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Sanctus martyr Thomas Morus:
an unknown Neo-Latin More play from
the College of Marchiennes

Abstract: While the history of Thomas More as a character on stage is long and varied, the humanist made his most regular appearance in Latin school plays across Catholic Europe throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Still, only a handful of these plays are known to have survived, all of which were performed on the Jesuit stage. This article sheds light on a newly discovered Neo-Latin More play, which, it argues, was staged at the Benedictine college of Marchiennes in the late-sixteenth or early-seventeenth century. After a brief contextualization and analysis of the manuscript and the tragedy enclosed, the article offers an edition of the Latin text and a study of its intertextual ties with the dramatic oeuvres of Desiderius Erasmus and George Buchanan.

Keywords: Neo-Latin drama, Thomas More, college of Marchiennes, Douai, Adrien de Roulers, George Buchanan, Desiderius Erasmus, intertextuality.

Résumé: Alors que l’histoire de Thomas More comme personnage de théâtre est longue et variée, c’est dans les pièces en latin jouées dans les écoles dans toute l’Europe catholique des XVII^{ème} et XVIII^{ème} siècles que More l’humaniste est apparu le plus régulièrement. Cependant, seule une poignée de ces pièces ont survécu, toutes ayant été jouées dans des écoles jésuites. Cet article fait la lumière sur une pièce néo-latine mettant More en scène, au collège bénédictin de Marchiennes à la fin du XVI^{ème} ou au début du XVII^{ème} siècle. Après une brève contextualisation et une analyse du manuscrit et de la tragédie, l’article propose une édition du texte latin et une étude de ses liens intertextuels avec les œuvres dramatiques d’Erasmus et de George Buchanan.

Mots-clés: théâtre néo-latin, Thomas More, collège de Marchiennes, Douai, Adrien de Roulers, George Buchanan, Erasme, intertextualité.

INTRODUCTION

Punning on Thomas More’s common epithet “the man for all seasons,” More scholar Friedrich-Karl Unterweg once dubbed the English humanist “the man for all stages” in recognition of his longevity as a theatrical

character over the past five centuries.¹ The history of More on stage is indeed long and varied, as has been shown by the same Unterweg, who traced the origins of this enduring tradition to early-modern school theater.² Almost invariably written in Latin, the first generation of plays based on the life and death of Sir Thomas More were performed on the stages of Catholic schools across the European Continent throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Pride of place went to the large international network of Jesuit colleges, which produced the vast majority of the Latin More plays of which some record still survives. For the record is fragmentary, to say the least: meant to be performed only, school plays were hardly ever printed, inevitably resulting in a massive loss of documentary evidence over time. Most of our knowledge of early-modern school drama is therefore based on secondary source material, predominantly theater leaflets (*periochae*), providing us with quite some metadata, but which only allow for general impressions of the plays all the same. Only very rarely have manuscripts survived containing the complete scripts of the plays themselves. While Unterweg, for instance, was able to list as many as almost fifty Latin plays about Thomas More, only six have come down to us as full texts. It should come as no surprise that these are all Jesuit in origin: *Thomas Morus, tragoedia* (Rome, 1612); *Morus sive morum integritas suo sanguine purpurata* (Saint Omer, c. 1660); *Thomas Morus, tragoedia* (Munich, 1723); *Thomas Morus Angliae Cancellarius* (Mannheim, 1725); the brief musical drama *Heroica in adversis constantia Thomae Mori* (Olomouc, 1727); and *Morus Angliae Cancellarius, tragedia* (Lwów, 1765).³

More also features in other Neo-Latin drama, yet only as a secondary character, so these plays do not qualify as “More plays” *sensu stricto*. The manuscript preserving the 1612 *Thomas Morus, tragoedia*, for instance, also includes a play titled *Roffensis* on the martyrdom of John Fisher, the bishop of Rochester (*Roffa* in Latin), performed at the English College in Rome in the early seventeenth century, in which More makes a brief

¹ Friedrich-Karl Unterweg, “A Man for All Stages—Five Centuries of Thomas More Dramas,” *Moreana* 108 (1991): 5–32.

² Friedrich-Karl Unterweg, *Thomas Morus Dramen vom Barock bis zur Gegenwart. Wesensmerkmale und Entwicklungstendenzen* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1990).

³ On these plays (not including the Lwów tragedy), see Unterweg, *Thomas Morus Dramen*, 36–62. Both the 1612 play from the English College in Rome and the Saint Omer play have been made available online in a “hypertext critical edition” by Dana F. Sutton (<http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/>). The Munich and Mannheim plays have remained unpublished, whereas the 1727 Olomouc operetta is freely available via Google Books. The manuscript containing the tragedy from the Jesuit college of Lwów has been digitized and is freely accessible in the digital collection of Vilnius University Library (<https://kolekcijos.biblioteka.vu.lt/>).

appearance during the third act.⁴ Another example is the 1624 printed tragedy *Henricus Octavus seu schisma Anglicanum* by Louvain professor Nicolaus Vernulaeus (1583–1649), which, as the title indicates, has a much wider scope than merely More’s fate, although the latter does make a regular appearance.⁵

It has gone unnoticed that there is actually another fully preserved Neo-Latin More play to be added to this list of exceptional survivors. For the médiathèque municipale of Arras in the north of France still holds a quarto manuscript (ms. 316) containing a lengthy tragedy in Latin titled *Sanctus martyr Thomas Morus, tragoedia* (“Holy Martyr Thomas More. A Tragedy”), which in terms of style, structure, and storyline ticks all the boxes of a first-generation More play.⁶ However, unlike all other Latin plays Unterweg brought together in this “first group” of More plays, *Sanctus martyr Thomas Morus* does not appear to have been performed on the stage of a Jesuit college, but on the Benedictine stage instead.⁷ In addition to its unique origin, the tragedy (of which an edition is offered below) might also very well be the oldest of its kind, and has several other characteristics that set it apart as a Neo-Latin play, as will be made clear in the rest of this article. No corresponding theater leaflet is known to have survived.

MANUSCRIPT PROVENANCE, ORIGIN, DATE, AND AUTHORSHIP

The manuscript’s provenance, firstly, is clearly indicated at the top of the title page: “Bibliotheca mon[aste]rii S[anc]ti Vedasti Atrebatensis. 1629.” By 1629, therefore, the book had somehow made its way into the library of the Benedictine Abbey of Saint Vaast in Arras. Moreover, this also presents us with a first *terminus ante quem* as to the composition of the tragedy: it must have been written before the end of 1629, which can still

⁴ The anonymous text has also been published online by Dana F. Sutton (see supra note 3). For an analysis of the martyr plays performed at the English College in Rome, see Howard B. Norland, “Political Martyrdom at the English College in Rome,” in *Politics and Aesthetics in European Baroque and Classicist Tragedy*, ed. Jan Bloemendal and Nigel Smith (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), 135–51.

⁵ Louis A. Schuster, *Henry VIII. A Neo-Latin Drama by Nicolaus Vernulaeus* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964).

⁶ *Catalogue général des manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques des départements. Publié sous les auspices du Ministre de l’Instruction publique—Tome IV. Arras. Avranches. Boulogne* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1872), 130 (it was originally numbered “316”). The manuscript is briefly referred to in D. Sacré, “The Low Countries,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Neo-Latin*, ed. Sarah Knight and Stefan Tilg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 477–92, p. 483.

⁷ Unterweg, “A Man for All Stages,” 6–16.

be in accordance with the catalogue's general assessment of the handwriting as "écriture bâtarde du XVI^e siècle."⁸

Yet this does not necessarily imply that the play was also written and performed at the Saint Vaast college, which the Benedictine abbey founded at the local university of Douai in 1619.⁹ While most schools run by religious orders tended to offer a complete curriculum in the humanities, there was also a limited number of colleges that exclusively organized more specialized courses in philosophy and/or theology, often in direct competition with the universities.¹⁰ The college of Saint Vaast at Douai belonged to the latter type, which are not known to have organized school theater, as opposed to their full-grown counterparts, which could produce up to seven plays per year. In fact, the Arras manuscript itself proves that origin and provenance should not be confused in this case either, as there are textual elements pointing to a different origin. At the very end of the play, in the epilogue, the playwright comes to the fore and asks his esteemed audience to forgive him if anything has not been to their liking. In the final verses, he concludes his address by asking the public to show their appreciation to the young actors with a round of applause: "Quem datis et repetunt alii indulgete favorem / Marchenae pubi faciles, vos plaudite. Abite." More specifically, therefore, he begs them to show their good-will to the "Marchena pubes," the young men of Marchiennes.

Although we are ill-informed about the rather short-lived history of the college of Marchiennes, we can still reconstruct some of the essentials.¹¹ Like Arras, the small French town of Marchiennes, which belonged to the Spanish Low Countries until it was annexed by Louis XIV in 1667, also had a Benedictine abbey. And like the Arras Benedictines, moreover, the Marchiennes Benedictines followed in the footsteps of the Jesuit order and started providing education from 1566 onward, which would eventually lead to the foundation of a separate college in 1574, integrated into the university of Douai, but still run by the Benedictines themselves. By 1577, the school housed some 150

⁸ *Catalogue général*, 130.

⁹ On the college, see Marie-Madeleine Compère and Dominique Julia, *Les collèges français. 16e–18e siècles. Répertoire 2—France du Nord et de l'Ouest* (Paris: Institut national de recherches pédagogique et CNRS, 1988), 269–72.

¹⁰ On the so-called upper school curriculum, see Paul F. Grendler, *Jesuit Schools and Universities in Europe 1548–1773* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2019), 23–27.

¹¹ See George Cardon, *La fondation de l'université de Douai* (Paris: Félix Alcan, éditeur, 1892), 472. The most recent and complete overview can be found in Compère and Julia, 260–61. In Latin, the college is usually called *collegium Marchianense (Duaci)*, *gymnasium Marciense*, or *Martianense collegium* (the latter spelling was used only by the Jesuit historiographer Buzelinus (1571–1626), it seems; see for example Johannes Buzelinus, *Gallo-Flandria* (Douai: Ex officina Marci Wyon typographi iurati, 1625), 226).

students.¹² As one of the many colleges that made up the university—the other main ones being the “collège du Roi,” the “collège d’Anchin,” and the “collège de Saint-Vaast”—the “collège de Marchiennes” offered both a complete program in the humanities and an additional *cursum philosophicum*. From 1615 onward, however, the abbey was no longer able to supply teachers for the humanities curriculum and limited its services to the philosophy module. In 1622, the abbey abandoned the college altogether by handing it over to the Jesuits of the larger Anchin college, who continued using the building, though exclusively for their philosophy course. Louis XIV’s invasion of Douai ushered in the definitive end as the building was sold to serve as barracks for the king’s troops in 1668.

Given the history of the college, therefore, it stands to reason that *Sanctus martyr Thomas Morus* was performed somewhere between 1566 and 1622. For while it is unlikely that the play was staged anywhere after 1615 (as schools that did not offer a humanities program are not generally known to have produced plays, and Marchiennes only offered courses in philosophy from 1615 onward), it is even more unlikely that it was staged anywhere between 1622 and 1629 (at which time the manuscript had entered the library of Saint Vaast in Arras) since the “Marchiennes college” as such had effectively stopped existing in 1622 on account of the absorption by the Anchin Jesuits. If the play was performed after 1622, the playwright would therefore not have referred to the “Marchena pubes,” but to the “Aquicinctina pubes.”¹³ When it was announced that the college would be taken over by the Jesuits, half of the student body stayed, thereby becoming *iuventus (Duacena) collegii Aquicinctini*, as we find it mentioned in theater leaflets and various other sources, while the rest transferred to either the royal college or the recently founded Saint Vaast college.¹⁴ In other words, after 1622, no playwright would have thought to make the reference “Marchena pubes.” This dispersal of students is probably also how the manuscript ended up in the library of the Abbey of Saint Vaast in Arras. In short, it seems that *Sanctus martyr Thomas Morus* is at once the only known Benedictine and possibly the oldest preserved Neo-Latin More play, as it may very well precede the

¹² Compare with the Anchin college, for instance, which housed over a thousand students by 1600 (L. Salambier, *L’étudiant de l’ancienne université de Douai* (Lille, 1911), 368).

¹³ Louis Desgraves, *Répertoire des programmes des pièces de théâtre jouées dans les Collèges en France* (Geneva: Droz, 1986), 56–57. All surviving plays known to have been performed at the Anchin college have ended up at the bibliothèque municipale de Douai (see Compère and Julia, 267).

¹⁴ Gilbert Dehon, *L’université de Douai dans la tourmente (1635–1765): heurs et malheurs de la Faculté des Arts* (Villeneuve d’Ascq: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 1998), 16.

hitherto oldest *Thomas Morus, tragoedia*, produced at the English College in Rome around 1612, by a number of decades.

Although the documented history of the college may be fragmentary, the More tragedy is actually not the only play from Marchiennes to have survived. While no *periochae* seem to remain, at least three other complete Latin plays known to have been performed on the Marchiennes stage have come down to us. Like *Sanctus martyr Thomas Morus*, two of these are manuscripts now housed in the médiathèque municipale d'Arras.¹⁵ In fact, these Latin comedies on Saint George and Saint Landelin, respectively, probably followed the same route as the More tragedy in ending up in Arras, and must have done so around the same time, since the play on Saint George mentions its provenance as follows: “Bibliothecae monasterii Sancti Vedasti Atrebatensis. 1628.”¹⁶ Both comedies, moreover, leave nothing to the imagination as to their origin, as they both explicitly mention that they had been “exhibita Duaci in collegio/gymnasio Marchianensi.”¹⁷ Marchiennes is most famous, however, for the third surviving play, which also dealt with recent English history: Adrianus Roulerius’ (Adrien de Roulers) *Stuarta, tragoedia, sive caedes Mariae serenissimae Scotorum reginae in Anglia perpetrata*.¹⁸ Dramatizing the very recent death of Mary, Queen of Scots (1587) in Senecan fashion, Roulerius’ *Stuarta* was performed by his

¹⁵ *Catalogue général*, 161; also listed in Johannes Bolte, “Die lateinischen Dramen Frankreichs aus dem 16. Jahrhundert,” in *Festschrift Johannes Vahlen zum siebenzigsten Geburtstag, gewidmet von seinen Schülern* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1900), 589–613, pp. 612–13; not mentioned in Desgraves, which included only Jesuit plays, or in Compère and Julia.

¹⁶ *Comoedia de Sancto Georgio* (ms. 410.1) and *Comoedia de Sancto Landelino* (ms. 410.2), both written in different hands.

¹⁷ *Comoedia de Sancto Landelino* seems to have been written by Gaugericus Hispanus, who added a liminary dedication to the abbot of the Benedictine Abbey of Saint Vaast, Philippe de Caverel (1555–1636), a noted patron of the arts and a regular dedicatee at the time. Since we know that Caverel was abbot from 1598 until his death in 1636, this gives us clear *termini inter quos*. Hispanus was hitherto known only as the author of various theological writings.

¹⁸ Adrianus Roulerius, *Stuarta tragoedia*, ed. Roman Woerner (Berlin: Weimansche Buchhandlung, 1906). For studies on Roulerius, see especially Roman Woerner, “Die älteste Maria Stuart-Tragödie,” in *Germanistische Abhandlungen*, ed. Herman Paul (Strasbourg: K. J. Trübner, 1902), 259–302, and James A. Parente and Jan Bloemendal, “The Humanist Tradition—*Maria Stuart* (1646),” in *Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679): Dutch Playwright in the Golden Age*, ed. Jan Bloemendal and Frans-Willem Korsten (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 341–58, pp. 345–49 (where further relevant bibliography is cited). See James A. Parente, “Historical Tragedy and the end of Christian Humanism: Nicolaus Vernulaeus (1583–1649),” in Bloemendal and Smith, *Politics and Aesthetics*, 152–81, p. 161: “In the Low Countries, the 1580s and 1590s witnessed an efflorescence of historical topics, especially those drawn from very recent history, on the vernacular and Neo-Latin stage. Consider, for example, the 1593 tragedy

Marchiennes students (“a iuventute gymnasii Marcianensis”) in 1593, and was printed in Douai that same year. Like *Sanctus martyr Thomas Morus*, it is a typical product of Counter-Reformation school theater, glorifying the free-willed martyrdom of a Catholic in accordance with the rules of classical tragedy.

This raises the question, lastly, of authorship. As mentioned before, the playwright comes to the fore only in the epilogue, where he unfortunately does not reveal his identity. All we can glean from this is that he was ill when he composed the play: in a Horace-inspired display of *modestia auctoris*, he apologizes if his style has been unworthy of the stage, begging the audience to forgive the sick author all the same. In fact, he hopes that they will show even more understanding in the knowledge that the playwright, already fearful of falling ill, had taken up the pen upon friendly request.¹⁹ The manuscript gives us no further indication as to its author. It is at least tempting to assume that Roulerius, who died just a few years after releasing *Stuarta*, might have been this ailing playwright. Yet we know too little of Roulerius’ life and career: a Lille-born priest, he at one point in time taught the *poetica* class at the college of Marchiennes, where he produced *Stuarta* in 1593, before returning to his home town to become the local parish priest and principal of the college of Saint-Peter until his death in 1597.²⁰ Though the Jesuit historiographer Buzelinus praises him for his rich poetic vein, “which brought forth multiple *carmina*,” the Mary Stuart play is the only one of his works to have come down to us.²¹ Nor do we have any evidence of his handwriting with which to compare the Arras manuscript. Moreover, though its overall plot and structure of course closely resemble Roulerius’ play, *Sanctus martyr Thomas Morus* does not seem to contain any explicit verbal echoes or

Maria Stuarta by Adrianus Roulerius of Douai, the epicenter of the Catholic resistance to England (...).”

¹⁹ *Sanctus martyr Thomas Morus, tragoedia*, v. 1762–66 (see edition infra): “Caetera, censors aequi, si carmen hiatus / impar sit tragici grandi, indignumque cothurno, / auctori veniam dabitur communiter aegro. / Si meret et dabitur rursus aegrotare timenti, / namque stilum imperio et iussu summisit amico.”

