

SHAKESPEARE'S CORIOLANUS: DOUBLE TRANSLATION AND THE SUBJECT OF LATINITY

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When the law functions as ordinance or sanction, it operates as an imperative that brings into being that which it legally enjoins and protects. The performative speaking of the law, an "utterance" that is most often within legal discourse inscribed in a book of laws, works only by reworking a set of already operative conventions. And these conventions are grounded in no other legitimating authority than the echo-chain of their own reinvocation. (Butler, 1993, p. 107).

[...] this butcherlie feare in making of latines [...].

Roger Ascham, *The Scholemaster*

This paper investigates the relationships between a Shakespearean tragedy and practices of Latin translation in the early modern English grammar school — the pedagogy for Latin learning known as "double translation" — as a historical case for translation theory and issues of subject formation. This is, then, a historical-theoretical study of a play and a specific translation pedagogy and ideology, one that may, I hope, speak to contemporary translation theory.¹ To cast my paper in the topical frames of this conference, I will speak to issues of history, translation and ideology, to translation and conflicts of the subject. My reading of *Coriolanus* hypothesizes some subsequent links between historical practices and texts and an understanding of translation and/as subject formation.

In "The Translation Turn in Cultural Studies" Susan Bassett (2003) argues for the importance of moving beyond linguistic interest, beyond the "formalist vacuum", and considering "the text embedded in its network of both source and target cultural signs". "Translation", she writes,

¹ For another, not unrelated discussion of "double translation", cf. Mignolo (2003). A comparison between early modern pedagogy and colonial practices falls outside the scope of this paper, but it is worthwhile considering the links between both hegemonizing forms. One might hypothesize that colonization of the early modern subject in the grammar school is a prerequisite for other colonizing practices. That the two are historically contiguous seems no accident, and invites future work. For recent work on translation and post-colonial resistance, cf. Álvarez and Vidal (1996).

is [...] always enmeshed in a set of power relations that exist in both the source and target contexts. The problems of decoding a text for a translator involve so much more than language, despite the fact that the basis of any written text is its language. [...] If translation studies has been increasingly concerned with the relations between individual texts and the wider cultural system within which those texts are produced and read, it is therefore not surprising that within cultural studies, and in post-colonial theory in particular, translation is increasingly being seen both as actual practice and as metaphor. (p. 446).

What might be gained if translation theory were to take account of translation's historically situated disciplinary practices, manifested in early modern pedagogy of double translation? What happens, that is, when the *task* of the translator is schoolwork, and the goal is rendering a young and liminal subject *the* subject of cultural-intellectual assimilation?² In many respects, early modern Latin translation does not appear comparable to contemporary studies of translation; in fact, it may even be seen as a sort of inversion. In preparing students, even as it submits students to power, the putatively apologetic, marginal or service status of the translator stands on its head: Latin learning is the very ticket to the cultural hegemonic. The grammar school pupil performed his work of translation as an apprentice to power: *translatio imperii*. The goal was to Latinize the student; that is, to make him not only fluent in the source language but also competent to achieve and demonstrate Latinity as mastery of grammar and faithful transmitter of values at the end of the process. Here, it would seem, source text and target text are one, aimed toward producing one disciplined, symbolically structured subject. At the very least, with regard to translation theory, the humanist pedagogy of translation and Latin learning speaks to Bassett's observation that "Translation [...] is a primary method of imposing meaning while concealing the power relations that lie behind the production of that meaning" (p. 445). It would seem, however, that Shakespeare had some interest in exposing those power relations which grammar school translation pedagogy would keep hidden.

Shakespeare's most provocative work may be his cultural translations or adaptations of classical sources. His Greek and Roman texts — *Rape of Lucrece*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Antony and Cleopatra* — are distinctively marked not only by their powerfully unsettling interrogations of

² I am referring, somewhat obliquely but most respectfully, to Derrida's essay on translation (1985) in which, reading Benjamin's foundational essay on translation, he speaks of the translator's task, mission, duty, debt to render and resituate meaning. Derrida, of course, does not have early modern double translation pedagogy in mind, but I found his discussion productive for thinking about Shakespeare's distinctive rendering of his classical sources.

classical authority and by representations of that authority as a cultural dead letter box, unregenerative or even deadly, but also by Shakespeare's thematizing early modern questions of cultural masculinity and subject formation itself under the rubric of *translatio imperii*. This interrogation is remarkably developed in *Coriolanus*, in which the most assiduous student of *romanitas* and his fully ventriloquized tutor in Roman values, his mother Volumnia, tacitly but poignantly address the Renaissance subject of Latinity.

