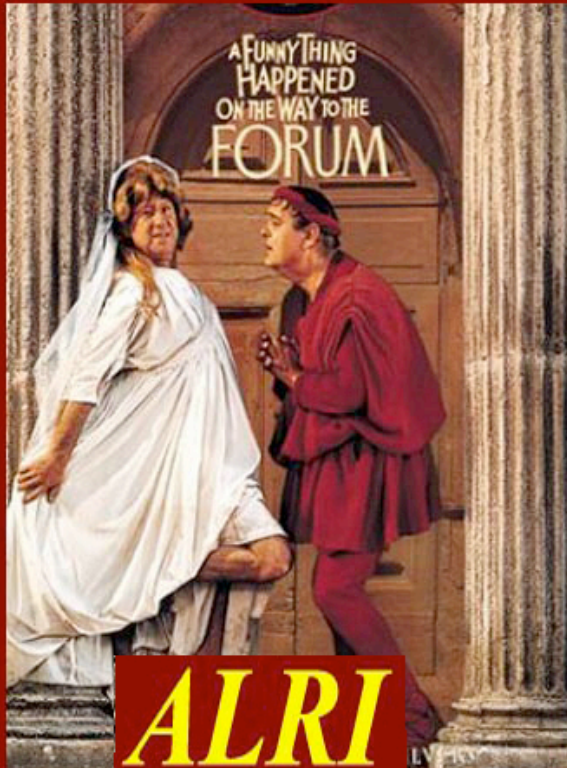


Ancient Rome Goes to the Movies

Rome in the Movies



ALRI
Spring semester, 2007

TEN SESSIONS!! TEN FILMS!!

- 1. A Funny thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*
- 2. Scipio Africanus:
The Defeat of Hannibal*
- 3. Spartacus*
- 4. Julius Caesar*
- 5. Antony and Cleopatra*
- 6. Augustus*
- 7. Caligula*
- 8. Satyricon*
- 9. Gladiator*
- 10. Titus*

Much more information is available at:
<http://www.mmdtkw.org/ARMoviesSyllabus.html>

Encore Learning
Spring Semester 2018
Instructor – Tom Wukitsch

Table of Contents

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Page 2 | Front matter |
| Page 40 | <i>A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum</i> |
| Page 67 | <i>Scipio Africanus – The Defeat of Hannibal</i> |
| Page 80 | <i>Spartacus</i> |
| Page 112 | <i>Julius Caesar (Shakespeare)</i> |
| Page 123 | <i>Antony and Cleopatra (Shakespeare)</i> |
| Page 139 | <i>Augustus</i> |
| Page 161 | <i>Caligula</i> |
| Page 174 | <i>Satyricon</i> |
| Page 200 | <i>Gladiator</i> |
| Page 216 | <i>Titus (Andronicus) (Shakespeare)</i> |
| Page 234 | <i>Appendix A: a Wikipedia list of films set in ancient Rome</i> |
| Page 237 | <i>Appendix B: abbreviated Roman Timeline</i> |

Syllabus

[Syllabus word origin: Neo-Latin: syllabus or syllabos, probably a misreading (in manuscripts of Cicero) of Greek sítybos, accusative plural of sítyba = a label for a papyrus roll (Earliest known use: 1650–60)]

Ancient Rome in the Movies (History 303)

Ten two to three hour sessions (depending on length of films)
 Tuesdays, March 6 through May 8, each class starting at 12 noon.
 Classes will be held in room 244 at George Mason University, 3401 N.
 Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA

Some filmmakers got ancient Rome right. Some got it wrong. Some didn't get it at all. Many films about Rome tell us more about the biases of the times in which they were made than about the times they claim to depict. Some are "message" films, and some just carry forward the message of the books on which they were based. There is nothing in the historical account of Spartacus, for example, that would lead us to accept the "Christian" message of the Spartacus film epic or of the Howard Fast novel on which it is based (nor, for that matter, is there any proletarian internationalism that could explain the former Soviet fascination with "Spartakiad") Recent big budget films, made for theaters, tend to get the background right, but they badly garble their historical story lines. Lower budget theater films don't even try for background accuracy much less for historical fact -- "Sword of the Arena", a girl-gadiator flick, comes to mind (although there were some documented female gladiators). Television productions vary greatly in authenticity: the History Channel, just one example, will buy and broadcast almost any show that claims to be "historical", so some History Channel content is completely bogus. Also, television time is usually sold in small chunks, so instead of getting an "in depth" 145 minute theater version of Rome, we may only get the 60 minute television version -- minus, of course, about 13 minutes for "messages from our sponsors." The recent and ongoing Italian-made "Rome" series falls into its own category: it's an in depth fictional soft porn soap opera and has almost no accurate historical content. (That doesn't mean it's not fun to watch, but we won't, so watch it on your own time.) There are, of course some good films on ancient Rome, and some of them have unusual formats. "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum", our first film, based on plays by ancient Rome's best comedic playwright, fully captures the irreverence for status and authority of the ancient Roman stage. Other films will follow. Popcorn not provided.

Textbooks: No textbook will be needed for this course. The usual handouts will be provided for each unit. But if you really think you must have a book, try one of these:

Big Screen Rome, by **Monica Silveira Cyrino**, or
Imperial Projections: Ancient Rome in Modern Popular Culture, by
Sandra B. Joshel et al., or,
Projecting the Past: Ancient Rome, Cinema, and History, by **Maria Wyke**
<http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0304366420/103-6383802-1503804>

For a few rambling general introductory notes for this course, go to:
<http://www.mmdtkw.org/ARMovIntroRamble.html>

Course Units (one film per unit):

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| Films | <p><i>Note that some of the links below are from Wikipedia, "the free encyclopedia that <u>anyone can edit</u>". Like much other information on the Internet, what appears in Wikipedia should be taken <u>cum grano salis</u>.</i></p> <p>-----</p> |
| <p>1. A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum (1966) 97 Minutes</p> | <p>A movie based on a Broadway musical, which was based on three plays that Plautus (ca. 200 bc), may be copied from the Greek stage. The broad comedy of Zero Mostel made the movie and the Broadway musical a success, and he was also the force behind bringing other previously blacklisted actors and staff into the production.</p> <p>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Funny_Thing_Happened_on_the_Way_to_the_Forum</p> <p>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plautus</p> <p>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zero_Mostel</p> |
| <p>2. Scipio Africanus -- The Defeat of Hannibal (1937) 93 Minutes</p> | <p>Made by Mussolini's son in 1937, the year of the Italian Trans-Libyan Highway and Italy's invasion of Ethiopia, this film won the Venice Film Festival prize for that year. It's clearly a propaganda piece glorifying Italian imperialism, but it is, nonetheless, surprisingly accurate. Its climax is the Battle of Zama (in modern Tunisia) in 202 BC, which ended the Second Punic War between Rome and Carthage.</p> <p>http://www.ihffilm.com/scipafdefofh.html</p> <p>http://www.roman-empire.net/army/zama.html</p> <p>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benito_Mussolini</p> |


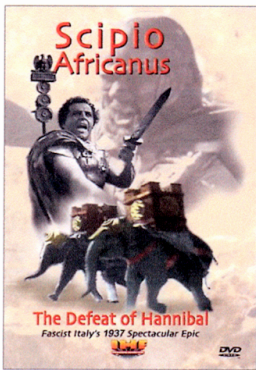
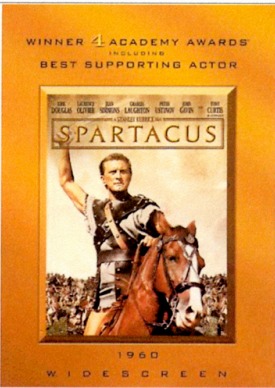

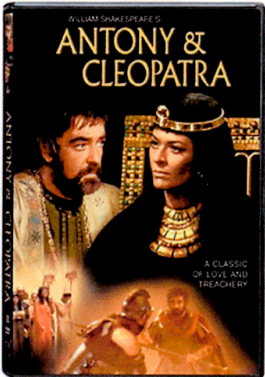
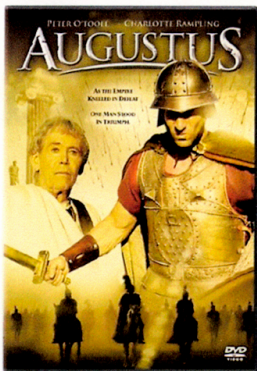
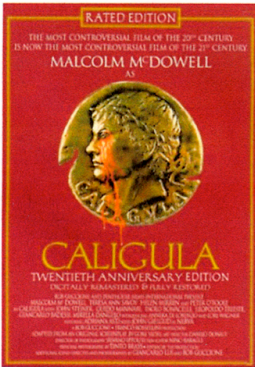

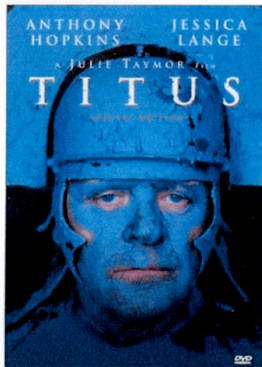
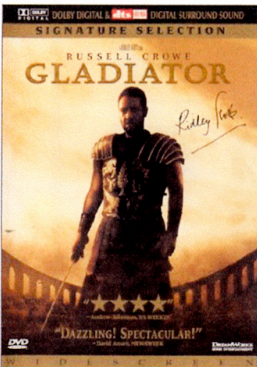
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| <p>3. Spartacus (1960) 198 Minutes</p> | <p>A very fictitious story of Rome's Third Servile War (73 - 70 BC), this is the movie that really broke the Hollywood blacklist. Kirk Douglas, producer as well as star of the epic, brought in the blacklisted screen-writer Dalton Trumbo and insisted that he be credited with the authorship of the screenplay. Trumbo drew his story from Howard Fast's 1951 novel and, like fast, portrayed Spartacus as a popular revolutionary. Many scholars disagree saying that Spartacus was just a wily escapee with no grand revolutionary agenda. It's impossible to say who was right: the historical evidence is extremely sketchy.</p> <p>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spartacus</p> <p>http://www.vroma.org/~bmcmanus/spartacus.html</p> <p>http://www.historyinfilm.com/spart/</p> <p>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Howard_Fast</p> <p>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dalton_Trumbo</p> |
| <p>4. Julius Caesar (1953) 121 Minutes</p> | <p><i>Julius Caesar</i> is the name of the production, but he dies early on. Shakespeare's story is really about Marc Antony's destruction of the <i>liberatori</i> who had assassinated Caesar. This film is recognized as one of Brando's greatest performances, and it is acclaimed by Shakespeare specialists as well as by the Hollywood crowd. Time period covered is 44 and 43 BC.</p> <p>http://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/juliuscaesar/</p> <p>http://www-tech.mit.edu/Shakespeare/julius_caesar/index.html part of http://www-tech.mit.edu/Shakespeare/</p> <p>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julius_Caesar_(1953_film)</p> <p>http://movies2.nytimes.com/mem/movies/review.html?_r=3&title1=Julius%20Caesar&title2=&reviewer=BOSLEY%20CROWTHER</p> <p>http://dir.yahoo.com/Arts/Humanities/History/By_Time_Period/Ancient_History/Roman/People/Caesar_Gaius_Julius_100_44_BCE/</p> |

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| <p>5. Antony and Cleopatra (1974) 161 Minutes</p> | <p>Not Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. It is an ITV television production of Trevor Nunn's stage version performed by London's Royal Shakespeare Company, which was shown in the United States to great acclaim in 1975. Most critics agree that it's the best mass media A and C ever produced. The time period is from 41 BC through 29 BC, but the action is much compressed by Shakespeare.</p> <p>http://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/antony/</p> <p>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antony_and_Cleopatra</p> <p>http://www-tech.mit.edu/Shakespeare/cleopatra/</p> |
| <p>6. Augustus (2003) 178 Minutes</p> | <p>"...equal parts history lesson and soap opera, and thoroughly engaging at all levels". Peter O'toole is Augustus on his deathbed and remembering/retelling his life. The film is surprisingly accurate. Also, surprisingly, the multiple flashback (and even flashbacks within flashbacks) form holds the film together. The only really jarring note is the gratuitous inclusion of Jesus in the last words of the film, supposedly spoken by the (ghost of?) Augustus in what appears to be a parody of his Res Gestae Divi Augusti (= Deeds of the Divine Augustus). The movie covers the life of Augustus from 45 BC until his death in 14 AD.</p> <p>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperium:_Augustus</p> <p>http://www.roman-emperors.org/auggie.htm</p> <p>http://www.virgil.org/augustus/</p> <p>http://classics.mit.edu/Augustus/deeds.html</p> |

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| <p>7. Caligula (1979, reworked several times, ours is essentially the R rated 1981 version.) 101 Minutes</p> | <p>This is an attempt to return to the Gore Vidal Caligula screenplay. Penthouse Magazine operatives had inserted almost an hour of gratuitous explicit sex and gore, which was removed for this "R" rated (cleaned up) version of the notorious Penthouse production. Caligula was undoubtedly evil and perhaps insane, but most of what we "know" about him was written by "historians" in the pay of his enemies after his assassination, and most of that is suspiciously similar to what had been written about previous tyrants in the ancient world. The action takes place between 31 AD when Caligula was summoned to the Villa of Tiberius in Capri and Caligula's death in 41 AD.</p> <p>http://www.roman-emperors.org/gaius.htm</p> <p>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caligula_%28film%29</p> <p>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caligula</p> |
| <p>8. Satyricon (1969) 129 Minutes</p> | <p><i>Satyricon (Fellini Satyricon)</i> is a 1969 film by Federico Fellini that is loosely based on the Petronius novel <i>Satyricon</i>, a series of bawdy and satirical episodes written during the reign of the emperor Nero and set in imperial Rome. Many literature "experts" call the Petronius work the world's first novel. The original text survives only in large fragments, and instead of trying to connect the fragments that survived, Fellini presented the material in a series of somewhat disjointed and dislocated scenes. Petronius, usually identified with Petronius Arbiter, is thought to have been Nero's "master of the revels". The date of the "events" in the <i>Satyricon</i> is unclear, but the work most likely dates from Nero's reign 54 - 68 AD.</p> <p>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satyricon_%28film%29</p> <p>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satyricon</p> <p>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petronius</p> <p>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federico_Fellini</p> |

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| <p>9. Gladiator (2000) 155 Minutes</p> | <p>A fiction set in the reign of Commodus, the film, nonetheless, is very good on Roman architecture, costume, life style, and general ambiance -- good enough for the film to become a staple of university ancient history and archeology courses. The history of Commodus, like that of Caligula 120 years before him, was written by historians in the pay of his erstwhile enemies. Commodus was named Caesar by his father, Marcus Aurelius, at age 5 in 166 AD and was made co-Augustus , in 178 AD. He reigned alone from his father's death in 180 AD until 192 when he was assassinated -- he was not killed in the arena as shown in the movie.</p> <p>http://www.mmdtkw.org/VCommodus.html</p> <p>http://abacus.bates.edu/~mimber/Rciv/gladiator.htm</p> <p>http://www.vroma.org/~bmcmanus/arena.html</p> <p>http://www.exovdate.com/the_real_gladiator_one.html</p> <p>http://ablemedia.com/ctcweb/consortium/gladiators.html</p> |
| <p>10. Titus (1999) 162 Minutes</p> | <p>Titus Andronicus, one of Shakespeare's earliest plays, is certainly his most violent. It was written, before Shakespeare found his own more mellow style, for an Elizabethan audience already inured to violent "revenge plays" modeled after the nine Senecan tragedies. Our movie is Julie Taymor's production, in which she fearlessly shows all of Shakespeare's violence. It is set in the period of "military anarchy" beginning with Maximus Thrax and ending with the formation of the Tetrarchy by Diocletian (235 - 285 AD) during the reign of a fictional Emperor Saturninus. Shakespeare's and Taymor's bloody story accurately reflects the violence of that time. Something to consider: Who commits the first violent act that provokes revenge? Taymor had staged Titus in New York in 1995 before her Lion King success and returned to it for her first movie.</p> <p>http://www.geocities.com/hopkinsfanatic/titusnyt.htm</p> <p>http://www.culturekiosque.com/nouveau/cinema/rhevideo2.html</p> <p>http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3768/is_200401/ai_n9394382</p> <p>http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3768/is_200201/ai_n9057295</p> <p>http://www-tech.mit.edu/Shakespeare/titus/index.html</p> <p>http://www.answers.com/topic/senecan-tragedy</p> |

Movies for ALRI Course #303

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Roman Movies -- Timeline

Films will be discussed/viewed in the order listed, which corresponds to their historical context.

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum

Titus Maccius Plautus, generally referred to simply as Plautus, was a playwright of Ancient Rome. He is believed to have been born in Sarsina (a city in Umbria) around 254 BC. His comedies are among the earliest surviving intact works in Latin literature. To protect himself, Plautus featured "Greek" characters and situations in all of his comedies, and they, in fact, may have been derived from earlier Greek works (a fine copying tradition, which was played out again later, during the Renaissance, when Shakespeare, among others, used the plays of Plautus as sources for their own comedies). The Broadway musical that preceded this movie was drawn from three plays by Plautus (*Miles Gloriosus*, *Pseudolus*, and *The Haunted House*) that ridicule three aspects of Roman Republic life: the braggart warrior, the clever slave who outwits his masters, and fear of ghosts. It wasn't very successful until Zero Mostel took over the leading part of *Pseudolus*.

Scipio Africanus, The Defeat of Hannibal

Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus Major (235 -- 183 BC) was a general in the Second Punic War and statesman of the Roman Republic. He was best known for defeating Hannibal of Carthage, a feat that earned him the surname Africanus, the nickname the Roman Hannibal and recognition as one of the finest commanders in military history.

Scipione l'africano, written by Carmine Gallone, won the Mussolini Cup for the greatest Italian film at the 1937 Venice Film Festival.

Fascist Italy's most spectacular costume epic, it celebrates ancient Rome's conquests in Africa during the Second Punic War. Produced during Italy's war against Abyssinia, and heavily backed by Mussolini's government, this was at the time the most expensive Italian film ever made. Drawing upon Rome's imperial past to justify Italy's expansionist present, *Scipio Africanus* piles cinematic spectacle -- a cast of thousands, savage battle scenes, and stunning recreations of Rome and Carthage -- atop its ideological agenda.

Spartacus

Spartacus (ca. 120 BC -- ca. 70 BC, at the end of the Third Servile War), according to Roman historians, was a gladiator-slave who became the alleged leader of an unsuccessful slave uprising against the Roman Republic. Little is known about Spartacus beyond the events of the Third Servile War, and the historical accounts of the war that have survived into modern times are sketchy and often contradictory. However, Spartacus' struggle, often portrayed as the struggle of oppressed people fighting for their freedom against a large powerful State, has found new meaning for modern writers since the 19th century. The figure of Spartacus and his rebellion have become an inspiration to many modern literary and political writers, who have made the character of Spartacus an ancient/modern folk hero.

Julius Caesar (Shakespeare)

Gaius Julius Caesar (July 12 or July 13, 100 BC – March 15, 44 BC), often simply called Julius Caesar, was a Roman military and political leader and one of the most influential men in world history. He played a critical role in the transformation of the Roman Republic into the Roman Empire.

Leading his legions across the Rubicon, Caesar sparked civil war in 49 BC that left him the undisputed master of the Roman world. After assuming control of the government, he began extensive reforms of Roman society and government. He was proclaimed dictator for life, and he heavily centralized the bureaucracy of the Republic. This forced the hand of a friend of Caesar, Marcus Junius Brutus, who then conspired with others to murder the dictator and restore the Republic. This dramatic assassination occurred on the Ides of March

(March 15th) in 44 BC and led to another Roman civil war. In 42 BC, two years after his assassination, the Roman Senate officially sanctified him as one of the Roman deities.

The film features a splendid characterization of Marc Antony by a very young Marlon Brando, who appears to have learned to speak clearly for this roll.

Antony and Cleopatra (Shakespeare)

Marcus Antonius (c. 83 BC–August 1, 30 BC), known in English as **Mark Antony**, was a Roman politician and general. He was an important supporter of Gaius Julius Caesar as a military commander and administrator. After Caesar's assassination, Antony allied with Gaius Julius Caesar Octavian and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus to form an official triumvirate which modern scholars have labeled the **Second Triumvirate**. The Triumvirate broke up in 33 BC and the disagreement turned to civil war in 31 BC, in which Antony was defeated by Octavian at the **Battle of Actium** and then at **Alexandria**. Antony committed suicide along with his lover, **Queen Cleopatra VII of Egypt**, in 30 BC.

Cleopatra VII (January 69 BC–November 30, 30 BC) was a Hellenistic co-ruler of Egypt with her father (Ptolemy XII Auletes), and with her brothers/husbands Ptolemy XIII and Ptolemy XIV. She consummated a liaison with Gaius Julius Caesar that solidified her grip on the throne, and, after Caesar's assassination, aligned with Mark Antony, with whom she produced twins. In all, Cleopatra had four children, one by Caesar (Caesarion) and three by Antony (Cleopatra Selene, Alexander Helios, Ptolemy Philadelphus). Her unions with her brothers produced no children (it is possible that they were never consummated). In any case, they were not close. Her reign marks the end of the Hellenistic and the beginning of the Roman era in the eastern Mediterranean. After Antony's rival and Caesar's legal heir, Gaius Julius Caesar Octavian (who later became the first "Princeps", Augustus brought the might of Rome against Egypt, it is said that Cleopatra took her own life on August 12, 30 BC, allegedly by means of an asp. Her legacy survives in the form of numerous dramatizations of her story, including William Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* and several modern films.

The film we will see is universally acknowledged to be the best *Antony and Cleopatra* ever made.

Augustus

Augustus (also Octavian) (September 23, 63 BC–August 19, AD 14), known as Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus for the period of his life prior to 27 BC, was the first and among the most important of the Roman Emperors.

Although he preserved the outward form of the Roman Republic, he ruled as an autocrat for 41 years, longer than any subsequent Emperor; and his rule is the dividing line between the Republic and the Roman Empire. He ended a century of civil wars and gave Rome an era of peace, prosperity, and imperial greatness, known as the *Pax Romana*, or *Roman peace*, which lasted for over 200 years.

Although somewhat fictionalized, this film still is probably the most accurate portrayal of Augustus ever filmed.

Caligula

Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus Germanicus (August 31, 12 – January 24, 41 AD), most commonly known as Caligula (= "Little Boots"), was the third Roman Emperor and a member of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, ruling from 37 to 41. Known for his extreme extravagance, eccentricity, depravity and cruelty, he is remembered as a despot. He was assassinated in 41 AD by several of his own guards.

The Roman historian Suetonius referred to Caligula as a "monster", and the surviving sources are universal in their condemnation. One popular tale, often cited as an example of his insanity and tyranny, is that Caligula appointed his favorite horse, Incitatus, to a seat on the Senate and attempted to appoint it to the position of consul. The story, however, owes its unrelenting currency to its charm: it is based on a single misunderstood near-contemporary reference, in which Suetonius merely repeats an unattributed rumor that Caligula was thinking about doing it (Suet. Cal. 55.3). Caligula is often alleged to have had incestuous relationships with his sisters, most notably his

younger sister Drusilla, but there is no credible evidence to support such claims either. In short, the surviving sources are filled with anecdotes of Caligula's cruelty and insanity rather than an actual account of his reign. This makes any reconstruction of his time as Princeps nearly impossible.

There are several versions of this film available, and the "R" rated version that we will see is the closest to Gore Vidal's original screenplay. The "unrated" version has an additional hour or so of extraneous perverted sex and violence, which was a post-production addition by the Penthouse Magazine producers. That's the version that we will not be seeing.

Fellini Satyricon

Petronius (c. 27–66) was a Roman writer of the Neronian age; he was a noted satirist. He is identified with Gaius Petronius Arbiter, but the manuscript text of the *Satyricon* calls him Titus Petronius. He is usually thought to have been Nero's "Master of the Revels."

His sole surviving work, the *Satyricon* (often called the earliest known novel) is an entertaining and earthy tale that tells us nothing directly of his fortunes, position, or even century. Some lines of Sidonius Apollinaris refer to him and are often taken to imply that he lived and wrote at Massilia (Marseille, France). If, however, we accept the identification of this author with the *Petronius* of Tacitus, Nero's courtier, we must suppose either that Massilia was his birthplace or, as is more likely, that Sidonius refers to the novel itself and that its scene was partly laid at Massilia.

The chief characters of the story are evidently strangers in the towns of Southern Italy where we find them. Their Greek-sounding names (Encolpius, Ascyltos, Giton, etc.) and literary training accord with the characteristics of the old Greek colony in the 1st century (Magna Graecia). The high position among Latin writers ascribed by Sidonius to Petronius, and the mention of him by Macrobius beside Menander among the humorists, when compared with the absolute silence of Quintilian, Juvenal and Martial, seem adverse to the opinion that the *Satyricon* was a work of the age of Nero. But Quintilian was concerned with writers who could be turned to use in the education of an orator, nor does it seem to have lain in Quintilian's personality to appreciate the rollicking, scurrilous humor of the *Satyricon*. The

silence of Juvenal and Martial may be accidental or it is possible that a work so abnormal in form and substance was more highly prized by later generations than by the author's contemporaries.

Fellini Satyricon is a 1969 film by Federico Fellini. It is loosely based on the Petronius novel, a series of bawdy and satirical episodes written during the reign of the emperor Nero and set in imperial Rome. The original text survives only in large fragments, and, instead of trying to connect and "patch up" the fragments that survived, Fellini decided to present the material in a series of somewhat disjointed and dislocated scenes.

Gladiator

Maximus, an entirely fictional character invented for the movie and a supposed protégé and commander of the army of Marcus Aurelius on the northern frontier, is unjustly disgraced by Commodus. He is enslaved and works his way up through the gladiatorial ranks and back to Rome. There he eventually fights with and kills Commodus in the Colosseum. The story is complete fiction except for the names of some of the major characters. But the background incidents and ambiance are so good that the film has become a staple of university Roman History and Archeology courses.

Gladiator supposedly takes place during the reign of Commodus (more properly Marcus Aurelius Commodus Antoninus), (180 -- December 31, 192 AD) the presumed son of Marcus Aurelius – there were rumors of a gladiator in the back room with Faustina Minora while old Marcus was away fighting along the Danube.

Commodus has been very badly treated by "history": all of the great Roman era historians were in the pay of the "optimati" while Commodus had been the darling of the "populares". Commodus ended the wasteful wars along the Rhine frontier and brought home the armies – and this was extremely unpopular with the Senatorial "military-industrial complex" whose paid historians later derided his reign and probably made up most of what we "know" about his "disastrous" rule. In his own time, he was undoubtedly the best-loved emperor excepting perhaps Augustus.

Titus

Titus is a powerful 1999 film adaptation of Shakespeare's revenge tragedy *The Tragedy of Titus Andronicus*, about the downfall of a Roman general. It was the first film of the play (aside from TV productions). The film is the directorial debut of Julie Taymor who co-produced and wrote the screenplay.

There was no real Roman Emperor named Saturninus, but during the long "period of military chaos" (192 – 284 AD) between Commodus and Diocletian there was a "fictional" "Saturninus" – inserted mistakenly by the author(s) of the *Historia Augusta* (or perhaps just misread) as "also ruled" during the reign of Gallienus (260-268 AD). Saturninus could actually have been a co-Consul with Gallienus.

The Tragedy of Titus Andronicus may be Shakespeare's earliest tragedy. It depicts a fictional Roman general engaged in a cycle of revenge with his enemy Tamora, the Queen of the Goths. The play is by far Shakespeare's bloodiest, taking its inspiration from Senecan Tragedy of Ancient Rome, the gory theatre that was played to bloodthirsty circus audiences between gladiatorial combats.

Recommended, but not necessary, reading

Review from: Bryn Mawr Classical Review 2002.07.29
 Reviewed by Kirk Ormand, Oberlin College, kirk.ormand@oberlin.edu
<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/bmcr/2002/2002-07-29.html>

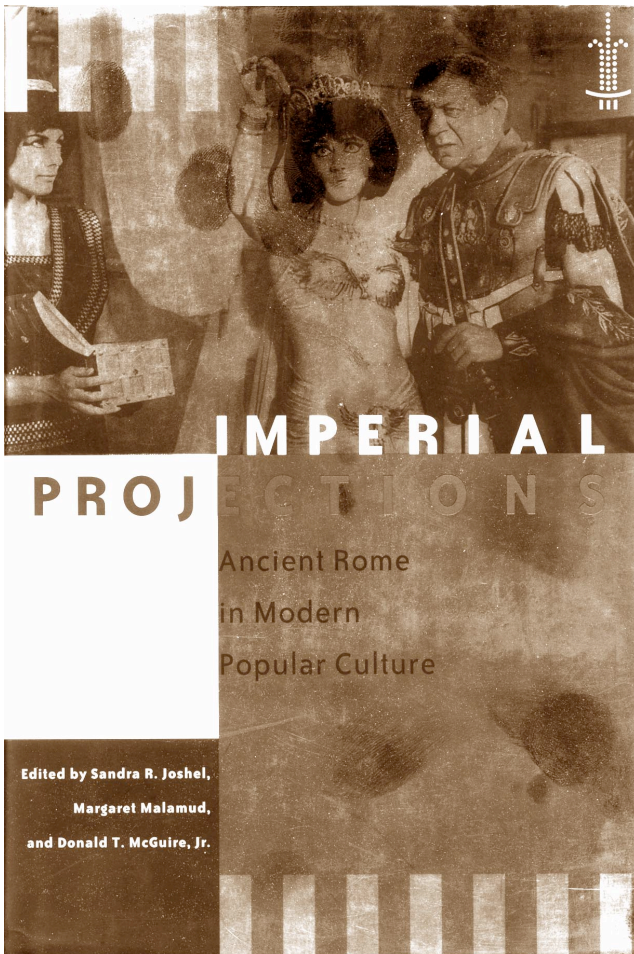
Imperial Projections: Ancient Rome in Modern Popular Culture by Sandra Joshel, Margaret Malamud, Donald T. McGuire,

Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001. Pp. 299. ISBN 0-8018-6742-8. \$45.00.

Contributors: William Fitzgerald, Martin M. Winkler, Alison Futrell, Sandra R. Joshel, Nicholas J. Cull, Margaret Malamud, Martha Malamud, Maria Wyke, Donald T. McGuire, Jr.

Imperial Projections is a terrific book. It successfully merges modern cultural critique with sound classical scholarship, and does so in a manner that is enjoyable to read and intellectually challenging.

The premise of the book is promising. The editors wish to explore the Rome that exists in the American imagination and to articulate how we have used Rome as a site of projection for modern cultural conflicts and anxieties. All the essays are good, some are outstanding, and the volume explores a wide range of



expressions of popular culture. Included here are the grandiose Roman epic movies of the 50's and 60's, the parodies of that form, the BBC's *I, Claudius*, a film by Derek Jarman, and even the architectural wonders of Caesars [sic] Palace in Las Vegas. Each author succeeds in analyzing a modern artifact, while taking into account the various modes of production that surround it, the public response to it, and the social currents that inform that production and response. This is cultural criticism at its best, providing us with interesting readings of modern American culture, while also exploring that oft-neglected topic, the form and function of our relation to the classical world.

Should I stop there in my praise I might be thought effusive. And yet there is more to praise. The authors of the book generally avoid jargon, and none explicitly refers to a body

of theory. Each essayist, however, demonstrates a sure knowledge of modern critical approaches, and underlying the various theses here one will find the theories of intertextuality, queer theory, Marxist ideology, feminist theory, and cinema studies. (Each contributor is well known as a classicist, and the authors' competence here is also evident, though the focus of the book is not on the ancient world per se). In analyzing *Spartacus*, or the BBC's *I, Claudius*, for example, Futrell and Joshel incorporate into their readings a subtle and effective critique of gender roles, and of the ways in which the domestic becomes a safe site for the movies to explore political revolution. Wyke's treatment of Jarman's *Sebastiane* is also an important discussion of the eroticization of suffering, drawing on the work of queer theorists. And so on. But none of the authors spends time justifying the theoretical stances that they take up; rather, their analyses stand on their own merits, and the authors assume that the reader is

smart enough to follow along. This sure-footedness regarding issues of gender, sexuality, social class, and critical theory is both welcome and encouraging.

Beyond that, the book holds together uncommonly well for a collection of essays on diverse productions across a range of media. The authors clearly know each other's essays and have gone to some pains to cross-reference one another. There is some overlap of treatment in a few of the pieces, but generally this ends up being complementary. The book is attractively produced, with a solid bibliography and thorough index.

In the paragraphs that follow, I briefly summarize each of the essays that appear in the volume. I have one or two quibbles with some of the pieces, but these should in no way be seen to detract from the importance of this book, or the enjoyment to be derived from reading it.

Joshel, Margaret Malamud, and Wyke have written an eloquent introduction to the volume in which they outline the major lines of representation of the Roman Empire in American popular culture. Rome is a virtual chameleon as a site of projection: at times Rome represents a tyrannical empire populated by actors with suspiciously upper-class British accents, doomed to be overthrown by plucky Christians who all have American accents. At other times Rome (especially the Republic) is America, the forerunner of our notions of law and, curiously, democracy. In still other venues Rome is characterized by excess, either negatively, as when an emperor (such as Nero) demonstrates moral failure through sexual and economic profligacy, or positively, when Caesars Palace becomes a celebration of that most American of activities, going to the mall. We can identify with Rome, or distance ourselves from it; in either case, Rome becomes a safe space in which to explore anxieties about shifting gender roles or sexual identities, or America's role as a former colony of Great Britain, or as an emerging world empire.

In "Oppositions, Anxieties, and Ambiguities in the Toga Movie," William Fitzgerald explores the persistent trope of Rome as a tyrannical empire that is doomed to be replaced by Christianity. As Fitzgerald argues, the movies of the 50's (especially *Quo Vadis*, and *Ben Hur*) are careful to champion Christianity without showing the Christians as actually subversive. The films negotiate this bit of ideology by casting it in the domestic sphere: the hero (played by an American) is converted after falling in love with a Christian woman (played by a European). Thus the rough American is domesticated at the same time that the hero is able to turn away from the flawed, decadent political power of public life at Rome. Fitzgerald is also lucid on the ways in which these films present erotic relations between men (in varying degrees of latency) as an emotional driving force, often masked behind a spectacle of violence.¹

Martin Winkler draws a more explicit connection between the films of the 50's and contemporary politics, arguing that *Quo Vadis* and *Ben Hur* figure the Roman empire as an analogue to Nazi Germany. One of the more interesting translations of this analogy has the Christians of ancient Rome as the counterparts to the

Jews persecuted by Hitler. While Winkler comments on this oddity (64), he does not quite theorize how it comes about in the American imagination. Moreover, at times he seems to push his evidence a bit far. Order and a desire for empire do not necessarily connote the Nazis. Nonetheless, Winkler has a good deal of interest to say about the iconography of the Roman Eagle in Hollywood films, the depiction of Nero as Antichrist, and Frank Capra's involvement in American Office of War Information films of the 1940's.

Alison Futrell's piece, "Seeing Red: Spartacus as Domestic Economist," is a model of cultural analysis. She traces the history of the representation of Spartacus' revolt, showing how the historical event becomes a vehicle in turn for "natural equality," nationalism, and eventually socialism in subsequent retellings. She then shows how the famous movie version reshapes the overt Marxist motivations of Howard Fast's play by moving the political revolution to the sphere of the family. Futrell points out that the movie is itself embroiled in a somewhat quieter revolution, as the employment and crediting of screenwriter Dalton Trumbo was an important step in dismantling the Hollywood blacklist. This essay, like several others in the volume, also has interesting insights into the ways in which the female lead in these movies of Rome is used to assure the "natural" superiority of its stirring hero.

A highlight of the volume, Sandra Joshel's "I, Claudius: Projection and Imperial Soap Opera," discusses the way in which the BBC's adaptation of Robert Graves' novel takes on the form and function of a soap opera. In contrast to the movies of Rome, this small-screen series reduces every aspect of the Empire to the imperial household, so that the decadence of Roman government becomes a family drama. As in soaps, "... family disintegration is repetitive, not cumulative" (143). And most important, the real threat to an orderly society in this domestic drama is a series of manipulative, greedy, lascivious women. Not coincidentally, the series depicts these women (especially Augustus' wife Livia) as pro-empire, where the "good" men of the series are forced to accept the empire against their desires for a return to the Republic. And finally, Joshel argues that the American showing of this drama had the particular effect of allowing us to see the Romans as "not us," because they were, essentially, British. Joshel is particularly strong on the way the medium of television itself molded this production, and on the ways in which Alistair Cooke and the reviewers shaped public response to it.

Nicholas Cull's analysis of the British camp comedies of ancient Rome does a nice job of tracing the roots of this particular genre, in this case to British military humor. There is less critique in this essay than in other pieces in the volume, as a good deal of space is devoted to simply describing the jokes and parodies in *Carry On, Cleo*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, and *Up Pompeii*. Some of the most interesting material here is Cull's discussion of the way the "camp" was used to explore anxieties about sex and sexuality in the 60's. A closing argument makes the point that the kind of "camp" used by these movies is only possible in an era of relative "innocence and repression" (184). What seemed cheeky in the 60's is pretty tame today, and that makes it difficult to camp things up in quite the same way.

In "Brooklyn on the Tiber: Roman Comedy on Broadway and in Film," Margaret Malamud gives an extended treatment of *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. Malamud explores the way that the works of Plautus (themselves derivative of a Greek tradition) were appropriated and recast for the Broadway stage production by Jewish comics who had cut their teeth in the "Borscht Belt." This Rome is a place where the comic tradition of the clever slave becomes a venue for exploring Jewish-American identification and assimilation. In the movie version of *A Funny Thing*, however, the story takes on a different tone, as Richard Lester wanted to criticize both the Hollywood film industry and what he understood as the socially unjust world of ancient Rome. He was limited in his ability to do so, however, by producer Melvin Frank. The result is an odd mix of gritty realism (a Rome populated by slaves in rags surrounded by rotting vegetables) and vaudevillian humor.

Martha Malamud writes a cogent essay about Colleen McCullough's series of novels on ancient Rome in "Serial Romans." Most interesting here is the observation that these novels are essentially conservative: bloodlines determine social class, and correctly so; women are weak and subordinate; homosexuality is an identity and an indication of moral degeneration; eastern characters are effeminate and luxurious; and so on. Malamud is also instructive on the way in which McCullough infantilizes her characters, producing upper class Romans who are all *Id*. Finally, the essay critiques the marketing of the novels themselves, and the ways in which the novels re-make Roman history into a supermarket Romance.²

One of the more sophisticated readings of the volume is Maria Wyke's discussion of Derek Jarman's 1976 film *Sebastiane*, "Shared Sexualities." Wyke traces the historical representation of Saint Sebastian, exploring the process by which his suffering is increasingly seen as erotic and particularly representative of gay male experience and pleasure. She then critiques Jarman's film, relating it both to this history and to underground gay male pornographic films (some with a vague classical setting) of the 50's and 60's. In Jarman's film Rome becomes a trope for homosexual liberation, rather than homosexuality being a sign of Roman decadence and decline. In creating this representation, however, Jarman focuses not on the interior of the imperial court, but on "barren barracks life on the edges of empire" (230). As such the film re-made both our understanding of homosexuality and of ancient Rome. (Again particularly interesting are the contemporary critics' attempts to direct and control the potential viewers of the film.) A brilliant, densely argued close to the essay discusses the "potential erotic ecstasy of self-renunciation" (245) of the film in light of our post-Foucauldian understanding of homosexual identity.

The volume closes with a lighthearted, and somewhat light, piece on the history and architecture of Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, by Margaret Malamud and Donald McGuire. It is clear that the authors have spared no expense to research their topic, and this is in keeping with the theme of the Palace. This is the Rome of Commerce with a capital C, where luxury and power are celebrated as part of

the American vision of "extravagant consumption" (262). As with some of the camp films of the same era, *Caesars Palace* succeeds (to the extent that it does) because of a kind of willful ignorance, a willingness on the part of the consumer to wink, nudge, and roll her eyes.

In sum, Rome has never been just Rome; and the Empire in particular has been a backdrop against which modern America works out its sense of identity. *Imperial Projections* goes a long way towards articulating the relation between modern America and ancient Rome, and towards theorizing the many subtexts that inform that relation.

Notes:

1. I missed reference here to Eve Sedgwick, 1985. *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. New York: Columbia University Press.
2. Reference could have been made here to two standard works on popular "women's" fiction: Janice Radway, 1984. *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. Leslie Rabine, 1985. "Romance in the Age of Electronics: Harlequin Enterprises," *Feminist Studies* 11: 39-60.

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Monica Silveira Cyrino, *Big Screen Rome*

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Reviewer: Suzanne Sharland, Classics, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, 7/11/07

Since film courses that focus on screen representations of Classical antiquity seem to be becoming such a staple of Classical Civilisation programmes everywhere, Monica Silveira Cyrino's "Big Screen Rome" comes as a welcome and timely addition to the growing store of secondary literature in this rapidly expanding area of Classical studies. Well-organised and appropriately illustrated, Cyrino's lively contribution suggests itself as a suitable textbook to prescribe for such courses. This is not to say, however, that there are no problems with the work. As the title implies, Cyrino's book concentrates on the Roman side of things and excludes the Greek portion of Classically themed films -- recent films such as Wolfgang Petersen's "Troy" (2004) and Oliver Stone's "Alexander" (2004) are noteworthy omissions dictated by the study's exclusively Roman bias.[1] Even within the Roman film universe, the work is far from exhaustive; Cyrino

focuses on a relatively small selection of films in the book. These, she explains, are the films she has tried and tested in her own film course at the University of New Mexico (p. 3). Unfortunately, the restrictions of the academic year mean that every lecturer or course co-ordinator designing a film studies module has inevitably to decide what to include and what to leave out. Nevertheless "Big Screen Rome" treats all the major and most famous Classically themed films of yesteryear and provides a solid, useful starting point for the Classics in the Movies student, who should be encouraged to build upon the basic information imparted by the study.

What gives Cyrino's work such potential as a textbook is the meticulously organised manner in which information about a number of Classically themed films is imparted. Indeed, it is clear that it is precisely as a textbook that Cyrino's book has been composed. Every chapter deals with just one film, thus avoiding unnecessary confusion, although there is some discussion of previous versions or direct predecessors of the film in question. Within each chapter the same structured organizational approach is taken. Cyrino arranges each chapter under a number of headings that are always the same and in the same order. This predictability makes the book easy to use. For example, on the first page of each chapter, one finds important information about the film's production studio, director, screenplay, cast and so on. This provides a useful reference point to turn to if one has, for example, forgotten the name of an actor or the year in which a film was released. Cyrino follows this, in each case, with an equally useful 'Plot Outline', which is detailed summary of the plot of each film. Cyrino anticipates that this will help students and lecturers place significant scenes and clear up confusion about the sequence of the narrative (p. 5). Cynics may comment that the plot summary will be of great help to those incorrigible students who, as incredible as it may seem, have failed to watch the film itself.

Next in every chapter comes a section entitled 'Ancient Background' which describes the ancient sources or the historical background that inspired the film. In these sections, Cyrino usually delves into some recorded history of ancient Rome, concerning which the modern films can be extraordinarily cavalier. The exception to the historical approach is in Chapter 6 (pp. 159-75), on "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" (1966), where the 'Ancient Background' section focuses instead on the background to Roman comedy, the genre on which this purely imaginary film is based. The section 'Background to the Film' in each case discusses the more recent background to the movie, with, as Cyrino explains, 'an examination of other appropriations, literary or figurative, of the story or its major characters since antiquity, and in particular the use of the story or characters in other media such as novels, stage plays, and other cinematic versions' (p. 5). This section explains, in addition, the manner in which the film project came to be assigned to a particular director and provides a brief summary of the particular director's career (p. 5). Cyrino's credentials as a film buff and her impressively broad knowledge of Hollywood (after all, she grew up in the neighbourhood)[[2]] enable her to impart interesting and often very revealing information about other films on non-Classical themes made by the directors in question.

The next section, 'Making the Movie', in each case highlights the actual production of the film under discussion, frequently involving intrigues, struggles, and expenses of such proportions that they rival the epic itself. This section also examines technical issues such as 'the development of the screenplay, directorial decisions about the shooting location and casting of actors, the film's artistic design, musical score, exceptional set-piece scenes, special effects and new cinematic technologies' (p. 5). The final major section, 'Themes and Interpretations', provides in each case an in-depth analysis of the major themes of the film, as well as situating the movie in the broader social, political, and cultural context of the time of its production and release. Cyrino evaluates each film's degree of critical and commercial success, and she also looks for reasons for this. Each chapter concludes with a potentially useful list of 'Core Issues' (take note, students!), a set of important themes and issues that Cyrino has identified as arising out of each film. One can almost see already the garishly coloured highlighter pens coming out to underline or otherwise mutilate these questions, helpfully posed in point-form.

Many of the films Cyrino discusses tell us more about the attitudes and trends in American society than about the ancient world. Cyrino is particularly good at contextualising each movie in the American society of the particular era in which it was made. She examines perceptively the degree to which each film she analyses captures its "Zeitgeist", and her book as a whole is set out chronologically so as to follow the evolution of the 'swords and sandals' epic from its heyday in the early 1950s to its sudden resurrection with the success of *Gladiator* in the year 2000. "Big Screen Rome" in effect tracks the changes in American political, religious, sexual, and cultural attitudes during the second half of the twentieth century. Cyrino's first three chapters treat three religious-themed American epics from the 1950s, "Quo Vadis" (1951), "The Robe" (1953), and "Ben-Hur" (1959). As Cyrino remarks (p. 3), these post-War religious epics all inherit as well as perpetuate similar mythologies about Rome. Their presentations of gender, race, and class are limited by the prejudices of that era. One of the problems faced by the lecturer today is how to make these pious films, which sometimes look like walking Christmas cards, accessible to the contemporary secularly-minded and often agnostic student. Yet it is important that students are familiar with this sub-genre of epic film in order for them to appreciate the subsequent parodies of it, in films like "Monty Python's Life of Brian" (1979). On the political front, Cyrino takes care to situate these films within the tense cultural and political climate of the United States during the Cold War period, another scenario that is entirely foreign to the modern eighteen- to twenty-year-old student. The next two chapters examine secular films about Rome made during the early 1960s, "Spartacus" (1960) and "Cleopatra" (1963). Few film courses about the ancient world would ignore these two highly significant movies. Cyrino follows this with three chapters treating comedies, "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" (1966), "Monty Python's Life of Brian" (1979), and Mel Brooks' "History of the World, Part 1: The Roman Empire Sequence" (1981). Cyrino finishes off with a very well-written chapter on "Gladiator" (2000), the film which launched the return of the Classically themed epic film.

In her introduction (pp. 1-6), Cyrino observes that there is both an attraction to the power and spectacle of Rome, as well as a simultaneous abhorrence felt towards what are perceived as the excesses of this ancient civilisation: 'Contemporary audiences readily relate to and even define themselves by the on-screen portrayal of the ancient Romans whose provocative combination of dignity and decadence both fascinates and disturbs' (pp. 1f.). Traditionally, however, American audiences do not seem to have been encouraged to identify themselves with the Romans. In the movies on the ancient world, until fairly recently, the American actors (or actors with American accents) never played the evil, oppressive Romans, but rather appeared as slaves, Christians, and other innocent victims of Rome's abuse of power. According to the Hollywood 'linguistic paradigm', actors with British accents that were 'posh'-sounding to American audiences played the evil, corrupt and oppressive Romans. This all changed, as Cyrino observes (p. 232), with "Gladiator" (2000), when Australian Russell Crowe adopted a gruff but refined English accent ('Royal Shakespeare Company two pints after lunch') in order to play the hero Maximus. However, the villain Commodus, played by American Joaquin Phoenix, also adopted an accent that veers occasionally into Cockney ('... busy likkle bee ...'). On America's shoulders, it seems, the mantle of Rome rests uneasily. Issues of power and empire suggested by the paradigm of ancient Rome have never been more significant for contemporary society, and to the rest of the world today, America is clearly Rome. Only certain recent films, however, have made a direct link between the ancient Roman empire and its most striking contemporary parallel.[[3]] By treating mostly earlier American-made movies,[[4]] however, which subscribe to the conventional paradigm, Cyrino has narrowed our perspective of ancient Rome.

In Cyrino's selection there are not enough recent films under discussion, and thus the entire focus of her book is on early material which, one anticipates, will eventually largely be replaced by later portrayals of the ancient world. Much of the more recent film material has been about Greece rather than about Rome. But even on the Roman side of things there have been many made-for-television spectacles (admittedly mostly British) that merit attention. These television series have often been less flashy but more historically accurate than the Hollywood blockbusters, and in the past I have found it useful to have students compare small and large screen presentations of the same historical figure. The nature of a television series allows the scriptwriters to go into greater detail on minor background issues that of necessity are swept under the carpet in the Hollywood blockbuster. If, for example, the 1963 Cleopatra film had been a television series as opposed to a lengthy movie, there may have been a chance to show aspects of Mark Antony's early career and his relationship to Julius Caesar that had to be edited out of the film version and which may have helped explain some of his later behaviour.[[5]] Cyrino has severely limited her choice of films by being strictly 'Big Screen' and 'Rome' (and almost exclusively American).

While a post-modernist analysis of the multi-layered meanings of the films and their reflections on antiquity may be instructive, on a more practical level, as

Cyrino herself suggests (p. 2), we need to question why we teach these films at all in the context of the Classics classroom. What bothers me, however, is that on the whole Cyrino's attitude towards the films she has selected (clearly her favourites) is more approving than critical. While there is nothing wrong with enjoying the spectacles, often it is necessary to focus on the movies' faults rather than their good points in order to enable our students to learn something about the ancient world from them. Do these films as artistic representations make any attempt at historical accuracy? To what extent could inaccuracies in these movies cause confusion or misconceptions in the minds of some of our students? How far-fetched must a film be before it loses any relevance to a study of the ancient world?[[6]] While it is true that most of our impressions of the ancient world are mediated by some previous representation, that there is no modern representation of antiquity that can be truly objective, and that all films about the ancient world are really about the modern one, it would be hard to justify giving up all attempts at historical accuracy in films that are, after all, promoted as historical 'period pieces'. Historical accuracy is what the lay person always wants to know about: I think it would be condescending and dismissive to suggest that the ordinary film-going public does not care about this. By failing to tackle the thorny question of historical accuracy head-on, "Big Screen Rome" ultimately is unable to raise itself out of the limited level of a class textbook to the status of a more rewarding and abiding contribution to scholarship.

When it comes to the visual recreation of the movie set, it has been observed, historical accuracy resides in the details of that recreation. [[7]] What I miss in Cyrino's book is a discussion of the historical anachronisms of each film, some of which are petty, others irritating, and still others dangerously misleading. I am not overly concerned about such legendary alleged slip-ups as the automobile in the arena or the wristwatch on the arm of a Roman soldier, amusing as these things may be to spot. Somewhat more insidious, however, is Judah's elderly servant Simonides (Esther's father) bumbling about in "Ben-Hur" with a "yarmulke" (skullcap) on his head centuries before this became the practice in Jewish communities. [[8]] Again, Judah's experience as a slave has him rowing a galley as a dire form of punishment, while in practice being an oarsman was a highly paid and respected profession. In battle, after all, it was better to depend on free men rather than on slaves. [[9]] In "Cleopatra" (1963), Cleopatra and Antony sit upright to eat their banquet on the queen's boat afloat on the River Cydnus. They look ridiculous: why aren't they reclining? Cyrino's book could have been made more useful if she had compiled a list of these anomalies. Even the minor infringements are worth noting, so that these can be brought to the students' attention.

A more serious dilemma, in my view, is whether Spartacus dies on a cross, as in Stanley Kubrick's movie, or in battle, as Plutarch tells us. [[10]] At a push, an anonymous Spartacus could indeed have been among his numerous followers crucified between Capua and Rome as a reprisal for antiquity's most successful slave uprising, but this is not what Plutarch says. As Classicists and Ancient Historians we need to ask why sometimes deliberate alterations to historical events and phenomena are made in modern films about the ancient world, and

what effect this has on our students' understanding of the ancient world. Having Spartacus die on the cross,[[11]] for example, is useful in dramatic terms, as it gives Kirk Douglas a Christ-like profile and a chance to have some dialogue with Jean Simmons, but knowledge of the ancient world reveals that dying in battle as a warrior and not on the cross like a slave would be the path that Spartacus himself (and any other ancient with an ounce of self-respect) would undoubtedly have preferred. It is important that we use the opportunities for discussion afforded by the films' inaccuracies to engage with our students, and to introduce them to the real challenges of the ancient world, in which the issues of right and wrong were not always as clear-cut as in a Hollywood movie.

NOTES

[[1]] With the release of "300" (2007), a dramatisation of the battle of Thermopylae, might it not soon be time for a companion volume entitled "Big Screen Greece"?

[[2]] See 'Acknowledgments', p. viii.

[[3]] According to Lou Marinoff, 'America is Rome reincarnate. Like the Roman empire, the American empire is vastly powerful and unfathomably corrupt. Like Rome, America imposes her civilisation upon an ungrateful world. Like Rome, America needs bread, circuses and philosopher-statesmen to forestall and yet to hasten her demise' ("The Philosopher's Magazine", Summer 1998 -- I owe this reference to Susan Haskins.) "Gladiator" (2000), prior to the disaster of 9/11 and all the propaganda that has followed it its wake, was in my view a high point in the United States' cultural biography at which point America could look at herself and admit that she was Rome.

[[4]] An exception to this is, of course, "Monty Python's Life of Brian" (1979), which Cyrino ably treats in her seventh chapter (pp. 176-93).

[[5]] Cyrino notes this problem with the editing of Burton's portrayal of Mark Antony at p. 145. However, she dismisses the 1999 BBC mini-series "Cleopatra" as 'feeble' (p. 151). An excellent example of a recent mini-series, perhaps too recent for Cyrino's book, to be fair, is the series "Rome" created by John Milius, William J. Macdonald, and Bruno Heller (London: BBC & HBO, 2006).

[[6]] Kathleen Coleman, herself an academic consultant to the movie "Gladiator" (2000), raises many questions regarding the issue of historical accuracy and the role of the academic consultant in her chapter 'The Pedant Goes to Hollywood: The Role of the Academic Consultant' in Martin M. Winkler (ed.), "Gladiator: Film and History" (Oxford 2004) 45-52. She concludes (p. 52) that historical accuracy need not be sacrificed to artistic sensibility provided that there is a sophisticated working relationship between the academic consultant and the filmmakers.

[[7]] Coleman [6] 49 observes that while scholars are often accused of being too focused on the minutiae, which may be a problem for an academic consultant

working on a film set, nevertheless, it should be remembered that ‘detail is the repository of authenticity’.

[[8]] Covering the head before God is very ancient practice in Judaism, but any form of head-covering is acceptable in terms of Jewish law. A wide variety of head-coverings has been worn by Jewish men from ancient times to the present, and many regional differences used to exist. It seems that the "yarmulke" as we know it dates from Medieval times. The word is Yiddish and the practice of wearing this cap probably comes from Poland. It has even been suggested that ‘the so-called Jewish garb of Poland, including even the ‘jarmulka’ (undercap), is simply the old Polish costume which the Jews retained after the Poles had adopted the German form of dress’ (JewishEncyclopedia.com - COSTUME, p. 20; accessed on 11/5/07).

[[9]] Ancient warship designs required that each oarsman be responsible for one oar, and therefore rowing was a skilled job, performed by trained personnel. J.G. Landels in his work "Engineering in the Ancient World" (London 1980) notes that however well designed a warship may have been, ‘it was only one half of a partnership, the other being a fit, well trained crew whose morale was high’ (p. 149). Where slaves were used on ancient galleys, they were apparently freed and trained first. Later designs, however, required three to seven men handling one oar, so individual skill mattered less, and from about the sixteenth century A.D., European powers started using condemned criminals and prisoners-of-war to man their galleys. From there the commonplace of a condemned ‘galley slave’ made its way into literature, and what eventually became a literary tradition seems to have influenced the portrayal of "Ben-Hur".

[[10]] Plutarch "Life of Crassus" 11.6-7. Plutarch (id. 8.3) also suggests that Spartacus the Thracian was in fact not born into slavery at all, as in the movie, but was enslaved through capture. I think that this is significant; the attitudes instilled in Spartacus by his free birth may explain the indomitable spirit that enabled him to lead the slave rebellion in the first place. It is not accidental that the Roman slave-owning classes preferred the home-born slave, the "verna", to formerly free individuals captured in warfare.

TKW note: the reference to Spartacus as a “Thracian” does not necessarily mean that he was from geographic Thrace (i.e. that he was from southeastern Bulgaria - Northern Thrace, northeastern Greece - Western Thrace, or the European part of Turkey - Eastern Thrace). He, in fact, merely may have been a gladiator designated as a “Thraex”, one who was armored in the Thracian manner and was trained to fight with Thracian style weapons.

[[11]] As far as I can tell, this is an innovation of the screenplay. Both the novel on which the film is loosely based, Howard Fast’s "Spartacus" (London 1952), as well as Arthur Koestler’s "The Gladiators" (London 1939), have Spartacus dying in battle.

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Some Introductory Notes for the Rome-Movies Course

Although the US political system is a conscious copy of the Roman Republic, it is the Empire that fascinates us.

Throughout history, peaks of Roman Empire interest seem to be co-temporal with empire building: e.g., Shakespeare's tremendously successful Roman plays during the Elizabethan era and modern fascination during the US "(sole) Imperial superpower" age. (Cf., the sword and sandal flicks of the post WW2 period). There are comparable German, Russian, and Italian examples.

Strictly speaking (and why not?), in Hollywood, ancient Religious – often biblical or ersatz biblical -- stuff is made into "Sword and Sandal movies". Movies with a non-religious Roman setting are "Toga movies".

Almost always, lessons are being taught – authors and movie producers are trying to teach the audience. There is often a great difference between the intended lesson and what is "received" by the audience, and "reception", of course, is time sensitive (see below).

Definitions:

Film – what people with pretensions of "culture" go to see at small "art" theaters in northwest Washington.

Movie -- what the rest of us go to see at multiplex theaters in the burbs.

Flick – what they usually show in places where you can also get a beer -- like your TV room.

Cinema – what they do in France and at the "Cinema and Draft House" at the corner of Glebe and Fillmore in Arlington VA (the latter of which is a better place.)

Two other words that you often hear in "film as literature" courses are "reception" and "gaze". There is great controversy about what these words mean and how they should be used. My simplistic definitions are as follows:

Reception refers to how material is taken in by a member or members of the audience – it is passive, although there is (usually) an active element, which is how the audience member processes the material, i.e., how the material is stirred into what the person already believes or knows. (The French "deconstruction" fad took this element to the extreme, saying that what the author might have intended the audience to take away had lost its relevance as soon as the author's words (or producer's product) were offered: the only thing that mattered was how the audience processed the information. This fad, remarkably, held sway throughout the West for a while, but we are now said to be in the "post-deconstructionism" phase. This is all, of course, just specialist jargon.)

Gaze (sometimes "**look**") is what the author or producer is trying to attract, to the story as a whole and to particular aspects of the story. Gaze is much more active than reception: the audience has to look rather than just see.

Both reception and gaze are, of course, modified by time. The time between when the story is written down and when it becomes available to a particular audience changes both reception and gaze. With our material, this happens several times:

First, when the event happens (or when the story is made up) and the original recording of the event takes place. This is not always as easy to define as it might seem. Some examples with our material are: the comedic situations in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, which appear to be Roman but were actually derived from earlier Greek stock situations and the "horrors and sex" in the Caligula story, which appear to be derived from historical accounts of Caligula's reign, but are really derived from pre-existing stock descriptions of ancient tyranny: nothing in what comes down to us about Caligula from the ancient "historians" has any necessary relationship to what he actually did, but what we can be sure about is that he was immensely unpopular with the successors in whose employ were the "historians". Nonetheless, it makes for a titillating story so it's repeated down through the ages.

Later intermediate retellings change the "lesson". In our material, three of the films (*Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Titus*) are based on explicit retellings by Shakespeare, who had lessons of his own to add. All of the stories in all three films were reworked by European Renaissance "humanists" (i.e., people – almost invariably men -- who rediscovered the "classic" Roman stories and rewrote them into Ciceronian Latin or their own vernaculars, their avowed purpose being to find "human" exemplars to replace the biblical exemplars of the earlier "scholastics".) It's worth noting here that Shakespeare got his Roman histories (*Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, but not *Titus Andronicus*) from Sir Thomas North's 1579 English translation of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*, and that North would have been working from Latin text(s) as rendered by Italian or French humanists.

Recent productions (i.e., 20th/21st century) have their own added lessons to teach.

The 1937 *Scipio* film was a glorification of Italian fascist imperialism, which had been expanding in Libya ("Tripolitania" and "Cyrenaica") since Mussolini's accession and which, a few months after *Scipio's* premier would lead to the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. The intended Italian audience reveled in the idea of imperial expansion. Seventy years later we look on it with revulsion: the "reception" has changed, undoubtedly because of current "political correctness".

The post WW2 Hollywood epics (both Biblical and Roman) were based on 19th century Protestant "novelizations". *Quo Vadis*, *The Robe*, and *The Ten Commandments* were clearly "religious message" films, and, not incidentally, had post-war anti-war messages. They are outside the scope of this course even though the first two were definitely "Roman". *Ben Hur*, which we will not see, was also blatantly religious, but that's not why we won't be seeing it. The choice was between Spartacus and Ben Hur, and the former has more lessons to teach both about Rome and about the societies that made the movies. (We will see the eight-minute chariot race scene from Ben Hur, however, (twice): it's too iconic and exciting to miss.) The Spartacus film also has Christian resonance, first because of the initial explicit tie-in to Christianity provided by the off-screen narrator and then because of how the Christian West reacts to crucifixion, not to mention the subtext of supposed Christian virtues that run through the whole film. (The narrator's opening "Christian" remarks are not nearly as jarring to the educated ear as are the remarks – supposedly the words of Augustus in a reference to his *Res Gestae* brag sheet – at the end of the 2003 Italian *Augustus* TV film that refer to the birth of "Jesus of Nazareth" in the 23rd year of his reign.