²⁰ Franciscus Sweertius, *Athenae Belgicae, sive Nomenclator infer. Germaniae scriptorum qui disciplinas philologicas, philosophicas, theologicas, iuridicas, medicas et musicas illustrarunt* (Antwerp: apud Gulielmum Tungris, 1628), 101; Valerius Andreas, *Bibliotheca Belgica. De Belgis vita scriptisque claris praemissa topographica Belgii totius seu Germaniae inferioris descriptione*, 2nd edn. (Louvain: typis Iacobi Zegers, 1643), 17. On the Saint Peter college in Lille, see Compère and Julia, 428–33.

²¹ Buzelinus, 46 (see supra note 11): “Ad colendas etiam Musas multum laboris calorisque Adrianus Roulerius Insulae natus attulit. Ac non poenitendum ex eo fructum studio fecisse nonnulla, quae lucem videre, ostendunt carmina, eaque in primis tragoedia, quam gravissimo versu composuit, et Mariam Stuartiam, sumpto ab eius Reginae Scotorum caede, argumento, nuncupavit.”

references to *Stuarta*, or vice versa. Any attribution to Roulerius—though it would greatly affect the play’s *terminus ante quem*, moving it to 1597—would therefore be too tenuous for now. Besides, if the play were his, why did he or his entourage not publish it? The manuscript seems like a finished product, with barely any smudges, corrections, or erasures, and with only a limited number of incomplete lines. And even if he never published it, why would nobody have at least mentioned the play’s existence or production? Other plausible authors could be adduced as well: Simon Caulerius (Caulier), for instance, who was professor of rhetoric at Marchiennes in Roulerius’ day.²² Yet there is no hard evidence to definitively attribute the play to any known teacher, whom we similarly know too little about. As is so often the case with school drama, therefore, the play remains anonymous for now, yet this does not detract from its relevance as a historical literary document.

SYNOPSIS

Aside from its Benedictine origin, *Sanctus martyr Thomas Morus* clearly falls into the first category of Unterweg’s fourfold classification of More drama: a lengthy, early-modern tragedy in Latin verse, focusing on More’s downfall, and idealizing him as a lay martyr and defender of the true faith.²³ It also ties in with the immensely popular genre of martyr drama on school stages across Counter-Reformation Europe. For it should always be borne in mind that the Jesuit model of theater—closely followed by the other Catholic school orders—was first and foremost an instrument of religious propaganda. Critical, historical accuracy was never the main concern. This also holds true for the More dramas, which are often explicitly based on the Catholic accounts of More’s life by

²² See Sweertius, 675: “Simon Caulerius Flinensis apud Duacum, in Collegio Marchianensi annos plures cum magna laude et concursu Duaci Rhetoricam docuit, scripsitque Rhetoricorum lib. V, typis Boscardi, 1594; Annales Ecclesiasticos, qui hactenus lucem non viderunt. Vivebat anno MDCXV.” Professors of rhetoric were often the school’s go-to playwrights.

²³ For a condensed overview of these four categories or phases, see Unterweg, *Thomas Morus Dramen*, 263–74. While, as noted before, the first category of More plays encompasses Continental, early-modern, Jesuit school plays in Latin with a clearly didactical purpose (*ibid.*, 155–81), the second phase is characterized by the rise of More productions on the commercial stage in the vernacular (183–219). Notable at this stage is the shifting focus from More as a Catholic martyr to More as a humanist and statesman. The third category—in some ways the secular continuation of the first phase—groups together non-professional, often quite brief plays (e.g. community theater) from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in which More’s role as a Christian father figure is often central (221–41). The final category of More dramas crystalized in the wake of the two world wars, and comprises modern, commercial plays that typically focus on More as the victim of a totalitarian state (243–62).

Sanders and Stapleton, both published in the 1580s.²⁴ It is therefore likely that *Sanctus martyr Thomas Morus* was also completed following these biographies, which would push the *terminus post quem* to 1585–88. The picture painted of More is consequently unabashedly positive, presenting him as the epitome of Christian *constantia* and *virtus*. His friends and family (friend Edward, daughter Margaret, Bishop Fisher, Catherine of Aragon) equally bask in this positive light, while his opponents (Henry VIII, Anne Boleyn, Wolsey, Norfolk) are contrastingly vilified.²⁵ Notable absentees from this *dramatis personae*, lastly, are any allegorical characters such as “Faith,” “Lust,” or “Tyranny.” Typical relics from the medieval morality plays, of which Jesuit drama can be seen as a continuation, these embodiments of abstract virtues and vices still featured regularly on the early-modern school stage. Jesuit martyr drama in particular, with its didactic purposes, often included such allegorical characters; in most of the Latin More plays Unterweg brought together, he noted the recurrence of this literary device.²⁶ In *Sanctus martyr Thomas Morus*, on the other hand, allegories are lacking: perhaps Benedictine school drama—which has remained virtually unstudied—was less inclined to perpetuate this medieval tradition?

Formally, the tragedy has a classical five-act structure, with each act being closed by a chorus, and with a prologue and epilogue introducing and concluding the story as a whole. It consists of 1,768 verses in total, set in iambic trimeters, apart from the exuberant choral meters and the dactylic hexameters that make up the epilogue. In keeping with the high position of tragedy within the hierarchy of genres, the Latin is sophisticated yet limpid.

Since the play is too long to be presented here with a facing translation, but too significant to be discussed piecemeal in fragments only, a synopsis of the play will be given here, in addition to the Latin text in the appendix below.

²⁴ Nicolaus Sanderus, *De origine ac progressu schismatis Anglicani* (Cologne: editus et auctus per Edouardum Rishtonum, 1585); Thomas Stapletonus, *Tres Thomae seu de S. Thomae Apostoli rebus gestis. De S. Thoma Archiepiscopi Cantuariensi et Martyre. De Thomae Mori Angliae quondam cancellarii vita* (Douai: Ex officina Ioannis Bogardi, 1588).

²⁵ The roles of Cromwell and Cranmer have been significantly downplayed. In fact, it seems that the two figures have been conflated into one, as the character of “Cromerius cancellarius” appears to be a fusion of both “Cromvellus” and “Cranmerus” (while Cranmer’s name is consistently rendered as *Cranmerus* in nearly all Latin sources, Cromwell is transliterated with more variation across the various *periochae*, for instance as *Cronvellus*, *Cromwelus*, *Cromvelius*, and *Cromwellius*). In the *periochae* of other More plays, the character of Edward is sometimes represented as More’s son, sometimes as his “alumnus.” Here, he is introduced as “iuuenis Moro carus,” a young man dear to More.

²⁶ Unterweg, *Thomas Morus Dramen*, 170–71.

No sooner has the prologue taken to the stage than the play's ideological stance is made abundantly clear. Bemoaning the virus-like spread of Protestantism across the Continent, the prologue rues the day when Luther's poison started infecting England too, turning its king against the pope, his own people, and eventually his very wife. For at the instigation of Wolsey, Henry started questioning his marriage, resulting in his estrangement from the Church, to which brave Catholics such as Fisher and More remained loyal. For this, they gladly paid the ultimate price.

The first act centers on Henry's scruples of conscience, setting the tragic events in motion. It opens with a monologue by Catherine of Aragon—interspersed with asides from a hidden Anne Boleyn—cursing Henry's infidelity and quoting biblical precedents of rulers who suffered divine punishment for such behavior. Ever combative, Catherine swears to weather the incoming storm, after which she runs into a supportive More, whom she praises to the skies. They are then joined by Wolsey, More's demonized counterpart, who tries to defend his actions in support of his king, mainly laying the blame with the papacy. As More and the queen hurl insult upon insult on the turncoat, Wolsey quickly runs off stage. Shifting its focus to the titular hero, the play then introduces More's oldest daughter Margaret and son-like friend Edward, who continue Catherine's expositional catalogue of tributes to the humanist: while Margaret praises her father for the exceptional education he has given her and her sisters, as evinced by the character's rhetorical display of classical learning, Edward, who has come from Paris bringing books and news of Budé and Erasmus, gratefully enters More's house as if it were a temple of the Muses. Other family members, such as More's wife, are notably absent. In the fifth scene, Henry and Catherine have their first serious confrontation. Though the queen takes offense at Henry's addressing her as "sister," the discussion starts out rather serenely, as the king explains his qualms about the validity of their marriage, which serves to offer the audience a concise overview of the theological-legal reasoning at the basis of the entire dispute. Tensions rise as Catherine contradicts his claims, and Henry eventually threatens to take legal action. The act comes to a close as the king summons his councilors for the first time, announcing that he wants his marriage annulled. While Fisher fiercely opposes and Wolsey and Norfolk acquiesce, More explicitly states that, as the king knows, he does not want to take a position in the debate. As the discussion moves to matters of church and state, and commonplaces on the relationship between kings and their subjects are bandied about, Henry loses his temper and sends everyone out. The chorus, finally, muses on the bloodshed caused across Europe on account of similar events.

Now that the genie is out of the bottle, the second act is one rife with heated debates, as the main characters try to position themselves within

this new political reality and the seeds of the schism are sown. Parallel to the opening act, it opens with a monologue, but by Wolsey this time, who fears that things are getting out of hand: the king has become a loose cannon in the clutches of a madwoman. More equally expresses his concerns to his daughter, confessing that he was much happier as a scholar than as a courtier. Margaret also serves as a sounding board for Catherine in the subsequent scene, in which the queen thunders against “Henry’s whore,” voicing the infamous rumor that Anne was actually Henry’s own daughter, making their union even more unholy.²⁷ When news comes from Rome announcing the pope’s unwillingness to annul Henry’s first marriage and his condemnation of the second union, the king is convinced that he should create his own church. Norfolk and Wolsey, unlike Fisher and More, are too afraid to contradict their master. Fisher is most outspoken in his criticism, provoking Henry’s full wrath. When the king tries to make the Bishop of Rochester take the Oath of Supremacy in the last scene, Fisher forebodingly proclaims that he would rather die. The chorus concludes by addressing the students in the audience, echoing More’s words: devote yourselves to the Muses, not to politics!

The “King’s Great Matter” gains momentum and claims its first victim in the third act, which revolves around Catherine’s downfall. It opens with a long monologue of More describing his successful career, at the end of which he tenders his resignation as Lord Chancellor. In the following scene, Catherine bemoans her fate to her daughter Mary, who makes her first appearance. They are joined on stage by Anne Boleyn, who chimes in on their lamentations with a Euripidean quote on the miserable position of women in society. While Catherine has accepted her fate, she fears for her daughter, and begs Anne to protect her when she is gone. The tragedy then moves from the world of women to that of men again, as Henry convenes with his advisors to decide on measures against recalcitrant subjects. As they exchange commonplaces on the authority of a ruler over his people, they decide to nip any opposition in the bud by persecuting exemplary individuals with an iron fist. The act reaches its climax as Henry commands Catherine to leave court at once, yet unexpectedly also orders his own daughter, Mary, to join her. Catherine desperately begs him to let Mary stay at court, and Henry eventually relents. The chorus makes light of Henry’s fit of clemency: make no mistake, he has become a bloodthirsty tyrant.

²⁷ It was Sanders’ biography that gave international publicity to this conspiracy theory (Sanderus, 14–17). The rumor is also mentioned in Roulerius’ *Stuarta* (see Paul Van Tieghem, *La littérature latine de la renaissance. Étude d’histoire littéraire européenne* (Geneva: Slatkine reprints, 1966), 169), as well as in the two surviving plays from the Jesuit English College in Rome mentioned above, *Roffensis* and *Thomas Morus, tragoedia*.

The fourth act similarly centers on the demise of yet another one of Henry and Anne's adversaries, John Fisher, thereby also foreshadowing More's downfall in the final act. Unlike More, however, Fisher meets his end entirely off stage. Fulfilling the dramatic device so typical of classical tragedy—the messenger report—Edward both opens and closes the act with a detailed eye-witness account of Fisher's arrest and execution, respectively. When the young man has just finished his report of the bishop's brutal capture, soldiers come knocking at the door to take More in as well. Margaret and Edward are left in despair, as the scene shifts to court, where Anne gloats victoriously. Now that her main opponents have been bested and Parliament has given the go-ahead for their marriage, she has reached the pinnacle of her power. Margaret subsequently comes to beg the new queen for her father's life. Anne is surprisingly accommodating and asks Henry to be lenient. The latter is willing to show clemency, as long as More meets his three simple demands: condemn his marriage with Catherine, recognize his marriage with Anne, and accept Henry as head of the English Church. Margaret is thrilled by this show of leniency and rushes to the Tower to relay the message. Her initial optimism fades as More staunchly refuses the terms. Following Edward's description of Fisher's stoic final moments, the chorus repeats its plea to the young members of the audience: stay away from court and devote yourselves to the Muses.

The play reaches its climax in the fifth act, which focuses on More's condemnation and execution. When even the king's entourage fail to persuade More to relent, the scene shifts to yet another monologue by Wolsey. Mirroring More's resignation speech, the cardinal gives a detailed account of his career as he sets off into exile, full of regret over the storm he has helped to unleash. Back at court, Henry is furious at the obstinacy of More, whom his councilors describe as a modern Socrates: dressed in rags and convinced of his moral superiority, More has presented his defense to a jury with rhetorical verve. Typically positioned between a critical advisor and a sycophant, the king then ponders the ramifications of having More executed and finally decides that the traitor should not only suffer the same fate as Fisher, but does not even deserve a proper funeral afterwards. The jury's verdict follows quickly in the next scene: More is sentenced to death on account of treason, after which he takes the floor, claiming that he is ready to die for his beliefs and that his conscience is clean, as opposed to many others in the room, whom he advises to be mindful of Wolsey's fate. Back in the Tower, Margaret tries in vain to convince her father one last time to reconsider, if only to save his family from falling on hard times. As More's mind is made up, they share an emotional goodbye. The final scene opens with More standing on the scaffold, delivering one last soliloquy. The epitome of Christian fortitude and *caritas*, he is not afraid to die, nor does he bear any ill-will toward his

executioners. In fact, he asks the people to pray for their king, as More himself subsequently prays to God to forgive his country. The tragedy concludes with a dialogue between the chorus and Margaret, lamenting More's cruel downfall. The chorus finally turns to the audience and proposes to bury the great man together. The epilogue, as mentioned above, similarly addresses the audience, humbly asking for their applause.

NEO-LATIN INTERTEXTUALITY: ERASMUS AND BUCHANAN

While the play could and should be subjected to further study from a multitude of perspectives, I take the opportunity to conclude this article by fleshing out one particularly interesting aspect: its use of intertextuality.

It should not come as a surprise, firstly, that *Sanctus martyr Thomas Morus* is deeply indebted to classical drama. As in every Neo-Latin tragedy, Seneca is ubiquitous in terms of language, style, and structure. While ample references to all ten plays attributed to Seneca can be found throughout the play, as can be ascertained in greater detail from the *apparatus fontium* offered below, it makes most use of (Pseudo-)Seneca's *Octavia*, a historical tragedy about Nero's repudiation of his wife Octavia in order to marry his mistress Poppaea. The parallels with the Tudor court are obvious: Henry VIII takes the place of the tyrannical emperor wanting to divorce his wife and send her into exile, Catherine of Aragon is like an early-modern Octavia, Anne Boleyn takes the role of the beautiful mistress, and Thomas More parallels the wise and steadfast councilor Seneca, whose advice is not heeded and who is eventually sentenced to death.²⁸ At times, these parallel characters coincide quite literally, as in the following lines introducing a furious Henry storming onto the stage, where the names "Henry" and "Nero" have simply been switched, with some metrical allowances:

Sed ecce, gressu fertur Henricus cito,
Trucique vultu (...). (Mor. 564–65)

Sed ecce, gressu fertur attonito Nero
Trucique vultu (...). (Sen. Oct. 435–36)

Of course, ancient tragedy is teeming with tyrants and their cruelty toward women, so the Latin playwright was quite spoilt for choice in this respect. The Benedictine teacher also drew inspiration from Seneca's *Medea*, for instance, from which similar role patterns have been transposed: Henry's behavior could be likened to that of Jason (backed

²⁸ On the reception of *Octavia* and its similar afterlife in Roulerius, see Patrick Kragelund, *Roman Historical Drama: The Octavia in Antiquity and Beyond* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 402–13.

by King Creon), who divorced and banished Medea (i.e. Catherine) to remarry Creusa (i.e. Anne). Like Medea, Catherine was a high-born stranger in a foreign country. Catherine's lament in 3.2, therefore, in which she contrasts her isolation to her former splendor as a princess of a wealthy kingdom, the vast reaches of which are amply described, clearly echoes Medea's similar complaint:

Deserta, maerens, sola fatalis diem
 Morabor aevi. Quidquid aureo Tagus
 Perfundit amni, aut dives alluit soli
 Iberus, aut quae Bethis Hesperiae alveo
 Diducit arva, genitor imperio meus
 Tenuit; feroces rexit Hesperios potens (Mor. 775–80)

Quamvis enim sim clade miseranda obruta,
 Expulsa, supplex, sola, deserta, undique
 Afflicta, quondam nobili fulsi patre
 Avoque clarum Sole deduxi genus.
 Quodcumque placidis flexibus Phasis rigat
 Pontusque quidquid Scythicus a tergo videt,
 Palustribus qua maria dulcescunt aquis,
 Armata peltis quidquid exterret cohors
 Inclusa ripis vidua Thermodontiis,
 Hoc omne noster genitor imperio regit.
 Generosa, felix, decore regali potens (Sen. Med. 207–17)

Having laid bare the indebtedness to classical sources, most studies on Neo-Latin drama tend to stop here. However, it should be borne in mind that, in addition to this vertical dimension of *Quellenforschung* (i.e. indebtedness to ancient models), there is often a horizontal dimension of intertextuality to be laid bare as well, since many of these early-modern school plays equally relied on contemporary, Neo-Latin texts, which usually goes unnoticed.²⁹ This is also the case in *Sanctus martyr Thomas Morus*, as it makes extensive use of the dramatic oeuvres of George Buchanan (1506–82) and, to a lesser extent, Desiderius Erasmus (c. 1469–1536).

