



RSC

TITUS
ANDRONICUS
&
TIMON
OF ATHENS



William
Shakespeare

Edited by Jonathan Bate
and Eric Rasmussen



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The RSC Shakespeare

William Shakespeare

**TITUS
ANDRONICUS
AND TIMON OF
ATHENS**

Edited by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen

Introduction by Jonathan Bate



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Shakespeare's most sustained and enduringly influential encounter with the culture of antiquity, which was itself such a formative influence on his own culture, came in the three plays that he based on Sir Thomas North's English translation of Plutarch's *Lives of the Most Noble Grecians and Romans: Julius Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra, and Coriolanus*. But these great tragedies were not his only forays into the classical world. He also wrote a long poem about early Rome's transition from monarchy to republic (*The Rape of Lucrece*), a dramatization of part of the Trojan war (*Troilus and Cressida*), a strange, generically hybrid play about the Romans in Britain (*Cymbeline*), and a romance of the ancient world based ultimately on sources from the Hellenistic period (*Pericles*). And there are two further "classical" plays, which, though one belongs to the early Elizabethan phase of Shakespeare's career and the other to his mature Jacobean years, have fascinating similarities that make them into a most intriguing pair: *Titus Andronicus* and *Timon of Athens*.

The full extent of their Shakespeareanness has always been doubted: scholars are now agreed that *Timon* was a collaboration with Thomas Middleton, and most agree that *Titus* was marked with the hand of George Peele—though there is still a debate as to whether the play was an active collaboration or a Shakespearean reworking and development of an earlier effort by Peele. Both plays include a high proportion of original plotting, as opposed to the Plutarch-based Roman tragedies, which follow their historical sources with a degree of rigor. Both plays have a hero who becomes increasingly isolated and verges toward madness. Both make much of the contrast between the supposedly civilized but actually corrupt city (Rome or Athens) and a wood or wilderness beyond. Both include soliloquies of great denunciatory force. Yet for three centuries, neither was staged with any regularity.

In the late twentieth century, however, *Titus* came into its own: in an age of genocides in real life and extreme, often playful violence within cinematic art, it seemed a very modern work. Indeed, in 1999 the immensely imaginative director Julie Taymor turned it into one of the finest of all Shakespearean movies, starring Anthony Hopkins. *Timon*, on the other hand, still awaits its modern rediscovery. But in an age dominated by financial anxiety, it may well be about to come into its own, perhaps justifying the sense of its importance that we find in the economic writings of its most famous nineteenth-century advocate, Karl Marx.

TITUS ANDRONICUS

From the 1700s to the Second World War *Titus Andronicus* was considered so shocking and so subversive of the noble Roman ideal of decorum that it was hardly ever staged and was frequently said to be by someone other than Shakespeare. High-minded critics and scholars could not imagine the National Poet soiling himself with a barbaric feast of rape, dismemberment, and cannibalism. Yet *Titus* was one of the most popular plays of the Elizabethan age.

A glorious mishmash of history and invention, it creates an imaginary Rome that is simultaneously democratic and imperial. The play is not so much a historical work as a meditation on history. We might call it a "meta-history." The political structures of the ear-

Roman republic and the decadence of the late Roman Empire are deliberately overlaid upon each other. They are also mingled with the preoccupations of late Elizabethan England: the opening political dispute between Saturninus and Bassianus is over the question of the succession to the recently deceased emperor, a matter of considerable concern at the time Shakespeare was writing, when the old Virgin Queen was nearing the end of her life and there were several rival candidates to succeed her.

We are asked to imagine that this could be any time in the Roman era and no time. The spiral of revenge begins with an act of human sacrifice, the slaying of Tamora's son Alarbus to appease the shades of those of Titus' sons who have been killed in the wars against the Goths. Historically, human sacrifice was never practiced in ancient Rome, but mythically all cultures have their foundational myths of such offerings. For Shakespeare and his audience Rome was evocative of the Roman Catholic Church as well as the pagan empire of the past. So it is that the action is peppered with allusions to the ultimate sacrifice, the crucifixion of God's own son, and to the doctrinal differences consequent upon it. The word "martyred," which was deeply significant to both Catholics and Protestants, is applied to Lavinia, and when she assists her father in the butchery of Chiron and Demetrius, she is asked to "receive the blood," a phrase that darkly parodies the language of the Eucharist, in which we are redeemed by the blood of Christ—though whether the wine of the feast was real or symbolic blood was a matter of fierce debate.

