

# Print, Patronage, and Occasion: Translations of Plutarch's *Moralia* in Tudor England

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In the dedication of his 1567 translation of *The Manual of Epictetus*, James Sanford wrote that it was 'published abroad for a common use and commoditie, and meete that of all estates he be usually read' (sig. A2<sup>r</sup>). John Dolman, in his translation of Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* (1561), expressed the hope that 'the unlearned also, might have some fruicion therof: and, that our countrey, might at length flowe with the workes of philosophye' (sig. ¶|2<sup>v</sup>). Sanford and Dolman were by no means the only Tudor translators of the classics who claimed that their translations were intended to make the works of antiquity available to a wider readership, including in particular those who were literate in the vernacular but lacked knowledge of Latin and Greek, in order to benefit the country as a whole. Thomas Newton hoped that his translation of Cicero's *Paradoxa Stoicorum* and *Somnium Scipionis* (1569), would pass 'into the hands of manye' (sig. A4<sup>r</sup>), while Arthur Golding wished the dedicatee of his famous translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1567), Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, long life:

that all such students as  
Doo travell too enrich our toong with knowledge heretofore  
Not common too our vulgar speech, may dayly more and more  
Proceede through thy good furtherance and favor in the same.  
Too all mens profit and delyght, and thy eternall fame.

(sig. b4<sup>r</sup>)

No wonder, then, that generations of scholars have emphasized, on the one hand, the translators' intention of transmitting the ideas of antiquity to the literate but not classically educated 'middle-class' readers of Tudor England, and, on the other, the patriotism and sense of duty to the commonwealth that inspired these authors to undertake their projects.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The classic treatments are H. S. Bennett, *English Books & Readers 1475 to 1557*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 152–77; H. S. Bennett, *English Books & Readers 1558 to 1603* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), pp. 87–111; Louis B. Wright, *Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan England* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1935), pp. 339–72.

Tudor translations were not only directed to an anonymous readership in print, however. Nor were translators as altruistic as the pronouncements in their prefaces suggest. Most translations were addressed to a specific individual with whom the author either had an established relationship or sought to establish one. In particular, writers often translated works to seek a reward, or (more commonly) some form of preferment from a patron, or to express gratefulness for the dedicatee's support of the author in the past.<sup>2</sup> In many cases, authors presented individual copies of their translations to patrons, either in the form of a manuscript, sometimes handwritten to add a personal touch, or in the shape of a customized copy of a printed book, perhaps with a beautiful binding or a manuscript dedication. The main occasion for presenting books, including translations, was New Year. As Thomas More wrote in the dedication of *The Life of John Picus, Earl of Mirandula* (c. 1510):

Hit is and of longe time hath bene [. . .] a custome in the begynnynge of the new yere frendes to sende betwene presentis or yestis [histories or tales] | as the witnesses of their love and frendsshyp and also signyfenge that they desyre eche to other that yere a gode contynuance and prosperous ende of that lukky bigynnynge.<sup>3</sup>

Books were presented on many other occasions, however, from the birthday of a patron to a monarch's visit to an educational establishment or a military conflict with a foreign nation.<sup>4</sup> Tudor translations were in many cases written specifically in response to a particular event or occasion in the life of a patron and offered some form of advice or commentary on the circumstances of the dedicatee.<sup>5</sup> In other instances, the translation, along with the letter of dedication, specifically advertised to the dedicatee or the readers of the book the suitability of the author for a position. The more active and creative conception of translation that existed in Tudor England meant that authors would readily fit translations to such purposes: in contrast to their modern counterparts, Tudor translators did not normally aim to represent the meaning and context of the original work as closely and accurately as possible, but sought to recreate the meaning of the classical text in the context of their own time.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See Eleanor Rosenberg, *Leicester: Patron of Letters* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955); Michael Brennan, *Literary Patronage in the English Renaissance: The Pembroke Family* (London: Routledge, 1988).

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Edwin Haviland Miller, 'New Year's Day Gift Books in the Sixteenth Century', *Studies in Bibliography*, 15 (1962), 233–41 (pp. 233–34).

<sup>4</sup> New Year's gift books and other presentation copies are discussed in Miller, 'New Year's Day Gift Books'; David R. Carlson, *English Humanist Books: Writers and Patrons, Manuscript and Print, 1475–1525* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993; repr. 1995); *The Libraries of Henry VIII*, ed. by James P. Carley, Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues, 7 (London: British Library, 2000), pp. xlv–li; James P. Carley, *The Books of King Henry VIII and his Wives* (London: British Library, 2004), pp. 53–79; Carlo M. Bajetta, 'The Manuscripts of Verse Presented to Elizabeth I: A Preliminary Investigation', *Ben Jonson Journal*, 8 (2001), 147–205; and Jason Scott-Warren, *Sir John Harington and the Book as Gift* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>5</sup> Warren Boutcher, 'The Renaissance', in *The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation*, ed. by Peter France (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 45–55 (p. 50).

<sup>6</sup> Boutcher, 'The Renaissance', pp. 45–51.

These issues are well illustrated by the translations of Plutarch's *Moralia*, one of the most popular classical works in Tudor England. Plutarch was a Greek author who lived under the Roman empire in the first and second centuries CE.<sup>7</sup> His *Moralia*, a name given to them in the Middle Ages, is in fact a miscellaneous collection of short works on various subjects. They deal with topics ranging from oracles to oratory and from animal psychology to pedagogy. However, the single largest group of essays — and certainly the most popular during the sixteenth century — deals with moral philosophy, particularly practical ethics: how to restrain anger, how to tell a friend from a flatterer, precepts for marriage, etc. Plutarch addressed many of the essays to friends or people in important positions, and several of the practical-philosophical essays, in particular, offer advice suitable to the circumstances of his dedicatees. By showing how his philosophical expertise could help people perform their role in society, Plutarch also promoted his own social and political standing.

