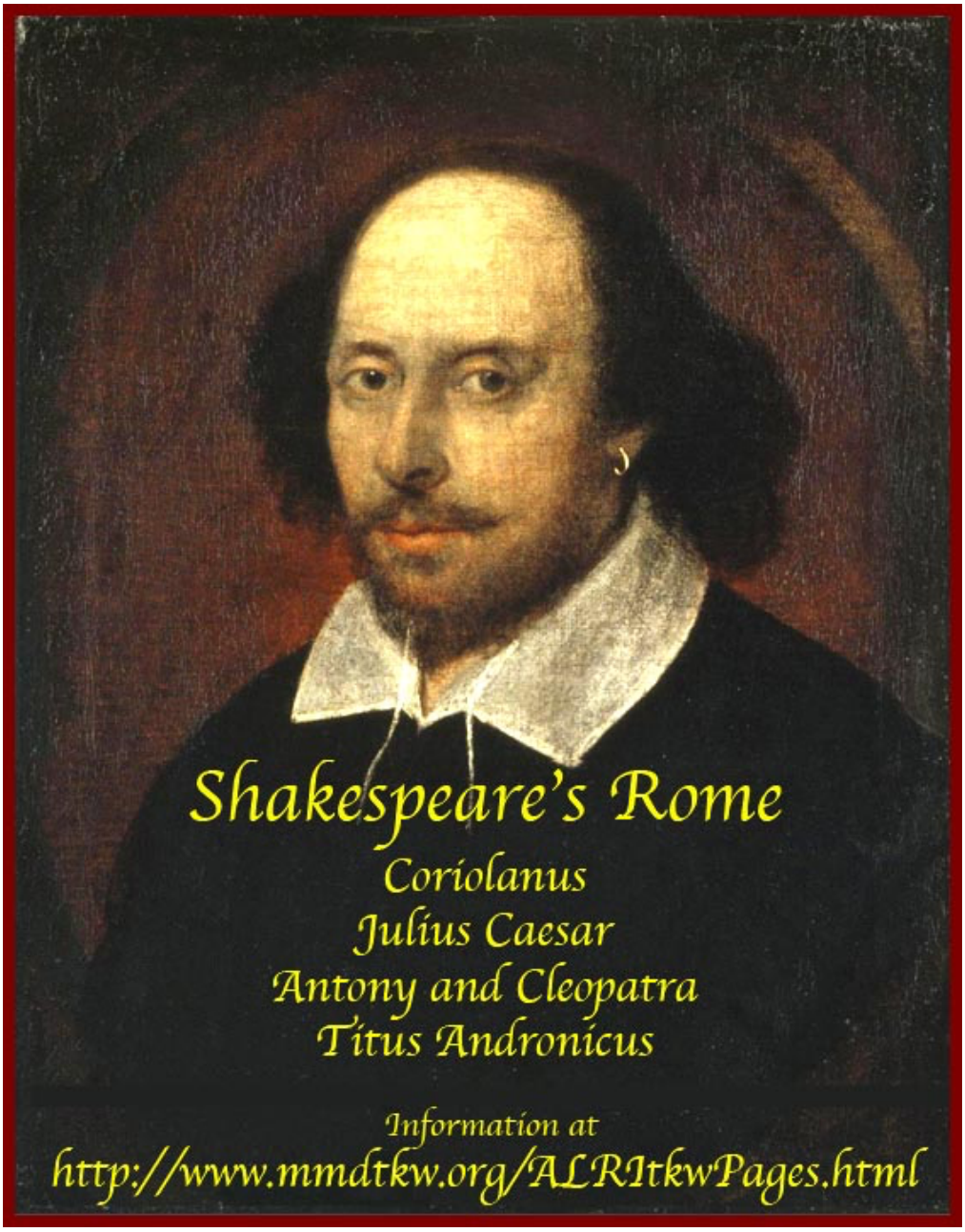
ALRI – Spring 2023



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All of the documents contained in this handout fall into three categories:

1. **The text of the first document in each section is original, (but some ideas are derived from *Shakespeare After All*, by Marjorie Garber, Pantheon Books, New York, 2004).**

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Contents:

Shakespeare's Classical World

Introduction:

There are two major ways to assess Shakespeare's mastery of classical myth and history:

analysis of his numerous quotations and allusions to classical sources;

assessment of the influence of classical writers on Shakespeare (and his playwriting contemporaries).

Rome in Elizabethan/Jacobean thought and our thought:

(Note that Elizabeth I was the last Tudor and James I was the first Jacobean [Stuart] monarch.)

Rome was much more important to Elizabethans/Jacobeans than to us (and was much more important to them than Greece).

Shakespeare's England thought of Rome as the great pagan alternative to Christianity. That's why there were so many "Roman" plays in the late sixteenth and early 17th centuries.

Shakespeare did write four works set in ancient Greece: *Troilus and Cressida, Timon of Athens, Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Venus and Adonis*. The last is an 1194 line poem written in 1593/94 while the theaters were closed because of a plague outbreak. But Shakespeare's Greek works were set in mythical rather than historical Athens -- his Roman plays are historically rooted.

As a result of the 19th/20th century revival of Greek studies (as an alternative to Christianity) by mostly German scholars, modern Americans think of Greece (more specifically Athens) as the main pagan influence on Western civilization.

Characteristics of Shakespeare's Roman worldview:

Most obviously, the four Roman plays are set in ancient Rome and were originally staged in Roman costume and with faux Roman sets.

All four plays are rife with blood, mutilation, violence, and mayhem.

***Titus Andronicus* is by far the most gruesome: it starts with a human dismemberment and sacrifice on stage; Aaron kills his baby's nurse on stage; offstage Lavinia's tongue is cut out after a rape, and her arms are cut off ; Titus cuts off his own hand on stage; offstage Titus slits the throats of Tamora's sons, and cooks them into a meatloaf; the play ends with Titus killing his dishonored daughter and then a series of stabbings. All of the Roman plays are awash with blood.**

Elizabethan/Jacobean audiences sometimes found grotesque comedy and/or satisfaction in simulated violent acts (as we also do, viz the rush we get when the movie hero beats down the villain.) Shakespeare clearly knew this, and we might argue that he eventually disapproved of it: was the last scene of Lear, perhaps, an attempt to move the audience past satisfaction to disgust.

All four of Shakespeare's Roman plays feature Roman factionalism, civic strife, and Roman-on-Roman violence. This, of course, would have resonated with what was happening in political conditions in the British Isles during his period.

The Roman plays portray the ancient Roma acceptance of suicide: Brutus and Cassius, Marc Antony, Portia, and the supposed suicide of Cleopatra.

Shakespeare shows the self-consciousness, theatricality, and historical awareness that "historically" marked his characters.

The *dramatis personae* (the plays' characters, literally "the masks of the drama") often refer to themselves in the third person.

Roman rhetoric plays an important part.

Characters know they are participating in events that will change history.

(Historically is in quotes, above, because we can't know that how accurately ancient Roman historians portrayed the behavior of the historical characters and the events portrayed.)

Timeliness of Shakespeare's Roman Plays

For Elizabethans/Jacobeans, "Rome" was not at all considered the distant past.

The Eastern Empire didn't fall until 1453.

English "public opinion" conflated Papal Rome with ancient Rome. Papal Rome's influence in England became an issue when, in 1527, Henry VIII was refused a divorce by the Medici Pope Clement VII who was under siege in Rome's Castel Sant'Angelo by renegade forces of Charles V, the "Holy Roman Emperor".

The defeat of the Spanish armada in 1588 and the foiling of the Gunpowder Plot (Catesby/Fawkes) in 1605 were considered to be victories over (papal) "Rome".

Shakespeare introduced some Christian customs and anachronisms in two of his Roman plays:

In Julius Caesar, Decius says that Romans would dip cloths in Caesars blood as Relics;

In Titus Andronicus, there are references to monasteries, "popish tricks", and martyrdom.

The court of James I had the feel of a Roman revival.

James called himself a "new Augustus" who would unite and pacify Britain with a *pax Britannicus* just as Augustus had initiated the *pax Romana*.

The court of James I was, like ancient Rome, notorious for dissolution, excessive banquets, and sexual scandals. Jacobean gossips could draw the connection.

Influences

After classical Greek and Roman drama were eclipsed by Christian liturgical events and dramas during the loosely defined medieval period in Europe, an initially Roman dramatic revival began in Italy. The revival eventually reached England in the years leading up to Shakespeare.

Shakespeare himself was influenced by classical writers from whom he borrowed plots, images, characters, incidents, and, probably, distortions. His most important sources were recent translations into English and printings of works by Ovid, Plautus, Seneca, and Plutarch.

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* was a big hit in Renaissance Europe, and left its marks all over Shakespeare. The *Pyramus and Thisbe* play at the end of *Midsummer Night's Dream* is a burlesque of a story told by Ovid, and one of Shakespeare's earliest poems, *Venus and Adonis*, is a much-expanded telling of another story from the *Metamorphoses*.

Plautus (Titus Maccius Plautus (c. 254–184 BC) was a Roman comic playwright and leader of the "New Comedy" movement. *A Comedy of Errors* is drawn very directly from a play by Plautus.

Seneca was the most influential classical tragedian during the Renaissance. His blood-soaked tales of revenge, with their ghosts, tortures, mutilations, and men of towering ambition inspired many imitators in the Renaissance. There were parallel French and British "Senecan" Renaissance theatrical traditions, but we are more interested in the British stream. Note that Seneca's revenge stories were meant to be recited by a single person in a small dark venue; the audience heard of but didn't see the violence. The Elizabethan revenge dramas were acted out in front of the audience.

***Titus Andronicus*, one of Shakespeare's earliest plays (1593) was part of an already developed popularity for pseudo Senecan**

"revenge dramas".

The first known English tragedy, *Gorboduc* (1561), by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton featured slaughter and revenge in direct emulation of Seneca.

An English translation of Seneca's "*tenne tragedies*" was published in 1581.

Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* was written and acted ca. 1585.

***The Misfortunes of Arthur* (about Mordred's treachery and King Arthur's death) was written in 1587 and played before Elizabeth I the next year.**

Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* was written before 1592 – it was first mentioned in that year in the records of Philip Henslowe.

Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* was the major source for Shakespeare's Roman history plays. The *Parallel Lives* is a collection of short biographies -- paired Greeks and Romans – followed by Plutarch's impressions of similarities and contrasts between the two men.

It is apparent that Shakespeare worked from the English translation of Plutarch by Thomas North (1579) when he wrote Coriolanus, Julius Caesar, and Antony and Cleopatra.

A Shakespeare Timeline Summary Chart

Year	Life	Works[1]	Events & Publications[2]
1557			Elizabeth I enthroned on 15 November
1564	Shakespeare Born		Christopher Marlowe born John Hawkins second voyage to New World Galileo Galilei born John Calvin dies The Peace of Troyes
1565-1581	1567(?) Richard Burbage, the greatest tragedian of the age, who would eventually portray Hamlet, Lear, Othello and all Shakespeare's great parts born 1576 James Burbage (father of Richard) obtains a 21 year lease and permission to build The Theatre in Shoreditch 1577 The Curtain, a rival theater near The Theatre, opens in Finbury		1565 Golding's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1-4) 1566 Gascoigne's *The Supposes* 1567 Thomas Nashe born 1571 Tirso de Molina born 1572 Thomas Dekker born 1572 John Donne & Ben Jonson born 1577 Holinshed publishes *The Chronicles of England, Scotland* and Ireland, Shakespeare's primary source for the history plays 1579 John Fletcher born 1580 Thomas Middleton born 1580 Montaigne's *Essais* published
1582	Shakespeare Married		Hakluyt's *Dievers Voyages Touching the Discovery of America*
1583	Birth of Susanna Shakespeare The Queen's Company is formed in London		
1585	Birth of twins, Judith and Hamnet Shakespeare		1586 Mary Queen of Scots tried for treason

1587(?)-1592	**Departure from Stratford** **Establishment in London as an actor/playwright**	***The Comedy of Errors*** ***Titus Andronicus*** ***The Taming of the Shrew*** ***Henry VI, 1,2,3*** ***Richard III***	**1587 Mary Queen of Scots executed** **1587 Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*** **1588 Defeat of the Armada** **1588 Greene's *Pandosto*** **1588 Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*** **1590 Spenser's *Faerie Queen* (1-3)** **1590 Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*** **1591 Sidney's*Astrophil and Stella*** **1592 Robert Greene dies** **1592 Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy***
1593	**Preferment sought through aristocratic connections - dedicates Venus and Lucrece to Henry Wriothsley, Earl of Southampton - possibly the youth of the *Sonnets*** **Founding member of the Lord Chamberlain's Men**	**1593 *Venus and Adonis*** **Begins writing the *Sonnets,* probably completed by c.1597 or earlier** ***Two Gentlemen of Verona*** ***Love's Labour's Lost***	**1593-94 Theaters closed by plague** **1593 Marlowe dies**
1594		**1594 *The Rape of Lucrece***	
1594-1596	**Shakespeare's Lyrical masterpieces** **Prosperity and recognition as the leading London playwright.** **1596 John Shakespeare reapplies successfully for a coat of arms 1596 Hamnet Shakespeare dies at age 11**	***Midsummer Night's Dream*** ***Romeo and Juliet*** ***Richard II*** ***Merchant of Venice***	**1594 Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*** **1594 Marlowe's *Edward II*** **1595 Thomas Kyd dies** **1595 Sidney's *An Apologia for Poetrie*** **1595 Sir Walter Raleigh explores the Orinoco** **1596 Spenser's *Faerie Queen* (4-6)** **1596 George Peele dies.**
1597-1599	**Artistic Maturity** **Purchases New Place, Stratford with other significant investments**	***Henry IV,1,2*** ***The Merry Wives of Windsor*** ***As You Like It*** ***Much Ado About Nothing***	**1597 Bacon's *Essays, Civil and Moral*** **1598 Phillip II of Spain dies** **1598 Francis Meres *Palladis Tamia***

(1597-1599)	**1599 The Globe Theater built on Bankside from the timbers of The Theatre. Shakespeare is a shareholder and receives about 10% of the profits**	***Henry V*** ***Julius Caesar***	**1598 John Florio's *A World of Word*s (English-Italian dictionary)** **1598 Ben Jonson 's *Every Man in his Humour*** **1599 Essex sent to Ireland and fails, is arrested on return** **1599 Edmund Spenser dies**
1600-1608	**The Period of the Great Tragedies & Problem Plays** **1600 The Fortune Theater opens** **1601 Shakespeare's father dies** **1603 The Lord Chamberlain's Men become The King's Men who perform at court more than any other company** **1607 Susanna Shakespeare married Dr. John Hall** **1608 The King's Men begin playing at the Blackfriars** **1608 Shakespeare's mother dies**	***Twelfth Night*** ***Hamlet*** ***Troilus & Cressida*** ***Alls Well That Ends Well*** ***Measure for Measure*** ***Othello*** ***King Lear*** ***Macbeth*** ***Antony and Clepatra*** ***Coriolanus*** ***Timon of Athens***	**1600 Kemp's *Nine Daies Wonder*** **1600 Dekker's *Shoemaker's Holiday*** **1601 Essex rebels against Elizabeth, fails and is executed 1601 Thomas Nashe dies** **1603 Elizabeth dies, James VI of Scotland becomes James I of England 1603 Sir Walter Raleigh arrested, tried and imprisoned 1603 The plague once again ravages London** **1604 Marston's *The Malcontent*** **1605 The Gunpowder Plot - Guy Fawkes and accomplices arrested 1605 Bacon's *The Advancement of Learning*** **1606 Ben Jonson's *Volpone*** **1607 Tourneur (?) *The Revenger's Tragedy* 1607 The founding of Jamestown**
1609-1611 **(1609-1611)**	**Period of the Romances** **1609 Publication of the *Sonnets***	***Pericles Prince of Tyre*** ***Cymbeline*** ***The Winter's Tale*** ***The Tempest***	**1609 Beaumont & Fletcher *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*** **1610 Prince Henry created Prince of Wales Ben Jonson *The Alchemist***

1612-1616	**Shakespeare probably retires from London life to Stratford Works on collaborations with John Fletcher 1616 Judith Shakespeare married Thomas Quiney March 1616 Shakespeare apparently ill revises his will April 23, 1616 Shakespeare dies and is burried at Holy trinity Church, Stratford**	***Henry VIII* *The Two Noble Kinsmen* *Cardenio***	**1612 Henry Prince of Wales dies 1612 *Webster's The White Devil* 1613 Francis Bacon becomes attorney general 1614 Jonson's *Bartholomew Fayre* 1614 Webster's *Duchess of Malfi* 1614 Sir Walter Raleigh's *History of the World* 1616 Francis Beaumont dies 1616 Ben Jonson's *Workes* published in folio 1623 Publication of Shakespeare's First Folio**

1. The dates given for plays are only approximate, of course. The actual composition date is rarely know for certain. The list of Shakespeare's works given in column two is in very rough approximate order of composition. There are significant disagreements among scholars about the actual order of composition and in most cases no firm dates. Works listed in column three are usually by date of publication. *The Spanish Tragedy*, for instance, was probably composed around 1586, but not published until 1592.

SHAKESPEARE PLAY CHRONOLOGY

From http://www.shakespeare-online.com/keydates/playchron.html

Establishing the chronology of Shakespeare's plays is a most frustrating and difficult task. It is impossible to know the exact order of succession because there is no record of the first production date of any of Shakespeare's works. However, scholars have decided upon a specific play chronology, based upon the following sources of information: 1) several historical events and allusions to those events in the plays; 2) the records of performances of the plays -- taken from such places as Henslowe's diary and the diaries of other Shakespeare contemporaries like John Manningham (a student at the Inns of Court), and Thomas Platter (a Swiss businessman); 3) the publication dates of sources; 4) the dates that the plays appear in print (remembering that the production of a play immediately followed the completion of that play in the Elizabethan age). Despite the fact that we have an accepted play chronology, we must keep in mind that the dating is conjectural, and there are many who disagree with the order of plays listed below.

First Performed	Plays	First Printed
1590-91	Henry VI, Part II	1594?
1590-91	Henry VI, Part III	1594?
1591-92	Henry VI, Part I	1623
1592-93	Richard III	1597
1592-93	Comedy of Errors	1623
1593-94	Titus Andronicus	1594
1593-94	Taming of the Shrew	1623
1594-95	Two Gentlemen of Verona	1623
1594-95	Love's Labour's Lost	1598?
1594-95	Romeo and Juliet	1597
1595-96	Richard II	1597
1595-96	A Midsummer Night's Dream	1600
1596-97	King John	1623
1596-97	The Merchant of Venice	1600
1597-98	Henry IV, Part I	1598
1597-98	Henry IV, Part II	1600
1598-99	Much Ado About Nothing	1600
1598-99	Henry V	1600
1599-1600	Julius Caesar	1623
1599-1600	As You Like It	1623
1599-1600	Twelfth Night	1623
1600-01	Hamlet	1603
1600-01	The Merry Wives of Windsor	1602
1601-02	Troilus and Cressida	1609
1602-03	All's Well That Ends Well	1623
1604-05	Measure for Measure	1623
1604-05	Othello	1622
1605-06	King Lear	1608
1605-06	Macbeth	1623

1606-07	**Antony and Cleopatra**	**1623**
1607-08	**Coriolanus**	**1623**
1607-08	**Timon of Athens**	**1623**
1608-09	**Pericles**	**1609**
1609-10	**Cymbeline**	**1623**
1610-11	**The Winter's Tale**	**1623**
1611-12	**The Tempest**	**1623**
1612-13	**Henry VIII**	**1623**
1612-13	**The Two Noble Kinsmen***	**1634**

***The Two Noble Kinsmen is listed as one of Shakespeare's plays although it must be noted that all but a few scholars believe it to be an original work of Shakespeare. The majority of the play was probably written by John Fletcher, who was a prominent actor and Shakespeare's close friend. Fletcher succeeded Shakespeare as foremost dramatist for the King's Men (the successor to the Chamberlain's Men).**

Shakespeare of Stratford

From http://www.shakespeare-online.com/biography/

SHAKESPEARE'S ANCESTRY

As a brief introductory detail it should be mentioned that, during the sixteenth century, there were many families with the name Shakespeare in and around Stratford. "Shakespeare" appears countless times in town minutes and court records, spelled in a variety of ways, from Shagspere to Chacsper. Unfortunately, there are very few records that reveal William Shakespeare's relationship to or with the many other Stratford Shakespeares. Genealogists claim to have discovered one man related to Shakespeare who was hanged in Gloucestershire for theft in 1248, and Shakespeare's father, in an application for a coat of arms, claimed that his grandfather was a hero in the War of the Roses and was granted land in Warwickshire in 1485 by Henry VII. No historical evidence has been discovered to corroborate this story of the man who would be William Shakespeare's great-grandfather, but, luckily, we do have information regarding his paternal and maternal grandfathers. The Bard's paternal grandfather was Richard Shakespeare (d. 1561), a farmer in Snitterfield, a village four miles northeast of Stratford. There is no record of Richard Shakespeare before 1529, but details about his life after this reveal that he was a tenant farmer, who, on occasion, would be fined for grazing too many cattle on the common grounds and for not attending manor court. There is no record of Richard Shakespeare's wife, but together they had two sons (possibly more), John and Henry. Richard Shakespeare worked on several different sections of land during his lifetime, including the land owned by the wealthy Robert Arden of Wilmecote, Shakespeare's maternal grandfather. Robert Arden (d. 1556) was the son of Thomas Arden of Wilmecote, Shakespeare's maternal great-grandfather, who probably belonged to the aristocratic family of the Ardens of Park Hall. He was catholic and married more than once (we know the name of his second wife -- Agnes Hill) and he fathered no fewer than eight daughters. He became the stepfather of Agnes' four children. Robert Arden had accumulated much property, and when he died, he named his daughter (Shakespeare's mother) Mary, only sixteen at the time, one of his executors. He left Mary some money and, in his own words, "all my land in Willmecote cawlide Asbyes and the crop apone the grounde, sowne and tyllide as hitt is".

SHAKESPEARE'S PARENTS

Shakespeare's father, John, came to Stratford from Snitterfield before 1532 as an apprentice glover and tanner of leathers. John Shakespeare prospered and began to deal in farm products and wool. It is recorded that he bought a house in 1552 (the date that he first appears in the town records), and bought more property in 1556. Because John Shakespeare owned one house on Greenhill Street and two houses on Henley Street, the exact location of William's birth cannot be known for certain. Sometime between 1556 and 1558 John Shakespeare married Mary Arden, the daughter of the wealthy Robert Arden of Wilmecote and owner of the sixty-acre farm called Asbies. The wedding would have most likely taken place in Mary Arden's parish church at Aston Cantlow, the burial place of Robert Arden, and, although there is no evidence of strong piety on either side of the family, it would have been a Catholic service, since Queen Mary I was the reigning monarch. We assume neither John nor Mary could write -- John used a pair of glovers' compasses as his signature while Mary used a running horse -- but it did not prevent them from becoming important members of the community. John Shakespeare was elected to a multitude of civic positions, including ale-taster of the borough (Stratford had a long-reaching reputation for its brewing) in 1557, chamberlain of the borough in 1561, alderman in 1565, (a position which came with free education for his children at the Stratford Grammar School), high bailiff, or mayor, in 1568, and chief alderman in 1571.

Due to his important civic duties, he rightfully sought the title of gentleman and applied for his coat-of-arms in 1570 (see picture on left). However, for unspecific reasons the application was abruptly withdrawn, and within the next few years, for reasons just as mystifying, John Shakespeare would go from wealthy business owner and dedicated civil servant to debtor and absentee council member. By 1578 he was behind in his taxes and stopped paying the statutory aldermanic subscription for poor relief. In 1579, he had to mortgage Mary Shakespeare's estate, Asbies, to pay his creditors. In 1580 he was fined 40 pounds for missing a court date and in 1586 the town removed him from the board of aldermen due to lack of attendance. By 1590, John Shakespeare owned only his house on Henley Street and, in 1592 he was fined for not attending church. However, near the very end of John Shakespeare's life, it seems that his social and economic standing was again beginning to flourish. He once again applied to the College of Heralds for a coat-of-arms in 1596, and, due likely to the success of William in London, this time his wish was granted. On October 20 of that year, by permission of the Garter King of Arms (the Queen's aid in such matters) "the said John Shakespeare, Gentlemen, and...his children, issue and posterity" were lawfully entitled to display the gold coat-of-arms, with a black banner bearing a silver spear (a visual representation of the family name "Shakespeare"). The coat-of-arms could then be displayed on their door and all their personal items. The motto was "Non sanz droict" or "not without right. The reason cited for granting the coat-of-arms was John Shakespeare's grandfather's faithful service to Henry VII, but no specifics were given as to what service he actually performed. The coat-of-arms appears on Shakespeare's tomb in Stratford. In 1599 John Shakespeare was reinstated on the town council, but died a short time later, in 1601. He was probably near seventy years old and he had been married for forty-four years. Mary Shakespeare died in 1608 and was buried on September 9.

SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTH

The baptismal register of the Holy Trinity parish church, in Stratford, shows the following entry for April 26, 1564: Gulielmus filius Johannes Shakespeare. The actual date of Shakespeare's birth is not known, but, traditionally, April 23, St George's Day, has been

Shakespeare's accepted birthday, and a house on Henley Street in Stratford, owned by William's father, John, is accepted as Shakespeare's birth place. However, the reality is that no one really knows when the great dramatist was born. According to the Book of Common Prayer, it was required that a child be baptized on the nearest Sunday or holy day following the birth, unless the parents had a legitimate excuse. As Dennis Kay proposes in his book Shakespeare

> If Shakespeare was indeed born on Sunday, April 23, the next feast day would have been St. Mark's Day on Tuesday the twenty-fifth. There might well have been some cause, both reasonable and great -- or perhaps, as has been suggested, St. Mark's Day was still held to be unlucky, as it had been before the Reformation, when altars and crucifixes used to be draped in black cloth, and when some claimed to see in the churchyard the spirits of those doomed to die in that year. . . .but that does not help to explain the christening on the twenty-sixth.(54)

No doubt Shakespeare's true birthday will remain a mystery forever. But the assumption that the Bard was born on the same day of the month that he died lends an exciting esoteric highlight to the otherwise mundane details of Shakespeare's life.

SHAKESPEARE'S SIBLINGS

William Shakespeare was indeed lucky to survive to adulthood in sixteenth-century England. Waves of the plague swept across the countryside, and pestilence ravaged Stratford during the hot summer months. Mary and John Shakespeare became parents for the first time in September of 1558, when their daughter Joan was born. Nothing is known of Joan Shakespeare except for the fact that she was baptized in Stratford on September 15, and succumbed to the plague shortly after. Their second child, Margaret, was born in 1562 and was baptized on December 2. She died one year later. The Shakespeares' fourth child, Gilbert, was baptized on October 13, 1566, at Holy Trinity. It is likely that John Shakespeare named his second son after his friend and neighbor on Henley Street, Gilbert Bradley, a glover and the burgess of Stratford for a time. Records show that Gilbert Shakespeare survived the plague and reached adulthood, becoming a haberdasher, working in London as of 1597, and spending much of his time back in Stratford. In 1609 he appeared in Stratford court in connection with a lawsuit, but we know no details regarding the matter. Gilbert Shakespeare seems to have had a long and successful career as a tradesman, and he died a bachelor in Stratford on February 3, 1612. In 1569, John and Mary Shakespeare gave birth to another girl, and named her after her first born sister, Joan. Joan Shakespeare accomplished the wondrous feat of living to be seventy-seven years old -- outliving William and all her other siblings by decades. Joan married William Hart the hatter and had four children but two of them died in childhood. Her son William Hart (1600-1639) followed in his famous uncle's footsteps and became an actor, performing with the King's Men in the mid-1630s. His most noted role was that of Falstaff. William Hart never married, but the leading actor of the restoration period, Charles Hart, is believed to have been William Hart's illegitimate son and grandnephew to Shakespeare. Due to the fact that Shakespeare's children and his other siblings did not carry on the line past the seventeenth century, the descendants of Joan Shakespeare Hart possess the only genetic link to the great playwright. Joan Shakespeare lost her husband William a week before she lost her brother William in 1616, and she lived the rest of her life in Shakespeare's birthplace. Joan died in 1646, but her descendants stayed in Stratford until 1806. Undoubtedly already euphoric that Joan had survived the precarious first few years of childhood, the Shakespeares' joy was heightened with the birth of their fourth daughter, Anne, in 1571, when William was seven years old.

Unfortunately, tragedy befell the family yet again when Anne died at the age of eight. The sorrow felt by the Shakespeares' over the loss of Anne was profound, and even though they were burdened by numerous debts at the time of her death, they arranged an unusually elaborate funeral for their cherished daughter. Anne Shakespeare was buried on April 4, 1579. In 1574, Mary and John Shakespeare had another boy and they named him Richard, probably after his paternal grandfather. Richard was baptized on March 11 of that year, and nothing else is known about him, except for the fact that he died, unmarried, and was buried on February 4, 1613 -- a year and a day after the death of Gilbert Shakespeare. Mary gave birth to one more child in 1580. They christened him on May 3 and named him Edmund, probably in honor of his uncle Edmund Lambert. Edmund was eager to follow William into the acting profession, and when he was old enough he joined William in London to embark on a career as a "player". Edmund did not make a great reputation for himself as an actor, but, in all fairness, cruel fate, and not his poor acting abilities, was likely the reason. Edmund died in 1607 -- not yet thirty years old. He was buried in St. Saviour's Church, in Southwark, on December 31 of that year. His funeral was costly and magnificent, with tolling bells heard across the Thames. It is most likely that William planned the funeral for his younger brother because William would have been the only Shakespeare wealthy enough to afford such an expensive tribute to Edmund. In addition, records show that the funeral was held in the morning, and as Dennis Kay points out, funerals were usually held in the afternoon. It is probable that the morning funeral was arranged so that Shakespeare's fellow actors could attend the burial of Edmund.

SHAKESPEARE'S EDUCATION AND CHILDHOOD

Shakespeare probably began his education at the age of six or seven at the Stratford grammar school, which is still standing only a short distance from his house on Henley Street and is in the care of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. Although we have no record of Shakespeare attending the school, due to the official position held by John Shakespeare it seems likely that he would have decided to educate young William at the school which was under the care of Stratford's governing body. The Stratford grammar school had been built some two hundred years before Shakespeare was born and in that time the lessons taught there were, of course, dictated primarily by the beliefs of the reigning monarch. In 1553, due to a charter by King Edward VI, the school became known as the King's New School of Stratford-upon-Avon. During the years that Shakespeare attended the school, at least one and possibly three headmasters stepped down because of their devotion to the Catholic religion proscribed by Queen Elizabeth. One of these masters was Simon Hunt (b. 1551), who, in 1578, according to tradition, left Stratford to pursue his more spiritual goal of becoming a Jesuit, and relocated to the seminary at Rheims. Hunt had found his true vocation: when he died in Rome seven years later he had risen to the position of Grand Penitentiary.

Like all of the great poets and dramatists of the time, Shakespeare learned his basic reading and writing skills from an ABC, or horn-book. Robert Speaight in his book, Shakespeare: The Man and His Achievement, describes this book as

> a primer framed in wood and covered with a thin plate of transparent horn. It included the alphabet in small letters and in capitals, with combinations of the five vowels with b, c, and d, and the Lord's Prayer in English. The first of these alphabets, which ended with the abbreviation for 'and', began with the mark of the cross. Hence the alphabet was known as 'Christ cross row' -- the cross-row of Richard III, I, i, 55. A short catechism was often included in the ABC book (the 'absey book' of King John, I, i,

196). (10)

In The Merry Wives of Windsor, there is a comical scene in which the Welsh headmaster tests his pupil's knowledge, who is appropriately named William. There is little doubt that Shakespeare was recalling his own experiences during his early school years. As was the case in all Elizabethan grammar schools, Latin was the primary language of learning. Although Shakespeare likely had some lessons in English, Latin composition and the study of Latin authors like Seneca, Cicero, Ovid, Virgil, and Horace would have been the focus of his literary training. One can see that Shakespeare absorbed much that was taught in his grammar school, for he had an impressive familiarity with the stories by Latin authors, as is evident when examining his plays and their sources. Even though scholars, basing their argument on a story told more than a century after the fact, accept that Shakespeare was removed from school around age thirteen because of his father's financial and social difficulties, there is no reason whatsoever to believe that he had not acquired a firm grasp of both English and Latin and that he had continued his studies elsewhere. The famous quotation from Nicholas Rowe's notoriously inaccurate biography of Shakespeare (written in 1709), where he claims that Shakespeare "acquir'd that little Latin he was Master of" and that Shakespeare was prevented by his father's poor fortune from "further Proficiency in that Language", should be read with an extremely critical eye.

There are other fragmented and dubious details about Shakespeare's life growing up in Stratford. He is supposed to have worked for a butcher, in addition to helping run his father's business. There is a fable that Shakespeare stole a deer from Sir Thomas Lucy at Charlecote, and, instead of serving a prison sentence, fled from Stratford. Although this surely is a fictitious incident, there exists a few verses of a humorous ballad mocking Lucy that have been connected to Shakespeare. "Edmond Malone records a version of two verses of the Lucy Ballad collected by one of the few great English classical scholars, Joshua Barnes, at Stratford between 1687 and 1690. Barnes stopped overnight at an inn and heard an old woman singing it. He gave her a new gown for the two stanzas which were all she remembered":

> Sir Thomas was so covetous
> To covet so much deer
> When horns enough upon his head
> Most plainly did appear
>
> Had not his worship one deer left?
> What then? He had a wife
> Took pains enough to find him horns
> Should last him during life. (Levi, 35)

Shakespeare's daily activities after he left school and before he re-emerged as a professional actor in the late 1580s are impossible to trace. Suggestions that he might have worked as a schoolmaster or lawyer or glover with his father and brother, Gilbert, are all plausible. So too is the argument that Shakespeare studied intensely to become a master at his literary craft, and honed his acting skills while traveling and visiting playhouses outside of Stratford. But, it is from this period known as the "lost years", that we obtain one vital piece of information about Shakespeare: he married a pregnant orphan named Anne Hathaway.

SHAKESPEARE'S MARRIAGE AND CHILDREN

Recordings in the Episcopal register at Worcester on the dates of November 27 and 28, 1582, reveal that Shakespeare desired to marry a young girl named Anne. There are two different documents regarding this matter, and their contents have raised a debate over just whom Shakespeare first intended to wed. Were there two Annes? Was Shakespeare in love with one but in lust with the other? Was Shakespeare ready to join in matrimony with the Anne of his dreams only to have an attack of conscience and marry the Anne with whom he had carnal relations? To discuss the controversy properly we should look at the documents in question. The first entry in the register is the following record of the issue of a marriage license to one Wm Shakespeare:

> Anno Domini 1582...Novembris...27 die eiusdem mensis. Item eodem die supradicto emanavit Licentia inter Wm Shaxpere et Annam Whateley de Temple Grafton.1

The next entry in the episcopal register records the marriage bond granted to one Wm Shakespeare:

> Noverint universi per praesentes nos Fulconem Sandells de Stratford in comitatu Warwici agricolam et Johannem Rychardson ibidem agricolam, teneri et firmiter obligari Ricardo Cosin generoso et Roberto Warmstry notario publico in quadraginta libris bonae et legalis monetae Angliae solvend. eisdem Ricardoet Roberto haered. execut. et assignat. suis ad quam quidem solucionem bene et fideliter faciend. obligamus nos et utrumque nostrum per se pro toto et in solid. haered. executor. et administrator. nostros firmiter per praesentes sigillis nostris sigillat. Dat. 28 die Novem. Anno regni dominae nostrae Eliz. Dei gratia Angliae Franc. et Hiberniae Reginae fidei defensor &c.25.2 (The condition of this obligation is such that if hereafter there shall not appear any lawful let or impediment by reason of any precontract, consanguinity, affinity or by any other lawful means whatsoever, but that William Shagspere on the one party and Anne Hathwey of Stratford in the diocese of Worcester, maiden, may lawfully solemnize matrimony together, and in the same afterwards remain and continue like man and wife according unto the laws in that behalf provided...)

Three possible conclusions can be reached from the above records: 1) The Anne Whateley in the first record and the Anne Hathwey in the second record are the same woman. Some scholars believe that the name Whateley was substituted accidentally for Hathwey into the register by the careless clerk. "The clerk was a nincompoop: he wrote Baker for Barber in his register, and Darby for Bradeley, and Edgock for Elcock, and Anne Whateley for Anne Hathaway. A lot of ingenious ink has been spilt over this error, but it is surely a simple one: the name Whateley occurs in a tithe appeal by a vicar on the same page of the register; the clerk could not follow his own notes, or he was distracted" (Levi, 37). Moreover, some believe that the couple selected Temple Grafton as the place for the wedding for reasons of privacy and that is why it is recorded in the register instead of Stratford. 2) The Wm Shaxpere and the Annam Whateley who wished to marry in Temple Grafton were two different people entirely from the Wm Shagspere and Anne Hathwey who were married in Stratford. This argument relies on the assumption that there was a relative of Shakespeare's living in Temple Grafton, or a man unrelated but sharing Shakespeare's name (which would be extremely unlikely), and that there is no trace of this relative after the issue of his marriage license. 3) The woman Shakespeare loved and the woman Shakespeare finally married were two different Annes. Not many critics support this hypothesis, but those that do

use it to portray Shakespeare as a young man torn between the love he felt for Anne Whateley and the obligation he felt toward Anne Hathwey and the child she was carrying, which was surely his. In Shakespeare, Anthony Burgess constructs a vivid scenario to this effect:

> It is reasonable to believe that Will wished to marry a girl named Anne Whateley. The name is common enough in the Midlands and is even attached to a four-star hotel in Horse Fair, Banbury. Her father may have been a friend of John Shakespeare's, he may have sold kidskin cheap, there are various reasons why the Shakespeares and the Whateleys, or their nubile children, might become friendly. Sent on skin-buying errands to Temple Grafton, Will could have fallen for a comely daughter, sweet as May and shy as a fawn. He was eighteen and highly susceptible. Knowing something about girls, he would know that this was the real thing. Something, perhaps, quite different from what he felt about Mistress Hathaway of Shottery. But why, attempting to marry Anne Whateley, had he put himself in the position of having to marry the other Anne? I suggest that, to use the crude but convenient properties of the old women's-magazine morality-stories, he was exercised by love for the one and lust for the other. I find it convenient to imagine that he knew Anne Hathaway carnally, for the first time, in the spring of 1582... (57)

Whichever argument one chooses to accept, it is fact that Shakespeare, a minor at the time, married Anne Hathaway, who was twenty-six and already several months pregnant. Anne was the eldest daughter, and one of the seven children of Richard Hathaway, a twice-married farmer in Shottery. When Richard died in 1581, he requested his son, Bartholomew, move into the house we now know as Anne Hathaway's Cottage, and maintain the property for his mother, Richard's second wife and Anne's stepmother. Anne lived in the cottage with Bartholomew, her step-mother, and her other siblings. No doubt she was bombarded with a barrage of household tasks to fill her days at Hewland Farm, as it was then called. After her marriage to Shakespeare, Anne left Hewland Farm to live in John Shakespeare's house on Henley Street, as was the custom of the day. Preparations for the new bride were made, and for reasons unknown, her arrival greatly bothered John Shakespeare's current tenant in the house, William Burbage. A heated fight ensued, and John refused to release Burbage from his lease, so Burbage decided to take the matter to a London court. On July 24, 1582, lawyers representing both sides met and resolved the matter -- John would release William Burbage from his lease.

The Shakespeares' first child was Susanna, christened on May 26th, 1583, and twins arrived in January, 1585. They were baptized on February 2 of that year and named after two very close friends of William -- the baker Hamnet Sadler and his wife, Judith. The Sadlers became the godparents of the twins and, in 1598, they, in turn, named their own son William. Not much information is known about the life of Anne and her children after this date, except for the tragic fact that Hamnet Shakespeare died of an unknown cause on August 11, 1596, at the age of eleven. By this time Shakespeare had long since moved to London to realize his dreams on the English stage (a time in the Bard's life that will be covered in depth later on) and we do not know if he was present at Hamnet's funeral in Stratford. We can only imagine how deeply the loss of his only son touched the sensitive poet, but his sorrow is undeniably reflected in his later work, and, particularly, in a passage from King John, written between 1595 and 1597:

> Young Arthur is my son, and he is lost:

I am not mad: I would to heaven I were!
For then, 'tis like I should forget myself:
O, if I could, what grief should I forget!
Preach some philosophy to make me mad,
And thou shalt be canonized, cardinal;
For being not mad but sensible of grief,
My reasonable part produces reason
How I may be deliver'd of these woes,
And teaches me to kill or hang myself:
If I were mad, I should forget my son,
Or madly think a babe of clouts were he:
I am not mad; too well, too well I feel
The different plague of each calamity....
I tore them from their bonds and cried aloud
'O that these hands could so redeem my son,
As they have given these hairs their liberty!'
But now I envy at their liberty,
And will again commit them to their bonds,
Because my poor child is a prisoner.
And, father cardinal, I have heard you say
That we shall see and know our friends in heaven:
If that be true, I shall see my boy again;
For since the birth of Cain, the first male child,
To him that did but yesterday suspire,
There was not such a gracious creature born.
But now will canker-sorrow eat my bud
And chase the native beauty from his cheek
And he will look as hollow as a ghost,
As dim and meagre as an ague's fit,
And so he'll die; and, rising so again,
When I shall meet him in the court of heaven
I shall not know him: therefore never, never
Must I behold my pretty Arthur more. (III.iv.45-91)

SHAKESPEARE AS ACTOR AND PLAYWRIGHT

We know very little about Shakespeare's life during two major spans of time, commonly referred to as the "lost years." The lost years fall into two periods: 1578-82 and 1585-92. The first period covers the time after Shakespeare left grammar school until his marriage to Anne Hathaway in November of 1582. The second period covers the seven years of Shakespeare's life in which he must have been perfecting his dramatic skills and collecting sources for the plots of his plays. "What could such a genius accomplish in this direction during six or eight years? The histories alone must have required unending hours of labor to gather facts for the plots and counter-plots of these stories. When we think of the time he must have spent in reading about the pre-Tudor dynasties, we are at a loss to estimate what a day's work meant to him. Perhaps he was one of those singular geniuses who absorbs books. George Douglas Brown, when discussing Shakespeare, often used to say he knew how to 'pluck the guts' out of a tome" (Neilson 45). No one knows for certain how Shakespeare first started his career in the theatre, although several London players would visit Stratford regularly, and so, sometime between 1585 and 1592, it is probable that young Shakespeare could have been recruited by the Leicester's or Queen's men. Whether an

acting troupe recruited Shakespeare in his hometown or he was forced on his own to travel to London to begin his career, he was nevertheless an established actor in the great city by the end of 1592. In this year came the first reference to Shakespeare in the world of the theatre. The dramatist Robert Greene declared in his death-bed autobiography that "There is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tygers heart wrapt in a Players hide supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you; and, being an absolute Johannes Factotum, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country." After Green's death, his editor, Henry Chettle, publicly apologized to Shakespeare in the Preface to his Kind-Heart's Dream:

> About three months since died M. Robert Greene, leaving many papers in sundry booksellers' hands, among other his Groatsworth of Wit, in which a letter written to divers play-makers is offensively by one or two of them taken, and because on the dead they cannot be avenged, they willfully forge in their conceits a living author....With neither of them that take offence was I acquainted, and with one of them I care not if I never be. The other, whom at that time I did not so much spare as since I wish I had, for that, as I have moderated the heat of living writers and might have used my own discretion (especially in such a case, the author being dead), that I did not I am as sorry as if the original fault had been my fault, because myself have seen his demeanor no less civil than he excellent in the quality he professes. Besides, the diver of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing that approves his art.

Such an apology indicates that Shakespeare was already a respected player in London with influential friends and connections. Records also tell us that several of Shakespeare's plays were popular by this time, including Henry VI, The Comedy of Errors, and Titus Andronicus. The company that staged most of the early productions of these plays was Pembroke's Men, sponsored by the Earl of Pembroke, Henry Herbert. The troupe was very popular and performed regularly at the court of Queen Elizabeth. Most critics conclude that Shakespeare spent time as both a writer and an actor for Pembroke's Men before 1592. The turning point in Shakespeare's career came in 1593. The theatres had been closed since 1592 due to an outbreak of the plague and, although it is possible that Shakespeare toured the outlying areas of London with acting companies like Pembroke's Men or Lord Strange's Men, it seems more likely that he left the theatre entirely during this time to work on his non-dramatic poetry. The hard work paid off, for by the end of 1593, Shakespeare had caught the attention of the Earl of Southampton.

Southampton became Shakespeare's patron, and on April 18, 1593, Venus and Adonis was entered for publication. Shakespeare had made his formal debut as a poet. The dedication Shakespeare wrote to Southampton at the beginning of the poem is impassioned and telling, "phrased with courtly deference" (Rowse 74):

> TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE HENRY WRIOTHESLEY, EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON, AND BARON OF TICHFIELD.
> RIGHT HONORABLE,
>
> I KNOW not how I shall offend in dedicating my
> unpolished lines to your lordship, nor how the world will
> censure me for choosing so strong a prop to support so weak a
> burden only, if your honour seem but pleased, I account

> myself highly praised, and vow to take advantage of all idle hours, till I have honoured you with some graver labour. But if the first heir of my invention prove deformed, I shall be sorry it had so noble a god-father, and never after ear so barren a land, for fear it yield me still so bad a harvest.
> I leave it to your honourable survey, and your honour to your heart's content; which I wish may always answer your own wish and the world's hopeful expectation.
>
> Your honour's in all duty,
> WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

Although there is no concrete proof that Shakespeare had a long and close friendship with Southampton, most scholars agree that this was the case, based on Shakespeare's writings, particularly the early sonnets.

Shakespeare returned to the theatre in 1594, and became a leading member of the Lord Chamberlain's Men, formally known as Lord Strange's Men. The manuscript accounts of the treasurer of the royal chamber in the public records office tells us the following:

> To William Kempe, William Shakespeare, and Richard Burbage, servants to the Lord Chamberlain, upon the council's warrent dated at Whitehall xv die Marcij 1594 for two several comedies or interludes showed by them before her Majesty in Christmas time last past, viz; upon St. Stephan's day and Innocent's day, xiiij li. vj s. viij d. and by way of her Majesty's reward...

This is proof that Shakespeare had performed with the Chamberlain's Men before Elizabeth I on several occasions. As payment for their performance the actors each received 10 pounds. During his time with the Chamberlain's Men Shakespeare wrote many plays, including Romeo and Juliet, Richard II, King John, and Love's Labour's Lost. As G.E. Bentley points out in Shakespeare and the Theatre, Shakespeare had by this time become immersed in his roles as actor and writer. He was "more completely and more continuously involved in theatres and acting companies than any other Elizabethan dramatist. [Shakespeare is] "the only one known who not only wrote plays for his company, acted in the plays, and shared the profits, but who was also one of the housekeepers who owned the building. For seventeen years he was one of the owners of the Globe theatre and for eight years he was one of the housekeepers of the company's second theatre, the Blackfriars, as well" (Rowse 128). During the years Shakespeare performed with the Chamberlain's Men, before their purchase of the Globe in 1599, they played primarily at the well-established theatres like the Swan, the Curtain, and the Theatre. The troupe would also give regular performances before Elizabeth I and her court, and tour the surrounding areas of London. Some important events in Shakespeare's personal life also take place during this time period. The Shakespeares finally received a coat of arms 1596 (see "Shakespeare's Parents" for more information on the coat-of-arms), and on August 11 of the same year, Shakespeare's son, Hamnet, died at the age of eleven. Shakespeare no doubt returned to Stratford for the burial, although we have no documented proof. In 1597, Shakespeare purchased the second largest house in Stratford: New Place. The house stood at the corner of Chapel Lane and Chapel Street, north of the Guild Chapel and right across from the very school he attended in his youth. He bought it from William Underhill for the low price of 60 pounds, and below is the actual deed (translated from the original Latin) transferring New Place from Underhill to Shakespeare on

May 4, 1597:

> Between William Shakespeare, complainant, and William Underhill, deforciant [wrongful occupier, supposed by the legal fiction on which the fine method of transfer was based to be keeping the complainant out of his rightful property], concerning one dwelling house, two barns, and two gardens with their appurtenances in Stratford-on-Avon, in regard to which a plea of agreement was broached in the same court: Namely, that the said William Underhill acknowledged the said tenements with their appurtenances to be the right of W. Shakespeare as being those which the same William Shakespeare has by gift of the said W. U., and remitted and waived claim to them from himself and his heirs to the said W.S. and his heirs forever....and agreement the same W.S. has given the foresaid W./U. sixty pounds sterling. (Brooke 21)

Many theorize that Shakespeare renewed his interest in Stratford only after the death of Hamnet and that, for the many years he was away in London, he neglected his family back home. However, it is just as likely that he made frequent yet unrecorded trips to Stratford while he was trying to find success in London.

SHAKESPEARE'S FELLOW ACTORS

Richard Burbage (b.1567? d.1619) →

Richard Burbage is considered to be the first great actor in the English theatre. He was the son of James Burbage, the theatrical entrepreneur who built "the Theatre" in Shoreditch on the outskirts of London, and the brother of another famous actor of the day, Cuthbert Burbage. Richard Burbage achieved success as performer by the age of 20 and during his career he appeared in plays by Jonson, Kyd, Beaumont and Fletcher, and John Webster. He also played many of the major Shakespearean characters, including Othello, Hamlet, Lear, and Richard III. "It is likely that Richard III was the most popular of all Shakespeare's plays with the Elizabethan public; it provided a superlative part for Burbage" (Rowse 130). Legend tells us that a woman fell in love with Burbage when she saw him play Richard III and begged him to come to her chambers that night under the name of King Richard. But Shakespeare overheard the proposition and, as a joke, left the theatre early to take Burbage's place. Shakespeare was 'at his game ere Burbage came. Then, message being brought that Richard III was at the door, Shakespeare caused return to be made that "William the Conqueror" was before Richard III" (Rowse 130). Early in his career Burbage probably would have been a member of both Lord Strange's Men and the Admiral's Men. Both companies performed at James Burbage's Theatre between 1590 and 1591. We do know that Burbage was a member of the Chamberlain's Men after 1594 and stayed with the group through its evolution into the King's Men in 1603. Although his last recorded performance was in 1610, he remained with the King's Men until his death in 1619.