The play sealed Shakespeare's reputation as the authentic successor to the original angry young man of English drama, Christopher Marlowe. Aaron's delight in his own villainy shamelessly pillaged from Barabas' and Ithamore's boasting in the same vein in Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*. Shakespeare was a contrarian. He took the commonplaces of his age and stuck them on their heads—or perhaps sliced off their heads and baked them in a pasty. Rome was synonymous with civilization and the Goths with barbarism: so Shakespeare considers the possibility that Rome was just as barbarous as the Gothic forest. Roman Stoicism proposed that it was healthy to keep your emotions under tight restraint: so Shakespeare voices the need to give your feelings vent ("Sorrow concealèd, like an oven stopped, / Doth burn the heart to cinders where it is"). The law prescribed that punishment should be left to the justice system: so Shakespeare dramatized the primal—though ultimately self-destructive—attraction of acting out revenge for oneself. A daughter has been raped and mutilated. The law is not there to help; even the poor Clown goes from quest for imperial justice to arbitrary execution. Titus accordingly raises the stakes and thinks of a revenge so hideous that it outdoes the original crime. This is but an extreme version of an instinct that is still with us: the police do nothing about burglaries, so out comes the homeowner's shotgun.

Structurally, the violence in *Titus* is always artistically purposeful, never showing gratuitous. There is a harsh but elegant symmetry to the action. Alarbus' limbs are lopped and so then are Lavinia's: since Tamora Queen of the Goths loses her son, Titus General of the Romans must lose his daughter. Ever since the time of ancient Greek tragedy, Western culture has been haunted by the figure of the revenger. He or she stands on a whole series of borderlines: between civilization and barbarity, between an individual's accountability to their own conscience and the community's need for the rule of law, between the conflicting demands of justice and mercy. Do we have a right—a duty even—to exact revenge against those who have destroyed our loved ones? Or should we leave vengeance to the law or the

gods? And if we do take action into our own hands, are we not reducing ourselves to the same moral level as the original perpetrator of murderous deeds? In the Elizabethan public theater, Thomas Kyd began to explore these questions in *The Spanish Tragedy*; Shakespeare developed them further in *Titus Andronicus* and then refined them to their highest level in *Hamlet*.

Revenge drama can deal as powerfully with emotional trauma as with ethical dilemmas. Hieronimo in *The Spanish Tragedy* is driven mad by the death of his son. In the end his grief becomes so intense that it is literally inexpressible, causing him to bite out his own tongue. Shakespeare nods toward Hieronimo when Titus says “Or shall we bite our tongues, and dumb shows / Pass the remainder of our hateful days?”

Is it possible to relieve emotional anguish through language? The attempt to do so is the traditional cathartic function of poetic tragedy. In *Titus*, Marcus—the play’s chief “spectator” figure—confronts the appalling mutilation of his niece, Lavinia, and finds himself searching for a language of mourning that will “ease [her] misery.” Her father, Titus, later tries to share her pain by holding her closely to him and comparing her to the weeping wind; himself first the sea and then the earth. But even this elemental language is insufficient. Lavinia’s woes are literally *unspeakable*. Throughout *Titus*, Shakespeare pushes at the boundaries between true expression and false, sanity and madness, speech and silence.

In particular, he is fascinated by the ways in which the human body itself can be made to speak. The actor on the Elizabethan stage communicated with his audience in two ways: through words and gestures. Shakespeare began his career as an actor, learning the elaborate rhetorical speeches and highly formalized physical gestures that characterized the relatively crude dramatic repertory of the time. The top box-office star of this period, the early 1590s, was Edward Alleyn. The first Hieronimo, Alleyn was renowned for his grand style. Shakespeare, though, quickly saw the dangers of going “over the top” onstage. Working closely with his leading actor, Richard Burbage, he sought to develop a much subtler style, in which poetic language became a medium less for showy display and more for a flexible, inquiring exploration of the inner life. *Titus* has its share of windy rhetorical grandiloquence—that was necessary in order to bring in the crowds. But its unique brilliance occurs in those passages where Shakespeare deliberately deprives himself of the dramatist’s usual resources of word and gesture. Kyd’s Hieronimo only bites himself into silence in the final scene before his death, whereas Shakespeare’s Lavinia has her tongue cut out before the halfway mark of the action. For the remainder of the time, she can speak only in dumb show. Nor can she express herself with gestures, for her hands have been cut off. She has become a visual icon of man’s inhumanity to woman. So it is that her father, Titus, has to “wrest an alphabet” from the “martyred signs” of her mutilated body.

Titus’ own body has been battered by years of war, and yet he survives. Shakespeare reminds us that real human beings are not supermen or last action heroes, but vulnerable creatures. Titus is scarred, muddy, physically made to stoop low, yet he remains high and indomitable in spirit, despite all the wrongs he has to endure in a cruel world devoid of divine justice:

Marcus, we are but shrubs, no cedars we,
No big-boned men framed of the Cyclops’ size,

But metal, Marcus, steel to the very back,

Yet wrung with wrongs more than our backs can bear.

