

Kyd and Marlowe's Revolution: from Surrey's *Aeneid* to Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*

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Abstract. The Early New English iambic pentameter was re-created by Wyatt and Surrey in the first half of the 16th c. Surrey introduced blank iambic pentameter into English poetry, and the first English tragedy, *Gorboduc*, was written in this versification form. Early New English playwrights were feeling their way into the iambic meter, and wrote “by the foot”: the mean stressing on even syllables reached 90 percent, while on the odd syllables it fell to 5 percent. The authors of first new English tragedies were members of the parliament or the gentlemen of the City Inns, and they wrote for the aristocratic audience and the Court. Their subject matter and their characters matched the verse form: they were stiff and stilted.

Marlowe and Kyd represented a new generation of playwrights who wrote for the commercial stage patronized by commoners. Marlowe and Kyd created different sets of plots and personages and a different versification style. Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* and Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* had a powerful impact on generations of English playwrights, from Shakespeare to Shirley. The particulars of the Earlier New English versification style compared to later Elizabethan dramaturgy are discussed in the presentation.

Key words: English iambic pentameter, Surrey, Kyd, Marlowe, versification style

1. About Surrey's *Aeneid*

English iambic pentameter has an almost seven hundred years' history. Discovered, as it is conventional to think, by Geoffrey Chaucer in the 14th c., it fell into disarray in the next century, and was rediscovered in 1520–40s by Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard Earl of Surrey. Surrey invented blank iambic pentameter that was to play an important role in the development of Renaissance English drama. He used unrhymed decasyllabic verse for his translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*, Books 2 and 4 (1541–1545). In his translation Surrey relied on two texts, Virgil's *Aeneid* written in the classical dactylic hexameter and its Italian translation (1535) done in the syllabic mode, both

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unrhymed. Surrey's versification in *The Aeneid* was sometimes interpreted as syllabic (Hardison 1989: 127). However, the poet's goal must have been iambic verse; that is why he rewrote Wyatt's earlier translation of Petrarch's sonnet *Amor, che nel pensier mio vive e regna* converting it into regular iamb. Since the time of Surrey's *Aeneid*, blank iambic pentameter began to be associated with historical and heroic subjects. In regular iambic pentameter there is a sizeable difference between the mean stressing on *even* (metrically strong, S) and *odd* (metrically weak, W) syllabic positions of the metrical scheme. In *The Aeneid* this difference is striking, and not only in the smoother version published in the Tottel's collection of 1557, but also in the rougher Hargrave Manuscript 205 of Book 4 (Padelford 1928: 142–143). In Book 2 the mean stressing of *even* syllables is 74.3 percent more frequent than of *odd* syllables. This is a sizeable difference (cf. Table 1).

However, it is not just the stress profile of the text that makes it iambic, but also the number of lines containing strings of “deviating” syllables that belong to polysyllabic words. Many words in *The Aeneid* seem to a modern reader to be placed on “wrong” syllabic positions of the iambic line. Disyllabic words stressed in modern English on the first syllable (*rattling*, *goddess* or *follow*) occur on positions *odd-even*, as in *The din resounded, with rattling of armes* (383). However, there was a developed system of secondary stresses in late Middle English and Early Modern English (Liddell 1910; Luick 1921; Dobson 1968: 445 ff.; Kökeritz 1974: 332–339; Barber 2004; cf. Minkova 2005). Liddell wrote: “The suffixes *-dom*, *-nesse*, *-esse*, *-este*, *-hed*, *-had*, *-ynge* (*-ing*), *-shipe* have secondary stress in M.E.” (Liddell 1910: LXXXVI). The system of secondary stresses, especially in slow and ceremonial discourse, “seems to have remained in educated speech until 1600” (Dobson 1968: 445). Dobson continues: “The pattern of a single stress only gradually replaced double stressing even in educated speech during the seventeenth century.” Variable or double stressing occurred in words of French origin, probably also in borrowed French words with English suffixes (*trembling*), Anglo-Saxon words with French suffixes (*goddesse*), and, less likely, in simple Anglo-Saxon words ending in a heavy syllable, e.g., *-owe* (*follow*, *furrow*).

Even at a superficial glance, most of Surrey's lines are very much iambic. This is how *The Aeneid*, Book 2 begins:

They whisted all, with fixed face attent,
When Prince Aeneas from the royal seat
Thus gan to speak: “O Queene! It is thy wil
I should renew a woe cannot be told,
How that the Greekes did spoil and overthrow

The Phrygian wealth and wailful realm of Troy...”

(Surrey, *The Aeneid*, Book 2, lines 1–6)

However, the Italian translation of *The Aeneid* was done in the syllabic mode, and Surrey might have left some of its vestiges of his English translation. Here are two lines that may be interpreted as syllabic¹:

x x X x X x X x x X

And **my wife shall follow far of** my stepes (940)

W S W S W S W S W S

x X X x X x x x X X

The frayd **mothers, wandring** through **the wide** house (630)

