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CHAPTER FOUR
'COMMENDATISSIMA DEO VIRGINALIS PUDICITIA': *IEPHTE* (1608/9) IN CONTEXT

The elephant and the ant

'Here you have, then, a *Iephte*. Mine that is. It is a subject solid and tragic, on which that sublime genius of the Scottish poet once labored, and which could perhaps – now that I do not hesitate to try my hand, in my own little way, at what he has so brightly achieved – cause jealousy with some, in the way they tell a lightly armed soldier to his shame that he follows too closely in his commander's tracks, or a yet inexperienced boy, if he can not equal the character and style of his learned teacher, that he can just imitate him in one way or another. On just one Iliad so many geniuses have shared their thoughts; one Medea from Colchis has inspired so many poets, clearly not all of them Homers and Virgils. (...) But even though diamants and pyrops have a glimmering shine, the lesser emerald, too, has its bright green grace. (...) Thus Mother Nature adapts to everything, by not diminishing the lesser ones through the superiority of the bigger players. For she has made elephants a fearful sight, with their snout and trunk, but she has miraculously added strength and fierceness to ants as well.'[1]

Such is the introduction to Lummenaeus à Marca's 1608 *Iephte tragoedia sacra*. Indeed, writing a Latin *Iephte* tragedy around 1600 meant taking up the literary glove with the mid-sixteenth-century Scottish poet, the 'elephant' George Buchanan. His *Iephthes sive votum, tragoedia* (Jephthes or the vow, a tragedy) had been written in the 1540s in France, where he was at the time working and living.[2] First published in 1554, it had since been

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[1] *Habes igitur Iephten, meam, argumentum solidum et tragicum, et cui Scoti vatis sublime illud ingenium aliquando desudavit, Quod fortassis invidiam apud aliquos mihi faciet si quod ille luculentissime perfecit, ego meo modulo retentare non erubescam. Quasi vero rorario veliti opprobrio detur quod ducis sui vestigiis inhaerescat, aut Tyroni puero quod eruditoris didascali characterem et prototypon si non assequi, saltem aliquot modo consequi possit. Et vero in unam solam Iliadem quot ingenia conspiraverunt. Una Medaea Colchica quot vates suscitavit, qui tamen non omnes Homeri aut Maronis tubam impleverunt. (...) Sed ut rutilent luculenti Adamantes, ut fulguriant Pyropi; est et minoribus smaragdis sua gratia et limpidus viror. (...) Ita quippe Natura Mater omnibus se attemperat, ut per maiorum excellentiam nihil minoribus velit decrescere, aut deperire; nam ut elephantes rictu et proboscide terribiles formarit, ita et formicis suos musculos et suam bilem non inefficaciore miraculo adfinxit* (*Iephte*, (1608/9), A2^{ro-vo}).

[2] References to works discussing the life and work of Buchanan can be found below, p. 179nt32.

republished as well as translated into other languages many times.[3] Though popular and ground-breaking, it has not been spared from theological controversies, nor from sharp protests of early modern literary critics.[4] Therefore, actively engaging Buchanan in the way Lummenaeus in his preface attests to, should at least presuppose awareness of the extensive tradition of Jephthah-exegesis, of the combined literary and theological pitfalls that may lie ahead and being prepared to confront them willingly.

Much has been written about Buchanan's *Iephthes* and its position in the literary and theological field. Originally a Latin school drama, in which Michel de Montaigne even claimed to have played a leading part,[5] it was reworked to the printed edition of several years later. Its genesis meant the firm establishment of Biblical tragedy in a classical garment, which would become translated and imitated by many, even emulated to perfection by some, in the next century or so.

But in order to accurately interpret Lummenaeus' *Iephte*, which, contrary to Buchanan's *Iephthes*, has remained relatively unnoticed and has only been superficially discussed, more is required than a mere comparison with Buchanan's tragedy and the reception of his work. As a theme, 'Jephthah' was not only suited for theological debate. On the contrary: as a literary subject, it could be used for illustrating a broad range of thematic aspects, upon which I have already briefly touched in the introduction to this thesis. When transferring such a theme to another time and place, as Lummenaeus did, a modern scholar is almost naturally tempted to initiate a renewed contextual interpretation as well, properly adjusted to the given circumstances of the author's own time and place. But any such attempt, however, cannot be disconnected from the theological aspects involved. Merely *assuming* that a Ghent Catholic would use the horrific theme to illustrate and disapprove of Calvinistic rigidity, as James Parente has done, cannot in itself lead to proper results. Still, the basis for the present chapter has been laid by Lummenaeus himself; but by referring to Buchanan in a literary sense, he also placed himself willingly or unwillingly in other

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[3] *Iephthes* was first printed in Paris in 1554 by Morel; a second edition appeared in 1557 with Vascosan in Paris. Cf. McFarlane, *Buchanan*, app. A (p. 499); Sharratt and Walsh, *George Buchanan*, 332. In the next fifty years or so, *Iephthes* would be translated in French, German, Polish, Italian and Hungarian. For a presentation of these various editions, cf. Durkan, *Bibliography of George Buchanan*, 39-57.

[4] The theological controversies will be addressed below. For literary criticism of Buchanan, cf. e.g. Daniel Heinsius (*De tragoediae constitutione liber*, Leiden: Elsevier 1643, chapter 17, pp. 200-211), both with respect to Buchanan's structure and style. Cf. Parente, *Religious Drama*, 142. Vossius erroneously criticized Buchanan for not conforming to the unity of time (*Institutio poetica*, II.3; cf. Lebègue, *La tragédie religieuse en France*, 235).

[5] Michel de Montaigne, *Essais*, I, ch. XXVI: 'Car, avant l'âge, *Alter ab undecimo tum me vix ceperat annus*, j'ai soutenu les premiers personnages ès tragédies latines de Buchanan, de Guérente et de Muret, qui se représentèrent en notre collège de Guyenne avec dignité.' See also Lebègue, *Tragédie religieuse*, 198.

traditions, illustrated by the fact that the use alone of such a possibly controversial theme lead Parente into making his claim with regard to the historical-religious context of Lummenaeus' *Iephte*.

In order to move the play's interpretation from its text to any particular context, a properly balanced analysis of the various perspectives expressed is required. For such an analysis, the history of the Biblical exegesis of Judges 11, Buchanan's treatment of the Biblical narrative, the scholarly investigations of his play and its position in comparison to that of Lummenaeus will form an excellent *repoussoir* for determining the relative and absolute position of Lummenaeus' *Iephte*. In the following sections, I will first address the Biblical narrative of Jephthah's daughter (Judges 11) and how it has been exegetically interpreted from Flavius Josephus, through the Middle Ages, to Lummenaeus' early modern Europe, where scholars, theologians and men of letters eagerly employed its wide range of interpretational possibilities. I will then provide an insight into Buchanan's drama and its theological implications, after which I will set up a structural comparison and in-depth analysis of Lummenaeus' *Iephte*. From there, the road to interpretational success lies wide open.

The Biblical narrative of Judges 11

Jephthah, a bastard son of Gilead, was forced from his father's land by his step brothers. But when the neighboring Ammonites prepared to wage war on Israel, the Israelites called upon Jephthah – who had been roaming the countryside with a pack of raiders – to be their captain. He agreed, but on one condition: that he be made Israel's leader in case he would succeed in defeating the Ammonites. Thus came to pass. The ways of diplomacy having failed, Jephthah went to war: he vowed to offer up for a burnt offering to the Lord whatsoever would come forth from the doors of his house to meet him, if and when he would return in peace from the children of Ammon.[6] Having returned victoriously from battle, Jephthah came home to his house in Mizpeh. But behold, 'his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she was his only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter. And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back. And she said unto him, My father, *if* thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance

[6] *Votum vovit Domino, dicens: si tradideris filios Ammon in manus meas, quicumque primus fuerit egressus de foribus domus meae, mihique occurrerit revertenti cum pace a filiis Ammon, eum holocaustum offeram Domino* (Judges 11:30-31).

for thee of thine enemies, *even* of the children of Ammon. And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done for me: let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows.'[7] When after two months the daughter returned from the mountains, Jephthah did with her as he had vowed. She had known no man. Afterwards, it became a custom that every year the daughters of Israel lamented the daughter of Jephthah for four days.

The exegetical background

Over the centuries, the Biblical narrative has provided more than enough material not only for tragic plays, but also for theological discussion. Recently, a much-needed, comprehensive overview of the exegetical history of the Jephthah-episode has been provided in John L. Thompson's *Writing the Wrongs. Women of the Old Testament among Biblical Commentators from Philo through the Reformation*. The following account relies heavily on this invaluable study, and to a lesser extent on David Marcus' *Jephthah and his Vow*, and Debora Shuger's *The Renaissance Bible: Scholarship, Sacrifice, and Subjectivity*.

The controversies surrounding the account of Jephthah's daughter date back some 2000 years. Already the ancient Jewish authors, like Flavius Josephus (37-c.100) and Pseudo-Philo (first century AD), were deeply troubled by the significance of the Biblical account of the sacrifice. Josephus strongly disapproved of Jephthah's behavior and condemned the sacrifice as neither sanctioned by the law nor well-pleasing to God.[8] However, as Thompson immediately adds, we should not forget the context in which Josephus was writing: part of his reason for writing the *Jewish Antiquities* was to present his people in a favorable light to a Greco-Roman audience, doing his best to deny that any approval of Jephthah issued either from Israel's laws or Israel's God.[9] From Pseudo-Philo we hear like objections: the vow made by Jephthah was illegitimate, perhaps even blasphemous. In Pseudo-Philo's account, God himself raises angry objections to Jephthah's carelessly formulated vow, but He does not object to its eventual fulfillment. In contrast to Josephus, Pseudo-Philo creatively adds some speaking details, drawing up a long lamentation by Jephthah's daughter, whom Pseudo-Philo names Seila.[10] One might thus argue that the first-century author has been the first to dramatize the Biblical narrative, by adding extra dimension to the characters, but most of all by underscoring the daughter's tragedy, and not

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[7] Judges 11:34-37 (translation KJV).
[8] Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* V, §257-270, quoted by Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs*, 106-107.
[9] Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs*, 106-107.
[10] Pseudo-Philo, *Biblical Antiquities*, 39.11-40.6. Cf. Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs*, 108-111; Van der Horst, 'Portraits of Biblical Women', 38-42.

the father's. In a way, Pseudo-Philo thus foregrounds the dramatic Jephthah-tradition that would be firmly established by Buchanan in the sixteenth century.

Patristic authors took over the debate, the most dominant of which proved to be Augustine (354-430). One of the lengthiest *quaestiones* in his *Quaestionum in Heptateuchum libri VII*, number 49, is entirely dedicated to the problems posed by Judges 11. From the Biblical narrative, he concludes, two good things emerge: first, that Jephthah is appropriately and definitively punished for his rashness in vowing, and as such that any dangerous precedent that might be drawn from Abraham's near-sacrifice of his son Isaac (when God intervened just in time to stop the sacrifice), is henceforth dismantled and disgraced; second, when Jephthah vowed to offer a sacrifice, he prefigured Christ in 1 Corinthians 15:24, when Christ delivers up the kingdom to God the Father. Thus, Jephthah is a type of none other than Christ himself, prefiguring the sacrifice that Jesus was one day to make.[11]

Augustine's young friend Quodvultdeus († c. 450) went one step further still: he not only viewed Jephthah as prefiguring Christ, who offered his flesh for our redemption, but even the daughter herself as a figure of Christ in her own right, and not merely as his sacrificed flesh. Quodvultdeus argues that the daughter's voluntary retreat to the mountains with her maidens, where she was to mourn her virginity and untimely death, compares to Christ's ascent to the Mount of Olives with his friends.[12]

Though their interpretations would prove less dominant than Augustine's and Quodvultdeus', other Church Fathers had wrestled with the theological implications as well. Jerome (c. 347-420) generally disapproved of Jephthah, but it appears that, though he condemns the sacrifice, Jephthah's motive is in itself commendable.[13] Origen (c. 185-254) compared the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter to the death of Christian martyrs, while Chrysostom (c. 347-407) rather recognized an example of God's providence and clemency: by allowing the sacrifice to continue, God prevented future sacrifices of this type.[14] Others partially agreed: for example, Procopius of

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[11] Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs*, 125-130. 'The kingdom,' according to Augustine's view presented by Thompson (p.130), 'is none other than the church, and Augustine carefully describes the sacrificial imagery whereby the church is offered to God as a *holocaustoma*. Both Jephthah's wife and daughter here symbolize the church, because the church is at times called the spouse or wife of Christ, but elsewhere, his chaste and virgin daughter.'

