

The Tragic Heroine as 'cōmoditie': *Iphigeneia* by Lady Jane Lumley and *The Execution of Lady Jane Grey* by Paul Delaroche

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Abstract

Lady Jane Lumley's *The Tragedie of Euripides called Iphigeneia translated out of the Greeke into Englishe* refers to the mythical tragic heroine, Iphigeneia, as 'cōmoditie' to family and nation. The familial power politics surrounding Lady Lumley's first cousin, Lady Jane Grey, resulted in the subject of Delaroche's painting, *The Execution of Lady Jane Grey*. These artefacts exhibit parallels and contrasts; in particular, whilst both tragedies were precipitated by paternal actions, Lumley's *Iphigeneia* focusses on the heroine as a commodity in a familial and national power discourse, whereas Delaroche concentrates on the 'tragic heroine' as an emotive historical and artistic commodity.

This essay will explore representations of the 'tragic heroine' as a commodity, through a comparison of *The Tragedie of Euripides called Iphigeneia translated out of the Greeke into Englishe*¹ (hereon referred to as *Iphigeneia*) and *The Execution of Lady Jane Grey*² (abbreviated to *Jane Grey*), a historical painting by Hippolyte (known as Paul) Delaroche. Although these two artefacts are in different mediums and were produced almost three hundred years apart, they are directly linked: the execution of Lady Jane Grey occurred around the time that Lady Jane Lumley (also known as Joan or Joanna Lumley), first cousin to Lady Jane Grey, was translating *Iphigeneia*. They both feature daughters as a 'commodity', for whom the father is 'an occasion of his owne childe's death'.³ In *Iphigeneia*, the prose narration of events leading up to the sacrifice of the heroine appears straightforward, but is instead subtly gendered: it develops over the course of the play from a focus on filial duty, told by predominantly male voices, to an increasing emphasis on self-determination, told by a heroic female voice. Delaroche's painting suspends action just prior to the execution, focussing attention on the emotive elements of the scene, without directly referencing the underlying familial discourse and power politics. It could be argued that in highlighting the emotive and sexualised in his painting of Lady Jane Grey, Delaroche is using her representation as a gendered artistic commodity. The material nature, date and context of each artefact is initially examined, followed by a comparison of the artefacts in their portrayal of the 'tragic heroine' as a 'commodity', whose wellbeing was sacrificed in order to obtain a familial or national objective.

Lady Lumley's *Iphigeneia* is credited as the first extant translation of a Greek play into English. It is based upon *Iphigeneia at Aulis* by Euripides, which utilised a mythical narrative to critique 'Greek culture and politics at the close of the fifth century' [BC].⁴ While producing her translation, Lady Lumley probably also consulted the Latin translation of Euripides' play by Erasmus, *Iphigenia at Aulis*,⁵ as she included a translation of Erasmus' Latin *Argumentum* not found in Euripides.⁶ *Iphigeneia* is the only English text in a small quarto manuscript of laid paper, measuring 19 cm by 14 cm, which appears to be Lady Lumley's common-place, or rough copy book.⁷ It is inscribed

¹ Lady Jane Lumley, TRANSLATIONS by Joan, Lady Lumley London British Library MS Royal 15 A. IX. Holograph, fols 63-97.

² Paul Delaroche, *The Execution of Lady Jane Grey*, 1833. The National Gallery, London (NG 53).

³ Lumley, MS Royal 15 A. IX. TRANSLATIONS fol. 76^r, 475-476.

⁴ William Arrowsmith, 'Editor's Foreword' in *Euripides Iphigeneia at Aulis*, translated by W.S. Merwin, and George E Dimock Jr. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. ix.

⁵ Carmel McCallum-Barry, 'Why did Erasmus Translate Greek Tragedy?' *Erasmus Studies*, Volume 24, Issue 1, (2004), p. 52. Note: 'Iphigeneia' is used in this essay except when the reference quoted has used 'Iphigenia'.

⁶ Lumley, MS Royal 15 A. IX. TRANSLATIONS fols 63^v - 65^r.

⁷ Harold H. Child, (ed.) *Iphigenia at Aulis translated by Lady Lumley* (Oxford: Malone Society, 1909), p.vi.

'*The doinge of my Lady Lumley dowghter to my L. Therle of Arundell*',⁸ suggesting that this manuscript was started after her marriage in c.1550, when she was fifteen years old.⁹ Some leaves, such as those used for *Iphigeneia*, are unusual in that the widely spaced 'chain' ribs are horizontal and the 'laid' ribs vertical. The folios preceding *Iphigeneia* in the manuscript have the more usual vertical chain ribs, suggesting the manuscript was built up successively. The early folios, with a 'pot and flower' watermark, comprise *epistolae* and Greek to Latin translations of Isocrates' orations, which Lady Lumley copied out neatly as New Year presents for her father.¹⁰ Arundel had provided his three children with an expensive humanist education, including Latin and Greek, a Tudor symbol of wealth and status.¹¹ *Iphigeneia* is written on paper with a distinctive 'glove and five point flower' watermark, known to have been available at Nonsuch Palace,¹² where Lady Lumley was chatelaine for her father from 1557.¹³

The dating of *Iphigeneia* is uncertain but important, as it affects the context in which *Iphigeneia* was written. The timing of Lady Lumley's translation, relative to Lady Jane Grey's execution, would seem relevant to a play based on the death of a tragic heroine. Purkiss argues for a date before Lady Jane Grey's execution: 'If *Iphigeneia* was written after her execution on 12 February 1554, it might have made very uncomfortable reading for Arundel, and raised questions about just who had been sacrificed and how willingly.'¹⁴ Arundel acquired Archbishop Cranmer's library in 1553, which included Euripides' Greek play *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, and Erasmus' Latin translation, providing Lady Lumley with access to these texts.¹⁵ Using evidence from Lumley's dated 'presentation manuscripts' and the distinctive watermarks, Wynne-Davis suggests between 1552 and 1558 for the manuscript, with *Iphigeneia* dated 1556 to 1557.¹⁶

