CHAPTER 7

Shakespeare and the Corruption of Troy

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When Lavatch, the Clown of *All's Well That Ends Well*, is ordered to fetch Helen to the Countess, he bursts into an impromptu ballad about Troy (I. 3. 69–78).[1] The Countess complains 'you corrupt the song, sirrah' (I. 3. 80–81), a remark that has multiple layers of meaning. My chapter considers how the Clown's 'corruption' or altering of the song is part of a wider refashioning of the Troy story for strategic purposes in retellings by Shakespeare and his contemporaries. The Troy story was significant because, as Thomas Fenne pointed out, 'the vanity of the English nation is such to derive their genealogie from the Trojans', via the Romans 'who chalenged their pedegree from the Trojans'.[2] William Warner's *Albion's England* (1597) described how the Roman Brute searched for a fit place in England 'For rased *Troy* to rear a *Troy*' and chose to 'build up his *Troy-novant*, inclosing it with wall on the Thames'.[3] The fullest elaboration of this myth, Thomas Heywood's epic poem *Troia Britanica: or Great Britaines Troy* (1609), draws parallels between British and Trojan history.[4] In canto XIV, for example, grief for the death of Hector, expressed by Priam, Hecuba and Cassandra, is echoed by figures in distant and recent English history: Edward III's loss of Edward the Black Prince, Queen Margaret of Lancaster's tears for the murder of her son Prince Edward, and Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke's sorrow for the death of her brother Philip Sidney, 'Whose fame for Arts and armes the whole world sounded'.[5]

1 Unless otherwise stated, all quotations are to William Shakespeare, *All's Well That Ends Well*, ed. by Suzanne Gossett and Helen Wilcox, The Arden Shakespeare Third Series (Bloomsbury, 2019). All other quotations are from *The Norton Shakespeare*, 3rd edn, ed. by Stephen Greenblatt and others (Norton, 2016).

2 Thomas Fenne, *Fennes frutes which worke is devided into three Severall Parts; the first, a dialogue betweene fame and the scholler ... The second, intreateth of the lamentable ruines which attend on warre* ([T. Orwin] for Richard Oliffe,1590), fol. 90v. See Chapter 5 (Joseph Bowling) in this volume for a discussion of Troy and British identity.

3 William Warner, *Albions England a continued historie of the same kingdom* (J[oan] B[roome, 1597), p. 63.

4 See Chapter 3 (Charlotte Coffin) in this volume for an analysis of Heywood's 'Jacobean Troy'.

5 Thomas Heywood, *Troia Britanica: or, Great Britaines Troy* (W. Jaggard, 1609, reprinted Georg

Despite Troy's power to inspire myths, its fate made those myths just as fragile as the cloud-kissing towers of Ilion, to echo Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece* (1370). Fenne thought the English desire to seek ancestry from the Trojans was 'follie'.[6] Richard Rainolde's guide to rhetoric offered an exemplary argument that 'It is not like to be true, that is said of the battaill of Troie' because

> It semeth a matter of folie that so many people, so mightie nacions should bee bewitched, to raise so mightie an army, hassardyng [*sic*] their lives, leaving their countrie, their wives, their children, for one woman. Be it so, that Helena passed all creatures, and that Nature with beautie had indued her with all vertue, and singularitie: yet the Grecians would not be so foolishe, that universallie thei would seke to caste doune their owne wealthe, and moche more the common wealthe of Grece, and kingdome, to stande in perill.

He asks: 'coulde wise men and the moste famous nobles of Grece so occupie their heddes' and then 'hasarde their lives for a beautifull harlot[?]'.[7]

Early modern retellings of the Trojan War, from translations of Homer's *Iliad* and long poems to fragmentary texts like the ballad in *All's Well That Ends Well*, offer very different interpretations of who or what was to blame for the fall of the city. Investigating these intertexts, particularly their representation of women, allows us to reassess fragmentary perceptions of Troy in Shakespeare and elsewhere. After analysing Lavatch's ballad fragment and drawing attention to the varied literary representations of Troy, this chapter offers a focused discussion of John Ogle's *Lamentation of Troy* as a possible intertext for Lavatch's ballad and Shakespeare's rewritings of the Troy story in *The Rape of Lucretia* and *All's Well that Ends Well*. It draws topical connections between the latter and the marital situation of Penelope Devereux who, like Helen of Troy, was both eulogized and reviled. Lavatch's ballad addresses the question of who caused the Trojan War from the outset:

> Was this faire face the cause, quoth she,
> Why the Grecians sacked *Troy*,
> Fond done, done, fond was this King *Priams* joy,
> With that she sighed as she stood, *bis*.
> [With that she sighed as she stood,]
> And gave this sentence then, among nine bad, if one be good, among
> nine bad, if one be good, there's yet one good in ten.[8]

The ballad, as it appears in the First Folio, may indeed be 'corrupt' since editors have had difficulty making sense of it or finding a source. The Folio text includes '*bis*' in the fourth line, indicating a musical repeat, the third line may be incomplete and the final lines have been set as prose by the compositor to save space (perhaps because of additional material).[9] The fair face is, of course, that of Helen, wife

Olms Verlag 1972), original pagination, pp. 358–59.

6 Fenne, *Fennes Frutes*, fol. 90^{v} (sig. Bb2^{v}).

7 Richard Rainolde, *A booke called the Foundacioun of rhetorike* (John Kingston, 1563), sigs G1^{v} and G2^{v}.

8 This is the ballad as reproduced in the First Folio edition, *Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies* (Isaac Jaggard and Ed. Blount, 1623), p. 233.

9 See Susan Snyder (ed.), *All's Well That Ends Well* (Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 223.

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of Menelaus, and Queen of Sparta, whom Paris, the son King Priam of Troy, abducts. In an obvious sense, Helen's beauty is the cause of the war and the fall of Troy. Her name functioned as 'a byword for sexual appetite or disaster or both' in the Renaissance, as Laurie Maguire points out.[10] Words may have been omitted from the next line 'Fond done, done',[11] but the Folio punctuation 'fond was this King Priam's joy'[12] makes a coherent phrase referring to Paris, who is called 'King Priam's joy' in another song of 1596 which describes his infatuation with Helen and blames her as the cause of the war:

> The soone inticed Graecian Dame
> Whose lustfull love with *Priams* ioy
> Kindled the fire where grew the flame
> That after burnt faire blooming *Troy*.[13]

The singer and central perspective in this song, from a romance by Christopher Middleton, is female; an aged Helen, who looks back with 'brine-salt teares' to lament her 'former sinne' of 'lustfull love'.[14] The ballad fragment in *All's Well* likewise adopts a sorrowful female voice, but there are insufficient parallels to suggest Middleton's song is the sole source. Lavatch's song may be, rather, a conflation of ballad fragments and verse retellings of the Troy story.