John Florio, the early modern translator of Montaigne may have considered published translation the work of "reputed females" inferior as well as feminized (Simon, 1996, p. 1), but in the early modern grammar school the work of learning and translating Latin was a masculinizing exercise. Latin language learning was a complex process of translation, adaptation, masculinizing assimilation, symbolic structuration, and, as well, class building, for it had a professional trajectory of preparing young men for legal, clerical, administrative positions in a socially select sphere. As the early modern notion of *translatio imperii* claimed seamless continuity of classical values from Rome to England, so the young male student-subject of Latinity, like a young William Shakespeare in his Stratford grammar school, could be expected to master the language of elite learning.³ He would be interpellated as the competent and disciplined translator, the affirmative transmitter of *romanitas* as learned in intimate, daily Latin instruction, through the labor of reading Ciceronian prose, the work of reading verse and epic, Horatian, Ovidian, Virgilian, in exemplary classical texts.

Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* may serve as a key example of translation/adaptation practices set in a historical context of "double translation"; that is, English humanist Roger Ascham's pedagogy by which boys, taken from the home or *mundus muliebris* and the mother tongue at about age seven and placed in the company of boys and male schoolmasters to learn the father language, learned Latin as an exercise in socialization and cultural hegemony. Ascham condemned the conventional practice of learning Latin by a model of imitation, through memorization of rules and under the constraints of often severe corporal discipline:

No learning ought to be learned with bondage: For, bodelie labors, wrought by compulsion, hurt not the bodie: but any learning learned by compulsion, tarieth not long in the mynde: And why? For what soeuer the mynde doth learne vnwillinglie with feare, the same it doth quicklie forget without care

³ I am speaking of England here and recognize that there are versions of this imperial-national ideal in other countries as well.

[...]. Socrates in the same place doth more plainlie say: [...] bring not vp your children in learning by compulsion and feare, but by playing and pleasure. (p. 43).

What I would question, however, is whether the praise and pleasure that Ascham would have in place of corporal punishment really freed students from what he so knowingly deplored as "this butcherlie feare in making of latines", or whether it actually bound them yet more intimately to the authority of their school masters and to the learning and translating of classical texts and their cultural authority.

Ascham summarized his method, the origins of which he himself located in Pliny and Cicero (Miller, 1963), as follows:

First, let him teach the childe, cherefullie and plainlie, the cause, and matter of the letter [Epistles of *Cicero*]: then, let him construe it into Englishe, so oft, as the childe may easilie carie awaie the understanding of it: Lastlie, parse it over perfitlie. This done thus, let the childe, by and by, both construe and parse it over again: so, that it may appeare, that the childe doubteth in nothing, that his master taught him before. After this, the childe must take a paper booke, and sitting in some place, where no man shall prompte him, by him self, let him translate into Englishe his former lesson. Then shewing it to his master, let the master take from him his latin booke, and pausing an houre, at the least, than let the childe translate his owne Englishe into latin again, in an other paper booke. When the childe bringeth it, turned into latin, the master must compare it with *Tullies* [*Cicero's*] boke, and laie them both together: and where the childe doth well, either in chosing, or true placing of *Tullies* wordes, let the master praise him, and saie here ye do well. For I assure you, there is no such whetstone, to sharpen a good witte and encourage a will to learninge, as is praise.

Young students first read Latin texts and translated texts from Latin to English; then, translating from English to Latin they undergo, in what Walter Ong called "a Renaissance puberty rite" (1959), a process of cultural assimilation and subjectification that reinforced the notion of *translatio imperii et studii*. The real lesson is generated from sitting down with the master to have the student's translation evaluated and corrected:

But if the childe misse, either in forgetting a worde, or in chaunging a good with a worse, or misordering the sentence, I would not have the master, ei-

ther froune, or chide with him [...]. For [...] a childe shall take more profit of two fautes, ientlie warned of, then of foure thinges, rightly hitt. For than, the master shall have good occasion to saie unto him, N. *Tullie* would have used such a worde, not this: *Tullie* would have placed this word here, not there would have used this case, this number, this person, this degree, this gender: he would have used this moode, this tense, this simple, rather than this compound: this aduerbe here, not there: he would have ended the sentence with this verbe, not with that nowne or participle, etc. [...] [A]fter this sort, the master shall teach without all error, and the scholar shall learne without great paine: the master being led by so sure a guide, and the scholer being brought into so plaine and easie a waie.