Aaron, meanwhile, is the first great Shakespearean villain, the forerunner of Richard the Third, Iago in *Othello*, and Edmund in *King Lear*. But he is also the first great black role in English drama. Motivated throughout by his status as an outsider, at first he seems to be the devil incarnate. But toward the end, there is an astonishing turn-around. “Is black so base a hue?” he asks the Nurse who has handed him his first-born son with an insult. Black pride and paternal affection undo the ancient racist equation of darkness with evil.

Titus Andronicus plays like the work of a very clever, very naughty schoolboy. In the classroom of the Stratford-upon-Avon grammar school, young Will would have learned that the purpose of studying the classics was to be inspired by their heroic actions and moral virtues. This was the message of books such as Plutarch’s *Lives of the Most Noble Grecians and Romans*, out of which he would later create his *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. But what he also found in classical literature were glorious tales of blood and gore, not to mention every sex crime imaginable. The brilliance of *Titus* is that it is suffused with the language of the Elizabethan classroom—words like “tutor,” “instruct,” “lesson”—yet uses classical literature as “pattern and precedent” not for virtue but for high crime and misdemeanor. The story of the rape of Philomel by Tereus and her sister Progne’s juicy act of revenge, as told in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, is explicitly invoked first by Demetrius and Chiron as the pattern for what they do to Lavinia and then by Titus as the precedent for what he will do to them. And it is by way of reference to the actual book of Ovid that the silenced Lavinia contrives to reveal what has happened.

Again, the lesson of classical literature was that tragedy should be kept apart from comedy, high art from low. Shakespeare was perfectly capable of following this precept when he wanted: *Julius Caesar* probably has fewer laughs than any other play in the canon. But in *Titus*, he wantonly flouts the classical rules. He recognizes that there is actually a very narrow borderline between tragedy and farce. Four hundred years before the enfants terribles of modern Hollywood, he saw that audiences love the shock of the roller-coaster ride from violence to humor. Jokes are always at someone’s expense and it is one of the obligations of the serious artist to push at the barrier of good taste so that we can discover when the expense is so great that we feel sick.

If the play has a fault, it is that the formality of both language and action in the opening scenes creates a sense of stiffness that suggests classicism at its most tedious. This is probably not Shakespeare’s fault: modern scholarship has persuasively demonstrated by means of close stylistic analysis that *Titus Andronicus* was begun by another dramatist, George Peele, who had a high-level classical education and a taste for large-scale symmetrical stage encounters spoken in high-flown rhetoric. It is almost certainly Peele who deserves credit for the play’s ingenious syncretism, its sweep across the diversity of Roman history. We do not know whether the play was written as a purposeful collaboration or whether Shakespeare came in to do a rewrite or to complete an unfinished work. Nor do we know at precisely what point the writing became his alone—though there is no doubt that he is the author of all the most dramatic scenes, from the rape through the hand-chopping to the fly-killing banquet (which was his later addition, not included in the earliest printed text) to the feast at the climax.

Perhaps the most profoundly Shakespearean moment—a dramatic move far beyond the capacity of Peele—comes when Titus is confronted with the dismembered ruins of his family and his brother Marcus tells him that it is time to “storm,” to rend his hair and explode into a great tirade of words, to rant in the style of a ham actor. But he does not cry or curse. He laughs. In times of extremity, you have to throw away the rulebook. In real life, tragedy and comedy don’t live in different boxes. William Wordsworth once wrote of thoughts that lie too deep for tears. Only William Shakespeare could have dramatized the astonishingly profound human idea that the place you get to when you go beyond tears is not silence but laughter.

TIMON OF ATHENS

In thirty-seven of Shakespeare’s thirty-eight plays, there are representations of family and sexual relationships—parents and children, siblings, lovers, married couples; usually multiple combinations. The bonds of family and desire are the very DNA of his dramatic world. *Timon of Athens* is the unique exception that proves the rule. Nobody in the play has a blood relationship to anyone else. The central character has no family and no lover.

The play seems to have been written around the time when Shakespeare was creating his most demanding female roles—Lady Macbeth and Cleopatra—and yet it almost entirely banishes women. Two whores have walk-on parts in one scene, delivering forty words between them. Some Amazons dance in a masque, though they may be intended as cross-dressed men, like the masquers in *Love’s Labour’s Lost* and *Henry VIII*. There are no children either: the boy actors in Shakespeare’s company can seldom have been so underemployed.

Cupid, the mischievous god of love, presides invisibly over all Shakespeare’s comedies and several of his tragedies: *Timon* is the one play in which he actually puts in an appearance speaking the prologue to the masque. But ironically, he has no part in the action. No character in the play is struck by the dart of love. Cupidity, however—the desire for money—is the heart of the matter.

