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The Tragedies of
HEROD & MARIAMNE



Sir Herbert Beerhohn Tice as Herod

The Tragedies of
HEROD & MARIAMNE

By
MAURICE J. VALENCY

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To
JANET CORNELL

FOREWORD

IT IS eighteen centuries since the story of Herod and Mariamne was first set down. It was then a matter of recent history, not yet formalized beyond the stage of controversy. In the course of time, it became a legend.

In one form or another, the story was told and told again throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Its career was not confined to the written or printed page. For it so happened that these characters were discovered to be of the very stuff of the drama, and it was by no means permitted that their tragedy should end with their death. They were doomed to reenact it at stated intervals forever.

In the sixteenth century Herod and Mariamne were first put on the stage. Thereafter their story was dramatized again and again. It is hardly possible to say how often. The most recent estimate of the number of Mariamne plays was made by Marcus Landau in 1895—he reckoned some thirty. For the purposes of the present study, it has been found possible to collect, without any difficulty, thirteen others. There are, doubtless, many more, growing dusty, somewhere.

Taken as a whole, the Mariamne dramas illustrate the evolution of a dramatic tradition over a period which is no less than coextensive with the entire history of tragedy in modern times. To trace the lines of its development is to cut a path through this history, a path that begins in the remote Middle Ages and comes out at Times Square. This path winds at times through what may properly be called a wilderness, at times it traverses well-cleared areas which scholars have explored, cultivated and even settled. As in the following pages we trace its course, we shall find it

possible quite often to follow the landmarks and fingerposts of scholarship, though sometimes we shall have to go by the stars.

Viewed, then, as an organic development, the Mariamne plays illustrate the growth of a dramatic tradition, the manner in which it adapts itself to its environment, the way in which the bough is bent, the tree inclined. Viewed individually, the plays enable us to gain some insight into the nature of the process of dramatic adaptation in general, and the practice of specific authors of very different times and countries. To facilitate a consideration of the plays from both these points of view, it has seemed expedient to examine by way of preliminary certain aspects of the theme and its principal character which have to a considerable extent determined the course of their development. We shall then go on to consider this development from the point of view chiefly of dramaturgy, leaving to one side the minutiae of scholarship, except insofar as is needful for a proper exposition of the problems involved.

It is perhaps inevitable that a study of this sort should occasionally touch upon controversial matters, or trespass upon the domains of one or another group of specialists. The views expressed in this book with regard to particular authors or periods are those which seem to the writer to have come closest to truth and reason. Of other possible judgments, no disparagement is intended.

In any critical discussion there is likely to be considerable latitude for difference of opinion. Particularly must this be the case with regard to an art which is so little understood as that of dramaturgy. Therefore, as much of the material to be discussed is not readily available, somewhat detailed abstracts of the plays in question have been set forth in the text, so that the reader may have some data before him from which to form an independent judgment if he so desires.

It is hoped that this essay on the history, not of tragedy, but of the technique of tragedy, as it may be observed in the fortunes

of a single plot upon which a great many hands have set their impress, may be of some value to those interested in the art and practice of playwriting. The road we have to follow does not scale Parnassus. But from the foothills, occasionally, a tolerably good view may be had of the peak.

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M. J. V.

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The Tragedies of
HEROD & MARIAMNE

THE STORY IN JOSEPHUS

TOWARD the end of the first century of this era, Flavius Josephus set down the unhappy story of Herod and Mariamne. He wrote it carefully and at length, not once but twice, with remarkable attention to detail and circumstance, almost as if he knew that the responsibility of preserving the story for posterity would rest upon him alone. It is a dramatic story; its characters are clearly drawn, their conflict sharp and powerfully motivated. Obviously the Jewish historian took some joy in writing it, for he devoted to it no less than five considerable chapters of the fifteenth book of the *Antiquities of the Jews*, as well as a dozen chapters of the first book of the *Jewish War*.

It is quite possible that Josephus had some personal interest in expanding this story, and some bias in his interpretation of the facts as they came to him, for they concern the fortunes of the house of Hashmon, from which, through his mother, the historian claimed to be descended. Doubtless he felt, therefore, a certain sympathy for the unfortunate Hasmonean queen, and a degree of antipathy for the upstart king. As his feelings in the matter effectively color his narrative, and as no other version of the story is extant, this has been the attitude taken also by subsequent generations.

The purpose of Josephus' histories, their relation to the public for which they were written and to the remarkable career of the writer, cannot be neglected in any evaluation of his account. He was born in the first year of Caligula (A.D. 37-38), in a period of great political ferment, three-quarters of a century after the death of that Mariamne whom he immortalized, and

forty-one years after the unpleasant death of her notorious spouse. It is not very likely that he heard the facts concerning them directly from a contemporary witness. It is generally agreed that his source was the *History* of that Nicolas of Damascus to whom he refers in the *Antiquities* and *Contra Apionem*.¹

The *History* of Nicolas was a work in 144 books, of which the greater part is now lost. The author was evidently very favorably inclined toward Herod, whom he had served in various capacities and represented at the court of Augustus, and his brother Ptolemaeus was a close friend of the king. Josephus, as was usual among historians of an earlier day, acknowledges his source only to contradict it, and being himself admittedly anti-Herodian, accuses Nicolas of partiality for Herod in that he falsely justifies the execution of Mariamne and her sons on the ground that Mariamne was unchaste, and that the sons made an attempt on the king's life.² "I, however," says Josephus, "who am descended from the Hasmonean queen, hold this for an unseemly falsehood, and relate everything with pure truth and honesty." And, speaking of Nicolas, he adds: "Thus he proceeds in his whole work, making a pompous encomium on whatever just actions the king had done and earnestly vindicating or apologizing for his unjust ones."³ Unfortunately, no extant fragment of Nicolas' work refers to the story of Herod and Mariamne, and the exact nature and extent of the controversy in which Josephus seems to have involved himself remains a matter of conjecture.

The *Jewish War* is the oldest of Josephus' known works. It was written toward the end of the reign of Vespasian (A.D. 69-79), and was probably intended to exhibit, as a warning to the Babylonian Jews, the majestic power of Rome. With this

¹ *Contra Apionem*, Bk II, chap. 7, *Antiq.*, Bk XVI, chap. 7, § 1.

² *Jewish War*, Bk I, chap. 24, § 2. *Antiq.*, Bk XVI, chap. 9, § 4, chap. 10, § 8, Bk XVII, chap. 5, § 4, chap. 9, § 7; chap. 11, § 3

³ *Antiq.*, Bk. XVI, chap. 7.

power, Josephus was by this time thoroughly reconciled. For after the defeat at the hands of Vespasian and Titus of the troops he commanded in Galilee, he had had the good sense to take Vespasian as his patron, and the new emperor's family name of Flavius for his own, and had settled in Rome and received Roman citizenship, a Roman pension, and an estate in Judaea.

The *Jewish War* was written first in Aramaic—this original has not been preserved—then translated by the author, with the assistance of others, into elegant Greek. The first two books of this work involve the period of Jewish history from the capture of Jerusalem by Antiochus Epiphanes to the outbreak of the war in A.D. 67. The remaining five books deal with the events of the war with Rome (A.D. 67-73) in which Josephus himself played a significant part.

The *Antiquities of the Jews* is somewhat more ambitious in scope, for it begins with the creation of the world and covers the entire history of the Jews up to the outbreak of the Roman war. The work was completed in the thirteenth year of Domitian (A.D. 93). Its purpose obviously differs considerably from that of the earlier work—it was meant to glorify the Jewish nation in the eyes of the Romans. In part it follows the Septuagint, but Josephus amplifies his source with numerous rabbinical traditions, as well as various extracts from such writers as Polybius, Strabo, and, as we have seen, Nicolas.

Mediaeval Christianity was kind to Josephus, partly, no doubt, because of the references in the *Antiquities* to John the Baptist and to the Christ.⁴ A Latin translation of the *Jewish War* was in existence as early as the fourth century,⁵ and Cassiodorus caused translations of the *Antiquities* and *Contra*

⁴ The celebrated reference to Jesus is, of course, of more than doubtful authenticity, but there can be no doubt that Josephus was regarded as having given important historical evidence in confirmation of the Gospels.

⁵ See E. Schurer, *History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ* (Edinburgh, 1885-90), I, 99 f.

Apionem to be made in the sixth.⁶ The adaptation of the *Jewish War* by the so-called Hegesippus cannot have been earlier than the fourth century. Its author was a Christian; he describes his work as a revision of Josephus, compresses the seven books of the original into five, and adds much material from the *Antiquities*, the Roman historians, and from his own imagination.⁷ The story of Herod and Mariamne was thus by no means unfamiliar in the Middle Ages. On the contrary, it seems to have found its way into a considerable number of history books and encyclopedias—the tenth-century Hebrew adaptation of Josephus called *Gorionides*,⁸ the twelfth-century chronicle of the Byzantine John Zonaras, Comestor's *Historia Scholastica*, and the *Speculum Majus* of Vincent of Beauvais⁹ all repeat the story in more or less detail.

Josephus was among the first authors printed in the Renaissance. In 1470, a Latin edition was printed in Augsburg. It was followed by a Latin edition of the *Jewish War*, printed at Rome in 1475, and one printed at Verona in 1480. Between this date and the end of the century, there appeared at Venice four more editions or reprintings of the Latin version, including an edition of the *Antiquities*.¹⁰ A French translation of the *Jewish War* appeared in Paris as early as 1492. The following year saw an Italian translation of this work published in Flor-

⁶ *De Institutione Divinarum et Humanarum Litterarum*, chap. xvii

⁷ F. Vogel, *De Hegesippo, qui dicitur, Josephi interprete* (Erlangen, 1881)

⁸ A. Silberman, *Untersuchungen über die Quellen des Dramas, The True Tragedy of Herod and Antipater von Samphon and Markham* (Wittenberg, 1922).

⁹ *Speculum historiale*, Lib. VI, cap. lvi. Vincent cites Comestor as his source.

¹⁰ All of these editions and others are listed in the British Museum Catalogue. Lodovico Dolce's *Marianna* was first published in 1565. It was performed some years before this date, but the existence of so many Latin editions of Josephus prior to this time—to say nothing of the Italian translation of 1493—makes the supposition unwarrantable that Dolce had, or needed, a knowledge of Greek, or that he depended in any way upon the Basel edition of 1544, as Landau supposed. Landau appears to have been unaware of any Latin translations of Josephus prior to that of 1611, and therefore cites this as the probable source of the early French and Spanish Mariamne dramas. M. Landau, "Die Dramen von Herodes und Mariamne" in *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Literaturgeschichte*, VIII (1895), 175 ff.

ence. In 1544, there appeared the famous Basel edition of all the works, in Greek. Complete Latin translations had already been published at Paris (1514, 1519) and at Basel (1534, 1540). A German version of the complete works was published at Strassburg in 1544. The first English translation appeared in London in 1602, was followed by another English edition in 1632, and by a half-dozen others in the next century. A complete edition of the works in French is dated at Paris, 1597. By this time, translations of the *Antiquities* and the *Jewish War* had appeared also in Dutch and in Spanish.

The dramatic possibilities of the Mariamne story became apparent at a comparatively early date in the development of Renaissance drama. Four tragedies based upon this theme were written in the sixteenth century. The seventeenth century produced at least a dozen new Mariamne plays; the eighteenth added some seven others; in the nineteenth, we may reckon another dozen; the present century has produced at least five. We may vary these sums at will by adopting a stricter or looser canon as to what constitutes a Mariamne play. But it is safe to say that there exist upward of forty plays based on the story of Herod and Mariamne.¹¹

Obviously, the story has had for dramatists of very different times and countries a degree of fascination not easily paralleled in the annals of the stage. The reasons for its popularity are not difficult to find. The story itself, as Josephus tells it, is in the highest degree interesting and well-suited to the drama. The characters are sculptured in the round, complete and whole almost to the last detail, yet their actions involve inconsistencies which tantalize analysis. The development has the attributes, rare in an historical account, of beginning, middle, and end. The moral implications are, or can be made, clear. The setting

¹¹ The generally accepted spelling of the queen's name is now "Mariamne." It is derived from certain Latin translations of Josephus. In the original the name is given as "Mariame" or "Mariamme." Almost every possible spelling has at some time been used.

is most interesting, both historically and geographically, and the story, moreover, acquires a certain mystical quality from its association in time and place with the birth of Christ and the dawn of a new era.

It would seem that all the dramatist had to do was to provide the dialogue, and the thing would move of itself. The eighteenth-century editor of Tristan l'Hermite's *La Mariane*, indeed, is overwhelmed by the felicity of the subject and the bountiful character of the source:

C'est là (he writes) que Tristan, par un bonheur qui n'est peut-être jamais arrivé qu'à lui, a trouvé sa tragédie toute faite et toute digérée. L'historien l'a conduit, pour ainsi dire, pas à pas et de scène en scène, depuis l'exposition jusqu'à la catastrophe; et le poète, en laissant toutes les choses qui servent à son action dans la place où l'histoire les a mises, a trouvé non seulement tous ses personnages, leurs intérêts, leurs caractères, et leurs mouvemens, mais, ce qu'il y a de plus merveilleux, l'économie même du poème et la distribution de toutes ses parties, selon les règles les plus étroites d'Aristote et du bon-sens.

Yet, with all this, neither Tristan nor any other dramatist has succeeded in writing a truly great play upon this theme. Of the many dramas that stem from the story in Josephus, not more than ten have had any considerable success either in their own time or later. With the exception of Tristan's play, none may be said to approach greatness. Yet among the dramatists who have handled this material, we may number at least seven who were at some time held to be masters of the stage—Hardy, Massinger, Calderón, Tirso, Tristan, Voltaire, and Hebbel.

To discover the reasons for the general lack of success in making use of a source so rich and generous, it is necessary to examine somewhat closely the nature and the history of the material.

Plays do not write themselves, no matter how excellent the theme. Doubtless the fire of true genius has seldom touched

this story, as indeed it has seldom touched any. Perhaps this fact has significance. Since the story has been generally available throughout the development of modern drama, if neither Corneille nor Racine nor Shakspeare were attracted to it in the very period which saw its greatest popularity among dramatists of lesser talent, it may be conjectured that the great saw objections to it which were not apparent to the less great.

These objections are evidently of various sorts—partly historical, partly dramaturgical. They involve such issues as the traditional character of Herod, not only as it was set forth by Josephus, but as it was fixed by the Bible and the Mysteries, his role in the slaughter of the Innocents, and the expectation of audiences conditioned by these traditions; they involve also the weakness of the stage in dealing with motives and states of mind of more than ordinary complexity, as well as a number of other difficulties which will be discussed in the sequel. The story in Josephus is rich and colorful, but not simple. On the contrary, it exhibits in its original form an almost bewildering complex of motive, detail, and circumstance: even in its simplest terms, it offers the dramatist a plot that is far more complex than the related plot of *Othello*.

The story in the *Antiquities* has to do with the efforts of the upstart Herod to acquire the throne of Judaea, and thereafter to found a dynasty. His father, Antipater, had taken advantage of the weakness of the head of the royal family, the Hasmonean, Hyrcanus, to push himself forward by means of military exploits and political intrigues until he had disposed of the reigning king, Aristobulus, the brother of Hyrcanus, and had himself been appointed procurator of Judaea by Julius Caesar. Antipater appointed his young son Herod, at this time apparently a youth of fifteen, governor of Galilee, and the boy at once showed his mettle by arresting the brigand Hezekiah and putting him to death. For this act of supererogation, he

was summoned by the Sanhedrin, but he appeared before it armed and with a bodyguard, and so overawed that august body that nobody but the Pharisee Sameas dared to accuse him.

In 44 B.C., Antipater was poisoned. In the following year Antony became master of the East, and appointed Herod and his brother Phasaelus tetrarchs of Judaea. Meanwhile, Antigonius, the uncle of Mariamne, invaded Palestine, routed the army of Hyrcanus and assumed the kingship. Herod fled to Rome. In a few days, Antony, with the consent of Octavius, bestowed upon him the sovereignty of Judaea.

To enter upon his new dominions, however, was somewhat more difficult than to acquire them. The campaign lasted three years, in the course of which Herod showed himself a brilliant general and fearless soldier. When at last victory was in sight, and Antigonius safely shut up in Jerusalem, Herod left his troops and went to Samaria to marry his betrothed, Mariamne, the granddaughter of Hyrcanus and niece of Antigonius. She was, Josephus tells us, a girl of remarkable beauty, of great spirit, and considerable wisdom, but somewhat haughty in her manner, and overproud of her Maccabean ancestry. Having united himself with the family he was supplanting in the government of Judaea, Herod returned to Jerusalem, stormed and sacked the town, and sent Antigonius to Antioch, where he was put to death by Antony. In this manner, Herod assumed the kingship.

His troubles had only just begun, for the family into which he had married at once began to intrigue against him. He had put a number of his enemies out of the way—a blood purge disposed of forty-five wealthy members of the Sanhedrin—but the populace bitterly resented his intrusion upon the throne. Under the circumstances, Herod found it expedient to keep his Maccabean relatives as much out of the public eye as possible. Instead of appointing to the high priesthood Mariamne's young brother Aristobulus, as was expected, he sent to Babylon

for an obscure priest named Ananelus and conferred the priesthood upon him. Alexandra, the mother of Mariamne, was greatly incensed at this highhanded procedure, and at once wrote Cleopatra to intercede with Antony on behalf of her son.

About this time, Antony's friend Quintus Dellius chanced to come to Jerusalem, and was so struck by the beauty of the Maccabean children that he advised Alexandra to send their portraits to Antony, as the best recommendation of their merits. Antony was in fact much impressed with the portraits, and he asked, as delicately as possible, that Aristobulus be sent to him. But Herod determined not to permit the young man to be dishonored, and declined Antony's request. Moreover, in order to appease his wife and mother-in-law, he sent Ananelus packing, and conferred the high priesthood, as they desired, upon Aristobulus.

All now seemed well. But the seeds of suspicion had been sown in the king's mind, and he set spies upon Alexandra, who for her part determined to escape to Egypt with her son. The two were concealed in a pair of coffins and were about to be smuggled out of the city, when the plot was discovered. Once more Herod forgave them, but this time he resolved to rid himself of the young man, who was growing dangerously popular. An occasion presented itself in the course of a feast at the house of Alexandra. It was a hot evening. The guests retired to bathe in the ponds, and the king's henchmen ducked the boy as if in sport, and held him under the surface until he was dead. He was then no more than eighteen years old, and of extraordinary beauty.

Alexandra's grief was so great that she is said to have consented to live thereafter only in the hope of finding an opportunity to revenge herself. Meanwhile she wrote to Cleopatra complaining of the outrage, and Cleopatra took up the matter with Antony, who summoned Herod to appear before him at Laodicea. Herod, thus finding himself in peril both at home

and abroad, left Joseph, his uncle and brother-in-law—for Salome, Joseph's wife, was Herod's sister—at the head of the government, with the secret charge that in the event that Antony should kill him, Joseph should at once kill Mariamne also, for since Herod was greatly in love with her, he was unwilling that any other man should have her after his death. Actually, says Josephus, his intimation was that Antony had fallen in love with her when he had formerly heard of her beauty.

But as Joseph in the conduct of the public affairs came into frequent contact with Mariamne, he gradually fell into the habit of lecturing her on the subject of the king's goodness and love for her, and one day, as a proof of this great love, he permitted himself to reveal the secret command, whence he drew the inference that Herod was able neither to live nor to die without Mariamne. Mariamne did not take this as a proof of affection.

When Herod returned triumphantly from the court of Antony, his sister Salome took the opportunity to charge Mariamne with having had improper relations with Joseph. Herod wisely paid no attention to the malicious accusations of his sister. But unfortunately Mariamne gave Herod to understand that she had heard of the secret charge and was not at all flattered by such a token of love. At this, the king cried out in dismay that now he had proof of her adulterous relations with Joseph, since Joseph would never have revealed such a secret under any other circumstances. And he gave orders that Joseph be executed forthwith.¹²

Meanwhile, Antony had lost the battle of Actium and his life, and it seemed likely that Herod would be punished for

¹² End of *Antiq.*, Bk. XV, chap. 3. The next chapter deals with the visit of Cleopatra to Judaea, her attempt to seduce Herod, his desire to kill her for the good of Antony, and decision to spare her for his own good. Chapter 5 deals with Herod's victorious campaign against the Arabs. The Mariamne story is resumed in Chapter 6.

having sided with him. There remained but one person in Judaea for whose sake Herod might be deprived of his throne. This was the aged Hyrcanus. Alexandra induced the old man to write to Malchus, governor of Arabia, asking him to aid them in escaping from Judaea. Herod, to whom the letter was betrayed by its bearer, Dositheus, now had grounds for charging Hyrcanus with treason, brought him before the Sanhedrin, and had him put to death.

With his affairs at home thus put in order, Herod prepared to go to Caesar's camp. He put the government in the hands of his brother Pheroras, settled his mother and sister in the fortress at Masada, and his wife and mother-in-law at Alexandrium, and left his treasurer Joseph,¹⁸ together with Sohemus the Iturean, to guard Mariamne and Alexandra. Sohemus and Joseph were secretly charged that if anything should happen to Herod at Caesar's camp, they were to kill the two women and preserve the succession to Herod's sons and to his brother Pheroras. The king now went to Rhodes and presented himself before Octavius, where instead of begging for the victor's favor, he delivered a proud speech in which he put forward his loyalty to Antony as his best recommendation to Caesar. Octavius, who was of a naturally magnanimous nature, restored the diadem to him, and sent him back to Judaea richer than he had come by the addition of a half-dozen cities.

But when the king came joyfully home to his wife, he was received with the greatest coldness; Mariamne declared openly that she was grieved at his success. The fact was, that remembering the earlier death sentence, and fearing a repetition of it, Mariamne had succeeded in winning from Sohemus an admission that fully confirmed her fears. The king was much dismayed at the clear evidences of his wife's hatred; sometimes "he

¹⁸ Many of the playwrights confuse this Joseph with Joseph the king's uncle, who was previously executed. There may have been, indeed, some confusion on this point in the mind of Josephus. In the *Jewish War* there is but one Joseph and one death command. The *Antiquities* has two of each.

was angry with her, and sometimes reconciled himself to her, but by always changing one passion for another, he was still in great uncertainty, and thus was entangled between hatred and love... In short, as he would gladly have her punished, so he was afraid, lest ere he was aware, he should by putting her to death, bring a greater punishment upon himself at the same time."¹⁴

One day, when he had "called for Mariamne out of the great affection he had always for her," she repulsed his amorous advances contemptuously, and reproached him with the murder of her father¹⁵ and brother. The king was furious. Salome found the moment opportune to send in his cupbearer—who had been prepared long beforehand—with the story that Mariamne had persuaded him to assist her in preparing a love potion, of the composition of which he was ignorant, which she intended to administer to the king. In order to discover what this love potion might contain, the king put Mariamne's eunuch to the torture. The eunuch, though in the greatest agony, could admit no knowledge of a love potion, but he confessed that Mariamne's hatred of Herod was caused by a secret that Sohemus had told her. Herod at once cried out that Sohemus would never have revealed his secret unless Mariamne had paid for it with her honor, and ordered the man immediately seized and slain. Mariamne was brought to trial. Herod was determined to have her condemned, and the court accordingly condemned her, with the recommendation that she be not hastily executed.

As Salome urged the possibility of an uprising if the execution were delayed, the king ordered that Mariamne be put to death at once. Alexandra behaved scandalously, and, to save herself, turned furiously against her daughter. But Mariamne

¹⁴ *Antiq.*, Bk. XV, chap. 7. Quoted from Whiston's translation (London, 1737)

¹⁵ *Sic.* It should be, of course, her grandfather, so it is in Zonaras' reading. This slip in Josephus accounts, in part, for the fact that so many dramatists have designated Hyrcanus as the father of Mariamne.

"went to her death with an unshaken firmness of mind and without changing the color of her face."

Once she was dead, the king's fury was transformed into terrible grief. He was unable to distract his mind from his sorrow, laid aside all public business, and would even order his servants to call Mariamne as if she were still alive. Eventually he fell into illness and madness. The physicians gave him up.

But he did not die. He survived Mariamne by a quarter-century, and the remaining chapters of Book XV of the *Antiquities* describe the rest of his reign in considerable detail. At this point, however, the story of Herod and Mariamne necessarily ends.

The most striking differences between this story and that of the first book of the *Jewish War* are that the secret command which is given twice in the *Antiquities* is given but once in the *Jewish War*, the cupbearer's accusation is omitted, and the murder of Aristobulus takes place in a slightly different way, for in the earlier history we are told simply that he was drowned by Herod's Gauls in Jericho. In the main, the two accounts are the same. Of the later life of Herod, into which both histories go, and of the feud between his sons by Mariamne and his son Antipater, it is not necessary to speak at this time. Some of the Mariamne plays deal with these matters; most of them take the story no further than the madness of Herod. It is with plays of the latter class that the present discussion is chiefly concerned.

From the story in Josephus, we should expect a Mariamne play to involve three elements—a man loves a woman excessively; he does or has done something which causes her to turn cold toward him; this coldness he is incapable of separating in his mind from the suspicion of infidelity, every circumstance works upon this suspicion, and he is driven to kill the woman he loves. This is, it is true, but one aspect of the Mariamne story—

other aspects will be discussed in the proper place—but granting that in general terms this represents a plot typical of Mariamne drama, the Mariamne situation is seen to be no distant relative of that in *Othello*.

Both situations are based upon groundless jealousy and supposedly outraged honor; both end in the murder of the beloved and the agony of the lover; both involve the machinations of a malevolent third person. Salome is no Iago, it is true. She is a much simpler character. As in the case of the ensign in Giraldi's story, her motive is revenge; she is not an "amateur in tragedy" like Iago. She simply wishes to get rid of a scornful and troublesome mistress. Yet her dramatic function is obviously the same as Iago's—she is the villain of the piece. The handkerchief episode in *Othello* is flimsy compared with the powerful motive of the betrayed secret in the Mariamne story, but it has an analogous function; both lead to catastrophic consequences. There are other points of similarity. Othello is a Moor, in Iago's words, "a Barbary horse"; Herod is an upstart, of Arab blood. Each has cause to feel a certain humility before his highborn lady; both are brave men, good soldiers, fierce in anger and in battle; both are hasty, and quick to strike when aroused, and quick to repent. *A priori*, the agony of Herod stirs the imagination every bit as much as the "solemn agony of the noble Moor."

But Othello, while springing from lowlier soil than the Jewish king, has enjoyed advantages that Herod has not enjoyed. The hero of Giraldi's crude tale¹⁶ is vastly inferior in dignity and pathos to the Herod of Josephus, and the picture of "Disdemona" felled with blows of a sandbag by the villainous ensign hidden in the bedroom closet, crying to her husband for help while he stands brutishly looking on and heaping her with abuse, seems hardly calculated to inspire a great tragedy. Yet the hand of the master has touched this story, and Giraldi's

¹⁶ *Hecatommsthi*, Bk. III, chap. 7.

Moor has become Othello, "the noblest man of man's making."

It has been otherwise with Herod.

In dealing with Giraldi's Moor, Shakspeare had a free hand. Giraldi had provided a plot, which Shakspeare, according to his custom, followed, but the character of the Moor had been but vaguely indicated. There was nothing to prevent Shakspeare from shaping the character as he pleased. The first writers who read Josephus with the purpose of putting the Mariamne story on the stage had no such liberty. In the history, they found Herod's portrait drawn at length and in detail; in the Mariamne story and in its context, Josephus had impressed upon the Jewish king certain disagreeable traits of character which could hardly be overlooked. These characteristics had moreover been preserved in a weighty tradition which the church carefully cherished. The early dramatists could not look upon Herod with the dispassionate eye of one who freshly analyzes human character.

The Middle Ages knew of Herod in several ways, but principally through the Gospel of Matthew, and the liturgical and Mystery plays, in which he played an outstanding role. The Herod of the Mysteries, needless to say, had no trace of nobility. He was a swaggering, blustering, weak, and boastful tyrant, an archetypal stage villain who was gleefully held up to hatred, contempt, and ridicule. Any attempt to ennoble such a character would have met, we may be sure, with resistance on the part of the audience, and even, it is possible, on the part of the spiritual authority.

It was with this Herod before their eyes that the playwrights of the Renaissance read Josephus. Certainly what they found there did not quite square with the goings-on that split the ears of the groundlings on Corpus Christi. But it could within certain limits be made to square with such matters. For the rest, the greater part of the Renaissance playwrights were interested not in noble but in spectacular characters—tyrants of a

Senecan cut. With this type of character the Herod of Josephus could easily be assimilated.

It was by giving magnitude and dignity to the Moor that Shakspeare succeeded in making a great tragedy out of a sordid tale of jealousy and revenge. But at the time when Herod was taken up by the Renaissance, and under the circumstances, he was in no condition to take on tragic grandeur, nor were there many playwrights disposed in those days to bestow grandeur upon him. His face was black with the accumulated hatred of fifty generations of honest Jews and Christians. It was to be some time before anyone saw in it a ray of light.

HEROD

*Il vient toujours un moment où les hommes font
pitié, plus qu'ils n'avaient fait horreur.*

—GABRIEL CHEVALLIER, *Clockemerle*.

FROM the point of view of the drama, the anti-Herodian bias of Josephus presents certain difficulties. If one accepts the historian's account of Herod as substantially true,¹ the obvious way to reconcile the occasional deeds of generosity and heroism ascribed to him with his more habitual savagery is to suppose him a foolish, selfish, brutal, and impulsive man, whose seeming magnanimity is ascribable to weakness, cunning, or egotism. This is precisely the view taken by the majority of commentators and a good many of the playwrights who have dealt with the theme. But Mariamne's death at the hands of such a Herod is not dramatically very interesting. It results in a play of persecution, the sort of thing that passed for tragedy in the Renaissance, a massacre of innocents in detail, and while it might conceivably provide the playwright with an interesting

¹ Josephus is obviously not always trustworthy. In speaking, for example, of the power of the Roman catapults at the siege of Jopata, of which he was an eyewitness, he tells of how a woman was so violently struck in the abdomen by a stone that her unborn child was flung a distance of half a furlong. (*Jewish War*, Bk. III, chap. 7, § 23.) For Josephus' professed power to foretell the future, see *ibid.*, Bk. III, chap. 7, § 9 and also *Life*, 42. Besides numerous inconsistencies between the *Life* and the *Jewish War*, we find differences between the latter (Bk. I, chap. 22, §§ 2, 5) and the *Antiq.* (Bk. XV, chap. 3, § 3) in the treatment of Herod's crimes. It is interesting to compare the extended account of Herod's growing suspicion and uncertainty in the *Antiq.* with the brief description in *Jewish War* (Bk. I, chap. 22): "His passion also made him stark mad, and leaping out of his bed, he ran about the palace in a wild manner; at which time, his sister Salome took the opportunity also to blast her reputation and confirmed his suspicion about Joseph, whereupon out of his ungovernable jealousy and rage, he commanded both of them to be slain immediately, but as soon as ever his passion was over, he repented of what he had done."

Mariamne, as far as Herod is concerned it provides a character of strictly limited possibilities.

Tragedy requires that the king have magnitude. "Herod should be by nature noble and right-minded," Grillparzer noted in his project for a Mariamne play that was never written. "A strong character, but inconsistent, doing otherwise than he thinks." Evidently some such interpretation is necessary before the king can acquire tragic grandeur. But the facts, as Josephus gives them, also seem to necessitate such a conclusion. In his conflict with Mariamne, Herod does not give the impression of a proper tyrant. We must concede that he does some very strange and brutal things. On the other hand, as he is the chief sufferer through these actions, one is tempted to suspect that there is more in the psychological relation of Herod and Mariamne than meets the eye. As regards the numerous inconsistencies in Herod's behavior as a public figure, there is no reason why we should not call Josephus' testimony into question. He made, as we have noted, no secret of his anti-Herodian bias. The source on which he chiefly relied for his material on Herod was distinctly partisan to the king. Under such circumstances, the result of Josephus' recension of Nicolas' story could hardly fail to give Herod a strangely confused personality. Josephus seems aware of this. As he tells us,

Now there are some who stand amazed at the diversity of Herod's nature and purposes. For when we consider his munificence, and the benefits which he bestowed upon mankind, his veriest enemies are compelled to admit that he had a nature that was vastly beneficent. But when anyone looks at the punishments which he inflicted and the injuries that he did—he will be forced to allow that he was brutish and a stranger to all humanity. Some people are, therefore, led to believe that Herod had a double nature and qualities which were quite in contradiction to each other; but I am of a different opinion, and believe that all his actions proceeded from one and the same spirit. For, being a man ambitious of honor, and quite overcome by that passion, he was induced to be liberal whenever there appeared

any prospect of obtaining either present or future renown.—If any one was not very obsequious to him in language or would not submit to be his slave, or seemed to desire a change in the government, he was not able to contain himself, but prosecuted his very kindred and friends, and punished them as if they were his enemies. And he did all this wickedness out of a desire that he might be himself alone honored.²

We need not dwell upon the manifest inadequacy of this interpretation. It has been the uniform practice of historians up to comparatively recent times to daub in even blacker colors the portrait of Herod with which Josephus provides us. But the inconsistencies have never been disposed of. Tristan l'Hermite derived the material for *La Mariane* not only from Josephus, but more directly, from a paraphrase of Josephus written by the Révérent Père Nicolas Caussin. Tristan tells us in the *advertissement* prefixed to his play:

Je me suis efforcé de dépeindre au vif l'humeur de ce Prince sanguinaire, à qui la Nature avoit fait assez de graces pour le rendre un des plus grands hommes de son siècle, s'il n'eust employé ces merueilleux avantages contre sa propre reputation, en corrompant des biens si purs par le débordement d'une cruauté sans exemple, & des autres vices qu'on a remarquez en sa vie.³

Caussin's remarkable work, *La Cour sainte* (1624-1635), was a highly cultistic combination of history, moral discourse, anecdote, and preaching. In Book IV, entitled "De l'impieté des cours: le politique malheureux," the confessor of Louis XIII sets forth the story of Herod and Mariamne at considerable length, in the manner of an *exemplum*. Needless to say, the worthy Caussin does not trouble his head unduly concerning the trustworthiness of his source or the complexities of the characters. Mariamne emerges from his pages as a "true mirror of patience"; Herod becomes "mauvais mary, persecuteur bar-

² *Antiq.*, Bk XVI, chap. 5, § 4 With this account of Herod's nature, we may profitably compare what Josephus has to say concerning Mariamne's habitual insolence toward him, which he "was accustomed to bear patiently."

³ Cf. Hardy's "ce monstre de cruauté" in the *Argument* to his *Mariamne*

bare, infame bourreau, mais tousiours plus agréable à la patiente Mariamne en qualité de persecuteur et de bourreau qu'en celle de mary. —Herodes n'avoit quasy rien d'humain que la peau et la figure."

But along with this idea of the monstrous character of Herod, the seventeenth century—in which Herod as a dramatic figure was developed more profoundly than in any other—entertained a more charitable view of the Hebrew king. We have noted the reference to the greatness of Herod and his "marvellous natural advantages" in the *advertissement* to *La Mariane*. Caussin, even, before he works himself up into a righteous fury against the malicious assassin who threw Mariamne all bleeding "upon the pyre where the bodies of her fathers and her brothers were burning," speaks of the king as "...cet infortuné Roy de Iudée. C'estoit un grand iugement naturel, un esprit perçant à merveille, un courage eslevé autant qu'il se peut dire."

Similarly, in the dedication (to Cardinal Richelieu) of *La Mort des enfans d'Herodes* (1639), La Calprenède writes

... ce Politique que ie vous offre, s'il eut des vices que vous detestez, il eut des vertus que vous estimez sans doute, & son courage & sa bonne conduite ont effacé une partie des taches de sa vie.

It cannot be denied, however, that the customary view taken of Herod was that, in Caussin's words, he was a hardly human monster. The view was by no means confined to the Renaissance. Mosheim, the father of modern church history, describes Herod as follows:

This prince was surnamed the Great (surely from no other circumstance than the greatness of his vices) and his government was a yoke of the most vexatious and oppressive kind. By a cruel, suspicious and overbearing temper he drew upon himself the aversion of all, not excepting those who lived on his bounty. By a mad luxury and an affectation of magnificence far above his fortune, together with the most profuse and elaborate largesses, he exhausted the treasury of that miserable nation.—In a word Judaea, governed by Herod, groaned under all that corruption which might be expected from

the authority and example of a prince, who though a Jew in outward profession, was a contemner of all laws human and divine.⁴

As the disciples of Mosheim were legion, it is not surprising that his elaboration of Josephus' remarks regarding Herod should echo from history to history. Similar statements may be found, indeed, in Schroeckh's *Christliche Kirchengeschichte* (1772 *et seq.*), in Neander's famous church history (1825), and in numberless other works of this character. How far eloquence and theologic indignation could go in this respect may be judged from the remarks of Dean Farrar in his popular *Life of Christ* (1874):⁵

His whole career was red with the blood of murder. He had massacred priests and nobles, he had decimated the Sanhedrin...Deaths by strangulation, deaths by burning, deaths by being cleft asunder, deaths by secret assassination, confessions forced by unutterable torture, acts of insolent and inhuman lust⁶ mark the annals of a reign which was so cruel that in the energetic language of the Jewish Ambassadors to the Emperor Augustus: "the survivors during his lifetime were even more miserable than the sufferers."

The elegant scholar, Charles Merivale, Dean of Ely, in his *History of the Romans under the Empire*⁷ (1850-62) offers a further example:

History hardly presents a more tragic situation than that of the devoted Mariamne, the miserable object of a furious attachment on the part of the monster who had slain before her eyes her uncle, her brother and her grandfather. Herod doted upon her beauty, in which she bore away the palm from every princess of her time.

In the last third of the nineteenth century, however, a reaction set in with respect to Herod, and such writers as Keim, in his *History of Jesus of Nazara*, Dean Stanley, in his *History of the Jewish Church*, and W. Willett, in his *Life and Times of Herod the Great*, began to take up his cause. The new interpre-

⁴ J. L. von Mosheim, *Institutionem historiae ecclesiasticae libri IV* (1726).

⁵ Page 66; see also F. E. Farrar, *The Herods* (New York, 1898).

⁶ Josephus takes the trouble to state that Herod was a temperate man

⁷ III, 393.

tations of Josephus tended to picture the king as a well-meaning ruler, whose great talents and strong passions were sometimes betrayed into evil-doing by much provocation and the difficult and perilous situation in which he was placed. Stanley, the leading liberal theologian of his age in England, says of him:

He had a greatness of soul which might have raised him above the petty intriguers by whom he was surrounded. His family affections were deep and strong. In that time of general dissolution of domestic ties, it is refreshing to witness the almost extravagant tenderness with which in the plain of Sharon, he founded, in the fervour of his filial love, Antipatris . . .⁸

John Vickers goes somewhat further, and sees in him not the persecutor, but the precursor of the chosen people:

Passionately fond of athletic sports, able to ride well to hounds, command a cavalry regiment, direct engineering operations, and deliver a telling speech—he would constitute an admirable specimen of the English country gentleman; and with his simple Jewish theism modified by Greek and Latin culture, might pass very well for having received a university education.⁹

Somewhat less enthusiastic, perhaps, Renan set Herod's reign above that of David and Solomon, while the classical scholar J. P. Mahaffy judged him "the most fascinating of men," one who had charmed everyone with whom he came in contact—Caesar, Sextus, Crassus, Cassius, Antony, and Octavius.¹⁰ A more recent biographer echoes once more the foregoing sentiments:

The very strangeness of his life, the complexity of his nature, the intricacy of his character, and the storms he had encountered and mastered, suggest that he was one of the most fascinating and glamorous of men.¹¹

⁸ *History of the Jewish Church* (1863 et seq.), III, 412.

