

Remembering Greece in Shakespeare's Rome

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For Shakespeare remembering Rome meant largely remembering Plutarch, a first-century Greek philosopher, magistrate in his home town of Chaeronea, priest of Apollo at Delphi, and, later in his life, citizen of conquering Rome. Plutarch's *Lives* polemically pit Greek soldiers, statesmen, and orators against parallel Roman figures; to recall the glory and tragedy of the past, they draw upon many Greek historical and literary sources. Plutarch's frequent quotation of Greek literature, in fact, represents a significant and largely unexplored point of intermediated contact for Shakespeare. The biographer's recollection of Homer's Hector and Andromache shapes the playwright's depiction of Brutus and Portia, and the extraordinary sequence of Homeric citation in the *Life of Caius Martius Coriolanus* (six consecutive quotations in a focused discussion¹) deeply informs Shakespeare's play, particularly its depiction of fate and free will². Gordon Braden makes a parallel case for the tragedians, noting at the outset that there are 547 quotations of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides in the *Moralia* and 61 in the

¹ Plutarch, *Lives*, trans. Thomas North, London, 1595, STC 20067, *Early English Books Online*, <https://eebo.chadwyck.com/>, pp. 252-53.

² See Robert S. Miola, "Lesse Greek? Homer in Jonson and Shakespeare", *The Ben Jonson Journal*, 23:1 (2016), pp. 101-26.

Lives, these last totaling approximately 90 lines³. Remembering Rome through the good offices of Plutarch necessarily meant remembering Greece.

But of course Shakespeare never read Plutarch directly at all; he read North's English translation (probably 1595) of Amyot's French rendering (1559) of Plutarch's Greek *Lives*. Thus his contact with ancient Rome was three hands and three tongues removed, distanced further by fifteen centuries of linguistic, historical, and cultural drift. Shakespeare reading North reading Amyot reading Plutarch reading (and writing) Rome constitutes a significant chapter in the history of classical reception. Moving beyond the limitations of traditional source study and the open-endedness of *intertextualité*, reception study focuses attention on the diachronic transformations of classical texts and ideas, enabling us to tune in more precisely to specific continuities and departures, to resultant harmonies and dissonances.

Let's listen again to Antony's grim prophecy in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*:

And *Cæsars* Spirit ranging for Reuenge,
 With *Ate* by his side, come hot from Hell,
 Shall in these Confines, with a Monarkes voyce,
 Cry hauocke, and let slip the Dogges of Warre,
 That this foule deede, shall smell aboute the earth
 With Carrion men, groaning for Buriall. (1498-1503)⁴

Antony predicts the unleashing of two supernatural forces on Italy as punishment for the assassination – Caesar's spirit, raging for revenge, and *Atē*, hot from hell (we recall the powerful malevolence of Brando's Antony in Mankiewicz' film, 1953). But Plutarch's Antony makes no such prediction and there is no mention of *Atē* at all in any of the *Lives* Shakespeare read. The allusion to this Greek figure is a conspicuous bit of Hellenizing, drawn from the capacious Elizabethan storehouse of classical miscellanea. According to

³ Gordon Braden, "Classical Greek Tragedy and Shakespeare", *Classical Receptions Journal*, 9:1 (2017), pp. 103-19.

⁴ All quotations from *Julius Caesar* refer to William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar* (Folio 1, 1623, *Old-Spelling Transcription*), ed. John D. Cox, *Internet Shakespeare Editions*, University of Victoria, <http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Library/Texts/IC/>.

Richard E. Doyle, *Atē* in Greek epic and lyric poetry usually means “blindness, infatuation, or folly”, often caused by an external supernatural agency, sometimes as punishment; in Aeschylus and Euripides *Atē* generally means “ruin, calamity, disaster”⁵. Sophocles, as usual, is ambivalent. Derived from the Sanskrit *á-vā-tah* (curiously, ‘not injured’), *Atē* also appears in cognate formations (ἀπάτα or ἄάω) and sometimes, as in *Julius Caesar*, personified as a goddess.

