Skenè Texts DA - CEMP

Classical and Early Modern Paradoxes in England

General Editor Silvia Bigliazzi

• 1.2

A Feast of Strange Opinions: Classical and Early Modern Paradoxes on the English Renaissance Stage

Edited by Marco Duranti
and Emanuel Stelzer

Edizioni ETS

S K E N È Theatre and Drama Studies

Executive Editor	Guido Avezzù.
General Editors	Guido Avezzù, Silvia Bigliazzi.
Editorial Board	Chiara Battisti, Simona Brunetti, Sidia Fiorato, Felice Gambin, Alessandro Grilli, Nicola Pasqualicchio, Susan Payne, Cristiano Ragni, Emanuel Stelzer, Gherardo Ugolini.
Managing Editors	Valentina Adami, Cristiano Ragni.
Assistant Managing Editors	Marco Duranti, Roberta Zanoni.
Editorial Staff	Chiara Battisti, Petra Bjelica, Francesco Dall'Olio, Bianca Del Villano, Serena Demichelis, Carina Fernandes, Sidia Fiorato, Leonardo Mancini, Antonietta Provenza, Carla Suthren.
Typesetting	Lorenza Baglieri, Cristiano Ragni.
Advisory Board	Anna Maria Belardinelli, Anton Bierl, Enoch Brater, Jean-Christophe Cavallin, Richard Allen Cave, Rosy Colombo, Claudia Corti, Marco De Marinis, Tobias Döring, Pavel Drábek, Paul Edmondson, Keir Douglas Elam, Ewan Fernie, Patrick Finglass, Enrico Giaccherini, Mark Griffith, Daniela Guardamagna, Stephen Halliwell, Robert Henke, Pierre Judet de la Combe, Eric Nicholson, Guido Paduano, Franco Perrelli, Didier Plassard, Donna Shalev, Susanne Wofford.

SKENÈ. Texts and Studies (https://textsandstudies.skeneproject.it/index.php/TS)
Supplement to *SKENÈ. Journal of Theatre and Drama Studies*
Copyright ©December 2023 S K E N È. Texts and Studies
This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.
info@skeneproject.it
Edizioni ETS
Palazzo Roncioni - Lungarno Mediceo, 16, I-56127 Pisa
info@edizioniets.com
www.edizioniets.com
Distribuzione
Messaggerie Libri SPA
Sede legale: via G. Verdi 8 - 20090 Assago (MI)
Promozione
PDE PROMOZIONE SRL
via Zago 2/2 - 40128 Bologna

ISBN (pdf) 978-884676836-0
ISBN 978-884676837-7
ISSN 2464-9295

CEMP - Classical and Early Modern Paradoxes in England

The series of CEMP volumes offers studies and fully annotated scholarly editions related to the CEMP open-access digital archive. This archive includes texts pertaining to the genres of the paradox, of the paradoxical fiction, and of the problem, which were published in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, and which are currently unavailable online and/or not open access (https://dh.dlls.univr.it/bib-arc/cemp). Our digital archive features diplomatic, semidiplomatic, and modernised editions of selected works, furnished with critical apparatuses and editorial notes, alongside related documentary materials, which, in turn, are relevant to poetic and dramatic texts of the English Renaissance. These texts provide fundamental testimony of the early modern episteme, functioning as a hinge joining widespread forms of the paradoxical discourse in different genres and texts and within the development of sceptical thinking.

The project is part of the Skenè Centre as well as of the Project of Excellence Digital humanities applied to foreign languages and literatures (2018-2022) Department of Foreign Languages and Literature at the University of Verona (https://dh.dlls.univr.it/en/).

Contents

Contributors 13

Marco Duranti and Emanuel Stelzer
Introduction 19

1. Ancient Paradoxical Culture and Drama

1. Alessandro Stavru
The Paradox of 'Making the Weaker Speech the Stronger':
on Aristophanes' *Clouds*, 889-1114 33

2. Robert Wardy
Paradoxical Agathon and His Brethren 55

2. Paradoxes in/of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama

3. Beatrice Righetti
The Incidence of the Speakers' Gender on Paradoxes in
Shakespeare's Comedies 79

4. Rocco Coronato
The Backstage. Honesty as Paradox in *Othello* 107

5. Bryan Crockett
Paradox in Performance 131

6. Andrew Hadfield
The Digges' Family and the Art of War 143

7. Francesco Dall'Olio
"Indiscreet chroniclers and witty play-makers":
William Cornwallis and the Fiction of Richard III 159

3. Paradoxes in Drama and the Digital

8. Gloria Mugelli and Federico Boschetti
Searching for Ritual Paradoxes in Annotated Ancient
Greek Tragedies 205

9. Alessandra Squeo
"It Is a Happiness to Be in Debt": Digital Approaches to the Culture of Paradox in Early Modern Drama 231

10. Michael R. Best
"Do you see this?" Ambiguity and Paradox in *King Lear* 259

Index 279

Contributors

Michael Best is Professor Emeritus at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. He completed his PhD at the University of Adelaide in 1966. After early work on John Lyly, he edited two early modern works of popular culture, *The Book of Secrets of Albertus Magnus* (Clarendon Press, 1973) and *The English Housewife,* by Gervase Markham (McGill-Queens University Press, 1986), both still in print. He later edited a selection of letters between South Australia and the Western Australian Goldfields (Wakefield Press, 1986) and a selection of Shakespeare's plays and poems, *Shakespeare on the Art of Love* (Duncan Baird Publishers, 2008). An early adopter of the digital medium, he published a hypertextual exploration of Shakespeare's Life and Times aimed at students, initially on floppy disks (Intellimation, 1991), then on CD ROM, and finally as a part of the Internet Shakespeare Editions (ISE), a web project and organisation he founded in 1996. On Shakespeare in and the digital medium he has published many articles, and has given conference papers and plenary lectures. Under his direction as Coordinating Editor the ISE has published open access old-spelling editions of all Shakespeare's plays, and progressively has added modern editions. The website project was donated to the University of Victoria in 2019. He is the editor of *King Lear* for the Internet Shakespeare Editions and a print version of this edition, prepared alongside Alexa Alice Joubin, has been published by Broadview Press (2023).