The nature of *Iphigeneia* is also contested. Although referred to as a translation, Lumley lists the 'spekers in this Tragedie',¹⁷ indicative of a spoken text. Lumley's use of prose instead of verse also suggests her translation might have been designed to be spoken or staged. Wynne-Davis argues that Lady Lumley may have adapted *Iphigeneia* for staging at the Banqueting House in Nonsuch Palace Grounds, a known setting for at least one play in Lady Lumley's lifetime.¹⁸ Evidence presented by Wynne-Davis includes Lumley's replacement of the Greek goddess, Artemis, with the Latin goddess Diana, referencing the Diana Fountain at Nonsuch Palace.¹⁹

The importance of Nonsuch Palace and the familial context in which Lady Lumley translated and adapted *Iphigeneia*, is evidenced by her elaborate funerary monument, shown in Figure 1.²⁰ The 'Arundel horses' and 'Lumley parakeets', together with the figures of her deceased infants and the inscription on the casket, illustrate Lady Lumley's position as part of a powerful combined family discourse. Her classical scholarship is

⁸ Lumley, MS Royal 15 A. IX. TRANSLATIONS, fol. 1.

⁹ Leo Gooch, *A Complete pattern of Nobility: John Lord Lumley (c.1534 – 1609)* (Sunderland University of Sunderland Press, 2009), p.14.

¹⁰ Lady Jane Lumley, London, British Library, MS Royal 15 A. I. ISOCRATES, Archidamus, translated into Latin by Joan, Lady Lumley (d.1577), as a present to her father Henry FitzAlan, Earl of Arundel. Holograph and Lady Jane Lumley, MS Royal 15 A. II. ISOCRATES, Evagoras, or fourth oration against Nococles, translated by the same for the same and described in her dedication as her fourth yearly gift of the same kind. Holograph.

¹¹ Patricia Demers, 'On first looking into Lumley's *Euripedes*', *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme*, XXIII, I (1999), p. 28.

¹² Marion Wynne-Davies, 'The good Lady Lumley's desire: Iphigeneia and the Nonsuch banqueting house', pp. 111-128 in Rina Walthaus and Marguérite Corporaal, *Heroines of the Golden StAge: Women and Drama in Spain and England 1500-1700*, (Kassel, Germany: Reichenberger, 2008. vii.) (Teatro del Siglo de Oro: Estudios de Literatura 105) p. 112.

¹³ Marion Wynne-Davies, p. 114.

¹⁴ Diane Purkiss, (ed.) *Three Tragedies by Renaissance Women*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1998).

¹⁵ Stephanie Hodgson-Wright, 'Jane Lumley's *Iphigenia at Aulis*: Multum in parvo, or less is more', in *Readings in Renaissance Women's Drama: Criticism, History, and Performance 1594-1998*, ed. by S.P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies, (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 130.

¹⁶ Wynne-Davies, pp. 114, 121.

¹⁷ Lumley MS Royal 15 A IX TRANSLATIONS, fol. 65^v.

¹⁸ Wynne-Davies, pp. 124 -125.

¹⁹ Wynne-Davies, p. 124.

²⁰ Andrew Skelton, *The Lumley Chapel: Cheam, Surrey* (The Churches Conservation Trust: 2007), unpaginated.

celebrated in the sgraffito scene, of Jason and the dragon, which symbolises the 'triumph of wisdom over strength'.²¹

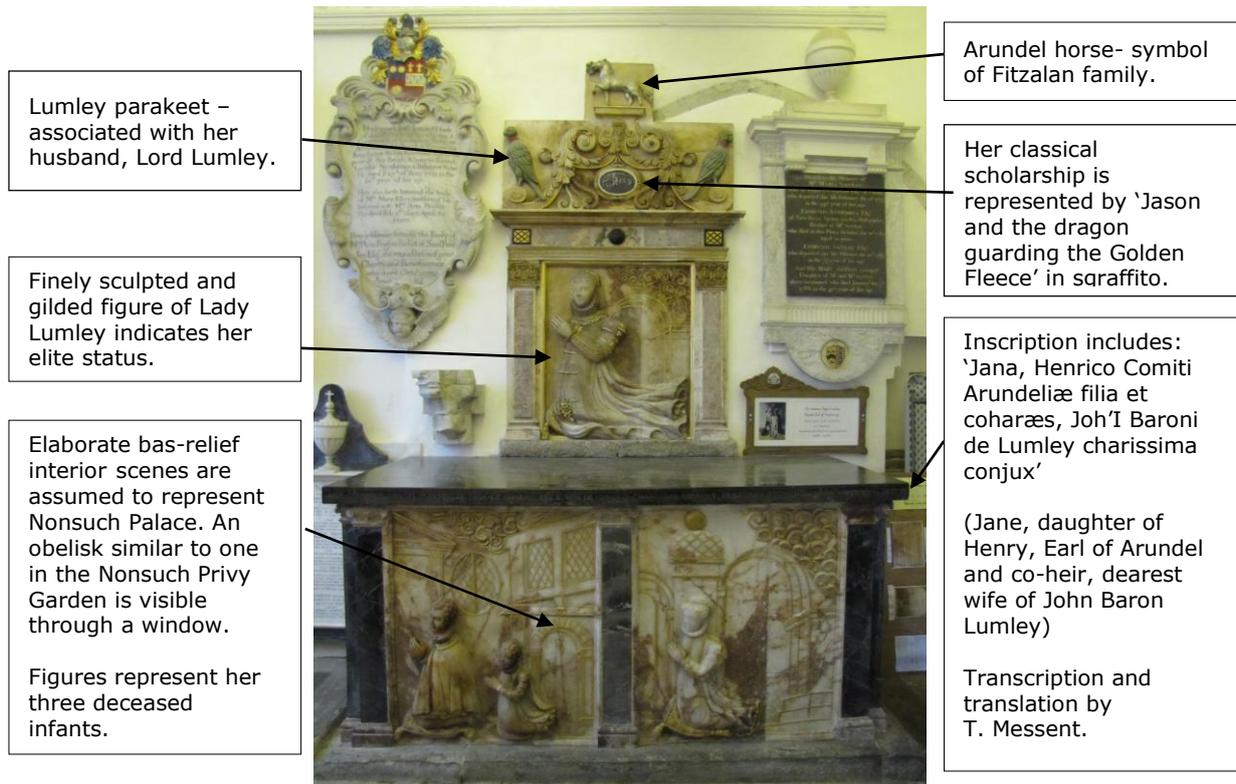


Figure 1. Lady Jane Lumley's Funerary Monument: Nonsuch Palace and familial discourse. Lumley Chapel, Cheam. Photograph by T Messent, with permission. Lumley Chapel in Cheam is in the care of The Churches Conservation Trust.