⁹ Vickers, *History of Herod, or Another Look at a Man Emerging from Twenty Centuries of Calumny* (London, 1885), p. 358.

¹⁰ J. P. Mahaffy, *The Greek World under Roman Sway from Polybius to Plutarch* (London, 1896).

¹¹ J. S. Minkin, *Herod* (New York, 1936), pp. 252-3.

Evidently it is a far cry from this "glamorous and fascinating" figure to the "infamous butcher" of Caussin, as it is a far cry from the "Wütrich König" of Hans Sachs or the "Blut-hund" of Hallmann to the stately Herodes of Hebbel and the romantic Herod of Phillips. Yet, while not even Caussin was blind to the "esprit perçant" and the "courage eslevé" of his villain, not even Hebbel could refrain from involving his hero in the bloody affair of the children of Bethlehem.

For it is by no means only the histories of Josephus and their adaptations which color the character of Herod for the dramatist. A cursory examination of these histories would have served to make it clear even to the dullest and most bigoted of those who chose to bring the subject to the stage that, whatever Herod might have been, it was something other than a blustering brute into whose bloody clutches fell the innocent, pure, and patient Mariamne. But another tradition, originating perhaps in the same hatred of the Jews for Herod which colors the account in Josephus, had, long before the time of the first Mariamne plays, invested the king with such traits as would have gladdened the heart of the most rabid anti-Herodian of the time of Augustus.

Of this tradition, the most important expression is found in the Gospels, in Matthew's account of the three Magi and the massacre of the Innocents. This story exerted a remarkable influence not only through the ordinary media of religious instruction and diffusion, but also through the tropes of the Epiphany service, the liturgical and the Mystery plays, all of which resulted in making Herod synonymous with villainy throughout Christendom.

THE HEROD OF THE MYSTERIES

THE STORY of the massacre of the children of Bethlehem, which plays an important part in shaping the course of the development of the character of Herod, and so of Mari-amne drama, does not appear in Josephus at all.¹ The ultimate source of this story as well as of all the liturgical and Mystery plays which deal with Herod is the Vulgate version of the passage in Matthew 2.16: "Tunc Herodes videns quoniam illud esset a magis iratus est valde et mittens occidit omnes pueros qui erant in Bethlehem . . ."

No Gospel save that of Matthew mentions this occurrence. This Gospel is generally dated between A.D. 80-100, and is thus of slightly later date than the *Jewish War*, and more or less contemporary with the *Antiquities*, which F. C. Burkitt and others have assigned as a source of the contemporary Gospel of Luke. The Herod of Matthew 2.16 is clearly intended to be Herod the Great. A new crime is thus added to the lengthy list with which Herod is provided by Josephus, and with it there emerges a new trait of character. For, while the qualities of ambition, cunning, and cruelty with which Josephus endows the king are evident also in the Gospel, in addition we are told that he became "very angry" on being deceived by the Wise Men—from this hint the Middle Ages derived his outstanding characteristic in the religious drama, his wrath. The result is the

¹ In Josephus, however, there occurs the analogous story of the birth of Moses, in which the prediction that a Jewish child would be born to humble the Egyptians caused the Egyptian king to order every male child of the Israelites to be drowned. (*Antiq.*, Bk. II, chap. 9, § 2, with which compare the story in Exodus.).

blustering, swaggering, boastful, bombastic tyrant of the Mysteries.

It is not difficult to understand why such a character should develop readily in the dawn of modern drama. The wrathful king of the Mysteries offered few difficulties to actor, playwright, or audience. Easily conceived, easily impersonated, and easily understood, he was excellently suited not only to terrify and to delight, but also to bear the allegorical burden which an age which loved allegory shifted upon him. He exemplified for it the forces of evil in their noisier and more obvious form, forces which the Middle Ages, secure in the knowledge of the ultimate triumph of the good, found somewhat comical. The character, certainly, was neither abstruse nor profound, but the promoters of the religious plays were interested in presenting on the stage, first of all, sound moral doctrine, and the dramatic soundness of the character was closely bound up in their minds with the soundness of the doctrine it represented. Under the circumstances, in the eyes of an audience which preferred a good show to any amount of subtle analysis, Herod was destined to achieve great popularity. His popularity, like that of Punch, with whose character his own has certain affinities, was somewhat special. He was popular because he could be hissed; he was the first of stage villains.

The possibilities of Herod were quite apparent to the writers of the Latin liturgical plays. In the eleventh century we find him already endowed with all the characteristics, in embryonic form, which he was to exhibit in the later Mysteries. His development appears to have been speedy and unambiguous. The first version of the Nevers play—in which he seems to have made his stage debut as a villain—and also the Orléans, Fleury, and Rouen manuscripts have him already exhibiting his characteristic brusqueness of manner. In one version of the Slaughter of the Innocents, he goes so far as to threaten the Wise Men with a stick; in another—the Montpellier version—he ends his

scene in even more cavalier fashion by taking a sword from a retainer, and brandishing it. "Already," remarks Chambers, "he is beginning to tear a passion to tatters in the manner that became traditionally associated with his name."² His significance for the drama at this time was undoubtedly very great. "Durch Herodes," writes Creizenach, "wurde in die ursprüngliche Form des christlichen Dramas das böse Prinzip und damit das eigentliche dramatische Leben eingeführt."³

As the religious plays passed out of the church into secular hands, the progressive elaboration of Herod's character received new impetus, and spectacle and horseplay became firmly entrenched in the Mysteries. Numberless attempts to restrain or control these popular manifestations of "religious" enthusiasm were of course made, but with little success, and the attempt to sanctify these popular mummeries to the uses of religion by means of the Corpus Christi festival and the procession of the Host, though it brought them somewhat more closely into relation with the church, could not materially limit their scope or development. By the fifteenth century the custom was almost universal throughout Christendom of following the Corpus Christi procession with Miracles and Mysteries acted and controlled by the guilds which had taken part in the pageant. In these hands, it was but natural that the purely spectacular traits of Herod's character should be developed. That the angry king would become in time bombastic, that the bombastic tyrant would develop comic traits was a foregone conclusion.

In their portrayal of Herod, the writers of the Mysteries had virtually unlimited license. Herod was thought of not only as an enemy of Christ, but as a kind of Saracen, an alien figure. The scope of his actions was therefore practically unlimited by

² E. K. Chambers, *Mediaeval Stage* (1925), II, 44-51, see also Karl Young, *Ordo Rachelis*, Univ. of Wisconsin "Studies in Language and Literature," No. 4 (1919), pp. 1-65.

³ W. Creizenach, *Geschichte des neueren Dramas* (2d ed.; Halle, 1911), I, 56.

civil or spiritual restrictions; he could say or do anything on the stage, within reason. The devil's ranting had to be kept within bounds, since the devil, after all, had had the advantages of a sound Christian education in heaven. Herod had the uninhibited freedom of the utterly gentile.⁴ On the other hand, in the Mysteries, he could never have descended to the role of a wholly comic character, a clown. The solemn nature of the religious drama would impart to him always a certain serious character, for the antagonist of Christ might have his comic side, but he could not be entirely ridiculous. Thus, though his ranting and boastful nature might recall the *miles gloriosus* of Latin comedy,⁵ the horrible role of the butcher of children precluded that interpretation of his character in any thoroughgoing sense. His role in the Mysteries partook of the magnificent as well as the clownish, of the swashbuckler as well as the tyrant. He was one who boasted and threatened beyond measure, but he did not threaten wholly in vain, for all his intended victim escaped him.

His magnificence was reflected in his costume. He was sometimes dressed in satin and blue buckram; usually he bore sword and sceptre and wore a helmet, and in one case, at least, a mitre. The Smiths' Company's register at Coventry notes that his sword was ornamented with silver, gold, and green paper. His face was often painted; sometimes he was masked.⁶ In spite of these details, his appearance does not detach itself as readily from the mists of time as does his character. Evidence has been adduced that he was dressed as a Saracen and wore red gloves; that he appeared black of face and continually in a rage;⁷ that he wore a periwig. It is certain that he was ex-

⁴ R. E. Parker, "Reputation of Herod in Early English Literature," *Speculum*, VIII (1933), 59-67.

⁵ H. Graf, *Der Miles Gloriosus im englischen Drama* (Rostock, 1891).

⁶ T. Sharp, *A Dissertation on the Pageants or Dramatic Mysteries at Coventry* (Coventry, 1825).

⁷ A. F. Leach, "Some English Plays and Players," *Furnivall Miscellany* (1901), pp. 205-34.

tremely vain of his appearance, whatever it was, as well as of his power, which, he would have had us think, was great.

His first appearance on the stage was usually accompanied by a monologue in which, after commanding silence, he revealed his name and threatened all those who might venture to disobey him. He then ordinarily proceeded to boast of his might, his personal beauty, and his magnificent dress. He is, he says in the Digby play, a great king,

King of Jerusalem
Lord of Alapye, Assye and tyr
of Abyron, bergaby, and bedlem.⁸

He sometimes boasts also of his power over supernatural forces, and bombastically credits himself with the attributes of God and the devil:

For I am evyn he thatt made bothe hevin and hell,
And of my myghte powar holdith vp this world rownd. . . .

And prynce am I of purgatorre and cheff capten of hell.⁹

He is a very vain monarch indeed:

Behold my contenance and my colur,
Bryghtur than the sun in the meddis of the day.¹⁰

But, powerful and beautiful as he is, he is not very dignified, and is likely to go off in a tantrum at any moment. All those who displease him, kings, messengers, knights, even the doctors who unravel the prophecy for him, feel his wrath. Moreover, his anger has a bad physiological effect upon him. It makes him sweat,¹¹ and almost drives him into madness,

for was I neuer so woe I wis
for wrath I am nere wood.¹²

⁸ Digby, *Mary Magdalen*, lines 157-59. See W. Tomlinson, *Der Herodes-Charakter im englischen Drama* (Leipzig, 1934), pp. 15 ff.

⁹ *Coventry Pageant Shearmen*, lines 486-520.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Chester VIII, 187

¹² *Ibid.*, 376-77.

But his temper is mercurial. When the children, and, as he thinks, his enemy among them, are dead, he rejoices,

O, my hart is rysand now in a glope¹³

and grows merry:

I was nevyr meryer here be-forn.¹⁴

In joy or anger, his acting tends always toward the extreme and the spectacular: doubtless, the role was a strenuous one. He is, for example, uncommonly fond of brandishing blades:

With this bryght bronde there bonis I brak onsunder¹⁵

and requires a certain scope for his rage, as we can see from the famous stage-direction in the *Coventry Pageant of the Shearmen and Taylors*:

Here Erode rages in the pagond and in the strete also.

This raging of his, brought about by the news that the Wise Men, following the advice of the warning angel, have eluded him by going home another way, must have made a considerable effect:

A-nothur wey, Owt! Owt! Owt!

Hath those fowls traytors done me this ded?

I stampe! I stare! I lok all abowtt!

Myght I them take, I shuld them bren at a glede!

I rent! I rawe! and now rund wode!

O! thatt these velen traytors hath mard this my mode!

The schalbe hangid yf I ma cum them to!¹⁶

With all his magnificence and his mad rage, however, he appears to combine certain traits of weakness. He is not too sure of himself; he takes counsel often, and follows the guidance of his ministers and knights. He is sometimes contradicted and sometimes disobeyed, and in several cases he is scolded and

¹³ Towneley XVI, 264.

¹⁴ Ludus Coventriae XX, 164.

¹⁵ *Coventry Pageant Shearmen*, 491.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 777-783.

cursed to his face.¹⁷ He is prone to complain and bemoan himself; bad news causes him to fall easily into lamentation and despair—perhaps this is a reminiscence of Josephus' description of his sorrow.

This composite picture of Herod, somewhat blurred as it is, and necessarily inaccurate, as a *montage* of this type is likely to be, represents more or less the stage villain of the Corpus Christi plays. He is not an impressive character—he is boastful, cruel, and showy, a tyrant splendidly accoutered, but weak and childish. He has often, in fact, the naïve, and, for us at least, pathetic ineffectiveness of a raging child—we shall have reason to return to this comparison. The relation of this character to that depicted by Josephus is vague. The Herod of the Mysteries was not developed through careful study of history; he was evolved in accordance with the wishes and prejudices of a populace whose desires were, as they always have been, the ultimate tribunal of the theatre.

This Herod was one of the best-known figures of the early stage. Chaucer's clerk, Absolon, played him "on a scaffold hye" in the days when the acting of the religious plays was still in the hands of the clergy; we may be sure that in later years the part devolved upon the lustiest of burgesses. As, under these circumstances, each Herod doubtless strove to out-Herod all previous Herods, the final form of this character in the days, say, of Shakspeare must have been such as might well give the judicious playwright pause. Popular knowledge of Herod was derived from the Mysteries rather than the Scriptures, and not at all from the comparatively restrained account in Josephus. It seems clear, therefore, that the Herod of the early Mariamne plays must make certain concessions to the Herod of the Mysteries in order to achieve any degree of success on the popular stage.

¹⁷ Towneley XIV, 499; XVI, 366, XVI, 156; York XIX, 123; Chester X, 153. Other examples have been collected in Tomlinson, *Der Herodes-Charakter*, which also provides a list of all the English Mysteries in which Herod appears.

In addition to Herod the King, the Gospels mention also Herod (Antipas) ¹⁸ the Tetrarch, who was responsible for the incarceration and the beheading of John the Baptist, and also Herod (Agrippa) the persecutor of the early church,¹⁹ who killed James the brother of John, imprisoned Peter, and was eventually smitten by an angel of the Lord. These several Herods, as we find them in the Gospels, are all unpleasant people, easily confused with one another, so that one might well be pardoned for thinking of them all as a single persistent Herod whose chief function it was to annoy good people. The Herod who plays the bully and the clown in the *Trial of Jesus*,²⁰ with his blasts of foolish French and Latin, is not distinguished in any way, as far as the play is concerned, from the Herod of the *Massacre of the Innocents*,²¹ who was, however, his father. The Herod of the Ludus Coventriae *The Death of Herod* was possibly suggested by the Herod Agrippa of Acts 12.23 who was smitten by the Lord, but he is still the same Herod to whom we are accustomed. His death is pitiful. After he has slaughtered the Innocents, he sits down to his dinner with expressions of great satisfaction, but it is Mors who serves the meat, and after listening to a lecture on their various iniquities, the king and his merry men are handed over by Mors to Diabolus.²²

For the Middle Ages, for the Renaissance, doubtless even today, Herod is all these Herods; few have taken the trouble to distinguish them. Thus, Calderón's famous play has the title *El Tetrarca*, though it has nothing to do with the Tetrarch Herod, but with his father. No objection seems to have been made to this confusion; possibly Calderón would have considered the distinction pedantic. Whether there were many Herods or only one, it came to the same thing, dramatically

¹⁸ Luke 3.19; Matt. 14.1, Mark 6.14; Luke 9.9. This was Herod's son by his sixth wife. He should not be confused with Antipater, the son of Doris.

¹⁹ Acts 12.1; 23.

²⁰ York XXXI

²¹ York XVI, XIX.

²² Cf. the final scene of Lozano's *Herodes Ascalonita*.

speaking. Father, son, or grandson, the character was functionally the same: as there was no difference in function, there was hardly need to make distinctions. After all was said and done, Herod was Herod:

*Une des premières règles est de prendre les héros connus tels qu'ils ont été, ou plutôt tels que le public les imagine, car il est bien plus aisé de mener les hommes par les idées qu'ils ont, qu'en voulant leur en donner de nouvelles. . .*²³

²³ Voltaire, Preface to *Marianne* (1730).

THE HEROD OF THE MARIAMNE PLAYS

HEROD, as a character, appears in four groups of plays, which have no necessary connection with each other—first, plays dealing with the story of John the Baptist and having to do with Herod the Tetrarch, Herodias his wife, and Salome his stepdaughter, for example, Oscar Wilde's *Salome*; second, those dealing primarily with the story of the slaughter of the Innocents, such as Heinsius' *Herodes infanticida*; third, those treating the later life of Herod, for example, La Calprenède's *La Mort des enfans d'Herodes*; finally, the large group of plays based on the story of Herod and Mariamne. It is with the last class that the present discussion is concerned.

The character of Herod in the Mariamne plays varies between rather wide limits, from the grim ferocious butcher almost all the way to the glamorous hero of romance, for his fortunes in the drama have been as varied as his fortunes in history. It would be comforting to find that his rise in the drama from the depths of tyrannical cruelty to the heights of romance parallels his rise in the estimation of theologians and biographers. But such is decidedly not the case. Long before historians, religious or otherwise, came to see much good in Herod, gifted dramatists who read their history with the unprejudiced eye of the artist realized the tragic worth of the character, and, not without certain concessions to popular prejudice, portrayed him according to their lights. Dolce's Herod (c. 1565) is a disgusting butcher, but by the end of the sixteenth century, Hardy and, a few years later, Tristan, estab-

lished Herod as one of the great characters of the tragic stage. Though there have been, one is tempted to hazard, scores of Herods since their time, it is questionable whether any progress in the conception of the character has been made. Of the Mariamne plays of the nineteenth century, only three treat the character of Herod sympathetically, and none of the nineteenth-century dramatists goes any further in this respect than Hardy.

It is not, therefore, particularly illuminating to consider chronologically the development of Herod as a character. Certain Herod types were fixed at a comparatively early date in accordance with various dramatic traditions. These types were developed to some extent, to some extent combined; they were subjected to the influence of contemporary fashion, but they persisted throughout the history of Mariamne drama, and we can detect the presence of one or the other in Mariamne plays of the very latest cut. As, to a considerable extent, the shape of a Mariamne play depends upon the character of Herod, it may be well, before we proceed to explore the channels which the Mariamne theme has followed in the development of the drama, to illustrate briefly the various Herod types.

The first of these types is the least complicated, at least in its pure form, and is closest to the Mysteries. It gives us a character largely of mediaeval cut, but which usually has some classical touches, a mediaeval rendering of the Senecan tyrant. We may dub this character the Wrathful King.

This formidable personage first appears as the protagonist of Hans Sachs' *Tragedia mit 15 Personen zu agirn, der Wütrich König Herodes, wie der sein drey Sön und sein Gmabel umb-bracht, und hat 5 actus*. This play, written about the same year (1552) which saw the production of Jodelle's *Cléopâtre captive*, has certain classical characteristics, derived, probably, from Sachs' study of Horace and of the Latin grammarians

Donatus and Diomedes. The story, which is developed largely through recital, follows the account in Josephus quite closely and takes in a generous span. The Mariamne affair is closed by the end of the second act; thence the poet goes on to treat of other matters in the life of Herod. The author is not interested particularly in motivating his plot, much less in the subtle delineation of character—he is concerned rather with telling a story in order to illustrate certain maxims. As may be expected, his Herod is a purely mechanical tyrant. The moment he discovers his secret has been betrayed, he packs the culprit Seemus off to execution. Soon after, the treacherous cupbearer accuses Mariamne of attempting to poison the king; at once the order is given for her death; she is bound and led away.¹

The king's madness is depicted in an equally conventional manner. After ordering his wife's death, he sits down to dinner as if nothing had happened, and calls for her to keep him company. He is told that she is dead:

Grossmechtiger König, die Königin
Die hat man heudt gefuret hin
Nach eurem Urteil sie gericht.

At first Herod does not seem to comprehend; when he does, he bursts forth into violent lamentation and reproach. Beyond this outburst, the death of Mariamne seems to have little effect upon him. By and by, at the instigation of his brother and sister, Feroces and Salome, he sends his sons off to their death in the same offhand way.

Sachs had read his Josephus very closely, as an examination of the play will show, but it does not seem to have occurred to him that there was anything inadequate in this treatment of

¹ Cf. *Jewish War*, Bk I, chap 22 "whereupon out of his ungovernable jealousy and rage, he commanded both of them to be slain immediately." This is quite different from the account in *Antiq*, Bk XV. Sachs had read the *Antiquities*, there is no mention of the cupbearer in the *Jewish War*.

Herod. The Herod he had in mind was the same as the villain of his other Herod play, *Die Entpfengniß und Geburdt Johannis und Christi*, which deals with the massacre of the Innocents and endows Herod with the usual traits of the Herod of the Mysteries. The married life of this Herod, surely, was a simple thing—one hardly needed to read Josephus; one could imagine it. The important thing was to show how after a life full of iniquity he came to meet his fate, for tragedy, as Puttenham was to say (1589), “deals with the doleful falls of unfortunate and afflicted princes, for the purpose of reminding men of the mutability of fortune and of God’s just punishment of a wicked life.” Thus, the long, disgusting, and seemingly irrelevant description of Herod’s final illness in *Der Wütrich König Herodes* is one of the chief points of the play—it exhibits the retribution meted out on earth to the enemy of Christ. On the other hand, these iniquitous actions did not need to be motivated or even made plausible or consistent—they served simply to show in a striking manner the reasons for the retribution.

There is no doubt that Sachs’ Herod is keyed considerably lower than the Herod of the Mysteries; we miss his loudness, his boastfulness, his swaggering, though his fury, cruelty, lamentation, and weakness are there. But Sachs felt the restraint of the classical formula which he thought he was following; he had no intention of aping the Mysteries, and did not do so, except insofar as he saw the character of Herod in terms of the Mysteries. His successors in the field did not always allow themselves to be hampered in this respect. Herod’s bombastic style was not permitted to die of desuetude in the period which saw the passing of the religious drama.

The Herod of Alexandre Hardy’s celebrated *Mariamne* (c. 1600) loves a sonorous phrase every bit as well as his mediæval prototype, “qui signala ses cruantez par le meurtre des

Saints Innocens," as Hardy takes care to remind us in his *Argument*. It is true that Herod's flood of invective is not wholly unprovoked, for in the course of the action he is addressed by his wife as "peste abominable," "Mégère d'enfer," "Lestrigon béant au carnage affamé," "hypocrite bourreau," "tigre plus felon que n'est la félonie." He is evidently not in her graces. In spite of this, the king's remorse for her death is little short of spectacular. His laments are pitiful to hear; he turns his "fyled tongue" upon himself as he is accustomed to turn it upon others and with as excellent an effect, calls his actions "Laestrygonish rather than royal," urges his people to avenge the queen upon him, tears out his hair, and attempts suicide.

Passages of similar import occur also in Tristan's *La Mariane* (1636), in which the part of Herod was once acted so strenuously that the actor suffered a stroke on the stage. In the third act of this excellent play, Herod waxes wode in traditional fashion:

La fureur me saisit & ce cruel outrage
Me mettant hors de moy m'abandonne à la rage.

He suffers woefully because of his wife's coldness:

Ah, tu m'as mis dans le fers, tu m'as mis dans la flame
Tu m'as percé le coeur, tu m'as arraché l'ame.

This is but a preliminary. His tortures really commence after he has heard the recital of Mariamne's death. Then he begins to rave in earnest, tries to take his retainer's sword to kill himself, is twice restrained, calls on the Hebrews to rise and kill him, then curses them for a timid people who dare not undertake such heroic action. In the course of his remarks, he calls upon God to punish them in various ways—to loose the Scythians against them, to burn their houses and ravish their daughters before their very eyes. If any of them are left after

this, they are to wander over the face of the earth in disgrace, while brimstone rains upon Jerusalem, which is to become an abyss. And having wrought himself up to this pitch, he takes leave of his senses.

This scene of fury and lamentation, based as it is upon Josephus, and colored by the bombastic practices of the tyrant of the Mysteries, becomes more or less traditional in the Mariamne tragedies. In Voltaire's *Mariamne* (1724) we find Herod, though much subdued, again calling upon the people to rise and the heavens to fall:

Armez vous contre moi, sujets qui la perdez,
Tonnez, écrasez-moi, cieux qui la possédez.

Similarly in Gozzi's (unacknowledged) version of Voltaire's play (c. 1751):

e voi tutti prendete
L'arme, o vasalli, voi chi la perdeste;
Tuona e m'infrangi, o ciel, che la possiedi.

And in Scevola's *Erode* (1815):

O miei vasalli
Che l'avete perduta, ripigliate
Contra me l'armi. Il parricida io sono
Punitemi, uccidetemi.

With these we may compare the analogous scene in Markham and Sampson's *Herod and Antipater* (1622), which is in a very different tradition:

Enough, too much; th'ast slaine me, Pheroras;
O, I have lost in her death more true joys,
Then Heaven can give or, Earth is worthy of:
I am a Traitor to my selfe and love;
To Nature, Vertue, Beauty, Excellence.

This is no longer the authentic voice of the Wrathful King. There is no mistaking it, on the other hand, in Klaj's *Herodes*

*der Kindermörder*² (1645) when Herod defies heroically the ghosts who come to plague him:

Zerzerret, zerstukket
Zerfleischet, zeiknikket
Rauchet und schmauchet
Rädert und ädert.
Ich bin ja keinen Unterthan
Will stehn bis auf den letzten Mann.

or in Hallmann's *Die beleidigte Liebe* (c. 1670), in which the cupbearer's accusation draws from the king the eloquent outburst:

Mord! Mord! Mord! Mord! Mord! Mord! Man will den Fursten toten,
Mord! Mord! Mord! Mord! Mord! Mord!

and in the spirited scene in which Mariamne's eunuchs are tortured on the stage under the king's personal supervision:

Zieht, foltert, reckt und brennt! . . . Flösst heiss geschmolzen Pech in
den verfluchten Mund! Streut Salz aufs rohe Fleisch!

in which the king makes a united front with his counterpart of the Senecan school.

This Herod—derived partly from the Mysteries, partly from Seneca, and who for the rest may have other antecedents as well—is identifiable in a considerable number of plays. In Tirso's *Vida de Herodes* (1636), he begins by manifesting a strong predilection for milk mixed with the blood of babies, and ends by killing, in addition to the usual Mariamne-Aristobulus-Joseph group of his victims, the entire Sanhedrin, all the descendants of David, 14,000 children (off stage), and a stageful of mothers and children, including a child of his own. The final tableau of this play is impressive: the furious king is seen dead, with a murdered child in each hand, a pose

²This work, while it has some interest for us, can hardly be numbered among the Mariamne plays. It is a dramatic poem dealing with the afflictions of Herod. A description of the play may be found in Landau, "Die Dramen von Herodes und Mariamne," *Zeitschrift für vergl. Litt.*, IX, 307.

taken directly from the Mysteries. In Lozano's *Herodes Ascalonita*, after the king has killed the usual number of people, he is shown dining upon food which is splashed with the blood of his victims. Then is revealed the headless trunk of Mariamne, whereupon the king starts up furiously with a table knife, storms about the stage brandishing it, and at last rushes off to kill himself. This is by no means the end of the Wrathful King. He is kept alive well into the nineteenth century; there is something of him in Neumeister's *Herodes der Grosse* (1853), in Rückert's play of the same name (1844), in the *Herod* of Iliowizi (1884) and that of Amélie Rives (1888), in whose play he evinces the desire to "turn the Nile to blood and swim in its encrimsoned waves," and to be "a vampire flattened at the throat of one vast body which should be the flesh incorporate of everything alive." There is something of him even in Hebbel's *Herodes und Mariamne* (1849), in which he is once more depicted as the slaughterer of the Innocents.

Obviously, the slaughter of the Innocents has no proper business in a Mariamne play, and cannot be motivated in any usual version of the plot. Its presence in the Mariamne dramas is ordinarily by way of an added attraction and final touch to the character of the tyrant. It simply serves further to confuse this character. In Tirso's play it is the result of rage; in Hebbel's, it is a gesture of defiance. It is, of course, a long way from the senseless savagery of Tirso's Herod to the delicate psychic processes of the hero of Hebbel's tragedy. But, as we shall see, it is questionable whether Hebbel has improved much on Tirso with respect to the motivation of the massacre.

By the middle of the fifteenth century the Herod of the Mysteries had developed tolerably firm outlines. Tyrannical, bombastic, revengeful, and cruel, he continued to split the ears of the groundlings for another century on the stages and pageants of the popular theatre. Meanwhile, in scholarly quar-

ters, a new and fascinating dramatic type had been discovered, a type in its way as tyrannical, bombastic, revengeful, and cruel, which was to influence the drama most powerfully—the Senecan tyrant.

There is a vast difference between the tyrant of the Mysteries and the Senecan tyrant, as indeed the difference is vast between the Mystery plays and the Senecan tragedies. The Senecan plays dealt with rhetorical abstractions. The Mysteries—perhaps because at first they were spoken in Latin, which the laity did not understand—represented action with painstaking realism. But in the sixteenth century theatre which, merging the two forms, produced the rhetorical horrors of Senecan tragedy with the utter realism of the Mysteries, it was natural that the tyrant of the Mysteries should occasionally peep out from beneath the classical trappings which had newly come into fashion. *Gismond of Salerne*, *Gorboduc*, *The Spanish Tragedy*, and *Titus Andronicus* have little in them of the Herod of the Mysteries. But aside from the Mariamne plays which are his special province, in Tamburlaine, “threatening the world with high astounding terms,” in Edward II, and Richard III who “set the murd’rous Machiavell to school,” we may perhaps discern something of the Herod character.³

The Mystery plays were dramatizations of prose narrative taken from the Bible. The Renaissance had classical authority for basing its dramas upon history as well. The playwright who contemplated launching a tragedy in the early sixteenth century thus had a vast unexplored sea of possible material before him. The Senecan models were by no means sedate, Seneca had chosen for his themes gruesome and bloody tales of adultery, incest, and murder, particularly the murder of near relatives. The Renaissance imitated him not only in form, but in the choice of plot and character.

³ Tomlinson, in *Der Herodes-Charakter*, is able to see traces of the Herod of the Mysteries also in Falstaff, Othello, Lear, and Caliban. It is somewhat difficult to follow him in these identifications.

The typical Senecan situation involved crime, preferably domestic crime, and retribution—specifically revenge—of a thoroughgoing nature. Christian tragedy dealt also with crime and punishment, but reserved retribution to the Almighty. Poetic justice was the keynote of mediaeval drama. The Senecan plays had no such purpose. They dealt with the circumstances of a purely personal settling of accounts, in which the protagonist, having been, or believing himself to have been, in some way sinned against, strove to eclipse the crime by the magnitude of a revenge which could not but leave him ultimately quite wretched also. This, in general, was the tragic situation the Renaissance inherited from Seneca; his imitators in the Renaissance canvassed history for plots of this nature. The resulting product, of course, varied widely in quality. It ranged all the way from *Alejandra*, *King Cambises*, and *Titus Andronicus* to *Hamlet* and *Othello*. Often enough, unhappily, it represented, in the words of the *Introduction to A Warning for Faire Women* (1599) only

How some damn'd tyrant to obtain a crown
Stabs, hangs, impoisons, smothers, cutteth throats.

The story in Josephus was evidently not a bad example of this kind of plot. It contained all the requisite ingredients—crime, revenge, jealousy, tyrant, heroine, and bloodshed. The astute humanist, Lodovico Dolce, who had already translated Seneca and reworked some of Euripides,⁴ served up the Mariamne story partly on the model of the master's putative *Octavia*, partly on that of his *Thyestes*, but with an enlightened eye also to the pattern of Greek drama.

Marianna is usually referred to as the redeeming example of the tragic art of its period.⁵ It is not pure Senecan tragedy;

⁴ *Giocasta*, from the *Phœnissæ*, *Iphigenia* and *Hecuba*, reborn, as he says, from Euripides.

⁵ E.g. J. A. Symonds, *Renaissance in Italy* (Modern Library) II, 243, D. C. Stuart, *Development of Dramatic Art* (New York, 1933), p. 266, J. B. Fletcher, *Literature of the Italian Renaissance* (New York, 1934), p. 281.

it is tintured to some extent with Greek influence. The second of its prologues is reminiscent of the Morality plays, but its abstract characters, Jealousy and the Devil, may have some other provenience—perhaps Plautine comedy,⁶ perhaps some classical opening such as that of the first act of *Thyestes*, in which a fury goads the ghost of Tantalus to start the tragedy. The play is exceptional among Senecan tragedies in that it has scope for action, and time to develop plot, suspense, and character. Marianna is not stained with blood, incest, or adultery as is the usual Senecan heroine. She is guiltless, and capable of arousing sympathy; naturally, this does not enhance the sympathetic character of Herod. But in order to make an adequate appraisal of this character, it will be necessary to give, at this point, some account of the play.

Dolce's tragedy, first printed in 1565, consists of two prologues, five acts, a number of choral interludes, and a choice selection of tirades and moral sentences. In the first of the prologues, Tragedy itself speaks, briefly giving the argument of the play, adding some praise of Venus, and then a description of the setting—a castle in the foreground, in the background, Jerusalem. In the second prologue, Pluto announces his intention of empowering himself over Herod by means of Jealousy. Jealousy now appears, and, charged with the fate of Herod, confidently predicts success. Nevertheless, Pluto decides to enter Herod's body in order personally to supervise his thought and actions. When these preliminaries are concluded, the action begins.

In the opening scene, Marianna tells the nurse of a dream in which her murdered brother Aristobulo appeared to warn her of forthcoming evil. She desires to avenge Aristobulo; revenge, she says, is the sweetest thing in the world. She detests Herod; she knows that before leaving for the court of Octavius, Herod charged Soemo to kill her if he should fail to return.

⁶ So suggested in Stuart, *loc. cit.*

The nurse tries, vainly, to calm her. At this point, Soemo comes to warn Marianna that Herod is in a dangerous mood, for he has been closeted all day with the wicked Salome. Marianna promises not to reveal the fact that Soemo has told her his secret, but she refuses to do anything to placate her husband. In the second act, Salome accuses the queen, through the agency of the corrupt cupbearer, of an attempt to poison Herod. The king demands proofs. Instead, the cupbearer names Marianna's eunuch as her accomplice. When the queen appears, a spirited stichomythia ensues, and in the course of the scene the cupbearer is forced to confess his treachery. He is packed off to a dungeon, but the king is still suspicious, and presently elicits from the eunuch a confession that Soemo has revealed the secret command. Herod instantly concludes that Marianna and Soemo are lovers, and that therefore the cupbearer's accusation must have been true.

The investigation is resumed in the third act. When Soemo appears, the king first disarms him with friendly words, then accuses him point-blank of wishing to marry Marianna and usurp the throne. The unhappy Soemo can do no more than compare himself with the chaste Joseph and the equally chaste Hippolytus; but these allusions get him nowhere, and he is led away to be beheaded. Herod's counselor pleads for the queen—he speaks of the age and poor appearance of Soemo and contrasts him with the king who is handsome, worthy of love and no more than thirty-five years of age. Herod answers that women are not reasonable creatures; moreover, Marianna deserves to die for the mere suspicion of adultery.

In Act Four, the chorus hears a long report of Soemo's death. Then Herod comes in and examines, with relish, his rival's head and hands, which are brought to him in a silver vessel. The chorus deplores the king's barbarity, and is promptly told to keep quiet, while Marianna is summoned and presented with the vessel and its contents. She does not take the matter

tamely; Herod thereupon informs her that as a special mark of his love, he will send her at once to join her beloved. She is taken out, together with the remains of Soemo, which are to be thrown to the dogs. Her little sons enter with their nurse, and offer themselves as knightly champions for their mother, "who never," they protest, "was guilty of outrage to the marital bed." It is in vain; Herod declares that their attitude proves them to be children of Soemo. When they retort with insolence, the king commands the guards to seize them, alive or dead. The children run off, and we hear how they are overcome by force of numbers. Herod's orders are that they are to be strangled; Marianna and her mother are to be decapitated forthwith.

Act Five is without action. The king has already repented of his cruelty, but the messenger he sent to stay the execution arrived too late, and a *nuntio* gives a minute description of the queen's death. Herod, in remorse, decides to punish his wicked sister. He wishes he could die and unite himself with Marianna, but he knows she is in heaven where he can never go, and he contents himself with ordering her funeral. The chorus ends the play with appropriate moral sentiments.

The character of Herod in Josephus is not, as we have seen, too easy to understand. But it was hardly necessary for Dolce to understand it for the purposes of this kind of tragedy. The Senecan machinery took care of Herod, smoothed out the irregularities and inconsistencies of his nature, together with whatever vitality the character may have had, and turned him out a well-rounded stock tyrant. The prologue gives one to understand that we are to witness the actions of a man under the influence of jealousy. But how far Herod's actions in this play may be imputed to jealousy is very questionable. Indeed, it may be suggested that the motive of his actions is jealousy only in the sense that jealousy motivates the revenge of Atreus in *Thyestes*.

In Dolce's mind, the story in Josephus squared very well with a received formula of classical tragedy, save that the king's suspicions, interpreted in a cinquecentist spirit, necessarily involved the idea of honor. It is there, in the absence of any direct evidence of his wife's infidelity, that the king feels himself most sorely touched. It is not enough that he be not sinned against in reality; the fact that Marianna has given him the least cause for suspicion is criminal in his eyes.⁷

Marianna's coldness has made the king suspicious. The cup-bearer's recantation does not remove the suspicion which his accusation has further aroused. When the eunuch accuses Soemo of having revealed the secret command, the entire affair suddenly makes sense—Soemo has seduced Marianna, who wishes to kill Herod in order to enjoy the throne with her beloved. At last we are on familiar ground, for this is no other than the Atreus-Thyestes situation, and now both Dolce and Herod know exactly what to do.⁸ Herod casts off his air of a reasonable human being, gets down to business in Senecan fashion, and the horrors commence. First, he dishes up portions of his rival in silver vessels; next, the children should be broiled and eaten—unfortunately, history stands in the way here, and Dolce has to content himself and his hero with having the boys strangled off stage, none the less in a manner which sufficiently recalls the child slayings of Medea and Hercules. Finally there is the tyrant's repentance, for which the author has the historical authority of Josephus, and the classical precedent of Creon and the other repentant tyrants of classical drama.

In this manner, Herod takes on, very naturally, the Senecan habit. Like Atreus and the others, he is given to gloating morbidly over his hurt and his vengeance. As he picks over the

⁷ *Marianna*, Act I, l. 192. With this idea we may compare the Spanish idea of honor as exemplified, for example, in *El médico de su honra*. The author of the *Tragedie of Mariam* makes a similar point.

⁸ Cf. Sulmone's revenge in Giraldis's *Orbecche* (1541), from which Herod may have taken a hint or two

contents of his silver dish for the edification of Marianna, he tells her it contains

The hands which oft-times, much to our disgrace,
About your throat full tenderly were wound—
And here, O shameless woman, is the heart
On which your own so often hotly pressed.⁹

In all these goings-on, he is a very unjust grim tyrant indeed: "Like to a bloody raging Feend and monstrous beast untam'de." But by the end of the fifth act, his cruelty has pretty well run its course, and, having suddenly perceived his mistake, he makes some attempt to match his former fury with the piteousness of his laments. He even desires to kill himself, but instead of doing so, as a proper Stoic should, he chooses to live, and orders Marianna's funeral rites more or less in the manner of Massinissa in Trissino's *Sofonisba* (1515). Nevertheless, his lamentation is spectacular; not without cause, we may recall, for in accordance with the unities, Dolce has made him kill retainer, wife, mother-in-law, and children all in the course of the afternoon.

The scene, or act, of lamentation and repentance are characteristic not only of Dolce's play, but of all Mariamne tragedy. It is impossible to disassociate these circumstances from the account of Herod in Josephus, and almost everywhere the story has appeared, in abridgement or paraphrase, the details of this titanic remorse are noted with satisfaction. On the other hand, by 1565 the tyrant's repentance was already a cliché of the theatre. It had been found in the *Antigone* of Sophocles and Seneca's *Hippolytus*, and imitated in the vernacular as early as 1499, the date of the production of Cammelli's *Filostrato e Panfila*. In the case of Herod, history and convention went happily hand in hand.