W S W S W S W S W S

The suffix *-ing* in *wandring* is a heavy syllable, and it might have had some degree of stress, at least in verse; the verb *follow* also ends in a heavy syllable, a diphthong. But even if the two lines are syllabic verse, they are relative exceptions. Many word in *The Aeneid* had variable places of stress as shown by the metrical positions they occupy. Surrey regularly placed French borrowings *altar*, *citee* and *palace* either on positions *even-odd* (SW) or on *odd-even* (WS). The word *altar* appeared four times on positions *even-odd* and five times on *odd-even*. This may indicate that *altar* had a variable place of stress. Compare: *Their **altares** eke are left both wast and voyd* (450) and *At the **altar** him trembling gan to draw* (716). Anglo-Saxon and hybrid words with heavy suffixes *-less*, *-ful*, *-hood* and *-ship*, the French *-esse* and the English *-nesse* (*manhood*, *hateful*, *giltless*, *goddesse*) all occurred both on positions SW and WS where they might have had some stress on the second syllable; cf.: *Disclosing her in forme a **goddesse** like* (777) and *Worship was done to Ceres the **goddesse*** (944). Barber, contrary to Minkova, thinks that rhyming may indicate stressing (Barber 2004: 133): Shakespeare rhymed *nye* with *immediately* and John Donne rhymed *I* with *childishly*. The pronoun *I* was pronounced then as it is today, so the suffix *-ly* must have, at some point, contained a diphthong. And we know that the great vowels shift occurred only in stressed syllables.

¹ Signs X and x indicate actual stressed and unstressed syllables in iambic lines, while W and S designate weak (usually unstressed) and strong (usually stressed) syllabic positions of the iambic metrical scheme.

2. About *Gorboduc*, *Jocasta* and *The Misfortunes of Arthur*

Norton and Sackville's *Gorboduc* (1561), Gascoigne and Kinwelmarsh's *Jocasta* (1566) and Hughes' (probably with collaborators) *The Misfortunes of Arthur* (1587) were composed for a courtly audience. We shall compare them with three tragedies of late 1580s written for the popular stage: Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* and Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, Parts 1 and 2. The three latter plays signalled the remarkable period of Renaissance English Drama that flourished during the Elizabethan, Jacobean and Caroline periods. *The Misfortunes of Arthur* was written simultaneously with *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Tamburlaine*, but what a world of difference! Looking at Hughes' play we can better appreciate Kyd and Marlowe's revolution.

***Gorboduc*.** Norton and Sackville following the example of Surrey's *Aeneid* composed *Gorboduc* in blank iambic pentameter: the plot was both "historical" and "heroic". The significance of *Gorboduc* cannot be overestimated (see Cunliffe 1912; Wilson and Hunter 1990). Later poets began to use iambic pentameter in plays of all genres. Both Norton and Sackville were university graduates and "gentlemen of the Inner Temple²"; therefore *Gorboduc* was first performed by the "gentlemen of the Inner Temple" during the Christmas festivities of 1561 and then again before Queen Elizabeth in January 1562. In the undated first quarto (probably issued in 1571) the authors acknowledged that Norton wrote the first three acts and Sackville – the final two. The playwrights followed the account of King Gorboduc from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regnum Britanniae* (1136) and Grafton's *Chronicle* (1556). *Gorboduc* was the first English Senecan tragedy, the direction that would be followed by a number of later Elizabethan, Jacobean and Caroline playwrights. It pioneered the whole trend that produced tragedies of murders and mutilations, madness and revenge, best known from Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* and Peele and Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*. The motifs were employed in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, and appeared as late as 1641 in Shirley's *The Cardinal*. Senecan tragedy is a corpus of first century A.D. dramas of which eight belong to the Roman author Lucius Annaeus Seneca the Younger. Rediscovered by Italian humanists in the mid-16th century, Senecan tragedies became models for the revival of tragedy on the Renaissance stage in France and England. The

² The Honourable Society of the Inner Temple, commonly known as Inner Temple, is one of the four Inns of Court (professional associations for barristers and judges) in London. To practice as a barrister, an individual must belong to one of these Inns. The Inner Temple is located in the wider Temple area of the capital, near the Royal Courts of Justice and within the City of London.

Elizabethan playwrights found Seneca's bloodthirsty themes appealing to the English audience that still enjoyed bear baiting. *Gorboduc* is the first English tragedy whose plot includes murders and revenge. Following the Senecan tradition, all murders in *Gorboduc* are committed behind the scene and reported by messengers. In later plays, murders began to occur on stage. Another feature of a Senecan tragedy was a supernatural element, a ghost; a ghost appeared in Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* and in Hughes' *The Misfortunes of Arthur*.

The authors made their play a warning to the Queen: what evils may ensue without a provision for a successor. King *Gorboduc* decides to divide his realm in his lifetime between his two sons. The sons fell into dissent; the elder son was enraged by not getting the whole kingdom; the suspicious younger brother killed the elder. The queen murdered the younger son for revenge. The appalled people rose in rebellion and slew the king and queen. The nobility destroyed the rebels, but the succession of the crown was uncertain, and a devastating civil war broke out.

The tragedy *Jocasta* (1566) was also divided between co-authors: the first and fourth acts were composed by Francis Kinwelmershe, the second, third and fifth by George Gascoigne. The tragedy is written blank iambic pentameter but contains more features of syllabic verse than *The Aeneid*. As in *Gorboduc*, the moving agent of the plot is the rivalry between two royal brothers. The conflict reflected the doom that had cursed the whole family: as we know from the Greek original by Euripides, the father of the princes, King Oedipus, was also their brother; he married, unknowingly, his own mother, Queen Jocasta. The authors had not gone directly to Euripides but to an Italian adaptation by Lodovico Dolce *Giocasta* (1541). *Jocasta* is a translation of *Giocasta*, Hughes' *The Misfortunes of Arthur* was composed twenty years after *Jocasta*, in 1587 (probably with collaborators), and performed before Queen Elizabeth in February 1588. The play is based on an Arthurian legend, the story of Mordred's treachery and King Arthur's death as told in Geoffrey Monmouth's *Historia Regnum Britanniae*. Cunliffe suggested that the play incorporates many translations of Seneca. It has a chorus, a ghost and a royal father and son simultaneously slaughtering each other. All tragic actions occur offstage, and a chorus, or a messenger announce the events.