[12] Quodvultdeus, *Liber de promissionibus et praedictionibus Dei*, 2.20.36-38. Cf. Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs*, 133.

[13] *Quodsi Iephtae optulit filiam suam virginem deo, non sacrificium placet, sed animus offerentis,* 'But if Jephthah offered his virgin daughter to God, the sacrifice was not pleasing but only the intention of the one offering it', Jerome, *Comm. Jer.* 2.45.4, quoted by Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs*, 123.

[14] Allan Menzies (ed.), *Origen's Commentary on John* (Grand Rapids, Michigan 1951), 377; Philip Schaff, ed., *Saint Chrysostom* (Grand Rapids, Michigan 1956), 434. Cf. Marcus, *Jephthah and his Vow*, 8.

Gaza (c. 520), who considered the vow fundamentally impious, stated that Abraham had never dreamt of such a sacrifice, but when commanded, he did not hesitate. Jephthah, in contrast, not only offered an insulting vow, but his daughter, by asking a two months postponement, was reluctant to suffer. That's why God did *not* stop the sacrifice, for she was not like Isaac, nor was her father like Abraham. Procopius underlined that vows – though never to be made lightly – should be swiftly fulfilled once made.[15] Isidore of Seville (c. 560-636) in the late sixth, early seventh century, partly followed Augustine in an almost exclusively typological account. Noteworthy is especially his untroubled admiration for a man who killed his daughter. Just like he would not question the necessity of the death of Christ, the death of Jephthah's daughter is likewise accepted as an exemplum given in the scriptural accounts.[16] The daughter, in Isidore's view, simply disappears into the flesh of her father: she possesses no independent existence, and therefore her sacrifice poses no moral dilemma. Jephthah himself is a type of Christ, who fulfilled all the sacraments of human salvation and offered to God his own flesh for the redemption of Israel.[17]

During the Middle Ages, several new lines of interpretation emerged, calling also more attention to Judges' apparent conflict with Hebrews 11:32, where Jephthah makes his appearance in the 'roll of heroes' of the Old Testament: 'What shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.'[18] Attempts to clarify this apparent Biblical discrepancy between the Old and the New Testament have been many. For example, Hugh of St. Cher (c. 1200-1263) called attention also to Jephthah's exemplary conduct in seeking peace with the Ammonites and Jephthah's repentance that must have followed the sacrifice in order for the New Testament to recall him as a hero of faith.[19] Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225-1274) noted, as had Augustine before him, that the Scriptural accounts reports that 'the spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah' before he made the vow: the faith and devotion which moved him to make the vow were from the Holy

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[15] Procopius of Gaza, *Commentarii in Iudices* 11:30. Cf. Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs*, 132.

[16] Isidore of Seville, *De ortu et obitu patrum* 30; *Qaesti.* 7.1-3 (see nt17). Cf. Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs*, 135-136; McGregor, 'Sense of Tragedy', 134.

[17] *Quis ergo in Jephte praenuntiabitur, nisi Dominus Jesus Christus... Qui omnia humanae salutis sacramenta... explevit, et quasi filiam, ita carnem propriam pro salute Israelis Domino obtulit,* Isidore of Seville, *Quaestiones in Vetus Testamentum*, 7.1-3, Migne, P.L., 83, 388-389, quoted by McGregor, 'Sense of Tragedy', 134; Shuger, *Renaissance Bible*, 144-145.

[18] Hebrews 11:32-34 (translation KJV). Cf. Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs*, 100.

[19] Hugh of St Cher, *Comm. Jud.* 11:12, 29-31. Cf. Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs*, 139.

Spirit. 'For this reason, because of the victory he had won and because he probably repented of his evil deed (which however prefigured something good) he is placed in the catalogue of the saints.'[20]

The transition from the Church Fathers to the Middle Ages had been fairly smooth. Many observations on the traditional topics were repeated over and over again: on the worries about the precedent the vow could have created, often connected with Abraham's sacrifice; on Jephthah's fidelity to an oath he swore; on the problems posed by the roll of heroes in Hebrews; on the admirable role of the daughter, but also negative concerns over her delay (as compared to Isaac's resolute obedience); on her retreat and sacrifice as a Christian virgin, presenting, or rather selling, Christian ascesis as a bloodless martyrdom for women; on the mystery of Christ's sacrifice. But there is no support for a precedent to be defended: praise for Jephthah would prove only to be possible if one assumed that, sooner or later, he had repented of his deed.[21]

In the fourteenth century, with Nicholas of Lyra (c. 1270-1349), the survivalist interpretation of Jephthah's story gained momentum. Basing himself on the argument introduced one and a half century earlier by the Jewish commentator David Kimhi (1160-1235) – though without mentioning his name – he concluded that Jephthah's daughter was not killed, but that she had become a nun in all but name, and was thus 'devoted' to the Lord. According to Thompson, Kimhi's key argument 'had entailed a reinterpretation of the Hebrew letter *waw* ('and') in the wording of Jephthah's vow. Instead of reading it conjunctively as 'and', Kimhi construed it disjunctively, as 'or'. The corrected text would read as follows: "Whatever comes forth from the doors of my house to meet me... shall be the Lord's *or* I will offer it up for a burnt offering.'"[22] Kimhi furthermore concluded that the daughter had said not to bewail her *death*, but her *virginity*, and that Jephthah did with her according to what he have vowed, which thus not necessarily meant killing her.[23] Lyra's position was soon attacked by more conventional Catholic readings, like those of Denis the Carthusian (1402-1471) a century later,[24] returning to the positions which had been taken by Josephus, Augustine and Aquinas.

Towards the Reformation era, most of the earlier interpretations resurfaced once again. With Martin Luther (1483-1546) we find an indictment of the vow as foolish and superstitious, of the sacrifice as

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[20] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 2a 2ae 88.2 ad 2, Blackfriars translation by Kevin D. O'Rourke, O.P., quoted by Sharratt and Walsh, *George Buchanan*, 16; see also Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs*, 140-141.

[21] Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs*, 148-149.

[22] Kimhi, *Comm. Jud.* 11:31; Lyra, *Comm. Jud.* 11. Cf. Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs*, 150-152.

[23] Marcus, *Jephthah and his Vow*, 8.

[24] Denis the Carthusian, *Comm. Jud.* 11. Cf. Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs*, 152-154.

needless, of Jephthah as rigid and foolishly consistent.[25] With Calvin (1509-1564) we find not a disapproval of vows in general, but of the content of this particular vow.[26] He later refers to Jephthah as acting diabolical: 'For see, this murderer of his own daughter, a despicable and outright diabolical crime'.[27] Several Protestant voices tried their hand again at the survivalists' theory, but the traditional view that Jephthah's daughter was killed by her father mostly prevailed. It shows nonetheless that it was not uncommon to defy 'official' party lines and be exposed to 'obvious polemical risks for a Protestant' in endorsing a degree of legitimacy to Jephthah's vow, and thus the Catholic clerical or monastic vows of celibacy against which Protestants were eager to protest.[28]

But the dividing line between Protestants and Roman-Catholics on the issue of the sacrifice proved even more unclear. Thompson convincingly falsifies Shuger's suggestion that 'Protestant survivalist readings of Jephthah's daughter [are] symptomatic of a more general hostility to the ostentatious ceremonialism of medieval Catholicism, particularly with respect to the Eucharistic sacrifice.' While this Protestant hostility to ceremony is a well-established fact, Thompson shows that Protestant exegesis, contrary to what one would expect, does not particularly resist to the daughter exemplifying a 'protonun'.[29] This line continues into the seventeenth century, of which Thompson only roughly provides the exegetical outlines, showing that the divisions between sacrificialists and survivalists does not fall along any denominational line, with both Calvinists, Puritans, and Catholics on both sides of the interpretational divide.[30] Thus, a playwright who wanted to compose a tragedy on the Jephthah theme was faced with a host of exegetical interpretations.

From theological theory to theatrical praxis

'By common consent, fictive or theatrical reconstructions of Biblical stories not only have greater freedom to fill in the silences of the text with feeling and pathos, they have that as their raison d'être. The playwright or poet thus enjoys a luxury most commentators deny themselves. (...) Poets are charged to inscribe depth of feeling. Commentators may well share such feeling, but the exegetical genre or ethos may inhibit its expression', as Thompson

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[25] Luther, *Tischreden*, §354; §2753b. Cf. Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs*, 155-156.
[26] Calvin, *Institutes* 4.13.3. Cf. Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs*, 160.
[27] *En enim propriae filiae parricidam, scelus detestandum et plane diabolicum*, Calvin, *Hom.* 3 on 1 Sam. 1:11-18, quoted by Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs*, 160.
[28] Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs*, 159; 169.
[29] Shuger, *Renaissance Bible*, 162-163; Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs*, 168-169.
[30] Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs*, 169-171.

strikingly remarks.[31] But the possibilities offered by the poetic genres are not just about filling in the silences with feeling and pathos. The poetic freedom also allows the poet to open up vast resources of literary techniques to get a message across to an audience. Its function is therefore not just to add a humanized depth to exegetical accounts, but also to effectively employ literary techniques in order to facilitate an effective transfer of theological and moral values.

This section will turn the attention from the exegetical background to the dramatic treatment of Judges 11 by George Buchanan and Cornelius à Marca. I will first provide a summary of Buchanan's play and of the *status quaestionis* with regard to the theological aspects involved. Next, I will move from Buchanan to A Marca through a structural comparison and an in-depth analysis of the presentation of the characters, the tragic focus and the dramatic methods employed.

Buchanan's Iephthes

Buchanan's *Iephthes* consists of seven episodes – it is not formally divided into acts – separated by six chorus songs.[32] A prologue is delivered by an angel, emphasizing the religious rebellion of the Israelites and the subsequent punishments – of which the Ammonite-threat is one – sent by God. The angel predicts the rise and fall of Jephthah, the latter of which will prevent him from becoming overconfident in his success.

The first episode involves Jephthah's wife, Storge, and his daughter Iphis. The wife does not make her appearance in the Bible, and was added by Buchanan, perhaps under influence of the mother addressed in the account by Pseudo-Philo, or of Iphigenia's mother Clytemnestra, in Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis*.[33] Storge relates a dream she had, in which a dog,

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[31] Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs*, 167.

[32] The most important works dealing with Buchanan's *Iephthes* are Lebègue, *Tragédie religieuse*, 225-254; Sharratt and Walsh, *George Buchanan*, 13-19; 21-94 (text and translation); 245-267 (notes); and McFarlane, *Buchanan*, 190-205. McFarlane also provides the current biography for Buchanan, replacing the older biography by Hume Brown, *George Buchanan*. A selection of works providing further insights into different aspects of *Iephthes*: Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs*, 165-169; Shuger, *Renaissance Bible*, 128-166; Sharratt, 'Euripides latinus'; Akkerman, 'A Spinozistic Perspective'; Stone, *Four Renaissance Tragedies*; Ephraim, *Reading the Jewish Woman*, 89-112; McGregor, 'Sense of Tragedy'; Sypherd, *Jephthah and his Daughter*, 13-20; Creizenach, *Geschichte des neueren Dramas*, II, 401-403; Porwig, *Der Jephtastoff*, 16-21.

[33] Cf. Sharratt and Walsh, *George Buchanan*, 248; Shuger, *Renaissance Bible*, 136. The name derives from the Greek *storgè*, denoting the natural affection between parents and children. In this chapter, I will not address the literary aspects of Lummenaeus' *Iepthe*, but it would surely be worth tracing his debts to various sources. Sharratt ('Euripides Latinus')

having chased off a wolf preying on a flock of sheep, itself attacks and kills some sheep. Storge prays that Iphis will be saved from misfortune, and is comforted by her: the daughter has a feeling her father will return victoriously from battle. She cannot, however, ease Storge's sorrows. In conclusion of the first episode, the chorus expresses its hope that the liberation will soon come. It expresses faith in God, who will surely not let the Ammonites' aggression go unpunished.