“In *Timon of Athens*,” wrote Karl Marx of his favorite play, “Shakespeare attributes two qualities to money. It is the visible deity, the transformation of all human and natural qualities into their opposites, the universal confusion and inversion of things; it brings incompatibles into fraternity. And it is the universal whore, the universal pander between men and nations.”¹ In simpler language: we worship money, it distorts our view of what is important in life and it turns all relationships into commercial exchanges. As Lucius’ servant puts it, “Ay, and I think one business does command us all, / For mine is money.” No other Shakespearean play gives so much attention to servants: by focusing on the master–servant relationship, as opposed to parent–child or man–woman, Shakespeare and his coauthor Thomas Middleton (a master in both the comedy and the tragedy of commercial exchange) bring home the Marxist point. Money as the universal whore: that is the symbolic significance of having prostitutes as the only female roles. It is also why the play begins with a selection of unnamed characters selling their wares: jewels, silks for fine clothing, poems, and painting.

The presence of a Poet is especially interesting, in that it gives a glimpse of Shakespeare’s conception of his own art. He knew from his experience of dedicating his early poems to the Earl of Southampton what was involved in the pursuit of patronage, and as a leading member

of the King's Men he was a firsthand witness of the rush for favors in the febrile atmosphere of the Jacobean court. The Painter at the beginning of *Timon* assumes that the Poet assiduously preparing "some work, some dedication / To the great lord," but the Poet's reply suggests that Shakespeare conceived of his own art in terms of *sprezzatura*, the air of seeming artlessness. It takes effort to strike fire from a flint, whereas poetry may slip out "idly" and "as a gum, which oozes / From whence 'tis nourished."

The opening scenes of the play offer a superb presentation of how culture, both in classic times and Shakespeare's, operates through an elaborate system of ceremonies and rituals in which hospitality and respect are key elements. The granting of favors and the lavishing of gifts are equally essential to the system.

Gift-giving was not a spontaneous act of generosity (is it ever?): it was, as one historian of the early modern period puts it, "an integral part of the package of obligations and indebtedness which accompanied any transaction of services."

In order to maintain the position in which he commands respect, Timon has to spend vast amounts of money throwing parties. As only the wise steward Flavius perceives, the continuance of the show has exhausted his master's financial resources. On a smaller scale Shakespeare himself had probably witnessed a similar process in his youth when his father reached a position of eminence in the community, but then overstretched himself, borrowed money and ran into trouble because he could not pay his debts. It is a familiar enough story, though in *Timon of Athens* the scale of the wealth is inflated to an extreme and the spiral into poverty is accompanied by a philosophical commentary.

Generally speaking, Shakespeare is skeptical of the claims of philosophy. He is more interested in how people behave in extreme situations than in what they profess to believe. He only used the word "philosopher" ten times in his complete works. Four of these usages are in wry contexts in the comedies, while the other six are confined to two tragedies written in close proximity to each other early in the reign of King James I. They are two tragedies which follow a similar pattern of a man going from high to low estate, out from city or court to forest or stormy place where there's scarcely a bush. In this "outside" space, the protagonist is filled with fury at his fellow humans. One of those two plays is *King Lear*, the other is *Timon of Athens*. The resemblances have often been observed.

TRIMON'S SERVANT What is a whoremaster, fool?

TRIMON A fool in good clothes, and something like thee. 'Tis a spirit: sometime't appears like a lord, sometime like a lawyer, sometime like a philosopher with two stones more than an artificial one. He is very often like a knight; and generally in all shapes that man goes up and down in from fourscore to thirteen, this spirit walks in.

TRIMON'S SERVANT Thou art not altogether a fool.

A snatch of dialogue such as this could easily change places and handy-dandy with the voice of Lear and his Fool.

Jaques in *As You Like It* may fancy himself as a philosopher, but it is in the cast of *Timon of Athens* that we meet the only professional philosopher in Shakespeare: Apemantus. "I come to observe," he says during Timon's first banquet, and he will remain to offer his tart observations throughout the play. He is an extreme embodiment of the philosophy embraced by Jaques: Cynicism. A Cynic takes Stoic rejection of worldliness to an extreme; a Cynic, the

saying had it, was a Stoic without a tunic. The paradigm was the outspoken and shameless Diogenes, who rejected “civilization” and returned to the “natural” life by becoming a vagabond. Apemantus is “the philosopher” in Shakespeare. Yet for Apemantus, as for Jaques, Cynicism is a pose. They both actually rather enjoy company and food. It is Timon who becomes the real thing.

In Act 2, the Fool goes off with Apemantus, saying, “I do not always follow lover, elder brother and woman: sometime the philosopher.” As on many occasions in *King Lear*, a line spoken by the Fool is at a deeper level applicable to the main character. Timon is the one who follows the way of the philosopher instead of lover, brother, or woman. “I am a Misanthropos, and hate mankind,” he will later announce. He becomes a Diogenes, rejecting all possessions and all worldliness, dying in his cave by the seashore.