In addition to acting, Richard Burbage was also an entrepreneur much like his father. When James Burbage died in 1597 he left the Theatre to Richard and his brother. Together they

disassembled the Theatre and built the Globe in 1599. The Burbages kept half the shares in the new theatre and the rest were assigned equally to Shakespeare and other members of the Chamberlain's Men. James Burbage also left another theatre to Richard - the Blackfriars Theatre. Richard Burbage leased it to an acting company called the Children of the Chapel, but, after they could not make the payments, Burbage bought back the lease with his brother and four new partners from the King's Men - Shakespeare, Henry Condell, William Sly, and John Heminge. Richard Burbage was also a wonderful painter. Some believe that the anonymous oil painting of Burbage seen above is actually a self-portrait, and he has often been credited with painting the Chandos portrait of Shakespeare. Burbage's skills as an artist were often in demand. With Shakespeare as his partner, providing the commemorative words, Burbage designed an impresa, or personal badge, for the Earl of Rutland (1578-1632). The badge was to be worn on the Earl's shield at a tournament on March 24, 1613 to honor James I. When Shakespeare died in 1616, he left his dear friend Burbage money to buy a mourning-ring in his memory. Burbage died on March 9, 1619, and "the true sound of Shakespeare's lines, as he had conceived them [and] Burbage had interpreted them, was silenced forever" (Holmes 203).

William Kempe (b.1560? d.1603?) →

William Kempe was one of the most beloved clowns in the Elizabethan theatre. Records tell us that Kempe was an actor with Leicester's Men on a tour of the Netherlands and Denmark in 1585-86. By 1593 Kempe was a member of Strange's Men, and theatre-goers and fellow actors were beginning to recognize his comedic talent. Thomas Nashe declared him the successor to the great Elizabethan performer, Richard Tarlton. Kempe joined the Chamberlain's Men in 1594 and acted in many of Shakespeare's plays. He was the original portrayer of Dogberry in Much Ado About Nothing, Peter in Romeo and Juliet, and possibly Falstaff. He also likely played Lancelot Gobbo in The Merchant of Venice and Bottom in A Midsummer Night's Dream. However it appears that Kempe suddenly left the Chamberlain's Men in 1599. The reason for his departure is not documented, although many believe that he was asked to leave due to his chronic improvising, and that Shakespeare made reference to this in Hamlet:

> **And let those that play**
> **your clowns speak no more than is**
> **set down for them;**
> **for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to**
> **set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh**
> **too (3.2.40-5)**

Once Kempe left the troupe Shakespeare's comic characters changed dramatically, indicating that earlier parts were written to fit Kempe's unique style. Examining Shakespeare's changes provides us with even more information about Kempe's stage presence. "He was a big man who specialized in Plebian clowns who spoke in earthly language...Kempe's characters have a tendency to confuse and mispronounce their words, and contemporary references to his dancing and ability to "make a scurvy face" suggest a physical brand of humour." (Boyce 335) Now finished with Shakespeare's troupe and looking for another way to entertain the people of London, Kempe planned a wild publicity stunt. In 1600 he danced a morris dance from London to Norwich, almost 100 miles north. He wrote his own account of the event called Kempe's Nine Days Wonder, and the picture above is from the cover of the original copy. Kempe returned to acting in 1601 when he left England to tour Europe. When he arrived home in 1602 he joined Worcester's Men, but he disappears from the records shortly after. Some scholars conclude that he died from the 1603 plague in London - the year of one of the largest outbreaks of the disease during Shakespeare's life.

Shakespeare's four Roman Plays

c.f., http://www.shakespeare-w.com/english/shakespeare/source.html

Coriolanus

Date: 1608, (1607-08)

Publication: 1623 (Folio 1)

Sources

- **Plutarch (c.46-120). Lives (Thomas North's English translation in 1579)**
- **Livius, Titus or Livy (59BC-AD17). Ab Urbe Condita Libri (Philemon Holland's English translation as The Romane Historie in 1600.)**
- **Camden, William (1551-1623). Remaines of Greater Worke Concerning Britain (1605)**
- **Averell, William A Marvaillous Combat of Contrarieties**

Julius Caesar

Date: 1599

Publication1623(F1)

Sources

- **Plutarch (c.46-120). Lives (Thomas North's English translation in 1579)**
- **Appian [Appianos] (2nd century). Civil Wars (English translation in 1578)**
- **Anonymous.The Tragedy of Caesar and Pompey, or Caesar's Revenge (c. 1595)**

Antony and Cleopatra

Date: 1607, (1606-07)

Stationer's Register: 20 May.1608

Publication: 1623(F1)

Sources

- **Plutarch (c.46-120). Lives (Thomas North's translation in 1579)**
- **Appian [Appianos] (2nd century). Civil Wars (English translation in 1578)**
- **Daniel, Samuel (c.1562-1619). The Tragedy of Cleopatra (c. 1594)**

Titus Andronicus

Date: 1589, 1592, (1588-1594)

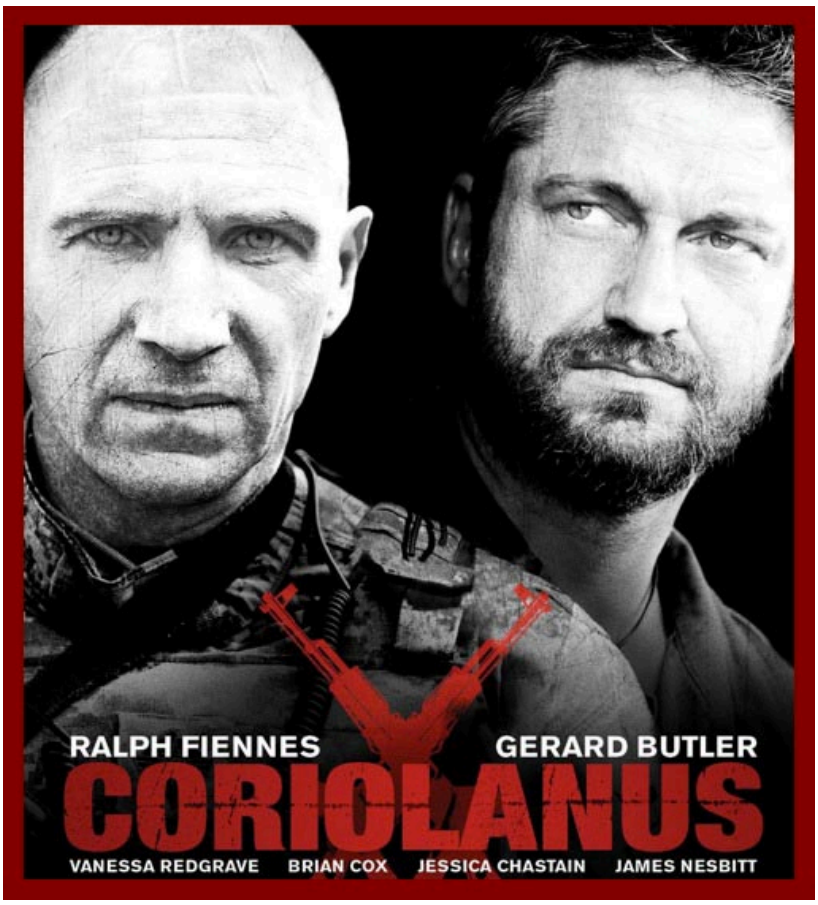
Stationer's Register: (6.Feb.1594)

Publications: 1594(Q1), 1600(Q2), 1611(Q3), 1623(F1)

Sources

- **a chapbook of "Titus Andronicus" sold by chapmen.**
- **Ovid (43 BC- AD18). Metamorphoses (Arthur Golding's English translation in 1567)**
- **Seneca, Lucius Annaeus (4. BC-AD65). Thyestes (English translation in 1560)**

Unit I – Coriolanus



2011 modern dress version of the Shakespeare play

The Shakespearean context:

Coriolanus **had its first performance in 1607 or 1608. Although *Coriolanus* fits into the earliest slot in the Roman chronology it was the last Roman play written by Shakespeare. This is mature Shakespeare – he'd already written most of his plays and his other three Roman plays had already been performed. *Titus Andronicus*, which was set much later in the Roman chronology – the late Empire, had its first performance in 1593-1594. *Julius Caesar* was performed in 1599-1600. *Antony and Cleopatra* had been performed a year before *Coriolanus* in 1606-1607.**

It is necessary to remember that a "regime change" had occurred in England in 1603 when Elizabeth I died ending the "Elizabethan era" (1558-1603). James I then ascended to the English throne thus beginning the "Jacobean era" (1603-1625). (The name James was supposedly derived from Jacob: Old Testament Hebrew, through Latin = iacobus.)

Since it was written, *Coriolanus* has seldom been played with neutrality – it almost always has a "left" or "right" slant. Depending on the ideology of the place and time and of the production, the protagonist is either a heroic defender of the correct established system or a reactionary defending a discredited system. There are also

"women's issues" (i.e., the "heroic mother") and "psychoanalytic" (i.e., the "Freudian mother") performances and vectors within performances. Audiences seldom have had the privilege of choosing their reception since directors (influenced by producers – the money) have broadly imposed their biases. We also don't know if Coriolanus and Aufidius were formerly gay lovers.

Since we know so little about Shakespeare, it is impossible to really know what his own bias ("left" or "right") might have been in writing Coriolanus. It's easier to assume that he was presenting yet another "problem" to his audiences. And by "audiences", we should not understand "the groups of people who attended individual performances" but rather the social divisions within the overall attendance at multiple performances. The upper class audience might see the "right" slant and sympathize with the Roman patrician view of the protagonist, and the lower class groundlings could well be sympathetic to the "left" Roman plebeian view articulated by his tribune enemies. It's very unlikely that anyone in Shakespeare's original audiences had any thought of any "women's issues" interpretation, and Freud and his Oedipus complex mother were far in the future.

There was, however, a timely English connection for the food shortage circumstances that precipitated the crisis in the Shakespeare's play: in 1557, during the reign of Mary I (aka Bloody Mary, for her persecution and execution of protestants) there had been corn riots in Oxfordshire; and, much more recently, in 1607, there had been corn riots in the Midlands. In both cases there was propaganda against the upper classes – nobles and burghers -- who, even during famine, had insensitively continued to use wheat starch to stiffen their neck and wrist ruffs.

> **[Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* is based mainly on Thomas North's 1579 translation of Plutarch's Life of Coriolanus. North worked from a previous translation by scholar/abbot Jacqes Amyot, who, working from the Vatican Plutarch, had translated all of Plutarch's lives into French, between 1559 and 1565. North's Englished Plutarch was very popular and had its third printing in 1603. For his *Coriolanus*, Shakespeare copied very heavily from North; more that 550 lines of the North text are copied in Shakespeare's play.**
>
> **Plutarch's Coriolanus is Shakespeare's Coriolanus but with a few minor additions. In Shakespeare, the character is shown to be introspective and psychologically torn. He is not, however, a *soliloquistic* Shakespearean soul-searcher. In fact it is his silences that are most telling. Other characters in the play remark on his unwillingness to answer. His answer in relenting after his mother's plea is to take her by the hand. We know him by his actions and by what others say of him.**
>
> **Shakespeare vastly amplifies the influence of Coriolanus' mother Volumnia (Veturia in Livy).**
>
> **The strange relationship between Shakespeare's Coriolanus and Aufidius is also a Shakespearean invention (i.e., not mentioned in the sources). They are almost amorous in both form (second person singular, usually reserved for lovers' conversations) and in content – they have fought each other heroically and both eroticize verbally their mutual memories of their hand-to-hand combat.**

Shakespeare also used North's Plutarch as the principal source for *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Timon of Athens*.]

The Roman context

The play is set at about 500 BC and is based on the story of a probably legendary hero of that time, Caius (or Cnaeus) Marcius Coriolanus. It is the very early Republic period. The Romans had recently expelled their last king, an Etruscan exile named Lucius Tarquinius Superbus (Tarquin the Proud). Tarquin had been a petty Tyrant in Rome, but he had been a military and diplomatic success in dealing with Rome's neighbors: the so-called "Treaty of Ferentina had brought the Latin League under Rome's hegemony. After his expulsion, Tarquin persuaded these old allies to Revolt. The Romans defeated Tarquin and his Latin allies, but were not able to fully occupy the Latin territories southeast of Rome. In the ensuing chaos there was a power vacuum in the area and the Volscians (Latin = Volscii) and other mountain tribes moved down toward the coast. The Voscians settled in and around Antium (modern Anzio).

It was in Roman efforts to subdue the Volscii that, according to Livy and Plutarch, Caius Marcius, literally, made his name. He was a junior officer in the Roman army that surrounded the Volscian town of Corioli, and, when others refused to charge the fortifications, he single-handedly broke through and slaughtered the defenders. He was granted the agnomen Coriolanus for his valor.

During the same period, the Plebeians were still struggling for their rights – they had already forced the Patricians to recognize the tribunate, but in the action of the Roman story (and of the Shakespearean version) the parameters of power had only begun to be established. In fact these parameters were never fully worked out; by the time of Augustus, some Plebeians had become part of the aristocracy, and the lines between upper and lower class were no longer set by family origins.

Several things to note about the Coriolanus story:

Titus Livius (Livy) (traditionally 59 BC – 17 AD), our earliest surviving source for the Coriolanus story, wrote his *Ab Urbe Condita* during the reign of Augustus (30 BC - 14 AD), 500 years after the events/legends described in the story. Although Livy is often said to have longed for a return of the Roman republic, the contrasts between the time of Coriolanus and the pax Romana of Augustus would have been clear to ancient Roman readers. (It's not sure that Livy was really pro-Republic – his chapters on the end of the Republic and the beginning of the Augustan Principate, which might have clarified his feelings, are lost.)

Plutarch, Shakespeare's main source for the Coriolanus story, was a Greek (Plutarchos) who became Lucius Mestrius Plutarchus when he achieved Roman citizenship. He was born ca. 46 AD and lived until 120 AD, so his work was a hundred years later than Livy's. Both probably worked from earlier sources – slight differences in their accounts could be the result of their using some different sources. Their

distance from the events, however, has led most modern historians to doubt their accounts.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, in Book VII of his *Roman Antiquities*, had an account of the Coriolanus story that was very similar to that of Livy. Dionysius wrote in Greek for the Greeks – trying to convince the Greeks to accede to Roman domination -- and was a contemporary of Livy. There is no evidence that Shakespeare had access to the writings of Dionysius.

Our modern context:

We have rewarded our victorious generals with our highest political power. George Washington was the first. He compared himself to Cincinnatus and organized the society of the Cincinnati (still existing), which became his presidential campaign machine.

William Henry Harrison ("Old Tippecanoe"), U. S. Grant, and Dwight D. Eisenhower are later examples. William Westmoreland and Alexander Haig thought they had a chance at the presidency but they faded away as did, most famously, Douglas MacArthur. MacArthur has been called "the American Caesar" and less prominently "the American Coriolanus".

But the most pathetic story in US History and the story that most closely parallels the mythical career of Coriolanus is that of Benedict Arnold. Arnold's services to he American cause, especially at Quebec and at Saratoga, were unmatched.

Unfortunately Arnold could not conceal his contempt for the inept Colonial General Horatio Gates (who had unjustly claimed Arnold's victory at Saratoga). Gates used his New England business and political connections to destroy Arnold's chances of promotion, and Arnold switched sides. (Gates also used those same connections to try to undermine George Washington, but the Virginian's military successes thwarted Gates' plots.) Arnold led victorious campaigns for the British and at the end of the Revolution moved to London. American Benedict Arnold mythology says that he died penniless and disregarded in London, but he actually was a successful international trader and businessman – his funeral was lavish, and, although he left debts, his wife cleared them rather easily by continuing the family business. He also left a large bequest to an illegitimate son.

This article is now more than eighty years old, but it is still considered to be accurate.

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

THE CLASSICAL ASSOCIATION

Historical Elements in the Story of Coriolanus
Author(s): E. T. Salmon
Source: *The Classical Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Apr., 1930), pp. 96-101
Published by: Cambridge University Press on behalf of The Classical Association
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/636594
Accessed: 12/07/2009 16:38

HISTORICAL ELEMENTS IN THE STORY OF CORIOLANUS.[1]

ONE of the most recent writers[2] on the early history of Rome has shown that the framework of the traditional story is perhaps to be trusted, even though there are many details, inconsistent and self-contradictory, which are obviously to be rejected. In view of this fact, it might be worth while to reconsider the Coriolanus story, the prevailing opinion concerning which is that vouchsafed by Mommsen[3] many years ago: 'die Erzählung ist ein spät, in die Annalen eingefügtes, darum in allen Stücken denselben ungleichartiges und widersprechendes Einschiebsel.' The reasons for arriving at such an opinion are sufficiently obvious to warrant their receiving but the barest recital. First, it is incredible that the Volsci would either choose a renegade Roman to be their general, or, even if they did, allow him at the last minute to rob them of the fruits of victory. Secondly, inconsistencies in the version of the story which we possess induce us to suspect its historicity; for example, Dionysius of Syracuse is made to send corn to the starving Romans[4]—yet Dionysius lived some hundred years later; a youthful Coriolanus is represented as having considerable influence in the senate[5]—yet in those early days the senate was essentially a gathering of venerable men; the Roman populace learns immediately the gist of Coriolanus' remarks in the senate[6]—yet senate meetings were held in secret; Volsci are allowed to attend the 'ludi'[7] and to meet at the Spring of Ferentina[8]—yet in the fifth century none but Latini could do this; the Roman Marcius is given an honorific cognomen, Coriolanus, because of his behaviour at the capture of Corioli—yet such cognomina were not granted until the third century or even later and even then only to the general and not to the subordinate;[9] the plebs is represented as wielding great power

[1] Ancient Sources: Livy 2. 33 sq.; Dionys. Hal. 6. 92 sq.; Val. Max. 5. 4; Plut., *Coriolanus*: Appian, *It.*, frag. 2-5: Polyaenus 8. 25. 3; Dio Cassius, fr. 18: [Aur. Victor] 19; Florus 1. 5; Eutropius 1. 14.

Modern Authorities: Niebuhr, *Röm. Gesch.* II., 1832, p. 110 sq.; Schwegler, *Röm. Gesch.* II., 1856, p. 357 sq.; Ihne, *Röm. Gesch.* I., 1868, p. 128 sq.; Meyer, *Ges. des Alt.* V., 1902, p. 133; De Sanctis, *Storia dei Romani* II., 1907, p. 109 sq.; Neumann in *Pflugk. Harttungs Weltgesch.*, 1909; Ranke, *Weltgeschichte*, 1909, 3. 2. 135 sq.; Pais, *Storia di Roma*[2] III., 1927, pp. 23, 132 sq.; *Camb. Anc. Hist.*, Vol. VII., 1928, p. 498 sq.

Special Articles: Mommsen, *Röm. Forsch.* II., p. 113; Peter, *die Quellen Plutarchs in den Biographien der Römer*, Halle, 1865, p. 7 sq.; Soltau, *die Anfänge der römischen Geschichtsschreibung*, 1909, p. 108 sq.

[2] H. M. Last in *Camb. Anc. Hist.* VII., 1928.

[3] Mommsen, *Röm. Forsch.* II., 113 sq.; cf. too Ihne 1. 134: 'every feature of the story is unhistorical,' and p. 137: 'there is nothing historical in the legend.'

[4] Dionys. Hal. 7-20, cf. Livy 2. 34. 7; Dionys. elsewhere (7. 1) detects the anachronism and substitutes the name of Gelo, and in this he is followed by Plutarch. The story of starving Romans is an anticipation of the events of 433, 411 (Livy 4. 25 and 4. 52 where Dionys. of Syracuse apparently *is* meant, cf. Schwegler II., p. 367).

[5] Livy 2. 34. 8; Dionys. 7. 21. For C.'s youthfulness, Livy 2. 33. 6. This difficulty was felt and so we find attempts to make C. a man of consular standing—he is said to be a candidate for consulship—Dionys. 7. 21, cf. Plut., c. 13; App., fr. 2. [Aurel. Vict.] 19 says he was consul. Livy 2. 34. 10 apparently makes Cor. older—he is represented as full grown at the time Tarquin was in Rome—but this is at variance with our other sources.

[6] Livy 2. 34 says plebs were informed by the tribunes, but at this time tribunes could not enter the senate, Val. Max. 2. 2. 7. Dionys. 7. 26 says C. spoke so loud his voice carried to the plebs without!

[7] Livy 2. 36.

[8] Livy 2. 38. 1; Dionys. 8. 4.

[9] First historical instance is that of L. Aemilius surnamed Privernas (*Fast. Triumph.* 329), but this is not the form we should expect. Privernas should mean a native of Privernum, cf. how Juvenal (8. 237, 245) applies the word Arpinas to Marius and Cicero. Livy 30. 45. 6 says that Scipio in 201 was surnamed Africanus, and this

in the assembly[1]—yet we know that in the fifth century it did nothing of the kind. Thirdly, we become very suspicious when we notice that the story, as we have it, contains elements obviously culled from the storehouse of Greek legend:[2] Coriolanus flies to his bitter personal enemy,[3] the Volscian Attius Tullius, even as the exiled Themistocles betook himself to his personal foe, the Molossian king Admetus;[4] an equal number of votes cast by the tribes would have acquitted Coriolanus,[5] even as in the tale of Orestes. (This fiction is particularly ill adapted to the Roman story, for the tribes at that time numbered twenty-one, so that an equality of votes was impossible—a fact noticed by Dionysius[6] who, in his efforts to rectify the error, only succeeds in getting more confused than ever.) A fourth and, at first sight, a very grave objection to our acceptance of the legend is the fact that our sources apparently give different versions. But, as Mommsen saw, the discrepancies are only superficial, and so this objection need not count for very much.

By so cataloguing the absurdities in the Coriolanus story, it is obvious that we must be very chary before placing any reliance on the historicity of the affair. But, as Mr. Last says,[7] 'of the elements which constitute the legend in its latest form some are additions so obviously belonging to other times that they may be discarded without damaging the reputation of the residue. . . . That the figure of Coriolanus contains a kernel of fact is certain, nor is an episode so curious as the invasion of Latium which he directs likely to be pure invention.' There have not been wanting modern critics who have treated the story with considerable freedom, but not in a way to win general acceptance.[8]

It is indeed a significant fact that, if we refuse to believe that Coriolanus was a Roman,[9] all the absurdities disappear, for they are all concerned with his life at Rome. On *a priori* grounds it is natural to suppose that an exiled Roman would not be appointed to the supreme command of the army of the enemies of Rome. Roman vanity was such that it made even Roman defeats the result of Roman skill. The story is of a piece with that which makes the Sabine Herdonius get command of the Capitol a little later on in this same century with the help of Roman exiles.[10] Yet even after we have denied the existence of a Roman named Coriolanus who turns traitor and leads the Volsci against his fatherland, there are certain acts attributed to this Coriolanus which deserve investigation, to see whether they shed any light on early Roman history. The first of these is the alleged capture of Corioli in 493.[11] Here, at once, we are faced with a difficulty: in 493 Romans and Volsci are at war, yet in 492 when Coriolanus is banished they are at peace.[12] Secondly, Corioli does not seem to have been a Volscian town at all, but a Latin one: according to

was the first instance of such an honorific cognomen—and perhaps Livy is right. The fact that such titles were only given to commanders-in-chief also helps to explain the attempt to make Cor. of consular standing, cf. n. 5 *supra*.

[1] To arraign a person before the assembly of the plebs was impossible before 471 (Publilian Law)—Livy 2. 56; Dionys. 9. 41; Diod. 11. 68. According to tradition plebiscita had no validity prior to 339—Livy 8. 12. 15.

[2] W. Soltau, *die Anfänge der röm. Gesch.*, 1909, p. 108 sq. says whole story is Homeric, and Cor. is counterpart to Achilles.

[3] Plut. *Cor.* 22, and cf. Dionys. 8. 1.

[4] Cicero's story (*Brut.* 10. 42) of Coriolanus, suicide is also taken from the history of Themistocles.

[5] Dionys. 7. 64. 6.

[6] *Ibid.*, and cf. J. J. Müller in *Philologus* 34, 1876, p. 109.

[7] *Camb. Anc. Hist.* VII., p. 498.

[8] De Sanctis II., p. 112, n. 2: 'Pais, in his analysis of the Coriolanus legend, appears to diverge further from the truth than does the legend itself.'

[9] The Volscians revered his memory and composed songs about it (Dionys. 8. 63), which implies he was a Volscian. Again, Fabius Pictor (*apud* Livy 2. 40. 10) says the Volsci did not kill him on his return, as assuredly they would have done had he been a Roman who had betrayed them.

[10] Livy 3. 15. 5: 'exsules seruique.'

[11] Livy 2. 33.

[12] Dionys. 8. 22 tries to overcome this difficulty by saying there was a truce.

Dionysius[1] indeed it was a signatory to the Cassian Treaty of this year 493. Another point to be noted is that Livy[2] expressly tells us that the older versions left Coriolanus' expedition against Corioli undated; nor does the campaign figure in the triumphal lists. Moreover, in 493 the Romans were not active in this area at all, but further to the south, as is indicated perhaps by the colonization of Signia in 495,[3] Velitrae in 494,[4] and Norba in 492.[5]

Obviously the story of the capture of the town in 493 is an invention.[6] But at this point three questions arise: Why was this capture invented? Why was it placed in the year 493? Why was the capture ascribed primarily to a Marcius, although actually Cominius was consul? All these questions are answerable. The reason for inventing a capture of Corioli is supplied by the events of the year 446, which are indirectly attested by reliable evidence—the Foedus Ardentinum, which Licinius Macer[7] saw, and which the late Dr. Beloch[8] so highly esteemed as a document in early Roman history. In 446 Aricia and Ardea quarrelled over the right to possess the site of Corioli, which was situated between them.[9] The disputants referred the matter to Rome, and Rome adjudged the land to neither of them, but to herself. Such chicanery had to be justified—so Rome pleaded that Corioli belonged to Rome by right of conquest. Next a date had to be assigned to this conquest. This was a comparatively easy matter, for the name of only one consul, Cassius, appeared in the treaty of 493,[10] whence it could be argued that the other consul was in the field, and he could be placed either at Corioli or any other convenient place.[11] How then does Marcius Coriolanus come into the piece? Cominius was consul, but it was impossible to find any record of his having achieved the capture. Next, we might note that rich plebeians and poor plebeians were not working completely in harmony, and a number of Roman legends preserve the story of internecine strife within the ranks of the plebeians. The story of Coriolanus does so, for the Marcii were a plebeian family, even though Coriolanus is represented as being 'a very dog to the commonalty.' Perhaps the most famous of the early Marcii was C. Marcius Rutilus, the first plebeian dictator and the first plebeian censor.[12] The name is significant, for Corioli was on the borders of, if not actually part of, Rutulian territory. The apocryphal capture of (Rutulian ?) Corioli was placed in 493, i.e. at just about the time that an apocryphal Marcius (Rutilus ?) was said to have been active. To bring the two events into relation with one another was a simple, even a natural, act. Unfortunately the Fasti did not know of any Marcius Rutilus who captured Corioli at that time, and so it was safer to speak of a Marcius Coriolanus.[13] In very truth this Marcius Coriolanus is sufficiently vague; we do not know whether he was called Gaius or Gnaius.[14] Thus may the

[1] Dionys. 5. 61: perhaps Corioli is represented as Volscian owing to confusion with the nearby town of Cora (Cori), which at one time possibly was Volscian.

[2] Livy 2. 33.

[3] Livy 2. 21.

[4] Livy 2. 31. 4; 2. 34. 6; Dionys. 7. 12; 7. 42.

[5] Livy 2. 34; Dionys. 7. 13.

[6] Livy 2. 33. 9 admits as much.

[7] Livy 4. 7. 10, and cf. Dionys. 11. 62.

[8] Beloch, *Röm. Gesch.*, 1926, p. 147; De Sanctis II. 115, on the other hand, thinks the Foedus Ardeatinum an invention of Licinius Macer.

[9] Livy 3. 71—our only source of knowledge as to the situation of Corioli; it had disappeared by the time of the Elder Pliny (*H.N.* 3. 69.)

[10] Livy 2. 33. 9.

[11] This, as it seems to the present writer, is sufficient to explain the sudden prominence of an unknown town. De Sanctis II. 112 thinks, on the other hand, that Corioli plays an important rôle in the story, because it was at Corioli that the 'legend' of Coriolanus took its rise. Pais III., p. 137, even goes so far as to suggest that *Mar*cius Coriolanus should have some connexion with the god Mars. Schwegler II. 363 and Ihne I. 134 suggest the name of the city was invented to explain the name of the hero.

[12] Livy 7. 17. 6; 7. 22. 7; 10. 8. 8.

[13] Another suggestion is that Coriolanus means the founder rather than the conqueror of Corioli, De Sanctis II. 113.

[14] It is Gaius according to Dionys. 6. 92; Plut. *Cor.* 1. Gnaius according to Dio Cass., fr. 18; Val. Max. V. 4. 1; Aul. Gell. 17. 21. 11;

493 'capture' of Corioli be explained. Historically it is important, in that the protagonist, shadowy as he may be, yet bears a name which is indirect support for the theory that there was dissension in the plebeian ranks.

The other great exploit of Coriolanus is his march on Rome. Critics have not been wanting for the rejection of the whole account as unhistorical, a number of reasons being vouchsafed. It is pointed out that our two main authorities differ from one another, and apparently in a violent fashion: that it was a sheer impossibility for Coriolanus to capture so many towns in such a short space of time;[1] that, despite the grandiose accounts, the victories of Coriolanus gained the Volscians nothing—the same *status quo* exists after his expedition as before it.[2]

To answer these objections singly, we might begin by saying that the discrepancy between Dionysius and Livy is only apparent. Mommsen[3] showed that, although Fabius Pictor[4] and Cicero[5] gave different accounts from Dionysius[6] of the manner in which Coriolanus met his end, the accounts of the story which we possess are in essence exactly the same and derived from a common source.[7] Dionysius differs from Livy only in that he gives a more highly coloured version, and one that offers him greater opportunities for rhetorical display: thus he makes Coriolanus actually appear before the assembly,[8] as this gives him the occasion for introducing some inordinately long, extravagant speeches. When we examine the differences between Livy's and Dionysius' versions of Coriolanus' march on Rome[9] we find that they are of the type demanded by Dionysius' treatment of the story. Thus Dionysius makes Coriolanus capture a larger number of towns, and, indeed, in an incredibly short space of time, and makes him move first, after the sortie to Cercei, in the direction of Labici and Pedum, the idea being to show the magnitude of the undertaking; Coriolanus' first act is to try to link up with the Aequi, the traditional allies of the Volsci. But we should observe that both versions make Coriolanus cover almost precisely the same territory, and Livy's, being the less highly coloured, is obviously to be preferred. Both versions are, however, exaggerated accounts; what really took place is that Coriolanus made a raid, and, having made it, retired. The list of towns which he is said to have captured merely marks the course of the raid. That a hostile army could make a sudden irruption, passing by walled towns, is proved by the later careers of Pyrrhus and Hannibal. This explains why the *status quo* is the same after the expedition as before it, and also explains the seeming inactivity of the Romans: the raid was over before they could move. The version which makes Coriolanus actually capture a large number of towns is due to that tendency, which is so marked a feature in Dionysius' narrative. If Coriolanus captures many towns, then hearkens to his mother's plea and munificently hands them back, the rhetorical effect is very great. Livy is at fault here no less than Dionysius.

Authors who have accepted the raid theory have nevertheless felt diffident

Florus 1. 11. 9; [Aur. Vict.] c. 19. The MSS. of Livy 2. 33. 5, 2. 35. 1, give both. This vagueness concerning the name is an additional argument for refusing to believe he was a Roman, cf. p.97 n. 9 supra.

[1] In one summer campaign either eleven (Livy 2. 39) or sixteen (Dionys. 8. 14 sq.) towns are said to have been taken. Dionys. indeed says seven of them fell in thirty days!

[2] For example, in 487 Velitrae, and not the area further north, is still the main seat of the Volscian War (Dionys. 8. 67).

[3] *Röm. Forsch.* II. 113 sq.

[4] *Apud* Livy 2. 40. 10; Dio Cassius, fr. 33, knew Pictor's version; and Zonaras 7. 16 gives the same account.

[5] Cicero, *Brut.* 10. 42; cf. *Laelius* 12. 42, and *ad Att.* 9. 10. 3.

[6] Dionys. 8. 59.

[7] Plutarch, of course, derives almost exclusively from Dionysius, H. Peter, *Die Quellen Plut. in den Biogr. der Röm.*, Halle, 1865, p. 7 sq.

[8] Dionys. 7. 64. Coriolanus' trial is possibly copied from that of Quinctius Kaeso (Soltau, *op. cit.*). Dionysius' elaboration of the Coriolanus story may be judged from the fact that he devotes to it not only the whole of Book 7, but most of Book 8 (chs. 1-62).

[9] Livy 2. 39; Dionys. 8. 14 sq.

about dating the expedition in 489, although on internal evidence it can be dated to that year.[1] It has been suggested that it belongs to the great Volscian War of some twenty years later.[2] Why should this assumption be made? Indeed, there is no valid reason for not placing the events of this period in their traditional order, although precise dating is impossible. That the raid of Coriolanus was historical would seem to be proved by a number of considerations. We might note that for reasons of self-glorification the Romans might invent victories or gloss over defeats. But why should they invent defeats inflicted on themselves?[3] Nor is it sufficient to say that the story is a 'Frauenlob' (the word is Mommsen's) invented to explain the reason for the dedication of a temple, at a spot four miles from the city,[4] to the goddess Fortuna Muliebris. It is said[5] that this temple was erected on the spot where Coriolanus turned back. But in the original story Coriolanus turned back at the Cluilian ditch, which was five miles from the city.[6] Doubtless the two events were later brought into relation one with another, and it was thus that the story of matronly intervention became tacked on to the Coriolanus story, but originally the two happenings were separate and distinct. As Mr. Last says,[7] 'this explanation of the temple dedication is an aetiological fiction needing no comment.'

In the absence of good reasons for inventing the tale, we may believe that the raid really took place, and in view of the agreement of our sources as to the ground covered we may believe that, besides advancing into Latium, the Volsci made an encircling movement in the direction of Labici and Pedum, i.e. towards the country of the Hernici. This is a move the importance of which has rightly been stressed by Mr. Last.[8] The raid into Latium at this time could neither hope for, nor did it actually terminate in, permanent results, so that it can be reckoned of minor importance. But the thrust in the direction of Labici is very significant, for should it have permanent results it would mean the isolation of the Hernici and the linking up of Volsci and Aequi. It is indeed possible that accounts of Aequo-Volscian co-operation have been exaggerated,[9] but it was precisely at this time that the Aequi were beginning to press on the rear of the Hernici. If now we study the order of events in these years we find that the Romans enter into a treaty with the Latini,[10] next comes the raid of Coriolanus, and the next that we learn is that the Hernici enter into a treaty with the Romans.[11] The treaties with the Latini and the Hernici have been regarded as unhistorical or as belonging to a later period.[12] But most scholars[13] are agreed that some such treaties were made at this time, although to speculate with Schwegler[14] and others as to the terms contained in the treaties would be an idle task.

[1] See Schwegler II., p. 371: in Livy the consuls for 490 and 489 are not given, having had to make room for the Coriolanus episode.

[2] Niebuhr II. 110; Schwegler II. 380.

[3] Cf. words of Mr. Last (*C.A.H.* VII., p. 498) quoted earlier.

[4] For the situation of the temple see Val. Max. 1. 8. 4; Festus, p. 315 L.

[5] Livy 2. 40. 12; Val. Max., *op. cit.*, and 5. 2. 1; Plut., c. 37; Festus, p. 301 L.; Serv. *ad Aen.* 4. 19; Dionys. 8. 55; 7. 1, etc.—he even says that the first priestess of this temple was the leader of the matronly band that visited Coriolanus, a certain Valeria. Is Valerius Antias responsible for this detail?

[6] Livy 2. 39. 5; Dionys. 8. 22 Dionys. says that Coriolanus made two advances on Rome, and on the second occasion his encampment was thirty stades—i.e. about four miles—from the city (8. 36). This second camp is obviously inserted to bring the story into relation with the temple of Fortuna Muliebris—even Plutarch, who follows Dionys. so closely, refuses to accept this item. In the original story the Cluilian ditch was the scene of the encampment, cf. Schwegler II. 382.

[7] *Op. cit.*, p. 499.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] De Sanctis II. 114.

[10] Livy 2. 33. 4 sq.; Dionys. 6. 95; Festus, p. 170 L.; Cicero *pro Balb.* 23. 53.

[11] Livy 2. 41. 1; Dionys. 9. 68.

[12] Cf. E. Täubler, *Imp. Rom.* I., p. 277; *vid.* O. Seeck, *Rh. Mus.* 37, 1882, p. 1 sq., for a discussion of these and other early treaties.

[13] Cf. *inter alios*, Ihne I. 129; Homo, *Prim. Italy* (E. T.), 1925, p. 145, etc.

[14] II. 304.

Livy says the Romans forced the treaty on the Hernici by force of arms[1]—a version that has long been suspect.[2]

Would it be too wildly improbable to suggest that the Hernici entered into this treaty because of the Coriolanus raid? One result of that raid had been to make the situation sufficiently alarming; the threat to the Hernici was that of being cut off from Latini and Romans. The danger had somehow been averted, but there was more chance of avoiding a repetition of it if Romans, Latini, and Hernici offered a solid front to Volsci and Aequi. At any rate tradition says that, after the raid of Coriolanus which embraced the country in the direction of Pedum, Labici, and Vitellia, the Hernici entered the Romano-Latin alliance, and it is perhaps not too far-fetched to say that one event caused the other.

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[1] Livy 2. 40.

[2] Schwegler II. 333 (1856); Ihne I. 130 (1868).

Analysis (from http://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/coriolanus/section8.rhtml)

One of Shakespeare's final tragedies, *Coriolanus* cannot be considered one of his greatest plays, and it has never been one of his more popular. It lacks depth, both metaphysical and psychological; though structurally sound, its characters are not multi-dimensional, and it lacks both the great poetic strength and the capacity to surprise that the best of the tragedies possess. It is, nevertheless, a solid play, united in structure and theme--the playwright is very much in command of his characters, one feels, although this sense of control may actually weaken the play: The *dramatis personae* never seem able to escape the iron structure that the plot imposes.

Perhaps Shakespeare's most overtly political play, more so even than the histories, *Coriolanus* takes as its hero a man completely lacking in political gifts--a stubborn soldier, brought down by an overweening pride and an inability to compromise with the forces that seek his downfall. A representative of the patrician class of Rome, Coriolanus' prowess in battle would seem to make him an ideal hero for the masses; however, he utterly lacks the common touch, and his fear of popular rule allows him to be construed as an enemy of the people. Set in the immediate aftermath of Rome's transition from monarchy to republic (indeed, we are told that Coriolanus played a part in the expulsion of the last king, Tarquin), the play portrays its hero as trapped between two worlds--he is a kingly figure, born to command; yet, at the same time he finds himself inhabiting a republican political reality that--though he himself has helped to create it--he cannot endure. Thus, his fate of exile is appropriate; he truly has no place in the new political life of his city.

Though Coriolanus is himself unsubtle, preferring to express himself directly (indeed, this contributes to his downfall), he is surrounded by craftier, more manipulative characters. His close friend, Menenius, serves as the perfect foil; for though he shares Coriolanus's aristocratic sensibilities and suspicion of the plebeian class, Menenius's smooth tongue and talent for compromise enable him to skate through the difficulties that debilitate Coriolanus. Menenius's counterparts on the plebeian side are the two tribunes, Sicinius and Brutus, whose talent for demagoguery and manipulation of the masses enable them to turn the people of Rome against Coriolanus--an easy task, given the hero's propensity for violent outbursts. Meanwhile, his

Volscian counterpart, the great general Tullus Aufidius, is similar to Coriolanus in temperament but has a resentful streak that leads him to betray Coriolanus when he feels himself to be eclipsed in glory.

The most significant figure in Coriolanus's life, however, is his domineering mother, Volumnia. As a woman, she lacks the ability to achieve power on her own in the male-dominated Roman society; she also lacks a husband through whom she might indirectly enjoy public clout. Thus, Volumnia raises her son to be a great soldier, and it is her ambition, more than his, that puts him on the disastrous track toward the consulship. Moreover, Volumnia's controlling nature constitutes a major cause of Coriolanus's fatal childishness; and while his legendary stubbornness holds sway in every other situation, she alone can overcome it and convince Coriolanus to spare Rome--and, thus, unwittingly set his doom in motion.

Structurally, the play falls into three main divisions, which overlap the five acts. The first shows Coriolanus at his heroic best, in the Volscian war, and culminates in his triumphant return to Rome. The second portion traces his failed attempt at the consulship, his fall from grace and his banishment. The third witnesses Coriolanus's return to Rome at the head of the Volscian army, reaches its climax when Volumnia convinces him to spare Rome, and then follows the great soldier to his death in Antium at the hands of the jealous Aufidius.

CORIOLANUS

An analysis of the play by William Shakespeare

The following article was originally published in *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays.* William Hazlitt. London: C.H. Reynell, 1817.

Shakespeare has in this play shown himself well versed in history and state affairs. *CORIOLANUS* is a storehouse of political commonplaces. Any one who studies it may save himself the trouble of reading Burke's *Reflections,* or Paine's *Rights of Man,* or the Debates in both Houses of Parliament since the French Revolution or our own. The arguments for and against aristocracy or democracy, on the privileges of the few and the claims of the many, on liberty and slavery, power and the abuse of it, peace and war, are here very ably handled, with the spirit of a poet and the acuteness of a philosopher. Shakespeare himself seems to have had a leaning to the arbitrary side of the question, perhaps from some feeling of contempt for his own origin; and to have spared no occasion of baiting the rabble. What he says of them is very true: what he says of their betters is also very true, though he dwells less upon it.--The cause of the people is indeed but little calculated as a subject for poetry: it admits of rhetoric, which goes into argument and explanation, but it presents no immediate or distinct images to the mind, 'no jutting frieze, buttress, or coigne of vantage' for poetry 'to make its pendant bed and procreant cradle in'. The language of poetry naturally falls in with the language of power. The imagination is an exaggerating and exclusive faculty: it takes from one thing to add to another: it accumulates circumstances together to give the greatest possible effect to a favourite object. The understanding is a dividing and measuring faculty: it judges of things, not according to their immediate

impression on the mind, but according to their relations to one another. The one is a monopolizing faculty, which seeks the greatest quantity of present excitement by inequality and disproportion; the other is a distributive faculty, which seeks the greatest quantity of ultimate good, by justice and proportion. The one is an aristocratical, the other a republican faculty. The principle of poetry is a very anti-levelling principle. It aims at effect, it exists by contrast. It admits of no medium. It is everything by excess. It rises above the ordinary standard of sufferings and crimes. It presents a dazzling appearance. It shows its head turretted, crowned, and crested. Its front is gilt and blood-stained. Before it 'it carries noise, and behind it tears'. It has its altars and its victims, sacrifices, human sacrifices. Kings, priests, nobles, are its train-bearers, tyrants and slaves its executioners.--'Carnage is its daughter.' Poetry is right-royal. It puts the individual for the species, the one above the infinite many, might before right. A lion hunting a flock of sheep or a herd of wild asses is a more poetical object than they; and we even take part with the lordly beast, because our vanity or some other feeling makes us disposed to place ourselves in the situation of the strongest party. So we feel some concern for the poor citizens of Rome when they meet together to compare their wants and grievances, till Coriolanus comes in and with blows and big words drives this set of 'poor rats', this rascal scum, to their homes and beggary before him. There is nothing heroical in a multitude of miserable rogues not wishing to be starved, or complaining that they are like to be so: but when a single man comes forward to brave their cries and to make them submit to the last indignities, from mere pride and self-will, our admiration of his prowess is immediately converted into contempt for their pusillanimity. The insolence of power is stronger than the plea of necessity. The tame submission to usurped authority or even the natural resistance to it has nothing to excite or flatter the imagination: it is the assumption of a right to insult or oppress others that carries an imposing air of superiority with it. We had rather be the oppressor than the oppressed. The love of power in ourselves and the admiration of it in others are both natural to man: the one makes him a tyrant, the other a slave. Wrong dressed out in pride, pomp, and circumstance has more attraction than abstract right -- Coriolanus complains of the fickleness of the people: yet the instant he cannot gratify his pride and obstinacy at their expense, he turns his arms against his country. If his country was not worth defending, why did he build his pride on its defence? He is a conqueror and a hero; he conquers other countries, and makes this a plea for enslaving his own; and when he is prevented from doing so, he leagues with its enemies to destroy his country. He rates the people 'as if he were a God to punish, and not a man of their infirmity'. He scoffs at one of their tribunes for maintaining their rights and franchises: 'Mark you his absolute SHALL?' not marking his own absolute WILL to take everything from them, his impatience of the slightest opposition to his own pretensions being in proportion to their arrogance and absurdity. If the great and powerful had the beneficence and wisdom of Gods, then all this would have been well: if with a greater knowledge of what is good for the people, they had as great a care for their interest as they have themselves, if they were seated above the world, sympathizing with the welfare, but not feeling the passions of men, receiving neither good nor hurt from them, but bestowing their benefits as free gifts on them, they might then rule over them like another Providence. But this is not the case. Coriolanus is unwilling that the senate should show their 'cares' for the people, lest their 'cares' should be construed into 'fears', to the subversion of all due authority; and he is no sooner disappointed in his schemes to deprive the people not only of the cares of the state, but of all power to redress themselves, than Volumnia is made madly to exclaim:

Now the red pestilence strike all trades in Rome,
And occupations perish.

This is but natural: it is but natural for a mother to have more regard for her son than for a whole city; but then the city should be left to take some care of itself. The care of the state cannot, we here see, be safely entrusted to maternal affection, or to the domestic charities of high life. The great have private feelings of their own, to which the interests of humanity and justice must curtsy. Their interests are so far from being the same as those of the community, that they are in direct and necessary opposition to them; their power is at the expense of OUR weakness; their riches of OUR poverty; their pride of OUR degradation; their splendour of OUR wretchedness; their tyranny of OUR servitude. If they had the superior knowledge ascribed to them (which they have not) it would only render them so much more formidable; and from Gods would convert them into Devils. The whole dramatic moral of *Coriolanus* is that those who have little shall have less, and that those who have much shall take all that others have left. The people are poor; therefore they ought to be starved. They are slaves; therefore they ought to be beaten. They work hard; therefore they ought to be treated like beasts of burden. They are ignorant; therefore they ought not to be allowed to feel that they want food, or clothing, or rest, that they are enslaved, oppressed, and miserable. This is the logic of the imagination and the passions; which seek to aggrandize what excites admiration and to heap contempt on misery, to raise power into tyranny, and to make tyranny absolute; to thrust down that which is low still lower, and to make wretches desperate: to exalt magistrates into kings, kings into gods; to degrade subjects to the rank of slaves, and slaves to the condition of brutes. The history of mankind is a romance, a mask, a tragedy, constructed upon the principles of POETICAL JUSTICE; it is a noble or royal hunt, in which what is sport to the few is death to the many, and in which the spectators halloo and encourage the strong to set upon the weak, and cry havoc in the chase, though they do not share in the spoil. We may depend upon it that what men delight to read in books, they will put in practice in reality.

One of the most natural traits in this play is the difference of the interest taken in the success of Coriolanus by his wife and mother. The one is only anxious for his honour; the other is fearful for his life.

Volumnia. Methinks I hither hear your husband's drum:
I see him pluck Aufidius down by th' hair:
Methinks I see him stamp thus--and call thus--
Come on, ye cowards; ye were got in fear
Though you were born in Rome; his bloody brow
With his mail'd hand then wiping, forth he goes
Like to a harvest man, that's task'd to mow
Or all, or lose his hire.

Virgila. His bloody brow! Oh Jupiter, no blood.

Volumnia. Away, you fool; it more becomes a man
Than gilt his trophy. The breast of Hecuba,
When she did suckle Hector, look'd not lovelier

Than Hector's forehead, when it spit forth blood
At Grecian swords contending.

When she hears the trumpets that proclaim her son's return, she says in the true spirit of a Roman matron:

These are the ushers of Martius: before him
He carries noise, and behind him he leaves tears.
Death, that dark spirit, in's nervy arm doth lie,
Which being advanc'd, declines, and then men die.

Coriolanus himself is a complete character: his love of reputation, his contempt of popular opinion, his pride and modesty, are consequences of each other. His pride consists in the inflexible sternness of his will; his love of glory is a determined desire to bear down all opposition, and to extort the admiration both of friends and foes. His contempt for popular favour, his unwillingness to hear his own praises, spring from the same source. He cannot contradict the praises that are bestowed upon him; therefore he is impatient at hearing them. He would enforce the good opinion of others by his actions, but does not want their acknowledgements in words.

Pray now, no more: my mother,
Who has a charter to extol her blood,
When she does praise me, grieves me.

His magnanimity is of the same kind. He admires in an enemy that courage which he honours in himself: he places himself on the hearth of Aufidius with the same confidence that he would have met him in the field, and feels that by putting himself in his power, he takes from him all temptation for using it against him.