The second artefact, *The Execution of Lady Jane Grey* by Paul Delaroche, is shown in Figure 2. It is dated 1833 and is a painting in oil on canvas, measuring 251 x 302 cm, unusually large for a single piece of linen. It is a double-lined canvas which was used for premium paintings in the nineteenth century and was pre-stretched and pre-primed.²² Evidence from a series of drawings dating from 1830, and the Whitworth watercolour and bodycolour study dated 1832, suggest that Delaroche worked on the composition of this painting intermittently for four years.²³ *Jane Grey* was first displayed at the 1834 Salon in Paris and is known as a 'Salon piece', designed for maximum visual impact.²⁴

Delaroche was born in 1797, the second son of an art dealer, four years after the execution of the former King and Queen of France, Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette.²⁵ Delaroche witnessed the 'July Revolution', as well as the rise and death of Napoleon. Interest in English history 'was stimulated by post-mortem studies' of these French events²⁶ and Delaroche visited England several times.²⁷ Since the reign of Elizabeth I, a

²¹ Mark Evans, (ed.) *The Lumley inventory and pedigree: art collecting and lineage in the Elizabethan Age: facsimile and commentary on the manuscript in the possession of the Earls of Scarborough* (Roxburghe Club: 2010), p. 36.

²² Stephen Bann and Linda Whiteley, *Painting History: Delaroche and Lady Jane Grey*, (London: National Gallery Company, 2010), p. 105.

²³ Bann and Whiteley, pp. 130-134.

²⁴ Christopher Riopelle, 'Lost and Found', in Stephen Bann and Linda Whiteley, *Painting History: Delaroche and Lady Jane Grey* (London: National Gallery Company, 2010), p. 17.

²⁵ Bann and Whiteley, p. 35.

²⁶ Strong, p.53.

²⁷ Bann, (2006), p. 348.

plethora of narratives, such as *Memoirs and Remains of Lady Jane Grey*,²⁸ and plays, including Rowe's *The Tragedy of Lady Jane Gray*,²⁹ were published and performed in England and France. Delaroche would have been aware of these, and also of English historical art, particularly prints, through members of his mother's family, who were 'Keepers of Prints' for a major art collection.³⁰ Delaroche produced a number of historical paintings prior to *Jane Grey*, including *The Death of Elizabeth*, reminiscent of illustrations in David Hulme's *History of England*.³¹ Delaroche was noted for evoking memories of multiple historical events, through the depiction of one 'enduring moment, its prefigural doubling of moments'.³²



Figure 2. Paul (Hippolyte) Delaroche (1797 – 1856), *The Execution of Lady Jane Grey*, 1833, (oil on canvas). Dimensions: 251x 302 cm. Location: The National Gallery, London (NG53). Reproduced by permission of Bridgeman, Image: BAL72630 © Bridgeman.

Although created in France, by a French artist, *Jane Grey* relates to English history and has been displayed in The National Gallery, London since 1975.³³ Delaroche attached this explanation: 'Jane Grey, whom Edward VI had, through his will, appointed heir to the throne, was, after a nine-days long reign, imprisoned by order of her cousin Mary, who, six months later, had her beheaded. Jane Grey was executed deep in the Tower of London, aged seventeen, on 12 February 1554.'³⁴

²⁸ *Lady Jane Grey, Memoirs and Remains of Lady Jane Grey: by Nicholas Harris Nicolas*, new Edition, (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1831).

²⁹ Nicholas Rowe, *The Tragedy of Lady Jane Gray: As it is acted in the Theatre-Royal in Drury Lane* (London: Bernard Lintott, 1715).

³⁰ Linda Whiteley, 'The Sense of the Past' in Bann and Whiteley (2010), p. 30.

³¹ Stephen Bann, 'Paul Delaroche's Early Work in the Context of English History Painting' in *Oxford Art Journal*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (2006), p. 341.

³² Beth S. Wright, 'The Space of Time: Delaroche's Depiction of Modern Historical Narrative', *Nineteenth-century French Studies*, Volume 36, Number 1 & 2, Fall-Winter 2007, p. 74.

³³ Cecil Gould, *Delaroche and Gautier: Gautier's views on the Execution of Lady Jane Grey and on other compositions by Delaroche*, (London: The National Gallery, 1975), 1st page, unpaginated booklet.

³⁴ Bann and Whiteley, p. 102.

Although Lumley's *Iphigeneia* dates from sixteenth-century England and Delaroche's painting from nineteenth-century France, the historical context of both of these artefacts featured political instability and executions, see Figure 3. Lady Lumley's attitude to the religious unrest and political intrigue of her period is unclear, although both the Fitzalan and Lumley families were committed Catholics, and Lord Arundel was instrumental in the downfall of his niece, Lady Jane Grey,³⁵ who was a devout Protestant.³⁶ The execution of Lady Jane Grey depicted by Delaroche was broadly contemporaneous with Lumley's translation of *Iphigeneia*. Delaroche may have known the myth of Iphigeneia but it is unlikely that he knew of Lady Jane Lumley's translation of *Iphigeneia*, as it was first published in 1909.³⁷

Figure 3 illustrates familial and political events in sixteenth-century England and in nineteenth-century France, culminating in Delaroche's painting *Jane Grey*. This figure sets out parallels in familial positioning and political strife.