The play's indebtedness to the two humanists is, firstly, still closely related to the vertical dimension set out above, since the Scottish and Dutch writers were both authoritative translators of Euripides. In fact,

²⁹ Recent scholarship on Neo-Latin school drama from the Southern Low Countries points to the added value of uncovering this additional layer of intertextuality; see for example Nicholas De Sutter, "*Philosophus modernus* (Antwerp, 1772). A Late, Anti-Voltairean Jesuit School Play," *Lias: Journal of Early Modern Intellectual Culture and Its Sources* 45.1 (2018): 145–201, and Nicholas De Sutter, "Lost and Found. Latin School Drama at the Augustinian College of Ghent," *Augustiniana* 69.1 (2019): 167–211.

Seneca was far more influential in early-modern theater than Greek tragedy, which remained relatively unknown and inaccessible until humanists such as Erasmus and Buchanan provided Latin translations.³⁰ Each translated two plays by Euripides, arguably the most popular of the three major Greek tragic playwrights: Erasmus first published his translations of *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia in Aulide* in 1506, and Buchanan followed with his translations of *Medea* and *Alcestis* in 1544 and 1556, respectively.³¹

Let us return to 3.2, where Catherine says goodbye to her daughter Mary. Not only is there Senecan influence in this scene, as discussed above, it also contains clear gleanings from both Erasmus' and Buchanan's Euripidean translations. Catherine and Mary's emotional parting at the end of the scene, for instance, is directly drawn from the famous last words exchanged between Trojan queen Hecuba and her daughter Polyxena—the princess is to be sacrificed by the Greeks—as rendered in Latin by Erasmus:

- Mar.* O pectus et, queis alita blande sum, ubera!
Cath. Pro ante tempus fati acerbi filia!
Mar. Vale, o parens, incolumis et sospes, vale.
Cath. Alii valebunt, istud haud matri datum est.
 Adeo undiquaque prorsus infelix ego. (Mor: 849–53)
- Pol.* O pectus et, quis alita blande sum, ubera!
Hec. Proh, ante tempus fati acerbi filia!
Pol. Vale, o parens; Cassandra, iam mihi vale.
Hec. Alii valebunt, istud haud matri est datum.
Pol. Quique in fera es, Polydore frater, Thracia.
Hec. Ita si quidem ille vivit, atqui non puto:
 Adeo undequaue prorsus infelix ago. (Erasm. *Hec.* 464–70)

When Anne Boleyn interrupts this goodbye, a large part of her interjection is taken word for word from Buchanan's translation of Euripides' *Medea*.³² In a display of genuine appreciation of Catherine's condition, Anne reprises an oft-quoted monologue by Euripides' *Medea*, in which the Colchian princess offers a female perspective on marriage

³⁰ See Jan Bloemendal and Norland Howard, "Introduction," in *Neo-Latin Drama in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Jan Bloemendal and Norland Howard (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), 1–24, p. 9.

³¹ Desiderius Erasmus, *Hecuba et Iphigenia Erasmo interprete* (Paris: J. Badius, 1506); George Buchanan, *Medea* (Paris: M. Vascosan, 1544); George Buchanan, *Alcestis* (Paris: M. Vascosan, 1556). For modern editions of these texts, see infra "Appendix: Edition of *Sanctus martyr Thomas Morus, tragoedia*." Buchanan was, of course, also intimately acquainted with Erasmus' translations (George Buchanan, *Tragedies*, ed. Peter Sharratt and Patrick Gerard Walsh (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1983), 253).

³² Apart from some orthographical peculiarities, and one "at" which had become "et".

and womanhood in antiquity. Medea's scathing qualification of women as "the most miserable of creatures" and as chattel subject to the whims of fate, who would be better off dead when they are not lucky enough to have obtained a "good" husband, still applied to women in early-modern England, it seems:

Nihil miserius feminis terra, omnium
 Quaecumque vivunt menteque vigent, edidit.
 Primum necesse est opibus immensis virum
 Emere suique accipere dominum corporis.
 Accedit aliud huic malo gravius malum,
 In quo periculum maximum, frugi vir an
 Nequam. Mulieri repudium infame est, neque
 Sponsae maritum ius recusandi est suum.
 In iura moresque venientem opus est novos
 Plane ariolari, quippe quae haud didicit domi
 Quali marito serviendum sibi foret.
 Et ista recte cuncta cum curaveris,
 Si degat una sponte vir patiens iugi,
 Beata vita est, sin secus, praestat mori. (Mor: 811–24 = Buchan. Med.
 246–59)

Unlike Erasmus, Buchanan moved beyond the work of a translator and also composed plays of his own. In fact, his two biblical tragedies—*Jephthes sive votum* (1554) and *Baptistes sive calumnia* (1577), on Jephthah's daughter and John the Baptist, respectively—also stemmed from his time as a school teacher in Bordeaux in the early 1540s. The Marchiennes school teacher in his turn made liberal use of Buchanan's original plays, which presented rewarding repositories of dramatic material for a More play, the full extent of which can be ascertained from the *apparatus fontium* offered below. I would therefore like to conclude by fleshing out one illustrative example of horizontal intertextuality for each of Buchanan's plays.

In addition to offering an extra *terminus post quem* (1577), firstly, the reliance on Buchanan's *Baptistes* is particularly significant on account of the fact that the tragedy on John the Baptist has long been regarded by scholars as an allegory of the fate of Thomas More himself.³³ The parallels with biblical times are clearly there, with John (like More) as a

³³ For example, James M. Aitken, *The Trial of George Buchanan Before the Lisbon Inquisition*, Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1939. For a discussion of the allegory question, see Steven Berkowitz, *A Critical Edition of George Buchanan's "Baptistes" and of Its Anonymous Seventeenth-Century Translation "Tyrannicall-Government Anatomized"* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1992), 105–17. Unterweg also included *Baptistes* as the very first item in his catalogue of More dramas (Unterweg, *Thomas Morus Dramen*, 34, 122–24).

defender of the true faith defying the tyrannical Herod (Henry VIII) for unlawfully divorcing his wife Phasaelis (Catherine) in order to marry the ambitious Herodias (Anne).³⁴ As opposed to the corrupt high priest Malchus (Wolsey), who chooses power over faith, the protagonist stays true to his religious principles and ends up losing his head for it. In fact, Buchanan himself supposedly swore to the Inquisition that John truly was an allegory of More, yet others have since doubted the validity of this confession under duress and tend to read *Baptistes* as a play about politico-religious persecution and oppression in more general terms.³⁵ Be that as it may, either interpretation works for the current case of Buchanan reception, even though the particular reuse of *Baptistes* in a contemporary play on Thomas More does speak volumes in the first respect.

One of the clearest examples of material recycled from *Baptistes* can be found at the start of the third act. Spoken as an aside by a courtier who has just witnessed More resign and Henry storm off stage, the following reflection on “the common fault found among kings”—that is, that they tend to lend their ears to sycophants, who deprive “virtue” of its true meaning in their quest for power—derives directly from a comment made by Gamaliel, one of the more tolerant Pharisees in *Baptistes*, after Malchus has similarly stormed off stage:

Virtutis olim quippe nomina vertimus.
 Virtute nulla splendidus, at manibus,
 Titulis superbus ambitu verae tumet
 Virtutis (...)
 Hoc quippe cunctis paene semper regibus
 Commune vitium est: facile adulatoribus
 Praebere sese, qui fideliter monent (Mor. 754–63)

Hoc adeo cunctis pene semper regibus
 Commune vitium, facile delatoribus
 Praebere sese (...)
 Sequuntur auram: qui fideliter monet,
 Timidus habetur, languidus, torpens, haebes
 Virtutis olim vertimus iam nomina.
 Virtute nulla splendidi, sed splendidis
 Titulis superbi, fallimus vulgus rude. (Buchan. *Bapt.* 256–65)

Finally, *Sanctus martyr Thomas Morus* also tapped into *Jephthes sive votum*, Buchanan’s first original tragedy. The Old Testament story of Jephthah and his daughter Iphis is essentially a biblical parallel to the Greek tragedy of Agamemnon and Iphigenia, in that both fathers were

³⁴ Stapleton had also labeled Anne as “altera Herodias,” a second Herodias (Stapletonus, 313).

³⁵ Buchanan, *Tragedies*, 13.

willing to sacrifice their own daughter for religious reasons. This pivotal father–daughter relationship was then easily transported to the Tudor court and used to give substance to the interactions between Henry and Mary on the one hand, and More and Margaret on the other. Mary’s ultimate appeal to her father not to send her into exile, for instance, is partly based on Iphis’ last and unsuccessful attempt to dissuade her father from executing her. Yet Buchanan’s take on Iphis’ words does more than give a voice to young girls alone. In the very last scene, for instance, even More himself makes use of various snippets taken from *Jephthes*. His dramatic last words, expressing resignation to his fate and asking the “fates and deceased ancestors” to “gently receive his soul, destined to save the kingdom’s life” all clearly echo Iphis’ own final words:

O fata, fata et morte defuncti patres,
 Accipite placide destinatam regiae
 Animam saluti. Lucis aureum iubar,
 Et vos Britanni principes, regni decus,
 Valet; quique scepra regnanti manu,
 Henrice, gestas, sospes aeternum vale. (Mor. 1716–21)

O fata, fata, et morte defuncti patres,
 Accipite placide destinatos patriae
 Manes saluti: tuque lux novissima
 Hodierna nostris haurienda oculis, vale. (Buchan. *Jeph*. 1327–30)

CONCLUSION

What Unterweg has labeled first-generation More dramas—Latin school plays, invariably of Jesuit origin, dating back to the Baroque period and focusing on the demise of Thomas More—are extremely rare literary documents, as only six of these tragedies were hitherto known to have survived as full texts. This article has shed first light on a new addition to this valuable corpus, *Sanctus martyr Thomas Morus, tragoedia*, a complete late-sixteenth or early-seventeenth-century Latin play about More performed at the college of Marchiennes in Douai and now preserved in the municipal library of the city of Arras, which is located in the old Abbey of Saint Vaast. The manuscript has several characteristics that set it apart from the other surviving plays: while it may very well be the oldest of its kind, it is certainly unique in terms of its origin, as it is the only known instance of a preserved non-Jesuit (i.e. Benedictine) Neo-Latin More play. Moreover, the manuscript contains fascinating cases of intertextual ties with other, contemporary Neo-Latin drama, proving once again the importance of including the horizontal dimension of *Quellenforschung* in scholarship on early-modern theater. For not only does the presence of Buchanan in this play provide an additional *terminus post quem* and does it offer insight into the creative process of Neo-Latin

playwrights, it also sheds light on Buchanan's own *Nachleben*. Reception is never a one-way street, as reception studies often give as much insight into the original source as into the receiving end. In Buchanan's case, the reliance on his Latin tragedies in *Sanctus martyr Thomas Morus* not only attests to his canonical status, but also presents a new example of a near-contemporary reading of *Baptistes sive calumnia* as a possible allegory of the life and death of Thomas More.

APPENDIX: EDITION OF *SANCTUS MARTYR THOMAS MORUS*,
TRAGOEDIA

The following edition of *Sanctus martyr Thomas Morus, tragoedia* is based on the *codex unicus*: France, Arras, Médiathèque de l'Abbaye Saint-Vaast (Bibliothèque municipale), ms. 316 (174). Due to internally inconsistent spelling quirks, orthography has been restored to classical standards. Necessary additions have been put between square brackets. Punctuation has been modernized and references to classical authors have been signaled in accordance with *Thesaurus linguae latinae* standards. References to Neo-Latin authors and works in the *apparatus fontium* are based on the following modern editions: George Buchanan, *Tragedies*, ed. Peter Sharratt and Patrick Gerard Walsh (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1983); George Buchanan, *Poetic Paraphrase of the Psalms of David. Psalmorum Davidis paraphrasis poetica*, ed. Roger P. H. Green (Geneva: Droz, 2011); Desiderius Erasmus, *Euripidis Hecuba et Iphigenia latinae factae Erasmo interprete*, ed. Jan Hendrik Waszink, *Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi. Ordinis primi tomus primus* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing, 1969), 193–359.

**Sanctus martyr Thomas Morus
Tragoedia**

Prologus

[Prol.]	Aetas parentum grande finitimo nefas Regum duello vidit: Hesperio quati Et Marte Gallo ditis Italiae solum; Vicina Belgis arva Francorum imbui
5	Caeso cruore. Vidit at maius nefas. Apostatarum quippe pestilens manus Coorta terris miscuit caelum mari. Primum Bohemos virus hereticum imbuit, Odiis Bohemos dissidentes impiis.
10	Sensim Lutherus (tantum Apostata concipit Et audet ambitione caecus immani nefas) Lutherus, inquam, poculum Germaniae Idem propinat; vulgus ebrium ruit

Et fraena laxat impudens licentiae.
 15 Bellum civile conflat et densis duces
 Stipat catervis efferatos in scelus.
 Caesar secundis victor auspiciis Deum
 Repressit armis arma Protestantium.
 Excutere penitus nequii ebibitum tamen
 20 Nuper venenum. Pertinax vicit furor
 Et asperatum exarsit odium cladibus.
 Hinc leniendis praeferocibus animis
 Religio (quamquam summus obstat pontifex)
 Promiscua datur atque libertas diu
 25 Efflagitata; licentia scelerum omnium
 Vires eundo pestis acquirit novas;
 Ad Anglicanas serpit effuse plagas.
 Rex ipse primum pontificis odio furit
 Et in suorum saevit impunis caput.
 30 Catharina Aragonia Regis Arturi thorum
 Sortita, paulo vidua post tempore, tamen
 Relicta virgo nupsit Henrico. Fides
 Denis bis annis coniuges socio tenet
 Foedere, et utrumque prole communi beat.
 35 At improborum scinditur concors amor
 Dolis, et instinctore Volsaeo perit.
 Repudia lite properat intenta dari
 Rex (terga vertit pontifex Dei et hostium metu)
 Abrumpit omne per scelus segnes moras
 40 Novasque pactus nuptias sponsus parat.
 Id execratus papa, fulmen evibrat,
 Et imprecatus dira, dividit impium
 Amens et irritatus in praeceps ruit
 Renuntiatque sese ecclesiae Anglicae ducem.
 45 At clerus inficiatur, et passim pii;
 Nec capite dubitant pertueri Romulae
 Antiqua maiestatis imperia suo.
 Hinc numerus ingens caede multatur virum:
 Praesul Britannos inter eximium decus
 50 Roffensis obita morte primum tollitur,
 Thomasque Morus, cuius exitium damus.
 Viri undiquaque perpolit litteris
 Iuvenesque docti: vester aspiret favor.
 Hic nulla risu digna luctu plurima
 55 Spectate. Amicos opto censores dari.

Actus 1 Scena 1
Catharina Aragonia. Anna Bolenia

[*Cath.*] Principibus inconsulta temeritas nocet.
Anna Quem penes honorum publicorum functio,
 Decreta suffragantis assensu integro
 Populi beatum diis et affinem puto.
 60 Cui non susurro temperavit noxium
 Oris venenum pestilentis, et catus
 Intaminatam amovit aurem perditis.
Cath. Huccine redimus?
Anna Odia fervent, dissident
 Qui nuptiali nuper evincti fide
 65 Facti parentes prole communi.
Cath. Dii!
 O misera miseris habita ludibrio modis!
 Ubi regiarum sancta taedarum fides?
 Ubi qui maritum foedus astringit Deus?
Anna Secreta pactam queritur infelix fidem,
 70 Pignusque fidei dexteram increpat datae,
 Thalamiq; pacti clamat auctorem Deum.
 Flumine perenni lachrimarum liquitur.
 Longum mariti expendit in se iniuriam;
 Immota vultus maesta terrae lumina
 75 Figit, procellae similis, aut scopulo; abnuit
 Solamen aure surda; amicos negligit.
Cath. Repudia, raptus, vis, potentium levi
 Non expiantur clade. Generis principem
 80 Abrahamum Hebraei fata genialibus
 Cogunt relictis ditis Aegypti uberes
 Inire campos; sceptrum complexus Phari
 Late tyrannus, instar excelsum deae,
 Sarrae stupebat oris eximium decus,
 Amore subito pectus aegrum saucius,
 85 Et quam sororem mortis in certo metu
 Compellat Abrahamus adsciscit nocens.
 Verum severus ultor incestos Deus
 Praesentiori punit afflictos malo.
 Primum tyranni pestis incestat domum,
 90 Et laeta sensim pecora, regios greges
 Nilumque luctuosa foecundum alveo
 In culta fundit arva diluvies novo.
 Malo eruditus praesidem Sarrae Deum,
 Atque Abrahami agnoscit incestus ducem.

63 Odia ... 76 negligit] cf. Buchan. *Med.* 15–32 68 maritum foedus] cf. Ov. *Pont.* 3.1.73 84 Amore ... saucius] cf. Buchan. *Med.* 8 87 Verum ... Deus] cf. Buchan. *Jeph.* 433

- 95 Cuius proneptis Dina Sichemi stupro
Contaminata violente grassantum manu
Fratrum recepta, caede funesta suo
Viduavit urbem cive. Quid memorem tribum
Variante bello Beniaminam funditus
- 100 Intercidisse?
Anna Gentis Aragonum memor,
Sint ista quamvis dura perpeſsu, feras.
Cath. Privata quantacumque dura perferam.
Anna Publica perinde.
Cath. Cavere qua datur licet,
Perferre minime: nauta, si mugit fretum,
105 Praesagus aerae litus affectat fugax
Periculi; simul arte pugnat fluctibus,
Quae si vocatus forte frustretur suos
Cedit procellae, fata fert animo sua
Maiore, casus caeterorum ast ingemit:
- 110 Tales adepti munus auspicio Deum
Reges procellas mugientes improbo
Ausu malorum provida vitent manu.
Si vis adulta vincat humanas opes,
Redimant salutem publicam damno suo;
115 Sin aequat altis ima, funestam vicem
Doleant suorum, fata perferant sua.