3. About Kyd and Marlowe³

Thomas Kyd and Christopher Marlowe, in contrast to the plays written by the “gentlemen of the Inns,” were commoners who wrote for the popular stage. Their plays were performed by professional troupes of actors and watched by wide audiences. Admittance cost money, and Elizabethan theatres became flourishing businesses.

Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593), a great Early Elizabethan tragedian, was born to a shoemaker. He attended a good school and went to the Cambridge University. A letter to the Cambridge authorities from the Privy Council gave rise to speculations that Marlowe not only began writing poems and plays in college, but he also simultaneously worked as a secret agent of the intelligence service. During a provoked “reckoning” brawl a certain Ingram Frizer rumoured to be a government agent stabbed Marlowe to death. Marlowe was buried in an unmarked grave. He was only 29 years old.

Tamburlaine The Great, Parts 1 and 2 were two out of seven Marlowe’s plays. Both parts of *Tamburlaine* were entered into the Stationer’s Register on August 14, 1590 as “two comical discourses,” and the printer Richard Jones published them together in a single *octavo* later the same year. *Tamburlaine’s* protagonist is the conqueror Timur who rose from shepherd to warrior. The play was, as we shall see, very innovative. The public responded to 1 *Tamburlaine* with enthusiasm, so Marlowe wrote a sequel, Part 2. The tragedy exemplified and created many typical features of Elizabethan high drama: grandiloquent imagery, hyperbolic expression and a strong, almost inhuman character consumed by an overwhelming passion for power. Christopher Marlowe’s plays were so successful thanks in part to the imposing stage presence of the tragic actor Edward Alleyn. Alleyn, reportedly, was unusually tall for the time, he probably had a booming voice, and the role of *Tamburlaine* was written for him. Marlowe’s plays became the foundation for the repertoire of his theatre company, the Admiral’s Men. Marlowe was much admired by other playwrights. Within weeks of his death, George Peele remembered him as “Marley, the Muses’ darling”; Ben Jonson wrote of “Marlowe’s mighty line.” Shakespeare paid a special tribute to Marlowe: in *As You Like It* he quotes a line from Marlowe’s poem *Hero and Leander* (*Dead Shepherd, now I find thy saw of might, “Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?”*). Shakespeare was strongly influenced by Marlowe, as can be seen in his reuse of Marlowe’s themes in *Antony and Cleopatra* (*Dido Queen of Carthage*), *The Merchant of Venice* (*The Jew of Malta*)

³ See Tarlinskaja 1987.

and *Richard II* (*Edward II*). In later years *Tamburlaine* was derided for its bombastic tone and the larger-than-life protagonist. By the 1590s the hyperbolic mode of *Tamburlaine* had gone out of fashion, but the play was long regarded with respect and admiration.

Thomas Kyd (1558–1594) was another important playwright of Early Elizabethan epoch. He was well known in his time, but fell into obscurity in later years. In 1773 Thomas Hawkins, an early editor of the play *The Spanish Tragedie*, discovered that it belonged to Kyd. Later scholars shed more light on Kyd's life and work, but the opinion of him as a poet was frequently unfavourable. Philip Edwards (1966: 6) called him “naïve,” “something of a plodder.” Edwards finds it amazing that “...a minor writer, in a strange inspiration, shapes the future by producing something quite new.” Kyd's prosody was accused of “metrical monotony” “manipulated with a cold correctness” (Sidney L. Lee 1909) and then derided for an opposite fault of creating “limping feet” that “very seldom manage to limp poetically” (Vincent 2005). We shall see that Kyd was a prominent poet of the generation preceding Shakespeare.

Kyd was educated at an excellent school, but probably never went to a university. By the 1580s Kyd was already a notable playwright. In 1598 in his *Paladis Tamia* (p. 279) Francis Meres placed him among “our best for tragedy.” Heywood called him “famous Kyd,” and Dekker referred to him as “industrious” suggesting that Kyd had written numerous plays. Jonson mentions Kyd next to Christopher Marlowe. For a while Thomas Kyd shared lodgings with Marlowe. In May 1593 the Privy Council ordered the arrest of the authors of “divers lewd and mutinous libels” posted around London. Kyd was among those arrested. His lodgings were searched and a compromising document found. Under torture Kyd confessed that he had them “from C. Marley.” The torture broke his health and spirits; Thomas Kyd died in dire poverty in August 1594; he was only 35 years old.

The famous *Spanish Tragedy* was probably composed in the mid to late 1580s. The earliest surviving edition was printed in 1592, with the full title *The Spanish Tragedie, Containing the lamentable end of Don Horatio, and Bel-imperia: with the pittifull death of olde Hieronimo*. *The Spanish Tragedy* was the most popular play of Elizabethan theatre, innovative in plot construction and character development. It was the first tragedy of revenge where murders were committed in a “play-in-play” onstage. The plot is completely original. A young Spanish warrior, Horatio falls in love with a lady of the court Bel-Imperia who reciprocates. Her brother wants her to marry the King's son, and arranges Horatio's murder during his rendezvous with Bel-Imperia. The rest of the play is about Horatio's father, Hieronimo. Mad with grief, Hieronimo plots and executes revenge as multiple murders enacted in a play-in-play. The

elements of this plot, revenge of a father for his son's murder (or of a son for his father's murder), madness and murders in a play-in-play recur in many later tragedies. The two *Tamburlaines* and *The Spanish Tragedy* are generally considered the beginning of the great Elizabethan theatre. We shall see how *Tamburlaine's* versification contributed to Marlowe's grandiloquent style and tragic intonations, and what innovations belong to Kyd the poet. Let us compare stressing of *The Aeneid* and of three plays composed by the gentlemen of the Inn for the court to three popular plays created for commercial stage.