Indeed, the conditions of performance suggest it may have been improvised. The Clown was played by Robert Armin, who was famed for his improvisatory comedy and for his singing. As Catherine A. Henze has argued, these two talents combined in Armin's ability to improvise revisions of a familiar song or song fragment in performance. The Countess's complaint that the Clown has corrupted the song may thus have provoked laughter since this was Armin's characteristic style.[15] Her objection relates more immediately to the Clown/Armin's misogynist tone in the last lines:

> LAVATCH Among nine bad if one be good,
> Among nine bad, if one be good,
> There's yet one good in ten.
> COUNTESS What, one good in ten? You corrupt the song, sirrah.
> LAVATCH One good woman in ten, madam, which is a purifying
> o' th' song. (1. 3. 76–82)

10 Laurie Maguire, *Shakespeare's Names* (Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 77.

11 G. K. Hunter (ed.), *All's Well That Ends Well*, The Arden Shakespeare (Methuen, 1962), claims the line 'is defective metrically' and 'gives neither rhyme nor sense' (p. 24 note to lines 67–76); Susan Snyder (ed.), *All's Well That Ends Well* (Oxford University Press, 1994), notes that it could match the tetrameter pattern when sung with four long notes (p. 98); and Arden editors Gossett and Wilcox (2019) refer to Ross W. Duffin's comment in his edited volume *Shakespeare's Songbook* (Norton: 2004), p. 426.

12 This is the punctuation in the Folio.

13 The song is part of C[hristopher] M[iddleton]'s romance, *The first part of the nature of a woman, Fitly described in a Florentine historie* (Valentine Simmes for Clement Knight, 1596), sig. C2^{v}.

14 Middleton, *The first part*, sig. C2^{v}.

15 Catherine A. Henze, '"Wise Enough to Play the Fool": Robert Armin and Shakespeare's Sung Songs of Scripted Improvisation', *Comparative Drama*, 47.4 (2013), pp. 419–49.

William Warburton speculates that the joke is Lavatch's corruption or inversion of an original song in which Hecuba laments that, of her ten good sons to Priam, Paris is the only bad one. This does not seem very convincing;[16] the ballad's speaker has been referring to Helen so the 'one good in ten' judgement appears to be about women. The Clown's riposte, that he has improved rather than corrupted the judgement against women, draws on King Solomon's supposed view that '*among a thousand Women hee found not one good*'.[17] Such misogyny is frequently directed at the figure of Helen in early modern debates over the nature of women. For example, Thomas Proctor's poem to a gentlewoman who claimed all men were false, argued that Paris 'proov'd himselfe a Lover just | Till stately Troy was turnd to dust' and used Helen to blame women more generally:

> If any fault bee found at all,
> To womens lot it needs must fall:
> If (*Hellen*) had not bin so light,
> Sir *Paris* had not died in fight.[18]

Similarly, Thomas Drant's 1566 translation of Horace's third satire claimed that before 'that cytyes had their walls, | or, Helen, came to Troye, | have women bathde the worlde in blood | (the cause of dyre annoye)'.[19] William Goodyear's 1581 translation of Jean de Cartigny's *Voyage du chevalier errant* paints an even more negative picture of Helen, associating her with witchcraft. A personified 'Folly' recounts that Helen

> by my counsell, went from her husband *Menelaus*, and suffered her selfe to be ravished of a yong lecherous Troyan named Paris, surnamed *Alexander*, the sonne of king *Priam*. She brought bloud & dethe to *Troye*, in steede of dowrie. For by her occasion, *Troye* was destroyed, and *Priam* with the most part of his children killed. And to the ende that her adulterous mate *Paris* or *Alexander*, should not leave her and goe to his owne lawfull wife *Pegasis Enone*, she bewitched him with certeine drinkes, wherein she was her crafts Mistres.[20]

16 Warburton's speculation is noted by Wilcox and Gossett (eds), *All's Well*, p. 158; Shakespeare credited Priam with fifty or fifty-one sons (*Titus Andronicus*, 1. 1. 83 and *Troilus and Cressida*, 1. 2. 146–53). The only similar comparison I can find is Priam's lament for Hector in *The Lamentation of Troy*: 'Death of a private sonne doth grieve one sore, | But losse of such a one gals ten times more'; John Ogle, *The Lamentation of Troy for the Death of Hector whereunto is annexed An Olde Womans Tale in hir Solitarie Cell* (William Mattes, 1594), ll. 209–10. I shall be returning to this poem.

17 The statistic, derived from Ecclesiastes 7. 30, is interpreted by Frances Meres in *Gods Arithmeticke* (Richard Jones, 1597): 'Hee that had seven hundred Concubines, and three hunderd [*sic*] Wives, which makes up a thousand women, hee sayeth, Eccles. 7. that *among a thousand Women hee found not one good*' (fol. 15^{r}). The evil reputation of women is a source of humour in John Heywood's interlude *The Playe Called the Foure PP* (William Middylton, 1544) where the Pardoner says that Lucifer readily allowed him to pardon women 'that unto us there come no mo[re]' since hell was overcharged with them. As a result 'to heven I do procure | Ten women to one man be sure' (sig. B4^{r}).

18 Thomas Proctor, *A gorgious gallery, of gallant inventions. Garnished and decked with divers dayntie devises, right delicate and delightfull, to recreate eche modest minde withal* (Richard Jones, 1578), sig. A3^{v}.

19 Thomas Drant, *A medicinable morall, that is, the two books of Horace his satyres, Englished accordyng to the prescription of saint Hierome* (Thomas Marshe, 1566), sig. B6^{r}. It was republished the following year.