Scena 2

Thomas Morus. Catharina

- [*Mor.*] Regina salve.
Cath. Concinnius proaevium
Non est, amicos quo salutaris tuos;
Disertioris litteraturae dator,
120 Humanitatis lautioris artifex,
Et efficacis fctor eloquii pudens,
Mi More.
Mor. Frontem expolitae explicas
Salibus, amoris icta curis. Proditor
Meditantis animi vultus est.
- 125 *Cath.* Praebet latus
Augusta avitae gentis infandum meae,
Saeclis tot orbi clara maiestas retro.
Qui susque deque volvit, et vertit levis
Iam pace longa pristinum imperii statum
Volsaeus opportunus incidit.

Scena 3
Thomas Volsaeus Cardinalis. Catharina. Morus

- [Vols.] Aragonas
- 130 Herois inter nomen inclitum tuas.
Cath. Hoc me scelus compellat impudens modo?
Vols. Ignosce laudem si quid incusas tui.
Cath. Quid immerentem regiam vexas, canis?
 Et nos quid atro dente securos petis?
- 135 *Vols.* Ambigua quorsum verba traicis?
Cath. Tegi
 Deprensa satagit scelera turpiter pudor.
 Fictus nocentis vitia vultus occulit.
 In sancta lecti iura regalis ruis?
 Coniugia dirimis iuncta concordii fide
 Legitima iure, et orbis assensu rata.
- 140 *Vols.* Regina.
Cath. Regni parte depulsam tuo,
 Impure leno, scelere, reginam ambitu,
 Diserte circulator, affaris novo?
- 145 *Vols.* Non nunc, sed ante crebro perspectum mihi,
 Difficile quam sit concitatum turbidis
 Animum procellis, regio fastu gravem
 Lenire: [...]
 In suspicatum leviter insontes vocat.
 Qui sanxit aliquid parte neglecta altera,
- 150 Iudex iniquus, censor et praeceps fuit.
 Diluere possum crimen intentum mihi.
 Residat ira. Pectus incensum rege.
Cath. Effare causae facinus egregiae locum.
Vols. Religio subiit animum nuptiis
- 155 *Cath.* Polluta vestris.
Cath. Crimen ordiris probe.
Vols. Repetitus usque moris incestus novi
 Animo execratione sollicitus gravi
 Terrebar, haesi tacitus, expendi nefas.
 Antiquitatis iura bullatae novo
- 160 Contaminata more deprendi; horru
 Vibrata detestationis fulmina,
 Et quae tacentes poena praesules premit.
Mor. Volsaeus inter unus Anglos et sapit
 Solus, magister iuris et legum potens

133 Quid ... 134 petis] cf. Hor. *Epod.* 6.1; 6.15 **138** In ... iura] cf. Sen. *Tro.* 877 **139** iuncta concordii] cf. Sen. *Ag.* 781 **144** Non ... 146 procellis] cf. Buchan. *Med.* 467–69 **145** Difficile ... sit] cf. Sen. *Med.* 203 **149** Qui ... 150 iniquus] cf. Sen. *Med.* 199–200 **164** magister ... et] cf. Sen. *Phoen.* 330

- 165 Vindex.
Vols. Potentum saepe connivet malis
 Metuens pericli papa consiliis.
Mor. Procax
 Et fastuosum ingenium ut est demens tibi.
Vols. Non insolenter te geras in praesulem.
Cath. Apostatam, murem aulicum, infidum canem!
- 170 *Vols.* Amant modestos, execrantur en malos.
Cath. Sui ministros.
Vols. Insolentiae locum
 Damus.
Cath. Citatus, et furore percitus,
 Evasit amens regiae eversor domus.

Scena 4

Margareta Mori filia. Eduardus iuvenis Moro carus

- [*Marg.*] Animum voluptas afficit solida, in manus
 175 Si quando veteris scriptor incidit notae.
 Seu quem vetustas sordido obduxit situ,
 Seu vindicatum splendor illustrat recens.
 Felicitatis si quid aspectu Deus
 Affert amico luce geniali, quota
 180 Me parte dexter auxit? Ut primum genus
 Taceam parentum, laude non caruit sua.
 Non vetera iura iactat antiquae domus,
 Nec stemma longum mille nobilibus avis.
 At clara virtus, candor, integritas, fides
 185 In rebus undecumque nota publicis,
 Regi probata, grata principibus vivis,
 Livoris exsors plebis adversae bonis.
 Quid quod politus sermo, Romanis gravi
 Qui certet ausu, nomen aeternat recens
 190 Nostri parentis; post dein primo loco
 Quem veneror unum, sector, amplector, colo.
 Morem perosus quippe saeculorum retro
 Tot effluentum, lautioribus imbuit
 Meque et sorores litteris. Sane omnium
 195 Insevit animis pertinacem vim Deus,
 Uti parentes liberos arctius ament,
 Colantque et ornent; facere sumptum non putant,
 Si liberales forte profundant opes
 Magnas in artes; consequantur id modo
 200 Ut perpolitos gratulentur liberos
 Probitate, et auctos institutis indole
 Dignus honesta. Hic prisca mirari subit
 Saecula, muliebri sexui insignem notam
 Conflasse, et ignorantiae caliginem,

- 205 Uti noctis offudisse tenebras mentibus.
Etenim mulieres raro perdoctas mihi
Historia, custos fida temporum, refert.
Inter Latinas una Gracchorum parens
Docto fluentis ore torrentis potens
- 210 Facunda, prudens, sancta, temperans, gravis
Natis forensi concione dignior,
Suspicitur, admirationem commovet.
Aetate quinta hinc quis eximium decus
Eudocia nostri civis inter Atticos,
- 215 Qua non sophisma solvit argute magis,
Seu sensa veterum penitus excuteret, sophos
Seu disputantis thema conciret scholae.
Stupenda dixit laude maiorum pari.
Studio iuventus insolenti virginis,
- 220 Coiit Athenas. Aure defixi bibunt,
Licet affluenter hauriant, crescit sitis
Nec temperantur influentis impetu
Exuberanti fontis unda, aspris hiant
Faucibus. Acumen tecta subtili modo
- 225 Edisserebat sensa priscorum, migrat
Post paulo Athenis adque Calchedonis
Gradum deflectit arces, rara quo virtus vocat,
Opumque pauper, dives artium thoro
Divo iugali iuncta Theodosio venit.
- 230 Certe deorum est munus indulgens pater.
Edu. Quaecumque amico iure Musarum coit
Amicitia, sincera, simplex, candida est
Et semper incrementa conquirat recens,
Violente nullo saevientis impetu
- 235 Premitur tyranni, aut temporum attritu perit.
Lutulentiore Lutetia Musis solum
Natale ducibus attigi, immo regiam.
Ego hic quaternas ossa martyrum velut
Byssos implicatas porto orans sinu:
- 240 Binas Erasmi salibus et suis iocis,
Urbanitate, lepore Budaei alteras
Doctis refertas. Usus hospitio divum
Perliberali, comi et humano admodum,
Quas charitates hospitalis epuli,
- 245 Quas suavitates hilaris alterna vice
Sermonis? Aegrum iustus urebat dolor
Animum, eloquentes inter Ausoniae rudem
Linguae tacere. Haud parva mulcebat tamen
Tacitum voluptas. Quippe Musarum domi
- 250 Phoebum arbitrabar atque Mercurium vices
Miscere verbis. Opiparas dapes
Quos apparatu condiunt multo coci
Postpono mundaе cenulae angusti laris,
Regumque gazis ante congressus fero

- 255 Molles eorum disciplinis qui valent
 Studio paratis. Parca temporis manu
 Libros volutat Myromori filia.
 En perferundis, virgo, litteris vaco.
Marg. Generose, felix nuntius, iuvenis venis.
 260 *Edu.* Nosterne Erasmus Parisiis?
 Virgo, capis.
 Virtutis admirator aureae, bonus
 Franciscus altis Galliarum honoribus
 Inauguratus nuper auspibus diis
 Muneribus auctum luculentis Batavo
 Accersit orbe.
 265 *Marg.* Gratulor. Caetera satin?
Edu. Belle, Budaeus expeditus aulico
 Procul tumultu.
Marg. Solitudo pellicit
 Musis amicum. More districtum suo
 Publica parentem consultatio tenet.

Scena 5 Rex Henricus. Catharina

- 270 [*Henr.*] Ut nemo parte semper ex omni sapit.
Cath. Desipere prodest plurimum suo loco.
Henr. Post fratris immatura germani, soror,
 Funera.
Cath. Sororem coniugem coniux vocat?
Henr. Praefabor aequam pauca dicturus quidem
 275 Veniam. [...] Nomen sororis dulce fastidis? Libet,
 Regina, et uxor esto tantisper mihi.
 Animum exulceratum si quis irritat dolor
 Compesce paulum, mitis et placida, rogo.
 280 Modesta morem pauca dicturo gere
 Orationisque aure perfer exitum.
 Post fratris, inquam, funus infaustum mei
 Relictus heres. Iure quo reges solent,
 Regnantis aulae scepra et augustum decus
 285 Principis adeptus, quidquid oceanus soli
 Unda diremit orbe finitimo rogo.
 Post iusta fratris persoluta manibus
 Ego te recepi iure communi thori.
 Hac parte quidquid forte peccatum, damus

270 Ut ... sapit] cf. *Erasm. Iphig.* 194 285 quidquid ... 286 rogo] cf. *Sen. Phae.* 1161–63

- 290 Et iuste amicis, sceleris immunes tamen.
Subsipere coepi caecus, ut sensim novi
Sese remisit ardor imperii et tumor,
Animoque pavidus grande conceptum nefas
Ingemui et ira numen infestum horruui.
- 295 Iam ratio melior suadet incestis diu
Contaminatos expedire nuptiis; me,
Me trepida pietas vincit et Dei metus.
Cath. Inopinus hei, Henrice, dementat furor.
Ubi est acumen regiae eximium indolis,
300 Animusque constans?
Henr. Sanus et prudens loquor.
Cath. Cur crimen infers turpis incesti thoro?
Henr. Sociare thalamis fratris uxorem nefas.
Cath. Fas, quam reliquit frater intactam.
Henr. Vetant
Leges.
Cath. Pudoris flore non laeso annuunt.
- 305 *Henr.* Quas longus ordo nempe pontificum tulit.
Cath. Queis Christianus orbis astrictus viget.
Henr. Religio mentem laesa percellit metu.
Cath. Religio non est: est superstitio gravi
Vicina sceleri. Statue virtuti modum,
310 Non trepidus error, ratio virtutem facit.
Henr. Pium impiumque sceleris alligas paris.
Cath. Absit, superstitiosa paucos occupat
Pietas: religio, certa decretis patrum,
Quos praesidentes rebus admovit sacris
315 Christus repertor generis humani, omnium est.
Henr. Humana fallunt, temere ne credas.
Cath. Pudor
Temerate divum! Sancta Christiadum fides!
Si qua orthodoxus (nullus errori locus)
Scivit senatus, iusta, legitima, rata,
320 Pia pertuemur.
Henr. Blandus hic oris lepos.
Contentionis acuta mittamus foro.
Oratione posse deductum tua
Argutiore haud crede de sententia.
Cath. Adeone regi quidlibet soli licet?
- 325 Remedia praesens rebus infaustis para,
Regnator orbis magne, nihil regno gravis.

Scena 6
Ioannes Fischerius Episcopus Roffensis. Morus

[*Roff.*] Etiamne spirat noster hereticum scelus
Rex?

Mor. Vela vertit, cessit extinctus pudor.

330 [*Roff.*] Qui exacuit olim doctus in malos stilum
Gentile prodit stemma seque negligit
Ridiculus?

Mor. Urget ira caelestum.

Roff. Pavet

Mor. Animus. [...]
Secundis rebus insolens modum
Regalis aulae luxus imponere nequit.

335 Ut solida virtus pectus imbutum vagis
Amoribus resolvit, excessit pudor.
Mox immigravit luxur et Venus parens.
Hic feriatum, desidem, ignavum greges
Inter muliebres, capite lapsantem, dolor,

340 Praesul, videres.

Roff. Lentus ad poenas Deus;
Gravitate pensat impensa moram.

Scena 7
Rex Henricus. Morus. Roffensis. Volsaeus. Dux Nolfocius. Comes.
[Chorus]

[*Henr.*] Missis seorsim nuntiis accersier
Vos imperavi, principes viri, licet
Vulgatus ante rumor edocuit satis

345 Quid huc senatum cogat, effabor tamen.
Arturus ex quo morte sublatus perit,
Cognitionis iure possedi Angliam.
Viduo relictam virginem Aragonam thoro
Inauspicatis coniugem ascivi sacris.

350 Veniam meretur error aetatis. Fidem
Dirimere certum est foedere incesto datam.

Roff. Rex magne, quem non dulce Syrenum melos
Demulsit, aut illexit impurum genus
Apostatarum, saeculo infaustum tuo,

355 Et gratulamur. Orbe procuso Deus
Officia rerum lege partitus rata,
Belli atque pacis principem auctorem dedit.
Sacris ministros rebus admovit suos
Ut ordo rebus lege compactus sua

- 360 Generi beata pace det nostro frui,
 Nil inquietum pectus incestus timor
 Percellat. Ipse nuptialibus sacris
 Cum purpuratis pontifex summus, Dei
 Qui primus explet integram in terris vicem,
 365 Est factus auctor.
- Vols.* Laxa pontificum manus,
 Si quid profundunt unde non sperent minus.
Roff. Proiectus audes, sermo nebulonem sapit.
 In sacrosanctum Christiani principem
 Populi profanus, contumeliosus, procax?
 370 *Vols.* Parcius in ore regis insulta.
- Roff.* Meret
 Petulantis hoc et impotentis ligulae
 Levitas.
Vols. Potentes prosequuntur affatim
 Beneficiis, favore, larga gratia;
 Vulgus severi comprimunt legum iugo.
 375 *Roff.* Vulgum superbis vile sceptris comparas,
 Rerum aestimator imperite et sordide!
Vols. Conviciorum sat superque pertuli;
 Iniuriosis parce, pontifex, probris.
Nolf. Non hic negotii cardo vertitur, viri.
 380 *Roff.* Hic circulator ludit et figit gradum.
Nolf. Nil Morus inquit.
Mor. Clare Nolfociae comes,
 Exercitavit dubia coniugii fides
 Privata pridem nostra consilia domi.
 Astricta linguae vincula non timidus gero.
 385 *Com.* Scit Anglicani et ipse regnator soli.
 Si pertinaci mente decretum sedet:
 Qui contrahendis pontifex auctor sacris,
 Sit dividendis sector idem pontifex.
 In hisce rebus magna opus prudentia est.
 390 Invidia populi gliscet, et regum minus
 Si nil beati properus iniussu pares
 Pontificis.
- Henr.* Etsi nolit?
Com. Antiqua fide
 Et amore repetes arctiori coniugem.
Henr. Egon repulsam ferre contemptus queam?
 395 Ego masculina prole fundabo domum.
 Repudia meditor; haeret hic animus: mea
 Veram sororem regia expelli volo.

- Com.* Quae virgo nupsit, uxor et felix parens
Est; te parentem prole communi beat.
- 400 *Henr.* Incerta coniunx non det heredem beat.
Dii secudent sanctiores nuptias.
Iam aestimavi coniugem dignam mihi
Genere atque forma victa cui cedat Venus.
- 405 *Com.* Probitas fidesque coniugis, mores, pudor,
Et genus avitum gentis Aragoniae decus
Placeant marito.
- Henr.* Regio cedit thoro.
- Com.* Vix sustinere posset hoc nefas Deus,
Videre populi sancta nec pietas sinat.
- Henr.* Prohibebor unus facere quod cunctis licet?
- 410 *Com.* Maiora populus semper a summo exigit.
Henr. Non territabit civium vanus furor.
Mussare si quem fida compererit manus
Per vulgus ambulonum supplicium dabit.
- Com.* Exasperare, qui favent cives, cave.
- 415 *Henr.* Opinione fluctuanti civium regi,
Regnare potius nata maiestas nequit.
- Com.* Iuste dolebis vulgus adversum tibi.
- Henr.* Desinite tandem, abite vos taciti domum.
- Chor.* Quae vis fata regit, cogit et ordinem
- 420 Rerum per celeres ocus exitus?
Nuper Germanus, mores imitatus avorum,
(O caecae mentes!) quanto respublica casu
Strata Bohemorum vicino vidit ab orbe!
Non tamen abstinuit: diros haurire furores
- 425 Praecipitat; miscere parat pacata tumultu
Certus in exitium ruere et dispendia belli.
Impuro (dolor!) en credit Apostatae.
Non fecere catos aliena pericla Britannos;
Indulgent paribus (triste!) tragoediis.
- 430 Intulit et Gallus simili spectanda theatro,
Sanguine civili bella pianda ferox.
Nos infelices devoti sanguinis aetas,
Alterno cadimus vulnere saucii.
Belgia finitimi tantum furit aemula belli.
- 435 Dum sperare datur, fidite, tristibus
Addent rebus opem prospera numina.

398 felix parens] Sen. *Oct.* 405 403 Genere ... 406 marito] cf. Sen. *Oct.* 545–48
407 Vix ... 410 exigit] cf. Sen. *Oct.* 572–75 424 Non ... abstinuit] Verg. *Aen.*
2.534 432 devoti ... aetas] Hor. *Epod.* 16.9

Actus 2 Scena 1
Volsaeus

[Vols.] Docta et diserta lingua pestilens malum!
Volsae, quo quo decidisti? Pro miser
Volsae, venit rebus extremum tuis
440 Profecto tempus; arte sollerti bonus
Ni genius antevertat impetum, perii!
Consilia perdunt improba auctorem suum.
Queis per Deum perplexus involvor malis?
Integer et aequus semper est similis sui.
445 Adversitatis in quod incidi fretum?
Qualis profundum ventus adverso quatit
Et fert tumultu, fluctibus variis agor.
Curae perurunt pectus afflictissimum.
450 Herois alto sanguine Aragonum sata,
Iam tot per annos uxor Henrici, thoro
Depulsa regis vertit exilio solum,
Auctoritate, nefas, et instinctu meo.
Quam suspicatur nemo, vel sanus parum,
Ad iura demens legit Henricus thori,
455 Dominaeque famula vilis invadit locum,
Formam nitore docta mentiri impudens,
Fastu insolenti, fronte pellaci, tumet.
Detestor illam, horreo, fugio, execror.