The *Moralia* became an instant classic, which accounts for the survival of so many of the essays, as well as for the inclusion of a number of spurious texts in the collection, such as the popular *De liberis educandis* (*The Education of Children*).<sup>8</sup> Plutarch's work was especially favoured by the humanists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, above all Erasmus. The Dutch scholar assisted in the preparation of the Greek *editio princeps* at the Aldine press, translated several essays into Latin, and modelled a number of his works, such as the *Adagia*, on the *Moralia*. Erasmus particularly valued Plutarch's essays for their practical wisdom and usefulness for everyday life: 'Socrates drew philosophy down from heaven to earth; Plutarch brought it into men's chambers and private apartments and bedrooms.'<sup>9</sup> He also realized their suitability to the sixteenth-century European system of patronage, especially the practice of gift-giving, and presented three Latin translations of essays from the *Moralia* to English patrons in the form of manuscript gift books: *De tuenda sanitate praecepta* (*Advice on Health*) to the rising diplomat John Yonge as a New Year's gift on 1 January 1513; *Quomodo adulator ab amico internoscatur* (*How to Distinguish Friends from Flatterers*) to Henry VIII in July 1513; and *De capienda ex inimicis utilitate* (*How to Profit from your Enemies*) to Thomas Wolsey as a New Year's present in 1514.<sup>10</sup> Plutarch's text was relatively easily

<sup>7</sup> My account of Plutarch and his *Moralia* is based on Konrat Ziegler, *Plutarchos von Chaironeia* (Stuttgart: Druckenmüller, 1949), repr. in *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, 2nd edn, ed. by Georg Wissowa and others, 83 vols (Stuttgart: Druckenmüller, 1894–1978), XXI, pt 1 (1951), cols 635–962; C. P. Jones, *Plutarch and Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971); D. A. Russell, *Plutarch* (London: Duckworth, 1973); and Lieve van Hoof, 'The Social Dynamics of Philosophy: Reading Plutarch's "Popular-Philosophical" Writings' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2006; abstract <<http://hdl.handle.net/1979/258>> [accessed 12 December 2007]).

<sup>8</sup> I shall refer to these spurious works as written by Plutarch in the remainder of this article, as they were published under his name and were generally believed to have been composed by him.

<sup>9</sup> Letter to Alexius Turzo (1525), trans. in *English Humanism: Wyatt to Cowley*, ed. by Joanna Martindale (London: Croom Helm, 1985), p. 121.

<sup>10</sup> See H. W. Garrod, 'Erasmus and his English Patrons', *The Library*, 5th series, 4 (1949–50), 1–13 (pp. 7–9).

reconciled with Christianity, and works from the *Moralia* (in contrast to some other classical texts) were unlikely to cause offence to dedicatees and readers. On the contrary, the essays presented practical solutions to everyday problems and were specially tailored to members of the social elite.<sup>11</sup> The compendious nature of Plutarch's *Moralia* made it possible for a translator to select a piece that offered advice on nearly any subject and detach it from the larger framework of the collection. As Plutarch generally compassed his thoughts in a relatively short space, individual essays could easily be turned into a small book for presentation to a patron.

The practice of presenting translations of individual essays, especially the practical-philosophical works, to patrons on particular occasions was soon adopted by writers in the vernacular. The first English translator of a work from Plutarch's *Moralia* was the courtier and poet Thomas Wyatt, who offered an English version of Plutarch's *De tranquillitate animi* (*Plutarch's Book of the Quiet of Mind*) to Queen Katherine as a New Year's gift in 1528. The dedication of the work to a woman marked a departure from the practice of Plutarch and Erasmus, but it set a pattern for English translators of the *Moralia*. Wyatt explains in the dedication that Katherine had originally asked him to translate 'The boke of Fraunces Petrarch | of the remedy of yll fortune' (sig. a2<sup>r</sup>), that is, the second book of Petrarch's popular *De remediis utriusque fortunae*, of which she also owned a Castilian translation.<sup>12</sup> After having tried his hand at nine or ten dialogues of that work, however, Wyatt found the book to be repetitious and turned instead to Plutarch's essay (in Guillaume Budé's Latin rendering), which 'contayn[ed]', as Wyatt put it, 'the hole effect | of that your hyghnes desyred of Petrarch in his lytell boke' (sig. a2<sup>r-v</sup>). Wyatt seems to have been put off further by Petrarch's prolix style, which he contrasts to Plutarch's pithy mode of expression, rendered even more plain and unadorned by Budé in his Latin version, and emphasis on meaning over words.<sup>13</sup>

What Wyatt does not mention in the dedication is the occasion in the royal household that prompted Katherine's request. It was in 1527 that Henry VIII set in motion the process to annul his marriage to Katherine. By May the queen was aware of his scheme, and on 22 June Henry asked her for a formal separation in person.<sup>14</sup> Katherine's response was indignant, and despite sustained

<sup>11</sup> Robert Aulotte, *Amyot et Plutarque: la tradition des 'Moralia' au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Travaux d'humanisme et renaissance, 69 (Geneva: Droz, 1965), pp. 35–38.

<sup>12</sup> Carley, *Books of Henry VIII*, p. 121.

<sup>13</sup> A. N. Brilliant, 'The Style of Wyatt's *The Quyet of Mynde*', *Essays and Studies*, 24 (1971), 1–21; Elizabeth Heale, *Wyatt, Surrey, and Early Tudor Poetry* (London: Longman, 1998), pp. 119–20.