Hesiod's *Theogony* numbers the personified *Atē* among the baleful daughters of Eris (Strife):

αὐτὰρ Ἔρις στρυγερὴ τέκε μὲν Πόνον ἀλγινόεντα
 Λήθην τε Λιμόν τε καὶ Ἄλγεα δακρυόεντα
 Ὑσμίνας τε Μάχας τε Φόνους τ' Ἄνδροκτασίας τε
 Νεϊκέα τε Ψεύδεά τε Λόγους τ' Ἀμφιλλογίας τε
 Δυσνομίην τ' Ἄτην τε, συνήθεας ἀλλήλησιν (226-30)⁶

And loathsome Strife bore painful Toil and Forgetfulness and Hunger and tearful Pains, and Combats and Battles and Murders and Slaughters, and Strifes and Lies and Tales and Disputes, and Lawlessness and Recklessness [here *Atē*], much like one another. (trans. Glenn W. Most)

In Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* Clytemnestra swears by *Atē* as retributive Ruin, companion to Dike (Justice), and Erinys (the Avenging Spirit) to justify the murder of Agamemnon:

καὶ τήνδ' ἀκούσῃ γ' ὀρκίων ἐμῶν θέμιν·
 μὰ τὴν τέλειον τῆς ἐμῆς παιδὸς Δίκην
 Ἄτην Ἐρινύν θ', αἴσι τόνδ' ἔσφαξ' ἐγώ,
 οὐ μοι φόβου μέλαθρον ἐλπὶς ἐμπατεῖ (1431-34)⁷

⁵ Richard E. Doyle, *ATH: Its Use and Meaning: A Study in the Greek Poetic Tradition from Homer to Euripides*, New York, Fordham University Press, 1989, p. 3.

⁶ Hesiod, *Theogony, Works and Days, Testimonia*, ed. and trans. Glenn W. Most, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2007, *Digital Loeb Classical Library Online*, <https://www.loebclassics.com/>.

⁷ Aeschylus, *Oresteia: Agamemnon, Libation-Bearers, Eumenides*, ed. and trans. Alan H. Sommerstein, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2009, *Digital Loeb Classical Library Online*, <https://www.loebclassics.com/>.

You will now also hear this righteous oath I swear: by the fulfilled Justice that was due for my child, by Ruin and by the Fury, through whose aid I slew this man, no fearful apprehension stalks my house (trans. Alan H. Sommerstein)

But in *Libation-Bearers* the Chorus sees *Atē* as avenging this murder in the person of Orestes:

ὦ πόνος ἐγγενῆς
καὶ παράμουσος ἄτασ
αἱματόεσσα πλαγά· (466-68)⁸

O misery bred in the family!
O bloody, discordant
stroke of Ruin! (trans. Alan H. Sommerstein)

The Furies of *Eumenides* in turn threaten Orestes with *δύσφορον ἄταν* (376), “unendurable ruin” (trans. Sommerstein). The invocation of *Atē* in the *Oresteia* both as prompter and punisher of Agamemnon’s murder suggests the grim inscrutability and fatality of the Aeschylean universe, wherein humans are doomed to grievous sorrows, wherein they suffer shipwreck on the unfathomable shoals of fate and free will.

The personified *Atē* of *Julius Caesar* has an influential *locus classicus* closer to Shakespeare than Hesiod or Aeschylus, Homer’s *Iliad*. In Book IX (496-512) Phoenix begs Achilles to relent by telling of the Litae (Prayers), who, lame and wrinkled, follow *Atē* (here Blindness), who “strong and fleet of foot” outruns them, “making men to fall”. Whoever listens to the supplications of the Litae greatly benefits, but whoever does not, pays the penalty:

λίσσονται δ’ ἄρα ταί γε Δία Κρονίωνα κιοῦσαι
τῷ Ἄτην ἄμ’ ἔπεσθαι, ἵνα βλαφθεῖς ἀποτίσῃ. (511-12)⁹

then they go and beg Zeus, son of Cronos, that Blindness may follow that man so that he may fall and pay full recompense.

⁸ See note 7.

⁹ Homer, *Iliad*, ed. and trans. A. T. Murray, rev. William F. Wyatt, 2 vols, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1924-25, *Digital Loeb Classical Library*, <https://www.loebclassics.com/>.