Federico Boschetti is PhD in Classical Philology (University of Trento - University of Lille III, 2005) and in Cognitive and Brain Sciences: Language, Interaction, and Computation (University of

Trento, 2010). Since 2011, he has been a researcher at the Institute for Computational Linguistics "A. Zampolli" (CNR-ILC). He currently works at the CNR-ILC detached research unit located at the Centre for Digital and Public Humanities (VeDPH) of Ca' Foscari University of Venice. His research interests are: Digital Philology, Historical OCR, Handwritten Text Recognition, and Distributional Semantics applied to ancient texts.

Rocco Coronato teaches English Literature at the University of Padua. He specialises in early modernity between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries. He has been a visiting scholar at Harvard, the Warburg Institute, Brown University, Chicago, Amsterdam, and has presented his works at numerous international conferences. He is the author of several essays and monographs published in international venues, including *Shakespeare, Caravaggio, and the Indistinct Regard* (Routledge 2017). He has also written some guides for Carocci (*Leggere Shakespeare*, 2017; *Guida ad Amleto*, 2022; *Guida alla Tempesta*, 2022). He has translated *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* (Rizzoli, 2022), and his university textbook *Letteratura inglese. Da Beowulf a Brexit* has just been released (Le Monnier-Mondadori Education).

Bryan Crockett, PhD, is an Emeritus Professor in the Department of English at Baltimore's Loyola University Maryland. There he specialised in early modern literature, particularly English Renaissance drama. In addition, he frequently taught courses in modern drama as well as ancient Greek philosophy. His 1995 book *The Play of Paradox* (University of Pennsylvania Press) is a wide-ranging study of paradox in early modern literature, philosophy, religion, and drama. *Love's Alchemy* (Five Star), his literary novel about John Donne, was published in 2015.

Francesco Dall'Olio obtained his MA in Philology and History of Antiquity from the University of Pisa, Scuola Normale Superiore, in 2013, and in 2014 the Scuola Normale's diploma. In 2019, he received his PhD in Philology, Literature and Linguistics from the University of Verona. Twice a visiting research fellow at the Gallatin School for Individualized Studies (NYU) as part of his PhD programme, and as

a postdoc researcher at the University of Verona, he has extensively worked on the reception of Greek literature in the early modern age, with a focus on early modern English literature and drama. His publications include articles on Alexander Neville's translation of Seneca's *Oedipus* (2018), Thomas Preston's *Cambises* (2020), and on Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and an essay in vol. 1.1 of the CEMP series (Skenè Texts and Studies) entitled "'I know not how to take their tyrannies': Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* and the Praise of the Tyrant". A book-length study on the early modern English reception of Greek notions of tyranny is forthcoming, as is an article on *Othello* and Seneca in the journal *Memoria di Shakespeare* (Issue 10, 2023).

Marco Duranti holds a PhD in Greek literature from the Universities of Verona and Freiburg i. Br. (2017). As a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Verona, he has worked on the reception of ancient Greek literature in early modern England. He has published articles and book chapters on Aristophanes' dramaturgy, Euripides' tragedies, with a focus on *Iphigenia Taurica*, as well as on the reception of Greek theatre in early modern continental Europe and England. He is the author of *"Ecclesiae et Rei Publicae": Greek Drama and the Education of the Ruling Class in Elizabethan England* (Skenè Texts and Studies, 2022). Together with Emanuel Stelzer he has edited *A Feast of Strange Opinions: Classical and Early Modern Paradoxes on the English Renaissance Stage* (CEMP 1.1, Skenè Texts and Studies, 2022). He has contributed to the digital project CEMP (Classical and Early Modern Paradoxes in England), of which he has coordinated the classical section.

Andrew Hadfield is Professor of English at the University of Sussex and a Fellow of the British Academy. He has recently published *Literature and Class from the Peasants' Revolt to the French Revolution* (Manchester University Press, 2021), and is now working on a second volume about literature and class from Peterloo to the present. He is a general editor of the works of Thomas Nashe and his latest book, *Thomas Nashe and Late Elizabethan Writing* (Reaktion/The Chicago University Press), was published in 2023.

Gloria Mugelli has a PhD in Classics and Anthropology of the Ancient World at the University of Pisa and at the Centre AnHiMa of the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales of Paris. She has researched the form and function of rituals (sacrifice, supplication and funerary rites) in ancient Greek tragedy, focusing on the relationship between ritual and dramatic performances. Her research, based on the corpus of the surviving ancient Greek tragedies, adopts the Euporia system that she developed together with Federico Boschetti. Her research interests focus on the texts of Greek and Latin literature, read from an anthropological perspective, on the teaching of ancient languages, and on digital methods and practices for the study of the ancient world.

Beatrice Righetti is a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Aosta Valley and a former doctoral student in Linguistics, Philology and Literature at the University of Padua. Her doctoral project deals with the reception of paradoxical writing and the *querelle des femmes* as regards the literary figure of the talkative woman in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England and Italy. Her main case study is the literary and theatrical character of the English shrew and the Shakespearean shrew in particular. She has published on Renaissance women writers and Shakespeare's plays, mostly *The Taming of the Shrew*, focusing on both the use of paradoxes and the relationship between metamorphosis, gender-based violence and power relations. She contributes to two digital projects directed by Silvia Bigliazzi ("Shakespeare's Narrative Sources: Italian Novellas and their European Dissemination", SENS; and CEMP) and to "From Paradise to Padua" directed by Alessandra Petrina.