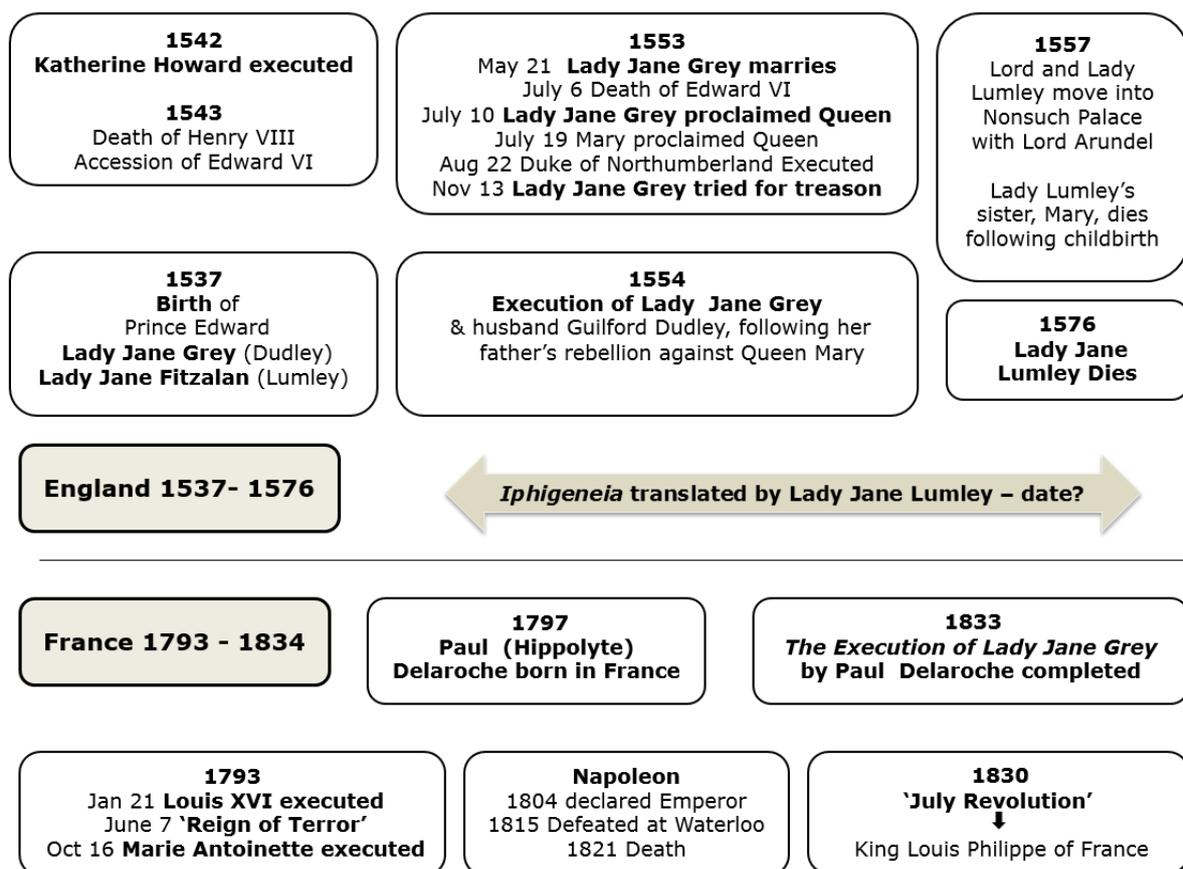


Figure 3. Relationship between *Iphigeneia* and *The Execution of Lady Jane Grey*: Including relevant political events in England (1537 - 1576)³⁸ and France (1793 - 1834).³⁹ Design: T. Messent.

³⁵ Gooch, p. 14.

³⁶ David Mathew, *Lady Jane Grey: The Setting of the Reign* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1972), pp.131-132.

³⁷ Lady Jane Lumley, *Iphigenia at Aulis* Translated by Lady Lumley. Reprint prepared by Harold H. Child (Chiswick: The Malone Society, 1909).

³⁸ Charlotte Bolland and Tanya Cooper, *The Real Tudors: Kings and Queens Rediscovered* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2015); Gooch, pp. 14-20; and John Guy, 'The Story of Lady Jane Grey' in Bann and Whiteley, (2010), pp. 9-15.

³⁹ Bann and Whiteley.

Shifting socio-cultural attitudes are reflected in the reception of both artefacts. Little is known about the initial reception of Lady Jane Lumley's *Iphigeneia*, or if it was performed. Lady Lumley's *Iphigeneia* was subject to considerable criticism for containing inaccuracies during the 1940s.⁴⁰ Modern critiques are more positive: 'in terms of gender politics and Jane Grey's execution, the many and complex resonances of the text shine through.'⁴¹ Lady Lumley's *Iphigeneia* was staged in 2013 and 2014 and is subject to continued academic interest.⁴²

Jane Grey received a rapturous response at the Paris Salon in 1834⁴³ but Delaroche's posthumous reputation declined rapidly.⁴⁴ When stored at the Tate Gallery, Millbank, the painting was affected by the 1928 Thames floods and reported irretrievably damaged. The rolled canvas was rediscovered by chance and restored in the 1970s.⁴⁵ *Jane Grey* was not then perceived as high quality art and some critics thought it was of more interest as an art history curiosity.⁴⁶ It has been extremely popular with the public since it was rehung in 1975,⁴⁷ although modern critics have only recently started to recognise the artistic merit in Delaroche's work, including *Jane Grey*.⁴⁸

This essay will now explore in depth how the 'tragic heroine' has been portrayed in these artefacts, and the extent to which the heroine was treated as a commodity. The self-sacrifice of the heroine was a recurring theme in tragedies by Euripides. These plays included ritual and rhetorical elements: the noble sacrifice is the epitome of perfection, a consenting virgin who offers her life for her community.⁴⁹

For the French *Jane Grey* 'contained poignant allusions to their own revolutionary past;' such as the execution of Marie-Antoinette. In Victorian England *Jane Grey* depicted a 'foremost historical heroine' and a 'victimized child-woman'.⁵⁰ Although Lady Jane Grey, as a married woman, would not typify Euripides' 'tragic heroine', Delaroche portrays *Jane Grey* as an innocent victim, not explicitly as a commodity to national and familial power politics.