(trans. A. T. Murray, rev. William F. Wyatt)

In 1598 Chapman translated *Atē* in this passage as “Goddesse Calamitie” and then later as “goddesse penaltie”:

they straight pray love this goddesse penaltie,
 May follow him, as he pursues the man hath done him wrong,
 Working reuenge and wounding him with a contempt as strong. (p. 90)¹⁰

Homer's *Atē* thus appears as a revenger in a translation published just one year before Antony invoked her as such on stage; revising this translation in 1611, Chapman renamed *Atē* Injury and replaced her agency with that of the wrongdoer's own wrongs:

they flie to *love*, and vse
 Their powres against him; that the wrongs, he doth to them, may fall
 On his owne head, and pay those paines, whose cure he failes to call. (p. 126)¹¹

This passage rewrites the Homeric fable to depict an inevitable sequence of guilt and condign punishment; the wrongs themselves, as Macbeth feared, commend the ingredience of the poisoned chalice to the poisoner's own lips.

In both translations what Richard E. Doyle has called the subjective meaning for *Atē* (blindness, infatuation, folly) gets replaced by the later objective meaning (ruin, calamity, disaster); and in both the mysterious workings of the malevolent goddess become integrated into comprehensible scheme of sin and punishment. In this context Antony naturally invokes *Atē* to wreak deserved ruin on those who struck down “the Noblest man / That euer liued in the Tide of Times” (1484-5). His usage is consistent with other allusions in Shakespeare, wherein others invoke *Atē* as a spirit of discord and retributive war. Berowne comically spurs

¹⁰ Homer, *Seauen Bookes of the Iliades of Homere*, trans. George Chapman, London, 1598, STC 13632, *Early English Books Online*, <https://eebo.chadwyck.com/>.

¹¹ Homer, *The Iliads of Homer Prince of Poets*, trans. George Chapman, London, 1611, STC 13634, *Early English Books Online*, <https://eebo.chadwyck.com/>.

Armado and Costard: “more Atees more Atees stirre them, or stirre them on” (*Love’s Labor’s Lost*, 2644-45); Chatillon calls Queen Eleanor “an A[t]e” who moves King John “to bloud and strife” (*King John*, 357); Benedick thinks Beatrice “the infernall Ate in good apparell” (*Much Ado About Nothing*, 657)¹². *Atē* appears similarly linked to strife in Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*, though she there serves also as “legitimate minister of Justice”¹³.

But why is Shakespeare’s *Atē* “infernal,” or as Antony put it “come hot from hell”? In Book 19 of the *Iliad*, Homer had assigned *Atē* celestial origins, identifying her as the eldest daughter of Zeus:

θεὸς διὰ πάντα τελευτᾶ.
 πρέσβα Διὸς θυγάτηρ Ἄτη, ἥ πάντας ἄᾶται,
 οὐλομένη· τῇ μὲν θ’ ἀπαλοὶ πόδες· οὐ γὰρ ἐπ’ οὐδεὶ
 πίλνεται, ἀλλ’ ἄρα ἦ γε κατ’ ἀνδρῶν κράατα βαίνει
 βλάπτουσ’ ἀνθρώπους· (90-94)

All things are done by strife: that ancient seed of *Iove*
Ate, that hurts all, perfects all. Her feete, are soft; and moue
 Not on the earth; they beare her still, aloft men heads; and there,
 The harmefull hurts them. (trans. Chapman, 1611, 269)

Chapman here names *Atē* “strife” and then “the harmefull”. Latin translators and commentators, notably Spondanus¹⁴, called *Atē* *Noxa*, “injury, harm, damage”. The vision of *Noxa* walking the world βλάπτουσ’ ἀνθρώπους, “harming men”, inevitably recalled other harmful spirits, namely the devils of Christian dispensation. In *Daemonolatry libri tres*, Nicolas Remi described the devil as eager for the ruin of men and always searching for occasions for

¹² All references are to the editions made available by *Internet Shakespeare Editions*, University of Victoria, <http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/>: *King John* (Folio 1, 1623, *Old-Spelling Transcription*), ed. Michael Best; *Love’s Labor’s Lost* (Folio 1, 1623, *Old-Spelling Transcription*), ed. Timothy Billings; *Macbeth* (Folio 1, 1623, *Old-Spelling Transcription*), eds Anthony Dawson and Gavin Paul; *Much Ado About Nothing* (Folio 1, 1623, *Old-Spelling Transcription*), eds Gretchen Minton and Cliff Werier.