Thus, the result of Dolce's treatment of the story in Josephus, as far as Herod is concerned, is to exaggerate his cruelty, but, at the same time, to emphasize his repentance, and so to widen

⁹ The translations in this volume, unless otherwise accredited, are mine.

the inconsistency in his character to the point of making him quite incomprehensible. This repentance, which, in Dolce's play, is entirely unmotivated, comes upon Herod like a clap of thunder; the result is that the Herod of the fourth act and the Herod of the fifth hardly seem to be, and in fact, are not, the same Herod. From this difficulty, as we shall see, Senecan Herod almost always suffers.

Herods of the pure bloodhound strain, or Wrathful King variety, are comparatively rare. The "bloodhound" is usually a mongrel. Many dramatists have been fascinated by the number of crimes which a Mariamne play can be made to include; commonly, however, some motivation is provided to account for these butcheries. Where the motive, as is very usual, is revenge, Senecan traits and attitudes are generally combined with the conventional wrathfulness and bloodthirstiness of the mediaeval tyrant. This combination of Senecan Tyrant and Wrathful King results in one of the most common of Herod characters.

Hallmann's Herod (1670), for example, has both strains. He is bombastic, wrathful, vain, and boastful, and at the same time suspicious, revengeful, and morbidly cruel. Orrery's Herod (1694) is of similar stripe. He is frequently defied by his wife, and is called a tyrant and usurper to his face by his own son. He is supremely cruel—his very first words are a command to torture the whole Sanhedrin. As befits a Herod of the Restoration, he is a quite absolute monarch, who believes that only absolutism can save the state, and he has the courage of his convictions though, like the Wrathful King, he spends much of his time in merely brandishing his sword. He has, in addition, certain characteristics which are more usual in the heroes of "heroic" drama than in the Wrathful King or Senecan Tyrant.

The horrible nature of some of these Herods is such as to frighten even themselves. This is the case with Goldingham's

tyrant (c. 1567), who turns from his evil deeds with revulsion even as he—reluctantly—goes on with them; the same is true of the hero of Markham and Sampson's *Herod and Antipater* (1622), and the Herod of Amélie Rives' *Herod and Mariamne* (1888), who frequently doubts his own sanity, and with good reason. To these examples of Senecan Herod, we may add the Acoreo of Argensola's *Alejandra* and the Herods of E. C., Lozano, Bianchi, Rückert, Neumeister, and others, such as the duke in Massinger's *Mariamne* play, *The Duke of Milan*, who have something of the Senecan strain in them.

It has been observed that the Herod of the *Mysteries* was a weak tyrant, easily swayed, prompt to break into lamentation, easily dejected and cast into despair. On the other hand, Senecan characters are far from weak—they are ever ready to brave death and destruction. Even the children in Seneca's plays face death with indifference, while his heroes and heroines exhibit the most impressive *apatheia* with respect to life's accidents. Phaedra, Deianira, and Jocasta kill themselves with Stoic calmness; Astyanax and Polyxena meet death with eagerness; Octavia, Cassandra, Electra, and Antigone look upon it with courage, and even the cowardly Jason and contemptible Aegisthus die without complaint. If Seneca's heroes or heroines can be accused of weakness, it must be with respect to the intellect rather than the will. They are prone to morbid introspection and cruel self-analysis. We first come upon Atreus in *Thyestes* brooding over his weakness in not seeking revenge; he is lost in the contemplation of his own doubts and fears when Thyestes makes his entrance. Oedipus and Jocasta in the *Thebais* similarly give themselves up to uncomfortable self-searching when they realize what lies before them, and Medea wavers at length concerning the course she shall pursue.

Herod's tragic predicament is no less acute than that of any Senecan protagonist. It is quite clear to him, so we are told in the

Antiquities, that he is destined to suffer equally with Mariamne in her punishment: "as he would gladly have her punished, so he was afraid lest ere he was aware, he should by putting her to death, bring a heavier punishment upon himself at the same time. . . . And so, sometimes he was angry with her and sometimes reconciled himself to her; but by always changing one passion for another, he was still in great uncertainty."¹⁰

In passages of Josephus such as this we glimpse the dramatic possibilities of the character of Herod. The Herod of *Jewish War*, Bk. I, chap. 22 is not very interesting dramatically; he seems to be nothing but a man of ungovernable temper who kills in a fit of anger and subsequently is sorry for it. He is not even the dramatic equal of Senecan Herod, who is a cold-blooded individual engaged in what he considers his duty. He amounts to little more than the Wrathful King. But this Herod of the *Antiquities*, who knows he must kill the thing he loves, whose suffering is based upon that knowledge, whose need to be delivered from uncertainty is even greater than his need for happiness, is evidently a tragic character of the first magnitude.

The first of our dramatists to realize this was Alexandre Hardy, whose *Mariamne*, produced 1595-1600, was first printed in the second volume of the unique edition of his *Théâtre* (1623-28).¹¹ The play is unfortunately so extravagant in its language that its very real merits are somewhat obscured. Its plot, save for the omission of certain Senecan peculiarities, is not materially different from that of Dolce's play; the character of Herod is very different indeed.

The play opens with a long sermon addressed to Herod by the ghost of Aristobule, who accuses the king of his crimes and foretells his unhappiness with Mariamne. The ghost vanishes. Then Herod proceeds to justify his actions for the benefit of Salome and Pherore. His crimes, says Herod, were politically necessary;

¹⁰ *Antiq.*, Bk. XV, chap. 7.

¹¹ *Le Théâtre d'Alexandre Hardy Parisien*, Vol. II (Paris, 1625) and also Vol. II, ed. Stengel (Marburg-Paris, 1884).

he has achieved greatness. Yet his domestic unhappiness spoils everything for him: in trying to possess all, he has got nothing. Salome suggests that since all his difficulties come through Mariamne, he get rid of her. But Herod will not listen to such advice, and his brother and sister are left lamenting this lack of foresight, which, they cry, is likely to bring ruin upon them all. In the next act, we find Mariamne complaining to the heavens, via her nurse, of Herod's tyranny. Her only desire is for the death of this tyrant, tiger, butcher, Laestrygonian, who has murdered her relatives and ordered, so Soesme has told her, that she herself be killed in the event of his death. The nurse advises her to be careful, lest she be overheard. But Mariamne has nothing to conceal—she desires to kill Herod before he kills her. The nurse reminds her of Herod's humility and kindness. Mariamne finds all this odious; for even if her husband treats her well, he is still of low birth and a murderer. A page now comes to summon the queen to Herod's cabinet. She goes, leaving the stage free for Salome and the king's cupbearer, who concoct a plot to accuse the queen of attempting to poison the king's wine.

When the third act opens, we find Herod in a rage against his wife, for, as he tells us, she has rejected his conjugal advances and refused to quench his amorous flames. This refusal, he cries, spells her final ruin—now he no longer trusts her; her every action is suspect. The cupbearer chooses this moment to deliver his accusation. Herod calls upon heaven, earth, and sea—the woman he loves desires to take his life!

The queen is summoned. Herod charges her with attempting to poison his wine. She invites him to proceed with her execution, since her executioner was already appointed when Herod went to visit Antony. The king at first pretends not to understand, then he orders the infamous Soesme and all his close friends to be seized, for it is quite certain that Soesme has soiled the honor of the royal couch. The prisoners are led in at once. The examination begins. Soesme's eunuch admits that Soesme has told the queen

of the secret command, but he stoutly maintains Mariamne's innocence. He is sent off to be tortured. Soesme declares that when news came of Herod's death, he revealed the secret in order to ingratiate himself with Mariamne. The king refuses to credit such a story, and packs him off to jail. There too, in the next act, we find the queen, praying for strength to triumph over death and her husband.

In the next scene, Herod laments his pitiful case. He is tortured by conflicting passions; he is a lamb between two wolves, alternately tormented by the beauty of Mariamne and the hideousness of her crime. If she lives, she will betray him again and again; if she dies, he may as well die also. And he resolves to follow the Golden Mean: if she repents of her crime and returns to her conjugal duties, he will receive her with open arms; otherwise she must die. Mariamne appears. The cupbearer is called upon to repeat his accusation. Mariamne cries out at it, but will not trouble to justify herself. Herod dismisses all the company. He exhorts the queen to confess and be forgiven. She answers scornfully that before she changes her attitude, Thetis will lose her bitterness, Zephyr will blow in winter, and so on, and urges him to kill her if he dares. He curses her roundly and sends her back to prison.

We follow the trial no further, for in the last act a messenger comes to describe the execution with much artistry and in great detail. On the way to the scaffold, Mariamne's mother, imitating the fury of the Bacchantes, attacked her daughter. "What cruelty!" cries Herod. Then come the details of Mariamne's death. Herod is in despair. He calls upon heaven, Phoebus, Clotho, and the people to avenge this crime upon its authors, upon himself first of all. He is tearing his hair when Pherore enters, surprised at the noise he is making, and counsels him to pass the sponge henceforth over his loss. Pherore is banished for his pains, together with Salome. Herod then declares that, in spite of all, Mariamne still lives; she is to be deemed a goddess. An altar is to be raised to

her in the palace. There his life will distill itself in tears. Eventually he hopes to win her forgiveness; when he has done so, he will die.

Hardy's *Mariamne* has been summarized in some detail because it is from this source, rather than from Dolce, that the tradition springs whence proceed the best of the Mariamne tragedies. For this Herod is no conventional representation. With all the verbal extravagances and mythological claptrap, Hardy's Herod is very much a creature of flesh and blood. The structure of the plot and its various relations will be discussed later; for the present, it may suffice to remark that while Hardy inflates his characters, undeniably, almost to comic proportions, he blows them up impartially, so that they preserve, on the whole, just mutual relations. Accordingly, though as individuals their actions may seem preposterous, in relation to each other they succeed in working out a profoundly tragic action.

Josephus tells us that Mariamne was a woman somewhat rough by nature. Hardy makes her out an implacable shrew, so that, in contrast with her, Herod takes on the guise of a sympathetic character. Though his actions, in the last analysis, remain enigmatic, he is evidently placed in a situation of tragic ambiguity. It is true that he has no one but himself to blame for the animosity which his wife feels toward him. But he is not aware of this; he is aware only of her hatred. In fact, she has evil intentions toward him, and he is unable to believe anything of her but evil. Under the circumstances, there seems to be nothing left for him to do which can possibly be to his advantage, and in his attempt to solve a problem which admits of no solution, he is thrown into terrible uncertainty. The conventional scene of lamentation is thus motivated from the very beginning of the play, for Herod is aware from the first of what Mariamne's death will mean to him, and we are made aware of the inevitability of the tragic outcome from the earliest possible moment.

Of Dolce's Herod nothing now persists save the quaintness of

the conception. A grim tyrant bent upon the revenge of a fancied wrong, inhumanly hard, egotistical and cruel, he is able in our day only to provoke a smile or gesture of revulsion. Sachs' Herod is a puppet crudely carved according to a pattern of the Middle Ages. But even in the long perspective which we must take of him, the Herod of Hardy remains a poignant figure. He is neither a fury slinging flame, nor a maniac scattering dust—he is a man in a desperate case. The situation in which he finds himself is largely of his own making, but it is one in which he is certain to suffer, for he is passionately in love with a woman who not only detests him to the point where she desires to kill him, but who actually seems to take gruesome joy in forcing him to kill her.¹² Under these circumstances, he pleads, threatens, commands; is by turns suspicious, arrogant, humble, passionate, and jealous, now suitor, now tyrant—in short, he is a husband. This interpretation presents certain difficulties; nevertheless the character of the *Vacillating Lover* remains basic in the formula which seems to have come closest to greatness in the dramatizations of the Mariamne story.

In Josephus' account, the circumstances leading up to the death of Mariamne are so complex that it is difficult to define clearly Herod's motives in ordering her execution. It is certain that he regarded any living representative of the Hasmonean family as a possible danger to himself and his dynasty. Certainly, too, he was influenced in his actions by the continual dissension in his household, the haughtiness and hatred of Mariamne, and the insistence of Salome that the troublesome queen be disposed of. To what extent jealousy may have played a part in the affair is not at all clear.

We have no choice, if we credit Josephus' interpretation, but to believe that the king had been jealous of Mariamne on a previous occasion. When Salome first denounced the relations

¹² This aspect of the tradition that stems from Hardy furnishes Hebbel with an important motive for his *Herodes*, as we shall see.

of Mariamne and Joseph to Herod, we are told, Herod "could not bear the torments of jealousy." Yet, because of the love he bore her, he was restrained from harming her, and at last he dropped his suspicions. In the second episode, however, Mariamne's hatred and insolence are emphasized in such a manner that Herod might well believe his wife was dangerous. At a time, then, when her scorn had goaded him into fury, the cupbearer's accusation and the eunuch's confession that Sohemus had betrayed his secret combined to bring about the king's decision to kill Mariamne. In view of all these circumstances, jealousy seems an inadequate term with which to describe Herod's probable state of mind. If, however, the dramatist wishes to treat the Mariamne story as the basis for a drama of jealousy, a few alterations of the story readily enable him to do so.

In general, the dramatists have treated the jealousy aspect of the story in three ways. There are, first of all, those plays which concern themselves primarily with Herod's revenge as a gruesome or pathetic spectacle, and treat Herod and Mariamne in the relation of tyrant and victim. Then there is the group of plays in which Herod is depicted primarily as an unsuccessful lover, without further complication. In such plays, jealousy is a marginal factor in the catastrophe, which is brought about mainly by Mariamne's hatred; for, while Herod may or may not suspect her of infidelity, his primary purpose is to gain or keep her love, and he kills her only when he sees this to be impossible. A third group involves what are preëminently plays of jealousy: all of these plays involve the presence of a rival for Mariamne's affections. This rival is usually a sympathetic character. The conflict in such plays is between the rivals.

Dolce's *Marianna* belongs to the first group. As in Senecan tragedy in general, if jealousy is a motive, it is present only as a condition precedent to the horrors which are to follow,

the main business of the play. The second prologue tells us that it is through jealousy that Herod is to be damned. The final chorus, however, warns us not against jealousy, but against anger and hate. Anger and hate are, indeed, the motives of the action. Nowhere in the play does Herod evince the least sign of affection for Mariamne upon which we may base the assumption that he feels jealousy in the normal sense of the term. The depiction of love as a preliminary to jealousy is not, in general, a characteristic of classical drama.

The ancients do not seem to have cared for love scenes on the stage, and neither in their comedies nor their tragedies is it usual to find lovers placed in juxtaposition. The usual technique is to have them relate, in tragedy, their woes, in comedy, their difficulties, to subordinate personages, while only the consequences of their passion are represented. The inference seems to be that the ancients were interested in contemplating in the theatre not love itself, but the results of love. For Italian tragedy in the Renaissance, also, love was a means to an end, usually an exceedingly unpleasant end. So it is with Trissino, Giraldi, Speroni, and Dolce. But a little later, on the French stage, love was to come into its own, bringing with it dramas in which jealousy was not merely alluded to as a motive, but depicted as a moving spectacle. Very different from Herod's scene with Marianna in the second act of Dolce's play is the scene of jealousy presented by Rotrou, under Spanish influence, in his *Laure persécutée*, where Orantée longs yet fears to see the mistress who has, he suspects, betrayed him.

The treatment of the jealousy motive in Hardy's *Mariamne* has, of course, much more in common with Rotrou's method than with that of Dolce, but this motive does not bring about the catastrophe. In Hardy's play, when Herod's jealousy is aroused, he promptly executes Soesme. Once Soesme is removed, the king stands ready to forgive Mariamne on almost any terms, and it is only when she remains obdurate in her

contempt and hatred that he gives way, fearing that if she lives she will betray him again and again. Similar things may be said of the analogous scenes in Tristan's *La Mariane*, though Tristan emphasizes the king's jealousy somewhat more than Hardy.

There are, however, as we have said, a number of plays in which Herod's jealousy is neither a means to an end nor a subordinate motive, but is depicted, illustrated, and developed as the plot unfolds, and leads directly to the catastrophe. Obviously, in such plays, little can be made of the king's jealousy unless he has some tangible cause for it.

In the *Antiquities*, we find that the betrayal of the secret charge in each case makes the king furious; but the inference that the queen could have secured the betrayal of these secrets only through marital infidelity seems precipitate to us and not particularly convincing even to Herod. In neither case, it is true, do Herod's presumptive rivals seem to have the necessary glamor. Joseph is Herod's uncle, presumably a man well on in years. Sohemus is a battered veteran. Neither of these is a likely rival for the king, and Josephus makes little of them, possibly because of his anti-Herodian bias, so that there is not the slightest hint in his account from which any connection between these men and Mariamne can be fabricated. Dolce is well aware of this difficulty, as the *consigliere's* speech shows, and Hardy is not even vaguely interested in the problem of Soesme's possibilities as a rival.

But when the fulcrum of the action is Herod's jealousy, the lack of a suitable rival becomes embarrassing. For if the king has no colorable excuse for jealousy, and yet persists in making a point of this passion, he necessarily becomes an abnormal character, and, given his special affinities, may be expected to take on traits of the bloodhound type. To save the character from this fate, the astute playwright is forced to provide him with a sufficient cause for his jealousy.

This may be done quite readily either by conferring upon Joseph or Sohemus the necessary attributes of a rival,¹³ or by providing a wholly new character. Both these devices have been employed. Besides Joseph in a new guise and Sohemus refurbished, the list of Herod's rivals numbers Tyridates the Parthian prince, Varus the Roman general, Phasaelus the king's brother, Antipater the king's son, and Octavius Caesar. Of these, the most interesting is Tyridates the Parthian.

The first of the Mariamne plays to make use of this Tyridates is a very bad one, Hallmann's *Die beleidigte Liebe oder die grossmütige Mariamne* (1670). It is a crude concoction, but the author is not entirely wanting in dramatic sense, and since he evidently realizes that jealousy is the mainspring of the action, he begins by establishing carefully the king's love for Mariamne. In his play, Herod is made to boast of his happiness, his power, and the beauty of his wife; next we are privileged to witness a scene in which he shows himself a fiery lover, but is sharply repulsed; two acts later, we are shown a scene of marital discord in the royal bedchamber. Then comes the cupbearer's accusation and the ensuing trial. It is only at this point that the glamorous Tyridates makes his appearance—not in person but by proxy, for it is his ambassador who comes to plead for the unfortunate queen. It then appears that some time before the first act, Tyridates was driven out of Parthia into Palestine, and there fell in love with the queen, who did not however lose her virtue in the encounter, since his love for her was pure and chaste. Salome, however, was enamored of the handsome Parthian; as he did not reciprocate, she took every opportunity to calumniate the more fortunate Mariamne and her lover, and thus forced Tyridates once more into exile. The appearance of his rival's ambassador naturally awakens such jealousy in the heart of Herod, who has suffered,

¹³ J. B. Fletcher, "Herod in the Drama," *Studies in Philology*, XIX (1922), 298.

as we have seen, repeated repulses on the part of his wife, that he finally determines she shall die.

In this somewhat ambiguous fashion, Herod makes his debut in the role of Jealous Husband. It is rather a timid debut. The presence in the country, if not in the play, of a real and worthy rival emphasizes, it is true, the new aspect of Herod, but on the whole he preserves here most of the characteristics of the Wrathful King, with a strong infusion of Senecan Tyrant. However, the next play to make use of Tyridates, Pordage's *Herod and Mariamne* (1674), puts the king definitely in the Jealous Husband class.

The omission of Tyridates from the action of Hallmann's play seems quaint, but it serves a purpose. Herod may be unsympathetic, but as long as he is unrivaled before our eyes, he preserves his stature. As soon as a sympathetic rival sets foot on the stage, it is inevitable that Herod should shrink in our estimation. It is then necessary that there be scenes between the rival and the queen, and between the rival and the king: the rival is certain to appear more sympathetic than the king. Particularly is this true if Mariamne's virtue is preserved, so that both she and her lover are made to suffer innocently as well as heroically. In this case, which is universal, the contrast between the appealing pair and the jealous husband skulking about in the background is almost too great for any principal character to bear.

This, then, is the dilemma with which the dramatist is faced. If Herod's jealousy is to furnish the motive power of the action, he must be provided with a rival, either real or imaginary. If, as in *Othello*, the rival is only imaginary, Herod's traditional bad character, unless the playwright is able to depart from it, is a hindrance. If the rival is real and sympathetic, the rival is very likely to steal the show.

Voltaire was especially sensitive to this difficulty. In the first

version of his *Mariamne* (1724), he provided Herod with a rival in the guise of the Roman praetor Varus, who is made to fall in love with the beautiful and chaste Mariamne. The necessary scene between Varus and Herod, however, turned out badly, for, as Voltaire wrote in the preface to his second version of the play (1730),

... Herod seemed in this play cruel and politically-minded; a tyrant to his subjects, his family, his wife; full of love for Mariamne, but full of a barbarous love which inspired in him not the slightest repentance for his furies. I gave Mariamne no other sentiments than an imprudent pride and inflexible hatred of her husband. And finally in order to conform with received opinion, I managed an interview between Herod and Varus in which I made the Praetor speak with the haughtiness which one imagines the Romans to have affected in speaking to kings.

What happened with all this arrangement? The inflexible Mariamne was not interesting at all; Herod, being no more than a criminal, was revolting; and his interview with Varus made him contemptible. I was present at the first performance: I was aware the moment Herod entered, that it was impossible the play should succeed.

The play did not succeed. In order to avoid making Herod contemptible, Voltaire, in the revision of 1730, substituted for the gallant and haughty Roman, the timid Platonic lover Sohême, from whose role every bit of color was carefully drained, and from whose veins every drop of blood. His first timid proffer of love was sternly rejected by Mariamne; thereafter his part was reduced to that of faithful Towser. In the third act of the play, Herod put in his appearance. He was a somewhat different Herod from that of the first version, a sorrowful and softened Herod, who had repented his crimes, and wished to turn over a new leaf:

It is true, remarks the author, that heroes should be depicted just as they were; but it is even more true that disagreeable characters should be softened; that one must think of the public for which one writes even more than of the hero who is being created, and that one

should imitate those able painters who embellish without losing the likeness. In order that Herod should preserve his likeness, it was necessary that he should excite indignation; but in order to please, he had to arouse pity.¹⁴

But in order to preserve the stature of this pitiable Herod, Voltaire was forced to diminish that of his rival almost to the vanishing point. If there were no Sohême in the play, and Mariamne had decided to run away by herself, the situation would hardly have been altered; even so Voltaire did not dare have Herod and Sohême meet on the stage.

For Voltaire was convinced that his play had failed principally because Herod had not been a sympathetic character, and he was determined that this time, by hook or crook, he should arouse sympathy. For this purpose, he bestowed upon him traits which made him, not noble, but pitiful, and these he borrowed from Hardy and Tristan. But the presence of even so weak a competitor for sympathy as Sohême seems to have pushed the king to strange extremes. He begins by pitying himself thoroughly; he decides to reform, to win the love of his people. Henceforth, he resolves, he will be more just and less severe. His sentiments suddenly become very advanced, he abjures his *ancien régime*, and, like Louis-Philippe, declares:

Je veux sur mes sujets régner en citoyen.

Presently he is told that Mariamne proposes to run away with Sohême. The spell is broken, he cries, now they shall see whether he is still Herod or not:

It was necessary, remarks Voltaire,¹⁵ that one should detest his crimes, that one should deplore his passion, that one should love his remorse, and that these changes, so violent, so sudden, so contrary, which form the character of Herod, should pass rapidly one by one into the soul of the spectator.

Salome understands Herod's nature as well as does Voltaire, and she fears the effect upon Herod of an interview with

¹⁴ Preface to the edition of 1730

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Mariamne. Mariamne is nevertheless brought in, with guards and confidante. She, of course, invites her husband to strike at once. But he prefers to cross-examine: Why was she running away? She loves Sohême? She stops him imperiously: her death should be enough; so cruel an affront she does not merit; she desires to go unblushing to her grave—how can he believe such a thing of her? He answers very sensibly that he can believe anything of her if she hates him. She protests her innocence once more; she is ready to die, but he must believe that she has preserved her virtue to the end—and, she adds, had he so willed, she might have loved him. Instantly his fury is turned into tenderness. “Are our hearts made only to detest each other?” he asks. “Give me back your hand, give me back your love.” She answers that his hand is still smoking with blood. He is sorry for it, she must believe him; she can see how far he is carried away, how great is his weakness. But can she really trust his repentance? He replies:

You may trust me in all if your hate I assuage,
Alas! all my cruelty, my inhuman rage,
If such flames in my heart are rekindled, 'tis you
Who by ceasing to love, make me savage anew.

Unfortunately, a guard rushes in at this point and announces that the people have revolted and, led by Sohême, are coming to storm the palace. Again the king's temper changes. He turns upon Mariamne: “You desire my death!” And he puts her once more under arrest. As he runs out to quell the uprising, he attempts to give further orders, but he is utterly confused:

I desire, I command—alas, fate bars the way—
I know not what to do—save to die in the fray!

But when he has returned victorious from the battle, he seems to know exactly what to do, for without waiting to hear anything, he orders the immediate execution of the queen. He is

made to listen to a report of Sohême's surrender. "Is everything ready," he asks impatiently, "for the execution of the queen?" It is. And the officer Narbas at once enters in tears with a description of the queen's death, to which he adds somewhat tardy evidence of the queen's innocence.

The rest of the play is taken from Tristan who took it from Hardy. The king makes a perfunctory attempt to stab himself, then falls into an armchair, thence into a weakness, thence to a lightness,

and by this declension
Into the madness wherein now he raves,
And all we wail for.

Undeniably, Voltaire has succeeded in creating a pitiful Herod; whether he has created an appealing one, the reader may judge.

It is not very likely that Voltaire had any acquaintance with Pordage's *Herod and Mariamne* (printed 1674), and the similarities between the two plays may be readily accounted for on the ground of their common ancestry. The central motive of Pordage's play, as in heroic plays generally, is love; the jealousy theme is paramount and the king's rival assumes significant proportions. The result is precisely what Voltaire desired to avoid:

In Pordage's play, for the first time, the Parthian Tyridates takes the stage in all his glory. Contrasted with this engaging rival, who appears to advantage in a good part of every act, the wretched king indeed cuts a sorry and ambiguous figure. As Pordage was not, like Voltaire, articulate in his intentions, it is not easy to say definitely what role he desired Herod to play. The king is not the chief villain of the piece—that role is reserved for Salome. Much less is he the hero. The protagonist of the action is Tyridates; the conflict is actually not between him and Herod, but between him and the virtuous Mariamne, for it is her virtue, not the power of the tyrant, that keeps the lovers apart. Thus, although Herod has actually an important part in the action, our

interest is shifted so completely from him that he is reduced to the status of an auxiliary character.

Under the circumstances, it is natural that Herod should conform to the type of the Vacillating Lover, and indeed he does so. In the course of the action, he proffers his love several times to his wife, is each time repulsed and each time grows dangerous. In the third act, he becomes convinced of Mariamne's love for Tyridates. Thenceforth, supposedly, he lives only for revenge, but this revenge is checked summarily by the Roman Sosius, and in the next act, Herod seems once more in a fair way to become the lover. However, at this point he discovers the betrayal of his secret by Sohemus, assumes the role of Wrathful King and has his retainers racked and strangled. In the last act there is another change, and we find him once again the lover. Presumably this might go on forever, save that it is now time to end the play, which Pordage does tidily by having the characters all kill each other.

Hardy had made the Vacillating Lover a touching and a tragic hero; Voltaire went to considerable lengths to make the Jealous Husband stir our sympathies; Pordage's Herod leaves us unmoved. The presence of the gallant and virtuous Tyridates dwarfs him; a liberal infusion of the bloodhound strain puts him definitely beyond the pale of our sympathy, and his amorous advances serve only to make him ridiculous as well as hateful. Moreover, he has not even the magnitude in evil-doing which renders him spectacular in some of the plays—he is much diminished in his state by the Roman Sosius and the shadowy figure of Augustus, as well as by his fear of the populace; his weakness is entirely explicit:

I see that my Fear is greater than my Rage,
I in this quarrel dare not Rome ingage:
Nor dare to my yet tot'ring Fortune trust,
But I must rule by seeming to be just.¹⁶

The role of jealous husband is, in general, one of the least attractive that the stage has to offer. It is very rare that, as in *Othello*, such characters are able to take on tragic splendor. When this role is thrust upon Herod, in particular, his situation as a stage character is likely to become desperate. Of the dozen Mariamne plays in which he is assigned this part¹⁷—the plays of Argensola, Massinger, Calderón, Tirso, Lozano, Hallmann, Pordage, Orrery, Voltaire, Nadal, and Scevola—not more than three can be said to have saved him from the pitfalls which beset it: Massinger's *Duke of Milan*, Calderón's *El Tetrarca*, and Scevola's *Erode*. Even in these plays there is room for doubt as to the extent to which he is saved.

Such are the principal forms assumed by the character of Herod in the drama. As the development of Mariamne as a character is not of sufficient moment to warrant separate consideration, we may now turn to a discussion of the plays from the point of view of plot and structure.

¹⁷ In some of these plays, of course, his character is also that of Vacillating Lover, of which the Jealous Husband may be a special case.

THE MARIAMNE DRAMAS

IN TELLING the story of Herod and Mariamne, Josephus unfolds a vast panorama. The fortunes of Herod are not merely the private fortunes of a petty prince; they are bound up with the fortunes of civilization, with the destruction of the old and the dawn of the new era. The execution of Mariamne is no simple domestic crime, nor even the climax of a vendetta; it marks the end of the great Maccabean house, and foreshadows the ruin of a people.

But the writers of the Renaissance who first dramatized the Mariamne story were but dimly aware, if at all, of its proportions, and the turn given to it by the French, in particular, resulted in bringing it pretty well within the limits of domestic drama. The term is of course sufficiently broad to cover a variety of forms. The *Agamemnon*—*Clytemnestra*—*Electra*—*Orestes* affair is domestic tragedy, so too is the story of Nero and Octavia, Atreus and Thyestes, or Hercules and Megara; so too are the stories of Othello, of Lear, of Hamlet, and Polyeucte.¹ It is largely a question of emphasis. Few people think of *Hamlet* as domestic drama,² for the Orestes-like situation of the hero is subordinated to his tragedy as an individual, and the focus of the play is the heart of a man rather than the bosom of his family.

The Mariamne plays, as a rule, take place in a palace, and have to do primarily with the relations of a husband and a

¹ G. B. Shaw suggests that the survival of interest in such plays is due to the studies of domestic life which they include. *Quintessence of Ibsenism* (New York, 1917), p. 223.

² Ruskin did, and H. M. Jones commends such a view, with which he credits Kittredge.

wife in a situation which is unusually complicated. Properly speaking, they belong in the field of domestic tragedy, but here too the author's attention may stray so far from the domestic situation that one tends to lose sight of the fact that there is one—a Mariamne play may thus become a historical drama, blood tragedy, psychological drama, or anything else.

Within the general frame of domestic drama, the simplest of the plots that can be derived from the Mariamne story involves but two characters—a husband and a wife who get on badly. The causes for their difficulties are made to vary widely in different plays. It may be posited that in almost all the Mariamne plays it is intended that Herod should love his wife to some extent. In a few of them he is depicted as a purely conventional husband; in most, he is a passionate and jealous lover. A distinction may therefore be made between those plays in which Herod is beloved by his wife and those in which he is not. The distinction is important, for there is a vast difference between the construction of a play in which a man in love is made to kill a woman who loves him, and one in which he kills a woman who detests him. In the former case, outside forces are usually necessary to bring about the catastrophe, unless it be an accident; in the latter, the catastrophe is inherent in the situation. Somewhat more complex is the third possible situation—that in which Mariamne loves Herod at the beginning of the action, but no longer loves him at the end. In this case, the change in the heroine is an important part of the action, and may in itself lead more or less directly to the catastrophe.

As to the factual relations between Herod and Mariamne, Josephus is quite clear. In the *Antiquities*, we are given to understand that by the time of Herod's return from Rhodes, Mariamne's love for him had cooled to the point where she openly declared that she was sorry he had returned alive. As Herod's return from Rhodes is the point of attack chosen by most of the early dramatists, we may expect that a large group

of plays will present this view of the king's domestic situation at the inception of the action. In some of these plays, it is assumed that Mariamne never loved Herod; in others, that her love turned to hate some time before the beginning of the play—the etiology, so to speak, of her case may differ, but the late point of attack levels these distinctions under a common head.

The Mariamne plays actually fall into all three of the groups referred to, and it may not be without interest to consider these categories briefly: first, those plays in which Herod is beloved throughout the action; second, those in which he is beloved only at first; lastly, those in which he is not beloved at all. In all three classes, the action is complicated, as a rule, by the working of external disruptive forces, but the importance of these will depend largely upon the initial relationship of Herod and Mariamne. In the third group, the influence of these forces is not particularly important, since the initial opposition between the principal characters is usually sufficient to motivate the catastrophe. In the second group, this influence becomes more important. In the first group, it is essential.

The first group is the smallest. The situation of a woman who is the victim of a lover whom she loves is among the most interesting of those that can be derived from the story in Josephus; but few playwrights have chosen to treat the story in this manner. The group includes no more than Fenton's *Mariamne* (1723), Tirso's *Vida de Herodes* (1637), and Neumeister's *Herodes der Grosse* (1853), three very dissimilar plays, the first of which was among the most successful of all Mariamne dramas. The catastrophe in the plays of Fenton and Tirso is brought about partly through the rashness of Herod, partly through the intervention of third parties; in Neumeister's play, it is a result of the king's lust for power. The protagonist of these plays is Herod, for Mariamne's attitude toward him is un-

changing, and it is his actions and reactions that bring about the tragedy.

In the second group, however, Mariamne is a developing character, and the effect of the action upon her is, or should be, one of the main features of the plot, in which we should normally expect her to take a central role. The group includes the plays of Markham and Sampson (1622), Massinger (1623), Calderón (1635), Rückert (1844), Hebbel (1849), Maaldrink (1885), Rives (1888), and Phillips (1900). In the plays of Hebbel, Rives, and Phillips, she is the central character; in Markham and Sampson's play, she is the central character as long as she lasts; she is not the central character in the plays of Calderón or Massinger; and Rückert's play cannot properly be said to have a plot. The motives for the queen's change of heart are regularly drawn from Josephus, who, as we have seen, brings her mistrust of her husband to its first climax as a result of the murder of Aristobulus, and to its second climax as a result of her discovery of the secret command. Phillips and Hebbel chose the first circumstance as the turning point of the action. In Phillips' play, it is climactic; in Hebbel's it precedes and motivates the main action, which is concerned with the secret command and its repetition. While many plays give the death of Aristobulus some importance in determining the change in Mariamne, with the exception of Phillips' *Herod*, all the plays of this group have the death command as its chief cause.

The third group is the largest. It comprises the tragedies of Dolce (1565), Sachs (1552), Hardy (1600), E.C. (1613), Tristan (1636), Lozano (1658), Hallmann (1670), Pordage (1674), Orrery (1694), Voltaire (1724), Nadal (1725), Bianchi (1761), Scevola (1815), and Iliowizi (1884). In these plays, Mariamne is not a developing character, and there is no marked change in her attitude toward Herod, whom she consistently

dislikes. As between the two, Herod is therefore the more important character; the tendency in these plays is for Mariamne to be somewhat wooden and for Herod to be quite volatile. As has already been intimated, two factors determine the intensity of her dislike for him—the character of Herod and the lateness of the point of attack. If Herod is depicted from the first as a tyrant and a bully, it is natural to expect that Mariamne will detest him, as she does, for example, in Dolce's *Marianna*. If, on the other hand, he is given the character of the Vacillating Lover or Jealous Husband, her feeling at the beginning may amount to no more than indifference or dislike. This is the situation in Tristan's *Mariane*, Voltaire's *Mariamne*, and Scevola's *Erode*. In the same way, if the point of attack is late, and the action begins after Herod and Mariamne are at sword's points, her hatred of him will naturally be more vivid than in cases where his iniquities are deferred until further along in the play.

Thus, to some extent, the difference between this and the group of plays in which Mariamne is depicted as a changing character is one of structure. In plays which observe the unities, and have the point of attack quite close to the catastrophe, the likelihood is that Mariamne's attitude toward her husband will not be seen to change. In Hebbel's drama, the discovery of the death command causes Mariamne to change before our eyes; in Voltaire's play, we are simply told that Mariamne has discovered the command and now considers it a perpetual divorce from Herod. Conceivably, if the point of attack were moved back far enough in the French play, it might include a scene in which Mariamne did not yet hate her husband. On the other hand, there are a number of plays, for example Lozano's, and Scevola's, in which we are told explicitly that Mariamne never loved her husband at all. Plays of this type, when they do not depict Herod as a brute, often provide a good reason

for Mariamne's indifference to her husband, in the form of a sympathetic lover whose innocent love Mariamne returns.

Somewhat more striking, at first blush, than these distinctions are those based upon considerations which have to do with the period, nationality, and form of the plays. In the four centuries of its dramatic life, the Mariamne story has seen many vicissitudes. It has been made the subject of history plays, Senecan imitations, blood tragedies, Spanish *comedias*, regular tragedies of the French type, heroic plays, domestic dramas, and romantic tragedies. Classification according to these distinctions is, necessarily, superficial. Within these categories, the shape and structure of a play depends to a considerable extent upon purely dramaturgical considerations which have nothing to do with period or provenience. Regardless of its superficial form, a play which falls in the first of the three groups above mentioned may be expected to concern two lovers whose life is disrupted by an outside force; if in the second, it will concern a man who gradually antagonizes his wife through his own selfishness or brutality; if in the third, it will have to do with the jealousy or suspicion of a husband whose wife dislikes him. The tendency of the first group is toward pitiful or sentimental drama; of the second, toward psychological drama; of the third, blood tragedy. Of course, it does not always work out so. If in plots of the third group, the playwright emphasizes the mental processes of the hero instead of his actions, the result may be of a very different order than blood tragedy. Moreover, the conventions of a particular period may be such as to limit to some extent the normal tendencies of the plot, so that what should be a bloody tragedy becomes a conversation piece.

Thus, other things being equal, the nature of a Mariamne play will depend upon a combination of factors derived partly from the vogue and temper of the time, partly from the aspect of the Mariamne story chosen by the dramatist. The dramas

of Calderón and Lozano differ fundamentally in conception and in structure—the former belongs to the second group, the latter to the third—and the triangular pattern of Lozano's play has, fundamentally, more in common with that of Por-dage than with that of Calderón. None the less, nobody would deny that the superficial similarity of the two Spanish plays is much closer than that of the heroic play and the *comedia*.

In a discussion designed to trace the fortunes of the Mari-amne theme through the various phases of the development of the drama, the arrangement of the plays is naturally a vexatious problem. A strictly chronological arrangement is not very informative, and a classification according to technical principles of structure obscures the historical development of the theme. The most advantageous arrangement seems to be one which preserves the chronological sequence of the plays within broad categories which the dramatists themselves more or less had in mind. It must be conceded the demarcations between these categories are not very substantial, and have a tendency to vanish upon close inspection. Certain plays are quite easy to classify, and the form at which the playwright was driving is clear. Others present difficulties. Where there is some question as to the exact connection in which a particular play should be discussed, an attempt has been made to place it in such context as would best illustrate the development of the theme, but it is freely admitted that other methods of classifying these plays are both possible and justifiable.

CLASSICAL TRAGEDIES

THE Mariamne theme has been attempted more often in classical form than in any other. Eleven plays may be considered under this heading, ranging in antiquity from Dolce's *Marianna* (1565) to Scevola's *Erode* (1815). Not all of these are regular plays. Hardy's *Mariamne* and Tristan's *La Mariane* deliberately offend the unities. E.C.'s *Mariam* and Fenton's *Mariamne* were intended to be regular, and do in fact pay their respects to the rules, but depart very widely from the classical tradition in spirit. Argensola's *Alejandra* is a gruesome Spanish imitation of Senecan tragedy. Taken as a group, these plays illustrate the vicissitudes not only of the Mariamne story but of the classical formula as well, in the course of nearly three centuries.