A messenger announces Jephthah's victory in the second episode. The Israelite leader had tried the ways of diplomacy, but to no avail. To ensure long-lasting peace, Jephthah destroyed cities and valiant men, but not the elderly, women and children. The chorus praises Jephthah's victory, and rejects idolatry. The women, especially Iphis, are summoned to prepare for the victor's homecoming.

We enter the third episode with a monologue by Jephthah. The Israelites had indeed once been unfaithful and abandoned by God, but He had now returned and blessed them with fortune and success. Jephthah, having returned victoriously, reiterates the oath he had sworn. Next, Iphis comes forward to meet him and naively spurs him to fulfill his vows in full, even though Jephthah will not tell her what it is that bothers him. A friend of the family, Symmachus, assures Iphis that he will do everything he can to obtain more information. The chorus supports Symmachus in his task and comments on the wickedness of evil.

The fourth episode opens with a dialogue between Symmachus and Jephthah, in which Jephthah gives away his secret, regrets the divine help he invoked, and lets Symmachus talk him into seeking professional advice before going forward with the sacrifice. The chorus will warn the mother and daughter, and wonders whether it is the daughter or the father who need its sympathy most.

A theological discussion between Jephthah and a priest is brought on stage in the fifth episode. The priest emphasizes that only lawful vows should be made. Jephthah and the priest argue about which is worse in the face of God's Law: not fulfilling vows (so Jephthah), or killing ones own children (so the priest, making explicit the tragic dilemma). The priest considers Jephthah's views utterly foolish and ignorant.

Storge, in the sixth episode, was looking forward to her daughter's marriage, but now rather wants to die with her. Jephthah considers himself even more unfortunate than his wife, for he will be committing a crime. Storge calls upon her daughter to try and soften Jephthah's ill-fated determination. Iphis pleas for mercy, asking him if she's ever done him wrong. Jephthah admits his mistake, and wishes his own death could save her. Iphis then acknowledges that the suffering of her father without doubt

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has analyzed Buchanan's use of Euripides, traces of which will inevitable have come through to Lummenaeus' play.

equals hers. She comforts both her parents and asks her mother not to be grievous towards her husband. The chorus praises Iphis, and promises her name will be remembered worldwide, while those who are unwilling to die nobly, will die anonymously.

In the seventh episode, Iphis has been sacrificed, and Storge commands a messenger to tell her all the gruesome details: Iphis ascended bravely onto the altar, and prayed, utterly prepared to sacrifice herself for the sake of her fatherland. The messenger finally reports that both Jephthah and the priest had been unable to control their emotions. The mother's grief will be great, so he says, but her daughter's conduct will be a great consolation. The mother cannot but disagree: the braver her daughter in the face of death, the greater her own grief.

The theological implications

Much has been written about the theological aspects of Buchanan's play. Raymond Lebègue, in 1929, concluded that the play held a firm place in the theological debates of the day: 'We again find Buchanan's habitual attacks on the ignorance and arrogance of priests, and against the cult of statues; we discover that, indirectly, he wanted to disapprove of the priests and monks who, by means of a vow, committed themselves for life, and who, according to him, violated their vows of chastity and poverty with simple excuses.'[34] Later scholars, like Fokke Akkerman and Donald Stone, shared Lebègues vision of Buchanan's play as a 'crypto-Protestant' drama, directed against vows and serving a polemical point.[35] Stone even implied that the play is weakened, because it does not resolve the issue of the vow,[36] but this would then go for many, if not most, of the Jephthah-drama's which were to follow Buchanan's.[37] Recent scholars, however, have been challenging these earlier perceptions of Buchanan's drama.

Crucial in Lebègue's interpretation is the Portuguese lawsuit of 1550, in which Buchanan was examined by the Inquisition.[38] Suspected of heterodox views, his treatment of the issue of the vow was also questioned. Buchanan later wrote that he had replied: 'On vows I have demonstrated my

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[34] 'On retrouve ses [i.e. Buchanan's] habituelles attaques contre l'ignorance et les prétentions des prêtres et contre le culte des statues, et l'on découvre qu'indirectement il a voulu blâmer les prêtres et les moines qui, par un voeu, s'engagent pour la vie et qui, selon lui, enfreignent, au moyen d'excuses commodes, leurs voeux de chasteté ou de pauvreté.' Lebègue, *Tragédie religieuse*, 234.

[35] Akkerman, 'A Spinozistic perspective', 168-169; Stone, *Four Renaissance Tragedies*, xi-xix; Ephraim, *Reading the Jewish Woman*, 103; McGregor, 'Sense of Tragedy', 135; Mueller, *Children of Oedipus*, 166.

[36] McGregor, 'Sense of Tragedy', 135; Stone, *Four Renaissance Tragedies*, xvi-xviii.

[37] Parente, *Religious Drama*, 147.

[38] Lebègue, *Tragédie religieuse*, 229-234, addressing 'les intentions de l'auteur'.

opinion by what I have written in the tragedy on Jephthah's vow, of which this is the main argument: vows that are legitimately made, are to be kept. Many also know that at Coimbra I enthusiastically used to read - and always to laud – the speech of Bartholomew Latomus versus Bucer on these matters.'[39] Apparently, the answer had satisfied the inquisitors. Lebègue assumed that Buchanan was at the time influenced by this controversy between Latomus and Bucer, the first holding the strict Catholic view (from the Church Fathers onwards, as we have seen) that vows must be fulfilled, but that God was only grateful for legitimate vows and not for criminal ones; the latter believing that foolish and criminal vows were not binding.[40] In Buchanan's play, most notably in the theological discussion with the priest, Jephthah would then roughly claim Latomus' position, implying that the priest's position would be the Protestant one. The priest would then take his cue directly from Calvin's attack on vows as an arrogation by man of the right to determine the form of worship, for which the motive was not piety, but arrogance.[41] According to Lebègue, as quoted above, the priestly vow of chastity would be one of such vows, which was therefore indirectly criticized by Buchanan. Unfortunately, Lebègue does not provide any other 'evidence' when demonstrating this point, except as given here. But in any case, Lebègue attempted to pinpoint the individual characters and their strict theological positions – as I will do in my analysis of Lummenaeus' play. He did not, however, take into account the overall structure of the play and the characters' positions in the play as a whole. Peter Sharratt and Patrick Walsh have attempted to show that, even though Lebègue's argument proves that the issue was indeed somewhat topical, Buchanan probably did not engage in a topical theological debate – if only because most of the relevant material in the Latomus-Bucer argument was published too late. In the dramatic debate they recognized Buchanan's interest in the potential for intellectual drama, rather than in reform propaganda.[42] James McGregor, paying due attention to the different dramatic positions – not just the strict theological ones – taken by the characters, noted that the Scotchman's plot does not revolve around the question of the vow, but around *how exactly* the vow is fulfilled. Since, McGregor argues, adhering to the proper Catholic position

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[39] *De votis scripto in tragoedia de voto Iephte meam sententiam ostendi cuius disputationis haec summa est: vota quae licite fiunt omnia servanda, ac multi etiam sciunt Conimbricae me orationem Barpt. Latomi super hac re contra Bucerum et legere libenter solitum, et semper laudare.* Aitken, J.M., *The Trial of George Buchanan before the Lisbon Inquisition, including the Text of Buchanan's Defences along with a Translation and Commentary*, Edinburgh 1939, p. 12, quoted by Sharratt and Walsh, *George Buchanan*, 14 (19nt3; 20nt21).

[40] A similar argument can be found with Calvin, *Sic Jephtha stultitiae suae poenas dedit, cum praecipiti fervore inconsideratum votum concepit*, 'Thus Jephthah was punished for his foolishness, when he uttered a thoughtless vow with headlong ardor', quoted by McFarlane, *Buchanan*, 196.

[41] Mueller, *Children of Oedipus*, 166; McGregor, 'Sense of Tragedy', 135-137.

[42] Sharratt and Walsh, *George Buchanan*, 14-15.

on vows, as Buchanan said he held, would in itself not produce tragedy at all, this would to a certain degree be an explanation of why the issue of the vow was left unresolved.[43] We will return to this later, when addressing Lummenaeus dealing with these issues.

Not only the discussion on vows was topical in sixteenth-century Europe, even more so the matter of the Eucharist was extensively discussed and Buchanan seems to have been particularly interested in it. In the law suit mentioned above, Buchanan also claims to have taken part in the discussion on the sacrifice of the mass, though his exact position does not become clear, other than having certain doubts about the Eucharist. Perhaps it could be linked indirectly to the sacrifice of the mass, since Jephthah's sacrifice of his daughter can be seen to parallel God's sacrifice of his son[44] – an interpretation, as we have seen, dating back all the way too Augustine and Quodvultdeus. Shuger considered the comparison to this pagan ceremonial to be supported by the frequent attacks on sacrifice, theater, and Catholic worship by Protestant writers, who objected to Eucharistic sacrifice because it resembled a stage play, and to plays because they resembled papist ceremonies.[45] But even so, any conclusions on this theoretical dividing line between Catholics and Protestants cannot be readily drawn solely by means of determining the various dramatic treatments of the story, since all sixteenth-century playwrights, be it Lutheran, Jesuit, or Buchanan himself, presupposed the sacrificial death of Jephthah's daughter.[46] Lebègue noted the exegetical tradition in viewing Jephthah as the prefiguration of Jesus Christ, and his daughter as prefiguring the Church, but he does not make clear how Buchanan's *Iephthes* would have fitted.[47] McGregor, on the other hand, isolated the chorus as the identifier of the daughter's Christic antetype. It is to the daughter that the chorus in the end turns in love. The final, loving chorus – answering to Isidore's allegory of the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter – recognized in the daughter's willing sacrifice a source of pride and hope for Israel, signifying its confidence in Christ, as He is foreshadowed by her.[48] Sharratt and Walsh, again, demonstrate a certain topicality of the typological interpretation in mid-sixteenth-century France, but leave rather unmotivated why Buchanan nevertheless stands aside from the discussion about the allegorical approach to the story of Jephthah.[49] Thompson notes that 'indeed, [the daughter] is clearly intended to stand as a type of Christ',[50] but whether or not he bases his statement on textual

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[43] McGregor, 'Sense of Tragedy', 135; 137.
[44] Sharratt and Walsh, *George Buchanan*, 18.
[45] Shuger, *Renaissance Bible*, 163.
[46] Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs*, 168-169. Cf. above, p. 178.
[47] Lebègue, *Tragédie religieuse*, 229.
[48] McGregor, 'Sense of Tragedy', 132-134.
[49] Sharratt and Walsh, *George Buchanan*, 16-17.
[50] Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs*, 167.

'evidence' or rather the exegetical history of Judges 11 alone, remains a guess. Shuger, on the other hand, concentrated on the transformation of Buchanan's daughter in a type of Christ, as the Christic resonances in her final speech and the grasp of her death as an expiatory sacrifice made this transformation, in her view, unmistakable.[51]

As with the exegetical tradition of Judges 11, here too we find a whole range of possible interpretations. In my view, the more recent scholars have at least been right to focus more exclusively on the daughter's position than on the issue of the vow, which does, indeed, remain unresolved. Making use of the scholarly findings with regard to Buchanan's play, I will now turn my attention to Lummenaeus' play: is it perhaps possible to construct an interpretation that is extracted from and consistent with the positions held by the different characters and the dramatic balance thus created by the author?

From Buchanan to Lummenaeus

As I have stated in the introduction to this chapter, taking up the glove with Buchanan should ideally presuppose a certain degree of awareness of the issues discussed above. While the dedicatory letter and its strict literary focus certainly do not imply that Lummenaeus had a complete understanding of the theological, literary and contextual workings of Buchanan's tragedy and the Jephthah-theme (besides the fact that a play's contextual relevance may well have changed some fifty years later, in another place), or that the issues discussed above would indeed have been anywhere close to relevant in sixteenth-century France to begin with, or, for that matter, that *our* understanding of these issues is anything more than an educated guess, we can at the very least assume that Lummenaeus had read Buchanan's play.[52] Therefore, the scholarly investigations of Buchanan's drama still provide an excellent opportunity for an initial confrontation with Lummenaeus' own tragedy, even if Lummenaeus, in his preface, does not seem specifically worried by the exegetical possibilities and pitfalls of the Jephthah-theme, and not even implies that Buchanan's drama had been in any way preoccupied with these problems. The fact that Lummenaeus mentions Buchanan without any reservation is perhaps already a telling fact in itself.