¹³ Jessica Wolfe, *Homer and the Question of Strife from Erasmus to Hobbes*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2015, p. 239.

¹⁴ Spondanus (Jean de Sponde), ed., *Homeri quae extant omnia*, Basle, 1583, *Münchener Digitalisierungszentrum* (MDZ) <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/>, p. 166.

rousing terrors (*quavis ratione diuexatos homines habeat, adque omnes concitandorum terriculatorum occasiones ob id semper est intentus*); he cites Homer's *Atē* and Suidas' interpretation: ὁ διάβολος, ὁ ἀντικείμενος ("the devil, the adverse one")¹⁵. After all, Homer had said that *Atē*'s deception of her father caused the angry Zeus to hurl her from heaven to earth. Among others Erasmus commented on the inevitable parallel with the expulsion of the fallen angels: *Hoc Homeri figmentum quidam existimant esse finitimum ei, quod de Lucefero coelis deturbato credunt Christiani* ("Some believe this invention of Homer to be close to that which Christians believe of Lucifer, namely that he was hurled down from heaven"¹⁶).

So early modern writers easily identified the personified *Atē*, Homer's seed of Jove, with a devil or the devil from hell now on earth. Ben Jonson featured *Atē* in *The Masque of Queenes* (1609) as head of eleven witches who come from a smoking, blazing hell, "some with rats on their heads, some on their shoulders, others with ointment pots at their girdles; all with spindles, timbrels, rattles, or other venefical instruments, making a confused noise, with strange gestures" (ll. 21-23)¹⁷. They (Ignorance, Suspicion, Credulity, Falsehood, Murmur, Malice Impudence, Slander, Execration, Bitterness, and Rage) chant eerily of owls, cats, and dogs, of gathering bits of flesh, wolves' hairs, mad dogs' foam, and of murdering an infant for his fat. These witches all obey the Dame, whom Jonson introduces with reference to this very passage of Homer:

This Dame I make to bear the person of Ate, or Mischief, for so I interpret it, out of Homer's description of her, *Iliad* 9. [505-12], where he makes her swift to hurt mankind, strong, and sound of feet; and *Iliad* 19. [91-4], walking upon men's heads; in both places using one and the same phrase to signify her power, βλάπτουσ' ἀνθρώπους, *laedens homines* ["harming men"] (3: 336).

¹⁵ Nicolas Remi, *Daemonolatreiae libri tres*, Lyons, 1595, *Münchener Digitalisierungszentrum (MDZ)*, <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/>, p. 172.

¹⁶ Desiderius Erasmus, *Adagiorum chiliades des. Erasmi*, Basle, 1536, *Erasmus Center for Early Modern Studies*, <http://www.erasmus.org/>, p. 236.

¹⁷ Ben Jonson, *The Masque of Queens*, ed. David Lindley, *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, 7 vols, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012, vol. III.

Atē, here as Mischief, serves the devil, “little Martin” (l. 71) and enters, “her hair knotted and folded with vipers; in her hand a torch made of a dead man’s arm, lighted; girded with a snake” (ll. 78-80).

Summoning an avenging *Atē* come hot from hell, Antony shows himself a perfectly orthodox early modern reader of classical mythology. The prevailing hermeneutic and Jonson’s example also illuminate Antony’s later invocation, spoken to the maddened mob about to burn the conspirators’ houses: “Now let it worke: Mischeefe thou art a-foot, / Take thou what course thou wilt” (1799-1800). By the name Mischief *Atē* ranges throughout the Rome of *Julius Caesar*, evident in the very next scene wherein the plebeians commit the chilling, blackly comic murder of Cinna the Poet, a focal point of Orson Welles’ landmark 1937 production¹⁸. Departing from Plutarch in this scene, Shakespeare here alludes to the other supernatural agency Antony had invoked:

CINNA

I dreamt to night, that I did feast with *Cæsar*,
 And things vnluckily charge my Fantasie:
 I haue no will to wander foorth of doores,
 Yet something leads me foorth. (1814-17)