<sup>14</sup> C. S. L. Davies and John Edwards, 'Katherine (1485–1536)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4891>> [accessed 19 July 2006] (hereafter *ODNB*).

pressure she refused to change her position. It was under these circumstances that Katherine solicited Wyatt, who had returned to England from a diplomatic mission in Italy around the same time, to produce his translation.<sup>15</sup> Clearly, both Petrarch's work, which was itself written for a friend who experienced misfortune and which promoted a Stoical freedom from suffering through the repression of the passions produced by adversity, and Plutarch's, which similarly prepared readers for possible disturbances of the mind by focusing attention on those aspects of our lives within our control, were of direct relevance to the queen, who felt deeply troubled by the situation facing her.<sup>16</sup>

Wyatt's private gift, intended to provide solace to the queen in her predicament, was made available to a much wider reading public through its publication in print, however. It was, in fact, his only work to appear in print during his lifetime, and the address to the reader (apparently by Wyatt) strongly suggests this happened with his knowledge and consent. Wyatt, who was in his mid-twenties when he wrote the book, clearly used the work to project an image of himself as an able and reliable client to potential patrons. He shows himself to be fluent in foreign languages and familiar with classical and modern literature — an achievement of some importance in the world of international diplomacy — and portrays himself as trustworthy and prudent through his adaptation of the persona of the plain speaker in his translation, which is peppered with homely proverbs.<sup>17</sup> The treatise (as well as the dedicatory epistle, of course) is further cast in the form of a familiar letter, with its associations of honesty and privacy.<sup>18</sup> Finally, his failure to mention the pretext for this translation may have been interpreted as a sign of his discretion by the book's first readers, who were sufficiently well informed about the royal divorce.<sup>19</sup>

Katherine, on her part, must at the very least have been aware of the possibility that the work would appear in print and thus become public. Wyatt's

<sup>15</sup> Patricia Thomson, *Sir Thomas Wyatt and his Background* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964), p. 59. Susan Brigden and Jonathan Woolfson offer an interpretation of the work in the context of Wyatt's personal experience as an ambassador in Italy; see Brigden and Woolfson, 'Thomas Wyatt in Italy', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 58 (2005), 464–511.

<sup>16</sup> There is an excellent discussion of Petrarch's *De remediis* in Nicholas Mann, *Petrarch* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 76–82. The author also notes that 'the *De remediis* is best taken in small doses' (p. 81). I am not convinced by the argument of a number of recent critics that Wyatt chose to translate Plutarch's work rather than Petrarch's because the passive acceptance of one's fate that it counselled would be less offensive to Henry: despite its title, Petrarch's *De remediis* barely advocates a militant resistance to adverse fortune. See Carley, *Books of Henry VIII*, p. 121; Greg Walker, *Writing under Tyranny: English Literature and the Henrician Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 284–85.

<sup>17</sup> Heale, *Early Tudor Poetry*, pp. 119–26.

<sup>18</sup> Scott-Warren, *Harington and the Book as Gift*, p. 17; Alan Stewart, *Close Readers: Humanism and Sodomy in Early Modern England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 156.

<sup>19</sup> The pamphlets published for and against the divorce during these years, as well as information coming through more informal channels, ensured that most literate people, especially in the capital, would have been able to follow events as they unfolded. See, for instance, Virginia Murphy, 'The Literature and Propaganda of Henry VIII's First Divorce', in *The Reign of Henry VIII: Politics, Policy and Piety*, ed. by Diarmaid MacCulloch (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), pp. 135–58.

translation was by no means the first book commissioned by Katherine.<sup>20</sup> She had, for instance, asked the famous Spanish humanist Ludovico Vives to write two treatises on the education of women. While one was specifically intended for the instruction of her daughter Mary, the other (*De institutione foeminae christianae*) was more general and apparently intended for a larger audience; she even asked Thomas More to provide an English translation of it (a commission that he passed to his client Richard Hyrde).<sup>21</sup> In addition to advancing her beliefs about the education of women, this publication displayed Katherine as a wise ruler who surrounded herself with learned counsellors. Wyatt's translation of Plutarch (or Petrarch) may have served a similar purpose at this critical time in her life.<sup>22</sup> It also showed Katherine keeping her fate in her own hands by realizing that external events could not deprive her of her most important quality, her virtue, and set up an implicit contrast between Henry's aggressive ruptures of the public realm and his patiently suffering wife.<sup>23</sup> Cast in the form of a philosophical treatise, Wyatt's translation nevertheless failed to attract the attention of the king and his supporters: it was printed by Richard Pynson, the king's printer, and nobody is known to have responded to the work.

Shortly after the publication of Wyatt's work, Thomas Elyot brought out a translation of Plutarch's *De liberis educandis* called *The Education or Bringing up of Children*. Like Wyatt's book, Elyot's translation was dedicated to a woman, his sister Margery, reflecting the belief of a prominent group of humanists that women as well as men could profit from reading the classics. Like Vives's treatise, it also charged a woman with the responsibility of overseeing the education of her children.<sup>24</sup> In the dedication of the work Elyot argues that just as there is nothing so natural as a desire for offspring, nothing is so insufferable as wicked children, who are a blot on the reputation of their kin. Therefore, he has prepared a translation of Plutarch's manual to assist his sister in their education, the single most important cause of the good or evil nature of children. In fact, it looks as if he presented the work to Margery on a particular occasion, namely the birth of her second son, George Puttenham, in 1529. That the book was published after George's birth is demonstrated by Elyot's frequent references in the dedication

<sup>20</sup> On Katherine as a patron of books see Carley, *Books of Henry VIII*, pp. 109–23.

<sup>21</sup> Maria Dowling, *Humanism in the Age of Henry VIII* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), p. 223.

<sup>22</sup> For an argument that Henry tried to do exactly the same following his decision to divorce Katherine, see J. Christopher Warner, *Henry VIII's Divorce: Literature and the Politics of the Printing Press* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1998).

<sup>23</sup> Wyatt was by no means alone in this effort: there were various other English writers who 'used their pens to offer support for Catherine — sometimes overtly, sometimes covertly — in Henry's "great matter"'; Juan Luis Vives, *The Instruction of a Christen Woman*, trans. by Richard Hyrde, ed. by Virginia Walcott Beauchamp and others (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), p. lxxxii.