In the title-page of *Coriolanus* it is said at the bottom of the Dramatis Personae, 'The whole history exactly followed, and many of the principal speeches copied, from the life of Coriolanus in Plutarch.' It will be interesting to our readers to see how far this is the case. Two of the principal scenes, those between Coriolanus and Aufidius and between Coriolanus and his mother, are thus given in Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch, dedicated to Queen Elizabeth, 1579. The first is as follows:

It was even twilight when he entered the city of Antium, and many people met him in the streets, but no man knew him. So he went directly to Tullus Aufidius' house, and when he came thither, he got him up straight to the chimney-hearth, and sat him down, and spake not a word to any man, his face all muffled over. They of the house spying him, wondered what he should be, and yet they durst not bid him rise. For ill-favouredly muffled and disguised as he was, yet there appeared a certain majesty in his countenance and in his silence: whereupon they went to Tullus, who was at supper, to tell him of the strange disguising of this man. Tullus rose presently from the board, and coming towards him, asked him what he was, and wherefore he came. Then Martius unmuffled himself, and after he had paused awhile, making no answer, he said unto himself, If thou knowest me not yet, Tullus, and seeing me, dost not perhaps believe me to be the man I am indeed, I must of necessity discover myself to be that I am. 'I am

Caius Martius, who hath done to thyself particularly, and to all the Volsces generally, great hurt and mischief, which I cannot deny for my surname of Coriolanus that I bear. For I never had other benefit nor recompence of the true and painful service I have done, and the extreme dangers I have been in, but this only surname; a good memory and witness of the malice and displeasure thou shouldest bear me. Indeed the name only remaineth with me; for the rest, the envy and cruelty of the people of Rome have taken from me, by the sufferance of the dastardly nobility and magistrates, who have forsaken me, and let me be banished by the people. This extremity hath now driven me to come as a poor suitor, to take thy chimney-hearth, not of any hope I have to save my life thereby. For if I had feared death, I would not have come hither to put myself in hazard; but pricked forward with desire to be revenged of them that thus have banished me, which now I do begin, in putting my person into the hands of their enemies. Wherefore if thou hast any heart to be wrecked of the injuries thy enemies have done thee, speed thee now, and let my misery serve thy turn, and so use it as my service may be a benefit to the Volsces: promising thee, that I will fight with better good will for all you, than I did when I was against you. Knowing that they fight more valiantly who know the force of the enemy, than such as have never proved it. And if it be so that thou dare not, and that thou art weary to prove fortune any more, then am I also weary to live any longer. And it were no wisdom in thee to save the life of him who hath been heretofore thy mortal enemy, and whose service now can nothing help, nor. pleasure thee.' Tullus hearing what he said, was a marvellous glad man, and taking him by the hand, he said unto him: 'Stand up, O Martius, and be of good cheer, for in proffering thyself unto us, thou doest us great honour: and by this means thou mayest hope also of greater things at all the Volsces' hands.' So he feasted him for that time, and entertained him in the honourablest manner he could, talking with him of no other matter at that present: but within few days after, they fell to consultation together in what sort they should begin their wars.

The meeting between Coriolanus and his mother is also nearly the same as in the play.

Now was Martius set then in the chair of state, with all the honours of a general, and when he had spied the women coming afar off, he marvelled what the matter meant: but afterwards knowing his wife which came foremost, he determined at the first to persist in his obstinate and inflexible rancour. But overcome in the end with natural affection, and being altogether altered to see them, his heart would not serve him to tarry their coining to his chair, but coming down in haste, he went to meet them, and first he kissed his mother, and embraced her a pretty while, then his wife and little children. And nature so wrought with him, that the tears fell from his eyes, and he could not keep himself from making much of them, but yielded to the affection of his blood, as if he had been violently carried with the fury of a most swift-running stream. After he had thus lovingly received them, and perceiving that his mother Volumnia would begin to speak to him, he called the chiefest of the council of the Volsces to hear what she would say. Then she spake in this sort: 'If we held our peace, my son, and determined not to speak, the state of our poor bodies, and present sight of our raiment, would easily betray to thee what life we have led at home, since thy exile and abode abroad; but think now with thyself, how much more unfortunate

than all the women living, we are come hither, considering that the sight which should be most pleasant to all others to behold, spiteful fortune had made most fearful to us: making myself to see my son, and my daughter here her husband, besieging the walls of his native country: so as that which is the only comfort to all others in their adversity and misery, to pray unto the Gods, and to call to them for aid, is the only thing which plungeth us into most deep perplexity. For we cannot, alas, together pray, both for victory to our country, and for safety of thy life also: but a world of grievous curses, yea more than any mortal enemy can heap upon us, are forcibly wrapped up in our prayers. For the bitter sop of most hard choice is offered thy wife and children, to forgo one of the two; either to lose the person of thyself, or the nurse of their native country. For myself, my son, I am determined not to tarry till fortune in my lifetime do make an end of this war. For if I cannot persuade the rather to do good unto both parties, than to overthrow and destroy the one, preferring love and nature before the malice and calamity of wars, thou shalt see, my son, and trust unto it, thou shalt no sooner march forward to assault thy country, but thy foot shall tread upon thy mother's womb, that brought thee first into this world. And I may not defer to see the day, either that my son be led prisoner in triumph by his natural countrymen, or that he himself do triumph of them, and of his natural country. For if it were so, that my request tended to save thy country, in destroying the Volsces, I must confess, thou wouldest hardly and doubtfully resolve on that. For as to destroy thy natural country, it is altogether unmeet and unlawful, so were it not just and less honourable to betray those that put their trust in thee. But my only demand consisteth, to make a gaol delivery of all evils, which delivereth equal benefit and safety, both to the one and the other, but most honourable for the Volsces. For it shall appear, that having victory in their hands, they have of special favour granted us singular graces, peace and amity, albeit themselves have no less part of both than we. Of which good, if so it came to pass, thyself is the only author, and so hast thou the only honour. But if it fail, and fall out contrary, thyself alone deservedly shalt carry the shameful reproach and burthen of either party. So, though the end of war be uncertain, yet this notwithstanding is most certain, that if it be thy chance to conquer, this benefit shalt thou reap of thy goodly conquest, to be chronicled the plague and destroyer of thy country. And if fortune overthrow thee, then the world will say, that through desire to, revenge thy private injuries, thou hast for ever undone thy good friends, who did most lovingly and courteously receive thee.' Martius gave good ear unto his mother's words, without interrupting her speech at all, and after she had said what she would, he held his peace a pretty while, and answered not a word. Hereupon she began again to speak unto him, and said; 'My son, why dost thou not answer me? Dost thou think it good altogether to give place unto thy choler and desire of revenge, and thinkest thou it not honesty for thee to grant thy mother's request in so weighty a cause? Dost thou take it honourable for a nobleman, to remember the wrongs and injuries done him, and dost not in like case think it an honest nobleman's part to be thankful for the goodness that parents do show to their children, acknowledging the duty and reverence they ought to bear unto them? No man living is more bound to show himself thankful in all parts and respects than thyself; who so universally showest all ingratitude. Moreover, my son, thou hast sorely taken of thy country, exacting grievous payments upon them, in revenge of the injuries offered thee; besides, thou hast not hitherto showed thy poor mother any courtesy. And therefore it is not only honest, but

due unto me, that without compulsion I should obtain my so just and reasonable request of thee. But since by reason I cannot persuade thee to it, to what purpose do I defer my last hope?' And with these words herself, his wife and children, fell down upon their knees before him: Martius seeing that, could refrain no longer, but went straight and lifted her up, crying out, 'Oh mother, what have you done to me?' And holding her hard by the right hand, 'Oh mother,' said he, 'you have won a happy victory for your country, but mortal and unhappy for your son: for I see myself vanquished by you alone.' These words being spoken openly, he spake a little apart with his mother and wife, and then let them return again to Rome, for so they did request him; and so remaining in the camp that night, the next morning he dislodged, and marched homeward unto the Volsces' country again.

Shakespeare has, in giving a dramatic form to this passage, adhered very closely and properly to the text. He did not think it necessary to improve upon the truth of nature. Several of the scenes in *JULIUS CAESAR*, particularly Portia's appeal to the confidence of her husband by showin0--/ him the wound she had given herself, and the appearance of the ghost of Caesar to Brutus, are, in like manner, taken from the history.

Classic Encyclopedia

Based on the 11th Edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica (pub. 1911)

CORIOLI, an ancient Volscian city in *Latium adiectum,* taken, according to the Roman annals in 493 B.C., with Longula and Pollusca, and retaken (but see above) for the Volsci by Gaius Marcius Coriolanus, its original conqueror, who, in disgust at his treatment by his countrymen, had deserted to the enemy. After this it does not appear in history, and we hear soon after. wards (443 B.C.) of a dispute between Ardea and Aricia about some land which had been part of the territory of Corioli, but had at an unknown date passed to Rome with Corioli. The site is apparently to be sought in the N.W. portion of the district between the sea, the river Astura and the Alban Hills; but it cannot be more accurately fixed (the identification with Monte Giove, S. of the Valle-Aricciana, rests on no sufficient evidence), and even in the time of Pliny it ranked among the lost cities of Latium.

Coriolanus According to Livy

The early fifth century

The career of the Roman nobleman Gnaeus Marcius Coriolanus was dominated by two struggles: the war between the Romans and Volsci and the conflict of the orders. Both were the result of an important event at the end of the sixth century, when Rome became a republic.

Shortly before 500 BCE, king Tarquin the Proud was expelled from his city by two princes of the royal family, Lucius Tarquinius Collatinus and Lucius Junius Brutus. The two men soon fell out with each other and Collatinus was expelled from Rome too. Not much later, however, Brutus died in a battle against the Etruscan allies of king Tarquin. The new ruler of Rome was Publius Valerius Publicola, a nobleman who announced that he would share his power with a colleague. From now on, Rome was a republic under two consuls, usually aristocrats.

Although the revolution lasted only a year or two, Rome was seriously weakened and had lost its grip on the neighboring towns of Latium, which had been forced into submission by Tarquin. The cities now wanted to become independent and revolted. But they had made a mistake. The Roman commander Aulus Postumius Albinus, Rome's first dictator, defeated them and a new treaty was concluded. The giant temple of Castor and Pollux on the Roman forum was built from the spoils, which must have been enormous.

This crisis was not over yet, when a new and formidable problem presented itself. The mountain tribes of the central Apennines, which had come down to the coastal plain before but had always been repelled, descended to Latium again, looking for better pastures. The Aequi and Volsci made good use of the divisions between the Latins. The towns in the east and south were easily conquered and the war against these tribes -from now on sedentary in Latium- was to become a yearly event. And Coriolanus was to become famous in this almost eternal war.

The second problem was the conflict of the orders. The king had been replaced by aristocrats, but the majority of the Romans had gained nothing from the republic. On a larger scale, Italy seems to have suffered from what is called the 'fifth-century crisis'. Its precise nature is unclear, but the archaeological record of the age is meager, the quality of products is low, and it seems that there were less imports from Greece. (It must be noted, however, that it is difficult to 14C-date objects to the fifth century.) There were social tensions between the rich and poor. A king might have intervened in favor of the poor, but the new aristocratic rulers certainly did not. The result was a debt crisis.

In ca. 490, the poorest Romans, called the plebeians, decided to act. They demanded an improvement of their conditions. Several debtors had been sold as slaves, and this was felt to be a great injustice. Therefore, the plebeians created the office of the tribunus plebis, who was to defend the rights of the poor. In a lex sacrata (sacred law), they swore that they would defend the tribune's person at all costs, which made him sacrosanct (i.e., he could not be attacked by the magistrates). This enabled him to veto (forbid) measures by consuls, sentences by praetors and financial decisions by quaestors. After a brief struggle, the aristocrats recognized the tribunes, although they demanded that they would not intervene

with military matters. The tribunes were therefore some sort of anti-magistrates elected by the people's assembly (consilium plebis).

The legend of Coriolanus

This was the world of the Roman nobleman Gnaeus Marcius: threatened by Volsci and Aequi, and internally divided. According to the Roman historian Titus Livius (59 BCE - 17 CE; or Livy, to use his English name), Marcius received his surname Coriolanus in the war against the Volsci. In the first years of the fifth century, this mountain tribe had taken over parts of southern Latium, and had captured Antium, modern Anzio. In 493 (Varronian), the Romans tried to expel them, but in vain. The only success in this war was the capture of a village named Corioli by the man who was from now on known as Coriolanus.

This can, however, not be true, because the custom to name persons after places where they had fought successfully, is not known before the late fourth century BCE. A more plausible interpretation, more in line with the nomenclature of the fifth century, is that the Marcius family originated from Corioli.

In those years, noblemen often went to the war with a following of their own, and they could play their own political role. For example, in 504V, a man named Attus Clausus had settled his men in Rome, where he became an influential senator. An inscription from Satricum mentions the followers (suodales) of one Publius Valerius - who may or may not be identical to Publius Valerius Publicola. It is likely that Gnaeus Marcius Coriolanus was a condottiere of this type, and the capture of Corioli may have been an action by his private army.

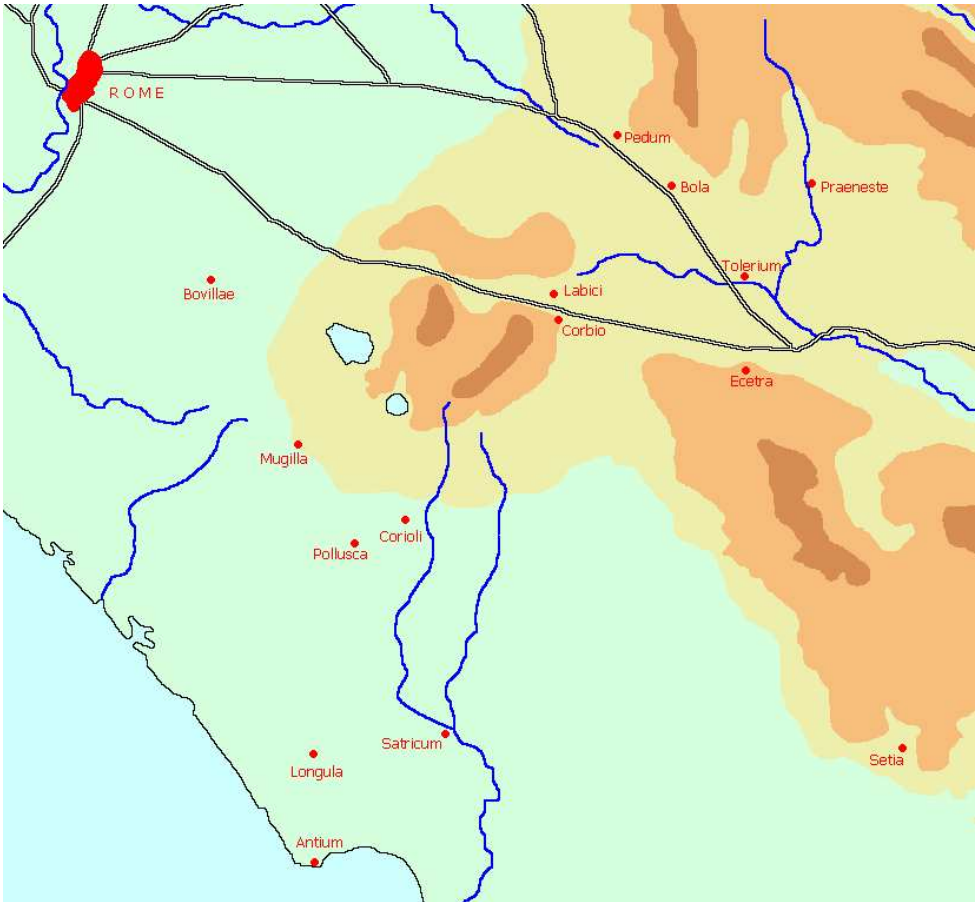
According to Livy, Coriolanus was an old-fashioned aristocrat, who wanted to use a food crisis (in 492-491V) to punish the plebeians. When the Senate had bought grain abroad, Coriolanus proposed that the plebeians would only receive it after they had abolished the tribunate. This proposal resulted in riots, and the tribunes ordered Coriolanus to explain himself during a meeting of the people's assembly. He refused, and preferred voluntary exile among the Volsci.

In 489-488V, Coriolanus was elected as one of the generals of a Volscian army, and he was extremely successful. His campaigns can be reconstructed with a fair degree of certainty from Book Seven of the Roman Antiquities by the historian Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a contemporary of Livy. Coriolanus first took the port of Circeii in the extreme south of Latium (modern Terracina), and advanced via Tolerium, Bola, Labici, Pedum, Corbio, Capitulum, and Bovillae to Rome. This campaign served to conquer the 'gap' between the Alban Mountains and the mountain range behind Praeneste. This was the eastern entrance to Latium.

The second campaign took place in the southern part of Latium, where Coriolanus captured Longula, Satricum, Ecetra, Setia, Pollusca, an unidentified place called Albietas, Mugilla, and finally Corioli.

Livy adds that Coriolanus gave the Volscian soldiers instructions to ravage only the farms of plebeians. The possessions of the rich Romans were to be spared. The story has a strange ending, because Livy wants us to believe that Coriolanus' mother Veturia and his wife Volumnia prevented him from attacking Rome itself - as if these women had not joined their relative in his voluntary exile.

In his History of the Italian wars, Appian of Alexandria adds that Coriolanus was put to death by the Volsci.



Area of the military conquests of Coriolanus as an ally/general of the Volsci

Assessment

It is difficult to establish the historical truth of the Coriolanus legend. His connection with the conflict of the orders is extremely suspect, because the family name Marcius is not aristocratic, but plebeian. (The name of Coriolanus' wife is plebeian as well.) The inevitable conclusion is that the the story of Coriolanus' conflict with the plebeians and his trial is an addition to an older story.story of Coriolanus' conflict with the plebeians and his trial is an addition to an older story.

On the other hand, the two military campaigns make sense, and it is possible that the historical truth is that a Roman condottiere who lived near the threatened region, sided with the Volscian enemies and became one of their most dangerous generals. This is possible, perhaps even likely, but we can not be certain.

SOURCES FOR *CORIOLANUS*

Shakespeare's primary source for *Coriolanus* was Plutarch's *Lives*, which was translated by Thomas North in 1579 and was popular enough to reach its third printing in 1603. This enormous work by the Greek philosopher and biographer was the principal source for several of Shakespeare's plays, including *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Timon of Athens*, and *Julius Caesar*. Unlike some of the other history plays, Shakespeare followed his source very closely while developing *Coriolanus*, including over 550 lines of North's prose interspersed throughout the play. Shakespeare relied on North particularly for Coriolanus' confrontation with the mob in Act III, Scene I and the speech Coriolanus gives at Aufidius' house in Act IV, Scene V. One can see the striking similarities in the following brief passage from North's *Lives* which corresponds to Coriolanus' aforementioned speech in the play:

> **I am Caius Martius, who hath done to thyself particularly, and to all the Volsces generally, great hurt and mischief, which I cannot deny for my surname of Coriolanus that I bear. For I never had other bebefit nor recompense of all the true and painful service I have done, and the extreme dangers I have been in, but this only surname: a good memory and witness of the malice and displeasure thou shouldst bear me. Indeed the name only remaineth with me: for the rest envy and cruelty of the people of Rome have taken from me, by the sufferance of the dastardly nobility and magistrates, who have forsaken me, and let me be banished by the people.**

Plutarch's account of the Roman warrior remains intact but for a minor few inventions by Shakespeare, such as the psychological turmoil of the hero, and the powerful role of his mother, Volumnia. Shakespeare expands on the character Virgilia, who is mentioned only once in passing in Plutarch's work, and on the character Menenius Agrippa, who, in the play, is given greater depth and an important role as the close friend and advisor of Coriolanus.

Mabillard, Amanda. An Analysis of Shakespeare's Sources for *Coriolanus*. Shakespeare Online. 2000. (Accessed 12 April 2009) < http://www.shakespeare-online.com/playanalysis/coriolanussources.html >.

Coriolanus (play)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Coriolanus, Act V, Scene III. Engraved by James Caldwell from a painting by Gavin Hamilton →

Coriolanus is a tragedy by William Shakespeare, based on the life of the legendary Roman leader, Gaius Martius Coriolanus.

Characters

Caius Martius, later surnamed Coriolanus	**Aufidius's Servingmen**
Menenius Agrippa, Senator of Rome	**Conspirators with Aufidius**
Cominius, Titus Lartius, generals	**Volscian Lords**
Volumnia, Coriolanus's mother	**Volscian Citizens**
Virgilia, Coriolanus's wife	**Soldiers in the Volscian army**
Young Martius, Coriolanus's son	**Adrian, a Volscian**
Valeria, a lady of Rome	**Nicanor, a Roman**
Sicinius Velutus, Junius Brutus, tribunes of Rome	**A Roman Herald**
Citizens of Rome	**Messengers**
Soldiers in the Roman Army	**Aediles**
Tullus Aufidius, general of the Volscian army	**A gentlewoman, an usher, Roman and Volscian senators and nobles, captains in the Roman army, officers, lictors**
Aufidius's Lieutenant	

Synopsis

The play opens in Rome shortly after the expulsion of the Tarquin kings. There are riots in progress, after stores of grain were withheld from ordinary citizens. The rioters are particularly angry at Gaius Martius, a brilliant Roman general whom they blame for the grain's being taken away. The rioters encounter a patrician named Menenius Agrippa, as well as Gaius Martius himself. Menenius tries to calm the rioters, while Martius is openly contemptuous, and says that the plebeians were not worthy of the grain because of their lack of military service. Two of the tribunes of Rome, Brutus and Sicinius, privately denounce Martius. He leaves Rome after news arrives that a Volscian army is in the field.

"Virgilia bewailing the absence of Coriolanus" by Thomas Woolner →

Virgilia bewailing the banishment of Coriolanus, 1871, St Mary's College, Strawberry Hill, Twickenham, England, Thomas Woolner, (1825-1892), Pre-RalhaeliteSculptor and Poet

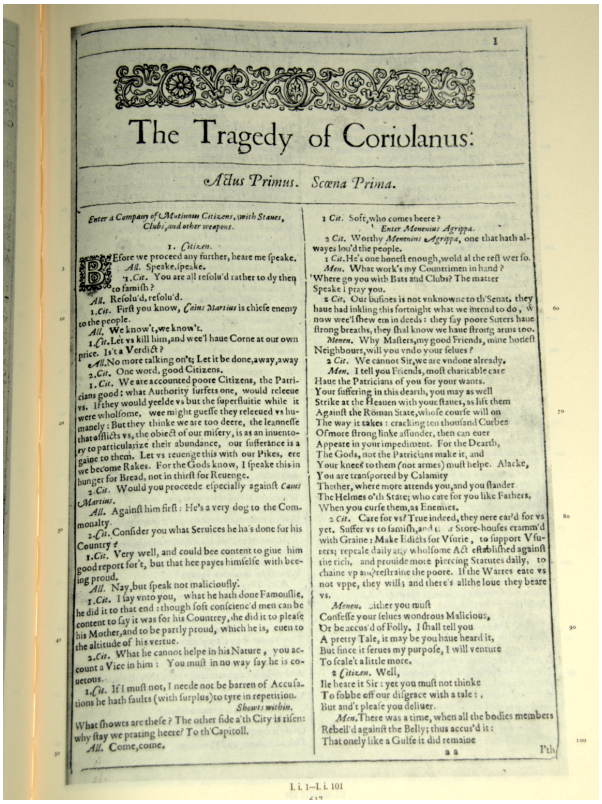
The commander of the Volscian army, Tullus Aufidius, has fought with Martius on several occasions and considers him a blood enemy. The Roman army is commanded by Cominius, with Martius as his deputy. While Cominius takes his soldiers to meet Aufidius' army, Martius leads a sally against the Volscian city of Corioles. The siege of Corioles is initially unsuccessful, but Martius is able to force open the gates of the city, and the Romans conquer it. Even though he is exhausted from the fighting, Martius marches quickly to join Cominius and fight the other Volscian force. Martius and Aufidius meet in single combat, which only ends when Aufidius' own soldiers drag him away from the battle.

In recognition of his great courage, Cominius gives Gaius Martius the cognomen of "Coriolanus". When they return to Rome, Coriolanus' mother Volumnia encourages her son to run for consul. Coriolanus is hesitant to do this, but he bows to his mother's wishes. He effortlessly wins the support of the Roman Senate, and seems at first to have won over the commoners as well. However, Brutus and Sicinius scheme to undo Coriolanus and whip up another riot in opposition to his becoming consul. Faced with this opposition, Coriolanus flies into a rage and rails against the concept of popular rule. He compares allowing plebeians to have power over the patricians to allowing "crows to peck the eagles". The two tribunes condemn Coriolanus as a traitor for his words, and order him to be banished.

After being exiled from Rome, Coriolanus seeks out Aufidius in the Volscian capital, and tells them that he will lead their army to victory against Rome. Aufidius and his superiors embrace Coriolanus, and allow him to lead a new assault on the city.

Rome, in its panic, tries desperately to persuade Coriolanus to halt his crusade for vengeance, but both Cominius and Menenius fail. Finally, Volumnia is sent to meet with her son, along with Coriolanus' wife and child, and another lady. Volumnia succeeds in dissuading her son from destroying Rome, and Coriolanus instead concludes a peace treaty between the Volscians and the Romans. When Coriolanus returns to the Volscian capital, conspirators, organised by Aufidius, kill him for his betrayal.

Facsimile of the first page of The Tragedy of Coriolanus from the First Folio, published in 1623 →



The Tragedy of Coriolanus:

Actus Primus. Scæna Prima.

Enter a Company of Mutinous Citizens, with Staues, Clubs, and other weapons.

1. Citizen.

Before we proceed any further, heare me speake.

All. Speake, speake.

1. Cit. You are all resolu'd rather to dy then to famish?

All. Resolu'd, resolu'd.

1. Cit. First you know, Caius Martius is chiefe enemy to the people.

All. We know't, we know't.

1. Cit. Let vs kill him, and we'l haue Corne at our own price. Is't a Verdict?

All. No more talking on't; Let it be done, away, away

2. Cit. One word, good Citizens.

1. Cit. We are accounted poore Citizens, the Patricians good: what Authority surfeits one, would releeue vs. If they would yeelde vs but the superfluitie while it were wholsome, we might guesse they releeued vs humanely: But they thinke we are too deere, the leanenesse that afflicts vs, the obiect of our misery, is as an inuentory to particularize their abundance, our sufferance is a gaine to them. Let vs reuenge this with our Pikes, ere we become Rakes. For the Gods know, I speake this in hunger for Bread, not in thirst for Reuenge.

2. Cit. Would you proceede especially against Caius Martius.

All. Against him first: He's a very dog to the Commonalty.

2. Cit. Consider you what Services he has done for his Country?

1. Cit. Very well, and could be content to giue him good report for't, but that he payes himselfe with being proud.

All. Nay, but speak not maliciously.

1. Cit. I say vnto you, what he hath done Famously, he did it to that end: though soft conscienc'd men can be content to say it was for his Country, he did it to please his Mother, and to be partly proud, which he is, euen to the altitude of his vertue.

2. Cit. What he cannot helpe in his Nature, you account a Vice in him: You must in no way say he is couetous.

1. Cit. If I must not, I needs not be barren of Accusations he hath faults (with surplus) to tyre in repetition.

Shouts within.

What shouts are these? The other side a'th City is risen: why stay we prating here? To th'Capitoll.

All. Come, come.

1 Cit. Soft, who comes here?

Enter Menenius Agrippa.

2 Cit. Worthy Menenius Agrippa, one that hath alwayes lou'd the people.

1 Cit. He's one honest enough, would all the rest were so.

Men. What work's my Countrimen in hand? Where go you with Bats and Clubs? The matter Speake I pray you.

2 Cit. Our businesse is not vnknowne to th'Senat, they haue had inkling this fortnight what we intend to do, which now we'l shew em in deeds: they say poore Suters haue strong breaths, they shal know we haue strong arms too.

Men. Why Masters, my good Friends, mine honest Neighbours, will you vndo your selues?

2 Cit. We cannot Sir, we are vndone already.

Men. I tell you Friends, most charitable care Haue the Patricians of you for your wants. Your suffering in this dearth, you may as well Strike at the Heauen with your staues, as lift them Against the Roman State, whose course will on The way it takes: cracking ten thousand Curbes Of more strong link asunder, then can euer Appease in your impediment. For the Dearth, The Gods, not the Patricians make it, and Your knees to them (not armes) must helpe. Alacke, You are transported by Calamity Thether, where more attends you, and you slander The Helmes o'th State; who care for you like Fathers, When you curse them, as Enemies.

2 Cit. Care for vs? True indeed, they nere car'd for vs yet. Suffer vs to famish, and [illegible] Store-houses cramm'd with Graine; Make Edicts for Vsurie, to support Vsurers; repeale daily any wholsome Act established against the rich, and prouide more piercing Statutes daily, to chaine vp and restraine the poore. If the Warres eate vs not vppe, they will, and there's all the loue they beare vs.

Men. Either you must Confesse your selues wondrous Malicious, Or be accus'd of Folly. I shall tell you A pretty Tale, it may be you haue heard it, But since it serues my purpose, I will venture To scale't a little more.

2 Citizen. Well, Ile heare it Sir: yet you must not thinke To fobbe off our disgrace with a tale: But and't please you deliuer.

Men. There was a time, when all the bodies members Rebell'd against the Belly; thus accus'd it: That only like a Gulfe it did remaine

a a Pth

I. i. 1—I. i. 101

Source

Coriolanus was largely based on the Life of Coriolanus as it was described in Plutarch's Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans and Livy's Ab Urbe condita.

Date and text

It was originally published in the First Folio of 1623. Elements of the text, such as the uncommonly detailed stage directions, lead some Shakespeare scholars to believe the text was prepared from a theatrical prompt book.

Performance history

Like some of Shakespeare's other plays (All's Well That Ends Well; Timon of Athens), there is no recorded performance of Coriolanus prior to the Restoration. After 1660, however, its themes made it a natural choice for times of political turmoil. The first known performance was Nahum Tate's bloody 1682 adaptation at Drury Lane. Seemingly undeterred by the earlier suppression of his Richard II, Tate offered a Coriolanus that was faithful to Shakespeare through four acts before becoming a Websterian bloodbath in the fifth act (John Webster (c.1580 – c.1634)). A later adaptation, John Dennis's The Invader of His Country, or The Fatal Resentment, was booed off the stage after three performances in 1719. The title and date indicate Dennis's intent, a vitriolic attack on the Jacobite 'Fifteen. (Similar intentions motivated James Thomson's 1745 version, though this bears only a very slight resemblance to Shakespeare's play. Its principal connection to Shakespeare is indirect; Thomas Sheridan's 1752 production at Smock Alley used some passages of Thomson's. David Garrick returned to Shakespeare's text in a 1754 Drury Lane production.[1]

The most famous Coriolanus in history is Laurence Olivier, who first played the part triumphantly at the Old Vic Theatre in 1937 and returned to it to even greater acclaim at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in 1959. In that production, he famously performed Coriolanus's death scene by dropping backwards from a high platform and being suspended upside-down (without the aid of wires), being reminiscent of Mussolini.[2]

Another notable Coriolanus of the twentieth century was Richard Burton, who also recorded the complete play for Caedmon Records.

Other famous performances of Coriolanus include Ian McKellen, Toby Stephens, Gerard Butler, and Ralph Fiennes. Alan Howard played Coriolanus in the 1984 BBC production and Ralph Fiennes plays him in the Weinstein Company's 2011

production that we will see.

Critical appraisal

A. C. Bradley described this play as "built on the grand scale,"[3] like King Lear and Macbeth, but it differs from those two masterpieces in an important way. The warrior Coriolanus is perhaps the most opaque of Shakespeare's tragic heroes, rarely pausing to soliloquize or reveal the motives behind his prideful isolation from Roman society. In this way, he is less like effervescent, reflective Shakespearean heroes/heroines such as Macbeth, Hamlet, Lear and Cleopatra and more like figures from ancient classical literature such as Achilles, Odysseus, and Aeneas -- or, to turn to literary creations from Shakespeare's time, the Marlovian conqueror Tamburlaine, whose militaristic pride finds a descendant in Coriolanus. Readers and playgoers have often found him an unsympathetic character, although his caustic pride is strangely, almost delicately balanced at times by a reluctance to be praised by his compatriots and an unwillingness to exploit and slander for political gain. The play is less frequently produced than the other tragedies of the later period, and is not so universally regarded as "great." (Bradley, for instance, declined to number it among his famous four in the landmark critical work Shakespearean Tragedy.) In his book Shakespeare's Language, Frank Kermode described Coriolanus as "probably the most fiercely and ingeniously planned and expressed of all the tragedies".[4]

The political overtones in Coriolanus are rich and nuanced. The drama especially and thoroughly examines the divide between plebeian democracy (favored in the play by the tribunes Brutus and Sicinius) and the proponents of autocracy (represented by the Coriolanus and the consulship itself). The conspiring tribunes point out Coriolanus' flaws and anti-democratic sentiments to the plebians, which admittedly he does possess, but they do so as a trick of demagoguery so they can consolidate their own power, not out of a sense of the greater good. This makes the tribunes comparable to Cassius in Julius Caesar, who publicly justifies the murder of Caesar because Caesar wanted to be king, when in private Cassius was simply jealous of Caesar's power (as opposed to Brutus, who had the best interests of the republic in mind). Still, it is not a simple transposition of characters between Caesar and Coriolanus: Caesar himself is actually more of a demagogue than Cassius and the other senators, winning over the support of "the mob" of Rome by showering them with treasure from his conquests. However, there is an underlying subtext that Caesar is being manipulative of the plebeians and does want power, though with the nuance that it is ultimately what the republic needs. Coriolanus, in contrast, is openly anti-democratic yet a highly skilled soldier and commander, and not particularly ambitious. Indeed, Coriolanus is portrayed as actually quite deficient in political tact and doesn't rely on such "trickery": when he is initially winning the election (before the tribunes start another riot) he actually doesn't do particularly well, due to his poor rhetorical skills, but he does do well enough to win, because enough voters recognize that he is well qualified for the position.

As in Hamlet, an important relationship of the play is between a mother and her son, but in Coriolanus, this relationship is both less fractured and devoid of the sexual tension that exists between Gertrude and the Danish prince. Indeed, the most intriguing tension resides, not in the hero's relationship with any woman, but in that which he maintains with his nemesis (and eventual ally) Aufidius. Marital and romantic concerns, so prominent in Antony and Cleopatra, are almost wholly absent. The play

maintains a serious tone throughout, without any of the familiar comic scenes, fools, or other stock devices commonly used by Shakespeare to lighten his tragedies. What comedy there is in the play may reside in Shakespeare's tart portrayal of the hypocrisy, cowardice, and fickleness of the plebeians.

T. S. Eliot famously proclaimed Coriolanus' superior to Hamlet in The Sacred Wood, in which he calls the former play, along with Antony and Cleopatra, the Bard's greatest tragic achievement. Eliot alludes to Coriolanus in a passage from his own The Waste Land.

Bertolt Brecht also adapted Shakespeare's play in 1952–5, as Coriolan for the Berliner Ensemble. He intended to make it a tragedy of the workers, not the individual, and introduce the alienation effect; his journal notes showing that he found many of his own effects already in the text, he considered staging the play with only minimal changes. The adaptation was unfinished at Brecht's death in 1956; it was completed by Manfred Wekwerth and Joachim Tenschert and staged in Frankfurt in 1962.[5]

Coriolanus has the distinction of being among the few Shakespeare plays banned in a democracy in modern times.[6] It was briefly suppressed in France in the late 1930s because of its use by the fascist element.[7]

References

1. **^ F. E. Halliday, A Shakespeare Companion 1564-1964, Baltimore, Penguin, 1964; p. 116.**
2. **^ http://www.rsc.org.uk/searcharchives/search/data?type_id=1&field,RESOURCE_IDENTIFIER,substring,string=C_M982_34 Accessed 13 October 2008.**
3. **^ Bradley, Shakespearean Tragedy**
4. **^ Kermode, Shakespeare's Language (Penguin Books 2001, p254).**
5. **^ Brown, Langdon, ed. Shakespeare Around the Globe: A Guide to Notable Postwar Revivals (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986): 82.**
6. **^ Maurois, Andre. The Miracle of France. Henri Lorin Binsse, trans. New York: Harpers, 1948: 432**
7. **^ Parker 123**

Coriolanus as *miles gloriosus* – Lear as *senex*

George Bernard Shaw called Coriolanus Shakespeare's greatest comedy.

Both the miles gloriosus and the senex were stock characters on Roman comedies and were used by the Roman comedian Plautus. Titus Maccius Plautus (c. 254–184 BCE), commonly known as Plautus, was a Roman playwright. His comedies are among the earliest surviving intact works in Latin literature, although they are known to be adaptations of earlier Greek plays or, at least, themes.

Shakespeare routinely used Plautine stories in his comedies – Comedy of errors, Much Ado About Nothing, Two Gentlemen of Verona, Two Noble Kinsmen. And in at least one of his tragedies – Lear is the senex. The Romans, nice guys that they were, would have taken Lear as a comedic figure. Shakespeare, on the other hand labeled the Merchant of Venice as a comedy – in his time, anti-Semitism was considered comedic.

One could argue that Shakespeare takes the miles gloriosus to its logical extreme, just as he took the senex to its extreme in Lear.

Coriolanus

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

"Veturia at the Feet of Coriolanus" by Gaspare Landi. In some Roman versions, Veturia was the mother of Coriolanus →

Gaius Marcius Coriolanus was a possibly legendary Roman general who lived in the 5th century BC. He received his toponymic title "Coriolanus" because of his exceptional valor in a Roman siege of the Volscian city of Corioli. He was then promoted to a general. [1] In later ancient times, it was generally accepted by historians that Coriolanus had lived, and a consensus narrative story of his life appeared, retold by leading historians such as Livy and Plutarch. The story is the basis for the play written by William Shakespeare.

19th-century humorous caricature of Coriolanus parting from his Wife and Family. →

The consensus biography

According to Plutarch, Coriolanus represented the Roman aristocracy. As a general, he successfully led the city's soldiers against an enemy tribe, the Volscians. After defeating the Volscians and winning support from the patricians of the Roman Senate, Coriolanus argued against the democratic inclinations of the plebeians, thereby making many personal enemies. The general was charged with misappropriation of public funds, convicted, and permanently banished from Rome. As a result of this ingratitude, the exiled general turned against Rome and made allegiance with the same Volscians he had once fought

against.

Plutarch's account of his defection tells that Coriolanus donned a disguise and entered the home of a wealthy Volscian noble, Tullus Aufidius. The unmasked Coriolanus appealed to Aufidius as a supplicant. Coriolanus and Aufidius then persuaded the Volscians to break their truce with Rome and raise an army to invade. When Coriolanus's Volscian troops threatened the city, Roman matrons, including his wife and mother, were sent to persuade him to call off the attack.

At the sight of his mother Veturia (known as Volumnia in Shakespeare's play), wife Virgilia and children throwing themselves at his feet in supplication, Coriolanus relented, withdrew his troops from the border of Rome, and retired to Aufidius's home city of Antium. Coriolanus had thus committed acts of disloyalty to both Rome and the Volscians. Aufidius then raised support to have Coriolanus first put on trial by the Volscians, and then assassinated before the trial had ended.

The tale of Coriolanus's appeal to Aufidius is quite similar to a tale from the life of Themistocles, a leader of the Athenian democracy who was a contemporary of Coriolanus. During Themistocles' exile from Athens, he traveled to the home of Admetus, King of the Molossians, a man who was his personal enemy. Themistocles came to Admetus in disguise and appealed to him as a fugitive, just as Coriolanus appealed to Aufidius. Themistocles, however, never attempted military retaliation against Athens.

Modern skepticism

Act V, Scene III of Shakespeare's Coriolanus. Engraved by James Caldwell from a paintingby Gavin Hamilton →

Coriolanus's history, as retold by these ancient historians, is a moralistic tale, which displays traits of individual and group temperament such as disloyalty and ingratitude. The story is today deemed legendary by most modern scholars, probably devised in order to justify the fact that the Romans had several times been badly defeated by the Volscians. The theory goes that, in order to maintain their self-respect, descendants of the surviving Romans came to believe that the reason they had been defeated was because a Roman defector had led the enemy forces. This myth would have bolstered the Romans' belief in the quality of their military leadership, as if to prove the assertion "only an ex-Roman could defeat Romans." Whether or not Coriolanus himself is a historical figure - and note that neither he nor any of the other leading figures in his tale can be confirmed by the consular Fasti - the saga preserves a genuine popular memory of the dark, unhappy decades of the early 5th century when

the Volscians overran Latium and threatened the very existence of Rome.

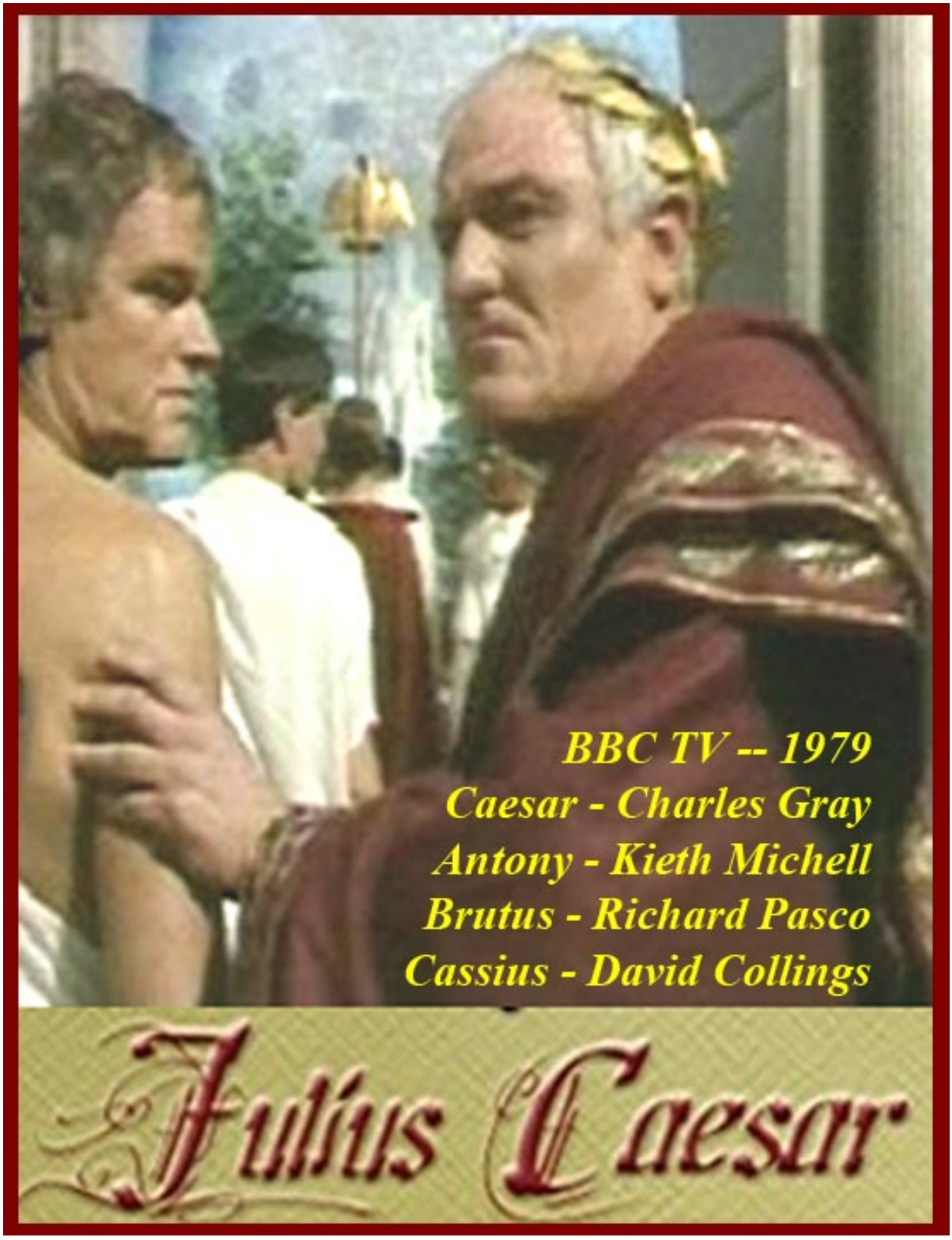
The story represents a recurring theme in history; successful generals brought down by political enemies and their own arrogance. The case of Benedict Arnold in the American Revolution specially stands out. Before his defection, Arnold was considered by many, including George Washington himself, as the best battlefield general on the American side. Like Coriolanus, Arnold felt entitled to special treatment because of the services he rendered the nation, but his arrogance and bad temper made him many enemies. His closeness to Washington thus made him an opportune target for Washington's rivals such as Horatio Gates. The English Civil war was very recent in the minds of the American colonists and there was a fear that the combination of Washington and Arnold would be a repeat of Oliver Cromwell and Sir Thomas Fairfax. Some feared a military dictatorship would grow out of Washington's and Arnold's victories on the battlefield.

Beethoven’s Coriolan Overture

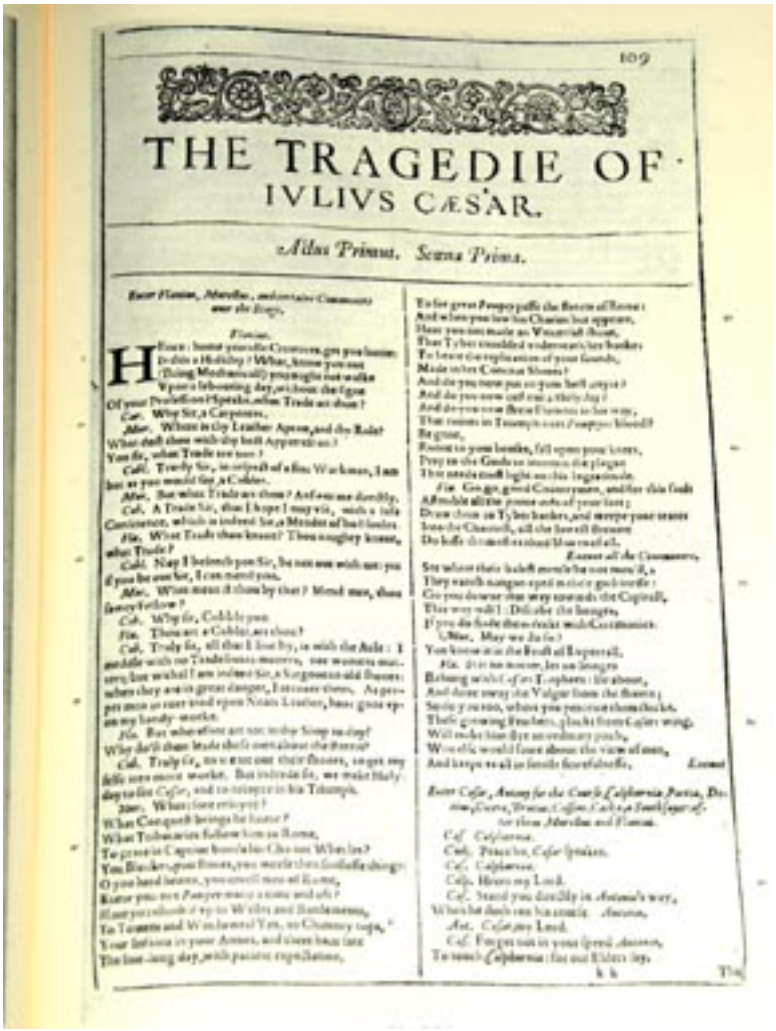
The Coriolan Overture (German: *Ouvertüre Coriolan, Op. 62*) is a composition written by Ludwig van Beethoven in 1807 for Heinrich Joseph von Collin's 1804 tragedy about the ancient Roman leader Gaius Marcius Coriolanus, not, as is sometimes claimed, for Shakespeare's play *Coriolanus*.

The structure and themes of the overture follow the play very generally. The main C minor theme represents Coriolanus' resolve and war-like tendencies (he is about to invade Rome), while the more tender E-flat major theme represents the pleadings of his mother to desist. Coriolanus eventually gives in to tenderness, but since he cannot turn back having led an army of his former enemies to Rome's gates, he kills himself. (In Shakespeare's play, on the other hand, he is murdered.)

Unit II -- Julius Caesar



The first known performance of Shakespeare's Julius Caesar was in 1601 or 1602. It was his second "Elizabethan" Roman play following Titus Andronicus, which was most likely written sometime between 1584 and the early 1590s. Elizabeth I died in 1603, several years before the first performance of Antony and Cleopatra, Shakespeare's next and third Roman play, which most scholars believe was written in 1606–07. To limit pirated performances, Shakespeare did not allow publication of the Julius Caesar text and most of his plays during his lifetime. The first known publication of Julius Caesar was in the famous "First Folio" which was printed in 1623, seven years after the death of Shakespeare, which occurred in 1616.



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THE TRAGEDIE OF
IVLIVS CÆSAR.

Actus Primus. Scena Prima.

Enter Flauius, Murellus, and certaine Commoners ouer the Stage.

Flauius.

Hence: home you idle Creatures, get you home:
Is this a Holiday? What, know you not
(Being Mechanicall) you ought not walke
Vpon a labouring day, without the signe
Of your Profession? Speake, what Trade art thou?

Car. Why Sir, a Carpenter.

Mar. Where is thy Leather Apron, and thy Rule?
What dost thou with thy best Apparrell on?
You sir, what Trade are you?

Cob. Truely Sir, in respect of a fine Workman, I am but as you would say, a Cobler.

Mar. But what Trade are thou? Answer me directly.

Cob. A Trade Sir, that I hope I may vse, with a safe Conscience, which is indeed Sir, a Mender of bad soules.

Mar. What Trade thou knaue? Thou naughty knaue, what Trade?

Cob. Nay I beseech you Sir, be not out with me: yet if you be out Sir, I can mend you.

Mar. What meanst thou by that? Mend me, thou saucy Fellow?

Cob. Why Sir, Cobble you.

Fla. Thou art a Cobler, art thou?

Cob. Truly Sir, all that I liue by, is with the Awle: I meddle with no Tradesmans matters, nor womens matters, but with all. I am indeed Sir, a Surgeon to old shoes: when they are in great danger, I recouer them. As proper a man as euer trod vpon Neats Leather, haue gone vpon my handy-worke.

Fla. But wherefore art not in thy Shop today?
Why dost thou lead these men about the streets?

Cob. Truly Sir, to weare out their shooes, to get my selfe into more worke. But indeede Sir, we make holyday to see *Cæsar*, and to reioyce in his Triumph.

Mar. Wherefore reioycest thou?
What Conquest brings he home?
What Tributaries follow him to Rome,
To grace in Captiue bonds his Chariot Wheeles?
You blockes, you stones, you worse then senselesse things:
O you hard hearts, you cruell men of Rome,
Knew you not *Pompey* many a time and oft?
Haue you climb'd vp to Walles and Battlements,
To Towres and Windowes? Yea, to Chimney tops,
Your Infants in your Armes, and there haue sate
The liue-long day, with patient expectation,
To see great *Pompey* passe the Streets of Rome:
And when you saw his Chariot but appeare,
Haue you not made an Vniuersall shout,
That Tyber trembled vnderneath her Bankes
To heare the replication of your sounds,
Made in her Concaue Shores?
And do you now put on your best attyre?
And do you now cull out a holyday?
And do you now strew Flowers in his way,
That comes in Triumph ouer *Pompeys* blood?
Be gone,
Runne to your houses, fall vpon your knees,
Pray to the Gods to intermit the plague
That needs must light on this Ingratitude.