The first half of the action is closed with a second banquet, in which with studied irony Timon offers his guests nothing instead of everything. Disgusted with mankind, he retreats to the woods. The general Alcibiades goes into exile at the same time: the point seems to be that both the military hero and the civic benefactor are victims of the system’s ingratitude. Scapegoats of Athenian political arrogance. Like the exiled Coriolanus in another classic play written a couple of years later, Alcibiades marches against the city that has mistreated him. The Athenian senators respond by calling on Timon to perform the role of the reconciler that Volumnia plays in *Coriolanus*; he does so indirectly by committing suicide, symbolically removing hatred from the city and allowing Alcibiades to make peace with the state. The parallel plot is, however, sketched briefly in rather than worked fully out.

The core of the play is the massive third scene of the fourth act in which a succession of visitors comes to Timon in the forest, giving him the opportunity to vent his misanthropy. There is an elegant symmetry between the series of suitors seeking favors in the first half of the play and the series of visitors gawping at Timon’s misfortunes in the second. Among them is Apemantus, the professional philosopher. He has dealt Timon a few home truths in the opening scene, along the lines of “He that loves to be flattered is worthy o’th’flatterer.” Now he says, “The middle of humanity thou never knewest, but the extremity of both ends. When thou wast in thy gilt and thy perfume, they mocked thee for too much curiosity: in thy rage thou know’st none, but art despised for the contrary.” Athenian moral philosophy, embodied for the Renaissance in the figure of Aristotle, extolled the virtues of the middle way, the golden mean. Tragic drama is about people who will not follow that way, who go instead to the extreme. Considered thus, Timon is the exemplary tragic figure.

With its paucity of female characters and absence of familial bonds, this will always remain one of Shakespeare’s least known, least loved, and least performed plays. Its exposure of our enslavement to money is too close to the bone. Why would large numbers of people who have the financial comfort that allows them to benefit from the public art form of theater want to spend an evening being beaten up on the subject? The harsh beauty of Timon’s anguished arias in the second half of the play, the exemplary loyalty of the steward Flavius, the incisive wit of Apemantus and the Fool: none of these are quite enough to compensate for the absence of an amorous or heroic countervoice. Perhaps it would have been a different story if the character of Alcibiades had been more fully developed. It is small wonder that critics have persistently speculated—without any direct evidence—that the play was unfinished or unperformed.

Yet for intellectual muscle, the second half of the play is as powerful as anything Shakespeare. It directly addresses one of the great questions in both his time and ours: the relationship between culture and nature. The home that Timon leaves and excoriates is the city of Athens, the birthplace of democracy, philosophy, and theater, the epitome of culture. When he goes into the woods, he is returning from culture to nature, reversing the process by which human cultural evolution has led to ever-greater alienation from our environmental origins. Initially, the angry exile believes that the order of nature is no different from that of the city he has left. He perceives natural forces to be in the same kind of relationship of exchange and deception as those of human society:

The sun's a thief, and with his great attraction
Robs the vast sea: the moon's an arrant thief,
And her pale fire she snatches from the sun:
The sea's a thief, whose liquid surge resolves
The moon into salt tears: the earth's a thief,
That feeds and breeds by a composture stolen
From gen'ral excrement: each thing's a thief.

And he blames the earth for yielding up the precious metal which is the origin of the commodity which is the root of all evil.

But in his downward spiral, Timon also makes a kind of spiritual ascent. His trajectory is not after all so very different from that of Antony and Cleopatra in the subsequent play that Shakespeare based on the same source in classical literature. Throwing away the gold, he finds peace in the imminence of death: "My long sickness / Of health and living now begins to mend, / And nothing brings me all things." He makes "his everlasting mansion / Upon the beachèd verge of the salt flood." His road from fickle worldly prosperity to the nothingness of death goes via the wood and peters out at the edge of the sea. The nineteenth-century critic William Hazlitt suggested that Timon ends by "seeking in the everlasting solemnities of nature oblivion from the transitory splendour of his lifetime."²

Though the play is couched in the ancient ascetic language of *contemptus mundi*, there was for Hazlitt, and there should be for us, something profoundly enduring about the image of a human soul contemplating the vastness of the ocean and being brought to the realization that money is not everything and indeed that nothing may bring all things. Like King Lear and his godson Edgar, Timon is one of a tiny handful of tragic characters who are brought to a place that we might call ground zero. The difference between the two plays is that in *Lear* the meaning of love is discovered amidst the apocalypse, whereas in *Timon* a man dies alone without any community save that of the elements of earth, sea, and sky.

Shakespeare endures through history. He illuminates later times as well as his own. He helps us to understand the human condition. But he cannot do this without a good text of the plays. Without editions there would be no Shakespeare. That is why every twenty years or so throughout the last three centuries there has been a major new edition of his complete works. One aspect of editing is the process of keeping the texts up to date—modernizing the spelling, punctuation, and typography (though not, of course, the actual words), providing explanatory notes in the light of changing educational practices (a generation ago, most of Shakespeare's classical and biblical allusions could be assumed to be generally understood, but now they can't).