Jocasta is a translation from Italian that explains some particulars of its versification: even simple Anglo-Saxon words *daughter*, *mother*, *father*, and *sister* appear on positions *odd-even* in mid-phrase.

The two **brethren** (nay rather cruel foes)
 Antigone, my swete **daughter**, come forth;
 Ah swete **mother**, ah my beloued **mother**;
 O dear **daughter**, my most unhappie brethren;
 Ismene my unfortunate **sister**...
 (*Jocasta*, 1.1.194; 4.1, 179, 186, 190; 5.5.239)

These are signs of a syllabic mode.

Gorboduc is an original play, and much closer to what we associate with regular iambic pentameter, though a few lines in *Gorboduc* still remind us of *The Aeneid*, e.g., Sackville's *Our wives*, **children**, **kindred**, **ourselves**, and **all** (*Gorboduc*, 5.2.100); is this line syllabic, like Surrey's *The frayd mothers*, **wandering** through the wide house? The elevated style of tragedy might have required a deliberate recitation, thus giving weight to every syllable, so *wandering* and even *children* might still have required some stress on the second syllable. If they had only one stress, on the first syllable, their location on positions *odd-even* might indicate that the author was struggling with his language material, trying to "find his feet" (Groves, 2005) in the new verse form. Hughes, 25 years later, did not use disyllabic words *mother* or *children* on positions *odd-even* in midline.

4. Versification

4.1. Stressing in earlier decasyllabic verse (Tables 1a and 1b)

The stressing on *even* (S) positions in all pre-Marlowe and pre-Kyd plays is very high: the mean stressing is 86.5 percent in *The Aeneid*, 82.5 and 85.6 in *Gorboduc*, 87.1 and 82.8 in *Jocasta*, and 91.4 in *The Misfortunes of Arthur*; cf. with 1 *Tamburlaine* 75.7 and with *The Spanish Tragedy* 78.0.

Table 1a. Stressing in earlier decasyllabic verse (even syllabic positions)

Author & play	Even (S) syllabic positions					
	2	4	6	8	10	Mean
Surrey, <i>Aeneid</i>	90.0	90.0	80.5	74.6	95.2	86.1
Norton, <i>Gorbod.</i>	75.8	90.5	68.3	84.6	94.3	82.7
Sackville, <i>Gorbod.</i>	76.3	91.8	79.0	83.7	97.2	85.6
Kinwelme., <i>Jocasta</i>	82.9	90.4	83.2	83.8	95.0	87.1
Gascoigne, <i>Jocasta</i>	77.9	91.2	73.2	81.3	90.4	82.8
Hughes, <i>Arthur</i>	85.8	95.9	89.6	85.6	100	91.4
Kyd, <i>Sp. Trag.</i>	73.5	87.7	69.2	76.7	82.8	78.0
Marlowe, 1 <i>Tamb.</i>	70.2	86.9	66.3	79.7	75.3	75.7

Table 2b. Stressing in earlier decasyllabic verse (odd syllabic positions)

Author & play	Odd (W) syllabic positions					
	1	3	5	7	9	Mean
Surrey, <i>Aeneid</i>	20.0	10.9	13.6	10.0	4.7	11.8
Norton, <i>Gorbod.</i>	17.7	6.1	6.3	5.0	0.4	7.1
Sackville, <i>Gorbod.</i>	16.7	5.6	7.7	5.9	1.3	7.4
Kinwelme., <i>Jocasta</i>	15.0	5.8	6.0	4.2	1.7	6.5
Gascoigne, <i>Jocasta</i>	16.9	5.2	9.3	5.2	3.2	8.0
Hughes, <i>Arthur</i>	22.6	5.8	7.8	8.7	3.8	9.7
Kyd, <i>Sp. Trag.</i>	27.2	6.2	5.7	3.5	3.0	9.1
Marlowe, 1 <i>Tamb.</i>	24.6	3.9	4.4	3.1	1.1	9.4

The Misfortunes of Arthur occurred simultaneously with Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* and Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, but Hughes seems unaware of popular plays. The high stressing of *The Misfortunes of Arthur* was caused, as we shall see, by Hughes' foot-beating rhythm *ta-TA | ta-TA | ta-TA | ta-TA | ta-TA*, as in *Thine death | is all, | that East, | or West | can see* (1.4.12). The place of **the lowest stressing (a "dip") in midline** at first uncertainly fluctuated between

positions 8 (Surrey's *Aeneid*, Kinwelmarsh's *Jocasta*) and 6 (Norton and Sackville's *Gorboduc*), then finally settled on position 6 (Kyd's and Marlowe's plays): an Elizabethan stressing pattern. After 1600 the "dip" gradually moved back to position 8. See below some examples from *Gorboduc*:

From painful travails **of** the weary day
 Of mutual treason, **or** a just revenge
 To hide the mischief **of** their meaning there
 The rascal numbers **of** unskillful sort
 (*Gorboduc*, 1.1.2, 63; 2.1.22–23)