The *Caligula* movie was the result of several different visions (some of them clearly perverted) working at cross-purposes. The version we will see is the least perverted (R – rated with Gore Vidal's name back on the label). We'll talk about but not see the other versions.

Fellini's *Satyricon*, based on the surviving fragmentary *Satyricon* of Petronius Arbiter, Nero's supposed "master of the revels", was produced to draw parallels between *Dolce Vita* 1960s Italy and Nero's Rome. It's pretty tame by today's standards. What could Fellini have wrought today? (Something to think about: were the *Satyricon*s of Petronius and Fellini about satire or Satyrs?)

Gladiator is yet another big sword and sandal blockbuster. The story is pure fiction except for the names of some of the main characters.

It gets an "F" for historical accuracy, but the background material – costumes, ambiance, architecture, and the feel of the colosseum are very accurate. When *Gladiator* first lit the silver screen, several movie critics said that it was too violent and bloody, but we "Romanists" know (don't we?) that the movies wasn't nearly bloody and violent enough to accurately depict the Colosseum and Roman society.

Our final film will be *Titus*, Julie Taymore's fairly accurate rendering of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Titus_Andronicus). This was Shakespeare's most violent play, and Ms. Taymore doesn't cringe from reflecting Shakespeare. Shakespeare scholars say that he was inspired by the "revenge dramas" of Seneca, nine "plays" intended to be read rather than performed that were written in blank verse by the Roman Stoic philosopher Seneca in the 1st century AD. 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. There are certainly "modernisms" throughout the film, but they are clearly both intentional and to the point. Taymore is better known for her design, direction, staging of "The Lion King" (which, in fact, has some elements that could easily have been drawn from Shakespeare – see *Macbeth*.) Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* is, of course, fiction and does not portray any known persons or incidents in ancient Rome. However, it does reflect the way life and politics worked in the higher reaches of Rome during the "crisis of the third century" (235 – 284 AD). C.f., http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/romans/thirdcenturycrisis_article_01.shtml .

0103Chariot Racing.doc

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

Article at: http://en2.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chariot_racing

Chariot Racing

Chariot racing was one of the most popular ancient Greek and Roman sports.

Early chariot racing



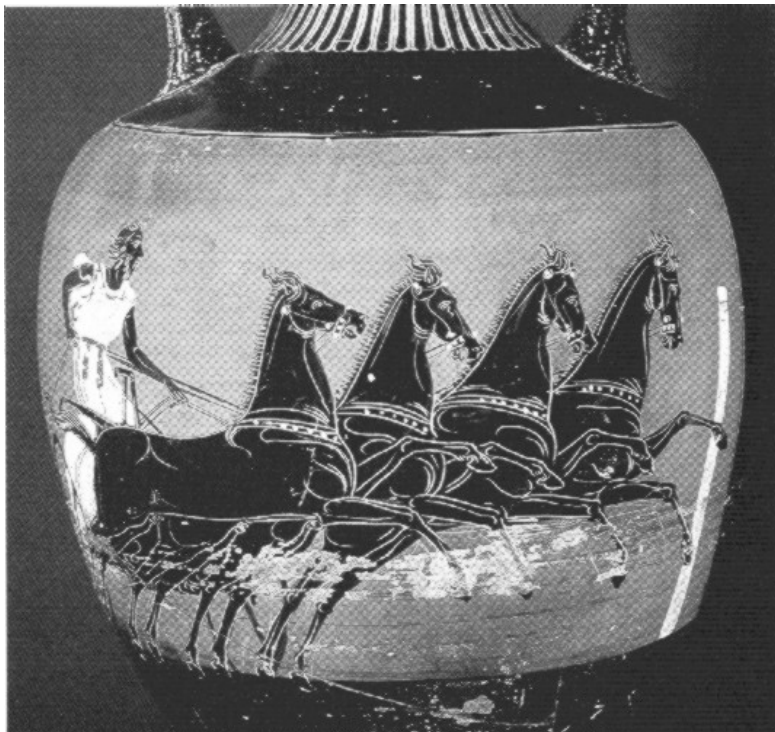
The chariot race at the funeral games of Patroclus

It is unknown exactly when chariot racing began, but it may have been as old as chariots themselves. It is known from artistic evidence on pottery that the sport existed in the Mycenaean world, but the first literary reference to a chariot race is the one described by Homer in Book 23 of the Iliad, at the funeral games of Patroclus. The participants in this race were Diomedes, Eumelus, Antilochus, Menelaus, and Meriones. The race, which was one lap around the stump of a tree, was won by Diomedes, who received a slave woman and a cauldron as his prize. A chariot race was also said to be the event that founded the Olympic Games;

according to one legend, King Oenomaus challenged his daughter's suitors to a race, but was defeated by Pelops, who founded the Games in honour of his victory.

The Olympic Games

In the Olympics, as well as the other Panhellenic Games, there were both four-horse (*tethrippon*) and two-horse (*synoris*) chariot races, which were essentially the same aside from the number of horses. The chariot racing event was first added to the Olympics in 680 BC (but was not, in reality, the founding event). The race was begun by a procession into the hippodrome, while a herald announced the names of the drivers and owners. The hippodrome at Olympia was about 600 yards long and 300 yards wide, and up to 60 chariots could race at one time (though in practise the number was probably much lower). It was located beneath a hill, which provided standing room for possibly as many as 10 000 spectators. A race consisted of twelve laps around the hippodrome, with sharp turns around the posts at either end. Various mechanical devices were used, including the starting gates (*hyspleges*, sing. *hysplex*) which were lowered to start the race. According to Pausanias these were invented by the architect Kleoitias, and staggered so that the chariots on the outside began the race earlier than those on the inside. The race did not actually begin properly until the final gate was opened, at which point each chariot would be more-or-less lined up alongside each other, although the ones that had started on the outside would have been travelling faster than the ones in the middle. Other mechanical devices known as the "eagle" and the "dolphin" were raised to signify that the race had begun, and were lowered as the race went on to signify the number of laps remaining. These were probably bronze carvings of those animals, set up on posts at starting line.



← *A chariot race at the ancient Olympic Games*

Unlike the other Olympic events, charioteers did not perform in the nude (see nudity in sports), probably for safety reasons because of the dust kicked up by the horses and chariots, and the likelihood of bloody crashes. The chariots themselves were modified war chariots, essentially wooden carts with two wheels and an open back, although chariots were by this time no longer used in battle. The charioteer's feet were held in place, but

the cart rested on the axle, so the ride must have been bumpy to say the least. The most exciting part of the chariot race, at least for the spectators, was the turns at the ends of the hippodrome. These turns were extremely violent and often deadly. If a chariot had not already been knocked over by an opponent before the turn, it might be overturned or crushed (along with the horses and driver) by the other chariots as they went around the post. Deliberately running into an opponent to cause him to crash was technically illegal, but nothing could be done about it (at Patroclus' funeral games, Antilochus in fact causes Menelaus to crash in this way), and crashes were likely to happen by accident anyway.

The chariot race was not as prestigious as the *stadion* (the foot race), but it was more important than other equestrian events such as racing on horseback, which were dropped from the Olympic Games very early on. In Mycenaean times the driver and owner would have been the same person, and therefore the winning driver received the prize. However, by the time of the Panhellenic Games, the owners usually had slaves who did the actual driving, and it was the owner who was awarded the prize. Arsecilas, the king of Cyrene, won the chariot race at the Pythian Games in 462 BC, when his slave driver was the only one to finish the race. In 416 BC the Athenian general Alcibiades had seven chariots in the race, one of which won; obviously he could not have been racing all seven chariots himself. Philip II of Macedon also won an Olympic chariot race in an attempt to prove he was not a barbarian, though if he had driven the chariot himself he would likely have been considered even lower than a barbarian. This rule also meant that women could technically win the race, despite the fact that women were not allowed to participate in or even watch the Games. This happened rarely, but a notable example is the Spartan Cynisca, daughter of Agesilaus II, who won the chariot race twice.

Chariot racing was also an event at other games in the Greek world, and was the most important event at the Panathenaic Games in Athens. At these games, the winner of the four-horse chariot race was given 140 amphorae of olive oil, an extremely expensive prize, as this was more oil than an athlete would ever need in his career. Most of it was probably sold to other athletes. There was another form of chariot racing at the Panathenaic Games, known as the *apobotai* or the *anabotai*. This involved jumping out of the chariot and running alongside for some distance (the *anabotai*); the *apobotai* apparently also including jumping back into the chariot after running alongside it. In these races there was a second driver who held the reins while the first driver jumped out, but of course neither of these were considered the winner.

Roman chariot racing

The Romans probably borrowed chariot racing from the Etruscans, who themselves borrowed it from the Greeks, but the Romans were also influenced directly by the Greeks especially after they conquered mainland Greece in 146 BC.

A winner of a Roman chariot race, from the Red team →



In Rome the main centre of chariot racing was the Circus Maximus in the valley between Palatine Hill and Aventine Hill, which could seat 150 000 people. The Circus probably dated back to the time of the Etruscans, but it was rebuilt by Julius Caesar around 50 BC so that it had a length of about 600 metres and a width of about 225 metres. One end of the track was more open than the other, as this was where the chariots lined up to begin the race. The Romans used a series of gates known as *carceres*, an equivalent to the Greek *hysplex*. These were staggered in the same way as the *hysplex*, but they were slightly different because Roman racing tracks also had a median (the *spina*) in the centre of the track. The starting positions had to be lined up on one side of the *spina*, rather than across the entire track as they were in Greece. When the chariots were lined up the emperor (or whoever was hosting the races, if they were not in Rome) dropped a cloth known as a *mappa*, signalling the beginning of the race.

Once the race had begun, the chariots could move in front of each other in an attempt to cause their opponents to crash into the *spina*. The *spina* had "eggs", similar to the "dolphins" of the Greek races, which may have dropped into a channel of water that ran along the top of the *spina* to signify the number of laps remaining. The *spina* eventually became very elaborate, with statues and obelisks and other forms of art, so that the spectators often could not see the chariots on the other side (but they seem to have thought this was more suspenseful and exciting). At either end of the *spina* there were turning posts (*metae*), and spectacular crashes took place there as well, as in the Greek races. Crashes in which the chariot was destroyed and the charioteer and horses incapacitated were known as a *naufragium*, also the Latin word for a shipwreck.

The race itself was much like its Greek counterpart, although there were eventually dozens of races every day, sometimes for hundreds of consecutive days each year. However, a race consisted of only 7 laps (and later 5 laps, so that there could be even more races per day), instead of the 12 laps of the Greek race. There were four-horse chariots (*quadrigae*) and two-horse chariots (*bigae*), but the four-horse races were more important. In rare cases, if a driver wanted to show off his skill, he could use up to 10 horses, although this was extremely impractical. The Roman drivers also wore helmets and other protective gear, unlike the Greeks, and they wrapped the reins around their arms, while the Greeks held the reins in their hands. Because of this the Romans had a much harder time letting go of the reins after a crash, so they could be dragged around the circus until they freed themselves. They carried knives to cut the reins in such a situation. A famous attempt to reconstruct a Roman chariot race can be seen in the 1959 movie *Ben-Hur*.

Another important difference was that the charioteers themselves, the *aurigae*, were considered to be the winners, although they were usually also slaves (as in the Greek world). They received a wreath of laurel leaves, and probably some money; if they won enough races they could buy their freedom. Drivers could become celebrities throughout the Empire simply by surviving, as the life expectancy of a charioteer was not very high. One such celebrity driver was Scopus, who won over 2000 races before being killed in a collision at the *meta* when he was about 27 years old. The horses, too, could become celebrities, but their life expectancy was also low. The Romans kept detailed statistics of the names, breeds, and pedigrees of famous horses.

Seats in the Circus were free for the poor, who by the time of the Empire had little else to do, as they were no longer involved in political or military affairs as they had been in the Republic. The wealthy could pay for shaded seats where they had a better view, and they probably also spent much of their times betting on the races. The emperor's palace was located close to the Hippodrome, and he would often watch the games as well. This was one of the only opportunities for the general population to view their leader. Julius Caesar frequently watched the races specifically so that the public could see him, although he apparently was not very interested as he usually brought something to read.

Nero was interested in the races almost to the exclusion of everything else. He was a driver himself, and won the chariot racing event at the Olympic Games, which were still being held in the Roman era. Under Nero the major racing factions began to develop. The four most important factions were the Reds, Blues, Greens, and Whites. They had existed before Nero, probably as friends and patrons of the various stables that produced the racehorses. Nero, however, subsidized them so that they grew almost beyond his control. Each team could have up to three chariots each in a race. Members of the same team often collaborated with each other against the other teams, for example to force them to crash into the *spina* (a legal and encouraged tactic). Drivers could switch teams, much like athletes can be traded to different teams today. Domitian

created two new factions, the Purples and Golds, but by the 3rd century only the Blues and Greens had any importance.

There were many other circuses throughout the Roman Empire; there was even another major circus outside Rome, the Circus Maxentius. There were major circuses at Alexandria and Antioch, and Herod the Great built four circuses in Judaea. In the 4th century Constantine the Great built a circus in his new capital at Constantinople.

Byzantine chariot racing

Like many other aspects of the Roman world, chariot racing continued in the Byzantine Empire, although the Byzantines did not keep as many records and statistics as the Romans did. Constantine preferred chariot racing to gladiatorial combat, which he considered a vestige of paganism. The Olympic Games were disbanded by the later Christian emperors, but chariot racing continued to be popular. The Hippodrome of Constantinople (really a Roman circus, not the open space that the original Greek hippodromes were) was connected to the emperor's

palace and the Church of Hagia Sophia, allowing spectators to view the emperor as they had in Rome.



← *The bronze horses from the Hippodrome are now in Venice.*

There is not much evidence that the chariot races were

subject to bribes or other forms of cheating in the Roman Empire. In the Byzantine Empire there seems to have been more cheating; Justinian I's reformed legal code prohibits drivers from placing curses on their opponents, but otherwise there does not seem to have been any mechanical tampering or bribery.

Chariot racing in the Byzantine Empire also included the Roman racing clubs, but by this time only the Blues and Greens were important. One of the most famous charioteers, Porphyrius, was a member of both the Blues and the Greens at various times in 5th century. However, they were now more than simply sports teams. They gained influence in military, political, and theological matters, with,

for example, the Blues tending towards Monophysitism and the Greens remaining Orthodox. They also developed in something like street gangs, responsible for robberies and murders. Although they had rioted as far back as the reign of Nero, the rioting throughout the 5th century and into the 6th century culminated in the Nika riots of 532 during the reign of Justinian, which began when some of their members were arrested for murder. Chariot racing seems to have declined after this incident, but they had in any case become much too expensive for the racing teams, or even the emperors, to pay for.

The Hippodrome in Constantinople remained a sanctuary for the emperors, until it was sacked during the Fourth Crusade in 1204. During the looting, the Crusaders removed a set of bronze statues of four horses, originally part of a monument depicting a *quadrigae* that was built by Constantine the Great. The horses still exist, but they are now at St. Mark's Cathedral in Venice.

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Real Roman racing chariots were flimsy basket-work affairs with small wheels to lower the center of gravity and long axles to minimize the risk of turning over. Drivers rode as far forward of the wheels as possible, sometimes climbing forward onto the single “tree” between the two center horses. Safety equipment included chest and leg protectors, cod pieces, helmets, and dust masks. Horses were yoked without collars.

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A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum is a musical with music and

lyrics by Stephen Sondheim and a book by Burt Shevelove and Larry Gelbart.

Based on the farces of the ancient Roman playwright Plautus, it tells the story of a slave named Pseudolus and his attempts to win his freedom by encouraging the romance between his master's son Hero and a young virgin named Philia, owned by Marcus Lycus, a dealer in courtesans, and promised to swaggering soldier Miles Gloriosus. The humor is broad, bawdy and fast-paced.

Original Broadway Production

A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum opened on Broadway May 8, 1962 at the Alvin Theatre. Directed by Broadway legend George Abbott and produced by Harold Prince, it was a smash, running 964 performances.

The show's creators originally wanted Phil Silvers in the lead role of Pseudolus, but he turned them down. So did Milton Berle. Eventually, Zero Mostel was cast.

The production was in trouble out of town. Director Abbott tried various fixes, including simplifying the complex plot, but nothing worked. Famed director Jerome Robbins, who idolized Abbott, and who had originally promised to direct the production before dropping out, was called in to make changes. Robbins had "named names" during the McCarthy era, and some feared he and the formerly blacklisted Mostel would clash, but they worked together well enough to turn the show around. (They soon worked again on *Fiddler On The Roof*.)

The biggest change Robbins demanded was a new opening number to introduce the bawdy, wild comedy. Stephen Sondheim complied, creating the famous song "Comedy Tonight." From then on, the show was a success.

Along with Mostel, the show featured a cast of seasoned performers, including Jack Gilford (Mostel's friend and fellow blacklist member), David Burns, John Carradine, Ruth Kobart and Raymond Walburn. The young lovers were played by Brian Davies and Preshy Marker. Karen Black was originally cast as the ingenue but was replaced out of town.

The show won several Tony Awards: best musical, best actor, best supporting actor (Burns), best book and best director. The score, Sondheim's first time on Broadway writing both words and music, was coolly received, however, not even garnering a nomination.

Motion Picture

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum was made into a film in 1966, directed by Richard Lester, with Zero Mostel and Jack Gilford recreating their stage roles. It also features the great--if ailing--clown Buster Keaton and the man who turned down the lead in the Broadway production, Phil Silvers. Also appearing are Lester favorites Michael Crawford, Michael Hordern and Roy Kinnear.

The script was adapted for the screen by Melvin Frank and Michael Pertwee. It rearranges the plot and cuts most of the songs. The movie was not well-received when first released, but has since acquired a cult following.

Broadway Revivals

In 1972 there was a critically well-received Broadway revival, directed by co-author Burt Shevelove and finally starring Phil Silvers (see above). Larry Blyden, who played Hysterium, the role created by Jack Gilford, also helped produce. Two songs were dropped from the show, and two new Sondheim songs were added.

The production ran 156 performances, but had to close soon after Phil Silvers suffered a stroke. The show won Tonys for Silvers and Blyden.

The musical was also revived with great success in 1996, starring Nathan Lane as Pseudolus, who was replaced later in the run by Whoopi Goldberg and also by David Alan Grier. The production, directed by Jerry Zaks, ran 715 performances. Lane won the Best Actor Tony for his work.

It's remarkable that every actor who has opened in the role of Pseudolus on Broadway--Zero Mostel, Phil Silvers and Nathan Lane--won a Best Actor Tony. In addition, Jason Alexander, who performed as Pseudolus in Jerome Robbins' Broadway, also won a Tony for Best Actor in a Musical.

West End Productions

The show was presented thrice in London's West End. The 1963 production and its 1986 revival were staged at the Strand Theatre and the Piccadilly Theatre respectively, and featured Frankie Howerd starring as Pseudolus. In 2004 there was a limited-run revival at the Royal National Theatre starring Desmond Barrit as Pseudolus, Philip Quast as Miles Gloriosus and Isla Blair as Domina. (Incidentally, Isla Blair played Philia in the 1963 production.)

Characters

- Pseudolus – A Roman slave, owned by Hero, who seeks to win his freedom by helping his young master win the heart of Philia, who is a virgin in the house of Marcus Lycus.
- Hero – Young son of Senex who falls in love with the virgin, Philia.
- Philia – A virgin in the house of Marcus Lycus, and Hero's love interest.
- Senex – A Roman Senator living in a less fashionable suburb of Rome.
- Marcus Lycus – A purveyor of courtesans, who operates from the house to the left of Senex.
- Domina – The wife of Senex. A manipulative shrewish woman whom is loathed by even her husband.
- Erronius – The elderly neighbor to the right of Senex who is searching for his two children, kidnapped in infancy by pirates.
- Gymnasia – A mute courtesan from the house of Lycus, for whom Pseudolus falls. (she is mute only in the film).
- Miles Gloriosus – A conceited captain in the Roman army.
- Hysterium – The chief slave in the house of Senex.

- Fertia the Populator – A female "Breeding Slave" (film only).
- Crassus – A merchant at the docks (film only).
- Tintinabula – A courtesan in the house of Lycus.
- Vibrata – A courtesan in the house of Lycus.
- Geminae – Twin courtesans in the house of Lycus.
- Panacea – A courtesan in the house of Lycus.
- Domina's Mother – Senex's whip-wielding mother-in-law (talked of in the play but seen only in the film).



[tkw note: The image is not at all contemporary with Plautus and bears no necessary similarity to how he really looked.]

Plautus

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Although we cannot verify much about Plautus' early life, we have certain ideas. It is believed that Titus Macchius Plautus was born in Sarsina (a city in Umbria) around 254 B.C. According to Morris Marples, in the early years of Plautus' life he worked as a stage-carpenter or scene-shifter.[1] This might have been where his love of the theater originated. After having worked in

the theater, his talent as an actor was eventually discovered, and he adopted the names 'Macchius' (a clownish stock-character in popular farces), and 'Plautus' (a term meaning "flat-footed"). Tradition also says that he eventually made enough money to go into the shipping business, but that the venture collapsed. He then is said to have worked as a manual laborer and studied Greek drama – particularly the New Comedy of Menander – in his spare time. His studies led to the production of his plays, which were first produced between c.205 BC and 184 BC. Plautus attained such popularity, that solely his name was a guarantee of theatrical success.

Plautus' comedies, which are among the earliest surviving intact works in Latin literature, are mostly adaptations of Greek models for a Roman audience and are often directly based on the works of the Greek playwrights. (Some might more properly be called 'adaptations') His works include *Stichus*, *Pseudolus*, *Amphitruo*, *Asinaria*, *Aulularia*, *Bacchides*, *Captivi*, *Casina*, *Cistellaria*, *Curculio*, *Epidicus*, *Menaechmi*, *Mercator*, *Miles Gloriosus*, *Mostellaria*, *Persa*, *Poenulus*,

Rudens, Trinummus, Truculentus, and Vidularia. [tkw note: The *Funny Thing* action is drawn from incidents in three of these plays: *Pseudolus, Miles Gloriosus, and Mostellaria (Haunted House).*]

Historical Context

The historical context within which Plautus wrote to some extent dictated the nature of his plays, in that there are certain ways in which Plautus comments on contemporary events and people. Plautus was a popular comedic playwright while Roman theater was still in its infancy, still feeling the birth pangs of theatrical evolution. Simultaneously, the Roman Republic was expanding its sphere of influence and control.

Plautus and the Gods of Roman Society

H.M. Tolliver discusses the state gods of Rome and their importance as seen in the Plautine Theater. These gods were an important part of everyday life to the Romans of Plautus' time and a citizen had a duty to his state to worship them. Tolliver tells us that the gods were not exactly like our contemporary gods. They were worshipped but also stood as a national symbol, somewhat like our flag of today. State religion also served as a political tool. If the gods supported a corrupt leader, then the people should too. Plautus is sometimes accused of teaching the public indifference and mockery of the gods. Any character in his plays could be compared to a god. Whether to honor a character or to mock him, these references were demeaning to the gods. These references to the gods include characters comparing a mortal woman to a god or saying he would rather be loved by a woman than the gods. Pyrgopolynices from *Miles Gloriosus* (vs. 1265) to brag about his long life says he was born one day later than Jupiter. In *Pseudolus*, Jupiter is compared to the Ballio the pimp. It is not uncommon too for a character to scorn the gods as seen in *Poenulus* and *Rudens*. However, when a character scorns a god, it is usually a character of low standing such as a pimp. Plautus perhaps does this to further demoralize the characters. The audience is not supposed to love the pimp, so by making the pimp do sometime against the proper conventions of society, the audience will dislike the character even more. Tolliver also relates the ways in which the gods are referenced to by the stock characters. Soldiers often bring ridicule among the gods. The young men, meant to represent the upper social class, often belittle the gods in their remarks. The parasites, pimps, and courtesans often praise the gods with scant ceremony. Tolliver goes on to argue that drama both reflects and foreshadows social change. There was most likely already much skepticism about the gods during Plautus' era. Plautus did not make up or encourage irreverence to the gods, but reflected ideas of his time. Some of Plautus' often religious beliefs may have come out in his works, but the state controlled stage productions, and Plautus' plays would have been banned had they been too risqué.[2]

Gnaeus Naevius

Gnaeus Naevius, another Roman playwright of the late third century B.C.E., wrote tragedies and even founded the *fabula praetexta* (history plays), in which he dramatized historical events. He is known to have fought in the First Punic War and his birth, therefore, is placed around the year 280 B.C.E.[3] His first tragedy took place in 235 B.C.E. Plautus would have been living at the exact time as Naevius, but began writing later.[4] Naevius is most famous for having been imprisoned by the Metelli and the Scipios – two powerful families of the late third century. The Metelli and Scipios were bitter rivals of Naevius' patron, Marcus Claudius Marcellus. Marcellus was the head of the family, the Marcelli, who were also one of the most powerful families in Rome.[5] Naevius was caught between this rivalry and was “the victim of punishment (including incarceration) inflicted by the chief men of the state (*principes civitatis, nobiles*) for his attacks upon them.”[6] According to A.J. Boyle, there is a reference in Plautus' *Miles Gloriosus* to a “foreign poet,” showing that poets might have been “imprisoned for unbridled speech.” Naevius' imprisonment and eventual exile is a case of state censorship that may have been a factor in Plautus' writing. Naevius was being exiled when Plautus was writing and this must have had an effect on what Plautus chose to speak about in his plays.

The Second Punic War, The Macedonian War and their Influence on Plautus' Plays

The Second Punic War, which occurred from 218-202 B.C.E. was the second engagement that Rome had with Carthaginian forces, especially Hannibal. M. Leigh has devoted an extensive chapter about Plautus and Hannibal in his recent book, *Comedy and the Rise of Rome*. He says that, “the plays themselves contain occasional references to the fact that the state is at arms...”[7] One good example is a piece of verse from the *Miles Gloriosus*, the composition date of which is not clear but often placed in the last decade of the 3rd century B.C.[8] A. F. West believes that this is inserted commentary on the Second Punic War. In his article, “On a Patriotic Passage in the *Miles Gloriosus* of Plautus,” he states that the war “engrossed the Romans more than all other public interests combined.”[9] The passage seems intended to rile up the audience, beginning with *hostis tibi adesse or*, “the foe is near at hand.”[10] At the time, the general Scipio Africanus was requesting to go out against Hannibal, a plan “strongly favored by the plebs.”[11] Plautus apparently pushes for the plan to be approved by the senate, working his audience up with the thought of an enemy in close proximity and a call to outmaneuver him. Therefore, it is reasonable to say that Plautus, according to P.B. Harvey, was “willing to insert [into his plays] highly specific allusions comprehensible to the audience.”[12] M. Leigh writes in his chapter on Plautus and Hannibal that, “the Plautus who emerges from this investigation is one whose comedies persistently touch the rawest nerves in the audience for whom he writes.”[13] Later, coming of the heels of the conflict with Hannibal, Rome was preparing to embark on another military mission, this time in Greece. While they would eventually move on Philip V in the Second Macedonian War, there was considerable debate beforehand about the course Rome should take in this conflict. In the article “*Bellum Philippicum: Some Roman and Greek Views Concerning the Causes of the Second Macedonian War*,” E.J. Bickerman writes

that “the causes of the fateful war...were vividly debated among both Greeks and Romans.”[14] Under the guise of protecting allies, Bickerman tells us, Rome was actually looking to expand its power and control eastward now that the Second Punic War was ended.[15] But starting this war would not be an easy task considering those recent struggles with Carthage – many Romans were tired of conflict to think of embarking on another campaign. As W.M. Owens writes in his article, “Plautus’ *Stichus* and the Political Crisis of 200 B.C.,” “there is evidence that antiwar feeling ran deep and persisted even after the war was approved.”[16] Owens contends that Plautus was attempting to match the complex mood of the Roman audience riding the victory of the Second Punic War but facing the beginning of a new conflict.[17] For instance, the characters of the dutiful daughters and their father seem obsessed over the idea of “officium,” the duty one has to do what is right. Their speech is littered with words such as “pietas” and “aequus,” and they struggle to make their father fulfill his proper role.[18] The stock parasite in this play, Gelasimus, has a patron client relationship with this family and offers to do any job in order to make ends meet; Owens puts forward that Plautus is portraying the economic hardship many Roman citizens were experiencing as a result of the cost of war.[19] With the repetition of responsibility to the desperation of the lower class, Plautus establishes himself firmly on the side of the average Roman citizen. While he makes no specific reference to the possible war with Greece or the previous war (that might be too dangerous), he does seem to push the message that the government should take care of its own people before attempting any other military actions. Plautus was notably influenced by the political events of his time and thus gives modern readers a greater insight into the politics of the ancient world and how an average Roman citizen living during his time might have viewed those events and the attitudes they might have possessed as a result.

Greek Influence

The influence of Greek playwrights is obvious when looking at the texts of the plays of Plautus. In the delayed prologue of the *Miles Gloriosus*, Palaestrio quite clearly states that, “Alazon Graece huic nomen est comoediae, / id nos Latine ‘gloriosum’ dicimus. hoc oppidum Ephesust.”[20] So, from the outset, though the opening is delayed a bit, the audience, if they were not already aware, find out that the play’s origin and setting are Greek. Added to this, and just as telling, is the overt use of Greek names and language. Though the Greek influence is quite evident, Plautus’ plays are in no way Greek plays. Greek influence only penetrates the texts of Plautus’ plays superficially, i.e., names, language, setting, and plot outline. Everything that comes in between these things is Roman.

Plautus’ Influences: Greek Comedy, Menander, and Aristophanes

Greek Old Comedy

In order to understand the Greek New Comedy of Menander and its’ similarities to Plautus, it is necessary to discuss, in juxtaposition with it, the idea of Greek Old

Comedy and its' evolution into New Comedy. The ancient Greek playwright that best embodies Old Comedy is Aristophanes. Aristophanes, a playwright of 5th century Athens, wrote such plays as *The Wasps*, *The Birds* and *The Clouds*. Each of these plays and the others that Aristophanes wrote are known for their critical political and societal commentary.[21] This is the main component of Old Comedy. It is extremely conscious of the world in which it functions and analyzes that world accordingly. Comedy and theater were the political commentary of the time – the public conscience. In Aristophanes' *The Wasps*, the playwright's commentary is unexpectedly blunt and forward. For example, he names his two main characters "Philocleon" and "Bdelycleon," which mean "pro-Cleon" and "anti-Cleon," respectively. Simply the names of the characters in this particular play of Aristophanes make a political statement. Cleon was a major political figure of the time and through the actions of the characters about which he writes Aristophanes is able to freely criticize the actions of this prominent politician in public and through his comedy.

Greek New Comedy

Greek New Comedy differs greatly from those plays of Aristophanes. The most notable difference, according to Dana F. Sutton is that New Comedy, in comparison to Old Comedy, is "devoid of an serious political, social or intellectual content" and "could be performed in any number of social and political settings without risk of giving offense." [22] The risk-taking for which Aristophanes is known is noticeably lacking in the New Comedy plays of Menander. Instead, there is much more of a focus on the home and the family unit – something that the Romans, including Plautus, could easily understand and adopt for themselves later in history.

Father-Son Relationships in Greek New Comedy and Plautus

One main theme of Greek New Comedy is the father-son relationship. For example, in Menander's *Dis Exapaton* there is a focus on the betrayal between age groups and friends. The father-son relationship is very strong and the son remains loyal to the father. The relationship is always a focus, even if it's not the focus of every action taken by the main characters. In Plautus, on the other hand, the focus is still on the relationship between father and son, but we see betrayal between the two men that wasn't seen in Menander. There is a focus on the proper conduct between a father and son that, apparently, was so important to Roman society at the time of Plautus.

This becomes the main difference and, also, similarity between Menander and Plautus. They both address "situations that tend to develop in the bosom of the family." [23] Both authors, through their plays, reflect a patriarchal society in which the father-son relationship is essential to proper function and development of the household.[24] It is no longer a political statement, as in Old Comedy, but a statement about household relations and proper behavior between a father and his son. But the attitudes on these relationships seem much different – a reflection of how the worlds of Menander and Plautus differed.

Farce

There are differences not just in how the father-son relationship is presented, but also in the way in which Menander and Plautus write their poetry. William S. Anderson discusses the believability of Menander versus the believability of Plautus and, in essence, says that Plautus' plays are much less believable than those plays of Menander because they seem to be such a farce in comparison. He addresses them as a reflection of Menander with some of Plautus' own contributions. Anderson claims that there is unevenness in the poetry of Plautus that results in "incredulity and refusal of sympathy of the audience." [25] This might be a reflection of an idea that the Romans were less sensitive to catering to the audience's artistic sensibilities and more to their hunger for pure entertainment.

Prologues

The poetry of Menander and Plautus is best juxtaposed within the context of the prologues. Robert B. Lloyd makes the point that "albeit the two prologues introduce plays whose plots are of essentially different types, they are almost identical in form..." [26] He goes on to address the specific style of Plautus that differs so greatly from Menander. He says that the "verbosity of the Plautine prologues has often been commented upon and generally excused by the necessity of the Roman playwright to win his audience." [27] However, in both Menander and Plautus, word play is essential to their comedy. Plautus might seem more verbose, but where he lacks in physical comedy he makes up for it with words, alliteration and paronomasia (punning). [28]

Plautus is well known for his devotion to puns, especially when it comes to the names of his characters. In *Miles Gloriosus*, for instance, the female concubine's name, *Philocomasium*, translates to "lover of a good party" – which is quite apt when we learn about the tricks and wild ways of this prostitute.

Character

Plautus' characters – many of which seem to crop up in quite a few of his plays – also came from Greek stock, though they too received some Plautine innovations. Indeed, since Plautus was adapting these plays it would be difficult not to have the same kinds of characters – roles such as slaves, concubines, soldiers, and old men. By working with the characters that were already there but injecting his own creativity, as J.C.B. Lowe wrote in his article "Aspects of Plautus' Originality in the *Asinaria*," "Plautus could substantially modify the characterization, and thus the whole emphasis of a play" [29]

The Clever Slave

One of the best examples of this method is the Plautine slave, a form that plays a major role in quite a few of Plautus' works. The "clever slave" in particular is a very strong character; he not only provides exposition and humor, but also often drives the plot in Plautus' plays. C. Stace argues that Plautus took the stock slave character from New Comedy in Greece and altered it for his own purposes. What Stace argues gives us both evidence of Plautus' creativity and his Greek source material. In New Comedy, he writes, "the slave is often not much more than a comedic turn, with the added purpose, perhaps, of exposition." [30] This shows

that there was precedent for this slave archetype, and obviously some of its old role continues in Plautus (the expository monologues, for instance). However, because Plautus found humor in slaves tricking their masters or comparing themselves to great heroes, he took the character a step further and created something very distinct.[31]

Understanding of Greek By Plautus' Audience

Philocomasium's name is not the only character of Plautus' whose name has Greek origins. In fact, of the approximate 270 proper names in the surviving plays of Plautus, about 250 names, are Greek.”[32] William M. Seaman proposes that these Greek names would have delivered a comic punch to the audience because of their already basic understanding of the Greek language.[33] This previous understanding of Greek language, Seaman suggests, comes from the “experience of Roman soldiers during the first and second Punic wars. Not only did men billeted in Greek areas have opportunity to learn sufficient Greek for the purpose of everyday conversation, but they were also able to see plays in the foreign tongue.”[34] Having an audience with knowledge of the Greek language, whether a limited knowledge or a more expanded one, allowed Plautus more freedom to use Greek references and words. Also, by using his many Greek references and showing that his plays were originally Greek, “It is possible that Plautus was in a way a teacher of Greek literature, myth, art and philosophy; so too was he teaching something of the nature of Greek words to people, who, like himself, had recently come into closer contact with that foreign tongue and all its riches.”[35]

These superficially Greek, yet Roman plays make a great deal of sense. At the time of the plays Rome is expanding, and having much success in Greece. W.S. Anderson has commented that Plautus, “is using and abusing Greek comedy to imply the superiority of Rome, in all its crude vitality, over the Greek world, which was now the political dependent of Rome, whose effete comic plots helped explain why the Greeks proved inadequate in the real world of the third and second centuries, in which the Romans exercised mastery.[36] They are in fact colonizing the region, which is a shadow of what it once was. Plautus was known for his adaptations of Greek originals but, his plays are much more authentic than just adaptations. Plautus was not merely imitating his Greek forefathers he was distorting the plays that he had in mind.

Plautus: Copycat or Creative Playwright?

Plautus was known for the use of Greek style in his plays. However, this has been a point of contention among modern scholars. One argument states that Plautus writes with originality and creativity – the other, that Plautus is a copycat of Greek New Comedy and that he makes no original contribution to playwriting. However, the reality lies in the middle of these two arguments. Plautus writes with a remarkable amount of creativity. However, he was influenced greatly by the Greek New Comedy playwrights of the past – particularly Menander.

A single reading of the *Miles Gloriosus* leaves the reader with the notion that the names, place, and play is Greek, but one must look beyond these superficial interpretations. Then again, W.S. Anderson would steer any reader away from the idea that Plautus' plays are somehow not his own or at least only his interpretation. Anderson says that, "Plautus homogenizes all the plays as vehicles for his special exploitation. Against the spirit of the Greek original, he engineers events at the end... or alter[s] the situation to fit his expectations." [37] Anderson's vehement reaction to the co-opting of Greek plays by Plautus seems to suggest that they are in no way like their originals were. It seems more likely that Plautus was just experimenting putting Roman ideas in Greek forms.

Greece and Rome, although always put into the same category, were entirely different worlds with entirely differently paradigms and ways-of-life. W. Geoffrey Arnott says that "we see that a set of formulae [used in the plays] concerned with characterization, motif, and situation has been applied to two dramatic situations which possess in themselves just as many difference as they do similarities." [38] It is important to compare the two authors and the remarkable similarities between them because it is essential in understanding Plautus. He writes about Greeks like a Greek. However, it is also important to note that Plautus and the writers of Greek New Comedy, such as Menander, were writing in two completely different contexts.

Contaminatio

One idea that is important to recognize is that of *contaminatio*, which refers to the mixing of elements of two or more source plays. Plautus, it seems, is quite open to this method of adaptation, and quite a few of his plots seem stitched together from different stories. One excellent example is his *Bacchides* and its supposed Greek predecessor, Menander's *Dis Exapaton*. The original Greek title translates as "The Man Deceiving Twice," yet the Plautine version has three tricks. However Plautus might have expanded himself upon the original plot in order to make a statement about Roman culture versus Greek culture – the possibility of another Greek play which happens to fit the space left by *Dis Exapaton* seems too improbable. [39] V. Castellani commented that:

Plautus' attack on the genre whose material he pirated was, as already stated, fourfold. He deconstructed many of the Greek plays' finely constructed plots; he reduced some, exaggerated others of the nicely drawn characters of Menander and of Menander's contemporaries and followers into caricatures; he substituted for or superimposed upon the elegant humor of his models his own more vigorous, more simply ridiculous foolery in action, in statement, even in language. [40]

By exploring ideas about Roman loyalty, Greek deceit, and differences in ethnicity, "Plautus in a sense surpassed his model." [41] He was not content to rest solely on a loyal adaptation that, while amusing, was not new or engaging for Rome. Plautus took what he found but again made sure to expand, subtract, and modify. In "Criteria of Originality in Plautus," [42] Henry Prescott writes that many

of the allusions to the Greek culture “come, not from the Greek originals, but from the mind and fancy of the Roman Poet himself.” While Plautus changes much of what he found in the older comedies, he didn’t throw all Greek aspects out the window – he, and his audience, were familiar enough with Greek culture that they could appreciate such jokes. He clearly saw something in those plays that made him leave such a strong Greek air in his adaptations. It seems to be the consensus of at least some scholars that Plautus is influenced by the Greeks only insofar as he needed to when devising his plays during the infancy of Roman comedy. He seems to have followed the same path that Horace did, though Horace is much later, in that he is putting Roman ideas in Greek forms. He is not only imitating the Greeks, but he is in fact distorting, cutting up, and transforming the plays into something entirely Roman. In essence it is Greek theater colonized by Rome and its playwrights.

Stagecraft

In Ancient Greece during the time of New Comedy, from which Plautus drew so much of his inspiration, there were permanent theaters that catered to the audience as well as the actor. The greatest playwrights of the day had quality facilities in which to present their work and, in a general sense, there was always enough public support to keep the theater running and successful. However, this was not the case in Rome during the time of the Republic when Plautus would have been writing his plays. Though the debate about this topic has sometimes been hindered by a lack of evidence, scholars have illuminated parts this field, and thus facilitated further research of the subject. What they have found is that while there was public support for theater and people came to enjoy tragedy and comedy alike, there was a notable lack of governmental support. The result was that there was not a permanent theater until Pompey dedicated the first one in 55 B.C.E in the Campus Martius.[43] The lack of a permanent space was extremely influential, and it gives us great insight if we are exploring the history of Roman theater and its ramifications on Plautine stagecraft.

The question of why there were no permanent theaters in Rome until 55 B.C.E. is a puzzling question for contemporary scholars of Roman drama. In their introduction to the *Miles Gloriosus*, Hammond, Mack and Moskalew say that, “the Romans were acquainted with the Greek stone theater, but, because they believed drama to be a demoralizing influence, they had a strong aversion to the erection of permanent theaters.”[44] This worry rings true when considering the subject matter of Plautus’ plays. The unreal becomes reality on stage in his work. T.J. Moore notes that, “all distinction between the play, production, and ‘real life’ has been obliterated [Plautus’ play *Curculio*]”.[45] This must have been a concern for any upstanding citizen, and so a place where social norms were upheld could not become an institution lest bad, or at least inappropriate, behavior be reinforced. Obviously the aristocracy was afraid of the power of the theater. They wished to assert control over the medium and went about doing so by making it impermanent. It would have been merely by their good graces and unlimited resources that a temporary stage would have been built during specific festivals.

The Importance of the *Ludi*

Roman drama, specifically Plautine comedy, was acted out on stage during the *ludi* or festival games. These plays were acted out during the day on wooden stages. Some were more important to drama - for instance, in his discussion of the importance of the *ludi Megalenses* in early Roman theater, John Arthur Hanson says that this particular festival “provided more days for dramatic representations than any of the other regular festivals, and it is in connection with these *ludi* that the most definite and secure literary evidence for the site of scenic games has come down to us.”[46] Because the *ludi* were religious in nature, it was appropriate for the Romans to set up this temporary stage close to the temple of the deity being celebrated. S.M. Goldberg notes that, “*ludi* were generally held within the precinct of the particular god being honored”.[47] But that information only tells us the where and the when. While there has been much debate about for whom these plays were performed, it is clear that certain members of the audience had their own special realms around the stage. T.J. Moore notes that, “seating in the temporary theaters where Plautus’ plays were first performed was often insufficient for all those who wished to see the play, that the primary criterion for determining who was to stand and who could sit was social status”.[48] This is not to say that the lower classes did not see the plays, but simply means that they probably had to stand while watching it. So these plays were performed in public for the public with the most prominent members of the society in the forefront.

As noted above, in the place of these familiar permanent theaters of the late Republic and Roman Empire, Plautus used temporary wooden stages, set up by the aristocracy that provided a performance space for the actors. These wooden structures were shallow and long with three openings in respect to the scene-house - because of the time-constraint on the building process, the stages were significantly smaller than any Greek structure that is familiar to modern scholars. The time limits existed because while the plays were performed during these festivals many other events took place that needed their own space as well. Because theater was not seen as the priority, the structures were built and dismantled within a day. Even more practically, they were dismantled quickly because of the fire-hazard in ancient Rome.[49]

Geography of the Stage

Often the geography of the stage and more importantly the play matched the geography of the city so that the audience would be well oriented to the locale of the play. Moore says that, “references to Roman locales must have been stunning for they are not merely references to things Roman, but the most blatant possible reminders that the production occurs in the city of Rome.”[50] So, Plautus seems to have choreographed his plays somewhat true-to-life. To do this, he needed his characters to exit and enter to or from whatever area their social standing would benefit.

Character and social standing are of the utmost importance when trying to figure out the puzzle that is Plautine stagecraft and stage-space. Two scholars, V.J. Rosivach and N.E. Andrews, have made interesting observations about stagecraft

in Plautus: V.J. Rosivach writes about identifying the side of the stage with both social status and geography. He says that, for example, “the house of the *medicus* lies offstage to the right. It would be in the forum or thereabouts that one would expect to find a *medicus*.”[51] Moreover, he says that characters that oppose one another always have to exit in opposite directions. In a slightly different vein, N.E. Andrews discusses the spatial semantics of Plautus; he has observed that even the different spaces of the stage are thematically charged. He states:

Plautus’ *Casina* employs these conventional tragic correlations between male/outside and female/inside, but then inverts them in order to establish an even more complex relationship among genre, gender and dramatic space. In the *Casina*, the struggle for control between men and women... is articulated by characters’ efforts to control stage movement into and out of the house.

[52]

So while it seems that there is a place for everyone in the plays of Plautus, no one stays in their place. And what clues us in to these specified realms is the way that the spaces are transgressed.

Andrews makes note of the fact that power struggle in the *Casina* is evident in the verbal comings and goings. In fact the words of action and the way that they are said are quite important to stagecraft. The words denoting direction or action such as *abeo* (“I go off”), *transeo* (“I go over”), *fores crepuerunt* (“the doors creak”), or *intus* (“inside”), which signal any character’s departure or entrance, are standard in the dialogue of Plautus’ plays. These verbs of motion or phrases can be taken as Plautine stage direction since no overt stage directions are apparent. Often, though, in these interchanges of characters, in Plautine adaptations of Greek originals, there occurs the need to move on to the next act. Plautus then might use what is known as a “cover monologue”. About this S.M. Goldberg notes that, “it marks the passage of time less by its length than by its direct and immediate address to the audience and by its switch from *senarii* in the dialogue to *iambic septenarii*. The resulting shift of mood distracts and distorts our sense of passing time.”[53] And so one method Plautus used to stage the play within the text was to change the meter and type of speech, which clued in the audience to the coming of the next act.

Relationship with the Audience

The small stages had a significant effect on the stagecraft of ancient Roman theater. Because of this limited space, there was also limited movement. Greek theater allowed for grand gestures and extensive action to reach the audience members who were in the very back of the theater. However the Romans would have had to depend more on their voices than large physicality. There was not an orchestra available like there was for the Greeks and this is reflected in the notable lack of a chorus in Roman drama. The replacement character that acts as the chorus would in Greek drama is often called the “prologue.”[54]

Goldberg says that, “these changes fostered a different relationship between actors and the space in which they performed and also between them and their audiences.”[55] Actors were thrust into much closer audience interaction. Because of this, a certain acting style became required that is more familiar to modern audiences. Because they would have been in such close proximity to the actors, ancient Roman audiences would have wanted attention and direct acknowledgement from the actors.[56]

That relationship between the actor and his audience was a very important one. Not only was the job of the actor in relation to the audience closer than it had ever been, but the relation of the audience to the stage was much closer. Because there was no orchestra, there was no space separating the audience from the stage. The audience could stand directly in front of the elevated wooden platform. This gave them the opportunity to look at the actors from a much different perspective. They would have seen every detail of the actor and hear every word he said. The audience member would have wanted that actor to speak directly to them. It was a part of the thrill, and, to this day, is still a thrill for audiences enjoying comedy or any type of theater. [57]

Plautine stagecraft is a lot more than just stage directions, theater mechanisms and costumes. Most of what we consider traditional stagecraft is still slightly mysterious with respect to Roman drama. The impermanence of early Roman theater undoubtedly affected what theater meant to Plautus’ society - it was something that had not reached the mainstream in the way that we think of mainstream today. That temporary nature was, in a way, done to control the threat posed by depictions of subverted order, even in comedy, maintained by the upper class. However, its affect on contemporary and future theater is unmistakable and the significance of audience-actor interaction that is so essential to Renaissance theater during the time of Shakespeare is first seen in these temporary theaters. Despite its limitation, therefore, Early Roman theater was another important step in the evolution of stagecraft.

Stock Characters

Plautus’ range of characters was created through his use of various techniques, but probably the most important is his use of stock characters and situations in his various plays. He incorporates the same stock characters constantly, especially when the character type is amusing to the audience. His devotion to comedy led him to creating characters that were as humorous as possible despite the repetition or shifts in personality. As Walter Juniper wrote, “Everything, including artistic characterization and consistency of characterization, were sacrificed to humor, and character portrayal remained only where it was necessary for the success of the plot and humor to have a *persona* who stayed in character, and where the *persona* by his portrayal contributed to humor.”[58] By sacrificing the characterization for humor’s sake, Plautus’ characters are not terribly deep, only showing the traits for their stock character type.

For example, in *Miles Gloriosus*, the titular “braggart soldier” Pyrgopolynices only shows his vain and immodest side in the first act, while the parasite Artotrogus exaggerates Pyrgopolynices’ achievements, creating more and more ludicrous claims that Pyrgopolynices agrees to without question. These two are perfect examples of the stock characters of the pompous soldier and the desperate parasite that appeared in Plautine comedies. In disposing of highly complex individuals, Plautus was supplying his audience with what it wanted, since “the audience to whose tastes Plautus catered was not interested in the character play,”[59] but instead, wanted the broad and accessible humor offered by stock set-ups. The humor Plautus offered, such as “puns, word plays, distortions of meaning, or other forms of verbal humor he usually puts them in the mouths of characters belonging to the lower social ranks, to whose language and position these varieties of humorous technique are most suitable,”[60] matched well with the stable of characters.

The Clever Slave

In his article “The Intriguing Slave in Greek Comedy,” Philip Harsh gives evidence to show that the clever slave is not an invention of Plautus. While previous critics such as A.W. Gomme believed that the slave was “ [a] truly comic character, the deviser of ingenious schemes, the controller of events, the commanding officer of his young master and friends, is a creation of Latin comedy,” and that Greek dramatists Menander did not use slaves in such a way that Plautus later did, Harsh refutes these beliefs by giving concrete examples of instances where a clever slave appeared in Greek comedy.[61] For instance, in the works of Athenaeus, Alciphron, and Lucian there are deceptions that involve the aid of a slave, and in Menander’s *Dis Exapaton* there was an elaborate deception executed by a clever slave that Plautus mirrors in his *Bacchides*. Evidence of clever slaves also appears in Menander’s *Thalis*, *Hypobolimaïos*, and from the papyrus fragment of his *Perinthia*. Harsh acknowledges that Gomme’s statement was probably made before the discovery of many of the papyri that we now have. While it was not necessarily a Roman invention, Plautus did his own style of depicting the clever slave. With larger, more active roles, more verbal exaggeration and exuberance, the slave was moved by Plautus further into the front of the action.[62] Because of the inversion of order created by a devious or witty slave, this stock character was perfect for achieving a humorous response and the traits of the character worked well for driving the plot forward.

The Lusty Old Man

Another important Plautine stock character, discussed by K.C. Ryder, is the *senex amator*. A *senex amator* is classified as an old man who for some reason contracts a passion for a young girl and who, in varying degrees, attempts to satisfy this passion. In Plautus these men are Demaenetus (*Asinaria*), Philoxenus and Nicobulus (*Bacchides*), Demipho (*Cistellaria*), Lysidamus (*Casina*), Demipho (*Mercator*), and Antipho (*Stichus*). Periplectomenos (*Miles Gloriosus*) and Daemones (*Rudens*) are regarded as *senes lepidi* because they usually keep their feelings within a respectable limit. All of these characters have the same goal, to be with a younger woman, but all go about it in different ways as Plautus could

not be too redundant with his characters despite their already obvious similarities. What they have in common is the ridicule with which their attempts are viewed, the imagery that suggests that they are motivated largely by animal passion, the childish behavior, and the reversion to the love-language of their youth.[63] This is a type, like the clever slave, which is fertile ground for comedy simply because of the nature of the character, and that is exactly why Plautus returned to it so many times.

Female Characters

There is often an inconsistency when it comes to the role designations given to female characters in Plautus' plays. To examine this it is important to understand where these role designations come from. The original manuscripts contained no prefaced list of character names as most new editions now have. Instead, the manuscripts sometimes have character names in the headings, or at other times we learn the role designation of the character through the play itself - a character will be described before entering the stage or another character will address him by name.

In examining the female role designations of Plautus, Z.M. Packman found that they are not as stable as their male counterparts: a *senex* will usually remain a *senex* for the duration of the play but designations like *matrona*, *mulier*, or *uxor* at times seem interchangeable. Most free adult women, married or widowed, appear in scene headings as *mulier*, simply translated as "woman". But in Plautus' *Stichus* the two young women are referred to as *sorores*, later *mulieres*, and then *matrona*, all of which have different meanings and connotations. Although there are these discrepancies, Packman tries to give a pattern to the female role designations of Plautus. *Mulier* is typically given to a woman of citizen class and of marriageable age or who has already been married. Unmarried citizen-class girls, regardless of sexual experience, were designated *virgo*. *Aniclla* was the term used for female household slaves, with *Anus* reserved for the elderly household slaves. A young woman that is unwed due to social status is usually referred to as *meretrix* or "courtesan." A *lena* or adoptive mother maybe a woman own these girls.[64]

Unnamed Characters

Like Packman, George Duckworth uses the scene headings in the manuscripts to support his theory about unnamed Plautine characters. There are approximately 220 characters in the 20 plays of Plautus. 30 are unnamed in both the scene headings and the text and there are about 9 characters who are named in the ancient text but not in any modern one. This means that about 18% of the total number of characters in Plautus is nameless. Most of the very important characters have names while most of the number of unnamed characters are of less importance. However there are some abnormalities - the main character in *Casina* is not mentioned by name anywhere in the text. In other instances, meanwhile, Plautus will give a name to a character that only has a few words or lines. One explanation is that some of the names have been lost over the years and for the most part, major characters do have names.[65]

The Language and Style of Plautus

Overview

The language and style of Plautus is not easy or simple. He wrote in a colloquial style far from the codified form of Latin that is found in Ovid or Virgil. This colloquial style is the everyday speech that Plautus would've been familiar with, yet that means that most students of Latin are unfamiliar with it. Adding to the unfamiliarity of Plautine language is the inconsistency of the irregularities that occur in the texts. In one of his prolific word-studies, A.W. Hodgman noted that:

the statements that one meets with, that this or that form is 'common,' or 'regular,' in Plautus, are frequently misleading, or even incorrect, and are usually unsatisfying.... I have gained an increasing respect for the manuscript tradition, a growing belief that the irregularities are, after all, in a certain sense regular. The whole system of inflexion- and, I suspect, of syntax also and of versification- was less fixed and stable in Plautus' time than it became later[66].

So, it is quite clear that the difficulty of the language and style of Plautus is an old issue, one that fit the bill to be in the first ever issue of *The Classical Quarterly*. The issue of language and style in the plays of Plautus covers an enormous amount of ground, and it is far too expansive to go into enough detail to do it justice. This glance at Plautine language and style shall briefly try to cover the areas of archaisms, diction, syntax, poetic devices, meter, and the manifestations of the sum of these parts on stage. The purpose of such a task is to inform a first time reader of Plautus of what they should expect in the text. And in turn, this will better the understanding of the material in the collection.

Archaisms

The best place to start then, would be quickly looking at the words that come together to form the plays of Plautus. The most shocking and immediate thing one notices about Plautine diction is the use of archaic Latin forms. Some might find these difficult to understand, but there are a great many possibilities for why we find them in the plays of Plautus. It is important to note, though, that Plautus did not set out to write a play in archaic Latin, using the term "archaic" only comes from our contemporary interpretation of the text. Most scholars seem to note that the plays language is written in a colloquial, everyday speech. M. Hammond, A.H. Mack, and W. Moskalaw have noted in their introduction to the text of the *Miles Gloriosus* that Plautus was, "free from convention... [and that] he sought to reproduce the easy tone of daily speech rather than the formal regularity of oratory or poetry. Hence, many of the irregularities which have troubled scribes and scholars perhaps merely reflect the everyday usages of the careless and untrained tongues which Plautus heard about him"[67]. Looking at the overall use of archaisms within Plautus, one will notice that they commonly occur in promises, agreements, threats, prologues, or speeches. Plautus uses archaic forms, though sometimes for metrical convenience, but more often for stylistic effect. There are many manifestations of these archaic forms in the texts

of Plautus' plays, in fact too many to completely include them in this article[68]. Here now, the most regular of irregularities, i.e., archaisms, will be delineated:

- * the use of uncontracted forms of some verbs like *malo*
- * the emendation of the final -e of singular imperatives
- * the use of -o in some verb stems where it would normally be -e
- * the use of the -ier ending for the present passive and deponent infinitive
- * often the forms of *sum* are joined to the preceding word
- * the deletion of the final -s and final -e when ne is added to a second singular verb
- * the replacement of -u with -o in noun endings
- * the use of *qu* instead of *c*, as in *quom* instead of *cum*
- * the use of the -ai genitive singular ending
- * the addition of a final -d onto personal pronouns in the accusative or ablative
- * there is sometimes the addition of a final -pte, -te, or -met to pronouns
- * the use of -is as the nominative plural ending[69]

These peculiarities are the most common in the plays of Plautus, and their notation should make initial readings a bit easier. Archaic word forms in Plautus reflect the way that his contemporaries interacted. Plautus' use of colloquial dialogue helps us understand, to a certain extent, how Roman's would have greeted each other and consequentially responded. For example, there are certain formulaic greetings such as "hello" and "how are you?" that illicit a certain formulaic response such as a returning hello, or answer as to your state of being well. *Quid agis* here would mean, "How are you?" Other responses are factual and have a less fixed answer. Overall though, archaic forms present the reader with a richer understanding of the Latin language.

Means of Expression

There are certain ways in which Plautus expressed himself in his plays, and these individual means of expression give a certain flair to his style of writing. The means of expression are not always specific to the writer, i.e., idiosyncratic, yet they are characteristic of the writer. The two examples of these characteristic means of expression are the use of proverbs and the use of Greek language in

the plays of Plautus. Plautus employs the use of proverbs in many of his plays. G.L. Beede defines proverbs as sayings currently among the folk. They are fundamentally of popular appeal, employed to drive home a point, to sum up a situation, and to characterize. Many times proverbs will address a certain genre such as law, religion, medicine, trades, crafts, and seafaring. Plautus' proverbs and proverbial expressions number into the hundreds. They sometimes appear alone or interwoven within a speech. The most common appearance of proverbs in Plautus appears to be at the end of a soliloquy. Plautus does this for dramatic effect to emphasize a point. Further interwoven into the plays of Plautus and just as common as the use of proverbs is the use of Greek within the texts of the plays. J.N. Hough suggests that Plautus' use of Greek is for artistic purposes and not simply because a Latin phrase will not fit the meter. Greek words are used when describing foods, oils, perfumes, etc. This is similar to our use of other languages in the English language such as the words *garçon* or *rendezvous*. These words give us a French flair just as the Greek would to the Romans. Slaves or characters of low standing speak much of the Greek. One possible explanation for this is that many Roman slaves would have been foreigners perhaps even speaking Greek.

Poetic Devices

Plautus also used more technical means of expression in his plays. One tool that Plautus used for the expression of his *servus callidus* stock character was alliteration. Alliteration is the repetition of sounds in a sentence or clause; those sounds usually come at the beginning of words. In the *Miles Gloriosus*, the *servus callidus* is Palaestrio. As he speaks with the character, Periplectomenus, he uses a significant amount of alliteration in order to assert his cleverness and, therefore, his authority. Plautus uses phrases such as “*falsiloquom, falsicum, falsiurium*” (MG I. 191). These words express the deep and respectable knowledge that Palaestrio has of the Latin language. Alliteration can also happen at the endings of words as well. For example, Palaestrio says, “*linguam, perfidiam, malitiam atque audaciam, confidentiam, confirmatam, fraudulentiam*” (MG II. 188-9). Also used, as seen above, is the technique of assonance, which is the repetition of similar sounding syllables. Word play is also a technique quite obvious in the plays of Plautus. There are various manifestations of word play in Plautus, but one instance in the *Miles Gloriosus* is Sceledre, *scelus*. This example is one of the punning of names in Plautus. Word play figures as an important technique in Plautus because it is fitting for certain characters, especially the clever slave. These poetic devices stand in the text in order to accentuate and emphasize whatever is being said in the text, and it also elevates the artistry of the language.

Meter

Further emphasizing and elevating the artistry of the language of the plays of Plautus is the use of meter, which simply put is the rhythm of the play. There seems to be great debate over whether Plautus found favor in strong word accent or verse ictus, stress. Plautus did not follow the meter of the Greek originals that he adapted for the Roman audience. Plautus used a great number of meters, but

most frequently he used the trochaic septenarius. Iambic words, though common in Latin, are difficult to fit in this meter, and naturally occur at the end of verses. G.B. Conte has noted that Plautus favors the use of *cantica* instead of Greek meters. This vacillation between meter and word stress highlights the fact that Latin literature was still in its infancy, and that there was not yet a standard way to write verse.