The most venerable representative of this group is the *Marianna* of Lodovico Dolce, of which certain aspects have already been discussed in connection with the character of Herod. It defines for the first time the basic sequence of the Mariamne plays.

Dolce's services to the drama of the Renaissance were considerable. By 1566, he had published a half-dozen tragedies—*Giocasta*, *Medea*, *Didone*, *Iphigenia*, *Thieste*, *Hecuba*—imitations, nearly all of which found their imitators. *Marianna* is his masterpiece. Its first production, at the home of Sebastiano Erizzo in Venice and in the presence of three hundred noblemen, was triumphant, although, we are told, the play was recited without music and without scenic apparatus. A second performance, with music and magnificent costumes, at the palace of the Duke of Ferrara, was marred by disturbances

caused by the great throng that came to witness the play; but the third performance was entirely successful, and took its place among the great productions of its day.¹ From our point of view, *Marianna* is not what might be considered a well-made play. Its intrigue is rudimentary. The author was thinking not in terms of unfolding character, but in terms of eliciting pity and terror by means of a depiction of horrible events. Yet we must grant that no other Renaissance tragedy, with the possible exception of Aretino's *Orazia*, can compare with it in merit. That this is due not so much to Dolce's genius as to the talents of Josephus is, in the light of Dolce's other work, extremely likely.

What little idea the Renaissance had of the Greek concept of tragedy was derived ultimately from Euripides. The tragedies of Euripides were first published in 1503, but by that time the worst elements of his style were already the admiration of the scholarly, who had long been familiar with his disciple Seneca. The *Poetics* became available soon after, and scholars vied with each other in doing it lip service, but it could exert little corrective influence. Aristotle had emphasized plot and orderly development above all other elements of dramatic composition, but Trissino, for example, while affirming his determination to abide by the rules of Aristotle,² completely disregarded his cardinal principles. Sophocles, who had been published as early as 1502, was studied carefully—it should have been obvious that he had plotted his dramas with the utmost care and invariably illustrated the principle of necessary sequence. But the Renaissance persisted in seeing in him only an inferior Euripides.

Euripides had largely eschewed the principle of movement in his plays. He preferred rather to juxtapose effective scenes arising out of the tragic situation than to develop the action

¹ Dedicatory letter to Antonio Molina (25 May 1565).

² Trissino, *Poetica* (1549).

causally. *Hecuba* and the *Trojan Women* are suites of scenes of pathos; with the notable exception of *Ion*, *Helen*, and *Iphigenia in Tauris*, all his plays are episodic in structure.

The faults of Euripides were exaggerated by Seneca; the faults of Seneca were exaggerated by the Renaissance. As the students of the *Poetics* preferred to cavil over its minutiae, and to disregard its wisdom, it was not until well into the seventeenth century that classical tragedy was able to benefit by Aristotle's system.

In the time of Dolce, *Octavia* and *Thyestes* were in highest esteem as dramatic models. *Octavia* is no more than a succession of declamatory tableaux, interlarded with choral songs. It has, properly speaking, a theme, but neither plot nor development. The effect is of a number of talkative people contemplating an impending catastrophe which at last occurs and gives rise to lamentation. The principals, in obedience to rules of decorum, never meet on the stage, though to avoid meeting they are forced to dodge each other. They spend their time in making moralizing speeches addressed to their confidants or to the audience, while current events are from time to time related by messengers, and the elicitation of excitement and suspense is sought by means of dreams, ghosts, and rhetorical demands for vengeance.

To some extent, *Marianna* is patterned upon *Octavia*. Both plays are in five acts, with choruses; in both, the characters contemplate an impending catastrophe, which occurs and gives rise to lamentation. Moreover, the two plays have in common certain characters and scenes. But the difference is very marked. *Octavia* stands still. Though its span of action is small, *Marianna* moves forward steadily scene by scene, its principals meet on the stage; it has conflict, and the *scènes à faire* are developed in action. *Octavia* has no dramatic quality. *Marianna* is, surprisingly enough when we consider the period, in every sense a play.

This becomes evident as soon as the two scenarios are juxtaposed:

OCTAVIA

Act 1. Octavia and her nurse discuss Octavia's sad state. She detests her husband, Nero, and fears he will kill her, for he loves another.

Act 2. Seneca, the good counselor, tries in vain to persuade Nero not to divorce Octavia.

Act 3. The ghost of Agrippina curses Nero and prophesies his death. Octavia tries to soothe the grief of the chorus.

Act 4 Poppaea tells her nurse of a dream in which Agrippina's ghost and the spectre of her husband (murdered by Nero) appeared. A messenger announces the people have risen out of sympathy for Octavia, and threaten to burn the palace.

Act 5. Nero threatens the populace, and then orders Octavia exiled and killed. The play ends on the lament of the chorus.

MARIANNA

Act 1. Mariamne and her nurse discuss Mariamne's sad state. She detests her husband, Herod, and fears he will kill her. Her brother Aristobulus has warned her of her death, in a dream. She is aware also of the secret command left with Soemo by Herod, who has just returned from Rhodes.

Act 2. Salome through the cup-bearer accuses Mariamne of a plot to poison Herod. Mariamne is summoned and forces the cup-bearer to recant. Her eunuch confesses that Soemo has betrayed the secret command.

Act 3. Herod examines Mariamne before the good counselor. He orders Soemo executed. The counselor tries to persuade him to spare Mariamne, accused of adultery.

Act 4. A detailed report of Soemo's death; after which his remains are brought in silver vessels, and presented by Herod to Mariamne. Her children offer themselves as her champions. Herod orders them strangled, and Mariamne and her mother beheaded.

Act 5. Herod experiences a change of heart. He learns that his messenger arrived too late with his pardon, and breaks into extended lamentation. The play ends on the lament of the chorus.

The Renaissance critics saw no objection to *Octavia* as a play. For them, drama was a branch of poetry, and its effects were necessarily rhetorical—the more so, the better. The very conditions of stage presentation were conducive to this view. The actors who “recited the poem” addressed themselves frankly to the audience, as the singers did and do in oratorio. There was at first no reason why the spectators should not crowd in as close as possible while the recitation went on. In France and elsewhere, a cramped stage thus came to be encumbered by the presence upon it of seated spectators. Hemmed in, in this way, the actors stood in pairs or in a semicircle, and strove to impress through purely verbal feats, fearful of the slightest movement which might make them appear ridiculous. A natural consequence was the further formalization of acting. Under such circumstances an illusion of reality was manifestly not possible, and the actors hardly attempted to produce one. They rarely sat down. They had little room in which to stride. A simple action such as falling on one’s knees was almost certain to excite the risibilities of the onlookers. The poor actor therefore stood his ground and contented himself with posturing discreetly and shouting loud. With this situation in mind, the playwright could hardly do other, even if he wished, than to keep his action off the stage.

But it was not merely expedient to keep most of the action behind the scenes; it was also theoretically sound. “You must not,” Horace had said, “bring upon the stage things fit only to be acted behind the scenes; and you must take away from view many actions, which elegant description may soon after deliver in the presence of the spectators.” This was naturally interpreted as meaning that elegant description was superior to action, and much more suited to the stage. There was a vast profane area off stage where things might without impropriety happen; the stage itself was reserved for narration, foreboding, moral comment, discussion, lamentation, and the various *bra-*

viva passages incidental to the great but doleful happenings with which it was proper that tragedy should concern itself.

The personages of tragedy were lofty, the atmosphere gloomy. As Scaliger wrote:

In tragoedia reges, principes, ex urbibus, arcibus, castris; principia sedatoria; exitus horribilis; oratio gravis, culta, a vulgi dictione aversa; tota facies anxiosa: metus, minae, exilia, mortes.³

The troubled look of things, it was the main business of the actors to set forth. They did so for at least four acts. Then came the exiles and deaths. "The action of a tragedy," wrote Minturno, "should be prolonged until there is some change of fortune."⁴ The change of fortune, usually the one event of the play, came, if ever, at the end.

In accordance with such notions of tragedy, Scaliger was able to suggest a sample outline of an ideal play—it accords very well with the pattern of *Octavia*. He chose the story of Ceyx and Alcyone for his illustration:

Let the first act be a passionate lamentation, the chorus to follow with execrations of sea life; the second act, a priest with votive offerings conversing with Alcyone and her nurse; altars, fire, pious sentiments, the chorus following with approbation of the vows; the third act, a messenger announcing the rising of the storm, together with rumors as to the ship, the chorus to follow with mention of shipwrecks and much apostrophizing of Neptune; the fourth act, tumultuous, the report found to be true, the shipwrecks described by sailors and merchants, the chorus bewailing the event as though all were lost; the fifth act, Alcyone peering anxiously over the sea and sighting far off a corpse, followed by the resolution when she was about to take her own life. This sample outline can be expanded by the introduction of other characters.⁵

Giraldi's notion of a proper scenario is somewhat livelier. The first act, he says, contains the argument or exposition; in the

³ *Poetice* (1561).

⁴ *Arte poetica* (1564).

⁵ *Ibid.* Translated in Stuart, *Development of Dramatic Art*, pp 269, 270; see also F. Brunetière, *L'Evolution des Genres* (Paris, 1892), pp 46 f.

second, things in the argument begin to move toward the end; the third presents the obstacles and troubles; the fourth, the means offered for remedying the troubles; the fifth, the desired end with solution of the argument.⁶

When, however, we try to square this ideal scenario with the action of his *Orbecche* (1541), we find in the play only the equivalents of the first and third acts of the scenario—the argument and exposition and the “obstacles and troubles” that lead to the end. Giraldi’s taste in the drama was such that he preferred the Latins to the Greeks on the ground that Seneca excelled the Greeks in prudence, gravity, decorum, majesty, and sententious maxims. *Orbecche* has two acts of exposition; in the third act, as in *Octavia*, the inevitable good counselor pleads with the tyrant Sulmone for clemency for Orbecche. In the fourth act, as in *Thyestes*, a messenger tells how Sulmone cut off Oronte’s hands, murdered his children before his eyes and then killed him. In the fifth act, things begin to happen. The severed limbs of her family are offered by Sulmone to his daughter, after she has recounted a foreshadowing dream. Then comes the desired end, and solution of the argument—she snatches a knife from one of the mangled bodies and stabs her father, who gravely and decorously retires to die, after which Orbecche appears with his head and sententially commits suicide.

In comparison with this gruesome business, which together with Speroni’s *Canace* (1542) set the fashion for cinquecento tragedy, *Marianna* appears to be a work of great restraint and subtlety. *Canace* is a succession of dialogues and recitals referring to certain revolting events which are supposed to have taken place off stage. *Orbecche* is little more. But in *Marianna* there is movement and emotion, and the catastrophe is led up to in a manner which might almost be called natural and convincing.

⁶ *Discorso sulle comedie e sulle tragedie* (written in 1543; published in 1554).

The point of attack in *Marianna* is, of course, late, but it is not as late as possible. In conformity with the unities, only a day might elapse between the inception of the tragedy and the catastrophe. Into this day, Dolce undertook to fit a host of events out of Josephus—the return from Rhodes, the cup-bearer's accusation, the execution of Soemo, the revolt of the children, and the execution of Mariamne and her family, to say nothing of the tyrant's repentance. It was evidently one of those unpleasant days when all sorts of things seem to happen, the sort of day without which regular tragedy could not exist.

It was possible for Dolce to compress these events into narrow compass only by the stern exclusion of all extraneous action. The unities of time and of action here went hand in hand. The play is in fact a little crowded by the affair of the cup-bearer. A stricter adherence to the unity of action would have forced the omission of this episode and complete concentration on the affair of the death command and its betrayal. In fact, the scene between Marianna and the cupbearer is a strong and lively one, and we should not willingly have it omitted. With this exception, Dolce developed his action with a good deal of economy. As is usual in Renaissance tragedy, his cast was small—he omitted the first and second Joseph, Alexandra, Cypros, Pheroras, Antony, Caesar, Antipater, and everyone else not strictly connected with the action in hand. The nurse, the counselor, and the messenger were indispensable; the children added a pitiful note which was not without classical precedent, although some alteration of history was necessary to warrant their introduction; the presentation of the victim's remains could hardly be omitted in cinquecento tragedy.

The Middle Ages seem to have cherished the strange belief that Senecan plays were meant to be read from a pulpit while the story was enacted in pantomime beneath. The Renaissance did not perpetuate this tradition. The first of the Senecan imi-

tations were intended only for recitation, but in time the tedium of the Senecan recitative was relieved by the simple expedient of translating at least part of the recital into realistic action.

It is not at all clear how much action Seneca meant to represent on the stage. The conduct of certain of his plays, *Hercules Furens*, for example, is puzzling unless we assume that nothing much was supposed to take place besides declamation. Other plays, however, among them *Thyestes*, seem to necessitate a certain amount of stage business. The consensus of opinion at the present time is that Seneca's tragedies were intended only for declamation.⁷ If we assume this to have been the fact, we can understand that Seneca did not need to follow the Horatian precept, *ne pueros coram populo Medea trucidet*.

Greek tragedy normally kept its horrors off stage. Though the exhibition of the victim's corpse was undoubtedly regarded as an important piece of stage business, the actual deed of violence was not usually represented. That this practice did not amount to a hard and fast rule among the Greeks is evident from *Ajax* and the *Trachiniae*. The rule was laid down by Horace, and the extent to which we may consider that Seneca violated it depends upon the view we take of the nature of his plays. It is obvious that, in any case, Seneca provides but little room for action. Most of the plays include descriptions of horrible happenings, some of which clearly take place off stage, though some appear to be taking place before the eyes of the actor. Phaedra and Jocasta stab themselves *coram populo*; Medea appears to be killing her children on the stage; there is no clear reason for believing that Hercules destroys his family behind the scenes.

Moreover, in Seneca, the traditional scene involving the exhibition of the victim's corpse tends to become very gruesome. The climactic point of *Thyestes* is the presentation to Thyestes

⁷ But see Leon Herrmann, *Le Théâtre de Sénèque* (Paris, 1924), p. 195.

of the heads of the children whose bodies he has just devoured. The various parts of the dismembered Hippolytus are identified by Theseus, as it were, before the eyes of the audience.

The Italian dramatists took, on the whole, a reasonable view of Senecan tragedy. They believed these tragedies were meant to be acted. In their imitations, they put most of the play into recital, as Seneca had done; they represented with scrupulous care the sort of thing they thought the Roman had meant to represent—and, later, considerably more. Thus the fashion set by Pazzi in his *Didone in Cartagine* (1524) of displaying the severed head and hands of the tragic victim became a commonplace; it gave rise to such variations as the presentation of the bloody heart of the hero to the heroine, as we find it, some time later, in *Gismond of Salerne*, in England.

The English playwrights at first imitated, then surpassed, the Italian. Much to Sidney's annoyance, the more popular drama tended to minimize "the difference between reporting and representing," but even the learned were not averse to some degree of realism. At Oxford and Cambridge were enacted, in the name of classical tragedy, such horrors as would have made a Roman's blood run cold. In 1592, the traditional scene of cannibalism was represented at Trinity College, Cambridge, with such stark realism that a lady in the audience "fell distracted and never recovered." Earlier and more popular English "tragedies" show clearly the strong tendency toward realism. The well-known stage direction in *Appius and Virginia* (1563) reads, "here tye a handcarcher aboute hir eyes and then strike of hir heade." In *Cambises* (c. 1569), Sisamnes was killed and scalped on the stage, and Cambises, to prove himself sober, shot an arrow through the heart of Praxaspes' son, in full view of the audience. Thus, with bladders of blood, hooks, swords, racks, false wounds, and all the apparatus of the Grand Guignol, the classical drama in England was assimilated to the Mysteries.

As regards Mariamne tragedy, the influence of Dolce's play

does not appear to have been felt in England at this time. It is in Spain that the next example of the tradition stemming from *Marianna* is to be looked for. But before we follow the tradition further, we may do well to digress for a moment to consider briefly the influence of Seneca upon the early English Mariamne plays.

Side by side with the popular adaptations of classical tragedy of which we have been speaking, a number of more or less sober imitations of Seneca were being produced in Latin at the English universities. Among these, only one has come to light which at all concerns the Mariamne story, William Goldingham's *Herodes tragoedia* (c. 1567). Another possible example—Patrick Adomson's Latin *Herodes* (c. 1572)—is known to have existed, but does not seem to be extant. It is not improbable that Adomson's play, like Grimald's *Archipropheta*, dealt with the Tetrach Herod and John the Baptist, or perhaps with the slaughter of the Innocents; but Schelling is of the opinion, for what reason he does not say, that it had to do with Mariamne or with Herod's later life.⁸

Goldingham's drama⁹ is a Senecan revenge tragedy in five acts of two scenes each, with choral interludes. It concerns the Mariamne story only slightly, for the action deals largely with Herod's relations with his children after Mariamne's death. The action is initiated by the ghost of "Mariemmma," which in a soliloquy refers to the circumstances of her death and asks that in retribution the memory of Herod's love for her shall embitter his whole life. Thus persecuted by Nemesis, Herod brings about the suicide of his son Antipater, who wishes to poison him. The arrest of Antipater is actually the only event of the play; the remainder is chiefly concerned with the remorse and lamenta-

⁸ F. E. Schelling, *Elizabethan Drama, 1558-1642* (New York, 1908), I, 32.

⁹ The text of Goldingham's play, printed from the manuscript in the Cambridge University Library, is appended to Tomlinson's *Der Herodes-Charakter*. The play has been described by Churchill and Keller, *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, XXXIV (Weimar, 1898).

tion of Herod. Although both Herod and the chorus excuse his bloody career on the grounds of inescapable destiny, they both shrink from the horrible deeds he has done and has still to do, and the king longs for death to put an end to his course.

While *Herodes tragoedia* seems to have been unknown outside of Cambridge, the treatment of Herod as a repentant sinner tortured by his own remorse and the ghosts of his victims is a recurrent theme which forms the basis of, or gives background to, such plays as Heinsius' *Herodes infanticida* (printed 1649), Johann Klay's *Herodes der Kindermörder* (printed 1645), and Francis Peck's dramatic poem *Herod the Great* (printed 1740), which are outside the field of Mariamne drama. The relations of Herod and Antipater form the theme of a considerable number of plays, some of which, like E.C.'s *Mariam* (printed 1613) and Markham and Sampson's *Herod and Antipater* (printed 1622) have also to do with the story of Mariamne, while others, for example, La Calprenède's *Mort des enfans d'Herodes* (printed 1639), have nothing to do with it. There is absolutely no reason to suspect that any of these plays was influenced by Goldingham's tragedy.

The strict Senecan form was ill adapted to the requirements of the English theatre. It provided a point of departure, and remained in vogue at the schools for a time as a Latin exercise, but it required the thoroughgoing metamorphosis which resulted in the *Spanish Tragedy* before it could hold a popular audience. While it was inevitable that "romantic" tragedy should triumph on the English stage, the scholarly partisans of the classical school did not surrender without a struggle. The horrors of blood tragedy, the "hornpipes mixed with funeralls" of tragicomedy, and the spectacular flights in time and space of irregular drama roused Sidney's ire. Some time after his death, his sister the Countess of Pembroke, and his friend Fulke Greville formed in the last decade of the sixteenth century a coterie the purpose of which was to purify the stage and to

replace its vagaries with the stately classical forms. The model of this group of reformers was, however, neither the Latin Seneca nor the Latin Buchanan, as Sidney had recommended, but the French Garnier, the foremost living exponent of the principles of the *Pléiade* in the drama.

The first fruit of their effort was the *Tragedie of Antonie* (1592), a translation of Garnier's *Marc-Antoine* into English blank verse, in four acts with choruses. The product of the Countess of Pembroke's pen, it was only too obviously an amateurish attempt, and professional playwrights were called in to lend weight to the movement. Accordingly, two years later, Thomas Kyd published a version of Garnier's *Cornélie*. It was produced, and fared badly. Samuel Daniel came to the rescue with an original tragedy entitled *Cleopatra* (1594), a sequel to the Countess' *Antonie*. It was not produced. A number of classical plays were later published by Fulke Greville, Samuel Brandon and, finally, William Alexander, Earl of Stirling, whose *Monarchicke Tragedies* (1607) mark the end of the movement. Its failure was generally attributed to the vulgarity of the public: the effort to restore the classical forms was much admired even by those writers who cannily forebore to share any part of the burden.

The *Tragedie of Mariam Faure Queene of Jewry* (published in 1613) is a belated specimen of the type of drama advocated by the Pembroke group. The authorship of the play has been somewhat difficult to determine. The title page of the copy in the British Museum gives the author as "that learned, vertuous, and truly noble ladie, E.C." It now appears to be settled that this truly noble lady was Elizabeth, wife of Sir Henry Carey, later Viscount Falkland.¹⁰ However this may be, the *Tragedie of Mariam* is certainly not to be numbered among the outstanding Mariamne tragedies. It is noteworthy for a certain regu-

¹⁰ A. C. Dunstan, introduction to the *Tragedie of Mariam*, 1613 (Malone Society, London, 1914). See also *The Lady Falkland: Her life*, ed. R. S. (1861).

larity; it adheres resolutely to the unities and is full of excellent maxims and long tirades; what action it has is handled with extreme decorum. Indeed, but a single action is represented, and that—a duel between Constabarus and Sillaeus—is hardly relevant to the main plot. With the exception of this romantic tidbit, all the action is messengered.

The plot is a curious jumble of material from Josephus, classical only in its superficial form, and very different from the pathetic tragedies of the French which served as models for this kind of drama. The play is episodic in structure, and makes a somewhat staccato effect. The first two acts are concerned mainly with the effect of the false rumor that Herod has been killed by Antony. Mariam hails the news with mixed feelings. Salome immediately casts off her husband Constabarus in favor of her Arab lover Sillaeus, who is subsequently challenged by Constabarus and wounded. Doris, in defiance of the king's orders, brings her little son Antipater to the capital. Pheroras, in spite of Herod's interdiction, marries his beloved Graphina.¹¹

Rumors now reach the city that Herod is not dead. Constabarus has been sheltering the rebel sons of Baba from Herod's vengeance. Now that Salome has divorced him, he fears that she will denounce his treachery to the king. In the third act, it is announced that Herod is on his way home. Pheroras and Salome plot to denounce Constabarus in order to cover their own offences. Mariam tells Sohemus, who has told her of the secret command, that she will under no circumstances be reconciled to her husband. When the king arrives, in the fourth act, the various motives of the play are brought to a head. As a result of Pheroras' accusation, Constabarus and his friends are put to death. Mariam angers her husband by her cold reception. The butler, suborned by Salome, launches the customary accusa-

¹¹ Graphina is possibly adapted from the Glaphyra who was, according to Josephus, the wife of Mariamne's son Alexander.

tion, and implicates Sohemus. Herod orders Sohemus killed, and, after some vacillation, casts Mariam into prison, where presently Doris comes to curse at her. In the last act, Nuntio describes the noble death of the queen. The butler has meanwhile confessed his treachery and hanged himself, and Mariam is completely exonerated. Herod breaks into lamentation and self-accusation. The chorus decides, in conclusion, that Herod has been hasty and Mariam imprudent.

Evidently this plot is well outside the classic tradition. There are three actions in the play—the Herod–Mariam plot, which involves the secret command, Sohemus, and the butler; the Salome–Sillaeus plot, which involves the completely extraneous affair of the sons of Baba and the incongruous circumstance of the duel; finally, the Pheroras–Graphina situation. All three actions depend, it is true, upon the return of Herod and are merged ingeniously in the fourth act; but this is hardly the way of classical tragedy.

The three plots come from Josephus, though from different places in his account. The affair of the sons of Baba took place some time after the death of Mariamne. The youths were relatives of Hyrcanus, and had been condemned to death twelve years earlier as a result of an abortive attempt at revolution. In order to rid herself of her husband Costabarus, Salome accused him of sheltering the rebels and of conspiring against the government. The three stories put together by E.C. actually have in common only the fact that they are all affairs of love, and their connection is due wholly to the author's ingenuity. By moving the Costabarus episode out of its chronologic setting, E.C. is able to contrast the wantonness of Salome with the chastity of Mariam. By a similar manipulation of Pheroras' unauthorized marriage, she is able to provide a second contrast, and also to motivate the treachery of Pheroras, through whom the wicked Salome works to get rid of her husband. In this scheme, with its extensive preparation and exposition, its single

act crammed with business, and its static conclusion, we may see clearly the influence of the French pattern, which, combined with English love of complication and of action, makes a rather strange play.

It is noteworthy that the author sides throughout with Herod. Though he is depicted as a tyrant, the blame for Mariam's death is laid not to his suspicious nature, his rashness, or cruelty, but to the queen's lack of humility and the fact that she has permitted herself to be put under suspicion. As the chorus tells us:

Tis not enough for one that is a wife
To keepe her spotless from an act of ill:
But from suspition she should free her life.

Carelessness and pride are her faults. Even Mariam recognizes the latter, when it is too late:

Had not my selfe against myselfe conspird,
No plot: no adversarie from without
Could Herods love from Mariam retirde—

In these verses E.C. pays homage not only to the ideal married state, but to Josephus' interpretation of Mariamne's character, which, he tells us, was pure and chaste, but somewhat haughty and rough by nature. True, E.C. goes somewhat beyond Josephus; she has a low opinion of women in general. None of her female characters are praiseworthy, and the entire sex is apostrophized bitterly in the farewell remarks of Constarus:

You creatures made to be the human curse,
You Tygers, Lyonesses, hungry Beares,
Teare massacring Huenas, nay far worse—

.
You are the least of goods, the worst of evils,
Your best are worse than men: your worst then divels.

Whether E.C.'s attitude toward her sex is to be construed as a tribute to her husband, or as a rebuke to the late queen and,

by implication, a compliment to the reigning king, or whether this represents her honest opinion of womanhood, we cannot of course tell. The age had in general no exalted opinion of women; even the *Faerie Queen* occasionally evidences this, and Lady Falkland seems to have been utterly convinced of the truth of this estimate. Dunstan mentions the fact that she had the words *Bee and Seem* inscribed on her daughter's wedding ring, a maxim which is reflected in the chorus to Act Three of *Mariam*. If the play then has a general moral, it seems to be that even a tyrant is entitled to a humble, patient, and loving wife; in any case, it is a woman's duty to preserve appearances. The artificiality of the moral squares well with the artificiality of the construction of the play.

In Spain, Senecan Herod came to the fore in a somewhat different guise from that of E.C.'s Frenchified tyrant. The evil aspects which had marked the ascendant of the Senecan formula in England shone upon it to an even greater extent among the Spanish.

In the latter part of the fourteenth century, eight of Seneca's plays were translated into Valencian, and at the beginning of the next century a Castilian translation appeared, but there is no evidence that these plays exerted any influence at this time. In 1528, Hernán Pérez de Oliva translated Sophocles' *Electra* freely into prose with the suggestive title of *La Venganza de Agamenón*.¹² He followed this with a translation of Euripides' *Hecuba*, printed in 1586 with the title of *Hécuba triste*. Both were probably translated from Latin versions. In 1577 appeared the first classical tragedies in Spanish, *Nise lastimosa* and *Nise laureada*, which Gerónimo Bermúdez, the author, called *Primeras tragedias españolas*.¹³ But these distinctly Senecan plays

¹² Said to be the first vernacular version of Sophocles in any language J. P. Crawford, *Spanish drama before Lope de Vega* (Philadelphia, 1937), p. 160.

¹³ *Nise lastimosa* was a translation of a Portuguese *Dona Iguéz de Castro* by Antonio Ferreira, a student of Coimbra, where Buchanan had taught

seem to have borne little fruit, and the Senecan influence is perceptible only in such gruesome tragedies as Juan de la Cueva's *Tragedia del príncipe tirano* and Argensola's *Isabela* and *Alejandra*, which bear about the same relation to Seneca as do the English revenge tragedies of the same period.

In the *Quijote* (Part I, chap. 48) Cervantes speaks in the highest terms of three tragedies written by a famous Spanish poet, which "delighted and amazed all auditors, and made more money for the players than thirty of the best plays acted since that time," and this in spite of the fact that they observed all the rules and precepts of art. The three plays are *La Filis*, *La Alejandra* and *La Isabela*. *La Filis* is not known to be extant. The other two plays are exceptionally bloody imitations of Italian Senecan tragedy, the work of Lupericio Leonardo de Argensola. The Spanish poet evidently meant to imitate the classics, but one can see that his tendency is all the other way. *La Alejandra* does not observe the unity of action, nor has it the classic style; it was written in four acts; it lacks the choral songs. So too, Cristóbal de Virués in his tragedy of *Elisa Dido* proposed to write a play "entirely in the fashion of the Greeks and Romans, with care and study," and did in fact succeed in copying to some extent the style of Trissino's *Sofonisba* and the moral patter of Seneca. He observed also the rules as to unity of time, the five acts, the chorus, and the rejection of comic elements. Like Bermúdez, he used hendecasyllabic *verso suelto*, with varied *estancias* for the choruses. But his play is utterly romantic; its two pairs of lovers and its various complications put it distinctly outside the Senecan tradition. His *La gran Semíramis*, *La cruel Casandra*, and *Atila furioso* are likewise meant to be imitations of the classics, but it is only too obvious that Virués, like Cueva and Argensola, was chiefly interested in the juxtaposition of scenes of horror. These feeble attempts in the direction of classical tragedy are almost all that

remains of this genre in the period before Lope de Vega.¹⁴ They are sufficient to show the tendency of the Spanish, like that of the English, away from the rules and precepts that were to impede the progress of the drama in other countries.

Argensola's *La Alejandra* (c. 1581) is, like Massinger's *Duke of Milan*, in part a Mariamne play. The underplot and the setting were apparently contrived by the author, but the main plot is clearly derived from Dolce's *Marianna*. The prologue or *loa*, taken partly from *Marianna* and partly from *Orbecche*, is recited by Tragedy, who describes herself and her adornments, and accounts for the amputation of her fifth act and her choral songs. There are two plots. The first is a story of revenge along traditional lines; the second is the Mariamne story. The combination results in a somewhat unedifying blood tragedy, but it involves an interesting use of the story in Josephus.

We are given to understand, first of all, that the emperor Ptolemy has been murdered by one Acoreo, who has usurped the throne of Egypt. Ptolemy's son, Orodante, unaware of Acoreo's crime, becomes the usurper's cupbearer. The conspirators Ostilo and Remulo, who desire to put Orodante on the throne, plot to dispose of a certain Lupercio, who is Orodante's rival for the hand of Sila, the emperor's daughter. Accordingly, they accuse Lupercio of adultery with the wife of Acoreo, Alejandra; she has in fact made amorous advances to Lupercio, who has loyally repulsed them. Acoreo promptly orders Lupercio hacked to pieces and causes Alejandra to wash her hands in his blood. In the course of these ablutions, she recognizes the vestiges of her beloved, and breaks into wild lamentation. Acoreo is rendered furious by this proof of her guilt, massacres her children, and offers her a choice of deaths. She chooses poison. Her agony is intense, punctuated with many maledic-

¹⁴ J. P. Crawford, "Notes on the tragedies of L. L. de Argensola," *Romantic Review*, V (1914), 31-34; and his *Spanish Drama before Lope de Vega*, pp. 170-73.

tions; as a parting shot she bites off her tongue and spits it at her husband, who is further plagued by the ghost of Ptolemy. Retribution is not long deferred. The report of the death of Alejandra and Lupericio brings about an uprising. Acoreo takes refuge in a tower, and is cut down by his own guards, who are subsequently killed by Orodante as traitors. But the victorious Orodante is enticed into the tower by his beloved Sila and there stabbed to death; Sila herself jumps from the tower in despair. Thus, no one is left at the end of the tragedy to enjoy the triumph of justice, or, in fact, anything else.

There is absolutely no reason for believing that this was not considered a very acceptable example of regular tragedy in Spain, except for the fact that after 1585 we hear no more about it. This is not very significant, however, for soon after this date the new drama of Lope de Vega completely overshadowed whatever had come before it. It is an interesting fact, on the other hand, that the three plays of Argensola mentioned by Cervantes were not included in the edition of Argensola's works printed in 1634 at Saragossa, but were known only from the reference in the *Quijote* until Lopez de Sedano included two of them in his *Parnaso español* in 1772.¹⁵ Whatever the significance of this may be, it is certainly not the first instance in Spanish literature of such an omission.

Obviously, in *La Alejandra* the Mariamne story is pretty well muddled. The guiltless and sympathetic queen of Dolce's play is here transformed into a repulsive creature; the tyrant becomes a horrible monster; Soemo's equivalent is given a romantic and sympathetic role; the cupbearer becomes one of the chief characters. While the face of the plot is thus altered, individual details are carefully preserved—Acoreo, like Herod, is a usurper and a tyrant; the remains of his supposed rival are presented to the queen; her children are killed. Argensola evidently con-

¹⁵ See O. H. Green, *The Life and Works of L. L. de Argensola* (Philadelphia, 1927).

sidered these details of Dolce's play especially worthy of preservation. To these he added certain circumstances, such as the ghost and the uprising, from the Senecan storehouse, together with a subplot through which the Mariamne story peers rather wistfully. The whole is a strong foretaste of the vastly more refined but equally repulsive dramas of *Celos* which Calderón was later to make famous.

It is with a certain relief that one turns to the French Renaissance, in which the Mariamne theme had far better fortune.

The vogue of the *drame à l'antique* in France was initiated by Jodelle's *Cléopâtre* (1553). Like Dolce, Jodelle followed to some extent the Greek pattern;¹⁶ like him, also, he followed the fashion set by Trissino in taking his plot from history. Trissino had dramatized a story out of Livy; Dolce, a story out of Josephus; Jodelle chose one out of Plutarch.

Structurally, *Cléopâtre* follows outlines similar to those of *Marianna*, but the nature of the action and its dramatic effect are very different. *Cléopâtre* opens in Senecan fashion with the ghost of Antony, who bewails his ruin by Cleopatra at some length. He has appeared to her, he tells us, in a dream, and summoned her to join him in death. In the ensuing scene, Cleopatra relates this dream to her two ladies in waiting, and declares that she will kill herself, whereupon the chorus chants the instability of human happiness. Then Octavian deplors the death of Antony, and is advised by his counselors to prevent Cleopatra's suicide so she may grace his triumph: the chorus sings the emptiness of human pride. In the third act, the principals meet, and Cleopatra begs for mercy for herself and her children. She has been accused of hiding her jewels. The accuser is summoned, and his baseness denounced by the queen, as in *Marianna* the queen denounces the baseness of the cupbearer. Octavian promises to spare her. But in the fourth act, Cleopatra

¹⁶ Lazare de Baïf had already made line-by-line translations of Sophocles' *Electra* (1537) and Euripides' *Hecuba* (1544).

reveals to her ladies that she has lied only to save her children. The three women go off to the tomb of Antony, and in the last act the death of Cleopatra is described minutely to the chorus, which ends the play on a moral note.

Evidently the form envisaged by the *Pléiade* was somewhat less vital than that of the Italians and Spaniards, but it was much less gruesome and much more genteel. According to the Italian interpretation of the Senecan formula, the goal of tragedy was the narration or representation of a climactic event. The French shifted the emphasis slightly, but the shift gave a different color to their drama. For them, the main business of tragedy was a depiction of the way in which the characters reacted to the tragic deed. Thus the emotion of French Renaissance tragedy was derived not from the depiction of the tragic deed in action or recital, but principally from the lamentations of the victims. As the protagonist of this sort of drama was one who suffered adverse fortune, and not one who struggled against it, the French playwright did not ordinarily take pains to develop the course of the catastrophe, nor to reveal in detail the causes of the piteous spectacle, nor to link them up in a dramatic sequence. He aimed rather at providing a ready-made situation capable of arousing a proper emotional outburst, and considered it dramatic in proportion to the amount of lamentation it could arouse.

Accordingly, Jean de la Taille advised placing the beginning of the play as close as possible to the end of the story.¹⁷ In this manner, since the piteous spectacle alone was indispensable, the bulk of the play could be given over to it. Tragedy with a happy ending, though Aristotle had recognized it and the Renaissance critics accepted its possibility, he considered totally improper.

This fashion of writing tragedy was notably followed by Garnier. His *Cornélie* (1574), as we have seen, exerted some

¹⁷ "De l'art de la tragédie," prefixed to his *Saul* (1572).

influence in England; patterned upon *Octavia*, it presented four acts of oratorical lamentation followed by a climax consisting of a fresh outburst on the part of the heroine at the news of her father's death. Garnier's *Antigone*, in imitation of Euripides, ends with a copious lament on the part of the repentant Creon. *Les Juives* (1583) ends with a long scene of weeping and wailing as the blinding of Sédécie and the murder of his children are related. The *Troade* similarly culminates in any orgy of grief on the part of the unhappy Hecuba.

Such was the line laid down for French tragedy in the sixteenth century. Its days were numbered. The causes that had brought about the reaction to classical tragedy in England worked with equal power in France. Grévin, Garnier, and Montchrétien did what they could to popularize the regular plays, but by 1580 popular taste had so far turned from them that regular tragedy all but vanished from the stage.

In his *Art poétique* (1598), Laudun formulated the theory of irregular tragedy. Its materials, he said, should be battles, murders, exiles, violations of women, betrayals, tears, cries, and similar matters. Its characters should be kings and princes. Here he parted company with Scaliger. The first act should give us, he said, the lamentations; the second, the suspicions; the third, the councils; the fourth, the threats and preparations; the fifth, the executions and bloodshed. The difference between this system and that of the *Pléiade* does not seem very marked, but obviously Laudun felt the need for some sort of development of the tragic situation. He drew somewhat closer to the Italians in putting the lamentations at the beginning and the bloodshed at the end. The prolongation of the agony beyond the catastrophe, an essential characteristic of the earlier French drama, had already become questionable. By the time of Corneille, it was considered a defect of structure.

The old genre, in which in a dignified manner nothing happened, was excellently suited to the exigencies of the unities.

In the more active irregular drama, the unities were dropped as leading to improbabilities in the action. At the same time, the happy ending came into fashion, spectacle was put on the stage, and comic scenes introduced. In this manner, tragicomedy took the place of tragedy.

It was not until the time of Mairet, Scudéry, Rotrou, Benserade, and Corneille that regular tragedy came once more into its own. It was then no longer the tragedy of the Renaissance; it was a new form. The first steps in its progress from the weak and weeping spectacles of Garnier to the powerful close-knit conflict of Corneille were taken by Alexandre Hardy.

Hardy, unlike Dolce, was a professional playwright, engaged for a quarter-century in supplying plays for the troupe of Valleran Lecomte at the Hôtel de Bourgogne. Like Lope de Vega, he was remarkably prolific.¹⁸ As Rigal has pointed out, Hardy was no barbarian; he had profound respect for the classical theatre and the principles of the *Pléiade*, and though most of his work was in tragicomedy, in tragedy he believed he was following the tradition of Garnier. In fact, most of his tragedies were based on classical themes and presented pitiful situations. But as he wrote for a popular audience which insisted on being entertained, he was forced to make compromises. While he reacted strongly against the irregular drama of the period 1570-1620, which had explicitly rejected the rhetorical tradition of the *Pléiade*, as a practical dramatist he had to take a middle ground between this tradition and the unbridled theatre of his immediate predecessors. This involved him in a number of contradictions. Although he was no poet, he affected the rhetorical style: though a practical playwright, he restored a form of drama which nobody wanted. He adopted

¹⁸ He is sometimes said to have produced some 1,400 plays between his debut (1593-98) and his death (1631-32). The figure, partly based upon the account of the brothers Parfaict (*Histoire du théâtre français* [1745], IV, 2 ff.) seems highly exaggerated. G. Lanson (*Esquisse d'une histoire de la tragédie française* [Paris, 1927], p. 42) estimates the number at 800 or more. Hardy himself claimed to have written some 600 plays. Thirty-four are extant.

the five acts, the Alexandrines, the pathetic subject matter, the system of messengers, ghosts, and dreams which had been rejected as lacking verisimilitude, the moral discussions and sentences, the elegiac fifth act. Moreover, he insisted on the unity of action to the complete exclusion of comic scenes from his tragedies, and while the scope of his action was in general more extensive than the school of Garnier would have deemed proper to tragedy, he kept the form sharply distinct from that of the irregular history play which some of his contemporaries tended to confuse with it.