Alessandra Squeo is Associate Professor of English literature at the University of Bari. Her research areas include Shakespeare textual studies, Victorian literature and culture, and Digital Humanities. She is the author of the monographs *Macchine per raccontare. Introduzione alla Hyperfiction* (2002), *Orizzonti del Visibile* (2009), *Shakespeare's Textual Traces. Patterns of Exchange in* The Merchant of Venice (2012), and of the recently published volume *Print and Digital Remediations of the Shakespearean Text. A Hermeneutics of*

Reading from the First Folio to the Web (ETS 2022). She has lately co-edited the special issue *Experiencing Shakespeare in Digital Environments* for the journal *Lingue e Linguaggi* (2021) and the volumes *Culture and the Legacy of Anthropology* (Peter Lang 2020) and *Portraits of Merchants. Multifocal Approaches to Money, Credit and the Market* (Pensa Mulimedia 2022), which explores forms of intersection between economics and the humanities.

Alessandro Stavru teaches Ancient Philosophy at the University of Verona. His areas of interest include Socrates, the Socratics and the Socratic literature, Pythagoras and Pythagoreanism, ancient aesthetics, and the history of classical scholarship (especially Walter F. Otto). He is an officer of the International Society for Socratic Studies and has helped in organising the international Socratica-colloquiums (2005, 2008, 2012 of which he edited the proceedings).

Emanuel Stelzer is a researcher at the University of Verona. He is the author of *Portraits in Early Modern English Drama: Visual Culture, Play-Texts, and Performances* (Routledge, 2019) and of *Shakespeare Among Italian Criminologists and Psychiatrists, 1870s-1920s* (Skenè Texts and Studies, 2021). Together with Silvia Bigliazzi, he has edited the volume *Shakespeare and the Mediterranean: Romeo and Juliet* (Skenè Texts and Studies, 2022), and, with Marco Duranti, *A Feast of Strange Opinions: Classical and Early Modern Paradoxes on the English Renaissance Stage* (CEMP 1.1, Skenè Texts and Studies, 2022). His articles have appeared in journals including *Critical Survey*, *Early Theatre*, *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, *English Studies*, and *The Huntington Library Quarterly*. His main interests are early modern English literature and drama, textual studies, and theatre history. He has contributed to the digital projects SENS (Shakespeare's Narrative Sources: Italian Novellas and their European Dissemination) and CEMP (Classical and Early Modern Paradoxes in England), of which he has coordinated the early modern section. He has also translated into Italian John Milton's *Comus* (ETS, 2020). He is managing editor of *Skenè: Journal of Theatre and Drama Studies*.

Robert Wardy was Reader in Ancient Philosophy at The University of Cambridge and a Fellow of St Catharine's College for many years, where he taught Western and Chinese Philosophy and Classics. His research encompasses ancient Greek natural philosophy, the history and theory of rhetoric, the theory and practice of translation, Taoism and seventeenth-century interchange between China and the West, and Plato's *Symposium*. He is also working on two large projects devoted to the history of thought experiments and paradoxes. He is currently Professor of Philosophy at The University of Arizona.

6

The Digges' Family and the Art of War

Andrew Hadfield

Abstract

Leonard Digges' fourth paradox in his posthumously published work, *Four Paradoxes, or Politique Discourses Concerning Military Discipline* (1604), is surely his most provocative: "That warre sometimes lesse hurtfull, and more to be wisht in a well governed State than peace". In making this claim, Digges is consciously opposing Erasmus's famous and much cited maxim, "Dulce Bellum Inexpertis" (war is sweet to the ignorant), as is suggested by his own Latin tag, "Et multis vtile bellum". Erasmus's adage had already been challenged by the English poet, George Gascoigne, in his poem, *Dulce Bellum Inexpertis*. Gascoigne, a soldier who had witnessed the terrifying siege of Antwerp, known as "The Spanish Fury", robustly defended his profession in consciously adapting Erasmus's meditation on the horrors of war, arguing that war was worst when not carried out by the professionals who knew how to do it and left to fanatics and the untrained. In this essay I will explore the relationship between Digges' paradoxes and earlier debates on war and peace, showing how importantly different positions were outlined in attempts to think through the interrelated paradoxes that war was most enthusiastically supported by those who knew nothing about it, and the way to ensure lasting peace was to wage effective war.

Keywords: paradox; Thomas Digges; Dudley Digges; war; Erasmus; George Gascoigne

It is hard to imagine the early modern period without its love of paradoxes. From the shock and surprise of four and twenty blackbirds emerging from a pie crust to satirical treatises on fleas, ants, the pox, bastardy and baldness; from the inversion of the established order on days of carnival to discussions of the Cretan liar paradox and Zeno's arrow, early modern Europeans loved to be startled by a challenging paradox. As Rosalie Colie pointed out in what is still one

of the most significant discussions of the phenomenon, paradoxes were everywhere and they could be divided – more or less – into two types. Both were designed to generate surprise, followed by reflected pleasure on the striking nature of that startled reaction. On the one hand there were paradoxes that could be "said to reside in extraordinary consistency of decorum (tautology)', or, probably more frequently, those that depended on 'the incongruous mixture of paradox with a normally unparadoxical form (contradiction)" (1966, 36).[1] Accordingly, paradoxes expose a ludicrous fallacy that is hidden in plain sight, either one that seems like a substantial idea but is actually pointless and groundless, or one that, once it is revealed, makes no sense.

Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536), probably the most influential European man of letters in the sixteenth century, frequently resorted to the paradox as a means of demonstrating the strange nature of the world and the need to exercise our wit as strenuously as possible in order to understand its complicated and curiously challenging design, producing *The Praise of Folly*, and the vast collections of *Adages* and *Colloquies*, which are stuffed with paradoxical examples of surprising wisdom (see Geraldine 1964). The adage, *Summum jus, summa injuria* (extreme justice is extreme injustice), for example, expresses the paradox that the more one adheres to the letter of the law, to administer justice as a written code, the more unjust one is likely to be, neglecting the spirit of the law – and therefore, justice – in attempting to apply it too rigidly (Mynors 1989, 244). One adage, in particular, seems to express Erasmus's belief in the foolishness of mankind and expose the vast effort that has gone into describing and analysing something that is not simply pointless but positively harmful: *Dulce Bellum Inexpertis*, war is sweet to the ignorant. This adage would seem to be an example of Colie's type one, the surprise of the reader generated by the extraordinary consistency of the idea, one that strikes the reader as something they should have realised all along but somehow failed to observe. To take a section almost – almost – at random:

[1] See also Knight Miller 1956. I am grateful to Fabio Ciambella who read the essay in draft and made a number of very helpful suggestions.

> There is nothing at all in all his members that may seem to be ordained to war, or to any violence . . . Nature hath given unto man a countenance not terrible and loathly, as unto other brute beasts; but meek and demure, representing the very tokens of love and benevolence. She hath given him amiable eyes, and in them assured marks of the inward mind. She hath ordained him arms to clip and embrace. She hath given him the wit and understanding to kiss: whereby the very minds and hearts of men should be coupled together, even as though they touched each other. Unto man alone she hath given laughing, a token of good cheer and gladness. To man alone she hath given weeping tears, as it were a pledge or token of meekness and mercy. Yea, and she hath given him a voice not threatening and horrible, as unto other brute beasts, but amiable and pleasant. Nature not yet content with all this, she hath given unto man alone the commodity of speech and reasoning: the which things verily may specially both get and nourish benevolence, so that nothing at all should be done among men by violence. (Erasmus 2023, 226)[2]

Natural and divine forces have created man as beautiful and reasonable with none of the instruments of violence that other creatures possess: teeth, claws, roaring voices, spikes, poisonous fangs, brute strength, and so on. Men and women can laugh and be ironic so, Erasmus implies, will understand that violent conflict is essentially ridiculous. Even so, with all these marvellous attributes and a sophisticated ability to appreciate and understand the world God made, mankind dedicates much of its time to thinking about violence and warfare and justifying these invariably harmful practices, that is, when not actually at war.

Erasmus concludes his extended adage, by far the longest he wrote, by contrasting the bellicose Pope Julius II, whose papacy (1503-1513) was largely concerned with the Papal Wars, with what he hopes will be the pacific rule of his successor, Leo X (1513-1521), who he anticipates will inaugurate a new era of peace exposing the destructive violence fostered and supported by the recently deceased pontiff:

[2] I have retained original spelling for quotations, while regularising f/s, i/j, and u/v.

> Leo himself, having alway a sober and a gentle wit, giving himself from his tender youth to good letters of humanity, was ever brought up, as it were, in the lap of the Muses, among men most highly learned. He so faultless led his life, that even in the city of Rome, where is most liberty of vice, was of him no evil rumour, and so governing himself came to the dignity to be bishop there, which dignity he never coveted, but was chosen thereto when he least thought thereon, by the provision of God to help to redress things in great decay by long wars. Let Julius the bishop have his glory of war, victories, and of his great triumphs, the which how evil they beseem a Christian bishop, it is not for such a one as I am to declare. I will this say, his glory, whatsoever it be, was mixed with the great destruction and grievous sorrow of many a creature. But by peace restored now to the world, Leo shall get more true glory than Julius won by so many wars that he either boldly begun, or prosperously fought and achieved. (Erasmus 1534, sig. E8*r*-*v*)[3]

Such a pious hope proved unfounded, as Leo was not the force for peace that Erasmus hoped he would be, even as he sought to limit his predecessor's commitment to conflict as a means of resolution. The man of letters proved no more effective at governing than the ruthless pragmatist, despite the support of Erasmus, a fellow intellectual. Yet, the point of the adage stands – in fact, Leo's reluctant pursuit of the War of Urbino in 1517 which hindered plans for a Crusade, might be seen to have actually supported Erasmus's argument, one war preventing another that was thought to be just (Erasmus, like the Popes, was never an absolute pacifist and believed in holy war against the infidel; see Barlett 2013, 249).[4] As Erasmus argues, men only see the gains of war and not its cost and so enthusiastically support conflict when they would be better served in their lifetimes, and in later memory, cultivating the arts of peace.

In many ways, Erasmus's words were too pithy and witty for their own good. The English soldier-poet, George Gascoigne (1534-5?-1577), adopted the Latin phrase for a long poem on the nature of the soldier. Unlike Erasmus, however, Gascoigne was not interested in stopping war between Christian states and saving military action

[3] On Julius II and Leo X see the entries in Kelly and Walsh 2015.

[4] On Erasmus and war, see Dallmayr 2006.

for anti-Islamic crusades – which Erasmus did support. His long poem was written after he had served with Arthur, Lord Grey de Wilton (1536-1593) in the Netherlands (1572-1574).[5] Gascoigne turns Erasmus's argument around through his own witty paradoxical application of the adage: if war is sweet to those who know nothing about it then they should not get involved in or write about warfare but leave it to those who do know what they are doing, i.e., the professionals. In Gascoigne's hands Erasmus's argument against war becomes one in favour of a trained military force taking responsibility for organised violence.