Language on Stage

Meter is not the only way in which the poet expressed what he wanted to say. The poet also gave each character a certain way to speak, or perhaps society expected certain stock characters to voice their opinions in certain ways. The *servus callidus* functioned as the exposition in many of Plautus' plays. According to C. Stace, "slaves in Plautus account for almost twice as much monologue as any other character... [and] this is a significant statistic; most of the monologues being, as they are, for purposes of humor, moralizing, or exposition of some kind, we can now begin to see the true nature of the slave's importance"[70]. Because humor, vulgarity, and "incongruity" are so much a part of the Plautine comedies, the slave becomes the essential tool to connect the audience to the *joke* through his monologue and direct connection to the audience. He is, then, not only a source for exposition and understanding, but connection - specifically, connection to the humor of the play, the playfulness of the play. The *servus callidus* is a character that, as McCarthy says, "draws the complete attention of the audience, and, according to C. Stace, 'despite his lies and abuse, claims our complete sympathy'"[71]. He does this, according to some scholarship, using monologue, the imperative mood and alliteration - all of which are specific and effective linguistic tools in both writing and speaking.

The specific type of monologue (or soliloquy) in which a Plautine slave engages is the *prologue*. As opposed to simple exposition, according to N.W. Slater, "these...prologues...have a far more important function than merely to provide information"[72]. Another way in which the *servus callidus* asserts his power over the play – specifically the other characters in the play – is through his use of the imperative mood. This is a mood in the Latin language that includes direct statement. In English, sentences such as, "Go!" or "Stay" are in the imperative mood. This type of language is used in order for, according to E. Segal, "the forceful inversion, the reduction of the master to an abject position of supplication...the master-as-suppliant is thus an extremely important feature of the Plautine comic finale"[73]. The language, the imperative mood is therefore used in the complete role-reversal of the normal relationship between slave and master and "those who enjoy authority and respect in the ordinary Roman world are unseated, ridiculed, while the lowliest members of society mount to their pedestals...the humble are in face exalted"[74]. This is not only an essential tool for the stock character of the *servus callidus* but also an essential tool for *laughter*.

Mscottknight 05:37, 5 December 2006 (UTC)

The Influence and Reception of Plautus

Despite Plautus being long dead, his influence lives on in such literary giants as Moliere and Shakespeare. The critical reception of Plautus has been much different than his influence on later literature. On one hand, scholarly reception of Plautus has come from viewing the Plautine corpus as crude to something a bit warmer and more complex. On the other hand, Plautus' influence on later literature is impressive since it has been an influence on two literary giants, Shakespeare and Moliere. When one puts scholarly approach and the literary influence of Plautus together, you can still find pretentiousness and snobbery thwarting contemporary success of the playwright. The downright denigration of Plautus and his influence on two literary giants seems not to fit together. Plautus lived over 2,000 years ago and his memory and imprint on society still lives on. Playwrights throughout history have looked to Plautus for character, plot, humor, and other elements of comedy. His influence ranges from similarities in idea to full literal translations woven into the play. Plautus' plays, though farcical in nature, are incredibly penetrating in their exploration of character, even if there are few obvious changes between Plautus' stock characters from play to play. The playwright's apparent familiarity with the absurdity of humanity and both the comedy and tragedy that stem from this absurdity have inspired his succeeding fellow playwrights centuries after his death. The most famous of these successors is Shakespeare – on whom Plautus had a tremendous amount of influence when it came to the Bard's earlier comedies.

Plautus and Shakespeare

Shakespeare does much the same thing as Plautus. Shakespeare takes from Plautus like Plautus took from his Greek models. He has taken someone else's plot for his own uses. C.L. Barber says that, "Shakespeare feeds Elizabethan life into the mill of Roman farce, life realized with his distinctively generous creativity, very different from Plautus' tough, narrow, resinous genius"[75]. So, there seems to have been a growing inclination to use Plautus as time went on, but there has always remained a resistance to him as a playwright. Perhaps one of the most famous plays that Plautine comedy influenced was William Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*. Some argue that the *Comedy of Errors* was a failed attempt to imitate Plautus' *Menaechmi*, but H.A. Watt argues otherwise. In his article "Plautus and Shakespeare: Further Comments on *Menaechmi* and the *Comedy of Errors*," Watt shows that while *Comedy of Errors* was not Shakespeare's best work, its failure was not due to his departure from the *Menaechmi* as some have suggested, but due to insufficient skill in character development as it was one of Shakespeare's earliest plays.

The Shakespearean comedy most studied for its' Plautine influence and parallels has been *The Comedy of Errors*. The Plautus and Shakespeare plays that most parallel each other, according to some modern scholarship, are, respectively, *The Menaechmi* and *The Comedy of Errors*. In fact, according to Marples, Shakespeare drew directly from Plautus, "parallels in plot, in incident, and in character"[76] and is undeniably influenced by the classical playwright's work.

Marples even uses the word, “borrower” in reference to not only how Plautus borrowed plots and characters from Menander, but how Shakespeare borrowed plots and characters from Plautus – especially Plautus’ *Menaechmi*. However, Shakespeare didn’t just “borrow,” but he also amplified some key aspects of Plautus’ play in order to make it more relevant for and more influential over his contemporary audience.

In fact, before one explores the connections between the two plays, H.A. Watt stresses the importance of recognizing the fact that the “two plays were written under conditions entirely different and served audience as remote as the poles”[77]. The worlds of Plautus and Shakespeare were entirely different and it is important to keep this in mind when comparing and contrasting their work, but despite such different worlds, their work was remarkably similar and equally relevant for their respective audiences as some things are eternally funny, such as the clever slave outwitting the boorish master.

The nature of the differences between *The Menaechmi* and *The Comedy of Errors* is undeniable. In *The Menaechmi*, Plautus uses only one set of twins – twin servants. Shakespeare, on the other hand, uses two sets of twins, which, according to William Connolly, “dilutes the force of [Shakespeare’s] situations”[78]. This speaks to the idea that Shakespeare took his play “to a new level” in many different aspects. The number of twins is the most prominent. As a result of such modifications of Plautine comedy, Shakespeare succeeds in creating a comedy that is not only Plautine but also Shakespearean.

As a way to show that Shakespeare has a comedic category of fusion between Elizabethan and Plautine techniques, T.W. Baldwin writes, “...Errors does not have the miniature unity of *Menaechmi*, which is characteristic of classic structure for comedy”[79]. Baldwin discusses the importance in noting that Shakespeare covers a much greater area in the structure of the actual play than Plautus ever does. This is also a result of Shakespeare’s audience because he was writing for an audience whose minds weren’t necessarily focused on house and home but also on the greater world around them and the role that they might have played in that world. Another characteristic of Shakespeare’s audience that is certainly different from the audience of Plautus is that Shakespeare’s audience was dominantly Christian. It was important for Shakespeare to acknowledge this in his writing. So, at the end of *Errors*, the world of the play is returned to normal when a Christian abbess interferes with the feuding. *Menaechmi*, on the other hand according to Niall Rudd, “is almost completely lacking in a supernatural dimension”[80]. Rudd says that a character in Plautus’ play would never blame an inconvenient situation on witchcraft – something that is quite common in Shakespeare.

However, regardless of the differences between the two plays, Shakespeare was clearly influenced by Plautus’ work. He used many of the same elements. He used the same type of characters as well as the ever important Plautine idea of the slave versus his master. He used the same type of humor (adjusted for the time) and pushed boundaries in the way that Plautus did, an example of which being

the clever slave managing to undo all the chaos created by farcical plot situations, most often a mistaken identity. It is, in the end, an acknowledgement of the brilliance and timelessness of Plautus' work. Shakespeare, although his play is significantly different from Plautus' *Menaechmi*, is a continuation of the playwrighting tradition in general. He in no way tried discredit the work of Plautus, but simply built on what had existed before him. Although he did rely heavily on Plautus' work for his first comedy, Shakespeare eventually departed from a form of translation to a combination of Plautine devices and facets of Elizabethan drama.

Watt argues that Shakespeare's departure from the *Menaechmi* is because Shakespeare takes his influence not only from Plautus, but also from Elizabethan drama. The *Menaechmi* already has one set of twins, and Shakespeare adds the servant twins as well. One suggestion is that Shakespeare got this idea from Plautus' *Amphitruo*, in which both twin masters and twin slaves appear. Another is that the doubling is just a stock situation of Elizabethan comedy (not just Shakespeare). The relationship between a master and a clever slave is also a common element in Elizabethan comedy. Again looking to Elizabethan comedy, Shakespeare often includes foils for his characters to have one set off the other. Another Shakespearian theme stems from Elizabethan romantic comedy. In this genre it is common for the plays to end with many marriages and couplings of pairs. This is something that is not seen in Plautine comedy. In the *Comedy of Errors* Aegeon and Aemilia are separated, Antipholus and Luciana are at outs, and Antipholus and Luciana have not yet met. At the end of the day, all the couples are happily together. These couplings are something that Plautus would not have dealt with. By writing his comedies in a combination of Elizabethan and Plautine styles, Shakespeare helps to create his own brand of comedy, one that uses both styles. Watt concludes that Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* is not his best and this is due to lack of characterization. Here Plautus succeeds, as he has much more characterization in his comedy. The *Comedy of Errors* should not be looked at as a failed copy of the *Menaechmi*, but as a Shakespearian hybrid of Plautine and Elizabethan comedy[81].

Early Productions of Plautine Comedies

Although a great influence on Shakespeare, Plautine comedies were translated and performed before Shakespeare's time. W.B. Sedgwick gives us a record, as we know it, of the *Amphitruo*, perhaps one of Plautus' most famous works throughout history. It was the most popular Plautine play in the Middle Ages, publicly performed at the Renaissance, and the first Plautine play to be translated into English. As well as having renaissance versions of Plautus' work, the Elizabethans also knew of Plautus. There is evidence of imitation in Edwardes' *Damon and Pythias*, Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*, and Heywood's *Silver Age*. Heywood sometimes even translated whole passages of Plautus. By being translated as well as imitated, Plautus is a major influence on comedy of the Elizabethan era and the Middle Ages, as can be seen in the Stonyhurst Pageants.

By looking to the Middle Ages and the entertainment typical of its day, H.W. Cole discusses the influence of Plautus and Terence on the Stonyhurst Pageants. The Stonyhurst Pageants are manuscripts of Old Testament plays that were probably composed after 1609 in Lancashire. Cole focuses on Plautus' influence on the particular Pageant of Naaman. The playwright of this pageant breaks away from the traditional style of religious medieval drama and relies heavily on the works of Plautus. Overall, the playwright cross-references eighteen of the twenty surviving plays of Plautus and five of the six Terence ones. It is clear that the author of the Stonyhurst Pageant of Naaman had a great knowledge of Plautus and was significantly influenced by this[82]. As well as being performed in the early 1600's, Plautus' plays and their influence goes back to even the early 1500's.

Even though few records of the plays of the 1500's exist, Bradner discusses the first known university production of Plautus in England. Although uncertain, through the limited records we can guess that this first production was of *Miles Gloriosus* at Oxford in 1522. The earliest recorded performance of a Plautine play comes from the *magnum jornale* of Queens College which contains a reference to a *comoedia Plauti* in either 1522 or 1523. This fits directly with comments made in the poems of Leland about the date of the production. The next production of *Miles Gloriosus* that we know of from limited records, was given by the Westminster School in 1564[83]. Other records also tell us about performances of the *Menaechmi*. From our knowledge, performances were given in the house of Cardinal Wolsey by boys of St. Paul's School as early as 1527[84]. From this we can determine that Plautus had a lasting influence on comedy throughout history. His influence ranges from little known plays such as the Stonyhurst Pageants to greats such as Shakespeare. By having such a wide range of influenced writers, Plautus lives on in others' works.

Echoes of Plautine Stock Characters and Plot Devices

As well as passing on his plots, Plautus passed on stock characters and plot devices. Not that Plautus created the stock characters, such as the clever slave and the parasite, not that he created the pun or wordplays, but with the similar plots, it is easy to see where later authors got their inspiration for plots and stock characters and plot devices.

One of the most important echoes of Plautus is the stock character of the parasite, which appears in many of Plautus' plays and goes on to achieve fame in the work of better known literary giants. Certainly the best example of this is Falstaff, the portly and cowardly knight who appears in three different Shakespeare plays. As J.W. Draper notes, the gluttonous Falstaff shares many characteristics with a parasite such as Artotrogus from *Miles Gloriosus*. Both characters seem fixated on food and where their next meal is coming from – Falstaff's great girth and his constant call for food, for instance, echo the pleasure Artotrogus takes in a certain kind of olive spread. But they also rely on flattery in order to gain these gifts, and both characters are willing to bury their patrons in empty praise[85]. Of course, Draper notes that Falstaff is also

something of a boastful military man, but notes, “Falstaff is so complex a character that he may well be, in effect, a combination of interlocking types”[86]. And while Shakespeare obviously had a knowledge of Latin literature, the parasite was so common in European drama at the time that he could have, in fact, not have been influenced directly by Plautus but instead received this stock character third-hand[87].

As well as appearing in Shakespearean comedy, the Plautine parasite appears in one of the first English comedies, Ralph Roister Doister. In *Ralph Roister Doister*, the character of Matthew Merrygreeke follows in the tradition of both Plautine Parasite and Plautine slave, as he both searches and grovels for food and also attempts to achieve his master’s desires[88]. Indeed, the play itself is often seen as borrowing heavily from or even being based on the Plautine comedy *Miles Gloriosus*[89]. Plautus obviously became the same kind of representative of earlier comedy that he himself found in Menander; as one of the most proficient examples of an older style of comedy who became a kind of gold mine for newer writers.

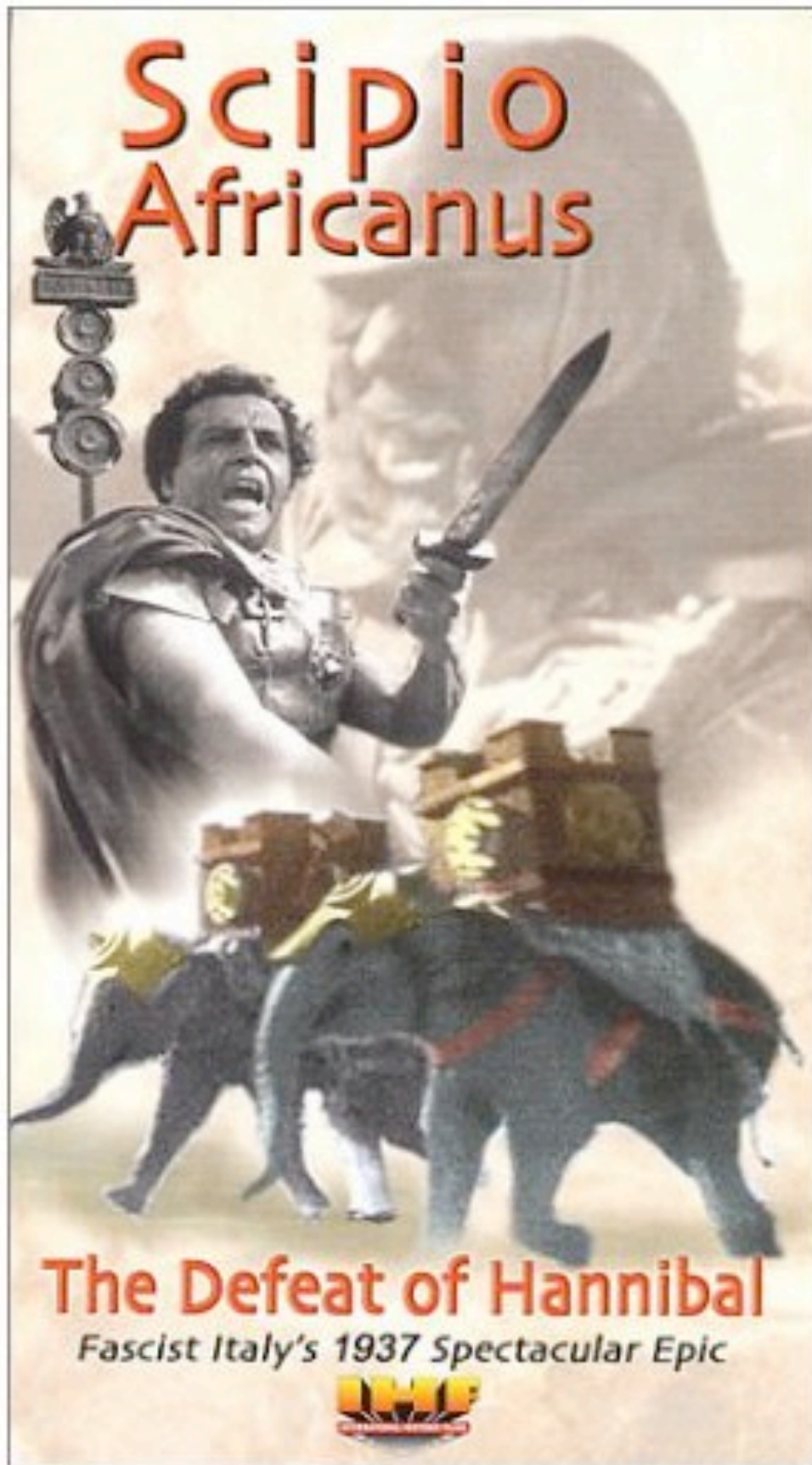
In terms of plot, or perhaps more accurately plot device, the method of conveying his plot, Plautus served as a source of inspiration and also provided the possibility of adaptation for later playwrights. The many deceits that Plautus layered his plays with, giving the audience the feeling of a genre bordering on farce, appear in much of the comedy written by Shakespeare and Moliere. For instance, the clever slave, which is also a Plautine stock character, has important roles in both *L’Avare* and *L’Etoudri*, two plays by Moliere, and in both drives the plot and creates the rouse just like Palaestrio in *Miles Gloriosus*[90]. These similar characters set up the same kind of deceptions in which many of Plautus’ plays find their driving force, and it is not a simple coincidence.

Beyond this, Shakespeare has many other Plautine elements appear in his work: he uses the same kind of opening monologue so common in Plautus’ plays and includes many Greek names and places, to mention a few of such Plautine elements. He even uses a “villain” in *The Comedy of Errors* of the same type as the one in *Menaechmi*, switching the character from a doctor to a teacher but keeping the character a shrewd, educated man[91]. While Watt also notes that this is one of Shakespeare’s least successful plays, it is clear that some of these elements appear in many of his works, such as *Twelfth Night* or *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and had a deep impact on Shakespeare’s writing[92]. Even though Plautus’ influence did not make the first Shakespearean comedy a success, Plautine stock characters do make later Shakespearean comedies successful. It is in many ways fitting that Plautus became such a source for writers of any age to look at for inspiration, considering his own reference to the New Comedy works of Greece. Many of his tropes have become so commonplace, or so frequently used, that most people wouldn’t even realize the true source of the technique. His popularity in Elizabethan England clearly had a hand in this, as one of the greatest writers of that or any time, Shakespeare found it fit to borrow from Plautus’ writing for his own plays. Like Plautus, he was able to take certain elements, work with them, and create something very original and very fitting for

his own time. It is to Plautus' great credit that his work has remained so influential and accessible in a future that is so different from his own time. It is clear that Plautus was a poet who had many direct influences, such as the Greek author Menander and various other writers of New Comedy. In fact many have written off Plautus as simply a talented translator, but Plautus imbued his work with his own original genius and he himself went on to influence writers hundreds of years in the future. His use of stock character, deceptions, and farce all trickled down from playwright to playwright, appearing in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and 17th Century France.

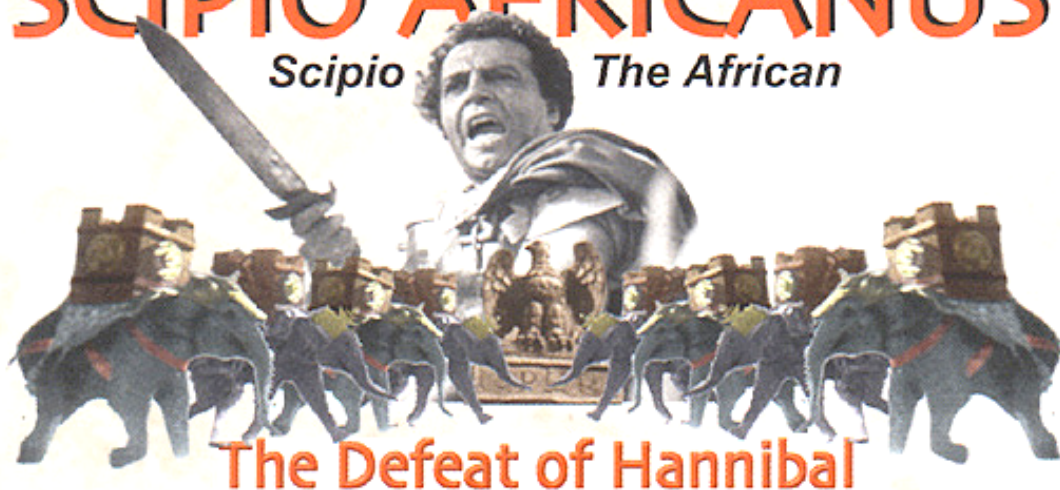
Footnotes and Works Cited can be found on the internet at:
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plautus#Footnotes>

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SCIPIO AFRICANUS

Scipio The African



The Defeat of Hannibal



B&W, 85 minutes,
Dubbed in English.
Italy, 1937
Product Number 789

Fascist Italy's most spectacular costume epic celebrates ancient Rome's conquests in Africa during the Second Punic War. Produced during Italy's war against Abyssinia, and heavily backed by Mussolini's government, this was at the time the most expensive Italian film ever made; utilizing over 30,000 human extras, 1,000 horses and a cast of 50 elephants. Drawing upon Rome's imperial past to justify Italy's expansionist present, Scipio Africanus piles cinematic spectacle — including graphic battle scenes in which Hannibal's charging elephants are hacked and gored by terrified infantry — atop its ideological agenda. The result is a film of soaring historical pageantry (and occasionally arch melodrama), reverberating with the aesthetics and ideals of fascist Italy. When Mussolini visited the film set during production, he was greeted by thousands of extras dressed as Roman legionnaires who shouted "Duce, Duce!" Weeks later, life followed art as many of these extras were drafted to fight in Abyssinia. Shown at the Venice Film Festival upon its release in 1937, Scipio Africanus was awarded the Mussolini Cup.



The film opens with scenes of desolation and defeat, as Hannibal, the great Carthaginian general, has just defeated Rome's forces at the Plains of Cannae. In response, Rome's politicians argue and dither, until the general Scipio Africanus steps forth with a bold plan: a lightning strike by sea against Carthage itself. A popular general and man of the people, Scipio quickly gains the support of soldiers and the veterans of his Spanish campaigns, and soon his daring strategy is in full operation. Hannibal meanwhile continues to move down Italy, as his brutish soldiers pillage Rome's villas and defile its women. The scene shifts to Carthage, depicted as a place of vaguely oriental decadence and exotic intrigue.

A major subplot concerns the vampish Carthaginian princess Sofonisba, whose marriage to the King of Numidia has ensnared him in a ruinous anti-Roman alliance. Hannibal, meanwhile, learning of Scipio's gathering forces, is forced to depart Italy and bring his armies back to defend Carthage. Finally, inevitably, Hannibal's and Scipio's forces meet on the vast plains of Zama. The spectacular battle scenes include an extraordinarily graphic sequence involving scores of elephants *- Hannibal's most famous military innovation - slaughtered as they charge wildly into Scipio's massed infantry force. Large clashes of cavalry and infantry follow. In the end, a Roman standard rises over the stilled field, pronouncing Rome's great African victory. With the return of peace - and a greatly expanded Roman imperium in the Mediterranean - Scipio returns to his estate to plant next year's wheat crop.

Italy, 1937, B&W, 85 minutes, dubbed in English, Digitally Restored. Not since Thomas Edison electrocuted Topsy the elephant before the cameras in 1903 had the movies so enraged animal rights advocates. In addition to its 32,848 human extras and 1,000 horses, the making of Scipio Africanus required a cast of 50 elephants. The butchering of many of these elephants -- one is speared in the eye by Scipio himself -- was central to the film's climactic battle scenes. Stampeded madly into crowds of terrified extras, many elephants were hacked and gored to death -- sacrificed in the interests of spectacle and realism.

0202ScipioneLAfricano.doc

Scipione l'africano/Scipio Africanus: The Defeat of Hannibal (1937)

"Victory - Or DEATH!"

Designed to instill a greater sense of nationalism among Italians close to the outbreak of WWII, Scipio Africanus chronicles the pivotal battle by the Roman

military leader that quashed Hannibal and his mighty band of warriors and pachyderms at the Battle of Zama, in 202 B.C.

It's an obvious propaganda piece, designed to instill patriotism near the end of the Second Italo-Abyssinian War by Il Duce, Benito Mussolini, but Scipio is less politically overt in spite of some heavy borrowing from the work of Hitler's favourite director at the time, Leni Riefenstahl.

Veteran director Carmine Gallone - whether by his own decision or from the supervision of Mussolini and his 21 year old son Vittorio - employs the same-styled cutaways to waves of saluting, cheering masses, and even mimics the declarations of loyalty by provincial followers when Scipio calls out to fellow Romans for support.

There's no doubt Riefenstahl's brilliant use of montages and music were used to model scenes of moving masses: early sequences are underscored with the same over-abundant, Wagnerian-styled orchestral fugues and chorus that dominate the opening celebrations in Riefenstahl's Olympia: Part 1, but in Scipio, the Riefenstahl riffs are jarring and disjointed, and the decision to mimic a Germanic musical style is a glaring cultural interpolation.

The only sequence where Gallone's nod actually works is at the very end, when a full scale Roman forum is gradually filled with victorious citizens, bearing flaming torches. The dark sky and backlit edifices parallel the sweeping crowds of flame-bearing soldiers in Triumph of the Will, as they assembled for a massive book burning ceremony; or the famous sequence of marching soldiers surrounded by columns of light in the Nuremberg stadium.

(A rare moment of humour, and one evocative of more familiar American WWII action/war genre, has an older Roman gob boarding a military ship for Carthage. Lamenting a lack of action back in Rome, he says he's back to get the job done. From an American angle, it's the familiar pro-active Average Joe who's willing to sacrifice his life for the nation; in Scipio, his stance is a bit more critical, inferring Rome's power has been completely emasculated by Hannibal and his barbarians, and the only route to victory lies in kicking some Carthaginian butt.)

One key problem with Scipio is Gallone's amazing dull direction, which relies far too much on static shots bearing bland compositions. Whereas an eccentric like Joseph Von Sternberg would've exploited the Roman setting with more expressive set designs, Gallone goes for workmanlike setups covering fairly theatrical sets. Worse are clumsy edits that make one ponder whether it was more stilted dialogue from the reportedly longer Italian 117 min. version that was trimmed to create the shorter English edit (retitled Scipio Africanus: The Defeat of Hannibal) used for this DVD.

The Scipio script is just plain banal, and the English dub track - feeling more like a sixties effort, with some occasional streetwise American tonalities - tries to distill the basic relationships and plot to even more simplistic conflicts; throw in

a captured wife (Isa Miranda), and you've got a character marker for the audience to follow the cross-cut narratives, before the warring sides finally meet on the battlefield.

Gallone does effectively uses cross-cutting as the Roman and Carthaginian armies anxiously await the first aggressive step that will kick-start the battle. This stylistic ploy may also have been used in earlier scenes, as characters like the separated Roman couple - the hubbie in Scipio's infantry, the wife now Hannibal's concubine - disappear for a long chunk until the grand finale.

Allegedly patterned after Benito Mussolini, Annibale Ninchi's performance is much more reserved than expected, and the military hero is relegated to a posing icon, mostly administering the nitty gritty battle tactics after throwing the pivotal lance that incites Hannibal's pachyderm division. As with many good villains, the only figure of genuine interest is Hannibal.

Camillo Pilotto as the cruel invader has some strong scenes, including a few brief moments as he hashes out some theoretical strategies with soldiers in his tent; and, most oddly, when he meets the captured upper-class wife of a Roman soldier (Miranda), whose home was trashed by brown-painted soldiers, and who clearly gets raped off-screen by the self-serving ruler.

Revenge is a main theme in Scipio, and the film opens with a sea of bodies, and a lone Roman staff that beckons justice; reclaimed and elevated to a symbolic relic, the staff manages to survive the bloody Battle of Zama in a severely hacked up form, and bookends Scipio as a sign of sweet revenge.

The action finale is a real mixed bag, largely because the production used real elephants in the combat scenes, and some were clearly maimed and killed for 'authenticity.' Scipio marshals his wary soldiers into battle by grabbing a lance at throwing it right into the eye of a mounted elephant; later scenes show the poor creatures getting lanced in the legs, and a mother dying on her side, while the baby - 'humanely' spared by a smiling Roman - hovers close by.

The rest of the battle is fairly standard, as Gallone never manages to impress the immensity and scope of the battlefield in spite of actually having fields full of infantry and cavalry to play with. The hand-to-hand combat scenes are decent, and unusually gory for the era. (Hollywood's Production Code mandated sadistic stabs be generally reduced to clean and fatal pokes in the tummy or back.)

In their witty, satirical, and informative 1984 book, *The Hollywood Hall of Shame*, writers Harry and Michael Medved chronicled Scipio in their 'Fascist Follies' wing, and describe the film as the epic that would restore Italy's stature in the filmmaking world. The film did win a prize - the Mussolini Cup at the 1937 Venice Film Festival - but according to the Medveds' research, the \$2 million spectacular lasted a week in Italian cinemas before it was reduced to free screenings at diverse public events, and yearly grade school assemblies in Italy. A New York City premiere failed to ignite the interest of critics and cinemagoers, and the film

ultimately disappeared in the art house circuits.

Alongside Stalin's The Fall of Berlin and Goebbels' Kolberg, Scipio Africanus is one of three legendary propaganda epics released by IHF on DVD. The source print for this disc is the shorter American release version, and while in decent shape, the print has some harsh contrasts that detract from scenes that one must assume were shot with greater care for richer shades of gray. The mono mix is standard, and the DVD comes with a brief text essay that provides a good intro, and warns viewers about the animal cruelties.

Director Carmine Gallone explored an interesting mix of genres throughout his long career, notably (or infamously, depending upon one's *blick*) the silent mega-production, The Last Days of Pompeii / Ultimi giorni di Pompeii, Gli (1927), shot on location among the ruins, and costing seven million Lire. After Scipio, Gallone chose to focus on several biopics and filmed operas (including Madame Butterfly, with Asian actors in a unique Italian-Japanese co-production), and returned to the historical epic in 1960 with Carthages in Flames / Cartagine in fiamme, which featured Camillo Pilotto among the cast.

Film editor Oswald Hafenrichter later edited Carol Reed's Fallen Idol and The Third Man, and an eclectic mix of projects, including the Peter Sellers comedy, Smallest Show on Earth, and several British horror and sci-fic films during the 1960s.

Annibale Ninchi later appeared in Federico Fellini's La Dolce vita and 8 1/2, and Isa Miranda maintained a lengthy career, popping up in a trio of cult films: Dorian Gray (1970), and Mario Bava's Roy Colt and Winchester Jack / Roy Colt e Winchester Jack (1970) and Twitch of the Death Nerve / Bay of Blood/Reazione a catena (1971).

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0203The war moves to Africa.doc

The war moves to Africa

After his victories in Hispania, Scipio returned to Rome a great hero, and, although he was technically ineligible, was elected consul in 205 BC. He resolved to end the war by attacking Carthage itself, and appealed directly to the Centuriate Assembly when he found the Senate opposed this. Thus he was given

command of the two legions in Sicily, plus 7,000 volunteers he had recruited, and the next year brought the war to North Africa when he landed at Utica, about twenty miles away from Carthage. Here he was counting on support from some Numidians, who resented Carthaginian control and so agreed to provide him with cavalry.

In 203 BC, when Scipio was carrying all before him in Africa and the Carthaginian peace party were arranging an armistice, Hannibal was recalled from Italy by the war party at Carthage. After leaving a record of his expedition engraved in Punic and Greek upon brazen tablets in the temple of Juno at Crotona, he sailed back to Africa. These records have been quoted by Polybius. His arrival immediately restored the predominance of the war party, who placed him in command of a combined force of African levies and his mercenaries from Italy. Hannibal opposed this and tried to convince them not to send these troops into battle. In 202 BC, Hannibal met Scipio in a peace conference, but political circumstances forced him to take battle. Despite mutual admiration, negotiations floundered due to Roman allegations of "Punic Faith," referring to the breach of protocols which ended the First Punic War by the Carthaginian attack on Saguntum, as well as perceived breach in the idealised Roman military etiquette (Hannibal's numerous ambushes). Thus being a very biased view of the Roman wartime and postwar propaganda.

The Battle of Zama



Painting of the Battle of Zama by Cornelis Cort, 1567

This decisive battle soon followed. Unlike most battles of the Second Punic War, the Romans had superiority in cavalry and the Carthaginians had superiority in infantry. The Roman army was generally better armed and a head taller than the Carthaginian. Hannibal had refused to lead this army into battle because he expected them not to stand their ground. There have been very hard arguments between him and the oligarchy. His co-general Hasdrubal Gisco was forced to suicide by a violent mob after he spoke in support of Hannibal not to lead these troops into battle. Before the battle Hannibal held no speech to his new troops, only to his veterans. The new troops proved as cowardly and inexperienced as he had expected.

The Roman cavalry won an early victory, and Scipio had devised tactics for defeating Carthaginian war elephants. However, the battle remained closely fought, and at one point it seemed that Hannibal was on the verge of victory. However, Scipio was able to rally his men, and his cavalry attacked Hannibal's rear. This two-pronged attack caused the Carthaginian formation to disintegrate and collapse. After their defeat, Hannibal convinced the Carthaginians to accept peace. Notably, he broke the rules of the assembly by forcibly removing a speaker who supported continued resistance. Afterwards he was sued to apologize for his lack of behaviour.

Results

Hispania was lost to Carthage forever, and was reduced to a client state. A war indemnity of 10,000 talents was imposed, her navy was limited to 10 ships to ward off pirates, and she was forbidden from raising an army without Rome's permission. Numidia took the opportunity to capture and plunder Carthaginian territory. Half a century later, when Carthage raised an army to defend itself from these incursions, it was destroyed by Rome in the Third Punic War. Rome on the other hand, by her victory, had taken a key step towards domination of West Eurasia.

The end of the war was not universally welcomed in Rome, for reasons of both politics and morale. When the Senate decreed upon a peace treaty with Carthage, Quintus Caecilius Metellus, a former consul, said he did not look upon the termination of the war as a blessing to Rome, since he feared that the Roman people would now sink back again into its former slumbers, from which it had been roused by the presence of Hannibal. (Valerius Maximus vii. 2. §3.). Others, most notably Cato the Elder, feared that if Carthage was not completely destroyed it would soon reacquire its power and pose new threats to Rome, and pressed for harsh peace conditions. Archeology found out that the famous military harbor, the Coton, was built after this war. It could house and quickly deploy 200 triremes, while Carthage was allowed to have 10 triremes and it was a protected against viewing inside.

Hannibal survived the battle of Zama and continued to enjoy a leadership role in Carthage even after the end of the war. However, Carthaginian nobility was upset by his democratisation and battle against corruption. They convinced the Romans to force him into exile, where he met them and their allies on the battlefield. He eventually committed suicide to avoid capture.

0204ZamaBattle.doc

Battle of Zama

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The Battle of Zama, generally accepted to have been fought on or around October 19 of 202 BC, was the final and decisive battle of the Second Punic War. A Roman army led by Scipio Africanus defeated a Carthaginian force led by Hannibal Barca. Soon after this defeat on their home ground, the Carthaginian senate sued for peace, ending the 17-year war.

Prelude

Despite nearly two decades of constant victories, much of it on Italian soil, the Carthaginian commander Hannibal Barca was still in Italia although confined to the south of the peninsula. A decisive victory by Gaius Claudius Nero in the brief Metaurus campaign killed Hannibal's brother Hasdrubal Barca and permanently severed Hannibal from all hope of reinforcements. Hannibal was now stranded, and forced to sustain a scorched earth policy throughout Southern Italy. Hannibal had entered Italy as a victorious conqueror. He humiliated the Romans at Ticinus, Trebia, Lake Trasimeno, and finally Cannae where the cream of the Roman army was slaughtered. Hannibal had anticipated using these victories to convince the Italian city-states to mutiny. Instead, they only produced a growing resolve in the Italian states to rally to Roman leadership.

After destroying the Carthaginian presence in Spain, Scipio Africanus proposed ending the war by invading Carthage's home territories, an area now roughly

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Date: | October 19, 202 BC |
| Location: | Zama, near Carthage |
| Result: | Decisive Roman victory; end of Second Punic War |
| Combatants | |
| Carthage | Roman Republic East Numidia |
| Commanders | |
| Hannibal | Scipio Africanus Masinissa |
| Strength | |
| almost 58,000 infantry | 34,000 Roman infantry |
| 6,000 cavalry | 3,000 Roman cavalry |
| 80 war elephants | 6,000 Numidian cavalry |
| Casualties | |
| 31,000 killed and wounded | 1,500 killed |
| 15,000 captured | 4,000 wounded |

comprising modern-day Tunisia. Despite the cautious Senate's opposition to this plan, the Roman people gave Scipio the requisite authority to attempt the invasion. At first Scipio operated cautiously, acting mostly to reinforce his army with local defectors. After Massinissa replaced the pro-Carthage Syphax as chieftain of the Numidians, Scipio felt able to risk a decisive battle and began menacing the city of Carthage itself. The Carthaginian senate recalled Hannibal from Italy and he met Scipio on the plains of Zama leading a ragtag army composed of local citizens and veterans from his Italian campaigns.

The two men are said to have met face-to-face before the battle. Hannibal reminded Scipio of fate's role in the war, and how lenient Hannibal was to Rome when it was on the brink of destruction. Scipio replied that chance played a role in every decision every day, and would not give peace without battle.

Battle

Zama marked a reversal from typical battles of the Second Punic War in that the Romans had less infantry, while the Carthaginians — by the defection of the Numidians — were outnumbered 6,000 to 3,000 in cavalry. Hannibal amassed some 50,000 infantry and 4,000 cavalry, while Scipio had a total of 34,000 infantry and 8,700 cavalry at his disposal. Placing his inexperienced cavalry on the flanks, Hannibal aligned his troops in three phalangial lines behind eighty war elephants. The first line consisted of mixed infantry of Gauls, Ligurians, and Balerians. In his second line he placed the Carthaginian and Libyan levies while his veterans from Italy were placed in the third line. Hannibal intentionally held back his third infantry line, in order to thwart Scipio's tendency to pin the Carthaginian center and envelop his opponent's lines, as he had previously done at the Battle of Ilipa.

Scipio Africanus →

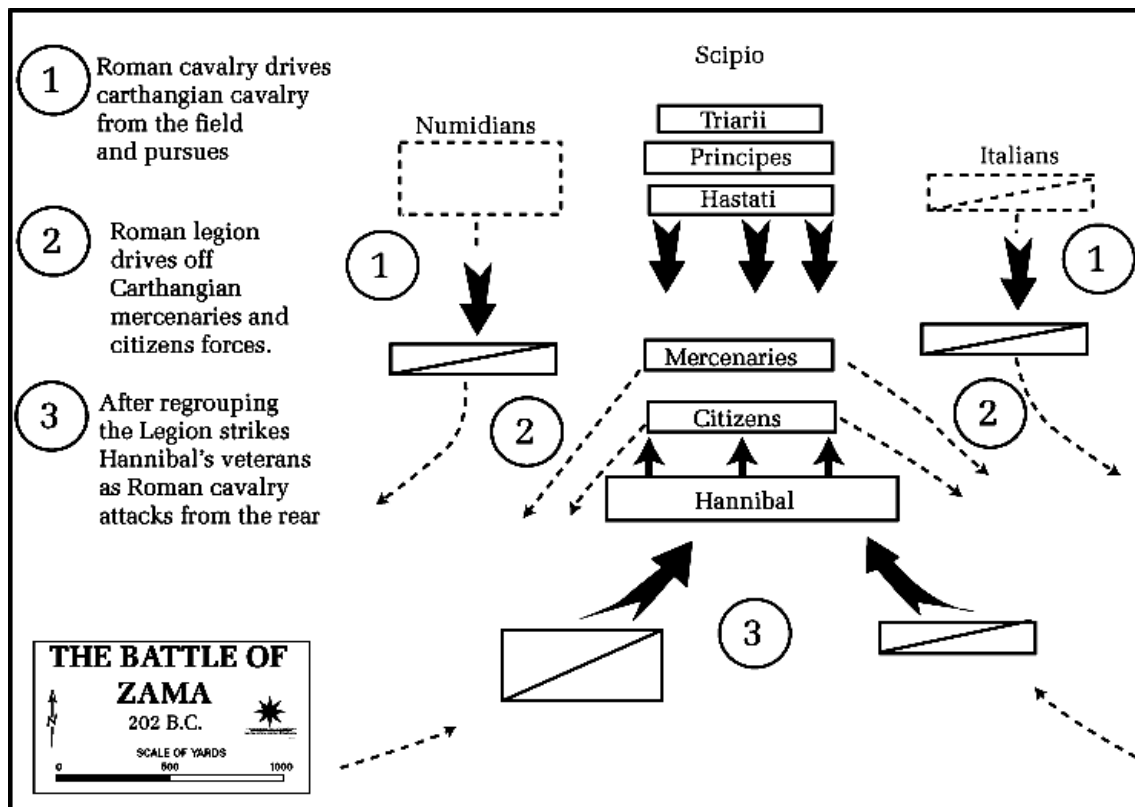
Hannibal hoped that the combination of the war elephants and the depth of the first two lines would weaken and disorganize the Roman advance, whereupon he would complete a victory with his reserves in the third line and overlap Scipio's lines. Though this formation was indeed well-conceived, it failed to produce a victory for the aging Hannibal, who was, by some claims, suffering from mental exhaustion after his campaigns in Italy.

At the outset of the battle, the superior Roman cavalry swept aside their Carthaginian counterparts and pursued



them off the field— depriving Hannibal of his entire body of cavalry (though it is believed that Hannibal had intended his cavalry to lure their opponents away from the battlefield, in effect eliminating the advantage the Romans enjoyed in this arm). Likewise, Hannibal's first two lines, unable to cope against the well-trained and confident Roman soldiers, were disposed of soon thereafter. For years, Hannibal had won victories with his experienced army, but now he faced the best of the Roman army, while he commanded a makeshift army, who fared poorly against the Romans. As Livy states "...the Romans immediately drove back the line[s] of their opponents; then pushing their elbows and the bosses of their shields, and pressing forward into the places which they had pushed them, they advanced at a considerable pace, as if there had been no one there to resist them..." [10].

Moreover, Scipio came up with an inventive method of neutralizing Hannibal's elephants. Hannibal lost all of his original elephant troops (who crossed the Alps with him) by the battle of Cannae, but they were replenished in Africa. First of all, Scipio knew that elephants could be ordered to charge forward, but they could only continue their charge in a straight line. So rather than lining his Roman forces in the traditional manipular lines, which put the velites, principes, and triarii in succeeding lines of 500 men groups, Scipio instead put the maniples in a checker pattern, with his elite heavy infantry in diagonals. Scipio realized that intentionally opening gaps in his troops meant that the elephants would continue between them, without harming a soul. He did this, and after the elephants passed through his troops harmlessly and were picked off on the other side (many of them were so distraught, in fact, they charged back into their own Carthaginian lines). Scipio's troops then fell back into formation and continued marching.



Plan of the battle

Despite these setbacks, the battle remained a closely contested engagement. When the Roman infantry confronted the Carthaginian third line, the resulting clash was fierce and bloody, with neither side achieving local superiority. In fact, at one point during the battle, it seemed that Hannibal was on the verge of victory. However, Scipio was able to rally his men, and his cavalry, after pursuing the Carthaginian cavalry, returned in time to deliver a devastating blow in Hannibal's rear. This two-pronged attack caused the Carthaginian formation to disintegrate and collapse. Unable to cope against the well-trained and confident Roman soldiers with his own indifferent troops after losing his notorious advantage, Hannibal experienced a crushing defeat that put an end to all resistance on the part of Carthage. In total, as many as 31,000 men of Hannibal's army were mercilessly killed at Zama, while 15,000 were taken as prisoners. The Romans on the other hand, lost as few as 1,500 dead and 4,000 wounded.

Aftermath

Soon after Scipio's victory at Zama, the war ended with the Carthaginian senate suing for peace. Unlike the treaty that ended the First Punic War, and which amounted merely to an extended armistice, the terms Carthage acceded to were so punishing that it was never able to challenge Rome for supremacy of the Mediterranean again. When Rome waged a third war on Carthage 50 years later, the Carthaginians were far from having the power to invade Italy, because the Romans had tricked them into completely disarming beforehand. Unarmed, they

could only organize a defense of their home city, which, after an extended siege, was captured and utterly destroyed.

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0301Spartacus.doc



The development of *Spartacus* was partly instigated by Kirk Douglas's failure to win the title role in William Wyler's *Ben-Hur*. Douglas had worked with Wyler before on *Detective Story*, and was disappointed when Wyler chose Charlton Heston instead. Not wanting to appear beaten, he decided to upstage Wyler, and create his own epic, *Spartacus*, with himself in the title role.

← *the original movie poster*

Screenplay development

Originally, Howard Fast was hired to adapt his own novel as a screenplay, but he experienced difficulty working in the screenplay

format and was replaced by the blacklisted Dalton Trumbo, who worked under the pseudonym "Sam Jackson". Some people feel the *Spartacus* in Trumbo's adaptation is depicted as a form of early communist who fights against the wealthy Roman establishment by liberating the slaves. The filming was plagued by the conflicting visions of Kubrick and Trumbo: Kubrick, a young director at the time, did not have the degree of control he would later have over his films, and the final product is more a result of Trumbo's optimistic screenplay than it is of Stanley Kubrick's trademark cynicism.

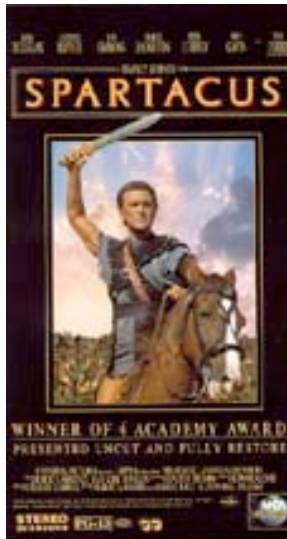
In post-production, Douglas was made aware that Kubrick intended to take writing credit for the film instead of Trumbo. The powerful Douglas publicly resisted Trumbo's exclusion, and when Trumbo's name appeared in the credits, the Hollywood blacklist was effectively broken.

Filming

***Spartacus* was originally to be directed by Anthony Mann. However, two weeks into shooting, Mann was fired by the studio because of his lack of leadership and Stanley Kubrick was hired to take over. At this point in his career, Kubrick had already directed four feature films, two of which were major Hollywood productions. Even so, *Spartacus* was Kubrick's biggest project so far, with a budget of \$12 million and a cast of 10,500, an impressive achievement for such a young director (although his contract did not give him complete control over the filming).**

***Spartacus* was filmed using 70 mm Super Technirama cameras, which was a change for Kubrick, who preferred using square-format ratios. Kubrick found working outdoors or in real locations to be distracting and thus preferred to film in the studio. He believed the actors would benefit more from working on a sound stage, where they could fully concentrate. To create the illusion of the large crowds that play such an essential role in the film, Kubrick's crew used three-channel sound equipment to record 76,000 spectators at a Michigan State – Notre Dame college football game shouting "Hail, Crassus!" and "I'm Spartacus!"**

The intimate scenes were filmed in Hollywood, but Kubrick insisted that all battle scenes be filmed on a vast plain outside Madrid. Eight thousand trained soldiers from the Spanish infantry were used to double as the Roman army. Kubrick directed the armies from the top of specially constructed towers. However, he eventually had to cut all but one of the gory battle scenes, due to negative audience reactions at preview screenings.



SPARTACUS: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Violence Enters Politics:

133 BCE: Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, a noble plebeian, was elected tribune. He proposed essential land and economic reforms which threatened the wealthy senatorial classes, so he passed these through the Assembly of Tribes. Gracchus was very popular with the masses, so he ran for a second consecutive term as tribune (though this was unconstitutional). A group of senators led an armed band against him in the Assembly and killed him and 300 of his followers.

123-21 BCE: Gaius Sempronius Gracchus (the younger brother of Tiberius) was elected tribune for two successive years; through the Assembly, he increased the power of the equestrian class at the expense of the senators. He also attempted sweeping economic reforms. Opposition between his followers and the Senate broke into riots and bloodshed, and he died in the violence.

The reform efforts of the Gracchi and the opposition these generated in the Senate constituted the foundation of the two political factions, the *populares* and the *optimates*.

Rise of the Generals:

107 BCE: Gaius Marius, a plebeian of the equestrian class and a *novus homo*, was elected consul and was designated by the

Assembly of Tribes as general in the African war against the wishes of the Senate. He reorganized the army and successfully concluded several wars. Marius was elected to five consecutive consulships (though this was unconstitutional) and then to a sixth consulship in 100. He became leader of the *populares*. During this time there was considerable unrest and rioting in Rome.

88 BCE: Lucius Cornelius Sulla, a patrician leader of the *optimates*, was elected consul and designated by the Senate as general in the war in Asia Minor although the Assembly had given this command to Marius. Sulla marched his legions into Rome itself to enforce his appointment and to stop the reform legislation of the *populares*; this was the first time in history that a Roman army marched upon Rome. Sulla outlawed Marius and took up his command in Asia Minor.

86 BCE: Marius returned to Rome and outlawed Sulla; he was elected to his seventh consulship and led a five-day bloodbath against the *optimates*. Marius, however, died within the year.

82-79 BCE: Sulla returned to Italy with his army and had himself proclaimed dictator. He conducted first “proscriptions,” in which he posted lists of those condemned to be executed (the Senate had asked him to *publish* these names with the following plea: “We do not ask you to pardon those whom you have destined for destruction; we only want you to relieve the anxiety of those whom you have decided to spare”). A large number of Roman aristocrats associated with the *populares* (520, according to Sorbonne professor Francois Hinard) were proscribed and their property confiscated. Sulla strengthened the power of the Senate, weakened the power of the tribunes, and stopped the grain dole. He passed a law that no army was to be stationed in or near Rome—in effect, he banned standing armies in Italy—and no general was to lead his army out of the provinces without permission of the Senate. Sulla retired and died in 79.

77-72 BCE: Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus, Pompey the Great, who had been a general under Sulla and celebrated a triumph at the exceptionally young age of 24, took command of the Roman legions in Spain and put down a revolt led by the followers of Marius.

Revolt of Spartacus:

The real Spartacus was a freeborn provincial from Thrace, who may have served as an auxiliary in the Roman army in Macedonia. He deserted the army, was outlawed, captured, sold into slavery, and trained at the gladiatorial school of Batiatus in Capua.

73 BCE: Spartacus escaped with 70-80 gladiators, seizing the knives in the cook's shop and a wagon full of weapons. They camped on Vesuvius and were joined by other rural slaves, overrunning the region with much plunder and pillage, although Spartacus apparently tried to restrain them. His chief aides were gladiators from Gaul, named Crixus and Oenomaus.

The Senate sent a praetor, Claudius Glaber (his *nomen* may have been Clodius; his *praenomen* is unknown), against the rebel slaves with about 3000 raw recruits hastily drafted from the region. They thought they had trapped the rebels on Vesuvius, but Spartacus led his men down the other side of the mountain using vines, fell on the rear of the soldiers, and routed them.

Spartacus subsequently defeated two forces of legionary cohorts; he wanted to lead his men across the Alps to escape from Italy, but the Gauls and Germans, led by Crixus, wanted to stay and plunder. They separated from Spartacus, who passed the winter near Thurii in southern Italy.

72 BCE: Spartacus had raised about 70,000 slaves, mostly from rural areas. The Senate, alarmed, finally sent the two consuls (L. Gellius Publicola and Cn. Cornelius Lentulus Clodianus), each with two legions, against the rebels. The Gauls and Germans, separated from Spartacus, were defeated by Publicola, and Crixus was killed. Spartacus defeated Lentulus, and then Publicola; to avenge Crixus, Spartacus had 300 prisoners from these battles fight in pairs to the death. ([map](#))

At Picenum in central Italy Spartacus defeated the consular armies, then pushed north and defeated the proconsul of Cisalpine Gaul at Mutina. The Alps were now open to the rebels, but again the Gauls and Germans refused to go, so Spartacus returned to southern Italy, perhaps intending to ship to Sicily.

In the autumn, when the revolt was at its height and Spartacus had about 120,000 followers, the Senate voted to pass over the consuls and grant *imperium* to Marcus Licinius Crassus, who had been a praetor in 73 B.C. but currently held no office. Crassus was the wealthiest man in Rome, a noble from an old plebeian family; since he had received very little support from the conservative nobles who dominated the Senate, he had allied himself with the faction of the *populares*.

Crassus was given six new legions plus the four consular legions. When one of Crassus' legates attacked Spartacus with two legions, against orders, Spartacus roundly defeated them. Crassus decimated the most cowardly cohort, then used his combined forces to defeat Spartacus, who retreated to Rhegium, in the toe of Italy. Spartacus tried to cross the straits into Sicily, but the Cilician pirates betrayed him.

Meanwhile, the Senate recalled Pompey and his legions from Spain, and they began the journey overland; Marcus Licinius Lucullus landed in Brundisium in the heel of Italy with his legions from Macedonia. When Spartacus finally fought his way out of the toe of Italy, he could not march to Brundisium and take ship to the east because of the presence of Lucullus. ([map](#))

71 BCE: Spartacus started north; some of the Gauls and Germans separated from him and were nearly defeated by Crassus before Spartacus rescued them. The slaves gained one more minor victory against part of Crassus' forces, but they were finally wiped out by Crassus' legions in a major battle in southern Italy, near the headwaters of the Siler river. It is believed that Spartacus died in this battle; there were so many corpses that his body was never found. The historian Appian reports that 6000 slaves were taken prisoner by Crassus and crucified along the Appian Way from Capua to Rome.

As many as 5000 slaves escaped and fled northward, but they were captured by Pompey's army north of Rome as he was marching back from Spain; Pompey subsequently tried to claim the glory of victory from Crassus, although he had not actually participated in any of the battles. The Senate voted Pompey a triumph because of his victory in Spain, but they decreed an ovation (a far less splendid and prestigious parade) for Crassus because his victory had been merely

over slaves. There were no political purges or proscriptions after the rebellion was crushed.

70 BCE: Pompey and Crassus were elected consuls, although Pompey was six years too young for the office and had never held any of the lower magistracies. As consuls, they repealed some of the unpopular laws of Sulla and restored the power of the tribunes.

Significance of Spartacus: quotation from Erich Gruen, *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic* (University of California Press, 1974) 20-21:

It was not the governing class alone that would react in horror to the prospect of a slave insurrection. Whatever the grievances of men disenfranchised and dispossessed by Sulla, they would have found unthinkable any common enterprise with Thracian or Gallic slaves. It causes no surprise that Marxist historians and writers have idealized Spartacus as a champion of the masses and leader of the one genuine social revolution in Roman history. That, however, is excessive. Spartacus and his companions sought to break the bonds of their own grievous oppression. There is no sign that they were motivated by ideological considerations to overturn the social structure. The sources make clear that Spartacus endeavored to bring his forces out of Italy toward freedom rather than to reform or reverse Roman society. The achievements of Spartacus are no less formidable for that. The courage, tenacity, and ability of the Thracian gladiator who held Roman forces at bay for some two years and built a handful of followers into an assemblage of over 120,000 men can only inspire admiration.

The Roman reaction was tardy and ineffective. . . . Error of judgment induced the Senate to treat the uprising too lightly at the outset. By the time Rome took firm steps, Spartacus' ranks had considerably swelled and the state's finest soldiers were serving abroad. But Crassus' efforts obtained full support, and the revolt was wiped out in 71.

Characters in Film with a Recorded Historical Existence:

Marcus Licinius Crassus (Lawrence Olivier)
Marcus Publius Glabrus [real name was Claudius Glaber] (John Dall)
Gaius Julius Caesar (John Gavin)
Lentulus Batiatus (Peter Ustinov—won Academy Award for best supporting actor)
Spartacus (Kirk Douglas)
Crixus (John Ireland)
Cilician pirates

Characters in Film with No Historical Record of Existence:

Antoninus (Tony Curtis)
Gracchus (Charles Laughton)
Helena (Nina Foch) and Claudia (Joanna Barnes)
Varinia (Jean Simmons)—only Plutarch says Spartacus had a wife, a Thracian who was enslaved with him
Marcellus (Charles McGraw)
Draba (Woody Strode)
Tigranes Levantes (Herbert Lom)—though there was a King of Armenia named Tigranes

Source

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Third Servile War

| Date | 73 to 71 BC |
|---|---|
| Location | Italia |
| Result | Decisive Roman victory |
| Combatants | |
| Army of escaped slaves | Roman Republic |
| Commanders | |
| Crixus †, Oenomaus †, Spartacus † ^a , Castus †, Gannicus † | Gaius Claudius Glaber, Publius Varinius, Gnaeus Clodianus, Lucius Gellius Publicola, Gaius Cassius Longinus, Gnaeus Manlius, Marcus Licinius Crassus, Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus, Marcus Terentius Varro Lucullus, Lucius Quinctius, Gnaeus Tremellius Scrofa |
| Strength | |
| 120,000 escaped slaves and gladiators, including non-combatants; total number of combatants unknown | 3,000+ militia, 8 Roman Legions (40,000-50,000 men), 12,000+ - organization unknown. |
| Casualties | |
| Almost all killed in action or crucified | Unspecified but heavy (50, 1,000, or 4,000 lost through decimation) |
| ^a Presumed dead, body never found | |

The Third Servile War, also called the Gladiator War and The War of Spartacus by Plutarch, was the last of a series of unrelated and unsuccessful slave rebellions against the Roman Republic, known collectively as the Servile Wars. The Third Servile War was the only one to directly threaten the Roman heartland of Italia and was doubly alarming to the Roman people due to the repeated successes of the rapidly growing band of rebel slaves against the Roman army between 73 and 71 BC. The rebellion was finally crushed in 71 BC through the concentrated military effort of a single commander, Marcus Licinius Crassus, although the rebellion continued to have indirect effects on Roman politics for years to come.

Between 73 and 71 BC, a band of escaped slaves — originally a small cadre of about 70 escaped gladiators which grew into a band of over 120,000 men, women and children — wandered throughout and raided the Roman province of Italia with relative impunity under the guidance of several leaders, including the famous gladiator-general Spartacus. The able-bodied adults of this band were a surprisingly effective armed force that repeatedly showed they could withstand the Roman military, from the local Campanian patrols, to the Roman militia, and to trained Roman legions under consular command. Plutarch described the



actions of the slaves as an attempt by Roman slaves to escape their masters and flee through Cisalpine Gaul, while Appian and Florus depicted the revolt as a civil war in which the slaves waged a campaign to capture the city of Rome itself.

← *Spartacus, Louvre, Paris*
Dennis Fouatier, 1830

The Roman Senate's growing alarm about the continued military successes of this band, and about their depredations against Roman towns and the countryside, eventually led to Rome's fielding of an army of eight legions under the harsh but effective leadership of Marcus Licinius Crassus. The war ended in 71 BC when, after a long and bitter fighting retreat before the legions of Crassus, and the realization that the legions of Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus and Marcus Terentius Varro Lucullus were

moving in to entrap them, the armies of Spartacus launched their full strength against Crassus' legions and were utterly destroyed.

While Spartacus' war is noteworthy in its own right, the Third Servile War was significant to the broader history of ancient Rome mostly in its effect on the careers of Pompey and Crassus. The two generals used their success in putting down the rebellion to further their political careers, using their public acclaim and the implied threat of their legions to sway the consular elections of 70 BC in their favor. Their actions as Consuls greatly furthered the subversion of Roman political institutions and contributed to the eventual transition of the Roman Republic into the Roman Empire.

Slavery in the Roman republic:

Through varying degrees throughout Roman history, the existence of a pool of inexpensive labor in the form of slaves was an important factor in the economy. Slaves were acquired for the Roman workforce through a variety of means, including purchase from foreign merchants and the enslavement of foreign populations through military conquest.[1] With Rome's heavy involvement in wars of conquest in the first and second centuries BC, tens if not hundreds of thousands of slaves at a time were imported into the Roman economy.[2] While there was limited use for slaves as servants, craftsmen, and personal attendants, vast numbers of slaves worked in mines and on the agricultural lands of Sicily and southern Italia.[3]

For the most part, slaves were treated harshly and oppressively during the Roman republican period. Under Republican law, a slave was not considered a person, but property. Owners could abuse, injure or even kill their own slaves without legal consequence. While there were many grades and types of slaves, the lowest — and most numerous — grades who worked in the fields and mines were subject to a life of hard physical labor.[4]

This high concentration and oppressive treatment of the slave population led to rebellions. In 135 BC and 104 BC, the First and Second Servile Wars, respectively, erupted in Sicily, where small bands of rebels found tens of thousands of willing followers wishing to escape the oppressive life of a Roman slave. While these were considered serious civil disturbances by the Roman Senate, taking years and direct military intervention to quell, they were never considered a serious threat to the Republic. The Roman heartland of Italia had never seen a slave uprising, nor had slaves ever been seen as a potential threat to the city of Rome. This would all change with the Third Servile War.