20 Jean de Cartigny, *The voyage of the wandering knight. Devised by John Carthenie, a Frenchman and translated out of French into English by William Goodyear of Southampton, merchant* (Thomas East,

Such accounts of Helen amply support Laurie Maguire's view that 'a name associated with sexuality, adultery, and the downfall of ancient civilization (the first two causing the last) was simply too much for a girl to bear'.[21]

Who gets to speak in retelling the Trojan story inevitably reinscribes or challenges such stereotypes. Helen does get a voice in Books III, VI and XXIV of early modern English translations of the *Iliad* by Hall (1581) and Chapman (1611).[22] She is not personally blamed, but she is objectified as 'the fair' in Homer's epic.[23] This set a phallocentric pattern for, as Montaigne observed, nothing lives 'so in men's mouths' and is 'so known and received as Troy, as Helen and her wars'.[24] Retellings of the Trojan War were a man-made history in which women's voices were largely eclipsed, a point acknowledged by Bishop Antonio de Guevara, author of the much reprinted *Diall of Princes*, translated by Thomas North. Referring to Evandor's wife, Nicostrata (Carmenta), who was famed for 'her eloquence & wisdome', and powers of prophecy, he claimed:

> if that which this woman wrote of the warres of Troy, had not bene through envy cast into the fire: the name of *Homere* had at this day remained obscure. The reason hereof is, because the woman was in the time of the destruction of Troy, and wrote as a witnes of sight.[25]

De Guevara points out that a female eye-witness would tell a very different story of the destruction of Troy; one dangerous enough to be burned like the city itself because of its power to destabilize established accounts. Although Nicostrata's history of Troy is lost, women's protesting voices can be glimpsed in subsequent female-authored commentaries like Christine de Pizan's *Boke of the Citye of Ladies* (1405, trans. by Brian Anslay, 1521). The author praises Nicostrata as 'a grete clarke

1581), pp. 21–22. In Ovid's *Heroides* (v. 2), Oenone refers to herself as 'Pegasis Oenone', a nymph associated with springs, in reference to those Pegasus created by striking the ground with his hoof. Ovid, *Heroides. Amores*, trans. by Grant Showerman, rev. by G. P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library, 41 (Harvard University Press, 1977).

21 Laurie Maguire, *Shakespeare's Names*, p. 77.

22 In Arthur Hall's *Ten Books of Homers Iliades, translated out of French* (Ralph Newberie, 1581), Helen is presented as modestly lamenting to Priam her part in the war and wishing she had not been born (III, sigs 48^v, 50^r). In Book VI she also admonishes Aphrodite's intervention in the single combat between Menelaus and Paris designed to end the war, and in Book XXIV of George Chapman's 1611 translation, she shows further tragic awareness as discussed below: *The Iliads of Homer Prince of Poets* (Nathaniell Butter, 1611), XXIV, p. 340.

23 See for instance Hall, *Ten Books of Homers Iliades*, Hall, III, sigs 48^v, 50^r. John Austin, in *Helen of Troy and her Shameless Phantom* (Cornell University Press, 1994), notes that because of the high value attached to it, 'whoever possessed beauty in Homeric society would possess the world' (p. 24), but it does not seem to give her a voice.

24 Michel de Montaigne, *Essays written in French by Michael Lord of Montaigne, Knight of the Order of S. Michael, gentleman of the French Kings Chamber*, trans. by John Florio (Edward Blount and William Barret, 1613), p. 422.

25 Antonio de Guevara, *The Diall of Princes*, trans. by Thomas North (John Waylande, 1557; repr. Richard Tottill and Thomas Marshe, 1568; Richard Tottill, 1582 and 1619). The quotation is from the 1582 edition, fol. 182^v (fol. 2^v of an unnumbered gathering between Z and AA). De Guevara's opinion circulates in other handbooks such as Robert Allott's *Wits Theater of the little World* (James Roberts for Nicholas Ling, 1599), p. 248.

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in the letter of Grece' and compares her to Cassandra, 'so greate a clark that she knew all the craftes'. Cassandra is emblematic of the silencing of female voices. De Pizan remarks that the Trojans 'toke no charge of all her wordes', and 'sayd she was a fole', beating her and imprisoning her 'to put awaye her noyse from theyr eares'. However, 'it had ben better that they had byleved her' as events proved them fools.[26] Cassandra's silencing was emphasized by the British Sign Language performance of Charlotte Arrowsmith in the Royal Shakespeare Company's 2018 production, especially in Act v Scene 3 where her eloquent signed warnings to Hector that 'Troy roars, Hecuba [...] cries out, poor Andromache shrills her dolor forth' (v. 3. 82–84) spoke for the other women on stage, but received no response other than an angry dismissal by Troilus.[27]

Nevertheless, female-authored retellings of the Trojan War and its cost have emerged. Lady Jane Lumley's highly performable 1557 play *Iphigenia at Aulis* (the first English translation of Euripides' tragedy) is discussed by Marion Wynne-Davies in this volume.[28] The 2018 RSC production of *Troilus and Cressida* cast female actors in leading roles, offering them and composer Evelyn Glennie new opportunities to recreate the story.[29] Twenty-first century novels like Natalie Haynes's *A Thousand Ships*, Pat Barker's excellent *The Silence of the Girls* and *The Women of Troy* (2022) have imaginatively recreated women's experiences.[30]

The need to reassess representations of the Trojan women was recognized in the early modern period too. Marie de Gournay observed that Helen deserved a reappraisal:

> Helen had overturned Asia by her inappropriate marriage — was anything more justifiable than detesting and stoning her? Nevertheless, we see that when she weeps for Hector at his death, she says, among other praises, that he was the only person in Troy from whom she had never heard an angry word — nay, many consolations for those of others.[31]

26 Christine de Pizan, *The Boke of the Cyte of Ladyes*, trans. by Brian Anslay (Henry Pepwell, 1521). All quotations are from *The Boke of the Cyte of Ladyes*, ed. by Hope Johnson (Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2014), pp. 199–201.

27 Bea Webster and Charlotte Arrowsmith, Interval Drinks vodcast, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SDK9R5IV1Qo> [accessed 31 August 2024].