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[51] Shuger, *Renaissance Bible*, 148. She notes especially ll. 1413-19.

[52] Merlevede, *Het* Iephte-*drama*, 178-181 gives a concise account of several verbal reminiscences of Buchanan found in Lummenaeus' tragedy. He strikingly notes that Lummenaeus' reference to Medea (cf. the preface to *Iephte* above) might also allude to Buchanan, since the latter had also composed a translation of Euripides' *Medea*. Cf. for a complete overview of Buchanan's works, including his translations of classical plays, McFarlane, *Buchanan*, Appendix A: Works by Buchanan (esp. pp. 498-500).

Keeping the exegetical history of Judges 11 and the interpretational problems with regard to Buchanan's drama in mind, I will now initiate an analysis of Lummenaeus' *Iephte*. The main task will be to establish the tragic focus of Lummenaeus as opposed to Buchanan, in order to be able to determine the theological emphasis of both authors. To this end, as with my investigation of the historical-political context of Lummenaeus' *Carcer Babylonius* elsewhere in this thesis, the tragic focus will be identified through a preliminary comparison of the dramatic structure of Buchanan's and Lummenaeus' plays, followed by a thorough definition of the different characters' positions in Lummenaeus' tragic narrative. Having identified the tragic focus, I will construct a well-founded insight into the contextual orientations of Lummenaeus' drama.[53] Towards the conclusion, we will hopefully be able to establish the theological position of Lummenaeus' play, the effects it could have sorted, and the means by which these were effectuated.

Lummenaeus' Iephte[54]

Lummenaeus' *Iephte* is a five-act tragedy, with further divisions into separate scenes.[55] The first act – there is no separate prologue – opens with Jephthah himself, on the eve of the battle against the Ammonites, while he justifies his call upon God's assistance in this mighty battle to come, to destroy the enemies that will otherwise soon invade His temples and desecrate His altars. When Jephthah has made his vow, he senses something moving his soul quite ardently [i.e. the Spirit of the Lord, as Judges 11:29]. Emphasis is placed, by the chorus, on the supposed dangers of rashness and overconfidence, but it wishes Jephthah all the best in the upcoming battle.

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[53] This approach is in a way similar to McGregor's, who attempts to establish first the nature of the 'action' which the play narrates, and then, more specifically, the nature of the action of individual characters, which includes e.g. also the omnipresent, but not actually represented, character of God. Cf. McGregor, 'Sense of Tragedy', 128-129. For Lummenaeus' *Iephte*, I would not like to determine the 'action' of, but the positions of value held by the characters (cf. the introduction to this thesis).

[54] All references to the play are based on the 1608[-1609] edition of the *Iephte*. Cf. below, p. 202nt102.

[55] This division into a total of twelve scenes makes the play more dynamic than Lummenaeus' other tragedies, which are indefinitely more static. Cf. Janning, *Der Chor*, 272; and chapter two of this thesis. Lummenaeus' *Iephte* has been discussed only by a handful of scholars, and for the most part rather superficially. The most important works – to which I will refer below when applicable – are: Merlevede, *Het* Iephte-*drama*, passim; Parente, 'The Paganization of Biblical Tragedy', passim; Janning, *Der Chor*, 272-276. Some brief, rather descriptive studies are Worp, *Geschiedenis van het drama*, vol. 1, 226-227; Porwig, *Der Jephtastoff*, 27-29; Sypherd, *Jephthah and his Daughter*, 44-46. Some minor comparative work has also been included by Führer, *Studien zu Jacob Baldes* Jephtias, 121-123.

The second scene of the first act moves the setting from the field of battle to the house of Jephthah, where mother Iris and daughter Hyanthe anxiously await his return.[56] The mother is troubled by the unpredictable nature of war, the grievous effects of *furor*. She has an anxious foreboding, but there is no mention of a dream. The daughter, as an omen of the role she will come to play, comforts her mother. But then a messenger arrives, announcing Jephthah's victory and swift return, after which he narrates the course of the battle fought. Only Jephthah had stood fast and courageous, while encouraging his fleeing men to fight bravely [the Spirit of the Lord!]. Eventually, even Ammon himself had been killed. Having both listened to this joyous news, Hyanthe nonetheless needs to comfort her mother's ill-foreboding once more, after which the daughter joyously starts making preparations for her father's return. The chorus bursts out in *cantus*, joyous songs, having forgotten its own warning regarding the dangers of *furor* and overconfidence now that Jephthah's victory and return have been announced.

In the second act, Lummenaeus diligently portrays the longing of Hyanthe for her father, creating *pathos*. The chorus, in its turn, emphasizes her craving as well. When eventually Jephthah is in sight, the chorus encourages Hyanthe to go out and meet him, unwittingly attributing to disaster and thus heightening the dramatic tension by instigating the tragic turn of events. This turn is, at least for the audience, instantly effectuated by the first word of Jephthah upon seeing his daughter (l. 371): *perii*, it is all over for me! In the following dialogue between father and daughter, he cannot find the strength to express what is bothering him. Hyanthe is sent indoors in ignorance instead. Jephthah's subsequent monologue – briefly – exemplifies his inner struggle, but after having being torn to and fro, he concludes: one cannot argue with God, the *votum* has been given and has to be kept. The *scelus*, the crime, i.e. the sacrifice, has to be committed, so he says. When in the final scene of the second act the women – ignorant, but sad nonetheless – return on stage, Jephthah finally finds the words and strength to tell of his *votum*. The mother is shocked: while she encourages Hyanthe to soften her father's heart with her pleas, the daughter eventually decides to obey her father's firm will. Iris collapses mentally, while Hyanthe

[56] Merlevede (*Het* Iephte-*drama*, 165) supposes the name Hyanthe derives from Ovidius' *Metamorphoses*, book 9, where Buchanan most likely got the name of 'his' daughter (Iphis) as well (besides being a variation on *Iphigeneia*). Lummenaeus, therefore, recognized Buchanan's sources and drew on those as well. Iris, the name of the mother, appears to be merely a variation on Ovid's/Buchanan's Iphis. Furthermore, Lummenaeus picked Telethusa – a name used by Ovid for the mother of Iphis – as the name of one of Hyanthe's friends. In later editions of *Iephte* (Rome 1624 and Douai 1628), Lummenaeus in fact names the mother of Hyanthe Telethusa, instead of Iris. This, in my view, is a clear marker of Lummenaeus' overt connection to Ovidius. However, the ease with which names are shifted may indicate that we should not attach too much importance to their meanings.

asks for a two-month delay to bewail her fate. The chorus calls fate fickle, disapproves of the sacrifice and of Jephthah, and will accompany Hyanthe in her fate.

A servant girl, Cleanthe, describes the troubled mood of Jephthah's house in the third act: the mother cursing the father, the father cursing the mother, and Hyanthe in between. A discussion between Hyanthe and Iris follows: the mother condemns the act as a crime, Hyanthe accepts her fate: her father owes his victory (and thus, though not directly stated, the freedom of the people) to his vow. The chorus, like the mother, condemns the act as a crime. The final chorus song of the third act then masks a time lapse, describing how Hyanthe had spent her time in the mountains: during the day she would be with her maiden friends; the nights she would spend with her mother.

The fourth act brings a scene between Hyanthe and the maidens, in the mountains. The end of her two month delay is drawing near. Hyanthe is afraid, fears the coming of Jephthah, but gathers strength and decides not to wait for him but to return home herself, even though her maidens try to convince her to stay. In the end, however, they vow to accompany her in her fate. The second scene brings the mother. She was expecting her daughter: the night fell, but Hyanthe had still not shown up. She is struck by a sudden fear: maybe her daughter's friends know where she is? Maybe she had cut short her father's vow by dying from fear? The mother will look for Hyanthe's friends and try to find out what happened, but she fears she will be too late. The final scene brings us the old man Iosabas: he relates only briefly of the sacrifice which has already taken place, of Hyanthe who called for her father, but more often for her mother. Then he focuses on the mother: who will tell her? For she does not yet know of the sacrifice! Then he sees Jephthah drawing near, sword in hand, red with blood. He stands still and rages, furiously, full of tears, and has completely gone insane. The chorus reiterates the fact that the sacrifice is completed, how the father forced the priest to cut his daughter open. The mother, in the meantime, is still ignorant, but is then seen drawing near. The chorus runs off.

In the fifth act, the mother enters the stage. A messenger comes, who relates the sacrifice in detail. The description is very vivid and emotional: the girl was prepared to die and uncovered her breast for her father, who forced the priest to kill her. She never flinched, her eyes towards the sky, until her soul left her body and sank into the fire. The blistering sound of her flesh in the sacrificial flames made the father break free from his *apatheia*; he screamed and cried, for he saw *his* blood being shed. The messenger finished, the mother fainted. A long chorus song concludes the play, like a lamentation, showing the small material pieces of Hyanthe that are left: some jewelry, clothes, her ashes. Hyanthe lives on inside their hearts, and will be remembered every year; the suffering will be for eternity.

Structural comparison

Having discussed the contents of both Buchanan's and Lummenaeus' play, I will now compare the dramatic structure of both tragedies, as a step towards determining the tragic focus of Lummenaeus' *Iephte*. Let us therefore first draw up a concise comparison of the significant choices Buchanan and Lummenaeus made in dramatically structuring the Jephthah-episode.

As we have seen, Buchanan first stages an angel, offering an insight into God's divine justice to be brought upon Jephthah. Then, after having staged the mother, who related her ominous dream and worries to her daughter, Buchanan firmly emphasizes (by means of a messenger) the events leading up to the Ammonite war, the attempt to negotiate a truce with Ammon, the violent battle and subsequent victory. Only then the reader is confronted with Jephthah himself, repeating the same oath he had apparently also sworn before going into battle. He returns home, and is greeted, to his great dismay, by his daughter. It is only with the greatest of difficulty that Jephthah gives vent to his precarious situation to his servant Symmachus, while the mother and the daughter are still ignorant. The chorus announces its plan to inform mother and daughter about the vow, but they will return on stage only in the sixth episode, when they have already been informed. Lummenaeus' tragedy opens with Jephthah's monologue, in which we actually hear him pronounce the vow before the battle. There is no mention of the failed negotiations, or of God's divine justice. Only then are we confronted with the mother and the daughter, who express similar worries about Jephthah's fate, after which a messenger arrives to announce the news of Jephthah's victory. When he finally returns home, the mother and daughter only learn with the greatest of difficulty of Jephthah's vow. After a short debate between mother and father, the daughter accepts her fate and retreats to the mountains. In Lummenaeus' play, we have now reached about line 650 (out of 1557 lines); in Buchanan's, about line 840 (out of 1450).

This very concise comparison of the initial phases of both tragedies makes clear that the most significant differences include Lummenaeus' shedding of the divine prologue; the absence in Lummenaeus' play of Jephthah's negotiations with the Ammonites; as well as the presence of Jephthah's reluctant informing of his family in person.

In the second half of his tragedy, Buchanan allows ample room for a theological discussion between Jephthah and a priest – for which the debate with Symmachus had just been a mere appetizer – as well as a confrontation between the mother, the daughter and Jephthah, after which a messenger reports to the mother the sacrifice of her daughter and the emotional outburst of Jephthah. Lummenaeus, on the other hand, had already moved forward the confrontation between the mother, the daughter, and Jephthah. Instead, he allows ample room for relating the daughter's retreat in the

mountains, her lamentations, the nightly visits to her mother. When one night the daughter does not return to visit her mother, the latter grows worried. Her ill foreboding, so the audience is informed, turns out to be true: the old man Iosabas relates of the daughter's sacrifice, but he dramatically emphasizes that the mother is still ignorant. A messenger then reports to the mother her daughter's death, and a long lamentation by her maiden friends concludes the tragedy.