The poem opens:

> To write of Warre and wote not what it is,
> Nor ever yet could march where War was made,
> May well be thought a worke begonne amis,
> A rash attempt, in woorthlesse verse to wade,
> To tell the triall, knowing not the trade:
> Yet such a vaine even nowe doth feede my Muse,
> That in this theame I must some labor use.
> (Gascoigne 2000, 1.7)

Gascoigne uses his long poem – just under 1500 lines – to argue that war, however brutal it might be, has its place in the divinely overseen universe and war is the legitimate instrument of God's will when all other avenues have been exhausted:

> Then what is warre? define it right at last,
> And let vs set all olde sayde sawes aside,
> Let Poets lie, let Painters faigne as fast,
> Astronomers let marke how starres do glide,
> And let these Travellers tell wonders wide:
> But let vs tell by trustie proufe of truth,
> What thing is warre which raiseth all this ruth.
>
> And for my parte my fansie for to wright,
> I say that warre is even the scourge of God,
> Tormenting such as dwell in princelie plight,

[5] On Gascoigne's life see the *ODNB* entry by G. W. Pigman III; on Arthur, fourteenth baron Grey of Wilton see the *ODNB* entry by Julian Lock.

> Yet not regarde the reaching of his rodde,
> Whose deedes and dueties often times are odde,
> Who raunge at randon jesting at the just,
> As though they raignde to do even what they lust.
>
> Whome neyther plague can pull into remorse,
> Nor dearth can drawe to mende that is amisse,
> Within whose hearts no pitie findeth force,
> Nor right can rule to judge what reason is.
> Whome sicknesse salveth not, nor bale brings blisse:
> Yet can high Jove by waste of bloudie warre,
> Sende scholemaisters to teach them what they are.
> (71-91)

Accordingly, *Dulce Bellum Inexpertis*, can be read within the tradition of 'mirrors for princes' literature, instructing rulers how they should behave; or, more significantly, the tradition of mirrors for magistrates, whereby appointed justices and officials – here, soldiers – can teach princes how they should behave and punish them if they transgress or fail to live up to the agreed standards (for a recent discussion, see Archer and Hadfield 2016). In making his case Gascoigne would seem to be asserting the rights of the soldier to make informed decisions and not simply casting the military as the stern arm of the secular or religious authorities. The concluding metaphor of soldiers as schoolmasters sent by Jove to mete out justice would seem to be a witty – and paradoxical – inversion of the Erasmian tradition in which learning and scholarship demonstrate that there is rarely a purpose to war and that the military need to be controlled by the scholars. While Erasmus would have supported Clemenceau's famous statement that 'War is too serious a matter to leave to soldiers', Gascoigne argues the contrary case, that war is too serious a matter to leave to all those intellectuals, painters, poets and travellers, who thought that they knew about it – but did not (see de Meneses 1998). C.S. Lewis once argued that "rhetoric is the greatest barrier between us and our ancestors", making a plausible enough case (qtd in Miller 2004, 27). However, we might also argue, perhaps even more persuasively, that it is really a faith in war that divides us. Roger Manning has demonstrated that war dominated life in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, "ordained by

Divine Providence because of man's sinfulness". Not only were kings who were successful in battle more highly regarded than those who worked for peace, but war was often a more powerful instrument than monarchy and it was common practice "to settle disputes between monarchs and republics by resort to arms" (2020, 134-5). We may well admire the wit of Erasmus but Gascoigne's paradoxical thinking is surely the more authentic voice of early modern Europe, anticipating Sir Philip Sidney's figure of the soldier-poet (see below).

While Gascoigne was developing his soldier-poet persona the generations of the Digges family were also outlining their thinking about the arts of war and military matters. Although there has been a reasonable amount of work on the Digges family, they are still relatively under-known and their significance not fully appreciated, in part because their intellectual achievements seem miscellaneous to us today. To start with the most celebrated example, Shakespeare clearly knew a number of the Digges' family works, making use of their thoughts on tactics and strategy in *Henry V* and *Coriolanus*, and some have argued that it was a Digges' connection to the Virginia Company that helped Shakespeare get hold of the Strachey letter for *The Tempest*. Perhaps we should not be surprised as there are clear biographical links: Thomas Digges' widow married Thomas Russell, an overseer of Shakespeare's will, and the younger Leonard Digges wrote commendatory verses prefacing the First Folio.[6]

The Digges were an affluent gentry family living in the south – mainly the south-east – of England who collectively wrote a number of important works on mathematics, geometry, astronomy, astrology, Latin poetry and military strategy. Leonard Digges (c.1515-1559) was the grandfather of this intriguing dynasty of gentry intellectuals. He oversaw the defences of the south Kent coast during Henry VII's reign, was nearly executed for his part in Wyatt's Rebellion (1554), wrote a prognostication that contained a great deal of information about astronomy and mathematics. He was especially interested in artillery and ballistics. After his death his son Thomas (c.1546-1595), who clearly shared his father's interests, produced a number of works based on his father's manuscripts, which included more work on mathematics and geometry and the treatise, *Stratioticos* (1579), which attempts to

[6] See Jorgensen 1953, Freehafer 1970, and Hadfield 2020.

apply the science of geometry to the art of war, the first two books being Leonard's work, the last two, by Thomas. Thomas's knowledge saw him appointed as the muster master for Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester in the mid-1580s, although his drive to root out corruption in the office brought him into conflict with the professional soldiers. Thomas had two sons, Leonard (1588-1635), a scholar of languages and poetry, who had a particular interest in Spanish literature, and Dudley (1582/3-1639), who was more intimately concerned with his father's military interests. Dudley was an ambassador to Russia, was prominent in the East India and Virginia Companies, and in 1604 produced another family treatise on war, *Foure Paradoxes, or Politique Discourses, Concerning Militarie Discipline*.[7] The first two of these paradoxes were written by Dudley's father, Thomas, and concerned the nature of warfare; the last two, written by Dudley, were a spirited defence of the military profession, very much in the vein of Gascoigne's poem, the fourth paradox situated within the tradition of 'just war' thought through the use of a quotation from Lucan's *Pharsalia*.[8]