28 See Chapter 6 (Marion Wynne-Davies) in this volume. Lady Jane Lumley, *The Tragedie of Euripides called Iphigenia Translated out of Greake into Englisshe* (British Library, MS Royal 15.A.ix). A printed text appears in *Three Tragedies by Renaissance Women*, ed. by Diane Purkiss (Penguin, 1998). The play has been produced at Sunderland University (dir. Stephanie Hodgson-Wright, 2000); by the Rose Company Theatre (dir. Emma Rucastle, 2013–14); and in a staged reading at the University of Auckland (dir. Tom Bishop, 2020), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MMIl71x_l2M&t=1466s> [accessed 31 August 2024].

29 *Troilus and Cressida*, dir. by Gregory Doran (Royal Shakespeare Company, Stratford-upon-Avon, 2018), was introduced by Helen as Prologue and included cross-casting of major roles: Agamemnon (Suzanne Bertish), Ulysses (Adjoa Andoh), Aeneas (Amanda Harris), Thersites (Sheila Reid), Calchas (Helen Grady) — with a brilliant score by Evelyn Glennie.

30 Natalie Haynes, *A Thousand Ships* (Mantle, 2019), Pat Barker, *The Silence of the Girls* (Double Day, 2018) and *The Women of Troy* (Penguin, 2020).

31 Marie Le Jars de Gournay, 'The Promenade of Monsieur de Montaigne' (1594), in *Apology for the Woman Writing and Other Works*, ed. and trans. by Richard Hillman and Colette Quesnel, The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe series (University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 58–59.

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Engaging with female voices in male-authored poetry, such as the mourning of Helen referred to by De Gournay, opened different perspectives on Helen and the war. The resonance of women's voices, like those lamenting Hector in Book xxiv of Homer or in Caxton's *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye* (first published 1473–74, republished 1553 and 1597), could be magnified by the rhetorical technique of *ethopoeia*, a form of *prosopopoeia* where the poet adopts the voice of 'a person knowne though dedde'.[32] Lynne Enterline explains that female speakers in Ovid's *Heroides*, for example, 'had the capacity to disrupt the plot of epic masculinity in favor of female characters, whose emotions demonstrate the "cost of civic duty" and undercut normative, teleological narratives of nationhood and masculinity'.[33] A cleverly constructed manuscript letter by Lady Elizabeth Dacre to Sir Anthony Cooke demonstrates how women could use these texts to speak. The supposedly 'silent Dacre' refers to Ovid's account of Penelope's speechless '*tristis amor*' to Ulysses to express how she has suffered and held fast in faithful love to her absent lover Cooke.[34]

Lavatch's ballad in *All's Well That Ends Well* unequivocally adopts a female persona. G. K. Hunter identifies Hecuba as the probable speaker and cites a ballad listed as 'The Lamentation of Hecuba and the Ladies of Troy' in the Stationers' Register on 1 August 1586 as a possible but lost source.[35] Tanya Pollard's fine study of Greek women on the Shakespearean stage notes how texts like Peele's *The Tale of Troy* (1589) popularized a Hecuba who 'inhabits a liquid realm of tears, which she recreates in those who witness her grief'.[36] Hecuba is an icon of passionate female complaint, most famously in *Hamlet* (ii. 2. 422–79).[37] Her affective power was undoubtedly magnified by the rhetorical technique of *ethopoeia* where, as Rainoldes explained, the speaker must 'faigne the maners of the same', and imitate them to produce an oration that 'altogether expresseth the mocion of the mynde'. By way of illustration, Rainoldes offers a 'patheticall and dolefull oracion, Hecuba the quene made, the citee of Troie destroied, her housbande, her children slaine'.[38] His sample oration repeats the misogynistic views of Helen as a dissembling 'harlotte', but also criticizes Menelaus' lack of wisdom for pursuing her. Hecuba's pain at her loss and the fall of Troy in dust and blood is made tangible through the power of rhetoric:

> The sorowes depe doe passe my joyes, as Phebus light with stormes caste doune. Hectors death did wounde my hart, by Hectors might Troie stiffe did stande, my comforte Hector was, Priamus joye, of Troie all the life, the strength, and

32 Rainolde, *A booke*, sig. N1^{v}, fol. 49^{v}.

33 Lynn Enterline, 'Drama, Pedagogy and the Female Complaint: or What's Troy Got To Do With It?', in *Drama and Pedagogy in Medieval and Early Modern England*, ed. by Elisabeth Dutton and James McBain (Narr Francke Attempto Verlag, 2015), pp. 185–210 (p. 207).

34 See Elaine Treharne, 'Tristis Amor: an unpublished verse love letter from Lady Elizabeth Dacre Howard to Sir Anthony Cooke', *Renaissance Studies*, 26.5 (2012), pp. 673–90 (pp. 684–85 for a transcription, translation and analysis of the letter).

35 G. K. Hunter (ed.), *All's Well That Ends Well.*

36 Tanya Pollard, *Greek Tragic Women on Shakespearean Stages* (Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 104.

37 See also *Titus Andronicus* (iv. 1. 20–21) and *Cymbeline* (iv. 2. 312).

38 Rainolde, *A booke*, sig. N1^{r} (fol. 49^{r}).

> power, his death did wound me for to die, but alas my dolefull and cruell fate to greater woe reserveth my life, loftie Troie before me felle, sworde, and fire hath seate and throne doune caste.[39]

Here the military fall of Troy is re-articulated as the fall of Queen Hecuba and her family. In what is probably the most extensive example of such an oration (by Fenne), the ghost of Hecuba, 'vext with eager lookes in frantike fierie moode', seizes the narrator's attention:

> But for because I would not wish thou shouldst my name mistake:
> Whom Greekes and Romanes long agoe in dolefull verse did make
> The world to know, and now my selfe shall verefie the same:
> Who called me olde Hecuba, so truely was my name.[40]

Hecuba's assertion of her name and right to verify her own story leads to an outpouring of 1200 lines of verse. Under the somewhat understated title, 'Hecubas Mishaps', she recounts in graphic detail the bloody deaths of her husband (sig. Ee4^{r}) and sons, the rape of Cassandra (sigs Ee2^{v}–Ee3^{r}), and the sacrifice of Polyxena (sig. Ee4^{v}–Ff1^{r}), and she grieves as the mother of Troy: 'Which was the eie of all the World, but now by Greekes throwne downe, | And like a desart place did lie' (sig. Ff2^{r}).