<sup>24</sup> Humanist attitudes to women, education, and reading the classics are discussed in Dowling, *Humanism in the Age of Henry VIII*, pp. 219–47.

to his 'littel newewes' (sig. A2<sup>v</sup> mis-signed A1<sup>v</sup>) in the plural.<sup>25</sup> However, it cannot have been printed long after that event. The reference to Elyot as 'one of the kingis most honorable Counsayle' and the absence of any mention of his knighthood on the title page of the first edition of the work show that the translation was published by June 1530 at the very latest. As one of Elyot's biographers has pointed out, Plutarch's handbook would have been a particularly apposite present for the birth of a son, as it deals not only with the instruction of children and young men but also with such subjects as the suckling of infants, which would have been much less relevant to a parent with older children.<sup>26</sup>

In contrast to Wyatt's translation, which one scholar has characterized as 'accurate to the point of literalness', Elyot made a number of changes and additions to the text.<sup>27</sup> In the preface to his work Wyatt had stated rather brusquely that the terseness of his translation would make the work more pleasant when it was understood, and that if a reader was unable to take profit from the work without understanding every historical or mythological reference, he had rather they would not read the book. Elyot, addressing his sister, is more helpful. As he points out in the dedication, he performs the dual roles of commentator and censor of the text:

I have not only used therein the office of a translatur | but also have declared at length the dyvers histories | only touched by Plutarch: to thentent that difficultie of understandinge shall not cause the matter to be to you fastidious | as it often tymes hath hapned to other. Also of pourpose I have omitted to translate some parte of this matter | conteyned as well in the Greke as in the Latin | partly for that it is strange from the experience or usage of this present tyme | partly that some vices be in those tonges reproved | whiche ought rather to be unknowen | than in a vulgare tonge to be expressed. (sig. A2<sup>v</sup> mis-signed A1<sup>v</sup>)

As Elyot indicates in this quotation, he glosses classical names mentioned by Plutarch on numerous occasions, without distinguishing clearly between the original text and his additions (a common practice in the period). The enigmatic 'parte' he says he has omitted turns out to be Plutarch's account of pederasty, for which he substitutes a 'pleasant narracion' (sig. E2<sup>v</sup>) of Ulysses's encounter with the Cyclops.<sup>28</sup> Rather than being simply 'reproved' by Plutarch, as Elyot claims, pederasty is in fact given a remarkably balanced treatment in the Greek text. Other writers of the period, including Guarino Guarini (on whose Latin version Elyot's translation is based) and Philemon Holland (who produced

<sup>25</sup> All references are to the first edition of Elyot's translation, the unique copy of which survives in the Newberry Library in Chicago (shelfmark Case 3A 619).

<sup>26</sup> Pearl Hogrefe, *The Life and Times of Sir Thomas Elyot Englishman* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1967), pp. 229–30.

<sup>27</sup> Patricia Thomson, 'Sir Thomas Wyatt: Classical Philosophy and English Humanism', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 25 (1962), 79–96 (p. 88).

<sup>28</sup> John M. Major, *Sir Thomas Elyot and Renaissance Humanism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), pp. 158–59.

another English version of the essay in 1603), were happy to include this passage in their translations. Elyot's aim, however, is not to represent the meaning of Plutarch faithfully but to give his sister advice that is tailored to her specific circumstances and needs. This provides the justification, or at least the pretext, for the substitution of a passage which he claimed had no relevance to the present situation and which he evidently feared would subvert the moral authority of the work.

Despite his comments in the letter of dedication, Elyot's translation was never intended solely for his sister's perusal. If it had been, he could simply have presented her with a manuscript of the work. Instead, Elyot chose to have Plutarch's essay printed and thus make it available to a much wider readership. Elyot's broader didactic intentions in publishing the book are revealed in comments in the catalogue of his works in the preface to *The Image of Governance* (1541): 'The Education of children, whiche also I translated oute of the wise Plutarche, making men and women, which will folow those rules, to be wel worthy to be fathers and mothers' (sig. a3<sup>r</sup>). This statement draws attention to the similarity of Elyot's translation of Plutarch with some of his other literary productions (such as *The Castle of Health*), which aimed to offer practical advice to English men and, equally importantly, women on everyday problems by making the wisdom of antiquity available in the vernacular. At the same time, it highlights the rhetorical aspect of the dedicatory epistle. By presenting himself as the friendly and trustworthy counsellor to his sister on a major event in her household, he both represents and facilitates the process whereby his printed book is received and put to use in the household of the anonymous reader.

Like Elyot's *The Education or Bringing up of Children*, and more specifically his *Castle of Health*, John Hales's *Plutarch's Precepts for the Preservation of Good Health* (1544), a translation of *De tuenda sanitate praecepta*, clearly served to make practical knowledge available to readers who did not have Latin.<sup>29</sup> There is, in fact, evidence of Hales's sympathy for social reform. Having been appointed a member of a commission investigating enclosures a few years after the publication of his Plutarch translation, he brought three bills in Parliament intended to protect the livelihood of poor farmers and the provision of sustenance and to curb the profit-making activities of powerful graziers. He also wrote a defence of his actions, blaming the greed of the rich, who took away the land of the commons through enclosure, for the dearth and disorder of the countryside.<sup>30</sup> Yet his translation was not intended for non-Latinate readers alone, and neither were

<sup>29</sup> See Paul Slack, 'Mirrors of Health and Treasures of Poor Men: The Uses of the Vernacular Medical Literature of Tudor England', in *Health, Medicine and Mortality in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. by Charles Webster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 237–73 (pp. 249–50), which only mentions the later English translation, *The Governance of Good Health* (c. 1555).