Scena 2
Morus. Margareta

[Mor.] Fortuna, quid me fronte fallaci diu
460 Alte extulisti sorte contentum mea?
Cur ad superbum limen illectas nocens,
Regique subicis proximo obscurum loco?
Melius latebam patris angusto lare,
Cives frequentans sorte privata genus.
465 Tum liber animus et sui iuris mihi
Semper vocabat studia recolenti mea.
O quam iuvabat eruendis impigro
Ponere laborem Marte scriptorum libris,
Aut acri aceto carmen illimere, modo
470 Epigramma Graium facere Romanum, modo
Sermone patrio comminisci quidpiam.

437 Docta ... malum] cf. Erasm. *Iphig.* 426 439 venit ... tuis] cf. Sen. *Ag.* 227
444 Integer ... sui] cf. Erasm. *Iphig.* 725–26 447 fluctibus ... agor] Sen. *Ag.* 138
449 alto sanguine] Sen. *Ag.* 222 458 Detestor ... execror] cf. Sen. *Phae.* 566
459 Fortuna ... 460 mea] cf. Sen. *Oct.* 377–79 463 Melius latebam] Sen. *Oct.* 381
465 Tum ... 467 iuvabat] cf. Sen. *Oct.* 383–85

- Marg.* Ferenda et perferenda fortibus
Adversa, quamquam saeculo premimur gravi.
- 475 *Mor.* Mea Margareta, si quid officii dabis,
Iam tempus impertire lugenti.
- Marg.* Pater,
Communis ille luctus ex aequo bonis.
- Mor.* Generosa dixti, gnata.
- Marg.* Sic faxo, pater.
- Mor.* Vicissitudo temporum et morum insolens
480 Exceptit aevi tristis extremum mei,
Quo scelera regnant, saevit effrenis furor,
Turpi libido Venere dominatur potens.
Quid, More, statuis? Pendet animus, hei mihi!

Scena 3 Catharina. Margareta. Comes

- [*Cath.*] O sol diurnae lucis auctor, o iubar
485 Illustre mundi, o quidquid Aragonum viget
Floretque.
- Marg.* Gentis indolem excita tuae,
Regina.
- Cath.* Ad urbis scepra Romani nepos
Lectus, frementi Marte vastat Italos,
Terretque maria, barbaros Libyae quatit,
Et lentus isthaec audit?
- 490 *Marg.* Ulcisci potest,
Qui temperanti cuncta compescit manu.
- Com.* Accessit istud sortis adversae tuis,
Regina, fatis. Vince virtutis memor,
Ac sicut ilex tonsa, decisis gravi
495 Ramis securi, caede percrescit sua,
Sic icta virtus vivit inter aspera.
- Cath.* O caelibem sortisque vitam lugubris!
Iam sterile, maestum, et luctuosum hic exigam,
Viduata amicis, tempus aetatis meae;
Orbata thalamo miseriis luctu obruor;
500 Maerore vincor; coniugi paelex datur.
- Com.* Regina, sensus recipe, lachrimis dolor
Augetur.
- Cath.* Eheu luce non grata fruor!
- Com.* Repudia perfer.
- Cath.* Humilis ut dominae premat

473 saeculo ... gravi] Sen. *Oct.* 430 477 Generosa dixti] Erasm. *Iphig.* 649
480 Quo ... 481 potens] cf. Sen. *Oct.* 431–32 483 O ... o] Buchan. *Jeph.* 842–43;
cf. Buchan. *Alc.* 250 493 ilex tonsa] cf. Hor. *Od.* 4.4.57–60; cf. Buchan. *Bapt.*
979–85 499 Orbata ... obruor] cf. Sen. *Oct.* 103 502 luce ... fruor] Sen. *Oct.* 105

- Ancilla thalamos?
Com. Obiter afflavit suos
 505 *Com.* Ignes Cupido volucer; opprimet faces
 Brevis efficaces.
Cath. Igne torretur gravi.
 Ut scelera vincat, omne perfectum est scelus.
 Thoris nefandis Bollenem addicit sibi,
 Ex se creatam.
Com. Triste portentum.
Cath. Thomas
 510 Bollenus huius creditur vulgo pater.
 Praefectus acer Anglicani militis
 Ternis premebat Nervios castris ferox,
 Iam maeste patriae tertia aspectu carens
 Redux peractis rebus ex sententia
 515 Sobolem auctiorem falsus offendit pater.
 Violente percontatur uxorem furens
 Ira familiae ut auctus irrepsit suae.
 Quid misera reddit? “Regis haec soboles tui.”
 Thomas tacere. Pectus occulte coqui.
 520 Crebro minari. Ut pedibus infans institit,
 Veri parentis intrat augustum larem.
 Iam facta coniunx nata miscetur patri,
 Gignetque patri liberos, fratres sibi;
 Unoque partu mater et fiet soror.
 525 *Marg.* Quae barbarorum vidit ora? Quis Schytes
 Per scelera rumpi tanta naturae audiit
 Leges? Nefandi fata vicit Oedipi.
Com. Seges doloris illa princeps publici?
Marg. Monstris tyrannus nomen augustum inquinat.
 530 Cur fruitur aura et impius vitam trahit?
 Pro summe divum, vindica incestum caput!
 In tam nocentem dextra non cesset tua!
 Quis tot referre facinorum formas potest,
 Et spes nefandas feminae insuetum sacrae
 535 Regnum ambientis per gradus scelerum omnium?
 Sic sancta pietas extulit trepidos gradus,
 Vacuumque Erinys saeva funesto pede
 Intravit aulam. Polluit Stygia face
 Sacros penates; iura naturae furens
 540 Rupit secundo. Quis locus culpa super?
Cath. Hac hac parente expectat heredem domus
 Regalis.
Com. O spes Angliae infelix meae!

507 perfectum ... scelus] Sen. *Med.* 986 524 Unoque partu] cf. Sen. *Phoen.*
 136 529 Monstris ... 532 tua] cf. Sen. *Oct.* 244–50 533 Quis ... 539 furens] cf.
 Sen. *Oct.* 157–63 540 Quis ... super] cf. Sen. *Oed.* 664 543 recipe ... precor] Sen.
Oct. 754

- Regina, vultu recipe laetitiam precor.
 Exhibilabit fama rumorem gradu
 545 Pernice; celeres dissipabit nuntios
 Ad Albionis, sceleris ignaros, sinus.
 Confirmet animum civium magnus favor.
Cath. Solatur iste, nostra non tollit mala.
Com. Vis magna populi est.
Cath. Maior armati ducis.
 550 *Com.* Forsan maritus sceleris absistet via,
 Repetetque prudens coniugem.
Cath. Paelex vetat.
Com. Invisa populo.
Cath. Grata coniugi suo.
Com. Nondum uxor est.
Cath. Iam fiet, et genitrix simul.

Scena 4 Volsaeus

- [*Vols.*] Et hoc secundis rebus accessit meis:
 555 Romam expedivi (namque Volsaeo favent
 Et purpurati Cardinales, et fidem
 Multis probavit pontifex summus meam)
 Romam expedivi nuntios, inquam, diu
 560 Qui distinerent litis huius exitum,
 Ne virgo petulans atque perniciēs mea
 Thalamos iniret regis. O festum diem!
 Iubet priores nuptias, novas vetat
 Summus sacrorum pontifex.
 Sed ecce, gressu fertur Henricus cito,
 565 Trucique vultu, dirus ardescit dolor.

Scena 5 Henricus. Comes. Nolfocius. Volsaeus

- [*Henr.*] Indignitatum cumulus augeri potest?
 Clemens dirempti accusat Henricum thori.
 Clemens secundas nuptias damnat; probat
 570 Henricus. Execrationis pontifex
 Interminatur fulmen, at vacat metu
 Rex.
Com. E salute quod sit imperii sequi
 Decet imperantes.
Nolf. Natus ad regnum nequit
 Parere.

547 Confirmet ... 553 simul] cf. Sen. *Oct.* 183–88 561 O ... diem] cf. Sen. *Med.* 985
 564 Sed ... 565 vultu] cf. Sen. *Oct.* 435–36

- Henr.* Rigidum et triste pontificis iugum
 Feram? [...]
- 575 *Vols.* Volsaee.
Henr. Rex.
Vols. Ubi lenitatis Romulae
 Fides? Potentum an facilis imperio favor?
Vols. Obstrictus etsi pontifex meritis tibi,
 At imminente non vacat victus metu.
 Caesar tumultu victor ingenti metum
 580 Incussit urbi, pavidus invidiam cavet
 Clemens.
Henr. Inane fulminantem desii
 Pavere. Pontifex et rex suis
 Henricus esto: ecclesiae primum caput
 Rex Anglicanae.
Nolf. Metuo, rex: turbas dabis.
 585 *Henr.* Iurare verbis cogo conceptis meo
 Cives favori obnoxios promiscue.
 Sin obsequuntur, capite supplicium dabunt.
 Aequatus astris iura transcribo mihi
 Pontificis alma: ecclesiae Henricus caput
 590 Rex Anglicanae.
Com. Crescit in dies malum.
Henr. Rex et sacrorum pontifex sum maximus.
 Professus hostem, testor infernam Stygem,
 Pontificis omne nomen extingam papae.
Com. His Anna coeptis nubat Henrico suo.

Scena 6

Comes. Morus. Henricus. Roffensis. [Chorus]

- 595 [*Com.*] Obrue tyranni prospero inflatum caput
 Coepti tenore, cuncta qui polles manu.
 Contunde perfidi intumentes spiritus,
 Et redde tantis et tot afflictas malis
 Genti quietem. [...]
- 600 *Mor.* Cum perit adeptus fronte perfricta pudor,
 Nec cura iuris, sanctitas, pietas, fides.
Henr. Quoad superbum ferre Romani iugum
 Pontificis atque contumacem spiritum
 Datum est, modeste tulimus. Hinc porro, viri,
 605 Quod auspicatum numen aeternum Dei
 Faxit regendo molior regno statum
 Non usitatum.
Mor. Cava maiestas, vetus
 Quodcumque regimen publicae colit rei.

- 610 *Henr.* Mutasse regimen saepe convulsis fuit
Rebus saluti.
- Mor.* Ne sit exitio cave.
- Henr.* Quoties tribunos vidit indomitos domi
Suos furore Roma praecipites agi,
Cum paene complorata patriae salus
Hostilis urbem hostilis afflaret metus?
615 Indole paratum mascula imperium furor
Quo deprimebat usque pertinax, potens?
Hinc indecoris ipsa maiestas patrum
Foedata lachrimis plebis ambibat manu
Pacem supina. Saepe dictator truces
620 Extinxit iras, saepe Romani parens
Fortuna regni plebis armatae faces
Avertit urbi: Sylla seminarium
Fetum furoris, victor et felix diu,
Abolevit, et convulsit omnino semel
625 Praesidia populi.
- Mor.* At Caesar asseruit brevi.
- Com.* Cum tu furorem, pace, rex, dicam tua,
Populi ferocis arguis, sapis parum.
Quis Anglicani turbat imperii otium
Furens tribunus? Populus obsequitur tibi,
630 Humanitate comis et studio favet.
- Henr.* Etiamne stolidi parricidae principem
Furoris insimulatis?
- Roff.* Offensam feras,
Princeps, modeste.
- Henr.* Lege vivendum nova.
- Roff.* Tune abrogabis scita maiorum?
- Henr.* Abrogo.
- 635 *Roff.* Legem tot annos auctor antiquas ratam?
Henr. Antiquo gemino nostra maiestas nitet
Honore.
- Roff.* Gemino honore maiestas nitet?
Henr. Ecclesiarum colite nostrarum caput
Me, quem potestas summa sit solum penes.
- 640 *Roff.* Quo temeritatis tantus erumpet furor?
Henr. Et tu furoris nomen insimulas meum?
Roff. Et temeritatis certa vestigia noto.
Henr. In verba nostra iureiurando fidem
Astringe, iubeo.
- Roff.* Scelere ut obstringas pari?
645 Quae vis fidem resolvat addictam pio
Papae favori? Mille non terrent cruces
Animum tenacem iuris et trepidum Dei.
- Henr.* Abolere nomen omne pontificis paro.
Vos nisi paratis iussa, depulsi solo
650 Procul Britanno, ad orbis externi exules
Fugietis oras.

- Roff.* Si quid exilio potes,
Rex, comminisci gravius, appara mori
Certis. Tonantis obire mortem gratia
Est Christianum.
- 655 *Henr.* Vilis, et victus, miser,
Non quas rogavi perferam leges? Viri,
Commune studium iungat unanimes fide,
Probate leges, sancta quas pietas rogat.
- Roff.* Pietatis etiam vela praetendis tuo
Demens furori?
- 660 *Henr.* Precibus armatis feram,
Quae perduelles tanta per scelera negant.
Volsae, nostri columen et regni salus,
Partes secutus saniores regio
Subscribe voto.
- Vols.* Dii secudent auspicor.
Roff. Excessit animo penitus evasus pudor.
- 665 *Henr.* In vos rebelles consulam gravius brevi.
Chor. Otium Musis dabimus, nec arces
Aureas regum dubii teremus.
Non est laeta magis, vel scelerum
Vita rudis, non est securior,
670 Quam quae solliciti postposuit
Animi curas Pieridum choris.
Musis parta quies undique tutior.
Ad Musas, iuvenes, adite docti:
Non opum mentes faciet beatas
675 Copia maior.

Actus 3 Scena 1 Morus. Henricus cum suis

- [*Mor.*] Non e potentum magna me censu videt
Anglia frequenti iura dicentem foro,
Humili at honesta gente civium aemulus
Semper meorum si qua certamen dedit
680 Vitae magistra et laudis emeritae parens
Virtus. Potitus fratris imperio tui,
Satagis togatos inter accitum rei
Prospicere summae. Quippe maturo regi,
Nec infideli magna consilio iuvat.
- 685 Mox qui propinquo sceptrum contingam gradu,
(Tantum est favoris) inter auratos eques
Insigne regni vellus aureum gero.
Proquaestor exin grande vectigal tuis
Conquiro fiscis: seu quod in portus venit,

- 690 Scriptura pecudum sive, dives et frequens
 Seu quod viritim pendit Anglicana gens.
 Hinc praetor Anglis iure dicundo datus
 Populi in senatu lectus orator tui
 Frequente regni. Quid quod increvit favor
- 695 Virtute maior, magne rex, mea, tuus?
 In exterorum quippe legatus solo
 Legum secundis magna confeci diis,
 Seu foedus ictum, pacis aut leges datae.
 Quos non honores temporis medio tuli?
- 700 Quam luculentas tenuis et censu levi
 Opes paravi. Crevit immensum domus
 Patriae supellex, purpuratorum auream
 Gazam anteibat, regiam aequabat fere.
 Felicitati defuit tantum modus.
- 705 Benignitati, iura cum dixi, tuae
 Grates reposui, at impares meritis tuis.
 Haec ipse mecum saepe pudibundus loquor.
 Egone mediocri stirpis obscurae loco
 Ortus, ad equestre clarus evasi decus?
- 710 Egone proceribus praepotentis regiae
 Annumeror? Inter nobiles sanguine viros,
 Qui longa decora praeferent, novitas nitet
 Nullo colore nostra? Qui modicis sibi
 Sat fecit animus, opibus obrutus stupet,
- 715 Et lata fundis arva metitur vagus,
 Et foenus auctum patriae expendit rei.
 Causam tueri iure sed possum meam.
 Muneribus, o rex, puduit obniti tuis.
 Uterque nostrum munus implevit suum.
- 720 Quam contulisti gratus accepi vicem.
 Caetera flagranti fors an invidiae obiacent.
 Ut miles aevo fessus effeto, aut via
 Exhaustus asperiore, praesidium peto.
 Magna levare mole curarum velim.
- 725 Scrinii magister regii et praetor fori
 Munus resigno, mole defunctus gravi.
Henr. Praetendis isthaec vela, curarum fugax.
 Offunde tenebris solis accensum iubar.
 Ambage ut ambis cautus obscura tuos!
- 730 *Mor.* Otia senectus lenta sectatur.
Henr. Thoma,
 Fallax senectus vela praetendit suo
 Splendida pudori.
- Mor.* Saepe caelestes Deos
 Testatus unum, creber intendi preces
 Affecta ut aetas, lucis usura frui
 Si fata fors an sorte felici darent,
 Tacitam quietam nacta divis otium
 735 Legerem colendis.

- Henr.* Tune neglectos queri
Tibi, More, divos, sacra vel iuste potes?
- 740 *Mor.* Nil par reponi lucis auctori Deo
Potest.
- Henr.* Mearum, More, causaris statum
Rerum novari; proprius hic urit dolor
Animum.
- Mor.* Et acerbe regimen imperii fero,
Novumque morem merito pollutum queror,
Pietatis almae nomen et merito queror.
- 745 *Egone labantem publicae statum rei
Coram intuebor, integer vitae senex
Scelerisque purus? Iuris antiqui decus
Pudore tacito frontis ingenuae gemo.*
- Com.* Sic abdicatos perdit excipient probos.
- 750 *Henr.* Et contumaces abdicarier expedit.
Com. Quem vera virtus mente non levem vaga,
Sed pertinacem stabilit, et iusti et boni,
Male contumacis audit infami nota.
Virtutis olim quippe nomina vertimus.
- 755 *Virtute nulla splendidus, at manibus,
Titulis superbus ambitu verae tumet
Virtutis, et qui saepe complent regias
Rumore falso, fraude, vel calumniis
Aures. [...]*
- 760 *Ad summa sanctitatis attollunt caput.
Hoc quippe cunctis paene semper regibus
Commune vitium est: facile adulatoribus
Praebere sese, qui fideliter monent
Odisse.*
- Henr.* Contumeliarum plus satis.
- 765 *In vos redundet, si quod admissum scelus.*
Com. Insanus, irae ablatus impetu, ruit.