In obvious ways *Foure Paradoxes* was a development of a stall set out in the earlier treatise, *Stratioticos*. In the 'Preface to the Reader' to that work Thomas argues that the fruits of his learning leads in one direction:

> The whole course of these histories with the rising and falling also of the *Assirian*, *Persian*, and *Macedonian Monarchies*, did plainely demonstrate unto mee, that the well and evill of this Militarie Discipline among all natural causes was the greatest, or rather the onely occasion, of the advancing, establishing, or raising and defacing of all *Monarchies*, *Empires*, *Kingdomes*, & *Common Weales*. (Digges 1579, A3*v*-A4*r*)

The way to secure peace is to understand the nature of war, so that one can never be complacent: "our Nation in thys happy peace maye not rest altogether carlesse of Warres" (ibid., A1*v*). Accordingly,

[7] For further details see Ciambella 2022.

[8] For biographical details see the *ODNB* entries: 'Digges, Leonard (c.1515-c.1559')' by Stephen Johnston; 'Digges, Thomas (c.1546-1595' by Stephen Johnston; 'Digges, Sir Dudley (1582/3-1639)' by Sean Kelsey; 'Digges, Leonard (1588-1635)' by Sidney Lee, revised Elizabeth Haresnape; on the Lucan quotation see Ciambella 2022, 170.

Stratioticos, a learned and innovative treatise on algebra, shows how the art of numbers is a branch of learning that a soldier must master, especially those in positions of power and authority, from the muster master in charge of supplies to the general overseeing strategy, and, in particular, the key figure of the master of ordinance, responsible for artillery, who needs to be properly learned in the science of mathematics.

Four Paradoxes is a natural development of this earlier family treatise, Dudley supplementing his father's ideas just as Thomas had expanded those of his father, Leonard, Dudley's grandfather. Together these works served to establish the Digges family as among the most significant thinkers on science and warfare in sixteenth-century England, adept strategists able to combine the new with the old, and to show how important it was to think through the paradox, that the best way to secure the peace was to understand how to win the war. Dudley laments the lack of material on warfare produced in England early in James' reign, in what looks like an assault on James' self-styled representation as the 'Rex Pacificus', the heir of Augustus, and support for the more militaristic policy of his son, Prince Henry and his circle.[9] As Fulke Greville was to do a few years later (1610-1614), Dudley cites Sir Philip Sidney as his ideal, lamenting that his predecessor used his "much better witte" to praise poetry when he would have best served his nation by producing an "Apologie for Souldiers" (Digges 1604, 74).[10] In doing so Dudley may well be recalling that Sir Philip began his treatise on poetry with a discussion of John Pietro Pugliano, the stable master at the court of Emperor Maximillian II, reflecting on horsemanship and soldiering: "He said soldiers were the noblest estate of mankind, and horsemen the noblest of soldiers" (Sidney 2022, 81). Just as the arts of peace and war are intimately intertwined, so are discussions of literature and warfare.

[9] The most extensive study of James as 'Rex Pacificus' is Patterson 1998. It is also worth noting that Charles I's combative approach to politics and diplomacy has earned him the title of 'Rex Bellicosus': see Young 1997, 17. I owe this reference to Fabio Ciambella.

[10] Greville celebrates Sidney as the ideal Protestant courtier/soldier in *The Life of the Renowned Sir Philip Sidney* (1651).

The first two Paradoxes by Thomas Digges are robust defences of the military profession, arguing that soldiers need to be supported by rulers. Paradox One, 'That no prince, or state doth gain, or save by giving too small entertainment unto soldiers, officers, or commanders martial', is only a paradox if the reader thinks that money spent on defence and warfare is wasted and needs to be persuaded otherwise. The Second Paradox argues that the ancient Greeks and Romans were far more sophisticated and adept at warfare than their modern English counterparts, and, so military spending needs to be increased in order to preserve the honour of the modern nation, hardly an unexpected conclusion and only a paradox if you assume that the moderns are better at everything than the ancients (see Ciambella 2022, 76 and 113).

It can also be said that the Third Paradox, "That the sometimes neglected profession deserves much commendation, and best becomes a Gentleman, that desires to live virtuously, or die Honourably", is only really a paradox if you think in an Erasmian way and are hostile to the defence of warfare – perhaps that is the point and maybe Erasmus, in Dudley's eyes, had started to dominate a complacent England (there is surely an element of special pleading here as the Treaty of Mellifont, proclaiming victory over the Catholic forces in Ireland was only a year old; see Silke 2000). Dudley, who, unlike his father, has an idealistic vision of warfare and the military profession, fulminates against mercenaries, as is appropriate given his high sense of the military calling (Digges 1604, 87).[11] He berates gentlemen for the vice of idleness and excoriates the vanity of fashion and what he sees as the dangerous notion that a man is worth no more than the clothes he wears. He condemns "bawdiehouse captains" and "lehouse soldiers", because in the end true values dictate that he "cannot chuse but attribute great honour to the warre, that is of power to make both old and young so honourable" (87). Dudley continues

[11] Thomas, unlike Dudley, had actually served in the army, acting as muster-master and trench-master in the earl of Leicester's campaign in the Low Countries in 1585, which might account for his more disillusioned evaluation of the army. I owe this point to Fabio Ciambella.