In both the *Lives* of Caesar and Brutus Plutarch’s Cinna dreamt that Caesar led him forth to a feast against his will. “*Caesar* tooke him by the hand, and led him against his will”; “*Caesar* was very importunate with him, and compelled him, so that at length he led him by the hand into a great darke place, where being maruellously affrayd, he was driuen to follow him in spite of his hart”¹⁹ (1595, 790, 1062). After waking, despite his misgivings, Cinna goes out for a different reason, “to honor his [*Caesar*’s] funerals”, “being ashamed not to accompany his funerals” (1595, 790, 1062). Shakespeare ignores this mundane motive and remembers instead the ominous dream Caesar leading Cinna by the hand against his will, here transformed into a vaguely supernatural force, “Yet something leads me foorth”. The first Cinna’s dream becomes the second’s waking nightmare.

¹⁸ Andrew James Hartley, *Shakespeare in Performance: Julius Caesar*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2014, pp. 43-47.

¹⁹ See note 1.

The phantom Caesar who flits just below the surface of the text here recalls the second supernatural personage of Antony's prophecy, Caesar's spirit, ranging for revenge, who actually appears on stage to Brutus in IV.iii:

Enter the Ghost of Cæsar.

How ill this Taper burnes. Ha! Who comes heere?

I thinke it is the weakenesse of mine eyes

That shapes this monstrous Apparition.

It comes vpon me: Art thou any thing?

Art thou some God, some Angell, or some Diuell,

That mak'st my blood cold, and my haire to stare?

Speake to me, what thou art.

Ghost. Thy euill Spirit *Brutus*?

Bru. Why com'st thou?

Ghost. To tell thee thou shalt see me at *Philippi*.

Brut. Well: then I shall see thee againe?

Ghost. I, at *Philippi*.

Brut. Why I will see thee at *Philippi* then:

Now I haue taken heart, thou vanishest.

Ill Spirit, I would hold more talke with thee. (2287-2302)

Here Brutus' earlier words come back to haunt him, quite literally:

We all stand vp against the spirit of *Cæsar*,

And in the Spirit of men, there is no blood:

O that we then could come by *Cæsars* Spirit,

And not dismember *Cæsar*! (800-3)

In this appearance Shakespeare follows closely two passages from Plutarch but makes significant changes. What appears to Plutarch's Brutus is not Caesar's ghost but at first an unidentified ὄψιν ("vision") and a φάσμα ("apparition, phantom"). Amyot translates as "une vision horrible" and "fantasme"; "une merueilleuse & monstrueuse figure" and "fantasme" (1565, fols. 515r, 697r)²⁰; North as "vision" and "image", then as "shape" and "spirit" (1595, 790, 791, 1070). In both *Lives* Brutus asks who the visitor is, the *Life* of Brutus supplying the direct question: "So *Brutus* boldly asked what

²⁰ Plutarch, *Les Vies des Hommes Illustres, Grecs & Romains*, trans. Jacques Amyot, Paris, 1565.

he was, a god or a man, and what cause brought him thither" (1595, 1070). Shakespeare's Brutus expands the range of supernatural possibilities: "Art thou some God, some Angell, or some Divell?"

Brutus might well be perplexed as Shakespeare, in fact, here translates to the stage Caesar's untranslatable *daimōn* from Plutarch's *Life of Caesar*:

ὁ μέντοι μέγας αὐτοῦ δαίμων, ᾧ παρὰ τὸν βίον ἐχρήσατο, καὶ τελευτήσαντος ἐπηκολούθησε τιμωρὸς τοῦ φόνου, διὰ τε γῆς πάσης καὶ θαλάττης ἐλαύνων καὶ ἀνιχνεύων ἄχρι τοῦ μηδένα λιπεῖν τῶν ἀπεκτονότων, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς καθ' ὅτιοῦν ἢ χειρὶ τοῦ ἔργου θιγόντας ἢ γνώμης μετασχόντας ἐπέξελεθεῖν. (*Caesar* 69.2)²¹

However, the great guardian-genius of the man, whose help he had enjoyed through life, followed upon him even after death as an avenger of his murder, driving and tracking down his slayers over every land and sea until not one of them was left, but even those who in any way soever either put hand to the deed or took part in the plot were punished. (trans. Perrin)