Fla. Go, go, good Countrymen, and for this fault
Assemble all the poore men of your sort;
Draw them to Tyber bankes, and weepe your teares
Into the Channell, till the lowest Stremme
Do kisse the most exalted Shores of all.
Exeunt all the Commoners.
See whether their basest mettle be not moued,
They vanish tongue-tied in their guiltinesse.
Go you downe that way towards the Capitoll,
This way will I: Disrobe the Images,
If you do finde them deckt with Ceremonies.

Mur. May we do so?
You know it is the Feast of Lupercall.

Fla. It is no matter, let no Images
Be hung with *Cæsars* Trophees: Ile about,
And driue away the Vulgar from the Streets:
So do you too, where you perceiue them thicke.
These growing Feathers, pluckt from *Cæsars* wing,
Will make him flye an ordinary pitch,
Who else would soare aboue the view of men,
And keepe vs all in seruile fearefulnesse.
Exeunt

Enter Cæsar, Antony for the Course, Calphurnia, Portia, Decius, Cicero, Brutus, Cassius, Casca, a Soothsayer: after them Murellus and Flauius.

Cæ. *Calphurnia.*

Casca. Peace ho, *Cæsar* speakes.

Cæ. *Calphurnia.*

Calp. Heere my Lord.

Cæ. Stand you directly in *Antonius* way,
When he doth run his Course. *Antonius.*

Ant. *Cæsar* my Lord.

Cæ. Forget not in your speed, *Antonius*,
To touch *Calphurnia*: for our Elders say,

k k The

← Act 1, Scene 1 of Julius Caesar in the First Folio

For many years in the past, Julius Caesar was taught in American and British secondary schools as a first introduction to Shakespeare. Julius Caesar was matched with Caesar's *Gallic Wars*, which was the text used in second year Latin in the then common Latin language curriculum. Every student knew that the *Gallic Wars* started with "*Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres*." Another reason for starting Shakespeare with Julius Caesar Caesar was that it contained no sex. This is in marked contrast with the now common practice of starting with Romeo and Juliet, a play that is loaded with adolescent romance and eroticism.

Julius Caesar is a play about political rivalry and jealousy, martial competition, and disillusionment of ideals. Like others of Shakespeare's middle oeuvre, this play is concerned with the nature of kingship (i.e., whether Caesar's program was equivalent to the much hated Roman monarchy), with the relationship of public and private personas, (e.g., Julius Caesar's decision to stay at home after his wife's pleas being reversed after an appeal to his public vanity, or, e.g., the movement of the public quarrel between Brutus and Cassius into the privacy of the tent to avoid being overheard by their troops), and with the limits of reason (omens, portents, soothsayers, and spirits, as well as the difference between the post-assassination speech of Brutus, in which he says that "public reason shall be rendered of Caesar's death", and the speech of Anthony, which is an appeal to the emotions of the demos, i.e., the mob – both speeches derived from the descriptions of Plutarch.)

The play also highlight's what we might call "political necessity". In the absence of any possibility of due process, might the killing of a tyrant have been necessary for the preservation of order or even for the preservation of a "republic", which, by the time of the play's action, had become an abstraction? Was Caesar a tyrant or was he just a hated and envied rival?

Sic semper tyrannis **From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia**

Great Seal of Virginia with the state motto.

Sic semper tyrannis is a Latin phrase meaning "thus always to tyrants". It is sometimes mistranslated as "death to tyrants". It is most known as the official motto of Virginia and for its usage during the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.

Motto

The phrase was recommended by George Mason to the Virginia Convention in 1776, as part of the state's seal. The Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia shows Virtue, sword in hand, with her foot on the prostrate form of Tyranny, whose crown lies nearby. The Seal was planned by Mason and designed by George Wythe, who signed the United States Declaration of Independence and taught law to Thomas Jefferson.[1] Additionally, the phrase is the motto of the United States Navy attack submarine named for the state, the USS *Virginia*. The phrase

is also the motto of the U.S. city Allentown, the third largest city in Pennsylvania, and is referenced in the official state song of Maryland.

History

The phrase is attributed to Marcus Junius Brutus, the most famous figure in the assassination of Julius Caesar on March 15, 44 BC: however, it is more probably a later dramatic invention, as Roman historians of the period did not record it. In American history, John Wilkes Booth shouted the phrase after shooting Abraham Lincoln on April 14, 1865, in part because of the association with the assassination of Caesar.[2][3] Timothy McVeigh was wearing a T-shirt with this phrase and a picture of Lincoln on it when he was arrested on April 19, 1995, the day of the Oklahoma City bombing.[4]

References

1. *^ Rowland, Kate Mason (1892). The Life of George Mason, 1725-1792. G.P. Putnam's Sons. pp. 264–265.*
2. *^ Diary Entry of John Wilkes Booth*
3. *^ TimesMachine April 15, 1865 - New York Times*
4. *^ Kilzer, Lou; Flynn, Kevin (1997-12-19). "Did McVeigh Plan to get Caught, or was he Sloppy?". Denver Rocky Mountain News*

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Does political necessity ever justify "regime change", i.e., the removal/elimination of a tyrant or a rival or of a proponent of a rival political theory? Can people be legitimately killed or put on hit lists (i.e., proscription, c.f. a "deck of cards") to prevent or delay a civil war? In the play and historically, Antony and Lepidus agree to the proscription of their relatives to cement the formation of the Second Triumvirate, an alliance with Octavian that temporarily shelves the rivalry between Antony and Octavian. Such Machiavellian decisions were common in Shakespeare's plays, and Shakespeare generally offered no adverse judgement. Shakespeare's 17th century audience would have been quite aware of the "Machiavel" as a personification of a Machiavellian decision-maker. (See below.)

We need to remind ourselves again that, in Shakespeare's time and up until the 19th and early 20th century, Plutarch was taught in primary schools. In Shakespeare's time the classical past was neither distant nor escapist. Rather a classical lesson could be a model for "modern" (16th / 17th century Elizabethan) ethics and statecraft; the Greeks and Romans were seen or at least imagined as models for conduct. History was taught to give lessons for conduct. Thomas North's 1579 English translation edition of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives of Famous Greeks and Romans* influenced not only Shakespeare's plays, but also the way the public saw their own history. The North edition that Shakespeare probably used was printed in 1595.

[tkw note -- An edition of North's translation of Caesar's life with notes and Shakespeare/North parallel texts is at http://www.archive.org/stream/northstranslatio00plutuoft#page/n5/mode/2up].

Plutarch's Lives were indeed parallel. All of the Lives were written in pairs -- he compared Julius Caesar to Alexander the Great. From there, it was easy for Shakespeare's public to posit further parallels, and the obvious candidates were the current English monarch, Elizabeth I and her equally heroic father, Henry VIII. Most important to everyone was the question of succession. After Caesar's murder, fourteen years of civil war wracked the Roman Empire. There had been trouble indeed among Henry's heirs, and now Elizabeth had no direct heir. The people and the politicians must have been worried in the first decade of the 17th century. (Despite the worries, things went fairly smoothly. James 1 started the Jacobean period and Shakespeare continued to flourish.) Civil war was dreaded in ancient Rome and in Elizabethan England.

In Julius Caesar, Shakespeare emphasizes Caesar's lack of a natural heir by adding in some action not found in Plutarch. The play begins during the Lupercalia festival, in mid-February of 44 BC. Mark Antony is instructed by Caesar (Act 1, Scene 2) to strike his wife Calpurnia, in the hope that she will be able to conceive.

Lupercalia

The Lupercalia was a very ancient, possibly pre-Roman pastoral festival, observed on February 15 to avert evil spirits and purify the city, releasing health and fertility. The Lupercalia was believed in antiquity to have some connection with the Ancient Greek festival of the Arcadian Lykaia (from Ancient Greek: λύκος -- lykos, "wolf", Latin lupus) and the worship of Lycaean Pan, the Greek equivalent to the Roman god Faunus, as instituted by Evander.

In Roman mythology, Lupercus is a god sometimes identified with the Roman god Faunus, who is the Roman equivalent of the Greek god Pan. Lupercus is the god of shepherds. His festival, celebrated on the anniversary of the founding of his temple on February 15, was called the Lupercalia. His priests wore goatskins. The second-century Christian apologist Justin Martyr mentions an image of "the Lycaean god, whom the Greeks call Pan and the Romans Lupercus," nude save for the girdle of goatskin, which stood in the Lupercal, the cave where Romulus and Remus were suckled by a she-wolf. There, on the Ides of February, a goat and a dog were sacrificed, and salt mealcakes prepared by the Vestal Virgins were burnt.

Plutarch's description of the Lupercalia:

> ***Lupercalia, of which many write that it was anciently celebrated by shepherds, and has also some connection with the Arcadian Lycaea. At this time many of the noble youths and of the magistrates run up and down through the city naked, for sport and laughter striking those they meet with shaggy thongs. And many women of rank also purposely get in their way, and like children at school present their hands to be struck, believing that the pregnant will thus be helped in delivery, and the barren to pregnancy.***

The Lupercalia festival was partly in honor of Lupa, the she-wolf who suckled the infant orphans, Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome, explaining the name of the festival, Lupercalia, or "Wolf Festival." The festival was celebrated near the cave of Lupercal on the Palatine (where Rome was founded, to expiate and purify new life in the Spring. The Lupercal cave, which had fallen into a state of decay, was rebuilt by Augustus; the celebration of the festival had been maintained, as we know from the famous occurrence of it in 44 BC. A highly decorated cavern fifty feet below the place where Augustus built his palace was discovered by archeologists in October 2007 in the correct approximate location. It may prove to be the Lupercal cave when analyzed.

The religious ceremonies were directed by the Luperci, the "brothers of the wolf (lupus)", a corporation of priests of Faunus, dressed only in goatskins, whose institution is attributed either to the Arcadian Evander, or to Romulus and Remus. The Luperci were divided into two collegia, called Quinctiliani (or Quinctiales) and Fabiani, from the gens Quinctilia (or Quinctia) and gens Fabia; at the head of each of these colleges was a magister. In 44 BC. a third college, the Julii, was instituted in honor of Julius Caesar, the first magister of which was Mark Antony. In imperial times the members were usually of the equestrian class.

The festival began with the sacrifice by the Luperci (or by the flamen dialis) of two male goats and a dog. Next young patrician Luperci representing each of the collegia were led to the altar, to be anointed on their foreheads with the sacrificial blood, which was wiped off the bloody knife with wool soaked in milk, after which they engaged in ritual smiling and laughter.

The sacrificial feast followed, after which the Luperci cut thongs, which were called Februa, from the skins of the victims, dressed themselves in the skins of the sacrificed goats, in imitation of Lupercus, and ran round the walls of the old Palatine city, the line of which was marked with stones, with the thongs in their hands, striking the people who crowded near. Girls and young women would line up on their route to receive lashes from these whips. This was supposed to ensure fertility, prevent sterility in women and ease the pains of childbirth. (This tradition itself may survive (Christianised, and shifted to Spring) in certain ritual Easter Monday whippings. Some sources also link the Lupercalia to Valentine's Day.)

Other Deviations from Plutarch

Shakespeare deviated from these historical facts in order to curtail time and compress the facts so that the play could be staged more easily. The tragic force is condensed into a few scenes for heightened effect.

- **Shakespeare makes Caesar's triumph take place on the day of Lupercalia instead of six months earlier.**

- **For greater dramatic effect he has made the Capitol the venue of Caesar's death and not Curia Pompeiana (at the rear of the large courtyard behind scaena of the theater of Pompey), although he does refer to the Pompey statue that is thought to have stood on the podium on which rose the Curia Pompeiana.**

- **Shakespeare gives Caesar's last words as "Et tu, Brute? Then fall, Caesar!" ("And you, Brutus? Then fall, Caesar."). Plutarch says he said nothing, pulling his toga over his head when he saw Brutus among the conspirators. Suetonius reports his last words, spoken in Greek, as "καί σύ τέκνον" (transliterated as "Kai su, teknon"; "Even you too, child" in English). The question mark at the end of Shakespeare's line is also questionable. It does not appear in the source, so the source line could have been declarative or exclamatory and could mean something like "This will also happen to you, [my] child". [tkw note – Some ancient sources said that Caesar thought Brutus was his son. Caesar had a long-running intimacy with Servilia Caepionis, the mother of Brutus. But Caesar's fathering of Brutus is unlikely; Brutus was born around 85 BC when Caesar was only fifteen years old. The first recorded liaison of Caesar with Servilia was in 64 BC. It is recorded that Caesar spared Brutus after defeating Pompey's forces at the battle of Pharsalus, supposedly for love of Servilia.]**

- **Caesar's murder, the funeral, Antony's oration, the reading of the will and Octavius' arrival all appear to take place on the same day in the play. Historically, the assassination took place on March 15 (The ides of March), the will was published three days later on March 18, the funeral took place on March 20, and Octavius arrived in Rome only in May.**

- **Shakespeare makes the Triumvirs meet in Rome instead of near Bolonia, so as to avoid a third locale.**

- **He has combined the two Battles of Phillipi although there was a three week interval between them. He also neglects to mention that the two battles took place in October of 42 BC, a full thirty months after Caesar's assassination.**

Pale and Lean Cassius

Gaius Cassius Longinus owned the Seian horse, and that was really bad luck. Cneius Seius had purchased that fine Argive steed and then was executed by Mark Antony. Antony gave the prize to Cornelius Dolabella, but Cassius, in his flight after assassinating Julius Caesar, defeated and killed Dolabella and took the horse. Shortly thereafter came the battle of Philippi and the end of Cassius (more later). Mark Antony kept the equine prize for himself after Philippi, and soon thereafter he lost the battle of Actium and followed Cassius to Hades. Every Roman schoolboy of the first and second century knew the proverb denoting impending doom: "ille homo habet equum Seianum" -- "That man has the Seian horse".

Shakespeare put these words in the mouth of Julius Caesar:

> **"Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look;**
> **He thinks too much: such men are dangerous."**

Cassius' envy and his fear of Caesar's growing power and of Caesar's great ambition led him to persuade Brutus that Caesar had to be stopped. Lean and hungry Cassius was, greedy for ever greater power and wealth.

Shakespeare was close, but Plutarch, who recorded Caesar's words almost fifteen hundred years closer to the event, recorded it thus:

> **"It is not the fat and the long-haired men that I fear,**
> **but the pale and the lean."**

Similar words with essentially the same meaning, and Shakespeare's scanned better. Both meant that Cassius was a military man and neither a philosopher -- long-haired -- nor one of the indolent nobles who grew fat and got a tan while others left the city to fight Rome's wars. Caesar himself was pale and lean and fully understood the ambition and greed of Cassius.

Who was this Cassius? Of a noble Roman family already famous for its civil and military services to Rome, his own early life has either not been recorded or lost. He first appears in the literature in 53 BC as one of the commanders in the army of Marcus Crassus at Crassus' disastrous defeat by the Parthians (ex-Seleucids) at the Battle of Carrhae (Haran) in Mesopotamia.

There has always been some question about Cassius' actions at Carrhae: his partisans said that Cassius had seen that Crassus was already defeated and therefore declined to throw away the lives of more Roman troops; his detractors said that he stood by, keeping his forces out of the battle, and let Crassus go down to ignominious defeat, capture, and execution; conspiracy theorists guessed that he had accepted promises of future preference and held back to let the Parthians clear Crassus from the path of Pompey -- or of Caesar. Whatever the circumstances, Cassius reorganized

the Roman remnant that escaped at Carrhae, arranged for their augmentation under his own command, and won a minor victory against the Parthians the next year.

Cassius then established a power base in Syria that allowed him to extort money from anyone who wished to trade in his area, and this enabled him to increase his wealth significantly. Cassius was appointed Tribune in 49 BC. He sided with Pompey and the rich "optimati" senators who opposed Julius Caesar, and he was Pompey's naval commander off Sicily in the civil war that ensued. Cassius was still on Pompey's side when Pompey was routed at the battle of Pharsalus in Thessaly,Greece, in 48 BC, but, shortly after Ptolemy delivered Pompey's head, Caesar forgave Cassius and tried to co-opt him by making him a legate.

After Caesar's pardon, which also extended to many others among Pompey's former allies, Cassius quickly slipped back into the opposition and became deeply involved in Optimati causes in Rome. That really meant that he conspired with other corrupt senators, who claimed to want a return to the republic but whose real goal was to thwart the mercantile, monetary, and civil/military service reforms proposed by Julius Caesar. Those reforms were to be implemented by Caesar's governor in Rome, Marc Antony, while Caesar was chasing Cleopatra in Egypt. Meanwhile Cassius was wooing and marrying Junia, the half sister of Brutus, another pardoned Pompey partisan and "republican" activist. (If this sounds really complicated, it's only because it really was really complicated.)

Probably even before Caesar returned to Rome, in the fall of 45 BC with Cleopatra on his arm and a plan to end the Senate's corrupt system of military and civil preferments in his pocket, a plot had been hatched to assassinate Caesar at the first opportunity. Cassius was one of several leaders of the plot and, after the fact, it was decided that he had been the key plotter.

About 60 senators were directly involved, and the standard account of the assassination of Julius Caesar says that twenty-seven of them managed to stab Caesar with their swords and daggers when he stopped to receive a petition at the foot of the statue of his old enemy Pompey at the temporary Curial meeting hall behind Pompey's theater. This happened only six months after Ceasar returned to Rome, but in that time he'd made enough stupid mistakes to infuriate all of Rome's classes and factions. His ineptitude was particularly obvious when his administration was compared with that of Marc Antony, who had ruled as "Master of the Horse" (originally a military title denoting "second-in-command" and leader of the cavalry) in Caesar's absence. Nobody really knows if twenty-seven blows were actually struck or if the number 27 had some numerological, tribal, or political significance. No matter: Caesar was dead in an initially popular assassination.

But Marc Antony, knowing that his own political future depended on casting the dead dictator as a popular military hero, quickly orchestrated a public outcry against the assassins. Caesar was burned on a makeshift warrior's pyre in the Forum, and Cassius and the other conspirators were forced to flee Rome.

Cassius eventually went back to his old power base in Syria, and there after defeating Antony's governor, Dolabella, and taking possession of the ill-fated Seian horse, he raised a big army out of the legions that were loyal to him personally. In 42 BC, he

joined forces with his brother-in-law and co-assassin, Brutus, and their combined armies waited for the legions of Marc Antony and Octavian (later Caesar Augustus) at Philippi. The battle on the field was essentially a draw: Antony's forces broke Cassius' army and entered his camp, but Brutus had defeated Octavian and was coming to Cassius' rescue. Cassius, seeing only the smaller picture, the enemy troops in his camp, and not knowing that salvation was at hand, ordered his trusted shield bearer to help him commit suicide. According to legend, the soldier dealt the death blow with the same sword that Cassius had used in the assassination of Caesar. When word came of the suicide of Cassius, Brutus also despaired and joined Cassius in suicide.

Thus ended the last of the "liberatori" who had slain Caesar, ostensibly to liberate Rome and restore the republic but actually to retain their corrupt privileges. History liked Brutus more than Cassius who took most of the blame for the plot. In fact, there were no good-guys here. All, even including Caesar, were in the game for what they could win by whatever means. They all died and their heirs sorted out what was left, and those who survived spun the histories the way they wanted to.

P.S.:

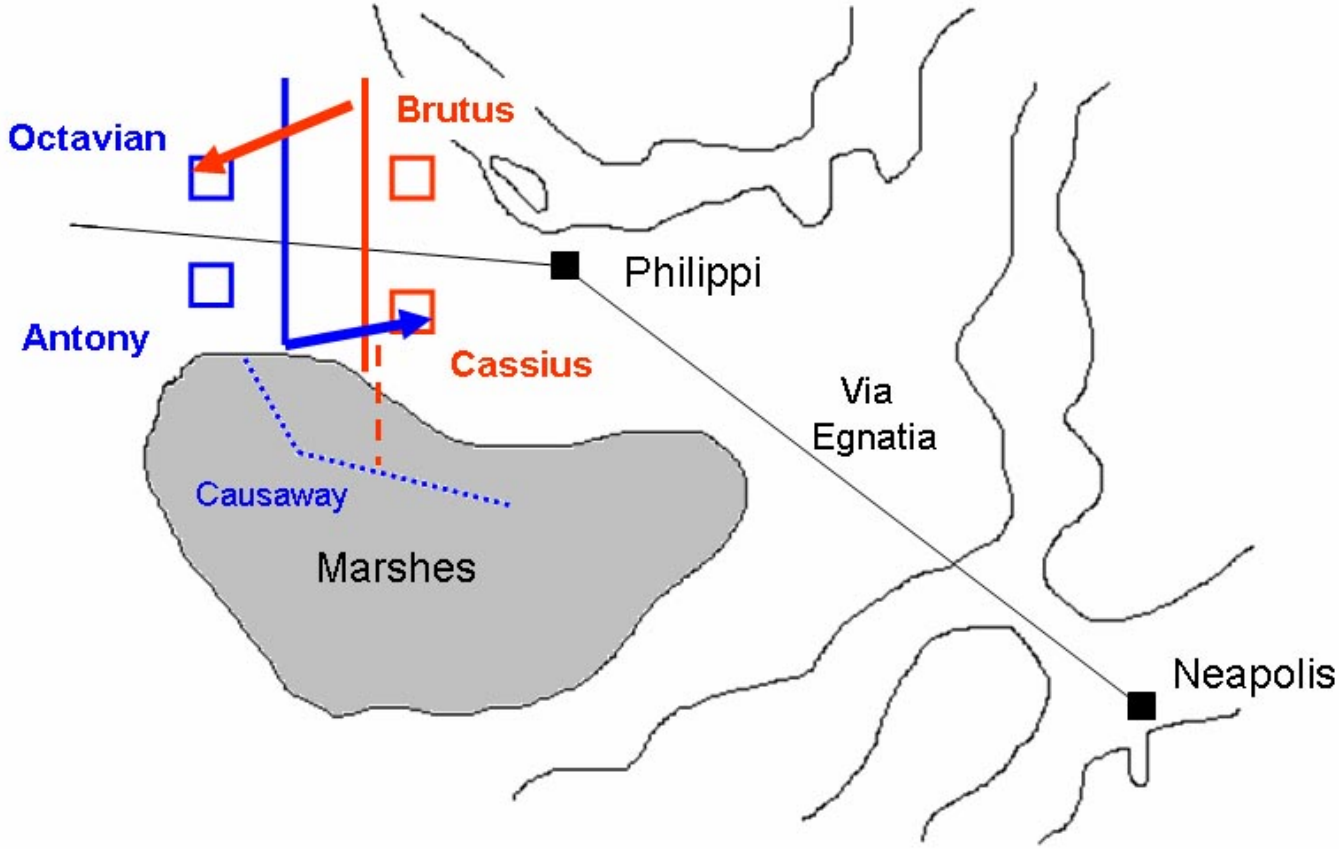
1. Cassius had the unusual misfortune of being on the loosing side at three of the major battles of his time: Carrhae, Pharsalus, and Philippi. Had he not despaired at Philippi, he may also have gone on to defeat at Actium.

2: Another Gaius Cassius Longinus, a direct descendant of the infamous assassin, appears as an author, jurist, philosopher, and enemy of Caligula and Nero (and therefore a good-guy) in the mid-first century AD. Nero had him banished, but Vespasian rehabilitated him and brought him back to Rome for an old age of public adulation.

The Battles of Philippi

Brutus and Cassius were marching eastward with about 17 Legions and 17,000 allied cavalry. A legion had about 4,000 men. Octavian and Antony temporarily allied to meet the threat and marched westward with 19 legions and 30,000 allied cavalry. The met astride the Via Enignatia just west of the fortress town of Philippi in the first week if October, 42 BC – 30 months after the murder of Julius Caesar.

The first battle took place in the first week of October 42 BC. Brutus, faced Octavian north of the road and Cassius faced Marc Antony south of the road. Antony, using his own troops and some of Octavian's, defeated Cassius and took his camp. But Brutus broke through Octavian's lines and got into Octavian's camp – but he was unable to hold it. The Philippi 1 was essentially a draw, but Cassius, thinking that Brutus was also defeated (bad intelligence!) committed suicide. Everyone withdrew and regrouped.



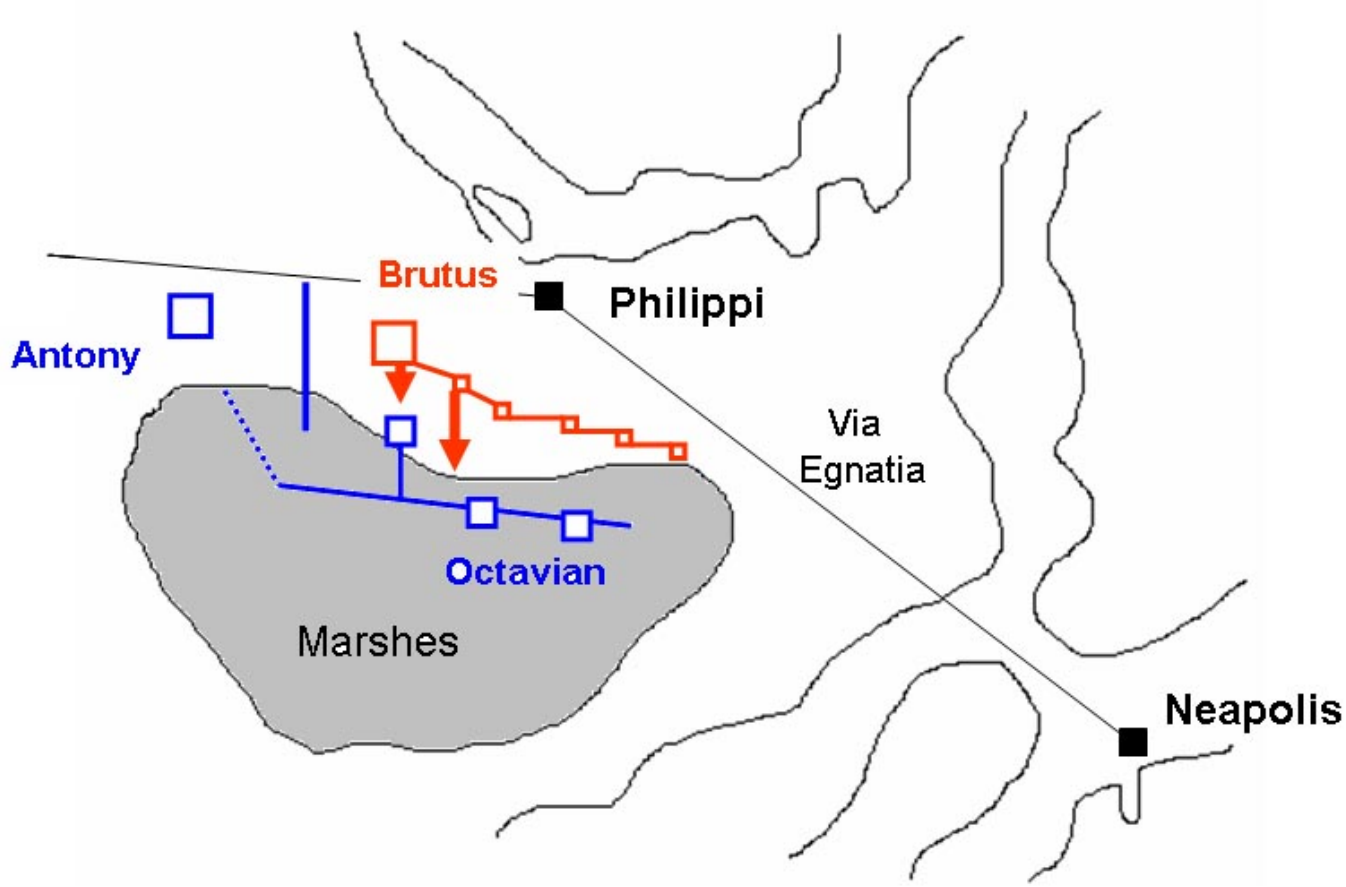
On the same day as the first battle of Philippi, the Republican (Brutus and Cassius's) fleet was able to intercept and destroy the triumvirs' reinforcements (two legions and other troops and supplies led by Gnaeus Domitius Calvinus). Thus, the strategic position of Antony and Octavian became quite serious, since the already depleted regions of Macedonia and Thessaly were unable to supply their army for long, while Brutus could easily receive supplies from the sea. The triumvirs had to send a legion south to Achaia to collect more supplies. The morale of the troops was boosted by the promise of further 5,000 denarii for each soldier and 25,000 for each centurion.

On the other side, however, the Liberators' army was left without its best strategic mind. Brutus had less military experience than Cassius and, even worse, he could not obtain the same sort of respect from his allies and his soldiers, although after the battle he offered another gift of 1,000 denarii for each soldier.

In the next three weeks, Antony was able to slowly advance his forces south of Brutus's army, fortifying a hill close to Cassius's former camp, which had been left unguarded by Brutus.

To avoid being outflanked Brutus was compelled to extend his line to the south, parallel to the via Egnatia, building several fortified posts. Brutus's defensive position was still secure, holding the high ground with a safe line of communication with the sea. He still wanted to keep the original plan of avoiding an open engagement while waiting for his naval superiority to wear out the enemy. Unfortunately, most of his officers and soldiers were tired of the delaying tactics and demanded another attempt

at an open battle. Probably both Brutus and his officers feared the risk of having their soldiers deserting to the enemy if they did not keep their ascendancy on the troops. Plutarch also reports that Brutus had not received news of Domitius Calvinus' defeat in the Ionian Sea. Thus, when some of the eastern allies and mercenaries started deserting, Brutus was forced to attack on the afternoon of October 23. As he said "I seem to carry on war like Pompey the Great, not so much commanding now as commanded."



The battle resulted in close combat between two armies of well-trained veterans. Arrows or javelins were largely ignored; instead, the soldiers packed into solid ranks and fought face-to-face with their swords, and the slaughter was terrible. In the end, Brutus's attack was repulsed, and his soldiers routed in confusion, their ranks broken. Octavian's soldiers were able to capture the gates of Brutus's camp before the routing army could reach this defensive position. Thus, Brutus's army could not reform, which made the triumvirs' victory complete. Brutus was able to retreat into the nearby hills with the equivalent of only 4 legions. Seeing that surrender and capture were inevitable, Brutus committed suicide.

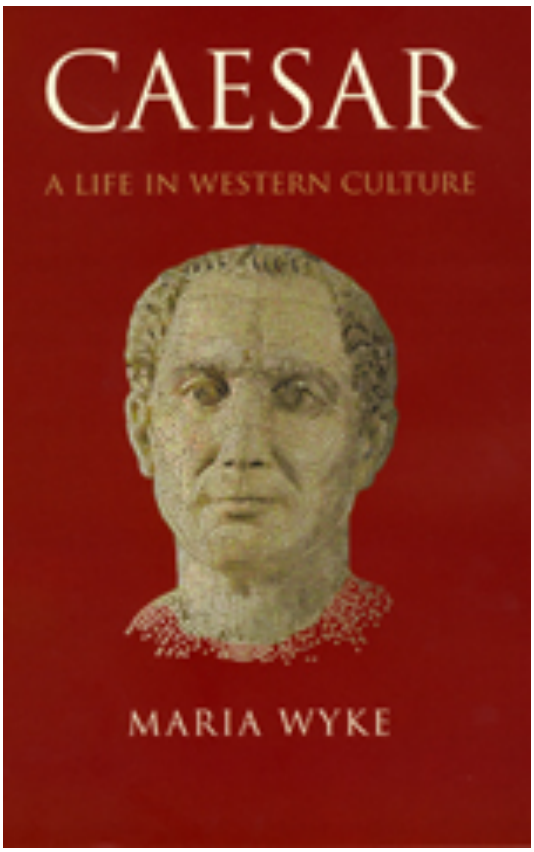
The total casualties for the second battle of Philippi were not reported, but the close quarters fighting likely resulted in heavy losses for both sides.

Julius Caesar -- Consul/Dictator of the Roman Republic

Bust of Julius Caesar

Reign	***October 49 BC – 15 March 44 BC (as dictator and/or consul)***
Full name	***Gaius Julius Caesar***
Born	***13 July 100 BC or 102 BC***
Birthplace	***Subura, Rome***
Died	***15 March 44 BC***
Place of death	***Curia of Pompey, Rome***
Consort	***Cornelia Cinna minor 84–68 BC*** ***Pompeia 68–63 BC*** ***Calpurnia Pisonis 59–44 BC***
Offspring	***Julia Caesaris 85/84–54 BC*** ***Caesarion 47–30 BC*** ***Augustus 63 BC–AD 14 (grand-nephew, posthumously adopted as Caesar's son in 44 BC)*** ***(TKW note: Caesar was also said to have that Brutus was his son – he had an affair with the mother of Brutus.)***
Royal House	***Julio-Claudian***
Father	***Gaius Julius Caesar***
Mother	***Aurelia Cotta***

An excerpt from



Caesar

A Life in Western Culture
288 pages, 33 halftones 6 x 9
© 2008
Cloth $25.00
ISBN: 9780226921532 Published September 2008
Maria Wyke

The University of Chicago Press

CAESAR'S CELEBRITY From fame to fable

Julius Caesar hit the headlines in late summer 2003 when a perfectly preserved white marble head displaying his likeness was discovered on a small island in the southern Mediterranean. Although it was quickly identified as another posthumous Roman portrait, it was presented as more refined and pristine than the few other busts which have been most closely associated with the statesman's name. Italian archaeologists also claimed its physiognomy (the lines around the brows, the sad expression, the distant gaze) revealed both Caesar's authority and the strains under which it placed him, with perhaps even a suggestion of foresight into his impending demise and that of his whole epoch. Found on Pantelleria, a holiday hideaway for pop stars and Hollywood celebrities, the marble head was then shot by the fashion photographer Fabrizio Ferri to accompany newspaper and magazine reports. Julius Caesar's face had emerged elegantly from the warm waters of the Mediterranean into contemporary celebrity culture.

Why is Julius Caesar the most famous of all Romans? Why not the dictator Sulla, the military conqueror Pompey, or the emperor Augustus? Caesar's exceptional talents, his actions, and his murder, as they figure in many ancient narratives, all assist in the process of turning the Roman dictator into an embodiment of a profound transformation in the history of Western civilization from republic to empire. Caught on the threshold of epochal change, Julius Caesar is also deeply implicated in it. Consequently his biography has taken on monumental dimensions, and matured into a foundational and formative story. It has possessed

extraordinary and lasting appeal because his image has not been fixed. Whether as founder or destroyer, Julius Caesar's life has become a point of reference from which to explore concerns about conquest and imperialism, revolution, dictatorship, liberty, tyranny and political assassination. Used as model or anti-model for warfare and statecraft, he has also been invoked to pose questions about more personal merits (such as audacity, risk-taking, courage and glory, leadership, good fortune and fame, even immortality) and about personal failings (such as arrogance, ambition, extravagance, lust and cruelty). Even from the time of his own writing about himself, Julius Caesar's life has been arranged, fictionalized, and sensationalized so as to become a set of canonic events and concepts whose telling reveals much more than just the minutiae of one individual's existence. Julius Caesar was a Roman leader of flesh and blood who existed in real time. He is also a quasi-mythic protagonist in the development of Western culture.

Fame

From the ancient sources (including Julius Caesar's own writing), there emerges the portrait of the most charismatic and talented Roman of his time. A spectacular and varied list of gifts, skills and capacities reveal a figure without precedent: a man of wide learning and sophisticated tastes, but also physical strength, endurance, courage, focus and energy; an eloquent and lively orator, a versatile and direct writer; a supremely shrewd general and magnetic leader, an astute and dynamic politician and statesman, an effective administrator, a clever self-publicist and showman, a successful lover, a favourite of fortune.

Blessed with such characteristics, and acting notionally in the name of the senate and the people of republican Rome, Julius Caesar conquered Gaul, vastly extended the boundaries of Roman rule, laid the foundations of France, and initiated the formation of what would become modern Europe. Then, in crisis-ridden Rome, he instigated a civil war against the republic's supporters and their leader Pompey, usurped power and established a permanent dictatorship. His populist, autocratic mode of government was cut short by his murder but eventually, after more than a decade of further civil war between his aspiring successors and his assassins, an enduring imperial monarchy was put in its place.

The Roman general and dictator constantly cultivated a public image for himself that was larger than life in order to arouse admiration and, therefore, increase his political authority, and also to achieve a lasting recognition (or fama) for those great deeds of state. Beyond the games and triumphs which he staged, and the honorific distinctions with which he adorned himself, his own commentaries on the war in Gaul and the subsequent civil war constitute a successful and enduring example of his self-promotion in pursuit of fama. In these works, the author refers to himself as 'Caesar'—a separable entity whose reputation can be favourably manipulated, polished and inflated. While the narratives affect third-person objectivity, a breathless haste and the limitations imposed by battlefield reporting, they tell tales of vast territories annexed and enemies utterly outwitted and overwhelmed.

Set alongside (and at times against) this self-presentation of 'Caesar' are the depictions which emerge from the works of contemporaries such as the poet Catullus, the orator and statesman Cicero, or the political historian Sallust. In his letters, speeches and philosophical essays, Cicero in particular offers no consistency: open hostility at times, at times expedient eulogy, frequently an oscillation between admiration and distaste. On at least one occasion, he expresses an apprehension that Julius Caesar will be granted the enduring fame he so desires, only for it to prove highly volatile:

Posterity will be staggered to hear and read of the military commands you have held and the provinces you have ruled … battles without number, fabulous victories, monuments and shows and Triumphs. And yet unless you now restore this city of ours to stability by measures of reorganization and lawgiving, your renown, however far and wide it may roam, will never be able to find a settled dwelling-place or firm abode. For among men still unborn, as among ourselves, there will rage sharp disagreements. Some will glorify your exploits to the skies. But others, I suggest, may find something lacking, and something vital at that. (Cicero, pro Marcello 28û9. Trans. M. Grant, 1969)

Cicero found himself in a difficult political situation after he had been pardoned by Caesar for supporting Pompey in the civil war. For a while after Pompey's defeat, flight and death in Egypt, the orator stayed away from Rome and delivered no public speeches. Yet, breaking his silence at last in this speech of September 46 BC, he even manages to hint at a certain incredulity about the dictator's own reports on his glorious military activities, to the dictator's face.

After Julius Caesar was assassinated two years later, disagreements raged even more intensely and more urgently over how to evaluate his exploits abroad, his seizure of power, and his autocratic government at home. Cicero himself expressed astonishment, in a letter written soon after the dictator's death, that all his actions, writings, speeches, promises and plans now had more force than if he had still been alive (Letters to Atticus, 14.10.1). His murder conferred on Caesar both humanity and tragedy; the themes of betrayal by friends, brutal slaughter, and greatness suddenly brought low formed part of his biography forevermore. Only by recasting it as the noble killing of a usurper, tyrant and destroyer of the republic could the chief conspirators Brutus and Cassius bestow some nobility on the deed rather than the victim. Evaluation of Caesar's life thus became caught up in the dramatic horror of his death—was it a life that deserved to be taken away?— and constituted an integral part of the propaganda war waged between Caesar's assassins and his successors Mark Antony and Octavian, until finally, in 42 BC at Philippi in Macedonia, the two sides engaged in battle either to restore republican government or to inherit the dictator's power.

These bitter conflicts over the image of Caesar assumed striking visual form on the coinage issued by each side in the aftermath of his murder. A silver denarius issued in Rome around 43 BC by the official moneyer L. Flaminius Chilo (Figure 1.1) shows on the obverse a portrait of Julius Caesar, his head garlanded with laurel. The coinage minted shortly before the dictator's death had offered distinctively realistic representations of his face: the baldness, the deeply wrinkled brow, the large eyes with surrounding crow's feet, prominent nose, thin-lipped mouth, heavily creased cheeks, jutting cheekbones and chin, long, scraggy neck displaying sagging folds of skin, a pronounced Adam's apple. Now, after his death, the dictator's physical blemishes and peculiarities are partially obscured, though not yet wholly idealized as those of a god. His head is endowed with more hair, greater regularity of feature, smoother skin and a more monumental aspect. The reverse of the coin unites this fresh, physically forceful representation of Caesar with the goddess Peace, who leans on a long sceptre of power and holds a twisted staff of prosperity.

Conversely, a silver denarius issued by Brutus in 43 or 42 BC (Figure 1.2), from a travelling mint which moved with his encampment through Greece and Asia, displays a humbly bare-headed portrait of Brutus the general. With him is conjoined, on the reverse, a cap of liberty (or the pilleus customarily granted to slaves on the death of their master). The cap is inserted between two daggers below which sits the clear legend EID[ES] MAR[TIAE]—an archaic

spelling of the Ides of March, the day in 44 BC on which the minter, along with some of his fellow senators, killed Julius Caesar. Here the promise of peace, prosperity and legitimate government which was being promoted for Caesar's successors in Rome is thoroughly rebuffed. Instead (and in order to stimulate military and civic support for the coming war), Brutus presents himself in the glorious republican tradition of tyrant-slaying: his heroic assassination of Caesar has freed the Roman state from servitude. This extreme polarity in the fame of Julius Caesar—between superhuman provider for the Roman people and sordid master of slaves—has further ensured the enduring and diverse significance of the Roman statesman in Western culture.

This polarity is clear in later testimonies to the life of Julius Caesar which survive from antiquity—the biographies, histories and epic poems which have supplied a substantial part of the raw material from which the diverse Caesars of subsequent millennia have been moulded. Commemoration of Julius Caesar was an essential political strategy for his grand-nephew Octavian, who, by virtue of his adoption as Caesar's son and his inheritance of Caesar's name and estate, could now lay claim also to his soldiers, his civilian support and his disputed authority over the Roman state. Octavian named himself 'Caesar, son of Caesar' and officially recognized his father's divinity. Yet, once securely installed as emperor of Rome's vast dominions and now also entitled 'Augustus', his image was carefully constructed by his court biographer Nicolaus of Damascus as an heroic ruler to be distinguished from his politically inept predecessor. The tale of the father's assassination warns in the most graphic terms against the errors and dangers which the son must avoid in order to survive. Within the canon of virtues and vices collated by the imperial loyalist Valerius Maximus during the reign of Tiberius, it is possible to find Julius Caesar as a high celestial power, an ethical model of courage and clemency, whose death is parricide—the shocking murder of the father of the country. In contrast, under the emperor Nero, in the seemingly seditious epic on the civil war composed by the poet Lucan, the narrator makes of Caesar a demonic and destructive force of nature, an unscrupulous despot whose anticipated murder will be a fitting punishment and an example to all tyrants. During the reign of Trajan, when Julius Caesar appears to have taken on an exemplary function specifically as Rome's greatest general and conqueror, he was also instated as the 'first of the Caesars' and thus not just a crucial pivot between republican and monarchical systems of government, but also the divine founder of empire and of an imperial dynasty which bore his name. Yet, when the evaluation of Julius Caesar's life no longer needed to function as a vital signal of a Roman subject's patriotism or treachery, in later histories and biographies it became possible to acknowledge his elevated status as first Roman emperor while still detailing his excessive ambition and his abuses of power, and even endorsing his murder as a just punishment.

Fable

Julius Caesar's talents, actions and murder, their vivid and extensive representation in ancient sources, and the frequent, violent and sometimes fatal conflicts which took place over those representations have all contributed to his lasting fame—which, in turn, has developed into a way of addressing the concerns of the present and anxieties about the future. Yet the title of founder of monarchy and empire, which Caesar acquired in the second century AD, and his elevation to the position of first emperor provide further explanation. For 'Caesar' then became both the name of the Roman military leader and statesman and the sign of Rome and its imperial system of government. From the perspective of early Christianity and then the Middle Ages, Julius Caesar oversaw the profound transformation of the world from pagan to Christian and created an office which, under the Christian emperors, would become

sanctified because it was divinely appointed.

While in some ecclesiastical literature Julius Caesar might represent the apogee of pagan pride before Christ advanced the teaching of humility, or was coloured more darkly still as an Antichrist, more often he personified supreme secular power on earth, and his monarchical mode of government a temporal counterpart to the spiritual government of God in heaven. Thus, in medieval literature, many features of Julius Caesar's ancient biography—which was dominated now by the authority of Lucan, whose civil war poem was read as a testimony to the benefits of monarchy—underwent epic and chivalric embellishment and invention. Already towards the end of the republican period (whose end is conventionally dated nowadays as 31 BC, when Octavian defeated Mark Antony in a sea battle and began to accrue far greater sovereign powers even than Caesar), and during the reigns of the first Roman emperors, Julius Caesar's life from birth to death had been fabricated by himself or others as unique and fated. In the Middle Ages, it was also deeply infused with an exemplary flavour—a celebration of ancient virtues (and, occasionally, a denigration of a few vices) delivered to aristocratic readers as a practical guide to their appropriate political role and moral behaviour at court. Sometimes miraculous tales were threaded into the surviving historical record to create a Caesarian fable about a supreme courtly hero and champion, just conqueror and emperor, who was a form of pagan saint. In the hands of medieval clerics, court chroniclers and poets, the life of Julius Caesar was transformed into a kind of secular scripture. Julius Caesar had himself already started the process of turning his biography into an heroic myth. Early in his life he had laid claim to both royal and divine ancestry, advancing himself and his family as descended from the first kings of Rome and the goddess Venus. Such ancestry rooted his biography within the narrative strategies fitting for an epic hero like Venus' son (and his supposed ancestor) Aeneas, and imply that a semi-divine mandate to greatness flowed through his veins.

Better to mark this extraordinary destiny, medieval literature and art elaborated a miraculous birth for the Roman statesman (although it is possible that comparable claims had been made for him in the earliest, lost sections of his ancient biographies). Authentication was supplied by retrieving its supposed historical record from ancient speculation about the origin of the family name 'Caesar': one of several classical explanations was that it came from the verb 'to cut' (cadere), and indicated that the first member of the Julian family who held it had been cut out (caesus est) of his mother's womb. Julius Caesar was not the first to bear this cognomen. Other etymologies for the name were also in circulation. Histories of ancient medicine made it clear that in republican Rome such an operation involved the death of the mother, yet Caesar's mother Aurelia did not die in childbirth. Nevertheless, medieval literature and iconography gave ample space to a birth which would be a suitably marvellous and auspicious beginning for such a great man. A lavish illustration for an extraordinarily popular medieval epic on Julius Caesar's deeds provides one such example (Figure 1.3). In conformity with medieval customs for lying in, the operation takes place exclusively among women. The dead mother is laid out on a litter of straw to soak up her blood, while a servant prepares the boiled water with which to wash the newborn who has emerged from his mother's open abdomen. The entire event is literally framed within one chamber of the castle of Julius Caesar's great achievements.

The mature Caesar was also included in the medieval canon of the Western world's greatest military heroes. This collection of champions, or Nine Worthies ('neuf preux'), was first identified, categorized, and made popular in the early fourteenth century in a poem

composed by a French jongleur or itinerant ministrel. Joining a neatly composed arrangement of three Christians, three Hebrews and two other pagans (Hector and Alexander the Great), Julius Caesar along with the rest was made to embody chivalric goodness, wisdom, prowess and valour. Perfect warriors, the Nine Worthies conferred glory on their nations and provided patterns of both military virtue and moral conduct for imitation. They frequently appeared on frescoes, tapestries, enamelled cups and playing cards owned by medieval princes and noblemen. In a similar way to a collection of saints, their role was to exhort a supposedly degenerate present to live up to medieval ideals projected back into the past. In this line-up, Julius Caesar was conventionally distinguished by his imperial crown and the crest of a two-headed eagle emblazoned on his medieval armour. In a fourteenth-century tapestry of the Nine Worthies commissioned by the Duke of Berry (and now surviving only in parts), a majestic and heavily bearded Caesar sits enthroned within a fantastic Gothic niche. He grasps a broad, unsheathed sword and is surrounded by his courtiers (mainly musicians, but also a soldier and, directly above him, his lady). His heraldic symbol of the double-headed imperial eagle is woven in sable on gold

Specific wars fought by the Roman general were widely narrated in the national chronicles and epic poems of the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, most notably in France, Germany and Britain. They were often invested with additional patriotic detail, whether to glorify the regions in which the works originated or their conqueror. A German epic, for example, commemorates how local barons, won over to Julius Caesar by his chivalric display of leniency, courtesy and generosity, came to his rescue when he would otherwise have been repulsed from the gates of his own city. Conversely, a chronicle of a city in the north-east of France recalls its strenuous defence against the Roman general, with the help of princes from other nearby areas, a number of kings from Africa and a few devils from hell. Completely fantastical victories might even stretch the Roman conqueror’s military triumphs to regions such as India (in order to retrace the map of Alexander’s conquests) and further on into the Biblical regions of Gog and Magog. In areas which Julius Caesar conquered (and in some which he didn’t), local chronicles claimed him for the founder of their cities or their peoples. Across Europe, he became a topographical trace, a local memory of a Roman presence which might invest a place with the importance attaching to his name.

Fabulous traits and deeds frequently migrated from one medieval worthy to another, moving in literature from Alexander to Charlemagne, Arthur and Caesar. Each becomes the conqueror of many countries; the perfect practitioner of prowess, leniency and wisdom; a hero in pursuit of a magic sword, tree or beast; born from or enjoying intercourse with fairies.

Every conqueror needs a distinguished horse which only he can ride. A number of classical sources note that Julius Caesar possessed such a horse, born on his own lands, whose front hooves resembled feet since they were divided in such a way that they looked like toes. This unusual condition was interpreted by a soothsayer as an omen that the master of such a horse would one day rule the world. Naturally, the horse would endure no other rider save Caesar. This observation in Caesar’s ancient biography seems to recall the characteristics of Bucephalus, the wild horse tamed by Alexander, which provided that hero too with an oracle predicting world empire. In medieval romance, Alexander’s horse becomes a horned creature so wild that it eats men. In a later medieval epic on Julius Caesar, in addition to unmistakable feet, his horse gains a fabulous horn on its head with which it can topple other riders and their mounts. A number of depictions survive in which this mythic horse (rather than its owner) is in sharp focus. A colourful earthenware dish of the early sixteenth century, which captures a

moment in the triumph of Julius Caesar, appears to jettison the medieval horn in favour of a more rational spike attached to a harness, but all four of the horse's human feet remain clearly visible as it is ridden on parade by a youth, who carries a globetipped branch to signify that their master is ruler of the whole world (Figure 1.5).