Scena 2

Catharina. Maria, Catharinae et Henrici filia. Anna

- [*Cath.*] Divina quanto saevit ira tardius,
Supplicia tanto atrocius tandem exigit,
O gnata!
- Maria* Lachrimis tempus hoc datur, o parens.
- 770 *Cath.* Miseranda virgo es, mulier infelix ego.
Hei misera! Quid ago? Lucis invisae moras

746 integer ... 747 purus] cf. Hor. *Od.* 1.22 754 Virtutis ... 757 Virtutis] cf. Buchan. *Bapt.* 263–65 757 et ... 764 Odisse] cf. Buchan. *Bapt.* 254–61 767 Divina ... 768 exigit] cf. Buchan. *Bapt.* 1037–38 770 Miseranda ... 772 Extraho] cf. Erasm. *Hec.* 457–59 771 Lucis ... moras] Sen. *Tro.* 939

- Extraho! In Aragonum contumeliam genus
 Impune! Vilis genere regali satam
 Angusta spatiis capiet extorrem casa;
 775 Deserta, maerens, sola fatalis diem
 Morabor aevi. Quidquid aureo Tagus
 Perfundit amni, aut dives alluit soli
 Iberus, aut quae Bethis Hesperiae alveo
 780 Diducit arva, genitor imperio meus
 Tenuit; feroces rexit Hesperios potens,
 Et ad frementem ratibus oceanum suis
 Pervasis, aestumque dubium Herculei freti,
 Maurumque trepido Marte finitimum fuga
 Praecipite ferri vidit aversum retro.
 785 Quid insidentes patrium memorem solum
 Iam tot per annos Marte depulsos patris?
 Quaqua parentis magna maiestas patet,
 Potui iugales nupta nancisci thoros;
 Contenta tenui sorte, non felix minus
 790 Caelebs sorori socia regnorum meae
 Adesse potui. Memet Anglorum pudet
 Taedetque. Ad auras noxii damnor soli
 Caelique; regno pulsa paelici locum
 Dedi thoroque vidua cessi. Quid prius
 795 Querar? Mariti iniuriam insignem mei?
 Verum dolorem questus auget, non levat.
 Meminisse debes, anime, regnantis domus
 Aragonorum: sortis adversae impetus
 Pervince fortis; nulla tempestas caput
 800 Deprimat; in aspris aureo virtus nitet
 Splendore.
- Maria* Quid te, mater, exanimas gemens?
Cath. Nondum miserias, nata, praesentes capis.
 Ignosce quidquid animus ira concitus
 Asperius egit, quaeque praecipiti ferox
 805 Dixi furore, victa et magnis malis.
- Anna* Regina, laudo dicta nec graviter fero.
 Par est profecto femina uti succenseat
 Et aestuanti bile in hostiles minas
 Vultu efferatur, similis amentum truci,
 810 Novas marito contrahente nuptias.
 Nihil miserius feminis terra, omnium
 Quaecumque vivunt menteque vigent, edidit.
 Primum necesse est opibus immensis virum
 Emere suique accipere dominum corporis.

773 genere regali] Sen. *Oed.* 835 775 Deserta ... 780 potens] cf. Sen. *Med.* 207–17 797 Meminisse debes] Sen. *Ag.* 150 806 Regina ... 810 nuptias] cf. Buchan. *Med.* 951–53 811 Nihil ... 824 mori] Buchan. *Med.* 246–59

- 815 Accedit aliud huic malo gravius malum,
 In quo periculum maximum, frugi vir an
 Nequam. Mulieri repudium infame est, neque
 Sponsae maritum ius recusandi est suum.
 In iura moresque venientem opus est novos
- 820 Plane ariolari, quippe quae haud didicit domi
 Quali marito serviendum sibi foret.
 Et ista recte cuncta cum curaveris,
 Si degat una sponte vir patiens iugi,
 Beata vita est, sin secus, praestat mori.
- 825 Sed cur tenellas uda lachrimis genas
 Maeres retrorsum flexa vultus candidos
 Nec haec libenter auribus verba imbibis?
Cath. Natae subibat tacita commiseratio.
 Per auspicato nuptias pactas tibi,
- 830 Regisque dextram dexterae implicitam tuae,
 Per spem futurae sobolis et regni, precor,
 Per si quid olim dulce sensisti meum,
 Cum regiarum virginum princeps choros
 Auctore me me duceres, cum te fide
- 835 Propiore colerem: redde, si mereor, vicem.
 Officia natae matris impendas meae.
 Ut me parentis saepe dilexti loco,
 Complexa natam matris ut sinu fove.
- 840 *Anna* Regina, quam fors rebus humanis opem
 Tulit feretque, parte maxima acceptam feram
 Tibi necesse. Repete quam debes opem.
 In virginali aetate regios lares
 Intra parente memet utetur proba
 Tenella virgo.
- 845 *Cath.* Pectus amplector pium
 Gratumque. Fando ne quid adiiciam morae,
 Et asperatum principem accendam, vale.
- Anna* Resiste, quidve casus, expecta, ferat.
Cath. Hinc exulatum propero, vestra fortunet Deus.
Maria O pectus et, quis alita blande sum, ubera!
- 850 *Cath.* Pro ante tempus fati acerbi filia!
Maria Vale, o parens, incolumis et sospes, vale.
Cath. Alii valebunt, istud haud matri datum est.
 Adeo undiquaque prorsus infelix ego.

825 Sed ... 828 commiseratio] cf. Buchan. *Med.* 967–76 848 Hinc ... Deus] cf. Buchan. *Med.* 989 849 O ... 853 ego] cf. Erasm. *Hec.* 464–70

Scena 3
Henricus. Volsaeus. Nolfocius. Comes

- 855 [Henr.] Quod perduelles rebus Anglorum creant
Discrimen, ambit regium imprimis caput.
Iurata factionis impiae cohors
Non conquiescet, caede ni incestet mea
Manus scelestas, patrio aut pulsum lare
Me luctuoso damnet exilio procul.
- 860 Nolf. Rex, occupandum quidquid infestum est tibi
Vinclis vel ense. Caede paucorum iuvat
Comprimere motus insolentum civium.
Henr. In immerentes consulam gravius velis?
Nolf. In perduelles consulas gravius volo.
- 865 Henr. At immerentes populus et dati favor
Regno laboris censet.
Nolf. At pestis recens
Fecit nocentes.
Henr. Sancta perstantis fides
Animi vocatur, quodque dissensu abnuunt.
- Nolf. Vulgi indecorum stare iudicio levis.
870 Henr. Pars quota salutis regiae levis
Favore vulgi.
Nolf. Vulgus obsequi sciat,
Rex imperare.
Henr. Temperarier potest
Utrumque melius: rebus addictum novis
Vulgus novari vetera non fert tamen.
- 875 Vols. Corrupta plebes ni capit clementiam
Ingrata regis, ferre nec pacem potest.
Sed inquietos perduelles respicit:
Malis domanda est, et gravi semper metu
Reprimenda, ne quid turbidum tentet nocens.
- 880 Com. Maioris urget summa momenti: brevi
Magnos tumultus concitabis, at diu
Sedabis. Igne qualis exiguo flagrat
Sensimque flammis ampla conceptis domus
- 885 Trahit ruinam, tale florenti statu
Regnum tumultu concidit parvo potens.
Principia belli certa, nequaquam exitus.
Henr. Ecquo malorum pondus urget noxium
Et triste fatum?
Vols. Cuncta successu fluent

860 occupandum ... 861 ense] cf. Sen. *Oct.* 531 **861** Caede paucorum] cf. Sen. *Oct.* 846 **867** Fecit nocentes] Sen. *Phoen.* 452 **875** Corrupta ... 878 metu] cf. Sen. *Oct.* 835–39

- 890 Nimis secundo, et dubia consilio reges,
Si qua vocaris promptus invadas viam.
Henr. Consultor aspris rebus efficax opus.
Nolf. Ne qui rebellent rebus attoniti novis
Castella, et urbes, litus oceani, et fora
- 895 Infide fido cuncta praesidio, metus
Monebit officii obsecundantes minus.
Iurare verbis coge conceptis tuo
Cives favori, obnoxios promiscue
Sin obsequuntur, exige extorres domo.
- 900 Proscribe, cedant urbe, deserant larem,
Vertant egentes patrium externo solum.
Henr. At qua senatum posse pellici putas
Auctoritate, moris ut patrii vetus
Memoria facile cedat animus omnium?
- 905 *Nolf.* Parabis opportuna, ut autumo, novis
Praesidia rebus, vel negotio levi.
Primum abdicatos publicis honoribus
Veteres magistratus in ordinem iube
Redigi; coopta deinde iuratos tibi
- 910 E plebe media, commodi dummodo fient.
Probos nefastos iure commissos pari,
Alternis alter continebitur metu.
Vols. Episcoporum contumax porro manus
Ferro domanda, ut caede paucorum timor
- 915 Incessat omnes. [...]
Hac arte clerus, si quid insolens paret,
Frangatur.
Henr. Hisce calculum adiicio, sequor.
Com. Ecclesiarum quisquis hostili statum
Turbavit ausu (prisca si memini probe)
- 920 Ecclesiarum alumnus et cliens fuit.
Antiqua repete, schismatum auctores suos
Digere per annos quemque pertinax furor
Quorum diremit orbe concusso pios
Et asperavit factiones impias.

Scena 4

Cromerius cancellarius. Procurator regius. Consilarii. Milites duo

- 925 [*Canc.*] Qua lege vestram principi astrinxitis fidem
Memoribus animis quilibet satis tenet.
Hoc vos decet sentire toto pectore,
Ut cuncta regis postposita sententiae
Vulgi efferatos impetus coerceant,

- 930 Et temeritatem comprimant rebellium.
Cons. [1] In suspicatum devocari praecave.
 Populi parentes esse, nos dominos decet
 Regi magistros publicae. [...]
- 935 *Cons.* [2] Extinguit odium docta comitas regi
 Et regere. [...]
- Proc.* Existimavi munus expleri meum,
 Si dicta, facta, murmur explore omnium,
 Et studia civitatis inquiram simul,
 Obscura si qua fama tacite spargitur,
 Quae muniat altum nomen et regis decus.
- 940 *Cons.* Quod difficile cuiuslibet hominis
 Sententiam aut prudentiam pernoscere
 In suspicatum quisquis incidet levem,
 Impinget vinculis captus pedem.
- 945 Vos donec aestus perduellium mora
 Lenta residat, excubate strenui.
 Vos velut odora nare sectatur feram
 Vestigiumque sequitur incursu canis,
 Quid vulgus inter musset incussos metus.
- 950 *Mil.* [1] Si quid susurrent forte cives clanculum,
 Quocumque, proceres, dicta resciscam modo.
- Mil.* [2] Vestris fideles rebus, et promptos manu,
 Proceres, inauthoratis aere regio.
- Cons.* Refert favorem scisse propensum aut minus
 955 Populi benignum, constat hoc publica quies.
 Rumigerulorum fraude mendicos manus
 Mentita vicos ostiatim permeet,
 Studio querelas, collocti commode,
 Passim frequentent, lachrimas oculis ciant,
- 960 Dolere simulent publicam ex animo vicem.
 Hac arte plebes capta quo studium ferat
 Incauta prodet. [...]
- Canc.* Comitatus ambit regium latus frequens.
Cons. Et rex minatur, totus in vultu est dolor.

Scena 5

Henricus cum suis. Catharina. Maria. Roffensis. Morus. Cancellarius. [Chorus]

- 965 [*Henr.*] Catharina, eundum est, effer ex aula pedem,
 Tecumque nata.
- Cath.* Nata? Communis divum
 Soboles, et arcti pignus amborum thori?
 Commune mecum vectet exilio solum?
 Mea nata? Quae te Caucasi invii iugis

- 970 Aluere tigres? Numinum testor fidem,
Non te parentis nomen immitem movet?
Nihil parentem nata? Nil retines patris?
Quid ingemiscam? Luctus exilio comes
Additur acerbo. Liberos impie creas
- 975 Uti miseriis obruas, patria exules
Domo? Cruentis satius enasci feris,
Ah satius inter asperas cautes ali,
Et beluarum stabula sortiri!
- Henr.* Sile.
- Cath.* Infans mihi silentium indicit pudor.
980 Hac calamitatum mole succumbam imperas?
Aragoniorum sanguis est generosior.
Expostulare iure iam tecum datur.
Quae barbarorum regio, quis vagus Schytes,
985 Ignara quae gens legis humanae scelus
Concepit istud? Liberos plaustris vehit,
Tardasque matres sedis incertae Schyta,
Nemora pererrat, montium superat iuga,
Nusquam labori parcit, omnia liberum
Studio suorum tentat et ferendo fert.
- 990 Humanitatis barbari expertes sacrae,
Vulgo frequentes liberum ostentant greges,
Seu coniugali iure natos, paelicum
Seu furta dederint. Patrio amplexi foveant
Amore, fetus ut tuerier ferae
- 995 Possint; obarmant ora dentibus aliae;
Unguibus obuncis asserunt quaedam pedes.
Henricus adeo patris oblitus furit
Et in decennem saevit atrox filiam,
Dominantis olim forsane heredem domus.
- 1000 *Henr.* Procax dicaxque mulierum semper genus.
Profugite pariter.
- Cath.* Rex, ut extremum loquar:
Quid nata meruit regio ut profuga lare
Matrem secuta mutet exilio domum?
Tua est, tibi quae saepe blanditam sinu
1005 Ridens paterno contulisti brachiis
Et dulce nomen laetus audisti patris
Balbutientem, mille fixisti oscula.
Meministin' isthaec?
- Henr.* Eloquendi non rudem
1010 Debere monuit esse me intentum scelus.
Verum gubernatoris instar callidi
Summa profugiam linteorum margine
Loquacitatem, mulier, istam futilem.
Officia patris quando nimium exaggeras

- Equidem saluti consulo imprimis tuae.
 1015 Adesse matri dulce solamen suae
 Natam volebam.
- Cath.* Mulierum ut loquax genus,
 Mendax virorum est. Ecquid ardenti minax
 Iamiam furebas ore? Me atque filiam
 Properare pariter concita urgebas fuga?
 1020 Testor coacti pura concilii viros.
 Feros furores, lene solamen parens
 Natura docuit. Pudit; effugium petis.
 Quid quod miseriae nata solamen meae
 Qui potuit esse, cuius aspectu necem
 1025 Certam pararet acerbitas divortii.
- Henr.* Vehemens et acris allatras, mulier, mei
 Secura. Procerum medius et patiens steti.
 Impune num tu regium incessas decus?
 Quod exprobare laesa, vel sospes queas,
 1030 Profugite pariter, ite veloci via.
- Cath.* At o levissime omnium mortalium!
Henr. Veto morari.
Maria Genibus accido tuis,
 Pater, per illud dignitatis regiae
 Sublime nomen, per tuum precor genus,
 1035 Per si quid ex me tibi voluptatis fuit,
 Per si quid unquam dulce sensisti meum,
 Si quando teneris comprimens te brachiis
 Collo pependi suave pondus patrio:
 Miserere, genitor, prolis, et matris leva
 1040 Bonus miserias. Cur trucem vultum amoves?
Roff. Ea diritatis fama posterum memor
 Explebit aevum, et ora damnatum scelus,
 Immane, taetrum, et impium, et terris novum.
 Humanitate temperatis civica.
- 1045 Clemens feratur alma maiestas tua
 Levisque saeclo posterorum iudici:
 Si nulla pietas matris exilium occupat,
 At abeat incomitata congressu suae
 Sobolis, feratque sola quodcumque imminet
 1050 Letale proli ne tuae exitium struas.
- Mor.* Antiqua si quid iura coniugii merent,
 Et si voluntas forte propendet tua
 Solito in amicos more, decretum horridum,
 Rex, verte, proli parce, parce coniugi.
 1055 Sin constitutum saevus antiquo et sedet
 Exigere matrem, contine natam domi.
- Canc.* Favoris aetas plena, et indoles rudis

1032 Genibus ... 1041 memor] cf. Buchan. *Jeph.* 1215–28 1050 Letale ... struas] cf. Buchan. *Med.* 303 1053 decretum horridum] cf. Sen. *Herc. O.* 928

- 1060 *Henr.* Expersque scelerum, flore virgineo integra,
En tacita deprecatur exilium et fugam.
Summissa fusas verba nequidquam preces
Viri frequentant. Fixa stat sententia.
- Cath.* Eho tyranne! Rursus en supplex iacet
Affusa genibus Aragonum proles tuis,
Respersa nulla labe et intacta et innocens,
- 1065 Tibi mittor uni, praeter extremas preces:
Miseresce natae. Mitis et vir et pater
Hac esto lege. Coniugem exilio procul
Extrude, natam facilis insontem fove.
- 1070 *Canc.* Te tua rogamus turba, rex, placidus fave
Et subeat animum iusta commiseratio.
Tu diritatis omnis obliviscere.
Per qui faventes patrio admorunt manus
Sceptro superbas caelites, per qui tuo
Felix ex ortu nomen accepit patris,
- 1075 *Henr.* Miseratus indulgenter afflictas habe.
Ut saepe damno mihi meus fuit pudor,
Nunc esto deinceps. Pertinaces vincitis:
Sospes supersit nata, mater exulet.
- 1080 *Cath.* Non hoc amoris pignus extincti reor.
Beneficiorum liberales gratias
Habeo tuorum. Leviter exilium fero.
Henrice, nostri et filiae memor, vale.
Valete, proceres, consulenti curiae
Hei mihi, cohors fidelis, aeternum vale.
- 1085 *Chor.* Henricus gregibus femineis pudet,
Suffecit cyathos meri minister.
Impudens pervicit amor tyrannum.
Victus cede pudor, cede cupidini.
Extremo Assyrium principe mollior,
Corruptus placitis servit amoribus
Anglorum dominus, tigre cruentior.
Dives at imbellis, infanda per omnia saevit.
Qui virtute nequit, caede praeibit avis.
- 1090 *Henr.* Insultare novo, More, Cupidini,
Insultare novae desine coniugi.
Regem vicit amor, desine conqueri.