Our texts with the highest stressing, Kinwelmarsh's acts of *Jocasta* and Hughes' *The Misfortunes of Arthur* contain many *rhythmic-syntactic clichés*: lines with identical rhythm tend to be filled with identical syntactic patterns. Thus, fully stressed lines with the word boundary rhythm *ta-TA-ta | TA | ta-TA | ta-TA-ta | TA* are often filled with two attributive phrases, a subject and an object, bound by a verbal phrase, a predicate. Here are examples from *Jocasta*: *O lucklesse babe, begot in wofull houre; The gilted roofes embowde with curious worke; The shining day had runne his hastened course* (1.1.52, 230; 2.1.197). And examples from *The Misfortunes of Arthur*: *Let th'offsprings sinne exceede the former stock; And dreadfull doome, t'augment thy cursèd hap; When inward gifts are deckt with outward grace* (1.1.23; 1.4.6; 5.1.86). This is kind of versification that Kyd and Marlowe had come to reform.

Why is Kyd and Marlowe's mean stressing on S so much lower than in *Gorboduc*, *Jocasta* and *The Misfortunes of Arthur*? First, the early poets wrote "by the foot," following an iambic rhythm that crystallized into the iambic meter; the earliest New English authors had no tradition to lean on. And secondly, there are many grammatical inversions in all early texts, particularly in *The Aeneid* and *Jocasta*. Inversions cause grammatical monosyllables to be placed at the end of a phrase, sometimes far removed from the word with which they have a close syntactic link. Such monosyllables were stressed on S.

Stressing of the final, tenth syllable. The early poets so frequently placed a stressed syllable on position 10 that it never fell below 90 percent and sometimes rose to 100 percent: Surrey stressed syllable 10 in 95.2 percent of all lines, Sackville (*Gorboduc*) in 97.2 percent, Kinwelmarsh in his portion of *Jocasta* – in 95 percent, while in *The Misfortunes of Arthur* position 10 is stressed 100 percent of the lines. A huge change comes in *The Spanish Tragedy* and *1 Tamburlaine*. In Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* the tenth syllable is stressed in only 82.8 percent of the lines, and in Marlowe's play only in 75.3 percent, though Barber

(2004: 131) is inclined to think that a secondary stress on *-a* in Marlowe's *Asia, Persia* (*Tamburlaine*) was possible, though not in *pro-tes-ta-ti-ons* and *ab-jec-ti-on*. He also thinks that a secondary stress was likely on *-ly* in Shakespeare's *immediately* (*Midsummer Night's Dream*) and in Donne's *childishly* (*The Good-morrow*). I considered all these syllables unstressed. In that case, stressing of *Tamburlaine* is unique: position 8 is stressed more often than 10, so the stress profile resembles a "dipper" with its handle down low. The unstressed syllables on position 10 in the early iambs come from long polysyllabic words placed at the end of the line: *ser-vi-tude*, *li-ber-ty*, *ig-no-rant*, *barbarous*, *A-si-a* and *op-pres-si-on*. The frequency of unstressed syllables on position 10 in *Tamburlaine* Part 1 is 25 percent, a quarter of all lines. Both *Tamburlaines* have a "dip" on syllable 6, the consequence of an unstressed end of the line, because missing stresses tend to occur every other foot, thus, on positions 6 and 10, and sometimes on positions 2, 6 and 10. For example:

Shall draw the chariot **of** my em-pe-ress
 The only paragon of **Tamburlaine**;
 And speech more pleasant **than** sweet harmony
 Usumcasane **and** Teridamas
 But **that** he lives and **will** be conqueror
 (Marlowe, 1 *Tamburlaine*, 3.3.80, 119, 121; 2.5.52; 3.3.211)

The unstressed "tail" of the lines probably required a particular intonation of the tragic actors, contributing to the unique effect in Marlowe's early tragedies. The intonation added to Marlowe's famous "mighty line", the magniloquence his bombastic verse. Imagine a tragic actor booming out:

Emperor of A-si-a **and** Per-si-a,
 Great lord of Media **and** Ar-me-ni-a,
 Duke of Africa **and** Al-ba-ni-a,
 Mesopotamia **and** of Par-thi-a...
 He will, with **Tamburlaines** de-struc-ti-on,
 But **Tamburlaine** by ex-pe-di-ti-on
 (1 *Tamburlaine*, 1.1.162–165; 3.2.33; 4.1.39)

The use of the disyllabic suffixes *-ion* at the end of the line is part of Kyd's and Marlowe's stylistic innovation. It was customary to believe that disyllabic *-ion* is a sign of earlier, archaic verse. However, in all earlier texts preceding Kyd

and Marlowe the disyllabic suffix *-ion* occurs rarely or not at all (0–4 cases per 1000 lines), while in *The Spanish Tragedy* the frequency goes up to over 16 per 1000 lines. If we add here geographic names ending in *-ia* so numerous in *Tamburlaine*, Marlowe's number jumps to almost 44 per 1000 lines. The use of disyllabic *-ion*, *-iance* and *-ious* was Kyd's and Marlowe's stylistic discovery. Their contemporaries Peele and Daniel used them seldom or not at all.