In relation to the theme of 'tragic heroine' as commodity, *Iphigeneia* includes all of Euripides' elements. Iphigeneia, a noble-born virgin, is explicitly presented as both a filial and national commodity. In *Iphigeneia*⁵¹ the heroine's father and uncle are key to the drama. Helen is the promised wife of Menelaus, Iphigeneia's uncle. When Paris takes Helen to Troy, it is Iphigeneia's father, Agamemnon, who leads the pursuit. The prophecy of Calchas, that the Grecians will only be successful if Iphigeneia is sacrificed, precipitates the tragedy:

AGA: And Calchas the prophesier [...] if my daughter Ephigeneya be slaine and sacrafised to the goddess Dyana, that then the whole hooste shall not onlye haue free passage to Troye, but also uictoriously conquer it; (*Iphigeneia*, fol. 68^v.123-130)

⁴⁰ David H. Greene, 'Lady Lumley and Greek Tragedy', in *Classical Journal* Vol. 36 (1941), pp. 536-47; and Frank D. Crane, 'Euripides, Erasmus, and Lady Lumley', *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (Jan., 1944), pp. 223-228.

⁴¹ Hodgson-Wright, (1998), p. 138.

⁴² Findlay, Alison, *Iphigenia: the first known play by an Englishwoman staged in Lancaster*, (2013, November 18) [blog post] Retrieved from: <http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/news/blogs/alison-findlay/iphigenia-the-first-known-play-by-an-englishwoman-staged-in-lancaster/> [Accessed on 20 February 2015].

⁴³ Tim J. Barringer, 'Rethinking Delaroche/Recovering Leighton' in *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (Autumn 2001), p. 11; Riopelle, p.17.

⁴⁴ Roy Strong, *Painting the Past: The Victorian Painter and British History*, rev. edn (London: Pimlico, 2004), p. 53.

⁴⁵ Riopelle, pp.17-19.

⁴⁶ Barringer, p. 11.

⁴⁷ Stephen Duffy, *Paul Delaroche 1797 – 1856: Paintings in the Wallace Collection*, (London: The Trustees of the Wallace Collection, 2010) p. 10; and Riopelle, pp. 19-20.

⁴⁸ Riopelle, p.20.

⁴⁹ John Wilkins, 'The State and the Individual: Euripides' plays of Voluntary Self-sacrifice', in Anton Powell (ed.), *Euripides, Women and Sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 182-183.

⁵⁰ Strong, p. 125.

⁵¹ Lumley, MS Royal 15 A. IX. fols 63^r-97^r.

Agamemnon bemoans his fate, rather than that of his daughter, and even when Menelaus relents, Agamemnon insists on Iphigeneia's sacrifice, justifying his decision on his fear of Uliesses taking revenge on his country and other children:

AGA: Alas, Alas: What a greate reproche it is, the father to be an occasion of his owne childes deathe.' (Iphigeneia, fol. 76^r. 474-476)

[...]

AGA: Brother do you not feare Vlisses? (Iphigeneia, fol. 77^v. 536)

[...]

AGA: But if it shulde chaunce that I shulde flie, then truly they wolde not onlie seke to destroie me, but also my children' (Iphigeneia, fol. 78^r. 549-552)

Tudor society stressed filial duty. Lady Lumley signed a letter to her father, '*Filia tua tibi deditissima Joanna Lumleya*' ('Your daughter most devoted to you Joanna Lumley').⁵² When Lady Jane Grey wrote to her father before her death, she finished, 'I am, Your obedient daughter til death, JANE DUDLEY'.⁵³

Iphigeneia demonstrates filial affection throughout, even whilst pleading with her father, against the cruelty of her sacrifice and expressing the natural desire of all men to live:

IPHI: Nowe O father I knelinge upon my knees and making moste humble sute, do mooste earnestly desier you to haue pitie uppon me, your daughter, and not to sley me so cruelly, for you knowe it is geuen to all mortall men to be desirous of life.' (Iphigeneia, fol. 88^v. 1027-1033)

She also appeals to Agamemnon on the basis of his love for her:

IPHI: You semed euer to loue me beste of all your children [...] And will you nowe consent to my dethe? (Iphigeneia, fol. 89^r. 1035-1036; 1042-1043)

As *Iphigeneia* progresses, there is a subtle shift in Iphigeneia's attitude, from an unwilling filial pawn, to a willing heroine, prepared to sublimate her self-interest and become a 'sacrificial commodity' to 'purchase' victory for her nation. She apportions blame to the city of Troy, the goddess Venus, Paris and her aunt, Helen. Not to her father, uncle or the Grecians:

IPHI: O Vnhappi Troye whiche haste norisshed and brought up that wicked man Paris: O Vnfortunate Venus whiche diddest promise to giue Hellena to him, for you haue bene the cause of my destruction, thoughe in dede I throughe my deathe shall purchase the grecians a glorious uictorie.' (Iphigeneia, fol. 89^v-90^r. 1079-087)

Iphigeneia twice refers to herself as a national commodity, speaking to her mother:

IPHI: Againe remember how I was not borne for your sake onlie, but rather for the cõmoditie of my countrie. (Iphigeneia, fol. 92^r. 1185-1187)

And then specifically to purchase victory for the Grecians:

IPHI: Wherefore I shall desier all you women to singe some songe of my deathe, and to prophecie good lucke unto the grecians: for with my deathe I shall purchase unto them a glorious uictorie. (Iphigeneia, fol. 94^v. 1297-1301)

⁵² Lumley, MS Royal 15 A. IX, fol. 4. Transcription and translation by T. Messent.

⁵³ Lady Jane Grey, (1831), p. 48.

Iphigeneia repeats her willingness to be a commodity for the national good when she consoles her father as she passes him on the way to the altar:

IPH: Wherefore seinge that I shall be sacraficed for the cōmoditie of all grece, I do desier you, that none of the grecians may slaie me preuilie: for I will make no resistance againste you. (*Iphigeneia*, fol. 95^v. 1348-1352)

A facet of a gendered reading of *Iphigeneia* is that, whilst the male members of her family, in particular her father and uncle, are very dominant in the early parts of the play,⁵⁴ the female voices of Iphigeneia, her mother Clytemnestra and the female Chorus, are increasingly vocal as the play progresses. This is particularly evident from Clytemnestra's long speech berating Agamemnon, in which she pleads for Iphigeneia, castigating her own sister, Helen.⁵⁵

CLIT: For if any man shoulde aske of you the cause of the deathe of your daughter, you woulde answer for Helens sake, which can be no lawfull cause, for it is not mete, that we sholde sleye our owne childe for a naughtie womans sake: (*Iphigeneia*, fol. 87^v. 978-983)

Female sibling relationships were important. Lady Jane Grey wrote to her sister, Katherine, on the evening directly before her execution.⁵⁶ Lady Lumley added an interchange mentioning Iphigeneia's sisters, which was absent from Euripides' original:

CLIT: but tell me what shall I saye to your sisters from you?