Corporal chastisement, harsh criticism, rote learning and merely imitative conformity to rules are proscribed here. But in their place Ascham substitutes more subtle but arguably insidious psychological coercions: the rules are still there, though conforming to them is more internalized and in the hands of a powerful, friendlier authority figure, ventriloquizing classical authority ("*Tullie* would have used such a worde, not this") who offers — or as well withholds — approval. Citing an ancient source, Thomas Elyot (1531) compared the authority of the grammar school master to that of a prince or a tyrant:

Moreover teaching represents the authority of a prince; wherefore Dionysius, King of Sicily, when he was for tyranny expelled by his people, he came into Italy, and there in a common school taught grammar, wherewith when he was of his enemies embraided and called a schoolmaster, he answered them that although Sicilians had exiled him, yet in despite of them all he reigned, noting thereby the authority that he had over his scholars [...]. (p. 18).

Ascham condemned the intellectually inhibiting desire to please the schoolmaster, declaring that "there is no one thing, that hath more, either dulled the wittes, or taken awaye the will of children from learning, then the care they have, to satisfie their masters, in making of latines" (p. 25), but in effect made it the cornerstone of the pedagogy of double translation. In both pedagogical methods the objective is the transmission of and the assimilation to classical values by submission, first to the schoolmaster's authority, then by second-nature internalization of the Latin text. Both methods, that is, aim toward a double translation, a double life for the Latin grammar student as the enunciated subject of Latinity, the bearer and reproducer of a

heritage, a discipline, and values. Rather than constituting an alternative, Ascham's double translation seems to give the game away on translation pedagogy.⁴

How did Shakespeare, the former grammar school pupil, respond to this process of assimilation and subject formation? Whatever method of Latin learning prevailed in his formative educational experience, he seems to have revisited those lessons and actively reflected on them later in his dramas. Shakespeare's construction of characters spectacularly at odds with classical authority may be seen as an active response to the cultural constellation of translation, transmission, and subject formation, especially to the sacrifices it exacts from the enunciated subject. Where his contemporary Ben Jonson would clothe his authority in imitation and identification, in the case of his Roman tragedy *Sejanus*, literal *translation imperii studiusque*, transporting or translating Latin texts in a prominent citational apparatus that flanked and propped up the dramatic text. Shakespeare's response, in contrast, offers a critical difference.⁵ Instead of Jonson's authorizing apparatus, he seems to have had some sense that the student of Latinity entered an interpellating citational apparatus of languages, grammar, discipline, a process of reproducing norms that extracted significant sacrifices.

In Shakespeare's play, Coriolanus and Volumnia, two culturally imprinted and hybridized characters, quintessentially Roman and somehow significantly also out of the Roman compass, constitute a powerful critical reflection on Roman values, an interruption or even radical interrogation of *translatio imperii*. As problematic, even malfunctioning signifiers of a dominant culture, their roles suggest that the Romanicity — shaping oneself to a standard of correctness, making Latin and classical authority a second nature, taking in the values of constancy, *amor patria*, stoic self-denial, virility and honor — that Ascham's Renaissance translation pedagogy seeks to transmit is always already dysfunctional, perhaps even irredeemably so, even as it remains a power to answer to.

⁴ Interestingly, in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* (1852, 1984) Karl Marx himself, it seems, prescribed a sort of humanist double translation for the subject of revolution, spoke for abandoning the familiar "mother" tongue of political status quo in favor of or assimilation to a revolutionary idiom:

"Just so does the beginner, having learnt a new language, always re-translate it into his mother tongue, but he has not assimilated the spirit of the new language, nor learnt to manipulate it freely, until he uses it without reference to the old and forgets his native tongue in using the new one. (p. 288). (So übersetzt der Anfänger, der eine neue Sprache erlernt hat, sie immer zurück in seine Muttersprache, aber den Geist der neuen Sprache hat er sich nur angeeignet, und frei in ihr zu produzieren vermag er nur, sobald er sich ohne Rückerinnerung in ihr bewegt und die ihm angestammte Sprache in ihn vergißt)".

Spivak (1993) somewhat similarly speaks of "surrendering", even to the point of losing agency, to work of translating post-colonial writing.