The unique circumstances of Julius Caesar's death did not escape his medieval chroniclers and poets. They carefully reiterate the portents and disturbances of nature which classical authors describe as having preceded the dictator's death, signifying its superhuman importance. According to ancient accounts, for example, some horses Caesar had dedicated to the gods would no longer graze but wept abundantly; a bull Caesar was sacrificing turned out to have no heart; a 'king' bird was torn to pieces by other birds in Rome's senate-hall; flames issued from men who were left unharmed by them; at night, lights were seen in the skies and crashing sounds were heard.

Medieval works also introduce new, even more elaborate omens. In a fifteenth-century poem memorializing history's most illustrious men, an Italian courtier amassed many of the miraculous events the medieval world believed to surround the murder of the Roman general: on that dark night, at the sixth hour, when the betrayal was arranged, terrible voices were heard clamouring in the sky, the earth quaked as if it were releasing a great sigh, fires with bloody tails circled through the air in battle, a lamb cried out 'Slaughter! Slaughter!', oxen pointed out to their ploughmen the pointlessness of carrying on … Some of these prodigies even echo those which, according to sacred scripture, marked the crucifixion of Christ and would herald the second coming. Generating a more explicit connection between Julius Caesar and Jesus Christ, the assassins Brutus and Cassius were generally damned in the Middle Ages for having betrayed the highest temporal authority and earthly counterpart of God. This type of execration finds most vivid expression in Dante's poetic depiction of a spiritual journey in which he came across the Roman senators in the nethermost pit of Hell. There they are perpetually mangled in the three mouths of Lucifer alongside the betrayer of God, Judas Iscariot.

Finally, attending to the close of Caesar's life, his relics became an object of veneration. Medieval guidebooks to Rome frequently drew the attention of pilgrims to a red granite obelisk which stood close by the Church of St Peter. This they identified as both a memorial in honour of Caesar and his tomb for, they asserted, the bronze sphere which sat high at the top contained his cremated remains. Thus Julius Caesar found a place on the sacred map of Rome.

Caesar in Western culture

If Julius Caesar acquired in antiquity the highly volatile fame which Cicero had foretold. During the course of the Middle Ages, however, he became far more than a famed (or infamous) historical figure. Now he was a fable, almost a myth, more than human and almost holy. Consequently, the ways in which Caesar has been received into Western culture have been extraordinarily diverse, and on numerous occasions profound. He has been constantly reshaped and adapted to new contexts and for fresh purposes. Whether perceived as conqueror or civilizer, founder or destroyer, democrat or autocrat, murderer or victim, he has appeared and reappeared for the purposes of imitation, education or entertainment, from the poetry of Dante to the casino at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas.

Caesar has been deployed to legitimate or undermine the authority of kings, to justify or

denounce the coups of generals, to launch or obstruct revolutions, to demonstrate incisive literary style and perfect grammar, to teach military strategy and tactics or the workings of fortune and destiny, to display luxury, to play out sexual excess, to stimulate expenditure and consumption. Moreover, the history of Caesar's reception is not only a matter of re-presenting him in ways that speak to the present (in paintings, plays, novels, operas, films and computer games, as well as in political speeches and historical treatises); it is also often a matter of adopting aspects of his life in someone else's, or replicating his murder for political reasons—a matter of becoming or removing a new Caesar.

How then might we investigate a reception history so vast and so diverse? Already towards the end of the Middle Ages, the reception of Julius Caesar—the use of his biography—began to fragment further. The emerging humanist interest in scholarly investigation, in antiquarianism and philology, entailed close scrutiny of Caesar's own commentaries and comparison of them with other classical sources. This, along with the pursuit of historical analysis, led to a dilution of the Roman dictator's fabulous and sacred aura. He now became a man of letters (as well as the general and statesman), perhaps rather more admirable for his writing style than his actions. If we consider Julius Caesar's reception exclusively at the level of state and of politics, it is possible to piece together some broad trends. Critics, for example, have observed various fluctuations in the fortunes of the political Caesar from the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries. With the initiation of violent debates about republicanism and citizenship in the Renaissance, and the re-establishment of republics, some humanists drew on Cato, Cicero and Brutus as symbolic champions of their civic liberty, while casting Caesar as the enemy for being a usurper and tyrant. In the counter-moves of the hereditary princes and monarchs of Europe, and the intellectuals who staked out the ground for them, the founder of European monarchy received swift rehabilitation or even greater admiration.

In the era of revolutions in late eighteenth-century America and France, Brutus became yet more noble, Caesar ever more villainous. The conspirator was widely and practically deployed in the French Revolution as historical and secular support for the armed struggle for liberty. On the other hand, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Napoleon Bonaparte ensured that Caesar replaced Brutus, and imperial replaced republican Rome, as admirable and reproducible models for leadership and government. So closely did Caesar seem bound to the French emperors and their expanding empires that 'Caesarism' was developed as a political theory in the latter half of the century better to understand the novelty of Napoleon III's regime, blending as it did authoritarianism with populism. By the start of the twentieth century, Julius Caesar had once again reached the elevated standing of a great man of world history, only to fall drastically into disrepute again after the death of the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini, who had so closely and so spectacularly shaped himself in Caesar's image.

From the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries, Julius Caesar may have careered between political model and anti-model, but he never disappeared from sight. In recent decades, his apparently diminished importance has been linked to the equally diminished standing of classics in Western educational systems, and the disappearance of pragmatics as an integral aspect of historical study. The Roman republic seems far too distant and too different from the present to offer any guidelines for political or moral life in a global economy, although the Roman empire is often used still to supply general parallels for the rise—and warnings of the inevitable fall—of that modern superpower, the United States of America.

JULIUS CAESAR

An analysis of the play by William Shakespeare

The following article was originally published in Characters of Shakespeare's Plays. William Hazlitt. London: C.H. Reynell, 1817.

JULIUS CAESAR was one of three principal plays by different authors, pitched upon by the celebrated Earl of Halifax to be brought out in a splendid manner by subscription, in the year 1707. The other two were the King and No King of Fletcher, and Dryden's Maiden Queen. There perhaps might be political reasons for this selection, as far as regards our author. Otherwise, Shakespeare's Julius Caesar is not equal, as a whole, to either of his other plays taken from the Roman history. It is inferior in interest to Coriolanus, and both in interest and power to Antony and Cleopatra. It, however, abounds in admirable and affecting passages, and is remarkable for the profound knowledge of character, in which Shakespeare could scarcely fail. If there is any exception to this remark, it is in the hero of the piece himself. We do not much admire the representation here given of Julius Caesar, nor do we think it answers to the portrait given of him in his Commentaries. He makes several vapouring and rather pedantic speeches, and does nothing. Indeed, he has nothing to do. So far, the fault of the character might be the fault of the plot.

The spirit with which the poet has entered at once into the manners of the common people, and the jealousies and heartburnings of the different factions, is shown in the first scene, when Flavius and Marullus, tribunes of the people, and some citizens of Rome, appear upon the stage.

> Flavius: Thou art a cobbler, art thou?
>
> Cobbler: Truly, Sir, ALL that I live by, is the AWL: I meddle with no tradesman's matters, nor woman's matters, but with-al, I am indeed, Sir, a surgeon to old shoes; when they are in great danger, I recover them.
>
> Flavius: But wherefore art not in thy shop today? Why dost thou lead these men about the streets?
>
> Cobbler: Truly, Sir, to wear out their shoes, to get myself into more work. But indeed. Sir, we make holiday to see Caesar, and rejoice in his triumph.

To this specimen of quaint low humour immediately follows that unexpected and animated burst of indignant eloquence, put into the mouth of one of the angry tribunes.

> Marullus: Wherefore rejoice!--What conquest brings he home?
> What tributaries follow him to Rome,
> To grace in captive-bonds his chariot-wheels?
> Oh you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome!
> Knew you not Pompey? Many a time and oft
> Have you climb'd up to walls and battlements,
> To towers and windows, yea, to chimney-tops,
> Your infants in your arms, and there have sat
> The live-long day with patient expectation,
> To see great Pompey pass the streets of Rome:

And when you saw his chariot but appear,
Have you not made an universal shout,
That Tiber trembled underneath his banks
To hear the replication of your sounds,
Made in his concave shores?
And do you now put on your best attire?
And do you now cull out an holiday?
And do you now strew flowers in his way
That comes in triumph over Pompey's blood?
Begone--
Run to your houses, fall upon your knees,
Pray to the Gods to intermit the plague,
That needs must light on this ingratitude.

The well-known dialogue between Brutus and Cassius, in which the latter breaks the design of the conspiracy to the former, and partly gains him over to it, is a noble piece of high-minded declamation. Cassius's insisting on the pretended effeminacy of Caesar's character, and his description of their swimming across the Tiber together, 'once upon a raw and gusty day', are among the finest strokes in it. But perhaps the whole is not equal to the short scene which follows when Caesar enters with his train.

Brutus: The games are done, and Caesar is returning.

Cassius: As they pass by, pluck Casca by the sleeve,
And he will, after his sour fashion, tell you
What has proceeded worthy note to-day.

Brutus: I will do so; but look you, Cassius--
The angry spot doth glow on Caesar's brow,
And all the rest look like a chidden train.
Calphurnia's cheek is pale; and Cicero
Looks with such ferret and such fiery eyes,
As we have seen him in the Capitol,
Being crost in conference by some senators.

Cassius: Casca will tell us what the matter is.

Caesar: Antonius--

Antony: Caesar?

Caesar: Let me have men about me that are fat,
Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep a-nights:
Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look,
He thinks too much; such men are dangerous.

Antony: Fear him not, Caesar, he's not dangerous;
He is a noble Roman, and well given.

Caesar: Would he were fatter; but I fear him not:
Yet if my name were liable to fear,
I do not know the man I should avoid
So soon as that spare Cassius. He reads much;
He is a great observer; and he looks
Quite through the deeds of men. He loves no plays,
As thou dost, Antony; he hears no music;
Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort,
As if he mock'd himself, and scorn'd his spirit,
That could be mov'd to smile at any thing.
Such men as he be never at heart's ease,
Whilst they behold a greater than themselves;
And therefore are they very dangerous.
I rather tell thee what is to be fear'd
Than what I fear; for always I am Caesar.
Come on my right hand, for this ear is deaf,
And tell me truly what thou think'st of him.

We know hardly any passage more expressive of the genius of Shakespeare than this. It is as if he had been actually present, had known the different characters and what they thought of one another, and had taken down what he heard and saw, their looks, words, and gestures, just as they happened.

The character of Mark Antony is further speculated upon where the conspirators deliberate whether he shall fall with Caesar. Brutus is against it:

(Brutus:) And for Mark Antony, think not of him:
For "he can do no more than Caesar's arm,
When Caesar's head is off."

Cassius: Yet do I fear him:
For in th' ingrafted love he bears to Caesar--

Brutus: Alas, good Cassius, do not think of him:
If he love Caesar, all that he can do
Is to himself, take thought, and die for Caesar:
(Brutus:) And that were much, he should; for he is giv'n
To sports, to wildness, and much company.

Trebonius: There is no fear in him; let him not die.
For he will live, and laugh at this hereafter.
They were in the wrong; and Cassius was right.

The honest manliness of Brutus is, however, sufficient to find out the unfitness of Cicero to be included in their enterprise, from his affected egotism and literary vanity.

O, name him not: let us not break with him;
For he will never follow any thing,
That other men begin.

His scepticism as to prodigies and his moralizing on the weather--"This disturbed sky is not to walk in"--are in the same spirit of refined imbecility.

Shakespeare has in this play and elsewhere shown the same penetration into political character and the springs of public events as into those of everyday life. For instance, the whole design to liberate their country fails from the generous temper and overweening confidence of Brutus in the goodness of their cause and the assistance of others. Thus it has always been. Those who mean well themselves think well of others, and fall a prey to their security. That humanity and sincerity which dispose men to resist injustice and tyranny render them unfit to cope with the cunning and power of those who are opposed to them. The friends of liberty trust to the professions of others because they are themselves sincere, and endeavour to secure the public good with the least possible hurt to its enemies, who have no regard to anything but their own unprincipled ends, and stick at nothing to accomplish them. Cassius was better cut out for a conspirator. His heart prompted his head. His habitual jealousy made him fear the worst that might happen, and his irritability of temper added to his inveteracy of purpose, and sharpened his patriotism. The mixed nature of his motives made him fitter to contend with bad men. The vices are never so well employed as in combating one another. Tyranny and servility are to be dealt with after their own fashion: otherwise, they will triumph over those who spare them, and finally pronounce their funeral panegyric, as Antony did that of Brutus. All the conspirators, save only he,

> Did that they did in envy of great Caesar:
> He only in a general honest thought
> And common good to all, made one of them.

The quarrel between Brutus and Cassius is managed in a masterly way. The dramatic fluctuation of passion, the calmness of Brutus, the heat of Cassius, are admirably described; and the exclamation of Cassius on hearing of the death of Portia, which he does not learn till after the reconciliation, 'How 'scap'd I killing when I crost you so?' gives double force to all that has gone before. The scene between Brutus and Portia, where she endeavours to extort the secret of the conspiracy from him, is conceived in the most heroical spirit, and the burst of tenderness in Brutus:

> You are my true and honourable wife;
> As dear to me as are the ruddy drops
> That visit my sad heart—

is justified by her whole behaviour. Portia's breathless impatience to learn the event of the conspiracy, in the dialogue with Lucius, is full of passion. The interest which Portia takes in Brutus and that which Calphurnia takes in the fate of Caesar are discriminated with the nicest precision. Mark Antony's speech over the dead body of Caesar has been justly admired for the mixture of pathos and artifice in it: that of Brutus certainly is not so good.

The entrance of the conspirators to the house of Brutus at midnight is rendered very impressive. In the midst of this scene we meet with one of those careless and natural digressions which occur so frequently and beautifully in Shakespeare. After Cassius has introduced his friends one by one, Brutus says:

(Brutus:) They are all welcome.
What watchful cared do interpose themselves
Betwixt your eyes and night?

Cassius: Shall I entreat a word? [They whisper.]

Decius: Here lies the east: doth not the day break here?

Casca: No.

Cinna. O pardon, Sir, it doth; and yon grey lines,
That fret the clouds, are messengers of day.

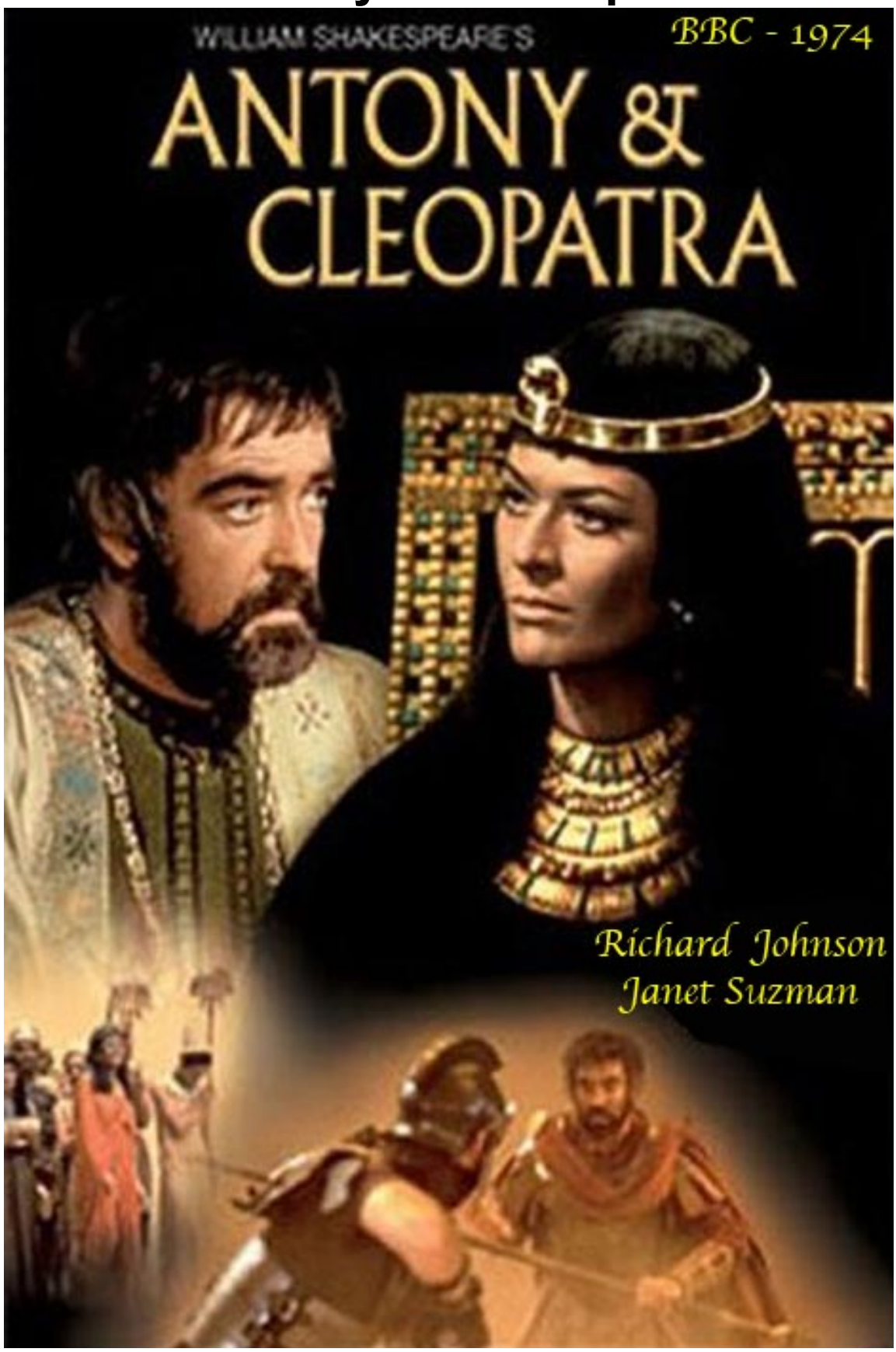
Casca: You shall confess, that you are both deceiv'd:
Here, as I point my sword, the sun arises,
Which is a great way growing on the south,
Weighing the youthful, season of the year.
Some two months hence, up higher toward the north
He first presents his fire, and the high east
Stands as the Capital, directly here.

We cannot help thinking this graceful familiarity better than all the formality in the world. The truth of history in Julius Caesar is very ably worked up with dramatic effect. The councils of generals, the doubtful turns of battles, are represented to the life. The death of Brutus is worthy of him--it has the dignity of the Roman senator with the firmness of the Stoic philosopher. But what is perhaps better than either, is the little incident of his boy, Lucius, falling asleep over his instrument, as he is playing to his master in his tent, the night before the battle. Nature had played him the same forgetful trick once before on the night of the conspiracy. The humanity of Brutus is the same on both occasions.

--It is no matter;
Enjoy the honey-heavy dew of slumber.
Thou hast no figures nor no fantasies,
Which busy care draws in the brains of men.
Therefore thou sleep'st so sound.

C.f., Addenda at the very end if this handout on Cassius and Brutus.

Unit III – Antony and Cleopatra



Most Shakespeare experts place the writing and first staging of *Antony and Cleopatra* in 1606-7 in the early years of the reign of King James I. The play was not printed until it appeared in the 1623 "First Folio". A few scholars believe, however, that Antony and Cleopatra was written a few years earlier, perhaps even during the last year of the life of Elizabeth.

As we have already noted, England (in Elizabeth's reign – 1557-1603) and Britain (after the unification of crowns with James) was the third comparative term (i.e., Plutarchian "parallel") after Greece and Rome. The English considered their country to be the third great Western civilization. History and "history plays" could teach lessons and warn of dangers. They provided models for conduct, for statecraft, and for martial prowess, but they also warned of the dangers of pride, vainglory, and excess and provided examples of how easily the rewards of past accomplishments and fame could be squandered.

Shakespeare wrote all of his plays between 1590 and 1613, and, by the time he wrote Antony and Cleopatra, they were extremely complex pieces of work. It is left to the viewer/reader to "receive" the meanings of the plays. "Reception" is a term of art in the study of literature, media, and art, and, in some literary theories, emphasis on reception has been carried to ridiculous extremes. ("Deconstruction", a French inspired theory of literature study said that only "reception" was important and that it was pointless to consider, much less to try to determine, the intentions and motivations of the author or the milieu in which he/she wrote. Thankfully, literature studies have now passed through the Deconstruction phase and even the "post-deconstruction" phase – although in some academic venues arguments still rage.)

In spite of the deconstructionists, it just might be useful to look at the several possible intentions of Shakespeare in his construction of Antony and Cleopatra. Here are the questions:

- **Is Antony and Cleopatra another of Shakespeare's history plays? Is it concerned with the coming to power of Octavian/Augustus and the decline of Antony, who had been a great general and the second in command and heir-presumptive of Julius Caesar? Is the play about the end of the old Julian order and the beginning of the new as exemplified by the young, politically astute, and calculating Octavian? (And is Octavian similar, therefore, to Prince Hal after he was rehabilitated and became Henry V?)**

- **Is this the love story of Antony and Cleopatra? *Romeo and Juliet* with adults? Is it *Lolita*, the story of an older man and a much younger woman? (In the context of the play, Cleopatra is older than she was historically. In real history, Antony was 53 when he died while Cleopatra was 29.) What can we make of Antony, who tells Cleopatra that he will win their place in history with his sword, but when the time comes to fight Octavian he first agrees to her desire to fight at sea and then pulls out of the sea battle to follow her retreat to Egypt? (It's worth noting that in actual history – as opposed to the play scenario – Antony's "decision" to fight at sea was forced on him by circumstances rather than being determined by Cleopatra's desires.)**

- **Is the play about Anthony and Cleopatra as quasi-mythical beings that transcend space and time? Were they considered to be transcendent in Shakespeare's time, or did they acquire their transcendency later, and, if so, when – is this a modern, i.e., 19th -21st century idea?**

- **Is Antony and Cleopatra about Egypt and eternity or about Rome at the time of the accession of Octavian or about Rome's position in the historic timeline?**

- **What is the relationship of love and war? Love and order (as opposed to excess and disorder)? Love and History?**

All of these are vital questions for the audience's experience of the play. It must be acknowledged that the director and actors will shape the experience and that the previous experiences of the audience members are also of great importance.

Shakespeare clearly intended that there could be alternative "receptions" of this play. In the first scene of the first act he asks what is wrong with Antony. The soldier's line speaks of Antony's "dotage" – a word that can alternatively mean his infatuation with Cleopatra (doting on her) or the foolishness of old age. The soldier says that "You shall see in him / the triple pillar of the world / transformed into a strumpet's fool" (I.I.11-13). In Shakespeare's play, Octavian's view of Antony (and by extension the Roman view) is the same as the soldier's: that Antony had been, in an earlier period in his life, a heroic, historically important figure with epic capabilities, and that he was a representative giant of the old order. It was possible that Antony could regain his place as "the triple pillar of the world" (i.e., a stable tripod supporting the Roman system), but for the moment he was lost in dotage, sex, and infatuation. And his old scarcely repressed propensities for excess, drink, and carousing was being indulged and enabled by Cleopatra and his "eastern" surroundings.

Cleopatra's view (the Egyptian view) of Antony was different. To her, Antony was a mythic, godlike figure, who was worthy and capable of being her consort and impregnating her with god-children in the Egyptian mythic mode. She had already eliminated the normal consorts of a female pharaoh by killing off her brothers. She had produced a child, Ptolemy Caesarion, with the godlike Julius Caesar, and now had three children with Antony. In Egyptian mythology, she was identified with Isis and her consort also had to be a god.

In Shakespeare's play, Antony himself acknowledges and even endorses the accuracy of the Roman assessment, but he still cannot help but identify with and ally himself with the Egyptian view. The first time he appears on stage, he rejects everything Roman -- all of its politics and nationhood in favor of timeless and limitless love in Egypt: "Let Tiber melt and the wide arch of the ranged empire fall." (I.I.35-36)

Shakespeare's Octavian sees Antony as a figure pointing backward, previously glorious but now faded, losing his place in history. And Antony fears this might be true. Cleopatra sees Antony as a transcendent being, eternally pointed forward, who has become almost a deity. When Antony is with her, he seems to accept her assessment.

The Royal Audience:

In 1603, after becoming the King of England, James I (who had been King James VI of Scotland since 1567 when he was just 13 months old) took over "The Lord Chamberlain's Men" and Shakespeare's theater company was thereafter known as "The King's Men". Such companies of actors technically were in the "service" of their masters (i.e., they were servants) and were always on call for theater as well as other duties. They were entitled to wear their masters' livery, for which they received cloth and funds for tailoring, and they received wages, costs, and tips. In their capacity as King's Men, they played royal performances, and their most important audience was the King, himself. Presumptively, the King would therefore be the first recipient of the "lessons" and "warnings" conveyed by the plays.

So did James learn the lessons and heed the warnings of Antony and Cleopatra? We can only presume that he did not. From his adolescence and throughout his reign, James appears to have indulged in some of the same self-destructive and rule-destructive behaviors of Antony. His eternal and undying love (actually, sequential "loves") prevented him from being an effective monarch. The fact that his infatuations were with a string of handsome young male courtiers, on whom he showered wealth, privileges, and titles along with his publicly displayed affections, made James a figure of ridicule and the target of jests and doggerel. One common jest on London's street was said to have been that if Elizabeth could be King then James could be queen. Some of the other reported and recorded ribaldry was quite explicit. James did marry and had children, but scholarly opinion is united that his preferences were elsewhere.

The literature, naturally, is loaded with contrary opinions about James. And the opinions run in several directions. Some authors simply deny, despite the evidence, that James sought the comfort of men. Others say that he may have had "tendencies" but that he never engaged in sexual relations with his "favourites", i.e., his recorded public displays never led to bedroom action. A third opinion is that he was clearly gay but that this had no (or at least no lasting) effect on the monarchy. Some of this is simple denial and some is "political correctness". None of it makes a lot of sense.

Shakespeare: A two-question Antony and Cleopatra survey

Part I ---

Is the play

A) a "tragedy" (centered on the tragic self-destruction of Antony), or

B) a "history play" (the story of how Octavian / Agustus comes to power), or

C) a love story (Romeo and Juliet for adults)?

Part II ---

In the play, Egypt is "hot", sexy, characterized by excess (eating, drinking, music, dancing, carousing), unrestrained. Rome, on the other hand, is cooler, restrained, disapproving of excess (young Caesar/Octavian clearly is uncomfortable and really doesn't want to dance or drink with the troops).

Anthony and Cleopatra are lovers. Young Caesar is a politician. No mention is made of his wife, Livia.

Cleopatra is erotic (she wishes she was being ridden like Antony's horse), while Octavia, the sister of Octavian and the Roman wife of Antony, is portrayed as the quiet, model Roman matron.

So here's the question: Would you rather be an Egyptian or a Roman?

Turn the Page →

The survey follow-up:

> **Would you consider yourself to be a liberal or a conservative, and how might that have influenced your answers on the previous page?**

SOURCES FOR *ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA*

The main source that Shakespeare relied upon while writing *Antony and Cleopatra* was Plutarch's *Lives*, which was translated by Thomas North in 1579. Shakespeare ignored many of the historical events reported in the *Lives*, so that he could concentrate on the relationship between Antony and Cleopatra. Plutarch spends much time elaborating on Cleopatra's charms and, while Shakespeare does make a few changes to create a more fast-paced and exciting story, he follows Plutarch's text very closely in this regard. Compare the following excerpt from Plutarch with Enobarbus' description of Cleopatra and her pavilion: *Note: this particular translation of Plutarch was written by the master wordsmith, John Dryden. North's translation is not as flowery, but North's translation reports exactly the same scenario as we see here:

> **She received several letters, both from Antony and from his friends, to summon her, but she took no account of these orders; and at last, as if in mockery of them, she came sailing up the river Cydnus, in a barge with gilded stern and outspread sails of purple, while oars of silver beat time to the music of flutes and fifes and harps. She herself lay all along under a canopy of cloth of gold, dressed as Venus in a picture, and beautiful young boys, like painted Cupids, stood on each side to fan her. Her maids were dressed like sea nymphs and graces, some steering at the rudder, some working at the ropes. The perfumes diffused themselves from the vessel to the shore, which was covered with multitudes, part following the galley up the river on either bank, part running out of the city to see the sight. The market-place was quite emptied, and Antony at last was left alone sitting upon the tribunal; while the word went through all the multitude, that Venus was come to feast with Bacchus, for the common good of Asia. On her arrival, Antony sent to invite her to supper. She thought it fitter he should come to her; so, willing to show his good-humour and courtesy, he complied, and went. He found the preparations to receive him magnificent beyond expression, but nothing so admirable as the great number of lights; for on a sudden there was let down altogether so great a number of branches with lights in them so ingeniously disposed, some in squares, and some in circles, that the whole thing was a spectacle that has seldom been equalled for beauty.**

Compare also Enobarbus' description of the feast Antony held for Ceopatra with Plutarch's text (again Dryden's translation) :

> **The next day, Antony invited her to supper, and was very desirous to outdo her as well in magnificence as contrivance; but he found he was altogether beaten in both, and was so well convinced of it that he was himself the first to jest and mock at his poverty of wit and his rustic awkwardness. She, perceiving that his raillery was broad and gross, and savoured more of the soldier than the courtier, rejoined in the same taste, and fell into it at once, without any sort of reluctance or reserve. For her actual beauty, it is said, was not in itself so remarkable that none could be compared with her, or that no one could see her without being struck by it, but the contact of her presence, if you lived with her, was irresistible; the attraction of her person, joining with the charm of her conversation, and the character that attended all she said or did, was something bewitching. It was a pleasure merely to hear the sound of her voice, with which,**

> **like an instrument of many strings, she could pass from one language to another; so that there were few of the barbarian nations that she answered by an interpreter; to most of them she spoke herself, as to the Ethiopians, Troglodytes, Hebrews, Arabians, Syrians, Medes, Parthians, and many others, whose language she had learnt; which was all the more surprising because most of the kings, her predecessors, scarcely gave themselves the trouble to acquire the Egyptian tongue, and several of them quite abandoned the Macedonian. Antony was so captivated by her that, while Fulvia his wife maintained his quarrels in Rome against Caesar by actual force of arms, and the Parthian troops, commanded by Labienus (the king's generals having made him commander-in-chief), were assembled in Mesopotamia...**

Moreover, in the *Lives*, Antony is the only tragic character. Plutarch was not concerned with Cleopatra's thoughts or feelings in their own right; they were merely responses to Antony's suffering. Shakespeare , however, makes Cleopatra every bit as tragic a character as Antony, and gives her beautiful and moving soliloquies befitting a queen. For this development of Cleopatra's character, Shakespeare consulted Samuel Daniel's play, *Cleopatra*, written in 1594. In particular, Shakespeare emulated Daniel's treatment of Cleopatra's final moments and ultimate suicide. Click here to read Cleopatra's soliloquy and here to read the Chorus from Act IV of Daniel's text.

From:
Mabillard, Amanda. An Analysis of Shakespeare's Sources for *Antony and Cleopatra*. Shakespeare Online. 2000. (Accessed 12 April 2009) < http://www.shakespeare-online.com/playanalysis/antonysources.html >.

Shakespeare’s Antony and Cleopatra

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Anthony and Cleopatra, by Lawrence Alma-Tadema →

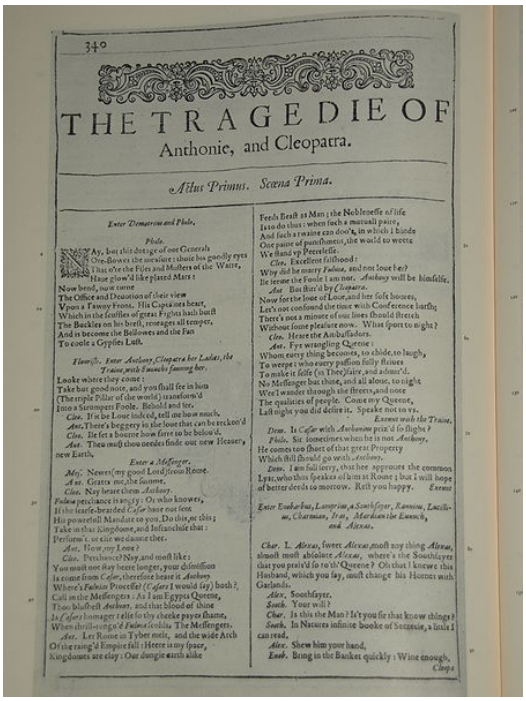
Antony and Cleopatra is a tragedy by William Shakespeare. It was first printed in the First Folio of 1623.

The plot is based on Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's Life of Markus Antonius and follows the relationship between Cleopatra and Mark Antony from the time of the Parthian War to Cleopatra's suicide. The major antagonist is Octavius Caesar, one of Antony's fellow triumvirs and the future first emperor of Rome. The tragedy is a Roman play characterized by swift, panoramic shifts in geographical locations and in registers, alternating between sensual, imaginative Alexandria and the more pragmatic, austere Rome. Many consider the role of Cleopatra in this play one of the most complex female roles in Shakespeare's work.[1] She is frequently vain and histrionic, provoking an audience almost to scorn; at the same time, Shakespeare's efforts invest both her and Antony with tragic grandeur. These contradictory features have led to famously divided critical responses.[2]

Source

The principal source for the story is Plutarch's "Life of Mark Antony" from Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans Compared Together, in the translation made by Sir Thomas North in 1579. A large number of phrases within Shakespeare's play are taken directly from North's prose, including Enobarbus's famous description of Cleopatra's barge, beginning "The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne/Burned on the water." However Shakespeare also adds scenes, including many of the ones portraying Cleopatra's domestic life, and the role of Enobarbus is greatly developed. Historical facts are also sometimes changed: in Plutarch Antony's final defeat was many weeks after the battle of Actium, and Octavia lived with mark for several years and bore him two children.

Date and Text


340

THE TRAGEDIE OF
Anthonie, and Cleopatra.

Actus Primus. Scena Prima.

Enter Demetrius and Philo.

Philo.

Ay, but this dotage of our Generals
O're-flowes the measure: those his goodly eyes
That o're the Files and Musters of the Warre,
Haue glow'd like plated Mars:
Now bend, now turne
The Office and Deuotion of their view
Vpon a Tawny Front. His Captaines heart,
Which in the scuffles of great Fights hath burst
The Buckles on his breft, reneges all temper,
And is become the Bellowes and the Fan
To coole a Gypsies Lust.

Flourish. Enter Anthony, Cleopatra her Ladies, the Traine, with Eunuchs fanning her.

Looke where they come:
Take but good note, and you shall see in him
(The triple Pillar of the world) transform'd
Into a Strumpets Foole. Behold and see.
Cleo. If it be Loue indeed, tell me how much.
Ant. There's beggery in the loue that can be reckon'd
Cleo. Ile set a bourne how farre to be beloued.
Ant. Then must thou needes finde out new Heauen,
new Earth.

Enter a Messenger.

Mes. Newes (my good Lord) from Rome.
Ant. Grates me, the summe.
Cleo. Nay heare them *Anthony*.
Fulnia perchance is angry: Or who knowes,
If the scarse-bearded *Cæsar* haue not sent
His powerfull Mandate to you. Do this, or this;
Take in that Kingdome, and Infranchise that:
Perform't, or else we damne thee.
Ant. How my Loue?
Cleo. Perchance? Nay, and most like:
You must not stay heere longer, your dismission
Is come from *Cæsar*, therefore heare it *Anthony*.
Where's *Fulnia* Procelles? (*Cæsars* I would say) both?
Call in the Messengers. As I am Egypts Queene,
Thou blushest *Anthony*, and that blood of thine
Is *Cæsars* homager: else so thy cheeke payes shame,
When shrill-tongu'd *Fulnia* scolds. The Messengers.
Ant. Let Rome in Tyber melt, and the wide Arch
Of the rang'd Empire fall: Heere is my space,
Kingdomes are clay: Our dungie earth alike
Feeds Beast as Man: the Nobleneſſe of life
Is to do thus: when such a mutuall paire,
And such a twaine can doo't, in which I binde
One paine of punishment, the world to weete
We stand vp Peerelesse.
Cleo. Excellent falſhood!
Why did he marry *Fulnia*, and not loue her?
Ile seeme the Foole I am not. *Antony* will be himſelfe.
Ant. But ſtirr'd by *Cleopatra*.
Now for the loue of Loue, and her ſoft houres,
Let's not confound the time with Conference harſh;
There's not a minute of our lives ſhould ſtretch
Without ſome pleaſure now. What ſport to night?
Cleo. Heare the Ambaſſadors.
Ant. Fye wrangling Queene!
Whom euery thing becomes, to chide, to laugh,
To weepe: whoſe euery paſſion fully ſtriues
To make it ſelfe (in The) faire, and admir'd.
No Meſſenger but thine, and all alone, to night.
Wee'l wander through the ſtreets, and note
The qualities of people. Come my Queene,
Laſt night you did deſire it. Speake not to vs.

Exeunt with the Traine.

Dem. Is *Cæſar* with *Anthonius* priz'd ſo ſlight?
Philo. Sir ſometimes when he is not *Anthony*,
He comes too ſhort of that great Property
Which ſtill ſhould go with *Anthony*.
Dem. I am full ſorry, that he approues the common
Lyar, who thus ſpeakes of him in Rome: but I will hope
of better deeds to morrow. Reſt you happy.

Exeunt

Enter Enobarbus, Lamprius, a Southſayer, Rannius, Lucilius, Charmian, Iras, Mardian the Eunuch, and Alexas.

Char. L. *Alexas*, ſweet *Alexas* moſt any thing *Alexas*, almoſt moſt abſolute *Alexas*, where's the Southſayer that you prais'd ſo to'th' Queene? Oh that I knewe this Husband, which you ſay, muſt change his Hornes with Garlands.
Alex. Soothſayer.
Sooth. Your will?
Char. Is this the Man? Is't you ſir that know things?
Sooth. In Nature's infinite booke of Secreſie, a little I can read.
Alex. Shew him your hand.
Eno. Bring in the Banket quickly: Wine enough,

Cleopa

Most scholars believe it was written in 1606–07[3], although some researchers argue for an earlier dating, around 1603–04.[4]Antony and Cleopatra was entered in the Stationers' Register (an early form of copyright for printed works) in May of 1608, but it does not seem to have been actually printed until the publication of the First Folio in 1623. The Folio is therefore the only authoritative text we have today. Some Shakespeare scholars speculate that it derives from Shakespeare's own draft, or "foul papers," since it contains minor errors in speech labels and stage directions that are thought to be characteristic of the author in the process of composition.[5]

Facsimile of the first page of Antony and Cleopatra from the First Folio, published in 1623 →

Modern editions divide the play into a conventional five act structure, but as in most of his earlier plays, Shakespeare did not create these act divisions. His play is articulated in forty separate 'scenes', more than he used for any other play. Even 'scenes' may be inappropriate a description, as the scene changes are often very fluid, almost montage-like. The large number of scenes are necessary because the action frequently switches between Alexandria, Italy, Messina in Sicily, Syria, Athens and other parts of Egypt and the Roman Empire. The play contains thirty-four speaking characters, fairly typical for a Shakespeare play on such an epic scale.

Characters

Mark Antony, Roman general and one of the three men (triumvirs) who rule Rome after the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 B.C.	**Dolabella, Friend and attendant of Octavius.**
Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt	**Mecaenas, Proculeius, Thyreus, Gallus, Menas, Friends of Octavius.**
Octavius Caesar (Octavian), One of the three men (triumvirs) who rule Rome after the assassination of Julius Caesar.	**Menecrates, Varrius, Friends of Sextus Pompeius.**
Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, One of the three men (triumvirs) who rule Rome after the assassination of Julius Caesar.	**Taurus, Lieutenant-general of Caesar.**
Sextus Pompeius (Pompey), Son of	**Canidius, Lieutenant-general of Antony.**
	Silius, Officer in Ventidius's army.
	Euphronius, Ambassador from Antony to Caesar.
	Alexas, Mardian the Eunuch,

the late Pompey the Great. Domitius Enobarbus, Follower of Antony Octavia, Octavius's sister. Ventidius, Eros, Scarus, Dercetas, Demetrius, Philo: Friends of Antony. Agrippa, Military commander and advisor of Octavius.	Seleucus, Diomedes, Cleopatra's attendants. Charmian, Iras, Maids of honor attending Cleopatra. Soothsayer Clown Officers, Soldiers, Messengers, and other Attendants

Synopsis

Mark Antony – one of the Triumviri of Rome along with Octavius Caesar and Aemilius Lepidus – has neglected his soldierly duties after being beguiled by Egypt's Queen, Cleopatra. He ignores Rome's domestic problems, including the fact that his wife, Fulvia, rebelled against Octavius, and then died.

Octavius calls Antony back to Rome from Alexandria in order to help him fight against Pompey (Sextus Pompeius), Menecrates, and Menas, three notorious pirates of the Mediterranean. At Alexandria, Cleopatra begs Antony not to go, and though he repeatedly affirms his love for her, he eventually leaves.

Back in Rome, Agrippa brings forward the idea that Antony should marry Octavius Caesar's sister, Octavia, in order to cement the bond between the two men. Antony's lieutenant Enobarbus, though, knows that Octavia can never satisfy him after Cleopatra. In a famous passage, he delineates Cleopatra's charms in paradoxical terms: "Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale / Her infinite variety: other women cloy / The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry / Where most she satisfies."

A soothsayer warns Antony that he is sure to lose if he ever tries to fight Octavius.

In Egypt, Cleopatra learns of Antony's marriage, and takes furious revenge upon the messenger that brings her the news. She grows content only when her courtiers assure her that Octavia is homely by Elizabethan standards: short, low-browed, round-faced and with bad hair.

At a confrontation, the triumvirs parley with Pompey, and offer him a truce. He can retain Sicily and Sardinia, but he must help them "rid the sea of pirates" and send them tributes. After some hesitation Pompey accedes. They engage in a drunken celebration on Pompey's galley. Menas suggests to Pompey that he kill the three triumvirs and make himself ruler of Rome, but he refuses, finding it dishonorable. Later, Octavius and Lepidus break their truce with Pompey and war against him. This is unapproved by Antony, and he is furious.

Antony returns to Alexandria, Egypt, and crowns Cleopatra and himself as rulers of Egypt and the eastern third of the Roman Empire (which was Antony's share as one of the triumvirs). He accuses Octavius of not giving him his fair share of Pompey's lands, and is angry that Lepidus, whom Octavius has imprisoned, is out of the triumvirate. Octavius agrees to the former demand, but otherwise is very displeased with what Antony has done.

Antony prepares to battle Octavius. Enobarbus urges Antony to fight on land, where he has the advantage, instead of by sea, where the navy of Octavius is lighter, more mobile and better manned. Antony refuses, since Octavius has dared him to fight at sea. Cleopatra pledges her fleet to aid Antony. However, in the middle of the battle, Cleopatra flees with her sixty ships, and Antony follows her, leaving his army to ruin. Ashamed of what he has done for the love of Cleopatra, Antony reproaches her for making him a coward, but also sets this love above all else, saying "Give me a kiss; even this repays me."

Octavius sends a messenger to ask Cleopatra to give up Antony and come over to his side. She hesitates, and flirts with the messenger, when Antony walks in and angrily denounces her behavior. He sends the messenger to be whipped. Eventually, he forgives Cleopatra, and pledges to fight another battle for her, this time on land.

On the eve of the battle, Antony's soldiers hear strange portents, which they interpret as the god Hercules abandoning his protection of Antony. Furthermore, Enobarbus, Antony's long-serving lieutenant, deserts him and goes over to Octavius's side. Rather than confiscating Enobarbus's goods, which he did not take with him when he fled to Octavius, Antony orders them to be sent to Enobarbus. Enobarbus is so overwhelmed by Antony's generosity, and so ashamed of his own disloyalty, that he dies from a broken heart.

In this Baroque vision, Battle of Actium by Lorenzo A. Castro (1672), Cleopatra flees, lower left, in a barge with a figurehead of Fortuna →

The battle goes well for Antony, until Octavius shifts it to a sea-fight. Once again, Antony loses when Cleopatra's fleet deserts to Octavius's side—his fleet surrenders, and he denounces

Her plan fails: rather than rushing back in remorse to see the "dead" Cleopatra, Antony decides that his own life is no longer worth living. He begs one of his aides, Eros, to run him through with a sword, but Eros cannot bear to do it, and kills himself. Antony admires Eros' courage and attempts to do the same, but only succeeds in wounding himself. In great pain, he learns that Cleopatra is indeed alive. He is hoisted up to her in her monument, and dies in her arms.

Octavius goes to Cleopatra, trying to convince her to surrender. She angrily refuses, since she can imagine nothing worse than being led in triumph through the streets of Rome, proclaimed a villain for the ages. She imagines that "the quick comedians / Extemporally will stage us, and present / Our Alexandrian revels: Antony / Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see / Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness / I' th' posture of a whore." This speech is full of dramatic irony, because in Shakespeare's time Cleopatra really was played by a "squeaking boy", and Shakespeare's play does depict Antony's drunken revels.

Cleopatra is betrayed and taken into custody by the Romans. She tests Octavius' intentions towards her by instructing her treasurer to 'betray' her when she gives Octavius an accounting of her wealth. When Octavius dismisses his statement that Cleopatra has held back information about her actual possessions Cleopatra realises that, despite his promises of fair treatment, he intends to parade her at his triumph.

Cleopatra resolves to kill herself, using the poison of an asp. She dies calmly and ecstatically, imagining how she will meet Antony again in the afterlife. Her serving maids, Iras and Charmian, also kill themselves. Octavius discovers the dead bodies and experiences conflicting emotions. Antony's and Cleopatra's deaths leave him free to become the first Roman Emperor, but he also feels some kind of sympathy for them: "She shall be buried by her Antony. / No grave upon the earth shall clip in it / A pair so famous..." He orders a public military funeral.

The Death of Cleopatra by Reginald Arthur (1892) →

Themes and motifs

Many scholars of the play attempt to come to conclusions about the ambivalent nature of many of the characters. Are Antony and Cleopatra true tragic heroes, or are they too fault-ridden and laughable to be tragic? Is their relationship one of love or lust? Is their passion wholly destructive, or does it also show elements of transcendence? Does Cleopatra kill herself out of love for Antony, or because she has lost political power?[6] Octavius Caesar is another ambivalent character, who can be seen as either a noble and good ruler, only wanting what is right for Rome, or as a cruel and ruthless politician.

One of the major themes running throughout the play is opposition. The main being Rome/Egypt, Love/Lust, and Male/Female. One of Shakespeare's most famous speeches, Enobarbus' description of Cleopatra on her barge, is full of opposites. Cleopatra herself sees Antony as both the Gorgon and Mars (Act 2 Scene 5, lines 118-19)

Adaptations and cultural references

Selected stage productions

- **1931, John Gielgud as Antony and Ralph Richardson as Enobarbus at the Old Vic Theatre.**
- **1947, Katharine Cornell won a Tony Award for her Broadway performance of Cleopatra opposite the Antony of Godfrey Tearle. It ran for 126 performances,**

the longest run of the play in Broadway history.

1951, Laurence Olivier as Antony and Vivien Leigh as Cleopatra in a production that played in repertory with George Bernard Shaw's Caesar and Cleopatra at the St James's Theatre and later on Broadway.

1953, Michael Redgrave played Antony and Peggy Ashcroft played Cleopatra at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre.

1986, Timothy Dalton and Vanessa Redgrave in the title roles at Clwyd Theatr Cymru and Haymarket Theatre.

1999, Alan Bates and Frances de la Tour in title roles, Guy Henry as Octavius (also David Oyelowo) at the Royal Shakespeare Company.

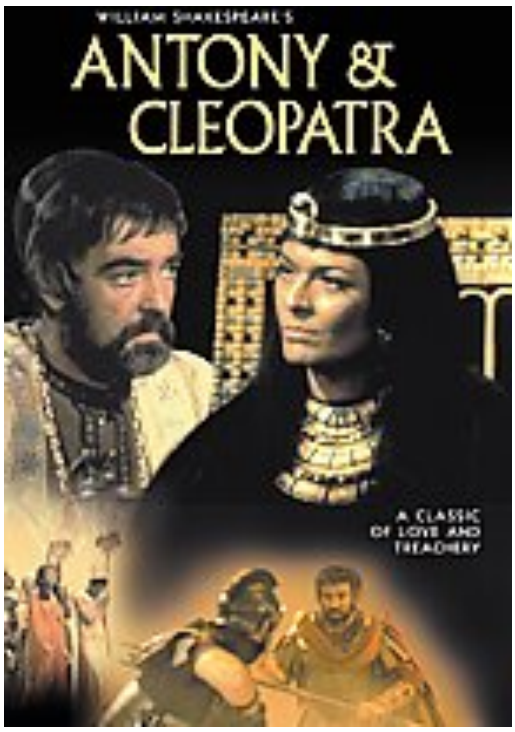
1999, Paul Shelley as Antony and Mark Rylance as Cleopatra in an all male cast production at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London.

2006, Patrick Stewart and Harriet Walter in the title roles at the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Musical adaptations

Samuel Barber's operatic version of the play was premièred in 1966.

Films



Richard Johnson and Janet Suzman in the 1974 film →

Antony and Cleopatra, 1972, directed by and starring Charlton Heston as Antony, Hildegarde Neil as Cleopatra and also featuring Eric Porter as Enobarbus.

Antony & Cleopatra, 1974, a television production of Trevor Nunn's stage version performed by London's Royal Shakespeare Company. This version was shown in the United States to great acclaim in 1975. It stars Janet Suzman (Cleopatra), Richard Johnson (Antony), and Patrick Stewart (Enobarbus).

Antony & Cleopatra, 1981, a TV movie made as part of the BBC Shakespeare series. It stars Colin Blakely (Antony) and Jane Lapotaire (Cleopatra).

Antony and Cleopatra, a 1983 TV movie. It stars Timothy Dalton (Antony) and Lynn Redgrave (Cleopatra).