Since cities, as well as humans, could voice their woes in *prosopopoeia*,[41] the female speaker in Lavatch's ballad could be Troy itself, rather than Hecuba. I suggest that an important but critically neglected intertext for Lavatch's ballad and other rewritings of the Trojan story is John Ogle's *The Lamentation of Troy, for the death of Hector* (1594) in which the female ghost of Troy returns to narrate and dictate the story to the author.[42] MacDonald P. Jackson noticed 'shriking' [shrieking], frequently repeated in Ogle's poem, as evidence to validate the line 'And great *Troy* shriking' in the 1609 Quarto of *Troilus and Cressida* (III. 3. 136), and noted a further parallel in Henry V's speech before Harfleur. Jackson concludes that it is difficult to determine whether *The Lamentation of Troy* 'offered Shakespeare anything different from his other sources'.[43] I suggest that it does offer something different because its structure prioritizes female voices, making it of significant interest in its own right as an early modern rewriting of the Trojan story. A feminized Troy presents cameo scenes from her history featuring Priam, followed by Hecuba, Andromache, Cassandra, Polyxena, Paris and finally, Helen.

Troy exhorts Ogle 'O, tell my griefes, and to this worlde them sound,' specifying, moreover, 'thou shalt speak as if my selfe had spoken' (sig. B2^{r}). She hopes 'Fair *Ilions* teares' and 'deepe laments' may 'stir | A flintie hart unto a high resounding' (sig. A3^{r}) through his pen. Indeed, she speaks like an uncanny revenant of Nicostrata,

39 Rainolde, *A booke*, sigs N2^{v}–N3^{r} (fol. 50^{v}–51^{r}).

40 Fenne, *Fennes frutes*, sigs Bb3^{v}, Bb4^{v}–Cc1^{r}. Subsequent references are given in the text.

41 See Rainolde, who gives the example of the city of Rome, *A booke*, sig. N2^{r} (fol. 50^{r}).

42 John Ogle, *The Lamentation of Troy for the Death of Hector whereunto is annexed An Olde Womans Tale in hir Solitarie Cell* (William Mattes, 1594). References are to this edition. See also Ogle, *The Lamentation of Troy*, ed. by Elkin Calhoun Wilson (Institute of Elizabethan Studies, 1959).

43 MacDonald P. Jackson, 'Great Troy Shrieking: Troilus and Cressida, III.iii.136', *Notes and Queries*, 55.2 (2008), pp. 188–91.

criticizing Homer's account as biased in favour of Achilles: 'Why then sweet *Homer*, did thy pen miscarry?' His misrepresentation of history is a double wrong: 'Wrong unto him that nere deserued so | Wronge to thy selfe in flattering him too much' (sigs B1^{r}–B1^{v}). Troy speaks back against Homer by composing a female-centred history of Hector's murder by Achilles, with Ogle as amanuensis. The poem encourages what Lynn Enterline has called 'transfers of affect' between the female speaking character and the male writer, eliding the two. How might such 'habits of alterity'[44] (the male writer's experience of female emotions) in *The Lamentation of Troy* have influenced early modern perceptions, including Shakespeare's writings?

The Rape of Lucrece, published in the same year as the *Lamentation*, relies on ventriloquism in the ekphrastic episode where Lucrece scrutinizes the 'skilful painting, made for Priam's Troy' (1367). Lucrece identifies with Hecuba, where 'all distress' is fixed, and vows to 'tune thy woes with my lamenting tongue', using her own voice to relieve Hecuba who has 'so much grief, and not a tongue' (1463–65). Amanda K. Ruud points out that Lucrece 'seizes control of an ambitious poetic scene' both retrospectively and prospectively: she mourns with and for Hecuba in the style of elegy, and anticipates her suicide (in response to rape) by writing her own elegy in advance. Lucrece's lament for Troy thus critically reframes 'epic ekphrasis as a site of lament' acknowledging her transformation into an absent, silent 'figure of poetry'.[45] Although Lucrece's 'sad dirge of her certain ending' (1612) before her husband and his men is of '"Few words"' (47 lines), she has already rehearsed it in over 200 lines about Troy. Lucrece's body and the despoiled city are aligned, so she speaks for the city, echoing Ogle's poem.

In the Prologue to *The Lamentation*, the city introduces herself as a site of mourning. She 'wepte' so 'piteously' that it seems 'she had been dissolved all to tears' (sig. B2^{r}). Her complaint effects a process in which individual identity is dissolved to expose the inter-relational quality of selfhood. The tragic protagonists of Troy dissolve through mourning. Hecuba proclaims 'The Troyan Queene is *Hecuba* no more'. Helen, 'speaking like one that had a troubled braine', makes the same point: '*Hector* dead, *Troy* gone, I, I al decaying' (sig. D3^{r}). These symptoms of self-dissolution seem to filter through into Hamlet's troubled brain via identification with the Player's tearful rendition of Hecuba's loss (*Hamlet* II. 2. 535–44). The dissolution of identity takes on a material quality through the tears and water imagery which permeate the whole poem, even down to the comparison of Andromache to Phillis, who, for love of Demophoon 'she her self did spill' (sig. C1^{r}). Hecuba imagines that Troy's tragic history is conceived in her womb with Paris as a firebrand and Hector as 'a Sea' flowing in her body (sigs B3^{r}–B3^{v}). She sees her prophetic 'vision verified' in her tears for Hector: 'Now that a signe of these Seas may be seene | I will be called of sadde seas the Queene' (sig. B3^{v}). The marginal note labels her this way.

Shakespeare's Lucrece likewise becomes a reservoir for the grief of Hecuba to weep 'Troy's painted woes' (1492), blending herself emotionally with all those she

44 Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, p. 140.

45 Amanda K. Ruud, 'Refusing Consolation in Shakespeare's *Lucrece*', *Philological Quarterly*, 99.3 (2020), pp. 269–93 (p. 270).

sees in the painting except Sinon. She promises to 'drop sweet balm in Priam's painted wound | And rail on Pyrrhus that hath done him wrong | And with my tears quench Troy that burns so long' (1466–68). *The Lamentation of Troy* might be the pre-text to which these lines allude. In the poem, Andromache 'did with teares brine, | The margine fill of *Hectors* wound so wide, | By trickling drops distilling from hir eien' (sig. C1^{v}). Shakespeare's tragic heroine certainly demonstrates the psychological process of *identification* which the complaint poem encourages: 'She throws her eyes about the painting round | And who she finds forlorn she doth lament' (1149–50).