IPHI: Desier them I prairie you, not to mourne for my deathe. (*Iphigeneia*, fol. 93^v. 1254-1257)

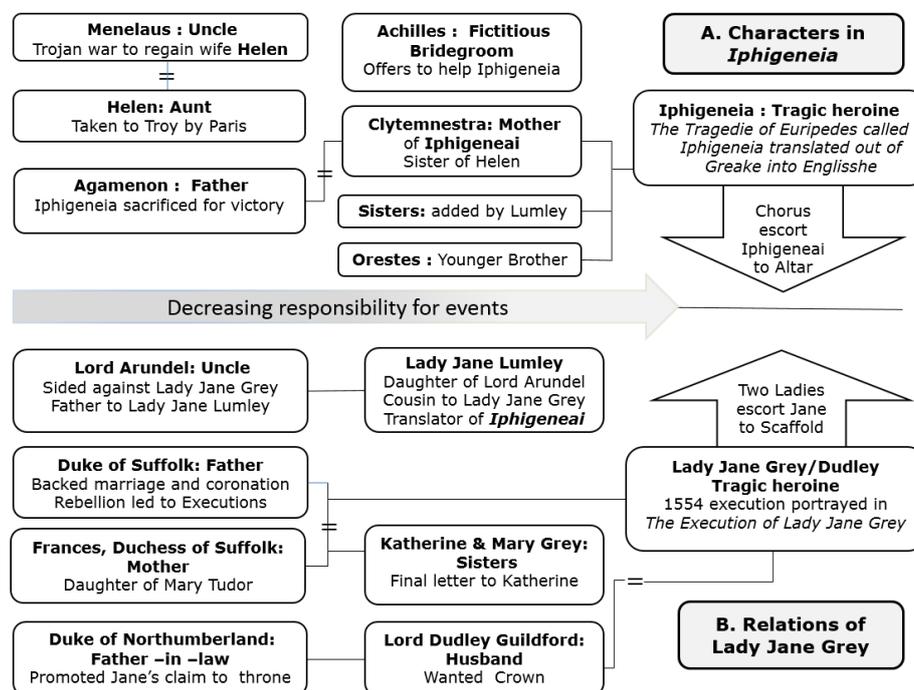


Figure 4. *Iphigeneia*, Lady Lumley and Lady Jane Grey: familial relationships and events. Design: T. Messent. Sources: Bolland and Cooper; Gooch; and Guy.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Lumley, MS Royal 15 A. IX. fols 66^r – 87^r.

⁵⁵ Lumley, MS Royal 15 A. IX. fols 87^v – 88^v.

⁵⁶ Lady Jane Grey, *The Letters of Lady Jane Grey, edited with a Memoir by Douglas Geary*, (Lowestoft: Flood & Son, Ltd., 1950), p. 55.

⁵⁷ Charlotte Bolland and Tanya Cooper, *The Real Tudors: Kings and Queens Rediscovered* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2015); Gooch, pp. 14-20; and John Guy, 'The Story of Lady Jane Grey' in Bann and Whiteley, (2010), pp. 9-15.

Figure 4 illustrates the familial relationships and events in *Iphigeneia*, and for Lady Jane Lumley and Lady Jane Grey. It summarises the parallels evident in the contributory actions of their male relatives and highlights the shift in gendered involvement: male relatives precipitate the tragedies, but it is the female Chorus who escort Iphigeneia to the altar, whilst Lady Jane Grey is escorted to her execution by two noblewomen.

In *Iphigeneia* the causal roles of Agamemnon and Menelaus form part of the narrative. In *Jane Grey* Delaroche does not record the actions of Lady Jane Grey's relatives, such as her father's participation in a rebellion which ultimately led to her execution. Lady Jane Grey's importance as a commodity to family ambition and a Protestant monarchy, is not included in Delaroche's painting. Jane is presented as a helpless victim rather than as a proclaimed Queen.⁵⁸

Marriage played a role in both tragedies. The powerful Duke of Northumberland became Lady Jane Grey's father-in-law upon her marriage to Guildford Dudley. Northumberland precipitated her downfall by encouraging Edward VI to name Lady Jane his heir.⁵⁹

In Greek tragedy a key trope is sacrifice of the tragic heroine as a form of marriage, with allusions to the letting of the pure blood of maidens and their sexualisation. This trope is clearly evident in *Iphigeneia* as her father uses her fictitious marriage to Achilles to persuade his wife to send Iphigeneia to him, so that he can carry out her sacrifice. He is criticised by Senex, the elderly messenger, for his deceit:

SEN: Thou haste prepared greuouse thinges, O kinge, for thou haste determined to sacrifice thy owne childe under the colour of marriage. (*Iphigeneia*, fol. 69^v. 175–178)

Purkiss details the 'homologous relation between marriage and death' at length,⁶⁰ going on to discuss the ramifications of Lady Lumley's Catholic faith and the Catholic view of ancient times, 'when innocent girls were routinely put to the sword to appease pagan gods and goddesses slighted with their loyalty to Christ'.⁶¹ This appeasement is referred to several times in *Iphigeneia*, for example:

IPHI: Bring me therefore unto the aultor of the temple of the goddes Diana, that with my blode I maye pacifie the wrathe of the goddess againste you. (*Iphigeneia*, fol. 94^v. 1301–1305)

The Chorus is important in drawing attention to Iphigeneia's physical attributes:

CHO: Beholde yonder goethe the uirgine, to be sacraficed with a grete companye of souldiers after hir, whos bewtifull face and faire bodi anone shalbe defiled with hir owne blode. (*Iphigeneia*, fol. 95^r. 1319–1323)

This juxtaposition of a 'uirgine, to be sacrificed' with 'a grete companye of souldiers' exemplifies a component of Greek 'tragic heroine' narratives: 'the imagery is not only sanctified but sexualised. Iphigeneia is beautiful and her beauty is about to be defiled, spoiled, ruined.' Thus Iphigeneia's death functions as a trope for rape, the opening of Iphigeneia's body as a 'form of defloration'.⁶² The visual image of a beautiful young girl, wearing a thin white under-dress, 'at the mercy' of the male executioner, is another example of this trope, here employed by Delaroche in *Jane Grey*. The attention drawn to Jane Grey's wedding ring highlights the significance of her marriage in this tragedy, see Figure 5 overleaf.