> The benefit of power, skill and practice in the warre is such that by it the poore have growne rich, the weake strong, and those that were reputed vile have got an honourable reputation, since all sorts of men are either through feare earnest or through love willing to entertaine friendly amitie with those especially that are renowned for it, since last a Commonwealth through it may growe from small beginnings to unlookt for height as that of *Rome* . . . by daring and doing rose from nothing to be Masters of the world. (91)

Warfare has become a universal panacea, curing all social ills, raising the poor upwards towards riches, fostering friendship, and encouraging laudable national pride and ambition.

The fourth paradox is more radical and provocative still, engaging with the long tradition of 'just war' theory.[12] It makes the case "That warre [is] sometimes lesse hurtfull, and more to be wisht in aswell governed State than peace" (Digges 1604, 96). Dudley uses the conflict between the Romans and the Volsces in the fifth century BCE to make his case, what we might call, following Margareta de Grazia (2007), *Coriolanus* without Coriolanus. Here, in a much clearer form than we witness in Shakespeare's play, *Coriolanus*, written three years later, we learn that war is the means of securing domestic peace and uniting factions. [13] It is the Senate's plan that war with the Volsces could well be a cure for domestic strife, a logical solution that is then undermined by politicians who have no understanding of how states should operate:

> Then they resolved on a warre with the Volsces to ease their City of that dearth, by diminishing their number, and appease those tumultuous broyles, by drawing poore with rich, and the meane sort with the Nobilitie, into one campe, one service, and one selfesame daunger: sure meanes to procure sure love and quietnesse in a contentious Commonwealth, as that of Rome was at that time. (104-5)

There is a strange ambiguity here in 'their number', as the reader cannot be sure whether Dudley means the Romans or the Volsces who are to be reduced, or, possibly, both warring factions. Yet, however the passage is read the implication is clearly drawn: war

[12] On 'just war' theory see Russell 1977 and Pugliatti 2010.

[13] For analysis see Hadfield 2004, 170-7.

works to unite internal factions and so unify the city, state or nation that wages war, obliterating, at least temporarily, internal divisions between classes and factions. Dudley draws on the familiar image of the body politic treated by a skillful doctor to counter the unwelcome interference and opposition to war of the tribunes Brutus and Sicinius, for whom Dudley has particular contempt:

> Yet even then there wanted not home tarrying housdoues, two peacebred tribanes Sicimus and Brutus, hindred that resolution calling it crueltie, and it may be some now will condemne this course, as changing for the worse: some that wil much mislike a body breaking-out should take receipts of quick-silver or mercurie, that may endanger life: yet they cannot but knowe even those poysons outwardly applied are sovereigne medicines to purge and clense, and therefore having a good Physition, I must professe, I thinke it much better to take yeerely Physicke, when the signe is good and circumstaances are correspondent, that may worke with some litle trouble, our health and safetie, than through sordide sparing, or cowardly feare of paine, to omitte happy opportunities of remedy, & so suffer our bodies perhaps crasie alreadie, so to sincke that death followes or at least some grievious sickenesse, asking farre deeper charge, bringing farre greater torment, especially since the sickenesse of a state, were it as great as a palsie may by a skilfull Physition be purged and evacuated at an issue in some remote part. (105)

War is elaborately cast here in the famous image of the *pharmakon*, a poison that also acts as a cure if applied properly (Cohen 1994, 79). To the uninitiated the cure seems dangerous and foolhardy but those with proper knowledge understand that it is, paradoxically, the best means of securing health. There will be casualties, of course, collateral damage, but a healthy society needs to purge itself through warfare. If the state does not flush away harmful elements, like a body it will grow unhealthy, plagued by alehouse soldiers and bawdyhouse captains, as well as the ludicrously fashionable courtiers who care more about their clothes than the iron discipline of war, which guarantees that a nation will flourish. The well-run and properly ordered society will not shrink from taking its required nasty medicine, understanding the paradox that what looks bitter or evil is, in fact, good. Dudley draws attention to the

paradoxical language, exhorting his readers to avoid the prospect of "sordide sparing" alongside the more obvious "cowardly fear of pain". Short to medium-term suffering will ward off catastrophic long-term agony.

There is a satisfying coherence to Dudley's account, whereby the senate acts to alleviate the problems caused by scarcity at home and develops a plausible and persuasive solution, to renew a war. In Shakespeare's play, we are never clear how the war and the food riots are related, nor, really how Coriolanus's actions fit in, so violent and irrational is his hatred of the people, and so ingrained Roman military culture in his psyche, he can only see the disturbance at home in terms of the war that it impedes (see Jorgensen 1973, 292-313). Shakespeare's play is built on paradoxes, something he may have taken from Dudley's account: Dudley's analysis of the war between the Romans and the Volsces uses that conflict to illustrate the paradox that war must be embraced as its absence leads to more problems than its repeated presence in peoples' lives, yearly physic being the ideal. Put another way, Shakespeare's play is replete with dramatic paradoxes, while Dudley's treatise is centred on a specific paradox. Behind talk of peace Dudley sees weakness, opportunism, double-dealing and hypocrisy. Either quarrels will never go away until one side has emerged victorious, like the global conflict between Christians and Ottomans, or they take place

> between Christans, with such inveterate malice and irreconcileable wrongs for titles so intricate, as in mans witte is to be feared will never be appeased, satisfied, decided, seeing that many of the Princes of this world, though they talk of peace and amitie to winne time, til their projectes come to full ripenesse, serving their turnes with that sweete name which they know is likely to blindfolde ease-affecting people, yet in their hearts desire nothing lesse: when as some of them weakened with the violent courses of their hereditary ambition, that can never be tamed, seeke peace as a breathing only to recover strength: others warely repecting our encreased greatnesse, and their owne unsetled state make faire shewes now, but are like enough here after upon aduantage to prove false hearted: others having gotten much wealth, gayned much reputation, encreased their power, and maintayned their libertie by the sworde, will never endure the losse of these by hearkning to

> peace, since last there never wanted coulorable pretences to breake those truces. (109-10)

Advocates of peace are actually endangering long-term peace and security. Paradoxically, it is those who recognise, in Chris Hedges' words (2002), that war is a force that gives us meaning, who truly understand that preparation for war is the best way to maintain the peace . Stable states need enemies, as, according to Dudley, the avoidance of war at all costs is the greatest danger a society can face.