The Lamentation's example of sorrowful compassion provides a model for that in *Lucrece* by including male speakers in the sea of tears. Priam is unable to maintain a 'manly courage' and expresses his 'inward grief' through groans, wails, beating his breast, and 'with flouds of tears which stormes of sighes did blow' (sig. B2^{v}). Conventional ideas of heroic masculinity are submerged for Paris too, whose 'clowdy braine' confuses cries of revenge with 'sighs and teares' of grief (sig. D1^{v}). An emotional struggle between anger and grief also characterizes male reactions in *Lucrece*. Collatine's voice is 'damned up with woe' and his sighs are like 'the violent roaring tide' flowing under a bridge (1667). Compassion is achieved in a confluence of emotion where, Lucrece recognizes, 'My woe too sensible thy passion maketh | More feeling painful' (1678–79). After her suicide, Collatine falls on her body with grief 'Till manly shame bids him possess his breath | And live to be revenged on her death' (1777–78). However, both he and Lucretius are overwhelmed with 'sorrow's tide' and 'weep with equal strife | Who should weep most' (1788–91).

Lucrece's suicide 'to drown one woe' (1680) builds on the acts of self-harm depicted in *The Lamentation of Troy* as a violent symptom of mourning. Andromache 'tare | Hir clothes, hir haire, hir flesh from off hir face' (sig. B4^{r}). Her tears and 'ceaseles shriking cryes' (sig. B4^{r}) disturb the baby at her breast as well. Ogle's Troy tells how Polyxena rent her nails through her forehead so 'blood ran downe and teares ore-took the same' (sig. C1^{v}). Rather than be seized/raped by Pyrrhus, she uses her own hands to ruin her beauty. Even Helen rends strands of her 'golden haire' which has caused the war by entwining 'several harts'. To lack compassion for those hearts who have suffered would be shameful: 'Then had hir shame beene registered in bloud. | As now hir fame in beautie hath long stood' (sig. D2^{v}). Here, as in other rewritings, female self-mutilation functions as a trope for Trojan shame at Ilium's fall. Shakespeare critically interrogates the grotesque consequences of this value system in the emblematic representation of Lucrece's bleeding body which looks like a 'late-sacked island' deserted and surrounded by a 'fearful flood' of black and red blood, the black blood recalling that of Hecuba (1454) and the island the city of Troy surrounded by 'red blood' (1437–42). Shakespeare's emblematic lament for the fall of Lucrece thus looks back to *The Lamentation of Troy* with references to mourning, corruption and loss: 'About the mourning and congealed face | Of that black blood a wat'ry rigol goes | Which ever seems to weep the tainted place.' (1744–46).

Because the Trojan story is founded on avenging the theft of female bodies and

the battle escalates into a cycle of revenge, female responses can move beyond tears of grief. *The Lamentation of Troy* advertises female revenge explicitly from the start. The ghost of Troy follows the model of revenge tragedy by appealing to Ogle to transmit her plea so she can rest in peace (sig. A3^{r}). She rejects the muses in favour of the 'Furies and Frensies' as 'fit companie | To help to blaze my wofull tragedie' (sig. A4^{r}). She invokes Alecto, Megaera and Tisiphone, the Erinyes or ancient chthonic spirits of revenge; invokes Pluto and Proserpina from the underworld (who had recently authorized Andrea's ghost's revenge in Thomas Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*), to take revenge on Achilles for killing Hector (sig. A4^{v}–B1^{r}). Troy's hyperbolic role offers a parallel to Tamora's perverse impersonation of Revenge in *Titus Andronicus*, produced in the same year as the poem. Tamora promises Titus 'wreathful vengeance on thy foes' (v. 2. 30–32). Lucius's siege of Rome with an army of Goths is compared to 'the story of that baleful, burning night | When subtle Greeks surprised King Priam's Troy' (v. 3. 82–83). In *The Lamentation*, the female protagonists follow Troy's example and 'vow revenge for Hector's sake' (sig. E3^{v}). Polyxena determines that 'once my will shall worke against my fate', showing the agency that revenge can bring a woman as she bids 'heaven and earth for me avenged be' (sig. C2^{v}). Hecuba is also an active avenger in the poem and in wider retellings of the story. Fenne's 'Hecubas Mishaps' depicts her conspiring with 'a counsell' of Trojan matrons 'How to revenge my slaughtred sonnes' (sig. Dd2^{v}) by helping Paris to kill Achilles in the temple. 'Then home we came with this revenge more mery than before: | For well we wist Achilles fierce should never hurt us more', she reports jauntily (sig. Dd4^{r}). Later retellings, especially those defending Achilles, emphasize her cunning. For example, *Love's Leprosie* (1598) describes how 'Olde *Hecuba*, well learned in their sex, | Instructes her daughter in this divelish text' of deception to take revenge via Polyxena, 'An Angels face wed to *Proserpines* soule'.[46]

The Clown's song about Troy in *All's Well That Ends Well* may invoke this model of female agency. Drawing on the biased view that 'Queene *Helens* lust was the spoile of Troy, and that her name will never be blotted out of the blacke booke of Infamie',[47] it alerts readers to the highly unconventional, perhaps inappropriate, quest that Shakespeare's Helen undertakes to pursue Bertram in the play. The overt desire which drives her to have sex with him (without his consent) and secure him as a husband makes her 'a heroine whose original audiences, if there were any, might have viewed her as a sexual transgressor, and who might have cared little for her feelings'.[48] The Clown's allusions to Troy when being sent to summon Helen alert readers to her potential to ruin Bertram, his family and the kingdom through her expert manipulation of bodies. Lavatch claims he is 'a prophet' who will 'speak the truth the next way' (I. 3. 51) and the tradition of female lament invoked by his allusions to Trojan women prefigures the character Helen's own experience in *All's Well:* first as longing to protect Bertram from 'the bloody course of war', like Penelope, Polyxena, and Andromache, and secondly, suffering loss, like Dido the