<sup>30</sup> *A Discourse of the Common Weal of this Realm of England. First Printed in 1581 and Commonly Attributed to W. S.*, ed. by Elizabeth Lamond (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1893), pp. xxxix–lxvii.



his motives in publishing it completely altruistic. In the dedication he emphasized that this work by Plutarch, himself allegedly a tutor and counsellor to the Roman Emperor Trajan, was specifically addressed to ‘suche as bee great rulers and Counsailours’ (sig. \*5<sup>v</sup>), and he presented his translation as a New Year’s gift to the Lord Chancellor of England, Thomas Audley. This was not the first time that Hales had sought patronage, or that he had used one of his own writings in an attempt to gain it. As early as 1534 he wrote a letter to Cromwell asking to be taken into his service, because twenty years as a servant to his relative Sir Christopher Hales had brought him little profit. Cromwell granted his request and employed Hales as a servant, but after his fall in 1540 Hales was once more on the look-out for a patron.<sup>31</sup> Drawing on his extensive legal knowledge, he composed ‘An Oration in Commendation of Laws’, which he sent to Sir Anthony Browne with the request to present it to the king. In this work Hales also revealed his familiarity with, and admiration for, Audley. If asked what jewel or treasure was most meet for the king, he says, he would answer ‘ten such judges as the lord Chancellor is’.<sup>32</sup> Hales would have very likely come into contact with Audley both as a servant of Cromwell, who worked closely with Audley in the 1530s, and as Sir Ralph Sadler’s deputy as clerk of the hanaper (a department of the Chancery). The language in which Hales addresses Audley in the dedication suggests that there was no established patronage relationship between the two,<sup>33</sup> but the creation of such a relationship may have been its aim: Audley was one of the most powerful men in England and was evidently prepared to use his position to advance his clients’ interests.<sup>34</sup>

Why did Hales choose to present this particular work to Audley? In the dedication, dated 1 January 1543 (1544 n.s.),<sup>35</sup> he points in general terms to the importance of the preservation of health, particularly for those in high office, on whom the good of the commonwealth as a whole depends. He concedes that

<sup>31</sup> *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII*, ed. by J. S. Brewer, James Gairdner, and R. H. Brodie, 23 vols (London: HMSO, 1862–1932), vii [1534] (1883), no. 1210; ix [1535] (1886), nos 342, 359. See *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1509–1558*, ed. by S. T. Bindoff, 3 vols (London: Secker & Warburg, 1982), ii, 276–77.

<sup>32</sup> *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, xvii [1542] (1900), Appx. no. 1 (British Library, Harley MS 4990).

<sup>33</sup> I am grateful to Alan Bryson for this point.

<sup>34</sup> Stanford E. Lehmberg, ‘Sir Thomas Audley: A Soul as Black as Marble?’, in *Tudor Men and Institutions: Studies in English Law and Government*, ed. by Arthur J. Slavin (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1972), pp. 3–31 (pp. 21–24).

<sup>35</sup> *STC* dates this book 1543 and explains in the introduction that ‘most citizens, including authors and printers, were heavily influenced by the host of almanacs beginning the year with January; consequently, for ordinary publications old-style dating should not be assumed without corroborative evidence’; see *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, & Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475–1640*, compiled by A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave, 2nd edn, rev. and enlarged by W. A. Jackson, F. S. Ferguson, and Katharine F. Pantzer, 3 vols (London: Bibliographical Society, 1976–91), 1, p. xxxviii. However, the official calendar in England throughout the period was that introduced by Julius Caesar, according to which the new year started on Lady Day (25 March). For evidence that Hales followed this calendar in dating his letters see Jean Rott and Robert Faerber, ‘Un Anglais à Strasbourg au milieu du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle: John Hales, Roger Ascham et Jean Sturm’, *Études Anglaises*, 21 (1968), 381–94 (p. 394).

‘great rulers and Counsaillours’ are sometimes forced to put their own health in danger to preserve the country in a state of emergency, and claims that Plutarch (and others) ‘have devised how to restore suche menne to their pristyne state and health of body’ (sig. \*5<sup>v</sup>). What he fails to mention, however, is that Audley had been prevented from attending most meetings of Parliament in 1543 by illness and was last present at a council meeting in July of that year.<sup>36</sup> There seems to be little doubt, therefore, that the treatise was specifically intended to provide Audley with timely advice on his health. There may have also been a particular reason why Hales, a committed Protestant, was concerned about Audley’s health. Whatever Audley’s exact religious beliefs, he was aligned with the reformers in the king’s service, and they would have been concerned to lose such a powerful and competent ally.<sup>37</sup> Unfortunately, Hales’s translation of Plutarch’s treatise, a regimen emphasizing healthy eating and living rather than a medical handbook offering cures for specific ailments, had little effect. On 21 April 1544 Audley resigned the great seal, citing doubts about his capacity to carry out the duties associated with that office ‘through infirmity of body’.<sup>38</sup> Nine days later he was dead, and the religious conservative Thomas Wriothesley took over as Lord Chancellor.

Thomas Blundeville’s collection of translations from Plutarch’s *Moralia*, *Three Moral Treatises* (1561), equally responds to an event of major public significance: the accession of Queen Elizabeth to the English throne in late 1558. While the work is, on one level, a simple celebration of the new regime by a previously unpublished author in search of patronage and preferment, it is also a skilful attempt to influence the future direction of the commonwealth by appealing to a shared past and present. Pride of place in the collection goes to *The Learned Prince*, a verse translation of Plutarch’s *Ad principem ineruditum*, dedicated to Queen Elizabeth. As Blundeville notes in the dedication, however, this translation had been preceded in time by the second piece in the collection, a verse rendering of *De capienda ex inimicis utilitate* called *The Fruits of Foes*, which had been presented to Queen Elizabeth as a New Year’s gift shortly after her accession and printed in 1559.<sup>39</sup> It opens with a commendatory poem by Roger Ascham, ‘Secretary to the Queenes majestie, for the latin tongue’ (sig. 2A2<sup>r</sup>), followed by the dedicatory epistle. In this letter Blundeville expresses his gratefulness to

<sup>36</sup> L. L. Ford, ‘Audley, Thomas, Baron Audley of Walden (1487/8–1544)’, *ODNB* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/896>> [accessed 6 July 2006]; Lehmborg, ‘Sir Thomas Audley’, pp. 9–10.