⁵ Cf. the 1605 Quarto of *Sejanus* and Jowett (1988). Cf. also Jonson's distinctive view on the author's relationship to classical authority: "requisite in our poet, or maker, is imitation, to be able to convert the substance, or riches of another poet, to his own use. To make choice of one excellent man above the rest, and so to follow him, till he grow very he, or so like him as the copy may be mistaken for the principal". (*Discoveries*, pp. 3057-3063).

Shakespeare's source text is "The Life of Coriolanus" from Plutarch's *Lives*, in the English Renaissance a triply translated work: written in Greek, soon translated into Latin, translated from Latin to French by Amyot, finally translated from French to English by Thomas North (Spencer, T. J. B., 1964). Interestingly, Plutarch's own work might be considered something of a double translation: his *Parallel Lives* compared Greek and Roman historical figures and were written in Roman-colonized Greece in the first and second centuries C.E. (Preston, 2001).

Staging Antony's inability to leave Cleopatra and thus reproduce (i.e., translate) Aeneas's narrative of renunciation in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Shakespeare refuses Plutarch's condemnation of Cleopatra as well as his moralizing pronouncements on Antony's unmanly attachment to pleasure. Instead he makes a powerful and provocative thematic point of Antony's vacillation between grim Roman thoughts associated with discipline, self-renunciation, constancy, duty, stoicism — i.e., those qualities of the assiduous grammar school student — and Egyptian mirth as a nearly utopian realm of desire. Rome may not melt into the Tiber in Shakespeare's Roman texts, as Antony wishes at one moment in the play, but he unsettles Roman cultural heritage and scrutinizes the classical authority that strongly informs political and educational formations in early modern England, the very authority that he answers to in adapting, emulating and competing with classical sources (Miola, 1983; Baldwin, 1944; Ong, 1959). That scrutiny, effectively introduced in early works, continues in *Coriolanus*, where Antony's anti-heroic ambivalence toward Roman discipline, his interpellative attachment to *romanitas* and his will or "affection" for Egyptian pleasure is readdressed in a text about another decisive moment in Roman history in which the masculine subject, intensely involved with a female figure, comes to be at odds with political interests of the state.⁶

If Antony "flunks" Romanicity, then surely Coriolanus should be the "A" student. Raised by his widowed mother in Roman virtues, sent by her to battle for Rome from the age of 16, he is the figure of all that is Roman. Coriolanus calls Volumnia "the honour'd mould / Wherein this trunk was fram'd" (5.3.22-23), and Volumnia acknowledges her formative role: "Thou art my warrior: / I holp to frame thee" (5.3.61-62). While Antony laments that Roman authority "melts" from him, Coriolanus exists in a culturally con-

⁶ Nancy Vickers (1985) has noted Shakespeare's heterogeneous attitudes toward Roman matters in *Lucrece*, where Shakespeare sees the high stakes of blazoning and anatomizing a woman in a homosocial competition, yet writes a "master"-work of emulation and competition, one that will prove his credentials as a serious writer precisely because he avails himself of and in ways transmits the very classical authority that he questions. This occupation of several positions seems a crucial characteristic of Shakespeare as adaptor and translator of classical texts.

gealed state of pure service to the state, radically inverted (that is, mirrored) when Rome banishes him and he joins Rome's Volscian enemy Aufidius. Yet his very diligence as the student of Rome nonetheless causes him to crash and burn.

If Antony's delinquency is linked to Cleopatra, Coriolanus's Roman failures are conventionally assigned to his mother. Plutarch says little of Volumnia and more of Coriolanus's attachment to her, but Shakespeare develops the son-mother/pedagogue relationship far more complexly than Plutarch and constructs an especially distilled Roman character.