46 Thomas Powell, *Loves Leprosie* (W. White, 1598), sigs B2^{v} and C1^{v}.

47 Nicholas Breton, *Conceyted letters, newly layde open* (Samuel Rand, 1618), sig. D3v.

48 Robert Shaughnessy, *The Routledge Guide to William Shakespeare* (Routledge, 2011), p. 211.

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unrequited lover of Aeneas. Helen's agency, based on a belief that 'our remedies oft in ourselves do lie' and 'The fated sky | Gives us free scope' for action (I. 1. 199–201), recalls how Hecuba and her Trojan women plot revenge on Achilles. Helen's revenge on Bertram, for deserting her, also uses trickery and female conspiracy. Although it does not involve killing, it is no less effective. The 'corrupt' ballad in *All's Well* thus effectively conjures up a range of possible roles for the female protagonist of the play from the Trojan traditions of destructive desire, female revenge and female complaint. The context of Troy (that Shakespeare satirizes at greater length in *Troilus and Cressida*) colours Lavatch's joking with tragic awareness that things will not all end well.

It is, perhaps, perverse to label Helen as a cause of tragedy, in the play or in Troy, an insight that Shakespeare signals in his characterizations of Helens in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Troilus and Cressida* (though passing allusions elsewhere in the canon are more prejudiced).[49] Helen's idolization as 'the face that launch'd above a thousand ships' is satirized as a male fantasy in *Troilus and Cressida* (III. 2. 82). Her introduction as 'the mortal Venus, the heart-blood of beauty, love's immortal soul', is wittily undercut by Pandarus's question 'Who, my cousin Cressida?' and the messenger's retort 'No, sir, Helen. Could you not find that out by her attributes?' (III. 1. 32–36). Act III Scene 1, the only scene in which Helen appears, dramatizes how she is limited and trivialized by hyperbolic repetitions of the words 'fair' and 'sweet' (III. 1. 40–45 and 58–70). Her confinement at the centre of the war is mirrored by her confinement in the text.

The Lamentation of Troy offers a more lengthy and complex rejection of the conventional labelling of Helen as a whore. Maguire argues that Ogle defends Helen by modifying a classical tradition of deifying her, to present her as an angelic saint.[50] In this remarkable portrait, Helen sees herself as the victim of an argument between Venus and a jealous Juno: 'The Gods conspired, it was not *Helens* fault' (sig. E2^{v}). Acknowledging that 'I live of all the world dispisde' (sig. E2^{r}), she refutes the whole cultural and literary tradition: 'Then how unjustlie am I blamde by some? | Saying, *Helen* the whore wrought *Troys* decay?' and concludes 'It was their wils, and *Helen* is no whore.'[51] Her passionate farewell kiss to Paris (sig. E1^{r}), and her acceptance into the sisterhood of Trojan grief, supports this view. Like Hecuba she is transformed by the 'fretfull worme' (sig. E1^{r}) of mourning.

Ogle's poem praises the Grecian Helen's beauty with local English references and thus adds another political layer of significance to the meanings her name generated for early modern audiences. Helen is 'Pride of her Countrey, mirror of her kind' but her beauty is specifically English: she is '*Albions Stella* faire', the muse of Philip Sidney's sonnet cycle (sig. D2^{v}). Helen is blazoned and provocatively eroticized in her grief. She has 'golden haire' with 'daintie tresses farre more pure than golde' and

49 Helen's name is repeated fourteen times in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the allusion becoming increasingly ironic (III. 2. 137); Alison Findlay, *Women in Shakespeare* (Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 182.

50 Laurie Maguire, *Helen of Troy: From Homer to Hollywood* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 131–34.

51 John Ogle, *The Lamentation of Troy*, sig. E2^{v}.

> The silver tears distilling from her eies
> Run down hir cheekes the Rose and Lilly fields:
> A sugred streame where thirstie *Cupid* lies,
> And drinks the *Nectar* that the fountaine yeelds.
> (*The Lamentation of Troy*, sig. D2^{v})

Her sighs drive her tears onto the 'snowie towre | Her necke, and thence into a lower place' where anyone lucky enough to 'couch there' would 'thinke that he was blest' (sig. D2^{v}). The obvious candidate for '*Albion's Stella* fair' is Penelope Devereux, Lady Rich, famous for her golden hair, outstanding beauty and intelligence. Ogle's poem describes Helen as 'Earth's only starre, from whose faire beams there came | Heat to inflame with love the coldest minde' (sig. D2^{v}). Penelope Devereux's powers of attraction inflamed admirers beyond Sir Philip Sidney who had immortalized her in *Astrophil and Stella*. Thomas Campion eulogized her as the 'Stella Britanna' whose voice also enchanted Sir Charles Blount, the lover who went on to command the victorious English forces in Ireland in 1603.[52] When *The Lamentation of Troy* was published, Penelope's adulterous affair with Sir Charles Blount had been public knowledge for four years; their second child, Mountjoy, was so named in celebration of Blount's succession to the title of Baron Mountjoy in 1594. The poem's sympathy for Helen of Troy's reluctance to return to 'home-spun *Menalay*' and her choice to die rather than 'live contemned, who honourd was before' (sig. D4^{v}) had immediate topical reference. Penelope had chosen to live with the Catholic Sir Charles Blount in preference to her husband, Lord Rich.

Ogle's explicitly English corruption of the Trojan story supplements Sidney's invention of Stella as an inspiration for love. It styles '*Albion's Stella* faire' like Helen, as an inspiration for war and nominates 'hir *Astrophil*' as the dead Hector. 'Astrophil', Sir Philip Sidney, had died as a model of military heroism in the Netherlands in 1586 and functions as an English Hector to inspire his countrymen. Helen/Penelope Devereux mourns him, claiming that the 'glorious beautie' in 'Stella's face' begins to fade as 'Things of esteem do fall' (sig. E1^{r}). She pointedly claims that '*Helen's* beautie might have florisht ever' if Englishmen did not 'Horde up' their treasure in building great houses instead of fighting (sigs E1^{r}–E1^{v}). When Helen abandons herself to grief, inspirations to desire and to violence are fused. Her actions are highly eroticized: 'Renting her garments, throwing forth her breasts' sounds more like a striptease than an act of mourning. Ogle's Helen may not be a whore but her role is to seduce English readers into taking up active military service. The poem comes to a climax with encomiums to the dead Hector [Sir Philip Sidney]: 'Glory of Troy and wonder of the World | Gem of true Nobles, knight-hoods full suffisance' (sig. D4^{r}), whose death brings the community together in admiration, loss, and