The rebellion begins (73 BC) – The Capuan revolt:

In the Roman Republic of the first century BC, gladiatorial games were one of the more popular forms of entertainment. In order to supply gladiators for the contests, several training schools, or ludi, were established throughout Italia.[5] In these schools, prisoners of war and condemned criminals — who were considered slaves — were taught the skills required to fight to the death in gladiatorial games.[6] In 73 BC, a group of some 200 gladiators in the Capuan school owned by Lentulus Batiatus plotted an escape. When their plot was betrayed, a force of about 70 men seized implements from the kitchen ("choppers and spits"), fought their way free from the school, and seized several wagons of gladiatorial weapons and armor.[7]

Once free, the escaped gladiators chose leaders from their number, selecting two Gallic slaves — Crixus and Oenomaus — and Spartacus, who was said either to be a Thracian auxiliary from the Roman legions later condemned to slavery, or a captive taken by the legions.[8] There is some question as to Spartacus's nationality, however, as "Thracians" were a type of gladiator in Rome.[9]

These escaped slaves were able to defeat a small force of troops sent after them from Capua, and equip themselves with captured military equipment as well as their gladiatorial weapons.[10] Sources are somewhat contradictory on the order of events immediately following the escape, but they generally agree that this band of escaped gladiators plundered the region surrounding Capua, recruited many other slaves into their ranks, and eventually retired to a more defensible position on Mount Vesuvius.[11]

Defeat of the praetorian armies:

As the revolt and raids were occurring in Campania — which was a vacation region of the rich and influential in Rome, and the location of many estates — the revolt quickly came to the attention of Roman authorities. It took Rome some time to realize the scale of the problem, viewing the slave revolt as more of a major crime wave than as an armed rebellion.

However, in 73 BC, Rome dispatched military force under praetorian authority to put down the rebellion.[12] A Roman praetor, Gaius Claudius Glaber, gathered a force of 3,000 men, not as legions, but as a militia "picked up in haste and at random, for the Romans did not consider this a war yet, but a raid, something like an attack of robbery." [13] Glaber's forces besieged the slaves on Mount Vesuvius, blocking the only known way down the mountain. With the slaves thus contained, Glaber was content to wait until starvation forced the slaves to surrender.

While the slaves lacked military training, Spartacus' forces displayed ingenuity in their use of available local materials, and in their use of clever, unorthodox tactics when facing the disciplined Roman armies.[14] In response to Glaber's siege, Spartacus' men made ropes and ladders from vines and trees growing on the slopes of Vesuvius and used them to rappel down the cliffs on the side of the mountain opposite Glaber's forces. They moved around the base of Vesuvius, outflanked the army, and annihilated Glaber's men.[15]

A second expedition, under the praetor Publius Varinius, was then dispatched against Spartacus. For some reason, Varinius seems to have split his forces under the command of his subordinates Furius and Cossinius. Plutarch mentions that Furius commanded some 2,000 men, but neither the strength of the remaining forces, nor whether the expedition was composed of militia or legions, appears to be known. These forces were also defeated by the army of escaped slaves: Cossinius was killed, Varinius was nearly captured, and the equipment of the armies was seized by the slaves.[16] With these successes, more and more slaves flocked to the Spartacan forces, as did "many of the herdsman and shepherds of the region", swelling their ranks to some 70,000.[17] The rebel slaves spent the winter of 73 BC arming and equipping their new recruits, and expanding their raiding territory to include the towns of Nola, Nuceria, Thurii and Metapontum.[18]

The victories of the rebel slaves did not come without a cost. At some time during these events, or possibly during one of the winter raids in late 73 BC, leader

Oenomaus was lost — presumably in battle — and is not mentioned further in the histories.[19]

Motivation and leadership of the escaped slaves:

By the end of 73 BC, Spartacus and Crixus were in command of a large group of armed men with a proven ability to withstand Roman armies. What they intended to do with this force is somewhat difficult for modern readers to determine. Since the Third Servile War was ultimately an unsuccessful rebellion, no firsthand account of the slaves' motives and goals exists, and historians writing about the war propose contradictory theories.

Many popular modern accounts of the war claim that there was a factional split in the escaped slaves between those under Spartacus, who wished to escape over the Alps to freedom, and those under Crixus, who wished to stay in southern Italia to continue raiding and plundering. This appears to be an interpretation of events based on the following: the regions that Florus lists as being raided by the slaves include Thurii and Metapontum, which are geographically distant from Nola and Nuceria. This indicates the existence of two groups: Lucius Gellius Publicola eventually attacked Crixus and a group of some 30,000 followers who are described as being separate from the main group under Spartacus;[20] Plutarch describes the desire of some of the escaped slaves to plunder Italia, rather than escape over the Alps.[21] While this factional split is not contradicted by classical sources, there does not seem to be any direct evidence to support it.

Fictional accounts — such as Stanley Kubrick's 1960 film *Spartacus* — sometimes portray Spartacus as an ancient Roman freedom fighter, struggling to change a corrupt Roman society and to end the Roman institution of slavery. Similarly, this is not contradicted by classical historians, but no historical account mentions that the goal of the rebel slaves was to end slavery in the Republic, nor do any of Spartacus' actions seem specifically aimed at ending slavery.

Even classical historians, who were writing only years after the events themselves, seem to be divided as to what the motives of Spartacus were. Appian and Florus write that he intended to march on Rome itself[22] — although this may have been no more than a reflection of Roman fears. If Spartacus did intend to march on Rome, it was a goal he must have later abandoned. Plutarch writes that Spartacus merely wished to escape northwards into Cisalpine Gaul and disperse his men back to their homes.[21]

It is not certain that the slaves were a homogeneous group under the leadership of Spartacus. While this is the unspoken assumption of the Roman historians, this may be the Romans projecting their own hierarchical view of military power and responsibility on the ad hoc organization of the slaves. Certainly other slave leaders are mentioned — Crixus, Oenomaus, Gannicus, and Castus — and we cannot tell from the historical evidence whether they were aides, subordinates, or even equals leading groups of their own and traveling in convoy with Spartacus' people.

Defeat of the consular armies (72 BC):

In the spring of 72 BC, the escaped slaves left their winter encampments and began to move northwards towards Cisalpine Gaul.

The Senate, alarmed by the size of the revolt and the defeat of the praetorian armies of Glaber and Varinius, dispatched a pair of consular legions under the command of Lucius Gellius Publicola and Gnaeus Cornelius Lentulus Clodianus.[23] Initially, the consular armies were successful. Gellius engaged a group of about 30,000 slaves, under command of Crixus, near Mount Garganus and killed two-thirds of the rebels, including Crixus himself.[24]

At this point in the history, there is a divergence in the classical sources as to the course of events which cannot be reconciled until the entry of Marcus Licinius Crassus into the war. The two most comprehensive (extant) histories of the war by Appian and Plutarch detail very different events. However, neither accounts directly contradicts the other, but simply reports different events, ignoring some events in the other account, and reporting events that are unique to that account.

Appian's history:

According to Appian, the battle between Gellius' legions and Crixus' men near Mount Garganus was the beginning of a long and complex series of military maneuvers that almost resulted in the Spartacan forces directly assaulting the city of Rome itself.

After his victory over Crixus, Gellius moved northwards, following the main group of slaves under Spartacus who were heading for Cisalpine Gaul. The army of Lentulus was deployed to bar Spartacus' path, and the consuls hoped to trap the rebel slaves between them. Spartacus' army met Lentulus' legion, defeated it, turned, and destroyed Gellius' army, forcing the Roman legions to retreat in disarray.[25] Appian claims that Spartacus executed some 300 captured Roman soldiers to avenge the death of Crixus, forcing them to fight each other to the death as gladiators.[26] Following this victory, Spartacus pushed northwards with his followers (some 120,000) as fast as he could travel, "having burned all his useless material, killed all his prisoners, and butchered his pack-animals in order to expedite his movement".[25]

The defeated consular armies fell back to Rome to regroup while Spartacus' followers moved northward. The consuls again engaged Spartacus somewhere in the Picenum region, and once again were defeated.[25]

Appian claims that at this point Spartacus changed his intention of marching on Rome — implying this was Spartacus' goal following the confrontation in Picenum[27] — as "he did not consider himself ready as yet for that kind of a fight, as his whole force was not suitably armed, for no city had joined him, but only slaves, deserters, and riff-raff", and decided to withdraw into southern Italia once again. They seized the town of Thurii and the surrounding countryside, arming themselves, raiding the surrounding territories, trading plunder with

merchants for bronze and iron (with which to manufacture more arms), and clashing occasionally with Roman forces which were invariably defeated.[28]

Plutarch's description of events differs significantly from that of Appian's: According to Plutarch, after the battle between Gellius' legion and Crixus men (whom Plutarch describes as "Germans"[29]) near Mount Garganus, Spartacus' men engaged the legion commanded by Lentulus, defeated them, seized their supplies and equipment, and pushed directly into northern Italia. After this defeat, both consuls were relieved of command of their armies by the Roman Senate and recalled to Rome.[30] Plutarch does not mention Spartacus engaging Gellius' legion at all, nor of Spartacus facing the combined consular legions in Picenum.[29]

Plutarch then goes on to detail a conflict not mentioned in Appian's history. According to Plutarch, Spartacus' army continued northwards to the region around Mutina (modern Modena). There, a Roman army of some 10,000 soldiers, led by the governor of Cisalpine Gaul, Gaius Cassius Longinus attempted to bar Spartacus' progress and were also defeated.[31]

Plutarch makes no further mention of events until the initial confrontation between Marcus Licinius Crassus and Spartacus in the spring of 71 BC, omitting the march on Rome and the retreat to Thurii described by Appian.[30] However, as Plutarch describes Crassus forcing Spartacus' followers to retreat southwards from Picenum, one might infer that the rebel slaves approached Picenum from the south in early 71 BC, implying that they withdrew southwards from Mutina to winter in southern or central Italia.

Why they might do so, when there was apparently no reason for them not to escape over the Alps — Spartacus' goal according to Plutarch[32] — is not explained.

The war under Crassus (71 BC):

The events of early 71 BC. Marcus Licinius Crassus takes command of the Roman legions, confronts Spartacus, and forces the rebel slaves to retreat through Lucania to the straits near Messina. Plutarch claims this occurred in the Picenum region, while Appian places the initial battles between Crassus and Spartacus in the Samnium region.

The events of early 71 BC. Marcus Licinius Crassus takes command of the Roman legions, confronts Spartacus, and forces the rebel slaves to retreat through Lucania to the straits near Messina. Plutarch claims this occurred in the Picenum region, while Appian places the initial battles between Crassus and Spartacus in the Samnium region.

Despite the contradictions in the classical sources regarding the events of 72 BC, there seems to be general agreement that Spartacus and his followers were in the south of Italia in early 71 BC.

Crassus takes command of the legions:

The Senate, now alarmed at the apparently unstoppable rebellion occurring within Italia, gave the task of putting down the rebellion to Marcus Licinius Crassus. Crassus had been a praetor in 73 BC, and although he was known for his political connections and family, he had no reputation as a military commander.[30]

He was assigned six new legions in addition to the two formerly consular legions of Gellius and Lentulus, giving him an army of some 40,000-50,000 trained Roman soldiers.[33] Crassus treated his legions with harsh, even brutal, discipline, reviving the punishment of unit decimation within his army. Appian is uncertain whether he decimated the two consular legions for cowardice when he was appointed their commander, or whether he had his entire army decimated for a later defeat (an event in which up to 4,000 legionaries would have been executed).[34] Plutarch only mentions the decimation of 50 legionaries of one cohort as punishment after Mummius' defeat in the first confrontation between Crassus and Spartacus.[35] Regardless of what actually occurred, Crassus' treatment of his legions proved that "he was more dangerous to them than the enemy", and spurred them on to victory rather than running the risk of displeasing their commander. [34]

Crassus and Spartacus:

When the forces of Spartacus moved northwards once again, Crassus deployed six of his legions on the borders of the region (Plutarch claims the initial battle between Crassus' legions and Spartacus' followers occurred near the Picenum region[30], Appian claims it occurred near the Samnium region[36]), and detached two legions under his legate, Mummius, to maneuver behind Spartacus, but gave them orders not to engage the rebels. When an opportunity presented itself, Mummius disobeyed, attacked the Spartacan forces, and was subsequently routed.[35] Despite this initial loss, Crassus' engaged Spartacus and defeated him, killing some 6,000 of the rebels.[36]

The tide seemed to have turned in the war. Crassus' legions were victorious in several engagements, killing thousands of the rebel slaves, and forcing Spartacus to retreat south through Lucania to the straits near Messina. According to Plutarch, Spartacus made a bargain with Cilician pirates to transport him and some 2,000 of his men to Sicily, where he intended to incite a slave revolt there and gather reinforcements. However, he was betrayed by the pirates, who took payment and then abandoned the rebel slaves.[35] Minor sources mention that there were some attempts at raft and shipbuilding by the rebels as a means to escape, but that Crassus took unspecified measures to ensure the rebels could not cross to Sicily, and their efforts were abandoned.[37]

Spartacus' forces then retreated towards Rhegium. Crassus' legions followed and upon arrival built fortifications across the isthmus at Rhegium, despite harassing raids from the rebel slaves. The rebels were under siege and cut off from their supplies.[38]

Reinforcement legions arrive; the end of the war:

The last events of the war in 71 BC, where the army of Spartacus broke the siege by Crassus' legions and retreated toward the mountains near Petelia. Shows the initial skirmishes between elements of the two sides, the turn-about of the Spartacan forces for the final confrontation. Note the legions of Pompey moving in from the north to capture survivors.

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At this time, the legions of Pompey were returning to Italia, having put down the rebellion of Quintus Sertorius in Hispania.

Sources disagree on whether Crassus had requested reinforcements, or whether the Senate simply took advantage of Pompey's return to Italia, but Pompey was ordered to bypass Rome and head south to aid Crassus.[39] The Senate also sent reinforcements under the command of "Lucullus", mistakenly thought by Appian to be Lucius Licinius Lucullus, commander of the forces engaged in the Third Mithridatic War at the time, but who appears to have been the proconsul of Macedonia Marcus Terentius Varro Lucullus, the former's younger brother.[40] With Pompey's legions marching out of the north, and Lucullus' troops landing in Brundisium, Crassus realized that if he did not put down the slave revolt quickly, credit for the war would go to the general who arrived with reinforcements, and thus he spurred his legions on to end the conflict quickly.[41]

Hearing of the approach of Pompey, Spartacus attempted to negotiate with Crassus to bring the conflict to a close before Roman reinforcements arrived.[42] When Crassus refused, a portion of Spartacus' forces broke out of confinement and fled toward the mountains west of Petelia (modern Strongoli) in Bruttium, with Crassus' legions in pursuit.[43] The legions managed to catch a portion of the rebels – under the command of Gannicus and Castus – separated from the main army, killing 12,300.[44] However, Crassus' legions also suffered losses, as some of the army of escaping slaves turned to meet the Roman forces under the command of a cavalry officer named Lucius Quinctius and the quaestor Gnaeus Tremellius Scrofa, routing them.[45] The rebel slaves were not, however, a professional army, and had reached their limit. They were unwilling to flee any further, and groups of men were breaking away from the main force to independently attack the oncoming legions of Crassus.[46] With discipline breaking down, Spartacus turned his forces around and brought his entire strength to bear on the oncoming legions. In this last stand, Spartacus' forces were finally routed completely, with the vast majority of them being killed on the battlefield.[47] The eventual fate of Spartacus himself is unknown, as his body was never found, but he is accounted by historians to have perished in battle along with his men.[48]

Aftermath:

The rebellion of the Third Servile War had been annihilated by Crassus.

Pompey's forces did not directly engage Spartacus' forces at any time, but his legions moving in from the north were able to capture some 5,000 rebels fleeing the battle, "all of whom he slew".[49] Because of this, Pompey sent a dispatch to the Senate, saying that while Crassus certainly had conquered the slaves in open battle, he himself had ended the war, thus claiming a large portion of the credit and earning the enmity of Crassus.[50]

While most of the rebel slaves had been killed on the battlefield, some 6,000 survivors had been captured by the legions of Crassus. All 6,000 were crucified along the road between Rome and Capua.[51]

Pompey and Crassus reaped political benefit for having put down the rebellion. Both Crassus and Pompey returned to Rome with their legions and refused to disband them, instead encamping them outside Rome.[52] Both men stood for the consulship of 70 BC, even though Pompey was ineligible to do so because of his age, nor had he ever served as praetor or quaestor.[53] Nonetheless, both men were elected consul for 70 BC,[54] partly due to the implied threat of their armed legions encamped outside the city.[55]

The effects of the Third Servile War on the Roman attitudes towards slavery, and the institution of slavery in Rome, are harder to determine. Certainly the revolt had shaken the Roman people, who "out of sheer fear seem to have begun to treat their slaves less harshly than before." [56] The wealthy owners of the latifundia began to reduce the number of agricultural slaves, opting to employ the large pool of formerly dispossessed freemen in sharecropping arrangements.[57] With the end of Julius Caesar's Gallic Wars in 52 BC, the major Roman wars of conquest would cease until the reign of emperor Trajan (reigned 98-117 AD), and with them the supply of plentiful and inexpensive slaves through military conquest, further promoting the use of freemen laborers in agricultural estates.

The legal status and rights of the Roman slave also began to change. During the time of emperor Claudius (reigned 41-54 AD), a constitution was enacted which made the killing of an old or infirm slave an act of murder, and decreed that if such slaves were abandoned by their owners, they became freedmen.[58] Under Antoninus Pius (reigned 138-161 AD), the legal rights of slaves were further extended, holding owners responsible for the killing of slaves, forcing the sale of slaves when it could be shown that they were being mistreated, and providing a (theoretically) neutral third party authority to which a slave could appeal.[59] While these legal changes occurred much too late to be direct results of the Third Servile War, they represent the legal codification of changes in the Roman attitude toward slaves which would have been evolving for decades.

It is difficult to determine the extent to which the events of this war contributed to the changes in the use and legal rights of Roman slaves. It seems that the end of the Servile Wars coincided with the end of the period of most prominent use of

slaves in Rome, and the beginning of a new perception of the slave within Roman society and law. The Third Servile War was the last of the Servile Wars, and Rome would not see another slave uprising of this type again.

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Notes:

* References to the Mommsen text is based on the Project Gutenberg e-text edition of the books. References are therefore given in terms of line numbers within the text file, and not page numbers as would be the case with physical books.

* References to "classical works" (Livy, Plutarch, Appian, etc.) are given in the traditional "Book:verse" format, rather than edition-specific page numbers.

1. ^ Smith, A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities, "Servus", p. 1038; details the legal and military means by which people were enslaved.

2. ^ Smith, Greek and Roman Antiquities, "Servus", p. 1040; Caesar, Commentarii de Bello Gallico, 2:33. Smith refers to the purchase of 10,000 slaves from Cilician pirates, while Caesar provides an example of the enslavement of 53,000 captive Aduatuci by a Roman army.

3. ^ Smith, Greek and Roman Antiquities, "Servus", p. 1039; Livy, The History of Rome, 6:12

4. ^ Smith, Greek and Roman Antiquities, "Servus", pp. 1022–39 summarizes the complex body of Roman law pertaining to the legal status of slaves.

5. ^ Smith, Greek and Roman Antiquities, "Gladiatores", p. 574.

6. ^ Mommsen, The History of Rome, 3233-3238.

7. ^ Plutarch, Crassus, 8:1-2; Appian, Civil Wars, 1:116; Livy, Periochae, 95:2; Florus, Epitome, 2.8. Plutarch claims 78 escaped, Livy claims 74, Appian "about seventy", and Florus says "thirty or rather more men". "Choppers and spits" is from Life of Crassus.

8. ^ Appian, Civil Wars, 1:116; Plutarch, Crassus, 8:2. Note: Spartacus' status as an auxilia is taken from the Loeb edition of Appian translated by Horace White, which states "...who had once served as a soldier with the Romans...". However, the translation by John Carter in the Penguin Classics version reads: "...who had once fought against the Romans and after being taken prisoner and sold...".

9. ^ Smith, Greek and Roman Antiquities, "Gladiatores", p. 576.

10. ^ Plutarch, Crassus, 9:1.

11. ^ Appian, Civil Wars, 1:116; Florus, Epitome, 2.8; - Florus and Appian make the claim that the slaves withdrew to Vesuvius, while Plutarch only mentions "a hill" in the later account of Glaber's siege of the slave's encampment.

12. ^ Note: while there seems to be consensus as to the general history of the praetorian expeditions, the names of the commanders and subordinates of these forces varies widely based on the historical account.

13. ^ Appian, Civil Wars, 1:116.

14. ^ Frontinus, Stratagems, Book I, 5:20-22 and Book VII:6.

15. ^ Plutarch, Crassus, 9:1-3; Frontinus, Stratagems, Book I, 5:20-22; Appian, Civil Wars, 1:116; Broughton, Magistrates of the Roman Republic, p. 109. Note: Plutarch and Frontinus write of expeditions under the command of "Clodius the praetor" and "Publius Varinus", while Appian writes of "Varinius Glaber" and "Publius Valerius".

16. ^ Plutarch, Crassus, 9:4-5; Livy, Periochae , 95; Appian, Civil Wars, 1:116; Sallust, Histories, 3:64-67.
17. ^ Plutarch, Crassus, 9:3; Appian, Civil War, 1:116. Livy identifies the second commander as "Publius Varenus" with the subordinate "Claudius Pulcher".
18. ^ Florus, Epitome, 2.8.
19. ^ Orosius, Histories 5.24.2; Bradley, Slavery and Rebellion, p.96.
20. ^ Plutarch, Crassus, 9:7; Appian, Civil Wars, 1:117.
21. ^ a b Plutarch, Crassus, 9:5-6.
22. ^ Appian, Civil Wars, 1:117; Florus, Epitome, 2.8.
23. ^ Appian, Civil Wars, 1:116-117; Plutarch, Crassus 9:6; Sallust, Histories, 3:64-67.
24. ^ Appian, Civil Wars, 1:117; Plutarch, Crassus 9:7; Livy, Periochae 96. Livy reports that troops under the (former) praetor Quintus Arrius killed Crixus and 20,000 of his followers.
25. ^ a b c Appian, Civil Wars, 1:117.
26. ^ Appian, Civil war, 1.117; Florus, Epitome, 2.8; Bradley, Slavery and Rebellion, p.121; Smith, Greek and Roman Antiquities, "Gladiatores", p.574. - Note that gladiator contests as part of some funeral rituals in the Roman Republic were a high honor, according to Smith. This accords with Florus' passage "He also celebrated the obsequies of his officers who had fallen in battle with funerals like those of Roman generals, and ordered his captives to fight at their pyres".
27. ^ Appian, Civil war, 1.117; Florus, Epitome, 2.8. Florus does not detail when and how Spartacus intended to march on Rome, but agrees this was Spartacus' ultimate goal.
28. ^ Appian, Civil Wars, 1:117.
29. ^ a b Plutarch, Crassus, 9:7.
30. ^ a b c d Plutarch, Crassus 10:1;.
31. ^ Bradley, Slavery and Rebellion, p. 96; Plutarch, Crassus 9:7; Livy, Periochae , 96:6. - Bradley identifies Gaius Cassius Longinus as the governor of Cisalpine Gaul at the time. Livy also identifies "Caius Cassius" and mentions his co-commander (or sub-commander?) "Cnaeus Manlius".
32. ^ Plutarch, Crassus, 9:5.
33. ^ Appian, Civil Wars, 1:118; Smith, A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities, "Exercitus", p.494; Appian details the number of legions, while Smith discusses the size of the legions throughout the Roman civilization, stating that late republican legions varied from 5,000-6,200 men per legion.
34. ^ a b Appian, Civil Wars, 1:118.
35. ^ a b c Plutarch, Crassus, 10:1-3.
36. ^ a b Appian, Civil Wars, 1:119.
37. ^ Florus, Epitome, 2.8; Cicero, Orations, "For Quintius, Sextus Roscius...", 5.2
38. ^ Plutarch, Crassus, 10:4-5.
39. ^ Contrast Plutarch, Crassus, 11:2 with Appian, Civil Wars, 1:119.
40. ^ Strachan-Davidson on Appian. 1.120; Appian, Civil Wars, 1:120; Plutarch, Crassus, 11:2.
41. ^ Appian, Civil Wars, 1:120; Plutarch, Crassus, 11:2.
42. ^ Appian, Civil Wars, 1:120;.

43. ^ Appian, *Civil Wars*, 1:120; Plutarch, *Crassus*, 10:6. No mention of the fate of the forces who did not break out of the siege is mentioned, although it is possible that these were the slaves under command of Gannicus and Castus mentioned later.

44. ^ Plutarch, *Crassus*, 11:3; Livy, *Periochae*, 97:1. Plutarch gives the figure 12,300 rebels killed. Livy claims 35,000.

45. ^ Bradley, *Slavery and Rebellion*. p. 97; Plutarch, *Crassus*, 11:4.

46. ^ Plutarch, *Crassus*, 11:5;

47. ^ Appian, *Civil Wars*, 1:120; Plutarch, *Crassus*, 11:6-7; Livy, *Periochae*, 97.1. Livy claims some 60,000 rebel slaves killed in this final action.

48. ^ Appian, *Civil Wars*, 1:120; Florus, *Epitome*, 2.8.

49. ^ Matyszak, *The Enemies of Rome* p.133; Plutarch, *Pompey*, 21:2, *Crassus* 11.7.

50. ^ Plutarch, *Crassus*, 11.7.

51. ^ Appian, *Civil Wars*, 1.120.

52. ^ Appian, *Civil Wars*, 1:116.

53. ^ Appian, *Civil Wars*, 1:121.

54. ^ Appian, *Civil Wars*, 1:121; Plutarch, *Crassus*, 12:2.

55. ^ Fagan, *The History of Ancient Rome*; Appian, *Civil Wars*, 1:121.

56. ^ Davis, *Readings in Ancient History*, p.90

57. ^ Smitha, Frank E. (2006). *From a Republic to Emperor Augustus: Spartacus and Declining Slavery*. Retrieved on 2006-09-23.

58. ^ Suetonius, *Life of Claudius*, 25.2

59. ^ Gaius, *Institvionvm Commentarivs*, I:52; Seneca, *De Beneficiis*, III:22. Gaius details the changes in the right of the owner to inflict whatever treatment they wished upon the slave, while Seneca details the slave's right to proper treatment and the creation of a "slave ombudsman".

Appian on Spartacus

Spartacus was the leader of an army of runaway slaves that infested Italy in 73-71 BCE but was ultimately defeated by the Roman general Crassus. There are two important sources about this revolt: the story is told in the *Life of Crassus* by Plutarch of Chaeronea, and in the *Civil wars* by Appian of Alexandria. Both authors lived in the second century CE, but used older accounts, such as the *Histories* of Sallust and Livy's *History of Rome* from the Foundation.

Here, we find the story by Appian (*Civil wars* 1.116-120). The translation was made by John Carter.

In Italy, at this same time, Spartacus, a Thracian who had once fought against the Romans and after being taken prisoner and sold had become a gladiator in a troop which was kept to provide entertainments at Capua, persuaded about seventy of his fellows to risk their lives for freedom rather than for exhibition as a spectacle. With them, he overpowered their guards and escaped. Then he

equipped himself and his companions with staves and daggers seized from travelers and took refuge on Mount Vesuvius, where he allowed many runaway domestic slaves and some free farm hands to join him.

With the gladiators Oenomaus and Crixus as his subordinates he plundered the nearby areas, and because he divided the spoils in equal shares his numbers quickly swelled. The first commander sent against him was Varinius Glaber [1], and the second Publius Valerius [2]; instead of legionary forces they had anyone they could quickly conscript on the way, because the Romans did not yet class the affair as a war, but as a kind of raid akin to piracy, and they were defeated when they attacked him. Spartacus himself actually captured Varinius' horse from under him; so nearly was a Roman general taken prisoner by a gladiator. After this, people flocked in still greater numbers to join Spartacus: his army now numbered 70,000 and he began to manufacture weapons and gather stores.

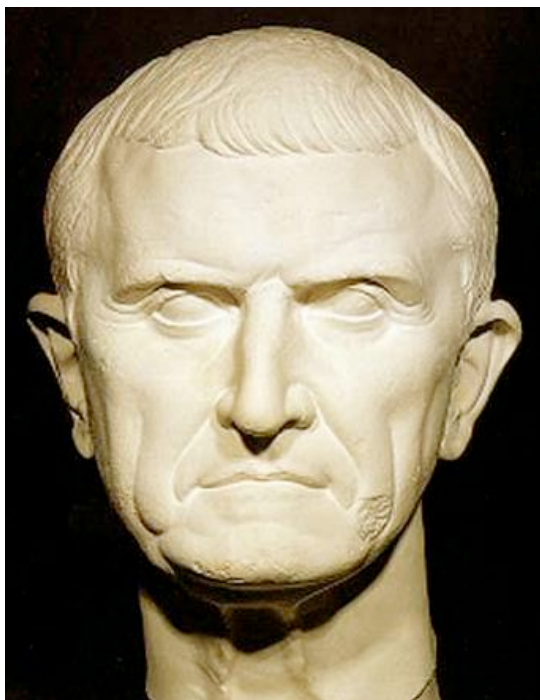
The government in Rome now dispatched the consuls with two legions. Crixus, at the head of 3,000 men, was defeated and killed by one of them at Mount Garganus, with the loss of two-thirds of his force. Spartacus, who was eager to go through the Apennines to the Alpine regions, and then to Celtic lands from the Alps, was intercepted and prevented from escaping by the other consul, while his colleague conducted the pursuit. But Spartacus turned on each of them and defeated them separately.

In the aftermath they retreated in confusion, while Spartacus, first sacrificing 300 Roman prisoners to Crixus, made for Rome with 120,000 foot soldiers after burning the useless equipment and putting all the prisoners to death and slaughtering the draught animals to free himself of all encumbrances; and although a large number of deserters approached him he refused to accept any of them.

When the consuls made another stand in Picenum, there was a further great struggle and on that occasion also a great Roman defeat. Spartacus, however, changed his mind about marching on Rome because he was not yet a match for the defenders and his troops did not all have soldier's arms and equipment (no town had joined their cause, and they were all slaves, deserters and human flotsam).

He seized the mountains around Thurii, together with the town itself, and then prevented traders bringing in gold and silver, barred his own men from acquiring any, and bought exclusively iron and bronze at good prices without harming those who brought them. As a result they had plenty of raw material and were well equipped and made frequent raiding expeditions. They again confronted the Romans in battle, defeated them, and on that occasion too returned to camp laden with booty.

The war had now lasted three years and was causing the Romans great concern, although at the beginning it had been



laughed-at and regarded as trivial because it was against gladiators. When the appointment of other generals was proposed there was universal reluctance to stand, and no one put himself forward until Licinius Crassus, distinguished both for his family and his wealth, undertook to assume the post, and led six legions against Spartacus. To these he added the two consular legions when he reached the front.

← *Crassus*

He immediately punished the latter for their repeated defeats, making them draw lots for every tenth man to be put to death [3]. According to some, this was not what happened; instead, when he himself had suffered defeat after engaging the enemy

with his whole force he had them all draw lots for the tenth place and put to death up to 4,000 men without being in the least deterred by their numbers. Whatever the truth, he established himself in the eyes of his men as more to be feared than a defeat at the hands of the enemy, and forthwith won a victory over 10,000 of Spartacus' men who were encamped separately somewhere. He killed two thirds of them and marched confidently against Spartacus himself.

After winning a brilliant victory, Crassus pursued Spartacus as he fled towards the sea with the intention of sailing across to Sicily, overtook him, and walled him in with ditches, earthworks, and palisades. Spartacus then tried to force his way out and reach the Samnite country, but Crassus killed almost 6,000 of his opponents at the beginning of the day and nearly as many more at evening, at the cost of three dead and seven wounded from the Roman army; so effective had their punishment been in altering their will to win.

Spartacus, who was waiting for some cavalry that were on their way to him, no longer went into battle with his full force, but conducted many separate harassing operations against his besiegers; he made sudden and repeated sorties against them, set fire to bundles of wood which he had thrown into the ditches, and made their work difficult. He crucified a Roman prisoner in no-man's land to demonstrate to his own troops the fate awaiting them if they were defeated.

When the government at Rome heard of the siege and contemplated the dishonor they would incur from a protracted war with gladiators, they appointed Pompey, who had recently arrived from Hispania, to an additional command in the field, in the belief that the task of dealing with Spartacus was now substantial and difficult. As a result of this appointment Crassus pressed on urgently with every

means of attacking Spartacus, to stop Pompey stealing his glory, while Spartacus, thinking to forestall Pompey, invited Crassus to negotiate.

When Crassus spurned the offer, Spartacus decided to make a desperate attempt, and with the cavalry which had by now arrived forced a way through the encircling fortifications with his whole army and retired towards Brundisium, with Crassus in pursuit. But when he discovered that Lucullus, who was on his way back from his victory over Mithridates [4], was there, he despaired of everything and, at the head of a still large force, joined battle with Crassus. The fight was long, and bitterly contested, since so many tens of thousands of men had no other hope.

Spartacus himself was wounded by a spear-thrust in the thigh, but went down on one knee, held his shield in front of him, and fought off his attackers until he and a great number of his followers were encircled and fell. The rest of his army was already in disorder and was cut down in huge numbers; consequently their losses were not easy to estimate (though the Romans lost about 1,000 men), and Spartacus' body was never found.

Since there was still a very large number of fugitives from the battle in the mountains, Crassus proceeded against them. They formed themselves into four groups and kept up their resistance until there were only 6,000 survivors, who were taken prisoner and crucified all the way along the road from Rome to Capua.

Notes

[1]

The first army was commanded by Gaius Claudius Glaber, and the second one by Publius Varinius. Appian combines these names.

[2]

This man never existed. The commander of the second army was called Publius Varinius.

[3]

This punishment was called decimation.

[4]

An error. Lucullus was the Roman general fighting in the east against Mithradates. In fact, another Lucullus fought against Spartacus.

Florus on Spartacus

Spartacus was the leader of an army of runaway slaves that infested Italy in 73-71 BCE but was ultimately defeated by the Roman general Crassus. There are two

important sources about this revolt: the story is told in the Life of Crassus by Plutarch of Chaeronea, and in the Civil wars by Appian of Alexandria.

A third account is that of Publius Annius Florus, the author of an epitome of the History of Rome since its foundation of the great Roman historian Livy. Here, we find his story (Epitome 2.8) in the translation by Edward Forster.

Spartacus, Crixus and Oenomaus, breaking out of the gladiatorial school of Lentulus with thirty or rather more men [1] of the same occupation, escaped from Capua. When, by summoning the slaves to their standard, they had quickly collected more than 10,000 adherents, these men, who had been originally content merely to have escaped, soon began to wish to take their revenge also.

The first position which attracted them (a suitable one for such ravaging monsters) was Mt. Vesuvius. Being besieged here by Clodius Glabrus [2], they slid by means of ropes made of vine-twigs through a passage in the hollow of the mountain down into its very depths, and issuing forth by a hidden exit, seized the camp of the general by a sudden attack which he never expected. They then attacked other camps, that of Varenus [3] and afterwards that of Thoranus [4]; and they ranged over the whole of Campania. Not content with the plundering of country houses and villages, they laid waste Nola, Nuceria, Thurii and Metapontum with terrible destruction.

Becoming a regular army by the daily arrival of fresh forces, they made themselves rude shields of wicker-work and the skins of animals, and swords and other weapons by melting down the iron in the slave-prisons. That nothing might be lacking which was proper to a regular army, cavalry was procured by breaking in herds of horses which they encountered, and his men brought to their leader the insignia and fasces captured from the praetors, nor were they refused by the man who, from being a Thracian mercenary, had become a soldier, and from a soldier a deserter, then a highwayman, and finally, thanks to his strength, a gladiator.

He also celebrated the obsequies of his officers who had fallen in battle with funerals like those of Roman generals, and ordered his captives to fight at their pyres, just as though he wished to wipe out all his past dishonor by having become, instead of a gladiator, a giver of gladiatorial shows.

Next, actually attacking generals of consular rank, he inflicted defeat on the army of Lentulus [5] in the Apennines and destroyed the camp of Gaius Cassius at Mutina [6]. Elated by these victories he entertained the project -in itself a sufficient disgrace to us- of attacking the city of Rome.

At last a combined effort was made, supported by all the resources of the empire, against this gladiator, and Licinius Crassus [7] vindicated the honor of Rome. Routed and put to flight by him, our enemies -I am ashamed to give them this title- took refuge in the furthest extremities of Italy. Here, being cut off in the angle of Bruttium and preparing to escape to Sicily, but being unable to obtain ships, they

tried to launch rafts of beams and casks bound together with withies on the swift waters of the straits.[8]

Failing in this attempt, they finally made a sally and met a death worthy of men, fighting to the death as became those who were commanded by a gladiator. Spartacus himself fell, as became a general, fighting most bravely in the front rank.

Notes

[1]

According to Appian and Plutarch about seventy.

[2]

The full name of this praetor was Gaius Claudius Glaber.

[3]

A praetor who was sent after the defeat Claudius Glaber.

[4]

Not known from other sources.

[5]

Gnaeus Cornelius Lentulus Clodianus, consul in 72.

[6]

Gaius Cassius Longinus, the governor of Gallia Cisalpina.

[7]

Marcus Licinius Crassus was praetor in 72.

[8]

Near Messina.

Plutarch on Spartacus

Spartacus was the leader of an army of runaway slaves that infested Italy in 73-71 BCE but was ultimately defeated by the Roman general Crassus. There are two important sources about this revolt: the story is told in the Life of Crassus by Plutarch of Chaeronea, and in the Civil wars by Appian of Alexandria. Both authors lived in the second century CE, but used older accounts, such as the Histories of Sallust and Livy's History of Rome from the Foundation.

Here, we find the story by Plutarch of Chaeronea (Life of Crassus 8-11). The translation was made by Rex Warner.

The rising of the gladiators and their devastation of Italy, which is generally known as the war of Spartacus, began as follows.

A man called Lentulus Batiatus had an establishment for gladiators at Capua. Most of them were Gauls and Thracians. They had done nothing wrong, but, simply because of the cruelty of their owner, were kept in close confinement until the time came for them to engage in combat. Two hundred of them planned to escape, but their plan was betrayed and only seventy-eight, who realized this,

managed to act in time and get away, armed with choppers and spits which they seized from some cookhouse. On the road they came across some wagons which were carrying arms for gladiators to another city, and they took these arms for their own use.

They then occupied a strong position [1] and elected three leaders. The first of these was Spartacus [2]. He was a Thracian from the nomadic tribes and not only had a great spirit and great physical strength, but was, much more than one would expect from his condition, most intelligent and cultured, being more like a Greek than a Thracian [3]. They say that when he was first taken to Rome to be sold, a snake was seen coiled round his head while he was asleep and his wife, who came from the same tribe and was a prophetess subject to possession by the frenzy of [the god of ecstasy] Dionysus, declared that this sign meant that he would have a great and terrible power which would end in misfortune. This woman shared in his escape and was then living with him.

First, then, the gladiators repulsed those who came out against them from Capua. In this engagement they got hold of proper arms and gladly took them in exchange for their own gladiatorial equipment which they threw away, as being barbarous and dishonorable weapons to use.

Then the praetor Clodius [4], with 3,000 soldiers, was sent out against them from Rome. He laid siege to them in a position which they took up on a hill. There was only one way up this hill, and that was a narrow and difficult one, and was closely guarded by Clodius; in every other direction there was nothing but sheer precipitous cliffs. The top of the hill, however, was covered with wild vines and from these they cut off all the branches that they needed, and then twisted them into strong ladders which were long enough to reach from the top, where they were fastened, right down the cliff face to the plain below. They all got down safely by means of these ladders except for one man who stayed at the top to deal with their arms, and he, once the rest had got down, began to drop the arms down to them, and, when he had finished his task, descended last and reached the plain in safety. The Romans knew nothing of all this, and so the gladiators were able to get round behind them and to throw them into confusion by the unexpectedness of the attack, first routing them and then capturing their camp.

And now they were joined by numbers of herdsmen and shepherds of those parts, all sturdy men and fast on their feet. Some of these they armed as regular infantrymen and made use of others as scouts and light troops.

The second expedition against them was led by the praetor Publius Varinus [5]. First they engaged and routed a force of 2,000 men under his deputy commander, Furius by name, then came the turn of Cossinius, who had been sent out with a large force to advise Varinus and to share with him the responsibility of the command. Spartacus watched his movements closely and very nearly captured him as he was bathing near Salinae. He only just managed to escape, and Spartacus immediately seized all his baggage and then pressed on hard after him and captured his camp. There was a

great slaughter and Cossinius was among those who fell. Next Spartacus defeated the praetor himself in a number of engagements and finally captured his lictors and the very horse that he rode.

By this time Spartacus had grown to be a great and formidable power, but he showed no signs of losing his head. He could not expect to prove superior to the whole power of Rome, and so he began to lead his army towards the Alps. His view was that they should cross the mountains and then disperse to their own homes, some to Thrace and some to Gaul. His men, however, would not listen to him. They were strong in numbers and full of confidence, and they went about Italy ravaging everything in their way.

There was now more to disturb the Senate than just the shame and the disgrace of the revolt. The situation had become dangerous enough to inspire real fear, and as a result both consuls [6] were sent out to deal with what was considered a major war and a most difficult one to fight. One of the consuls, Gellius, fell suddenly upon and entirely destroyed the German contingent of Spartacus' troops, who in their insolent self-confidence had marched off on their own and lost contact with the rest; but when Lentulus, the other consul, had surrounded the enemy with large forces, Spartacus turned to the attack, joined battle, defeated the generals of Lentulus and captured all their equipment.

He then pushed on towards the Alps and was confronted by Cassius, the governor of Cisalpine Gaul, with an army of 10,000 men. In the battle that followed Cassius was defeated and, after losing many of his men, only just managed to escape with his own life.

This news roused the Senate to anger. The consuls were told to return to civilian life, and Crassus [7] was appointed to the supreme command of the war. Because of his reputation or because of their friendship with him large numbers of the nobility volunteered to serve with him.

Spartacus was now bearing down on Picenum, and Crassus himself took up a position on the borders of the district with the intention of meeting the attack there. He ordered one of his subordinate commanders, Mummius, with two legions to march round by another route and instructed him to follow the enemy, but not to join battle with them or even to do any skirmishing. Mummius, however, as soon as he saw what appeared to him a good opportunity, offered battle and was defeated. Many of his men were killed and many saved their lives by throwing away their arms and running for it. Crassus gave Mummius himself a very rough reception after this.

He re-armed his soldiers and made them give guarantees that in future they would preserve the arms in their possession. Then he took 500 of those who had been the first to fly and had shown themselves the greatest cowards, and, dividing them into fifty squads of ten men each, put to death one man, chosen by lot, from each squad. This was a traditional method of punishing soldiers, now revived by Crassus after having been out of use for many years [8]. Those who

are punished in this way not only lose their lives but are also disgraced, since the whole army are there as spectators, and the actual circumstances of the execution are very savage and repulsive.

After employing this method of conversion on his men, Crassus led them against the enemy. But Spartacus slipped away from him and marched through Lucania to the sea. At the Straits [9] he fell in with some pirate ships from Cilicia and formed the plan of landing 2,000 men in Sicily and seizing the island; he would be able, he thought, to start another revolt of the slaves there, since the previous slave war had recently died down and only needed a little fuel to make it blaze out again [10]. However, the Cilicians, after agreeing to his proposals and receiving gifts from him, failed to keep their promises and sailed off.

So Spartacus marched back again from the sea and established his army in the peninsula of Rhegium. At this point Crassus came up. His observation of the place made him see what should be done, and he began to build fortifications right across the isthmus. In this way he was able at the same time to keep his own soldiers busy and to deprive the enemy of supplies. The task which he had set himself was neither easy nor inconsiderable, but he finished it and, contrary to all expectation, had it done in a very short time. A ditch, nearly sixty kilometers long and five meters wide, was carried across the neck of land from sea to sea; and above the ditch he constructed a wall which was astonishingly high and strong.

At first Spartacus despised these fortifications and did not take them seriously; but soon he found himself short of plunder and, when he wanted to break out from the peninsula, he realized that he was walled in and could get no more supplies where he was. So he waited for a night when it was snowing and a wintry storm had got up, and then, after filling up a small section of the ditch with earth and timber and branches of trees, managed to get a third of his army across.

Crassus was now alarmed, thinking that Spartacus might conceive the idea of marching directly on Rome. But he was relieved from his anxiety when he saw that, as the result of some disagreement, many of Spartacus' men had left him and were encamped as an independent force by themselves near a lake in Lucania [...]. Crassus fell upon this division of the enemy and dislodged them from their positions by the lake, but at this point Spartacus suddenly appeared and stopped their flight, so that he was prevented from following them up and slaughtering them.

Crassus now regretted that he had previously written to the Senate to ask them to send for Lucullus from Thrace and Pompey from Hispania [11]. He made all the haste he could to finish the war before these generals arrived, knowing that the credit for the success would be likely to go not to himself but to the commander who appeared on the scene with reinforcements.

In the first place, then, he decided to attack the enemy force under Gaius Canicius and Castus, who had separated themselves from the rest and were operating on their own. With this intention he sent out 6,000 men to occupy some high ground before the enemy could do so and he told them to try to do this without being observed. They, however, though they attempted to elude observation by covering up their helmets, were seen by two women who were sacrificing for the enemy, and they would have been in great danger if Crassus had not quickly brought up the rest of his forces and joined battle. This was the most stubbornly contested battle of all. In it Crassus' troops killed 12,300 men, but he only found two of them who were wounded in the back. All the rest died standing in the ranks and fighting back against the Romans.

After this force had been defeated, Spartacus retired to the mountains of Petelia. One of Crassus' officers called Quintus, and the quaestor Scrophas [12] followed closely in his tracks. But when Spartacus turned on his pursuers, the Romans were entirely routed and they only just managed to drag the quaestor, who had been wounded, into safety. This success turned out to be the undoing of Spartacus, since it filled his slaves with over-confidence. They refused any longer to avoid battle and would not even obey their officers. Instead they surrounded them with arms in their hands as soon as they began to march and forced them to lead them back through Lucania against the Romans.

This was precisely what Crassus most wanted them to do. It had already been reported that Pompey was on his way, and in fact a number of people were already loudly proclaiming that the victory in this war belonged to him; it only remained for him to come and fight a battle, they said, and the war would be over. Crassus, therefore, was very eager to fight the decisive engagement himself and he camped close by the enemy. Here, as his men were digging a trench, the slaves came out, jumped into the trench and began to fight with those who were digging. More men from both sides kept on coming up, and Spartacus, realizing that he had no alternative, drew up his whole army in order of battle.

First, when his horse was brought to him, he drew his sword and killed it, saying that the enemy had plenty of good horses which would be his if he won, and, if he lost, he would not need a horse at all. Then he made straight for Crassus himself, charging forward through the press of weapons and wounded men, and, though he did not reach Crassus, he cut down two centurions who fell on him together. Finally, when his own men had taken to flight, he himself, surrounded by enemies, still stood his ground and died fighting to the last.

Crassus had had good fortune, had shown excellent generalship, and had risked his own life in the fighting; nevertheless the success of Crassus served to increase the fame of Pompey. The fugitives from the battle fell in with Pompey's troops and were destroyed, so that Pompey, in his dispatch to the senate, was able to say that, while Crassus certainly had conquered the slaves in open battle, he himself had dug the war up by the roots. Pompey then celebrated a magnificent triumph for his victories against Sertorius and for the war in Hispania, [11] while Crassus, much as he may have wanted to do so, did not

venture to ask for a proper triumph; indeed it was thought that he acted rather meanly and discredibly when he accepted, for a war fought against slaves, the minor honor of a procession on foot, called the 'ovation'.

Notes

[1]

According to Appian of Alexandria, the Vesuvius.

[2]

The others were Oenomaus and Crixus.

[3]

This last remark is a well-known cliché from ancient literature. Any non-Greek/Roman who had done something special, was said to be more intelligent than other barbarians. The same is said about Arminius (who destroyed three Roman legions in the battle in the Teutoburg Forest [September 9 CE]) and Julius Civilis (the leader of the Batavian revolt).

[4]

His full name was Gaius Claudius Glaber.

[5]

We are still in the year 73.

[6]

Lucius Gellius Publicola and Gnaeus Cornelius Lentulus Clodianus, consuls in 72.

[7]

Marcus Licinius Crassus was praetor in 72.

[8]

This type of punishment was known as decimation.

[9]

Near Messina.

[10]

In the second and first centuries, there were several slave wars on Sicily. Time and again, the slaves on Sicily had revolted, once crowning a king of their own.

[11]

Pompey had been fighting against Sertorius in Hispania and had recently finished the war. He was now on his way back home.

[12]

Their full names are Quintus Marcius Rufus and Gnaeus Tremellius Scrofa.

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Julius Caesar (1953 film)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



← *Original movie poster for Julius Caesar*

Directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz

Cinematography by Joseph Ruttenberg

Editing by John Dunning

Distributed by MGM

Release date: June 4, 1953 (USA)

Running time: 121 min.

Country: USA

Language: English

Julius Caesar is a 1953 film adaptation of the Shakespeare play Julius Caesar. It was made by MGM, directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz, who also wrote the uncredited screenplay, and produced by John Houseman. The original music score was by Miklós Rózsa.

It stars Marlon Brando as Marc Antony, James Mason as Brutus, John Gielgud as Cassius, Louis Calhern as Julius Caesar, Edmond

O'Brien as Casca, Greer Garson as Calpurnia, and Deborah Kerr as Portia.

Awards and nominations:

The film won the Academy Award for Best Art Direction, and was nominated for Best Actor in a Leading Role (Marlon Brando), Best Cinematography, Black-and-White, Best Music, Scoring of a Dramatic or Comedy Picture and Best Picture.

It also won two BAFTA awards for Best British Actor (John Gielgud) and Best Foreign Actor (Marlon Brando). It was also nominated in the Best Film category.

Trivia:

- Julius Caesar represents the third time in three consecutive years that Brando was nominated for the Best Actor Award. He was nominated in 1951 for *A Streetcar Named Desire* and in 1952 for *Viva Zapata!*
- Brando won the BAFTA Best Actor award in three consecutive years for *Viva Zapata!* (1952), *Julius Caesar* (1953), and *On the Waterfront* (1954).
- John Gielgud, who plays Cassius in this version, played the title role in the 1970 film with Charlton Heston, Jason Robards and Richard Johnson (as Cassius)
- John Houseman, who had produced the famous 1937 Broadway version of the play starring Orson Welles and the Mercury Theatre, also produced the MGM film. By this time, however, Welles and Houseman had had a falling out, and Welles had nothing to do with the 1953 film.
- John Hoyt, who plays Decius Brutus, also played him in the 1937 stage version.
- Marlon Brando listened to old records of John Barrymore reciting Shakespeare in preparation for his role as Marc Antony.

N.Y. TIMES REVIEW

Julius Caesar' and Two Other Arrivals; Shakespeare Tragedy, Filmed by M-G-M With a Notable Cast, Unfolds at Booth

By BOSLEY CROWTHER (Published June 5, 1953)

William Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar," most familiar, perhaps, of all the plays that poured in great floods of noble rhetoric from the pen of the immortal Bard, has been put on the screen by Joseph L. Mankiewicz and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in a production that smites the eye with violence and rings with the clang of metal words. Considering the vast amount of talking and the patchiness of action in the play, it is a production that pulls the full potential of point and passion from this classic of the stage.

Actually, Shakespeare wrote this drama to be observed within the confines of a fairly modest theatre and to be absorbed in large measure through the ear which, of course, was the physical necessity with all of his eloquent plays. And thus, any faithful translation from the written text to the screen must perforce be confined and conditioned by the exigencies of the play. It is much to Mr. Mankiewicz's

credit that he had captured his characters at close range and staged the whole drama, with few elisions, from an intimate point of view.

Blessed with a cast of actors that conspicuously includes John Gielgud, as the lean and hungry Cassius; Marlon Brando, as Mark Antony; James Mason, as the conscientious Brutus, and Louis Calhern, as Caesar, who is slain. Mr. Mankiewicz has got most of his impact out of the words that surge hotly from their throats and from the subtleties of their expressions and the violence of their attitudes.

The occurrence of physical action, though almost entirely confined to the actual assassination of Caesar and the briefly played battle of Philippi, seems strangely to run through the picture with the characters' every word and move. The vibrant illusion of mighty doings flows strongly from the screen of the Booth [theater].

Through no fault, of course, of the director or of John Houseman, who produced, the script for this admirable effort does contain some embarrassing flaws. Breathes there a high school junior who doesn't know that the high point of the play is Mark Antony's stirring oration over the body of his friend? With Mr. Brando delivering this oration in a brilliant, electrifying splurge of bitter and passionate invective about two-thirds of the way through the film, the remaining decline and fall of Brutus and Cassius seem spiritless and drab. If ever there was an anti-climax in a film (or a play), it is here.

Also, the cavalier fashion in which Shakespeare introduced and tossed aside the wives of poor Caesar and Brutus brings a minor irritation to the film. Somehow, one feels that Greer Garson, as Calpurnia, great Caesar's wife, and Deborah Kerr, as the loyal spouse of Brutus, go too swiftly and sadly down the drain.

However, it is true that "Julius Caesar" is essentially a drama of men caught in the complex dilemma of political power and tyranny. And it is in the illumination of the thoughts and the characters of men entangled and absorbed in this dilemma that this eloquent picture excels.

It is no slight at all to anybody to say that Britain's Mr. Gielgud gives by far the most rounded and subtle performance in the film. His Cassius is desperate, sarcastic, perceptive and intense, the quintessence of the feverish rebelliousness that Shakespeare put into words. But then, of course, this Cassius is the most clever realist in the play. If Brutus had followed his urgings, the show would have been over in Act 3.

Next to Mr. Gielgud's Cassius, the delight and surprise of the film is Mr. Brando's Mark Antony, which is something memorable to see. Athletic and bullet-headed, he looks the realest Roman of them all and possesses the fire of hot convictions and the firm elasticity of steel. Happily, Mr. Brando's diction, which has been guttural and slurred in previous films, is clear and precise in this instance. In him a major talent has emerged.

As for the Brutus of Mr. Mason, it has depth and authority, but lacks that one final bond of candor that would attract the full sympathy he deserves. Mr. Calhern's Caesar is puffed and pompous, the Casca of Edmund O'Brien is glib and tough, and a dozen or so other actors are easy and sure in lesser roles.

The wide screen upon which the picture is projected twice a day at the Booth enhances somewhat its scenic grandeur, but exaggerates the size of its close views. Pan shots are blurred in many instances, and some slight distortion does occur for those who happen to be seated forward of the middle of the house. The stereophonic sound is an improvement, especially for a short symphonic film wherein the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer symphonic orchestra plays Tchaikowsky's "Capriccio Italien." This comes as a suitable introduction to a stirring and memorable film.

JULIUS CAESAR, the play by William Shakespeare; directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz; produced by John Houseman for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. At the Booth Theatre.

CAST:

Julius Caesar - Louis Calhern, Mark Antony - Marion Brando, Brutus - James Mason, Cassius - John Gielgud, Casca - Edmond O'Brien, Calpurnia - Greer Garson, Portia - Deborah Kerr, Marulius - George Macready, Flavius - Michael Pate, A soothsayer - Richard Hale, Cicero - Alan Napier, Decius Brutus - John Hoyt, Metellus Cimber - Tom Powers, Cinna - William Cottrell, Trebonius - Jack Raine, Ligarius - Ian Wolfe, Artimidorus - Morgan Farley, Servant to Anthony - Bill Phipps



From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The Tragedy of Julius Caesar is a play by William Shakespeare probably written in 1599. It portrays the conspiracy against the Roman dictator, Julius Caesar, his assassination and its aftermath. It is the first of his Roman plays and is based on true events from Roman history.

Caesar is not the central character in the action of the play, appearing in only three scenes and dying at the beginning of the third Act. The central protagonist of the play is Brutus and the central psychological drama is his struggle between the conflicting demands of honour, patriotism, and friendship.

Most Shakespeare critics and historians agree that the play reflected the general anxiety of England due to worries over succession of leadership. At the time of its creation and first performance, Queen Elizabeth, a strong ruler, was elderly and had refused to name a successor, leading to worries that a civil war similar to that of Rome's might break out after her death.

Date of the play

Allusions in three contemporaneous works support a date of 1599 for Julius Caesar.[1]

1) Ben Jonson's play *Every Man Out of His Humour* (acted 1599, published 1600) paraphrases Shakespeare's line "O judgment, thou art fled to brutish beasts" (*Julius Caesar*, III,ii,104) as "reason long since is fled to animals" in III,i. Jonson's play also includes "Et tu, Brute" in V,iv.

2) The anonymous play *The Wisdom of Dr. Dodipoll* (published in 1600) gives its own paraphrase, "Then reason's fled to animals, I see."

3) A passage in John Weever's *Mirror of Martyrs*, published in 1601, makes clear reference to the speeches of Brutus and Mark Antony in *Julius Caesar*. John Weever stated that he'd written his poem two years earlier, which (presumably) fixes the date as 1599.

Performance history

Thomas Patter, a Swiss traveller, saw a tragedy about Julius Caesar at a Bankside theatre on September 21, 1599. This was most likely Shakespeare's play. There is no immediately obvious alternative candidate. (While the story of Julius Caesar was dramatized repeatedly in the Elizabethan/Jacobean period, none of the other plays known is as good a match with Patter's description as Shakespeare's play.)[2]

After the theatres re-opened at the start of the Restoration era, the play was revived by Thomas Killigrew's King's Company in 1672. Charles Hart initially played Brutus, as did Thomas Betterton in later productions. *Julius Caesar* was one of the very few Shakespearean plays that was not adapted during the Restoration period or the eighteenth century.[3]

Text of the play: *Julius Caesar* was first published in the First Folio in 1623, that text being the sole authority for the play. The Folio text is notable for its quality and consistency; scholars judge it to have been set into type from a theatrical promptbook. The play's source was Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's *Life of Brutus* and *Life of Caesar*.

The plot

Marcus Brutus is Caesar's close friend; his ancestors were famed for driving the tyrannical King Tarquin from Rome (described in Shakespeare's earlier *The Rape of Lucrece*). Brutus allows himself to be cajoled into joining a group of conspiring senators because of a growing suspicion—implanted by Gaius Cassius—that Caesar intends to turn republican Rome into a monarchy under his own rule. Traditional readings of the play maintain that Cassius and the other conspirators are motivated largely by envy and ambition, whereas Brutus is motivated by the demands of honour and patriotism; other commentators, such as Isaac Asimov, suggest that the text shows Brutus is no less moved by envy and flattery.[4] One of the central strengths of the play is that it resists categorising its characters as either simple heroes or villains.

The early scenes deal mainly with Brutus's arguments with Cassius and his struggle with his own conscience. The growing tide of public support soon turns Brutus against Caesar (This public support was actually faked. Cassius wrote letters in different handwritings over the next month and hid them in different places for Brutus to find in order to get Brutus to join the conspiracy). A soothsayer warns Caesar to "beware the Ides of March," which he ignores, culminating in his assassination at the Capitol by the conspirators that day.

Caesar's assassination is perhaps the most famous part of the play. After ignoring the soothsayer as well as his wife's own premonitions, Caesar is caught at the senate at the mercy of the conspirators. After a few words exchanged, Casca stabs Caesar in the back of his neck, and the others follow in stabbing him; Brutus is last. At this point, Caesar utters the famous line "Et tu, Brute?" ("And you, Brutus?", i.e., "You too, Brutus?"). Shakespeare has him add, "Then fall, Caesar," suggesting that Caesar did not want to survive such treachery. The conspirators make clear that they did this act for Rome, not for their own purposes.

After Caesar's death, however, Mark Antony, with a subtle and eloquent speech over Caesar's corpse -- the much-quoted Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears... -- deftly turns public opinion against the assassins by manipulating the emotions of the common people, in contrast to the rational tone of Brutus's speech. Antony rouses the mob to drive the conspirators from Rome.

The beginning of Act Four is marked by the quarrel scene, where Brutus attacks Cassius for soiling the noble act of regicide by accepting bribes ("Did not great Julius bleed for justice' sake? / What villain touch'd his body, that did stab, / And not for justice?", IV.iii,19-21). The two are reconciled, but as they prepare for war with Mark Antony and Caesar's great-nephew, Octavian (Shakespeare's spelling: Octavius), Caesar's ghost appears to Brutus with a warning of defeat ("thou shalt see me at Philippi", IV.iii,283). Events go badly for the conspirators during the battle; both Brutus and Cassius choose to commit suicide rather than to be captured. The play ends with a tribute to Brutus, who has remained "the noblest Roman of them all" (V.v,68) and hints at the friction between Mark Antony and Octavian which will characterize another of Shakespeare's Roman plays, Antony and Cleopatra.

Deviations From Plutarch

Shakespeare makes Caesar's triumph take place on the day of Iupercalia instead of six months earlier

For greater dramatic effect he has made the Capitol the venue of Caesar's death and not the Curia Pompeiana (A meeting hall at the rear of the courtyard behind Pompey's theater in the Campus Martius).

Caesar's murder, the funeral, Antony's oration, the reading of the will, and Octavius' arrival all take place on the same day in the play. However, 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 only in May.

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

He has combined the two Battles of Philippi although there was a twenty day interval between them.

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.[5]. However, Suetonius reports his last words, spoken in Greek " (transliterated as) "Kai su, teknon?" = "You too, child?" in English.[6]

Shakespeare deviated from these historical facts in order to curtail time and compress the facts so that the play could be staged without any kind of difficulty. The tragic force is condensed into a few scenes for the heightened effect.