<sup>37</sup> Arthur Joseph Slavin, *Politics and Profit: A Study of Sir Ralph Sadler, 1507–1547* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), pp. 136, 144–46. For differing interpretations of Audley’s religious position see Ford, ‘Baron Audley of Walden’; Lehmborg, ‘Sir Thomas Audley’; Slavin, *Politics and Profit*, p. 136.

<sup>38</sup> *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, xix, pt 1 [1544] (1903), no. 459, quoted in Ford, ‘Baron Audley of Walden’.

<sup>39</sup> The sectional title-page of *The Fruits of Foes* reveals the existence of an earlier edition, stating that the work is ‘Newly corrected and cleansed of manye faultes escaped in the former printing’. The date is suggested by the entry of the work in the Stationers’ Register in 1558–59 and its mention in the preface to Jasper Heywood’s translation of Seneca’s *Thyestes* (1560) (sig. \*8r). See *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London: 1554–1640, A.D.*, ed. by Edward Arber, 5 vols (London: privately printed, 1875–94), 1, 96.

Elizabeth, who his 'griefes did oft redresse', but implies that more support is needed: 'fortune styll doth lowre'. A committed Protestant, he expresses despair at the rule of Queen Mary and high hopes for the new reign:

From this day forth, I should no more dispeire.  
For loe, (saith she [Hope]) the golden worlde at hande,  
And Justice raignes again within this lande.

(sig. 2A2<sup>v</sup>)

The treatise itself teaches that our enemies force us to be careful and prudent, to live our life according to the highest standards, and to know ourselves, particularly in the context of public life.<sup>40</sup> Despite the expressions of praise in the dedication, then, the translation seems intended to encourage Elizabeth to learn from the abuses of the previous reign and to rule according to the highest principles in order not to give any opportunity to the enemies of the regime.

The third translation, *The Port of Rest* (*De tranquillitate animi*), is dedicated to Blundeville's 'faithfull frendes' (sig. 3A3<sup>v</sup>) John Astley and John Harington, both of whom had close connections with the queen. In the 1540s Astley had held a position in the household of Elizabeth, while Harington was in the service of Thomas Seymour. For their implication in Seymour's plot to marry Princess Elizabeth in 1549, both ended up in the Tower, where Harington translated Cicero's *The Book of Friendship* (1550) from the French. Astley and his wife quickly returned to Elizabeth's service, although Katherine was sent to the Tower once more and dismissed for suspected involvement in the Dudley conspiracy in 1556. John Harington and his wife, Ethelreda Malte (apparently a natural daughter of Henry VIII), both attended Princess Elizabeth in the Tower in 1554. The accession of Elizabeth quickly improved the fortunes of Harington, Astley (whose new office as treasurer of the queen's jewels and plate put him in charge of New Year's gifts), Katherine Astley (who became one of the most powerful women in England in her position as chief gentlewoman of the privy chamber), and Harington's new wife Isabell Markham, who similarly served as a lady of the privy chamber.<sup>41</sup> Blundeville's exact relationship to Astley, Harington, and Elizabeth is unclear, but his address to the readers in *The Art of Riding and Breaking Great Horses* (?1561) suggests that he had been familiar with his 'deare frende M. John Astely' (sig. A5<sup>r</sup>) for some time. Both the dedication to *The Port of Rest* and the treatise itself emphasize the friendship between the author and his dedicatees — a fellowship that appears to extend to the four women who have a spectral presence in the work (the wives of Astley and Harington and

<sup>40</sup> See Plutarch, *Selected Essays and Dialogues*, tr. by Donald Russell, The World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 183.

<sup>41</sup> Ruth Hughey, *John Harington of Stepney, Tudor Gentleman: His Life and Works* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1971); Charlotte Merton, 'Astley, John (c. 1507–1596)', *ODNB* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/818>> [accessed 31 January 2007]; Charlotte Merton, 'Astley, Katherine (d. 1565)', *ODNB* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/68016>> [accessed 31 January 2007]. On Harington, Astley, and Princess Elizabeth, see also Stewart, *Close Readers*, pp. 122–60.

particularly Elizabeth). Plutarch's essay is cast in the form of a letter of advice to a friend, and in the epistle Blundeville expresses the wish to share the joy that Plutarch's treatise gave him when he found himself overcome with misery and despair with his friends by offering them this translation. Blundeville's translation of Plutarch's treatise, which offers advice on how to deal with adversity, moreover, draws attention to the shared history of misfortune of these 'frendes': *The Port of Rest* of the title refers as much to the current state of affairs as to a state of mind.