In their excess, perhaps we could call Coriolanus and Volumnia hyper-translators of *romanitas* who thus constitute a powerful critical reflection on Roman values. As problematic, even malfunctioning signifiers of Romanicity, their roles seem to suggest that Romanicity itself, even as it remains a power to answer to, is always already dysfunctional, perhaps even irredeemably so. For as adapted from Plutarch, Shakespeare's Volumnia says less about maternity than about the ravages of the cultural patrimony she is tasked to pass on; that is, she is herself a transmitter, a translator. Educated by this ventriloquized schoolmaster, Coriolanus's pure warrior-patrician valor blinds him to political exigencies. He slights the people's tribunes, aggressively insults common citizens as "scabs", "curs" and "fragments", imagines himself quartering them with his sword and making a heap of their bodies "as high / As I could pick my lance" (1.1.198-199). Volumnia's pride in her son's honorable deeds is voiced in gory and disturbing images: "Oh, he is wounded; I thank the gods for't [...] there will be large cicatrices to show the people when he shall stand for his place" (2.1.120; 146-47). She boasts of an occluded maternal function in enthusiastically sending her son "to a cruel war", "to let him seek danger where he was like to find fame" at an age "when [...] a mother should not sell him an hour from her beholding" (1.3.7-9); she discloses a jarring substitutive predisposition when she declares "If my son were my husband I should freelier rejoice in that absence wherein he won honour, than in the embracements of his bed" (1.3.2-4); and she offers a ever-disturbing and mangled heroic simile in imagining a bloody Coriolanus's return from battle:

The breasts of Hecuba
When she did suckle Hector, look'd not lovelier
Than Hector's forehead when it spit forth blood
At Grecian sword contemning. (1.3.40-43).

Volumnia is conventionally read as the cause of Coriolanus's downfall, and her rapturous and instrumentalizing views of Coriolanus's wounds as what can be marketed for political gain mark her as a bloody-minded mother. Yet pathologizing her character amounts to taking an effect for a cause, ignoring the conflicts of her adaptive labors and Coriolanus's own mixed interpellation. By occupying the maternal role and actively functioning as a surrogate for the absent father while voicing paternal-patrician authority to encourage or "nurture" the martial leanings of Coriolanus, she stands, like him, in an awkward configuration of family, state, cultural patrimony. Coppélia Kahn (1997) places Volumnia in historical Rome, where mothers *would* participate in their sons' educations, would prepare them to serve Rome. For Shakespeare, however, the pedagogical model is the homosocial sphere of the schoolmaster and curricular discipline in the humanist grammar school, set apart from the *mundus muliebris*.⁷ His Volumnia, then, is not only a pedagogue but an English translation, a paternally ventriloquized maternal figure, singularly loyal to state and warrior-aristocratic values.

His Coriolanus, furthermore, is the student of *romanitas* who has never absorbed the lesson of the professional trajectory of Latin learning in the Renaissance: administrative service, social promotion. Because, in an act that amounts to cultural disavowal, he cannot endure the market or appeal to the populace that is the material, economic fleshly base beneath the superstructure of *romanitas*, he cannot endure the demands of political candidacy. Volumnia's caution, "I have a heart as little apt as yours, / But yet a brain that leads my use of anger / To better vantage" (3.2.29-31), is legible to her as the mediator and tutorial voice of a *romanitas* that Coriolanus would have unsullied. Assuming the paternal role seems to give Volumnia the ability to do a cost-benefit analysis of ideology; she can endure some moments of impurity in order to prevail politically. But such pragmatic maneuvering would have no place in the official curriculum which Coriolanus has absorbed. He is, in her words, "too absolute, / Though therein you can never be too noble, / But when extremities speak" (3.2.39-41).⁸ Though she persuades him to present himself again in the gown of the candidate and

⁷ Cf. Elyot's remark that English students were disadvantaged by not living in Rome and therefore by not speaking Latin at home:

"Some old authors hold opinion that, before the age of seven years, a child should not be instructed in letters; but those writers were either Greeks or Latins, among whom all doctrine and sciences were in their maternal tongues, by reason whereof they saved all that long time which at this day is spent in understanding perfectly the Greek or Latin. [...] Therefore that infelicity of our time and country compelleth us to encroach somewhat upon the years of children, and specially of noblemen, that they may sooner attain to wisdom and gravity than private persons.... (p. 17)."

But such a statement is at odds with the humanist concern, voiced by Ascham, Elyot, and Erasmus, among others, that boys should be taken from their mothers' care and placed under the molding influence of their teachers. For more on such molding, cf. Correll (1996, pp. 58-76).

"spend a fawn upon 'em / For the inheritance of their loves and safeguard / Of what that want might ruin" (3.2.67-69), the scene ends catastrophically with his banishment and his vow to destroy Rome. The exemplary Roman becomes the counter-exemplar.