Notable stage productions

- **1926:** By far the most elaborate performance of the play was staged as a benefit for the Actors' Fund of America at the Hollywood Bowl. Caesar arrived for the Lupercal in a chariot drawn by four white horses. The stage was the size of a city block and dominated by a central tower eighty feet in height. The event was mainly aimed at creating work for unemployed actors. Three hundred gladiators appeared in an arena scene not featured in Shakespeare's play; a similar number of girls danced as Caesar's captives; a total of three thousand soldiers took part in the battle sequences.
- 1937:** Orson Welles' famous production at the Mercury Theatre drew fervored comment as the director dressed his protagonists in uniforms reminiscent of those common at the time in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, as well as drawing a specific analogy between Caesar and Mussolini. Opinions vary on the artistic value of the resulting production: some see Welles' mercilessly pared-down script (the running time was around 90 minutes without an interval, several characters were eliminated, dialogue was moved around and borrowed from other plays, and the final two acts were reduced to a single scene) as a radical and innovative way of cutting away the unnecessary elements of Shakespeare's tale; others thought Welles' version was a mangled and lobotomised version of Shakespeare's tragedy which lacked the psychological depth of the original. Most agreed that the production owed more to Welles than it did to Shakespeare. However,

Welles's innovations have been echoed in many subsequent modern productions, which have seen parallels between Caesar's fall and the downfalls of various governments in the twentieth century. The production was most noted for its portrayal of the slaughter of Cinna (Norman Lloyd).

Parodies

The Canadian comedy duo Wayne and Shuster parodied Julius Caesar in their 1958 sketch *Rinse the Blood off My Toga*. Flavius Maximus, Private Roman I, is hired by Brutus to investigate the death of Caesar. The police procedural combines Shakespeare, *Dragnet*, and vaudeville jokes and was first broadcast on the Ed Sullivan Show. [1]

Notes

1. F. E. Halliday, *Shakespeare Companion*, pp. 159, 260, 524, 533.
2. Richard Edes's Latin play *Caesar Interfectus* (1582?) would not qualify. The *Admiral's Men* had an anonymous *Caesar* and *Pompey* in their repertory in 1594–5, and another play, *Caesar's Fall*, or *the Two Shapes*, written by Thomas Dekker, Michael Drayton, Thomas Middleton, Anthony Munday, and John Webster, in 1601–2, too late for Patter's reference. Neither play has survived. The anonymous *Caesar's Revenge* dates to 1606, while George Chapman's *Caesar and Pompey* dates from ca. 1613. E. K. Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, Vol. 2, p. 179; Vol. 3, pp. 259, 309; Vol. 4, p. 4.
3. Halliday, p. 261.
4. Asimov's *Guide to Shakespeare*, Vols. I and II (1970), ISBN 0-517-26825-6, 1970
5. Plutarch, *Caesar* 66.9
6. Suetonius, *Julius* 82.2

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How did Shakespeare know about Julius Caesar?

The Parallel Lives of Plutarch (Greek, AD 46 – 119) compares the lives of important Greeks with those of Important Romans. Plutarch's book was translated by *Sir Thomas North* in 1579, and this translation was Shakespeare's source for his Roman plays: Shakespeare used full passages making only minor changes that would suit his story line and give a more dramatic effect.

In *Julius Caesar*, Shakespeare took the following plots or events almost without change from North's translation of Plutarch:

Act I Scene ii

The Celebration of the feast of Lupercal.

Offering of crown to Julius Caesar by Mark Anthony, which Caesar refused to accept.

Suspicion in the mind of Caesar about Cassius.

Act II Scene iii

Artemidorus giving Caesar a letter of warning.

Act III Scene i

Assassination of Julius Caesar.

Oration of Brutus in the market place.

Cassius opposed to the idea of Brutus of giving Cassius a chance to speak at the Caesar's funeral.

Act III Scene ii

Antony's funeral speech and, afterward, the riot by the Roman people.

The escape of the conspirators.

Act III Scene iii

Mistaken murder of the poet Cinna by the angry Roman mob.

Act IV Scene iii

Cassius's meeting with Brutus and his accusation.

The Caesar's ghost appeared to Brutus.

Act V Scene i

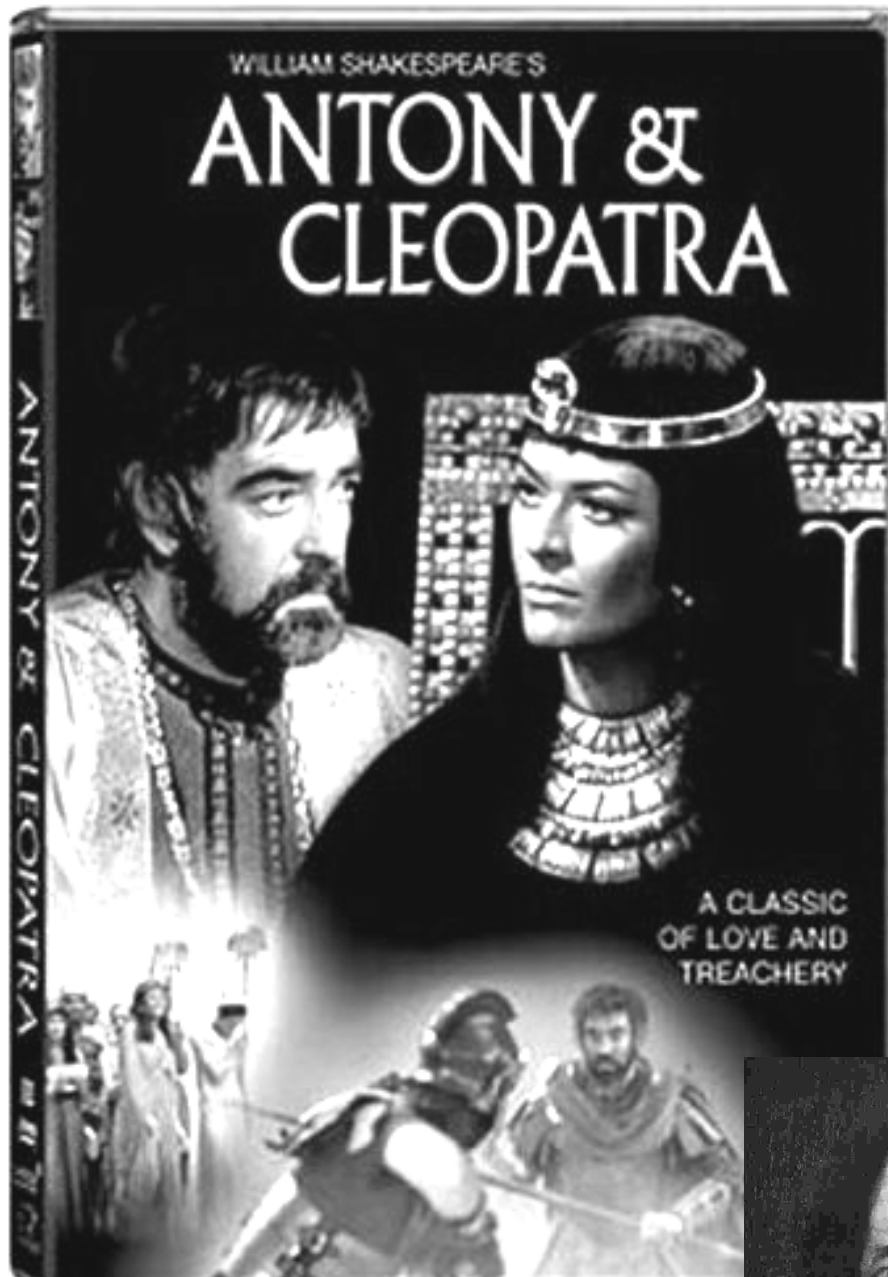
Brutus decides that he will commit suicide if he loses the battle.

Act V Scene v

Brutus's suicide by running onto the sword held by Strato.

Praise of Brutus by Antony.

0501Antony and Cleopatra.doc



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

Scholars believe that Shakespeare wrote *Antony and Cleopatra* in 1606, immediately after *Macbeth*, and it is one of the last great tragedies that Shakespeare produced. The most geographically sweeping of Shakespeare's plays, *Antony and Cleopatra's* setting is the entire Roman Empire, its backdrop the well-documented history of Octavius Caesar, Marc Antony, and



Cleopatra. Shakespeare's primary source for *Antony and Cleopatra* was the *Life of Marcus Antonius* contained in Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*, which was translated into English by Sir Thomas North in 1579. North's language was so rich that Shakespeare incorporated large, relatively unchanged excerpts of it into his text. The plot of the play also remains close to North's history, although characters like Enobarbus and Cleopatra's attendants are largely Shakespearean creations.

The action of the story takes place roughly two years after the events of Shakespeare's earlier play about the Roman Empire, *Julius Caesar*. At the beginning of that tragedy, Caesar has triumphed over his rival Pompey the Great, the father of young Pompey in *Antony and Cleopatra*, and aspires to kingship. Caesar is then assassinated by Cassius and Brutus, who hope to preserve the Roman Republic. Instead, Cassius and Brutus are defeated by Mark Antony and Octavius Caesar, Julius's nephew, who then join Marcus Aemilius Lepidus to create a three-man government, or triumvirate, over the empire.

Historically, the action of *Antony and Cleopatra* takes place over a ten-year span, whereas in the play the story is compressed to fit the needs of the stage. Antony is clearly much older than he was in *Julius Caesar*, and his political instincts seem to be waning. Octavius Caesar was only a minor character in the earlier play, but here he comes into his own as the man who will rise to become the first Roman emperor. Most of the political battles and machinations depicted are historically accurate, as is the romance of the title characters.

Analysis of Major Characters

Mark Antony

Throughout the play, Antony grapples with the conflict between his love for Cleopatra and his duties to the Roman Empire. In Act I, scene i, he engages Cleopatra in a conversation about the nature and depth of their love, dismissing the duties he has neglected for her sake: "Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch / Of the ranged empire fall" (I.i.35–36). In the very next scene, however, Antony worries that he is about to "lose [him]self in dotage" (I.ii.106) and fears that the death of his wife is only one of the ills that his "idleness doth hatch" (I.ii.119). Thus, Antony finds himself torn between the Rome of his duty and the Alexandria of his pleasure. The geographical poles that draw him in opposite directions represent deep-seated conflicts between his reason and emotion, his sense of duty and his desire, his obligations to the state and his private needs.

Antony's understanding of himself, however, cannot bear the stress of such tension. In his mind, he is first and foremost a Roman hero of the first caliber. He won his position as one of the three leaders of the world by vanquishing the treacherous Brutus and Cassius, who conspired to assassinate his predecessor, Julius Caesar. He often recalls the golden days of his own heroism, but now that

he is entangled in an affair with the Egyptian queen, his memories do little more than demonstrate how far he has strayed from his ideal self. As he points out to Octavia in Act III, scene iv, his current actions imperil his honor, and without his honor—the defining characteristic of the Roman hero—he can no longer be Antony: “If I lose my honor, / I lose myself. Better I were not yours / Than yours so branchless” (III.iv.22–24). Later, having suffered defeat at the hands of both Caesar and Cleopatra, Antony returns to the imagery of the stripped tree as he laments, “[T]his pine is barked / That overtopped them all” (IV.xiii.23–24). Rather than amend his identity to accommodate these defeats, Antony chooses to take his own life, an act that restores him to his brave and indomitable former self. In suicide, Antony manages to convince himself and the world (as represented by Cleopatra and Caesar) that he is “a Roman by a Roman / Valiantly vanquished” (IV.xvi.59–60).

Cleopatra

The assortment of perspectives from which we see Cleopatra illustrates the varying understandings of her as a decadent foreign woman and a noble ruler. As Philo and Demetrius take the stage in Act I, scene i, their complaints about Antony’s neglected duties frame the audience’s understanding of Cleopatra, the queen for whom Antony risks his reputation. Within the first ten lines of the play, the men declare Cleopatra a lustful “gipsy,” a description that is repeated throughout the play as though by a chorus (I.i.10). Cleopatra is labeled a “wrangling queen” (I.i.50), a “slave” (I.iv.19), an “Egyptian dish” (II.vi.123), and a “whore” (III.vi.67); she is called “Salt Cleopatra” (II.i.21) and an enchantress who has made Antony “the noble ruin of her magic” (III.x.18).

But to view Cleopatra as such is to reduce her character to the rather narrow perspective of the Romans, who, standing to lose their honor or kingdoms through her agency, are most threatened by her. Certainly this threat has much to do with Cleopatra’s beauty and open sexuality, which, as Enobarbus points out in his famous description of her in Act II, scene ii, is awe-inspiring. But it is also a performance. Indeed, when Cleopatra takes the stage, she does so as an actress, elevating her passion, grief, and outrage to the most dramatic and captivating level. As Enobarbus says, the queen did not walk through the street, but rather

*Hop[ped] forty paces . . .
And having lost her breath, she spoke and panted,
That she did make defect perfection,
And breathless, pour breath forth.
(II.ii.235–238)*

Whether whispering sweet words of love to Antony or railing at a supposedly disloyal servant, Cleopatra leaves her onlookers breathless. As Antony notes, she is a woman “[w]hom everything becomes—to chide, to laugh / To weep” (I.i.51–52). It is this ability to be the perfect embodiment of all things—beauty and ugliness, virtue and vice—that Cleopatra stands to lose after her defeat by Caesar. By parading her through the streets of Rome as his trophy, he intends to reduce her character to a single, base element—to immortalize her as a whore. If

Antony cannot allow his conception of self to expand to incorporate his defeats, then Cleopatra cannot allow hers to be stripped to the image of a boy actor “squeaking Cleopatra . . . / l’t’h’ posture of a whore” (V.ii.216–217). Cleopatra often behaves childishly and with relentless self-absorption; nevertheless, her charisma, strength, and indomitable will make her one of Shakespeare’s strongest, most awe-inspiring female characters.

Octavius Caesar

Octavius Caesar is both a menacing adversary for Antony and a rigid representation of Roman law and order. He is not a two-dimensional villain, though, since his frustrations with the ever-neglectful Antony seem justified. When he complains to Lepidus that he resents having to “bear / So great weight in [Antony’s] lightness,” we certainly understand his concern (I.iv.24–25). He does not emerge as a particularly likable character—his treatment of Lepidus, for instance, betrays the cruel underside of Caesar’s aggressive ambitions—but he is a complicated one. He is, in other words, convincingly human. There is, perhaps, no better example of Caesar’s humanity than his conflicted feelings about Antony. For a good deal of the play, Caesar seems bent, rather ruthlessly, on destroying Antony. When he achieves this desired end, however, he does not relish the moment as we might expect. Instead, he mourns the loss of a great soldier and musters enough compassion to be not only fair-minded but also fair-hearted, commanding that the lovers be buried beside one another.

From SparkNotes

Themes, Motifs & Symbols

Themes

Themes are the fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a literary work.

The Struggle Between Reason and Emotion:

In his opening lines to Demetrius, Philo complains that Antony has abandoned the military endeavors on which his reputation is based for Cleopatra’s sake. His criticism of Antony’s “dotage,” or stupidity, introduces a tension between reason and emotion that runs throughout the play (I.i.1). Antony and Cleopatra’s first exchange heightens this tension, as they argue whether their love can be put into words and understood or whether it exceeds such faculties and boundaries of reason. If, according to Roman consensus, Antony is the military hero and disciplined statesman that Caesar and others believe him to be, then he seems to have happily abandoned his reason in order to pursue his passion. He declares: “Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch / Of the ranged empire fall” (I.i.35–36). The play, however, is more concerned with the battle between reason and emotion than the triumph of one over the other, and this battle is waged most forcefully in the character of Antony. More than any other character in the play, Antony vacillates between Western and Eastern sensibilities, feeling pulled by

both his duty to the empire and his desire for pleasure, his want of military glory and his passion for Cleopatra. Soon after his nonchalant dismissal of Caesar's messenger, the empire, and his duty to it, he chastises himself for his neglect and commits to return to Rome, lest he "lose [him]self in dotage" (I.ii.106).

As the play progresses, Antony continues to inhabit conflicting identities that play out the struggle between reason and emotion. At one moment, he is the vengeful war hero whom Caesar praises and fears. Soon thereafter, he sacrifices his military position by unwisely allowing Cleopatra to determine his course of action. As his Roman allies—even the ever-faithful Enobarbus—abandon him, Antony feels that he has, indeed, lost himself in dotage, and he determines to rescue his noble identity by taking his own life. At first, this course of action may appear to be a triumph of reason over passion, of Western sensibilities over Eastern ones, but the play is not that simple. Although Antony dies believing himself a man of honor, discipline, and reason, our understanding of him is not nearly as straight-forward. In order to come to terms with Antony's character, we must analyze the aspects of his identity that he ignores. He is, in the end, a man ruled by passion as much as by reason. Likewise, the play offers us a worldview in which one sensibility cannot easily dominate another. Reason cannot ever fully conquer the passions, nor can passion wholly undo reason.

The Clash of East and West:

Although *Antony and Cleopatra* details the conflict between Rome and Egypt, giving us an idea of the Elizabethan perceptions of the difference between Western and Eastern cultures, it does not make a definitive statement about which culture ultimately triumphs. In the play, the Western and Eastern poles of the world are characterized by those who inhabit them: Caesar, for instance, embodies the stoic duty of the West, while Cleopatra, in all her theatrical grandeur, represents the free-flowing passions of the East. Caesar's concerns throughout the play are certainly imperial: he means to invade foreign lands in order to invest them with traditions and sensibilities of his own. But the play resists siding with this imperialist impulse. Shakespeare, in other words, does not align the play's sympathies with the West; *Antony and Cleopatra* can hardly be read as propaganda for Western domination. On the contrary, the Roman understanding of Cleopatra and her kingdom seems exceedingly superficial. To Caesar, the queen of Egypt is little more than a whore with a flair for drama. His perspective allows little room for the real power of Cleopatra's sexuality—she can, after all, persuade the most decorated of generals to follow her into ignoble retreat. Similarly, it allows little room for the indomitable strength of her will, which she demonstrates so forcefully at the end of the play as she refuses to allow herself to be turned into a "Egyptian puppet" for the entertainment of the Roman masses (V.ii.204).

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, West meets East, but it does not, regardless of Caesar's triumph over the land of Egypt, conquer it. Cleopatra's suicide suggests that something of the East's spirit, the freedoms and passions that are not represented in the play's conception of the West, cannot be subsumed by Caesar's victory. The play suggests that the East will live on as a visible and unconquerable counterpoint to the West, bound as inseparably and eternally as

Antony and Cleopatra are in their tomb.

The Definition of Honor:

Throughout the play, characters define honor variously, and often in ways that are not intuitive. As Antony prepares to meet Caesar in battle, he determines that he “will live / Or bathe [his] dying honour in the blood / Shall make it live again” (IV.ii.5–7). Here, he explicitly links the notion of honor to that of death, suggesting the latter as a surefire means of achieving the former. The play bears out this assertion, since, although Antony and Cleopatra kill themselves for different reasons, they both imagine that the act invests them with honor. In death, Antony returns to his identity as a true, noble Roman, becoming “a Roman by a Roman / Valiantly vanquished” (IV.xvi.59–60), while Cleopatra resolves to “bury him, and then what’s brave, what’s noble, / Let’s do it after the high Roman fashion” (IV.xvi.89–90). At first, the queen’s words seem to suggest that honor is a distinctly Roman attribute, but Cleopatra’s death, which is her means of ensuring that she remains her truest, most uncompromised self, is distinctly against Rome. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, honor seems less a function of Western or Eastern culture than of the characters’ determination to define themselves on their own terms. Both Antony and Cleopatra secure honorable deaths by refusing to compromise their identities.

Motifs

Motifs are recurring structures, contrasts, or literary devices that can help to develop and inform the text’s major themes.

Extravagant Declarations of Love:

In Act I, scene i, Antony and Cleopatra argue over whether their love for one another can be measured and articulated:

CLEOPATRA: *[to Antony] If it be love indeed, tell me how much.*

ANTONY: *There’s beggary in the love that can be reckoned.*

CLEOPATRA: *I’ll set a bourn how far to be beloved.*

ANTONY: *Then must thou needs find out new heaven, new earth.*

(I.i.14–17)

This exchange sets the tone for the way that love will be discussed and understood throughout the play. Cleopatra expresses the expectation that love should be declared or demonstrated grandly. She wants to hear and see exactly how much Antony loves her. Love, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, is not comprised of private intimacies, as it is in *Romeo and Juliet*. Instead, love belongs to the public arena. In the lines quoted above, Cleopatra claims that she will set the boundaries of her lover’s affections, and Antony responds that, to do so, she will need to discover uncharted territories. By likening their love to the discovery and claim of “new heaven, new earth,” the couple links private emotions to affairs of state. Love, in other words, becomes an extension of politics, with the annexation of another’s heart analogous to the conquering of a foreign land.

Public Displays of Affection:

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, public displays of affection are generally understood to be expressions of political power and allegiance. Caesar, for example, laments

that Octavia arrives in Rome without the fanfare of a proper entourage because it betrays her weakness: without an accompanying army of horses, guardsmen, and trumpeters, she cannot possibly be recognized as Caesar's sister or Antony's wife. The connection between public display and power is one that the characters—especially Caesar and Cleopatra—understand well. After Antony's death, their battle of wills revolves around Caesar's desire to exhibit the Egyptian queen on the streets of Rome as a sign of his triumph. Cleopatra refuses such an end, choosing instead to take her own life. Even this act is meant as a public performance, however: decked in her grandest royal robes and playing the part of the tragic lover, Cleopatra intends her last act to be as much a defiance of Caesar's power as a gesture of romantic devotion. For death, she claims, is "the way / To fool their preparation and to conquer / Their most absurd intents" (V.ii.220–222).

Female Sexuality:

Throughout the play, the male characters rail against the power of female sexuality. Caesar and his men condemn Antony for the weakness that makes him bow to the Egyptian queen, but they clearly lay the blame for his downfall on Cleopatra. On the rare occasion that the Romans do not refer to her as a whore, they describe her as an enchantress whose beauty casts a dangerous spell over men. As Enobarbus notes, Cleopatra possesses the power to warp the minds and judgment of all men, even "holy priests" who "[b]less her" when she acts like a whore (II.ii.244–245).

The unapologetic openness of Cleopatra's sexuality stands to threaten the Romans. But they are equally obsessed with the powers of Octavia's sexuality. Caesar's sister, who, in beauty and temperament stands as Cleopatra's opposite, is nevertheless considered to possess power enough to mend the triumvir's damaged relationship: Caesar and Antony expect that she will serve to "knit [their] hearts / With an unslipping knot" (II.ii.132–133). In this way, women are saddled with both the responsibility for men's political alliances and the blame for their personal failures.

Symbols

Symbols are objects, characters, figures, or colors used to represent abstract ideas or concepts.

Shape-Changing Clouds:

In Act IV, scene xv, Antony likens his shifting sense of self to a cloud that changes shape as it tumbles across the sky. Just as the cloud turns from "a bear or lion, / A towered citadel, a pendent rock," Antony seems to change from the reputed conqueror into a debased victim (IV.xv.3–4). As he says to Eros, his uncharacteristic defeat, both on the battlefield and in matters of love, makes it difficult for him to "hold this visible shape" (IV.xv.14).

Cleopatra's Fleeing Ships:

The image of Cleopatra's fleeing ships is presented twice in the play. Antony twice does battle with Caesar at sea, and both times his navy is betrayed by the queen's retreat. The ships remind us of Cleopatra's inconstancy and of the inconstancy of human character in the play. One cannot be sure of Cleopatra's allegiance: it is uncertain whether she flees out of fear or because she realizes it would be politically savvy to align herself with Caesar. Her fleeing ships are an effective symbol of her wavering and changeability.

The Asps:

One of the most memorable symbols in the play comes in its final moments, as Cleopatra applies deadly snakes to her skin. The asps are a prop in the queen's final and most magnificent performance. As she lifts one snake, then another to her breast, they become her children and she a common wet nurse: "Dost thou not see my baby at my breast, / That sucks the nurse asleep?" (V.ii.300–301). The domestic nature of the image contributes to Cleopatra's final metamorphosis, in death, into Antony's wife. She assures him, "Husband, I come" (V.ii.278).





Theda Bara



Claudet Colbert



**Cleopatra as
seen more
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ELIZABETH TAYLOR
Elizabeth Taylor



Cleopatra -- Daughter of the Pharaoh

From <http://www.royalty.nu/Africa/Egypt/Cleopatra.html>

Cleopatra VII was born in 69 BC in Alexandria, which was then the capital of Egypt. Her father was Egypt's pharaoh, Ptolemy XII, nicknamed Auletes or "Flute-Player." Cleopatra's mother was probably Auletes's sister, Cleopatra V Tryphaena. (It was commonplace for members of the Ptolemaic dynasty to marry their siblings.)

There was another Cleopatra in the family -- Cleopatra VII's elder sister, Cleopatra VI. Cleopatra VII also had an older sister named Berenice; a younger sister, Arsinoe; and two younger brothers, both called Ptolemy. The family was not truly Egyptian, but Macedonian. They were descended from Ptolemy I, a general of Alexander the Great who became king of Egypt after Alexander's death in 323 BC.

Ptolemy XII was a weak and cruel ruler, and in 58 BC the people of Alexandria rebelled and overthrew him. He fled to Rome while his eldest daughter, Berenice, took the throne. She married a cousin but soon had him strangled so that she could marry another man, Archelaus. At some point during Berenice's three-year reign Cleopatra VI died of unknown causes. In 55 BC Ptolemy XII reclaimed his throne with the help of the Roman general Pompey. Berenice was beheaded (her husband was executed, as well).

Cleopatra VII was now the pharaoh's oldest child. When her father died in 51 BC, leaving his children in Pompey's care, Cleopatra and her brother Ptolemy XIII inherited the throne.

Queen of Egypt

Cleopatra was 17 or 18 when she became the queen of Egypt. She was far from beautiful, despite her glamorous image today. She is depicted on ancient coins with a long hooked nose and masculine features. Yet she was clearly a very seductive woman. She had an enchantingly musical voice and exuded charisma. She was also highly intelligent. She spoke nine languages (she was the first Ptolemy pharaoh who could actually speak Egyptian!) and proved to be a shrewd politician.

In compliance with Egyptian tradition Cleopatra married her brother and co-ruler, Ptolemy XIII, who was about 12 at the time. But it was a marriage of convenience only, and Ptolemy was pharaoh in name only. For three years he remained in the background while Cleopatra ruled alone.

Ptolemy's advisors - led by a eunuch named Pothinus - resented Cleopatra's independence and conspired against her. In 48 BC they stripped Cleopatra of her power and she was forced into exile in Syria. Her sister Arsinoe went with her.

Cleopatra and Caesar

Determined to regain her throne, Cleopatra amassed an army on Egypt's border. At this time Pompey was vying with Julius Caesar for control of the Roman Empire. After losing the battle of Pharsalos he sailed to Alexandria, pursued by Caesar, to seek Ptolemy's protection. But Ptolemy's advisors thought it would be safer to side with Caesar, and when Pompey arrived he was stabbed to death while the pharaoh watched.

Three days later Caesar reached Alexandria. Before he entered the city, Ptolemy's courtiers brought him a gift -- Pompey's head. But Pompey had once been Caesar's friend, and Caesar was appalled by his brutal murder. He marched into the city, seized control of the palace, and began issuing orders. Both Ptolemy and Cleopatra were to dismiss their armies and meet with Caesar, who would settle their dispute. But Cleopatra knew that if she entered Alexandria openly, Ptolemy's henchmen would kill her. So she had herself smuggled to Caesar inside an oriental rug. When the rug was unrolled, Cleopatra tumbled out. It is said that Caesar was bewitched by her charm, and became her lover that very night.

When Ptolemy saw Caesar and Cleopatra together the next day, he was furious. He stormed out of the palace, shouting that he had been betrayed. Caesar had Ptolemy arrested, but the pharaoh's army -- led by the eunuch Pothinus and Cleopatra's sister Arsinoe -- laid siege to the palace.

In hopes of appeasing the attackers Caesar released Ptolemy XIII, but the Alexandrian War continued for almost six months. It ended when Pothinus was killed in battle and Ptolemy XIII drowned in the Nile while trying to flee. Alexandria surrendered to Caesar, who captured Arsinoe and restored Cleopatra to her throne. Cleopatra then married her brother Ptolemy XIV, who was 11 or 12 years old.

Soon after their victory Cleopatra and Caesar enjoyed a leisurely two-month cruise on the Nile. The Roman historian Suetonius wrote that they would have sailed all the way to Ethiopia if Caesar's troops had agreed to follow him. Cleopatra may have become pregnant at this time. She later gave birth to a son, Ptolemy XV, called Caesarion or "Little Caesar." It has been suggested that Caesar wasn't really Caesarion's father -- despite his promiscuity, Caesar had only one other child - but Caesarion strongly resembled Caesar, and Caesar acknowledged Caesarion as his son.

After the cruise Caesar returned to Rome, leaving three legions in Egypt to protect Cleopatra. A year later he invited Cleopatra to visit him in Rome. She arrived in the autumn of 46 BC, accompanied by Caesarion and her young brother/husband, Ptolemy XIV. In September Caesar celebrated his war triumphs by parading through the streets of Rome with his prisoners, including Cleopatra's sister Arsinoe. (Caesar spared Arsinoe's life, but later Mark Antony had her killed at Cleopatra's request.)

Cleopatra lived in Caesar's villa near Rome for almost two years. Caesar

showered her with gifts and titles. He even had a statue of her erected in the temple of Venus Genetrix. His fellow Romans were scandalized by his extra-marital affair (Caesar was married to a woman named Calpurnia). It was rumored that Caesar intended to pass a law allowing him to marry Cleopatra and make their son his heir. It was also rumored that Caesar -- who had accepted a lifetime dictatorship and sat on a golden throne in the Senate - intended to become the king of Rome.

On March 15, 44 BC a crowd of conspirators surrounded Caesar at a Senate meeting and stabbed him to death. Knowing that she too was in danger, Cleopatra quickly left Rome with her entourage. Before or immediately after their return to Egypt, Ptolemy XIV died, possibly poisoned at Cleopatra's command. Cleopatra then made Caesarion her co-regent.

Cleopatra and Mark Antony

Caesar's assassination caused anarchy and civil war in Rome. Eventually the empire was divided among three men: Caesar's great-nephew Octavian, who later became the emperor Augustus; Marcus Lepidus; and Marcus Antonius, better known today as Mark Antony.

In 42 BC Mark Antony summoned Cleopatra to Tarsus (in modern-day Turkey) to question her about whether she had assisted his enemies. Cleopatra arrived in style on a barge with a gilded stern, purple sails, and silver oars. The boat was sailed by her maids, who were dressed as sea nymphs. Cleopatra herself was dressed as Venus, the goddess of love. She reclined under a gold canopy, fanned by boys in Cupid costumes.

Antony, an unsophisticated, pleasure-loving man, was impressed by this blatant display of luxury, as Cleopatra had intended. Cleopatra entertained him on her barge that night, and the next night Antony invited her to supper, hoping to outdo her in magnificence. He failed, but joked about it in his good-natured, vulgar way. Cleopatra didn't seem to mind his tasteless sense of humor - in fact, she joined right in. Like Caesar before him, Antony was enthralled. Forgetting his responsibilities, he accompanied Cleopatra to Alexandria and spent the winter with her there.

The Greek writer Plutarch wrote of Cleopatra, "Plato admits four sorts of flattery, but she had a thousand. Were Antony serious or disposed to mirth, she had at any moment some new delight or charm to meet his wishes; at every turn she was upon him, and let him escape her neither by day nor by night. She played at dice with him, drank with him, hunted with him; and when he exercised in arms, she was there to see. At night she would go rambling with him to disturb and torment people at their doors and windows, dressed like a servant-woman, for Antony also went in servant's disguise... However, the Alexandrians in general liked it all well enough, and joined good-humouredly and kindly in his frolic and play."

Finally, "rousing himself from sleep, and shaking off the fumes of wine," Antony

said goodbye to Cleopatra and returned to his duties as a ruler of the Roman empire. Six months later Cleopatra gave birth to twins, Cleopatra Selene and Alexander Helios. It was four years before she saw their father again. During that time Antony married Octavian's half-sister, Octavia. They had two daughters, both named Antonia.

In 37 BC, while on his way to invade Parthia, Antony enjoyed another rendezvous with Cleopatra. He hurried through his military campaign and raced back to Cleopatra. From then on Alexandria was his home, and Cleopatra was his life. He married her in 36 BC and she gave birth to another son, Ptolemy Philadelphus.

Meanwhile, back in Rome, Octavia remained loyal to her bigamous husband. She decided to visit Antony, and when she reached Athens she received a letter from him saying that he would meet her there. However, Cleopatra was determined to keep Antony away from his other wife. She cried and fainted and starved herself and got her way. Antony cancelled his trip, and Octavia returned home without seeing her husband.

The Roman people were disgusted by the way Antony had treated Octavia. They were also angry to hear that Cleopatra and Antony were calling themselves gods (the New Isis and the New Dionysus). Worst of all, in 34 BC Antony made Alexander Helios the king of Armenia, Cleopatra Selene the queen of Cyrenaica and Crete, and Ptolemy Philadelphus the king of Syria. Caesarion was proclaimed the "King of Kings," and Cleopatra was the "Queen of Kings."

Outraged, Octavian convinced the Roman Senate to declare war on Egypt. In 31 BC Antony's forces fought the Romans in a sea battle off the coast of Actium, Greece. Cleopatra was there with sixty ships of her own. When she saw that Antony's cumbersome, badly-manned galleys were losing to the Romans' lighter, swifter boats, she fled the scene. Antony abandoned his men to follow her. Although it is possible that they had prearranged their retreat, the Romans saw it as proof that Antony was enslaved by his love of Cleopatra, unable to think or act on his own.

For three days Antony sat alone in the prow of Cleopatra's ship, refusing to see or speak to her. They returned to Egypt, where Antony lived alone for a time, brooding, while Cleopatra prepared for an invasion by Rome. When Antony received word that his forces had surrendered at Actium and his allies had gone over to Octavian, he left his solitary home and returned to Cleopatra to party away their final days.

Cleopatra began experimenting with poisons to learn which would cause the most painless death. She also built a mausoleum to which she moved all of her gold, silver, emeralds, pearls, ebony, ivory, and other treasure.

In 30 BC Octavian reached Alexandria. Mark Antony marched his army out of the city to meet the enemy. He stopped on high ground to watch what he expected would be a naval battle between his fleet and the Roman fleet. Instead he saw his

fleet salute the Romans with their oars and join them. At this Antony's cavalry also deserted him. His infantry was soon defeated and Antony returned to the city, shouting that Cleopatra had betrayed him. Terrified that he would harm her, Cleopatra fled to the monument that housed her treasures and locked herself in, ordering her servants to tell Antony she was dead. Believing it, Antony cried out, "Now, Antony, why delay longer? Fate has snatched away your only reason for living." He went to his room and opened his coat, exclaiming that he would soon be with Cleopatra. He ordered a servant named Eros to kill him, but Eros killed himself instead. "Well done, Eros," Antony said, "you show your master how to do what you didn't have the heart to do yourself." Antony stabbed himself in the stomach and passed out on a couch. When he woke up he begged his servants to put him out of his misery, but they ran away. At last Cleopatra's secretary came and told him Cleopatra wanted to see him. Overjoyed to hear Cleopatra was alive, Antony had himself carried to her mausoleum. Cleopatra was afraid to open the door because of the approach of Octavian's army, but she and her two serving women let down ropes from a window and pulled him up. Distraught, Cleopatra laid Antony on her bed and beat her breasts, calling him her lord, husband and emperor. Antony told her not to pity him, but to remember his past happiness. Then he died.

The Death of Cleopatra:

When Octavian and his men reached her monument Cleopatra refused to let them in. She negotiated with them through the barred door, demanding that her kingdom be given to her children. Octavian ordered one man to keep her talking while others set up ladders and climbed through the window. When Cleopatra saw the men she pulled out a dagger and tried to stab herself, but she was disarmed and taken prisoner. Her children were also taken prisoner and were treated well.

Octavian allowed Cleopatra to arrange Antony's funeral. She buried him with royal splendor. After the funeral she took to her bed, sick with grief. She wanted to kill herself, but Octavian kept her under close guard. One day he visited her and she flung herself at his feet, nearly naked, and told him she wanted to live. Octavian was lulled into a false sense of security.

Cleopatra was determined to die - perhaps because she had lost Mark Antony, perhaps because she knew Octavian intended to humiliate her, as her sister Arsinoe had been humiliated, by marching her through Rome in chains. With Octavian's permission she visited Antony's tomb. Then she returned to her mausoleum, took a bath, and ordered a feast. While the meal was being prepared a man arrived at her monument with a basket of figs. The guards checked the basket and found nothing suspicious, so they allowed the man to deliver it to Cleopatra.

After she had eaten, Cleopatra wrote a letter, sealed it, and sent it to Octavian. He opened it and found Cleopatra's plea that he would allow her to be buried in

Antony's tomb. Alarmed, Octavian sent messengers to alert her guards that Cleopatra planned to commit suicide. But it was too late. They found the 39-year old queen dead on her golden bed, with her maid Iras dying at her feet. Her other maid, Charmion, was weakly adjusting Cleopatra's crown. "Was this well done of your lady, Charmion?" one of the guards demanded.

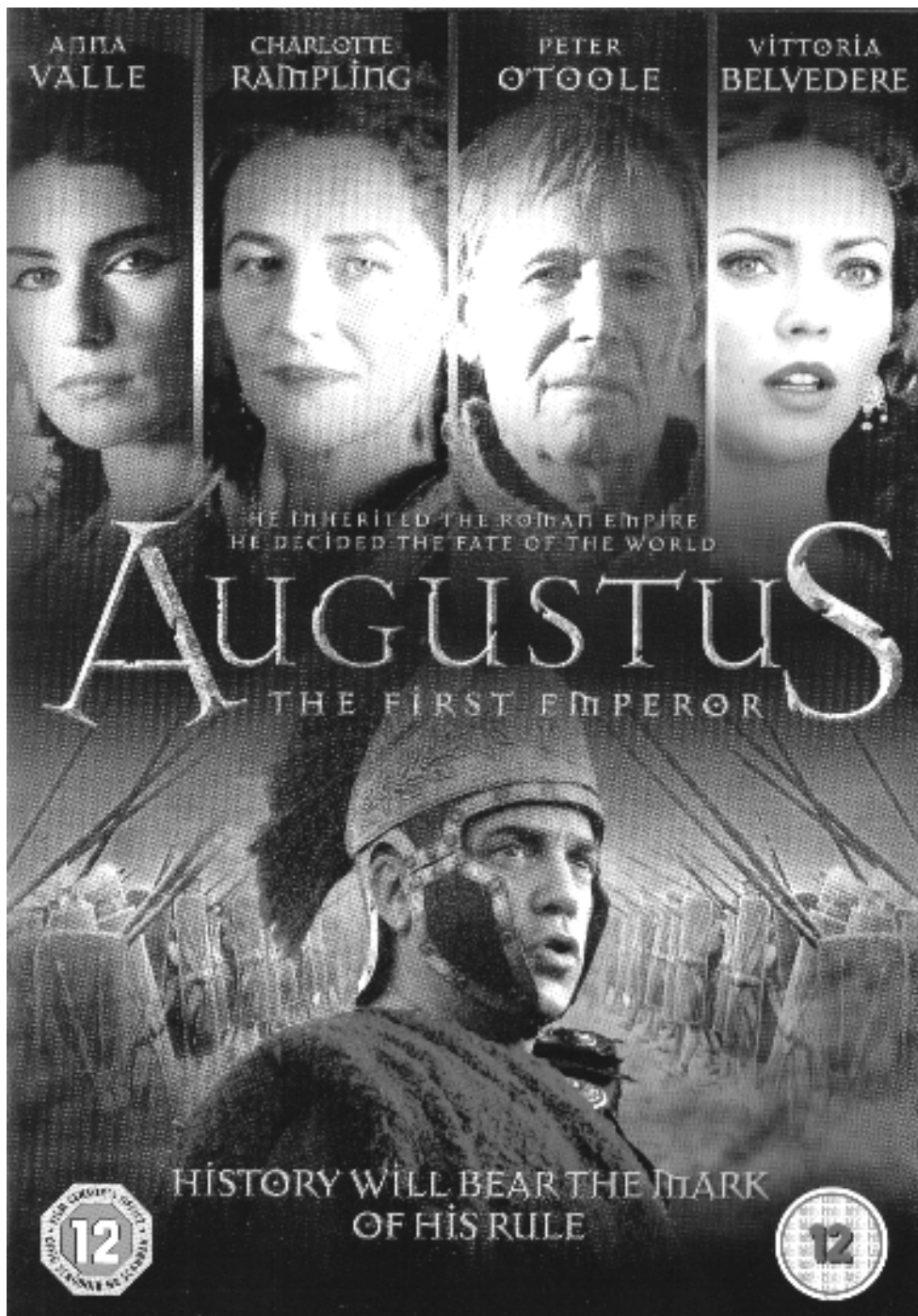
"Extremely well," said Charmion, "as became the descendent of so many kings." And she too fell over dead.

Two pricks were found on Cleopatra's arm, and it was believed that she had allowed herself to be bitten by an asp (a kind of poisonous snake) that was smuggled in with the figs. As she had wished, she was buried beside Antony.

Cleopatra was the last pharaoh; after her death Egypt became a Roman province. Because Caesarion was Julius Caesar's son and might pose a threat to Octavian's power, Octavian had the boy strangled by his tutor. Cleopatra's other children were sent to Rome to be raised by Octavia in the court of Octavian (Augustus). Cleopatra Selene married King Juba II of Mauretania (who had been raised in the court of Augustus along with Cleopatra Selene) and had two children, Ptolemy and Drusilla. Their capital at Sirta in northern Africa was a thriving and very Roman metropolis. No one knows what happened to Alexander Helios and Ptolemy Philadelphus.

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Imperium: Augustus
DVD/178 MIN./US R



"O'Toole is the one who really carries the film, an old veteran delivering on a part that, in retrospect, seems as if it couldn't have been played by another."

DVD REVIEW

By James Plath

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As a boy, I was a bit of an Ancient Rome junkie. I collected Roman Imperial coins, I read every book I could find on the Roman Empire, and, of course, I relished those period films. Even as an adult, I loved "I, Claudius" and Russell Crowe's performance in "Gladiator." I'm also a Peter O'Toole fan, so the stage was certainly set for me to settle in on a cold winter's night and curl up with this made-for-Italian-television three-hour film. And I did enjoy "Augustus"—despite one egregiously horrible scene, some soap-opera moments, and occasional wincing over apparent anachronisms.

You could call "Augustus" a more peripatetic and orgy-less "I, Claudius," because there are plenty of scenes that will otherwise remind viewers of that acclaimed 1960 BBC mini-series. The cameras frequently pull in for tight shots on the faces of Augustus (O'Toole) and his wife Livia (Charlotte Rampling), or on Marc Antony (Massimo Ghini) and Cleopatra (Anna Valle). The scene construction also resembles a stage play or a screenplay shot on a small soundstage, with characters talking at length to each other in close quarters. But unlike "I, Claudius," which was shot indoors—even implied faraway battle locations were filmed inside tents—this 2003 entry also offers scenery, scope, and large-scale battles. "Augustus" was filmed on location in Tunisia, and the production values are quite good.

"Did I play my part well in this comedy called life?" Augustus asks those who gather around his deathbed at the film's beginning. "Applause please." Then it's a flashback to the recent past, with the beloved Augustus milling among his people in the streets of Rome and surviving yet another assassination attempt. But perhaps because we haven't seen it before in films, the shot of Augustus walking through the crowded streets while the plebeians applaud seems more appropriate to Martin Sheen walking onto the set of "The West Wing." Yes, Augustus was instrumental in encouraging public readings as performances, and the historian Suetonius talks about occasions when audiences were so rude that they talked, slept, or did nothing with their hands. But it was still a bit jarring—same with a line that Marc Antony says to Augustus: "You have no balls." Whoa! And yet, Rai Radiotelevisione Italiana enlisted seven professors as historical advisors, so perhaps these aren't anachronisms after all. Still, they sure felt head-snappingly contemporary.

The other major head-snapper was a battle scene where Augustus and Mark Anthony are about to face off with their armies when one soldier staring straight ahead at the opposing phalanx exclaims, "It's my brother," then another says "That's my friend, Marcus," and another says, "That's my wife's brother," and so-

on-and-so-forth, until you expect them all to belt out a stirring rendition of "He's My Friend," a song from "The Unsinkable Molly Brown." It's contemporary, it's comic, and it beats you over the head with a point that a five year old could have gotten. Another battle scene features the corniest deaths by arrows many of you will have witnessed. Yet, those goofy moments aside, the battles, the scenes of political intrigue, and the "talky" scenes that lend some depth to the characters make for a collectively enjoyable viewing experience.

The action begins with Julius Caesar calling for Octavius (Augustus) to join him in Spain, and we see the pair fighting side by side and understand the secret behind Caesar's power: love the legions and work side by side with them and they will die for you. Later, Octavius takes on the name that his great-uncle bestowed upon him: Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus, though he would become known as Caesar Augustus or, after his deification, the Divine Augustus. As the first master of public relations, Augustus also discovers that to succeed he must get the people to love him. Even as he's destined to be part of a second triumvirate with Antony and Lepidus, we watch him form part of a trio of close friends: Octavius, the leader; Agrippa (Ken Duken), the general; and Maecenas (Russell Barr, who plays the part in a flamboyantly flaming way), the politician. The film is narrated in an interesting way, told in flashbacks within a flashback as the dying Augustus narrates part of the story and an old Augustus shares part of his life with his daughter, Julia (Vittoria Belvedere). There's intrigue everywhere and always because the throne is at stake, and the film stays pretty close to the basic historical facts about Augustus' life, leaving out an earlier marriage and deviating slightly in other areas as well. But that's not bad. It allows the filmmakers to focus on the events that led to Augustus' swift rise to power, and his inclination toward peace when all around him preferred war.

O'Toole is the one who really carries the film, an old veteran delivering on a part that, in retrospect, seems as if it couldn't have been played by another. The supporting cast isn't as strong, but they still deliver believable performances. Part of the credit has to go to Eric Lerner, who contributes an intelligent script that only infrequently crosses the line into melodrama, and to Young, who manages to move the film forward so that 178 minutes doesn't feel like a punishment. This would have merited a 7, if it weren't for that really awful battle scene that's an insult to even a rock's intelligence.

Those of you wanting to read more about Augustus, who ruled Rome from 27 bc to 14 ad, might consider the following as a starting point:

Buchan, John. *Augustus*. Boston: Houghton, 1937. Many consider this to be the modern definitive biography of Caesar Augustus.

Carcopino, Jerome. *Daily Life in Ancient Rome*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1940. A highly readable and fascinating account of what it would have been like to live in Rome, including daily routines and customs, based on historical research.

Charlesworth, M.P. *The Roman Empire*. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1968. Another good primer about life in Ancient Rome, this one focusing on broader areas of culture.

Suetonius. *The Twelve Caesars*. Trans. Robert Graves. London: Penguin Classics, 1957. The "horse's mouth" bio. Suetonius was born around 69 ad. and based his lives of the Caesars on eyewitness accounts.

Walworth, Nancy Z. *Augustus Caesar*. New York: Chelsea House, 1989. This one is suggested for younger readers.

Bottom Line:

Aside from the lapses in writing and directorial judgment that push "Augustus" in the direction of a bad soap opera, and despite some action scenes where the deaths seem as routinely dramatic as the cavalrymen shot by arrows in all those 1950s westerns, this made-for-TV movie is a respectable addition to a growing roster of ancient world spectacles—and no, we're not counting that thinly disguised porno flick, "Caligula."

"Augustus" is as good as or better than "The Robe" (1953) and its sequel,



"Demetrius and the Gladiators" (1954), and the writing and performances are miles of aqueducts better than "The Last Days of Pompeii" (1960). As an epic celebrating a single character's life, it's on a par with "Cleopatra" (1963), but the storyline and action isn't as compelling as "Ben-Hur" (1959) or "Spartacus" (1960), and the cinematography isn't anywhere near as stylish as what Ridley Scott gave us in "Gladiator" (2000). Still, "Augustus" does a nice job of blending a relatively historically accurate narrative with some action and character development. In fact, those who think "I, Claudius" too talky and slow-moving might actually prefer "Augustus." O'Toole's performance is every bit as strong as Derek Jacobi's, and there's much more in the way of public scenes and battles to offset quieter moments—no orgies, mind you, but then again, Roman debauchery wasn't built in a day.

← *Prima Porta Augustus*

AUGUSTUS (31 B.C. - 14 A.D.)

by Nina C. Coppolino

From <http://www.roman-emperors.org/auggiex.htm>

Introduction and Summary

Augustus was born Gaius Octavius on 23 September 63 B.C. His mother, Atia, was the niece of Julius Caesar; Atia's mother was Caesar's sister. Augustus, therefore, as the great-nephew of Julius Caesar, had family connections to political power at Rome. Unlike his great-uncle and adoptive father who was murdered by a senatorial conspiracy in 44 B.C., Augustus lived a long life, having replaced the oligarchic rule of the Roman Republic with a constitutional monarchy, controlled first by the Julio-Claudian Dynasty (31 B.C. -- 68 A.D.), in which Augustus was followed by Tiberius, Claudius, Caligula, and Nero, all of whom were descended from Augustus or his wife, Livia.

Through his gradual efforts, and through the circumstances of his era, Augustus ruled Rome alone for nearly a half-century (31 B.C. -- 14 A.D.), and he set for all his successors the institutional and ideological foundations of the Roman Empire. The broad bases of his power were the army, whose loyalty was maintained by money and land-grants at retirement, and Tiberius' apparently genuine support of many people, who wanted at any constitutional cost an end to the factional bloodshed of the late Republican civil wars; the nobles retained niches in the regular operation of the still prestigious political administration or in military roles, property was ultimately secured, administrative roles were more easily filled by some increased social mobility among the ranks and classes, and the populace (once fed) was ostensibly defended by the tribunicia potestas with which Augustus legitimized his rule, and which finally became the official rubric under which the state was run for centuries. The innovative outcome of Augustus' rule was the acquisition of sole power at Rome and abroad by the assumption of traditionally distributed powers found in long-standing Roman magistracies, military commands, state religious honors, patronage, family connections, and personal influence.

Rise and Acquisition of Powers

Youth and career to 28 B.C.

In 51 B.C., at the age of twelve, Octavian first appeared publicly to give the funeral oration for his grandmother, Julia. In 48 Caesar had his fifteen-year-old great-nephew elected to the priestly college of the pontifices, and he also enrolled him in the hereditary patrician aristocracy of Rome: on his mother's side Octavian had the patrician blood of the Caesars, while his father's family, the Octavii, were wealthy townsmen from Velitrae, southeast of Rome, to which his father came

only as an equestrian banker, though his grandfather was a senator. After recovering from illness in 46, Octavian joined Caesar in Spain against the two sons of Pompey the Great, and in 45 Octavian was sent to Apollonia in Epirus to study with the Greek rhetorician Apollodorus of Pergamum, and to train with legions stationed nearby. In 44, only several months after his arrival in Greece, Octavian learned that Julius Caesar had been murdered at Rome. Octavian then arrived back in southern Italy to discover that he had been adopted in Caesar's will as his son and heir. From this time Octavian called himself C. Julius Caesar Octavianus, though to avoid confusion, modern scholars customarily refer to him as Octavian before 27 B.C.

A feud soon developed between Octavian and Antony, Caesar's colleague as consul, who intended to gain hold of Caesar's Gallic provinces and was luring Caesar's veterans to his side. Octavian raised an army on his own. Under the terms of Caesar's will, Octavian was required to pay a legacy to the urban plebs, but Antony refused to hand over the necessary cash which Caesar's widow had given to him. In 43 at Mutina Antony was defeated by Octavian with armies given to him by the senate. Octavian was elected consul that year for the first time at the unusually young age of nineteen; he had refused to fight unless he got the consulship because he was convinced that the senate would discard him after they had used him to get rid of Antony. Finally in 43 at Bononia, Octavian made terms with Antony and Lepidus, who had alternately supported Caesar, Antony, and the senate. Together the three men formed the triumvirate, which had been initially granted absolute powers for five years. They ruthlessly proscribed 120 senators and many equestrian whose property and money were confiscated to pay troops. In 42 Antony and Octavian defeated Brutus and Cassius, the murderers of Caesar, in two battles at Philippi in Macedonia; the credit went to Antony because Octavian was ill during the fighting. On the ostensibly Republican side, only Sextus Pompey survived with a fleet, and Domitius Ahenobarbus with the fleet of Brutus and Cassius.

In the division of provinces and duties after Philippi, Antony got the potential wealth and glory of the East, and Octavian got the difficult task of settling veterans in Italy by confiscating property, since there was no money yet to buy it. He faced protest at home and the starvation of Rome by Sextus Pompey, who was blockading grain ships in Sicily. In 40 Antony married Octavian's sister Octavia. In that year at Perusia Octavian fought and defeated Antony's brother, Lucius, who had objected to Octavian's receiving credit for settling troops in Italy before Antony returned from the East. Though Lucius was pardoned, others of Octavian's enemies and the town council of Perusia were executed. Octavian tried to win the support of Sextus Pompey and his fleet by marrying Pompey's aunt, Scribonia, in what was now Octavian's third and penultimate match, producing his only daughter, Julia. Pompey, however, sided with Antony who was vexed at the Perusine episode and since 42 was spending winters in Egypt with Cleopatra. In the autumn of 40 at Brundisium, Octavian confronted Antony and the combined fleets of Pompey and Ahenobarbus, but instead of hostilities they agreed to a pact; they declared Antony's the Greek-speaking provinces east of Macedonia, and Octavian's the Latin-speaking provinces west of Illyricum,

while Lepidus remained in Africa, and Pompey initially got nothing and continued to blockade Italy.

Despite concessions to Pompey, in 38 war broke out in indecisive sea battles off Cumae and Rhegium on the coast of southern Italy. Octavian divorced Scribonia and married his last wife Livia, who brought to the marriage her own sons, Tiberius and Drusus. In 38 Octavian replaced his praenomen Gaius with Imperator, the title by which troops hailed their leader after military success (ultimately Imperator developed into the title Emperor). From this time Octavian's full title was Imperator Caesar Divi Filius, including the reference to him as the son of his deified father. In 37 Octavian built a new fleet under the direction of his friend and lieutenant Agrippa, and he met Antony at Tarentum to renew the triumvirate for five more years. In 36 Octavian, Agrippa, and Lepidus launched a triple attack on Sextus Pompey in Sicily, and they won a naval battle at Naulochus, after which Pompey was killed in Egypt, and Lepidus was ousted from the triumvirate for trying to take over Sicily.

In 36 Octavian received tribunician sacrosanctity for his personal security and as an invocation of his father's support of the people; he circumspectly declined the title of pontifex maximus because it was held by Lepidus. Antony launched a failed campaign against the Parthians, and when his wife, Octavia, attempted to bring supplies and additional troops, he snubbed her and her brother by sending her home. In 34 Antony gave eastern provinces to his children by Cleopatra, and Egypt and Cyprus to Cleopatra's children by Caesar; these were the so-called Donations of Alexandria. In the resulting propaganda war, Octavian did the most damage to Antony by presenting Cleopatra and her territorial gains as a foreign menace to the security of Rome. From 35 to 33 Octavian fought in Illyricum and Dalmatia, the eastern borders of Italy. In 33 Agrippa as aedile dealt with the precious water supply in Rome and restored aqueducts.

In 32 the inhabitants of Italy and of many provinces swore a personal oath of allegiance to Octavian to support him against his private enemies. By this oath Octavian claimed that the people were demanding him as leader in the now inevitable war, declared nominally against Cleopatra. Antony divorced Octavia. In 31 Octavian defeated the combined forces of Antony and Cleopatra in a naval battle at Actium off the coast of Greece. After the suicides of Antony and Cleopatra in Egypt, Octavian annexed Egypt as a province. In 31 Octavian assumed the consulship at Rome for the third time and monopolized it successively through 23.

In 29 Octavian celebrated a triple triumph at Rome for his conquest of Illyricum, for the battle of Actium, and for the annexation of Egypt. Octavian's now huge army of sixty legions began to be demobilized and was shortly reduced to twenty-eight. Soldiers and veterans were paid with funds now drawn from the vast wealth of Egypt. Despite the fact that wars were going on in Gaul and Spain, the temple of Janus at Rome was ceremoniously closed, an event that happened only twice before in history, to signify that Rome was at peace with the world. The senate and people voted Octavian countless other honors, crowns, games,

commemorative structures, and additional powers, including his ability to create patricians, both to enlarge and to preserve the social hierarchy into which Julius Caesar had previously introduced Octavian himself. In 28 with Agrippa as his colleague in his sixth consulship, Octavian held a census of the people and moderately reduced the swollen ranks of the senate from 1000 to 800 members, of which he was appointed the leading man.

'The Republic Restored':

The First Constitutional Settlement of the Principate, 27-24 B.C.

In 27 Octavian declared that he had restored the republic, a claim echoed but also dismissed even among the ancients. Octavian gave amnesty to his former opponents in the civil wars. While the senate and assemblies resumed their regular functions, Octavian maintained his hold on the consulship, but elections for his colleague took place. The swollen ranks of praetors and quaestors were reduced by half to the Sullan numbers of eight and twenty, respectively, and all these offices retained their traditional functions, including the consulship and praetorship as springboards for provincial commands.

The real, monarchical hold, however, that Octavian had on the state was military. When Octavian announced his plans to lay down supreme power, there had been protest in the senate, partly from his partisans and partly perhaps from concern that the state would erupt again into civil war. In the so-called 'first settlement' of 27, Octavian agreed to accept for ten years a provincial command which contained the largest standing Roman armies, then stationed in Spain, Gaul, and Syria, the so-called 'imperial provinces.' By the removal of senatorial proconsuls from Octavian's three major provinces, and with the placement there of subordinate legates, Octavian was no longer threatened by men of consular rank with significant armies. The three major senatorial provinces of Illyricum, Macedonia and Africa appeared to balance Octavian's grant, but in reality these provinces held only a few legions. Thus without appearing to force the senate, Octavian obtained sole proconsular power over the major provincial armies; though this power normally lapsed at Rome, he maintained both civil and military authority there through his consulship. Technically Octavian used powers given to him for a fixed period by the senate and people of Rome, and there were Republican precedents, albeit abnormal ones, for such powers and continuous rule.

Octavian later claimed that in 27 he had no more power than any of his colleagues in any magistracy (*Res Gestae* 34.3), and he referred to himself simply as princeps, the first man among equals at Rome. This strictly unofficial and broad title, not to be confused with the narrow parameters of the 'princeps senatus', had already been applied to individuals in the late Republic, and for centuries the leading men of Rome had been known as 'principes viri'. Thus the 'principate', as the era is now designated, suggests a mere pre-eminence in civil affairs which belies absolute power based ultimately on the army.

The official title decreed to Octavian by the senate in 27 was Augustus, the name by which he is most widely known, making his full title Imperator Caesar Divi Filius Augustus. He considered adopting the name 'Romulus' and the association it would have for him as the refounder of Rome. Because Romulus, however, also had the contemporary discredit of both overt monarchy and fratricide, Augustus preferred the association of his new title with religious awe: holy things, for instance, were called augusta. The title was traditionally linked by etymology with augere, 'to increase'; the adjective was juxtaposed with the religious practice of augury in Ennius's well-known description of Romulus's founding of Rome *augusto augurio*. The title Augustus was subsequently held by all Roman emperors except Vitellius, and Augusta was used to address the wife of the reigning emperor, or his mother.

After 27 Augustus maintained that he excelled all his equals only in his *auctoritas*. This term, also etymologically connected with *augustus*, had no constitutional meaning and implied no legal powers; it signified Augustus's moral authority and increased prestige which guaranteed the good of the order in Rome. *Auctoritas* was personal power which rested on the loyalty of people who, as clients of Augustus, recognized his military conquest and his achievement of political stability for the commonwealth. This type of power was seen previously in the personal oath of allegiance of 32, and it did not depend on the immediate constitutional settlement.

In 27 Augustus ultimately and perhaps wisely freed Rome from his presence to visit the western provinces of Gaul and Spain. When he returned to Rome in 24, he became consul for the tenth time with one Norbanus Flaccus, who had supported both Sextus Pompey and Antony in the civil wars. Despite an indecisive outcome in the Spanish war, honors were voted by the senate to Augustus's relatives who participated. Augustus himself was ill and facing a conspiracy against his life.

The Second Settlement and the Evolution of the Principate, 23 -- 16 B.C.

In Augustus's absence from Rome, dissatisfaction with the new regime had apparently resulted in a conspiracy by his colleague in the consulship, Varro Murena, and a Republican, Fannius Caepio, both of whom were brought to trial and executed. Though Augustus veiled monarchic power more than Julius Caesar did, Augustus's unending series of consulships was a thorn in the side of the senatorial class, which was prevented yearly from competing for one of the two seats of the supreme magistracy. In 23 Augustus abdicated the consulship, and in so doing, he made room for more nobles, relieved himself of consular duties, and increased the number of former consuls available for administrative work. He held the consulship again on only two occasions, 5 and 2 B.C., to introduce his grandsons to public life; he held this office a total of thirteen times, nine of them consecutively from 31-23.