In the second part, we note especially the absence of any thorough (theological) discussion in Lummenaeus' work, as well as the absence of the daughter's retreat in Buchanan's. Structural importance is also assigned to the chorus-ending of Lummenaeus' play. Significant, too, are the descriptions of the sacrifice itself, but these will be addressed in more detail below.

Presentation of characters

Keeping these major shifts in structure in mind, we will now first turn to Lummenaeus' dramatic presentation of the main characters, including the chorus. Lebègue provided an overview of the characters of Buchanan's tragedy,[57] but only *after* having established the theological positions taken up in the drama. I will here attempt to use the dramatic characterizations for establishing not only the individual theological positions taken, but most of all the overall impression that the audience is left with by the author, with which they are sent home, so to speak.

Jephthah

Jephthah's appearance is limited to the first two acts. In the first act he pronounces the opening monologue, in which he justifies the war against the Ammonites and makes the vow. In the second act the audience is witness to his homecoming and unfortunate encounter with Hyanthe, the subsequent, non-fruitful discussion with Hyanthe, his soliloquy that follows, and his final, unveiling discussion with both Iris and Hyanthe. After the initial, joyful announcement of Jephthah's victory, his first words when encountering his daughter, mark the tragic turn: 'HYA I see my father; father, hello father. / IEP It is all over for me! HYA What is it that I hear? IEP I'm finished, ah I'm finished' (370-371).[58] In the subsequent dialogue with his daughter, Jephthah cannot find the strength to tell her the truth. Instead, he acts harshly to the ignorant daughter, but through this emotional harshness,

[57] Lebègue, *Tragédie religieuse*, 239-241.
[58] HYA *Video parentem; Pater, io salve pater.* / IEP *Perij.* HYA *Quid isthoc audio?* IEP *Perî, ah peri.*

his deeply troubled character reveals an intense love for his daughter, as if he is protecting himself from further harm by not letting his emotions gain control. His emotions have to give way to his piety: no matter how he personally feels about the sacrifice, the initial vow has been legitimately made, because the precarious situation with the Ammonites called for drastic measures – even though the consequences were unforeseen. His inner monologue reveals his troubled character, but is not specifically emphasized in the play as a whole.[59] The subsequent discussion between mother, father, and daughter summons emotional reactions, but lacks any theological depth. For Jephthah, the underlying reasoning is clear. Still, however, he sometimes seems to crumble in front of his daughter, who has been summoned by her mother to soften her father's heart. But the incessantly brief answers of Jephthah are unambiguous: 'I have vowed, and I'm forced to keep it: it is God's command' (519);[60] 'Words are of no use, / we have made a vow, Hyanthe, it is up to me to fulfil it, / up to you to suffer it' (542-544);[61] 'IEP Stop your laments. IRIS Then give me what you owe me. / IEP Your suffering will be endless, / I will do it: I owe my daughter, my daughter I will give' (581-583);[62] 'I have vowed. That does not change, and that is all there is to it' (600).[63] His answers are brief but decisive, though he struggles not to let his family's, or his own, emotions get the better of him. The vow is legitimate, and therefore needs to be followed through.

He only reappears as a mute character in the fourth act – when Iosabas sees him running around in tears, infuriated. He is mentioned as well in the messenger's account of the fifth act: during the sacrifice, he had made a numb impression, until his daughter's body sank into the fire and the hissing noises unleashed his passion: he gave a horrible cry and burst into tears, seeing *his* blood being shed on the altar.

Hyanthe

The daughter personifies the tragic turn of the play. Her first appearance decidedly marks her love for her father, but is simultaneously drenched in

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[59] 'In der Charakterisierung Jephtas zeigt Lummenaeus mehr psychologisches Verständnis [i.e. than Buchanan], wenn er den Helden, in einem Monologe mit sich ringend, zur völligen Ratlosigkeit in Bezug auf die Notwendigkeit dieses unmenschlichen Opfers gelangen läßt,' Porwig, *Der Jephtastoff*, 28.

[60] *Vovi, coactus teneor, ita mandat Deus.*

[61] *Verba proficient nihil, / vovimus Hyanthe, reddere incumbit mihi / perferre tibi.*

[62] IEP *Abrumpe questus.* IRIS *Redde quam debes mihi.* / IEP *Tuus sibi ipsi non facit finem dolor, / iam facio, natam debeo, natam dabo.*

[63] *Vovimus. Fixum est, sat est.*

wordplay and dramatic irony to reiterate the tragic turn:[64] when comforting her mother's ominous foreboding, she assures her that 'father will return unharmed, / triumphant after having faced the fearsome enemy: / God always serves the better vow' (181-183);[65] and elsewhere: 'Oh how my craving soul longs to see your face, dear father. I'm finished: why do you take so long?' (242-243);[66] or 'Let it be, mother, what is there to fear? / Now, dedicate me to my father in festive ceremony / and I will stand in front. IRIS Blessed are you, my daughter: do so, and may that piety of yours always grow' (250-253).[67] Thus, when considering the irony in words like *meliora vota*, *pereo*, *macta/macte, festis cultibus, prima sistam,* and Hyanthe's growing *pietas*, her attempts to comfort her mother are themselves, so the audience knows, ominous as well.

Hyanthe's character is construed along similar lines as her father's. While she at first is emotionally shocked by the sacrificial prospect, she soon acknowledges the underlying necessity. After rather passively observing the discussion between her mother and father – which, as stated, is not a real discussion to begin with, but just a confrontation between emotional objections (Iris) and steadfast religious piety (Jephthah) –, she makes up her mind and accepts the pious necessity: 'Leave it, mother. IRIS I have become completely insane here. / HYA Let it be, mother: I owe to father / all he has vowed' (587-589).[68] To her mother, however, Hyanthe makes clear that her willingness to accept her fate is not solely governed by her piety, but also by her love for and obedience to her father, who, she recognizes, also has no choice but to accept his fate. To her mother, Hyanthe – now that her father has left the stage – openly assumes *his* role, reproducing *his* arguments: '[Father] has made a vow and he owes it to God. / IRIS But your intestines and your organs are not pleasing to the Gods. / HYA But vows always are!' (685-687).[69] The discussion is – still – not primarily about the validity of the vow, but rather about the issue of human sacrifice, considered barbaric by the mother, but a mere unfortunate result of a legitimate vow by the father and the daughter. The legitimacy of the vow appears to be addressed briefly in the lines following 687 (cf. above), where Hyanthe firmly reiterates that *vicit his votis Pater* (688; 695), 'with these vows father has been victorious', while the mother protests *non vicit istis* (690), 'he has won, but surely not

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[64] Absence of dramatic irony in Lummenaeus' *Iephte* was noted by Merlevede (*Het* Iephte-*drama*, 167), but these passages clearly suggest otherwise.

[65] *(...) veniet incolumis pater / et victor et defunctus hostili metu: / meliora semper vota tutatur Deus.*

[66] *Quam pronus animus in tuos vultus avet / dilecte Genitor, pereo, cur nectis moras?*

[67] *Omitte mater, ecquid etiamnum times? / Ergo me parenti macta festis cultibus / Et prima sistam.* IRIS *Macte nata, sic age, / et ista pietas semper accrescat tibi.*

[68] *Omitte mater.* IRIS *Penitus in furias agor.*/ HYA *Omitte mater ista, patri debeo / quaecumque vovit.*

[69] *Vovit* [sc. *pater*] *et debet Deo.* / IRIS *Non illa superos exta, non placant fibrae.* / HYA *At vota semper.*

thanks to the vows'. But the opposition is not developed any further in the ensuing discussion.

In the fourth act, Hyanthe has retreated with her girlfriends into the mountains, and the opportunity is seized by the author to underline the contrast between emotional desires and pious necessity. In the lengthy passage, running from lines 811 to 1117, Hyanthe bravely counters the emotional charges from her friends. When her time is up, she will not hide in the mountains, nor will she accept that her friends want to die with her. Sometimes, indeed, she hesitates – something she did not do with her mother – almost giving in to her friends' sorrowful plight. But towards the end of the passage, when her time has run out, her humble determination gains strength: 'Nothing remains for me; father / is waiting for me, and has already constructed the altar with the merciless stake. / There is nothing more I can do. Lead me, girls, though full of fear I am' (1104-1106).[70] Though she will not reappear again, her sacrifice is described in detail by a messenger in the fifth act. He recounts that she, though initially frightened by the fire and the swords, gathered all her strength and ascended onto the altar. During the sacrifice, she never gave a sound and kept her eyes fixated at the heavens above, until her soul left her blood-stained body. Both her constancy and determination are thus firmly emphasized.

Iris

The mother is a character that represents the understandable, maternal reaction to the sacrificial death of her child.[71] From the beginning, her appearances are filled with fear and anxiety, except for the brief moment right after the messenger's announcement of Jephthah's victory, i.e. right before the tragic turn of events. Her reactions have already been described in the discussions of Jephthah's and Hyanthe's characters above, for she mostly serves as an emotional counter-weight to their decisiveness. Needless to say, her obvious hysteria results from her intense love for both her husband and her daughter, as well as from her incapacity to influence the outcome of the tragic events. The dramatic voice of an emotional mother clearly finds no audience with Jephthah and Hyanthe, and her claims that 'it is a vain superstition to offer up someone else's blood. God has never looked upon such a sacrificial victim, / mankind does not even sacrifice livestock to him / by shedding blood. Crimes are not pleasing to God' (577-

[70] *Nil mihi restat, pater / exspectat, aramque impia struxit pyra, / nec plura possum, ducite exanguem metu.*

[71] As Korsten noted with regard to the mother in Vondel's *Ieptha*: '[She] must bear the heaviest weight on her shoulders that a mother can: the death of a child' (Korsten, *Sovereignty as Inviolability*, 142).

580),[72] are not properly answered, for Jephthah apparently considers them the result of her emotional state (cf. lines 581-583 above).

Chorus

The chorus accounts for 34% of the entire play (528 lines),[73] with its final song being the longest with 194 lines. If one would also count the lines of the individual members of the chorus who engage in dialogue with Hyanthe in the fourth act, the chorus total would be higher still.

Generally, the chorus roughly claims the same position as the mother, though its position does shift slightly towards the end of the play. In the first act, it reacts to Jephthah's impending attack on the Ammonites. Like the mother, an inexplicable fear suddenly comes over the chorus, when in clear and fluent lines it expresses: 'Does even our voice itself stop / without apparent reason? / Whatever it is, it is a great evil / for which so much fear is generated' (102-105).[74] Like the mother, it briefly rejoices over Ammon's defeat and Jephthah's victory, bursting out in a song which is not without dramatic irony: 'Fame will honour you [sc. Jephthah] with perpetual markers, / and recall your name: / virtue brought about by deeds / will never submerge in death. / Where the sun is born in the purple sky, / where it dies in the sea, / there fame will announce Jephthah's honour' (296-302).[75] Like the mother, the chorus bewails the human sacrifice, wishing to be Hyanthe's companion on her fatal journey. It does not question the necessity of the vow: 'Alas, bound by her father's vows / she will pollute the altars by having her blood shed' (622-623).[76]

As we have seen, the chorus members individually attempt to persuade Hyanthe to stay in the mountains with them, but to no avail: Hyanthe's preparedness to obey her inborn piety prevails. Following Iosabas' concise account of the sacrifice, the chorus elaborates upon his words. Indeed, Hyanthe has been sacrificed and the chorus saw it all. Not yet, however, does it focus on Hyanthe's role, but rather, like Iosabas, on the fact that the mother is still ignorant. Then, in the final song, the chorus' lyrical Latin gains momentum, providing with its style such strength as if it

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[72] *Religio vana est, sanguinem alienum dare. / Adhaec quod istam victimam nunquam Deus / adspexit, illi pecora non homines litant / fuso cruore, scelera non placant Deum.*

[73] Cf. the table on p. 109.