On the other hand, he rejected the unities of place and time as impractical and improbable restrictions, developed his action, and represented a considerable part of it on the stage. In his later tragedies he followed the irregular playwrights in omitting the chorus. He went further. Anticipating Corneille, he illustrated for the first time the dramatic value of the conflict of wills, particularly in his tragedies of revenge, and to some extent he showed himself aware of the value of exploiting the psychological processes of his characters. The result is that while he did not write "well-made" plays, and had no idea of the close-knit Cornelian intrigue, his tragedies have movement and life, his speeches do not comment on, but advance the action, and the action grows out of the characters. In tragicomedy he followed the lead of Garnier's *Bradamante*. This form also he kept rigorously separate from that of tragedy, but it was inevitable that he should carry over into the stricter form the looser texture, the romantic and psychologic interest, and the emphasis upon plot and action of the newer drama.

Mariamne is his masterpiece.¹⁰ Within a generation of its first production, Tristan l'Hermite revived the subject in *La Mariane* (1636), a significant reworking of Hardy's play. Both these plays follow the general sequence established by Dolce in his *Marianna*—foreshadowing, accusation, trial, execution, and re-

¹⁰ For a summary of the play see pp. 45 ff.

pentance. But important departures occur, which involve not only the emphasis given to the various phases of the action, but, most significantly, the relation of Herod and Mariamne. In Dolce's play, that relation is not one of conflict, but of persecution. Both Hardy and Tristan represent an authentic conflict of wills. Dolce was not thinking in terms of what was to become known as Brunetière's law of the drama; Hardy and Tristan decidedly were. Dolce's play is bounded by the limitations of Renaissance tragedy; Tristan's play, at least, is essentially modern.

The three plays open in much the same fashion. *Marianna*, it will be recalled, begins with a lengthy exposition regarding the nature, extent, and reasons for Mariamne's hatred of Herod. The scene is played between Mariamne and her nurse. The queen is minded no longer to put up with Herod's threats and insults; moreover, she thirsts for revenge.

For Dolce, as for Hardy, the tragic situation involved a spectacle of the extreme misery of a noble victim crushed by fortune or by a cruel tyrant. The victim, not the tyrant, was the hero or heroine of the tragedy. It was natural for the victim to detest the tyrant. Dolce went a step further. In accordance with Josephus, he made his heroine proud and haughty, and in imitation of the heroines of Euripides, he made her revengeful also. Unfortunately, this Euripidean Mariamne did not accord too well with the pattern of tragedy which Dolce had in mind. In the sort of drama he was writing, it was natural for Mariamne to take on some Euripidean characteristics, but she could hardly be a Medea. Her role is that of patient, not of agent, in the tragedy. Though her hatred of Herod is exaggerated by Dolce into an active desire for revenge, this must necessarily remain without consequence in the play, and results only in the loss of our sympathy for her. Her desire to kill Herod may thus be said to be a dramatic

blunder. It is repeated by Hardy, but it is not repeated by Tristan or by any subsequent dramatist.

It is barely possible that Hardy knew the Italian *Marianna*. It is almost certain that Tristan knew it, for he refers in his *advertissement* to certain "Italian imitations." What he owes to Hardy is a matter of dispute. Rigal says, in effect, "Tristan has nothing in his play which he does not owe to Hardy."²⁰ Bernardin says, "Tristan owes nothing to Hardy."²¹ A casual comparison of the two plays will, however, show that Tristan owes a good deal to Hardy. It is possible that he owes a little also to Dolce.

Marianna is in the last analysis a play of horror. Hardy and Tristan are concerned not with horror but with pathos. In Dolce's play the protagonist is Marianna. In the plays of Hardy and Tristan the protagonist is Herod. The transfer of interest from patient to agent, a familiar phenomenon in Italian and Elizabethan tragedy, may be to some degree attributed to the powerful influence of Euripides' *Medea* upon the imitators of classical tragedy. In France, moreover, such authors as Montaigne and d'Urfé were bringing about among the writers of the time of Henry IV a deeper interest in the analysis of human actions. Hardy's Mariamne is by no means a gentle creature, but she helps to make Herod understandable. The desire for Herod's death, which is merely an incongruous circumstance in Dolce's *Marianna*, is not absolutely out of keeping with the character of Mariamne in the French play, for Hardy depicts her as a strong character who might easily be capable of revenge. The difference in character puts a different complexion upon the motives of the catastrophe. Dolce's Herod kills his wife to revenge what he considers an infidelity. The French Herod kills his wife because she drives him to despair.

²⁰ E. Rigal, *Alexandre Hardy et le théâtre français* (Paris, 1889).

²¹ N. M. Bernardin, *Un précurseur de Racine, Tristan L'Hermite* (Paris, 1895).

The disparity of point of view between the Italian and the French writers is strikingly illustrated in their opening scenes. In the Italian play, it is the victim who dreams the foreshadowing dream, and it is her complaint which forms the subject of the first act. The French plays open, on the contrary, with an account of the afflictions of Herod, for the French authors incline to sympathize with the unhappy husband whose wife detests him to the point where she would rather die than submit to his caresses. In Hardy's play, it is Herod who sees the ghost of Aristobule; in Tristan's play, it is Herod who dreams the foreshadowing dream.

In structure the two French plays are quite similar. Both open with a scene in which Herod justifies his crimes and complains bitterly of Mariamne's coldness. In both plays, Salome and Pherore, his sister and brother, are in league against his wife, and try in vain to turn Herod against her. Both plays omit the Senecan horrors of Dolce's play, and both change the scene to show Mariamne in prison and on her way to the scaffold, thus emphasizing the pathetic, where Dolce has emphasized the horrible.

The French plays diverge slightly but significantly in the second act. In Hardy's play, Mariamne's nurse warns the queen not to rail so loudly against her husband lest she be overheard. In Tristan's play, she is actually overheard by Salome, with whom she engages in a sharp battle of words, and thus develops more clearly the acrimonious side of her character. There are other differences. Tristan's second act includes the accusation and sets the time for the trial which is held in the next act; Hardy defers the accusation until the third act, which, as it also includes the trial, gives an impression of undue haste. The remaining acts cover about the same ground in the two plays. Both fifth acts are without action. In Hardy's play, the queen's death is described by a messenger; so too is the scene involving Alexandra's shameful conduct, of which Mari-

amne, we are told, took no notice. Then follows the familiar scene of lamentation on the part of Herod.

In Tristan's version, the last act opens with a long monologue by Herod in which he declares that his life is in peril if his wife lives, but that he will certainly die of grief if she dies. He decides to retract the order for her execution. At this point, Narbal enters to announce Mariamne's death. Herod swoons, and, recovering, breaks into lamentation; he then asks Narbal for a detailed account of the execution. The Alexandra episode, which Tristan has already put on the stage, is now recounted as well, to impress it, as it were, firmly on our minds. As, in Narbal's recital, Mariamne's head flies off, Herod attempts to seize Narbal's sword and kill himself with it. He is prevented. Then he calls on the Hebrews to kill him, and, as they make no move, curses them roundly. At last he loses his mind, calls for Mariamne as if she were alive, recovers his reason, and decides to build a temple²² to her with her picture on the altar, where all shall worship her on pain of death. Suddenly he sees the queen in the clouds, rising toward heaven. Happy spirits surround her; one gives her a palm, another a crown; she looks down on his torments with an innocent eye. He addresses her—she has vanquished him on earth, and is about to triumph in heaven—and in excellent verse he asks her pardon. Once again he swoons—

—portons-le sur un lit,

says the matter-of-fact Tharé,

Possible que des sens il reprendra l'usage
Quand on aura jetté de l'eau sur son visage.

Narbal, shortly after, utters the conventional concluding lines, similar to those of Dolce's *Marianna*:

Mais les meilleurs esprits font des fautes extrêmes
Et les Rois bien souvent sont esclaves d'eux-mêmes.

²² An amusing version of Herod's celebrated architectural feat.

As the story in Josephus brought out the best in Dolce and Hardy, so, too, it inspired Tristan to write his masterpiece. He had begun as a lyric poet. *La Mariane* was his first play; he never surpassed it. His next play, *Panthée*, followed in 1637; *La Folie du Sage*, a tragicomedy, was produced in 1644; *La Mort de Sénèque*, a fine tragedy, appeared the same year. The rest of his plays were of mediocre merit.

In justifying his version of *Sophonisbe*, for which he had plundered Mairet, P. Corneille mentions the fact that "Feu M. Tristan a renouvelé Mariamne sur les pas du defunt Sieur Hardy." There was absolutely nothing exceptional about this practice—the seventeenth century practiced plagiarism without compunction. Mairet's *Sophonisbe* had followed those of Saint-Gelays, Claude Mermet, Montchrétien and Nicholas de Montreux, to mention no others. Scudéry's *Didon* came hot on the track of Hardy's and Jodelle's; it was promptly followed by Boisrobert's. Benserade's *Cléopâtre* was preceded by those of Montreux, Belliard, Garnier, and Jodelle, and followed by Mairet's *Marc-Antoine*.

Thus, in reviving Hardy's play, Tristan exhibited no more than good sense in the choice of a subject. A great deal of skill went into his revision. His characters are finer than Hardy's, their mentality is more shrewdly analyzed, his insight is deeper. In the scene, for example, in which Soesme is examined by Herod as to his supposedly adulterous relations with the queen, the retainer is made to say, in Tristan's play:

Hé! Sire! je commis ce crime par foiblesse!
Ce fut par imprudence & par legereté—²⁸

Herod brushes this excuse aside impatiently. He knows the truth already, he says, it remains only for Soesme to confess it. And he manifests an unhealthy interest in the details of Soesme's relations with Mariamne:

²⁸ The text is that of the excellent edition of Jacques Madeleine (Paris, 1917).

Apprens moy bien au long par ta confession
La naissance & le cours de ceste passion;
Trouvas-tu dans son ame un peu de resistance?
Et quels progresz fis-tu devant la jouissance?

At this, Soesme is shocked so that he cannot speak a word. Herod ironically compliments him upon his discretion. The wretched Soesme praises the queen's beauty and her virtue; how can the king believe such things of a queen,

Une Reine encore, & si chaste et si sage
Qu'elle sert de miroir à celles de cet Age?
Vous luy faites grand tort de prendre ces soupçons.

This homily Herod finds boring, and he shuts it off at once, and turning to his guards, orders:

Que l'on aille égorger ce fascheux Orateur.

And with this he turns his back upon the hapless Soesme, who is led out forthwith to his death.

This excellent scene, of which Hardy would have been entirely incapable, demonstrates to what lengths of realism Tristan could go in the interpretation of character. Herod is here very much the *grand seigneur*, cold, sarcastic, hiding his fury under a mask of calmness. Yet the cold fury he displays in this scene accords badly with the intense suffering he exhibits in the ensuing acts. He is, on the whole, decidedly not the type of character who hides his hurt; on the contrary, he is most voluble in his suffering. Whatever gifts Tristan possessed as a dramatist, he did not have the precious English sense of understatement, and he works his characters hard in all their moods. Thus, what might have been richness in Herod's character turns out rather as incongruity, and Tristan does no more than hint at the depth of the character he has conceived but cannot quite synthesize.

In the same way, the realism and reasonableness of Herod's scene with Pherore and Salome (Act IV, scene 1) detract from

the emotional effect instead of adding to it. In this scene, as he is congratulated on his escape from the death which Mariamne has supposedly planned for him, he boasts a little of the special care heaven takes of him. But he is unhappy, for he realizes to what an extent his life is tied up with that of Mariamne:

Je puis bien m'assurer qu'esteignant ce flambeau
Je ne verray plus rien d'aimable ny de beau.

.

O cieux! pourquoy faut-il qu'elle soit infidelle?
Vous devriez la former moins perfide ou moins belle—

And he begins again to waver in his resolution to have her executed—after all, he reflects, Soesme justified himself before dying. Salome begins to weep. Their whole race will be destroyed, she cries. Pherore suggests that Herod is under a spell. The king has a ready answer: he would spare Mariamne only to punish her the more, for death would put too quick an end to her misery. Salome points out the danger of such a course; if Mariamne is kept in prison there may be a popular uprising.²⁴ And so they work upon Herod until he gives in wearily:

Bien, qu'on l'oste, qu'on l'oste . . .²⁵

And looking at the matter with a statesman's eye for the probable consequences, he immediately adds:

Il sera necessaire incontinent après
D'en avertir César par un courier exprés,
De crante que l'envie, avec ses artifices,
Me rende près de luy quelques mauvais offices,
Et me fasse passer, la verité celant,
Pour un Prince ombrageux, inuste, & violent.

How far this reasonable monarch is from the Wrathful King or Senecan Tyrant need hardly be pointed out. No dramatist has succeeded in making Herod more real, more human, or more

²⁴ *Antiq.*, Bk. XV, chap. 2

²⁵ This excellent line is taken directly out of Caussin, *Le Politique Malheureux*.

convincing. But, again, his very rationality detracts from his greatness as a character. Othello appeals strongly to that side of us which does not reason; we imagine ourselves in his place and are frightened at the possibilities, for all men are equal in the realm of unreason. But in the realm of reason—why, we wonder, since Herod reasons so well, did he not reason a little better?

And if he had, indeed? Given the sort of woman that Mariamne had become, would this have saved them? The answer is doubtless in the negative; therein lies the tragedy of Herod. But, alas! the tragedy of a reasonable man is always a little ridiculous. It is marvelous how little insight these characters have into the real difficulty between them. Mariamne sees his fierce jealousy, but not his love; his crimes, but not the necessity that causes them. For his part, he does not seem to realize the position in which he has placed her, and blames his fortune when he has himself to blame. As a rational person he understands very well that after what he has done to her it is possible that she may wish to kill him, but he has no idea of what to do about it, save to lament his fate: not for a moment does it occur to him that he has not acted reasonably.

To see to what lengths Tristan has gone to make us sympathize with Herod instead of with his victim, it is necessary only to compare his treatment of the situation with that of Caussin, whose account in other respects he followed exactly. For Caussin, Mariamne was

... une petite fille de ces grand Machabées, bien versée en la Loy de Dieu, discrete, accorte, deferante, respectueuse, debonnaire, chaste comme une Suzanne, mais surtout courageuse et patiente. . . . C'este créature . . . eut donc Herodes pour mary, qui n'avoit quasi rien d'humain que la peau et la figure. . . . La genereuse fille prevoyoit bien que la mettant entre les mains d'Herodes, c'estoit la jeter en la gueule du Lyon. Mais pour ne contredire a ceux ausquels elle avoit appris a deferer toute sa vie, et pour obeir aux loix de la necessité, elle se mit le ioug au col. . . .

For Tristan, it is in self-defense that Herod kills her. At the moment she is being executed, the king says:

Ma vie est en péril s'il est vrai qu'elle vive,
Et si la belle est morte, il faut que je la suive.

and so decides to retract his order, thus choosing the lesser of two evils. It is through fear of her also that Pherore and Salome desire her death. As Salome remarks, in Act Two,

 notre sexe est fort vindicatif,
Et dans ses trahisons se rend bien inventif:
La tigresse qui voit enlever sa portée,
Est moins à redouter qu'une femme irritée.

Indeed, Tristan's Mariamne is a very different soul from the model young lady described by Caussin, and Salome is not very far off in her estimate of the tigress-like qualities of the irritated queen, who openly avows to Dina, her confidante, that she will never stoop to please a barbarian, a Scythian, the murderer of her relatives; further, an abominable monster. With her, it is, in short, as if she had read Caussin and was determined to be guided by his description of her husband rather than by his description of herself.

With the shrill and acrimonious lady of the first part of the play, we may compare the Mariamne of the fourth act, resigned, gentle, patient, considerate, but not humble. The scene is her dungeon. She is happy to die, she declares; she would rather die than, living, be tied mouth to mouth to a corpse, and she prays heaven to make her path easy for her. The jailer enters, weeping. The queen does not wish to detain the executioners, but she asks a moment in which to speak to her children and to divide among them the trifles that remain to her. When she reënters, a little later, on her way to the scaffold, she is still thinking of her children—she prays heaven to make them holy, temperate, law-abiding, like herself. As for Herod, she is willing to satisfy his thirst with her blood. And,

at the risk of seeming repetitious, she once more proclaims her stainless glory. Then she sees her mother in the crowd. "Suffer," she says to the captain of the guards, "that I give her the last tear and the last kiss; it will take but a moment." She is told to hurry. But her mother, in fear for herself, brutally tells her she is getting less than she deserves, for it would have been more just to burn her or to crucify her. To these pitiless reproaches,

Femme sans pitié, nouvelle Danaïde,
Inhumaine traïstresse, assassine, perfide . . .

Mariamne answers simply,

Vous vivrez innocente, et je mourrais coupable.

Which comes as close to sublimity as anything in French drama.

The excellence of *Tristan's* tragedy lies in the fact that he makes us realize, as Josephus does not, that these characters infallibly brought out the worst in each other. Their relationship, without either of them moving a finger, is tragic; in action, there is nothing either of them can do to avoid sorrow. The concomitant weakness of this situation is that the final outcome is unimportant. The tragic situation is more poignant with Mariamne living than with Mariamne dead. To have Herod lament as if he had killed her rashly or through a mistake, is to overlook the main point of the play. Unhappily, in following Hardy in the arrangement of his fifth act, *Tristan* was forced to do something of this sort.

Tristan's play has many drawbacks, as we have seen, but it has many excellences too, and it may well be considered not only one of the best of the Mariamne dramas, but one of the masterpieces of the French stage. It was first produced in the spring of 1636, at Mondory's Théâtre du Marais, in the same year as Corneille's *Cid*.²⁶ Little is known of the actual conditions of production. It is certain that Hardy had written for

²⁶ *La Mariane* was first published in 1636; second edition, revised, 1637.

the simultaneous settings of the Hôtel de Bourgogne. Bernardin suggests that *La Mariane* was produced in a setting of this sort. But 1636, as Madeleine points out, is a late date for this arrangement,²⁷ and it is more than likely that the set was a simple interior with movable properties. Fragmentary scene directions noted by Michel Laurent some forty years later give us at least an approximate idea of what the *décor* must have been:

Mariane. Theatre is a palace. In the first act, a bed, an armchair, two chairs; second act, it is a room; third, a throne, an armchair, a carpet on the throne, two benches; in the fourth act, the prison; in the fifth, the palace and an armchair, and drop the curtain for the end.²⁸

The success of *La Mariane* is attested by no less a critic than Corneille. In speaking of the proper place for the catastrophe, which, according to him, should end a play, he says:

the contrary is seen in *La Mariane*, whose death, although it takes place in the interval separating the fourth from the fifth act, does not prevent the sorrows of Herod, which take up the whole of the last act, from having been extraordinarily successful. But I should not advise anyone to follow this example. Miracles do not occur every day; and although its author merited his success by the great effort of imagination which he made to depict the despair of this king, perhaps the excellence of the actor who played the part contributed greatly to it.²⁹

The actor to whom Corneille refers was Mondory. "This character of Herod," writes Tallemant des Réaux, "cost him dear; for as his imagination was strong, at the moment he believed himself almost to be what he represented, and as he was playing this role he suffered an apoplexy which prevented him from playing thereafter."³⁰ This took place in the autumn of 1637. *La Mariane* was interrupted for a time, but Mondory found substitutes and the play was continued. It was played with great frequency all through the seventeenth century, as

²⁷ Preface to his edition of *La Mariane* (Paris, 1917).

²⁸ H. C. Lancaster, *Le Mémoire de Mabelot, Laurent et d'autres décorateurs de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne et de la Comédie-française au XVII^e siècle* (Paris, 1920).

²⁹ Corneille, *Discours de l'utilité et des parties du Poëme dramatique* (1660).

³⁰ *Les Historiettes de Tallemant des Réaux* (3rd ed., 1865), V, 436.

late as 1703-4, by the company of the Marais; and, maintaining itself excellently against the competition of the drama of Corneille and Racine, was requested at Versailles, and even toured the provinces.⁸¹

The remarkable success of Tristan's play put Hardy's *Mariamne* pretty much in the shade, and indeed almost every change made by Tristan in Hardy's play was a change for the better. Tristan was a poet, and he had qualities of imagination and of expression in which Hardy was lacking. But Hardy was the first to see that the Mariamne story is more than a tale of insane jealousy; that the tragedy of Herod primarily concerns a man who makes himself powerful only at the cost of making himself wretched, who has striven mightily to gain what he cannot enjoy, and who at last comes to realize that his every step in the direction of happiness has taken him further from his goal. The development initiated by Hardy was to have consequences of incalculable importance for the drama. Henceforth in France the tragic situation could no longer be considered merely as a spectacle of human misery which it was the function of the characters to lament, nor as a spectacle of human suffering which it was the function of the audience to enjoy. After Hardy, it was recognized that tragedy must be primarily a question of the human soul. It was upon this groundwork that Corneille and Racine were to stand.

Something of this change in the French conception of tragedy may be glimpsed even in the very mediocre sequel to *La Mariamne*, published in Paris by Gauthier de Costes de la Calprenède in 1639, entitled *La Mort des enfans d'Herodes ou suite de Mariane*. La Calprenède, through the authorship of several lengthy romances of which we shall have to take further notice

⁸¹ For the reputation of *La Mariane*, see Rapin, *Réflexions sur La Poétique d'Aristote* (1674), II, xix. A Dutch imitation by Coenraed Droste was published in 1714, ten years before Voltaire's *Mariamne*. Droste's play was entitled *Mariamne, Treurspel* and was included in the author's *De Haegse Schouburg*, Vol II ('s Gravenhage, 1714).

somewhat later in this discussion, was destined to exert considerable influence on the drama in France, England, and Germany. His own work in the theatre, however, suffers by comparison with that of his talented contemporaries. He was not without skill in the depiction of character and situation—in these respects, *Jeanne d'Angleterre* and *Le Comte d'Essex* exhibit a certain merit. Not as much can be said, unfortunately, for *La Mort des enfans d'Herodes*. It is a wholly uninspired composition which can hardly be considered a sequel to *La Mariane*, for it does not carry forward, as one might expect, the central motive of that play, but takes up a wholly new intrigue in the course of which Mariamne's sons lose their lives. The only interest this play has for us, therefore, is in the way in which the character of Herod is developed.

It might reasonably be supposed that, following the advances made in plot development and characterization by Hardy and Tristan, La Calprenède would be able to analyze the tragic relation of Herod and his sons with a certain degree of insight. Nothing is further from the fact. La Calprenède evidently understood that tragedy involved a psychic conflict, but all that he was able to derive from his predecessors in the field was the pathetic character of Herod. In his attempt to make a somewhat close analysis of this character, however, he succeeded only in exaggerating the pitiful aspect of the king's nature to proportions which closely approximate the ridiculous.

The plot of this play, like that of *Herod and Antipater* (1622), concerns the machinations of Herod's bastardized son, Antipater, to ruin the sons of Mariamne. In this he completely succeeds; strangely enough, he goes unpunished. Herod is depicted as a weak and aged king, full of years and sorrow, who dyes his hair and paints his cheeks in an effort to appear young. The part of the heroine devolves, for want of a better, upon Glaphira, the Cappadocian princess who is married to Prince Alexander.

Alexander has been told, falsely, that Herod is attempting to seduce Glaphira. The prince proceeds to heap reproaches upon the head of his father, who patiently justifies himself. It is discovered that Pherore is guilty of the scandalous story. He is summoned, denies that he meant it seriously, and is chided and sent about his business by the king. But Alexander and his brother Aristobulus decide they are surrounded by enemies, and conspire to flee to Cappadocia. Their plot is denounced by Antipater and Diophantes, the king's secretary, who make it appear to be directed against the king's life. Thus imposed upon, Herod proceeds to try his sons, and condemns them to death. After the order for their execution is signed, Glaphira comes to plead for the young men, in the name of Mariamne. Herod grants the pardon, but, as he very well knows, this mercy comes too late, and when the princess has gone joyfully to release her husband, the king laments the sad necessity that has brought about so many disasters. His lamentation is indeed somewhat more extravagant than is usual even with him, for he resolves in the future to confine himself in some horrible abyss or graveyard where the sun never shines, where he may mull over his many sins while he drags to an end his long and detestable life.

Thus we lose sight of him. As for Glaphira, the sight of the corpses of the men she has come to save is the signal for a long tirade, in the course of which she calls the judgment of heaven down upon Herod, his palace, and his city. When she has finished, she swoons dramatically upon the body of her husband.

That is all there is to *La Mort des enfans d'Herodes*,³² which is thus seen to be somewhat closer to the "naked dramas" of the Renaissance than we should ordinarily expect at this period. The action is quite devoid of dramatic energy, and derives what virtue it may have largely from the character of the wretched

³² The text is available in the Modern Language Association Collection of Photographic Facsimiles (1929), No. 115, Vol. VI, Part 2

Herod crushed by the weight of his crimes, a figure which recalls the Herodes of Goldingham. The action, which is, as we have seen, smoothly but not powerfully motivated, conforms easily to the unities and is generally decorously declamatory in nature, without suspense or heightened interest.

Of the copious ghost and dream machinery of Senecan tragedy Dolce had borrowed only the prophetic dream. This simple method of foreshadowing action was felt to be preëminently suitable to tragedy. The Renaissance, like the Middle Ages, was much preoccupied by the signification of dreams. In the drama, the prophetic dream had the authority of Euripides. It was a favorite device of Seneca, and became an infallible adjunct of Renaissance tragedy, in which it served a double purpose: to introduce the mystic note of foreboding and suspense deemed proper to tragedy; and, at the same time, to advance the exposition in a thrifty and striking manner.

The ghost has been called probably the oldest figure in tragedy. The ghost of Clytemnestra opens Aeschylus' *Eumenides*; Darius haunts his *Persae*. The prologue of Euripides' *Hecuba* involves the ghost of Polydorus, and the shade of Achilles is described in the *Troades*. In the Senecan theatre, almost every generation of characters is likely to be haunted by the ghosts of its ancestors—*Thyestes* is opened by the ghost of Tantalus, *Agamemnon* by the ghost of Thyestes. In *Octavia*, we have the ghost of Agrippina in one place, of Britannicus in another. In the *Thebais*, Oedipus is terrified by the ghost of the murdered Laius.

The ghosts raised by Seneca were not easily laid. The stage of the Renaissance was positively infested by them. Whole legions of spirits flocked to the Elizabethan theatre. The Enlightenment succeeded in banishing a few from the stage, but the necromancers of the romantic period called them up again in multitudes; they hung about the fringes of the realistic and natural-

istic theatre. It is doubtful whether we shall ever see the last of them.

French tragedy made extensive use of the classical "utilities," not only of ghosts and dreams, but of gods, furies, prophets, and oracles. We find such things in Garnier's *Hippolyte*, *Cornélie*, *Marc-Antoine*, and *Les Juives*; in Grévin's *Mort de César*, and Montchrétien's *Hector*. The later irregular tragedy rejected the gods, the allegorical figures, and ghosts, but it saw no objection to dreams and visions.

In his reaction to irregular tragedy, Hardy went back to the classical ghost as a means of foreshadowing the catastrophe, and his *Mariamne* opens with a sixty-eight-line homily addressed to Herod by the ghost of Aristobule. The ghost was no doubt much more effective on the stage than the recital of the dream as in Dolce's play. But after Hardy, the spirits took a long holiday from the French theatre, which had evidently become too cramped with *bonnêtes gens* for comfort. More than two centuries were to elapse before, encouraged by the successful persistence of the ghost in *Hamlet*, they ventured a timid re-appearance in Voltaire's *Eriphyle*, and, on condition that the stage be cleared of all but actors, in his *Sémiramis*.

The ghosts banished from the French stage after Hardy became *émigrés*, and went to join their confreres in Germany and England, where the *Mariamne* plays were numbered among their favorite haunts. Hallmann's *Die beleidigte Liebe* has both dream and ghosts, though the ghosts who haunt Herod are not of the same type as the spectre employed by Hardy. They neither foretell nor initiate action, but, like the shades which pass in review before Herod in the fifth act of *Herod and Antipater*, and those which plague him in Pordage's *Mariamne* and Orrery's *Herod the Great*, serve largely for spectacle, have a mediaeval coloring, and symbolize the torments of conscience and the other world. But their lineage is ancient, if not pure, and they are doubtless

related to the furies who pursue Orestes in Aeschylus' tragedy, as the more functional shade of Aristobulus in Hardy's play, like that of the elder Hamlet, is related to the ghost of Clytemnestra who cries for vengeance in the *Eumenides*.

The most determined assault of the ghosts who haunt the Mariamne story takes place in Francis Peck's dramatic poem, *Herod the Great* (1720), which pertains rather more to the spirit world than to ours. In that composition, the spirit of Mariamne appears to Herod in Act Two; various ghosts plague him in his sleep in Act Three; and six ghosts appear to him, waking, in Act Four. At the end of this treatment, Herod is, naturally, somewhat cowed, and resolves to flee. The ghosts are apparently satisfied with this triumph, and turn to other endeavors, for from this time on, with the exception of Iliowizi's *Herod* (1884), the Mariamne tragedies seem to get on without supernatural intervention.

The century which separated Tristan's *La Mariane* from Voltaire's *Mariamne* saw the triumph of classical tragedy in the work of Corneille and Racine, and its decline in their imitators. The classical rules which had been rejected in the period 1570-1620 were readopted in the early part of the century in the name, strangely enough, of realism. The *bienséances* were established as a concession to the tastes of polite society, and the *politesse* of the salon was extended to the tragic stage. The rules and *bienséances* were, of course, no unmixed blessing. They gave the dramatic poem form, dignity, and concentration, but only at the expense of vitality and warmth. They resulted in a purely conventional drama of high technical merit played upon a thoroughly chill stage.

Corneille both set and transcended the limits of classical tragedy. From the amorphous lyricism of Renaissance tragedy, he evolved the structure of the well-made play. He imported from Latin comedy via tragicomedy the closely knit intrigue;

transformed the lyric plaint into motives and springs of action; made of the plot a problem which every scene advanced toward the solution. By setting tragedy, as Hardy and Tristan had indicated, outside of time and space and in the human soul, he contrived a drama bounded but not limited by rules. Finally, he concentrated the dramatic conflict in an emotional and psychological crisis.

In Corneille's theatre, the reasonable will was dominant; the conflict was resolved in action based not upon impulse, but upon clear and reasoned judgments. In the drama of Racine, love became the supreme motive. In consequence, the characters of Racine lack the heroic proportions of those of Corneille, their calmness and impressive self-mastery. They come somewhat closer to humanity. They are hesitant, irresolute, and, under influences derived from the Greek theatre, they are tossed about by powerful passions against which they feebly struggle, but over which they have no control. In the theatre of Racine the significant roles are reserved for women.

The development of classical tragedy in France began with Corneille and ended with Racine. The host of playwrights who exploited the classical formula after Racine produced little of value. The inhibitory influence of the rules and *bienséances*, insisted upon by an over-critical public, prevented original departures from the received patterns. It became permissible only to imitate the masters, from whom were derived a repertory of sure-fire situations, and a lexicon of "tragic" phrases. In this manner, French tragedy became a matter of arranging certain given materials in accordance with an inviolable system.

The patterns were standardized—the tragic option, as in the necessity of choosing between love and honor, or love and duty; the triangular situation, with its sequel of jealousy and revenge; the incestuous or illicit love affair; the threat to the hero arising from a loved one. Attempts were made to inject suspense and emotion into these clichés by such devices as incognitos, misun-

derstandings, and recognitions; repetition was disguised by means of rhetoric, and the theatre drifted further and further from the natural and the vital toward the perfectly dull on the one hand, and the melodramatic and spectacular on the other.

For a third of a century, from 1730 to 1760, the fortunes of classical tragedy lay entirely in the hands of Voltaire, who in his day was accounted the equal, if not the superior, of Racine and Corneille. Actually, his genius was critical rather than creative. He was aware of the slough into which French tragedy had fallen, but he was neither willing nor able to pull it out. In a period of transition, he showed himself at times receptive, more often intolerant, of new ideas. He began by coming under the influence of Shakspeare.³³ From this "savage" he was able to learn a little—at least he was able to see in the Englishman's art the deadly coldness of his own.

But though he realized that French tragedy had bogged down hopelessly, he hesitated to set it free for fear it might lack restraint. After 1745, when Shakspeare came into vogue in France, Voltaire spent much energy in combatting his influence.³⁴ He was an enemy of the "polite" blood tragedy of Crébillon, as well as of the tendencies of La Motte in the direction of realism and liberty,³⁵ and as the times progressed inevitably in the direction of romanticism, the former innovator entrenched himself more and more deeply in the system of Racine, which, indeed, he succeeded in maintaining on the stage until the time of Victor Hugo. But while he insisted on the necessity of greatly depicting great passions in the manner of Racine, for him, as for his fellows, tragedy remained a matter of the ingenious application of rules to standardized materials.

Of his twenty-seven tragedies, *Mariamne* is third in point of time. It immediately precedes the decade (1730-42) in which

³³ "Discours sur la tragédie," prefaced to *Brutus* (1731)

³⁴ "Lettre à M. le Marquis Scipion Maffei," prefixed to *Mérope* (1744)

³⁵ Preface to *Oedipe* (1730).

the author showed himself amenable to English influence, the period which saw the production of *Brutus*, *Zaïre*, and *Mabomet*. The situation in *Mariamne* is similar to that of his second tragedy, *Artémire*, which was produced in 1720, but never published as a whole.

In its first state, *Mariamne* was produced on March 6, 1724. It failed miserably. A drastic revision preceded the second production in 1725, and it received a final revision in 1762. Voltaire published all three editions—the first in 1724, the revision in 1730, the second revision in 1762.

In its original state it had a triangular plot, possibly derived from La Calprenède's *Cléopâtre*, with the Roman Varus substituted for the Parthian Tyridates, who is the lover of Mariamne in La Calprenède's romance. But, as we have noted, Herod was dwarfed by the presence of the sympathetic rival, and the play had not the magnitude of tragedy. In his revision, Voltaire suppressed the too weighty Varus, and substituted Sohême, who is promoted for the purpose from the "créature d'Herode" of Tristan to an independent kingship,³⁶ provided with a confidant, and transformed into an Essene, in the words of Voltaire, "a kind of Jansenist."³⁷ In the interest of a closer intrigue than Tristan would have deemed necessary, Sohême is, moreover, somewhat unhistorically betrothed to Salome, whom he casts off for love of Mariamne, and whom he thus furnishes with a motive for revenge. Pherore, Salome's accomplice in Tristan's play, is dropped from the cast, and his part in bringing about the catastrophe is taken by Mazaël, the evil counselor, who is rather mechanically balanced against the good counselor, Idamas. The queen's confidante, Dina, in Tristan's play, is renamed Elise. Tristan's Narbal, now called Narbas, shares in the general promotion to the extent of being made an "ancien officier des rois Asmonéens."

³⁶ Sohemus was actually made a "mendarch," a regent of a small province, by Herod (*Antiq.*, Bk XV, chap 7, § 3)

³⁷ Letter to the Comte d'Argental, 7 August 1762.

While Voltaire's conception of the character and relationship of Herod and Mariamne is identical with that of Tristan, his plot is somewhat different, and in this difference may be seen the direction in which tragic art had developed since the days of *La Mariane*. The unities are strictly observed. There are no ghosts demanding revenge, nor dreams to presage disaster. The euphuistic tendencies of Tristan are suppressed. The action is simple and unified, rather bare of incident, but animated by rapid reversals of situation. The plot is tightly knit, and all excess incident—the betrayal of the secret command, the poison plot, the trial—is dropped. The pathetic ending is carefully foreshadowed and developed, though it is no longer given an entire act. Mariamne shows the influence of the Cornelian heroines, and is presented with a tragic option. All the other characters are weak.

In spite of the tight intrigue, a certain vagueness pervades the play, for the characters are continually wavering. The action begins with conflicting rumors of Herod's death and his proximate return from Rome. The secret command is apparently known to everyone. Sohême, the king of Ascalon, is staying in Jerusalem to protect the queen. A letter arrives from Herod instructing Salome, who is regent in his absence, to abase herself before Mariamne. When she does so, Mariamne treats her with contempt, and draws upon herself a threat of vengeance. Mariamne then asks Sohême to aid her in fleeing to Rome, but when he timidly reveals his love for her, the queen is greatly annoyed and declares she can never see him again. She is, however, a merciful woman, and when he evinces his repentance, she agrees to make use of him.

The impending return of Herod is announced. He is apparently furious at something Salome has told him. The queen begins to waver in her resolution to escape; as she is now in real danger, Sohême determines to carry her off to safety. In the third act, Herod appears. He has decided to exalt Mariamne in power,

and to reform himself completely. Just then, Mazael comes in with news that Sohême is about to run off with the queen. The king furiously orders Mariamne arrested. In the fourth act, he meets her on the stage for the first time. As in *Tristan's* play, she defies him imperiously, but insists on her innocence. Gradually his anger changes to tenderness; he offers to forgive her if she will forgive him. It looks as if matters are improving. Then a guard darts in with news of an uprising led by Sohême, the object of which is to free the queen. In an altered mood, Herod rushes out to fight. Mariamne, left to herself and her guards, has a long soliloquy, in the midst of which Sohême hastens in, sword in hand, and says that the time is ripe for flight. The queen refuses. She is a loyal subject, and will take no part in treasonable practices; she is a loyal wife, her husband is in danger, and she is resolved to stand by him at all hazards. Sohême is lost in admiration—when he has recovered, he runs out never to appear more.

To her retainer, Narbas, the queen then explains her plan—she will show Herod the kind of woman she is; in the midst of the fray, she will run between him and Sohême, stop the fighting, and put her fate in the hands of her husband. This turns out to be quite unnecessary, for the victorious Herod now enters and orders her instant execution. Lightning can be no swifter than the speed with which his order is obeyed. Almost as soon as Mariamne is led off, Narbas comes to give the formal description of the crowds, the scaffold, and the death of the queen. He adds to his recital what he knows of the queen's innocence, a piece of information which would have averted the catastrophe had he divulged it sooner. As it is, it simply brings about the traditional scene of lamentation, similar to that of *Tristan*, and the play ends on this note.

"On disait," Voltaire wrote in the preface to the edition of 1724, "que le sujet de *Mariamne* n'était autre chose qu'un vieux

mari amoureux et brutal, à qui sa femme refuse avec aigreur le devoir conjugal; et on ajoutait qu'une querelle de ménage ne pouvait jamais faire une tragédie."

But when we consider, he added, in effect, the greatness of the king, the beauty of the queen, and their tragic relationship, then we must agree that these are proper materials for tragedy.

The fact is, however, quite obviously, that blowing up the figures does not alter their relationship. *Mariamne* is a *querelle de ménage*, though upon a royal scale. The objection to such a foundation for tragedy does not seem to us, schooled as we are in the drama of Ibsen and Strindberg, particularly important. In the days of Voltaire, it was, of course, a most important objection, but it must be admitted that he did nothing to avoid it. On the contrary, he seems to have gone out of his way to incur it, for, though he shows himself conscious, as always, of the political setting of the action, he reduces the complicated story of Josephus to very simple terms—his plot involves, really, only the story of a woman who desires to leave her husband, but is prevented and killed out of motives of jealousy.