Without the consulship Augustus lacked legitimate civil and military authority at Rome. Accordingly in 23, he was awarded the tribunicia potestas for life. With this grant, Augustus regained the initiative to bring legislation and motions before the senate; he got the right of putting the first motion in any meeting of the senate, despite the fact that the seniority of the actual tribunate was very low; he technically had the right to the tribunician veto, but he probably never had to use it, because he would already have approved of motions before they reached the senate; he got magisterial power to compel citizens to obey his orders; he got the power to help citizens oppressed by other magistrates (and he had already been granted tribunician sacrosanctity for his personal protection in 36). Augustus did not need any of these new powers themselves, but rather the legitimacy they provided. It was also convenient that tribunician power was traditionally invoked in protection of the common people. To advertise this association with the people, Augustus set the official beginning of his reign at the assumption of tribunician power in 23; traditionally years had been numbered by the annual consulship, but now they were counted by the successive tenure of tribunician power, a practice which continued throughout the Imperial period.

Without the consulship, Augustus technically did not any longer have military power in Rome, but only in his own provinces. The senate therefore enlarged his proconsular imperium so that it did not lapse when he entered the boundaries of the city; more importantly, since the consuls at Rome had more power than any one abroad and could command any army, Augustus's military power was officially declared greater than any proconsul's, reducing them all to his legates, with what was called 'maius imperium proconsulare'. Greater military power and tribunician power were thus for Augustus the legitimate bases of rule, and they remained so throughout the duration of the Empire.

Perhaps Augustus's illness in 23 forced him to provide for the control of the armies abroad by having the senate grant Agrippa proconsular imperium for five years; Agrippa then got an eastern command. In 22 riots broke out at Rome, when flood, disease and famine were attributed to the fact that Augustus had withdrawn from the consulship and apparently was not in charge. Augustus refused to take the office of dictator, which was too politically charged with envy and hatred, and he also refused to accept the censorship for life and its traditionally despised power to expel members of the senate arbitrarily. He did, however, assume the care of the grain supply, which he quickly repaired, and then he left for Sicily, Greece, and Asia.

After Augustus left Rome, there was disorder at the consular elections of 22, with only one consul elected when Augustus refused to stand for the office; the next year there was a similar crisis. Augustus refused to return to Rome during all the trouble. To help elect the consuls and to restore order he sent Agrippa, who in 21 married Augustus's daughter, Julia, then widowed by the death of Marcellus two years earlier. In 19 Augustus was again begged to take the consulship, which he refused, and was summoned to Rome because of more unrest; the day he finally arrived was declared a holiday by the senate, and an altar was dedicated to Fortune the Homebringer. In 19 he accepted consular power for life, the right to sit between the two elected consuls, to bear the fasces as symbols of power, and to be attended by twelve lictors. Though Augustus did not need consular power, the visibility of it appeared to quell the agitation of the people. He also accepted a five-year appointment as supervisor of morals with censorial powers. By 19 he held not the invidious offices but the actual powers of the consulship, tribunate, censorship; effectively, he also held the military dictatorship.

In 18 the powers of the principate were renewed for five more years through the extension of the proconsular power which was initially granted to Augustus for ten years at the first constitutional settlement of 27. Now Augustus made Agrippa virtually co-regent through the renewal award of proconsular power, and the award of tribunician power. In 18 Augustus used his censorial power to reduce the ranks of the senate again from eight-hundred to six-hundred members (the three such senatorial reforms took place in 29, 18, and 11). By the authority of his tribunician power, he passed the Julian Laws of 18 for moral reform and the criminal code. The new laws were intended to mitigate the social and civil disorder caused by the cynicism of late Republican anarchy, and to encourage long-term stability for the state. There were laws against adultery and promoting marriage and childbirth by the grant of special privileges or penalties, laws against luxury and electoral corruption, and appellate laws superceding public jury-verdicts ultimately to the jurisdiction of Augustus himself.

Remaining years of the Principate and

Succession, 17 B.C. -- 14 A.D.

To mark the new age of Augustus in 17, he and Agrippa celebrated the solemn

sacrifices at the time-honored Secular Games. In succession plans that year, Augustus adopted his grandsons, Gaius and Lucius, sons of Agrippa and Julia. From 16 to 13 Augustus was abroad organizing Gaul, and Agrippa was in Asia. In 15 Augustus established the Imperial mint at Lugdunum; the senate, which traditionally controlled coinage, continued to produce money in bronze, while Augustus obtained direct control over gold and silver coinage with the mint at Lugdunum in the west and at Antioch in the east. In 13 Augustus and Agrippa returned to Rome, and their provinces were renewed for five more years, as was Agrippa's tribunician power; later in that year Agrippa died, leaving Augustus without his long-trusted friend, who was buried with lavish honors in Augustus's mausoleum on the bank of the Tiber river. After Agrippa's death, Julia bore their third son, Agrippa Postumus. Tiberius had to divorce his wife, Vipsania, to marry the widowed Julia. In 13 the former triumvir, Lepidus, also died, leaving open the life-long office of the high priest of Roman state-religion; in 12 Augustus became pontifex maximus. Augustus's power as supervisor of morals was renewed for five more years. He reformed the senate for the third time, and he set up a permanent commission for the care of the water supply, which had been Agrippa's domain. Tiberius and Drusus campaigned in Germany and Dalmatia, and in 9 Drusus died. In 8 Augustus's proconsular power was renewed for a third time for ten years; a census was held, the month Sextilis was renamed August, and Rome was divided into fourteen regions.

In 6 Tiberius was given tribunician power for life and was sent to the east to settle the throne in Armenia. In 5 and 2 Augustus again assumed the consulship only to introduce his grandsons, Gaius and Lucius, to public life, with their ceremonial assumption of the toga virilis. At the designation of Gaius in 5 as princeps iuventutis and so as apparent successor of Augustus, Tiberius settled at Rhodes for eight years in so-called retirement, which may have been used to gain support in the east for his own succession. In 2 B. C. Augustus received the purely honorific title pater patriae, with the associations of the power and prestigious influence of a father over the state family. His titles included Imperator Caesar Divi Filius Augustus Pontifex Maximus, Pater Patriae. All of his titles were republican, including Imperator. His military proconsular power was never given prominence in his official appellation; Trajan was the first emperor to use the title proconsul, and only when he was not in Italy.

In 2 Gaius was dispatched from Rome to negotiate with the Parthians in the east. In this year Augustus was compelled to banish from Rome his own daughter, Julia, for her scandalous personal behavior, which was a great embarrassment to her father's legislative efforts at moral reform. With Julia's departure and divorce from Tiberius, Augustus had to make his dynastic plans without the hope of any more male grandchildren, the supply of which dwindled to only Agrippa Postumus, when Lucius and Gaius died, in 2 and 4 A.D., respectively. In 2 A.D. Tiberius was recalled from Rhodes to Rome, perhaps because eastern support for his succession had surpassed Gaius'; Tiberius' consular imperium and tribunician power had run out in 1 B.C. and had not been renewed. In 4 A.D., after the death of Gaius, Augustus adopted Tiberius and Agrippa Postumus. Though Augustus preferred a Julian heir to the Claudian Tiberius, Augustus disliked the

wild behavior of Agrippa Postumus and exiled him three years after his adoption. Tiberius, now adopted into the Julian line, was forced to enlarge the line further by adopting, in dynastic preference to his own son by Vipsania, his nephew Germanicus; his mother was the daughter of Augustus's sister, and Germanicus married Augustus's granddaughter, Agrippina.

From 4 to 11 Augustus employed Tiberius in campaigns in the Balkans and Germany. In 6 Augustus established the *aerarium militare* as a public treasury to pay soldiers; though he made the initial grant from his own money, thereafter the treasury was maintained by new sales and inheritance taxes, with the result that donations to retired soldiers did not appear to depend on the emperor. A new fire brigade and nocturnal police force was also established, in seven cohorts of one-thousand freedmen each, with two cohorts for each of the fourteen regions of the city. In 12 Tiberius celebrated a triumph for Dalmatia and Pannonia, and Germanicus held the consulship.

In 13 Tiberius was again granted proconsular imperium and tribunician power. In 14 he conducted a census with Augustus and then left Rome for a command in Illyricum. Augustus died on 19 August A.D. 14 at Nola. The armies were loyal to Tiberius, and he had the tribunician right of initiative at Rome. This hereditary system of succession was established by Augustus for centuries.

The Empire

Territorial Acquisitions

Political power at Rome had always been won through the force, prestige, and wealth of conquest; Augustus' armies conquered more lands than any of his Roman predecessors or successors. After the death of Cleopatra in 30, Egypt was the first major gain by Augustus, with the wealth and flourishing cities of the Ptolemies, and Egyptian grain. Exposed geographically only in the south, the province was advanced to the First Cataract by the prefect Cornelius Gallus; in 25 there was another successful expedition against raids by the Ethiopians.

Although Augustus, through his legate, failed to conquer Arabia Felix, the Red Sea was secured and sea-trade with India was ultimately established. In 27 Augustus visited Gaul and held a census there for the purpose of fairer taxation, and in 26-25 he fought a war in Spain, which Agrippa finally concluded in 19, with the pacification of the province. While Augustus was in Spain, Varro Murena defeated the Salassi, who were raiding Cisalpine Gaul from Aosta in the western Alps. In 25 Augustus settled Juba as the king of Mauretania in Africa, another province valuable for the grain supply to Rome.

In 25 in Asia Minor, Galatia was annexed, and Augustus founded the colony of Caesarea at Antioch. The main problem in the east was Parthia, which could unsettle Roman control in neighboring Armenia, and further west into Galatia. In 30 Augustus refrained from a draining war with Phraates of Parthia, by refusing to abet a pretender to the Parthian throne, by setting up a client-king in Armenia

minor, and by holding the brothers of Armenian king Artaxes as hostages to Armenia's good behavior as a buffer state in the area. Ten years later, after the watchful regency of Agrippa from 23-21, Augustus reached a diplomatic settlement with Parthia for the return of the Roman standards captured from Crassus in 53 B.C., for the stability of the Parthian kingdom in the region, and for Parthian agreement to Roman control in Armenia; Parthia acquiesced under only the threat of combined military force from Augustus in Syria and Tiberius in Armenia. From 16-13 Agrippa was back in the east settling the Bosporan kingdom, which was economically important as the main source of food from southern Russia for cities of northern Asia Minor and the Aegean, as well as for Roman troops on the eastern frontier; despite a later shift in local control, Roman hegemony was established.

In 15 Tiberius and Drusus completed the pacification of the northern Alpine frontier, begun in 25 when T. Varro wiped out the Salassi on the western side. Now on the eastern side of the Alps, the frontier was pushed up to the Danube river, including Raetia and Noricum. With Alpine passes open, Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul became more united and prosperous; the raids of the Alpine tribes of Italy were over, and Roman armies could more easily get to central Gaul and the Rhine. From 13-9 the northern frontier was further strengthened near Illyricum by the conquest of Pannonia. Roman control thus stretched from the Adriatic to the Danube, making an overland route from Rome to Illyricum through the easternmost Julian Alps, and connecting Macedonia to Italy and Gaul. After an uprising in Thrace was quelled from 11-9, the Romans were in control of the territory south of the entire length of the Danube to the Black Sea. At the northernmost frontier, Drusus campaigned in Germany from 12-9 and tried to advance Caesar's German frontier of the Rhine as far as the Elbe, but he accomplished only raids between the two rivers.

On the eastern frontier, the Parthians and Armenians were in dispute again, and in 2 B.C. Augustus sent his grandson Gaius there, in what was already a successfully negotiated end to the trouble. Since 37 Judea had been controlled by Herod the Great as a friend of Augustus; Judea was finally made into a Roman province in 6 A.D., when at the request of the Jews, Archelaus, the son of Herod, was driven out.

In 5 A.D. on the northern frontier Tiberius reached the Elbe, and then tried to subdue the Marcomanni, so that by linking the Elbe with the Danube a new frontier could be established all the way to the Black Sea. His efforts were interrupted and never resumed. In 6 there was a great and bloody revolt in Pannonia and Dalmatia, which Tiberius finally crushed in 7-8 in Pannonia, and in 9 in Dalmatia. Though Tiberius did return to Germany, he and Germanicus were occupied in defending the Rhine after Quinctilius Varus suffered a disastrous defeat there at the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest, losing three legions and all the territory east of the river. Despite the recovery of the river and forays beyond it, Augustus gave up the thought of a frontier beyond the Rhine.

Imperial Policy and Ideology

In his relationship with the armies as well as with the provincials, Augustus operated as a patron to clients. He was the only patron of the client army, which he controlled with land or money, often out of his own great wealth; he gave to his successors an army accustomed to dynastic loyalty. Similarly in the provinces, local client-kings and magistrates who were loyal to Augustus created relative stability for an empire whose allegiance no longer shifted to the latest victor in Roman civil wars, but rested on the dynasty of the principate.

While an overseas empire demanded a standing army instead of simply an emergency force, Augustus still did not have an integrated imperial policy of either defense or expansion. Military campaigns were conducted pragmatically for the protection of frontiers, the assurance of the food supply, or the reaction to rebellion. Augustus, however, exploited the appearance of aggressive conquest, taking military credit even for diplomatic gains like Parthia, and granting decisive honors for family who were only minimally successful, or who had to return subsequently to quell rebellion.

The ideology of the Pax Augusta referred to the condition of those who had been subdued; peace was born of broad imperial conquest, which did not imply any limits or a governing policy of pacifism. Similarly, conquest or colonization by Augustus did not have an ideological and policy goal of Romanization. The primary purpose of colonization of pacified regions was military control through the grant of land to soldiers who formed garrison-colonies, and these colonies had the effect of encouraging trade in the provinces. In the west, the adoption of Roman customs and language took place spontaneously in the relative cultural void, which absorbed the Roman pattern of urbanization; in the east the sophisticated native cultures were not Romanized, nor did Augustus intend them to be.

State Religion, and Imperial Image and Building

Roman religion consisted of cult ritual, whose regular and traditional performance had a cohesive role in the state. The prestige of religious things had been dampened by neglect during the civil war years, but now religion was restored and promoted by Augustus for stability and for his own position in the state. Julius Caesar had traced the divine ancestry of his family to Venus and Mars, and when he was deified in 42, Augustus early in his career became the son of a god; in 29 he dedicated the Temple of the Divine Julius in the Roman Forum. Augustus's defeat of Antony and Cleopatra was portrayed as a victory of Roman over Egyptian gods; in 28 Augustus dedicated a temple to 'Actian Apollo' on Rome's Palatine Hill, where Augustus himself lived. Apollo was represented in a cult statue and in reliefs as both the god of vengeance against sacrilege like Antony's, and also as a bringer of peace. Augustus undertook the restoration of existing temples in the city, and he claims to have rebuilt eighty-two. (Res Gestae, 20.4)

After Actium Augustus was venerated as a divine king in Egypt, and the provinces in the east were allowed to erect temples to him in association with the goddess Roma. At Rome the senate made the traditional vows and prayers for his safety, and included him in annual prayers at the beginning of the year; even at Rome, however, the process of divination was begun. His name was included in the ancient Salian hymn to Mars or Quirinus. In 27 the cult of the Genius of Augustus was established, in which it was decreed that a libation should be poured to his guardian spirit at public and private banquets. The senate authorized a tribute to his moral leadership by setting up in the senate-house a golden shield celebrating his military virtue, clemency, justice, and social and religious responsibility; this shield was associated with the goddess Victoria and therefore implied god-given rule. Laurel trees sacred to Apollo were set up on either side of Augustus's house, and for rescuing citizens he was awarded the corona civica, made of oak leaves from the tree sacred to Jupiter. On coins of the period Jupiter's eagle, a symbol of apotheosis, was depicted with the civic crown and laurel branches.

In 27 in the Campus Martius Agrippa built the Pantheon, but he was not allowed to fashion it as an overt 'Augusteum'; instead the temple was dedicated to the divine ancestry of Augustus through Venus, Mars, and the deified Julius. In 25-24 work began on the Temple of Mars Ultor, which Augustus had vowed at the battle of Philippi in vengeance for his father's murder, and which later housed the standards returned by the Parthians. In 22 the temple of Jupiter Tonans was dedicated on the Capitoline Hill by Augustus who had escaped being struck by lightning during the Spanish campaign. After 20 the Prima Porta Augustus was commissioned, a statue of the emperor on whose cuirass is depicted the return of the standards by Parthia, in the presence of Mars, Apollo, and Venus.

In 17 Augustus celebrated the Secular Games which marked the close of a saeculum or epoch of a human life-span, defined in the Republic at one-hundred years, but celebrated elastically in Augustus's day at one-hundred-and-ten. In the new spirit of prosperity, the traditional deities of dread, including warlike Mars, and underworld Pluto and Persephone, were absent; sacrifices were made in honor of the Fates, the goddess of childbirth, Earth Mother, Jupiter and Juno, and Apollo and Diana. The poet Horace was commissioned to write a hymn which was sung by twenty-seven boys and twenty-seven girls.

In 13 at the return of Augustus from Spain and Gaul, the senate decreed the Ara Pacis to be built near the Campus Martius. This altar was to be used by magistrates and priests for annual sacrifices. Reliefs on the altar depict the symbols and fruits of peace in juxtaposition with figures of war by which peace was gained, and there are processions perhaps representing the major priesthoods in Rome, with Augustus himself portrayed in religious attire. Near this altar was a sundial associated with Augustus's patron, the sun-god Apollo. In 12 in the western province of Gaul, Drusus set up an altar at Lugdunum dedicated to Roma and Augustus.

After Actium, when Augustus was given the power of creating new patricians, the supply of men for priesthoods was increased. Augustus himself became a member of the Fratres Arvales, an elite fraternity which performed time-honored, public sacrifices for the prosperity of the state-family. In 12 Augustus became pontifex maximus; in 11, a new high priest of Jupiter, the flamen dialis, was appointed. When Augustus in 8 divided Rome into fourteen regions, the humble worship by the poor of the gods of the crossroads, the Lares Compitales, was elevated to official stature; this worship was promoted throughout the regions of Rome and Italy in association with the worship of the genius of Augustus. At this time the genius of Augustus was probably included in official oaths.

Less than one month after his death in 14 A.D., divine honors were decreed to Augustus at Rome, and the precedent was set there for the posthumous deification of successive emperors.

Assessment

There was not a dyarchic division of power between the senate and Augustus. Augustus ultimately had the power of all the legions abroad and of the standing army of 9,000 soldiers in the Praetorian Guard at Rome and in the Italian towns. The senate, however, had important judicial, financial, and probouleutic functions at home, and it was the source of provincial governorships. The basic social hierarchy of Rome was maintained with the senatorial nobility at the top; the equites, who were of the same economic class but lacked the prestige of the senate, still staffed the jury-courts and junior army and procuratorial posts, but now they also got provincial commands. Around Augustus there was not so much a 'party' of political alliance, as a group of friends or clients who were confidants by the personal choice of Augustus. Most important for advisory, administrative, and military positions was the dynastic network of the imperial family.

In both the ancient and modern assessments of Augustus, there is a tension between the favorable view that the statesman Augustus atoned for the ruthlessness of Octavian, and the negative view that Augustus pursued power under all circumstances, doomed the nobility, slaughtered libertas, and was the political forerunner of World War Two continental dictators. It is apparent, at least, that the most historically significant result of the principate was the restoration of a ratified rule of law, with Augustus as the supreme judge, initiator, and executive officer. This rule evolved gradually and pragmatically; its basic ideology and administration were transmitted by the dynastic system for centuries of relative stability at Rome.

Ancient Sources

On Augustus as Octavian, Cicero's letters and Philippics describe the year after Julius Caesar's murder (March 44 - summer 43 BC); Plutarch's Lives of Brutus and Antony are sources for the triumviral period.

The Monumentum Ancyranum is an inscription known since the sixteenth century from the temple of 'Rome and Augustus' at Ancyra in Galatia. The inscription is Augustus's own account of his achievements and honors at Rome. This account is commonly known by its prefatory title *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, or "achievements of the divine Augustus." The purpose of the inscription was to show and justify Augustus's influence and power at Rome and in the Roman world. The text, which is addressed to the Roman people, describes the beginning of his public life, his military successes, honors given to him, official expenditures for the public good, foreign policy, and ultimately the highest honor any Roman could receive, the title of *pater patriae*, 'father of the country.' Since Augustus received this title in 2 B.C. the text of the Ancyra inscription appears to date from that time, though earlier drafts are likely, as his honors and achievements grew. According to Suetonius (Aug. 101, 4), the inscription was originally designed for bronze tablets set up in front of Augustus's mausoleum built substantially, if not completely, in 28 BC at Rome.

The *Fasti Consulares* and *Fasti Juliani* provide further epigraphic evidence about Augustus and his time in the form of official lists of the holders of the annual consulship at Rome, and of holidays and religious festivals, respectively.

Nicolaus of Damascus wrote a *Life of Augustus* c. 25-20 B.C.; only a fragment of this eulogistic work survives concerning Augustus's youth and ending with the death of Julius. The work was probably a free paraphrase of an autobiography by Augustus.

Velleius Paterculus, who wrote the *Historiae* during the reign of Tiberius (14-37 A.D.), provides a virtually contemporary, often eye-witness, and flattering account of wars of the Augustan period.

Appian describes events at Rome until 35 B.C. Though he wrote the *Civil Wars* in the second century A.D., Appian's account, sometimes favorable and sometimes not, is based on the contemporary history of C. Asinius Pollio, who was consul in 40 B.C.

Dio Cassius is the main source for events at Rome from 36 B.C., though the author himself lived c. 150-235 A.D., and his sources for the Augustan period are unknown. His account describes a ruthless Octavian, but an ideal Augustus as *princeps*, and a model for the Severan Era.

Tacitus gives an account of Augustus's merits and mostly demerits in the *Annals*, which the historian may have started composing as early as 115.

Suetonius wrote a *Life of Augustus* in the second century A.D. Suetonius was the court archivist of Hadrian (117-38 A.D.), and he had access to imperial documents of the Augustan age. Detached anecdotes replace a fully connected chronology.

Philo of Alexandria extols the benevolence of Augustus in contrast to Caligula, in Embassy to Gaius, c. 40 A.D.

Flavius Josephus both favored and disfavored Rome in Bellum Judaism c. 75 and Jewish Antiquities c 93-94A.D..

Pliny the Elder wrote negative reports about Augustus in Natural History, completed in 77 A.D.

Florus wrote a second century A.D. Epitome of all Wars during 700 Years, an abridgement of the history of Roman wars waged through the Age of Augustus. Eutropius and Aurelius Victor were fourth century A.D. epitomists; Eutropius based his early Roman history on an epitome of Livy, and Victor wrote the Caesares based on Suetonius. John Zonaras wrote a twelfth century epitome of Dio Cassius.

Lastly, for the era and the man, the literature of the Augustan Age is a major source which includes the works of Livy, Vergil, Horace, Ovid, Propertius, and Tibullus .

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Caligula

From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1979_in_film

Caligula is a 1979 film directed by Tinto Brass, with additional scenes filmed by Bob Guccione and Giancarlo Lui, about the Roman Emperor Gaius Caesar Germanicus also known as "Caligula". Caligula was written by Gore Vidal and co-financed by Penthouse magazine, though the script underwent several re-writes after Tinto Brass and Malcolm McDowell found Gore Vidal's interpretation of the infamous Emperor to be unsatisfactory. The producers were Bob Guccione and Franco Rossellini. The film was initially budgeted at \$17.5-million, but by the end of the production the budget swelled up to about \$22 million. The film ended up grossing \$21 million in its initial release; afterward, Caligula became a long-time hit on home video market. The production advertised itself as "the most controversial film in history. Only one movie dares to show the perversion behind Imperial Rome..."

It stars Malcolm McDowell as the Emperor and chronicles his rise and fall as the brief ruler of the Roman Empire. The film focuses heavily on Caligula's infamously deviant sexual practices, as well as those of his contemporaries. It drew heavy criticism because of its scenes of actual penetration in the "uncut" version.

Production:

Gore Vidal developed the screenplay from Roberto Rossellini's unproduced television mini-series treatment at the request of the famous director's nephew, Franco. Rossellini and Vidal originally intended for the film to be a modestly budgeted historical drama, but could not find a financier, until Vidal had the idea of contacting media mogul Bob Guccione, who agreed on two conditions; that the film would be transformed into a flamboyant, over-the-top, luxurious spectacle akin to Hollywood's sword and sandal epics of the 50's and 60's and that hardcore sex would be added to the script in order to plug Guccione's Penthouse magazine. Both Vidal and Rossellini obliged.

Celebrated art director Danilo Donati was hired to build the expensive and complex sets & costumes. Renowned talent, including Malcolm McDowell, Helen Mirren, Peter O'Toole and John Gielgud were cast. Maria Schneider was originally cast as Caligula's doomed sister Drusilla, but later dropped out due to her concerns with the sex and nudity in the film and was shortly replaced by Teresa Ann Savoy. Tinto Brass, a relatively young Italian director known for his works of avante-garde, but picked out by Bob Guccione for being able to fuse explicit sex and big budget historical drama in the 1976 controversial film Salon Kitty, was hired to direct the film. The production was housed in Dear Studios, Rome, where

the infamous debacle *Cleopatra* was filmed thirteen years earlier. The shooting commenced in September of 1976, with the hopes of an early 1977 release.

This proved to be simply wishful thinking, as the entire production started to slowly fall apart. It first started with Tinto Brass and Malcolm McDowell being unhappy with Gore Vidal's interpretation of the title character, Vidal agreed to collaborate with them and re-write the shooting script over a dozen times, and the three people became rather annoyed with each other by the time the principal photography began.

Soon afterwards, due to Rossellini and Guccione's inexperience in producing major films, it was realized by the filmmakers involved that the shooting schedule for the production was horribly unrealistic for a film of such scope and Danilo Donati had to scrap his original ideas for the sets and replace them with such surreal imagery as bizarre matte paintings, blacked out areas, silk backdrops and



curtains. This resulted in even more departures from the script, with Tinto Brass and the actors improvising around scenes written to take place in entirely different locations, and sometimes shooting whole new scenes (such as the frolicking scene that erroneously opens the film) in order show some progress made while the incomplete sets were off-limits. The production was also plagued with delays due to the constant clashes between Tinto Brass and Bob Guccione over the sexual nature of the film.

← *Malcolm McDowell as Caligula*

By the time the principal photography on *Caligula* had completed, Gore Vidal (having learned the hard way from his involvement with *Myra Breckinridge*), was beginning to fear of being associated with such an out-of-control production and rightfully thinking that the film would turn out incoherent, disowned the movie and did his best to distance himself from the project. Bob Guccione, infuriated that Tinto Brass didn't showcase his hand-picked Penthouse Pet models, secretly snuck back into the studio and shot additional hardcore sexual content more in line with his vision of the film, which he would later use to replace Tinto Brass' bizarre and farcical scenes of sexual depravity.

When the film finally entered post-production, Bob Guccione and his close friend Giancarlo Lui decided to fire Tinto Brass because neither was happy of where he had taken the film in terms of story, political context (Guccione would later call Brass a "Communist") and depiction of sexuality. Giancarlo Lui then took it upon himself to re-fashion the film into something more in-line with what Gore Vidal had first scripted many drafts ago and, more importantly, with what the readers of

Penthouse magazine were expecting out of a Bob Guccione production. This ultimately proved to be a grave mistake that destroyed the film.

Lui deleted as much surrealism and inventions of Malcolm McDowell and Brass as he possibly could without completely distorting the story. Also, with much footage improvised and re-written from the original draft of the film, many scenes were deleted all together or trimmed, scrambled and re-cut into something barely coherent. Also, much of the disturbing sexual images Brass had shot were deleted and about six minutes worth of them were replaced by Bob Guccione's re-shoots. All in all, the final cut of the film bore virtually no resemblance to what Tinto Brass and Malcolm McDowell had intended. Ironically, it also bore little resemblance to what Vidal wanted as well.

In the unpleasant aftermath, Tinto Brass and Gore Vidal launched numerous independent lawsuits over such things as breach of contract and fraud, delaying the release of *Caligula* indefinitely. Both eventually settled for cash settlements and the right to have their names partially removed from the film. Afterwards, various charges of obscenity also contributed to the film's hold up from public release.

In late 1979, almost four years after the production began, *Caligula* finally made its debut in a crippled, butchered, practically incoherent form.

Multiple versions:

Caligula was shown in various versions, including:

* A 150 minute Italian cut; it was basically a shortened version of the U.S. edition. It was eventually pulled out of release in favor of Franco Rossellini's re-edited version (more on which below), but a briefly released VHS tape exists, though it is now out-of print and until recently was considered a collector's item. However, Raro Video announced that it would release a re-mastered edition of this cut on December 5th, 2006, along with an interview by Tinto Brass, in which he, for the first time, would discuss in great detail where the editing of the film went wrong. This never came to fruition, when Raro Video's distributor backed out at the last second and the company ended up replacing it with a remastered print of Franco Rossellini's edit, though Raro Video did promise to release the 150 minute version in the near future.

* The unrated version, available in the U.S. and mainland Europe, running 156 minutes (NTSC) and 150 minutes (PAL). This is the most widely seen cut of the film. It enjoyed a limited, albeit highly profitable, run in the American cinemas. This version contained many scenes with extremely taboo, sexually, and violently explicit content, including orgies, masturbation, fellatio, cunnilingus, anal fisting, male and female homosexuality, cross-dressing and transvestism, sibling incest, rape, male and female urination, decapitating prisoners using a lawn-mower-type device (which is unlikely to have actually existed), unseen fratricide, penile castration and unseen testi castration, and slamming a child on stone steps like a rag doll. The film was highly controversial and would certainly have received an

X rating from the MPAA. The U.S. DVD release of this version is available in a blue cover. In 2001, Dutch FilmWorks (DFW) released a European region 2 uncut version of Caligula in re-mastered form with a cleaner print. DFW released two editions; first, a standard single DVD of the main feature, and a second, limited edition double disc set including biographies of the actors, filmographies of the actors, a "making of Caligula" featurette (55 mins), and a photo gallery. Another 2 disc deluxe edition was released in France early in 2003, containing improved image and audio quality.

* The UK version, running 144 minutes. Aside from the removing 12 minutes of explicit footage, the editors included some replacement shots, derived from Tinto Brass' principal shoot, as well as remainder footage from Bob Guccione's re-shoots. Just like the older Italian cut, this version is also out-of-print these days, but is actively hunted for by various collectors.

* The rumored and infamous 210-minute unreleased version, shown in a private screening in Cannes, France (though not as part of the film festival). It is highly sought-after, but no one has been able to locate a copy of this version, and is considered by many to be simply an urban legend.

* Guccione eventually authorized an R-rated cut released in 1981, 105 minutes long, which earned the film wider distribution. Contrary to popular belief, majority of the cut footage was that of various dramatic scenes, which many felt brought the pace to a screeching halt (this was possibly due to the botched editing). In this version all of the hardcore, bloody and violent footage was either trimmed or replaced with yet another set of alternate shots and angles.

* In 1984, Franco Rossellini, unhappy with Bob Guccione's final edit of the film, re-edited an extended, pre-release print of Caligula, which may or may not have been the infamous 210 minute version. This new edition of the film, re-titled as *Io, Caligola* clocked in at 133 minutes and contained various minor scenes and shots not present in any other versions of the film, but the Italian censors had it cut down to an astonishing 86 minutes. However, after a huge backlash, they allowed it to be brought up to 123 minutes. The missing ten minutes are no doubt responsible for a few jump cuts that occur throughout the film. This version has been released on DVD, but is available exclusively in Italy.

* When *Io, Caligola* was released on home video in the late eighties, the distributor put back in some of the hardcore material shot by Bob Guccione (it was deleted at Franco Rossellini's order) in order to boost the sales. This is the version that is currently available on DVD.

* The second R-rated version saw light in 1999. It was released straight to DVD and contained no alternate angles. Various shots simply repeated themselves continuously instead of using the different takes of scenes seen in the R-rated theatrical release, causing numerous continuity problems and a disorienting, nauseating feel to the viewers. The rest of the cuts and trims, however, were

based on the 1981 censored release. This DVD version ran a total of 102 minutes and was released with a red cover.

* A few months later, the FilmFour channel, frustrated by the lack of any extended version of the film available in the UK (only the low quality 1981 censored version was still in print), released their own cut of Caligula, running approximately 140 minutes (the missing 16 minutes can be mostly attributed to the PAL overspeeding and time compression.) It was essentially the same as the 156 minute version, but lacked all of Guccione's footage (much to his anger). Those missing bits were the lesbian tryst and a handful of sexual inserts during the imperial bordello sequence.

The new R-rated version, the 156-minute cut and the lo, Caligola version have been released to DVD in various countries. The 1981 R-rated cut was released briefly on DVD in the UK

The uncut Twentieth Anniversary Edition DVD was refused classification in 2006 by Australia's OFLC effectively banning the film in its uncensored form. The OFLC deemed the film too sexually explicit to fall within the R18+ classification (despite sexually explicit mainstream films such as 9 Songs receiving this rating). The film could not be accommodated in the X classification (for explicit sex) as it contains depictions of violence. Although the film's sexual content was permissible in the X category, the OFLC's classification guidelines unambiguously state "No depiction of violence... is allowed in the category" [1].

Critical reaction:

The film was heavily panned by critics; Roger Ebert gave it zero stars, describing it as "sickening, utterly worthless, shameful trash"; a generation later it remained on the list of his most hated films (he also mentioned walking out of the theatre in the middle of it). Both Peter O'Toole and Malcolm McDowell have since expressed regret in participating in the film. The director, Tinto Brass, disowned the film altogether, since it was taken out of his hands and given to Giancarlo Lui, to complete the editing. Writer Gore Vidal also disowned the film, but that happened much earlier than the incident with Brass and for an entirely different reason: Vidal and Brass had major creative differences over the subject matter, and though both had strong ideas concerning Caligula's reasons and motivations behind his madness, neither could find a common ground. The majority of those behind the film backed Tinto Brass, which infuriated Gore Vidal, who left the project, bad-mouthing the entire production. Whatever intellectual heft Vidal's writing and research would have given the production is notably absent from the finished version, since it was re-written into a somewhat fictionalized political fable by Brass and McDowell, which, in turn, was deleted by Bob Guccione and Giancarlo Lui during the editing process.

Cast

- * Malcolm McDowell -- Caligula
- * Peter O'Toole -- Tiberius

- * Paolo Bonacelli -- Cassius Chaerea
- * John Gielgud -- Nerva
- * Helen Mirren -- Caesonia
- * Teresa Ann Savoy -- Drusilla
- * Lori Wagner -- Agrippina
- * Anneka di Lorenzo -- Messalina
- * John Steiner -- Longinus

As would be the case with Commodus 120 years later, after he was assassinated Caligula was savaged by Roman era "historians" in the employ of his enemies. There is little independent evidence that anything they wrote about his depravity and violence is true. – tkw

Caligula

From <http://www.roman-emperors.org/gaius.htm>

Gaius Caesar Augustus Germanicus (b. A.D. 12, d. A.D. 41, emperor A.D. 37-41) represents a turning point in the early history of the Principate. Unfortunately, his is the most poorly documented reign of the Julio-Claudian dynasty. The literary sources for these four years are meager, frequently anecdotal, and universally hostile.[[1]] As a result, not only are many of the events of the reign unclear, but Gaius himself appears more as a caricature than a real person, a crazed megalomaniac given to capricious cruelty and harebrained schemes. Although some headway can be made in disentangling truth from embellishment, the true character of the youthful emperor will forever elude us.



Early Life and Reign:

Gaius was born on 31 August, A.D. 12, probably at the Julio-Claudian resort of Antium (modern Anzio), the third of six children born to Augustus's adopted grandson, Germanicus, and Augustus's granddaughter, Agrippina. As a baby he accompanied his parents on military campaigns in the north and was shown to the troops wearing a miniature soldier's outfit, including the hob-nailed sandal called *caliga*, whence the nickname by which posterity remembers him.[[2]] His

childhood was not a happy one, spent amid an atmosphere of paranoia, suspicion, and murder. Instability within the Julio-Claudian house, generated by uncertainty over the succession, led to a series of personal tragedies. When his father died under suspicious circumstances on 10 October A.D. 19, relations between his mother and his grand-uncle, the emperor Tiberius, deteriorated irretrievably, and the adolescent Gaius was sent to live first with his great-grandmother Livia in A.D. 27 and then, following Livia's death two years later, with his grandmother Antonia. Shortly before the fall of Tiberius's Praetorian Prefect, Sejanus, in A.D. 31 he was summoned to join Tiberius at his villa on Capri, where he remained until his accession in A.D. 37. In the interim, his two brothers and his mother suffered demotion and, eventually, violent death. Throughout these years, the only position of administrative responsibility Gaius held was an honorary quaestorship in A.D. 33. [[3]]

When Tiberius died on 16 March A.D. 37, Gaius was in a perfect position to assume power, despite the obstacle of Tiberius's will, which named him and his cousin Tiberius Gemellus joint heirs. (Gemellus's life was shortened considerably by this bequest, since Gaius ordered him killed within a matter of months.) Backed by the Praetorian Prefect Q. Sutorius Macro, Gaius asserted his dominance. He had Tiberius's will declared null and void on grounds of insanity, accepted the powers of the Principate as conferred by the Senate, and entered Rome on 28 March amid scenes of wild rejoicing. His first acts were generous in spirit: he paid Tiberius's bequests and gave a cash bonus to the Praetorian Guard, the first recorded *donativum* to troops in imperial history. He honored his father and other dead relatives and publicly destroyed Tiberius's personal papers, which no doubt implicated many of the Roman elite in the destruction of Gaius's immediate family. Finally, he recalled exiles and reimbursed those wronged by the imperial tax system [[4]]. His popularity was immense. Yet within four years he lay in a bloody heap in a palace corridor, murdered by officers of the very guard entrusted to protect him. What went wrong?

Gaius's "Madness":

The ancient sources are practically unanimous as to the cause of Gaius's downfall: he was insane. The writers differ as to how this condition came about, but all agree that after his good start Gaius began to behave in an openly autocratic manner, even a crazed one. [[5]] Outlandish stories cluster about the raving emperor, illustrating his excessive cruelty, immoral sexual escapades, or disrespect toward tradition and the Senate. The sources describe his incestuous relations with his sisters, laughable military campaigns in the north, the building of a pontoon bridge across the Bay at Baiae, and the plan to make his horse a consul. [[6]] Modern scholars have pored over these incidents and come up with a variety of explanations: Gaius suffered from an illness; he was misunderstood; he was corrupted by power; or, accepting the ancient evidence, they conclude that he was mad. [[7]] However, appreciating the nature of the ancient sources is crucial when approaching this issue. Their unanimous hostility renders their

testimony suspect, especially since Gaius's reported behavior fits remarkably well with that of the ancient tyrant, a literary type enshrined in Greco-Roman tradition centuries before his reign. Further, the only eye-witness account of Gaius's behavior, Philo's *Embassy to Gaius*, offers little evidence of outright insanity, despite the antagonism of the author, whom Gaius treated with the utmost disrespect. Rather, he comes across as aloof, arrogant, egotistical, and cuttingly witty -- but not insane. The best explanation both for Gaius's behavior and the subsequent hostility of the sources is that he was an inexperienced young man thrust into a position of unlimited power, the true nature of which had been carefully disguised by its founder, Augustus. Gaius, however, saw through the disguise and began to act accordingly. This, coupled with his troubled upbringing and almost complete lack of tact led to behavior that struck his contemporaries as extreme, even insane.

Gaius and the Empire:

Gaius's reign is too short, and the surviving ancient accounts too sensationalized, for any serious policies of his to be discerned. During his reign, Mauretania was annexed and reorganized into two provinces, Herod Agrippa was appointed to a kingdom in Palestine, and severe riots took place in Alexandria between Jews and Greeks. These events are largely overlooked in the sources, since they offer slim pickings for sensational stories of madness. [[8]] Two other episodes, however, garner greater attention: Gaius's military activities on the northern frontier, and his vehement demand for divine honors. His military activities are portrayed as ludicrous, with Gauls dressed up as Germans at his triumph and Roman troops ordered to collect sea-shells as "spoils of the sea." Modern scholars have attempted to make sense of these events in various ways. The most reasonable suggestion is that Gaius went north to earn military glory and discovered there a nascent conspiracy under the commander of the Upper German legions, Cn. Lentulus Gaetulicus. The subsequent events are shrouded in uncertainty, but it is known that Gaetulicus and Gaius's brother-in-law, M. Aemilius Lepidus, were executed and Gaius's two surviving sisters, implicated in the plot, suffered exile. [[9]] Gaius's enthusiasm for divine honors for himself and his favorite sister, Drusilla (who died suddenly in A.D. 38 and was deified), is presented in the sources as another clear sign of his madness, but it may be no more than the young autocrat tactlessly pushing the limits of the imperial cult, already established under Augustus. Gaius's excess in this regard is best illustrated by his order that a statue of him be erected in the Temple at Jerusalem. Only the delaying tactics of the Syrian governor, P. Petronius, and the intervention of Herod Agrippa prevented riots and a potential uprising in Palestine. [[10]]

Conspiracy and Assassination:

The conspiracy that ended Gaius's life was hatched among the officers of the Praetorian Guard, apparently for purely personal reasons. It appears also to have

had the support of some senators and an imperial freedman. [[11]] As with conspiracies in general, there are suspicions that the plot was more broad-based than the sources intimate, and it may even have enjoyed the support of the next emperor Claudius, but these propositions are not provable on available evidence. On 24 January A.D. 41 the praetorian tribune Cassius Chaerea and other guardsmen caught Gaius alone in a secluded palace corridor and cut him down. He was 28 years old and had ruled three years and ten months. [[12]]

Conclusion:

Whatever damage Tiberius's later years had done to the carefully crafted political edifice created by Augustus, Gaius multiplied it a hundredfold. When he came to power in A.D. 37 Gaius had no administrative experience beyond his honorary quaestorship, and had spent an unhappy early life far from the public eye. He appears, once in power, to have realized the boundless scope of his authority and acted accordingly. For the elite, this situation proved intolerable and ensured the blackening of Caligula's name in the historical record they would dictate. The sensational and hostile nature of that record, however, should in no way trivialize Gaius's importance. His reign highlighted an inherent weakness in the Augustan Principate, now openly revealed for what it was -- a raw monarchy in which only the self-discipline of the incumbent acted as a restraint on his behavior. That the only means of retiring the wayward *princeps* was murder marked another important revelation: Roman emperors could not relinquish their powers without simultaneously relinquishing their lives.

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NOTES

[[1]] The main ancient sources for Gaius's reign are: Suet. *Gaius*; Dio 59; Philo *In Flaccum* and *Legatio ad Gaium*; Jos. *AJ* 19.1-211. Tacitus's account of the reign is lost. However, he makes occasional references to Gaius in the extant portions of his works, as does Seneca. All of these sources have reason to be hostile to Gaius's memory: Seneca's style was roundly abused by the emperor (Suet. *Gaius* 53.2; Dio 59.19.7-8); Philo and Josephus, as Jews, resented Gaius's blasphemous demands for divinity that almost roused Palestine to rebellion (see above, Gaius and the Empire); and the later sources inherited a tradition about Gaius that can be shown to be biased and exaggerated, cf. Charlesworth, "The Tradition about Gaius." Besides these literary sources, inscriptions and coins also offer some information, see Smallwood, *Documents Illustrating*.

[[2]] Tac. *Ann.* 1.41.3; Suet. *Gaius* 9.1.

[[3]] Death of Germanicus and aftermath: Tac. *Ann.* 2.69-3.19; Gaius with Livia, Antonia, and Tiberius: Tac. *Ann.* 6.20.1; Suet. *Gaius* 10.1, 23.2; fate of Agrippina: Tac. *Ann.* 5.3.2 - 5.5.2, 6.25.1; and of Nero and Drusus Caesar: Tac. *Ann.* 5.3.2, 6.23.4-5, Suet. *Tib.* 54, *Gaius* 7; Gaius's quaestorship: Dio 58.23.1. For the alleged involvement of Gaius in his father's death, see D'Ecr , "La mort de Germanicus."

[[4]] Early reign and first acts: Suet. *Gaius* 13-16; Philo *Leg.* 8-13; Dio 59.2-3. Macro's full name: Smallwood, *Documents Illustrating*, no. 254. Date of Gaius's arrival in Rome: *Acta Fratrum Arvalium* (Smallwood, *Documents Illustrating*, no. 3.15-17). Gemellus: Suet. *Gaius* 14.1, 15.2, 23.3; Dio 59.1.2-3, 59.8.1-2; Philo *Leg.* 23-31.

[[5]] Seneca, without explanation, believes he went mad (*Brev.* 18.5-6; *Helv.* 10.4; *Tranqu.* 14.5; *Ben.* 7.11.2). Josephus also thinks that Gaius went mad but alludes to a love-potion administered by his wife Caesonia as the cause (*AJ* 19.193), apparently after two years of good rule (*AJ* 18.256). Philo blames an illness in the fall of A.D. 37 (*Leg.* 14-22). Suetonius mentions simply a "brain sickness" (*valitudo mentis*; *Gaius* 51.1). Dio thinks that faults of character led to a

deterioration in his behavior (59.3-4). Surviving references suggest that Tacitus thought Gaius at least of troubled and impulsive mind, which is not the same thing as crazed (*Agr.* 13.2; *Ann.* 6.20.1, 6.45.5, 13.3.6; *Hist.* 4.48.2).

[[6]] Incest: Suet. *Gaius* 24.1; Dio 59.3.6; Jos. *AJ* 19.204. Military campaigns: Tac. *Hist.* 4.15.3, *Germania* 37.5, Suet. *Gaius* 43-46, Dio 59.21.1-3. Bridge at Baiae: Suet. *Gaius* 19; Dio 59.17; Jos. *AJ* 19.5-6. Horse as consul: Suet. *Gaius* 55.3; Dio 59.14.7; His alleged setting up of a brothel in the palace may contain a kernel of truth, even if the story is much embellished, see T.A.J. McGinn, "Caligula's Brothel on the Palatine," *EMC* 42 (1998): 95-107.

[[7]] Alcoholism: Jerome, "Historical Tradition"; hyperthyroidism/thyrototoxicos: Katz, "Illness of Caligula"; mania: Massaro and Montgomery, "Gaius: Mad, Bad, Ill or All Three" and "Gaius (Caligula) Doth Murder Sleep"; epilepsy: Benediktson, "Caligula's Madness." Morgan ("Caligula's Illness Again") makes some astute observations on the weakness of the medical approach as a whole. He points out that the ancient concept of physiognomy -- that people's characters are manifest in their appearance -- makes any diagnosis highly suspect. In fact, all such medical explanations are doomed to failure. The sources simply cannot be trusted, and diagnosing a patient 2,000 years dead is, at best, a stretch. Balsdon (*The Emperor Gaius*) argued that Gaius was misunderstood and attempted to offer rational explanations for all of his apparently deranged antics. A useful summary and critique of "madness" theories is to be found in Barrett, *Caligula*, 213-41. For a recent acceptance of the madness thesis, cf. Ferrill, *Caligula, Emperor of Rome*.

[[8]] Mauretania: Dio 59.25.1; see also Barrett, *Caligula*, 115-20. Agrippa: Jos. *AJ* 18.228-37; *Phil Leg.* 324-26; see also E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule* (Leiden, 1976), 187-200. Alexandrian riots: Philo *Flacc* and *Leg.*

[[9]] Fake Germans in triumph: Suet. *Gaius* 47. Military campaigns: see above, note [6]. For modern rationalizations of these campaigns, cf., e.g., Bicknell, "Military Activities"; Davies, "Abortive Invasion"; Philips, "Abortive Invasion"; Barrett, *Caligula*, 125-39, and Woods, "Caligula's Seashells.". Execution of Gaetulicus and exile of sisters: the Gaetulicus affair is ably assessed in Barrett, *Caligula*, 91-113, and id. *Agrippina*, 60-70; for a contrasting view, see Simpson, "The 'Conspiracy' of AD 39."

[[10]] The Jerusalem affair is described most fully by Josephus (*AJ* 18.261-309; *BJ* 2.184-203) and Philo (*Leg.* 188, 198-348). Thorough modern assessments can be found in Barrett, *Caligula*, 188-91, cf. 140-53 (on Gaius's demand for divine honours, which Barrett argues are exaggerated by the sources); Bilde "Statue in the Temple"; and Smallwood, *Jews* (above, note [8]), 174-80. Drusilla: Suet. *Gaius* 24.2-3; Dio 59.11; Smallwood, *Documents Illustrating*, nos 5.12-15, 11, 128, 401.12; Wood, "Diva Drusilla."

[[11]] The named Praetorian conspirators include three tribunes -- Cassius Chaerea (Suet. *Gaius* 56.2; Dio 59.29.1; Sen. *Const.* 18.3; Jos. *AJ* 19.18, 21, 28-37);

Cornelius Sabinus (Suet. *Gaius* 58.2; Dio 59.29.1; Jos. *AJ* 19.46, 48, 261); Papinius (Jos. *AJ* 19.37) -- and the Prefect M. Arrecinus Clemens (Jos. *AJ* 19.37-46). Senators associated with the plot are M. Annianus Vinicianus (Jos. *AJ* 19.18, 20, 49-51), M. Valerius Asiaticus (Tac. *Ann.* 11.1.2), Cluvius Rufus and L. Nonius Asprenas (Jos. *AJ* 19.91-92, 98). Gaius's freedman Callistus is also a named participant (Tac. *Ann.* 11.29.1; Dio 29.29.1; Jos. *AJ* 19.63-69).

[[12]] The possible involvement of Claudius in the plot is assessed by B. Levick, *Claudius* (New Haven, 1990), 33-39. The fullest account of the assassination is that of Josephus (*AJ* 19.70-113), with more summary accounts found in Suetonius (*Gaius* 58) and the epitome of Dio (59.29.5-7).



0801Satyricon1.doc

From <http://www.culturecourt.com/F/Fellini/FSat.htm>

By Lawrence Russell



Fellini Satyricon (1969)
 dir. Federico Fellini
 writ. Fellini and Bernardino Zapponi (based on the writings of Petronious) cine. Giuseppe Rotunno sets Danilo Donati and Luigi Caccianoe music Nino Rota, Ilhan Mimaroght, Tod Dockstader, Andrew Rudin star. Martin Potter (Encolpio), Hiram Keller (Ascyllite), Max Born (Gitone), Salvo Randone (Eumolpo the Poet), Il Moro (Trimalcione), Magali Noel (Fortunata), Capucine (Trifena), Alain Cuny (Lica), Fanfulla (Vernacchio), Luigi Montefiori (Minotaur), Joseph Wheeler (suicide: Petronius), Lucia Bose (suicide: P's wife), et. al.

figures in a fresco

The "theatre effect" is often the sign of primitivism in film drama -- except when it's Orson Welles or

Frederico Fellini. Satyricon's sets are spectacular, neo-modernist constructions that combine both the pictographic art of the past with the angular sensibility of the present. Characters declaim their lines to phantoms beyond the screen or to decadent aristocrats in the burlesques that are frequently featured within the playhouses, feasts, tombs, temples and the other venues that carry the action of this mythical adventure.

The film begins with the "hero" Encolpio (Martin Potter) monologuing in front of a fresco, bemoaning his fate:

Encolpio: The earth has not dragged me into the abyss... nor has the tempestuous sea engulfed me... I have fled from justice, from the arena... I have even stained my hands with blood... to end up here, banished and abandoned.... Who was it that condemned me to this solitude? He who knows every vice... who himself admits he deserves banishment: Ascyllitus!

Who is he speaking to? The obsolete convention of live theatre is resurrected by Fellini in order to break the alienation between the viewer and the subject, thus moving away from the aesthetic of cinematic voyeurism into audience complicity.

It's a clever directive, one which establishes not only the dramatic method but also the visual style. An atmosphere of history is integral to the audience's acceptance of the story. Proceeding as if the world is an art gallery is often the kiss of death in drama, but under Fellini's direction it's a brilliant fugue of modern expressionism and interpretative mythology.

Fellini Satyricon: Encolpio

"In Satyricon, I was influenced by the look of frescoes. At the end, these people, whose lives were so real to them, are now only crumbling frescoes." (Fellini)

Encolpio: student, pretty boy bisexual adventurer, and creature of fortune whose present misery is due to the theft of his boy lover Gitone by his friend and fellow student, Ascyllitus. We are also introduced to Ascyllitus (Hiram Keller) by way of a monologue and quickly learn that he's no sentimentalist:

Ascyllitus: (hoarsely) Encolpio is looking for me, he wants revenge. (gloats) Friendship lasts as long as it is convenient.

They fight, and Encolpio holds Ascyllitus's head over a steaming culvert.

Encolpio: Where is Gitone?

Ascyllitus: (gasping) I sold him to Vernacchio the actor...

Their dispute over the boy-toy Gitone (Max Born) is another one of those peculiar passions that make love an illness, sex a disease. Gitone is a treacherous little ponce whose affections are political rather than spiritual, so we are forced to consider him as a symbol of Encolpio's cruel Fortune. While Encolpio's fascination with Gitone is pathetic, the masochism is part of the complexity of his friendship with A.

"Because of the picture's open, non-judgemental portrayal of homosexuality, some journalists seized upon the tempting notion that I myself must be a homosexual or at least bisexual...." (Fellini)

In one of the many great scenes, Encolpio confronts Vernacchio (Fanfulla), the actor who bought the boy and is training him for female roles ("Helen of Troy, the faithful Penelope, Cornelia..."). Typical of the Roman arts in the time of Nero, Vernacchio's playhouse stages not only obscene farces but also the "theatre of the real thing" -- a blasphemer has his hand chopped off as part of the evening's entertainment. The audience laughs at Encolpio's attempt to regain Gitone, begin bidding for him. But a Senator intervenes, and Encolpio is allowed to lead Gitone away.

They wander the city, which is a warren of the grotesque, a bizarre brothel, a merchant mall of the unconscious. A huge head is being dragged through an alley, a nightmare from a beheading, or an icon of the local Caesar (the megalomaniacal Trimalchio, as it later develops). They retire to Encolpio's room, make love, but in the morning are found by Ascyllitus. Instead of fighting, they decide to go their separate ways, split their possessions, but when asked who he wants to be with, the faithless Gitone chooses Ascyllitus. Encolpio barely has time to dwell upon this treachery when an earthquake hits, and the city collapses, blocks splitting from the huge dream walls, burying citizens, animals and the collective memory.

Cut to: an art gallery that looks perhaps a little too chic for the ancient world, but nonetheless sustains the film's neo-primitivist/moderno style. Here Encolpio meets up with the poet Eumolpus (Salvo Randone), an older gentleman, also down on his luck. As the camera patrols the hangings:

Eumolpus: The masters in this gallery... are indicative of the apathy of our times. Nobody paints like this anymore.

Encolpio: What caused this decadence?

Eumolpus: Lust of money...

How did you get here? While the continuity is outstanding in terms of tone, the narrative progression is difficult to comprehend unless one is familiar with Petronius, recognizes the stories, the characters and the Fellini fictions. This isn't a major problem, as the action exists as a Fellini expressionism as much as it is a history, is a literature. Petronius' Satyricon is also a collection of fragments, memories of the original work, an incomplete oeuvre, like the plays of Sophocles or the writings of Cicero. In this sense Fellini's narrative imagery is internal, fragments of music from the id.

The next major scene is the feast at Trimalchio's, another Caesar who considers himself a poet, wit, bon vivant -- a subject of envy, contempt and rage from Eumolpus. The scene is raw, the characters coarse, the action bizarre to the point

of revulsion. Eumolpus and Encolpio watch, participate, but are really observers in this casual orgy of sexual theatre, gluttony, and megalomania.

The aging Trimalchio (Il Moro), who, like Truman Capote, can do anything at his party, humiliates his slaves and his guests as dwarves stagger in with smoldering cauldrons of flesh -- ambiguous torsos from ambiguous creatures in an ambiguous universe. A pig is brought forth, gutted, releasing an avalanche of hens, snails, pigeons -- verily, all the small animals and fowl of the known world. The guests drink, dance, insult one another under a huge icon of the host. Trimalchio's belches, farts, snores are decoded as maxims of wisdom and divinations by a vulpine secretary. At one point Trimalchio denounces the drunken Eumolpus for having stolen his verses, orders that he be thrown into the ovens. Eumolpus is dragged up the steps to these open pits of hell, but allowed to retreat, intimidated and debased. Trimalchio is a tyrant of the flesh, the soul -- a tumorous ego.

His feast is a farce, as is the next scene, his rehearsal for death -- a play-within-the-play which is an existential homage to the occult.

The party adjourns to the plutocrat's tomb, a Roman theatre-set of heavy megalithic blocks, a stone garden of the soul. Here Trimalchio rehearses his funeral and internment, has his guests weep and deliver their sycophantic perorations as he lies smugly in the vault.

Telescoping the narrative within itself even further, Fellini now inserts the story of The Matron of Ephesus. A beautiful widow makes love to a young soldier who has been guarding a crucified thief on a nearby ridge. When the body of the thief is stolen, the widow aids her lover by replacing the thief with the body of her husband... which allows Trimalchio to proclaim his grandest witticism, "Better to hang a dead husband than a living lover."

Thus Fellini uses the theatre-effect to cobble together an episodic narrative that has the spacial architecture of consciousness, an anecdotal progression of memory, cause, and effect. Art can't exist without history. It exists as a perception of the Past, which in turn becomes an anticipation of the Future.

"It was like speculating about life on Mars, but with the help of a Martian, so Satyricon satisfied in me some of my desire to make a science-fiction film."
(Fellini)

Now the dynamic changes, moving away from the closed, interior city sets of perpetual night into the open, exterior landscape of the ocean and the unknown. The transition here is thrilling, like arriving on another planet -- albeit as a prisoner.

A huge barge sits on the ocean, its black hulk a fantastic metaphor of evil, a contradiction in the face of Nature. The V.O. by Encolpio tells us "we had been taken prisoner by the terrible Lichas of Tarantum." By "we" he means himself, his

friend Ascyllitus and toy-boy Gitone. How? It doesn't really matter. As Encolpio moves, so goes his nightmare, so goes his fate.

These sequences are among the most brilliantly executed in all film drama to date. The photographic compositions isolate Nature and exalt the machine. The screen is sectionized into the geometrics of ocean horizon and the raised oars of the slave galley -- dramatic simplicities that give imaginative and emotional depth to the historical reality. No matter how fantastic the characters and their actions, there's a raw authenticity continuously seeping from the expressionism. This, says Fellini, is how it was.

The bowels of this war barge are a hellhole of chained slaves working the huge chorus of oars as acrobats perform on the walkway between the bulkheads, musicians play lyres in droning harmony with the pitch and yawl... and Gitone sings in the tradition of the Arabic boy soprano. The master Lichas (Alain Cuny) amuses himself and his cast of cutthroats and slaves by wrestling selected victims in a sexual overture to death. His insane, reptilian eyes turn to Encolpio:

Lichas: (rasps) Come to me, O tender fawn...

The androgynous Encolpio is no match for the sadistic Lichas. But instead of snapping his neck, Lichas' death embrace becomes one of love. "What eyes, what clear blue eyes," he intones as he pins Encolpio to the deck and kisses him. And this is no mere one-night stand -- Lichas and Encolpio are married in a hastily convened ceremony on the top deck and celebrate their love with the slaughter of a young calf. Lichas wears a veil in a peculiar gesture of submission and dominance, as if he is both male and female, his homosexuality a primal twining, an omnivore from the deep.

Time passes... the ship is seen passing through sleet and snow. A sea-monster is captured, raised to the deck, butchered. Then, as they draw close to the island where the young Caesar has his home, armed vessels surround them. As they watch, the young Caesar is hunted along the shoreline onto the sculptured white rocks where, cornered, he draws his sword and kills himself. His body is then impaled on a pike to the cries of "The Tyrant is dead!" The invaders confront Lichas on his ship, sneer, "We've drowned your emperor like a pig!" A sword is drawn and -- in one of those cinematic moments you forever recall in your dreams -- Lichas is decapitated, his head flying into the ocean where it sinks beneath the waves, his broken eyes rolled upwards in a frozen moment of ecstasy.

You last see Gitone being hustled away ("We'll keep him") as you expect Encolpio and Ascyllitus to either die or remain in chains. But no... here Fellini changes the mood dynamic again.

You see an enclave bounded by a rock face, a sand garden adjoining the villa of Petronius, which is where he slits his wrists after freeing his slaves and sending away his children. You don't know it's Petronius, although Fellini has said

elsewhere that's who it is. Does this matter? You know suicide was a Roman option, an occultic solution to a political fait accompli. Again, the episodic narrative emulates dream, articulates history.

In this broken paradise of softly falling water, chirping birds and frescos, they find a beautiful Ethiopian slave girl hiding in her kennel, share her for the night. Encolpio awakens at dawn to sound of departing horsemen, and the roar of flames. The bodies of Petronius and his wife are being immolated on their funeral pyre.

Cut To: Another desolate landscape where the wind stirs the dust around some tethered horses near a covered wagon. This is the encampment of the Nymphomaniac, who lies bound in the wagon, writhing in a perpetual state of indiscriminate arousal. Her position is more cruciform than missionary, her desire more occultic than mad. A crone tells them her husband is taking her to the "Hermaphrodite" at the oracle for a "cure"... but in the meantime he would be pleased if the young men would help soothe his wife's hermetic fever. Forever the incorrigible opportunist, Ascylite is only too happy to oblige, and he mounts the Nymphomaniac in an act that simulates ecstasy, but seals his fate.

They journey with the husband to the Oracle. The plan is to steal the Hermaphrodite, a sickly grotesque who lies in a crib beside the healing pool in the cave. The Hermaphrodite is a transgendered being who mirrors our origins, realizes our fears, fixes myth with biological fact. All come to this "demigod" seeking a cure for what ails them. War amputees, seniles, the insane... and the wandering voyeurs of history. Encolpio stabs and kills the old man who is the Hermaphrodite's guardian, and the trio flee with this sacred creature lodged on a hand cart. But like some fragile experiment from the stud farm, the Hermaphrodite dies, and the nympho's husband, enraged, attacks Encolpio and Ascylitus.