Because Shakespeare did not personally oversee the publication of his plays, with some plays there are major editorial difficulties. Decisions have to be made as to the relative authority of the early printed editions, the pocket format “Quartos” published during Shakespeare's lifetime and the elaborately produced “First Folio” text of 1623, the original “Complete Works” prepared for the press after his death by Shakespeare's fellow actors, the people who knew the plays better than anyone else. *Titus Andronicus* was printed in a Quarto version in 1594 which was reprinted two more times before its appearance in the 1623 Folio. The Folio text contains an entire scene (Act 3 Scene 2) missing from the Quartos, which presumably indicates that the Folio text was set with consultation to another source, probably a theatrical promptbook.

Timon of Athens was first printed in the Folio in a text that is rife with problems, most likely in large part due to the collaborative (and therefore untidy) nature of the manuscript, rather than the printing process itself.

The following notes highlight various aspects of the editorial process and indicate conventions used in the text of this edition:

Lists of Parts are supplied in the First Folio for only six plays, one of which is *Timon of Athens*, but not *Titus Andronicus*, for which the list here is editorially supplied. Capital letters indicate that part of the name used for speech headings in the script (thus “TITUS Andronicus, a noble general” or “APEMANTUS, a churlish philosopher”).

Locations are provided by the Folio for only two plays, but not for *Titus Andronicus* or *Timon of Athens*. Eighteenth-century editors, working in an age of elaborately realistic stage sets, were the first to provide detailed locations (“*another part of the forest/city*”). Given that Shakespeare wrote for a bare stage and often an imprecise sense of place, we have relegated locations to the explanatory notes, where they are given at the beginning of each scene whenever the imaginary location is different from the one before. In the case of *Titus Andronicus* the action takes place in and around the city of Rome, while *Timon of Athens* unfolds in the city of Athens and the woods outside the city.

Act and Scene Divisions were provided in the Folio in a much more thoroughgoing way than in the Quartos. Sometimes, however, they were erroneous or omitted; corrections are

additions supplied by editorial tradition are indicated by square brackets. Five-act division based on a classical model, and act breaks provided the opportunity to replace the candles in the indoor Blackfriars playhouse the King's Men used after 1608, but Shakespeare did not necessarily think in terms of a five-part structure of dramatic composition. The Folio convention is that a scene ends when the stage is empty. Nowadays, partly under the influence of film, we tend to consider a scene to be a dramatic unit that ends with either a change of imaginary location or a significant passage of time within the narrative. Shakespeare's fluidity of composition accords well with this convention, so in addition to act and scene numbers we provide a *running scene* count in the right margin at the beginning of each new scene, in the typeface used for editorial directions. Where there is a scene break caused by a momentarily bare stage, but the location does not change and extra time does not pass, we use the convention *running scene continues*. There is inevitably a degree of editorial judgment in making such calls, but the system is very valuable in suggesting the pace of the plays.

Speakers' Names are often inconsistent in Folio. We have regularized speech headings, but retained an element of deliberate inconsistency in entry directions, in order to give the flavor of Folio. Thus in *Titus*, LUCIUS, QUINTUS, MARTIUS, and MUTIUS are always so-called in speech headings but often referred to simply as "Sons" or "Titus' Sons" in entry directions; in *Timon* FLAVIUS is always so-called in speech headings but often referred to simply as "Steward" in entry directions.

Verse is indicated by lines that do not run to the right margin and by capitalization of each line. The Folio printers sometimes set verse as prose and vice versa (either out of misunderstanding or for reasons of space). We have silently corrected in such cases, although in some instances there is ambiguity, in which case we have leaned toward the preservation of Folio layout. Folio sometimes uses contraction ("turnd" rather than "turned") to indicate whether or not the final "-ed" of a past participle is sounded, an area where there is variation for the sake of the five-beat iambic pentameter rhythm. We use the convention of a grave accent to indicate sounding (thus "turnèd" would be two syllables), but would urge actors not to overstress. In cases where one speaker ends with a verse half line and the next begins with the other half of the pentameter, editors since the late eighteenth century have indented the second line. We have abandoned this convention, since the Folio does not use it, nor do actors' cues in the Shakespearean theater. An exception is made when the second speaker actively interrupts or completes the first speaker's sentence.

Spelling is modernized, but older forms are very occasionally maintained where necessary for rhythm or aural effect.