Disyllabic suffixes were just one way of elongating polysyllabic words. There were several others. We regularly find a longer variant of a polysyllable at the end of Kyd's and Marlowe's line, while its syncopated variant occurs in midline. Compare the use of the forms *empress* – *emperess* in midline and at the end of the line: *The Turk and his great emp-ress, as it seems*, and *Behold the Turk and his great em-pe-ress* (1 *Tamburlaine*, 5.2.409, 293). Another way of elongating the final word was to treat a stop [b, d, t] plus a sonorant [l, r, n] as syllabic:

What honor were't in his as-sem-**bl**-y
 Like Phoebe, Flora, or the Hun-**tr**-ess
 Shall blast the plant and the young sa-**pl**-ings
 (Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy*, 3.13.68; 4.1.143; 4.2.18)
 Resolve, I hope we are re-sem-**bl**-ed
 And from their shields strike flames of ligh-**tn**-ing
 Some made your wives, and some your chil-**dr**-en
 (Marlowe, 1 *Tamburlaine*, 2.6.36; 3.2.81; 5.1.27)

4.2. Word boundaries and strong syntactic breaks

Adjacent words that create junctures in verse are called “metrical words”; their stress falls on an S syllabic position. The line *So youth's | proud livery | so gazed on | now* (Shakespeare, *Son.* 2, line 3) contains ten “dictionary” words but four metrical words. I differentiate three degrees of syntactic affinity between metrical words: a strong link [/], a medium link [//] and a strong (or full) break [///]. The strong link exists, for example, between components of an attributive phrase, or a verb and its direct object, a medium link occurs, for instance, between a subject and a predicate, or between any adjacent words that have no immediate syntactic link, while a full break takes place between two sentences or a sentence and a clause.

Table 2. Word boundaries, in percent of all lines after syllabic positions

Authors	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Surrey	42.7	33.4	77.6	13.0	42.5	38.9	39.7	31.4	100
Sackville	46.1	31.7	68.1	23.7	<u>56.0</u>	24.0	31.5	36.0	99.6
Kinwelme.	40.1	36.8	78.5	14.1	49.3	33.9	29.5	49.6	97.8
Hughes	51.1	33.2	74.4	21.2	<u>64.0</u>	25.4	<u>54.0</u>	32.4	100
Kyd	46.0	24.4	52.7	32.2	40.0	29.0	33.9	29.4	98.5
Marlowe	44.9	26.5	48.0	39.7	35.9	31.4	26.8	31.7	97.5

Table 3. Strong syntactic breaks, in percent of all lines after syllabic positions

Authors	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Surrey	6.5	2.3	31.0	2.7	8.6	2.7	1.5	0.9	81.5
Sackville	8.3	1.7	29.2	1.5	13.7	1.7	0.9	0.4	70.8
Kinwelme.	8.9	2.5	30.1	1.2	7.1	1.1	0.8	0.0	79.0
Hughes	10.8	1.4	33.9	1.1	<u>20.5</u>	1.1	4.0	0.0	89.9
Kyd	11.9	4.4	22.7	9.3	6.9	2.6	1.7	0.7	89.2
Marlowe	6.5	2.2	12.0	6.7	4.6	2.0	1.7	0.2	82.7

Tables 2 and 3 show percent of word boundaries and strong syntactic breaks after positions 2–10 in our texts, from Surrey's *Aeneid* through Marlowe's 1 *Tamburlaine*. All early authors before Kyd and Marlowe, and Hughes in particular, prefer a foot-emphasizing word boundary rhythm. Strong syntactic breaks support word boundaries **after position four**. Hughes, who wrote "by the foot", has numerous strong breaks also after position 6. Syntactic breaks emphasize the 4 + 6 hemistich line structure. It is relentlessly rigid in all older texts, and particularly in Hughes' tragedy. The numbers of breaks after odd syllables are small: from zero through 1.4 percent of the lines. Even Surrey, whose stressing "dip" fell on position 8 and not on 6, as in most Elizabethan authors, preferred 4 + 6 hemistich segmentation. See examples of Hughes' verse:

Nor long // in mind, /// nor mouth, /// where Arthur // fell
 No graue / I need /// (O Fates) /// nor burial / rights
 No stately / hearse, /// nor tombe // with haughty / toppe
 Be ay // unknown, /// so that // in euery / coast
 I still // be feared, /// and lookt // for euery / houre
 (Hughes, *The Misfortunes*, 5.1. 171, 174–175, 177–178)

The frequency of word boundaries after position 4 in Surrey's *Aeneid* and Kinwelmarsh's acts of *Jocasta* is also amazing: it reaches 78 percent. Over two-thirds of the texts have a 4 + 6 syllabic composition. Strong syntactic breaks after position 4 occur in one-third of their lines.

Kyd and Marlowe seem to be dwellers of a different world. Though their line is still structured 4 + 6, the way most Elizabethan poetry preferred, it is composed in a much more flexible way, particularly so *Tamburlaine*, because Marlowe took great pains to find or create long words, among them exotic proper names of personages and names of countries ending in disyllabic *-ia*, as in *Gra-e-ci-a*. Marlowe's words often straddle the hemistich boundary; this explains the total low numbers of word boundaries, and in particular very few syntactic breaks after position 4. *The Spanish Tragedy* contains more word boundaries and strong breaks after position 4 than *Tamburlaine*. Below are examples of Marlowe's lines (figure 5 indicates a word boundary after position 5):

Mesopotamia /5/ and of Par-thi-a
 Usumcasane /5/ and Techelles both
 Usumcasane /5/ and The-ri-da-mas
 (Marlowe, 1 *Tamburlaine*, 1.1.165; 2.3.36; 2.5.52)

Not all word boundaries after position 5 are created by proper names. The playwright consciously created more word boundaries after positions 3 and 5 than after 6, and more after 7 than after 8; his earlier *Dido* and later *Edward II* are more like other Elizabethan texts. *Tamburlaine* seems to be a stylistic experiment. Here are more examples from *Tamburlaine*:

To triumph / 3 / over /5/ many /7/ provinces
 And mighty /3/ soldan /5/ of Egyptia
 An hundred /3/ horsemen /5/ of my company
 Religious, /3/ righteous, /5/ and inviolate
 (Marlowe, 1 *Tamburlaine*, 1.1.173; 1.2.10, 39;
 2 *Tamburlaine*, 2.1.48)

Marlowe's end-stopped lines filled with long words in 1 *Tamburlaine* did not allow syntactic breaks within the line: that would make the phrases filling the hemistiches too short. The number of breaks after position 4 is already a little higher in 2 *Tamburlaine*. In all following plays the number of syntactic breaks after position 4 gradually increases. Below are examples of strong breaks after position 4 from *Edward II*:

Ay, Isabel, /4/ ne'er was my heart so light.
 Clerk of the crown, /4/ direct our warrant forth,
 For Gaveston, /4/ to Ireland! Beaumont, fly...
 Lord Mortimer, /4/ we leave you to your charge.
 Now let us in, /4/ and feast us royally.
 For wot you not /4/ that I have made him sure...
 (Marlowe, *Edward II*, 1.4.371–373, 375–376, 380)

Clearly, *Tamburlaine* was a stylistic experiment. Word boundaries after syllable 4 predominate in *The Spanish Tragedy*: 52.7, and so do strong syntactic breaks; they occur in over 20 percent of the lines. Medium breaks support the 4 + 6 hemistich segmentation, especially when flanked by strong links. In the lines below, medium breaks after position 4 are underlined.

The ugly / fiends // do sally / forth // of hell,
 And frame / my steps // to unfrequented / paths...
 The cloudy / day // my discontent / records,
 Early // begins // to register / my dreams
 And drives me / forth // to seek / the murderer.
 (Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy*, 3.2.16–17, 19–21)

4.3. Pleonastic verb *do* and grammatical inversions

Pleonastic *do* (not in questions and negations) often occurs in verse to fill syllabic space, e.g. *Black treason hid, then, then **did** I despair* (Sackville, *Gorboduc*, 4.2.120). They are particularly numerous in Kinwelmarsh's portion of *Jocasta* (87 per 1000 lines), next come Surrey's *Aeneid* and Norton's acts of *Gorboduc* (60.2 and 60.6). In *The Spanish Tragedy* and 1 *Tamburlaine* the indices precipitously fall: 17.1 and 10.1 per 1000 lines. Grammatical inversions are particularly numerous in Surrey's *Aeneid* (103.5 per 1000 lines), next comes Gascoigne in his portion of *Jocasta* (72.1), followed by Norton's portion of *Gorboduc*. Kyd has reduced the number to 32.3, Marlowe to 27.5 per 1000 lines. The use of pleonastic *do* and grammatical inversions are more common in earlier poets. The innovative authors who wrote for the public stage did not need the versification support of the devices that help alleviate versification problems. Some later poets, however, chose to use the devices; Shakespeare employed many filler *do* and grammatical inversions all his creative life. The

devices also augmented technical problems in composing rhymed verse; they became a crutch for weaker poets, such as the early 17th c. John Davies of Hereford. Here are some examples of grammatical inversions from *The Aeneid* and Norton's portion of *Gorboduc: A Gerkish soule must **offred be** therefore, **The turrets hye** and eke the palace roofe, **Did move thee now such weapons for to weld?** (673) ...**my sholders brode** (953), **Abashéd** then I woxe... (*The Aeneid*, lines 149, 576, 673, 953, 1027). **Your son, sir, lives, and healthy I him left.** **With sudden force invaded hath** the land (*Gorboduc*, 3.1.63, 160).*

4.4. Rhythmical italics in early iambs

Sometimes strings of adjacent syllables whose stressing deviates from the iambic scheme support the meaning of the line or its segment. In that case the deviations become a stylistic device of *rhythmical italics*, not unlike onomatopoeia, e.g. **Trampling** their bowels with our horses' hoofs (1 *Tamburlaine*, 3.3.250). In *The Aeneid* they were probably still fortuitous; the explanation of their occurrence might be the plot of the poem and the structure of English phrases. *The Aeneid* is a poem about action. Verbs referring to violent actions are, understandably, frequent in the whole text, so they also occur on positions 1–2. The structure of English phrases might be another explanation. Surrey often placed present participles at the beginning of a phrase and a line, on positions 1–2 or, more rarely, on 5–6 (*odd-even*), for example: **Sighing**, he sayd: 'Flee, flee, O goddesse son' (367), **Rered** for wrath, **swelling** her speckled neck (488). In contrast, attributive participles and verbal nouns usually occur in mid-phrase and are preceded by a grammatical word on an *odd* syllabic position, so the participles and verbal nouns appear on positions *even-odd*, for example: **Whose waltring** tongs did lick **their hissing** mouthes (266). Thus, a fortuitous occurrence of the *-ing* forms on Surrey's *Aeneid* on positions 1–2 (*odd-even*) might be the consequence of English phrasal structures. But from our present-day perspective Surrey's fortuitous "rhythmical italics" are surprisingly to the point. We find similar examples in the best texts from Shakespeare to Shelley. Most of Surrey's "rhythmical italics" seem to us semantically motivated: they emphasize the meaning of micro-situations, exactly as in later poetry. All the random examples cited below come from *The Aeneid*, Book 2: **Burning** with rage (438), **Raging** in furie (535), **Trembling** for age (659), ... **trembling** doth bend (826), ... **trembling** for dredful fere (903), **Sprinkling** with blood... (647), ... **dragging** a brand of flame (915). Possible rhythmical italics formed by monosyllables are even more convincing: **Fell to the ground**, all ouerspred with flash (396), **Fell to the ground; and whatso that with flame** (652);

Fell on the bedd, & these last words she sayde (Book 4, 865); *Neptunes there shakes with his mace the walles* (800); *And now at hand, well nere strikes with his spere* (687). How many cases of *fell on...*, *strike with...* and *shake with...* on positions WS we encounter in thousands of lines of the later poetry! Surrey, fortuitously or intentionally, invented the stylistic device of rhythmical italics.