What now? Fellini's complex, episodic narrative continues to scroll.

Somehow Encolpio finds himself rolling down a slope into a crude arena, the lair of the Minotar. And, true to form, his "friend" Ascylitus is somehow the grinning intimate of the Caesar and his entourage who will watch this piece of mythological theatre. The Minotar is a seven foot giant wearing a bull-ram headpiece, and awaits his trophy in his labyrinth. Once again Encolpio finds himself on-stage against his will.

He escapes death by appealing to the Minotar's humanity:

Encolpio: Dear Minotar, I will love you if you set me free...

The Minotar removes his headpiece, smiles, laughs, addresses the crowd:

Minotar: (to the pro-Consul) This isn't cowardice... it's the commonsense of an educated youth!

They embrace and instead of being killed, Encolpio is given Ariadne, a trophy harlot who lies willing and able on a stone bed nearby. But Encolpio finds himself incapable of performing and is tossed contemptuously into the surrounding trench by the disgruntled Ariadne. And as he crawls out, who should appear on a travelling litter, reborn as a wealthy noble with an entourage of women? His old mentor Eumolpus, The Poet... in a crazy reversal of Fortune that makes him the heir of Trimalchio!

They retire to Eumolpus' harem, a fantasy quadrangle of the senses. Encolpio has his bum smacked by a bevy of voluptuaries in a futile attempt to restore his potency as Ascyllitus stands arrogantly on a giant swing, riding it back and forth in a vulgar foreplay as infantile as it is theatrical. This respite -- like an interlude from *One Thousand and One Nights* -- is brief, and presently Encolpio journeys beyond the Great Swamps in search of the Witch who will restore his lost sexuality.

Oenothea is a plump negress, another vagina on a slab. Her magic is to morph into fire in a basic metaphor of potency. Once again Encolpio is invited to perform -- and this time he seems to have better luck. As Ascyllitus lingers outside by the river bank, he is attacked and killed by a man who might be the Nymphomaniac's husband or merely a bandit who preys on the clients of the Witch. Ascyllitus calls out to Encolpio as he's fatally stabbed, then mysteriously enters the Witch's cave, urges Encolpio to leave. Delighted with his restored powers, Encolpio follows the ghost, finds Ascyllitus dead in the saw grass. The incident is contradictory, occultic, and left unexplained. The scene closes with the shocked Encolpio framed against a solitary stone megalith.

The final episode sees Encolpio encounter a ship heading for Africa. The Master lies dead on the shore, surrounded by crates, friends and retainers. The Master's will is read, the lucky inheritors told that they will have to eat his body if they want to share in his wealth. Meanwhile the crew invites Encolpio to join them, and as they run happily over the dunes towards the ship, the Master's body is eaten. Although there's no Christian intent, the situation appeals to the cynical who will recall *The Last Supper*.

The film ends with Encolpio's V.O. telling of his odyssey, the islands, the cities... then, in a lap-dissolve, he and his friends transmogrify, become figures in a fresco on a broken wall in a set of ruins.

"'What a pity,' some archaeologist laments, upon viewing something called Fellini's *Satyricon*. 'It seems to be missing its beginning, middle and end. It is so strange... what kind of man could this Fellini have been? Perhaps he was mad.'"

Fellini's narrative has an interesting image/symbol sub-text, one which integrates the action in a series of loops. There is the head, at first a mysterious icon in the street, later a mural at the Feast of Trimalchio, finally the severed head of Lichas sinking below the waves. Lichas is first seen wearing an animal head piece, a

totemic mask similar to that worn by the Minotaur. There's the white horse, sleeping on its feet in a sunken court prior to the earthquake, a thing of beauty and innocence in a city of polymorphic decadence. Horses recur in elegant pursuit of the horizon or in captive poses, more beautiful than the human, closer to the Gods, never grotesque, never decadent. Women on their backs: the Nymphomaniac, Ariadne, the Witch. Always on altars, sexual transponders of Fortune and reincarnation. And the frescoes....

paganism: religious order and the secularization of form

The pagan form is episodic, mythical, anthropomorphic, open. The religious form is determinist, codified, atomic, closed. Fellini Satyricon is the perfect post-modern testament, a de-construction of the determinist model in which the hero is the author of his fate in favor of the episodic model where Fate is a subject of Fortune etc. By interpreting the past, it predicts the future: the end of religious order, the secularization of Form. When a priest posted a black edged bulletin on the door of his church denouncing Fellini as a sinner, he was responding instinctively to the heresy of art and the fatal movement of history. But Fellini is only the messenger, not the messiah.

***Fellini quotes from I, Fellini by Charlotte Chandler**

OXFORD WORLD'S CLASSICS

PETRONIUS
THE SATYRICON

A new translation by P. G. Walsh



Gaius Petronius (~27-66 A.D.), the author of the *Satyricon*, was the emperor Nero's advisor in matters of luxury and extravagance (his unofficial title was *arbiter elegantiae*). As befitted his office, he slept days and partied nights. He was a lover of style, manners, and literature, and his personality was characterized by freedom, a lack of self-consciousness, a loose tongue, and an attitude. A rival's jealousy turned Nero against Petronius, and he was forced to commit suicide. However, before his death, he lampooned Nero in his will and sent the emperor a copy.

The emperor Nero was interested in literature and art, especially theater. He fancied himself as a sort of reincarnation of Apollo, and liked to display his talents and be praised. His artistic obsessions and extravagant buildings brought him ridicule. Nero's court was distinguished by its immorality and extravagance. Everyone's primary goal was making lots of money. Because there was so much leisure for the very rich, strong ambition and responsibility were required for almost anything at all to be accomplished. Life at court was uncertain because Nero was capricious. Literature was used for flattery, personal advancement, advocacy of your own position, and destruction of your opponent's position. The literary arms of the establishment included censorship, prosecution, libel suits, and that old standby, physical attacks.

Unconventional and unique, the *Satyricon* stands almost alone in literature. It touches on everything, especially small-town life and ordinary people. Its characters are mostly of Greek or Near Eastern origin and are probably based on real people; Trimalchio's house has a lot in common with Nero's court. Some of the characters' names have given rise to much interesting etymological speculation: the name of Encolpius, our narrator, means "in the fold," or more explicitly here, "in the crotch"; his friend is named Ascyltos, or "unworn," and they fight over the affections of the boy Giton ("neighbor").

The *Satyricon* was probably written around 61 AD and first printed in 1664. It is a very long work, of which we only have fragments. Petronius probably read it in installments to his friends, and possibly to the court of Nero. The *Cena* is one of the longer fragments; its survival in its entirety suggests that people have been enjoying it as a separable story for a long time. A banquet is the traditional setting for the kind of light conversation that is featured in the *Cena*.

The *Satyricon* itself, as its name implies, is a satire. The origin of the word "satire" has been a subject for academic debate: some say it comes from *satura*, or medley, while others theorize that it refers to something which is goat-like, like a satyr (smelly, rude, unkempt, and hairy?). Petronius satirizes anything and everything, using taste as the only standard. This is NOT a moralistic story intended to produce reform, as we often imagine a satire to be. We never know Petronius's own opinion (although he warns prudes not to criticize his story), because he doesn't give it to us directly. The only opinions we have are those of the characters in the story. Encolpius, as we shall see, criticizes Trimalchio, but Encolpius is no great prize either, so what is his criticism worth?

More specifically, the *Satyricon* is a Menippean satire. This genre, originally a humorous discussion of philosophy in alternating prose and verse, is characterized by the use of many different styles. In the *Satyricon*, accordingly, we find proverbs, verse, interpolated stories, and varied levels of language (from the very vulgar to the very elegant).

Some of the stories told by Trimalchio's guests are part of the genre called Milesian tales. These are funny, often questionable, stories characterized by a great deal of variety and incongruity in their plots, and by lots of digressions. They have a lot in common with the more outlandish *controversiae* of the rhetorical schools, as we shall see.

The *Satyricon* is set in Campania, which is the region around Naples and Mt. Vesuvius, in the middle of Italy. The advantage of this setting for us, paradoxically, is the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 A.D. Two nearby towns, Pompeii and Herculaneum, were completely destroyed but in such a way that an unusual number of antiquities of this date were preserved by being covered with ash or mud. We have many resources at our disposal to help us learn about life in Mediterranean countries at this time, which enables us to visualize what life was like for Petronius and the characters of the *Satyricon*.

Pompeii was a walled town, densely built up with little wasted space. In the center of town was the Forum, an open space off-limits to wheeled vehicles. The Forum had three functions: religious, civic/governmental, and commercial. There were buildings around the perimeter of the Forum for each function. Gladiator contests were held in the open center. In Chapter 4, Encolpius and his friends will be discussing an upcoming contest in which the combatants will fight to the death. This was a rare and special treat; animals and people were too expensive to sacrifice in that way very often.

Houses and baths made up the rest of Pompeii. As we shall see, the baths were a vitally important aspect of Roman social life. The city streets did double duty as sewers also; there were stepping stones to make crossing easier. Often the owner of a house would rent out the first floor to a small shopkeeper.

The houses had no exterior windows (why would they want to look out into the sewer?); all the windows looked inward to the atrium. On the walls were paintings which allowed you to imagine you were looking out into an unreal world. Fake columns, perspectives, historical or religious scenes, sacred landscapes, and abstract designs all ornamented the walls of a Roman house. What you didn't paint on the walls was your life story, as we shall see that Trimalchio has done. Holes in the roof let in light and air, but, as you can imagine, the light inside was very dim. At the entrance to the house was the *lararium*, a shrine to your ancestors and protecting *genii*.

Trimalchio probably has a house outside the city walls, unrestricted in size and with actual windows, not unlike that of the emperor Tiberius. This emperor, who

was old and paranoid, lived in a country villa on the island of Capri and used to dump people he considered suspicious over the cliffs.

From: Ancient History Sourcebook

<http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/ancient/petronius-satyricon-feast.html>

Petronius Arbiter (c.27-66 CE) The Banquet of Trimalchio from the *Satyricon*

[Introduction (adapted from Davis)]

The following is a excerpt from a comic romance probably composed during the reign of Nero. The picture of Trimalchio, the coarse freedman parvenu, who has nothing to commend him but his money, and who is surrounded by countless parasites and creatures of his whims, is one of the most clever and unsparing delineations in ancient literature. .

At last we went to recline at table where boys from Alexandria poured snow water on our hands, while others, turning their attention to our feet, picked our nails, and not in silence did they perform their task, but singing all the time. I wished to try if the whole retinue could sing, and so I called for a drink, and a boy, not less ready with his tune, brought it accompanying his action with a sharp-toned ditty; and no matter what you asked for it was all the same song.

The first course was served and it was good, for all were close up at the table, save Trimalchio, for whom, after a new fashion, the place of honor was reserved. Among the first viands there was a little ass of Corinthian bronze with saddle bags on his back, in one of which were white olives and in the other black. Over the ass were two silver platters, engraved on the edges with Trimalchio's name, and the weight of silver. Dormice seasoned with honey and poppies lay on little bridge-like structures of iron; there were also sausages brought in piping hot on a silver gridiron, and under that Syrian plums and pomegranate grains.

We were in the midst of these delights when Trimalchio was brought in with a burst of music. They laid him down on some little cushions, very carefully; whereat some giddy ones broke into a laugh, though it was not much to be wondered at, to see his bald pate peeping out from a scarlet cloak, and his neck all wrapped up and a robe with a broad purple stripe hanging down before him, with tassels and fringes dingle-dangle about him.

Then going through his teeth with a silver pick, "my friends," quoth he, "I really didn't want to come to dinner so soon, but I was afraid my absence would cause

too great a delay, so I denied myself the pleasure I was at---at any rate I hope you'll let me finish my game." A slave followed, carrying a checkerboard of turpentine wood, with crystal dice; but one thing in particular I noticed as extra nice---he had gold and silver coins instead of the ordinary black and white pieces. While he was cursing like a trooper over the game and we were starting on the lighter dishes, a basket was brought in on a tray, with a wooden hen in it, her wings spread round, as if she were hatching.

Then two slaves came with their eternal singing, and began searching the straw, whence they rooted out some peahen's eggs, and distributed them among the guests. At this Trimalchio turned around---"Friends," he says, "I had some peahen's eggs placed under a hen, and so help me Hercules!---I hope they're not hatched out; we'd better try if they're still tasty." Thereupon we took up our spoons---they were not less than half a pound weight of silver---and broke the eggs that were made of rich pastry. I had been almost on the point of throwing my share away, for I thought I had a chick in it, until hearing an old hand saying, "There must be something good in this," I delved deeper---and found a very fat fig-pecker inside, surrounded by peppered egg yolk.

At this point Trimalchio stopped his game, demanded the same dishes, and raising his voice, declared that if anyone wanted more liquor he had only to say the word. At once the orchestra struck up the music, as the slaves also struck up theirs, and removed the first course. In the bustle a dish chanced to fall, and when a boy stooped to pick it up, Trimalchio gave him a few vigorous cuffs for his pains, and bade him to "throw it down again"---and a slave coming in swept out the silver platter along with the refuse. After that two long-haired Ethiopians entered with little bladders, similar to those used in sprinkling the arena in the amphitheater, but instead of water they poured wine on our hands. Then glass wine jars were brought in, carefully sealed and a ticket on the neck of each, reading thus: "Opimian Falernia, One hundred years old."

[Davis: Presently one of the guests remarks, first on how completely Trimalchio is under the thumb of his wife; next he comments on the gentleman's vast riches.] "So help me Hercules, the tenth of his slaves don't know their own master.... Some time ago the quality of his wool was not to his liking; so what does he do, but buys rams at Tarentum to improve the breed. In order to have Attic honey at home with him, he has bees brought from Attica to better his stock by crossing it with the Greek. A couple of days ago he had the notion to write to India for mushroom seed. And his freedmen, his one-time comrades [in slavery] they are no small cheese either; they are immensely well-off. Do you see that chap on the last couch over there? Today he has his 800,000 sesterces. He came from nothing, and time was when he had to carry wood upon his back.... He has been manumitted only lately, but he knows his business. Not long ago he displayed this notice: "Caius Pompeius Diogenes, Having Taken A House Is Disposed To Let His Garret From The Kalends Of July."

[After a very long discussion in like vein and a vulgar display of luxuries and

riches, Trimalchio condescends to tell the company how he came by his vast wealth.]

"When I came here first [as a slave] from Asia, I was only as high as yonder candlestick, and I'd be measuring my height on it every day, and greasing my lips with lamp oil to bring out a bit of hair on my snout. Well, at last, to make a long story short, as it pleased the gods, I became master in the house, and as you see, I'm a chip off the same block. He [my master] made me coheir with Caesar, and I came into a royal fortune, but no one ever thinks he has enough. I was mad for trading, and to put it all in a nutshell, bought five ships, freighted them with wine--and wine was as good as coined money at that time--and sent them to Rome. You wouldn't believe it, every one of those ships was wrecked. In one day Neptune swallowed up 30,000,000 sesterces on me. D'ye think I lost heart? Not much! I took no notice of it, by Hercules! I got more ships made, larger, better, and luckier; that no one might say I wasn't a plucky fellow. A big ship has big strength---that's plain! Well I freighted them with wine, bacon, beans, perfumes, and slaves. Here Fortuna (my consort) showed her devotion. She sold her jewelry and all her dresses, and gave me a hundred gold pieces---that's what my fortune grew from. What the gods ordain happens quickly. For on just one voyage I scooped in 10,000,000 sesterces and immediately started to redeem all the lands that used to be my master's. I built a house, bought some cattle to sell again---whatever I laid my hand to grew like a honeycomb. When I found myself richer than all the country round about was worth, in less than no time I gave up trading, and commenced lending money at interest to the freedmen. Upon my word, I was very near giving up business altogether, only an astrologer, who happened to come into our colony, dissuaded me.

"And now I may as well tell you it all---I have thirty years, four months and two days to live, moreover I'm to fall in for an estate---that's prophecy anyway. If I'm so lucky as to be able to join my domains to Apulia, I'll say I've got on pretty well. Meanwhile under Mercury's' fostering, I've built this house. Just a hut once, you know---now a regular temple! It has four dining rooms, twenty bedrooms, two marble porticoes, a set of cells upstairs, my own bedroom, a sitting room for this viper (my wife!) here, a very fine porter's room, and it holds guests to any amount. There are a lot of other things too that I'll show you by and by. Take my word for it, if you have a penny you're worth a penny, you are valued for just what you have. Yesterday your friend was a frog, he's a king today---that's the way it goes."

[Trimalchio goes on to show off to his guests the costly shroud, perfumes, etc., he has been assembling for his own funeral; and at last] we, the guests were already disgusted with the whole affair when Trimalchio, who, by the way, was beastly drunk, ordered in the cornet players for our further pleasure, and propped up with cushions, stretched himself out at full length. "Imagine I'm dead," says he, "and play something soothing!" Whereat the cornet players struck up a funeral march, and one of them especially---a slave of the undertaker fellow---the best in the crowd, played with such effect that he roused the whole

neighborhood. So the watchmen, who had charge of the district, thinking Trimalchio's house on fire, burst in the door, and surged in---as was their right---with axes and water ready. Taking advantage of such an opportune moment . . . we bolted incontinently, as if there had been a real fire in the place.

Source:

From: William Stearns Davis, ed., *Readings in Ancient History: Illustrative Extracts from the Sources*, 2 Vols. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1912-13), Vol. II: *Rome and the West*, pp. ??

Scanned by: J. S. Arkenberg, Dept. of History, Cal. State Fullerton. Prof. Arkenberg has modernized the text.

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THE *Fellini* FILES

<http://www.culturecourt.com/F/Fellini/FelliniFiles.htm>



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Fellini Satyricon (1969) dir. Federico Fellini writ. Fellini and Bernardino Zapponi (based on the writings of Petronius) cine. Giuseppe Rotunno sets Danilo Donati and Luigi Caccianoce music Nino Rota, Ilhan Mimaroght, Tod Dockstader, Andrew Rudin star. Martin Potter (Encolpio), Hiram Keller (Ascylite), Max Born (Gitone), Salvo Randone (Eumolpo the Poet), Il Moro (Trimalcione), Magali Noel (Fortunata), Capucine (Trifena), Alain Cuny (Lica), Fanfulla (Vernacchio), Luigi Montefiori (Minotaur), Joseph Wheeler (suicide: Petronius), Lucia Bose (suicide: P's wife), et. al.

figures in a fresco

The "theatre effect" is often the sign of primitivism in film drama -- except when it's Orson Welles or Federico Fellini. *Satyricon's* sets are spectacular, neo-modernist constructions that combine both the pictographic art of the past with the angular sensibility of the present. Characters declaim their lines to phantoms beyond the screen or to decadent aristocrats in the burlesques that are frequently featured within the playhouses, feasts, tombs, temples and the other venues that carry the action of this mythical adventure.

The film begins with the "hero" Encolpio (Martin Potter) monologuing in front of a fresco, bemoaning his fate:

Encolpio: The earth has not dragged me into the abyss... nor has the tempestuous sea engulfed me... I have fled from justice, from the arena... I have even stained my hands with blood... to end up here, banished and abandoned.... Who was it that condemned me to this solitude? He who knows every vice... who himself admits he deserves banishment: Ascyllitus!

Who is he speaking to? The obsolete convention of live theatre is resurrected by Fellini in order to break the alienation between the viewer and the subject, thus moving away from the aesthetic of cinematic voyeurism into audience complicity.

It's a clever directive, one which establishes not only the dramatic method but also the visual style. An atmosphere of history is integral to the audience's acceptance of the story. Proceeding as if the world is an art gallery is often the kiss of death in drama, but under Fellini's direction it's a brilliant fugue of modern expressionism and interpretative mythology.

"In Satyricon, I was influenced by the look of frescoes. At the end, these people, whose lives were so real to them, are now only crumbling frescoes."
(Fellini)

Encolpio: student, pretty boy bisexual adventurer, and creature of fortune whose present misery is due to the theft of his boy lover Gitone by his friend and fellow student, Ascyllitus. We are also introduced to Ascyllitus (Hiram Keller) by way of a monologue and quickly learn that he's no sentimentalist:

Ascyllitus: (*hoarsely*) Encolpio is looking for me, he wants revenge. (*gloats*) Friendship lasts as long as it is convenient.

They fight, and Encolpio holds Ascyllitus's head over a steaming culvert.

Encolpio: Where is Gitone?

Ascyllitus: (*gasping*) I sold him to Vernacchio the actor...

Their dispute over the boy-toy Gitone (Max Born) is another one of those peculiar passions that make love an illness, sex a disease. Gitone is a treacherous little ponce whose affections are political rather than spiritual, so we are forced to consider him as a symbol of Encolpio's cruel Fortune. While Encolpio's fascination with Gitone is pathetic, the masochism is part of the complexity of his

friendship with A.

"Because of the picture's open, non-judgemental portrayal of homosexuality, some journalists seized upon the tempting notion that I myself must be a homosexual or at least bisexual...." (Fellini)

In one of the many great scenes, Encolpio confronts Vernacchio (Fanfulla), the actor who bought the boy and is training him for female roles ("Helen of Troy, the faithful Penelope, Cornelia..."). Typical of the Roman arts in the time of Nero, Vernacchio's playhouse stages not only obscene farces but also the "theatre of the real thing" -- a blasphemer has his hand chopped off as part of the evening's entertainment. The audience laughs at Encolpio's attempt to regain Gitone, begin bidding for him. But a Senator intervenes, and Encolpio is allowed to lead Gitone away.

They wander the city, which is a warren of the grotesque, a bizarre brothel, a merchant mall of the unconscious. A huge head is being dragged through an alley, a nightmare from a beheading, or an icon of the local Caesar (the megalomaniacal Trimalchio, as it later develops). They retire to Encolpio's room, make love, but in the morning are found by Ascyllitus. Instead of fighting, they decide to go their separate ways, split their possessions, but when asked *who* he wants to be with, the faithless Gitone chooses Ascyllitus. Encolpio barely has time to dwell upon this treachery when an earthquake hits, and the city collapses, blocks splitting from the huge dream walls, burying citizens, animals *and* the collective memory.

Cut to: an art gallery that looks perhaps a little too chic for the ancient world, but nonetheless sustains the film's neo-primitivist/moderno style. Here Encolpio meets up with the poet Eumolpus (Salvo Randone), an older gentleman, also down on his luck. As the camera patrols the hangings:

Eumolpus: The masters in this gallery... are indicative of the apathy of our times. Nobody paints like this anymore.

Encolpio: What caused this decadence?

Eumolpus: Lust of money...

How did you get here? While the continuity is outstanding in terms of tone, the narrative progression is difficult to comprehend unless one is familiar with Petronius, recognizes the stories, the characters and the Fellini fictions. This isn't a major problem, as the action exists as a Fellini expressionism as much as it is a history, is a literature. Petronius' *Satyricon* is also a collection of fragments, memories of the original work, an incomplete *oeuvre*, like the plays of Sophocles or the writings of Cicero. In this sense Fellini's narrative imagery is internal, fragments of music from the id.

The next major scene is the feast at Trimalchio's, another Caesar who considers himself a poet, wit, *bon vivant* -- a subject of envy, contempt and rage from Eumolpus. The scene is raw, the characters coarse, the action bizarre to the point of revulsion. Eumolpus and Encolpio watch, participate, but are really observers in this casual orgy of sexual theatre, gluttony, and megalomania.

The aging Trimalchio (Il Moro), who, like Truman Capote, can do anything at his party, humiliates his slaves and his guests as dwarves stagger in with smoldering cauldrons of flesh -- ambiguous torsos from ambiguous creatures in an ambiguous universe. A pig is brought forth, gutted, releasing an avalanche of hens, snails, pigeons -- verily, all the small animals and fowl of the known world. The guests drink, dance, insult one another under a huge icon of the host. Trimalchio's belches, farts, snores are decoded as maxims of wisdom and divinations by a vulpine secretary. At one point Trimalchio denounces the drunken Eumolpus for having stolen his verses, orders that he be thrown into the ovens. Eumolpus is dragged up the steps to these open pits of hell, but allowed to retreat, intimidated and debased. Trimalchio is a tyrant of the flesh, the soul -- a tumorous ego.

His feast is a farce, as is the next scene, his rehearsal for death -- a play-within-the-play which is an existential homage to the occult.

The party adjourns to the plutocrat's tomb, a Roman theatre-set of heavy megalithic blocks, a stone garden of the soul. Here Trimalchio rehearses his funeral and internment, has his guests weep and deliver their sycophantic perorations as he lies smugly in the vault.

Telescoping the narrative within itself even further, Fellini now inserts the story of *The Matron of Ephesus*. A beautiful widow makes love to a young soldier who has been guarding a crucified thief on a nearby ridge. When the body of the thief is stolen, the widow aids her lover by replacing the thief with the body of her husband... which allows Trimalchio to proclaim his grandest witticism, "Better to hang a dead husband than a living lover."

Thus Fellini uses the theatre-effect to cobble together an episodic narrative that has the spacial architecture of consciousness, an anecdotal progression of memory, cause, and effect. Art can't exist without history. It exists as a perception of the Past, which in turn becomes an anticipation of the Future.

*"It was like speculating about life on Mars, but with the help of a Martian, so Satyricon satisfied in me some of my desire to make a science-fiction film."
(Fellini)*

Now the dynamic changes, moving away from the closed, interior city sets of perpetual night into the open, exterior landscape of the ocean and the unknown. The transition here is thrilling, like arriving on another planet -- albeit as a prisoner.

A huge barge sits on the ocean, its black hulk a fantastic metaphor of evil, a contradiction in the face of Nature. The V.O. by Encolpio tells us "we had been taken prisoner by the terrible Lichas of Tarantum." By "we" he means himself, his friend Ascyllitus and toy-boy Gitone. How? It doesn't really matter. As Encolpio moves, so goes his nightmare, so goes his fate.

These sequences are among the most brilliantly executed in all film drama to date. The photographic compositions isolate Nature and exalt the machine. The screen is sectionized into the geometrics of ocean horizon and the raised oars of the slave galley -- dramatic simplicities that give imaginative and emotional depth to the historical reality. No matter how fantastic the characters and their actions, there's a raw authenticity continuously seeping from the expressionism. *This*, says Fellini, *is how it was*.

The bowels of this war barge are a hellhole of chained slaves working the huge chorus of oars as acrobats perform on the walkway between the bulkheads, musicians play lyres in droning harmony with the pitch and yawl... and Gitone sings in the tradition of the Arabic boy soprano. The master Lichas (Alain Cuny) amuses himself and his cast of cutthroats and slaves by wrestling selected victims in a sexual overture to death. His insane, reptilian eyes turn to Encolpio:

Lichas: (*rasps*) Come to me, O tender fawn...

The androgynous Encolpio is no match for the sadistic Lichas. But instead of snapping his neck, Lichas' death embrace becomes one of love. "What eyes, what clear blue eyes," he intones as he pins Encolpio to the deck and kisses him. And this is no mere one-night stand -- Lichas and Encolpio are married in a hastily convened ceremony on the top deck and celebrate their love with the slaughter of a young calf. Lichas wears a veil in a peculiar gesture of submission and dominance, as if he is both male and female, his homosexuality a primal twining, an omnivore from the deep.

Time passes... the ship is seen passing through sleet and snow. A sea-monster is captured, raised to the deck, butchered. Then, as they draw close to the island where the young Caesar has his home, armed vessels surround them. As they watch, the young Caesar is hunted along the shoreline onto the sculptured white rocks where, cornered, he draws his sword and kills himself. His body is then impaled on a pike to the cries of "The Tyrant is dead!" The invaders confront Lichas on his ship, sneer, "We've drowned your emperor like a pig!" A sword is drawn and -- in one of those cinematic moments you forever recall in your dreams -- Lichas is decapitated, his head flying into the ocean where it sinks beneath the waves, his broken eyes rolled upwards in a frozen moment of ecstasy.

You last see Gitone being hustled away ("We'll keep him") as you expect Encolpio and Ascyllitus to either die or remain in chains. But no... here Fellini changes the mood dynamic again.

You see an enclave bounded by a rock face, a sand garden adjoining the villa of Petronius, which is where he slits his wrists after freeing his slaves and sending away his children. You don't know it's Petronius, although Fellini has said elsewhere that's who it is. Does this matter? You know suicide was a Roman option, an occultic solution to a political *fait accompli*. Again, the episodic narrative emulates dream, articulates history.

In this broken paradise of softly falling water, chirping birds and frescos, they find a beautiful Ethiopian slave girl hiding in her kennel, share her for the night. Encolpio awakens at dawn to sound of departing horsemen, and the roar of flames. The bodies of Petronius and his wife are being immolated on their funeral pyre.

Cut To: Another desolate landscape where the wind stirs the dust around some tethered horses near a covered wagon. This is the encampment of the Nymphomaniac, who lies bound in the wagon, writhing in a perpetual state of indiscriminate arousal. Her position is more cruciform than missionary, her desire more occultic than mad. A crone tells them her husband is taking her to the "Hermaphrodite" at the *oracle* for a "cure"... but in the meantime he would be pleased if the young men would help soothe his wife's hermetic fever. Forever the incorrigible opportunist, Ascyllite is only too happy to oblige, and he mounts the Nymphomaniac in an act that simulates ecstasy, but seals his fate.

They journey with the husband to the Oracle. The plan is to steal the Hermaphrodite, a sickly grotesque who lies in a crib beside the healing pool in the cave. The Hermaphrodite is a transgendered being who mirrors our origins, realizes our fears, fixes myth with biological fact. All come to this "demigod" seeking a cure for what ails them. War amputees, seniles, the insane... and the wandering voyeurs of history. Encolpio stabs and kills the old man who is the Hermaphrodite's guardian, and the trio flee with this sacred creature lodged on a hand cart. But like some fragile experiment from the stud farm, the Hermaphrodite dies, and the nympho's husband, enraged, attacks Encolpio and Ascyllitus.

What now? Fellini's complex, episodic narrative continues to scroll.

Somehow Encolpio finds himself rolling down a slope into a crude arena, the lair of the Minotar. And, true to form, his "friend" Ascyllitus is somehow the grinning intimate of the Caesar and his entourage who will watch this piece of mythological theatre. The Minotar is a seven foot giant wearing a bull-ram headpiece, and awaits his trophy in his labyrinth. Once again Encolpio finds himself on-stage against his will.

He escapes death by appealing to the Minotar's humanity:

Encolpio: Dear Minotar, I will love you if you set me free...

The Minotar removes his headpiece, smiles, laughs, addresses the crowd:

Minotar: (to the pro-Consul) This isn't cowardice... it's the commonsense of an educated youth!

They embrace and instead of being killed, Encolpio is given Ariadne, a trophy harlot who lies willing and able on a stone bed nearby. But Encolpio finds himself incapable of performing and is tossed contemptuously into the surrounding trench by the disgruntled Ariadne. And as he crawls out, who should appear on a travelling litter, reborn as a wealthy noble with an entourage of women? His old mentor Eumolpus, The Poet... in a crazy reversal of Fortune that makes him the heir of Trimalchio!

They retire to Eumolpus' harem, a fantasy quadrangle of the senses. Encolpio has his bum smacked by a bevy of voluptuaries in a futile attempt to restore his potency as Ascyllitus stands arrogantly on a giant swing, riding it back and forth in a vulgar foreplay as infantile as it is theatrical. This respite -- like an interlude from *One Thousand and One Nights* -- is brief, and presently Encolpio journeys beyond the Great Swamps in search of the Witch who will restore his lost sexuality.

Oenothea is a plump negress, another vagina on a slab. Her magic is to morph into fire in a basic metaphor of potency. Once again Encolpio is invited to perform -- and this time he seems to have better luck. As Ascyllitus lingers outside by the river bank, he is attacked and killed by a man who might be the Nymphomaniac's husband or merely a bandit who preys on the clients of the Witch. Ascyllitus calls out to Encolpio as he's fatally stabbed, then mysteriously enters the Witch's cave, urges Encolpio to leave. Delighted with his restored powers, Encolpio follows *the ghost*, finds Ascyllitus dead in the saw grass. The incident is contradictory, occultic, and left unexplained. The scene closes with the shocked Encolpio framed against a solitary stone megalith.

The final episode sees Encolpio encounter a ship heading for Africa. The Master lies dead on the shore, surrounded by crates, friends and retainers. The Master's will is read, the lucky inheritors told that they will have to eat his body if they want to share in his wealth. Meanwhile the crew invites Encolpio to join them, and as they run happily over the dunes towards the ship, the Master's body is eaten. Although there's no Christian intent, the situation appeals to the cynical who will recall The Last Supper.

The film ends with Encolpio's V.O. telling of his odyssey, the islands, the cities... then, in a lap-dissolve, he and his friends transmogrify, become *figures in a fresco* on a broken wall in a set of ruins.

"What a pity," some archaeologist laments, upon viewing something called Fellini's Satyricon. 'It seems to be missing its beginning, middle and end. It is so strange... what kind of man could this Fellini have been? Perhaps he

was mad."

Fellini's narrative has an interesting image/symbol sub-text, one which integrates the action in a series of loops. There is the *head*, at first a mysterious icon in the street, later a mural at the Feast of Trimalchio, finally the severed head of Lichas sinking below the waves. Lichas is first seen wearing an animal head piece, a totemic mask similar to that worn by the Minotaur. There's the white *horse*, sleeping on its feet in a sunken court prior to the earthquake, a thing of beauty and innocence in a city of polymorphic decadence. Horses recur in elegant pursuit of the horizon or in captive poses, more beautiful than the human, closer to the Gods, never grotesque, never decadent. *Women on their backs*: the Nymphomaniac, Ariadne, the Witch. Always on altars, sexual transponders of Fortune and reincarnation. And the *frescoes*....

paganism: religious order and the secularization of form

The pagan form is episodic, mythical, anthropomorphic, open. The religious form is determinist, codified, atomic, closed. *Fellini Satyricon* is the perfect post-modern testament, a de-construction of the determinist model in which the hero is the author of his fate in favor of the episodic model where Fate is a subject of Fortune etc. By interpreting the past, it predicts the future: the end of religious order, the secularization of Form. When a priest posted a black edged bulletin of the door of his church denouncing Fellini as a sinner, he was responding instinctively to the heresy of art and the fatal movement of history. But Fellini is only the messenger, not the messiah.

*Fellini quotes from *I, Fellini* by Charlotte Chandler

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The following gives background of the original *Satyricon* text by Petronius and makes a few comments on Fellini's treatment of that text.

From <http://community.middlebury.edu/~harris/LatinAuthors/Petronius.html>

PETRONIUS AND THE SATYRICON

Fragments of a popular Roman Novel

The name of one Gaius (?) Petronius who died in 65 A.D. has been for so long associated with the fragmentary novel called *The Satyricon*, that it seems petty at this time to argue the question of authorship. Tacitus does give in about a page a vignette of Petronius, formerly consul and a governor of Bithynia, adding that he was a man of undisputed taste, which led to his being called (or appointed?) *arbiter elegantiae*, an interesting and unique title, but one whose meaning is not really clear. He lived an unconventional life, often reversing night and day, but had talent for administration also. But no mention is made of his writing any book, and the best reason for staying with this Tacitean Petronius is the lack of any other candidate to whom the *Satyricon* can be assigned. The question still remains whether the kind of man Tacitus describes would be like to write a novel devoted to people of the lower classes, whether he would be as intimately aware of their language and their sociology as the writer of the *Satyricon* is.

One MS of the central portion which we have, the *Cena Trimalchionis*, was discovered in the 17 c. in what is now Yugoslavia, which together with some pages of dissociated text usually printed before and after it, form the hundred or so pages of this absolutely unusual novel. Our text is apparently one section of a much longer work, perhaps fifteen times as long, of which the outline is not at all clear to us. It does seem a shame that so little of a work of such value is preserved, while reams of Statius and Silius Italicus survive intact!

The *Satyricon* is our only source of information about the language of the people who made up the Roman populace. It is true, Plautus does

show traces of popular speech in his Grecizing comedies, and the myriad inscriptions do reveal bits and pieces of ordinary language, but in the *Satyricon* we find description, conversations, stories and bits of biography which tell us much about that unknown Roman, the proletariat. In *Trimalchio*, at whose villa an elaborate party is being staged, we see what must have been a common occurrence in Rome of the time, an immigrant bourgeois who has become rich without picking up any of the elements of taste and education which would make him pass for a Roman gentleman. Coarse as he is, gross, rich and often disgusting, *Trimalchio* is above all real, as are the friends who congregate for free dinner at his lavish table.

Reading this novella, there are many surprises, but perhaps none is more interesting than the language itself. It is not easy to read in places, since there are numerous items of vocabulary found rarely or nowhere else in Latin. But there is nothing of the well-groomed literariness of Ciceronian periods, sentence structure is simple and direct, and the notions of the speakers are just the sort of things that real people are liable to be saying. Knowing so little about the Roman lower classes, we are grateful for this one eye-opener, and only wish we had more of it. For social history of the Roman immigrant freedmen of the 1st c. A.D., the *Satyricon* is a mine of information, actually the only such mine of information we have.

Fellini's film *Satyricon* is well worth seeing as background to reading the text. It is such a lavish and overwrought production, that one might miss the fact that it is quite near to the text, actually most of the dialog is close translation into Italian, while the scenes of the *Cena* are as gross and gaudy as the Latin text indicates.

One episode, that of the Ephesian Matron, is completely remarkable and unexpected, since it portrays a light-hearted skit of a widow attending a corpse of her husband in a tomb. For reasons based in the story line, the body of the husband ends up hung on a crucifix outside the tomb, in company with two crucified criminals. There is no space to go into this here, but it seems clear that someone who misunderstood Christianity totally, heard of Christ's entombment and crucifixion, and turned it into an odd form of comedy. This needs further study and discussion....

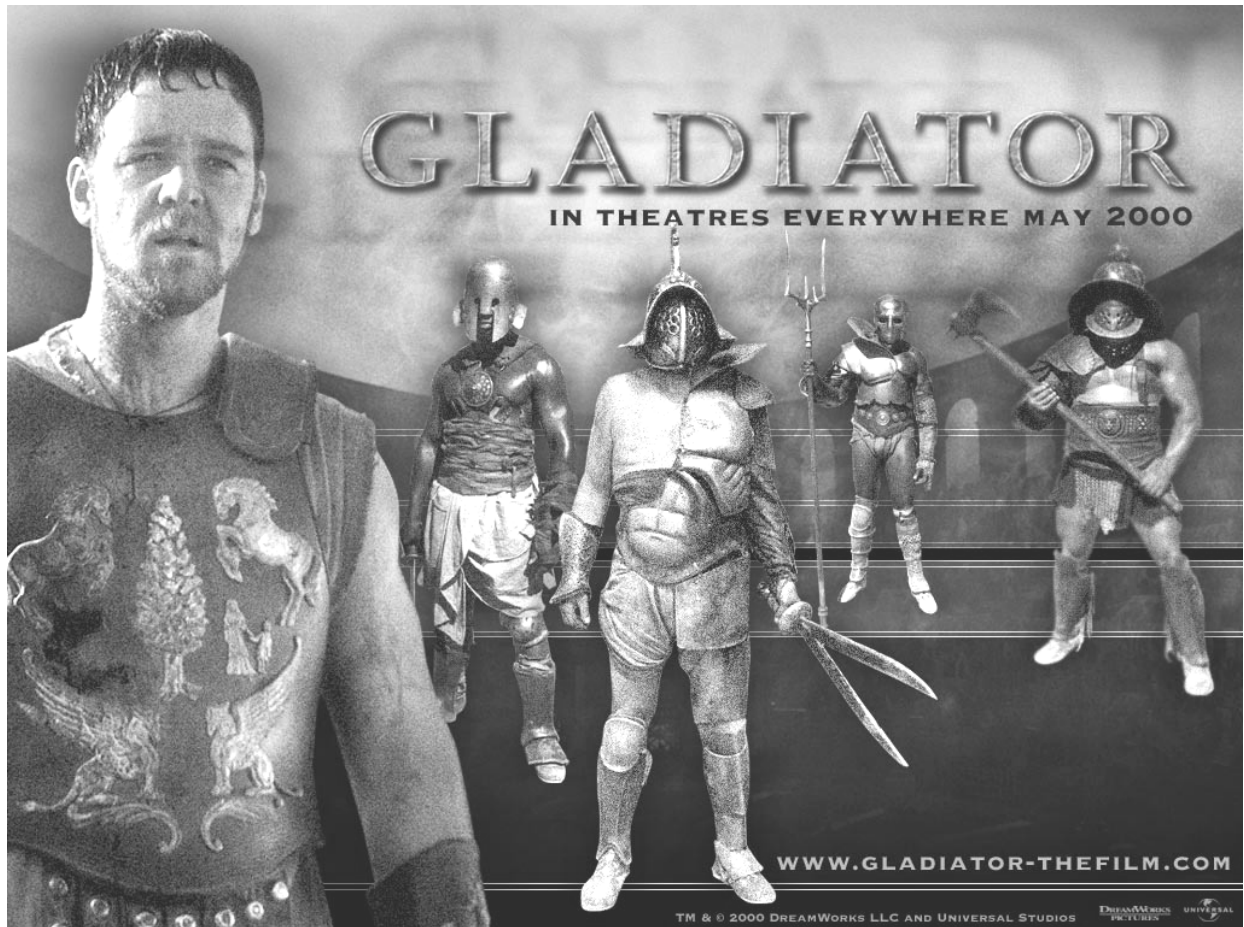
No student who has studied a few years of high school Latin should

miss reading sections of Petronius. This is what Romans read for entertainment, there is nothing fancy or oratorical here, but the daily talk of the little people who have vanished from the Roman scene. The gabby table-talkers, the nouveau riche Trimalchio, the grossly expensive estate with everything a person could imagine imagining---- these were a part of Roman life, and curiously, can be found in astonishing replica in America of the end of the 20th century!

Return to [Latin Author index](#)

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Gladiator: Trashing Commodus

Now that everyone in the world has seen Ridley Scott's *Gladiator* movie, maybe we should look at what's true in it and what is cinematic invention. The short answer is that everything in the background (sets, costumes, gladiatorial activities, the Colosseum and games) is very accurate and that the storyline and main characters are pretty much invented, even characters who were historical, like Marcus Aurelius, Commodus, and his sister Lucilla.

Commodus is shown in *Gladiator* as arriving on the battlefield after the action is complete. In fact, he campaigned with his father and participated in battles from the time he was five years old and actually was in command of the troops in the successful campaign shown at the start of the movie. Maximus, the movie's heroic and victorious general, never existed, and his fictional victories really belonged to Commodus. Three years before his death, Marcus Aurelius named Commodus co-Emperor in recognition of his military victories, but Marcus Aurelius actually ruled alone until his death. That occurred in 180 AD, of disease usually identified as "the plague" (medical authorities differ on what that might

have been), somewhere near modern Vienna (and historians, of course, argue about exactly where). A few enemies of Commodus later mentioned poison, but there's really no evidence (and it was always "poison" and never smothering that came up in such cases.) Lucilla wasn't in the military theater.

Nobody ever was able to determine the exact fatherhood of the many children produced by Faustina the Younger, the wife of Marcus Aurelius, but both Lucilla and Commodus were among her brood. Lucilla was older by a number of years, and she really had married Lucius Verus when Commodus was four years older. Verus died ten years before the action of the film starts, so it is unlikely that there would be an eight-year-old son of theirs running around several years into the epic. Lucilla did hate Commodus and she participated in an early assassination plot for which she was exiled and then murdered on orders of Commodus. There was never any hint that he took her to bed, but there was plenty of evidence of such activity with some of his younger sisters -- nobody knows how willing they were. (Lucilla, who had remarried, was also promiscuous -- just not with her brother.) Commodus' main squeeze was a cousin named Marcia, and there will be more about her later.

Shortly after Marcus Aurelius' death, Commodus signed treaties with the Germans and withdrew all Roman forces from north of the Danube River. This move was immensely popular with the Army, who had been campaigning there relentlessly for almost 20 years, and with most Romans, who were tired of the high casualty rate and of the economic drain caused by war profiteering by many Senatorial families. Commodus brought the 180,000 man Danube Army home to an immense triumphal celebration, which he dedicated to his deceased father. But it was Commodus who was the people's hero. His popularity was bolstered by the unprecedented long series of gladiatorial games associated with the Triumph and with large distributions of money to all Romans.

Commodus sponsored additional games throughout his reign and always gave out cash to help people enjoy them. He was arguably the most popular Emperor that Rome had since Augustus. Of course, he was hated by the upper classes -- it was their war profits he was distributing to the masses. Modern economists have estimated that his expenditures for "bread and circuses" were huge, but that he spent much less than the "good emperors" before him (and especially Marcus Aurelius) had spent on border wars that were of marginal to negative value to the already over-extended Empire.

Commodus did fight in the arena, but he had an understandably perfect record. His gladiatorial opponents knew that if they put on a good but not dangerous show they would only receive a minor wound and would be spared in the end by the merciful Emperor. He was also an accomplished animal slayer and had lions, bears, leopards, hippos, and a giraffe on his lists of conquests. Some of these he slew from safe platforms and catwalks, but he also sometimes went down to the arena floor. One of his great crowd pleasers was shooting the heads off running ostriches with specially designed broad-headed arrows -- they'd run around headless for a while, much to the delight of the crowd. And it should be

remembered that none of his excesses put off the audience. Bloody as the movie is, it cannot compare with the hellish scenes played out in the real Colosseum -- scenes relished by the Roman public -- men, women, and children alike. Some revisionists have gone so far as to say that Commodus just played to his audience and that, perhaps, he wasn't as mad as he seemed. (This is the Hamlet debate a millennium and a half sooner.)

I think he was really a little nuts. And really evil -- as was his whole society. And saying that he was just an ultimate expression of his society doesn't excuse. By the end of his rule, he had apparently identified himself with both Jupiter and Hercules. He took to wearing a Herculean lion skin and keeping a Hercules style club next to his throne. His arena persona took over his life, and he turned civil administration over to lackeys and freedmen. With his encouragement, they increased the number of executions and property seizures among the upper classes, always trying to get enough money to mollify the Roman mob. Commodus eventually tried to rename the months of the year after his own names and titles, and he proclaimed a new name for Rome: the "Colony of Commodus". Ultimately his extreme behaviors and megalomaniacal beliefs became habitual, and because of them he ended up with many more powerful enemies than he could defend against.

The *Gladiator* film vastly telescopes the reign of Commodus, showing him being killed early in his reign in the Colosseum. He really lasted thirteen years, and, at the end of 192, he was poised to seize the last remaining public offices for himself. On New Year's day 193 he planned to go before the Senate (dressed as a gladiator, with the Hercules lion skin on his shoulders) to take over the offices of the two elected Consuls after having them murdered. The story then becomes murky.

Perhaps because of "information" supplied by enemy Senators, Marcia (Commodus' mistress/cousin), connived with some of Commodus' cronies and the wrestlers and gladiators he hung out with, and they convinced each other that they were all on Commodus' latest death list. The story goes that, on New Year's Eve, they first poisoned Commodus, but the dose was only strong enough to render him unconscious. Fearing that he might wake up in a mean mood, Marcia persuaded one of the wrestlers to strangle him. Commodus never saw the dawn of the new year.

The Senate rejoiced and proclaimed famously that Commodus' corpse should be dragged through the streets with "the hook" -- that was how really badly disgraced dead gladiators were taken from the arena. He was saved from that post-mortem indignity by one of the high-ranking plotters, who spirited the body away to an unmarked grave outside Rome.

The death of Commodus marked the beginning of a new series of civil wars. His immediate successor, Pertinax, lasted only 87 days before the army killed him off. Then Didius Julianus offered the Praetorian Guard the biggest bribe, and they made him emperor. When he couldn't deliver the bribe money, he soon lost

Praetorian support. Provincial armies proclaimed their own emperors, and, when Septimius Severus marched on the city, Julianus was killed an officer in his own guard platoon -- only 66 days after the Senate had proclaimed him. The Senate then proclaimed Septimius Severus Emperor, but it took him four years to root out other claimants.

You should also remember that Commodus' enemies got to pay the next generation of historians, whose works became the basis for "historical fact".

The dying game: How did the gladiators really live?

By John Follain, The London Times 12/15/02

Roman gladiators are the stuff of legend and Hollywood movies. But newly discovered bones are finally revealing the truth about how these ancient heroes lived and died.

The tall gladiator had marched into the Ephesus arena earlier that afternoon, to perform before an audience of up to 25,000 spectators. He was among the lowest of the low in the gladiator hierarchy, which paired off opponents as evenly as possible to ensure contests lasted. As a retiarius, he carried no helmet, and his weapons were a trident and a net. Normally he would have been pitted against a secutor or a murmillo - both of whom had a visored helmet, a shield, greaves, a sword or a dagger, and a protected sword arm.

The profession of retiarius attracted the scorn of the contemporary writer Juvenal: 'What he hurls is a net, and he misses, of course, and we see him Look up at the seats, then run for his life, all around the arena, Easy for all to know and identify.' We will never know whether the Ephesus gladiator, who was between 18 and 25 years old, and 6ft tall - giving him an advantage as far as throwing his net over his adversary went - fought well or badly. But we do know how he met his end: a dagger blow of such violence that it split his head open with a gash that ran from the top of one ear, across the front of his face, under the nose, to the opposite cheek.

His badly mangled skull has survived to tell the tale of his death. Until now, what we knew about gladiators - those bloody icons of the ancient world - was derived from inscriptions on tombs, from the literature of the time, and from the decorations on columns that celebrated the triumphs of Roman emperors. But in Ephesus in western Turkey, a city so rich and thriving it was the New York of ancient Rome, a cemetery for gladiators is for the first time yielding bony evidence of not only how they died, but also how they lived, and how their injuries were treated.

Believed to have been inherited from the Etruscans, gladiator contests spread across the Roman dominions and were at first part of funeral celebrations for rich families. In 78BC, the death of the dictator Sulla was marked with battles fought by 6,000 gladiators. In time, the private and religious significance of these contests disappeared, and they became shows put on as popular entertainment. The gladiators were tools of Roman rulers who believed, as the ancient formula said, that they could keep the plebs under control with 'bread and games'. Entry was free.

The fury of gladiatorial combat first came to Ephesus in 69BC, courtesy of Lucullus, the Roman army's commander-in-chief. The city was a vital centre, on a par with Alexandria in Egypt, or Antioch in Syria. Under the Emperor Augustus, it became the first city of the Roman province of Asia, and the residence of the proconsul. A political and commercial centre with a population of an estimated 200,000, it sat astride trade routes that ran from West to East, and from South to North.

To accommodate the contests, the eastern part of the Ephesus stadium built by the Greeks was converted into an elliptical arena. One of the biggest monuments of the city, the stadium was oval-shaped, about 330 yards long and 160 yards wide. Some 25,000 spectators - half the capacity of the Colosseum - could watch the athletic games favoured by the Greeks. Centuries later, people could watch chariot races, and the gladiator combats that began in the afternoon with the participants, right arms raised, hailing high officials, nobles and senators with the ritualistic words: 'Those who are about to die salute you.'

There was no mistaking the purpose of these fights: they were designed to impress people with the might of Rome, and they allowed the cities of the entire empire to show that they belonged to it. Significantly, the Ephesus contests were organised by the high priest who oversaw the worship of the emperor. In the amphitheatre, the audience embodied the Roman nation, the sovereign people of the Earth. It was the people, and not their ruler, who decided whether a vanquished gladiator had demonstrated sufficient fighting spirit and courage to obtain a pardon. The people could also decide to grant a gladiator freedom - most of them were prisoners of war, slaves or condemned offenders - just as they could call for his execution on the spot.

When a gladiator died, his body was carried only a short distance from the scene of his last stand. Some 300 yards away, off a covered passage built with huge limestone blocks, lay a cemetery. There, the body was placed in a sarcophagus that rested on the ground. No other objects were buried with the body. But the dead man was often honoured with an inscription that would guarantee him later recognition. Some epitaphs carried the word 'gladiator' in both Latin and Greek, and detailed the cities he had fought in and the victories he had won. One related how Pandos, from Asia Minor, had won 10 contests and that, even though he had had the sun in his eyes, he had managed to kill an opponent 'as if he were a donkey'.

The epitaphs were discovered in 1993, when archeologists stumbled across them as they tried to trace the path taken by holy processions from the centre of Ephesus to the Temple of Artemis - one of the seven wonders of the ancient world - on the city's outskirts. The cemetery, now covered by an orchard and off a street where shepherds walk their sheep, yielded not only the inscriptions but also - much more excitingly - enough material to allow for the first mass autopsy ever performed on the bones of gladiators.

The 'Dr Death' ministering to these remains works from a small office in the faculty of medicine at the University of Vienna. The screensaver on the computer of Karl Grossschmidt, an anthropologist and assistant professor, has grinning skeletons in sneakers jogging in all directions. A burly man with delicate tortoiseshell glasses and a ready grin, Grossschmidt is deadpan about his daily dealings with death: when he warns that the junction underneath his window is highly dangerous, he mentions that he once saw a student thrown by a car above a tram. Of the student's fate, he comments: 'Fresh bones.'

In May last year, the somewhat staler gladiator bones were turned over to Grossschmidt and his assistant Fabian Kanz. The age of the remains did not worry him: the work he is proudest of was on Neanderthal bones from Croatia, the youngest of which was 26,000 years old. When he arrived in Ephesus, Grossschmidt was taken to a huge warehouse where, stacked from floor to ceiling, were 300 blue plastic crates full of bones. He picked his way through them and selected the most promising relics. 'There wasn't much about these bones that suggested death,' he says, 'so I wasn't shaken by them at all. Not like Egyptian mummies. What with the eyes and the hair, you really do feel you have a corpse in front of you.'

Grossschmidt soon established that the bones had been mixed up, and that the remains of one single body were more often than not spread between different crates. Gradually he was able to put the skeletons back together again, although it was impossible to complete the task, as smaller bones, like the ones from the ribcage, are too similar to be attributed to a particular skeleton. The bones were not just of men - sometimes women and children had been buried with them, making it likely that these were family graves.

He estimated the remains were of some 120 individuals, and dated most of them to AD200-300. This was a time when gladiatorial combats reached their zenith. Some of the fighters buried in the cemetery may have performed under the emperor-gladiator Commodus, who took part in a thousand bouts, and enjoyed shooting sickle-headed arrows to decapitate ostriches. Commodus, who was assassinated in AD192, features in Ridley Scott's film *Gladiator*, starring Russell Crowe. After his death, gladiator games became more and more popular, and in AD249, to celebrate the millennium of the foundation of Rome, 1,000 pairs of gladiators fought in the Colosseum. Thirty-two elephants, a dozen tigers, more than 50 lions and six hippopotamuses were among the animals that were sacrificed.

Of the Ephesus remains, the gladiator bones stood out. They are now the subject of an exhibition in the Turkish city - entitled *Gladiators in Ephesus: Death in the Afternoon* - which attracts half the visitors who come to the site, and which organisers hope will travel to Britain next year. The skeletons' hands and feet especially were extremely developed, with odd-looking swellings in certain places due to constant strain. Gladiators wore no sandals and walked barefoot on the sand that was spread across the arena to soak up their blood. Their feet had an abnormal bone structure, and marks on the bones showed that their tendons were also bigger than normal - much like the racket arm of a modern-day tennis champion can be an inch or two longer than his other arm.

But it was the damage to the bones that spoke the most. Many shoulder blades bore the mark of the belt that held the heavy shield many of them used. Other, more serious injuries found on the skeletons helped to reveal what kind of gladiators these were - in ancient Rome, they were divided into several categories, and rules determined what weapons they could carry and who they were paired against. The aim was to make it difficult to injure the adversary.

A lucky find allowed the experts to precisely match an injury with the kind of weapon that caused it. A bronze trident fished from the bottom of the harbour of Ephesus in 1989 matches exactly three jagged holes found in a skull from the cemetery. The holes, each 2in apart, form a neat line across the top of the skull, with the lowest one at the point where the fighter's brows met. The prongs are 8 1/2in long, and plunged into his brain. It was the last injury this man suffered, but not the first: between two of the holes was the mark of an earlier blow, which had healed but only after, as Grossschmidt puts it, 'he had bled like a pig'.

On the femur just above the knee of another skeleton, Grossschmidt found four odd-looking marks that form the outline of a square. The marks are believed to have been made by a four-pronged weapon that is depicted on a tombstone found in Romania. It is held by a retiarius, who also carries a trident, his dog at his feet. Until now, archeologists thought the four-pronged version was an artist's invention, an object with perhaps a religious significance, but the Austrian team believe they have shown that it really existed. They are in no doubt that the femur injury was suffered during fighting, as this part of the body was one of the least protected in gladiator combats. The gladiator, although not fatally injured, cannot have survived very long as, crippled, he could no longer avoid his opponent's blows.

Sometimes execution, when it came, was swift. For decades, the popular wisdom has been that a death sentence was ordered with a thumbs-down sign, but this is disputed by many historians who believe that the sign was only made once the gladiator had already been killed. The more common practice was for the public to cry: 'Iugula [Lance him through]!'

The vanquished were expected to act in accordance with the greatness of manhood and, motionless, await the death thrust. Rather than a public display of killing, according to the late Bristol university historian Thomas Wiedemann,

gladiatorial combat should be seen more usefully as a demonstration of the power to overcome death. '[The loser] was expected to take the coup de grace without protest, and the ritualized way in which it was carried out will have helped many defeated gladiators to fulfill this expectation,' wrote Wiedemann in his book *Emperors and Gladiators*. 'In that sense, even the gladiator who died in the arena had overcome death. His death was certainly a consolation to those who watched it. They had assembled in order to be reminded of the death of a great Roman.'

At least one of the gladiators buried in Ephesus was executed with a single dagger blow to the throat. He may have been squatting on all fours at the time, exhausted; the sword smashed through his left shoulder blade, slipped through the upper aperture of the thorax and pierced the heart. Another was dispatched with a dagger blow to the front of the throat, echoing a report of the time that the Emperor Claudius ordered that defeated fighters have their throats slit, so that he could enjoy watching their faces as they died.

In Pompeii in the Gulf of Naples, a relief on a panel shows a similar episode: the loser holds onto the left knee of the victor, who pierces his throat with a sword. 'Of course,' Wiedemann observed, 'a gladiator who failed to accept his execution heroically would hardly have been remembered on a relief glorifying the generosity [of the games' organizer].'

The epitaphs found in the cemetery reveal that most of the gladiators died in the first year of their career. During that first year, the chances of survival were an estimated 3:1, and every second gladiator who was defeated in the arena was put to death. Those contestants who were sent into the arena armed with swords were usually given no prior training, and for them the first fight was a death sentence. It was truly, as Michael Grant wrote in his vivid little book *Gladiators: The Bloody Truth*, the nastiest blood sport invented.

But gladiators also lived to fight another day, and many more. Some fighters had 150 victories recorded on their tombstones. One 21-year-old had trained for four years, and died during his fifth fight. One 30-year-old had fought 34 times; he had scored 21 victories, and had been pardoned four times after being defeated. Gladiators could even live to very old age: the oldest in Ephesus died at 99, long freed and pensioned.

'If they were good, the gladiators became heroes,' says Professor Fritz Krinzinger, director of the Austrian Archaeological Institute, which oversees the Ephesus study. 'They were the Schumachers of the ancient world. They were in danger every time they performed, and they were ready to give their lives for sport.' The gladiators exuded an aura of myth, glory, power and eroticism. Even children idolized them, as revealed by the discovery in Ephesus of graffiti of gladiators drawn in an infantile hand. Young women swooned at the thought of their prowess: one gladiator, Crescens, was notorious as 'the boss and healer of girls at night' and 'the girls' darling'. Probably to appease nervous husbands, the Emperor Augustus decreed that women, other than the six vestal virgins who

were in any case sworn to chastity, could watch the games only from the seats that were furthest away.

Games were advertised in public places, fan clubs supported individual gladiators, and street hawkers sold souvenirs of the biggest contests. People believed that they could cure epilepsy with the warm blood of a butchered gladiator. The most expensive fighters were sold to games organisers for a sum equivalent to 15 times the yearly income of a legionnaire: provided the gladiator lived long enough to fight a couple of battles, the organisers could count on recovering their investment.

Apart from fame, one of the few perks enjoyed by the gladiators in Ephesus was medical attention so good it would impress even today's doctors.

A fracture on a radius, the thicker and shorter bone of the forearm, that was found in the cemetery had healed so perfectly with the help of physiotherapy that it is almost invisible to the naked eye. This is testimony to the skills taught by Galen of Pergamum, to the north of Ephesus, one of the most renowned doctors of his day, who had acquired vast anatomical experience by specializing on gladiators in Asia Minor, and had then become personal doctor to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. From writings of the time, we know that gladiators often had their own private doctor and masseur. The worst wounds, especially those inflicted by animals, were described and analyzed at length in medical treatises.

The Ephesus remains also show that gladiators were heavily built: they ate heartily to increase body weight and to protect themselves against deep wounds, and were nicknamed 'barley eaters' because of their diet of pulses and barley porridge, rich in carbohydrates. Dr Galen, however, was concerned that the barley made their flesh soft. On the day before battle, they were given special meals to steel them for the task ahead.

The epitaphs that described the gladiators' feats did not guarantee them lasting respect. Some three centuries after their burial, their resting places were disturbed when the sarcophagi were opened and reused to bury more dead - sometimes without even removing the remains of the first occupants. The inscriptions were amended to bear the name of the latest arrival.

In the 3rd and 4th centuries, gladiatorial games became fewer and farther between, replaced by cheaper animal hunts. The sport so many men had died for was itself killed off in AD404 by the Emperor Honorius, when he closed what remained of the gladiator schools. No longer would gladiators, in Byron's words, be 'butchered to make a Roman holiday'.