The only complicating factor in this familiar pattern of domestic drama is *Mariamne's* heroic decision to sacrifice the man who loves her, and, in the name of conjugal fidelity, to stand by the man she hates. The rest of the very simple machinery of the play, the jealousy and hatred of Salome, and the malignance of Mazaël, is without special significance, and comes to nothing in the light of Herod's forgiving nature.

The play suffers from the banality of the plot and the extreme timidity with which it is developed. As *Mariamne* does not love Sohême, her decision in the fifth act to stand by Herod is not striking; as neither Sohême nor his love for the queen are impressive, his tragic fate does not arouse sympathy. The silence of Narbas, on the other hand, is one of those mystifications in which eighteenth-century tragedy commonly dealt. Had Narbas spoken before instead of after the execution, the play would vanish. In

Hebbel's version of this incident, as we shall see, the silence of Titus, who plays an equivalent role, is made explicable, since Mariamne expressly asks him not to speak until she is dead. But as the device is fundamentally the same, Hebbel's play suffers from the same weakness.

The initial conception of the character of Mariamne, Voltaire derived undoubtedly from Tristan, but her manners are better in the more modern play, and she resorts more readily to irony and sarcasm than to epithets and curses. The word battle in which she engages with Salome at the end of Tristan's first act is refined, in conformity with the *bienséances*, into a display of venomous charity. In this episode, Salome's obviously insincere proffer of friendship is coldly parried in a manner calculated to serve for exhibition purposes:

Ne me redoutez point; je sais également
 Dédaigner votre crime et votre châtement;
 J'ai vu tous vos desseins, et je vous les pardonne.
 C'est à vos seules remords que je vous abandonne.

Mariamne is equally mistress of herself when outraged by Sohême's very timid proffer of love, and rebuffs it in the same elevated style:

Je ne m'attendais pas qu'une flamme coupable
 Dût ajouter ce comble à l'horreur qui m'accable.

.

Tout espoir m'est ravi, je ne vous verrai plus.

And when he hurriedly and confusedly expresses his repentance, she coldly tells this man who is about to risk and lose his life for her:

Il suffit, je vous crois—

and adds sternly,

d'indignes passions
 Ne doivent point souiller les nobles actions.

Her *sangfroid* is statuesque, her virtue abominable. Unlike Tristan's Mariamne, she neither feels, suffers, nor expresses herself with intensity, nor ever permits herself the slightest touch of human feeling. Her attitudes toward her lover, her husband, her children, her reputation, and her death are alike smug, posed, false, conventional. Through all the vicissitudes to which the play subjects her, she remains unchanged as if made of stone—an extreme and unhappy development of the Cornelian heroine—and, impervious to everything, she seems to go to her death in the secure confidence that the headsman's axe will be dashed to fragments when it comes in contact with her inviolable neck. To measure the progress that Voltaire made in characterization as a result of his study of Shakspeare, we have but to compare this figure out of Madame Tussaud's with the vastly more human feminine types of Zaire and Aménaïde.

Under the circumstances, it is natural that the chief interest of the play should be focused upon the sufferings of Herod, as in *La Mariane*. But in Tristan's play, Herod is a gallant and passionate lover, is introduced at the very beginning of the play, and dominates the action throughout, while in Voltaire's play, he does not appear until late in the third act, and as he vacillates constantly and is hardly on the stage long enough to acquire a definite personality, he is able to dominate neither the action nor anything else. Thus, he is forced to share the position of central character with the static Mariamne and the impoverished Sohême, and the uncertainty as to the proper focus of attention goes to enhance the general vagueness and diffusiveness of the play.

The role of an aged lover, depicted seriously and with dignity, was one of the innovations of Corneille, who had exploited it in *Sertorius* and in *Pulchérie*. It is possible that this is the sort of part Voltaire had in mind for Herod, although we are told in the first scene that he has been but five years married. At any rate, the king's jealousy and his passion are not those of youth. His

passion is dignified and restrained, and results in making him pitiable; his jealousy has nothing in common with the cold fury of Tristan's Herod. It is even questionable whether it exists at all. Certainly he does not kill Mariamne out of jealousy; it is only when he believes that she desires his death that he orders hers.

This outcome is in fact so weakly prepared as to be unconvincing. In his effort to make Herod sympathetic, the author goes so far in weakening him as almost to preclude the possibility that he is capable of ordering the execution of Mariamne. The vagueness of the preparation, as we can see from Voltaire's comments on the play, was quite conscious:

If one wishes to follow history, Mariamne should hate Herod and overwhelm him with reproaches, but if one desires that Mariamne should be interesting, her reproaches must leave open the possibility of reconciliation; her hate must not appear absolutely inflexible. In this manner, the spectator is softened, and history is not at all entirely belied.⁸⁸

The blurring of the sharp outlines of Josephus' story is thus laid to the very real necessity for making the characters sympathetic and of creating interest and suspense. But as, in fact, the tendency of the action and the characters is all in the direction of the mean, the suspense points all too clearly toward a final reconciliation, once Sohême is removed, and the king's extreme measures at the end are out of keeping with the tone of the characters and the story.

In the first version of the play, the queen's death took place on the stage. The fashion of depicting death as a stage spectacle had been recently popularized by Campistron and by LaGrange-Chancel,⁸⁹ and the reception accorded the tragic spectacle of Mariamne's death was entirely unexpected. The first night of the play happened to fall on the eve of the *fête des rois*. As the Macabean queen raised the poisoned cup to her lips, the parterre

⁸⁸ Preface to the edition of 1730.

⁸⁹ Campistron, *La Mort de Phocion*; LaGrange-Chancel, *Alceste*, *Méléagre*.

shouted, "La reine boit!," interrupted the play, and, as Voltaire tells us, missed the very pathetic scene between the king and the dying queen. The effect of this scene, which was thereupon relegated to the appendices of future editions of *Mariamne*, may, however, be judged from its presence in the last act of Fenton's celebrated *Mariamne*, which had appeared in London the preceding year. It was with regret that Voltaire suppressed the scene—

J'avoue que c'est contre mon goût que j'ai mis la mort de Mariane en récit au lieu de la mettre en action; mais je n'ai voulu combattre en rien le goût du public: c'est pour lui et non pour moi que j'écris; ce sont ses sentimens et non les miens que je dois suivre.⁴⁰

In his original version of the play, which includes a good deal of political discussion on the part of Varus, this was the only bit of action visible on the stage. Its excision left the second version almost entirely within the realm of oratory, for, save for the excitement of the uprising, there is no other stage business in *Mariamne*. By the time of the second version, Voltaire was already studying Shakspere, in whose work he could see how these things were ordered in England. But it would have been unthinkable to introduce a sample of the great unwashed upon the French stage. The details of the riot are therefore related by a soldier, and the riot itself is confined to that happy no-man's land where the most impressive stage effects of classical tragedy have always taken place—backstage.

In spite of the "extreme indulgence" with which Voltaire assures us the second version of *Mariamne* was received by the public, the fact is that the play never went well on the stage, and was soon withdrawn. In his later life, Voltaire referred to it as a play he had never regarded as other than declamatory. It was, none the less, not unfruitful. To it, or its influence, may be traced the handful of mediocre *Mariamne* tragedies which appeared in the century following its production—some translations, a rival

⁴⁰ Preface to the edition of 1730.

piece by Nadal, a German play by Schönaich, and two Italian tragedies, of which one is much better than its French model.

Before its final revision in 1762, Voltaire's *Mariamne* had already been translated into German and Italian. Both of these translations were made from the first version, and thus include the character of Varus and exclude that of Sohême. The German translation, by M.J.F. Scharfenstein, appeared as *Marianne* in 1740 in Nürnberg, and in 1751 in Vienna. It was soon rivaled by another translation by Weisse and the youthful Lessing. The Italian version was prepared by Gasparo Gozzi, and was printed under the name of *Marianne* in the first volume of his *Teatro ebraico* (Venice, 1751). It is perhaps significant that the translator does not refer to the "famous French author" by name.

A more immediate consequence of Voltaire's *Mariamne* was the *Mariamne* of the Abbé Augustin Nadal, or Nadault, which appeared at the Comédie-française in the year (1725) following the first production of Voltaire's play. Nadal, the publisher of *Le Nouveau Mercure*, and author of an *Histoire des vestales*, a *Traité du luxe des dames romaines*, and *Le Paradis terrestre*, an imitation of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, has left, in addition to these works, five mediocre tragedies, all on Biblical or semi-Biblical subjects. Of these, *Saul* (1705) and *Hérode* (1709) had a certain amount of success at the Comédie-française. *Hérode*, a tragedy "derived from the Scriptures," is actually taken from the account in Josephus of the later life of Herod, and deals with the tragic fate of his son Alexander. The plot of this very insipid drama makes use of Salome, Thirron, and Narbal (taken from *Tristan*), and culminates quite unhistorically in the execution of Alexander, the death of Salome, and the madness of Herod.⁴¹

A good part of the Abbé Nadal's energy, after 1724, must have been expended in persecuting Voltaire. He first expressed his dislike in the *Triplet au Titon de Tillet*. He followed the publication of Voltaire's *Mariamne* with a detailed criticism of the

⁴¹ *Oeuvres mêlées*, Vol III (Paris, 1738)

play, including a careful list of his bad verses and plagiarisms,⁴² and burlesqued *Zaire* in a one-act prose parody entitled *Arlequin au Parnasse*, produced by the Comédie-italienne in 1737. In 1725, he undertook to demonstrate how a *Mariamne* play should really be written. Unfortunately, his *Mariamne* did none too well at the Comédie-française, and he was forced to console himself by severely taking to task the "vile and sometimes venal partiality of the parterre," while leaving the merits of his own production to a less misguided posterity.

But posterity has not righted the wrong, if any, done to Nadal's *Mariamne*. To the reader of today, it seems to demonstrate only the author's total lack of ability in the drama, while the verse is obviously far short of Voltaire's brilliant and polished expression. The plot of this *Mariamne* is a concoction of materials out of Josephus, Tristan, and, strangely enough, Voltaire. It follows in general the pattern of Tristan; Soesme is made, as in Voltaire, the platonic lover of the queen; in addition, Tharès is made the lover of Salome. The secret command, here restored to its traditional importance, is entrusted to Soesme, who, as usual, betrays it to the queen, who reveals her knowledge of it to the king, who, as always, flies into a fury and orders her death. The poison plot is hatched up by Salome, and denounced by Tharès—who is obviously related to the inoffensive Tharé, captain of the guard in Tristan's play, and the Zaré employed by Voltaire. There are some other curious details. In Voltaire's play, the queen's confidante, as we have noted, was named Elise; in Nadal's, Elisa is the confidante of Salome, while *Mariamne's* confidante is called Phœdime, a character taken from Nadal's *Hérode*, in which she figures, on the other side of the fence, as the confidante of Salome. From that play also is taken the insignificant role of the young Alexander. The role of Mazael is lifted intact from Voltaire.

Since Soesme is *Mariamne's* platonic lover, there is obviously

⁴² *Ibid.*, I, 265 f.

no room in Nadal's play for Voltaire's Varus. He is none the less not entirely omitted by Nadal, who involves him in the one piece of original plotting the play can boast. Mariamne is favored by Varus, whose intervention Salome and her accomplice Mazael fear. In order to get Mariamne to antagonize the Roman, they persuade Herod to invite Mariamne to a sacrifice to Caesar which the king orders to be performed at the Temple. The queen, of course, protests against this sacrilege. This makes the king angry, but it is only a contributory cause in the catastrophe.

The final scene involves another novelty. When Herod is told that Soesme has protested Mariamne's innocence with his last gasp, he orders the queen's execution halted, and summons her accuser, Tharès. The accuser, conscience-stricken, confesses his treachery and stabs himself. As news is now brought of Mariamne's death, Hérod tries to follow the example of Tharès, but is prevented, and thus condemned to live.

He is in this play the usual vacillating lover, and resembles closely the Herod of Voltaire. Mariamne is simply a more tearful edition of Voltaire's Mariamne. It is not easy to see in what way Nadal thought he was improving upon the tragedy which he had so severely criticized. His action, if possible, is even more sedate than that of Voltaire. Practically no movement is necessary on the stage; the uprising and the execution are recited, as is to be expected, and even an obligatory scene between Herod and his wife is simply related by Herod.

Soon after the publication of Scharfenstein's translation of Voltaire's *Mariamne*, an original German version of the story appeared. In Gottsched's *Das Neueste aus der anmutigen Gelehrsamkeit*⁴⁸ was published a detailed criticism of a play entitled *Mariamne und Herodes*, by Christoph Otto v. Schönaich, known as the author of the epic poem, *Hermann*, and of three tragedies published at Breslau in 1754 under the title, *Versuch in der*

⁴⁸ (Leipzig, 1775), V, 53 f.

tragischen Dichtkunst. The play does not seem to be extant, but from Gottsched's remarks it seems clear that the plot was very much in the French tradition, save that it included young Antipater in the action. The play was written in rimed couplets of inferior workmanship, many of which Gottsched quotes, and to Landau it is reminiscent in style of the *Schlesier* of the seventeenth century. It certainly has strong reminiscences of Racine, even to an echo of the celebrated line of Orestes in the last scene of *Andromaque*:

Pour qui sont ces serpents qui sifflent sur vos têtes?

which Herod gives us intact in his analogous speech of lamentation

Wie doch die Nattern dort auf ihren Hauptern zischen.

Of the same general cut is the *Marianne* of Giovanni Antonio Bianchi of Lucca (1686-1758). Bianchi appears to have been a Franciscan whose main work was in the field of history and of theology. His interest in the theatre is evidenced by a work on the *Vices and Defects of the Modern Theatre*, a dozen tragedies, and two comedies. In the complete edition of his tragedies, published in Rome (1761) in four volumes under his Arcadian nom de plume "Lauriso Tragiense," *Marianne* for the first time appeared.

It is a regular tragedy. Its pattern is simple, simpler even than that of *Dolce*; it preserves only the essential elements of the story—the death command is revealed by Soemo to Mariamne, who thereupon conceives a hatred of Herod, who, when he discovers the betrayal, concludes that Soemo and Mariamne are in love, and orders them both killed. When they are dead, in his despair, he attempts suicide, but is prevented and consoled by his sons.⁴⁴

Were it only for these uninspired creations, one might be tempted to lament the fact that it had ever occurred to Voltaire

⁴⁴ Landau, "Die Dramen von Herodes und Mariamne," *Zeitschrift für vergl. Litt.*, IX, 205.

to revive the Mariamne story. But the mills of the gods, as everyone knows, grind slowly. Almost a century after the first publication of Voltaire's play, Luigi Scevola of Brescia published a very presentable play based largely upon Voltaire's tragedy.

Scevola's work in the drama came, to some extent, under the influence of Alfieri, who had died in 1803, twelve years before the publication of *Erode*. Scevola's first play, *La morte di Socrate*, had a successful production in Milan; in addition, he wrote a *Romeo e Giulietta*, and a *Sappho*. The latter was "crowned" in Naples in 1813, exactly a century after the publication of Maffei's celebrated *Merope*, which marked the triumph of French influence on Italian tragedy. Two years later, in Milan, *Erode* was published.

The century of Italian drama which separated Maffei from Scevola was under the domination first of Voltaire, then of Alfieri. Italian tragedy thus continued to be largely imitative, and did not develop, as did comedy and the opera, into a national form after the initial impetus given it in the Renaissance. Tragedy emerged from its long struggle to survive against the competition of the opera somewhat stern and grim, its bloody tendencies checked, perfectly regular, with a leaning toward strong situations which should bring out "points" of acting, and lengthy tirades to serve as *bravura* passages for the actor.

Erode is a regular tragedy in *versi sciolti*. Its general scheme is similar to that of Voltaire's *Mariamne*. The plot concerns the attempt of the gallant Soemo to remove the queen, with whom he is in love, from the power of Herod; the situations and characters are to a considerable extent similarly derived. As in Voltaire's play, the king's sister rules in his absence, and subjects the queen to humiliation. But the king's sister is not named Salome. Possibly out of regard for the lady-in-waiting in Fenton's famous *Mariamne*, she is called Arsinoe. Voltaire's Mazaël turns up once more in his usual role; the good counselor Idamas and the queen's retainer Narbas are

combined in Azaria, whose name is strongly reminiscent of that of Hazeroth, who has a similar part in Fenton's play.⁴⁵ Herod is, of course, the Vacillating Lover, and Marianne is very like Voltaire's Mariamne—a tragic option is presented to her, and her decision, as before, is consonant with the duty of a loyal wife who detests her husband. As in Voltaire's play, also, the death command and the poison plot are omitted from the action.

It is surprising, in view of all these similarities, to see how different the two plays are in effect. It is not a question of expression, certainly. It is the way in which the plot is handled that principally makes the difference. For Scevola goes over the timid outlines of Voltaire's play with boldness and precision, and a rather complete lack of inhibitory self-criticism, so that the effects are strengthened and heightened, the contrasts marked, and the entire conception frankly revealed for what it is.

The boldness of Scevola's execution is everywhere apparent. Voltaire halfheartedly gives his plot a triangular shape by making the ascetic Sohême a platonic lover of the queen, who does not return his love. Scevola strengthens the triangle by making Soemo a bold warrior passionately in love with the queen, who has always loved him. Voltaire leaves the outcome of the play continually in doubt, and weakens Herod until we doubt his ability to do anything but complain. Scevola, without altering the king, causes the catastrophe to follow inevitably from his weakness. The misunderstanding which causes the death of Mariamne is warily pushed into the background by Voltaire; by Scevola it is brought sharply into focus. In this manner, with a complete disregard for history, a complete lack of insight into the psychological richness of

⁴⁵ The Biblical Azariah, who led the revolt against Uzziah the king (II Chron 26), has nothing to do with Mariamne drama and does not seem a likely source. More likely, the name Hazeroth suggested the better-known Biblical name

the Mariamne story, and a ruthless plundering of Voltaire, Scevola succeeds in constructing an admirable stage play, every scene of which is a commonplace.

The initial situation in *Erode* is brought about by the conventional device of a recognition, very similar to that involving Arsinoe and Flaminius in Fenton's play, even more similar to that of Voltaire's *Alzire* (1736). Like *Alzire* and *Zamore*, Soemo and Marianne were lovers before Marianne's marriage to Herod. Marianne supposes Soemo to have been killed in battle; he is, in fact, alive, a quaestor in Varus' army, and when he hears of Marianne's sad plight under the regency of Herod's sister, Arsinoe, he hurries off to the assistance of his beloved. Her retainer Azaria reveals to Soemo the fact that Marianne married Herod only to save the life of her father, Ircano. She detests her husband. None the less, when she meets her former lover, Marianne bids him leave her forever, for, in spite of her feelings, she is determined to be true to Herod. The evil counselor, Mazaele, breaks in upon this interview, with news of Herod's arrival. He finds Soemo at Marianne's feet, and resolves to work upon Herod's jealousy, with the help of Arsinoe, in order to ruin the queen.

The king, as in Voltaire's play, arrives well disposed toward his wife, but Arsinoe at once brings up the matter of the suspicious Roman who is paying court to the queen. The scene between Herod and this Roman ends violently, and the quaestor is ordered out of the city, while to Marianne the king remarks that he intends to have the Roman put to death. The queen's fervent entreaties make it plain to Herod that she loves the Roman, and, in an agony of jealousy, he orders her execution. But instead of an execution, we get at this point a complete reconciliation, for Herod's love triumphs over his jealousy, Marianne is exalted in power, Arsinoe is ordered into exile, and Soemo has merely to go away in peace. Only Azaria has misgivings about the outcome.

In fact, at the banquet of reconciliation, to which the Roman has been invited, Arsinoe produces a letter from Alexandra in which the true identity of the "Roman" is revealed. As further dissimulation is impossible, Soemo now accuses Herod of having robbed him of Marianne, and the king summarily condemns them both, and his children, to death.

But, in the last act, we find that the populace has freed Soemo and is up in arms against the king. Herod wavers as to the fate of Marianne. At dusk, Azaria comes to take her to the Temple, before Soemo attacks the palace. Marianne will not desert her husband. But when Arsinoe tells her that Herod is on his way to the Temple by a secret door, Marianne fears that he will fall into the hands of Soemo, and she hurries to save her husband. Herod appears at just this moment, and, misunderstanding the cause of her hurried departure, he stabs his wife to death. Her innocence is at once established by everyone. News comes of the failure of the revolt. For Herod it is an occasion only for despair and lamentation.

Although much of it, in obedience to the classical formula, is in recital, *Erode* is thus seen to be a lively play full of strong and melodramatic situations. As in Voltaire's play, the death of Marianne is not a necessary consequence of the tragic situation. It is actually due to an error, not a physical error as in the case of *El Tetrarca*, but a misapprehension. In a wide sense, this is true of a number of Mariamne plays, but as in Scevola's play the error is due to Herod's misunderstanding of Marianne's words as she leaves for the Temple,⁴⁶ the accidental nature of the outcome is perhaps unduly emphasized, for tragedy.

How far the plot departs from the story in Josephus need hardly be pointed out. It is to all intents a different story, for the king's suspicions, totally unjustified in Josephus, are

⁴⁶ She says, "Come, let us run to Soemo!" The king cries, "Go, run to Soemo in hell!" and stabs her.

entirely justified here, and a good deal of underhand business goes on under the royal nose, though Mariamne doggedly remains an exemplary wife. The onus of her murder is therefore to a certain extent lifted from the king's shoulders. He arouses considerable sympathy. Even by nineteenth-century standards, he is neither an unreasonable nor a morbid character, but simply a jealous husband, who happens also to be a political tyrant involved against his will in a nasty business. The pathetic aspect of his nature and his revulsion from the bloody course into which destiny seems to have thrust him come out clearly in his soliloquy of Act 5. Here he voices his dilemma in a speech which echoes sentiments as old, in Mariamne tragedy, as Goldingham's *Herodes*:

—Oimè! Fra queste mura
S'incalzano, s'amucchiano i diletti,
Si succedono i dì di sangue, io corro
Già di abisso in abisso—E qual riparo?
Se nulla manca a la certezza, e al colmo
È la miseria mia, che bado? Tanti
Già non punii men perfidi di lei?
E in lei che perdo alfine? Una bellezza
Senza onestate, un petto senza fede,
Una larva d'amore.

Like all the classical Mariamne dramas, *Erode* is predicated on the assumption that Mariamne does not love Herod. The general tendency in these plays is, as we have seen, to make Mariamne an unchanging, and often enough, an uninteresting character, and to focus the attention upon the vacillation, the suffering, or the cruelty of Herod. The type of tragedy which contemplated the sufferings of a persecuted and inactive victim at the hands of a tyrant or "traitor" remained popular from the early Renaissance to the time of Voltaire in France, and of Fenton, Rowe, and Addison in England, and in the form of melodrama survived until late in the nineteenth century.

It was inevitable that the principal role in most of these plays should devolve upon the villain, who was an active character, and whose part was usually taken by a "star" actor, rather than upon the passive though pitiful victim.

In the *Mariamne* plays, particularly, the turn given to the character of Herod by Hardy had resulted in making Herod vastly more interesting than *Mariamne* both to playwright and actor.⁴⁷ The effect of the triangular plot employed by Voltaire was, as he himself noted, to diminish the stature of Herod and to lessen the interest of the character, and, it will be recalled, he went to considerable lengths in his revision to remedy this deficiency. In *Scevola's* play, however, it stands as irremediable. The interest centers not in the figure of Herod, here grown a little wistful, but, as in Pordage's *Herod and Mariamne*, with which this play has a strong affinity, in the affair of the handsome Soemo and the beautiful Marianne. As all the characters in this triangle are to some extent sympathetic, the problem chiefly involves the divided loyalty of Marianne, a problem therefore of the same general type as that of *Chimène* in the *Cid*. But Soemo has not the dramatic force of Rodrigue. It is Marianne who emerges here as the central character. Upon her tragic option, her decision, and her fate, the drama chiefly dwells. Unfortunately, she is far too insubstantial a character to carry the weight of the tragedy. This, perhaps the chief defect in the construction of the play, is a general weakness of all *Mariamne* plays of the Jealous Husband type.

Scevola's play is further from the "naked drama" of the Renaissance than any of the other regular tragedies that follow the pattern of Hardy. The new influences in favor of realism, action, and heightened interest could not fail to leave their mark upon it. The dividing line between tragedy and melo-

⁴⁷ Voltaire, after discussing the complex character of Herod in the first version of his play, adds: "Je ne donnai à *Mariamne* d'autres sentimens qu'un orgueil imprudent, et qu'une haine inflexible pour son mari." (Preface to the 1730 edition)

drama was wearing thin. *Erode* was written in the darkest hour of classical tragedy. Alfieri's work was done. The dawn of romantic drama was at hand. Six years before the publication of *Erode*, Lemerrier's *Christoph Colomb* (1809) had been put on at the Odéon, in Paris. Lemerrier had broken the classical rules in a spectacular manner; the spectators in consequence had broken each other's heads, thus inaugurating the romantic era in the French theatre. Seven years after *Erode*, Manzoni's romantic *Conte di Carmagnola* was published. Then came Hugo's *Preface to Cromwell*, and in 1830, the production of *Hernani*, which definitely ushered in romantic tragedy. But for all the excitement attending the production, the triumph was a tame one. Classical tragedy had long been moribund. When the great Talma died in 1826, classical tragedy died with him.

Erode stands upon the threshold of romanticism, but it looks back to Alfieri for its inspiration, and its expression approximates his compressed and staccato style. In conception, too, it exhibits the unwavering concentration upon the main and single conflict which is characteristic of that author's work. But neither the plot of *Erode* nor its development has anything in it of the classical bareness of Alfieri's *Antigone* or *Saul*. In these respects, *Erode* is closer to the work of Niccolini. Its chief interest lies not in the contemplation of a piteous spectacle or in the conflict of two personalities, but in the working out of a romantic intrigue more or less in the manner of eighteenth-century English tragedy. It is a parting gesture in the direction of the classics in an age that was rapidly becoming romantic.

COMEDIAS

IN THE Golden Age of Spain, the Mariamne story underwent its strangest development. Three Spanish tragicomedies are based upon it, one by Tirso de Molina (printed 1636), one by Calderón (printed 1637), and one by Cristóbal Lozano (printed 1658). To one unacquainted with the ways of Spanish *comedia*, a comparison of any of these with the story in Josephus, or the French or Italian Mariamne tragedies, cannot fail to give cause for amusement. The tragedies have to do with a more or less uniform succession of events or situations taken, more or less accurately, from Josephus—a critical political situation, a beautiful queen, a jealous king, the intrigues of his family and his counselors, the death command, the poison plot, the execution, the king's repentance. In the Spanish plays, the same or similar materials are generally present, but so altered in character and proportion, so jumbled, so mingled with extraneous matter as to be in some cases absolutely unrecognizable.

The *comedia* as a dramatic genre is *sui generis*. It observes few of the "laws" of classical drama. But it is far from lawless. It follows a precise and highly conventional system which remained standard in Spain for a period exceeding a century, and which, though profoundly national, exercised a profound influence abroad.

La vida de Herodes, by Tirso de Molina, is not a particularly good example of the Spanish form. As its name indicates, it is a kind of history play, and its construction is somewhat more disjointed than is common to the *comedia*. Of the fourscore

plays we possess from Tirso's pen,¹ it doubtless ranks, poetically and dramatically, among the worst. As in all Spanish *comedias*, its interest centers in a love story, not the story told by Josephus, but a romantic tale of the courtship and marriage of an *infanta* called Mariadnes by a gallant known as Herodes, who turns out to be the bloodthirsty scoundrel who massacred the Innocents.

With this love story are fused various other materials, historical and religious in nature. There is a casual attempt to foreshadow the slaughter of the Innocents at the very beginning of the play; the end is given over to a representation of this scene of atrocity. The character of Herodes in all this cannot consistently fall into any of the patterns we have categorized; it is naturally somewhat ambiguous, and is changed to suit the exigencies of the action. For the purpose of the slaughter of the children, Herodes is tricked out in the conventional traits of the Wrathful King, borrowed from the Corpus Christi plays. In the body of the play, he appears as the conventional Spanish *galán*.

Within the religious frame are set three stories—the wooing of Mariadnes, the rivalry, political and amatory, of Herodes and his brother Faseló,² and a short jealousy drama involving a certain minister called Josefo and culminating in the death of Mariadnes—all so perfectly unhistorical and so far from what one might reasonably expect of a Mariamne play that it seems wonderful that so considerable a writer as Tirso could have meant it to be taken seriously at all.

But the *comedia* was not meant to be taken seriously in the sense that the dramas of Corneille and Racine, for example,

¹ Cotarelo y Mori catalogues 86 plays, of which some are certainly not by Tirso, who is said to have written some 400 plays [E. Cotarelo y Mori, *Tirso de Molina, investigaciones bio-bibliográficas* (1893)]. *La Vida de Herodes* was printed in the 5th part of the *Comedias nuevas*.

² The Phasaclus of the *Antiquities*, who, having been captured by the Parthians, battered out his brains against a rock, and thus expired long before Herod's marriage.

were. French tragedy was from the first an essentially aristocratic form, directed to an unusually sensitive, attentive, and critical audience. Corneille relates in his *Examen* of the *Cid* that when Chimène and Rodrigue appeared together on the stage, "il s'élevait un certain frémissement dans l'assemblée, qui marquait une curiosité merveilleuse et un redoublement d'attention." We have the testimony of Voltaire³ and of Mme de Sévigné⁴ as to the extraordinary effect of *Cinna* and of *Esther*; furthermore, the violent incidents which marked the innovations of romantic tragedy in France testify eloquently to the degree of seriousness with which the French audience took its drama.

The French playwrights, after Hardy, worked hard, produced comparatively little, and were continually conscious of the criticism of the learned. The argument holds also to some extent for the Elizabethan playwrights—the audience to which *Hamlet* and *Lear* were directed could not have been uncultured or inattentive. We marvel at the speed with which the great Shakspearean dramas must have been written; but their composition must seem terribly labored in comparison with that of a *comedia*. We know that Lope de Vega finished *La noche de San Juan* in three days, while *Queen más niente medra más* was put together in twenty-four hours by Hurtado de Mendoza and Francisco de Quevedo. Shakspeare has left some thirty-seven plays; Corneille, fewer than thirty. Lope wrote upwards of 1800, of which he tells us he wrote more than a hundred in twenty-four hours each. Over 400 of his plays are extant, a vast literature in themselves.

Spanish drama existed by virtue of the support and interest of a popular audience, for which it was frankly designed. Midway between the all-embracing realism of Shakspeare and the utterly conventional and exclusive drama of the French, it

³ *Siècle de Louis XIV*, chap. xxii.

⁴ Letter of 21 February 1689 *Lettres de Mme de Sévigné* (ed. Mesnard, Paris, 1862-67; in *Collection des grands écrivains*).

combined realism with convention in a way peculiar to itself. It was in a high sense social, to a considerable extent, anonymous,⁵ and it was unmistakably national and of its time. It was directed to no one class of society; in form and content it exhibited the mixed tastes of court and public, country and town. Calderón's *El mágico prodigioso* (1637) was written for the Corpus Christi festival of the village of Yepes; on the other hand, conditions at the elaborate court presentations were often exact replicas of those of the popular theatres, or *corrales*.

There is abundant evidence as to the character of the popular audience of the Golden Age. The *corrales* were uncommonly turbulent, and the *cazuela*, in which the female contingent of the audience was penned, necessitated the constant attendance of a policeman. A contemporary description of a court presentation at Buen Retiro, to which the public was admitted, gives some idea of what the situation in the popular theatre must have been:

Asimismo, para que viese todo lo que pasa en los corrales en la cazuela de las mujeres, se ha representado bien al vivo, mesándose y arañándose unas, dándose vaya otras, y mofándolas los mosqueteros. Han echado entre ellas ratones en cajas, que abiertas saltaban, y ayudado este alboroto de silbatos, chiflos y castradores, se hace espectáculo más de gusto que de decencia.⁶

It is clear that the audience took extraordinary delight in the spectacle. "It is well to consider and inquire," wrote P. Juan de Mariana in his *Tratado contra los juegos publicos*, "for what reason plays and comedies beguile men to such an extent that neglecting other duties of life, many are prey to this vanity and waste all their days in this pleasure, often excited with such madness that it is no less wonderful to see what

⁵ There is, for example, considerable uncertainty as to the authorship even of some famous plays as *La estrella de Sevilla*, and *El condenado por desconfiado*.

⁶ From Pellicer, *Avisos*, 14 February 1640, quoted in A. Castro, *Tirso de Molina* (2d ed., *Clásicos castellanos*, Madrid, 1922), I, ix. To Castro's excellent discussion, I am indebted in more than one particular.

their gestures and features express, the cries, applause and tears of those who came to see, than those of the actors themselves."⁷

Such an audience cared little for classical rules, nor did it concern itself unduly with questions of probability, verisimilitude or historical accuracy. It went to the theatre to be entertained not only with a *comedia*, but with songs, dances, and *entremeses*. It required of the playwright that he furnish a good show with plenty of thrills and marvels, and the playwright, "considering that the wrath of a seated Spaniard is immoderate, when in two hours there is not presented to him everything from Genesis to the Last Judgment,"⁸ endeavored as best he could, to comply. In the epilogue to *El vergonzoso en palacio*,⁹ Tirso disposes shortly of an (imaginary) tiresome pedant who objects that history has been treated with some violence in the play:

¡Como si la licencia de Apolo se estrachase a la recolección histórica, y no pudiese fabricar, sobre cimientos de personas verdaderas, arquitecturas del ingenio fingidas!

It is possible, of course, that the playwright, considering the *comedia* outside the domain of art, as Lope says, deliberately wrote down to the level of his audience. Lope's oft-quoted statement¹⁰ seems to indicate that the relation of playwright and audience was not quite healthy, and that the playwright found it necessary "hablarle en necio para darle gusto." The unhappy Alarcón, whose talent was not particularly flexible, addresses his audience with the words, "contigo hablo, bestia fiera." It is thus possible, even likely, that the highbrows of the Golden Age looked down on the play industry of their

⁷ Written c 1606. Quoted in Castro, *op. cit.*, I, xiii.

⁸ Lope de Vega in the *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias* Translated in B. Clark, *European Theories of the Drama* (New York, 1929), p. 91.

⁹ *Cigarrales de Toledo* (1624) For dramatic theory in the Golden Age, see further M. Menéndez y Pelayo, *Historia de las ideas estéticas en España* (1885) II, 416-87; H. J. Chaytor, *Dramatic Theory in Spain* (1925).

¹⁰ In the *Arte nuevo*.

time as the highbrows of the Hollywood Age look down upon the motion picture industry. But Tirso does not seem conscious of any such tendency in his time. On the contrary, he defends Lope's disregard of the rules not on the ground of necessity, but of art—

Que si él, en muchas partes de sus escritos, dice que el no guardar el arte antiguo lo hace por conformarse con el gusto de la plebe—que nunca consintió el freno de las leyes y preceptos—dícelo por su natural modestia y porque no atribuya la malicia ignorante a arrogancia lo que es política perfección.¹¹

By the time of Tirso, the reduction of the five acts of regular drama to four, and then to three, had been effectively established in Spain. *La vida de Herodes*, like Calderón's *El Tetrarca*, is in three acts or *jornadas*. But the act divisions in Spanish drama are not much more than arbitrary pauses in the action. The Spanish plays, like the Elizabethan, are based upon units, not of acts, but of scenes, which are made to shift with considerable rapidity, both in point of time and of place. The technique of the *comedia* is therefore in some respects similar to that of the modern cinema.

Scene changes were ordinarily effected by a momentary clearing of the stage, and the new place and time was indicated in the lines spoken by the actors who next entered. If a character were shown dressing, it was understood that he was in his house; if clothed for traveling, he was supposed to be on the road. To indicate a walk, the actors simply circled the stage. As the audience did not ordinarily trouble itself as to the precise locale of the action, more exact indications were seldom necessary. Scenery, except in the *palaciegas* or *comedias de teatro*, was simple enough to permit an almost unlimited number of scene changes. The stage, which at first had been no more than a temporary platform, was in time assimilated

¹¹ Epilogue to *El vergonzoso*, in Castro, *Obras de Tirso de Molina*, I, 195.

more or less to the Italian, or, even more closely, to the Elizabethan stage.

The stage for which *La vida de Herodes* was designed was a shallow platform covered by a sloping roof. It stood in a courtyard and was surrounded by a *patio*, then by a few tiers of seats, finally by the rooms of the house, which formed the boxes. On both sides and behind the stage was the *vestuario*, or tireroom, which served for entrances and exits, and also solved the embarrassing problem of how to dispose of corpses on a curtainless stage, since it was available for those who were stabbed to fall into. From behind its *paño*, or curtain, *galanes*, jealous husbands, or *graciosos* could overhear, observe, and sally forth unexpectedly. Since much of the action of the *comedia* involved this sort of business, the *paño* was an indispensable piece of equipment.

The backstage, moreover, was elaborated to a considerable extent in the course of the seventeenth century, and various devices borrowed from the elaborate multiple stages and *carros* of religious drama were introduced into the secular theatre. The gradual change in the character of the stage and stage machinery, is noted by Cervantes in the preface to his *Ocho comedias*. "Comedies in the time of Lope de Rueda," he writes, "were conversations. There was no machinery in those times, no duels either on foot or on horseback, it was still unknown to see a person appear through a hole in the ground, still more to see clouds coming from heaven bearing angels or souls of the dead." That such effects were not possible on every stage even after the middle of the century goes without saying. In a stage direction in Lozano's *Herodes Ascalonita* (1658), we are told that the allegorical figure of Fame appears from above, in a cloud, crowned with laurel and holding a palm, but that if there is no machinery, she may walk out instead with great majesty. The elaboration of stage machinery was of no particular importance, however, in the development of the *comedia*;

from first to last, Spanish secular drama depended upon poetry, situation, and action for its effects, not upon spectacle.¹²

Lope de Vega had given the *comedia* an essentially baroque style. His characters spoke in a variety of verse forms, *romance*, *liras*, *redondillas*, *décimas*, *quintillas*, sonnets, fitted to the character of the speaker and the speech, according to a system devised by him, and set forth in the *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias*.¹³ To this system, derived in part from Juan de la Cueva, Lope added the mannered phrasing which sounds for us the characteristic note of the *comedia*. In consequence, the traditional language of the theatre soon became twisted so far from current speech that the very antagonists of *culteranismo*—among them Tirso is outstanding—are cultists and conceptists in their work.

Like Lope, from whose formula he never departed, Tirso drew largely upon history for his dramatic materials, and a good many of his plays are set in countries other than Spain. But for him, as for his dramatic compeers, "history was a time in which all the heroes of the past existed contemporaneously," and geography was a far-off place beyond the sea. He himself was very well traveled—he had crossed the Atlantic in the interests of his religious order—and in his plays could be designedly accurate with regard to such matters as the road between Toledo and Madrid. But what had Apollo's lyre to do with the topography of Jerusalem?

The Spanish audience saw no objection to having Jerusalem on the seacoast, or Athens in Asia, any more than the Elizabethan audience objected to the placing of a seaport in Bohemia. The audience was interested not in the topography of the Peloponnesus, but in the gallantry of Alexander and the love of

¹² See H. A. Rennert, *Spanish Stage in the Time of Lope de Vega* (New York, 1909), K. Mantzius, *History of Theatrical Art* (London, 1903-21), Vol. II; W. C. Shoemaker, *Multiple Stage in Spain* (Princeton, 1933).

¹³ Whether this system was an advantage or not is a debatable question. See A. Morel-Fatio, *La comedia espagnole du XVII^e siècle* (2d ed., Paris, 1923).

Apelles. It saw no incongruity in the depiction of Herod, Caesar, Scipio, or Coriolanus as romantic lovers, but it would have seen grave objections to any deviation on the part of these gentry from the Spanish way of thinking or acting. Thus Alexander, Orestes, Attila, Coriolanus, Judas Maccabeus, and Herod were all made welcome on the Spanish stage, but only on condition that their manners squared properly with those of Castilian gentlemen of the seventeenth century.