The treatise that is placed at the head of the collection, *The Learned Prince*, is a much more overtly political work, even if it emphasizes the moral qualities needed by princes. At first sight it seems a straightforward panegyric of the queen. At the end of the treatise Blundeville praises Elizabeth as the embodiment of all the virtues commended for a ruler by Plutarch, and in the dedicatory poem he claims that:

Who yf he [Plutarch] were alyve to Judge: I wene [think],  
Of all the Quenes in honour to be had  
[. . .]  
He would your grace, should onely beare the bell [take first place].  
(sig. A2<sup>r</sup>)

The title of the printed version of the work, *The Learned Prince*, similarly points to the outcome of a prince's education rather than its process. In contrast, the manuscript version presented to the queen (which survives in the Royal Collection in the British Library) uses the Latin title *In principe requiri doctrinam*.<sup>42</sup> As well as emphasizing that there are certain requirements for rulers, the ambiguity of the word 'doctrina', which can refer to both instruction and its outcome — learning — is significant. The dedicatory epistle similarly stresses how Plutarch's treatise reveals the qualities in which a prince should excel and the faults of evil rulers (at the same time as it praises the good). It was, of course, common for humanist counsellors to couch their advice in the form of praise of qualities that were particularly apposite for a prince.<sup>43</sup>

More than offering specific advice, however, the collection presents Blundeville and his Protestant humanist 'frendes' as Queen Elizabeth's natural counsellors. The collection appeals to a shared history of suffering during the preceding reigns to offer a vision of the future in which these men take the lead in administrating a reformed commonwealth. The verse letter of dedication preceding the translation of *The Learned Prince* shows how this idea was specifically mediated through the shared reading of a valued classical author:

<sup>42</sup> BL, MS Royal 18. A. XLIII.

<sup>43</sup> See, for instance, David Rundle, "'Not So Much Praise As Precept": Erasmus, Panegyric, and the Renaissance Art of Teaching Princes', in *Pedagogy and Power: Rhetorics of Classical Learning*, ed. by Yun Lee Too and Niall Livingstone (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 148–69.

And though this Boke, your highnes oft hath redde,  
 In Grekyshe prose as Plutarke did it wright:  
 My rurall muse, for that, yeat, had no dredde  
 In Englysh verse, agayne the same tendight.  
 Presuminge of the favor whyche she fownde,  
 When that she sange, what fruites of foes might ryse  
 And that your grace, gave eare unto the sownde  
 Of suche rude ryme, as she did then devyse.  
 (sig. A2<sup>r</sup>)

As Blundeville writes, Queen Elizabeth often read Plutarch; she even produced a translation of one of the essays from the *Moralia* (*De curiositate*) in 1598.<sup>44</sup> However, she did not normally read Plutarch, or indeed any other classical author, alone. Ascham, the author of the commendatory poem to the *Fruits of Foes*, claimed that he read Greek and Latin works with her daily after dinner during the early years of her reign, resuming a practice he had introduced as her tutor in the years preceding the fall of Seymour.<sup>45</sup> It may well have been Ascham who introduced Plutarch to Elizabeth, and more than likely he continued reading the Greek author with her. Astley, who referred in his letter to Ascham printed in *A Report and Discourse of the Affairs and State of Germany* (1553) to their ‘frendly fellowshyp together at Cheston Chelsey, and here at Hatfield her graces [i.e. Elizabeth’s] house: our pleasant studies in readyng together Aristotles Rethorike, Cicero, and Livie’ (sig. A2<sup>r</sup>), seems to have been part of the same reading circle. Harington, who was a frequent visitor to the household of Princess Elizabeth as a servant of Seymour, may have been associated with their reading fellowship too.<sup>46</sup> By offering his translation of Plutarch to the queen, Blundeville presents himself as another reader or interpreter of the text. As Astley’s quotation shows, shared reading was intimately connected with friendship.<sup>47</sup> The friendship between Blundeville, Astley, Harington, Ascham, and Elizabeth established in the remainder of the collection thus serves to underpin their imagined reading fellowship. As the reading of classical authors by noblemen and their clients was understood to be an intensely political activity, and one closely linked with political advice and discussion, the ‘frendly fellowshyp’ of these readers is finally revealed as an alternative privy counsel and Blundeville and his Protestant humanist ‘frendes’ as Elizabeth’s natural counsellors.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>44</sup> The National Archives, Public Record Office, SP 12/289, printed in *Queen Elizabeth’s Englishings of Boethius, ‘De consolatione philosophiae’, A.D. 1593, Plutarch, ‘De curiositate’, A.D. 1598, Horace, ‘De arte poetica’ (part), A.D. 1598*, ed. by Caroline Pemberton, Early English Text Society, o.s. 113 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1899), pp. 121–41.

<sup>45</sup> Lawrence V. Ryan, *Roger Ascham* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963), p. 223.

<sup>46</sup> Stewart, *Close Readers*, pp. 159–60.

<sup>47</sup> See also *ibid.*, pp. 122–60.

<sup>48</sup> See Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, “‘Studied for Action’”: How Gabriel Harvey Read his Livy’, *Past and Present*, 129 (1990), 30–78.

In contrast to the authors considered so far, Edward Grant did not dedicate his translation of Plutarch's *De liberis educandis*, *A Precedent for Parents* (1571), to a particular person. Instead, he directed his verse address to the 'children, youth, and parents of Englande', claiming that:

because in Grekish tong good Plutarch first did vwright,  
Unknovvne to many, novve it comes in English to thy sight

and shortly afterwards:

For countreys cause I tooke this payne, and travel herein spente.  
(sig. A3<sup>v</sup>)

Here at last, it seems, we have a clear example of a translation intended to make the classics available to the many so-called middle-class readers in Elizabethan England who were thirsty for the knowledge contained in them but unable to access Greek and Latin texts in their original languages, by an author who specifically invokes nationalistic motives in translating a foreign-language original.