[74] *An ipsa vox in faucibus / compressa sine caussa stupet? / Quodcumque id est, grande est malum / pro quo tot erumpunt metus.*

[75] *Te* [sc. *Iephten*] *signis recolet fama perennibus, / et nomen referet tuum: / non unquam Stygio flumine mergitur / virtus parta Laboribus: / qua Sol purpureo nascitur aethere / qua denascitur aequore, / Iephtaeos titulos fama loquacior.* Jephthah's name will even be remembered in the land where the sun sets, i.e. in the West, which can, from an Israeli perspective, easily be understood as Lummenaeus' own Western-Europe.

[76] *Heu, heu, votis vincta paternis / sanguine fuso polluet aras.*

was to carry the girl's spirit to heaven on the carriage that is their lamentation. The chorus works its way towards a beautiful climax, in which attention centres not on tragic shock and awe, but on praise, lamentation and song.[77] Their lament signifies the first of those which they then and there 'vow' will be held in Hyanthe's honour for all the years to come: 'This is the last thing we will vow in mourning you, / Hyanthe: whenever this day will return to us, / you too will return to us. We will bewail you / every year, and our pain will live forever' (1552-1555).[78]

On a side note, the chorus also serves a practical end in theatrical terms, e.g. in describing scenes at which the audience had not been present (but, since it consists of Hyanthe's friends, its accounts are 'coloured' and not free from emotions) and in masking time lapses. In recognizing Buchanan's indebtedness to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Lummenaeus also got the name for one of the individual chorus members from the Roman poet.[79]

Tragic focus: a comparison

Having established both a structural comparison between Lummenaeus' and Buchanan's plays, as well as having determined the exact positions of the different characters in Lummenaeus' *Iephte*, I will now attempt to establish the tragic focus, which will in turn aid in determining the play's theological position.

In structuring his *Iephte*, Lummenaeus did not slavishly follow Buchanan. But neither did Lummenaeus attempt to hide his debt to Buchanan (indeed, how could he: the Scottish model was one of the most famous Biblical tragedies of the sixteenth century); rather, he willingly acknowledged Buchanan's tragedy as his point of departure. Do any similarities, then, not indicate Lummenaeus' plagiarism, but his approval of the model?[80] And similarly, do differences between the two plays indicate

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[77] A method embraced in Lummenaeus' other plays as well; cf. chapter three.

[78] *Hoc ultimum vovemus in luctus tuos / Hyantha, dum recurret hic nobis dies, / et tu recurres, annuus fiet tibi / deplanctus iste, et vivet aeternus dolor.*

[79] With regards to the names of some of the *personae*, cf. above, p. 186nt56.

[80] Some critics have been rather preoccupied with their unfounded criticism of Lummenaeus' supposed plagiarism, e.g. Valentin, *Le theâtre des Jesuits*, II, 789: 'En réalité, Marca est un plagiaire de Buchanan dont il se borne à préciser les idées pour les mettre en plein accord avec la position romaine sur les vœux.' In a note (1271n172) he adds: 'Jusque dans le titre!', which doubtlessly refers to the alternative title of the 1613 *Iephte* provided by, amongst others, Porwig (*De Jephtastoff*, 27), but which I have not yet seen in any copy of any *Iephte*-edition: *Iephte sive votum Hebraei illius ducis temere factum et impie impletum*. Porwig refers to the copy of Lummenaeus' *Opera omnia* in the University Library of Wroclaw in Poland (formerly also known as Breslau), but – provided the copy preserved there today is the same as in 1932 –, it does not contain any alternative title. In fact, the same 'subtitle' is already mentioned by Antonius Sanderus in 1624 (*De*

Lummenaeus' willing deviation from this model to comply with his own (confessional) view on the subject and his stylistic agenda?

Lummenaeus discarded of the divine prologue, which meant shedding radically the initial moral lesson provided. Buchanan's angel made it clear that Jephthah would not 'assess himself by the outcome of this battle, and grow proud and arrogant with success' and therefore he would at once 'be overwhelmed with domestic loss, and his arrogant airs [would be] shattered and retreat.'[81] This touch of divine reasoning is left out by Lummenaeus, thus providing less interpretational guidance and leaving more room for the audience's own explorations of the theme (though under the constant and strict custody of the auctorial techniques). Furthermore, Lummenaeus explicitly refrains from introducing Jephthah's unsuccessful, but nonetheless praiseworthy negotiations with the Ammonite king. Instead, he introduces Jephthah's bravery in the face of death, at a moment when the other soldiers were running and hiding. Thus, Lummenaeus contributes to another dimension of Jephthah's presentation, reinforcing the idea that indeed a divine power had given him extra strength, as Jephthah himself had already sensed,[82] and allowing the vow to gain more credibility and apparent validity.

Above all, Lummenaeus radically shifts the tragic focus by not only significantly advancing the revelation of Jephthah's vow to his wife and daughter, but also by having Jephthah make this revelation personally, which creates ample opportunity for Iris and Hyanthe to respond directly. But the structural differences generate effects that are much more varied: Lummenaeus' approach means that the emphasis in effect shifts from discussing the legitimacy of the vow and the sacrifice – by then rather fixed elements –, to the mental and physical effects of this terrifying awareness on the characters involved, allowing him to spend more than half of the play on exploring the emotional reactions of the daughter and the mother. Indeed, this focus on the mental effects can be found much more in Lummenaeus' *Iephte* than in Buchanan's *Iephthes*, even though the latter, too, had laid focus there, as has been suggested by McGregor.[83] With Buchanan, however, this conclusion appears much more artificial and far-fetched, mostly because we remember the uncompromising structural importance assigned to the theological discussions. If it was indeed Lummenaeus' intention to explore

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Gandavensibus, 60), and served no other purpose than briefly describing the work. Thus, Sanderus similarly provided for, e.g., *Carcer Babylonius*: *sive caedes liberorum Sedechiae Regis, et exoculatio eius in Reblatha.*

[81] *Porro ne Iephtes quoque / se metiatur exitu huius proelii / et intumescat insolens rebus bonis, / damno obruetur protinus domestico, / cedentque fracti contumaces spiritus*, Buchanan, *Iephthes*, prologue 51-55, translation by Sharratt and Walsh, *George Buchanan*, 65.

[82] *Iephte* (1608/9), l. 69: *Nescio quid animus maior a solito furit*, 'I do not know why my soul is infuriated more than usual'. Cf. above, p. 185.

[83] McGregor, 'Sense of Tragedy', 137.

these psychological effects, he at least made sure that he could profit from a more effective structure to facilitate this exploration.

The importance Lummenaeus assigned to the daughter's retreat in the mountains is inseparably connected to the absence of an overt theological discussion. As the analysis of the characters' individual positions has made apparent, the dividing lines are quite clear from the outset (and with regard to the tragic ending of the narrative as dictated by Scripture any discussion would eventually be more or less futile anyway): on the one hand, there are Jephthah and his daughter, who both consider the vow to be legitimate. This legitimacy apparently overrules their personal attitude towards human sacrifice, which, even though it is becoming painfully prominent even with Jephthah himself, formally remains irrelevant. On the other hand, there are the mother and the chorus, who on their part do not discuss the legitimacy of the vow itself, but emphasize the vow's consequences, i.e. human sacrifice. This contrast enables a thorough insight in the inherent conflict between obeying God's Law, though tragic the consequences may be, and a personal rationality that is influenced by emotion. Lummenaeus, in other words, has shown through characterization rather than theological discussion the firm discrepancy that has also been noted with regard to Buchanan's debate between Jephthah and the priest: 'The play centres on a situation that is mysteriously impervious to reason and problem-solving. (...) The purpose of the debate therefore is not to reach a conclusion but to present an irreconcilable opposition.'[84] With Lummenaeus, too, a conclusion does not need to be reached. A conclusion had already been presupposed, i.e. the legitimacy of the vow, which made any discussion on or reaction to the vow's consequences irrelevant in any other than a dramatic way, and which assumed from the outset that the ways of God's justice are mysterious.

Lummenaeus' dramatic methods

An insight into the theological position of the play's thematic elaborations can most clearly be gained by means of defining the tragedy's structural efficiency in enforcing moral perspectives, i.e. through establishing the direction in which the audience or reader is slowly drawn. Needless to say, we can never accurately establish the effect a character('s presentation) had on the specific individuals of which a (reading) audience consisted. We can, however, attempt to analyse the author's dramatic methods in constructing his drama, as we were in effect doing just now.[85]

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[84] Mueller, *Children of Oedipus*, 166.

[85] With regard to Buchanan's *Iephthes*, McGregor, 'Sense of Tragedy', 123 seeks to answer the question: 'Whose action is to be imitated in the Jephthes?' The method I apply here, will not primarily lead to a determination of the action to be imitated, but will rather

In *Iephte*, the pious rigidness of Jephthah would initially have unleashed feelings of horror and helplessness with a humane audience. Who, indeed, would even consider sacrificing his own daughter? Surely, God would prevent human sacrifice, as he had done with Isaac. Jephthah, however, neglects the issue of the human sacrifice, for, as I have shown, it is considered subordinate to the question of the vow, which is itself not under discussion. Rather often, we do receive a glimpse of his emotions, showing the discrepancies underlying his piety or the nature of piety in general. Lummenaeus' non-argumentative approach, however, saves Jephthah from the personal faults laid bear in Buchanan's drama, where the protagonist attempts to obscure his suffering with rationalizing argument. [86] In Lummenaeus' version, the Scriptural account is taken as it had been given – no discussion or rhetorical trickery necessary – and the playwright worked from there. That is also why, in the remainder of the play, Jephthah needed not actively reappear again, for the audience's attention had been turned from his pious rigidness to the daughter, be it somewhat forcefully.

Opportunely, for this end, Judges 11 provided Lummenaeus with a second turn: when the daughter suddenly gave her consent. By placing this consent early on in the play, Lummenaeus was left with enough room to digress as well on another element provided by Scripture: the daughter's retreat in the mountains. With these elements – which are in fact following the Biblical chronology more closely than Buchanan, who even completely left out the daughter's retreat –, Lummenaeus could then effectively rely on emotional digressions rather than theological discussion.

Does this, then, suggest that Lummenaeus shared common ground with Erasmus' views on the didactic process tragedy entails? *In tragoedia praecipue spectandos affectus, et quidem fere acriores illos. Hi quibus rebus moveantur, paucis ostendet* [sc. *praeceptor*]. *Tum argumenta veluti declamantium,* 'In tragedy, the teacher will point out that particular attention should be paid to the emotions aroused, and especially, indeed, to the more profound. He will show briefly how these effects are achieved. Then he will deal with the arguments of the speakers as if they were set pieces of rhetoric.'[87] Indeed, with Lummenaeus, too, rhetoric comes second – but only the argumentative

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determine the general outlook of the play. This does not necessarily have to coincide with one character's actions, but will most likely prove to consist of a complicated ensemble of characters and their actions.

[86] McGregor, 'Sense of Tragedy', 124.

[87] Desiderius Erasmus, *De ratione studii* (ed. J.-C. Margolin, *Opera omnia*, I.2, Amsterdam 1971, pp. 142-143), translation C.R. Thompson (ed.), *Educational Writings*, II, *Collected Works*, 24 (Toronto 1978), 687, quoted by McGregor, 'Sense of Tragedy', 122-123; 123nt10. The passage reminds of Richard Griffith's theory on dramatic 'set pieces', which I have addressed in more detail elsewhere in this thesis. Cf. chapter two, p. 93.

rhetoric, not the Senecan rhetoric of emotion. Through the display of emotions, the play's morals are likewise forced upon the audience.[88]

The theological implications

Having arrived at this hypothesis – unfortunately, interpretational efforts rarely become more than that –, which religious-confessional options have been left open by the author? In other words, having pinpointed the auctorial methods of conveying moral valuations through dramatic techniques, which theological views may eventually prevail?