It was on such a stage, for such an audience, and according to such conventions that *La vida de Herodes* was played. It unfolded a spectacle which no student of the *Antiquities* could have witnessed without a smile; but it is unlikely that there were many such in the audience, which was thus innocently edified by a sight of the events described by Josephus, reflected, as it were, in a distorting mirror.

As *La vida de Herodes* opens, young Herod has just returned to Jerusalem from a victorious campaign in Armenia, in the course of which he has lost his heart to a portrait of a beautiful lady. Though he will not name the lady (lest his heart be jealous of his tongue), he speaks quite freely of his predilection for a drink composed of milk mixed with the blood of children. In the absence of Herod, certain betrothals have been arranged: Mariadnes and Aristobulo, the children of the neighboring king, Hircano, are to marry Herod's brother and sister, Faselo and Salome. Faselo exhibits a picture of Mariadnes—the moment Herod sees it, he bursts into a fury. She is the lady of his portrait.

Some scenes later, Mariadnes falls from her horse while hunting. Herod and his friend Josefo are providentially in the vicinity. They carry the unconscious princess to a rustic shelter, and there Herod, after some hesitation as to his proper course, decides to woo her, disguised as a rustic. Accordingly, he changes his clothes, announces to her that his name is Claricio, and takes her off into the woods. In the next act, we see that

Herod's wooing has been entirely successful. Thus, when Hircano and the family appear in search of the princess, she asks her father to marry her to Herod, whose identity she has at last discovered. Faselo takes the matter badly; Mark Antony, he considers, will help him to his revenge. At this moment, a Roman messenger arrives with a message from Antony ordering Faselo to come at once to his support and to bring Herod as a prisoner, along with the lovely Mariadnes, whose portrait has made Antony her slave. With the help of the Romans, Faselo captures Herod. Josefo is made governor of Jerusalem. As he has sworn to do whatever Herod may command him, the new governor undertakes to kill Mariadnes in the event of Herod's death.

In Act Three, Faselo, now king of Judea, offers Herod the choice of changing his allegiance¹⁴ and renouncing Mariadnes, or of dying. Herod chooses death. At this point, Augustus enters with the insignia of victory, puts Faselo's crown upon Herod's head, and goes off to fight the Arabs. Faselo is imprisoned, but Herod is not able to savor his triumph, for an anonymous letter (written by Salome) apprises him that Josefo is not taking proper care of Mariadnes' honor. Herod speeds back to his palace. There we find the good Josefo in the act of calming Mariadnes who is upset about the death command. It was both heartless and needless to give such a command, she cries, for she would have killed herself in any case, had Herod died. Josefo proposes that they rehearse the scene of Herod's homecoming, in order that they may be sure it will go off smoothly. They do so—it includes the most tender speeches, in the midst of which Herod bursts in furiously from behind the *paño*, with the accusing letter still in his hand. He at once packs them off to prison, and, as we see later, Mariadnes is executed.

¹⁴ Herod, strangely enough, is on the side of Caesar in this play. As for Phasaclus, we have noted that he was dead long before Actum.

The three Magi now appear to ask after the newly born King of the Jews. Herod brutally orders the slaughter of Aris-tobulo, Josefo, the Sanhedrin, and all the descendants of David. The scene changes. Angels sing the *Gloria*, comic shepherds adore the child in traditional fashion. Then mothers and children appear in great excitement. Fourteen thousand children have been killed. Herod now has everyone on the stage massacred. Then he exits, raving. In the final scene, we see the tyrant dead, with a murdered child in each hand, the traditional emblem of Corpus Christi day.

There is little comparison, intellectually speaking, between this hodgepodge of Mystery play and *comedia* and such works as *El burlador de Sevilla* or *El condenado por desconfiado*. Conceivably, however, the *Herodes*, like these plays, illustrates a moral. It must be granted that the illustration is not a particularly good one; but the lesson appears to be a favorite with Spanish dramatists—it concerns the terrible consequences of jealousy. Had it not been for the fury into which he fell as a result of his jealousy and the consequent death of his beloved Mariadnes, we are permitted to conjecture, Herod would not have committed the atrocities for which he is notorious.

As for the plot, though as usual in the *comedias*, it is intricate, it is neither sufficiently swift nor well connected to make a good story; in entertainment value it cannot compare with Calderón's *El Tetrarca*. The play bears the marks of hasty concoction. From Josephus are derived the names of the characters, the locale of the action, and such circumstances as the struggle between Antony and Octavius, the secret command, and the death of Mariamne. Upon this slender foundation are reared such *arquitecturas del ingenio fingidas* as the story of the rival brothers, the unconscious maiden at the mercy of her lover in rustic surroundings, the rehearsal of the love scene and its misunderstanding, the disguises, incognitos, coincidences, false confidences, anonymous letters, and sudden reversals of fortune

which make up the play—all perfectly commonplace devices. Equally commonplace in the *comedias* are the return of the *galán* from a campaign in foreign parts at the inception of the play, his jealousy at finding the lady of his heart wooed by another, the device of having the heroine betrothed by her father at the beginning of the play to a suitor who will prove unsuccessful, the tempestuous courtship in disguise, and the clowning of the rustics, the last, an invariable attribute of Tirso's theatre.

Familiar as these dramatic counters were, however, there was evidently some difficulty in welding them to the Mariamne material. In consequence, the joints of *La vida de Herodes* are far from neat. The secret command remains without consequence, save as weak motivation of the rehearsal scene, and Herod never learns that Josefo has betrayed it. The death of Mariadnes, toward which the action seems to be moving through Acts Two and Three is all but lost sight of in the hurly-burly of the conclusion, and neither the adoration of the Child, nor the slaughter of the Innocents can be said to have any clear connection with the rest of the action. As for the characters, Herod makes no sense whatever; Mariadnes is depicted with Tirso's customary shrewd malice, but to all intents our interest in her, as is natural in a cloak-and-sword play, ceases with her marriage. Her tragedy is therefore no more than an incongruity in the play.

The year after the publication of Tirso's *Vida de Herodes* (1636), there appeared another Spanish version of the Mariamne story, Calderón's *El Tetrarca de Jerusalén, o El mayor monstruo los celos*. While *La vida de Herodes* cannot be considered in any sense representative of Tirso's best work, *El Tetrarca* is a fair, even an excellent, example of the work of Calderón.

Among the hundred-and-twenty-odd *comedias* collected by

Calderón's biographer and disciple Vera Tassis, there are four tragic dramas on the subject of jealousy: *A secreto agravio secreta venganza*; *El médico de su honra*; *El pintor de su honra*; and *El Tetrarca*. Strictly speaking, however, only the last is a drama of jealousy. The other three plays, though often referred to as jealousy dramas, deal not with jealousy, but with offended honor.¹⁵ In each of these plays, a husband—without love, without passion, and after careful reasoning—assassinates his wife in cold blood in accordance with a social convention. The tetrarch is a character of a different stamp. Unlike Don Gutierre, Don Lope, and Don Juan de Roca, he is passionately in love with his wife, and passionately jealous of her. Moreover, he kills her not out of jealousy but by sheer accident, while fighting with his rival in the dark.

Thus the tetrarch is a much warmer and more sympathetic character than the other offended husbands of Calderón. *El médico de su honra* is, after *El alcalde de Zalamea*, perhaps the poet's most artistic effort, but we have neither insight into, nor any sympathy for, the character of Don Gutierre. He was perhaps applauded in his day, but for us he is an object of horror, as foreign and repulsive as the Herod of the Mysteries. The tetrarch, on the other hand, is a creature of flesh and blood, though somewhat inflated. He is, in fact, exceptional among the characters of Spanish drama. As he is not a seventeenth-century figure, he very properly does not speak in terms of honor, and his jealousy remains a natural passion, though it must be granted that Calderón has idealized and exaggerated this natural passion to the point of complete unreality. The jealousy of Othello is unreasoning and furious; that of the tetrarch is, in the words of Menéndez y Pelayo, "strained, sifted, and weighed."

¹⁵ To this effect, see M. Menéndez y Pelayo, *Calderón y su teatro* (Madrid, 1910), pp. 299, 300. An excellent brief discussion of honor in the Spanish drama may be found in G. T. Northup, *Three Plays by Calderón* (New York, 1926), pp. xviff. See also A. Castro, "Algunas observaciones," in *Revista de filología española*, III (1916), 1-50, 357-86.

In general, Calderón's plays make the impression of having interchangeable parts. With the exception of *El alcalde de Zalamea*, *El príncipe constante*, *El médico de su honra*, and *Luis Pérez el Gallego*, the heroes and heroines of his comedias would, with minor adjustments, serve as well in one place as in another. This is a result not merely of mass-production methods in the drama. Calderón was an unusually conscientious craftsman. But his tendency was to idealize all he touched—the ugly, the ordinary, the prosaic, all that was not exceedingly noble or noteworthy, is lacking in his theatre, which in consequence is without contrast or relief. It follows too that his types are necessarily few in number, uncomplicated, and all of a piece. Their reactions in a given situation are absolutely predictable; the situations in which they are placed, with certain exceptions, vary between narrow limits. As we read his plays, particularly those of the cloak-and-sword type, we feel that we are seeing again and again the same characters doing the same things.

Generally speaking, this is true of all the theatre of the Golden Age. None of its playwrights, with the possible exception of Alarcón, made much of individual character. The audience favored complex stories, in themselves rarely conducive to accurate character portrayal. The run of a play, moreover, was ordinarily quite short, and gave the actors little opportunity to con their parts carefully. The natural tendency was to typify the roles. A standard troupe might consist of three *galanes*, three *damas*, a *barba* or *viejo*, two *graciosos*, and two maids; as the actors were stereotyped, so too the parts came to be, and in time the plots also.

El Tetrarca is clearly intended for a troupe of this sort, but it is somewhat elaborate: it has four *galanes*, Herod, Octavius, Tolomeo and Aristobulo; three *damas*, Mariene, Sirene and Libia; two *graciosos*, Polidoro and Filipo; and an assortment of maids and soldiers. Its action is nicely calculated to put the actors through their paces. The plot, like the characters, rather smacks

of the assembly line. It is full of stock devices, stock coincidences, and stock situations. At the same time, there can be no doubt that the result is a highly efficient mechanism. The play has a relation to the story in Josephus that is only slightly less vague than that of Tirso's *comedia*, but in construction and ingenuity, it is incomparably better than the *Vida de Herodes*.

El Tetrarca is carefully and conscientiously put together, and it must have been an exciting and entertaining play. It was never a great play. It has been praised at times beyond measure, compared favorably with *Othello*, classed as one of the four outstanding masterpieces of the Spanish theatre.¹⁶ By the romantic writers of Germany and England, particularly by Goethe, the Schlegels, Shelley, and Fitzgerald, its author was exalted to a place beyond Shakspeare's. The reaction was not long in coming. As the works of Lope de Vega and Tirso came to light, Calderón was rapidly overshadowed, and it is now generally agreed that they are his superiors in the *comedia*. Neither of them, however, had his poetic gift, and no one has written *autos* to equal his, while individual scenes and passages of his secular drama challenge comparison with the best the theatre has to afford.

To Menéndez y Pelayo, whose early efforts were directed at exalting the genius of Lope, Calderón appeared of all Spanish dramatists the most uneven in style, the most redundant, hyperbolic, strained, and rhetorical. Later critics have adopted a juster view. Calderón was not so much a *cultista* as a *conceptista*; his plays are marred rather by poetic subtleties than by intentional obscurities of language. Great poet though he was, he was uncommonly fond of his conceits, and these echo and reecho among his plays like so many bursts of firecrackers. *El Tetrarca* is a special repository for these *jeux d'esprit*. No moment in it is so perilous, sweet, or solemn as to be without room for a string of metaphors, an *equívoco* or antithesis.

¹⁶ In *Tesouro del teatro español*, cited by J. L. Klein, *Geschichte des Dramas*, XI, part 1, 233.

This difficulty is aggravated by the fact that the principal characters of the play, Herod in particular, are unusually garrulous. We know that Caldéron was enrolled in the faculty of Canonical Law at Salamanca; Herod gives every sign of having studied there also. How Calderón fared in his studies we do not know, but, clearly, the learned faculty had every reason to be proud of Herod, who, as a logician, is absolutely unrivaled in the theatre. Calderón's heroes are, in general, much given to hairsplitting; a good half of Herod's lines in *El Tetrarca* consists of syllogisms, sorites, dilemmas, and such subtle arguments as would effectively clog the action of any ordinary play.

El Tetrarca is not so easily halted. It has the pace of a movie thriller, and its well-articulated plot plunges headlong through scene after scene of action and suspense, leaving, far behind, a troubled wake of suspicion concerning its fundamental absurdity. It is enjoyable reading in our day, and its success in its own times is unquestionable, both in and out of its native country.¹⁷

El Tetrarca was printed in 1637. It had certainly been written some time before, for Lope, who died in 1635, mentions it in a *loa*.¹⁸ Tirso's *Vida de Herodes*, included in Part V of his *Comedias nuevas* was approved by the censor on June 30, 1635. It is thus not easy to determine which of these plays came first. To Landau it seemed that Tirso wished to rival Calderón with *La vida de Herodes*, and he points to the fact that the episode of Mariene's portrait in *El Tetrarca* is absurdly expanded by Tirso, in whose

¹⁷ Various versions soon appeared in other languages. The first appears to have been an Italian version by G. A. Cicognini, entitled *Mariena ovvero il maggior mostro del mondo* (1670). Another Italian version appeared in 1724; it was an opera, *La Mariene, o Ecceci della gelosia*, for which Domenico Lalli wrote the libretto and T. Albinoni the music (see T. Wiel, *Nuovo archivio veneto* [Venice, 1891], II, 388); Landau judges that the plot for this opera was taken from Calderón or Cicognini. *Das grosse Ungeheuer oder der eifersüchtiger Herodes* was played in Dresden in 1674. *Vier Fürsten Herodes* was produced in the same city in 1688 (see M. Furstenau, *Zum Geschichte der Musik und des Theaters am Hofe zu Dresden* [Dresden, 1861], I, 244, 304). A German translation by G. N. Barmann was published at Zwickau in 1824 in *Die Schauspiele des Don P. Calderón de la Barca*, Vol. IV.

¹⁸ Klein, *op. cit.*, XI, part 2, 252.

play Herod, Antony, and Cleopatra (and, we may add, Faselos and Salome) are all smitten of portraits. There is, however, no reason to believe that Tirso amplified the portrait incident of *El Tetrarca*; it is equally reasonable to suppose that Calderón simplified and improved upon the model of Tirso—in fact, judging from the relative ingenuity expended upon the incident, it seems more likely, if anything, that Calderón's is the later development.

The picture incident was in the first place derived from Josephus, who relates that Alexandra at Dellius' suggestion, had likenesses painted of her two children, and sent them to Antony.¹⁹ Both Tirso and Calderón seem to have been much impressed by this affair, which is suggestive of romantic tales in which princes fall in love with portraits of unknown princesses, or with faces seen in magic mirrors. Certainly Tirso seems to have had a weakness for incidents of this type; in *El vergonzoso* he has Serafina fall in love, unwittingly, with a portrait of herself dressed as a man; in *La vida de Herodes*, Mariadnes' portraits seem to be as widely distributed as those of a modern star of the cinema. But Calderón's use of the picture story is incomparably more ingenious than that of Tirso. Doubtless, he was capable both of borrowing and of improving upon his contemporary. His *A secreto agravio secreta venganza* is an improvement upon Tirso's *Celoso prudente*; his *El secreto a voces* is an improvement of Tirso's *Amar por arte mayor*; while the second act of his *Cabellos de Absalón* is no improvement at all, but simply a theft from the third act of Tirso's *Venganza de Tamar*. In the case of *El Tetrarca*, the question of precedence, however, is academic. Except for the general subject, and the matter of the pictures, the two plays are entirely dissimilar.

El Tetrarca opens in Herod's palace at Joppa. The issue of the battle of Actium is being awaited, and the tetrarch²⁰ is in an

¹⁹ *Antiq.*, Bk XV, chap. 2, § 6, *Jewish War*, Bk. I, chap. 22, § 3.

²⁰ A confusion, obviously, not an anachronism. The Tetrarch Herod was the son of Herod the King, who is here intended.

exalted mood, for he foresees the triumph of his diplomacy, as a result of which, when Antony and Caesar have destroyed each other, he will be able to make his beloved Mariene empress of the world. But the queen is sad. An astrologer has foretold that she is to be the victim of the most horrible monster in existence; as for Herod, he is destined to kill the thing that he most loves with the dagger he wears in his belt. Herod is not impressed with this prophecy. In a closely reasoned speech on necessity and free will, he amply demonstrates its absurdity, and, to clinch his argument, tosses the dagger out of the window. There is a cry of pain. The knife has stuck in the back of Admiral Tolomeo ²¹ who has just returned, shipwrecked, from his defeat at Actium. Herod too is taken somewhat aback by this fatality, and as Mariene begs him not to let the dangerous dagger out of his sight in the future, he sticks it back in his girdle. The scene shifts from Joppa to Memphis. Octavius has captured Mariene's brother, Aristobulo, and in his possession has found a document revealing Herod's intended treachery. Octavius orders Herod arrested at once. There is also a miniature of Mariene. Octavius proceeds to fall passionately in love with it, though the original, he is told, is dead.

The second act begins in Octavius' tent, in which soldiers are hanging a large copy of Mariene's picture. Herod enters in suppliant mood. But the moment his eyes fall upon the portrait, he draws his dagger and strikes at the back of Octavius. Miraculously, the picture falls between them. It is pierced, but Octavius is saved. Herod is disarmed and sent to jail. There his servant Filipo comes to ascertain his last wishes, apprising him, at the same time, that Octavius intends to advance upon Jerusalem. Filipo receives from Herod a sealed letter addressed to Tolomeo.

In the meantime, Mariene is sending the Jewish fleet to Herod's rescue, and Tolomeo, who remains behind, has involved himself

²¹ In Tolomeo we may recognize Herod's friend Ptolemy, the brother of Nicolas of Damascus.

with both of Mariene's maids of honor, Libia and Sirene. When Filipo arrives with Herod's letter, Libia suspects that the missive is a *billet-doux* from her rival, insists upon seeing it, and, in the fracas, the letter is torn. Mariene comes in unexpectedly, gains possession of the pieces, and reads: "My honor and my service require that you, after my death (horrible fate), shall kill (I shudder) Mariene." The queen enjoins strict secrecy upon everyone, and, after lamenting Herod's ingratitude at some length, concludes that as a wife she is bound to avenge herself, but as a queen she is obliged to save her husband.

In the third act, she does both. Octavius is at the walls of Jerusalem. At the intercession of Mariene, he sets the tetrarch free. The queen then announces to Herod that henceforth she will have nothing whatever to do with him, and she retires to her room. Herod philosophically locks her in. By and by, we find Mariene preparing for bed while Sirene sings for her the cultistic verses of a song by Escrivá, which Calderón employed in *Echo and Narcissus* and which may be found also in the *Quijote*:

Come, sweet death, but come well hidden,
Quietly come as a guest unbidden,
Lest the pleasure of death's pain
Make me wish to live again.

In the midst of the song, Octavius breaks in through the garden window. But Mariene sternly repulses his advances. When he insistently grasps her hand, she plucks a dagger from his belt—it is the dagger he took from Herod. She does no more than threaten to kill herself, however, then throws down the knife, and runs out into the garden with Octavius in hot pursuit.

Herod walks in upon the disordered scene. Octavius and Mariene reënter. The men, at sight of each other, draw their daggers. Mariene blows out the lights. In the scuffle, Herod drops his dagger, picks up the fated one by mistake, and plunges it, as he thinks, into Octavius. The guards rush in with lights.

It is Mariene who has been killed. But it is not he who has killed her, cries Herod; she is the victim of destiny and of the greatest monster in the world—jealousy. With that, he rushes forth and jumps into the sea. The weeping Libia bestows herself upon Tolomeo. The play, declares Filipo, is over.

Thus Calderón ends the tragic drama as a *comedia*, brings the death of Mariene about by accident instead of design, and caps it with the usual marriage. This outcome is obviously weak, and, were it not for the thread of destiny that leads to it, would be weaker still. The marriage of Tolomeo and Libia is entirely insignificant, for the underplot, although ingeniously worked into the main action, hardly carries much weight, and as Tolomeo and Libia are perfectly neutral characters, it is of no special importance to us what happens to them. Moreover, the death of Mariene, under the circumstances, lacks point, since it is brought about by chance or fate, and not by any internal or logical necessity of character or plot. Putting out the light to resolve the drama is a vice peculiar to cloak-and-sword plays, an ingenuous method of leaving the solution of the plot to chance, in the role of *deus ex machina*. But this device seems particularly incongruous in a serious play, especially as Mariene has not the slightest motive for obfuscating the issues.²²

The plot is closer to history than that of the *Vida de Herodes*. With the exception of the material in the underplot, almost all its elements may be found in Josephus. It is largely by means of exaggeration that the story is hoisted out of reality into the world of romance. Herod's ambition, Josephus explicitly tells us, did not exceed the limits of his kingdom. Here it is magnified to include the empire of the world, which the tetrarch covets indeed not so much for his own sake as out of love for Mariene, to whom he intends to present it. His jealousy is as boundless as his ambition; death is nothing to Herod compared with the

²² The candles were, of course, a stage property, but hardly a source of illumination. The play was played by daylight.

gnawings of his jealous heart. The sight of Mariene's portrait in the tent of Octavius is sufficient to transform the humble suppliant instantly into an assassin. In the last scene but one of the play, when the tetrarch comes upon the fated dagger on the floor strewn with his wife's clothing, he becomes utterly reckless. This is, indeed, the one scene in which Herod's actions seem to accord well with nature as we know it, and his remarks on this occasion have been much admired:

¡Tarde hemos llegado, celos!
 ¡Tarde, tarde! Pues no dudo
 que quién arrastró despojos
 habra celebrado triunfos...

Hartzenbusch wrote that the idea of dishonor could not be expressed in a more poetic manner. However this may be, the exaggeration of the tetrarch's jealousy has by this time been so great that even in this moment, in which his passion is natural and justifiable, one tends to look upon it as unreal.

On the other hand, it must be conceded that the author has almost succeeded in taking the character out of the conventions of the seventeenth century, a rare achievement for any dramatist of the Golden Age. Herod's mental processes, however abnormal, are not those of the conventional "jealous" husband of the Spanish stage. His actions proceed not from a traditional sense of his duty to himself and to society, but from the excesses of a natural passion, the primitive nature of which the gingerbread framework of the play cannot entirely obscure. He is a quaint character, no doubt, but we cannot deny his substantiality.

As much can be said of Mariene. Menéndez y Pelayo somewhat severely writes of her that she is not a true character at all, and that the beauties of the play are concentrated in Herod alone.²⁸ But Mariene's reactions are vigorous enough to warrant

²⁸ *Calderón y su teatro*, pp. 326 ff.

her substantiality as a character. The initiative passes into her hands as soon as she discovers Tolomeo's secret, and the last act belongs almost wholly to her. Her character suffers, it is true, from the fact that it is twisted about rather carelessly to suit the exigencies of the plot, but in spite of this she is outstanding among Calderón's women, who are habitually frail, without intellect, and without moral fibre. In using her influence to save the man she is resolved henceforth to hate, she enters into the very inner sanctum of drama. Unhappily, Calderón hardly knows what to do with her once she is there, and he poses the conflict between her duty to her husband and her duty to herself in terms that cannot be taken seriously in our day. None the less, Calderón's Mariene represents a very real advance in the history of the character. Here, for the first time, we see her as an active participant in her tragedy, though her tragedy is certainly not on a plane with that of Tristan's *Mariane*, which was published the year before in France. In Calderón's play, she is hardly a tragic character by ordinary standards, but she initiates action, reasons out and makes decisions, opposes her will to her emotions and to the will of others, and yields nothing to the others in strength. Her own personality is not in the least complex, but she is quite definitely in the tradition which produced the complex women of Corneille. Other Mariamnes inherited her energy. We find something of her in the Mariamne of Voltaire, of Scevola, and Phillips, particularly in the celebrated Mariamne of Hebbel.

Few dramatists seem to have noted the rather obvious fact that the essential richness of the Mariamne story lies not in court intrigues, jealousies, villainies, and plots, but in the irreconcilable conflict between Herod and Mariamne. Against their union is arrayed the overpowering force of destiny—not the destiny of fated daggers and astrological predictions, but that of character and heredity. The haughty queen and the passionate

adventurer have no need of external forces to bring them to their tragic end. Their tragedy is within themselves; it needs no astrologer to predict it. It is to the credit of Hardy and Tristan that this essential element of the Mariamne tragedy was not lost upon them, but even in Tristan's play it remains implicit.

The more emphasis given to the role of Salome, Antipater, Pheroras, Mazaël, and the other schemers and plotters, the weaker is the essential conflict. It is the function of the auxiliary characters to illustrate this conflict, not to bring it about. In Fenton's *Mariamne*, in which the king and queen are depicted throughout as lovers, there is no conflict between them, and the catastrophe is almost entirely due to the machinations of the villain. In Hebbel's *Mariamne*, on the contrary, there are no machinations, and the entire force of the tragedy rises out of the relations of Herod and Mariamne. In *El Tetrarca* there are no villains, and neither Salome nor Alexandra figure in the cast. But it is not the conflict of personalities that brings on the catastrophe, though such a conflict is sketched lightly in the last act. Calderón has no intention here, as he had in *La vida es sueño*, of writing "psychological" drama. He sets the burden of the catastrophe squarely upon fate.

For Calderón, as for Seneca, fate is everywhere operative in the universe. Its workings are augured by omens, portents, prophecies, and oracles. In a sense, at least, fate exemplifies for him the inevitable character of the development of human relationships. In a sense, too, it represents for him the struggle of the individual will with the world will. But this is hardly a metaphysical concept with Calderón. It is rather a half-mystical belief in predestination. For Calderón, the fates of men are written in the stars, but the stars work infallibly in accordance with Christian ideas of sin and retribution.

It is not safe, according to Calderón, to trifle with destiny. Certain of his characters are made to pooh-pooh the prophecies with which his plays abound, but they are invariably shown

their mistake. When Prince Henry stumbles, on the occasion of the landing of the Portuguese army in *El príncipe constante*, his brother Ferdinand cheers the awe-stricken soldiery by sneering at "these common portents and terrors vain." Ferdinand is, however, badly defeated, and Henry is captured and comes to a bad end. Similarly in *El Tetrarca*, Herod reads Mariene a long lecture on the foolishness of the astrologer's predictions, but he comes to see his error in the fullness of time, and when he finds the fated dagger on the floor of his wife's room, and cries

¿Aqueste
no es el fiero puñal duro
que, registro de los astres
es aguja de sus rumbos?

we see that he has been completely cowed by destiny.

The Mariamne story was not taken up again in Spain for nearly a quarter-century, though the period was one of intense dramatic activity. In 1658, *Herodes Ascalonita y la hermosa Mariana* was first published by Licenciado Gaspar Lozano in *Las soledades de la vida y desengaños del mundo*.

Lozano is better known as the author of *Los reyes nuevos de Toledo* (1667), a novel based on the history of the Trastamaran line, than as a dramatist,²⁴ though, besides the present work, he was the author of a biblical drama, *David perseguido*. His name is given as "don Gaspar Lozano, rector del Colegio de nuestra Señora de la Annunciación de Murcia"²⁵ in the edition of *Las soledades* of 1663, but the dedication to Don Pedro Portocarrero, in which *Las soledades* are spoken of as youthful work, is signed Cristóbal Lozano, and this is the name given him in the *Catálogo bibliográfico y biográfico del teatro antiguo*

²⁴ See G. Ticknor, *History of Spanish Literature*, in the Julius (German) translation (Leipzig, 1851-6), III, 328, 434, see also E. Merimée and S. G. Morley, *History of Spanish Literature* (New York, 1930), pp. 392-3.

²⁵ He became chaplain of the Chapel of the New Kings at the Cathedral of Toledo.

español,²⁶ which notes that the name Cristóbal was used only in the posthumous edition of Lozano's works. The edition of *Herodes Ascalonita* published at Madrid in 1791 calls him, moreover, Gaspar Lozano Montesino; but the question of why he called himself Gaspar in one place and Cristóbal in another is a riddle that hardly concerns the present discussion.

While the plot of *Herodes Ascalonita* cannot be said to be modeled either upon that of Tirso's *La vida de Herodes*, or that of the *Tetrarca* of Calderón, whose letter of recommendation to the censor is affixed to *Las soledades*, there can be no doubt that Lozano was indebted to these plays in more than one particular. From Josephus he drew the historical background of his plot, and some of its incident; with this he combined a romantic intrigue developed by means of the usual paraphernalia of cloak-and-sword *comedia*—darkness, daggers, secret doors, incriminating letters, nocturnal prowlings and surprises. The action is extravagant, much more so than is usual even in this type of play. It takes place for the greater part in the small hours of the morning, and the characters, doubtless because of their habitual insomnia, are nervous and hysterical. The setting of the play is romantic, a castle with concealed doors and secret passages, and in it, among the *galanes* and *graciosos* of his court, the figure of Herod moves with the majesty of a Punchinello. It has been remarked that the plays of Calderón and Tirso are in a sense caricatures of the story in Josephus; it may be added that Lozano's play carries the process a step further. It is a caricature of the plays of Tirso and of Calderón.

Herodes Ascalonita is written in the usual assortment of metres. It is very rich in poetic clichés, but it must be confessed that its wealth of cultistic counters is not relieved, as in the work of Calderón, by any unusual lyrical quality. The play is divided into the traditional three *jornadas*. There seems to be in it some attempt to abide by the unity of place, for

²⁶ Compiled by Barrera y Leirado (Madrid, 1860), p. 225.

the entire action is set in the Alcázar of Masada.²⁷ The cast is small—there are the two principal characters, Mariana and Herodes; Josef and Salome; the *gracioso* Lazaro, who is Josef's servant, and the *criada* Isabel, besides the allegorical figure of Fame, and some soldiers.

The plot is of a type which had already become basic in the romantic drama and the romantic novel. It has a quadrilateral pattern, at the principal angle of which is a woman who is staunchly loyal to the man she has married, though she secretly loves the sweetheart of her youth, who is also married. All that was necessary to derive this formula from the story in Josephus was to presuppose an actual love affair between two of the victims of Herod's jealousy—Mariamne and Joseph, the husband of Salome. Joseph is, for this purpose, rejuvenated and made sympathetic, and his avuncular relationship to his rival is suppressed. The result is a sufficiently glamorous figure.

That this formula results in a proper motivation of Salome's hatred of the queen is a happy circumstance of which Lozano makes full use. As in the English heroic plays, which commonly employ a pattern similar to this, all the characters are extremely virtuous, with the exception of Herod, whose villainy is on a heroic scale.

The play opens on a "dark" scene through which a cloaked figure darts with drawn dagger, in by one door, and out the other. Then Mariana runs in, half-dressed, and in great excitement. At the same time, Josef rushes on in his nightshirt, sword in hand. The two clutch at each other in the darkness, then lights are brought, and Salome comes in, green with jealousy. It develops that both Mariana and Josef were pursuing an apparition which appeared to them in a dream. To Mariana it seemed that her husband came to her bedside, threatening, cloaked, dagger in hand. To Josef it appeared that a certain

²⁷ The fortress of Masada was, in fact, the domicile chosen by Herod for Mariamne and Alexandra on the occasion of his visit to Caesar. The plot of *Herodes Ascalonita* involves, however, not Caesar but Antony.

man who once took from him the woman he loved, now came and stole his cloak and dagger in order to murder this woman with them. The explanations being concluded, the characters go back—to bed, presumably.

A few scenes later, Herod makes his appearance in the uniform of a general, and his court, after some delay, comes to meet him. He is extravagant in his compliments to his wife, but, as she informs us in an aside, the better he treats her, the more she hates him. Herod is not unaware of her dislike, and he questions Josef privately, as he thinks, concerning the reasons for it. Is it because he is accused of having murdered her relatives? Josef makes an evasive answer. . . In fact, the conversation has been overheard not only by Mariana but by the *gracioso* Lazaro, who takes time between the acts to warn the audience to beware of Herod, who is a bad man from whom Jesus Christ himself had to flee.

The second act also begins in the darkness. Herod comes in, in dishabille, bearing a light, a sword, and a letter. Josef, in the same condition, but minus letter, comes to meet him. It seems they have been searching the palace for a man who mysteriously appeared at Herod's bedside, put a paper in his hand, and vanished. Herod reads the paper. It is a letter from Antony to Alexandra, assuring her that justice will be meted out to Herod, and thanking her for the portrait of Mariana, with whom Antony is greatly taken. Herod, who has already been summoned by Antony, feels that life and honor are now at stake. He has already seen, he recalls, a portrait of Mariana in Antony's possession; he has every reason to be jealous. Josef remarks that he feels Herod's jealousy as if it were his own. They walk up and down the stage, sword in hand, talking. The king occasionally brandishes his weapon. With murderous intent, he suddenly turns it upon Josef, who cries in astonishment, "But this is Josef!" The king calms himself. He had thought it was Antony. He puts his kingdom in Josef's hand, and extracts

an oath that if he should fail to return, Josef will kill Mariana. Again the king begins to stab at Josef, who valiantly parries the blows. "But I am Josef," he protests. The king stops. "You are? Enough. I thought you were Antonio."

Next day, we find that the king has gone off to Syria. Josef loses no time in telling the queen of his secret charge, which he assures her he has no intention of carrying out, since he desires only to be permitted to love her. In her turn, Mariana mentions a certain secret love of hers—she can say no more, since she belongs now to Herod. Meanwhile, a plot is brewing against these lovers. Salome has found an unaddressed love letter in Josef's writing. She sends it to Mariana by way of the servant Lazaro. Now, there is a secret door, painted with a landscape, at one end of the stage. Through this door, Herod makes his appearance, with lantern and sword, for, as he tells us, he has come back to spy on Mariana. She enters, attended by her maid; the king retires into his recess. The maid sings the sad song of the Infanta of Tyre and the ungrateful Aeneas. Mariana falls asleep. Lazaro enters with his letter. The king dashes out to get it. Mariana awakes, overturns the light, and they all rush about wildly in the darkness. In the end, Mariana escapes, Lazaro takes refuge under the *bufete*, and Herod goes out furiously by his secret door. Then Josef comes in with his naked sword.

In Act Three, Salome reveals to Herod the secret love of Josef and Mariana, as well as her own treachery in sending the love letter. Herod bides his time, but as in the next scene Mariana brings up the matter of the secret command, Herod concludes that his worst suspicions are confirmed, and when we next see Josef, it is in a prison cell where he is repeating lugubrious verses to himself. Mariana comes in (with candle) and offers to set her lover free, but he refuses to compromise her, and is led out to his death. The queen swoons. Suddenly *Fama* appears to her out of a cloud, with news of Herod's recent victims—Mariana's children, the Sanhedrin, and a hundred

thousand children of Bethlehem. Mariana is then edified by a vision of the Holy Family and ends the scene in an ecstasy.

In the next scene, we are told that the people are in revolt. Servants enter to lay Herod's table. The utensils are bloody. The king comes to dinner, washes his hands in bloody water, and is apologetically offered a blood-stained towel by Salome; evidently the laundry cannot keep pace with his crimes. He has washed his honor, remarks Herod, in blood and now he wants his dinner. As he cuts the loaf, blood spurts from it—nevertheless, he dines cheerfully, reflecting that while he has his Mariana all is well with him. And he calls to a guard to stay the order for her execution. But the order comes too late; Lazaro has already arrived with the details of the execution. Herod starts up with the bread knife. The curtain is drawn back by Salome, and the headless corpse of Mariana is revealed. Herod exits raving. When he has gone, Lazaro refers us, for further information on this wholly truthful story, to Philo,²⁸ Josefo, or the *Anales* of Pineda.

This play illustrates in a striking manner the rapid degeneration of the theatre of the Golden Age. As the weakness of Italian painting in the seventeenth century expressed itself in striking effects of *chiaroscuro*, Spanish drama in its senescence tried to give the impression of strength by summoning forth all its weaknesses.

Herodes Ascalonita comes but twenty-three years after *El Tetrarca*. The Golden Age was well on its way toward becoming the age of gilt, and the theatre already showed clear signs of spiritual dilapidation. Under these circumstances the well-worn routine of the *comedia* was gone over again and again; the spectacular and the baroque were exaggerated to the point of senselessness; the old saws were mouthed with great emphasis in situations mechanically keyed-up to a tension which was

²⁸ The reference is probably not to the Alexandrian philosopher, but to the Philo who wrote an epic on the history of Jerusalem, quoted by Alexander Polyhistor, and referred to by Josephus in *Contra Apionem*, Bk I, chap. 23.

supposed to pass for vitality. As in the case of French tragedy after Racine, the new *comedias* were simply mosaics from the old, save that with the Spanish, a straining for originality resulted in ever more lurid colorings and more violent effects.

Scenes to be played in the dark were a favorite dramatic device in the Golden Age; they gave opportunities for all sorts of muddles—escapes, substitutions, discoveries, and mistakes—some tragic, some laughable. It was conventionally agreed that in the dark no stage character could recognize his friend or enemy, or even his own mother, any more than in broad daylight he could guess the identity of a veiled woman. But while most cloak-and-sword plays have a scene or so with darkness and candles, it must have seemed to Lozano a stroke of genius to play a *comedia* almost entirely in the dark. In Lozano's play, Herod appears without his candle or lantern only twice, if we except the opening scene. What the purpose of this midnight mummery could have been, it is hardly possible to say—perhaps it was designed to give a sombre effect to the drama, perhaps it was an end in itself. The result is a strange *chiaroscuro*.

Herodes Ascalonita is little more than a succession of striking effects. The device of the foreboding dream, which Lozano seems to have used with true Spanish enthusiasm, is, of course, Senecan in its derivation, but it is far from the conventional prophetic dream. The device was not common in Spanish *comedia*; Lozano found it in neither of his models, and he mixed it up rather badly, for the dream figure of Herod is actually seen running about murderously on the stage, though Herod himself is alive and has not yet arrived at Masada. It is, of course, a most spectacular way in which to open the play. An analogy, in travesty, of the opening of *Hamlet*, it serves to foreshadow, if nothing else, the general tenor of the action, for it brings all the characters rushing out into the darkness in a state of great excitement about nothing in particular; this is, in general, what happens in the sequel. But beyond this it is

a little difficult to say exactly what the dream foretells—whether the actual catastrophe, Herod's future state of mind, the general bloody tendency of the situation, or the giving of the secret command. It seems to come closest, perhaps, to the last, but as the secret command is only a side issue in the action, it hardly seems worth this elaborate preparation.

The quadrilateral plot, we have noted, enabled Lozano to motivate Salome's hatred of Mariana on the grounds of jealousy. Neither Tirso nor Calderón had treated Salome in this manner. In Calderón's play, the character is entirely lacking. She is present in *La vida de Herodes*, in which she sends the fatal letter; but in this play, she is betrothed to Aristobulo and has no particular connection with Josefo. Lozano must therefore have derived the correct relationship of Salome and Josef, as well as the jealousy motive, either directly from Josephus or from some other source.²⁰ Once the proper relation of Salome and Josef was established, Salome's hatred of Mariamne was easily motivated on the ground of jealousy, a motive which Lozano developed, in a manner typical of the *comedia*, by means of embarrassing encounters, domestic quarrels, reconciliations, and trials of fidelity. Salome is thus made into a not unsympathetic character, and the play has no villains, with the exception of Herod.