Punctuation in Shakespeare's time was as much rhetorical as grammatical. "Colon" was originally a term for a unit of thought in an argument. The semicolon was a new unit of punctuation (some of the Quartos lack them altogether). We have modernized punctuation throughout, but have given more weight to Folio punctuation than many editors, since though not Shakespearean, it reflects the usage of his period. In particular, we have used the colon far more than many editors: it is exceptionally useful as a way of indicating how many

Shakespearean speeches unfold clause by clause in a developing argument that gives the illusion of enacting the process of thinking in the moment. We have also kept in mind the origin of punctuation in classical times as a way of assisting the actor and orator: the comma suggests the briefest of pauses for breath, the colon a middling one, and a full stop or period a longer pause. Semicolons, by contrast, belong to an era of punctuation that was only just coming in during Shakespeare's time and that is coming to an end now: we have accordingly only used them where they occur in our copy texts (and not always then). Dashes are sometimes used for parenthetical interjections where the Folio has brackets. They are also used for interruptions and changes in train of thought. Where a change of addressee occurs within a speech, we have used a dash preceded by a period (or occasionally another form of punctuation). Often the identity of the respective addressees is obvious from the context. When it is not, this has been indicated in a marginal stage direction.

Entrances and Exits are fairly thorough in Folio, which has accordingly been followed as faithfully as possible. Where characters are omitted or corrections are necessary, this is indicated by square brackets (e.g. “[*and Attendants*]”). *Exit* is sometimes silently normalized to *Exeunt* and *Manet* anglicized to “remains.” We trust Folio positioning of entrances and exits to a greater degree than most editors.

Editorial Stage Directions such as stage business, asides, indications of addressee and characters' position on the gallery stage are only used sparingly in Folio. Other editions mingle directions of this kind with original Folio and Quarto directions, sometimes marking them by means of square brackets. We have sought to distinguish what could be described as *directorial* interventions of this kind from Folio-style directions (either original or supplied) by placing them in the right margin in a smaller typeface. There is a degree of subjectivity about which directions are of which kind, but the procedure is intended as a reminder to the reader and the actor that Shakespearean stage directions are often dependent upon editorial inference alone and are not set in stone. We also depart from editorial tradition in sometimes admitting uncertainty and thus printing permissive stage directions, such as an *Aside?* (often a line may be equally effective as an aside or as a direct address—it is for each production or reading to make its own decision) or a *may exit* or a piece of business placed between arrows to indicate that it may occur at various different moments within a scene.

Line Numbers are editorial, for reference and to key the explanatory and textual notes.

Explanatory Notes allusions and gloss obsolete and difficult words, confusing phraseology, occasional major textual cruces, and so on. Particular attention is given to nonstandard usage, bawdy innuendo, and technical terms (e.g. legal and military language). Where more than one sense is given, commas indicate shades of related meaning, slashes alternative or double meanings.

Textual Notes at the end of the play indicate major departures from Folio. They take the following form: the reading of our text is given in bold and its source given after an equals sign. For *Titus Andronicus* “Q” indicates a reading from the First Quarto of 1594, “Q2” a reading from the Second Quarto of 1600, “F2” a correction that derives from the Second Folio.

of 1632, “F3” a correction introduced in the Third Folio of 1663–64, “F4” a correction from the Fourth Folio of 1685, and “Ed” one that derives from the subsequent editorial tradition. The rejected Folio (“F”) reading is then given. Thus for *Titus* Act 2 Scene 1 line 22: “**nymph** = Q. F = Queene” means that the Folio text’s “Queene” has been rejected in favor of the Quarto’s “nymph,” as the repetition of “queen” in Aaron’s speech would appear to be a compositorial error. There are no Quarto texts for *Timon of Athens*, thus “F2” indicates a correction introduced in the Second Folio of 1632, “F3” a correction introduced in the Third Folio of 1663–64, “F4” one from the Fourth Folio of 1685, and “Ed” a correction introduced by a later editor.

AUTHORSHIP: Mostly by Shakespeare, but the first act and possibly the beginning of the second and fourth acts have the stylistic marks of **GEORGE PEELE**. It is not known whether this was an active collaboration or whether Shakespeare took over an older play by Peele and revised the later acts much more thoroughly than the first one. Francis Meres in 1598 and the 1623 Folio editors had no hesitation in attributing the play to Shakespeare.

MAJOR PARTS: (*with percentage of lines/number of speeches/scenes on stage*) Titus Andronicus (28%/117/9), Aaron the Moor (14%/57/6), Marcus Andronicus (12%/63/9), Tamora (10%/49/5), Saturninus (8%/49/5), Lucius (7%/51/4), Demetrius (4%/39/7), Bassianus (3%/14/3), Lavinia (2%/15/3), Chiron (2%/30/6), Young Lucius (2%/11/4).

LINGUISTIC MEDIUM: 98% verse, 2% prose.

DATE: 1591/92, perhaps revised 1594? Performed at the Rose in January 1594 and marketed by the theater manager as “ne,” possibly meaning “new.” Title page of first published edition, also 1594, seems to imply performance by three successive companies (see “Text,” below), suggesting staging before theaters were closed due to the plague for the second half of 1592 and nearly all of 1593. Perhaps the first two companies performed an old version by Peele and the 1594 performance and text were newly revised by Shakespeare.