We have seen that both Jephthah and his daughter hold the view that vows must be fulfilled, however horrible the consequences. Both, in this respect, show constancy in their viewpoint. It is the vow that counts, unfortunate though the results may be. In contrast, the mother and the chorus both disapprove of the sacrifice, but they essentially leave the issue of the vow unaddressed. These positions immediately rule out any theological discussion, for they would be destined to be waged at different levels. The basic assumption of the play's thematic approach is, therefore, that vows are to be kept, and the personal suffering originating from the eventual fulfilment does not at all disqualify its validity. And whether or not the vow was made rashly – as a receptive audience would have understood from the chorus' disavowing of rashness and overconfidence –, is strictly speaking beside the point and a discussion on these issues is therefore left out. This view on the legitimacy of vows, or rather this presupposition, can be considered, as we have seen, the traditional Catholic position, held by Jephthah and accepted by Hyanthe. The mother's argumentative position, on the other hand, is principally non-existent in view of this basic assumption, and can therefore not be qualified as a true opposing opinion (cf. Lebègue's argument regarding the discussion between Jephthah and the priest in Buchanan's drama). Rather, her position provides a means by which the tragic focus shifts from Jephthah to the daughter – so that any negative connotations with Jephthah's strict appearance are somewhat mollified – and by which the daughter's part seems all the more admirable. Already had Jephthah's position been somewhat excused, because the significant addition of the notion of a divine spirit, that came over Jephthah when he made the vow (cf. above p. 185), aligned the character with views

[88] This counters Parente's argument ('The Paganization of Biblical Tragedy', 220), who argued that Lummenaeus preferred 'emotional reactions, rather (...) than the intellectual problems implicit in the plots'. Through emotional display intellectual problems may also be addressed, albeit in an entirely different way methodically. Therefore, these two elements should not be treated as if they were serving opposing goals, for the first might serve to illustrate, and give shape to, the second, as Lummenaeus aptly demonstrates.

like those expressed by Thomas Aquinas, who argued that partly because of this Jephthah was named a hero of the Old Testament.[89]

Nonetheless, it is Hyanthe's position that will eventually be the one remembered by the audience, as her obedience to a higher power – her father, superficially; God, principally – is underlined by emotional rhetoric. Whereas in Buchanan's play the final messenger had to be summoned to report Hyanthe's final speech, this speech is absent in Lummenaeus' account. Indeed, Buchanan needed this device to shift the tragic focus away from Jephthah and his strict piousness to the daughter, who had been lost sight of when Jephthah's various discussions started. Lummenaeus, on the other hand, creates a dramatic structure in which the focus is gradually drawn towards Hyanthe and her sorrowful sense of piety, an approach already suggested by Pseudo-Philo, who was the first to emphasize the daughter's tragedy. The affection for the girl – of her mother, her friends *and* her father Jephthah – is the tragic trigger. Contrary to what was quite common in the exegetical tradition, Lummenaeus avoids any discussion on Jephthah's position. While Isidore of Seville had actually admired Jephthah – which was partly justified by his presence in the roll of heroes of the Old Testament –, and in early modern times, too, Jephthah's praiseworthy position as a successful military leader was commonly singled out, Lummenaeus shifts all attention away from Jephthah. Not only does the play, in this respect, move away from any theological discussion towards a demonstration of man's relationship to God, but it also moves away from the theme's most recent applications. Instead, it returns to the Catholic position on vows, and the emphasis on the daughter's voluntary sacrifice.

There remains the typological interpretation to be addressed. As may have become clear, nowhere this link between Jephthah or his daughter and Jesus Christ or the Church is made explicit. Like the studies on the issue in Buchanan's play, discussed above, here too it is fairly impossible to 'prove' an implicit typological interpretation of the tragedy, for this would have depended solely on the audience's perception. Still, while threading cautiously on the interpretational path of Lummenaeus' play, it appears that the audience – even those not aware of the typological tradition in the exegetical history of Judges 11 – could gradually have become aware of the Christological significance of the sacrifice. The exegesis of Judges 11 makes clear that throughout history, commentators have placed emphasis not only on the matter of the vow – whether it was right or wrong – but also on the daughter and her admirable position. It appears Lummenaeus' *Iephte,* with its gradually increasing emphasis on the daughter, proposes a similar shift: would not Hyanthe's retreat in the mountains – described at length – at one point or another have reminded the Christian audience of Christ's ascent to the mount of Olives with his friends, as Quodvultdeus had already

[89] Cf. above, p. 195.

suggested long ago?[90] This detailed description of Hyanthe's time in the mountains in any case receives ample attention, since it sets Lummenaeus' *Iephte* clearly apart from Buchanan's. And would the sheer beauty of her sacrificial death, her willingness and preparedness, her bravery in the face of death, her eyes upward to the skies while life slowly flowed from her virgin body – would all this not have 'reconciled the reader to the sacrificial law'?[91] Could this allegorical interpretation have been completely denied, so that Hyanthe's death had truly been in vain? In my opinion, these questions in themselves sufficiently deny credibility to Parente's rather unfounded suggestion that 'Lummenaeus refrained from drawing any Christological parallels (...), as had been customary in sixteenth-century theatre. In opposition to the opinions of many patristic and medieval commentators, the death of Jephthah's daughter in Lummenaeus' play did not prefigure Christ's sacrificial death,'[92] for, as we have seen, even in Buchanan's tragedy – surely a prime example of sixteenth-century drama – the Christological parallel remains fairly implicit. To this typological end, Lummenaeus, in my view, had the final chorus play a crucial, symbolic part: as said before, the lyrical elevation of its song carried the audience off in a rush, in sheer lament, in a personal suffering actually made felt by the chorus' devotion to Hyanthe, similar to a Christian's devotion to Christ. But the underlying suffering, after all, denotes a tragedy, as Augustine noted: *nam quare luctus et lamentatio decerneretur, si votum illud laetitiae fuit?*, 'For why should mourning and lamentation have been decreed if the vow was a thing of delight?'[93] Indeed, it is an *argumentum solidum et tragicum*, a subject both solid and tragic,[94] for tragic the sacrifice may be, the vow itself is solid.

The analysis now enables a critical reevaluation of James Parente's contextual interpretation of Lummenaeus' *Iephte*. In view of the historical-religious situation in Ghent, he noted that 'to the fervent catholic Lummenaeus, Jephthah's justification of his unnatural sacrifice of his daughter recalled the recent fanaticism of the Ghent Calvinists by which they had established themselves as the sole interpreters of God's will'.[95] Unfortunately, Parente leaves this claim otherwise unmotivated. As my analysis of the drama has shown, the so-called 'fanaticism' of Jephthah, as Parente called it, is actually first and foremost based on the judge's behavior

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[90] Cf. above, p. 175.

[91] As Shuger, *Renaissance Bible,* 157, suggests with regard to Buchanan. The scene is perhaps reminiscent of other Biblical scenes, e.g. the martyred death of St. Stephen, The Acts, 7:55: 'But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God' (KJV).

[92] Parente, 'The Paganization of Biblical Tragedy', 233.

[93] Augustine, *Quaest. Iud.* 7.49.27, quoted and translated by Thompson, *Writing the Wrongs*, 130.

[94] Cf. the preface to Lummenaeus' *Iephte*, A2^{ro}, quoted in the introduction to this chapter, p. 171.

[95] Parente, 'The Paganization of Biblical Tragedy', 222-223.

as presented in Scripture, which is fully consistent with the traditional Catholic viewpoint on vows. Furthermore, the Calvinistic stance on vows rather decreed that vows voluntarily undertaken were not pleasing to God, for they represented superstition rather than devotion.[96] This Calvinistic viewpoint can, in my view, not be identified in Jephthah's dramatic position. Would Lummenaeus not have been more accurate in his presentation if such topical relevance had been his aim?[97] Nonetheless, the wishful desire to link the emergence of such theatrical pieces to contemporary debates or circumstances is indeed understandable. But in the case of Lummenaeus' *Iephte*, I see no ready answers that can provide anything more than unfounded hypotheses. In my view, the last thing we should do is let the contextual circumstances stand in the way of a proper, *sec* interpretation of the play in its entirety, its dramatic techniques, the characters, and their positions. In short: it is analysis, not context, that dictates interpretation.[98]

O*ther contexts of Lummenaeus'* Iephte

In this chapter, I have thus far addressed Lummenaeus' *Iephte* tragedy as a fairly abstract piece of literature. Before turning to the concluding remarks, I would first like to return from the abstract positions to the more earthly circumstances surrounding the genesis and reception of Lummenaeus' work. In my view, the material circumstances and contextual facts with regard to *Iephte* should not be ignored, but it remains to be seen whether or not they will be able to serve a more explicit point.

Unlike Buchanan's drama, which was initially written and performed in a school setting,[99] we know hardly anything about the genesis and function of Lummenaeus' *Iephte*. It surely did not cause a great deal of overt

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[96] McGregor, 'Sense of Tragedy', 135-137.

[97] For the religious and political situation in Ghent around 1610, cf. chapter three, pp. 153ff. It is interesting to note that at least two references to public performances of Jephthah-dramas in Ghent have survived, both however from a much earlier period. The first one is a diary-entry, referring to a performance of a Latin Jephthah play by Ghent schoolboys in March 1569, which notes that Jephthah killed his own child, and thus acted against the natural law of parents having to keep their children safe from harm (cf. Frans de Potter (ed.), *Dagboek van Cornelis en Philip van Campene*, 213). The other is mentioned by Decavele, *Gent. Apologie*, 403: a Ghent Chamber of Rhetoric, *De Fonteine*, staged a *Spel van Jefta* on the fifth of January 1578, of which three copies have survived, celebrating the entry of William of Orange in Ghent on the 29th of December 1577, and in which Orange was compared to Judas Maccabeus. At best, these references show the versatility of the Jephthah-theme as a dramatic subject with a broad topical potential.

[98] In the conclusion to this thesis, I will once again turn to the *Iephte* in an attempt to understand the position of this tragedy in the life and times of Lummenaeus, based on the conclusions reached here. Cf. below, p. 215.

[99] For instance McFarlane, *Buchanan*, 194.

controversy. The title page provides us with the year 1608, the printer's mark on the final page (p. 78 / f. K3^{vo}) with 1609.[100] A manuscript of the play is preserved in the community library of Arras (number 476), and Merlevede judges its text to be somewhat older than the first printed edition.[101] In Louvain (1613) a slightly reworked version of *Iephte* appeared in the *Opera Omnia*, and two thoroughly abridged – and again mutually slightly different – versions in Rome (1624) and Douai (1628).[102] We know little about Lummenaeus from the years leading up to 1608, other than that he was living and working at St Peter's abbey in Ghent (cf. chapter one of this thesis). Whether or not he was connected to any educational institute, remains uncertain.[103] Therefore, ingenious – but bold – contextual interpretations that have been proposed with regard to Buchanan's school play (e.g. 'sacrifice is the female equivalent of war, the play projects the boys' anxieties about having to die for their country or their faith'[104]) are much more complicated with regard to Lummenaeus' drama. If Lummenaeus had

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[100] Merlevede, *Het* Iephte-*drama*, 11, suggests that printing of the *Iephte* probably started in 1608 and finished in 1609.

[101] Merlevede, *Het* Iephte-*drama*, 18. Cf. *id.*, 15-18 for more in-depth information regarding the manuscript. The *Iephte*-manuscript had already been listed in Haenel's *Catalogus librorum manuscriptorum* (p. 43: *Tragedia de voto Jeptae p. Cornelium a Marca; saec. XVII. 12*) as early as 1830.

[102] Cf. Merlevede, *Het* Iephte-*drama*, passim, for a synoptic edition of the different versions. For this case-study, I have chosen to analyse only the 1608(-1609) edition, since it contains the 'original' version, in which the author specifically mentions Buchanan. The manuscript may perhaps provide an older text, but probably did not reach an audience that compares with that of the printed edition. In any case, this case-study provides only a first attempt to methodically analyse Lummenaeus' play in a theological context. For the other editions, a similar analysis can be initiated: the 1624 and 1628 editions of *Iephte* are modified to such an extent as compared to the 1608-1613 editions, that they would well deserve a separate analysis, heeding the specific circumstances then involved.