⁵⁸ John Gough Nichols, ed., (ed. with Illustrative documents and notes), *The Chronicles of Queen Jane, and Two Years of Queen Mary, and especially of the Rebellion of Sir Thomas Wyatt: Written by A Resident in the Tower of London*, (London: Camden Society, M.DCCC.L.), pp. 103–105.

⁵⁹ Eric Ives, *Lady Jane Grey: A Tudor Mystery* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), p. 150–153.

⁶⁰ Purkiss, p. xxviii.

⁶¹ Purkiss, p. xxxii.

⁶² Purkiss, p. xxxii.

Although Delaroche's composition is pared down, with only five figures, it combines visual form and narrative, as shown in Figure 5. Progressing left to right, from Lady Jane's discarded over-dress and petticoats, past her mourning ladies, then her wedding ring, towards the executioner's axe. Attention next shifts to the central figures, 'a grey-haired man'⁶³ leaning over her, and Lady Jane Grey, kneeling and with waxen hands reaching for the block. All eyes are averted or hidden.⁶⁴ The background is a forbidding grey interior conveying a sense of confinement, although her execution was actually carried out on Tower Green. The meditative pose of the executioner is an important compositional change from the 'grosser, sword-bearing figure' in the 1832 Whitworth study.⁶⁵ Delaroche's suspension of action just before the execution, heightens our anticipation of the impending climax, so that we 'tremble before a catastrophe which has already taken place'.⁶⁶

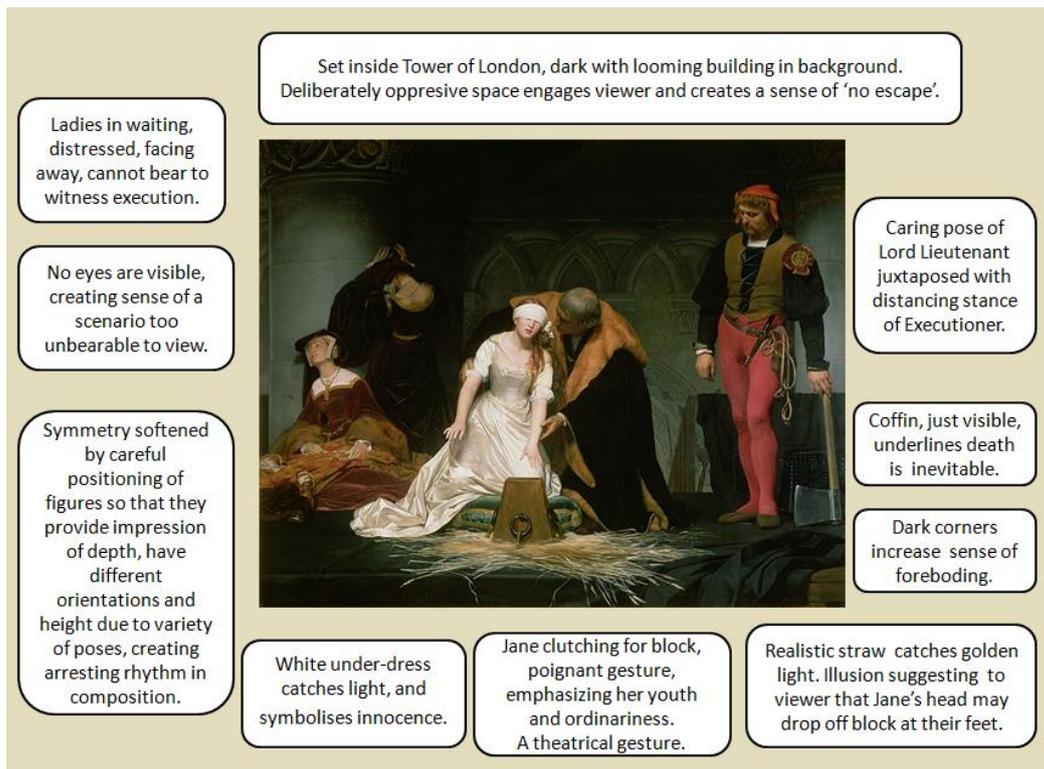


Figure 5. Paul Delaroche. *The Execution of Lady Jane Grey*.

Annotated to show compositional elements which create narrative and evoke emotional response. Annotations and Border Layout by T Messent. Text of annotations: adapted from Stephen Bann.⁶⁷ Image BAL72630 Reproduced by permission © Bridgeman.

The emotional impact of Delaroche's *Jane Grey* is heightened by repeated motifs, such as the lacing of Lady Jane Grey's corset, reprised in the cushion and the executioner's waistcoat. Another group of motifs is the knot in her blindfold, her bodice ribbon and the loops in the rope.⁶⁸ In 1868 Hamerton wrote, 'With Delaroche the human interest of the subject was the first thing'.⁶⁹ The major elements of Delaroche's technique for creating an emotional response to this human interest, according to Bann, are illustrated in Figure 5.⁷⁰

⁶³ Cecil Gould, (1975) 2nd page, unpaginated.

⁶⁴ Bann and Whiteley, p. 108.

⁶⁵ Bann and Whiteley, p. 133.

⁶⁶ Reference to Barthes on historical photographs in Stephen Bann, *The Clothing of Clio: A Study of the Representation of History in Nineteenth-Century Britain and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p 75.