When we look a little closer at the translation and the circumstances of Grant's life around the time of publication, however, a rather different picture emerges. In accordance with his earlier comments about preparing the translation for the public good, he claims in the preface that he expects no remuneration for his efforts: 'No hier nor no guerdon [reward], I do crave for this my payne'. Yet only a few lines later he declares:

And some perchance of learned sort, vwhen that they do this vevv,  
VVill judge my labour vvell imployde, and vvorthy guerdon devve.  
(sig. A4<sup>r</sup>)

In his additions to Plutarch's text, Grant, who was working as an assistant master at Westminster School, also takes the opportunity to complain about the parsimony of parents, who would rather spend their money on 'soone passing pleasures & pelting pastimes' (sig. C1<sup>r</sup>) than on their children's education. What is more, Grant was promoted to the position of headmaster of Westminster the year after his translation was published.<sup>49</sup> It does not seem fanciful to suggest, therefore, that he used *A Precedent for Parents* to advertise his suitability for the post. While not dedicated to a particular patron, Grant's translation of Plutarch allowed him to demonstrate the knowledge and skills required in a schoolmaster. The content of the work showed his expertise in all aspects of the education and bringing up of children. Translating Plutarch's text gave him the opportunity to display his fluency in the classical languages (especially Greek, from which he quotes liberally) and translation skills (particularly his copious knowledge of

<sup>49</sup> Stephen Wright, 'Grant, Edward (c. 1546–1601)', *ODNB* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11254>> [accessed 24 July 2006]; Sidney Lee, 'Grant or GRAUNT, Edward (1540?–1601)', in *Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. by Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee, 63 vols (London: Smith, 1885–1901), repr. in *ODNB* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11254>> [accessed 24 July 2006].

synonyms, including many ‘inkhorn’ terms, for example ‘relucēt and esclariſhed’ (sig. C5<sup>v</sup>), ‘to eſchue, flee and evitate’ (sig. E3<sup>v</sup>), and ‘to cohibite & bridle’ (sig. E4<sup>r</sup>). In the numerous additions to Plutarch’s original, Grant further exhibits his familiarity with ancient literature by continually quoting classical authors, and his fluency in the compositional exercises practised in the schools (themes, that is, essays on moral subjects, and poems). The subject on which he includes a long digression near the beginning of the book, ‘Labor improbus omnia vincit’ (‘There is nothing so hie, so sharpe, so rigorous, so difficile, which with diligent study thou mayst not obtaine’ (sig. B1<sup>v</sup>)), for example, was a common theme of grammar school compositions of the time.<sup>50</sup> In this context, the intentions behind Grant’s appeal to the public good in the preface may appear more complex too: it was surely in the interest of a prospective master of one of the main institutions preparing boys for royal service to project the image of one who selflessly laboured for queen and country.

These translations were not the only English versions of Plutarch’s *Moralia* to appear in Tudor England. Eighteen years after the publication of Grant’s work, in 1589, John Clapham translated *De tranquillitate animi* from the French of Amyot, for example, and another twelve years later Valentine Simmes published an anonymous version of *De capienda ex inimicis utilitate*. Several authors incorporated translations of the *Moralia* in larger works, most notably John Lyly, whose *Euphues* includes a complete, if free, version of *De liberis educandis* and parts of *De exilio* (*Exile*) and *De garrulitate* (*Talkativeness*).<sup>51</sup> And a number of authors followed Erasmus in presenting Latin translations of essays from the *Moralia* to English patrons: John Cheke offered a version of *De superstitione* (*Superstition*) to Henry VIII as a New Year’s gift in 1545 or 1546;<sup>52</sup> John Christopherson dedicated his Latin translation of *De garrulitate* to Princess Mary during the reign of Edward VI;<sup>53</sup> and John Rainolds presented *De capienda ex inimicis utilitate* to Queen Elizabeth in 1574.<sup>54</sup> The best-known Tudor translation of the *Moralia*, and the only one to include all essays, was the schoolmaster Philemon Holland’s version, published shortly after the death of Elizabeth in 1603 (but written and entered in the Stationers’ Register during her reign). It is an impressive achievement on many counts, not least its sheer size. Running to over 1400 pages in folio, it includes a glossary and index, as well as a commentary on each individual essay. The overall quality of the translation, which is based on Amyot’s French version,

<sup>50</sup> Hugh Robinson, for instance, included a model theme (*chreia*) on the subject in a textbook printed for his pupils at Winchester College (*I. Preces. II. Grammaticalia quaedam. III. Rhetorica brevis* (1616), sigs B4<sup>v</sup>–C1<sup>r</sup>).

<sup>51</sup> *The Complete Works of John Lyly*, ed. by R. Warwick Bond, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902), 1, 156.

<sup>52</sup> University College, Oxford, MS 171.

<sup>53</sup> Cambridge University Library, MS Dd. vi. 56.

<sup>54</sup> BL, MS Royal 15. A. III, printed with minor changes in Rainolds’s *Orationes duodecim* (1614).

is also very good, and Holland's rendering is generally both clearer and more faithful to the original than those of his predecessors.

Critics have often considered the translations of Plutarch's *Moralia* discussed in this paper rather insignificant in comparison with Erasmus's more ambitious programme for moral, political, and religious reform, on the one hand, and Holland's more comprehensive, fluent, and accurate translation, on the other. Henry Burrowes Lathrop's comment that 'the translations of a few of Plutarch's essays from the *Morals* [. . .] have little significance' is typical, as is Patricia Thomson's claim that the English translations of Plutarch's work 'make a restricted, down-to-earth — one might almost say provincial — contribution to the more ambitious design of Erasmian didacticism'.<sup>55</sup> It was, however, precisely the practical and occasional nature of these works that made them attractive to translators, dedicatees, and readers alike. This aspect should also make these works fertile hunting ground for current scholars interested in the social and political contexts of literature and the material forms in which they were produced, circulated, and received. Tudor translations of the *Moralia* offer important insights into the relationships between manuscript and print and between presentation copies and editions for publication; the role of patronage in the literary system and the various positions and attitudes of clients in relation to their patrons; and the interaction between literary works and public and private events. Finally, it is in relation to the specific occasions and events to which they responded that these translations reveal their full range of meanings and significances and are manifested as interesting and dynamic works of literature in their own right.

<sup>55</sup> Henry Burrowes Lathrop, *Translations from the Classics into English from Caxton to Chapman 1477–1620* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1933; repr. New York: Octagon, 1967), p. 208; Thomson, 'Sir Thomas Wyatt', p. 87.