The Gladiator -- History and Interpretation of Gladiatorial Games

<http://abacus.bates.edu/~mimber/Rciv/gladiator.htm>



The Romans believed that they inherited the practice of gladiatorial games from the Etruscans who used them as part of a funeral ritual (servants would duel to the death for the right to provide companionship to their owners in eternity). We don't have any evidence, however, that the Etruscans, in fact, did any such thing. Conversely, we do have evidence of gladiators in Campanian society, perhaps of Samnite origin. The early Christians interpreted the gladiatorial games as a type of human sacrifice. While it is true that gladiatorial games involved the attempted killing of one person by another, and that the Romans associated them with funeral rituals, in fact, the analogy by the Christians seems to have been more a brilliant rhetorical move in the service of a larger anti-pagan polemic than a fair description of how Romans themselves understood the games.

The first gladiatorial games were offered in Rome in 264 BCE by sons of Junius Brutus Pera in their father's honor after he had died. Gladiatorial combat became a very popular form of public spectacle very quickly in Rome. Those who offered games began to compete in terms of the numbers of matches offered. Whereas the sons of Brutus Pera offered three matches, a century later, Titus Flaminus offered 74 pairs in games in honor of his father that lasted over three days. Julius Caesar promised 320 matches in funeral games for his daughter, Julia, but the Senate passed legislation limiting the amount of money that could be spent on gladiatorial games to stop him. Thus, during the Republic, gladiatorial combat was associated in Rome with a) a death and b) elite competition. Such displays provided members of the elite with a vehicle by which to advertise the newest generation in a family which sought to rule Romans.

The funeral association is as important for our analysis as the association with competition within the elite. Not merely were the games linked to a specific

person's death, but they were also very much about death (during the Republic they were only held around the time of the winter equinox; Augustus later permitted gladiatorial games at the spring equinox as well). Gladiators entered the arena with the intent to kill each other. Roman spectators thus observed men facing death, and attempting to overcome it. In a metaphorical sense as well, gladiators were socially dead - they were *infamis* under Roman law (typically slaves, prisoners of war and convicted criminals who had a much more restricted set of rights under Roman law than ordinary citizens). If they fought well enough, however, they might, with the crowd's support, win both their lives (crowds could and did urge the editores, the sponsors of the games, to spare a defeated gladiator before the kill) and their social identities (crowds urged emperors to free gladiators who were popular). Thus, gladiators, from a Roman's point of view (if not a Christian's) offered at least the opportunity to observe death defeated and transcended.

What gladiators did (indeed what they were trained to do) was kill and die well. These were tasks of extraordinary urgency for Romans. On the one hand, Romans (as most premodern societies and impoverished modern societies) faced daunting mortality rates. They did not have the opportunity to "grow into their deaths" as a matter of course (as moderns in materially successful societies do). A Roman at the age of 20 knew he would probably die before he was 30, and he wanted to meet death with honor and dignity. He could observe gladiators do it in the arena. Conversely, as members of a relentlessly militaristic culture, Romans valued the art of killing in a way we simply don't understand. Roman soldiers, moreover, enjoyed a much greater autonomy in their line of battle than Greeks did. In fact, the success of the Roman battle line often depended on the courage of individual soldiers in hand to hand combat. Thus the ability of an ordinary citizen to kill single handedly was a skill that the entire empire depended on to survive.

Gladiatorial games proved immediately and immensely popular within the Roman Empire. There are reports, for example, of people in towns where prominent citizens died virtually extorting promises of gladiatorial games from the survivors. Eventually, the emperors had to regulate how much could be spent on gladiatorial performances to prevent members of the elite from bankrupting themselves. As Rome expanded, so did the performance of the games. We have evidence of gladiatorial performances in virtually every part of the Roman Empire. The games themselves became a vehicle for the Romanization of the empire. On the one hand, Roman soldiers liked to observe gladiatorial matches. Thus, *lanistae* (owner/managers of gladiatorial troops) would follow the troops to new quarters and offer matches for entertainment. This could be a highly profitable enterprise and it was not unusual for members of the elite to invest in gladiatorial troupes. Cicero's friend, Atticus, for example, made back his investment in a troupe after two performances. The games themselves provided ways for Rome to demonstrate the power of their empire. The sheer cost of the producing games was stunning. Contests involving animals from distant provinces demonstrated in a material way how far Rome's dominance reached. Inhabitants of towns in lands conquered by the Romans built amphitheaters and sponsored competitions

as a way of demonstrating their Romanness. Historians traditionally had a great deal of difficulty accepting that the Greeks, for example, enthusiastically embraced the games (cf. Japanese enthusiasm for baseball), but, in fact, the Greeks loved gladiators. The Greeks were not alone. Mosaics and wall paintings from North Africa and other parts of the empire routinely use depictions of gladiatorial combat for their themes.

There are a number of reasons why gladiatorial combat proved so enthralling for Romans. The arena was a liminal site where fundamental human conflicts were symbolically fought. The gladiator as outlaw confronted the forces of civilization and law. Contestants who specialized in the fighting of animals fought in the guise of bears, leopards and lions - wild and, to folks living then, daunting forces of nature. Finally, at issue in every gladiatorial contest, was the most basic question of life and death.

Format of gladiatorial games

The Romans, throughout the history of the Republic, drew a sharp distinction between gladiatorial contests and other forms of spectacular entertainment. Games that the state sponsored were called *ludi*, were held quite frequently, never involved armed single combat, were associated with the worship of a god and were paid for (at least in part) by the public treasury. Gladiatorial shows, which the Romans called *munera*, in contrast, were sponsored by private individuals, were held very infrequently, were associated with funeral rituals, and were paid for privately. The change in Roman government initiated by Augustus blurred some of these distinctions (e.g. funding). Augustus, in fact, was quick to take control of the infrastructure of the gladiatorial entertainment business (the Roman states, for example, owned the schools where gladiators trained).

In addition to the armed individual gladiatorial contests, other spectacles became associated with gladiatorial games. *Venationes* were usually held in the morning of game days (but could be offered on their own). *Bestiarii*, or combatants trained to fight animals, were pitted against wild animals from all over the empire (bullfights and rodeos are the modern heirs and/or equivalents). The slaughter of wildlife in these contests was astonishing. Hundreds of deaths in a day were routine. At the games held by Trajan when he became Emperor, 9,000 were killed. Today we are appalled by scale of wanton destruction. But to folks living 2,000 years ago, wild animals were as much enemies as marauding Germanic tribes. While there are occasional reports of audience sympathy for the plight of animals (elephants in particular seemed to have been troubling), Romans overwhelmingly sided with the human combatants. The *venationes* symbolized the ability of human society to protect itself from hostile forces of nature and remained popular throughout the history of the empire. The Christians, for example, never attempted to outlaw *venationes* while they worked strenuously to end gladiatorial combat.

After the *venationes*, a typical spectacle would include a lunch interlude during which *humiliores* (Romans of non-elite status - execution by sword was a

privilege reserved for the elite) who had been convicted of capital crimes were executed. Typically, the convicted were killed by burning at the stake or crucifixion (forms of capital punishment that the Romans appeared to have adopted from the Carthaginians) or *ad bestias* (in which the convict would be left alone in the arena with one or more wild - and hungry - animals). Romans had a somewhat contradictory attitude towards these executions. On the one hand, like the *venationes*, the executions were welcome examples of the power of society, law and order, to restrain and suppress forces that threatened it. Public executions were popular. On the other hand, writers of elite status, seem to suggest that gentlemen and women didn't indulge themselves too much in this spectacle. The decent thing to do was go get lunch. Some writers, for example, criticized the Emperor Claudius because he routinely stayed in the stadium and observed the executions. To ordinary Romans, however, Claudius' presence indicated that the Emperor took his responsibility for preserving law and order seriously. The people executed were, by definition, wicked and dangerous. Their deaths were something to rejoice in. During the Principate they become something to revel in. Under Nero, the practice arose of writing plays adapted from myths in which people died and assigning the role of a character who would die to a condemned man. The audience would watch the play, and the actual killing of the condemned man in character's role (an ancient variant on a snuff film).

It was at these lunch time spectacles that Romans executed Christians when local or national officials were in a persecuting mode. Public response to these executions could vary dramatically. On the one hand, Christians who refused to sacrifice to the Roman gods, flagrantly rejected the norms of the society in which they lived. There are plenty of examples of communities demanding that their leaders send Christians to the arena for public execution (cf. accounts of Jews demanding that Pilate order the execution of Jesus). On the other hand, the "crime" of Christianity was quite different than the crimes of others executed in the arena (murder, temple theft, etc.). Christian sources, at least, report that the dignity of Christians in facing a spectacle intended to degrade and humiliate them, often inspired respect among the crowds in the stadium.

After lunch, the gladiatorial contests were held. Originally, gladiators were identified with ethnic names (e.g., Thracian or Samnite) which indicated the kind of weaponry they used, not the actual ethnic identity. In fact, the evidence suggests gladiators fought hard to resist the pseudo-ethnic labeling (there's a famous example of a gladiator of Samnite origin who fought as a "Thracian") and took care on their tombstones to indicate their true ethnic identities.

Samnites (later called *secutores*) carried oblong shields and short swords and wore plumed helmets with visors. Thracians carried small round shields and curved daggers. Gladiators called *retiarii* ("net men") carried nets to trip and hold their opponents and tridents which they used to finish off a captured victim. A *Retarius* typically fought a "Gallic" gladiator (also called a *murmillo*) who wore a rectangular shield and a visored helmet decorated with a fish (*murmillo*) or a Samnite. The vary names and distinctive weaponry of the gladiators displayed a

history of the peoples Rome had defeated as her empire expanded. Interestingly enough, as the empire expanded and gladiatorial combat grew popular in the provinces, Romans began to drop the ethnic identification of gladiators for terms that described their costume or style of fighting (e.g. Samnites became *secutores*).

Gladiatorial Demography

Romans "recruited" gladiators from a number of population sources over the course of their history. Captured soldiers were a popular source, particularly in the years of Rome's imperial expansions. Even when the geographical limits of the empire had been established, soldiers of rebellious provinces remained a fruitful source of gladiators. Titus and Vespasian were able to eliminate extraordinary numbers of rebellious Jews by organizing gladiatorial games after they "pacified" Judea. Roman courts could sentence individuals convicted of serious criminal offenses to gladiatorial schools. Similarly owners of recalcitrant and/or fugitive slaves could sell these slaves *ad ludos* (or condemn them to death in public executions). Under the empire, however, laws were passed requiring owners to establish some basis (e.g., criminal behavior) for such treatment of a slave.

Despite the fact (perhaps because of the fact) that gladiatorial combat was so marked by "outlaw" and servile combatants, free citizens could and did become gladiators. To do so, they had to take an oath in which they agreed that they would submit to a) being branded; b) being chained; c) being killed by an iron weapon; d) to pay for the food and drink they received with their blood; and d) to suffer things even if they did not wish to. To agree, voluntarily, to such conditions was a renunciation of all the social benefits of citizenship in the Roman world (*libertas*, the sanctity of the citizen's body, etc.). Thus, the free citizens who chose to enter the arena were viewed with grave suspicion by members of the Roman elite. However, there is evidence that a substantial proportion of the gladiatorial forces (perhaps as many as half) were originally of citizen status (who voluntarily entered the gladiatorial schools) by the end of the Republic.

The choice for some citizens can be explained by economic factors. Gladiators got three square meals a day, decent medical care, and if they were good, survived to freedom. They also had the opportunity to win purses that editores would frequently offer as bonus in competitions. If they survived they would win their freedom. And although they could never be citizens, their children could. For citizens of higher social status who had fallen on hard times (scholars always posit the example of a Roman who lost his fortune in the a lawsuit) or economically marginal citizens without a trade, career options were limited to the army (with a strict disciplinary system), teaching (for the literate who were willing to fight for fees) and the gladiatorial schools.

Another category of gladiator that should interest us is women. Women fought as gladiators. The author of an inscription from Pompeii boasts that he was the first editor in his town to bring women into the arena. The practice appears to have

been widespread and did not end until specifically outlawed by the Emperor Septimius Severus in the early 3rd century, AD. The female gladiator is perhaps the most marginal symbol available and there was no doubt some prurient interest aroused by these spectacles. The presence of women in the arena, however, suggests that Romans looked upon the particular *virtus* [skill in killing and dying well] gladiators symbolized as something that existed almost before gender.

There were also citizens, particularly during the Principate, who fought as gladiators as a political statement. Under the Republic, the marginal social status of the gladiator reinforced Roman belief in the superior status of citizens. As Rome suffered civil war and then virtual monarchy, members of the elite would sometimes choose to fight in the arena as a way of demonstrating that the Augustan ideology of the "Republic Restored" was so much bunk. All citizens, they suggested, now were no better than slaves. Conversely, some Emperors, themselves became obsessed with arena. Caligula forced free born citizens to fight as gladiators. The Emperor Commodus is said to have fought as a gladiator in 1000 contests. These "bad" Emperors, who were themselves liminal figures, marking the line between divine and mortal, used the arena to demonstrate their authority and diminish that of the elite. Emperors who appeared as gladiators did what no citizen should dare to do. Emperors who compelled citizens to appear as gladiators demonstrated that mere citizen status meant nothing when compared with imperial status.

Romans accepted and supported the Principate, however, because emperors implicitly promised to maintain the integrity of Rome's complex hierarchy of social status. "Good" emperors were sensitive to the complexity of their power relations with Romans across the penumbra of statuses within Roman society. A "good" emperor appeared at the games, and attended to the populace's expression of their will. A "good" Emperor supported the spectacles as a way of demonstrating the ability of Rome to protect its citizenry from internal threats to its law and order, and the historic ability of Rome to spread this protection across the Mediterranean basin and beyond. A "good" Emperor, thus enjoyed the games, but not too much.

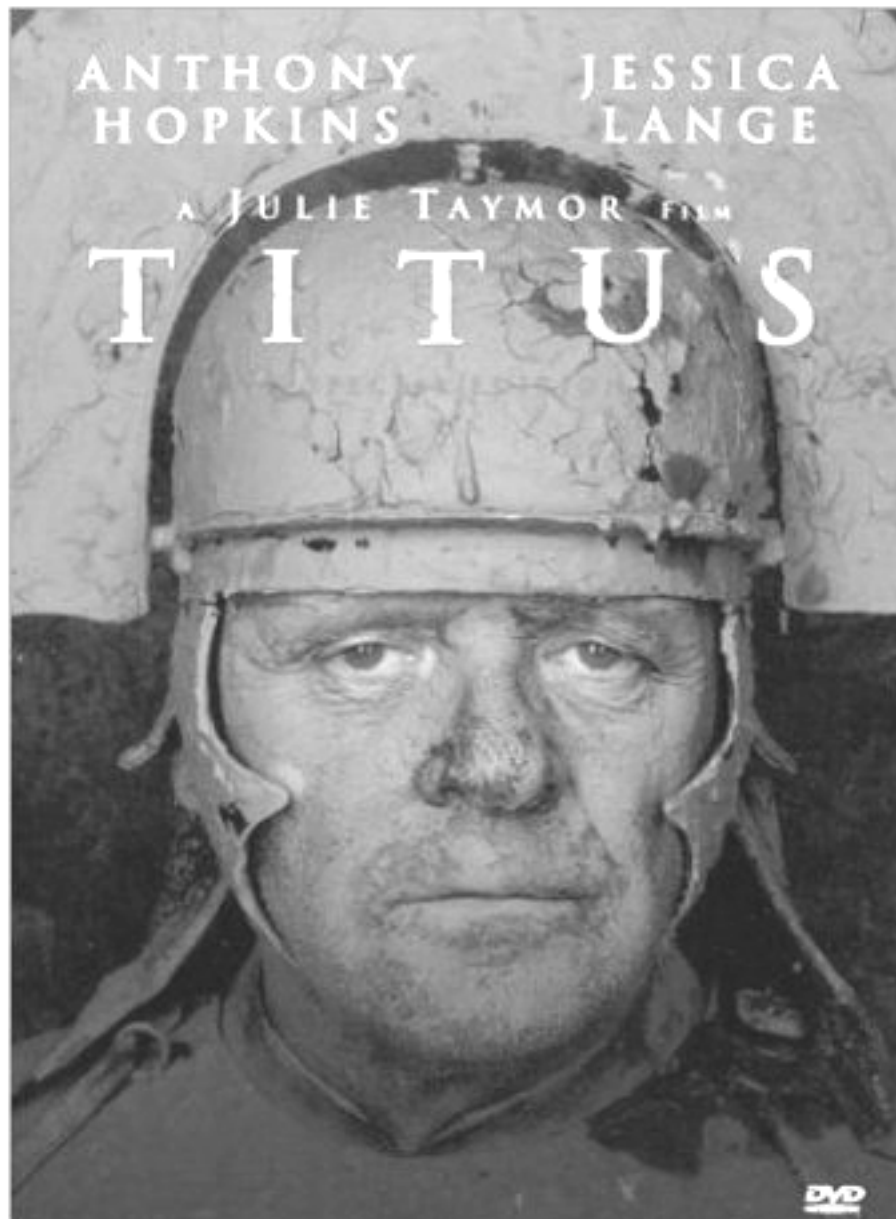
How were they trained?

While the prospect of taking the gladiator's oath no doubt horrifies us, relative to the life Romans at the economic margin enjoyed, conditions in gladiatorial schools were not that bad. It is true that the conditions in the school where Spartacus trained were bad enough to spark the worst slave revolt in Roman history. However, this school was an anomaly. Owners and trainers conceived of gladiators as an investment. Skimping on the schools simply didn't make sense. Gladiators received a reasonable diet (a high protein/fat diet in training) and good (for the day) medical care. They formed enduring relationships with women that resulted in children, and if they survived to freedom, legally recognized marriages and families. Within the community of gladiators they, like all Romans, formed *collegia* and shared a cult worship of the god Hercules. In fact, in a bizarre way,

the gladiatorial schools seem to have provided their inhabitants with a vital, united and committed community (admittedly predicated on the possibility that one might have to kill another). Gladiators were trained not merely how to fight well, but how to make an efficient killing blow and, if defeated, how to offer one's body for the most effective coup de grace. In cases where gladiators or bestarii were mortally wounded in the arena, the accepted practice seems to have been to remove them from public view before executing the killing blow. Typically gladiators fought a handful of matches a year, and would, if they survived, win their freedom after a number (which varied widely depending on time and place) their freedom. Even gladiators who lost a match could survive if the audience pleaded their case to the editor.

Despite their servile and "outlaw" legal and social status, gladiators often enjoyed great social prestige. Young Roman boys liked to hang out at gladiator schools and even take lessons there (parents hated this). Roman matrons particularly enjoyed having affairs with gladiators (or at least Roman men often worried that they did). The 'pop' celebrity of gladiators, like the 'pop' celebrity of athletes today, indicates the extraordinary importance of the battles they fought in the arena to the construction and maintenance of Romanitas.

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Heavy Seneca: his Influence on Shakespeare's Tragedies

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Immensely popular throughout sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe, Seneca's eight tragedies influenced not only Racine and Corneille, but also Shakespeare - as this essay sets out to show. Whether or not Seneca's plays were originally designed for performance in the theatre, they have been and are being performed: Ted Hughes' version of Oedipus is a case in point. Seneca's tragedies, like those of the Athenian dramatists in the fifth century, deal with Greek myth: Hercules Furens, Agamemnon, Thyestes, Oedipus, Medea, Phaedra, The Trojan Women, The Phoenician Women. But Seneca is radically different from his Greek predecessors: since his play The Trojan Women puts on stage the murder of both Polyxena, and Astyanax, and since it adds a sinister, supernatural element, it is very unlike Euripides' play of the same title and must be examined on its own terms.

Which brings us to the crucial point about Seneca's tragedies: the Roman dramatist uses Greek material to comment obliquely on the outrages of Nero's court and describes a world that is radically evil. These plays are therefore much more pessimistic than most Greek tragedies and might almost be termed religious drama. Typically in a Senecan tragedy, we begin with a Cloud of Evil, then witness the defeat of Reason by Evil, and finally experience the Triumph of Evil - as in The Trojan Women. It is therefore no surprise that a century which has witnessed the Holocaust, the Gulags, Hiroshima and much else should be engaged in the rehabilitation of Seneca's tragedies. Far from being contemptible as drama, these tragedies speak directly to our experience.

2

'No author exercised a wider or deeper influence upon the Elizabethan mind or upon the Elizabethan form of tragedy than did Seneca'.(1) So, rightly, T.S. Eliot. That influence is seen most obviously in Kyd's The Spanish Tragedy of 1586, in Webster's The Duchess of Malfy of 1614 and in the plays of Marston, but Seneca (2) is also crucial to Shakespeare,(3) who may well have read his plays in Latin at Stratford grammar school. The revenge tragedies Titus Andronicus and Hamlet derive from Seneca, as do those plays of vaulting ambition Richard III and Macbeth; and Seneca is extensively burlesqued in the comedy A Midsummer Night's Dream.

For the dramatists of the Renaissance in France, in Italy, and in England, Classical tragedy means the ten Latin plays of Seneca, not Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides; as the Martindales say, 'Seneca was the closest Shakespeare ever got to Greek tragedy'.(4) Indeed Francis Meres sees Shakespeare as a new Seneca: 'As Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the Latins; so Shakespeare among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage'.(5) No wonder, then, that Shakespeare himself, when he satirizes contemporary dramatists who mix the four recognized types of drama to the customer's taste, uses Seneca as a touchstone: 'Seneca cannot be too heavy nor Plautus too light' (Hamlet 2.2.396-97).

For Seneca was in the Elizabethan air. Between 1551 and 1563 Cambridge was very Senecan, with two performances of *The Trojan Women*, two performances of *Medea*, and one of *Oedipus*; a landmark was clearly the staging of *The Trojan Women*, one of Seneca's best plays, in 1551. Then the first English tragedy *Gorboduc*, performed in 1562, was clearly Romanizing and was praised by Sidney as 'climbing to the height of Seneca his style'. And, not least, the Tenne Tragedies of Seneca were translated into English by Jasper Heywood and others between 1559 and 1581, when they were published as a single book. These translations, which, as Eliot says, have 'considerable poetic charm and quite adequate accuracy, with occasional flashes of real beauty',⁽⁶⁾ exercised a substantial influence on Elizabethan dramatists.

3

Shakespeare's most Senecan plays are *Titus Andronicus*, *Hamlet*, *Richard III*, and *Macbeth*, and the plays of Seneca that most contribute to these are *The Trojan Women*, *Phaedra*, *Thyestes*, *Agamemnon* and *Hercules Furens*. What Shakespeare derived from Seneca are the following seven general features, mediated, in part, through Italian Senecan plays such as the *Orbecche* of Cinthio (1541):

1. An obsession with *scelus* (= crime).
2. A preoccupation with torture, mutilation, incest and corpses - as in *Titus Andronicus*.
3. A stress on witchcraft and the supernatural - as in *Macbeth*.
4. The existence of vaulting ambition in the prince - as in *Richard III* and *Macbeth*.
5. The ghost that calls for revenge - as in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*.
6. The self-dramatization of the hero, especially as he dies - as in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*.⁽⁷⁾
7. The frequent use of stichomythia in dialogue, which derives from passages like *Medea* 168 - as in *Richard III* and *Hamlet*.

4

Seneca's influence is paramount in two of Shakespeare's revenge tragedies, *Titus Andronicus* and *Hamlet*. Widely regarded as Shakespeare's most Senecan play, *Titus Andronicus*, whose historical background is largely that of the fifth and sixth centuries AD, moves, like the plays of Seneca, 'towards a disaster for which the cause is established in the first minutes of action'.⁽⁸⁾ First produced in the years 1590-92 and virtually absent from the London stage for centuries because of its horrors, *Titus Andronicus* invites us to contemplate multiple murders, human sacrifice, the cutting off of Titus' hand, the severed heads of Titus' sons, the rape, murder, and dismemberment of Lavinia, and a cannibal feast, in which Titus' mad cookery of Tamora's sons comes straight out of Seneca's *Thyestes*;⁽⁹⁾ as Muir says, 'It is a nice irony that Shakespeare's most shocking play should be closest in spirit to the classics'.⁽¹⁰⁾

Here Seneca is teaching Shakespeare how to make *scelus*, crime, a word that occurs more than 200 times in Seneca's plays, 'the central principle of tragic

action and design, how to focus on the crime, the perpetrators, the victims, and on the moral framework violated'.(11) Indeed two of the most common tags from Seneca in Elizabethan drama deal with *scelus*: 'for crimes the safe way always leads through more crimes' (Agamemnon 115) and 'Great crimes you don't avenge, unless you outdo them', which comes, significantly, from *Thyestes* (195-96). The word *scelus*, crime, occurs 38 times in Seneca's play *Thyestes*, which is an important influence on *Titus Andronicus*.

The revenge play, which is launched by *scelus*, comes in three phases, consisting of:

1. the appearance of the ghost or Fury;
2. the making of the revenger; and
3. the ritual revenge itself.(12)

Shakespeare adapts this pattern in *Titus Andronicus* by sharing the revenge among three people, Tamora, who impersonates Revenge, Titus and Aaron. The most obvious representative of evil in the play - he is called by Waith 'an embodiment of evil'(13) - the Moorish barbarian, Aaron, clearly recalls the hateful figure of Atreus in Seneca's *Thyestes*. But Titus, who, as a noble Roman father, contrasts with Aaron, turns into an avenger himself and serves up her children for Tamora to eat in a cannibal feast; 'Rome is but a wilderness of tigers' (3.1.54). For, as we see from *Orbecche*, *Gordobuc*, and *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, the spectacle of *Kindermord* haunted the Renaissance.

For *Titus Andronicus* and for other plays, what Seneca offers Shakespeare, above all else, is an inimical universe in which evil triumphs(14) - as the two direct quotations from Seneca's *Phaedra* attest. For Demetrius adapts *Phaedra* 1180 on the subject of Hell to articulate 'his consuming lust for Lavinia; his hell is emotional and psychological, a product of unruly passion',(15) while Titus' outburst about the rapists' actions adapts *Phaedra* 671-72 to question God's tolerance of evil.

5

Discussion of Seneca's influence on *Hamlet* must begin with the remarks of Thomas Nashe:

Yet English Seneca read by candle light yeeldes manie good sentences, as Bloud is a beggar, and so foorth; and, if you intreate him faire in a frostie morning, he will affoord you whole Hamlets, I should say handfulls of tragicall speaches. But O grieffe! tempus edax rerum, what's that will last alwaies? The sea exhaled by droppes will in continance be drie, and Seneca led bloud line by line and page by page at length must needes die to our stage.(16)

It is not indeed that specific plays of Seneca's lie behind *Hamlet*, but that the whole tone of the play is Seneca; as Doran puts it, 'Hamlet is certainly not much like any play of Seneca's one can name, but Seneca is undoubtedly one of the

effective ingredients in the emotional charge of Hamlet . Hamlet without Seneca is inconceivable' (17).

Thematically, what Seneca gives to Hamlet is the general theme of revenge for a great wrong done; the ghost of Hamlet 's father that seeks such a revenge and the extreme passion that characterizes Hamlet himself. Stylistically, what Seneca gives to Hamlet is the meditative soliloquy and stichomythia. There is therefore a general Senecan atmosphere in the play; as Miola says, 'The ghosts of Senecan drama - Atreus, Hercules, Pyrrhus, Clytemnestra, Aegisthus, Orestes, Electra - and of neo-Senecan drama - Hieronimo, Titus, Lucianus - hover in the background of Hamlet , providing perspective on character and action'.(18)

Central to that perspective is the fact that Senecan conventions are often transformed in Hamlet . For example, Hamlet himself is not an avenger of the Senecan type who ruthlessly pursues his victim, but is something quite different, a man who, notoriously, wavers constantly before committing himself to revenge. Here Shakespeare exploits the Renaissance topos of an opposition between passionate action on the one hand and the Stoic ideal that passion is an infirmity on the other ('Give me that man that is not passion's slave'); at times, Hamlet sets out to be the Senecan avenger, at other times, he regards revenge with extreme misgivings. On the other hand, Claudius who displays lust, vengefulness, and greed for power is straight out of Seneca's Aegisthus.(19)

The Senecan conventions are altered in other ways. While the ghost of Hamlet's father derives from the ghosts in Seneca's Agamemnon and Thyestes, unlike them, Hamlet's father modifies the call for revenge; 'nor let thy soul contrive / Against thy mother ought'. Again, Hamlet 's famous meditative soliloquy 'To be or not to be' derives from a choral ode in Seneca's The Trojan Women lines 371-81. (20)

6

Two of Shakespeare's plays of vaulting ambition in the prince, Richard III and Macbeth are also strongly influenced by Seneca. Richard III is called by Muir 'the most Senecan of Shakespeare's plays'(21) and the play is clearly indebted to Hercules Furens, Phaedra and The Trojan Women. Richard himself is a typically Senecan tyrant, a gloomy, introspective, self-dramatizing hero, 'a spectacular character who dares *scelus*',(22) he exemplifies extremely well the fact that evil is most potent when it lodges in the heart of the prince - as with Thyestes. Significantly, he revises that famous Senecan tag to 'But I am in / so far in blood that sin will pluck on sin' (4.2.63-4).

One of the main Senecan features of Richard III is that Gloucester's wooing of Anne derives from Lycus' wooing of Megera in Hercules Furens;(23) as Hunter says, 'The whole Lycus/Megera situation in Hercules Furens - the usurping monarch seeking to strengthen his rule by forcing marriage on the wife of the vanished ruler - seems to be echoed in this scene'.(24) To be specific: in both plays, there are similar preparations for entrance; appeals to general principles; the tyrant's wish for a softer answer, after a bitter one; his justification for past

slaughter; and the violent reaction of the women who, clad in mourning, want the tyrant's death.

The climax of the wooing scene, the sword sequence, comes from Seneca's *Phaedra*. Just as the outraged Hippolytus holds a sword at the breast of the self-confessed criminal lover, *Phaedra*, who invites the stroke, so the outraged Anne holds a sword at the breast of the criminal lover, Gloucester, who invited the stroke. Faced with an eroticization of the situation, both Hippolytus and Anne drop the sword.

Finally, another important Senecan element in *Richard III* is found in the *kommos* (lamentation) of Act 4, scene 4: the lamenting women, led by Margaret, who seeks to revile the tyrant, derive from the lamenting women in *The Trojan Women*, led by Hecuba.

7

Macbeth, which was probably first performed at the Globe in 1606 and is one of the shortest of Shakespeare's plays, is 'a sophisticated recension of Senecan elements(25) and so exemplifies what Hazlitt called 'the wildness of the imagination'. The Martindales usefully sum up Seneca's influence on *Macbeth*: 'There are a number of features in *Macbeth* - the heated rhetoric, the brooding sense of evil, the preoccupation with power, the obsessive introspection, the claustrophobic images of cosmic destruction - which recall Seneca's manner and interest, together with an unusually high number of passages which seem to derive from his plays.(26) Indeed the play constitutes Shakespeare's 'most profound and mature vision of evil(27) and *Macbeth* himself is a criminal, an immoral man in a moral universe, whose 'choice of evil unleashes catastrophic consequences which inflict the whole cosmos'(28) - a typically Senecan scenario. But *Macbeth* differs from *Richard III*: whereas *Richard* is the villain as hero, *Macbeth* is a hero who becomes a villain.(29)

Detailed analysis of how Seneca's plays influence *Macbeth* must begin with Shakespeare's appropriation of two epigrams of Seneca that haunt the Elizabethan imagination; as Eliot says of Seneca, 'again and again the epigrammatic observation on life or death is put in the most telling way at the most telling moment'.(30) At *Agamemnon* 115 Clytemnestra says *per scelera semper sceleribus tutum est iter*, which Studley translates as 'The softest path to mischief is by mischief open still'; this becomes *Macbeth*'s 'Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill' (3.2.55). At *Phaedra* 607 *Phaedra* says *curae leves loquuntur, ingentes stupent*, which Studley translates as 'Light cares have words at will, but great do make us aghast'; this becomes Malcolm's 'the grief, that does not speak,/Whisters the o'er fraught heart, and bids it break' (4.3.209-10).

But the Senecan play that most influences *Macbeth* is *Hercules Furens*, which Shakespeare must have re-read at this time. When, after the murder of Duncan, *Macbeth* and Lady *Macbeth* vainly hope to cleanse their blood-stained hands they draw not only on *Phaedra* 715-18, but also on *Hercules Furens* 1323-26. In

Phaedra Hippolytus cries out after being polluted by his stepmother's attempted seduction:

**What Tanais will wash me or what Maeotis
pressing barbarous floods into the Pontic sea?
Not the mighty father himself with all his Ocean
will expiate such a crime.**

In Hercules Furens Hercules cries out after killing his children:

**What Tanais or what Nile or what Tigris
raging with Persian water or what fierce Rhine
or Tagus flowing swollen with the golden sand of Spain
will cleanse this hand?**

Compare Macbeth's soliloquy (2.2.59-62);

**Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine
Making the green one red.**

and Lady Macbeth (5.1.48-49): 'There's the smell of blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand'.

Then Macbeth's famous soliloquy at the end of the play certainly derives from a passage in Hercules Furens, in which Hercules confronts the ruin of his life (1258-61):

**There is no reason for me to hold, to delay my life
longer in this light; I have lost all my advantages,
mind, arms, fame, wife, children,
even my madness. No one can be cured of a
polluted mind; crime must be cured by death.**

This becomes (5.3.22-26)

**I have lived long enough: my way of life
Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf;
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have ...**

and (5.3.40)

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseas'd?

Next, Macbeth's assertion (1.7.7) that 'We but teach / Bloody instructions, which being taught, return / To plague th' inventor' echoes Theseus' dictum in *Hercules Furens* that 'What each has done he suffers; the crime seeks out the author and the guilty one is crushed by his own form of guilt. And, finally, Macbeth's reflection on Sleep in Act 2, scene 2, is based on the Chorus' reflections on Sleep in *Hercules Furens* 1065-81 (as well as in Ovid); with Macbeth's 'Sleep that knits up the revell'd sleeve of care, / The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath, / Balm of hurt minds, great Nature's second course, / Chief nourisher in Life's feast', compare, in Heywood's translation 'And then O tamer best / O sleep of toyles, the quietnesse of mynde / of all the lyfe of man the better parte'.

In yet another debt to Seneca, Shakespeare makes Lady Macbeth find a paradigm for atrocious masculine daring in the character of Medea.(31) Amid a framework of ritual incantation, Lady Macbeth's countenancing of infanticide recalls Medea's murder of her children, and her command to the Spirits to 'unsex me here' recalls Medea's invocation to her own soul to 'Exile all foolish female feare and pity from thy Minde' (Studley). Finally, behind the secret, black and midnight hags who seek to bring about the damnation of Macbeth, lie the Furies of Greek mythology and of Seneca's Thyestes, terrible avenging sisters who are synonymous with witches and devils.(32)

This astonishing catalogue of Senecan influence means that *Macbeth* rather than *Richard III* is 'the most Senecan of all Shakespeare's plays',(33) and, since it is also one of Shakespeare's greatest plays, we can see that Seneca's influence was enormously beneficial.

8

To conclude, the appeal of Seneca's plays for the Elizabethan age and for the modern age is not far to seek: Seneca studies evil with great diligence and, in particular, evil in the prince, and both those ages are very well versed in evil. In Seneca's plays and their Elizabethan recensions, in the revenge plays *Titus Andronicus* and *Hamlet*, and in the plays of vaulting ambition *Richard III* and *Macbeth*, evil is a palpable presence and lodges especially in the heart of the prince. In Seneca and in Shakespeare, we encounter first a Cloud of Evil, then the defeat of Reason by Evil, and, finally, the triumph of Evil.

All this is caviar to the age of Dachau and Auschwitz, of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, of Kampuchea, Northern Ireland, Bosnia. Horror does not turn us off, as it turned off the Victorians, who could not handle Seneca. Nor did horror turn off the Elizabethans, who lived in an age with its own uncertainties, with the Tower, the bear-baiting, the mob. Consequently, Shakespeare could embrace with éclat what has been called the Kingdom of Violence, could give us the horrors and crimes of *Titus Andronicus*, revenge, filicide, cannibal feast.

The significance of Seneca for Shakespeare and for our time can be gauged from the following quotation from Peter Brook, who directed a landmark production of *Titus Andronicus* at Stratford in 1955, with Lawrence Olivier as Titus:(34)

The real appeal of Titus (over theoretically "greater" plays like Hamlet and Lear) 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.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 T.S.Eliot, *Selected Essays* (1951),65.
- 2 For Seneca's plays, see esp. L.J. Herington *Arion* 5 (1966), 422-71, A.J. Boyle, *Ramus* 16 (1987), 78-101.
- 3 For Seneca and Shakespeare see esp. R.S. Miola, *Shakespeare and Classical Tragedy - The Influence of Seneca* (1992), also C. & M. Martindale, *Shakespeare and the Uses of Antiquity* (1990), 29-44.
- 4 Martindales (n.3), 44.
- 5 *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, ed. G.Gregory Smith (1971), vol.2, 317-318.
- 6 Eliot (n.1), 65-66.
- 7 For this self-dramatization see T.S. Eliot 'Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca' in *Selected Essays* (n.1), 126-140.
- 8 E.M. Waith, *Titus Andronicus* (1984) 69.
- 9 Cf. Martindales (n.1), 47: 'Especially close to Titus in atmosphere is Thyestes, with its brooding sense of evil and its climax in a cannibal feast.'
- 10 K.Muir, *The Sources of Shakespeare's Plays* (1977) 23.
- 11 Miola (n.3), 16.
- 12 P. Mercer, *Hamlet and the Acting of Revenge* (1987).
- 13 Waith (n.8), 64.
- 14 Cf. Herington (n.2).
- 15 Miola (n.3), 14.
- 16 *Elizabethan Critical Essays* (n.5), vol. 1, 312.
- 17 M. Doran, *Endeavours of Art: A Study of Form in Elizabethan Drama* (1954)16.
- 18 Miola (n.3), 52.
- 19 W.A. Armstrong, *Review of English Studies* 24 (1948), 34.
- 20 Cf. Miola (n.3), 38.
- 21 Muir (n.10), 37.
- 22 Miola (n.3), 91.
- 23 H.G. Brooks, *Modern Language Review* 75 (1980), 728-37.
- 24 G.K. Hunter, *Richard III (The Revels Plays)*, 138.
- 25 Miola (n.3), 93. He deals with Macbeth at pp. 92-121.
- 26 Martindales (n.3), 37.
- 27 G. Wilson Knight, *The Wheel of Fire* (1961),140.
- 28 Martindales (n.3), 38.
- 29 K. Muir, *Macbeth* (1957), lxi.
- 30 Eliot (n.1), 74.
- 31 I-S. Ewbank, *Shakespeare Survey*, 19 (1966) 82-94.
- 32 A.R. McGee, *Shakespeare Survey*, 19 (1966) 55-67.
- 33 See n.21.

34 Quoted in Waith (n.8), 55-56.

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The Tony Award-Winning



From Insights, 1990

Titus Andronicus: Writing What Was Selling

Titus Andronicus, written at least by 1594, represents one of the first plays by a young playwright struggling to gain a reputation. London theatre audiences of the time were enamored with gory “revenge” plays, and it is entirely logical that Shakespeare would try his hand at writing what was selling.

For source materials and inspiration, the aspiring playwright had a long list from which to choose. Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* provided many of the legends adapted for *Titus Andronicus*; Seneca’s *Thyestes*, and Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy*, as well as the phenomenal stage successes of Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta* and *Tamburlaine*, were before the young Shakespeare, who paid them all the flattery of imitation.

Titus Andronicus also foreshadows elements Shakespeare later developed more fully in *Hamlet* (revenge upon his father’s killer); *Coriolanus* (ingratitude of Rome toward its honored general); *Julius Caesar* (Roman political factionalism); *Othello* (the Moor Aaron, exulting in evil for the sheer joy of it prefigures Iago); and *King Lear* (infirm old age confronted by human bestiality).

Titus Andronicus, however, does not address these issues with the compassion and humanity offered by the later, more mature plays. Rather it evokes pathos on behalf of gruesome suffering. It is a revenge play in the sensational vein of Shakespeare’s immediate predecessors, focusing on violence, gore and horror. And it sold.

It was given twice within ten days in 1594, a sure evidence of its popularity. It did well enough, in fact, to elicit a sour comment from

Ben Jonson, who was appalled with the success of what he took to be a bloody and sensational piece of bombastic rhetoric.

Productions were recorded throughout the 1600s, and adaptations in the 1700s made Aaron the Moor into the play's dominating figure. By the time of Queen Victoria, a play with so much onstage violence was certain to encounter resistance, and Titus Andronicus was seen only once during the 1800s, in a version in which "every expression calculated to offend the ear has been studiously avoided." In our own time, and viewed as a political allegory or a period piece, Peter Brook's striking 1955 production at Stratford-upon-Avon, with Laurence Olivier as Titus and Vivien Leigh as Lavinia, was deeply moving.

A difficulty of putting this play on the stage is that its pure goriness can become comic. The play contains a dozen killings, most of them on stage. It adds multiple mutilations. Detached heads, hands, and stumps are much in evidence, and a white empress has a black baby by her Moorish paramour. The sight of Lavinia walking around with two stumps for hands and her tongue cut out and Titus with his stump of a hand, and the baking of human pies at the end, can make the audience laugh because it all seems so "gross."

Be reminded the revenge drama was popular when Shakespeare began to write. Even today's motion pictures capitalize on the proven (if temporary) audience appeal of a particular genre, and twenty years later Shakespeare would likely have agreed Titus Andronicus was an old-fashioned play. Gruesome though much of its action is, it far transcends most of the plays Shakespeare was imitating.

The allegory for Elizabethans, and perhaps for our time, may be that even golden ages come to an end, in blood, torture and barbarism. Rome, the greatest civilization the world had known, had fallen. How could subsequent empires, no matter how splendid, evade the same fate?

Titus Andronicus: "And I Will Be Revenged on Them All"

By Jane S. Carducci

From Souvenir Program, 1990

Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* (c. 1594) is so full of cruelties that the modern theater-goer may find it hard to disagree with T. S. Eliot's view of this melodrama as "one of the stupidest and most uninspired plays ever written." One critic, S. Clark Hulse, has even calculated the accumulated horrors in *Titus*: "It 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."

More generously, we might consider *Titus* in its immediate literary context: that of the Revenge Tragedy, popular during the Age of Elizabeth. This genre followed the dramatic design of Seneca's Roman tragedies, especially his drama *Thyestes* (c. 65 AD)--which included the horrors of rape, murder, severed hands, and cannibalism. In England this tradition began with *The Spanish Tragedy* (c. 1586) by Thomas Kyd, who first accommodated Seneca to the Elizabethan stage. Kyd inspired numerous spin-offs other than *Titus Andronicus*: *Antonio's Revenge* (1599) by John Marston, *Hamlet* (1601) by William Shakespeare, *Bussy d'Ambois* (c. 1604), *The Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois* (c. 1610) by George Chapman, *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1607), and *The Atheist's Tragedy* (c. 1611), both of which are attributed to Cyril Tourneur.

Ideally, these revenge plays would consist of three elements: first, firm character development; second, a well-constructed plot; and third, complete action (i.e., a beginning, middle, and end). In the beginning is murder, the end, vengeance; the job of the dramatist is to skillfully bridge the gap. Alas, the ideal revenge tragedy was reached only once with Shakespeare's masterpiece, *Hamlet*. Most of the revenge plays degenerated from complete action to episodic structure and from Aristotle's "pity and terror" to "pity and horror."

The dramatic pattern of *Titus Andronicus* closely follows that of the other revenge plays. *Titus*, as avenger, must become a villain because, according to the Elizabethan view, vengeance properly belongs to God alone. Marcus, *Titus*'s brother, strengthens this view by insisting on the wickedness of vengeful acts. Besides the motive of revenge, other features of this genre include pretended or actual madness, delay in the action, blood and sensationalism, stoicism, hyperbole, soliloquy, and stichomythic dialogue (a rhetorical device where characters speak alternate single lines).

For example, *Titus* goes mad after he leaves the forest in II.iii. and never recovers his sanity. Second, the action in *Titus* is delayed: *Titus* knows his enemies from the beginning of Act IV, but waits until Tamora's plot for his chance to serve her the Thyestean banquet. Additionally, Shakespeare displays in *Titus* the most brutal of Senecan horrors with "murders, rapes, and massacres,/ Acts of black night, abominable deeds,/ Complots of mischief, treason, villainies/ Ruthful to hear, yet piteously performed" (V.i.63-6). Fourth, these Roman men, while in Rome, represent a Senecan stoic silence, similar to the "real" men of today who are often defined as men of action, yet personally mute.

Furthermore, Shakespeare adopts some of Seneca's rhetorical devices. Titus consists of many long, didactic speeches in a florid and hyperbolic style (N.B. Marcus's reaction to Lavinia's mutilation in II.iv,11-58 or Titus's apostrophe to the earth III.i.12-26). Sixth, stichomythia fills the play and can be experienced more recently in the familiar verbal parry between the television characters Mattie and David on *Moonlighting*. In *Titus*, for example, Aaron spars with Demetrius and Chiron:

Demetrius: Villain, what hast thou done?

Aaron: That which thou canst not undo.

Chiron: Thou hast undone our mother.

Aaron: Villain, I have done thy mother.

Demetrius: And therein, hellish dog, thou hast undone her. (4.2.73-77)

Even though it follows in the Senecan tradition of bombast and brutality, *Titus* is especially savage. Again T. S. Eliot comments: "No doubt. . . Titus Andronicus. . . would have made the living Seneca shudder with genuine aesthetic horror." Finally, we feel relief and even comfort in returning to the court and the civil order of Rome. Lucius assures us that he will "govern so/ To heal Rome's harms and wipe away her woe" (V.iii.147-8). But, even as a modern audience accustomed to horror movies (and, indeed, even the revenge themes found in Chuck Norris's karate movies or Charles Bronson's *Death Wish* series), we wish that the playwright would reverse frame, knitting "these broken limbs again into one body" (V.iii.72). Since, of course, this cannot happen, we must settle, like Titus's grandson, to "leave these bitter deep laments" and to be made "merry with some pleasing tale" (III.ii.46-47).-

Julie Taymor's Titus: Deciding Not to Cut

Literature Film Quarterly, 2004 by Marti, Cecile

The first time I saw Julie Taymor's *Titus*, I was both fascinated and horrified: fascinated by the boldness and cleverness of the iconography and horrified by the various forms of violence to which the characters' bodies were submitted. This reminded me of the early modern literary genre of the anatomical blazon and of the spectacular dissections that took place in the anatomy theatres during the second part of the sixteenth century and the first part of the seventeenth century throughout Europe. All Renaissance artists were strongly influenced by the mixed feelings of fascination and horror inspired by those public dissections, and Shakespeare was no exception to the trend insofar as various appropriations of and references to the blazon are disseminated in his sonnets (cf. sonnets 20, 23, or 145) and plays (*Twelfth Night*, *Coriolanus*, *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Julius*

Caesar, or Titus Andronicus). As David Hillman and Carla Mazzio state: "Parts of the body are scattered throughout the literary and cultural texts of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe."¹ A few centuries later, the everlasting craze for hemoglobin, scattered limbs, and big thrills is given full satisfaction on the screens.

Julie Taymor, in her adaptation of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, has composed a strikingly visual reworking of Renaissance "Baroque fantasies of the imagination."² The trope of fragmentation at the root of the anatomical blazon initiated by Clement Marot in 1535 is here particularly analogous to the rhetoric of film editing developed in *Titus*. Originally, the poetic partition of the female body and the subsequent praise or denigration of the selected body parts were the constituting elements of the anatomical blazon. As far as Titus and Lavinia are concerned, the anachronism implied in a cinematic emblazoning of some of their body parts involves a fracture of bodily and gender representations as well as a shift in intention from the blasonneurs' point of view. Depriving the human body (most often female) of its wholeness in an attempt to objectify it, annihilating any trace of identity (here again feminine), and eventually subduing it was the profession of faith of the early modern blazoners. The desire to dissect a body discursively and impose a dominion upon a selected body part stems mainly from assumptions that: ". . . the part, in the early modern period, becomes a subject, both in the sense of being 'subjected'-of being isolated and disempowered-and of being 'subjected'-imagined to be endowed with qualities of intention and subjectivity."³

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Representations of corporeality are also central to *Titus Andronicus* where the body's fragmentation and its loss of coherence acquire a collective perspective and become a synecdoche of political havoc and social dismantlement. It is thus through the disintegrated bodies of Titus and Lavinia that the politics of national threat and racial invasion get worked out. On the other hand, the emblazoning process of the editor of Taymor film, Françoise Bonnot, does not obey the same early modern imperatives of bodily conquest and dominion in *Titus*-the sadistic load contained in a Renaissance blazon is not here clearly perceptible-for if film editing is essentially based on deconstructive, paradigmatic methods (cutting), most of the time it aims at constructing coherent narratives and characters.

As far as Titus is concerned, the repeated shots of body parts (mostly close-ups) stand for the anaphora upon which the anatomical blazon is based and which is so prominent in Shakespeare's text (becoming a kind of throbbing and haunting litany). The selected body parts emblazoned in Taymor's *Titus* are self-evidently the hand and the head. As the film unfolds, alternations of praise and blame in the representations of these body parts closely coalesce with the modulations of Titus's identity as his masculinity or masculine attributes (reason, courage, honor, virtue, and *virtus* amongst others) are ruthlessly assaulted from all sides. The whole interest or purpose of anatomical blazons residing mainly in the second constituent of the genre, the deconstruction of Titus's praise and

masculine gendering that is established in his first sequences, will occupy the rest of the film.

If we now move on to the sequence corresponding to the second part of the play's 3.1, a radical change has occurred in the way Titus's body is edited. Not only has the cutting rhythm been modified, but also the camera work has undergone a spectacular transformation as far as the eponymous character is concerned. The sequence I am referring to displays how Titus accepts the loss of his left hand in an attempt to save his sons' lives.

It is quite fascinating how the carnivalesque suddenly breaks into the household of the Andronici, confined as it has been within the limits of the Goths' sphere of influence until this sequence. Various images of carnival and grotesque that are akin to the texts by Marot, Rabelais, or Nashe also pervade Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus and are exacerbated in Taymor's Titus. The "kitchen sequence" in particular is both gruesome and grotesque. Setting Titus's dismemberment in an antique-looking kitchen is in itself a direct reference to Renaissance grotesque -- this kitchen has nothing to do with a contemporary sterile one where the food is hidden away in storage spaces. In fact, Titus's kitchen could not possibly be more Rabelaisian: all kinds of vegetables and other provisions are spread abundantly on the massive wooden tables while different sorts of poultry as well as hams hang from butcher's hooks.

"Now is a time to storm": Julie Taymor's Titus (2000)

Literature Film Quarterly, 2002 by Walker, Elsie

If you think you know Shakespeare...think again.'

Julie Taymor's Titus is a quintessentially postmodern adaptation: playful, selfconscious, heterogeneous Like other postmodern directors, Taymor plays with the make believe or illusionist conventions of cinema. featuring "stagy" scenes, editing discontinuity, and subjective camerawork rather than filming straight, "objective" reality. Such Brechtian, distancing devices are typical of demystificatory postmodern art.² But Taymor describes Titus in anti-postmodern, perhaps mystificatory terms. as a total, cross-cultural narrative encapsulating the violence of the last two centuries. Also, the ending of Taymor's Titus, pointing toward a world beyond her postmodern mise-en-scene, is (tentatively) Romantic. I will focus on the postmodern form of Titus as well as the Romantic conviction behind its making. I shall also explore how Taymor combines "theatrical" and "filmic" modes of presentation, collapsing distinctions between the artificial and the real because, for Taymor, Shakespeare's "timeless" work prefigures twentieth-century events.

Like Luhrmann's William Shakespeare's *Romeo + Juliet* (1997), Taymor's *Titus* is an eclectic collage--she features heterogeneous film iconography, an international cast, and her hybrid mise-en-scene emphasizes temporal and cultural differences rather than cultural homogeneity. Rather than "re-creating Rome, 400 A.D." Taymor's mise-en-scene evokes various epochs, an ancient world of ritual, mausoleums and orgies along with elements of modern America. Tanks, horses and carriages, limousines, bows and arrows, machine guns, and electric Olympics-style torches are shown in close-up. Taymor and her production designer, Dante Ferretti, feature imposing monoliths. Roman aqueducts along with twentieth century fascist architecture, the government buildings of Mussolini's time built to "recreate the glory of the ancient Roman empire."³ The costumes by Milena Canonero are not the "clothes for a costume drama," but an anachronistic combination of togas and runway chic, business suits and leathers, ancient and ultra modern. Titus (Anthony Hopkins), for example, begins wearing ancient battle dress and war paint, changes to an Eisenhower jacket, to a baggy gray jumper and corduroy pants, to his all-white cook's outfit--the clothes mark his changing role from austere victor (vulnerable in assuming his invulnerability), a politician, an "avuncular old man," to a picture of professionalism executing revenge. By contrast, Lavinia (Laura Fraser) is first dressed "like a Grace Kelly from the 1950s" or an "Italian Katherine Hepburn," a "good girl" in little black gloves and a full bell skirt," but after she is ravaged, Lavinia's torn and bloodied petticoats and her painterly beauty evoke Degas's ballerinas (Taymor 181).

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The eclecticism of this *Titus* may be inspired by the famous drawing by Henry Peacham, the only surviving Elizabethan illustration of a Shakespearean play. The drawing, perhaps drawn from a production of *Titus*, shows a mix of costumes and postures, rather than revealing any attempt toward an "authentic" holistic and unified presentation of ancient Rome. Titus wears a toga but his soldiers are Elizabethan men-at-arms with halberds, while Tamora's dress is vaguely medieval. As Jonathan Bate writes (in his editorial introduction to *Titus Andronicus*), "there could be no better precedent for modern productions which are determinedly eclectic in their dress, combining modern and ancient, the present as well as the past" (43). Bate also discusses the illustration's emblematic quality, fitting with "the way in which the characters in the play so often seem to become emblems, to be frozen into postures that are the very picture of supplication, grief or violent revenge" (43). In Taymor's film, the actors use Stanislavskian, method-acting techniques (for example, in his DVD commentary, Hopkins says that Titus's "super objective becomes revenge"), but they are also sometimes shown frozen in emblematic gestures--this combination of naturalistic and "stylized" acting is discussed in more detail below.

Taymor's long-time collaborator, composer Elliot Goldenthal, matches the eclecticism of her mise-en-scene and characterization with an eclectic musical lexicon. Goldenthal wrote diverse music to play into the psychology of individual characters, rather than bind things together in a wash of homogenous sound: *Titus* is accompanied with orchestral and mass music--solemn and complex like

Monteverdi's choral works; Saturninus, the neo-fascist who lives in Mussolini's palace, is associated with 1930s jazz music; Chiron and Demetrius are associated with "chaotic" rock and heavy metal.

Goldenthal's diverse musical cues and Taymor's use of eclectic cultural styles and referents to "anchor" the story-telling are especially important considering that *Titus Andronicus* is one of Shakespeare's lesser-known plays. Taymor also takes Luhrmann's use of film intertextuality, incorporating various generic and stylistic visual templates, to a dizzying extreme, including everything from cartoonish action to art-house horror.⁴ In the first sequence of *Titus*, the entrance of the "clown" crashing through the wall of a regular boy's kitchen alludes to both Loncraine's *Richard III* (where Richard III crashes through Prince Edward's study) and *The Last Action Hero* (1993) in which Arnold Schwarzenegger, as the action-movie Hamlet, crashes into a regular boy's life. Taymor's final scene, with its bright colors, the tableaux vivants, and horrendous subject matter, surely borrows from Peter Greenaway's *The Cook, The Thief His Wife and Her Lover* (1989)-in both films, nasty events are portrayed in a stylish way. Taymor's mix of diverse filmic iconography underlines the disconcerting mixture of tone in *Titus* in a new way for her own generation, for a primarily film-literate audience.

Appendix A

List of films set in ancient Rome

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

This page lists some films set in the city of Rome during the Roman Kingdom, the Roman Republic or the Roman Empire. Where films are only partly set in Rome, they are so noted.

The Roman Kingdom

Duel of the Titans
Romulus and the Sabines
Duel of Champions
The Rape of the Sabine Women
Hero of Rome
Coriolanus: Hero without a Country

The Roman Republic

- *Coriolanus* (1984)
- *Brennus, Enemy of Rome*

Second Punic War

- *Annibale*
- *Hannibal – Rome's Worst Nightmare* (2006)
- *Siege of Syracuse*
- *Scipio Africanus: The Defeat of Hannibal*
Jupiter's Darling (1955), set in Rome and its environs
The Centurion (1961)

Late Republic

Spartacus partly set in Rome (1960)
Spartacus (2004)
Spartacus: Blood and Sand (2010)
Spartacus: Gods of the Arena (2011)
Julius Caesar (TV miniseries) (2002)
Druids (2001)
Caesar and Cleopatra (1945)
Caesar the Conqueror (1962)
A Queen for Caesar (1962)
Carry On Cleo parody of *Cleopatra*, set in the reign of Julius Caesar (1964)
Cleopatra (1934)
Cleopatra (1963)
Cleopatra (1999)

Julius Caesar (1953)

Julius Caesar (1970)

Empire (2005)

Rome (2005)

The Roman Empire

1st century BC

Empire (TV Series) (2005)

1st century AD

Ben Hur (2003 film)

Ben-Hur (1925 film) - this film is noteworthy for its color segments and for the female nudity in the parade sequence

Ben-Hur (1959) partly set in Rome

Caligula (1979) partly set in Rome

Demetrius and the Gladiators sequel to *The Robe*

I, Claudius (Never completed) (1937)

I, Claudius (BBC TV series) (1976)

The Life of Brian (1979)

The Robe partly set in Rome (1953)

Reign of Nero

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum - a fleeting reference to the emperor is made when the gladiatorial trainer in the Colosseum wants his hulking student to drive his next victim "straight into Nero's box".

Barabbas (1961)

Quo Vadis (1951)

Quo Vadis (2001)

Satyricon (1969)

The Sign of the Cross

Warrior Queen

Flavian Dynasty

- *The Last Days Of Pompeii* (1935)
- *The Last Days Of Pompeii* (1959)
- *Pompeii: The Last Day* (2003)
- *Up Pompeii* (1971)
- *Up Pompeii!* is set in 79 AD, yet anachronistically shows Nero still reigning 10 years after his death (BBC TV Series) (1969–1975)
- Masada (miniseries)
- Titus Andronicus (1985)

101-110 AD

- *The Dacians*

- *The Column*

Reign of Hadrian

- *Centurion* disappearance of the Ninth Legion (2010)
- *The Eagle* disappearance of the Ninth Legion (2011)
- *The Eagle of the Ninth* adaption of the novel by Rosemary Sutcliff. (2011)

Reign of Commodus

- *The Fall of the Roman Empire* latter half set in Rome (1964)
- *Gladiator* latter half set in Rome, partly a remake of *The Fall of the Roman Empire* (2000)

260-272 AD

- *Nel segno di Roma*

Reign of Diocletian

- *Sebastiane*

310-315 AD

- *Constantine and the Cross*
- *Fabiola*

Late Empire

Agora (film)

Appendix B

□□ Ancient Rome Timeline

Ancient Rome Timeline

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| 753 BC | Foundation of Rome (according to the standard Roman creation myth) |
| 600 BC | The Etruscans establish cities from northern to central Italy |
| 282 BC | 282-272: War with Pyrrhus |
| 264 BC | 264-241: War with Carthage (First Punic War) |
| 218 BC | Hannibal invades Italy |
| 135BC | 135-132 BC First Servile War prompted by slave revolts |
| 73 BC | 73 - 71 BC Slave uprising led by the gladiator called Spartacus |
| 64 BC | Pompey captures Jerusalem |
| 45 BC | Julius Caesar defeats Pompey to become the first dictator of Rome |
| 44 BC | Julius Caesar assassinated |
| 44 BC | 44-31BC The Triumvirate of Marc Antony, Lepidus, and Octavian (later known as Caesar Augustus) become the rulers of Rome |
| 31 BC | Antony and Cleopatra are defeated by Octavian |
| 27 BC | Octavian becomes Caesar Augustus, the first Roman emperor (“Princeps”) until 14AD |
| 0 | (conventional) |
| 14AD | Death of Augustus. Tiberius, stepson of Caesar Augustus, becomes emperor until 37AD |
| 29 AD (ca.) | Crucifixion of Jesus in Jerusalem and the origin of Christianity |
| 37 | Gaius (Caligula) crowned Emperor |
| 41 | Caligula is killed and Claudius proclaimed Emperor |
| 54 | Emperor Claudius dies (murdered?) and Nero is proclaimed Emperor |

- 64** Fire destroyed much of Rome - the Christians are blamed for the destruction
- 68** The death of Nero ended the Julio-Claudian dynasty
- 68 - 69** "Year of Four Emperors" followed by the beginning of the Flavian Dynasty by Vespasian
- 75 - 80** The Roman emperors start to build the Colloseum in Rome as a place of gladiatorial combat
- 180** Commodus succeeds his father Marcus Aurelius and gains imperial power
- 305** Constantine becomes the first Christian emperor
- 380** Christianity is declared the sole religion of the Roman Empire by Theodosius I
- 410** The Visigoths, led by Alaric, sack Rome heralding the total decline of the Roman Empire
- 455** The Vandals, led by Gaiseric, sack Rome
- 476** The last Roman Emperor, Romulus Augustulus, was deposed by Odoacer, a German Goth