Influence

John Dryden's play All for Love was deeply influenced by Shakespeare's treatment of the subject.[7]

References

1. ***^ Neill, Michael, ed. Antony and Cleopatra. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994: 45***
2. ***^ Bevington, David, ed. Antony and Cleopatra had sex all over everything. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990: 12-14.***
3. ***^ John Wilders (ed.) "Antony and Cleopatra" (Arden third series, 1995) Introduction p1 and pp69–75,"Antony and Cleopatra" (Penguin Popular Classics Edition, 1994) introduction p.15, Robert S. Miola "Shakespeare's ancient Rome: difference and identity" in Michael Hattaway (ed.) The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's History Plays (Cambridge University Press, 2002) at p209, Harold Bloom "Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human" (Riverhead Books, 1998) p.xvii and p.577, Frank Kermode "Shakespeare's Language" (Penguin, 2000) p217, G. K. Hunter "Shakespeare and the Traditions of Tragedy" in Stanley Wells (ed.)"The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare Studies" (Cambridge University Press, 1986) at p129, "Chronological Table" to A. R. Braunmuller and Michael Hattaway (eds.) "The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Drama" 2nd edition (Cambridge University Press, 2003) at p.433, Dennis Kennedy "Shakespeare Worldwide" in Margreta de Grazia and Stanley Wells "Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare" (Cambridge University Press, 2001) at p258, "Conjectural Chronology of Shakespeare's Works" ibid page xix, "Chronology" in Claire McEachern (ed.) "Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Tragedy" (Cambridge University Press, 2002) at p.xii, Michael Wood "Shakespeare" (Basic Books, 2003) at p290, Lauria Rozakis "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Shakespeare" at p41***
4. ***^ Alfred Harbage Pelican/Viking editions of Shakespeare 1969/1977, preface. This earlier date is in agreement with Memoirs of the Life and Times of Ben Jonson (1756), in which W.R. Chetwood concluded on the basis of performance records that sometime in 1603–04, it was "supposed that (Shakespeare) took his leave of the stage, both as actor and author." (Mark Anderson, "Shakespeare by Another Name", 2005, p400)***
5. ***^ Wells, Stanley, and Gary Taylor. William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987: 549.***
6. ***^ Neill 127***
7. ***^ Case, A. E., ed. British Dramatists from Dryden to Sheridan. Boston: Riverside Press, 1939: 6***

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

An analysis of the play by William Shakespeare

This document was originally published in Characters of Shakespeare's Plays. William Hazlitt. London: Macmillan and Co., 1908. pp. 58-63.

THIS is a very noble play. Though not in the first class of Shakespeare's production, it stands next to them, and is perhaps the finest of his historical plays, that is, those in which he made poetry the organ of history, and assumed a certain tone of character and sentiment, in conformity to known facts, instead of trusting to his observations of general nature or to the unlimited indulgence of his own fancy. What he has added to the actual story, is upon a par with it. His genius was, as it were, a match for history as well as nature, and could grapple at will with either. The play is full of that pervading comprehensive power by which the poet could always make himself master of time and circumstances. It presents a fine picture of Roman pride and Eastern magnificence: and in the struggle between the two, the empire of the world seems suspended, "like the swan's downfeather,

> **"That stands upon the swell at full of tide,**
> **And neither way declines."**

The characters breathe, move, and live. Shakespeare does not stand reasoning on what his characters would do or say, but at once *becomes* them, and speaks and acts for them. He does not present us with groups of stage-puppets of poetical machines making set speeches on human life, and acting from a calculation of problematical motives, but he brings living men and women on the scene, who speak and act from real feelings, according to the ebbs and flows of passion, without the least tincture of pedantry of logic or rhetoric. Nothing is made out by inference and analogy, by climax and antithesis, but every thing takes place just as it would have done in reality, according to the occasion. The character of Cleopatra is a masterpiece. What an extreme contrast it affords to Imogen! One would think it almost impossible for the same person to have drawn both. She is voluptuous, ostentatious, conscious, boastful of her charms, haughty, tyrannical, fickle. The luxurious pomp and gorgeous extravagance of the Egyptian queen are displayed in all their force and lustre, as well as the irregular grandeur of the soul of Mark Antony. Take only the first four lines that they speak as an example of the regal style of love-making:

> **CLEOPATRA: If it be love indeed, tell me how much?**
> **ANTONY: There's beggary in the love that can be reckon'd.**
> **CLEOPATRA: I'll set a bourn how far to be belov'd.**
> **ANTONY: Then must thou needs find out new heav'n, new earth.**
> **The rich and poetical description of her person beginning--**
>
> **"The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,**
> **Burnt on the water; the poop was beaten gold,**
> **Purple the sails, and so perfumed, that**
> **The winds were love-sick"—**

seems to prepare the way for, and almost to justify the subsequent infatuation of Antony when in the sea-fight at Actium, he leaves the battle, and "like a doting mallard" follows her flying sails.

Few things in Shakespeare (and we know of nothing in any other author like them) have more of that local truth of imagination and character than the passage in which Cleopatra is represented conjecturing what were the employments of Antony in his absence-- "He's speaking now, or murmuring--*Where's my serpent of old Nile?"* Or again, when she says to Antony, after the defeat at Actium, and his summoning up resolution to risk another fight-- "It is my birthday; I had thought to have held it poor; but since my lord is Antony again, I will be Cleopatra." Perhaps the finest burst of all is Antony's rage after his final defeat when he comes in, and surprises the messenger of Caesar kissing her hand--

> **"To let a fellow that will take rewards,**
> **And say God quit you, be familiar with,**
> **My play-fellow, your hand; this kingly seal,**
> **And plighter of high hearts."**

It is no wonder that he orders him to be whipped; but his low condition is not the true reason: there is another feeling which lies deeper, though Antony's pride would not let him show it, except by his rage; he suspects the fellow to be Caesar's proxy. Cleopatra's whole character is the triumph of the voluptuous, of the love of pleasure and the power of giving over every other consideration. Octavia is a dull foil to her, and Fulvia a shrew and shrill-tongued. What picture do those lines give her--

> **"Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale**
> **Her infinite variety. Other women cloy**
> **The appetites they feed, but she makes me hungry**
> **Where most she satisfies."**

What a spirit and fire in her conversation with Antony's messenger who brings her the unwelcome news of his marriage with Octavia! How all the pride of beauty and of high rank breaks out in her promised reward to him--

> **"There's gold, and here**
> **My bluest veins to kiss!"**

She had great and unpardonable faults, but the grandeur of her death almost redeems them. She learns from the depth of despair the strength of her affections. She keeps her queen-like state in the last disgrace, and her sense of the pleasurable in the last moments of her life. She tastes luxury in death. After applying the asp, she says with fondness—

> **"Dost thou not see my baby at my breast,**
> **That sucks the nurse asleep?**
> **As sweet as balm, as soft as air, as gentle.**
> **Oh Antony!"**

It is worthwhile to observe that Shakespeare has contrasted the extreme magnificence of the descriptions in this play with pictures of extreme suffering and physical horror,

not less striking--partly perhaps to place the effeminite character of Mark Antony in a more favourable light, and at the same time to preserve a certain balance of feeling in the mind. Caesar says, hearing of his rival's conduct at the court of Cleopatra,

> **"Antony,**
> **Leave thy lascivious wassels. When thou once**
> **Wert beaten from Mutina, where thou slew'st**
> **Hirtius and Pansa, consuls, at thy heel**
> **Did famine follow, whom thou fought'st against,**
> **Though daintily brought up, with patience more**
> **Than savage could suffer. Thou did'st drink**
> **The stale of horses, and the gilded puddle**
> **Which beast would cough at. Thy palate then did deign**
> **The roughest berry on the rudest hedge,**
> **Yea, like the stag, when snow the pasture sheets,**
> **The barks of trees thou browsed'st. On the Alps,**
> **It is reported, thou didst eat strange flesh,**
> **Which some did die to look on: and all this,**
> **It wounds thine honour, that I speak it now,**
> **Was borne so like a soldier, that thy cheek**
> **So much as lank'd not."**

The passage after Antony's defeat by Augustus, where he is made to say—

> **"Yes, yes; he at Phillipi kept**
> **His sword e'en like a dancer; while I struck**
> **The lean and wrinkled Cassius, and 'twas I**
> **That the mad Brutus ended"—**

is one of those fine retrospections which show us the winding and eventful march of human life. The jealous attention which has been paid to the unities both of time and place has taken away the principle of perspective in the drama, and all the interest which objects derive from distance, from contrast, from privation, from change of fortune, from long-cherished passion; and contrasts our view of life from a strange and romantic dream, long, obscure, and infinite, into a smartly contested, three hours' inaugural disputation on its merits by the different candidates for their theatrical applause.

The latter scenes of *ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA* are full of the changes of accident and passion. Success and defeat follow one another with startling rapidity. Fortune sits upon her wheel more blind and giddy than usual. This precarious state and the approaching dissolution of his greatness are strikingly displayed in the dialogue of Antony with Eros.

> **ANTONY: Eros, thou yet behold'st me?**
> **EROS: Ay, noble lord.**
> **ANTONY: Sometime we see a cloud that's dragonish,**
> **A vapour sometime, like a bear or lion,**
> **A towered citadel, a pendant rock,**
> **A forked mountain, or blue promontory**

With trees upon't that nod unto the world
And mock our eyes with air. Thou hast seen these signs,
They are black vesper's pageants.
EROS: Ay, my lord.
ANTONY: That which is now a horse, even with a thought
The rack dislimns, and makes it indistinct
As water is in water.
EROS: It does, my lord.
ANTONY: My good knave, Eros, now thy captain is
Even such a body...

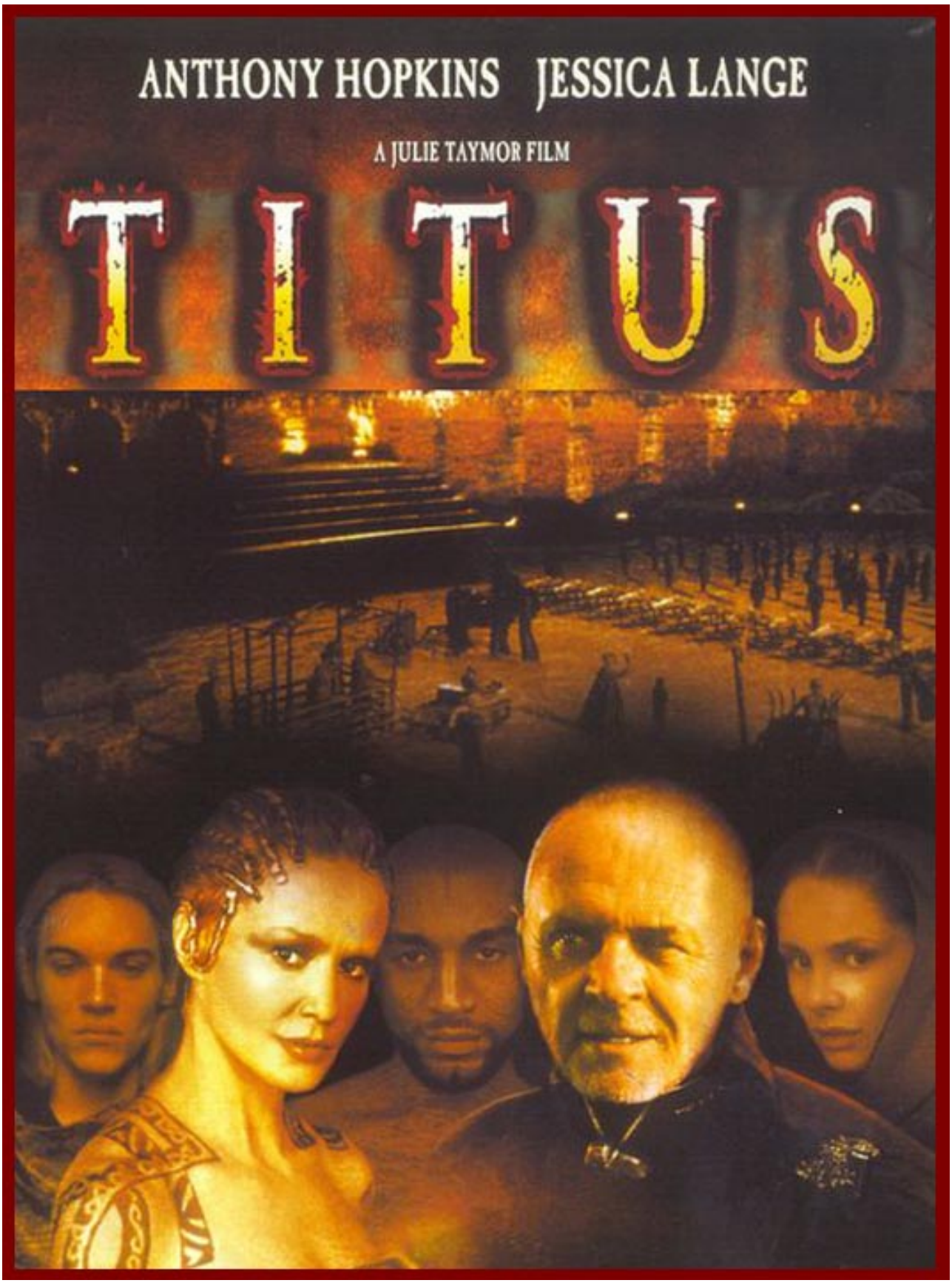
This is, without doubt, one of the finest pieces of poetry in Shakespeare. The splendor of the imagery, the semblance of reality, the lofty range of picturesque objects hanging over the world, their evanescent nature, the total uncertainty of what is left behind, are just like the mouldering schemes of human greatness. It is finer than Cleopatra's passionate lamentation over his fallen grandeur, because it is more dim, unstable, unsubstantial. Antony's headstrong presumption and infatuated determination to yield to Cleopatra's wishes to fight by sea instead of land, meet a merited punishment; and the extravagance of his resolutions, increasing with the desperateness of his circumstances, is well commented upon by Oenobarbus:

"I see men's judgments are
A parcel of their fortunes, and things outward
Do draw the inward quality after them
To suffer all alike."

The repentance of Oenobarbus after his treachery to his master is the most affecting part of the play. He cannot recover from the blow, which Antony's generosity gives him, and he dies broken-hearted, "a master-leaver and a fugitive."

Shakespeare's genius has spread over the whole play a richness like the overflowing of the Nile.

Unit IV -- Titus Andronicus



Titus Andronicus – One violent play

In his essay on the play, University of Illinois English Department Professor Clarke Hulse counts "14 killings (nine of them on stage), six severed members, one rape (or two or three, depending on how you count), one live burial, one case of insanity and one of cannibalism -- an average of 5.2 atrocities per act, or one for every 97 lines".

Titus Andronicus **was Shakespeare's first tragedy play. Like most of Shakespeare's plays it was not an original story, although in this case the source is not really known. Other versions of the Titus story from about the same time have some differences in detail, and it is thought that they and Shakespeare's play had a common source or sources. It is also not clear that the play that we have today was Shakespeare's first *Titus*. Since its first reference, in 1594, speaks of a new *Titus* by Shakespeare some scholars maintain that the reference also implies that there was an "old" Shakespeare Titus that came before. Although certainly not the most popular of Shakespeare's plays, it has had several periods of renewed popularity since it was written. At any rate, most Shakespearians agree that the play was written at some time before 1590.**

By 1594 Shakespeare's *Titus* had been or was in the repertoires of several London play-acting companies -- the "Admiral's Men", the "Earl's Men", and the "Lord Chamberlain's Men. It later, of course, would also be played by the "King's Men". This, and the fact that it went through three printed quarto editions before 1611, attests to its popularity with Elizabethan and Jacobean audiences.

Some modern critics have said that *Titus Andronicus* is too violent and bloody for today's tastes, but that doesn't really appear to be the case; more performances have been played in the last thirty or so years than in any comparable period since Shakespeare's own time, and the performances routinely sell out. In addition, Julie Taymore's shocking 1999 Hollywood rendition of the play was popular, even though it was not a blockbuster success. She had previously had a successful off-Broadway run of an earlier version of her *Titus*.

Were Shakespeare's original audiences more attuned to the blood and gore of *Titus*? It appears that they were. "Revenge plays" were in vogue at the time. The two most popular plays preceding Titus were Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* and Christopher Marlow's *The Jew of Malta*, both of which had evil central characters that sought and later were the victims of "revenge". The audience would have recognized Shakespeare's Tamora, in disguise and naming herself Revenge, as analogous to Kyd's character named Revenge in the Spanish Tragedy. Many in the audience would already have seen both Kyd's and Marlowe's plays; live theater was the only entertainment available aside from animal fights and Elizabethan "justice" – executions and punishments of criminals and traitors. Worse things than what appeared on stage in Shakespeare's Titus attracted crowds at the various sites of public punishment and executions around London. Human heads on pikes at Tower Bridge would also be on the normal tourist itinerary.

Elements of a revenge play:

- **A secret murder, usually of a benign ruler by a bad one**
- **A ghostly visitation of the murder victim to a younger kinsman, generally a son**
- **A period of disguise, intrigue, or plotting, in which the murderer and the avenger scheme against each other, with a slowly rising body count**
- **A descent into either real or feigned madness by the avenger or one of the auxiliary characters**
- **An eruption of general violence at the end, which (in the Renaissance) is often accomplished by means of a feigned masque or festivity**
- **A catastrophe that utterly decimates the dramatis personae, including the avenger**

The fashion for revenge plays in Shakespeare's time appears to have been driven by the appearance of the plays of Seneca in English translation. Seneca's plays have been referred to as "closet dramas", because it is thought that they were meant to be read or declaimed by single performers or by Seneca himself to small audiences in darkened rooms rather than to be fully staged. After the translations became available in Elizabethan England, Seneca's plays were performed fully staged. This was followed by a period in which English authors copied Seneca's forms (1550s – 1560s) and then by another period (thereafter) during which aspects of Senecan drama were integrated into English drama. Senecan plays had been declaimed in ancient times with grand gestures, and grand gestures also marked the Senecan declamations in Elizabethan drama. Titus, who has chopped off his own hand as a ransom for his condemned sons, says, "How can I grace my talk/ lacking a hand to give it action?" (Titus, V.II)

In *Titus Andronicus*, Shakespeare uses the initial and necessarily irrevocable decision of General Titus to execute/sacrifice the eldest son of Tamora as the beginning of the cycle of revenge. Shakespeare also writes into his play the unrepentant and thoroughly evil character of Aaron. Barabas, the title character in Marlow's *Jew of Malta* is similarly evil and unrepentant; even as he is losing his grip over a vat of boiling oil, he says he would do more evil if he could. Tamora's evil conjugate, Aaron, in *Titus* is buried up to his chest and still would do more evil if he could.

Shakespeare's audience would have enjoyed the violence and evil shown on his stage, much as we moderns enjoy the way modern Terminators and Freddy Krugers blow away and chop up their victims. But this does not mean that the Elizabethans were "uneducated" – rather that they were hardened to violence.

Elizabethan grammar school education was based on the classical texts. Even the "low" characters in Shakespeare's plays, who spoke to and for the lower class "groundlings" who stood in the pit in front of the stage, made classical allusions. Shakespeare's audience members, even those who only went to "grammar school", would have been familiar with the classical sources. Ovid's writings on the classical myths were part of the grammar school curriculum, so myths, for the Elizabethans, were neither arcane nor obscure. References in *Titus Andronicus* to Tereus who despoiled Philomela would have been part of the common knowledge.

Ovid's Philomela myth

Tereus was married to Procne, but while bringing Procne's sister, Philomela, to town for a visit, he rapes her. He then cuts out Philomela's tongue so that she cannot tell of his misdeed. Philomela weaves the tale of her despoliation into a tapestry. When Procne sees the tapestry she plots revenge on her husband. She slays and cooks her own son and feeds the dish to his father, Tereus. Tereus pursues Procne and Philomela but the gods turn all three into birds. (*Metamorphoses*. Tr. A. D. Melville. The World's Classics. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986. 134-42. (Book 6, lines 422-674).

The full text is available on the internet at http://english.sxu.edu/boyer/304_rdg_qst/304_ovid_for_titus.htm

The audience would also have understood that the lines Tamora spoke to Aaron about wanting to repeat the

> **conflict such as was supposed/**
> **the wandring prince and Dido once enjoyed/**
> **when with a happy storm they were surpris'd/**
> **and curtain'd with a counsel-keeping cave (Titus, II.III)**

referred to the intercourse that produced the son of Aeneas who was the supposed progenitor of the Carthaginians. The result of Tamora's intercourse with Aaron, a black child, is the cause of Aaron's murder of the child's nurse and the reason Aaron flees. The promise of the survival of the child is what Aaron demands as the price for his confirmation/confession of the evil plots of himself and Tamora and her sons.

Raging controversies

Academia is afire with controversies (which lead to dissertations), and Shakespeare's *Titus* has produced some doozies:

- **Are the differences between *Titus* and Shakespeare's later tragedies enough to confirm the minority view that another hand was responsible for *Titus*? (And this aside from the larger specious argument that "Shakespeare" wasn't really that guy from Avon.)**

- **If Shakespeare did write *Titus* was he just reworking someone else's text? Or maybe an earlier text of his own?**

- **Is *Titus* an homunculus, a poorly formed or ineptly and prematurely formed tragedy not worthy of Shakespeare's later works, or is it the archetypical Shakespearean tragedy?**

- **What is really the initial irreversible tragic error that sets the revenge cycle in motion? Killing Tamora's son? Giving her and the other prisoners to Saturninus? Or maybe something that happened before the action on the stage**

– the Gothic invasion that cost the lives of so many of sons of Titus? (Or, put another way, is the Titus character already nuts before the play's action starts?)

- **Can Tamora be considered (apart from her ethnicity in the play) an early-arriving "Gothic" character? Gothic Literature, is usually thought to have been initiated by Horace Walpole with his 1764 novel *The Castle of Otranto* and had stock characters including tyrants, villains, bandits, maniacs, Byronic heroes, persecuted maidens, femmes fatales, madwomen, magicians, vampires, werewolves, monsters, demons, angels, fallen angels, beauties and the beasts, revenants, ghosts, perambulating skeletons, the Wandering Jew, Revenge, and the Devil himself. Did Tamora and Aaron fit in with this group?**
-

Shakespeare and Philomela

Shakespeare parallels the Philomela story from Ovid's Metamorphosis in Titus Andronicus starting with act two and the rape of Lavinia and returns to it in the final act. One important variation is that in Ovid's tale Philomela was raped and had her tongue cut out, but still had her hands and was able to weave a tapestry to tell her sister about the outrage done to her. Both in Shakespeare's day and today, Philomela's weaving has been a symbol of art as a means for communication and resolution in the face of violence. Thus, by purposely changing the story so that Lavinia's hands are cut off, leaving her unable to weave her story as Philomel did, Shakespeare certainly seems to be consciously excising any possibility for art in this play. I think this ties in to some extent with Virgil's complaint that the play in general seems artless. The change to the Ovidian source ensures that Titus Andronicus will be relentlessly grim and frustrated.

(The Arthur Golding translation of the Metamorphosis, which was the Elizabethan translation that Shakespeare would have used, is on the Internet at http://www.elizabethanauthors.com/ovid06.htm, beginning at about line 542. Ovid, translated by Arthur Golding, The .XV. Bookes of P. Ouidius Naso, Entytuled Metamorphosis (1567))

Senecan tragedy

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Ancient bust of Seneca (Antikensammlung Berlin) →

Senecan tragedy is a body of ten 1st century (A. D.) dramas, of which eight were written by the Roman Stoic philosopher and politician L. Annaeus Seneca (Seneca the Younger). Rediscovered by Italian humanists in the mid-16th century, they became the models for the revival of tragedy on the Renaissance stage. The two great, but very different, dramatic traditions of the age - French Neoclassical tragedy and Elizabethan tragedy - both drew inspiration from Seneca.

Seneca's plays were reworkings chiefly of Euripides' dramas and also of works of Aeschylus and Sophocles. Probably meant to be recited at elite gatherings, they differ from their originals in their long declamatory, narrative accounts of action, their obtrusive moralizing, and their bombastic rhetoric. They dwell on detailed accounts of horrible deeds and contain long reflective soliloquies. Though the gods rarely appear in these plays, ghosts and witches abound. In an age when the Greek originals were scarcely known, Seneca's plays were mistaken for high Classical drama. Senecan tragedies tended to include ideas of revenge, the occult, the supernatural, suicide, blood and gore. The Renaissance scholar Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484-1558), who knew both Latin and Greek, preferred Seneca to Euripides.

French Neoclassical dramatic tradition, which reached its highest expression in the 17th-century tragedies of Pierre Corneille and Jean Racine, drew on Seneca for form and grandeur of style. These Neoclassicists adopted Seneca's innovation of the confidant (usually a servant), his substitution of speech for action, and his moral hairsplitting.
The Elizabethan dramatists found Seneca's themes of bloodthirsty revenge more congenial to English taste than they did his form. The first English tragedy, Gorboduc (1561), by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton, is a chain of slaughter and revenge written in direct imitation of Seneca. (As it happens, Gorboduc does follow the form as well as the subject matter of Senecan tragedy: but only a very few other English plays - e.g. The Misfortunes of Arthur - followed its lead in this.) Senecan influence is also evident in Thomas Kyd's The Spanish Tragedy and Shakespeare's Hamlet: both share a revenge theme, a corpse-strewn climax, and ghosts among the cast, which can all be traced back to the Senecan model.

This article incorporates text from the Encyclopædia Britannica, Eleventh Edition, a publication now in the public domain.

A short version of the story of Tereus, Procne, and Philomela

When leaders from neighboring cities were visiting Thebes to offer their condolences, Athens was not among them. Athens was in a war, and Tereus and his army saved Athens from their foe. Procne, the king's daughter, married Tereus as part of Athens' gratitude for Tereus' help. He took her back to Thrace, his home, and after a while there in happiness, she missed her sister. Tereus went back to Athens to bring Philomela back for a visit. Their father, Pandion, was reluctant to let his only other daughter leave, but he did. What Pandion didn't know was that Tereus had fallen in desperate love with Philomela. When they arrived in Thrace, he took Philomela to a hidden cottage in the woods and raped her. She was humiliated and furious at the betrayal of her brother-in-law, and she said: "'You'll pay my score one day. I'll shed my shame / And shout what you have done. If I've the chance, / I'll walk among the crowds: or, if I'm held / Locked in the woods, my voice shall fill the woods / And move the rocks to pity.'" Book 6 -- Tereus, Procne, and Philomela, line 46-50. So Tereus cut out her tongue and locked her away where none would ever find her.

Tereus went to his wife and told her that he'd found out that Philomela was dead when he got to Athens. A year passed and Procne mourned her sister. Meanwhile, Philomela wove the story of her kidnapping, rape, and assault into a tapestry and got it to her sister. Procne saw the tapestry and understood what had happened, so during the Bacchic rituals when women go into the woods to worship Bacchus, she rescued Philomela and took her back to the home that she shared with Tereus. The sisters then killed Itys, Procne and Tereus' son, and cooked him. Procne called her husband in and served him the meal. When he called for his son, Philomela came out of the kitchen and presented him with the boy's severed head. In his horror and fury, he chased the women with his sword, vowing to kill them for their treachery. Philomela was changed to a nightingale; Procne became a swallow; and Tereus was transformed to a hoopoe.

Seneca in early Elizabethan England

Renaissance Quarterly, Spring, 2006 by Jessica Winston
An Excerpt from the introduction

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing in the late 1580s, Thomas Nashe famously accused contemporary dramatists of a lack of originality, describing them as "triviall translators" who did little more than copy the "good sentences" and "tragicall speeches" out of Seneca. Such playwrights, he suggested, were akin to mountebanks, who "let blood" from the classical author, sapping his words "line by line and page by page," until he "at length" came to "die to our stage." (1) Nashe's attack on his contemporaries is puzzling. After all, many Renaissance authors borrowed lines, scenes, and plots from historical and literary sources, a practice that was not (except in this case) viewed as a problem. Still, his statement is also apt, prefiguring and encapsulating the main critical line on the reception of Seneca in Elizabethan England. Dramatic authors worked with the tragedies in a piecemeal fashion, copying and adapting elements of them: the "good sentences" and "tragicall speeches," as well as the bombastic rhetoric of the characters, the stock figures and plot devices (such as a chorus, nurses, and ghosts), and the five-act dramatic structure. They looked to Seneca, in other words, as a source of ideas, styles, techniques, and forms that they could draw upon--or, in Nashe's terms, bleed dry--in order to enliven their own plays and the English dramatic tradition. (2)

This line of criticism, however, often fails to recognize that the Elizabethan reception of Seneca occurred in two distinct phases, and only accurately describes the second of these. (3) The first took place in the 1560s. Prior to this decade there was little concern with Seneca in England, with only a handful of philosophical works and fragments of the drama published in manuscript and print. (4) Beginning in 1559, however, there was intense interest in the author, especially at the universities and early English law schools, the Inns of Court, where students and fellows translated most of the drama and performed a series of Senecan and neo-Senecan plays. (5) The later phase took place in the 1580s and 1590s when, after a decade-long break in the performance and publication of Seneca, Thomas Newton compiled the first English anthology of the Tenne Tragedies (1581), and Thomas Kyd, Christopher Marlowe, and Shakespeare adapted elements of the drama for their plays.

The difference between the phases is pronounced. Later playwrights imitated aspects of the tragedies, but earlier ones engaged with them comprehensively and in their entirety. Thus, in the 1560s authors fully translated nine of the tragedies into English. Jasper Heywood (1535-98) translated Troas (1559), Thyestes (1560), and Hercules Furens (1561). Alexander Neville (1544-1614) did the same with Oedipus (1563). John Studley (ca. 1545-90?) followed with Agamemnon, Medea, Hercules Oetaeus (all 1566),

and Hippolytus (1567), as did Thomas Nuce (ca. 1545-1617) with Octavia (1566?), the erroneously attributed drama that stars Seneca as a counselor to Nero. (6) At the same time, many authors wrote original plays, such as Thomas Sackville (ca. 1536-1608) and Norton's (1530/32-85) Gorboduc (performed 1562) or the multiauthored Gismond of Salerne (performed 1567-68), which imitated more thoroughly than later Elizabethan tragedies the form of Seneca: the five acts each divided by a chorus, the lengthy deliberative speeches, and the quick verbal exchanges. In essence, while playwrights in the second phase wanted their Seneca in parts--his sentences, rhetoric, devices, and structures--the ones in the first wanted their Seneca whole in the form of complete translations and extensive imitations. Or, to extend the imagery of Nashe, while later playwrights drew upon the tragedies to add life to their drama, the early Elizabethans aimed to animate and sustain the tragedies themselves. (7)

Any account of Seneca in early modern England must heed this distinction. Yet few studies address this first phase, and those that do concentrate either on the aesthetic qualities of the translations and adaptations or on their contributions to the progress of English drama: the early Elizabethans supplied and reworked classical models in ways that spurred later dramatic developments. (8) Why such works were important for those who composed them remains unclear. (9) The purpose of this essay, then, is to explore this first phase, focusing mainly on the translations, a group of works that for the most part preceded and influenced the adaptations, and that therefore should be examined first if we are to understand the early Elizabethan interest in Seneca overall. As the following shows, the translations should be read against the background of the social, political, and literary culture of the universities, and particularly the Inns of Court, in the 1560s. In this context they look less like forms of dramatic invention than kinds of writing that facilitated the translators' Latin learning, personal interactions, and their political thinking and involvement.

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Footnotes

(1) Works of Thomas Nashe, 3:315-16.

(2) The earliest and most influential examples of this argument appear in Cunliffe; Manly; Charlton; Lucas; Eliot, 1927; Mendell. Miola provides a more recent instance of this trend. Although aiming for an "integrated assessment" (9) of Seneca's influence, he instead provides a subtle analysis of Shakespeare's tactical, sporadic, allusive, and playful engagement with Senecan sources. Hunter, 1967 and 1974, deviates from this strain of criticism, disputing the extent and significance of Seneca's influence. Kiefer, 1978a and 1985, provides a useful overview of criticism on the influence of Seneca.

(3) A comparable outline of these phases appears in Charlton, 139-47.

(4) The philosophical works include Robert Whittington's translation of De Remediis Fortuitorum (1547) as well as editions and translations of two works by St. Martin of Braga (515-ca. 579), which were erroneously attributed to

Seneca in the period: The Rule of an Honest Life (1516, 1523, 1538, and 1546) and The Mirror of Glass of Manners and Wisdom (1547). The fragments of plays include Wyatt's translation of the last stanza of the second chorus of Thyestes as "Stand Whoso List upon the Slipper Top"; Dean Nowell's copy of a preface to Hippolytus in his notebook, which may have been played at Westminster in the Christmas of 1546; and an undated fragment of the opening chorus of Hercules Oetaeus attributed to Queen Elizabeth. Trinity College, Cambridge, produced a version of Troas, probably one by Seneca, in 1551-52: G. C. Smith, 1923, 53; Records, 966. On Hippolytus, see Baldwin, 2:560. On Elizabeth's translation, see Renaissance Drama by Women, 6-12.

(5) In the 1560s there were three recorded performances of plays by Seneca at Cambridge: Oedipus, Troas, and Medea at Trinity College. See G. C. Smith, 1909, 269-70; 1923, 56-58; Boas, 387; Records, 2:968-70. In addition, there was a performance of a play titled Hecuba at Trinity which may be Seneca's Troas, although Nelson suggests that it is Erasmus's 1506 translation of Euripides' The Trojan Women: Records, 208, 968, 1214. Boas, 387, records a performance of Medea at Queens' in 1563, but Nelson (Records, 989) explains no such record has been found and Boas may have misread the word "comoedia" in the college records. At Oxford, there was no recorded performance of Seneca until the production of the Pseudo-Senecan Octavia at Christ Church in 1585: Boas, 385-90.

(6) Although Nuce's Octavia was published in 1566, it is likely that it was written earlier, perhaps about 1562 (as suggested by O'Keefe, 93), since in the preface he describes the work as the "first fruits of my yong study": Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 41:249.

(7) Braden, 1985, argues that later Elizabethan dramatists did engage with larger themes and issues of Senecan tragedy, adapting Seneca because he represented a certain autarchic style of selfhood--represented by its will, self-sufficiency, and ambition--which Elizabethans found compelling as they faced the possibility of absolutist rule. Even so, he does not consider why English authors took so long to become interested in Seneca, nor does he account for the differences between earlier and later Elizabethan ways of working with the tragedies.

(8) Recent accounts of Seneca in the Renaissance by Braden, 1985, and Boyle barely mention the early Elizabethans. For studies of style, see Spearing, 1912 and 1920; Eliot, 1932; O'Keefe. For studies of the contributions of early Elizabethan translations to English drama, see Rees, 133, who calls the translators "midwi[ves] assisting at the birth of English drama"; Kiefer, 1978b and 1983; B. Smith, 1978; Green; Miola; Norland; Helms; Goldberg.

(9) B. Smith has begun this work, examining the role that Senecan drama played in shaping and defining the private communities of the Inns of Court, but he bases the majority of his conclusions on Neville's Oedipus, and does not address the reasons for Seneca's popularity in these communities in the 1560s in particular: see especially part 1 of chapter 5 on tragedy, 203-39.

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Revenge play

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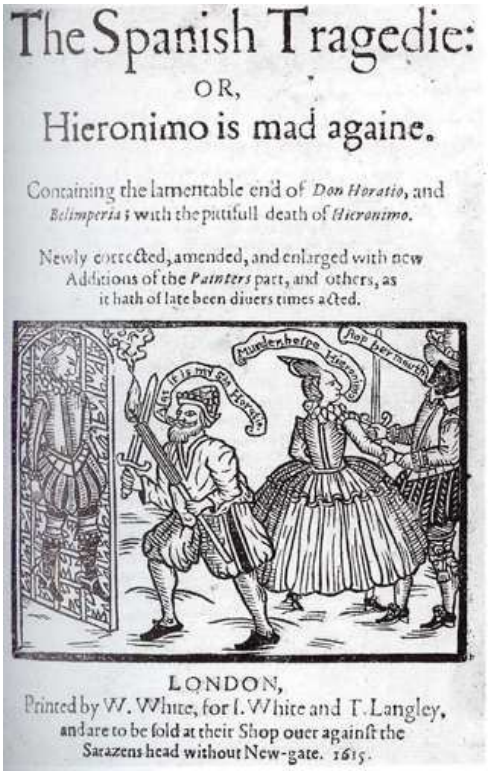
The Spanish Tragedie:
OR,
Hieronimo is mad againe.

Containing the lamentable end of *Don Horatio*, and *Bellimperia*; with the pittifull death of *Hieronimo*.

Newly corrected, amended, and enlarged with new Additions of the *Painters* part, and others, as it hath of late been diuers times acted.

LONDON,
Printed by W. White, for I. White and T. Langley, and are to be sold at their Shop ouer against the Sarazens head without New-gate. 1615.

Title page of the Quarto edition of *The Spanish Tragedy* (1615) →

The revenge play or revenge tragedy is a form of tragedy which was extremely popular in the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras. The best-known of these are Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* and William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The genre was first categorized by the scholar Fredson Bowers.

Origins, conventions, and themes

The only clear precedent and influence for the Renaissance genre is the work of the Roman playwright and Stoic philosopher Seneca the Younger, perhaps most of all his *Thyestes.* It is still unclear if Seneca's plays were performed or recited during Roman times; at any rate, Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights staged them, as it were, with a vengeance, in plays full of gruesome and often darkly comic violence. The Senecan model, though never followed slavishly, makes for a clear definition of the type, which almost invariably includes

- **A secret murder, usually of a benign ruler by a bad one**
- **A ghostly visitation of the murder victim to a younger kinsman, generally a son**
- **A period of disguise, intrigue, or plotting, in which the murderer and the avenger scheme against each other, with a slowly rising body count**
- **A descent into either real or feigned madness by the avenger or one of the auxiliary characters**
- **An eruption of general violence at the end, which (in the Renaissance) is often accomplished by means of a feigned masque or festivity**
- **A catastrophe that utterly decimates the dramatis personae, including the avenger**

Both the stoicism of Seneca and his political career (he was an advisor to Nero) leave their mark on Renaissance practice. In the English plays, the avenger is either stoic (albeit not very specifically) or struggling to be so; in this respect, the main thematic concern of the English revenge plays is the problem of pain. Politically, the English playwrights used the revenge plot to explore themes of absolute power, corruption in court, and of faction--all concerns that applied to late Elizabethan and Jacobean politics as they had to Roman politics.

History

Some early Elizabethan tragedies betray evidence of a Senecan influence; *Gorboduc* (1561) is notable in this regard. The "hybrid morality" *Horestes* (1567) also offers an early example of the genre.[1] Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, however, is the first major example of the revenge plot in English drama. Performed and published in 1587, *The Spanish Tragedy* was a popular smash so successful that, with *Tamburlaine*, it practically defined tragic dramaturgy for a number of years. Refitted with additions by Ben Jonson, it found performance intermittently until 1642. Its most famous scenes were copied, transformed, and—finally—mocked; the play itself was given a sequel that may have been partially written by Kyd.

***Hamlet* is one of the few Shakespeare plays to fit into the revenge category; indeed, it may be read as a figural, literary response to Kyd, who is sometimes credited with the so-called ur-Hamlet with which Shakespeare worked. As regards revenge tragedy, *Hamlet* is notable for the way in which it complicates the themes and deepens the psychology of its models. What is, in *The Spanish Tragedy*, a straightforward duty of revenge, is for Prince Hamlet, both factually and morally ambiguous. Hamlet has been read, with some support, as enacting a thematic conflict between the Roman values of martial valor and blood-right on the one hand, and Christian values of humility and acceptance on the other.**

A more purely Jacobean example than *Hamlet* is *The Revenger's Tragedy*, apparently produced in 1606 and printed anonymously the following year. The author was long assumed, on somewhat unconvincing external evidence, to be Cyril Tourneur; in recent decades, numerous critics have argued in favor of attributing the play to Thomas Middleton. On stylistic grounds, this argument is convincing. *The Revenger's Tragedy* is marked by the earthy—even obscene—style, irreverent tone, and grotesque subject matter that typifies Middleton's comedies. The play, though it lacks a ghost, is in other respects a sophisticated updating of *The Spanish Tragedy*, concerning lust, greed, and corruption in an Italian court.

Caroline instances of the genre are largely derivative of earlier models and are little read today, even by specialists.

Influence

A number of plays, from 1587 on, are influenced by certain aspects of revenge tragedy, although they do not fit perfectly into this category.

Besides *Hamlet*, other plays of Shakespeare's with at least some revenge elements are *Titus Andronicus*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Macbeth*. Other revenge tragedies include *The White Devil*, *The Changeling*, *The Duchess of Malfi*, *The Atheist's Tragedy*, *The Jew of Malta*, *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois* and *The Malcontent*.

Thomas Pynchon's novel *The Crying of Lot 49* contains an extended parody of the Jacobean revenge-play formula, titled *The Courier's Tragedy* and written by the fictitious Richard Wharfinger. Most of the action is simply described by the narrator, with occasional snippets of dialogue.

Film

Numerous adaptations have been made of revenge plays. Excluding films based on *Hamlet*, these include:

Derek Jarman's *Edward II*
Julie Taymor's *Titus*
Alex Cox's *Revengers Tragedy*
Marcus Thompson's *Middleton's Changeling*
Peter Greenaway's *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife, and Her Lover* is an original work in the revenge play style.

References

^ William Farnham, *The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy*, revised edition, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1956). p. 259: "*Horestes* can claim distinction because of its earliness in the long line of Elizabethan tragedies of revenge."

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The Formalization of Horror in Titus Andronicus
Author(s): Jack E. Reese
Source: *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (Winter, 1970), pp. 77-84
Published by: Folger Shakespeare Library in association with George Washington University
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2868405
Accessed: 29/08/2009 11:34

The Formalization of Horror in *Titus Andronicus*

JACK E. REESE

ALTHOUGH *Titus Andronicus* was a splendid success in its own day,[1] it has been almost universally castigated since. As early as 1687, Ravenscroft called it "a heap of rubbish";[2] Coleridge suggested that it was "obviously intended to excite vulgar audiences by its scenes of blood and horror";[3] and, in this century, Dover Wilson has said that it "seems to jolt and bump along like some broken down cart, laden with bleeding corpses from an Elizabethan scaffold, and driven by an executioner from Bedlam dressed in cap and bells."[4] Indeed, many critics, repelled by what they term the play's Senecan excesses, have either denied Shakespeare's authorship or insisted that he merely touched up an old play.[5]

In light of *Titus'* reputation as Grand Guignol fare, then, the unqualified success of Peter Brook's 1955 Stratford production must have come as somewhat of a surprise to those who had the rare opportunity of seeing the play acted. Certain concessions, it must be admitted, were made in that production to modern sensibilities—Vivian Leigh appeared with scarlet ribbons dangling from her mouth and sleeves in response to the startling stage direction, "Enter Lauinia, her hands cut off, and her tongue cut out, & ravisht" (II.iv);[6] the deaths of Tamora's two sons were, mercifully, related rather than enacted; the heads of Titus' two sons were delivered to him tastefully concealed in black cloths and steel baskets; and Lavinia was allowed to carry her father's hand offstage in her arms rather than in her mouth. A thoroughly "refined" *Titus,* however, would be impossible, and one must accept the fact that the Stratford production succeeded, not because of the relatively minor deletions or alterations, but because of the competency of the actors, led by Miss Leigh, Sir Lawrence Olivier, and Anthony Quayle, and the skill of the director in establishing an appropriate style of performance.

[1] Both Q2 (1600) and Q3 (1611) maintain that the play was acted "sundry times" by the Lord Chamberlain's Men (who by 1611 were the King's Majesty's Servants); see also Ben Jonson's complaint in the "Induction" to *Bartholomew Fair* (1614): "Hee that will swear, *Ieronimo,* or *Andronicus* are the best plays, yet, shall passe vnexcepted at, heere, as a man whose Iudgement shews it is constant, and hath stood still, these fiue and twentie, or thirtie yeeres."

[2] Edward Ravenscroft, *Titus Andronicus, or the Rape of Lavinia* (1687), sig. A2.

[3] *Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism,* ed. T. M. Raysor (Cambridge, Mass., 1930), II, 31.

[4] *Titus Andronicus,* ed. J. Dover Wilson (Cambridge, 1948), p. xii.

[5] The controversy is adequately summarized by J. C. Maxwell in the Introduction to his Arden edition of the play (3rd ed., London, 1961), pp. xx-xxx. Since this essay pertains to the play itself rather than to the question of authorship, I am accepting the opinion of Maxwell and others that the work is substantially Shakespeare's.

[6] Stage directions herein quoted are taken from Joseph Quincy Adams' facsimile edition of the 1594 Q1 (New York, 1936); citations from the text are from the 1961 Arden edition.

That manner, as many reviewers pointed out, was highly formal—at times, even stylized. As one observer said, "It was as if the actors were engaged in a ritual at once fluent from habitual performance and yet still practised with concentrated attention. There was something puppet-like about them. . . ."[7] Other commentators noted the way in which the priests moved in "hieratic solemnity";[8] the opening "formal scene in black, brown, and gold";[9] the corpses which looked "very elegant, particularly the ladies";[10] the banquet scene in which "the victims topple forward in succession across the dinner-table like a row of ninepins skittled from behind";[11] the characters "marching and counter-marching with obstinate purposefulness in a dirge-like quadrille."[12] Mr. Brook later explained why he staged the play in the manner clearly indicated by even these brief quotations:

> The real appeal of *Titus* . . . was that abstract—stylized—Roman—classical though it appeared to be, it was obviously for everyone in the audience about the most modern of emotions—about violence, hatred, cruelty, pain —in a form that, because *unrealistic,* transcended the anecdote and became for each audience *quite abstract and thus totally real.*[13]

Richard Findlater explains more simply, "If the audience at Stratford is not sickened by men chopping off hands and tearing out tongues, by mothers inciting their sons to rape and later eating them at dinner, it is partly because of the way in which Mr. Brook has formalized the horror."[14]

This paper will suggest that it was not Mr. Brook who "formalized the horror" in *Titus Andronicus,* but Shakespeare. Many readers, I believe, have dismissed the play as an immature exercise in sensationalism because they have failed to recognize certain highly formal elements in the play which subdue (or "abstract") the horror, especially in the stage version which Shakespeare conceived.[15]

There is, first of all, an elaborate system of "balances" and "opposites" in the play. As William T. Hastings has pointed out, we are presented with "a

[7] Sir Richard David, "Drams of Eale", *SS 10* (1957), p. 126. Sir Richard comments at length on the "powerfully simple" setting used to enhance the "compulsive and incantatory" performance.

[8] J. C. Trewin, *Shakespeare on the English Stage, 1900-1964* (London, 1964), p. 255.

[9] "This Other Stratford", *Saturday Review,* XXXVIII (Sept. 24, 1955), 24.

[10] Evelyn Waugh, "Titus With a Grain of Salt", *Spectator* (Sept. 2, 1955), p. 301.

[11] David, p. 126.

[12] *Ibid.*

[13] "Search for a Hunger", *Encore* (Jul.-Aug., 1961), pp. 16-17.

[14] "Shakespearean Atrocities", *The Twentieth Century* (Oct., 1955), p. 369.

[15] I have not considered in the following discussion the language of the play, which is often inappropriate to, and detracts one's attention from, the shocking events being portrayed. Muriel C. Bradbrook, *Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy* (Cambridge, 1935), p. 99, has described the tone of the play as incongruously "cool and cultured", and Eugene M. Waith, "The Metamorphosis of Violence in *Titus Andronicus*", *SS 10* (1957), p. 39, has noted the "formal, rhetorical style" which makes the characters "purely emblematic". Certain features of the play invited, if they did not demand, non-dramatic, "literary" language: the necessity for spelling out in the dialogue many of Lavinia's movements and postures after her mutilation; Shakespeare's futile attempts to differentiate among Titus' reactions to the incredibly severe catastrophes which befall him; the extensive background of classical legend which encouraged the use of "stately" language; and the presence of a great many ceremonies and rituals which called for the special rhetoric of public address. This last aspect of the play is discussed by A. C. Hamilton, "*Titus Andronicus*: The Form of Shakespearian Tragedy", *SQ,* XIV (1963), 206-207, and Alice C. Venezky, *Pageantry on the Shakespearean Stage* (New York, 1951), *passim.*

Renaissance world without nuances, a world of black and white, of extremes (whitest chastity and blackest lust, supreme love and supreme hate); the moral code is that of complete self-sacrifice, of intense devotion, of unlimited revenge."[16] It is very clear that the characters are either wholly good or wholly bad, with perhaps two exceptions: Titus, who, despite his essential nobility, is led by pride and misguided zeal for country to make several tragic errors,[17] and Aaron, who is allowed the one decent impulse of wishing to save the life of his illegitimate son. Neither figure, however, could ever be regarded as complex, and their contemporaries are merely embodied virtues or vices. The scene in V.ii where Tamora and her two sons assume the allgeorical roles of Revenge, Murder, and Rapine can be viewed as a symbol of the characterization of the entire work.

This characterization deeply affects the audience's reaction to the unpatriotic gore of *Titus*. We are not terribly moved by what happens on stage, primarily because we do not believe in the humanity of the characters; we will accept them only as classical echoes or "types". We are shocked far less by Lavinia's fate, for example, than that of Desdemona, because Desdemona is a woman, not an emblematic figure representing Injured Innocence, which Lavinia largely is.

Moreover, the systematic designation of the characters into diametrically opposed groups imposes an unconvincing neatness on the materials of the plot and constantly reminds one of the "literary" flavor of the play, especially in view of the other obvious parallels and "opposites". For example, Roman civilization and pagan barbarism are clearly contrasted, as Alan Somers points out: "The essential conflict . . . is the struggle between Rome and all that this signifies in the European tradition to which we, and Shakespeare, belong, and the barbarism of primitive nature."[18] In the opening scene, Bassianus and Saturninus are paired against each other in rivalry for the crown; later, they become rival candidates for the hand of Lavinia, and finally rival bridegrooms. Titus and his sons are ranged against Tamora and her sons. There is even some purely rhetorical balancing in the play; when Tamora and Aaron meet clandestinely in the forest, she describes their love-nest in highly sensual terms:

> The birds chant melody on every bush,
> The snake lies rolled in the cheerful sun,
> The green leaves quiver with the cooling wind
> And make a chequer'd shadow on the ground. . . . (II. iii. 12-15)

A few moments later, after she and her lover have been discovered by Bassianus and Lavinia, she complains to her bloodthirsty sons that she has been enticed to this "barren detested vale", where

> The trees, though summer, yet forlorn and lean,
> O'ercome with moss and baleful mistletoe:

[16] "The Hardboiled Shakespeare", *SAB*, XVII (1942), 117.