In Greek the intransigently alien δαίμων can mean "god, goddess, divine power, destiny, fortune, good or evil genius, tutelary divinity, lesser god, or evil spirit". Both Amyot and North depersonalized Caesar's *daimōn* into "celle grande fortune & faueur du ciel" (1565, fol. 514v), "his great prosperity and good fortune" (1595, 790). Creating Caesar's ghost, Shakespeare gets closer to Plutarch, here importing the conventions of the popular revenge play descending from Seneca, perhaps particularly from *Caesar's Revenge*, which likewise features two vengeful spirits, a hellish presiding figure named Discord and Caesar's ghost.

Leaving for another day the implications of 'Desdemona', 'ill fated', we recall that the *daimōn* appears elsewhere in Shakespeare's *Rome*, significantly shadowing another Caesar, Octavius, in the soothsayer's warning to Antony:

Thy Dæmon that thy spirit which keepes thee, is
Noble, Couragious, high vnmatchable,

²¹ Plutarch, *Lives*, ed. and trans. Bernadotte Perrin, 11 vols, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1914-26, *Loeb Digital Classical Library*, <https://www.loebclassics.com/>.

Where *Cæsars* is not. But neere him, thy Angell
 Becomes a feare: as being o're-powr'd, therefore
 Make space enough betweene you. (984-8)

Closely following North's definition, "the good angell and spirit that keepeth thee" (1595, 983), Shakespeare here represents the *daimōn* as a tutelary spirit, the "*Genius*" Macbeth refers to, recalling this passage (1046), or in Christian terms, as a guardian angel. Elsewhere, following Amyot, North translates *daimōnes* as "spirits or angels" (1595, 1070). The appearance of the *daimōn* in *Julius Caesar* may thus recall ironically Antony's earlier statement, "*Brutus, as you know, was Caesars Angel*" (1718). But Caesar's *daimōn* (now his Ghost) in *Julius Caesar* plays the role of avenger, not protector.

So what sort of angel or spirit might this *daimōn* staged as Caesar's ghost be? Plutarch's visitant spirit identifies itself in both lives as an evil *daimōn*: Ὁ σός, ὦ Βροῦτε, δαίμων κακός ("your evil *daimōn*, Brutus", *Caesar* 69.11; *Brutus* 36.7). Amyot renders this, "Je suis ton mauuais ange & esprit, Brutus" and "Je suis ton mauuais ange, Brutus" (1565, fols. 515r, 697r). North translates, "I am thy ill angell, Brutus"; "I am thy euill spirit, *Brutus*" (1595, 791, 1070), the last 4 words echoed verbatim by Shakespeare. The diachronic movement of the text through the different languages, centuries, and theologies inevitably accretes meanings. The δαίμων κακός becoming "mauuais ange & esprit", "ill angel" and "evil spirit" inevitably conjures the devil, the fallen angel, as the lexical ambivalence of *daimōn*/demon attests. Witness Thomas Cooper's entry for *daemon* in his *Thesaurus Linguae Romanae* (1584): "Sometime it is taken for God, sometime the soule, or some other spirite. *Daemones dicuntur a Christiania spiritus in caelo a Deo creati, qui de caelo deiecti, partim in terrae infimo, partim in hoc aere damnati sun*"t (sig. I.i.1v, "Daemons are said by Christianity to be spirits God created in heaven, who were thrown down from heaven, some damned to the lower earth, some to the air")²². The ghostly *daemon* may be a wicked demon. We recall Hamlet's fear:

The spirit that I haue seene
 May be a deale, and the deale hath power

²² Thomas Cooper, *Thesaurus Linguae Romanae*, London, 1584, STC 5689, *Early English Books Online*, <https://eebo.chadwyck.com/>.