How should we read *Four Paradoxes*? Perhaps we need to acknowledge that it is an interesting and cleverly provocative argument, as befits a work of paradox, but probably not a subtle or profoundly challenging work of analysis, its argument traditional, familiar and deeply ingrained in the psyche of a continent that believed that disputes could and should be settled by violence and military conflict. The Digges family are surely most significant because of their introduction of advanced mathematical principles to a wide audience in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, not because they believed that war was a useful social and political tool. The notion that preparing for war is the best way to keep the peace is a familiar Renaissance paradox to be read alongside such apparent truths as women are only constant in their inconstancy, only the wise are rich, and that misery is true happiness (see Malloch 1956 and Vickers 1968). What we might want to note is that, in a time when war was the most obvious means of resolving quarrels between states, Dudley's paradox, and its implied criticism of *Dulce Bellum Inexpertis*, was probably more readily accepted by readers than Erasmus's.

Works Cited

Archer, Harriet, and Andrew Hadfield, eds. 2016. A Mirror for Magistrates *in Context: Literature, History, and Politics in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bartlett, Kenneth R. 2013. *A Short History of the Italian Renaissance*. Toronto: The University of Toronto Press.

Ciambella, Fabio. 2022. *War Discourse in Four Paradoxes: the Case of Thomas Scott (1602) and the Digges (1604)*". Verona: Skenè. Texts and Studies.

Colie, Rosalie. 1996. *Paradoxia Epidemica: the Renaissance Tradition of Paradox*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Cohen David. 1994. "Classical Rhetoric and Modern Theories of Discourse", in *Persuasion: Greek Rhetoric in Action*, edited by Ian Worthington, 69-82. London: Routledge.

Dallmayr, Fred R. 2006. "A War Against the Turks? Erasmus on War and Peace". *Asian Journal of Social Science* 34 (1): 67-85.

De Grazia, Margareta. 2007. '*Hamlet' Without Hamlet.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

de Meneses, Filipe Ribeiro. 1998. "Too Serious a Matter to Be Left to the Generals? Parliament and the Army in Wartime Portugal 1914-18". *Journal of Contemporary History* 33: 85-96.

Digges, Dudley, and Thomas Digges. 1604. *Four Paradoxes, or Politique Discourses Concerning Militarie Discipline.* London: H. Lownes.

Digges, Thomas. 1579. *An Arithmeticall Warlike Treatise Named Stratioticos.* London: Richard Field.

Erasmus, Desiderius. 2023. *Erasmus in English, 1523-1584*, edited by Alex Davis, Gordon Kendal, and Neil Rhodes, 2 vols. Oxford: MHRA.

—1534. *Bellum Erasmi: Translated into Englyshe.* London: Thomas Berthelet.

Freehafer, John. 1970. "Leonard Digges, Ben Jonson, and the Beginning of Shakespeare Idolatry". *Shakespeare Quarterly* 21 (1): 63-75.

Gascoigne, George. 2000. *Dulce Bellum Inexpertis* in *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres*, edited by G. W. Pigman III. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Geraldine, Mary. 1964. "Erasmus and the Tradition of Paradox". *Studies in Philology* 61: 41-4.

Hadfield, Andrew. 2020. "Shakespeare and The Digges Brothers", *Reformation* 25: 2-17.

— 2004. *Shakespeare and Renaissance Politics.* London: Bloomsbury.

Hale, J. R. 1985. *War and Society in Renaissance Europe, 1450-1620.* London: Fontana.

Hedges, Chris. 2002. *War Is a Force that Gives Us Meaning*. New York: Public Affairs.

Jorgensen, Paul A. 1973. *Shakespeare's Military World.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

— 1953. "Shakespeare's Use of War and Peace". *Huntington Library Quarterly* 16 (4): 319-52.

Kelly, J. N. D. and Walsh, Michael. 2015. *A Dictionary of Popes.* 3rd ed.: Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Knight Miller, Henry. 1956. "The Paradoxical Encomium with Special Reference to its Vogue in England, 1600–1800". *Modern Philology* 53: 145-78.

Malloch, A.E. 1956. "The Techniques and Function of the Renaissance Paradox". *Studies in Philology* 53 (2): 191-203.

Manning, Roger. 2020. "Explanations and Justifications of War in the British Kingdoms in the Seventeenth Century". *Quidditas* 41: 134-81.

Miller, Susan. 2004. *Rescuing the Subject: a Critical Introduction to Rhetoric and the Writer*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.

Mynors, R. A. B., ed. 1989. *The Collected Works of Erasmus*, vol. 32. Toronto: Toronto University Press.

Patterson, W. B. 1998. *James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pugliatti, Paola. 2010. *Shakespeare and the Just War Tradition*. London: Rutledge.

Russell, Frederick H. 1977. *The Just War in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Silke, J. J. 2000. *Kinsale: the Spanish Intervention in Ireland at the End of the Elizabethan Wars*. Dublin: Four Courts.

Sidney, Sir Philip. 2002. *An Apology for Poetry (Or, The Defence of Poetry)*, edited by Geoffrey Shepherd, revised by R. W. Maslen. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Vickers, Brian. 1968. "*King Lear* and Renaissance Paradoxes". *Modern Language Review* 63 (2): 305-14.

Young, Michael B. 1997. *Charles I*. London: Macmillan.