[17] His senseless sacrifice of Tamora's youngest son, Alarbus; his wrong-headed support of Saturninus, the poorer candidate for the crown; his offer of Lavinia to the new emperor; and the violent slaying of his own disobedient son.

[18] " 'Wilderness of Tigers': Structure and Symbolism in *Titus Andronicus*", *EC*, X (1960), 276.

Here never shines the sun: here nothing breeds,
Unless the nightly owl or fatal raven. . . . (II. ii. 94-97)

This system of "balances" or "opposites" is related to another dramatic technique which contributes heavily to the formal atmosphere of the play, the repetition of words, phrases, scenes, and images, often with an ironic twist. Titus' grand entrance in Act I is almost parodied at two subsequent points, the opening of Act III where he grovels in the dust seeking a reprieve for his sons from the same officials who had earlier greeted him as Rome's saviour, and the grisly procession in Act IV made up of the amputee Titus and his brother Marcus, each bearing the head of one of Titus' executed sons; the now-banished Lucius; Lucius' young son; and Lavinia, carrying the severed hand of her father between her teeth.[19] There are also a number of references to "hands": Lavinia loses both of hers, Titus one of his; we are reminded that this same hand had frequently saved Rome; Titus uses his remaining hand to "thump down" his heart "all mad with misery" (III. ii. 7-11); Lavinia identifies her attackers by writing in the sand "Without the help of any hand at all" (IV. i. 70), and so forth.[20]

The most significant pattern of repetition in Titus, however, is seen in the frequent pleas and supplications, which may be divided into two groups, passionately genuine requests for mercy and hypocritical dodges to advance an evil cause.[21] The first occur when: Tamora asks Titus to spare her youngest son (I. i. 104-120); Marcus and his nephews seek permission to give Mutius a proper burial (I. i. 347-383); Bassianus pleads with Saturninus to restore Titus to his honored estate (I. i. 413-423); Lavinia implores Tamora to prevent her rape (II. iii. 136-178); Titus asks Saturninus to allow his sons to be placed in his custody (II. iii. 288-298) and begs the tribunes for their lives (III. i. 1-31); Aaron asks Lucius not to kill his illegitimate son (V. i. 53-58); and Marcus requests the people of Rome to withhold their judgement concerning the mass slayings until he and Lucius have had the opportunity to explain what has happened (V. iii. 67-136). The false or hypocritical pleas include Tamora's supplication to Bassianus to restore Titus and his family to favor (I. i. 434-458); her promised intercession with the emperor in behalf of Titus' sons (II. iii. 304-305); the ominous "supplication" sent Saturninus by Titus (IV. iii. 106-118); and, indirectly, Tamora's suggestion that Titus gather his family for a banquet, to which all his enemies will come to "stoop and kneel" at his mercy (V. ii. 110-120); and her promise to Saturninus that she will "entreat" Titus to stop Lucius from destroying Rome with his army of Goths (IV. iv. 88-103). The remarkable frequency of these supplications suggests that, in addition to giving artistic shape to the play, they help to create a particular atmosphere. Of the genuine pleas for mercy, the vast majority are disallowed, while the

[19] Hamilton identifies many additional ironic "echoes" in the play.

[20] Laura Jepson, "A Footnote on 'Hands' in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*", *Fla. State Univ. Studies*, XIX (1955), 7-10, discusses this repetition, claiming that it accentuates "the ironic undertone, which gathers force in the play until it breaks vehemently in the murderous onslaught at the end."

[21] Judith M. Carr, "The Pleas in *Titus Andronicus*", *SQ*, XIV (1963), 278-279, omits many of these supplications, specifying six principal ones. Her thesis is, "As well as strengthening the unity of the play, these pleas are a rich source of irony in that the positions of refusing and being refused are significantly reversed."

hypocritical supplications generally further the villainous ambitions of their makers. Surely, the irony is intentional. The consistent refusals of reasonable requests for mercy and justice symbolize the chaotic state into which Rome lapses for a time; they echo Titus' complaint, *"Terras Astraea reliquit"* (IV. iii. 4), a fitting motto for the "wilderness of tigers" which is Rome.

These pleas and supplications, moreover, are frequently delivered from bended knee, as are prayers, expressions of respect to parents and sovereigns, and the performance of solemn rituals. A reader of the play is likely to overlook the number of these kneeling scenes, which, according to the Q1 stage directions and the dialogue, unmistakably occur when: Tamora asks that Alarbus be spared (I. i. 104-120; see I. i. 454-455); Lavinia greets her father on his return to Rome (I. i. 161); Marcus and his two nephews seek permission for the burial of Mutius (S. D., I. i. 369); Mutius' body is interred (S. D., I. i. 389); Titus, Bassianus, and Titus' family ask forgiveness before the emperor (I. i. 457, 459, 481, 485); Titus seeks the custody of his two sons (II. iii. 288-289); he and Lavinia pledge themselves to revenge (II. i. 209), shortly after which they, Marcus, and young Lucius solemnly consecrate themselves to the destruction of their enemies (IV. i. 87-88); and the rustic clown delivers Titus' "supplication" to the emperor (IV. iv. 42-48; see IV. iii. 108-110). In addition, Shakespeare very likely conceived characters to be kneeling when the coffin of Titus' son who was killed in the war is placed in the tomb (I. i. 150-156); Tamora is chosen by Saturninus for his wife (I. i. 329-333); Lavinia begs Tamora for mercy (II. iii. 136-186); Chiron and Demetrius have their throats cut (V. ii. 166-205); and Marcus, Lucius, and his young son pay their last respects to the dead Titus (V. iii. 151-175).

The ironic effect of this repetition is very strong: the audience quickly senses that the repeated tableaux of kneeling figures signify, not piety and respect, as might be expected, but rejected pleas for mercy and justice, vain prayers to indifferent gods, barbaric perversions of solemn rites, and frightening reminders of previous outrages. (For example, Tamora's plea for Alarbus is paralleled by Lavinia's request for the preservation of her innocence, which is in turn paralleled by the deaths of Chiron and Demetrius, kneeling before her and Titus.) In other words, these scenes help to create the sense of moral and spiritual desolation which dominates the play.

The tableaux also help to "formalize the horror". The repetition of very obvious motifs or themes—visual or verbal—tends, of course, to make a play more artificial. The characters become less like human beings and more like symbols being manipulated in an excessively orderly framework, and the carefully-planned stage "pictures" freeze the characters into symbolic groupings. This is especially true of *Titus Andronicus,* as witnessed in the repeated exhibition of characters engaged in the ritual of prayer or supplication or some other solemn occasion, and in other significant tableaux which Shakespeare planned carefully.

The stage directions in the 1594 Q1, likely set from the author's foul papers, are remarkably complete and descriptive, and the dialogue contains a number of indications of stage business.[22] Indeed, one gets the impression

[22] See W. W. Greg, *The Shakespeare First Folio* (Oxford, 1955), 203-204.

that the young Shakespeare was almost as much concerned with the arrangement of his characters on stage as he was with what they had to say. The opening stage direction in Q1 is a good example: *"Enter the Tribunes and Senators aloft: And then enter Saturninus and his followers at one dore, and Bassianus and his followers, with Drums and Trumpets."* The F adds the phrase, *"at the other"*, after *"Bassianus and his followers"*, undoubtedly by way of confirming the staging as the author conceived it, for throughout the play (and especially in Act I) antagonistic groups are neatly paired off against each other. Here, for example, the rival candidates for the crown are ranged on opposite sides of the stage, the belligerent attitudes of their followers immediately establishing the violent mood of the play. The balancing is further emphasized by the opening speeches of the two antagonists (I. i. 1-17) which are approximately the same length and very similar syntactically. Each consists of an alliterating series of nouns of address (". . . patricians . . . patrons . . ." as compared with "Romans, friends, followers, favourer . . ."), followed by a series of imperative verbs ("Defend . . . Plead . . . Let . . . Nor Wrong . . ." as compared with "Keep . . . suffer not . . . let . . . fight . . .").

While this quarrel is taking place, Marcus Andronicus makes a dramatic entrance on the balcony, bearing the crown of the late emperor. Now the scene is wholly symmetrical; facing each other on the main stage are the two hostile groups, the fates of their leaders in the hands of the tribunes and senators who are, appropriately, standing above them. On the balcony are probably two senators on one side and two tribunes on the other, with Marcus in the middle. At this point, then, the entire stage arrangement "points" at the glittering crown borne by Marcus, the competition for which will set in motion the bloody course of events to follow.

Titus' magnificent entrance is equally symmetrical and symbolic. After the Captain announces the triumphant return of Rome's greatest hero, there is the remarkable stage direction:

> *Sound Drums and Trumpets, and then enter two of Titus sonnes, and then two men bearing a Coffin covered with black, then two other sonnes, then Titus Andronicus, and then Tamora the Queene of Gothes and her two sonnes Chiron and Demetrius, with Aron the More, and others as many as can be, then set downe the Coffin, and Titus speakes.* (I. i. 69).

(Modern editors add Alarbus, upcoming victim of Andronici revenge, to the list of Tamora's sons, since he obviously enters at this point.) The procession is mechanically symmetrical, and, as the frequently-published Longleat drawing shows, so is the tableau which follows.[23] On one side of the stage stand Titus and his sons; on the other Tamora, her sons, and the mysterious Moor Aaron—two groups whose enmity will largely destroy each other and almost drown Rome in a sea of blood. In the middle of the stage, framed by

[23] This drawing, discovered in the library of The Most Hon. the Marquess of Bath, Longleat, and attributed to Henry Peacham, was first published by Sir E. K. Chambers in *The Library* for March, 1925. It has since been reproduced many times. John Munro in *TLS* (10 June and 1 July, 1948) argued that the picture was a "comprehensive" depiction of the entire play, while John Dover Wilson," 'Titus Andronicus' on the Stage in 1595", *SS 1* (1948), pp. 17-24, and Thomas Marc Parrott, "Further Observations on *Titus Andronicus*", *SQ*, I (1950), 22-29, have maintained that it records the action at I. i. 129. Obviously, I favor the latter assumption.

the antagonists, is the coffin covered with black—a highly appropriate symbol of the slaughters to follow. The parallelism is continued with the offstage sacrifice of Alarbus on the funeral pyre as compensation for the young Andronicus whose body is about to be placed in the family tomb.

Another striking illustration of this carefully planned stage grouping takes place later in Act I after Lavinia is snatched out from under the nose of Saturninus by Bassianus: *"Enter aloft the Emperour with Tamora and her two sonnes and Aron the moore"* (I. i. 298). Only Titus remains on the center stage below. The hostile Saturninus announces his intended marriage to Tamora, who will thus be at liberty to revenge herself upon her conqueror and the murderer of her son. Again, the arrangement of the figures is patently symbolic: Tamora, Demetrius, Chiron, and Aaron, aloft on the balcony, now have the upper hand, while Titus' rapid fall from power and prestige is emphasized by his inferior position and lack of attendants. His isolation is underlined even more strongly a few lines later when the characters on the balcony retire and he is left completely alone for the space of three lines (I. i. 338-340), the only occasion in this extraordinarily busy first act, full of bustling processions, noisy entrances and exits, and large crowd scenes, when the stage is not crowded with figures.[24]

The result of such meticulously-conceived stage tableaux is to create an atmosphere of ritualism and formality, to stress the "emblematic or heraldic" quality which Miss Bradbrook believes distinguishes all the characters. Indeed, her analysis of one of Titus' speeches as giving the effect "of a living picture rather than life itself"[25] may be applied to the entire play.

Nor is this pictorial quality created solely by the arrangement of the characters. Throughout *Titus* are strikingly graphic verbal descriptions of imagined or offstage scenes, as carefully conceived as the groupings noted above. These passages, which seem more appropriate to the context, say, of *Lucrece* than a tragic drama, further emphasize the artificiality of the play; in a sense, they suggest to the audience that it is hearing a poem read rather than seeing the events of that poem put into dramatic form. Titus' remarks to Lavinia after her mutilation are a good example:

> Shall thy good uncle, and thy brother Lucius,
> And thou, and I, sit round about some fountain,
> Looking all downwards to behold our cheeks
> How they are stain'd, like meadows yet not dry,
> With miry slime left on them by a flood?

[24] These three scenes are the most carefully-planned and "symbolic" in the play, but there are many others in which the characters are frozen into memorable tableaux. Among the most deliberately pictorial are II. iii. 192-306 (Martius and Quintus in the trapdoor-"hole"); the opening scene in Act III (Titus prostrating himself before the unsympathetic judges and senators who are leading his two sons to their deaths); III. i. 279-287 (the pitiful procession of Titus and what is left of his family); IV. i. 76 (Lavinia writing in the sand); the opening of IV. ii (*"Enter Aron, Chiron, and Demetrius at one doore, and at the other doore young Lucius, and another with a bundle of weapons, and verses writ upon them"*); IV. iii (Titus and his followers shooting arrows with messages attached to them into the Emperor's "court"); the opening of V. ii. (Tamora and her sons in disguise); V. ii. 166-205 (the ritualistic sacrifice of Chiron and Demetrius); V. iii (the formal dinner which turns into stylized slaughter).

[25] *Shakespeare and Elizabethan Poetry* (London, 1951), p. 105. Miss Bradbrook claims that *Titus* is "more like a pageant than a play" (p. 110).

> And in the fountain shall we gaze so long
> Till the fresh taste be taken from that clearness,
> And made a brine-pit with our bitter tears?
> Or shall we cut away our hands like thine?
> Or shall we bite our tongues, and in dumb shows
> Pass the remainder of our hateful days?[26] (III. i. 122-132)

This essay was intended to demonstrate that Mr. Brook's success in staging *Titus Andronicus* resulted at least in part from his recognition (and translation into modern stage practices) of those largely visual devices in the play which "abstract" or formalize the horror. Although the work is extraordinarily bloody, the blood which is shed is often clearly identifiable as red ink or whatever sixteenth-century stage managers used to simulate wounds. The elaborate system of balances and parallels, the repetition of motifs, the meticulously-arranged stage tableaux, the pictorial quality of many scenes all tend to de-emphasize the physical violence by stylizing it. The characters are de-humanized by their language, their selfconscious posturing, and their association with a deeply formal and ritualistic environment. Consequently, *Titus Andronicus* represents, not a deliberate effort to shock an audience, but a fascinating and partially successful attempt to subdue the sensationalism of the most shocking material imaginable.

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[26] Cf. II. iii. 12-29; II. iii. 198-202; II. iii. 226-236; III. ii. 39-45; V. i. 98-120; V. ii. 45-59.

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Getting It All Right: Titus Andronicus and Roman History
Author(s): Naomi Conn Liebler
Source: *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (Autumn, 1994), pp. 263-278
Published by: Folger Shakespeare Library in association with George Washington University
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2871231 Accessed: 29/08/2009 17:33

Getting It All Right: *Titus Andronicus* and Roman History

Naomi Conn Liebler

Some thirty-five years ago, Terence Spencer proposed the context in which an Elizabethan audience would have received *Titus Andronicus*. Although he did not positively claim it as a source for the play, he referred in some detail to Antonio de Guevara's *Decada*, translated in 1577 by Edward Hellowes as *A Chronicle, conteyning the liues of tenne Emperours of Rome* and dedicated to Queen Elizabeth. Spencer noted that among the "lives," an Elizabethan reader would have found

> [A] blood-curdling life of a certain Emperor Bassianus, . . . one of almost unparalleled cruelty. . . . I will not say that it is a positive relief to pass from the life of Bassianus by Guevara to Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* (and there to find, by the way, that Bassianus is the better of the two brothers). . . . *Titus Andronicus* is Senecan . . . and its *sources* probably belong to medieval legend. Yet . . . it is also a not untypical piece of Roman history, or would seem to be so to anyone who came fresh from reading Guevara. Not the most high and palmy state of Rome, certainly. But an authentic Rome . . . from which the usual political lessons could be drawn. . . . *Titus Andronicus* is a more typical Roman play, a more characteristic piece of Roman history, than the three great plays of Shakespeare which are generally grouped under that name.[1]

Spencer's citation of Guevara, which seems to have been ignored generally by critics and editors of the play, raises more questions than it answers. The first of these is what analogous contemporary materials can in any sense be said to have served as "sources" for a play that does not offer the usual clues for source study (e.g., specific episodes of plot or lines of dialogue borrowed or imitated). A second question concerns the absorption of antecedent texts by any cultural artifact and the technology of tracking such absorption. As Fredric Jameson has reminded us, "we never really confront a text immediately, in all its freshness as a thing-in-itself. Rather, texts come before us as the always-already-read; we apprehend them through sedimented layers of previous interpretations, or—if the text is brand-new—through the sedimented reading habits and categories developed by those inherited interpretive traditions."[2]

This essay began as a paper presented in the seminar on "Tragedy and Death" at the 1992 annual meeting of the Shakespeare Association of America in Kansas City. I am particularly grateful to John W. Velz, Barbara Mowat, David Bevington, and John Drakakis; to my colleague Professor David Kelly, Department of Classics, Montclair State University; and to the referees for *Shakespeare Quarterly* for their invaluable suggestions and encouragement.

[1] T.J.B. Spencer, "Shakespeare and the Elizabethan Romans," *Shakespeare Survey* 10 (1957): 27–38, esp. 31–32.

[2] Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, NY, 1981), 9.

Jameson's remarks suggest complications beyond those of reader response and indicate that the identification of "source" in any cultural production is often a convoluted procedure indeed. Spencer was correct in saying that *Titus Andronicus* offered its original audience "the usual political lessons" for which they turned to Roman history in the first place. But, perhaps because Guevara's text is represented on Hellowes's title page as primarily a work of moral instruction,[3] Spencer dismissed his own discovery with a characteristically witty but uncharacteristically wrong guess: "The play does not assume a political situation known to Roman history; it is, rather, a summary of Roman politics. It is not so much that any particular set of political institutions is assumed in *Titus*, but rather that it includes *all* the political institutions that Rome ever had. The author seemed anxious, not to get it all right, but to get it all in."[4]

Spencer's reading leaves us with a *Titus* whose Rome is assumed to have been entirely fictional because it was apparently unidentifiable. Such a fictional Rome is not in itself a bad thing; as Robert Weimann cautions us, we should not "ignore or minimize the fictional status of theatrical discourse."[5] But *Titus* has continued to challenge readers to trace its sources, and the work of critics who have rightly resisted consigning it to an entirely fictional status has produced a bricolage Roman context patched together out of various bits of literary and historical lore.[6] Even the most careful

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See also Jonathan Goldberg, "Speculations: *Macbeth* and source," and Robert Weimann's cautionary response, "Towards a literary theory of ideology: mimesis, representation, authority," both in *Shakespeare Reproduced: The Text in History and Ideology*, Jean E. Howard and Marion F. O'Connor, eds. (London and New York, 1987), 242–64 and 265–72, respectively.

[3] The title page reads: "A Chronicle, conteyning the liues of tenne Emperours of Rome. Wherein are discouered, their beginnings, proceedings, and endings, worthie to be read, marked, and remembred. Wherein are also conteyned Lawes of speciall profite and policie. Sentences of singular shortnesse and sweetenesse. Orations of great grauitie and Wisedome. Letters of rare learning and eloquence. Examples of vices carefully to be auoyded, and notable paternes of vertue fruitfull to be followed. Compiled by the most famous Syr Anthonie of Gueuara, Bishop of Mondonnedo, Preacher, Chronicler, and counsellour to the Emperour Charles the fift: and translated out of Spanish into English, by Edward Hellowes, Groome of her Maiesties Leashe. Hereunto is also annexed a table, recapitulating such particularities, as are in this booke mentioned. Imprinted at London for Ralphe Newberrie dwelling in Fleetestrete. Anno Gratiæ 1577." Guevara was a Roman Catholic priest, interested primarily in promoting Christian values: the other work for which he was known in England was *Archontorologion*, or *The Diall of Princes* (translated into English by Thomas North and printed by Bernard Alsop in 1619), a compilation of the moral writings of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, "Declaring what Excellency consisteth in a Prince that is a good Christian: and what euils attend on him that is a cruell Tirant."

[4] Spencer, 32. Recently critics such as Robert S. Miola, in "*Titus Andronicus* and the Mythos of Shakespeare's Rome" (*Shakespeare Studies* 14 [1981]: 85–98), and Maurice Charney, in *Titus Andronicus* (Hemel Hempstead, UK, 1990), have likewise attempted to locate *Titus*'s "historicity" by suggesting a hybrid Elizabethan-Roman point of view.

[5] Weimann in Howard and O'Connor, eds., 269.

[6] Earlier attempts to identify the play's "sources" have yielded an array of less than satisfactory nominations, aside from the well-known echoes of Ovid, Seneca, and Virgil—that is, literary analogues. Even Geoffrey Bullough hedges every suggestion, noting how little may be said with certainty about Shakespeare's acquisition of the plot concerning the Goths and Aaron, as well as any story about any actual Andronici (*Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, 8 vols. [New York, 1957–75], 6:3–82). The closest parallel texts are a prose story and a ballad printed in an eighteenth-century chapbook owned by the Folger Shakespeare Library. As Bullough says, these are as likely to have followed Shakespeare's play as to have preceded it, although, having said that, he then goes on to treat the prose version as "the main

critics have assented to Spencer's conclusion. Robert S. Miola, for example, says that "any approach which seeks to fit the various incarnations of Shakespeare's Rome to a single political or theological Procrustean bed does violence to the heterogeneity of the city's origins and character,"[7] not because the play's historicity remains hidden but because the city's does.

The project of *Titus*'s historical recuperation is further problematized by the fact that the Hellowes-Guevara 1577 *Chronicle* was itself based on another text, one that was already available in English circa 1550.[8] That original, Herodian's *De imperatorum Romanorum praeclarè gesti*, had been translated into English by Nicholas Smyth as *The history of Herodian*, from the Latin of Angelo Politiano, and issued in quarto by William Coplande (STC 13221) twenty-seven years before the Hellowes-Guevara *Chronicle*.[9] I wish to argue that in the English translation of Herodian's *History* the Rome of *Titus Andronicus* is identifiable. The play's "political situation" includes certain very specific situations represented by Herodian and thus tells of a particularly disastrous period "known to Roman history." Herodian's *History* was certainly known, if not well known. Although the circa 1550 quarto seems not to have been reprinted in the sixteenth century, the *History* resurfaced in three closely timed editions in the mid-seventeenth century, just before the outbreak of the Civil War: a quarto entered in the Stationers' Register on 29 March 1629 (STC 13222) in an English translation by I. M[axwell], a duodecimo copy of the same entered 15 September 1634 (STC 13223), and a Latin octavo entered 3 February 1638 (STC 13220). Thus the *History* cannot be said to have lost interest among English readers; its temporary disappearance from the canons of authorized historiography during Elizabeth's and James's reigns and its triple reemergence during Charles's is itself a subject worth pursuing, but one that lies beyond the scope of this essay.[10]

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source," which "probably goes back to a sixteenth-century original" (6:7). A similarly inchoate list of suggestions is offered in J. C. Maxwell's introduction to the Arden edition of the play ([London, 1953] xxvii–xxxii). Charney also notes that the "exact" historical source is unknown (7), as d → D. J. Palmer, in "The Unspeakable in Pursuit of the Uneatable: Language and Action in *Titus Andronicus*" (*Critical Quarterly* 14 [1972]: 320–39, esp. 323). Palmer offers a lengthy and detailed attempt to link Saturninus (as well as the rest of the imperial family in the play) with the iconography generally associated with Saturn throughout the Renaissance (323–26).

[7] Miola, 95.

[8] This early date is given in the first edition of the *Short Title Catalogue* as approximate and unverified. I am very grateful to Daniel Traister of the University of Pennsylvania Library for expediting the loan of a photocopy of this quarto.

[9] All quotations of Herodian follow Smyth's translation and will be cited parenthetically in the text, with abbreviations silently expanded.

[10] As Margot Heinemann has noted, the texts of classical historians were pressed into (and of course occasionally suppressed from) political service by various Tudor and Stuart interests. Tacitus, for example, "who had first been translated into English in the 1590s and promoted as the favoured historian of Essex, Greville, and the aristocratic critics of absolutist monarchy . . . was deeply distrusted by King James, who thought him favourable to tyrannicide. . . . Although classical republican ideas were an inspiration or a warning, rather than a programme, for dissident aristocrats and intellectuals in early Stuart England, they were not purely nostalgic and backward-looking but survived underground among the classically educated (notably in the Sidney and Neville families) and were to surface again as one strand of revolutionary thought in the 1640s" (" 'Let Rome in Tiber melt': Order and Disorder in

Herodian's *History* constitutes a "con-text" for *Titus Andronicus* in the sense formulated by Francis Barker and Peter Hulme in their discussion of *The Tempest*:

> con-texts are the precondition of the plays' historical and political signification. . . . Source criticism, which might *seem* to militate against autotelic unity by relating the text in question to other texts, in fact only obscures such relationships. . . . In general, the fullness of the play's unity needs protecting from con-textual contamination, so 'sources' are kept at bay except for the odd verbal parallel. But occasionally . . . that unity can only be protected by recourse to a notion of source as explanatory of a feature otherwise aberrant to that posited unity.

The authors explain their formulation in an endnote: "Con-texts with a hyphen, to signify a break from the inequality of the usual text/context relationship. Con-texts are themselves *texts* and must be *read with*: they do not simply make up a background."[11] If we insist on tracking *Titus*'s "sources" in the conventional way, seeking "the odd verbal parallel," we end up where Spencer and others have left us. But accepting Barker and Hulme's "discursive con-text" allows us to avoid the traps inherent in such conventional approaches, the most silencing of which is the requirement of demonstrating not only that Shakespeare *could have* read Herodian but that he actually *did*, marshalling "the odd verbal parallel" as proof. Recognizing Herodian's *History* as a discursive con-text activates an awareness that "each individual text, rather than [being] a meaningful unit in itself, lies at the intersection of different discourses. . . . The text must still be taken as a point of purchase on the discursive field—but in order to demonstrate that, athwart its alleged unity, the text is in fact marked and fissured by the interplay of the discourses that constitute it."[12] Put a bit differently, such a recognition comprises what Foucault in his widely read essay "What Is an Author?" called "returning to" a particular discourse, which he describes as "always a return to a text in itself, specifically, to a primary and unadorned text with particular attention to those things registered in the interstices of the text, its gaps and absences." Foucault's essay concludes with a list of desiderata for literary inquiry: "New questions will be heard: 'What are the modes of existence of this discourse?' 'Where does it come from; how is it circulated; who controls it?' 'What placements are determined for possible subjects?' 'Who can fulfill these diverse functions of the subject?' "[13] These questions encircle a "return to" Herodian as a discursive con-text—i.e., a historical source—for *Titus Andronicus*, distinct from previously recognized literary or literal sources like Ovid and Seneca. Not only did Shakespeare "get it all in," he also "got it all right."

Herodian's *History* comes closer than Guevara's text to Shakespeare's interest in dynastic issues in *Titus Andronicus*. Although this preoccupation was sustained in one form or another throughout Shakespeare's career, it

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'Antony and Cleopatra' " in *Antony and Cleopatra*, John Drakakis, ed., New Casebook Series [Basingstoke and London, 1994], 166–81, esp. 175–76).

[11] Barker and Hulme, "Nymphs and reapers heavily vanish: the discursive con-texts of *The Tempest*" in *Alternative Shakespeares*, John Drakakis, ed. (London, 1985), 191–205, esp. 195–96 and 236, n. 7.

[12] Barker and Hulme in *Alternative Shakespeares*, 197.

[13] Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, NY, 1977), 113–38, esp. 135 and 138.

seems to have centered in particular ways during the early stages. Witness Shakespeare's contemporaneous concerns in the First Tetralogy, where, as in *Titus*, the author inflects the material of history to show a society in the process of fragmentation, though here he is somewhat constrained by the fact that his subject was the English monarchy. In the Roman plays (not only *Titus* but also *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus*) the political emphasis is, with greater safety because with greater political and historical distance, deflected onto a Roman rather than an English form of government.[14] Reading Herodian does not yield very many "odd verbal parallel[s]," but it does reveal certain incidents and composites which suggest that Shakespeare was aware of the *History*.

Herodian narrates a sixty-year period when imperial Rome was ruled by an Afro-Asiatic dynasty, its Roman religion converted to a Syrian theocracy spearheaded by one Julia Domna, a politically clever and ambitious *materfamilias* (whose influence is understated by Guevara); her son, Geta; and her step-son, Bassianus. Bassianus murdered his half-brother and proceeded to rule, under the names of Caracalla and Antoninus, an honorific surname adopted by all emperors from Bassianus onward. He was, as Spencer said, one of the more vicious tyrants in Roman history. Guevara makes Caracalla not the same person as Bassianus but the unacknowledged illegitimate *son* of Bassianus,[15] thereby distending and diluting the narrative of intrafamilial violence. Herodian's Caracalla, Antoninus, and Bassianus are one person, a single composite ruler of extraordinary amorality, comparable to Nero and Caligula. In Herodian we find together in a single text characters named Bassianus and Saturninus, and a representation of Julia Domna (more victim than villain in Guevara) that provides an apt model for Tamora. The Andronici, Aaron, and Tamora's sons may have been fictional, but the Rome they inhabit in this play was certainly not.

I

Smyth's translation of Herodian was in every sense an authorized quarto. Coplande's imprint on the title page bears the license: "*Cum gratia & priuilegio regali ad imprimendum solum.*" Smyth's long dedicatory epistle is addressed "To the ryghte honorable Lorde, Wyllyam Earle of Pe[m]broke, Lorde President of the Kyng and Queenes Maiesties Counsayle, in the Marches of Wales, and one of theyr Maiesties most honorable preuie Counsaile. . . . " He begins by announcing his intention to recognize the contributions of historiographers to the cause of learning:

> Amongest all those, that haue by theyr wrytynge, beautifyed the Greke & Latin tonge, none are supposed . . . so much to haue profited mortall affaires, as Historiographers, who haue faythfully reduced into writyng the actes & deades of such, as in fame (either good or euyll) haue passed thys transitorye lyfe. . . . Chieflye, through the manyfold examples, bothe good, and euyll, conteyned in Histories, all sortes of people may attayne by them, to more knowledge in shorte space, then otherwyse they might in al theyr liues, if y' same were much longer then the common age of man. . . .
>
> (sig. Aii)

[14] I am grateful to John Drakakis for suggesting this connection between the First Tetralogy and *Titus* and for suggesting as well that the Roman plays together constitute a "Third Tetralogy."

[15] Hellowes, "The Life of the Emperour Heliogabalus," *Chronicle*, 374–77.

The lessons of Herodian's history, "not before (I thynke) brought into oure Englyshe tonge" (sig. Aii^{v}), form the ground of this translation. Herodian claims the authority of an eyewitness to much of his subject matter. This claim may well be believed, since his history covers a period of only some sixty years (180–238 A.D.): "And when by the space of lx. yeres, the Citie of Rome had sustained more gouernours then for the time sufficed, it came to passe, that many straunge thinges and worthy admiracion chaunced" (sig. Bi^{v}). Here is the lesson (possibly one of Spencer's "usual political" ones) that Tudor England would have learned from Herodian.

The historical Rome that failed to stave off the fifth-century Gothic invasion had already long since destroyed itself from within. The story of Rome's self-destruction began under Bassianus's father, Septimius Severus, who had gained control of the city without significant opposition during an interregnum when Rome had no central leadership (193 A.D.). His main rival for this control was one Niger, a former consul and governor of Syria. Niger's belated (and futile) efforts to defeat Severus involved the deployment of troops of Moroccan javelin-throwers, famous (says Herodian) for bravery, brutality, and savagery, and in Herodian's account Shakespeare might have found inspiration for his Moor.[16] Severus's most famous exploit was the subjection of Britain, to which Herodian devotes detailed attention. While in Britain, in the midst of this prolonged and ultimately successful campaign, he died of disease and old age, despite the malign efforts of his son Bassianus, who "laboured to perswade hys fathers Physycions, and mynysters to rydde in anye case, wyth all celerytye possyble, the olde man oute of the world: untyll that Seuerus, beyng rather throughe thoughte, then syckenes, consumed, eanded hys life" (sig. Niii).[17] At first Bassianus and Geta ruled together "as Conqueroures of Brytayne" (sig. Niii^{v}), but their partnership was sustained only for the sake of appearances; following Severus's death, they returned to Rome,

> vsyng in their iorney continuall rancor and debate. For they neuer lodged in one Inne, or vsed one table: suspecting daily, all theyr mete, and drynke, leste eyther of them preuenting other, should couertly in their seruices, worke hys seate wyth poyson. . . . They chose besydes, eyther vnto hym selfe a sundrye Garde, and neuer came togithers, unles it were some tyme for a lytle whyle to be seen of the people.
>
> (sig. Oi)

After a week-long funeral observance for their father, they resumed hostilities, "where they dayly exercysed priuye grudges, lying in awayte one for an other, and ymagynyng al y' meanes, wherby they myght entrappe eyther other. Fynallye, they omytted nothynge, wherewyth eyther of them might

[16] Both Maxwell, in a line gloss at 4.2.20 of the Arden edition, and Grace Starry West, in "Going by the Book: Classical Allusions in *Titus Andronicus*" (*Studies in Philology* 79 [1982]: 62–77, esp. 70), note the reference to "Moorish javelins" in the line from Horace's *Odes* (I.22) that Titus inscribes on the bundle of arrows presented to Chiron and Demetrius, and both consider this a reference to Aaron. But the Moorish reputation for javelin-throwing was a commonplace assumption: Herodian mentions it at several points, as does Horace.

[17] Readers will notice the similarity between the language of this passage and that of Richard's aside regarding Gaunt's illness (*Richard II*, 1.4.54). All quotations of Shakespeare follow the *Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston, 1974).

destroy, and defeate other, and aspire to thole Monarchye by hym selfe" (sig. Oii^{v}).

Shortly after their return to Rome, and despite Julia's efforts to reconcile them, the brothers agreed to divide the empire, Bassianus retaining the European portion (including, of course, Rome) and Geta the Asiatic. But this resolution failed, inevitably, as any dual government is likely to fail, and for the most ordinary of reasons:

> their rancor, and enuy, encreased daily. For when any Capitaines, or Magistrates, were elected, either of the brethren, acted as his own frende chiefly. Or when they sate in iudgement, they helde euer dyuerse opinyons, to the intollerable domage, & losse, of the party, who had y' matter in controuersye. They omytted besides no kynde of secrete wyles, and entrappynges, labourynge to entyse eyther others Cookes, Butlars, and Cupbearers, to poyson theyr Mayster.
>
> (sig. Oiii)

Finally Bassianus grew impatient and took both matters and daggers into his own hands: "Wherfore, sodeynlye breakynge open hys Brothers Chaumbre dore, he moste cruelly there slew hym, vpon hys Moothers lap" (sig. Oiii^{v}). He then fled into his own camp, spreading the tale (reminiscent of Edmund's intrigue against Edgar in *King Lear*) that he had just barely escaped "a maruaylouse daunger, and Treason, of a malycyouse manner, hys enemye, for so he named hys brother" (sig. Oiii^{v}). In justifying his actions to his people, Bassianus cited several historical precedents for "kynred"-killers, naming "Romulus hym selfe, the buylder of this Citye," who "forbare not his Brother, which deluded hys workes of so greate importaunce." Continuing, he lists "Germanicus the brother of Nero, and Tytus the brother of Domitian" and mentions that "Marcus the Philosopher, did not suffre y' checkes of his Son in lawe" (sig. Oiiii^{v}). The juxtaposition of the names Titus and Marcus here could have suggested those of the principal Andronici. Bassianus next had all the surviving friends, allies, and servants of Geta put to death, and indeed "anye one, which was but of lytle acquayntaunce with Geta" (sig. Oiiii^{v}). Herodian then narrates a reign of terror in which Bassianus destroyed every artifact that had given any pleasure to Geta. Bassianus also slew every senator, every sympathizer, every member of the nobility, and all of the Vestal Virgins; the victims included his own wife, a few of his cousins, and all of the citizens who had hissed at a certain player whom Bassianus had found amusing (sig. Pi). Having exhausted both himself and his supply of enemies, he departed Rome for the provinces, leaving the city without any government at all.

Bassianus's wife, unnamed in Herodian's account, was no accidental victim of the bloodbath. This marriage to the daughter of Plautianus, one of his Libyan compatriots, had been arranged by Severus some years before he died. It was an unhappy union, and to avenge Bassianus's neglect and daily death threats (sig. Mii), Plautianus hired a tribune out of the praetorian guard to kill both Bassianus and Severus. This tribune's name was Saturninus, and he too was Syrian by birth (sigs. Miii–Ni). The plot failed when Saturninus betrayed his employer and we read no more of him in Herodian, but the names of the characters may have lingered in Shakespeare's memory; perhaps the name *Saturninus* sounded more "Ro-

man" than that of the historical *Geta* for the brother of Shakespeare's Bassianus.[18] If *Saturninus* is indeed a substitution for *Geta*, Shakespeare simply reversed the personae of the brothers.

One further episode from Herodian may be worth mentioning. Although most of the material Shakespeare would have absorbed from the narrative has been described so far in terms of names and characterization, at least one segment of Shakespeare's plot seems modeled on Herodian. The second half of 2.3 in *Titus*—the scene in which Aaron tricks Quintus and Martius into the pit where they are framed for Bassianus's death—is suggested in Herodian's narrative: during a review of troops in Alexandria, Bassianus took revenge on that city's army for its failure to pay him due respect. He ordered the youth of the city to assemble in a certain field outside the city walls, promising to constitute them as a phalanx in honor of their late prince, Alexander.

> When thei were so assembled, he commaunded them, to separate themselfes in bandes, a greate space one from an other, that he mighte electe oute of them, the apteste ages, statures, and personages, for the warres. The yonge men creditynge the same, and perswaded wyth a coloure of truthe, thrughe the greate honoure, he had before shewed towardes theyre deade Prince, resorted thither in many companyes, bringinge with them, their Parentes and Bretherne, with ioyouse acclamacions & shoutes. Then . . . [Bassianus], went about eche companye, vewing them, and praisinge this and that, in euerye one as he liked, vntil his whole host had compassed them vnwares, and loking for no such thinge. And when he perceaued them al to be enclosed with his armie, & entangled, as it were with nettes, him selfe came furth with his garde, and gaue a watche word vnto the Souldiours: who furthwith ran vpon the people, and slewe with meruaylous slaughter, the naked, and vnarmed youth, & al other that wer present. Of the Souldiors, some were occupied in murdering onely, other some buried the dead corpses, in huge pyttes, & coueringe them with earth againe, raysed a meruaylous highe hil. Many were drawen half dead into y' pittes, & many were buryed quicke. There perished besides very many of the Souldiours them selfes. For they, which had any breth remaining, and not fully lost theyr natural strength, clipping the Souldiors, which ranne vpon them, drewe the same also, into the pittes wyth them.
>
> (sig. Piii^{v})

In the end Bassianus was slain by a member of his own guard, one Martialis (Shakespeare's Marcus?), the surviving brother of yet another of his victims.

[18] Shakespearean editors, baffled by all attempts to identify Saturninus and any link between that name and Bassianus, ought to consult Herodian. The name *Saturninus* is mentioned just once in Dio, but in that instance he is the joint-prefect with Plautianus, who preceded Bassianus's father in power and whose daughter married Bassianus; that Saturninus was killed about ten years before Bassianus came to power. It is, in any case, very unlikely that Dio's fragments would have been known to Shakespeare, since the two versions by R. Stephanus (1548 and 1551) were in Latin and stopped short of Bassianus's reign, and a later one in Latin by Leunclavius (1592) contained only fragments of Books LXXVII–LXXIX (*Dio's Roman History*, ed. and trans. Ernest Cary, 9 vols. [1927; rpt. Cambridge, MA, 1955], 1:xxvi–xxvii and 9:203–435). It is also possible that Geta's name suggested *Goth* to Shakespeare; in fact early histories of the Goths refer generally to the scattered tribes of Goths as "Getae" or "Geticae." But it is more likely that the suggestion of *Goths* comes from Bassianus's preference, among his many armies, for "y' Germanic horsemen" (sig. Qii) with whom he surrounded himself in his final days, *Goths* having been identified historically with marauding Germanic tribes (see *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2d ed., "Goth," sb. 1).

The manner of his death is worth noting: returning from worship at the Temple of Diana in Mesopotamia, he stopped, as Herodian narrates,

> to do the requisites of nature. Then Martialis, (which awaited euery conuenient howre) seyng the Emperour alone, & all other farre of, made haste towardes him asthough he were called for some businesse, & running vpon him unwares, as he was vntrussing his pointes, stabbed him in with a dagger, which he of purpose, secretly bare in hys sleaue.
>
> (sig. Qii)

The reign of Bassianus lasted a total of six years and ended, with humiliating irony, in an act of defecation.

II

Post-Derridean critics such as Jonathan Goldberg have sensitized readers—perhaps overly—to the pitfalls that attend not only what used to be understood as "source study" but also, or especially, to the language deployed in those studies: terms such as *source*, *analogue*, *antecedent*, *parallel text*, *influence*, and the like are either suspect or hopelessly indeterminate. Such terms suggest a hierarchy that is in turn undone by the challenge of radical indeterminacy, although such a "hierarchy" is itself an interpretive rather than an inevitable construct.[19] When these semantic challenges are combined with new-historicist interrogations of "historicity" (another troublesome word), the likelihood of saying anything concrete about Shakespeare's recycling of antecedent literary or historical texts, whose examination or acknowledgment might make some significant difference in the way we read a play, diminishes exponentially. Yet faced with a text, such as Herodian's *History*, that demands consideration in relation to *Titus* (and would so demand even if other historiographical "sources" had already been identified as certain), does the reader dismiss the project because any and all "decidability" has been theoretically undermined? With *Titus* such a project seems all the more problematic because the date of the play, its original performance conditions, and other important data are as uncertain as its historiographical models.[20] One example of the chain of interpretive logic which has obscured *Titus*'s con-textualization in recorded Roman history will serve to illustrate how we have arrived at this impasse between a Spencerian fictionality and a Goldbergian indeterminacy. Because the prose version in the eighteenth-century Folger chapbook (see note 6, above) names its emperor "Theodosius," critics have widely assumed that Shakespeare followed this lead, that he substituted a fictional Saturninus for Theodosius and set the action during the last years of the Empire, just before one of the early Gothic invasions in 410 A.D. Such an assignment positions the prose story as a source, not as a sequel, and constitutes a critical anachronism requiring the existence of an unknown earlier version of which the chapbook text would be a later copy.

[19] On this matter, see especially Michael D. Bristol's important discussion in *Shakespeare's America, America's Shakespeare* (London and New York, 1990), 116–17; see also Goldberg in Howard and O'Connor, eds., passim.

[20] In addition to the play's numerous modern editions, see also R. F. Hill, "The Composition of *Titus Andronicus*," *SS* 10 (1957): 60–70.

Other than Spencer's suggestion of Hellowes-Guevara (which he then dismisses), no specific historical material has been aligned with *Titus*—no record of particular Goths or particular Romans. Thus it is all the more remarkable that there has recently been so much excellent critical discussion of ideology in *Titus*,[21] given that the identity of the represented ideology has not been established. All of Shakespeare's usually accepted classical readings long antedate the famous "Sack of Rome," leading critics to believe that no history of the late Roman Empire was available to him. Among those works available in English during the early part of Shakespeare's career, Tacitus's *Histories* and *Annals* (translated into English in 1591 and 1598, respectively) and Pliny's *Natural History* (translated into English in 1566) merely mention among various Germanic tribes certain "Gothones" (Tacitus) or "Gutones" (Pliny), and in any case both historians, as well as Suetonius (whose *Lives of the Caesars* was not translated until 1606), wrote during the first century A.D., long before any "Goths" became a threat to Roman borders or territories. Moreover, in Shakespeare's play it is the Romans who are victorious, and nothing in the play indicates who started the war or who invaded whose territories.

It may be said with some safety, then, that Shakespeare's "Goths" are not the same people who overthrew Rome in the fifth century and indeed may not represent any particular historical Goths at all. The term *Goth* was deployed generically in Shakespeare's time to signify "barbarian," especially barbarians of Eastern origin and of fierce reputation. Donne, in "A Valediction: of the Book," employs the image of "ravenous / Vandals and Goths" to signal the end of civilization and especially of literacy and learning.[22] In *As You Like It*, Touchstone compares his displacement in Arden with that of "honest Ovid . . . among the Goths" (3.3.8–9), alluding to Ovid's description of his banishment among the Getae (formerly identified with "Goths") in the *Pontic Epistles*. Lear, in banishing Cordelia, compares her to "The barbarous Scythian, / Or he that makes his generation messes / To gorge his appetite" (1.1.116–18), incorporating a reminder of the reputation of invaders from the East for intrafamilial cannibalism, which is, of course, reflected in Tamora's unwitting consumption of her children.[23]

Herodian supplies the connective material: long before any actual Gothic invasions, the Rome that was so popular in the late-Elizabethan imagination was effectively undone, un-Romanized by several generations of Afro-Asiatic emperors, beginning with Septimius Severus, a Libyan (193–211 A.D.), and his second wife, Julia Domna, a Syrian; and continuing through Bassianus (211–17 A.D.); his successor, Macrinus, an African from Mauretania (217–18 A.D.); and Elagabalus (218–22 A.D.), grandson of Julia

[21] See especially Emily C. Bartels, "Making More of the Moor: Aaron, Othello, and Renaissance Refashionings of Race," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 41 (1990): 433–54; John D. Cox, *Shakespeare and the Dramaturgy of Power* (Princeton, NJ, 1989); and Ania Loomba, *Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama* (Manchester, UK, 1989).

[22] *The Songs and Sonets of John Donne*, ed. Theodore Redpath, 2d ed. (New York, 1983), 247-52, esp. ll. 24–25.

[23] I am grateful to John W. Velz for the references to *As You Like It* and *King Lear*. Although Scythian invasions of the area around the Black Sea, where the Greeks encountered them, apparently ceased by the end of the second century B.C., their reputation for barbarism was easily conflated with that of the various "Goths" who were active during the first several centuries A.D.

Domna's sister. The dynasty finally ended with Alexander Severus (222–35 A.D.), a pacifist whose weak military command ultimately led to the return of "European" leadership under Maximinus (235–38 A.D.), who was born in Thrace. Of the three contemporary records of the late Roman Empire from the reign of Marcus Aurelius (161–80 A.D.) through that of Gordian III (238–44 A.D.)—an extraordinary period of internal destruction and disintegration by an Afro-Asiatic force that ruled from within Roman borders—only Herodian's (rivalling in its detail Plutarch's *Lives*) was extant in English during Shakespeare's time.[24] The Roman history that Tudor England would have read about in Herodian was not the masculine, European, Roman history of Marcus Brutus, Julius Caesar, and Marc Antony; it was not the Rome on which England in part rested its own cultural genealogy. Rather it was a Rome dominated by female influence[25] that subverted everything understood by the ideology of *romanitas* and governed by a miscegenized culture; it was a political anomaly—perhaps a

[24] The other texts covering this period include: Dio Cassius's *Roman History*, fragmentary and in any case not translated into English until the twentieth century (its sixteenth-century Latin fragments do not extend to the reign of Bassianus, although later editions do); and the extremely popular, anonymous *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, which was known throughout Europe in Latin codices (six editions from 1475 to 1518), including those owned by Petrarch and Erasmus, but was never translated into English until the twentieth century. Its details differ from those in Herodian: it does not mention Saturninus; it diminishes Julia Domna's role (although she is identified as a notorious adulteress); and it underemphasizes the conversion of Rome to Syrian religion. See the bilingual edition by David Magie for the Loeb Classical Library (3 vols. [Cambridge, MA, 1922], Vols. 1 and 2).

[25] Julia Domna's extraordinary influence during Bassianus's reign is generally acknowledged by historians and translators of Herodian. See Edward C. Echols, trans., Herodian of Antioch, *A History of the Roman Empire from the Death of Marcus Aurelius to the Accession of Gordian III* (Berkeley, 1961), 5; and ed. and trans. C. R. Whittaker, *Herodian*, 2 vols., Loeb Classical Library (London and Cambridge, MA, 1969), 2:367n.

[26] It is important to recognize that modern interpretations of "Elizabethan" attitudes may be more modern than Elizabethan. As Martin Bernal argues in "The Fabrication of Ancient Greece 1785–1985," the first volume of the provocative and controversial *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization* (2 vols. [New Brunswick, NJ, 1987]): "For 18th- and 19th-century Romantics and racists it was simply intolerable for Greece, which was seen not merely as the epitome of Europe but also as its pure childhood, to have been the result of the mixture of native Europeans and colonizing Africans and Semites" (1:2 [with italics deleted]); in the Renaissance "no one questioned the fact that the Greeks had been the pupils of the Egyptians, in whom there was an equal, if not more passionate, interest" (1:24), and who were "deeply respected for their antiquity and well-preserved ancient religion and philosophy" (1:23). If Elizabethan England inherited the Classical period's acceptance of Greece's Afro-Asiatic roots, we may need to reevaluate our assessments of Shakespeare's representations of Moors—not only of Aaron but more obviously of Othello and Portia's Moroccan suitor in *The Merchant of Venice*—all of whose very noble traits are misrecognized by their Italianate fellow characters. It must be noted that Bernal's thesis has been challenged not only on points of historical accuracy but also for its failure to recognize a distinction between "objective" and "subjective" ethnicity. The former entails "a biological category which defines groups of human beings in terms of their shared physical characteristics resulting from a common gene pool," whereas the latter identifies "the ideology of an ethnic group by defining as shared its ancestors, history, language, mode of production, religion, customs, culture, etc., and is therefore a social construct, not a fact of nature" (Edith Hall, "When Is a Myth Not a Myth? Bernal's 'Ancient Model,' " *Arethusa* 25 [1992]: 181–201, esp. 185). Herodian's history (along with that of Dio and the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*) affirms that between 183 and 236 A.D. Rome was governed by an Afro-Asiatic dynasty, in terms that satisfy both of Hall's important distinctions of ethnicity. How the Elizabethan heirs to this history interpreted that ethnic admixture is a question that merits further careful consideration beyond that undertaken by

political anathema[26]—to its Elizabethan heirs. Thus in Herodian we find not only some of those names that have baffled *Titus*'s editors but, perhaps more important, we find a slice of Roman history which saw Rome dominated from within by "barbarians"[27]—its values compromised and its pollution led and orchestrated by a politically ambitious and calculating matriarch (mirrored in Tamora) and by a dynasty of African rulers. *Titus Andronicus* may be Shakespeare's attempt to accommodate that long and problematic episode in the history of a "Rome" that England preferred not to recognize.