T'assume a pleasing shape, yea, and perhaps,
 Out of my weakenes, and my melancholy,
 As he is very potent with such spirits,
 Abuses me to damne me [...]. (*Hamlet* 2nd Quarto, 1638-43)

Antony's prophecy, furthermore, pairs Caesar's spirit with *Atē* from hell, and the Ghost's enigmatic reply, "Thy euill Spirit, *Brutus*", fits well with other passages wherein "spirit" is associated with conjuration, the black art of necromancy. Cassius tells Brutus to "Coniure" with his name: "*Brutus* will start a Spirit as soone as *Caesar*" (245-6). Ligarius says, "Thou like an Exorcist, hast coniur'd vp / My mortified Spirit" (968-9), explicitly connecting the raising of spirits to the summoning of demons. Like the infernal *Atē*, Caesar's spirit stalks the world of the play, βλάπτουσ' ἀνθρώπους, "harming men". Stabbing himself Cassius says: "*Cæsar*, thou art reueng'd, / Euen with the Sword that kill'd thee" (2526-27). Brutus comments: "O *Iulius Cæsar*, thou art mighty yet, / Thy Spirit walkes abroad, and turnes our Swords / In our owne proper Entrailes" (2583-85). Brutus reports two more appearances:

The Ghost of *Cæsar* hath appear'd to me
 Two seuerall times by Night: at Sardis, once;
 And this last Night, here in Philippi fields:
 I know my houre is come. (2660-63)

He addresses his last words to the triumphant revenging spirit: "*Caesar*, now be still, / I kill'd not thee with halfe so good a will" (2697-98).

Of course, Shakespeare is not really bringing a devil onstage here so much as he is deploying all the resources of a later supernaturalism, that distinctly non-classical remix of hell, ghosts, devils, conjuration, exorcism, and walking spirits, to create what MacCallum called a "paroxysm of dread" and an "atmosphere of weird presentiment"²³. But, there is one final puzzle worth contemplating. Since some unidentified ὄψιν ("vision") or φάσμα ("apparition, phantom") appears to Plutarch's Brutus, which inevitably recalls Caesar's revenge-seeking *daimōn*, why does this

²³ M. W. MacCallum, *Shakespeare's Roman Plays and Their Background*, London, Macmillan, 1910, p. 196.

visitant spirit identify itself in both *Lives* as Brutus' (not Caesar's) *daimōn*? According to Christopher Pelling, Plutarch here "plays with the notion that two people's fates can become one"; he suggests "that Brutus' and Caesar's *daimones* are either identical, or at least inextricably and catastrophically linked"²⁴. Caesar's *daimōn* punishes his executioners and seems to become or to collude with Brutus's *daimōn* who appears to him. Shakespeare, Pelling suggests further, retains the Plutarchan idea that the supernatural agencies guiding these two mighty opposites may be tragically identical or interlinked. At this point we feel the force of A. D. Nuttall's insight that Shakespeare sometimes exhibits a "faculty for driving through the available un-Greek transmitting text to whatever lay on the other side"²⁵.

Nuttall's comment certainly rings true in this individual instance. But over all Shakespeare contradicts Plutarch and his translators even as he closely follows them. Focusing on the manners and characters of men, Plutarch's *Lives* everywhere show a purposeful supernaturalism. F. E. Brenk concluded that the *Lives* "represent a great historical and theological thesis in their insistence on divine retribution in this life"²⁶, whether brought about by vice itself or the direct intervention of the gods. Furthermore, persuasively analyzing the language of the *Lives*, particularly ὁ θεός, οἱ θεοί, δαίμονες, πρόνοια, τύχη, τὸ αὐτόματον, τὸ πεπωρωμένον (God, gods, *daimōnes*, providence, fortune, chance, fate), Simon Swain showed that divine Providence therein pervasively guides both the decline of Greece and the rise of Rome²⁷. Amyot and North amplified and Christianized this divine direction. Plutarch's Brutus, for example, says he used to think it was "impious and unmanly to yield to one's *daimōn*" (40), that is the

²⁴ Plutarch, *Caesar*, trans. and ed. Christopher Pelling, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 496. See, alternatively, Hannu Poutiainen, "Autoapotropaics: *Daimon* and *Psuché* between Plutarch and Shakespeare", *Oxford Literary Review*, 34 (2012), pp. 51-70.

²⁵ A. D. Nuttall, "Action at a Distance: Shakespeare and the Greeks", in *Shakespeare and the Classics*, eds Charles Martindale and A. B. Taylor, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 209-22: 214.