Actus 4 Scena 1

Eduardus. Morus. Margareta. Milites

[*Edu.*] Facinora dira, barbara, horrida, aspera;
Ecquis tyrannos Christiani nominis,

- 1100 Hostes, Latinos Caesares reddi locis
Terrisque nostris nescit? Increscit furor
Violentus, ortu gaudet haud sane levi.
Marg. Quid istud, oro?
Edu. Quod oculi exhorrent mei,
Et usque pavidus trepidat animus, cor micat
Ut insolentis regis occurrit scelus.
- 1105 *Marg.* Quid, quaeso?
Edu. Solus genitor advertit gradum.
Si nuntiorum nullus afflavit celer
Rumor, inopinus verberabo aures senis.
Quid tum? Necesse discat, affabor. Thoma,
Fischerius eheu Anglicani lux soli
1110 Praesulque Roffae clarus aut caelum tenet,
Aut clausus alto regiae tacet specu.
Mor. Quod semper animo tempus exhorrebam, adest.
En quo libido regis effrenis ruit.
Roffensis ictus regio occumbit meus
1115 Tandem furori!
Edu. Barbarum vidi nefas.
Vidi revinctis manibus attonitum senem
Trahi rapique, militum quati manu
Saeva frementium.
Marg. Ordinem digere rei.
Edu. Ibat satellites principis iussu feroc
1120 Instructus armis, praelio qualem ruit
Acies vocante. Praesulis postquam fores
Ariete veluti miles impulit ferus,
Penetrare tecti limen irrumpit minax.
Qua solitudo tacita pandebat viam
1125 Fertur citatus, vacua collustrat domus
Atria; viam vi, qua fores obstant, facit.
Perrumpit aditus, vellit, evertit, ruit.
Collidit arma, terret horrendus fremor.
Antistes insolentiae ignarus preces
1130 Fundebat alto caelitem regi sacras,
Cum subito famulum pavidam concurrat manus
Dominumque clamat, atque praesidium vocat.
Securus ille rite perfectis Deo
Ex more votis surgit impavidus: "Quis hic
1135 Tumultus?" inquit. "Personat strepitu domus."
Haurit fremores, militum attendit minas.
Occurrit ultro, saeptus armorum globo.
Manus catenis porgit; insultat seni
Petulans satellites, vexat astrictum procax.
1140 Nec mora, revinctum rapuit et pernix pedes,
Subducit urbis praesulem aspectu suae.

- 1145
Mor. Ferro peremptus spiritum expuerit leuam,
Aut vinctus imo carceris specu dein
Sperat supremum (tamque spes vitae leuis
Superest) nec oculis redditus meis fuit.
Marg. Et mea propinquant fata.
Mor. Despondes, pater!
Marg. Crudescit ira magis magisque principis.
Mor. At sistet aliquis impetum effrenem, et trucem
Extinguet iram.
Mor. Plurimi incendunt trucem
1150 Iram tyranni.
Marg. Quibus odio sunt integri!
Mor. At at fragorem sentio armorum. Imminent.
Marg. Nihil pericli, pone securus metum.
Mor. Haurio frementes aure non surda sonos.
Marg. Ah genitor, adsunt, aera collucent procul.
1155 In nos feruntur, recipe te invisum, pater.
Mil. [1] In suspicatum cautus armatos vocat,
Fugax recessit, se abdet occultum domi.
Mil. [2] Hac irrumpamus, impetum unanimes date.
Mor. Quid obsequentem vinculis opus premi?
1160 *Mil.* [1] Ne te fugacem conciti auferant pedes.
Mor. Valente iuuenes robore effetus senex
Aetate tardus antevertet integros?
Mil. [2] Imperia sunt haec, More, non timor fugae.

Scena 2

Margareta. Eduardus. Comes

- 1165 [*Marg.*] O qui potenti providus vastum manu
Moderaris orbem, numen invoco ac testor tuum:
Si non perosus patriam es stirpem et domum
Penitus, periclo proximum vindex patrem
Respice, tyranni verte decretum impii,
Vivatque sospes liberis iunctus parens,
1170 Et quem minatur Angliae casum rapax
Fortuna rebus, et tuis pariter sacris
Averte placidus.
Edu. Pectus incusso metu
Nondum vacabit liberum. Caprea velut
Pernice cursu montis abditum in latus
1175 Ab ore rapido fugit instantis lupi,
In solita sensim pascua impingit pedem,
Ita ad penates redeo desertos fuga
Et imminentis agminis certo metu.

1180 At at trementes horror artus concutit.
 Praesagit animus triste conflari malum.
 Confecta luctu lachrimis vultum rigat,
 Perfundit ora pallor, et suspiriis
 Longoque gemitu triste pectus insonat.
 1185 *Marg.* Ah pater, ut ora muta conspicor tui,
 Vivosque vultus? Animus infractus labat.
 Veneranda in ora miles incussit manum
 Palmasque fune vinxit impius latro?
 Recta ad tyrannum conciti raptum ferunt.
 1190 Mi pater, aheni clausus an liber locus
 (Qui solitus amplae spatia metiri domus)
 Receptit? Ecquid principis tantum furit
 Impasta feritas?
Edu. Morus oppressus domi
 Sese in latronum liber immisit manus?
 Quidnam repente, Margari, turbae datum?
 1195 Ecqui peractum?
Marg. Vinctus in summa pater.
Edu. Quousque tandem gliscet immitis furor?
Marg. Ne quid dolori, iuvenis, adicias meo.
Edu. Haec in piorum incestus ocepit caput:
 Metit papaverum eminentes vertices
 1200 Caules, ut humiles nempe succidat dein
 Aut servitute dominus impotens premat.

Scena 3

Anna. Volsaeus. Henricus

[Anna] Frustra impeditis nuptiis meis mora,
 Tandem iugali iungor Henrico face.
 Rumpuntur hostes. Quem meus vicit decor
 1205 Et forma et aetas tradidit vinctum mihi:
 Aragoniorum stirpe praetumida thoro
 Concessit exul, tacuit antistes simul
 Rochestriorum et Morus edomiti malis.
 Praesidia veterum nuptiarum sustuli.
 1210 *Henr.* O cara sortis socia, thalamicque unica
 Dilecta consors, cuncta successu fluent
 Nobis secundo, flante fortuna.
Anna Dii
 Favent: senatus iam probat nostros thoros
 Quos improbarat pertinax.
 1215 Catharina nostri cessit aemula thalami.
 Cessere quotquot nomini invidi meo
 Hostesque visi; vinctus antistes modo

- 1220 Roffensis ima conditur mutus specu,
Thomasque Morus, voce qui passim tonans
Tuum meumque exhibilat populo scelus,
Iugale foedus arguens.
- Henr.* Merita dabunt
Supplicia plexi quique pontificem colent.
Testor potentem lucidi aetheris Deum:
Quicumque thalamo inuret infamem notam,
- 1225 Quicumque vel te coniugi uxorem invidet,
Mactatus ille te levaverit metu.
- Vols.* Volsaeae, questus fundis infaustos, miser?
Audis superbum et insolentem paelicis
Fastum: marito rege tumida spiritus
- 1230 Gerit altiores. Cede regia domo
Temporibus, aut in pervicacem paelicem
Elatus insolentiae poenas dabis.

Scena 4

Margareta. Comes. Anna

- [*Marg.*] Tutor superstes atque praesidium reis
Ecquam saluti et patriis affers opem
- 1235 Praesens periculis?
- Com.* Admonet meae tuus
Genitor salutis Margari, at sero tamen,
Vehimur eadem quippe Catholici rate.
- Marg.* Adeone desperata genitoris salus?
- Com.* Pietatis aditus atque vitae clauditur,
1240 Nefas Britannis esse posterius piis.
- Marg.* Ut eximatur efficax verbis roga.
- Com.* Quae regis aditus, sola quae fandi vices
Tempusque novit, quamque rex unam colit,
Advertit ultro compta sollicitate gradum.
- 1245 *Marg.* Certum experiri laude mendaci ordiar
Orationem; laude mitescit ferox
Et delinitur feminarum animus.
- Com.* Iuvo.
- Marg.* Regina, sidus Albionis aureum
Et auspiciato fida civium salus,
1250 Princeps, tuorum, supplicii innixam genu
Nil dura perfer, et preces audi pias.
- Anna* Ne supplicantes accidant genibus veto.
Non me paternae sortis immemorem decus
Foedat superbum.
- Marg.* Vulnus inflictum gemo
1255 Patriae saluti.
- Anna* Digna gemitu liberum
Salus parentum est.
- Marg.* Digna regnantum fide

- 1260 Clemens, misericors, dia pietas, et favor.
Si nil sceleste carus admisit parens,
Regina, vinclis expediri deprecor.
Sin perduellis principem laesit suum,
Tot absolutum reddier meritis rogo.
Per quae merenti decora cumulantur tibi,
Per spem virilis sobolis, et thori fidem,
Et tu (potes nam) deme compedem patri.
- 1265 Propendet in te coniugis solam fervor
Amorque; quamquam Caucasum incusset ferus,
Animum lenires tristem et intractabilem.
Humanitatis iura sic socia admonent,
Inflexte mentem regis offensam prece.
- 1270 *Anna* Meus iste labor est: aggredi verbis virum.

Scena 5

Henricus. Volsaeus. Nolfocius. Anna. Margareta. Comes

- [*Henr.*] Ut qui novellae coniugi arrides meae,
Volsae.
- Vols.* Poenitudo pertundit mei
Me sera consilii.
- Henr.* Inficiaris, impudens,
Qui factus auctor nuptiarum pertinax?
1275 Revolvat animus dira Roffensem palam
Capiti imprecatum, insulse pontifex, tuo.
Laboris exanclata post duri scelus
Pericla; crimen regio intendis thoro?
Excede tectum regiae infelix domus.
- 1280 *Vols.* Rex pauca.
- Henr.* Nostra pace quod facias brevis.
Vols. Connubio ut ante suffragor tuo,
At evagatas suppressi caedes velim.
- Henr.* Et istud instinctore Volsaeo patre.
1285 *Nolf.* Abi, sceleste, in maxumam malam crucem.
Huc moliuntur nubilo vultu gradum.
Regina praefert fronte laetitiam modo.
Precibus agetur atque lachrimis.
- Anna* Potens
Vitae necisque magne coniunx arbiter,
Monimenta maiestatis illa regiae
1290 Magnifica duco, nulla quae emoveat dies,
Clemente cives regier imperio, neci
Quamquam merentes scelere subduci, asseri,

1264 Et ... nam] Hor. *Epod.* 17.45 1267 Animum ... 1270 virum] cf. Sen. *Phae.* 271–72 1284 in ... crucem] Plaut. *Cas.* 611; Plaut. *Men.* 66; Plaut. *Poen.* 347; Plaut. *Rud.* 518; Plaut. *Trin.* 598

- Et liberari perditorum machinis.
Si vis amoris solita, si favor manet,
Nil durus audi.
- 1295 *Henr.* Fare.
Anna Condone meis,
Rex magne, Morum precibus atque filiae
Lachrimis parentem.
- Henr.* Precibus ut morem geram,
Hac lege Morum carceri exemptum volo.
Repudia coniugis asserat primum meae,
Novisque thalamis iure legitimo annuat.
1300 Demum Latinos execratus praesules,
Ecclesiae sciat Anglicanae me principem.
Hac lege patrem, Margari, fato eripe.
- Marg.* Rex, vive, clemens atque patriae pater.
1305 Nec te laboris huius immemor, potens
Regina, taceo, grata si meritis minus
Tuis videbor. Facilis indulge meo
Tantum dolori, miseriisque patrii.
Satisne dixit? Pertinax iusti patrem
1310 Mens continebit liberum.
- Com.* Ut semper procax
Nequitia. Turris alta suspectu eminent
Et qui satelles subito maturat gradum
Custos in arce propter excubat fores.

Scena 6

Comes. Miles. Margareta. Morus

- [*Com.*] Heus bone.
Mil. Quis isthuc clanculum affectat viam?
1315 *Com.* Adsumus amici.
Mil. Sed quis indulget?
Com. Favor
Regalis unum et istud insuper adiicit,
Esto remotis arbitris fas colloqui
Natam parenti.
- Mil.* Faxo, conferant colloquia.
Marg. Genitor, tale conspicui decus
1320 Aspicimus oris? Paedor obducit situ
Incana foedo menta et horrificat comam.
Mor. Sanguinis amicum sidus et fautor mei,
Dux magne, salve.
- Com.* Meruit officium vicem.
Mor. Mea nata, salve, res satin' meae domi?
1325 *Marg.* Funesta gemitu resonat assiduo domus.
Abs rege, genitor, magna qui pollens potest,
Adsum, saluti et ipsa praesidium tuae
Munio.

- Mor.* Tyranno forsā admōsti p̄ces?
Marg. Haud irritas.
Mor. Fraudem cave.
Marg. Fraudem times?
1330 *Mor.* Qui fraude perit fraudis ut sit admones
Securus?
Marg. Officiosa sedulitas fuit,
Tentasse mentem fraudulentam principis.
Mor. Sic nempe generi es, nata, persimilis tuo.
Marg. Clemens bonusque reddit illaesum tuis
1335 Te rex amicis. Certa libertas, salus
Et vita redeunt.
Mor. Quot mihi leges tulit?
Marg. Tres.
Mor. Nempe.
Marg. Duram pertinax mentem induis?
Repudia coniugis assere exactae domo,
Novisque thalamis iure legitimo annue.
1340 Demum Latinos execratus praesules,
Illum Anglicanae ecclesiae caput cole.
Mor. Hic perdis operam, ut esse non liceat piis.
Pax fida nivibus dabitur et flammis prius,
1345 Et solida ratibus ante substernet vada
Reciproca Syrtis, Bosphorus fundet vagus,
Perfundet Arctos pontus, et Siculo latus
Committet Italum Scylla praecisum semel
Gallis Britannos iunget, et solum solo,
1350 Ego quam Catholicos impio aversos metu
Agam. Senectus fortiter potius mori,
Et fata Christi ferre gratia pium est.
Marg. Quid agam? Parenti quippe decretum mori
Et pertueri scita pontificum et Dei.
Furiant tyrannum scelera per novum scelus.
1355 At o adeste et numen advertite pium,
Superi.
Mor. Familiam ferre fortunam doce.

Scena 7

Eduardus. Morus. [Chorus]

- [*Edu.*] Converte, Titan, avios currus retro.
Redi, remetiare maturum diem.
Emitte noctem, nube inhorrescat polus

1334 Clemens bonusque] Buchan. *Ps.* 112.17 1343 Pax ... prius] cf. Sen. *Herc. f.* 375; Sen. *Thy.* 480 1346 Perfundet ... latus] cf. Sen. *Thy.* 477 1359 Emitte ... polus] cf. Sen. *Herc. O.* 1132–33

- 1360 Et vindicanti tela librentur manu.
Nunc summe toto detona caelo Deus.
Intende dextram, vindices flammās para.
Perime nocentes, vindica immeritos manu.
- Mor.* Compesce questus.
Edu. Quid prius referens gemam?
- 1365 Supplicia praesul inausa Roffensis luit
Et truncus humeris capite desecto iacet.
Ad principatum nuper almae pontifex
Sedis vocatus Paulus, et sacris datus
Divum sacerdos, gnarus insolentiae
- 1370 Regalis, audit destinari caedibus
Pietatis ergo, vetera pontificis pio
Ausu professos iura primates viros,
Antistitemque indigna Roffensem pati.
Sancti senatus inter adscribit patres
- 1375 Et purpuratum decore cardineo colit.
Testem galerum dignitatis destinat.
Ea fama subito regis animum perculit.
Desaevit amens, dirus ultrices parat
Poenas, sacratum damnat impius caput.
- 1380 Feralis aderat luce funesta dies.
Placidus et hilaris ore non maesto senex
Ibat phalanges inter armatas pedes.
Effusa plebes uda lachrimis coit.
Alto dolorem corde patricii premunt
- 1385 Metuque pavidos occulunt vultus manu.
Est propter arcem vastus ambitu locus,
Quo colligendis vulgus animis confluit.
Hic excitati pulla stringebat oculos
Species theatri, et apparatu funebri
- 1390 Terrebat animos. Praesul infertur, gradu
Tardus senili scandit. Ut summo stetit
Tandem theatro, et huc et huc vultus tulit
Intrepidus animo, concionem civium
Affatur ultro, voce non fracta malis.
- 1395 Mox apprecatus fausta rebus Angliae
Regique, tacita mente concepit preces.
Nec mora, securi subiicit sacrum caput.
- Chor.* Impio Morum scelerata ferro
Opprimit saevi feritas tyranni.
- 1400 Nescium vinci studiis malorum,
Invium pectus sceleri tyrannus
Opprimit amens.
Otium quisquis dederit Camoenis
Aulicos prudens fugiat tumultus.
- 1405 Qui vacat supplex Superis colendis,

(Rara regnantum pietas) profana
 Exeat aula.
 Principum magnis emitur voluntas
 Temporis parvi studiis; voluntas
 1410 Raro perpetuis aequa laboribus.
 Cives inter agat civis amabiles.
 Raro tecta patent regia gratiae.
 Numquam summa probo, me mediocribus
 Dedi malo favoribus.
 1415 Nullis obsequiis gratia principum
 Duratura fovet tuta clientulos.
 Quo sperata mihi gratia principum.

Actus 5 Scena 1

**Cancellarius. Procurator regius. Consilarii. Apparitor. Nolfocius.
 Morus**

[*Canc.*] Quantis laborat Angliae infelix status
 Pridem procellis, portus at nondum patet!
 1420 *Proc.* Et proditorum quanta succrescit seges!
 In efficacem qualis Alcidem (ferunt)
 Persecta fauces crevit Hydra saevior
 Et pullulantia tulit ora multiceps,
 In factiones talis Anglorum furor
 1425 Erumpit. Unum deme, surgunt plurimi.
Canc. Male feriatos poena reprimat comes.
App. En sisto, proceres, creditum armatae Thomam
 Vigilum cohorti; libero integer fidem.
Nolf. Flagitia perduellis, o divum fidem!
 1430 Quae et quanta regni sancta maiestas tulit?
 Impunitatis tantulum affulsit spei?
 Quae, More, tua mens? Concipis tantum nefas.
 Violare nuper principis sanctum caput
 1435 Fuerat inausum civium occultis dolis
 Temerariorum; quique subsedit furor
 Oppressus acie regium horruit caput.
 Provectus audes, prodis hosti principem,
 Patriamque gentium exterarum incursibus.
Mor. Hic iura debent sancta sortiri locum.
 1440 Conviciis et iurgiis patet locus,
 Quo se bubulci rure pugnaces premunt.
Nolf. Nec hic dicaci parcat ori perfidus.
Canc. Haec missa sunt; truculentos aspera
 Incessit animos ira et inflammat magis.
 1445 Inverte mentem, More, facinus admissum grave est.
 Decede pertinace de sententia.