SOURCES: The story is not historical. An anonymous chapbook narrative, once thought to be the source, is almost certain to be a derivative text rather than a source, so it must be assumed either that there is a lost source or that the plot is freely invented, while drawing on a range of Roman materials, both historical and poetic—most notably the tragedies of Seneca and Ovid’s story of Progne’s revenge on the tyrant Tereus for the rape of her sister Philomela (*Metamorphoses* book 6, used as a prop and plot device in Act 4 Scene 1). There is also a strong influence from other tragedies of the period, notably Thomas Kyd’s *Spanish Tragedy* (c.1589, especially for the revenger as a self-consciously theatrical performer) and Christopher Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta* (c.1591, for Aaron’s delight in his own villainy).

TEXT: published in Quarto as *The Most Lamentable Romaine Tragedie of Titus Andronicus: As was Plaide by the Right Honourable the Earle of Darbie, Earle of Pembroke, and Earle of Sussex their Seruants* (1594, reprinted 1600 and 1611). A good-quality text, perhaps printed from Shakespeare’s manuscript, though with one or two signs of revision in the process of composition (some false starts and the possibility that the killing of both Alarbus and Mutius in the first act were late additions—could these be Shakespearean revisions to Peele’s original?). The Second Quarto, which included some good corrections, was printed from a damaged copy of the First Quarto, resulting in some changes to the wording of the final scene and the addition of four new lines at the very end of the play. The Folio text was printed from a copy of the Third Quarto, incorporating both corrections and errors from the Second

and Third Quartos; it introduced many new errors of its own, because it was mostly typeset by “Compositor E,” the one genuinely incompetent agent in the creation of the First Folio. The principal value of the Folio text is that it introduces stage directions, presumably derived from the theatrical promptbook, and adds one complete new scene (Act 3 Scene 2, the fly-killing banquet). Most modern editions are based on the First Quarto, but with the banquet inserted from Folio. In accordance with our practice of beginning from Folio and avoiding the conflation of discrete texts, we depart from this tradition and edit the Folio text, though with frequent emendation in places where the text is erroneous, principally as a result of the shoddy work of “Compositor E.” Since they appear in the Folio, the Second Quarto’s extra four lines at the end are included, but they are marked with curly brackets to indicate that they are an addition that seems to derive from the printing shop rather than the playhouse.

TITUS ANDRONICUS

mans

TURNINUS the deceased Emperor's eldest son, who succeeds as Emperor
SSIANUS, his brother

TITUS Andronicus, a noble general

FLAVIA, his daughter

his sons

LUCIUS

QUINTUS

MARTIUS

MUTIUS

MARCUS, his brother, a Tribune of the people

YOUNG LUCIUS, son of Lucius

MARCUS, son of Marcus Andronicus

Kinsmen of Titus

SEMPRONIUS

CAIUS

VALENTINE

MILLIUS

CAPTAIN

MESSENGER

NURSE

CLOWN

LORD

actors, Tribunes, Soldiers and Attendants

ths

TAMORA, Queen of the Goths, later Empress of Rome, married to Saturninus

her sons

ALARBUS

DEMETRIUS

CHIRON

AMMON, a Moor, Tamora's lover Soldiers

Act 1 Scene 1

Flourish. Enter the Tribunes and Senators, aloft. And then enter Saturninus and his followers at one door [below], and Bassianus and his followers at the other, with Drum and Colours

SATURNINUS Noble **patricians**, **patrons**¹ of my right,
 defend the justice of my cause with arms.

My kind countrymen, my loving followers,
 defend my **successive**⁴ title with your swords.
 I was the first-born son **that**⁵ was the last
 that wore the imperial **diadem**⁶ of Rome:
 when let my father's **honours**⁷ live in me,
 or wrong mine age with this indignity.

BASSIANUS Romans, friends, followers, favourers of my right,
 never Bassianus, Caesar's son,
 were **gracious**¹¹ in the eyes of royal Rome,
 I beg then this passage to the **Capitol**,¹²
 and **suffer not**¹³ dishonour to approach
 my imperial seat, to **virtue consecrate**,¹⁴
 to justice, **continence**¹⁵ and nobility:
 let **desert** in **pure election**¹⁶ shine,
 and, Romans, fight for freedom in your choice.

Enter Marcus Andronicus, aloft, with the crown

MARCUS Princes, that strive by factions and by friends
 ambitiously for rule and **empire**,¹⁹
 know that the people of Rome, for whom we stand
special party, have by common **voice**²¹
 election for the Roman empire,
 chosen Andronicus, **surnamed Pius**²³
 for many good and great **deserts**²⁴ to Rome:
 nobler man, a braver warrior,
 lives not this day within the city walls.

He by the senate is **accited**²⁷ home
 from weary wars against the barbarous Goths,
that²⁹ with his sons, a terror to our foes,
 hath **yoked**³⁰ a nation strong, trained up in arms.
 Ten years are spent since first he undertook
 his cause of Rome and chastised with arms

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