52 Thomas Campion, *Umbra* (Edward Griffin, 1619), sig. F3^{v}. Campion claimed that her face inflamed the love of Astrophil and her sweet voice enchanted the Irish commander (Sir Charles Blount, Eighth Lord Mountjoy and Earl of Devonshire). See Michele Margetts, 'Stella Britanna: The Early Life (1563–1592) of Lady Penelope Devereux, Lady Rich (d. 1607)' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Yale University, 1992), p. 1. See also Sally Varlow, *The Lady Penelope: Passion and Intrigue in the Heart of the Elizabethan Court* (Carlson Books, 2007), and Gerit Quealy, 'Astrophil's Star: Locating Penelope Rich in the Sidney Constellation', *Sidney Journal* 41.1/2 (2023), pp. 23–36.

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fear for what lies ahead (sig. E3^{v}). The ghost of Troy instructs Ogle to 'shew to *Albion* this' and 'Bid her take heed she holde her *Hector* deere | And wel regard him while he living is' (sig. E4^{r}). This second, living, Hector refers immediately to the poem's dedicatee, Peregrine Bertie, thirteenth Baron Willoughby, whom Sir Philip Sidney regarded as 'my very special friend' due to their service together in the Netherlands. Bertie had been an excellent military leader, Elizabeth's effective commander-in-chief in the Netherlands until 1591 and subsequently supported Essex's English forces in Normandy.[53] His successors as Albion's 'living Hectors' included Penelope's lover Blount. He was also present when Sidney was wounded; he organized naval defence against the Spanish Armada in 1588, and returned to the Netherlands in 1593, disobeying Elizabeth I's wishes.[54] Penelope's brother, the Earl of Essex, was a figurehead for aggressive military intervention in Europe.[55] Readers of *The Lamentation of Troy* are thus exhorted by Helen/Stella to honour Hector/Sidney's memory and defend the heritage of new Troy since 'valiant knights faire *England* hath inow' (sig. E4^{r}).

An even more extreme example of the corruption of the Trojan story for political purposes is the Jacobean ballad 'The Greekes and Trojan Wars' (*c.* 1623–24), designed to recruit English soldiers to fight in Ireland.[56] Unlike the conventional association of London and England with Troy,[57] the ballad identifies the British soldiers with the Greek heroes, Ulysses and Achilles, warning them not to be tempted by their ladies to stay at home but, instead, join the campaign to recover the ravished Helen:

Let noble *Brittains* notice take
Of this allusion which Ile make
Imagine all the power of *Greece*
To fetch great *Agamemnons* Neece
are sacking *Troy*
which they at last destroy
utterly
They will fetch her
From her Letcher
By all this extremity.

Ireland is our *Hellen* fair
Ravish'd from us through want of care

53 D. J. B. Trim, 'Bertie, Peregrine, thirteenth Baron Willoughby of Willoughby, Beck and Eresby (1555–1601)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (ODNB)*, 2008, <https://www-oxforddnb-com> [accessed 6 October 2024].

54 Christopher Maginn, 'Blount, Charles, eighth Baron Mountjoy and earl of Devonshire (1563–1606), ODNB, 2008, <https://www-oxforddnb-com> [accessed 6 October 2024].

55 Paul E. J. Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: The Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, 1585–1597* (Cambridge University Press, 1999).

56 'The Greeks and Trojans Warres', Roxburghe Collection, British Library (EBBA 30459), is undated (est. 1623–51 in the Early English Ballad Archive). Its woodcuts show a military figure with dark hair in Jacobean armour and a second woodcut of Tudor religious figures (not in the later version in EEBO which is dated 1671). The ballad writer Humphrey Crouch (fl. 1601–57) is identified by Jason McElligott (*ODNB*) as an anti-Catholic misogynist.

57 In Chapter 8 in this volume, Janice Valls-Russell examines the references to Greek and Trojan warriors in Shakespeare's *2 and 3 Henry VI*.

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The *Paris* that hath done this rape
Is fond security (that ape).

Uniting as a nation to attack a subversive colony, rather than pursuing the damaging internal divisions that would ultimately lead to civil war, is blatant propaganda. English soldiers must 'Let all home-bred strife alone | And as the *Greeks* all joynd in one | Their loss and honour to repair'. The 'home-bred strife' probably alludes to political divisions caused by a proposed match between Prince Charles and the Spanish Infanta, and by the government of Ireland under Henry Carey, Viscount Falkland. Charles Blount's military campaign had asserted English political control over Ireland at the Treaty of London in 1604, but without full conversion to Anglicanism, so this ballad's later repurposing of the Trojan War, as religious and political differences in England emerged, may look back to earlier appropriations like *The Lamentation of Troy.*

What I believe is Shakespeare's own rewriting of the *Lamentation* in *All's Well That Ends Well*, connects topically with Penelope Devereux's situation in 1605–06, the most probable date for the play. Like the heroine of *All's Well*, Penelope faced significant marital difficulties because although Lord Rich had formally divorced her, in 1605, her marriage to Charles Blount later that year in a private ceremony was deemed contrary to canon law, causing a public scandal. Like Helen of Troy, the extraordinary Penelope Devereux was both celebrated and reviled, even accused of witchcraft over her brother, Essex. Elements of her story may have resonated in *All's Well*: in the suspicions of Helen's forwardness at court, her rejection by Bertram, followed by her fear of the perils of military engagement and her subsequent transformation to a Catholic pilgrim. Shakespeare's retelling of Helen's story, dramatizing female determination alongside the precarity of all human endeavours, traces exactly the kind of 'mingled yarn' (IV. 3. 68) that we find across early modern accounts of the Trojan War. Like Lavatch's 'corruption' of the song, the stories are often fragmented, some objectifying and casting blame on Helen, others giving female figures a voice to disrupt epic narratives of male military heroism. Although the tragic conclusion for Ilium was predetermined, its protagonists displayed a kaleidoscope of feelings and opinions which made it perpetually fascinating to early modern storytellers. Troy was a magnet for topical retellings designed to shape Great Britain as Troy-novant.

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