[103] Except, somewhat later, for the sessions of Erycius Puteanus' school of rhetoric in Louvain, the *Palaestra Bonae Mentis*, at which Lummenaeus appears to have been a regular guest. Cf. chapter one, pp. 29ff. Porwig, *Der Jephtastoff*, 16-38, counts Lummenaeus' tragedies as 'Schuldrama auf katholischer Seite', basing herself (p. 27), it seems, on a letter by abbot Angelus Gryllus of St. Paul's abbey in Rome, who suggested the moral and didactic function of Lummenaeus' tragedies: *Quid si sacrarum litterarum professorem, cothurnum Sophocleum indutum, cernam abigere a Republica Christiana Comicorum turbam, in morum corruptelam, inservientem adolescentibus, et pietatem una cum religione a pectoribus nostris semoventem! Facessant Plauti, evanescant Terentii, sintque a nobis procul isti profani*, 'What if I would see a professor of sacred literature, bestowed with the tragic grandeur of Sophocles, expell from our Christian world the herds of comedians, who corrupt our morals, who, aimed at our youngsters, remove from our chests piety along with faith! Let the Plautines give way, let the Terentians vanish, let those heathens be far from us!' These words alone, unfortunately, do not prove that Lummenaeus' tragedies were school drama. Rather, they emphasize first and foremost the opposition between (classical) comedy and Biblical tragedy. In any case, Porwig's classification is rather rough, for she counts Buchanan's play as 'Schuldrama auf protestantischer Seite'.

[104] Shuger, *Renaissance Bible*, 155.

indeed written his play as a school drama, he would perhaps have been right, in the eyes of some modern critics, to replace Buchanan's theological discussion with emotional rhetoric, which was a much more effective means of indoctrination.[105] On the other hand, lively debate is a central characteristic of school drama,[106] which Lummenaeus' *Iephte*, but also his other plays, definitely lack. Elsewhere in this thesis the structural stylistics have been addressed in more detail.

In any case, references to theatrical performances of the *Iephte* are few, and above all dubious. In his published correspondence, Lummenaeus' friend Justus Rycquius refers twice to the *Iephte* in two letters from 1610. In the first, he writes from Rome: *De Iephte Cornelii a Marca, συμμαθητοῦ quondam mei, laetum omnino fuit*, 'About the *Iephte* of Cornelius à Marca, once my fellow student, I have heard only good things'; in the second: *Cornelii Marcani famam percepi, Iephten Tragoediam non vidi, tanto omnium plausu exceptam, ut nemo esset in Orchestra Litteraria, qui pollicem non premeret*, 'I have heard of Cornelius à Marca's fame, but I have not seen his *Iephte tragoedia*, which has been received with so much applause from everyone, so that there can be no one in the Theater of Letters, who does not approve'.[107] In spite of what we would *like* these words to mean, chances are slim Rycquius is here referring to actual theatre performances. Both letters address the rising star of Ghent's status in the supranational *respublica litteraria* – thanks to, indeed, men like Lummenaeus –, which is here meant by *Orchestra Litteraria*, with *orchestra* denoting nothing more than a playful theatrical metaphor.[108] With

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[105] Scholarly opinions disagree on whether or not Buchanan's theological discussion provided dramatic material that was suited for an effective stage treatment. E.g. Sypherd, *Jephthah and his Daughter*, 16, supposes that theological discussion did not provide good dramatic material for an effective stage treatment, while McFarlane, *Buchanan*, 198, notes that the discussion 'from the standpoint of a Renaissance audience, provides that debate which seems to have given so much pleasure to spectators (as in La Taille or Garnier)'. A modern scholar, however, is probably never fully able to ignore his modern values and put himself in the position of a Renaissance audience, as Murray Roston's conclusion lays bear (*Biblical Drama*, 81): 'Its [i.e. Buchanan's *Iephthes*] lengthy Senecan-type speeches on the problem of fulfillment of vows make it dull reading today and it lacks any real dramatic power.' McFarlane seems to have the better argument, since aligning Buchanan's methods with those of other Renaissance dramatists makes its validity more plausible, which, in fact, comes close to what I have argued with regard to the tradition of Lummenaeus' dramatic *poetics*. Cf. chapter three.

[106] McGregor, 'Sense of Tragedy', 138.

[107] Justus Rycquius, *Epistolarum selectarum centuria altera, nova, in qua mixtim quaesita et censurae* (Lovanii, typis Christophori Flavii 1615), 113 and 160-161 respectively. Parente, 'The Paganization of Biblical Tragedy', 216-217, sums up these and several other passages, taking them at face-value.

[108] Such metaphors were often used in Lummenaeus' dedicatory letters. With no other evidence available, they can solely be regarded as common theatrical metaphors. Examples of such metaphors are many, e.g. the incipit of the dedicatory letter of Lummenaeus' *Iephte tragoedia sacra* (Romae, apud I. Mascardum 1624): *Iephten paludatum, et*

other evidence of performances lacking, it is unknown who constituted Lummenaeus' target-audience, other than his circle of humanist colleagues.[109]

Concluding remarks

In this chapter, I have initiated a thematic and structural comparison of Buchanan's and Lummenaeus' Jephthah tragedies.[110] The combined *repoussoir* of the exegetical field and the results yielded by the investigations of Buchanan's play, helped to create distinctive demarcations for Lummenaeus' tragedy as well.

As a dramatic treatment of the Jephthah-theme, as a literary product, it would perhaps not be unfair to call Lummenaeus' 1608 *Iephte* an attempted emulation of Buchanan's tragedy. Our author recognized certain advantages in Buchanan's treatment of the theme, and took the Scotchman's work as his point of departure. In doing so, he clearly did not attempt to hide this debt; rather, he stimulated the reader to initiate a comparison between both plays, in the course of which the attentive reader would have spotted very specific structural and, consequently, focus-related differences. The comparison would lead a reader to conclude that Lummenaeus surely did not, in the words of Parente, 'share Buchanan's view that Jephthah's tragedy arose from his conceited misperception of his obligation to fulfill his rash oath and execute his own daughter.'[111] On the contrary: my analysis has shown that Lummenaeus did not consider the obligation to fulfill the oath a conceited misconception at all.

Interestingly, the Jephthah theme also made a significant appearance in another specimen of Lummenaeus' literary production, a 1617 *homilia* from the collection *Corona virginea sive stellae duodecim, id est duodecim homiliae sacrae* (Ghent 1618). In the third *homilia* Lummenaeus says:

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misera fortuna crudelem in viscera filiae suae, plaustro tragico in scenam veho; or the incipit of the dedicatory letter of Lummenaeus' *Amnon* (1617): *Amnonem Tragoediam in cothurnis at te mitto. Luculentum argumentum est, et quod mereatur plaustris in scenam vehi.* In his many speeches, Lummenaeus also liberally employed theatrical metaphors. Cf. the biographical chapter, p. 75nt237.

[109] The Rome edition of 1624 had, as noted above, been thoroughly revised. It may be that Lummenaeus modified the play in order for it to be more suited for performance. An analysis of this new version could be shaped as any of the case studies in this thesis – but confirmation of a performance would still only be possible by archival evidence.

[110] The comparison has left aside the strictly literary aspects of both tragedies. The literary traditions with which Lummenaeus' *poetics* connect have been extensively discussed in chapter 2.

[111] Parente, 'The Paganization of Biblical Tragedy', 218.

> 'Most commendable to God is virginal chastity, which I find hardly anywhere in the ancient writings, but in Jephthah's only daughter, who, bound by her father's vows (so Scripture attests), did not know man or marriage, who yet not denied herself to be the voluntary victim of his sacrifice, for she had first (so the words of the text) bewailed her virginity in the mountains during a three month period of mourning, after which she sacrificed it to God; this thus even commends the girl, it praises her decency and grace, because she never gave up her chastity, and steadfastly held on to it, because her harsh father had ordered it somewhat roughly.' [112]

In this *homilia*, spoken at the Ghent Society of Jesus in 1617 at the occasion of the *Purificatio Mariae* (the Purification of the Virgin, or Candlemas (i.e. 2 February)), Lummenaeus clearly commends virginal chastity and recalls the example provided by Jephthah's daughter. The text of the *homilia*, in my view, substantiates the reading of his *Iephte tragoedia sacra* given above. It confirms that, in Lummenaeus' view, the focus of the narrative should shift to the position of the daughter rather than of the father. Her position, in the end, is the commendable one, while her father's rigid adherence to the vow (which is itself not commented upon) turns out – from Lummenaeus' perspective, not according to Scripture! – only to have been *duriuscule*, somewhat harsh.

There is, however, also a clear difference in presentation. In the play no emphasis is placed on Hyanthe's commendable chastity. Rather, as we have seen, her decisiveness and willingness to obey a higher authority are the characteristics that are underlined by the dramatic structure and techniques. Though both works present the Biblical narrative with a focus on the daughter's position, the tragedy underlines the daughter's admirable handling of her tragic fate,[113] while the *homilia*, emphasizing the Biblical text (*virginitatem*, Jud. 11:38/39), reiterates her adherence to chastity. In the *homilia*, in short, a moral is made explicit, which is not surprising in view of the collection *Corona Virginea*, a tribute to the Holy Virgin. The tragedy, on the other hand, leaves the morals implicit, for reasons I will address in this

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[112] *Commendatissima Deo Virginalis pudicitia est, quam in antiquis monumentis nullibi fere reperio, nisi forte in una Iephtide, quae paternis obstricta votis (teste scriptura) virum et coniugium ignoravit, quae tamen non voluntarie admodum sacrificasse ex eo redarguitur, quod virginitatem suam (textus verba sunt) prius in montibus trimestri luctu defleverit, quam Deo Opt. Max. immolaret; sic tamen etiam commendat hoc puellam istam, decorem et gratiam conciliat, quod pudorem non prostituit, et obnixe tenuit, quod rigidus Pater duriuscule imperavit* (*Corona Virginea* (1618), 51).

[113] Note especially that the daughter will not retreat into the mountains to bewail her virginity, but her *fatum*: *fatisque condona* [sc. *tu, Iephte*] *meis: ut donec aureos Luna bis tranet polos, / vallata tenero virginum planctu, avijs / mea fata plorem, rupium in convallibus*, 'Grant this to my fate: that until the moon has twice filled its golden poles, I can bewail my fate, shrouded by the soft cries of maidens, in mountain valleys' (ll. 610-612).

thesis' conclusion.[114] It should be clearly noted, however, that in the *homilia*, too, any possible link to monastic vows is not connected to the Jephthah-theme (as has been argued with regard to Buchanan's play, cf. above), or is at least left implicit: the example of Jephthah's daughter is rather employed to celebrate Mary's holy virginity, to which Lummenaeus was especially devoted.[115] It is significant that here, too, the issue of the vow is left completely unaddressed.

The lack of contextual evidence regarding the genesis and reception of *Iephte* had not kept James Parente from considering Lummenaeus' choice of subject in view of the historical-religious situation in Ghent, i.e. Jephthah denoting Calvinistic fervor. The analysis of Lummenaeus' play has proficiently demonstrated that the dramatic perspectives do not support this claim and that any such conclusion would require additional, extra-textual evidence. Adhering to the Catholic stance on vows, Lummenaeus in fact moved the tragedy away from the overt theological debate and into the realm of emotion. He thus prevented distractions caused by theological discussions, while rather emphasizing emotions, which were actually considered much more effective than learned dialogue. In itself, this departure from the grand model, Buchanan, could easily explain Lummenaeus' choice of topic and his 'defensive' dedicatory letter, if he indeed considered Buchanan's treatment – both from a literary and thematic perspective – irreconcilable with his own thoughts on the issue. To this end, *Iephte*'s perspectives of value take the audience by the hand. The shift in tragic focus, the lack of argumentative dialogue, the presence of dramatic irony, the rhetoric of emotion, the verbally-visual shock effect: all these tools were distinguishably and decidedly used by the skillful, goal oriented craftsman, and contributed to steadfastly guiding the audience onto the steady course *he* had set out on the rough seas of Biblical drama.

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[114] Cf. below, pp. 217-220.

[115] Lummenaeus' devotion to the Virgin Mary can be deduced from the numerous references in his work, as well as from his plan to write a local history of Mary after the examples set by Justus Lipsius and Erycius Puteanus. Cf. the biographical chapter, pp. 51-52. Interestingly, Lipsius' treatises on the Holy Virgin had provoked rather heated reactions in non-Catholic countries. Cf. De Landtsheer, 'Justus Lipsius's Treatises on the Holy Virgin'.