⁶⁷ Bann and Whiteley, pp. 102-109.

⁶⁸ Bann and Whiteley, p. 108.

⁶⁹ Cited by Stephen Bann, (2006), p. 369.

⁷⁰ Bann and Whiteley, pp. 102-108.

Delaroche sought inspiration 'from a wide cultural repertoire', such as etchings by Opie, religious symbolism and Troubadour paintings.⁷¹ Yet Delaroche's highly focussed composition is in stark contrast to earlier depictions, such as the etching by Jan Luyken, *The Execution of Lady Jane Grey*, which shows large numbers of people on and surrounding the scaffold and the standing figure of Lady Jane Grey with outstretched arms, as shown in Figure 6.



Figure 6. Jan Luyken, *The Execution of Lady Jane Grey*, published 1664-1712, (etching)
Private collection, Image XJF377230 Reproduced by permission © Bridgeman.

In an exchange with the Chorus, Iphigeneia's references to the 'sone' and 'light' act as tropes for life and accentuate the tragedy of its loss. They provide a visual perspective within the narrative:

Iphi: Alas thou sone, which arte comforte to mans life, O thou light which doeste make
ioyfull all creatures, I shalbe compelled by and by to forsake you all and to change my
life. (*Iphigeneia*, fol. 95^r. 1314-1318)

The device of light is also used by Delaroche, to draw attention to Lady Jane Grey's white dress and the straw 'as yet unstained' where her head will fall.⁷²

Both artefacts have strong dramatic elements. Lady Lumley repeatedly increased the dramatic impact of her translation by omitting or drastically shortening sections of lyrical chorus. Here two lines of prose replace over a hundred lines of verse:

Cho: What is this? Me thinkes I see Menelaius striunge withe Agamemnon' seruante.
(*Iphigeneia*, fol.70^v. 206-207)

In *Iphigeneia* the climax of the action is a very theatrical moment when, just before the sword strikes, Iphigeneia miraculously disappears, replaced upon the altar by a sacrificial 'white harte'.⁷³

⁷¹ Bann and Whiteley, p. 104; pp. 128-129.

⁷² Bann and Whiteley, p. 108.

⁷³ Lumley, MS Royal 15 A. IX. fol. 96^r, 1370.

Dramatic representation is a key element of Delaroche's paintings.⁷⁴ Bann suggests Mademoiselle Anaïs, an actress who modelled for *Jane Grey*, embodied 'concentrated drama' [...] 'with the tragic eloquence of outstretched arms'.⁷⁵ This emphasised the stark reality of Jane's helplessness and increased the emotive resonance of *Jane Grey*.

In conclusion, although their contexts differed both geographically and temporally, these artefacts shared many characteristics, most noticeably the theme of a young, tragic heroine, sacrificed as commodity to family and nation. *Iphigeneia*, based on a mythical tragic heroine, was translated in a period of political turmoil, which included the execution of Lady Jane Grey. Delaroche's painting of *Jane Grey*, based on her execution, referenced historical tragedy, linking past and present political unrest. *Iphigeneia* and *Jane Grey* both include narrative and visual elements, although in different mediums and varying proportions. These artefacts both lend themselves to a gendered interpretation: they feature a tragic heroine whose predicament was largely precipitated by male relatives. As the narrative progresses, there is a shift towards female voices and the support of female attendants. These artefacts share an innovative approach, in evoking emotional response by simplification and concentration. In recent years both artefacts have experienced renewed academic interest and acclaim.

There are differences: *Iphigeneia* is mythical whilst *Jane Grey* represents a historical event, although much altered through the lens of historical distortion and artistic licence. *Iphigeneia* focusses on a daughter as a paternal commodity, a relationship not shown in Delaroche's representation. Lady Lumley's translation, whilst referring to classical mythology, was an artefact created within the milieu of a humanist-educated Tudor noblewoman, with her awareness of familial power politics, national responsibility and filial duty, and this is reflected in her translation. There is no direct indication that Lady Lumley was alluding to Lady Jane Grey in *Iphigeneia*. As Hodgson-Wright notes, 'any allusion to contemporary politics was of necessity subtly nuanced'.⁷⁶

Delaroche painted with the emotional sensibilities of a culture undergoing political turmoil, referencing back to an earlier period of unrest in Tudor England, but reminiscent of more recent French events, such as the execution of Marie-Antoinette. Delaroche's emphasis is on the moment, with little indication of the causal familial discourse or Jane Grey as a parental commodity. Delaroche used the 'innocent victim' narrative of Lady Jane Grey's execution primarily as an artistic commodity and structured his painting to elicit an emotional response.

Filial duty and gender politics are viewed very differently by modern society, conditioned by Freudian concepts of Oedipus, reverse Oedipus, and the Electra complex. It is difficult for a contemporary audience to ignore an awareness of Foucault and familial power discourses. These artefacts did not inform each other, rather, a comparative study of their communalities enriches our understanding of elite women and the potential tragedy inherent in their roles. An interpretation of the 'tragic heroine' as familial, national, emotional and artistic 'commodity' would appear to be embedded in both these artefacts, then as now.

⁷⁴ Bann, (2010), p. 35.

⁷⁵ Bann, (2010), p. 43.

⁷⁶ Stephanie Hodgson-Wright, 'Jane, Lady Lumley, Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis* (c. 1554)' in *Reading Early Modern Women: An Anthology of Texts in Manuscript and Print, 1550 -1700*, ed. by Helen Ostovich and Elizabeth Sauer, (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 329.

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_____ MS Royal 15 A. II. ISOCRATES, Evagoras, or fourth oration against Nococles, translated by the same for the same and described in her dedication as her fourth yearly gift of the same kind. Holograph

_____ MS Royal 15 A IX TRANSLATIONS by Joan, Lady Lumley. Holograph

_____ MS Royal 17A XXIII 'SENTENCES painted by the Lorde Keepars gallery at Gorhambury [co. Herts] and selected by him [sc. Sir Nicholas Bacon] out of divers authors and sent to the good Ladye Lumley [Jane, daughter of Henry Fitz-Alan, Earl of Arundel, and first wife of John, Lord Lumley] at her desire'

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