- Te poenitudo sceleris iciat tempori.
 Venerare meritum principem semper bene
 De te tuisque. Quam rogat legem proba.
- 1450 *Cons.* In spem venimus regiae clementiae.
 Clemens piusque quidquid admissum, eluet.
 Abolebit ultro quidquid irarum fuit.
 Subscribe pactis auspiciato nuptiis,
 Papamque damna; ad gratiam facilis tibi
 Patet receptus.
- 1455 *Mor.* Gratus hic animi favor.
 Sat mihi voluntas omnium nota et fides.
 Faxit propitium numen experiar Deus.
 Ne dubius erem, neve maiorum nepos
 Iniuriosus abrogem leges sacras.
- 1460 Religio castum antiqua designem scelus
 Infame prohibet, ante decretum mori
 Quam mutet animum pestilens defectio.
- Nolf.* Vir execrate, contumax eho caput.
 Sic se superbo tollit ausu furcifer.
- 1465 *Canc.* Veterum legantur more duodeni viri,
 Uti perduellionis astringant reum,
 Aut absolutum perferant sententiis.
- Cons.* Ut tollat iracunda tandem iurgiis
 Non comprimendis odia consilium. Probo.

Scena 2 Volsaeus

- 1470 [*Vols.*] Diserta percensere quod tuli malum
 Nec lingua possit, mente nec sat assequi.
 Fortuna flatu propulit pleno ratem,
 Et stravit aequor invium cunctis mihi.
 Quid non honorum consecutus immerrens,
- 1475 Omnes honorum quippe calcavi gradus.
 Nam litteratis natus ingenue viris
 Mox consuevi civico dignus foro
 Mendacis acui iacula felix ligulae.
 Ad sanctioris disciplinae lauream
- 1480 Iactator audax artis evasi brevi.
 Episcopatu dives, auctus gloria,
 In purpuratis inde cardineum decus
 Gero. Galero verticem incinxi meum.
 Post venditantis maxima eloquii dolis,
- 1485 Aulam frequento, regios canes sequor.
 Memoria famae nulla perituum monet.
 Divos decusque negligo demens meum.

1490 Naufugia pietas fecit et periit pudor.
 At vindicanti lentus ad poenas Deus.
 Telo assecutus regia exturbor domo.
 Exilia demum passus experior fidem.
 Miser latronum, o vile mancipium Erebi,
 Volsaee, vinctus spiritum tenuem exprimam.
 Comes latronum, excidis nimis tibi.
 1495 Volsaee, divum numen aversum feras.

Scena 3

Henricus. Consilarii. [Procurator]

[Henr.] Et lenitatis Morus exemplum meae
 Non experitur? Durat etiamnum procax?
 Cons. Infractus animum tollit, et semper malis
 Crescit superbus. Carcer ingenium ferox
 1500 Exasperavit. Libycus ut nuper leo
 Silvis avitis raptus in caveam fremit.
 Henr. Iudicibus ecqua fronte sistitur reus?
 Cons. Frontem severam laetus exornat color.
 Graviter renidet more quo semper solet.
 1505 Qualis frequente iura dicebat foro,
 Aut purpuratos inter orator frequens
 Causas agebat, talis impavido et gravi
 Excelsus ore iudices inter stetit.
 Henr. Caetera quis habitus?
 Cons. Limbus astringit rudis
 1510 Panni togatum. Sortis oblitus suae
 E plebe veluti sordida ducat genus,
 Nil grande spirat. Socratem Atticum putes.
 Henr. Quae cura nostri?
 Cons. Summa.
 Henr. Quae regni?
 Cons. Nimis
 Sollicita semper.
 Henr. Ut divum memor?
 1515 Cons. Assiduus oculos tollit et supplex vocat
 In vota divos. [...]
 Henr. Nil poenitudo pertinaciae movet?
 Cons. Divis resignat mortis horam liberae.
 Henr. Quin expeditis consulentem principem?
 1520 Cons. Crudelitatis et impotentiae notam
 Cave.
 Henr. Nocentes opprimi refert mea.
 Proc. Adverte, rex, in proditores impios.

1488 Naufugia ... fecit] cf. Sen. *Thy.* 515 1513 Nimis ... 1514 semper] Sen. *Oed.*
 674–75 1523 Liberrima indignatio] Hor. *Epod.* 4.10

- 1525 *Cons.* Liberrima indignatio vulgum asperat
Roffensis ex quo caede sublatus perit.
Tacite minatur, queritur, et passim gemit.
Coniugia detestatur et divortium.
Periclitamur, regis imprimis salus.
- 1530 *Henr.* Frigētis adeo! Murmur haud vulgi moror.
Quos pertinacia sociat poenas pares
Luant. In urbis praesul aspectu perit
Roffensis; aequa supplicia Morus ferat.
Prius salute civium meum decus.
- 1535 *Cons.* [1] Regum decus salusque civium pares.
Cons. [2] Incurret aliud fama dedecus et grave.
Ne tu minacis plebis insultus time.
Opprimat inertes vulgus, audentes timet.
Henr. Nec adquiescit consulenti sanius?
Nec lenitatem fastuosus accipit?
Moriatur; ite; doceat imperium pati.
- 1540 *Cons.* Cives potentum discat obniti nefas.
Non ambiendum principi fateor senem,
At immerentem morte multari nefas.
Henr. Aequi bonique consulite, iubeo mori.
- 1545 *Cons.* Redundat in te si quod admissum scelus.
Qui iussit admisit scelus.
Henr. Iubeo mori,
Vos veto morari.
- Cons.* Sancta consulo iudicum
Monimenta.
- Henr.* Truncum corpus abiici volo,
Ut insepulta membra differant canes,
Avideque volucres proditorem bellicent.
- 1550 *Cons.* Nostra ut colorem ex more maiorum viri
Iudicia ducant, pariter hic operam date.

Scena 4

Duodecimviri. Cancellarius. Morus. Procurator. Nolfocius

- [*Duo.*] Capitale crimen morte multandum est, viri.
Sancti senatus scita regnique ordines
Regemque laesum querimus et rempublicam.
- 1555 *Proc.* Morte expietur laesa maiestas.
Canc. Placet.
Mor. Luxata corpus membra vix, proceres, ferunt.
Subiicite sedem.
Canc. Profer huc sedem, puer.
Mor. Si vita tanti pendet, o divum fidem,

1548 Ut ... canes] cf. Hor. *Epod.* 5.99 1555 Hic legebatur sententia quae in fine adscribitur (*in margine*)

- Iuxta nocentum et innocentum stat salus
Caditque.
- 1560 *Proc.* Iusta expendit examen mora,
Et trutinat aequa lance pondus criminum.
- Mor.* Quod explicandis tempus angustum libris
Suffecit aegre, crimen intentum mihi
Regno piisque damnat, et capitis quidem.
- 1565 Si pace vestra, iudices, datur eloqui,
Dedicatus etsi capite, dicam libere.
Antiquitatem veritatis vindicem
Testemque, verso septimo anno perdius
Pernoxque, scrutor cuius interest mea
- 1570 Et Catholicorum quaestionis arduos
Motae recessus, summa sacrorum an penes
Orbis profanos Christiani principes.
Quod tenere, tamquam facile, scivistis tamen.
- Canc.* Huc temeritatis, More, prorumpis pudens?
- 1575 Nempe antevertes sanctitate praesules,
Purae professor mentis et caeli capax;
Legum peritos, nobili sanguine satos,
Quorum magister usus consilia regit,
Longe anteibis. Solus Anglorum sapis.
- 1580 *Mor.* Episcoporum scita damnas omnium.
Volsaeus unus instar omnium tibi,
Provectus urbe nuper exul et miser,
Facinoris ampli praemium dignum tulit.
Inter latrones additus meritaе cruci.
- 1585 Volsaeus, inquam, spiritus tantos facit.
At quae profiteor morte centeni volent
Obita tueri.
- Canc.* Et ista concilium frequens
Et parlamenti auctoritas statuit vetus.
- Mor.* Haec tacita conciliabuli satius premi
- 1590 Decreta vestri oecumenica nobis favent
Concilia; quotquot Christianus audiit,
Et vidit orbis mille delapsis retro
Annis. At Anglus, esto, desciscat, furat,
Et execratus iura pontificum abnuat,
- 1595 Iactura regni facilis huius et insulae.
Galli supersunt, atque sedes Itali
Fixa pietatis, Iberus, Indus, Aethiops,
Et quidquid oriens Phoebus exsuperans videt.
- Nolf.* Nequitia patet, opinioque pertinax,
- 1600 Quique instruebant pectus infames doli.
Perverse et audax contumelia satis.
- Mor.* Mens pura sceleris atque recti conscia
Liberius adigit vera testari palam.
Leges rogare nemo Christiadam novas,
Perferre nemo tentet iniussu patrum
- 1605 Synodo coacta, specimen ut sit omnium.

- Proc.* Vitae potestas et necis datur tibi.
Nex pertinacem sequitur evestigio,
Assentientem vita, libertas, salus.
- 1610 *Mor.* Moriamur, agite, sic iuvat Morum mori.

Scena 5 Cancellarius. Milites. Margareta. Morus

- [*Canc.*] Compingite specu.
Mil. Qua rei capitis solent?
Proc. Vos rem tenetis.
Marg. Magne regnator deum,
Qui praepotente dextera caelum regis.
Humana satagis! Omen et tristes minas
- 1615 Insaniorum fata fatis obrue.
Partes quieta transiit ubi nox duas,
Oculisque clarum Pleias abstulit iugum,
Consuetam membris venit obtusis quies,
Lenisque nostris somnus obrepsit genis,
- 1620 Cum taetra sese spectra nocturnis mihi
Reddunt in umbris, meque vultu territant.
O semper in nos vel favens etiamnum atrox
Fortuna, misces luctibus novis domum.
Vidi cruentum capite derepto patrem;
- 1625 Exanguem vidi corpus et truncum atque inops
Iacere, et insepulta membra proiici.
Visam parentis quo salus mei loco.
Eheu labanti lassa vix gradu feror.
Praesagit animus grande conflare malum.
- 1630 Ah, misera, trahitur evinctus pater!
Ibo, vel inermis agmen in medium ruam,
Ut vindicato aut patre defenso cadam.
Mil. Quo pergis audax? Siste furialem gradum.
Mor. Mea Margareta, spiritum excita; dolor
- 1635 Oppressit animum, faucibus vox abditur.
Si quo levare possit officio dolor,
Natae supremum ut munus impendam, date.
Mil. Damus moramque et tempus arbitrio tuo.
Mor. O dulce pignus, spes et afflictae domus.
- 1640 O mea voluptas sola, quidquid asperum
Fortuna peperit, perfer, et memor advoca
Decora tuorum clara maiorum.
- Marg.* Pater,

1612 Magne ... deum] cf. Sen. *Phae.* 671 **1616** Partes ... 1619 genis] cf. Sen. *Tro.* 438–41 **1622** O ... 1623 domum] cf. Buchan. *Jeph.* 1290–92 **1629** Praesagit ... malum] cf. Sen. *Herc. O.* 745 **1632** defenso cadam] Sen. *Tro.* 677 **1633** Siste ... gradum] cf. Sen. *Med.* 157 **1639** O ... domus] cf. Sen. *Med.* 945; Sen. *Tro.* 462

- O dura dirae sortis, o acerbitas.
Talem supremum, genitor, amplecti datur?
- 1645 *Mor.* In nos, ferendum, si qua molitur potens
Fortuna, fluxas illa opes, animum nequit
Auferre; tenuem spiritum expuam senex,
Victurus inter caelitem aeternum choros.
- Marg.* Ah pater!
- Mor.* Amori quidquid indulges, nocet.
- 1650 Patiente et aequo perfer hanc animo vicem.
Recede, nata, iamque sic temet para,
Uti parentis familiae officium expleas;
Mei nepotes semper ut valeant, iube.
Mea Margareta, sospes aeternum vale.
- 1655 *Marg.* O manus amicis saepe data, pater, vale.
Mor. Me duc, satelles, nube pileo caput.
Luctu priusquam macter, exanimor meae
Natae.
- Marg.* Parens sic excidit? Me perditam
Inhibes inermem? Nomen affari tuum
- 1660 Da pater, et audi, iusta si rogo, preces.
Cui tot relinquis dona sortis prosperae?
Armenta pecorum pinguium et laetos greges,
Et arva nullis metienda terminis.
Ecquem supellex dives heredem tibi
- 1665 Et census auri multus instituet, pater?
Avarus illa fiscus hausit regius.
Nos et clientes hostium ludibrio
Obiicis relictos? Quanta liberos manent
- 1670 Respice pericla: ut opibus exuti suis,
Profugi, et egentes patria cedant domo.
Respice clientes, vulgus infaustum, pater.
Miseresce nostri, te per hanc rogo manum.
Tuam salutem redime, nam parvo potes.
Subscribe regi, nuptias ratas habe.
- 1675 *Mor.* Aspiro ad arces luce cassus igneas.
Ut martyr illuc subvolarem, sic tenes,
Tot vota panxi cernuus, supplex, polo
Supinus. Acies structa militem vocat,
Bravia forti victor efferam manu.
- 1680 Non infidelis, nata, votis patriis,
Secura divum repete lugubrem domum.
Marg. Extrema figam manibus et genibus sine
Oscula. Pater, recedo, abeo. Pater, vale.
Solvuntur artus, hei mihi, mens deficit.

1685 Falso putamus esse divorum genus?
 Humana casu regier immunia Dei?
 Non emovendum statuit ordinem Deus
 Qui dividendis praemiis iustis vacat,
 Et impiorum saevus obtundit caput.

Scena extrema

Morus. Lictor. Nolfocius. [Margareta. Chorus]

1690 [Mor.] Ventum ad supremum, nobiles tandem viri,
 Meique cives, fata nequidquam moror.
 Vos si qua pietas, si quis extincti favor,
 Quandoque, si qua memoria subeat mei,
 Arcete precibus manibus quaeso meis,
 1695 Quidquid sceleribus ultor irrogat Deus.
 Reddam receptus arce siderea vicem.
 Oratione principem assidua pii
 Vestrum iuvate, regna consiliis uti
 Bonis proborumque atque sapientum regat.
 1700 At testor unum, principes sancte viri,
 Iterumque testor, conscius divum sator,
 Nil me asperatum, caede decreta, mori.
 Cliens, amicus, fautor obeo principis.
 Aeterne divum genitor atque hominum parens,
 1705 Tandem propitius patriae et clemens meae
 Ignosce, meque victimam bonus cape.
 Quod si piari morte luctifica iubes
 Quaecumque nostra contumax superbia
 Supplicia meruit, rege, patrono, Deo,
 1710 Te patre relicto, pacis insolens bonis
 Utinam imminenti caede lustretur mea.
 Sic, sic rependam patriae vicem meae.
 Hic si meorum civium sita est salus,
 In me furoris impetum ac irae tuae
 1715 Per mille mortes flecte saepius, pater.
 O fata, fata et morte defuncti patres,
 Accipite placide destinatam regiae
 Animam saluti. Lucis aureum iubar,
 Et vos Britanni principes, regni decus,
 1720 Valete; quique sceptrum regnanti manu,
 Henrice, gestas, sospes aeternum vale.
 Obnube, lictor, expeditius caput.

1690 Ventum ... supremum] Verg. *Aen.* 12.801 1696 receptus arce] cf. Sen. *Oct.* 380
 1704 Aeterne ... 1715 pater] cf. Buchan. *Jeph.* 1413–23 1709 Supplicia ... 1710
 bonis] cf. Buchan. *Jeph.* 440–41 1716 O ... 1720 Valete] cf. Buchan. *Jeph.* 1327–30

- Lict.* Sic faxo, pronus flecte.
Nolf. Porro sic eant
 1725 *Chor.* Qui proditorum turpe concipiunt scelus.
 Turbatori, virgo, quid vultu siles,
 Et obstupenti figis obtutu humidos
 Maerens ocellos? Parce lachrimas genis.
Marg. Triste tyrannidis ingemo facinus.
 Patris funera lachrimis prosequor.
 1730 Inhumata magis membra volucribus
 Provecta queror.
 Supplicium capite dabit quisquis
 Condiderit inops aggere corpus.
Chor. Fortunae luxuriantis opes
 1735 Animus laetis ebrius et sui
 Oblitusque Deum,
 Instrumenta dedit nequitiae.
 Humana monarchis si comitas
 Desit, gravitas propior vitio
 1740 Saepe tyrannidis excitat ignes.
 Qui nuper pontifici summo,
 Caesareis turmis obsesso
 Adriani intra moles, ferre
 Celerabat opem, dirior hostis
 1745 Fit pontifici, atque piis impius.
Marg. Ille parentis inops dedit avibus
 Truncum corpus; cavet edicto
 Lugubre cadaver humo contegi.
Chor. Nos aetas eximet immani
 1750 Irae principis infesti bonis.
 Mecum, agite, parentem, qui reduces
 Musas nuper terris
 Reddidit Anglicis,
 1755 Tollite, tumulo condite meritum.
 Ferale melos naenia personet.

Epilogus

- [*Epil.*] Concessu illustris numeroque frequentior ordo
 Magne, viri proceres, ornatibus undique clari
 Phoebeis iuvenes: funesta tragoedia Morum
 Sustulit, et caelo functum meliore recepit,
 1760 Purpureisque Deus (pietas meret) addidit auctum
 Martyribus, mundique dedit succurrere terris.
 Caetera, censores aequi, si carmen hiatus
 Impar sit tragici, grandi indignumque cothurno,
 Auctori veniam dabit communiters aegro.

1765

Si meret et dabitur rursus aegrotare timenti,
Namque stilum imperio et iussu summisit amico.
Quem datis et repetunt alii indulgete favorem
Marchenae publi faciles, vos plaudite. Abite.

Finis

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