²⁶ F. E. Brenk, S. J., *In Mist Appareled: Religious Themes in Plutarch's Moralia and Lives*, Leiden, Brill, 1977, p. 272.

²⁷ Simon Swain, "Plutarch: Chance, Providence, and History", *American Journal of Philology*, 110 (1989), pp. 272-302.

evil spirit prompting suicide; Amyot and North convert this into a little sermon, not about resisting evil impulses but about the necessity of yielding to God's will, "l'ordonnance diuine" (1565, fol. 698v); humans must "give place and yeeld to diuine prouidence" and dispose themselves "constantly & patiently to take whatsoever it pleaseth him to send us" (1595, 1072), "ce qui luy plaist nous enuoyer" (1565, fol. 698v). The evil *daimōn* to be resisted gets replaced by the Judaeo-Christian God to be obeyed.

This God appears also in the larger sweep of Roman history:

ἀλλὰ καὶ δεομένοις ἔδοξε τοῖς πράγμασι μοναρχίας πραότατος ὥσπερ ἰατρὸς ὑπ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ δαίμονος δεδόσθαι. διὸ Καίσαρα μὲν εὐθὺς ἐπόθησεν ὁ Ῥωμαίων δῆμος, ὥστε χαλεπὸς γενέσθαι καὶ ἀπαραίτητος τοῖς ἀπεκτονόσι (Comparison of Dion and Brutus, 2)

but it was clear that the ills of the state required a monarchy, and that Caesar, like a most gentle physician, had been assigned to them by Heaven itself. Therefore the Roman people felt at once a yearning for Caesar and in consequence became harsh and implacable towards his murderers (trans. Perrin)

Amyot renders Caesar's appointment to Rome by the guiding *daimōn* as "que Dieu de grace speciale eust donné à l'Empire Romain" (1565, fol. 703), "whom God had ordeined of special grace to be Gouvernor of the Empire of Rome" (1595, 1079) in North's faithful translation. Divergence from the divine plan results in civil war (and even the modern translator has chosen "Heaven"). Roman history rises and falls under the Judaeo-Christian God's watchful eye and purposeful hand.

This God, however, is conspicuously absent from the Rome of *Julius Caesar*. In 25 of 28 recurrences "god" appears in the plural, the singular occurring only in Cassius' contemptuous denial of Caesar as "god" and in Brutus' query to the Ghost. What is more, Shakespeare amplifies the pagan supernaturalism of the *Lives*, adding to Plutarch's many portents the earthquake, the lion in the Capitol, the lioness whelping in the streets, and the rain of blood (435-6, 452-3, 1004, 1008). Diverging from Plutarch's mere listing, Shakespeare has Casca and Calphurnia fearfully recount the portents in two separate scenes (I.iii and II.ii). Shakespeare gives the

Soothsayer two appearances and replicates the eerie bleeding of Pompey's statue (1725-26) in Calphurnia's dream of Caesar's statue (1069-72). He makes Cinna's dream Caesar a daylight force leading to the poet's destruction. And he invents for Antony the prophecy of a curse lighting on the limbs of men, domestic fury and civil strife, the reign of Caesar's spirit, with all its demonic overtones, ranging for revenge, with *Atē*, hot from hell. Shakespeare's reception of Greek elements in *Julius Caesar* darkens the vision of Rome he found in his sources. Unlike Plutarch and his translators, the playwright never orders the assassination and the aftermath into a comforting, comprehensible divine scheme. Perhaps that is why it has attracted translocation to non-Christian cultures, such as Greg Doran's movement of the play to an African setting in 2012: "I guess the one that thing that also the African context has no problem with at all: the whole sense of the spirit world and the soothsayer and lions walking around in the streets and terrible thunderstorms. Somehow the soothsayer is in touch with something that most of the population really believe in"²⁸. Those who would read Christian Providential purpose in such a bleak and terrifying history must attend Cicero's rebuke: "Indeed, it is a strange disposed time: / But men may construe things after their fashion, / Cleane from the purpose of the things themselues" (465-68).

²⁸ Gregor Doran, Interview, in Emma Brown, "Shakespeare's African Play", *Interview Magazine* (12 April 2013), <https://www.interviewmagazine.com/culture/gregory-doran-julius-caesar-bam>.