III

The horrors that the play represents—however shocking they may be to our supposedly kinder, gentler culture—would probably not have shocked an audience regularly entertained by what Steven Mullaney calls the "dramaturgy of the margins," by which "the horizon of community was made visible, the limits of definition, containment, and control made manifest," and which included "hospitals and brothels, . . . madhouses, scaffolds of execution, prisons, and lazar-houses,"[28] not to mention the various animal and human atrocities occurring virtually next door to the Theatre in bear-baiting and cockfighting dens, and similarly heterodox, disorderly, or "incontinent" cultural entertainments. As John W. Velz has pointed out, "The most important edifice in Shakespeare's Rome, its wall, is seldom spoken of by scholars. To Shakespeare, Rome is above all *urbs* in its etymological sense, the enclave of civilization ringed round with a protective wall, outside of which the dark forces of barbarism lurk."[29] Evidently one did not have to venture very far outside those walls, if at all, to find barbarism lurking.

A *margin* is not only linear, defining a city's limits, but also spatial, a topology inhabited and informed by a social behavior and a political status. It is a space meant to delimit indefinition, ambiguity, and flux, to define and contain by describing a boundary. A margin is itself, as Mullaney has argued, a locus for alteration. In the terms by which a polis defines itself, *margin* represents the verge, the limits by which one is citizen or alien, "one of us" or "one of them." Moreover, as the anthropologist Mary Douglas has argued, "all margins are dangerous. If they are pulled this way or that the shape of fundamental experience is altered. Any structure of ideas is

Bartels and Loomba (see note 21, above), and by Michael Neill, who, in contrast with Bartels, argues that racial distinction is one of the clearest, least ambiguous representations of "difference" in Shakespearean and other Renaissance drama; see "Unproper Beds: Race, Adultery, and the Hideous in *Othello*," *SQ* 40 (1989): 383–412. Taken together, the works cited by Neill and Bartels constitute a substantial annotated bibliography of current scholarship on the problematics of interpreting representations of race in Renaissance drama.

[27] Echols reminds us that Herodian was himself a Syrian living in Roman exile (and, interestingly, writing in Greek) and adds that "his early association with the Syrian dynasty at Rome would account for the amazing 'Romanness' of his outlook. Herodian is so thoroughly patriotic and so Romanized that he can speak of his fellow non-Romans as barbarians and can offer an analysis of his fellow Syrians that is thoroughly unflattering" (5).

[28] Mullaney, *The Place of the Stage: License, Play, and Power in Renaissance England* (Chicago and London, 1988), 31.

[29] Velz, "The Ancient World in Shakespeare: Authenticity or Anachronism? A Retrospect," *SS* 31 (1978): 1–12, esp. 11.

vulnerable at its margins."[30] The reason for this metamorphosis, as Foucault has explained, is that margins, or boundaries, define the licit, the permissible, the orthodox.[31] Margins contain cultural definitions and ideologies. Altering margins can in some ways prove more dangerous than penetrating or transgressing them. If corrected, a transgression stands as a violation of an orthodoxy which is retained; if uncorrected, it has the far more serious effect of actually altering that orthodoxy by changing the definitions of licit and illicit, that is, the definitions of a culture itself. The contestation of the meaning and practice of *romanitas*— triggered in the play by Tamora's "captivity," quickly transformed into power, and Aaron's unservile service—unleashes alterations in that very model of what had previously constituted *romanitas*, that is, in Titus himself. Nothing less than the definition of Roman cultural values is at stake in this play. "Love is not love / Which alters when it alteration finds," Shakespeare writes in Sonnet 116; neither does *romanitas* remain *romanitas*.

Rome in *Titus Andronicus*, as represented by Saturninus, attempted to subvert the alien Goths by incorporating them into Roman citizenship and Roman values through union with Tamora. But the dismembered polity, "headless Rome" (1.1.186), split from the beginning of the play by antagonistic brothers, has already been fractured beyond any unified set of values. Since gender and racial distinctions are two especially visible tactics for defining culture, Shakespeare's use of a feminized and racialized dialectic to render Rome's cultural disintegration concrete enables his audience to "see" the consequences of abandoning cultural definitions.

The crisis of Roman cultural definition is illuminated from the very start of the play through the contesting claims for "piety," defined separately by Tamora and Titus (1.1.106–26) as "vengeance" and as proper burial rites. We immediately find that the problem of definitions has spread to members of Titus's own family, as when Titus disowns and kills Mutius. In his refusal to allow Mutius's burial, Titus enacts the definitional crisis, a process that Marcus recognizes: "Thou art a Roman, be not barbarous" (1.1.378); Roman values are themselves revealed as the site of contestation. Since one hallmark of *romanitas* is filial obedience, Mutius's refusal to remand Lavinia to Saturninus seems nothing less than treason to Titus. But Rome's belief in its own laws is equally compelling, and Lavinia was legally contracted to Bassianus. In order to resolve this particular conflict, Titus kills the "traitor," disclaiming kinship: Mutius is deliberately misrecognized, made other, alien. As Titus says to Lucius: "Nor thou, nor he, are any sons of mine, / My sons would never so dishonor me. / Traitor, restore Lavinia to the Emperor" (1.1.294–96). Only as an alien can Mutius be denied proper ritual burial in the family tomb (1.1.349–54); since he is an Andronicus, Titus's refusal to allow Mutius proper burial is called by his brother Marcus "impiety" (l. 355), the charge now coming not from Tamora, as at 1.1.130, but from within the family.

The crisis of identification or definition spreads in yet another direction when Saturninus establishes Tamora as his empress. Tamora and her sons, former prisoners of war, are redefined as members of the community.

[30] Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London, 1966), 121.

[31] See Foucault, "A Preface to Transgression," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, 29–52.

Tamora's empowerment enables her to avenge her son's death, but she does so as a new-made Roman, and the distinction of *otherness* is thereby obliterated. For the remainder of the play, with the exception of Aaron, the permanent alien,[32] all participants in this internecine slaughter are either Romans or neo-Romans by definition, and the entire community, in a chaos of kin-killing and self-mutilation, turns on itself in the ultimate pattern of annihilation. Later in his career, Shakespeare gave a very specific language to this kind of situation: in *Lear* we hear about "Humanity . . . [preying] on itself, / Like monsters of the deep" (4.2.49–50), and in *Coriolanus*, Rome is again defined by images of dismemberment and is three times warned against *omophagia* (1.1.85, 3.1.288–92, and 4.2.50–51).

At the play's start, little more than halfway through 1.1, we first see the consequences of contestation between separate communities; as the play proceeds, the arena narrows to a specifically Roman venue, contracting yet again into the smaller arena of a single family. Before the play has ended, that arena will contract still further to its most microcosmic version, that of the individual: Titus himself will become the locus, the site of contestation, and the divisions we have already witnessed between communities, within a community, and within a family will become manifest in the literal dismemberment of the patriarch and his only daughter, and the beheading of two of his three remaining sons.[33] Martius and Quintus die from their dismemberment, as does Alarbus; but the images presented by both Titus and Lavinia are images of life-in-death, terrifying indistinctions that pollute by their very failure to separate the living from the dead, which is the aim and the design of burial rites and mourning practices. Critics have struggled to define Titus's killing of Lavinia in a range of meanings from cruelty to mercy; but within the play, even Saturninus calls him "unnatural and unkind" (5.3.48). Moral evaluations aside (and who among those present, except perhaps for Lucius and Marcus, is qualified to make any?), Titus completes Lavinia's definition as "dead," recounting the sequence of events to Tamora: " 'twas Chiron and Demetrius: / They ravish'd her, and cut away her tongue, / And they, 'twas they, that did her all this wrong" (ll. 56–58).

Ironically, the "headlessness" by which Rome is identified at the opening of the play is filled in by the image of Aaron's punishment at the end of the play. Set "breast-deep," "fast'ned in the earth" (ll. 179 and 183), he *appears* to be a disembodied head; "planted," he epitomizes the paradox of an unregenerable polity. While he is not the corn or seed Marcus hopes to gather, *his* seed, half Moor and half Roman-Goth, will eventually destroy what is left of Rome (4.2.175–80). By that time (and indeed before the play is over) Rome will have lost all vestiges of its political identity as well. Titus

[32] Grace Starry West points out that Aaron is "the black man with the Jewish name" (71), thus anchoring Aaron's alienation via two identities demonized in Shakespeare's time. Leslie A. Fiedler, in *The Stranger in Shakespeare* (London, 1973), was the first to offer this insight (178).

[33] Miola focuses primarily on Lavinia's rape as the iconic representation of Rome's destruction: "Since Lavinia is portrayed more as the daughter of Titus and the sister of Lucius than as the wife of Bassianus, the rape is a direct assault on the Andronici family and the Roman virtue which it represents. . . . Such violation of the family amounts to a violation of the larger order in human affairs. . . . Instead of beginning the Roman Empire, the rape of Lavinia signals the end of whatever civilization Rome possesses and the triumph of lawless savagery" (88–89).

will have had a hand in that, too, having sent off Lucius, "the turned forth" (l. 109), to rally the Gothic army to march against what was once his city and against a woman who was once their queen. All cultural definitions are nullified in this play by the confusion or neglect of cultural markers. Rome, which has long since become a "wilderness of tigers," is in the end identified with the incorporated aliens Tamora and Aaron, each of whom is separately called by Lucius a "ravenous tiger" (ll. 5 and 195).[34] G. K. Hunter has written that "Rome clearly has forgotten how to be Rome. It takes a political convulsion and a blood-bath to re-establish the city as different from the wilderness of tigers."[35] Here Hunter, along with most of this play's analysts, takes Marcus's "Let me teach you how to knit again" (l. 70) and Lucius's promise "to heal Rome's harms, and wipe away her woe" (l. 148) at face value; that is, he assumes that Rome will indeed arise from its "scattered corn." Lucius's first act of "healing" is properly constructed as the reestablishment of funeral rites, which bring us back to the play's beginning. Funeral rites are, and were from the start in this play, one of the cultural distinctions separating "Roman" from "other": Lucius buries Titus and Lavinia in the Andronici tomb while planting Aaron and throwing Tamora "to beasts and birds to prey" (l. 198). Aaron and Tamora are denied such rites not only as an act of revenge but also because there are no rites appropriate to them; as incorporated aliens, they remain demonized and marginal. One may live, like Titus, or be brought to live, like Tamora and Aaron, within a city's walls, yet still be demonized as marginal. That, surely, is another one of the "usual political lessons" to which Spencer refers.

But no regeneration is possible in such a fractured polity, and that, too, is one of the play's political lessons, though not, perhaps, one of the "usual" ones. Throughout *Titus Andronicus* both Roman and Gothic cultural distinctions are confounded: early on, Demetrius counsels his mother to wait for the "opportunity of sharp revenge" that would "favor Tamora, the Queen of Goths / (When Goths were Goths and Tamora was queen)" (1.1.137, 139–40). By the play's end, Goths are still not Goths (no more than Romans are Romans); they return with Lucius as his allies. Rome, too, is hybridized by Saturninus's marriage to Tamora, who refers to herself as "incorporate in Rome, / A Roman now adopted happily" (1.1.462–63). After this, Tamora's coupling with Aaron and the birth of their interracial child simply extends the blurring of distinctions already set in motion. Finally, Lucius's attempt to restore those distinctions is undermined by the truth about the bodies he would inter in the Andronicus tomb, once a locus of ritual integrity, as Titus had argued in his initial refusal to bury the son he had killed. The bodies of Titus and Lavinia are fragmented; they are missing parts. Despite Lucius's fiat, then, which is too little and comes too late, the Rome of *Titus Andronicus*, like its historical counterpart under Bassianus and his successors, cannot (and could not) be reestablished. By the end of Shakespeare's play, we know why and how Rome fell.

Titus Andronicus is, in many respects, a marginal play. Shakespeare's first tragedy is the terminus a quo for the rest of his work in that genre; as Charney has suggested, it forms the initial boundary for the Shakespearean

[34] Loomba makes this point in *Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama* (46).

[35] Hunter, "Shakespeare's Earliest Tragedies: 'Titus Andronicus' and 'Romeo and Juliet,'" *SS* 27 (1974): 1–10, esp. 6. See also D. J. Palmer, 338.

tragic corpus.[36] As a play whose direct sources have hitherto defied most attempts at identification, it has been the object of a great deal of critical ambivalence, as both its detractors and apologists demonstrate. But most important, and central to the present essay, is the fact that the play is concerned in its structure and characterization with marginality and the threat it poses to political identity. Rome in this play is a city of ambiguity, whose cultural identification is challenged from the outset by the incorporation of aliens within its boundaries, by confusion and dissension about its rules of conduct and their consistent applications, and by the hybridization of its central leadership.

IV

The intersections of axes along which culture is produced also mark its vulnerable points; that which can be joined can also be sundered. Mary Douglas has distinguished four kinds of social pollution: "danger pressing on external boundaries"; "danger from transgressing the internal lines of the system"; "danger in the margins of the lines"; and "danger from internal contradiction."[37] *Titus Andronicus* neatly packages all four dangers; as Herodian's history tells us, Rome itself was for sixty years a sutured patchwork of European and Afro-Asiatic peoples, politics, and religions.

What happens to a civilization that has lost or confused its cultural integrity? What are the vulnerable intersections of cultural coordinates? In *Titus* culture is literally articulated in terms of body parts,[38] which in turn are arranged into male and female categories. These anatomical assignments are expanded into gendered social roles, which are then undermined by constant inversion and reinversion in this play. How else does culture define itself? It distinguishes "self" from "other," "them" from "us," citizen from alien, and does so along both national and racial lines of demarcation. Out of such definitions, or rather to secure them, ideology is formed. But the Rome we encounter in *Titus Andronicus* has no unifying ideology. What classical historians have identified as *romanitas* may or may not have prevailed as a cohesive cultural construction during the period of the Republic and that of most of the Empire. But by the closing decades of the Empire, "Rome" itself as an integral and identifiable culture had already devoured itself by its own internalized alienization, its margins erased by cultural indefinition. Herodian's *History* did indeed offer "the usual political lessons" to Shakespeare and his contemporaries, and those lessons—the answers to the questions just noted—are embodied, dissected, and reassembled in *Titus Andronicus*.

[36] Charney, 9–10.

[37] Douglas, 122.

[38] For excellent discussions of the instances of dismemberment in *Titus*, see Palmer; Albert H. Tricomi, "The Aesthetics of Mutilation in 'Titus Andronicus,' " *SS* 27 (1974): 11–19; Gail Kern Paster, " 'In the spirit of men there is no blood': Blood as Trope of Gender in *Julius Caesar*," *SQ* 40 (1989): 284–98, esp. 289; Gillian Murray Kendall, " 'Lend me thy hand': Metaphor and Mayhem in *Titus Andronicus*," *SQ* 40 (1989): 299–316; and Katherine A. Rowe, "Dismembering and Forgetting in *Titus Andronicus*," in this issue of *SQ*, pp. 279–303. The consistency with which Shakespeare attaches such imagery to Roman history is remarkable: we find it again in *Coriolanus* in Menenius's fable of the belly. Remarkably, Shakespeare's first tragedy looks ahead to his final tragedy when, in *Titus*, Aemilius looks "backward" by invoking the "historical" Coriolanus as a model for Lucius's revolt against Rome (4.4.68).

Titus Andronicus

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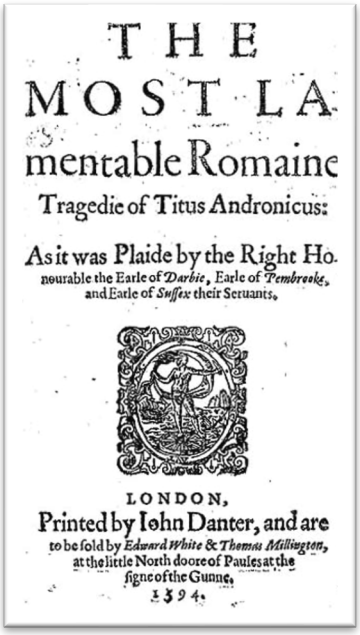
THE
MOST LA
mentable Romaine
Tragedie of Titus Andronicus:
As it was Plaide by the Right Ho.
nourable the Earle of *Darbie*, Earle of *Pembrooke*,
and Earle of *Sussex* their Seruants.
LONDON,
Printed by Iohn Danter, and are
to be sold by *Edward White* & *Thomas Millington*,
at the little North doore of Paules at the
signe of the Gunne.
1594.

Titus Andronicus **may be Shakespeare's earliest tragedy; it is believed to have been written sometime between 1584 and the early 1590s. It depicts a Roman general who is engaged in a cycle of revenge with his enemy Tamora, the Queen of the Goths. The play is by far Shakespeare's bloodiest work. It lost popularity during the Victorian era because of its gore, and it has only recently seen its fortunes revive.**

Title page of the first quarto edition (1594) →

Date and text

Most scholars date the play to the early 1590s. In his Arden edition, Jonathan Bate points out that on 24 January 1594, it was apparently listed as a new play in Philip Henslowe's diary. However, Bate reports that many scholars have doubted its newness in 1594, given that Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* (1614) describes the play as 25 to 30 years old, which would date it to ca. 1584-89. [1]

The play was published in three separate quarto editions prior to the First Folio of 1623, which are referred to as Q1, Q2, and Q3 by Shakespeare scholars. The play was entered into the Register of the Stationers Company on 6 February 1594, by the printer John Danter. Danter sold the rights to the booksellers Thomas Millington and Edward White; they issued the first quarto edition (Q1) later that year, with printing done by Danter. The title page is unusual in that it assigns the play to three different companies of actors—Pembroke's Men, Derby's Men, and Sussex's Men. White published Q2 in 1600 (printed by James Roberts), and Q3 in 1611 (printed by Edward Allde). The First Folio text (1623) was printed from Q3 with an additional scene, III, ii.

Q1 is regarded as a reasonably "good" (complete and reliable) text, and is the basis for most modern editions, although it does not include some material found in the First Folio. Only a single copy is known to exist today. Q2 appears to be based on a damaged copy of Q1, as it is a good reproduction of the Q1 text, but is missing a number of lines. Two copies are known to exist today. Q3 appears to be a further degradation of the Q2 text: it includes a number of corrections to Q2, but introduces even more errors. The First Folio text of 1623 seems to be based on the Q3 text, but also includes material found in none of the quarto editions, including the entirety of Act 3, Scene 2 (in which Titus seems to be losing his sanity). This scene is generally regarded as authentic and included in modern editions of the play.

None of the three quarto editions name the author (as was normal in the publication of playtexts in the early 1590s). However, Francis Meres lists the play as one of Shakespeare's tragedies in a publication of 1598, and the editors of the First Folio included it among his works. Despite this, Shakespeare's full authorship has been doubted. In the introduction to his 1678 adaptation of the play (printed nine years later,

in 1687), Edward Ravenscroft states: "I have been told by some anciently conversant with the Stage, that it was not Originally his, but brought by a private Author to be Acted, and he only gave some Master-touches to one or two Principal Parts or Characters". [2] There are problems with Ravenscroft's statement: the old men "conversant with the Stage" could not have been more than children when *Titus* was written, and Ravenscroft may be biased, since he uses the story to justify his alterations of Shakespeare's play. However, the story has been used to bolster arguments that another author was partly responsible.

The principal candidate is the dramatist George Peele, whose linguistic characteristics have been detected in both the first act, and the scene in which Lavinia uses Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to explain that she has been raped.[3] The assertion of Peele's hand in the play remains controversial, however, and those who admire the play tend to argue against it.[4] It has even been posited that Shakespeare did not write *Titus Andronicus* at all; for example, the 19th century *Globe Illustrated Shakespeare* goes so far as to claim there was a general agreement on the matter due to the un-Shakespearean "barbarity" of the play's action.

Performance

Although *Titus Andronicus* is one of Shakespeare's earliest plays, it is hard to say exactly how early it is. The anonymous play *A Knack to Know a Knave,* acted in 1592, alludes to Titus and the Goths, which clearly indicates Shakespeare's play, since other versions of the Titus story involve Moors, not Goths. Philip Henslowe's diary records performances of a *Titus and Vespasian* in 1592-93, and some critics have identified this with Shakespeare's play.[5]

In January and February of 1594, Sussex's Men gave three performances of *Titus Andronicus*; two more performances followed in June of the same year, at the Newington Butts theatre, by either the Admiral's Men or the Lord Chamberlain's Men. A private performance occurred in 1596 at Sir John Harington's house in Rutland.

In the Restoration, the play was performed in 1678 at Drury Lane, in an adaptation by Edward Ravenscroft. The eighteenth-century actor James Quin considered Aaron, the villain in *Titus,* one of his favourite roles.[6]

Characters

Titus Andronicus, *a noble Roman, General against the Goths.*
***Children of* Titus Andronicus:**
Lucius
Quintus
Martius
Mutius
Lavinia, *Daughter to* Titus Andronicus.
Young Lucius, a Boy, Son *to* Lucius and grandson of Titus.
Marcus Andronicus, *Tribune of the People, and Brother to* Titus.
Publius, *Son to* Marcus *the Tribune.*
***Sons to* Tamora:**
Alarbus (non-speaking role)
Demetrius
Chiron
Saturninus, *Son to the late Emperor of Rome, and afterwards declared Emperor.*
Bassianus, *Brother to* Saturninus, *in love with* Lavinia.
***A* Nurse, *and a black* Child(illegitimate son of Tamora and Aaron).**
Æmilius, *a noble Roman*.
Aaron, *a Moor beloved by* Tamora.
A* Captain, Tribune, Messenger, *and a

Tamora, *Queen of the Goths.* **Clown: *Romans*.**

Synopsis

Lavinia showing her father how she may be able to reveal the identities her rapists. →

The Emperor of Rome has died, and his sons Saturninus and Bassianus are squabbling over who will succeed him. The Tribune of the People, Marcus Andronicus, announces that the people's choice for new emperor is his brother, Titus Andronicus, a Roman general newly returned from ten years' campaigning against the empire's foes, the Goths. Titus enters Rome to much fanfare, bearing with him Tamora, Queen of the Goths, her sons, and Aaron the Moor. Titus feels a religious duty to sacrifice Tamora's eldest son Alarbus, in order to avenge his sons, dead from the war, and allow them to rest in peace. Tamora begs for the life of Alarbus, but Titus refuses her pleas. Tamora secretly plans for horrible revenge on Titus and all of his remaining sons. Titus Andronicus refuses the throne in favour of the late emperor's eldest son Saturninus, much to Saturninus' delight. The two agree that Saturninus will marry Titus' daughter Lavinia. However, Bassianus was previously betrothed to the girl. Titus' surviving sons help them escape the marriage. In the fighting, Titus kills his son Mutius. Titus is at first angry at his sons for bringing what he sees as dishonor upon his name, but his anger is eventually softened by Saturninus. The new emperor, Saturninus, marries Tamora instead.

During a hunting party the next day, Tamora's lover, Aaron the Moor, meets Tamora's sons Chiron and Demetrius. The two are arguing over which should take sexual advantage of the newlywed Lavinia. They are easily persuaded by Aaron to ambush Bassianus and kill him in the presence of Tamora and Lavinia, in order to have their way with her. Lavinia begs Tamora to stop her sons, but Tamora refuses. Chiron and Demetrius throw Bassianus's body in a pit, as Aaron had directed them, then take Lavinia away and rape her. To keep her from revealing what she has seen and endured, they cut out her tongue and cut off her hands.

Aaron brings Titus' sons Martius and Quintus to the scene and frames them for the murder of Bassianus with a forged letter outlining their plan to kill him. Angry, the Emperor arrests them. Marcus then discovers Lavinia and takes her to her father. When she and Titus are reunited, he is overcome with grief. He and his remaining son Lucius have begged for the lives of Martius and Quintus, but the two are found guilty and are marched off to execution. Aaron enters, and falsely tells Titus, Lucius, and Marcus that the emperor will spare the prisoners if one of the three sacrifices a hand. Each demands the right to do so, but it is Titus who has Aaron cut off his (Titus') hand and take it to the emperor. In return, a messenger brings Titus the heads of his sons.

Desperate for revenge, Titus orders Lucius to flee Rome and raise an army among their former enemy, the Goths.

Later, Titus' grandson (Lucius' son), who has been helping Titus read to Lavinia, complains that she will not leave his book alone. In the book, she indicates to Titus and Marcus the story of Philomela, in which a similarly mute victim "wrote" the name of her wrongdoer. Marcus gives her a stick to hold with her mouth and stumps and she writes the names of her attackers in the dirt. Titus vows revenge. Feigning madness, he ties written prayers for justice to arrows and commands his kinsmen to aim them at the sky. Marcus directs the arrows to land inside the palace of Saturninus, who is enraged by this. He confronts the Andronici and orders the execution of a Clown who had delivered a further supplication from Titus.

Tamora delivers a mixed-race child, and the nurse can tell it must have been fathered by Aaron. Aaron kills the nurse and flees with the baby to save it from the Emperor's inevitable wrath. Later, Lucius, marching on Rome with an army, captures Aaron and threatens to hang the infant. To save the baby, Aaron reveals the entire plot to Lucius, relishing every murder, rape, and dismemberment.

Tamora, convinced of Titus' madness, approaches him along with her two sons, dressed as the spirits of Revenge, Murder, and Rape. She tells Titus that she (as a supernatural spirit) will grant him revenge if he will convince Lucius to stop attacking Rome. Titus agrees, sending Marcus to invite Lucius to a feast. "Revenge" (Tamora) offers to invite the Emperor and Tamora, and is about to leave, but Titus insists that "Rape" and "Murder" (Chiron and Demetrius) stay with him. She agrees. When she is gone Titus' servants bind Chiron and Demetrius, and Titus cuts their throats, while Lavinia holds a basin in her stumps to catch their blood. He plans to cook them into a pie for their mother. This is the same revenge Procne took for the rape of her sister Philomela.

The next day, during the feast at his house, Titus asks Saturninus whether a father should kill his daughter if she has been raped.[7] When the Emperor agrees, Titus kills Lavinia and tells Saturninus what Tamora's sons had done. When the Emperor asks for Chiron and Demetrius, Titus reveals that they were in the pie Tamora has just been enjoying, and then kills Tamora. Saturninus kills Titus just as Lucius arrives, and Lucius kills Saturninus to avenge his father's death.

Lucius tells his family's story to the people and is proclaimed Emperor. He orders that Saturninus be given a proper burial, that Tamora's body be thrown to the wild beasts, and that Aaron be buried chest-deep and left to die of thirst and starvation. Aaron, however, is unrepentant to the end, proclaiming:

"If one good Deed in all my life I did, I do repent it from my very Soule."

Language

The language of *Titus Andronicus* adds greatly to the grisly action of the play. Jack Reese notes that, as a result of its gruesome nature, the play is often disregarded "as an immature exercise in sensationalism" (78). He says that this is the fault of the readers who are unaware of the literary elements and techniques present throughout

the work. Reese suggests that the horrific fates of the characters are not even so horrific because the characters lack any human quality that would lead the readers to identify with them. In the example of Lavinia, he refers to her as "an emblematic figure representing Injured Innocence" (79). There are greater implications to her brutal experience than what is simply written on the page. Reese mentions that the audience is further disconnected from the violence onstage through its various descriptions. The language used in these descriptions serves to "further emphasize the artificiality of the play; in a sense, they suggest to the audience that it is hearing a poem read rather than seeing the events of that poem put into dramatic form" (83). Peter Sacks comments on the imagery conveyed through the play's language as marked by "an artificial and heavily emblematic style, and above all, a revoltingly grotesque series of horrors which seem to have little function but to ironize man's inadequate expressions of pain and loss" (587). Shakespeare's mastery of language stylizes the brutality seen in *Titus Andronicus*. Gillian Kendall follows a similar line of thought, stating that rhetorical devices, such as metaphor, augment the violent imagery, also elevating it. She discusses how the figurative use of certain words complements their literal counterparts. This, however, "disrupts the way the audience perceives imagery" (300). An example of this is seen in the body politic/dead body imagery in the beginning; the two images soon become interchangeable, as do others through the course of the play.

Critic Mary Fawcett looks not only at the language of the play, but also at language as a theme. She comments on the communication methods of Lavinia, post-rape, looking first at the term "scrowl" used by Demetrius in Act 2 Scene 4. Fawcett suggests that this word is a fusion of "scowl" and "scroll"; Demetrius "locates an area of language that is not spoken and not written" (261). She then goes on to address an incident where Titus offers his hand to Lavinia so that she may attempt to use it as a substitute tongue. This scene raises issues of patriarchy since Titus is facilitating his daughter's speech; the "patriarchal nature of language" is illustrated. The scene also recalls Lavinia's earlier request for paternal blessing when she asks her father to bless her with his hand in Act 1 Scene 1. Fawcett says that "the frightful literalization of this request reminds us of the etymology of blessing: a bleeding or wounding" (262). When he finally kills Lavinia, Titus is adhering to ideas set forth by his predecessor Livy; to Titus, "words point to a pre-existing text which alone originates and sanctions action" (269). The significance of language to the characters and to the play as a whole is unmistakable.

Dramatic structure

Written between 1589 and 1592, *Titus Andronicus* may be Shakespeare's earliest tragedy and is written in the form of a revenge tragedy. The play has characteristics similar to the work of Seneca, specifically his play *Thyestes*, which included horrific scenes of severed hands, cannibalism, and rape. Although violence was not uncommon in Elizabethan plays, *Titus Andronicus* stands out due to the volume and extremity of the violent acts committed. Unlike his other works, the play contains an uncanny number of crude and savage moments, which has sparked debate among critics as to whether or not the play was actually composed by Shakespeare. However this was not Shakespeare's only revenge tragedy, as his work *Hamlet* is considered one of the best examples of Elizabethan revenge tragedies and his works *Julius Caesar* and *Macbeth* have elements of the revenge tragedy. However, neither of these

works contains the volume or the vivid descriptions of violence that one finds in *Titus Andronicus*.

Critic S. Clark Hulse even went as far as to calculate the number of atrocities occurring in the play and concluded that, "It (the play) has 14 killings, 9 of them on stage, 6 severed members, 1 rape (or 2 or 3 depending on how you count), 1 live burial, 1 case of insanity, and 1 of cannibalism—-an average of 5.2 atrocities per act, or one for every 97 lines." The vivid descriptions that Shakespeare uses to describe these violent acts certainly stand out to critics. T. S. Eliot claimed that the play was the "worst play ever written" (Bate 27). Shakespearean critic Harold Bloom, in his work *Shakespeare: Invention of the Human*, says that Shakespeare must have intended the work as a parody of the violent plays of colleague Christopher Marlowe, who was writing at the same time as Shakespeare.

What stands out about the dramatic structure of the play is that unlike Shakespeare's other works, such as *Romeo and Juliet* which shifts between comedy and tragedy, *Titus Andronicus* continuously remains a revenge tragedy throughout. The play cannot be considered a history play, as it combines various names and events from different points in Roman history, such as the Lucrece story, which Shakespeare likely would have been familiar with from Ovid's work, *Fasti* or Livy's work *The History of Rome*. It has been noted by critics that the play contains very few subplots in contrast to other works by Shakespeare such as *Twelfth Night* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Themes

This Roman tragedy is based on the mythological story of Procne and Philomela found in Ovid's Metamorphoses. Alan Hughes, a Shakespearean critic, believes that Procne's revenge is a conspicuous theme in this Shakespearean play. Procne avenges the dismemberment of her sister Philomela, whose tongue is cut out after she is raped by Procne's husband Tereus, by killing her son and feeding him to her husband. [8] Just as Procne is driven by revenge, the characters in *Titus Andronicus* are driven by revenge fueling the rape and carnage that occurs throughout the play. Some of Titus' sons are killed during the war with the Goths, and as a result Titus sacrifices Alarbus, the oldest of Tamora's sons, perpetuating the conflict between the Andronicus family and Tamora. With the intention of revenge, Tamora orders her sons Chiron and Demetrius to rape Lavinia, Titus' daughter. Not only is Lavinia raped, but she is brutally dismembered as her tongue and hands are cut off. Titus eventually takes revenge on Tamora by killing and then cooking Chiron and Demetrius into a pie and serving it to the Queen. [9]

Even though the hateful relationship between Tamora and Titus provides the main revenge plot in this tragedy, Bellyse Baildon states that this play is also a conglomeration of two themes which were popular in England before Shakespeare's time. The first theme is known as "the Wicked Moor" theme in which the Moor, Aaron, commits murder and rape out of revenge and pure malice (Baildon 17). For example, Aaron murders the nurse who brings him his illegitimate son out of pure malice as he doesn't want news of the illegitimate relationship between him and Tamora to leak. The second theme may be known as "the White Lady and Moor" theme which focuses on the lustful relationship between the white queen and a black slave. [10] Aaron is

Tamora's slave, yet they conceive a child together, but he then goes against her wishes as she wants their illegitimate son to be killed while he wants to raise him. [11] Along with the previous two critics, Deborah Willis also adds that this play is different from other revenge plays because women, and not just men, are also fueled by revenge. Revenge acts as a leveling agent as men, sons, fathers, women, and slaves all follow the path of revenge to defend honor and their families. To save the honor of the Goths, Tamora wages a personal war with the Andronicus family. While Lavinia represents the view of women as objects, Tamora uses excess cruelty and violence, therefore disturbing the patriarchal system. [12] Also, Titus assumes the feminine role of Procne as he avenges his daughter's honor. Not only does revenge lead to the eventual destruction and death of most of the main characters, but it also acts as an equalizer between men and women.

Reputation

As Shakespeare's most gruesome play, *Titus Andronicus* has also been his most derided. Critics from Lewis Theobald and Edmond Malone to J. M. Robertson doubted Shakespeare's authorship because of its lurid violence and generally uninspired verse. However, it was an extremely popular play in its day, on a par with such plays as Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* and Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*.
Shakespeare scholar Harold Bloom has claimed that the play cannot be taken seriously and that the best imaginable production would be one directed by Mel Brooks.

The character of Titus has been played by actors such as Brian Cox, Anthony Sher, Anthony Hopkins and Laurence Olivier.

Adaptations

***Die Schändung* by German author Botho Strauss**

***Titus Andronicus. Komödie nach Shakespeare* by Swiss author Friedrich Dürrenmatt**

The 1998 film *Titus Andronicus*, directed by Chris Dunne. Stars Bob Reese as Titus, and costars Tom Dennis, Levi-David Tinker, Candy Kane and Lexton Raliegh.

***Titus* (1999), directed by Julie Taymor. Stars Anthony Hopkins and Jessica Lange as Titus and Tamora.**

***Titus Andronicus* (1985): a TV movie directed by Jane Howell, last of the BBC Shakespeare series. Stars Trevor Peacock and Eileen Atkins as Titus and Tamora, with Hugh Quarshie as Aaron.**

***Anatomie Titus Fall of Rome. Ein Shakespearekommentar*, a 1984 play by (East) German author Heiner Müller**

***Titus Andronicus: The Musical!*, written by Brian Colonna, Erik Edborg, Hannah Duggan, Erin Rollman, Matt Petraglia, and Samantha Schmitz, was staged by the Buntport Theater of Denver, Colorado three times between 2005 and 2007.**

The Reduced Shakespeare Company rendered *Titus Andronicus* as a cooking show and referred to the time of its writing as Shakespeare's "Quentin Tarantino phase".

***Tragedy! A Musical Comedy*, written by Michael Johnson and Mary Davenport was performed at the 2007 New York International Fringe Festival.**

Notes

1. **^ Bate, *Titus*, 70.**
2. **^ Quoted in Jonathan Bate, ed. *Titus Andronicus* (Arden Shakespeare, 1996), p. 79**
3. **^ Brian Vickers, *Shakespeare: Co-Author* (Oxford University Press, 2004) describes the history of this attribution and adds more evidence of his own.**
4. **^ For a summary of this debate, see Bate, *Titus*, p. 79-83.**
5. **^ F. E. Halliday, *A Shakespeare Companion 1564-1964,* Baltimore, Penguin, 1964; pp. 496-97.**
6. **^ Halliday, *Shakespeare Companion,* pp. 399, 403-4, 497.**
7. **^ Citing the story of Verginia, told in Livy.**
8. **^ Ovid 230**
9. **^ Shakespeare 1070-1096**
10. **^ Baildon 17**
11. **^ Shakespeare 1087**
12. **^ Willis 22**

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US Code: TITLE 17 > CHAPTER 1 > § 107

§ 107. Limitations on exclusive rights: Fair use

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Prospectus

Shakespeare's Four Roman Plays

Instructor: Tom Wukitsch

There will be four sessions during which we will watch Shakespeare's four Roman plays. A week after each of those four sessions there will be a lecture/discussion session on the play we will have watched the previous week – for a total of eight sessions.

Each session is scheduled for <u>three hours</u>. The discussion sessions might, however, be a somewhat shorter, depending on how much I have to say and how much discussion takes place. The sessions during which we watch the plays will pretty much go the full three hours, because that's how long the plays are.

There are six Shakespeare works that deal with the Roman World and several more that deal with Greek subjects Mythology (e.g., *Troilus and Cressida*, *Timon of Athens*, *Tempest*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*).

The six Roman works are

- ***Coriolanus* -- 1608 (Scene: Rome, ca. 490s BC)**
- ***Julius Caesar* -- 1599 (Scene: Rome, February/March 44 BC through Philippi, October 42 BC)**
- ***Antony and Cleopatra* -- 1606-07 (Scene: Rome and Egypt, ca. 40 BC through August of 30 BC**
- ***Titus Andronicus* -- ca. 1590 (Scene: Rome, 3rd century AD**
- ***The Rape of Lucrece* -- 1594 Narative poem, written in plague times when the theaters were closed (Scene: Rome, 510 BC). Not included in this course.**
- ***Cymbeline* -- ca. 1609 (Scene: England, date indeterminate but based on legends attached to a 1st century AD Celtic King and his conflicts with the Romans in England) Not included in this course.**

  [It's possible that Shakespeare also collaborated with Ben Johnson on his Sejanus in 1603. Some years later, Johnson said he had removed the parts written by a collaborator and rewritten those parts himself.]

We will discuss and then see each of the first four in Roman historical order rather than in the order in which they were written. This presents a problem with determining the historical forces at play at the time when they were written as well as with assessing the development of Shakespeare's writing, but it does allow us to take a better look at the background Roman history. *Lucrece* won't be covered at all because it is not a play, and *Cymbeline* was eliminated because its Roman aspect was simply too peripheral.

Shakespeare's Roman and Greek works rely heavily on the works of ancient authors, particularly

- **Livy (*Ab Urbe Condita Libri*),**
- **Ovid (*Metamorphoses*),**
- **Virgil (*Aeneid*), and, most importantly,**
- **Plutarch (*Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans*, commonly called *Parallel Lives* or *Plutarch's Lives*).**

Shakespeare's main source was Sir Thomas North's 1579 English translation of *Plutarch's Lives*. The North translation was a best-seller in England, and Roman history and mythology were staples of 16th and 17th century grammar school education. So many members of Shakespeare's audience already would have been aware of the stories used by Shakespeare. They went to see the plays not to hear the stories for the first time but, like us, to see how Shakespeare would enhance and embellish the ancient tales.

Addendum (9Nov2016):

Pale and Lean Cassius: Gaius Cassius Longinus owned the Seian horse, and it was really bad luck. Cneius Seius had purchased the fine Argive steed and then was executed by Mark Antony. Antony gave the prize to Cornelius Dolabella, but Cassius, in his flight after assassinating Julius Caesar, defeated and killed Dolabella and took the horse. Shortly thereafter came the battle of Philippi and the end of Cassius (more later). Mark Antony kept the equine prize for himself after Philippi, and soon thereafter he lost the battle of Actium and followed Cassius to Hades. Every Roman schoolboy of the first and second century knew the proverb denoting impending doom: "ille homo habet equum Seianum" -- "That man has Seian's horse". Shakespeare put these words in the mouth of Julius Caesar: "Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look; He thinks too much: such men are dangerous." Cassius' envy and his fear of Caesar's growing power and of Caesar's great ambition led him to persuade Brutus that Caesar had to be stopped. Lean and hungry Cassius was, greedy for ever greater power and wealth.**

Shakespeare was close, but Plutarch, who recorded Caesar's words almost fifteen hundred years closer to the event, recorded it thus "It is not, the fat and the long-haired men that I fear, but the pale and the lean." Similar words with essentially the

same meaning, and Shakespeare's scanned better. Both meant that Caesar fully understood the ambition and greed of Cassius.

Who was this Cassius? Of a noble Roman family already famous for its civil and military services to Rome, his own early life was either not been recorded or lost. He first appears in the literature in 53 BC as one of the commanders in the army of Marcus Crassus at Crassus disastrous defeat by the Parthians (ex-Seleucids) at the Battle of Carrhae (Haran) in Mesopotamia.

There has always been some question about Cassius' actions at Carrhae: his partisans said that Cassius had seen that Crassus was already defeated and therefore declined to throw away the lives of more Roman troops; his detractors said that he stood by, keeping his forces out of the battle, and let Crassus go down to ignominious defeat, capture, and execution; conspiracy theorists guessed that he had accepted promises of future preference and held back to let the Parthians clear Crassus from the path of Pompey -- or of Caesar. Whatever the circumstances, Cassius reorganized the Roman remnant that escaped at Carrhae, arranged for their augmentation under his own command, and won a minor victory against the Parthians the next year.

Cassius then established a power base in Syria that allowed him to extort money from anyone who wished to trade in his area, and this enabled him to increase his wealth significantly. Cassius was appointed Tribune in 49 BC. He sided with Pompey and the corrupt "republican" Senate against Julius Caesar, and he was Pompey's naval commander off Sicily in the civil war that ensued. Cassius was still on Pompey's side when Pompey was routed at the battle of Pharsalus in Thessaly (Greece) in 48 BC, but, shortly after Ptolemy delivered Pompey's head, Caesar forgave Cassius and tried to co-opt him by making him a legate.

After Caesar's pardon, which also extended to many others among Pompey's former allies, Cassius quickly slipped back into the opposition and became deeply involved in "republican" causes in Rome. That really meant that he conspired with other corrupt senators, who claimed to want a return to the republic but whose real goal was to thwart the mercantile, monetary, and civil/military service reforms proposed by Julius Caesar. Those reforms were to be implemented by Caesar's governor in Rome, Marc Antony, while Caesar was chasing Cleopatra in Egypt. Meanwhile Cassius was wooing and marrying Junia, the half sister of Brutus, another pardoned Pompey partisan and "republican" activist. (If this sounds really complicated, it's only because it really was really complicated.)

Probably even before Caesar returned to Rome in the fall of 45 BC with Cleopatra on his arm and a plan to end the Senate's corrupt system of military and civil preferments in his pocket, a plot had been hatched to assassinate Caesar at the first opportunity. Cassius was one of several leaders of the plot and, after the fact, it was decided that he had been the key plotter.

About 60 senators were directly involved, and the standard account of the assassination of Julius Caesar says that twenty-seven of them managed to stab Caesar with their swords and daggers when he stopped to receive a petition at the foot of the statue of his old enemy Pompey at the temporary Curial meeting hall behind Pompey's theater. This happened only six months after Ceasar returned to Rome, but

in that time he'd made enough stupid mistakes to infuriate all of Rome's classes and factions. His ineptitude was particularly obvious when his admiinistration was compared with that of Marc Antony, who had ruled in Caesar's absence. Nobody really knows if twenty-seven blows were actually struck or if the number 27 had some numerological, tribal, or political significance. No matter: Caesar was dead in an initially popular assassination.

But Marc Antony, knowing that his own political future depended on casting the dead dictator as a popular military hero, quickly orchestrated a public outcry against the assassins. Caesar was burned on a makeshift warrior's pyre in the Forum, and Cassius and the other conspirators were forced to flee Rome.

Cassius eventually went back to his old power base in Syria, and there after defeating Antony's governor, Dolabella, and taking possession of the ill-fated horse, he raised a big army from the legions that were loyal to him personally. In 42 BC, he joined forces with his brother-in-law and co-assassin, Brutus, and their combined armies waited for the legions of Marc Antony and Octavian (later Caesar Augustus) at Philippi. The battle on the field was essentially a draw: Antony's forces broke Cassius' army and entered his camp, but Brutus had defeated Octavian and was coming to Cassius' rescue. Cassius, seeing only the smaller picture, the enemy troops in his camp, and not knowing that salvation was at hand, ordered his trusted shield bearer to help him commit suicide. According to legend, the soldier dealt the death blow with the same sword that Cassius had used in the assassination of Caesar. When word came of the suicide of Cassius, Brutus also despaired and joined Cassius in suicide.

Thus ended the last of the "liberatori" who had slain Caesar, ostensibly to restore the republic but actually to retain their corrupt privileges. History liked Brutus more than Cassius who took most of the blame for the plot. In fact, there were no good-guys here. All, including Caesar, were in the game for what they could win by whatever means. They all died and their heirs sorted out what was left and spun the histories the way they wanted to.

P.S.
1. Cassius had the unusual distinction of being on the loosing side at three of the major battles of his time: Carrhae, Pharsalus, and Philippi. Had he not despaired at Philippi, he may also have gone to Actium.

2: Another Gaius Cassius Longinus, a direct descendant of the famed assassin, appears as an author, jurist, philosopher, and enemy of Caligula and Nero (and therefore a good-guy) in the mid-first century AD. Nero had him banished, but Vespasian rehabilitated him and brought him back to Rome for an old age of public adulation.

Et Tu, Brutus: **The basic facts of the case are well known: Brutus, Cassius, and some of their friends stab Caesar to death. Civil war ensues in which Octavian (later Caesar Augustus) and Mark Antony team up against the assassins and chase them to Greece. First Cassius and then Brutus commit suicide rather than face defeat and capture. How did an idealist, philosopher, and "patriot" like Marcus Brutus get into this story.**

Plutarch and other historians all say the same thing: if anyone involved in the assassination acted in good faith and with high moral intentions, it was Brutus. He was uniformly considered to be idealistic (especially on the matter of Roman "republican" ideals) and "constant" -- the latter being a polite way of saying stubborn or stiff-necked. Brutus was the nephew and the son in law of Cato the philosopher (marriage to cousins was normal). Instead of pursuing a military career, which would have been normal for a Roman of his class, Brutus studied philosophy. He specialized in classical Platonism, but he was learned in all the contemporary schools of philosophy.

Brutus' family had been friendly with Caesar, and Brutus' father had been proscribed and executed by Caesar's great enemy, Pompey. Nonetheless, for ideological reasons, Brutus fought on the side of Pompey in the civil war between Caesar and Pompey -- Brutus thought that Caesar was the greater threat to the Republic. Despite this, Caesar thought so much of Brutus that he gave orders that Brutus should be spared or allowed to escape in any battle.

After Pompey was defeated, Caesar pardoned Brutus and gave him several important government jobs, even leaving him in charge of Rome when Caesar went off for his foreign battles. Brutus was one of Caesar's most able administrators and was a well-liked governor. It was commonly thought that Caesar was grooming Brutus to be his successor. It was also widely believed that Brutus was Caesar's unacknowledged love child -- there had been a notorious liaison between Caesar and Servilia, Brutus' mother, at just the right time. Brutus was treated like a favored son, although accounts of Brutus "living in Caesar's house" may be allegorical.

Yet on the Ides of March, 44 BC, there he was, leading the other conspirators, drawing daggers against Julius Caesar in the curia of the Theater that Pompey had built a few years earlier, before he had been expelled from Rome and hunted down. Brutus had been convinced once again, this time by Cassius, who historians mostly agree was the most villainous of the conspirators, that Caesar, his benefactor and maybe his father, was destroying Roman Republican institutions. Brutus was trying to save the Republic, just has his supposed ancestor, Junius Brutus, had founded the Republic by slaying the last Tarquin king. That horrible old fraud, Freud, would have loved to get Marcus Brutus on his couch.

Caesar, according to the histories, was stabbed twenty-seven or twenty-three times. At first he resisted, but, according to legend, he accepted the blows after seeing that Brutus was among his assailants.

The Senators fled rather than staying around to hear the speech Brutus had prepared, but the next day, March 16, the conspirators, who styled themselves the "*liberatori*" (liberators), were pardoned and praised by the Senate. But their situation soured quickly.

Later on the sixteenth, Mark Antony, who was Brutus' rival for the mantle of Caesar, gave an impassioned speech over Caesar's body in the forum, even exposing Caesars mutilated corpse to the mob. The mob seized the body and burned it in the center of the forum in a solemn hero's funeral.

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Brutus, Cassius, and the others fled to Greece where they gathered an army in the

hopes of returning to Rome and reestablishing the Republic. Octavian, Caesars' grand-nephew and posthumously adopted heir, in temporary alliance with Mark Antony, defeated the *liberatori* in Greece, and first Cassius and then Brutus took their own lives to avoid capture and ignominy. By the end of 42 BC all of the *liberatori* were dead. It took Octavian another twelve years to secure sole rule.

Brutus' story is available in much greater detail on the Internet http://classics.mit.edu/Plutarch/m_brutus.html.

P.S.: 1) Plutarch is the main source for information about the assassination and its aftermath. He wrote his biographies more than one hundred years after the fact, but he had in hand several histories and biographies that were written by witnesses and even some letters from the conspirators (most of which have since been lost.)

2) Whatever their motives, the *liberatori* were essentially correct: Caesar was trampling all over Republican institutions. What they seemed not to realize was that those institutions had already been irretrievably broken by the civil wars that wracked the Roman Republic in the decades before Caesar crossed the Rubicon. Julius Caesar was a symptom, not the cause, of the Republic's fatal illness.

3) Idealists or villains, the *liberatori* strategy really stunk. You make a plan, gather your army, and then have your revolution. It really doesn't work if you try to do it the other way around.