The "proper" allusion here is to Virgil's Aeneas, the exemplary subject of translation in grammar school where reading *The Aeneid* would be a standard character-building exercise. Both Antony and Coriolanus fall short of the Roman epic model, but it is their very failure that constructs the rich material of the two plays. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, Enobarbus describes the admiral ship of Cleopatra's navy, the "Antoniad", but, as well, Antony as the ignominious mock-hero of a parodic and aborted epic — an epic that will never be written — which sees him chasing Cleopatra's Egyptian ships rather than, as Aeneas with Dido, leaving her for empire and civilization. Coriolanus's failure or refusal to make the transition from warrior to political honors, despite Volumnia's exhortations and coaching, makes him the exile who threatens to lay waste to the Rome that Aeneas founded. In North's Plutarch Coriolanus is the anti-Aeneas, as he starts sacking Roman cities:

they [the Romans] had intelligence at the length that the enemies [Coriolanus, leading the Volsces] had layed seige to the cittie of Lavinium, in the which were all the temples and images of the goddes their protectours, and from whence came first their auncient originall, for that *Aeneas* at his first arrivall into Italie dyd build that cittie. (p. 352).

In exile, Shakespeare's Coriolanus rejects his family name — Caius Martius — and the name that signifies his martial honors and which he purchased with blood at Corioles and waits to be renamed in the Roman ruins he intends to create (5.1.13-15). Cominius calls him "a kind of nothing, titleless", waiting to forge another name "in the fire of burning Rome", but that name hovers hauntingly over the text. Were it to be given, it would be "anti-Aeneas".

Volumnia comes to Coriolanus's camp with his wife and son to appeal to him to spare Rome, and in that confrontation Coriolanus is caught on the interpellative hook of the son of a mother. She comes not as the ventriloquized paternal surrogate, the pedagogue that she has been, but as the voice of emotion, family, blood. His quest not to "Be such a gosling to obey instinct, but stand / As if a man were author of himself / And knew no other

⁸ "Extremities" here is glossed as "extreme situations", but it seems also to pun on and recall Menenius's fable of the belly in act one, where the plebeians are the limbs or extremities.

kin" (5.3.35-37) seems less delusional than utopian, but it cannot be sustained in the tragedy. Yet though Volumnia comes as the mother, her role has always been doubled, has always combined maternity with the role of the schoolmaster and the intimate pedagogy of double translation.

Coriolanus is swayed by his mother to abandon revenge against Rome, but he can no longer be the exemplar of *romanitas*: "Like a dull actor now / I have forgot my part and I am out, / Even to a full disgrace" (5.3.40-42). The Tribune Sicinius who has been Coriolanus' enemy in Rome wishes that "he had continued to his country / As he began, and not unknit himself / The noble knot he made" (4.2.30-32), but it seems that for the Roman subject there is only knitting or unknitting. Coriolanus is undone not by maternity but by a life of double translation and by dedication to ideals he has absorbed of pleasing the master.

By the play's conclusion, following Coriolanus's violent death at the hands of a vengeful Roman mob, Volumnia is reassimilated, hailed as Rome's savior. Hailing indeed. That she can be the life of Rome and the death of Coriolanus takes us to the question of Coriolanus's own interpellation crisis: quintessentially Roman, the very figure of *virtus*, he is expelled as Rome's scapegoat. The Roman values he embodies are not equipment for living, even as he is caught in an endless grammar lesson, the "echo-chain" of citationality that Judith Butler (1993, p. 107) identifies as the way symbolic law operates: he cannot live as Roman. Here, it seems, the subject of translation is culturally triangulated as the young Latin student, the character Coriolanus, and Shakespeare, all negotiating the subject-forming circuits of early modern humanist pedagogical regimes, Rome and cultural masculinity. Within this constellation we can locate translation practice as both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic, a response to a structure of domination perpetuated by the valorized transmission of traditional authority. Thus, in a tragic drama that stages the struggle between the enunciated subject and the subject of the enunciation, *Coriolanus* stands as a drama of translation in which the student of *romanitas* and Latinity, however assiduous and deeply imprinted, cannot but fail spectacularly as the subject of Latinity.

Shakespeare's reworking of the Coriolanus story from the *Lives* offers a strong translation agenda that moves from source to subject formation. Even as it passes on, reinvoles, revoices, resignifies a classical source and authority, in what may call a wrenched rendering of Latin texts, *Coriolanus* actively reflects on the tradition that becomes the agenda of translation — *translatio imperii studiusque* — as treacherous and deadly to its most exemplary subjects.

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