Of the two authors of *Gorboduc*, Sackville had more rhythmical italics: Norton, 53.3 per 1000 lines and Sackville, 85.9. Can we call Sackville a better poet? Here are examples from Sackville's portion:

Clasping his hands, to heaven he cast his sight;
 And straight – pale death **pressing** within his face...
Wearied in field with cold of winter nights,
 And some, no doubt, **stricken** with dread of law...
Slain with the sword, while he yet sucks thy breast
 (*Gorboduc*, 4.2.224–225; 5.1.87, 88; 5.2.223)

The authors of *Jocasta* do not seem to be aware of rhythmical italics at all, and Hughes's use of rhythmical italics is still sparse: this stylistic device did not become widespread at once. Marlowe and Kyd, however, used rhythmical italics with confidence. In Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* they are numerous. Almost all English poets prefer **verbs** in their "deviations" on positions WS or WSW, compared to the text outside the "deviations" and in prose, where nouns predominate. Marlowe, however, used verbs on positions 1–2 especially often. His "muscular verbs" have been noticed before (Varn 1987). Identical rhythmic, grammatical and lexical patterns keep recurring: **Batter** the walls..., **Batter** our walls... (1 *Tamburlaine*, 3.1.66; 5.1.2), **Batter** the shining palace (2 *Tamburlaine*, 2.4.105); **Shaking** their swords... (1 *Tamburlaine*, 4.2.26), **Shaking** her silver tresses... (1 *Tamburlaine*, 5.2.78), **Shake with** their weight... (1 *Tamburlaine*, 5.2.288), **Shaking** the burden... (2 *Tamburlaine*, 4.1.131), **Shaking** and quivering... (2 *Tamburlaine*, 5.3.68); **Stretching** their paws... (1 *Tamburlaine*, 1.1.51), **Stretching** their monstrous paws... (2 *Tamburlaine*, 3.5.28), and **Stretching** your conquering arms... (2 *Tamburlaine*, 1.5.97). There is little wonder that poetic vocabulary recurs, or that grammatical forms recur, or that deviations from the prevailing iambic sequence of stresses recur. But when all three recurrences overlap, they become formulaic.

Kyd's rhythmical italics are also very expressive. Below are a few examples from *The Spanish Tragedy*: **Ran to** a mountain-top, and hung himself (4.1.127); **Beat at** the window of this brightest heaven (3.7.13); **Beat at** the bushes, stamp our grandam earth (3.13.19); **Knock at** the dismal gates of Pluto's court; **Murmur**

sad words abruptly broken off (3.11.266, 321); ... *singing fits not this case* (2.4.181); *Then, starting in a rage, falls on the earth* (3.12.12). These examples might have come from Shakespeare's plays. Kyd's verse may seem archaic and cautious compared to the younger poet, Shakespeare's. But it is unfair to criticize an older-generation poet from the point of view of the next generation, as it was unfair to criticize Shakespeare because he did not fit the standards of the 18th c. English Classicism or the 19th c. Russian realism. We ought to give Kyd a deserved place of honour.

5. Conclusions: Marlowe's and Kyd's innovations

Marlowe created his specific *Tamburlaine* versification style and introduced the use of super-long words and of the disyllabic suffix *-ion* as one way to compose longer polysyllables at the end of the line. Many unstressed ends of lines (position 10) probably called for a bombastic declamation style and an exaggerated intonation: recall how Hamlet warned his actors to speak more naturally (or "I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines") and not to gesticulate too violently ("Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand thus, but use all gently"). If *The Spanish Tragedy* appeared a year earlier than 1 *Tamburlaine*, then Kyd's style probably gave the first inspiration to the younger Marlowe. Kyd influenced the later development of the Renaissance drama in the features of versification and in plot structure. He reinvented the Seneca-inspired tragedy of revenge, of real or fake madness, of supernatural characters and of murders on stage in a play-in-play. The latter innovation continued through Middleton's *Women Beware Women* to Shirley's *Cardinal*. Kyd's personages, as opposed to Marlowe's, are very appealing. Some scenes are memorable: e.g., *The Spanish Tragedy* contains a beautiful scene of 16th century courtship, as Horatio and Bel-Imperia rendezvous in a garden, Act 2 Scene 4, or Hieronimo's famous tragic monologue *O eyes! No eyes, but fountains fraught with tears* in Act 3, Scene 1.

Kyd and Marlowe worked alongside other playwrights (Lyly, Peele and Greene, to name a few), but they seem to have been the most innovative playwrights that had repercussions in the later Jacobean and Caroline drama. Kyd and Marlowe, and Kyd in particular, had been, very obviously, the mentors of great Shakespeare.⁴

⁴ The material is from my new, fourth book, *Shakespeare and the Versification of English Drama 1561–1642* (forthcoming).

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