Herod is compounded of elements taken partly from Calderón and from Tirso, partly out of the Mysteries and the author's imagination. This Herod is a much more jealous gallant than Calderón's tetrarch, though it is true he has more reason to be jealous. He takes his duties as the husband of a pretty wife very seriously, has built a secret door especially to spy upon her, and appears to trust her in nothing. On the other hand, he is aware of the fact that she does not love him, a circumstance which forms no part of his difficulty in the

²⁰ Very likely he followed the account in the *Jewish War*, his plot accords much better with this than with the story in the *Antiquities*.

plays of Calderón and of Tirso. His jealousy of Antony is, as we have seen, unusually great, but his wildness must not be attributed solely to the strength of his passion. For in striking at his friend Josef, whom he from time to time mistakes for Antony in the candlelight, he is unconsciously striking at the real cause of his jealousy—a typically Spanish bit of stage subtlety comparable to the stabbing of Mariene's picture in *El Tetrarca*. With typical Spanish carelessness, on the other hand, his false start and secret return are not motivated at all. Though he is summoned abroad in peril of his life, he is simply suspicious in general, and comes back to see if all is well at home.

When the disclosure of his true rival takes place in the third act, he takes a leaf out of *A secreto agravio secreta venganza*, and decides that his vengeance like his dishonor must be kept secret. It is perhaps for this reason that he overshadows the executions of Josef and Mariana with the slaughter of the guiltless Sanhedrin and the 100,000 Innocents of Bethlehem (14,000 in Tirso). At least, no other motive for this considerable massacre is assigned. His final fury, his bloody dinner, and the display of Mariana's headless corpse are realistic details suggested, no doubt, partly by the last scenes of Tirso's play, partly by the Mysteries.

Mariana is a more conventional type than Herod. She has less vitality than Calderón's Mariene, and the situation in which Lozano places her serves only to enhance the bareness of her character. Though she coquettes with her platonic lover, and is continually found in embarrassing situations with him, she is a miracle of virtue, and she lives and dies an innocent victim of her husband's fury. She is a sad and a nervous queen, as well she might be in a castle in which people are constantly running about with drawn daggers, and she finds it difficult to sleep. Luckily, Isabel, like Calderón's Sirene, is qualified to sing lullabies to her mistress. But she does not, we have noted, sing the

verses of Comendador Escrivá. Those are reserved, in a reciprocal version, for Josef's death song, which he sings himself:

Muerte, si habéis de venir,
mucho pienso que os tardáis,
que aunque el vivir me alargáis,
es más muerte este vivir.

Evidently Lozano believed that if he multiplied the devices employed by his predecessors, he would proportionally improve the dramatic effect. The anonymous letter of Tirso's play becomes three letters in Lozano's. Calderón's final scene in the dark is evolved into an almost continuous series of dark scenes. There is one death song in *El Tetrarca*; two in *Herodes Ascalonita*. Tirso's Herod issues once from behind the *paño*; Lozano's is constantly popping in and out of his secret door. Even the affair of the slaughter of the Innocents, of very doubtful value in Tirso's play, is introduced twice here—once in Mariana's vision, and again at the very end—where the fatalities are multiplied tenfold.

With Lozano's play, the Mariamne theme apparently came to rest in Spanish drama. The nineteenth-century *Herodes, drama bíblico en cinco actos y en verso* by Ramón Franquelo y Martínez (2d ed., Malaga, 1872), is not a Mariamne play, although in some respects it resembles one. It has to do mainly with the slaughter of the Innocents, and an imaginary affair between Herod and a certain Raquel—none other, in fact, than the Rachel of Matthew 2.18.

The point of the play seems to be that to every man all women are the same, for the Herod-Raquel incident takes a form similar to that of the Herod-Mariamne affair and results in the death of Raquel, her child, the slaughter of the Innocents, and the madness of Herod. These misfortunes, it is implied, are due not only to Herod's cruel nature, but to the fact that he desperately needs someone to love him, and nobody

loves him. He has had nine wives, including the beautiful Mariamne, but none of them has suited him. Raquel seems more promising, but unhappily she will have none of him, and the slaughter goes on. This sad and somewhat sentimental Herod is developed in operatic style with much fanfare, spectacle, and machinery. The resulting play is a mongrel, in which may be seen traces of the French melodrama, the native *comedia*, and the religious pageants.

Spanish drama in the nineteenth century was divided in its allegiance between the patterns of the Golden Age and the models of the French romanticists. The close of the seventeenth century had seen the end of whatever was great in the national drama. In the opening years of the eighteenth century, the French influence became stronger and stronger among the learned, but *comedias* continued to be produced. An attack upon the popular theatre was launched in the name of French classicism by Luzán, and later by Nasarre and Montiano.³⁰ The *galicistas* rapidly gained ground. In official lists of plays suitable for production, Lope, Calderón, and Tirso were not included. Toward the end of the century, the traditionalists rallied about the manifesto of García de la Huerta, *La escena hespañola defendida* (1786), which was supported by his *Theatro hespañol*, a seventeen-volume anthology of old *comedias*, including, curiously enough, nothing of Lope, Tirso, or Alarcón. The struggle, such as it was, was now joined in earnest.

Some sort of compromise was reached in the work of Moratín, the only considerable dramatist the eighteenth century produced in Spain. He wrote comedies, principally, patterned more or less upon Molière. Classical tragedy made little headway. Thus matters stood until the third decade of the nineteenth century, when Rivas ushered in romantic tragedy. At about the same time, José Zorilla initiated a revival of the *capa y espada*

³⁰ See C. B. Quaila, "The Campaign to Substitute French Neo-Classical Tragedy for the *Comedia*, 1737-1800," *PMLA*, LIV (March, 1939), pp. 184 ff

genre, and once more Spanish genius began to assert itself upon the stage.

Franquelo y Martínez' play illustrates a stage in the revival of the old forms. The play is written in the traditional variety of metres; it is full of rustic clowning and buffoonery in the style, but without the grace, of Tirso; it has a religious tone. It involves, besides, a great deal of operatic *brouhaha* and spectacle. The characters are familiar types. Raquel is a stout sort of rustic Mariamne, full of pride and scorn for the lovelorn Herod, so strong in her maternal righteousness that she is capable of felling two soldiers (Teutons) of the royal body-guard in single combat. Herod is a lover of the "heroic" type, the sort who offers his beloved the choice of love or death. At the end of the play he is read a homily on his vices by the ghost of his victim.

In the introduction, the author tells us that the play had been successfully acted ten years before at the theatre of Prince Alfonso, that he has spent the intervening decade in improving it, and that in the present version he means to "delineate the immortal figure of Herod I, that man of passions and torments, of the instincts of a tiger, who in the midst of his acts of violence felt the need of being loved." For this purpose he has followed Orsini's *História de Maria, Madre de Dios*.

While the play is not strictly germane to the present discussion, it is perhaps sufficiently connected with it to warrant brief consideration.

It is in five acts, accompanied and interspersed with music, and opens in a rural setting near Bethlehem, where Herod's envoys are seen skulking about the cabin of the shepherdess Raquel, of whom Herod is enamored. But Raquel is already married, and she would rather die, so she tells us, than marry a man who has neither law nor religion, and who has killed, besides, his wife Mariana and all her family. There is a rustic feast; when it is over, Herod arrives with his train and offers

Raquel the choice of coming quietly, or being dragged, to his court. She promises to come.

When she appears at court somewhat later, it is, however, only to reproach Herod with his evil passions. In due course, the Magi appear and are entertained with a ballet, after which the perfidious Herod orders the slaughter of the children. The next act is given over to spectacle and clowning—we see the angels, the rustics, the Christ child, and the Magi bearing gifts. The scene shifts to the Temple, where mothers and children have taken refuge from Herod's Teutons, who have orders to massacre everyone. Raquel stoutly defends her infant son, and with a borrowed sword manages to strike down two of the soldiers. Herod now makes his appearance and calls upon Raquel to choose between the throne and the death of her child. She refuses to have anything to do with him. As in the distance we see the Christ child escaping, Raquel's son is killed, and the mother, at the sight of the little corpse, falls dead.

In the last act, we find Herod at the point of death. The stage darkens. The ghost of Raquel appears and prophesies the death and future infamy of Herod. At her behest, letters of fire appear on the curtain: *Horrible*, his past; *Infamous*, his present; *Cursed*, his future. Then she edifies the dying man with a short history of the world in a series of tableaux with music—Adam and Eve, Noah's Ark, and a third group called Redemption. Herod is by this time pretty well overcome. Clouds gather over the stage, and the curtain falls.

Let us say it is an epilogue to the Herod drama of Spain.

TRAGEDIES OF BLOOD

THE TERM "blood tragedy" is somewhat more vexatious than the other terms available to classify the Mariamne dramas. It refers not only to the content, but, by implication, to the dramatic form. Strictly speaking, it should perhaps include a number of Mariamne plays which are more conveniently dealt with under other headings—such as, for example, Argensola's *La Alejandra*, or Markham and Sampson's *Herod and Antipater*.

It would be gratuitous to attempt in this place a definition of a term the application of which is fairly clear, however vague its limits. We shall use the phrase, insofar as it serves us, to group together a number of plays which have in common certain special characteristics. All the Mariamne tragedies are bloody, but some are more so than others, and of these some seem to have been written with the sensational and gruesome aspects of the plot particularly in mind. In the ideal example of blood tragedy, such details would all be enacted on the stage. So they are, for example, in Hallmann's *Die beleidigte Liebe*. On the other hand, Rives' *Mariamne* is a very bloody tragedy, yet, while it keeps our eyes firmly fixed on a succession of lurid spectacles, it manages to keep some of these just off the stage, as a gesture, perhaps, in the direction of decorum.

In the plays of Massinger, Hallmann, Pordage, Orrery, Fenton, and Rives, the macabre is given varied emphasis and treatment, but, in all of these plays, it is well to the fore. As a group they are a fair illustration of the development of this aspect of Mariamne drama.

The Duke of Milan, like *Alejandra*, provides the Mariamne story with an extraneous frame. The story of Francisco's revenge, motivated by the duke's seduction of Francisco's sister, follows a traditional pattern of Elizabethan drama, and was probably derived in the first instance from a Spanish or Italian source. With this plot, the Mariamne story meshes rather badly, and the effect is of two independent stories rather than of a unified development, although theoretically the two stories are fused into a single action.

The play was first published in 1623, and was probably the second of Massinger's tragedies. We have no information as to the manner of its reception, though the title page of the original edition informs us that it was "often acted at the Black Friars." Clearly it does not represent the best the author could do in point of construction. Because of the clumsy juxtaposition of the two plots, the play appears to end at the close of Act Four, and the fifth act necessitates what amounts to a fresh start. The static fifth act of classical French drama was, of course, wholly foreign to the Elizabethan theatre, which generally preferred to have in its fifth acts a brisk denouement with plenty of action. Therefore, while the main action of the *Duke of Milan* was climaxed and ended in Act Four, for the purposes of the fifth act it became necessary to cap this climax. To the usual contents of the fifth act in the French tragedies, Massinger accordingly added the sensational episode of the false physicians and the corpse with the poisoned lips, business similar to that of the *Second Maid's Tragedy*. In this way, he succeeded in bringing about an extremely gruesome final scene.

As the plot of the *Duke of Milan* is tolerably well known, it will be unnecessary to give more than a very brief summary of it here. The setting comes from Guicciardini's *Storia d'Italia* (Books XV, XIX), but the play has little to do with the Italian wars of Francis I and Charles V. For the purposes of the plot, these worthies are equated with Antony and Octavius.

Sforza, who actually found himself allied with the losing side in the Italian war, is given the role of Herod. The plot then follows, in the main, the story in Josephus. The role of Mariamne is given to Marcelia, the duke's wife; that of Salome is filled by Mariana, his sister; that of Sohemus, by Francisco, his viceroy.

The action is complicated. On the defeat of the French king, the duke decides to go and surrender to the emperor, but before doing so he confides written orders to Francisco to kill Marcelia in the event of his death. The villainous Francisco attempts to seduce Marcelia, who rebuffs him, whereupon he informs her of the secret command. When the duke returns from the emperor's camp, he is coldly received, becomes furious and banishes his wife from his presence. In the next act, however, he takes on the role of the Vacillating Lover, and begins to send envoys to beg her forgiveness. Reports are brought to him of his wife's intimacy with Francisco. These are not credited until Francisco himself confesses that Marcelia is in love with him. Sforza orders his wife dragged into his presence. She admits—falsely—that she loves Francisco, whereupon the duke, thoroughly enraged, stabs her. Before Marcelia dies, she reveals the truth concerning her behavior. Sforza's sorrow knows no bounds.

In the last act, we find that Francisco's purpose in all this has been to avenge his sister, whom the duke once wronged. Together with this sister, disguised as Hebrew doctors, Francisco comes to the court and undertakes to cure Marcelia, for the duke refuses to consider that his wife is dead. The cure consists mainly in painting the corpse's lips with poison. The duke kisses these lips, and dies at some length. In the course of his dying, he sends Francisco to his death and the sister to a nunnery.

The theme of Francisco's revenge, while not absolutely new in the play, is very faintly hinted at in a few enigmatic lines

at the beginning of the first act; conceivably, these were inserted as an afterthought when it became necessary to tie in the action of the last act. The theme is not particularly advantageous. Since the real source of emotion is in the relationship of the duke and Marcelia, which ends with her death and his madness, the prolongation of the drama can hardly be justified by a last minute disclosure of the villain's motives, while the belated introduction of the wronged sister, an absolute stranger to us, is little more than confusing. This defect in construction cannot be laid solely to Massinger's inexperience in tragedy at this time.¹ The same objection may be made to the construction of *The Roman Actor*, one of the last plays Massinger wrote by himself, in which the hero, Paris, dies at the end of Act Four and effectively ends the play, though Domitia and Domitian go on for another act. Moreover, it may be observed that in general Massinger's plays suffer from fifth-act trouble. While the cause of his difficulty cannot, of course, be definitely determined, it may perhaps be found in Massinger's predilection for foreign plot patterns, particularly the Italian and the French. As these patterns were more closely assimilated to the classical scheme than the English, they usually had a bare fifth act, which Massinger, for his purposes, found it necessary to fill up with extraneous action.

Save for this awkwardness in structure, the *Duke of Milan* exhibits the firmness and perspicuity of style that distinguishes Massinger among the followers of Shakspeare. Unlike many of his contemporaries, he usually avoids the multiple plot,² and his best plays have an admirable sureness of outline. The *Duke of Milan* represents considerable patchwork on the part of the author, yet the main action, a graft of Hebrew upon Italian history, evidences no incongruities. As a practical stage-writer

¹ As Koeppel suggests in *Cambridge History of English Literature*, VI, 174. See also E. Koeppel, *Quellen-Studien zu den Dramen George Chapman's, Phillip Massingers, and John Fords* (Strassburg, 1897).

² *The Unnatural Combat* has, however, two actions.

of long experience, Massinger was skilful in abstracting his plots from various sources. *The Great Duke of Florence* was a hybrid of Italian and English materials. *The Roman Actor* was put together out of Suetonius and Dio Cassius. *The Renegado* is a mélange of various works of Cervantes. The combination of Josephus and Guicciardini is quite as felicitous as any of these.

Guicciardini, of course, provided no more than a setting and, as it were, an excuse for thus drastically transposing the Mariamne story in time and place. Massinger's treatment of the story is quite free. As Francisco's villainy is brought very much to the fore, the role of Mariana, who stands for Salome, is necessarily without much importance; she has only a nuisance value in the play. The wicked, lewd, or revengeful Francisco is assimilated much more closely to the character of Iago than is common in the villains of Mariamne drama, who normally proceed from motives of ambition or jealousy. His purposes are, however, not nearly as explicit even as those of his distinguished predecessor in villainy; his object seems, at first, to be the seduction of Marcellia, and only when he is repulsed does he appear to desire her death and that of the duke. He is of course the chief disruptive factor of the play, but it does not turn solely upon his efforts to bring about disaster in the Sforza ménage. The plot, like that of *El Tetrarca*, falls into the second of our categories,³ and it is the change in Marcellia's attitude toward the duke which is chiefly responsible for the catastrophe. This change appears, in fact, not to be a profound one. It results in a determination on the part of Marcellia to teach her husband a lesson, somewhat in the style of Calderón's Mariamne, or Hebbel's, whose prototype in some respects Marcellia is. The resulting comedy of errors has a tragic ending. The chilly reception which Marcellia accords the triumphant Sforza on his return from the emperor's camp makes him angry; then everything—even the words of the duchess herself—seems to point

³ See above, p. 70.

to his betrayal. The question of why Marcelia would let herself go so far in her plan for punishing the duke as to imperil and lose her own life, Massinger might find it difficult to answer.

Of the materials of the play, traces may be found in Massinger's other work, for as is usual with those who write habitually for the stage, his plays suffer from the frequent repetition of stock phrases, situations, and characters. The theme of the brother avenging the dishonored sister comes up again in *The Bond-Man* and *The Renegado*. Francisco has much in common with the villainous Montreville in *The Unnaturall Combat*, and with the villainous Domitian in *The Roman Actor*. Marcelia and Sforza, like Massinger's other heroes and heroines, are verbose, full of maxims and high sentences, given to oratorical flights on the slightest provocation. Like Timoleon of Corinth, Paris, and Lidia, they are provided with ample opportunity to mount the rostrum or take the stump. In *The Duke of Milan*, Sforza's speech before the emperor is made the subject of an entire scene, which might easily have been dispensed with. Its inclusion, like that of the gruesome business of the last act, argues the practical playwright, who, through spectacle and declamation makes the most of his situations and his actors, if not always of his play.

While Massinger was undoubtedly capable of writing excellent verse, *The Duke of Milan* suffers from a certain tediousness and prosiness of expression. The verse is clear and straightforward, for Massinger had no euphuistic affectations. But he could not rid himself of a cultistic predilection for stock phrases, comparisons, and the mechanical repetition of mythologic allusions, so that his plays are apt to give the impression of being garments cut from the same cloth. This effect is unhappily enhanced by a genuine superficiality in the treatment of the characters, who, being drawn from the common stock, have a certain family resemblance.

The question of what could have impelled Massinger to bring

together in one play such disparate materials is not likely to be fruitful. Dunstan suggests that he put the Mariamne story in an Italian setting in order to avoid the traditional character of the Herod of the Mysteries.⁴ A more likely suggestion may perhaps be based on the fact that in the year (1622) preceding the publication of Massinger's play, Markham and Sampson had published their chronicle play, *Herod and Antipater*, while Hardy's *Mariamne*, though not yet published, was enjoying a triumph in Paris. It is possible that Massinger was tempted by the success of these plays to venture a similar theme in the popular Italian setting. But he can by no means be accused of plagiarism. His play is not at all like Hardy's tragedy; as for *Herod and Antipater*, though it is a very bloody play, it is of an entirely different stamp from *The Duke of Milan*.

Much closer than these to Massinger's play are the bloody tragedies of Pordage and the Earl of Orrery which, following *The Duke of Milan* by an interval of some fifty years, are the next examples of Mariamne drama in England.

The interval saw the degeneration of the Elizabethan drama, the Puritan reaction, and the closing of the theatres. The return of the drama was initiated in Cromwell's time by D'Avenant's celebrated *Siege of Rhodes* (1656), which was given the (then) inoffensive name of "opera." It was in fact a drama "sung in recitative music," a form that had already gained popularity in Italy, and was not entirely novel in England.⁵ Its insignificant plot leaned toward the romantic drama made popular by Beaumont and Fletcher; it had tendencies also that were distinctly French. In emulation of the Alexandrines of French drama, the dialogue was rhymed and partly in couplets. The background

⁴ A. C. Dunstan, *Examination of Two English Dramas* (Koenigsberg, 1908), p. 96; W. Grack, *Studien über die dramatische Behandlung der Geschichte von Herodes und Mariamne* (Koenigsberg, 1901), p. 18.

⁵ D'Avenant had written masques for the court of Charles I. The opera did not attain popularity in France until Lulli and Quinault produced *Cadmus and Hermione* in 1673 (*Oxford History of Music*, III, 295).

was warlike and magnificent; the theme was love, with its corollaries jealousy and honor. The fable was "heroical," and intended to "advance the characters of virtue in the shapes of valour and conjugal love."⁶ The magnificence of D'Avenant's presentation was unfortunately marred by the necessity of setting the siege, the Turkish fleet and army, and the defenses of Rhodes all in a space eleven feet in height and fifteen in depth, so that the battle fought "in recitative music by seven persons only"⁷ must have had its less serious side. *The Siege of Rhodes* was, however, only a beginning. The accession of the Merry Monarch brought about an active revival of romantic drama under the guidance of D'Avenant and the Killigrews. As the king and the court had acquired a taste for French drama in the years of their exile, it was natural that the new English theatre should cater to some extent to this taste.

The pattern of French drama with which the English courtiers had become familiar was neither the classical type of Garnier, nor the new tragedy of Corneille in its final form. The early years of the king's exile coincided with the vogue of the irregular drama of Hardy and Rotrou, the later years with that of Tristan and the *Tragi-Comedy of The Cid*. To these influences may be added that of Spanish drama and fiction, of the heroic epics of the Italians, particularly of Ariosto and Tasso,⁸ and that of the French romancers, Gomberville, La Calprenède, and the Scudérys. In English drama, these influences expressed themselves in an inclination toward exaggerated characterization, together with an infatuation with the extravagant, the grandiloquent, the romantic, and, unfortunately, the vapid.

The type of drama introduced by D'Avenant in *The Siege of Rhodes* and, more particularly, in *Love and Honour*, was

⁶ "To the Reader," in *The Siege of Rhodes*, edition of 1656. This foreword was not reprinted.

⁷ Quoted from *The Rehearsal*.

⁸ See Dryden, "Essay of Heroick Plays," in *Essays of John Dryden*, ed. by Ker (Oxford, 1900), I, 150.

taken up by Orrery, Howard, Elkanah Settle, Weston, Hopkins, Cooke, Rymer, Bankes, Pordage, and, of course, Dryden. The French influence became more pronounced. These plays came to be written invariably in heroic couplet; the unities seem to have been generally observed,⁹ at least superficially. The impossible prowess of the heroes and improbable virtue of the heroines of the French romances were transferred to the English stage, and set against tumultuous backgrounds of war, rebellion, and treason, in far-off romantic settings. The action developed one exciting scene after the other, always on the side of the superficial and external, following the fortunes of the supermen who carried the principal roles as they performed prodigies of valor to gain or to keep the love of the heroine. In this development, affairs of state and of the heart were made to alternate as the springs of action, but usually the various attacks and uprisings with which the hero had to deal were dictated by the progress of the love plot. It was further enlivened by means of duels, murders, suicides, and ghosts, and ornamented with lengthy tirades and debates. The last, according to Scott, were the most widely applauded of all the features of the heroic drama.

As in Cornelian tragedy, the essential part of the heroic play was a crisis, or series of crises. But these were not crises of a psychological nature. They were physical, and ended in victory and marriage, or in defeat and death. The characters were unchanging types which did not have to be developed. Their relations were conventional.

The usual plot was quadrilateral in shape. The hero and his mistress were bound by ties of indissoluble constancy. To this pair were ordinarily opposed a male and a female villain, who were in love, respectively, with the heroine and the hero, and

⁹ L. N. Chase, *The English Heroic Play* (New York, 1903), p. 26. Pordage's *Herod and Mariamne*, however, observes only the unity of time

worked with might and main to separate them. Courtship in the heroic plays was a grim affair, for the villains usually gave their beloveds the choice of love or death. Accordingly, the heroic plays are full of high-sounding couplets expressing the absolute indifference to death of the characters thus threatened, or even their positive longing to exchange this life for that of peace everlasting.

The villainous rival was necessarily an important character. He provided the conflict and served as foil to the hero, by whose superior prowess he was continually put in the shade. He had to be worthy of his opponent. In *The Conquest of Granada*, Almanzor's rival for the love of Almahide is so far overshadowed that he "should not dare be so impudent as to despair." In Pordage's *Herod and Mariamne*, the hero Tyridates utterly dwarfs the weak and villainous Herod, as the beautiful and virtuous Mariamne puts to shame the lustful and revengeful Salome. To these villains full poetic justice is ordinarily meted out, for the heroic plays make a great display of virtue, and the villains usually do not survive the final curtain.

The life of these dramatic extravaganzas was short, and, had it not been for the genius of Dryden, would have been shorter. Their "illustrious depravity and majestic madness," in the words of Dr. Johnson, suited the artificial attitudes of a time of transition. But the transition was swift, and the time had the saving grace of humor. The end of the heroic drama was forecast in the contemporary *Rehearsal* (1670); by the time of Fielding's *Tom Thumb the Great* (1730), it is doubtful if the carcass was worth kicking.

The Mariamne story needed but the addition of a romantic lover to transform it into a proper plot for heroic drama. The background of war and rebellion, the far-off place and time, the villains, ghosts, murders and other paraphernalia of the heroic play had already been provided by Josephus and the

early dramatists. The romantic lover did not even have to be invented. He had already made his mark in the popular French romance *Cléopâtre*.

This twelve-volume work, anonymously printed in Paris (1647-49), was the work of Gauthier de Costes de la Calprenède, whose work in the drama we have already mentioned. Following d'Urfé and Gomberville, La Calprenède achieved prodigious celebrity first as the author of *Cassandre*, a romance in ten volumes (1642-45), then of *Cléopâtre*, which surpassed it both in size and in popularity. The contents of these works were largely fictitious, but the author nevertheless regarded them as "history embellished with certain inventions," and as such they were generally accepted. The heroines of these novels were uniformly beautiful and virtuous; the heroes were brave, amorous, dignified, and eloquent. They were meant to serve as exemplars for the courtiers of Louis XIII; they served as models for the heroes and heroines of English heroic drama.

La Calprenède was much interested in the Mariamne story. Eight years after the publication of *La Mort des enfans d'Herodes* he took up the cudgels in earnest for the Hasmonean princess, presented her with a lover, and consecrated to the love affair of Tyridates and Mariamne some four hundred pages of his *Cléopâtre*, consisting mainly of letters and gallant speeches. Nothing more chaste and virtuous can be imagined than the Mariamne of La Calprenède, and nothing more gallant than the devoted Tyridates, who in the course of the four hundred pages receives no more from his beloved than one kiss on the forehead. Unhappily the whole of this moving episode is imaginary. There is not any historical evidence for connecting the two.

The historical Tyridates was a noble Persian who was set up as anti-king to Phraates IV. He was forced, in consequence of military reverses, to flee to Syria. It is possible that he visited Palestine, but as neither Josephus nor anyone else has any

information on this point, there was nothing to restrain La Calprenède's imagination in the matter.¹⁰

The first to appear of the heroic plays that dealt with the Mariamne story was Samuel Pordage's *Herod and Mariamne*. Pordage, whose name Oldham introduced into his version of Juvenal's *Third Satire*, was a Grub Street hack, the author of an innocuous Biblical satire, *Azaria and Husbai* (1682), and of *The Medal Revers'd* (1682), as well as of a heroic play entitled *The Siege of Babylon* (printed 1678) which seems to have caused no furore. His *Herod and Mariamne*, produced at the Duke Theatre, was printed by Elkanah Settle, who signed the dedication. Settle, now chiefly famous as Dryden's butt, had connections in the theatre, and was the author of a considerable number of plays, of which *Cambyses, King of Persia* seems to have had some success. What his part was in *Herod and Mariamne* is not entirely clear. Its authorship was for a time attributed to him, though he says specifically in the dedication that he is not the author of the play, "the first copy of it being given to me by a Gentleman, to use and form as I pleas'd." It is possible, however, that he had a hand in its revision as well as its publication.¹¹

The play, in five acts, was published in 1674, but the prologue states that it was written "a dozen years agoe," or some time about 1662. Orrery's unproduced *Herod the Great* was not published until 1694, fifteen years after the Earl's death. Pordage's play is thus the first Mariamne tragedy to appear in English after the opening of the theatres.

It has the customary crossed plot of heroic drama. Its principal lovers are Mariamne and Tyridates; its villains are Herod and Salome, who are in love, respectively, with Mariamne and Tyridates. Salome is provided with a jealous and revengeful

¹⁰ See H. W. Hill, "La Calprenède's Romances and the Restoration Drama" in *University of Nevada Studies*, II (1910), 3.

¹¹ See F. C. Brown, *Elkanah Settle, His Life and Works* (Chicago, 1910).

husband named Alexas.¹² The plot is complex and full of incident, but somewhat incoherent, for it exhibits in all respects the airy disregard for logical sequence that is characteristic of the heroic drama. The customary wars are kept pretty much in the background and do not obtrude themselves upon the action. All the strife proceeds from the loves, hatred, and jealousies of the characters.

In the opening scene,¹³ we witness the return not of Herod, as is usual, but of Tyridates the Parthian. The queen is in prison. Herod is in Rhodes. Tyridates arrives in Jerusalem fresh from a victorious campaign against the Arabs. Burning with love for Mariamne, whose portrait he carries always with him, he visits the queen, in disguise, and offers to lead a revolt to free her; but although Mariamne hates her husband and is aware of the conditional death sentence pronounced against her, she refuses to be a party to treason.

In Act Two, Herod makes his entrance, and is accorded the usual chilly reception. The clouds begin to gather. Salome declares her love to Tyridates; it is spurned; she vows revenge. The means soon present themselves: she presently finds Tyridates on his knees before Mariamne. Salome determines to destroy them both. Accordingly she tells her husband, Alexas, that Tyridates is trying to seduce her, and tells Herod that Mariamne is enamored of the Parthian. Herod turns furiously upon his wife, but her beauty has its customary effect upon him, and he offers her love instead of punishment. She repulses him. He accuses her of loving Tyridates. She proceeds, unwisely, to plead for the Parthian. It is enough to decide the issue—Herod must have the Parthian's life.

In the meantime, with the help of his friend Assanes, Tyridates has escaped being poisoned by Salome and Alexas, and,

¹² Alexas was actually her third husband. There is no record of his jealousy.

¹³ This scene may be compared with that of Tirso's play; it is in some respects a stock opening in Spanish *comedia*. See J Fitzmaurice-Kelly, *Relations between Spanish and English Literature* (Liverpool, 1910).

on the advice of Mariamne, has decided to escape from the city. On the way out, he is ambushed by Alexas, whom he kills, and then takes refuge in the Temple. Herod is about to storm the Temple when the legate Sosius intervenes in the name of Augustus, calls upon Tyridates to surrender, and exiles him from the land.

In the fourth act, the Parthian takes leave of Mariamne. She speaks at length of her honor and virtue, which prevent her from following her natural inclinations. Her lover swears never to see her again. When he has gone, there is a spirited scene between the queen and her husband; in the course of it, she reproaches him for having given the secret command. He concludes at once that she has seduced the man who revealed it. As she scorns to justify herself, Sohemus, Josephus, and Philon, the servant of Mariamne, are racked and strangled. Salome urges her brother to kill Mariamne also, but he fears the indignation of Caesar, and contents himself with locking her up.

In Act Five, Salome, in male disguise, comes to the Roman camp. She provokes Tyridates to a duel; her wig is knocked off, and she is discovered. Once more she offers the Parthian her love. It is rejected, and she leaves, furious against Mariamne. Meanwhile, the queen is brought to trial. Herod acquits her, offers her his love, and is again repulsed. This time, he determines she shall die—at once, before he can change his mind. When she has gone to her death, Herod sees the ghosts of his victims pass in review before him. One by one they pass—at last Mariamne joins their company.

To the Roman camp speeds Pheroras with news of the queen's death. Hot on his heels comes Herod, dagger in hand. The rivals fight. Both fall. The Parthian unites himself in death with his beloved Mariamne; Herod perishes miserably; Salome stabs herself in despair. Only Assanes remains, like Horatio, to make known the fame of his brave and unfortunate friend.

The plot of *Herod and Mariamne* is thus seen to be a remark-

able combination of unrelated materials, comparable, in its extravagance, to nothing in Mariamne drama save the Spanish *comedias*. The Tyridates-Mariamne-Herod-Salome affair makes, it is true, a unified plot; but the secret command, the trial of Mariamne, and the execution of Sohemus, Josephus and Philon have nothing to do with this plot—they have to do only with the story in Josephus. Thus, when Tyridates fades out of the play at the beginning of Act Four, a wholly new situation arises in which he is not at all involved—the question of the betrayal of the secret death sentence by Sohemus and his colleague. It is this peril, and not that in which Tyridates involves her, that directly brings about the death of the queen, and the play therefore suffers from a lamentable lack of unity, as well as of good taste, for Herod is required to accuse his wife not only of having erred with Tyridates, but of having seduced Sohemus and Josephus as well. As in the French models which Pordage in part followed, Herod is, moreover, a vacillating lover, and is willing to forgive all his wife's imaginary transgressions if she will but return his love. But while in Tristan's play, this comes off very well and is part of a unified action and a persistent emotion, here the effect of his continual proffers of love and his continual repulses—echoed in the similar behavior of Salome and Tyridates, and of Tyridates and the queen—is quite ridiculous. These combinations of stubborn unsuccessful wooers, whose desperate antics were a commonplace of Italian epic and of pastoral drama, are of the very essence of the heroic play. The final flurry of deaths and suicides is, however, very weakly motivated even for this type of drama, and serves only to add to the general bloodiness of the action, to which it gives, if not a conclusion, at least a quietus.

The characters, as usual in heroic drama, are quite wooden, with the exception of Herod, whose French ancestry is evidenced in his continual changes of mood. The principal types are extreme in conception—the bombastic virtue of the queen

is theatrically opposed to the blustering viciousness of Salome; the strong and trustful Tyridates and the weak and suspicious Herod makes a second antithetical pair. The other characters are no more than ninepins.

What influence Pordage's play might have had on subsequent Mariamne drama, it is not easy to determine. Certain similarities between it and Orrery's *Herod the Great* make it reasonably clear that some relationship existed between the two plays, but since the date of composition of *Herod the Great* is doubtful, little can be said about the nature of the relationship. More interesting are the similarities between Pordage's play and Scevola's *Erode*. That Scevola knew at least one English Mariamne play, that of Fenton, is, we have already noted, not unlikely. There is reason for suspecting a closer relationship with Pordage's drama. In *Erode*, it will be recalled, the queen has a platonic lover, a warrior, who comes in disguise to visit her in her prison, speaks of his love for her, and offers to free her. Her interview with him is very similar to that of Mariamne and Tyridates, and it is interrupted by the wicked Mazaele who finds Soemo at Mariamne's feet, as Pordage's Salome finds Tyridates at the feet of Mariamne. Like Salome, Scevola's Arsinoe then accuses Mariamne of loving the intruder, and it is by Mariamne's plea that her lover's life be spared that, in both plays, Herod is convinced of their attachment. In both cases, also, the lover is exiled and takes his stand in the Temple. Here ends the resemblance between the plays; it is possibly sufficient to warrant the hypothesis that Scevola had read Pordage's play.

Upon Orrery's *Herod the Great*, Pordage seems to have had, if any, a more general influence. *Herod the Great* was neither acted nor published in its author's lifetime. It appears to have first seen the light of day in 1694, when it was included in a posthumous edition of Orrery's plays.¹⁴ The author, Roger Boyle, Earl

¹⁴ The 1694 edition was preceded by the publication of only two comedies, *Mr Anthony* (1690), and *Guzman* (1693). See E. Siegert, "Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery und seine Dramen," *Wiener Beiträge zur englischen Philologie*, Vol XXIII

of Orrery and Lord Broghill, does not seem to have achieved any considerable distinction in the drama. He claims credit for having first used the heroic couplet on the stage, but his chief fame as a writer rests upon his authorship of the romance *Parthenissa* (1654-65).

All of his tragedies are heroic in form. His earliest production, *The History of King Henry V*, was acted in 1664; of his tragedies, *Mustapha* (acted 1665), *The Black Prince* (acted 1667), *Tryphon* (acted 1668), *Altemira*, and *Herod the Great* (not acted), only *Mustapha* did well on the stage.

Herod the Great consists of a prologue, five acts, and an epilogue, and is in form only vaguely similar to Pordage's *Herod and Mariamne*. It involves a rivalry between Herod and his son Antipater, who is Mariamne's platonic lover, and it culminates in the death of the beloved and the rivals, who end each other's lives simultaneously in a duel. There are important differences between the two plays. Tyridates is absent from Orrery's play; his place is taken by Antipater; Tyridates' two friends are transmuted into the four friends, Phaesiel, Haziell, Samias and Pollio.¹⁵ The queen's chambermaid is once more Dina, as in Tristan's play; the queen has, moreover, a confidante named, somewhat confusingly, Mariana. Salome is the wife of Costabares, as in E. C.'s *Mariam*, but she no longer loves the Arab Sillaeus; her love is now Sohemus,¹⁶ to whom, as usual, Herod entrusts the secret command. Besides these characters, the cast includes Abner, a friend of Herod; Annanelus, the high priest, and the ghosts of Hirkanos and Aristobulus.

The action is complicated, inasmuch as Mariamne falls in love with Antipater while remaining true to Herod, who falls in love with Mariana without ceasing to desire Mariamne, who

(Vienna and Leipzig, 1906), and W. S. Clark, *The Dramatic Works of Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery* (Cambridge, Mass., 1937).

¹⁵ In Phaesiel and Samias we may recognize Phasaclius, the king's brother, and Sameas the Pharisee.

¹⁶ As in Voltaire's *Mariamne* (1724).

is also loved by Sohemus. The magnanimity of Herod is not confined to the realm of Cupid; his physical prowess and strength of mind are also exceptional. On his return from Rhodes he learns that, on the report of his death, there were plans afoot to offer the crown to Mariamne. Once again the wretched rabbis of the Sanhedrin are put to the torture and the sword. When he discovers that Sohemus has betrayed the secret command, he stabs him to death with his own hand; when the ghosts of Hirkanos and Aristobulus come to plague him, he chases them about mercilessly with his sword, as in *The Conquest of Granada* Almanzor chases the reproving ghost of his mother.

He is very much a man, but his love affairs get on badly. To make the queen jealous, he pretends to be in love with Mariana; but when the pretense becomes reality, he is repulsed. As for the virtuous queen, she longs but for death, and constantly defies Herod in order to make him kill her. Like his French prototypes, he vacillates continually. When he discovers that he has been betrayed by Sohemus, he orders Mariamne executed at once—only to recall the order. Later, Salome makes him so angry with tales of Mariamne's infidelity, that he vows to tear out the hearts of Mariamne and her lover, burn them, and mingle the ashes. He has made the error of executing his friend Abner's father; when Mariamne magnanimously saves him from the avenging hand of Abner, he is softened once more—until Salome works him up again. At last, when he feels that his honor is badly involved, he decides, like the Herods of Tirso and Lozano, to be its leech. In the middle of the night, he goes with candle and dagger to his wife's room. She is asleep. Like Othello, he awakens her with a groan, then stabs her. In dying, she begs him to spare Antipater. This is all the hint Herod needs. Antipater opportunely appears through a secret door to aid the queen. There is a duel; Antipater is killed, and the unrepentant Herod, exulting in the fact that he has killed the lovers, dies also.

The similarity of the play in certain of its details to Lozano's *Herodes Ascalonita* (published 1658; 2d ed., 1663) need hardly be pointed out—the domestic character of the intrigue, the platonic lover resident in the palace, whose protection Mariamne constantly needs, the candle and dagger business, the secret door, and the jealousy of Salome. That Restoration drama was heavily indebted to Spanish *comedia* is, of course, undeniable,¹⁷ but the question of whether Orrery was directly indebted to Lozano for these circumstances admits of no simple answer. The devices used by Lozano were commonplaces of the Spanish theatre; it is an interesting coincidence that they should occur in an almost contemporary example of Mariamne drama in England. Perhaps the point should be pressed no further.

Contemporary with the vogue of the heroic drama in England, and similar to the heroic plays in several respects, is *Die beleidigte Liebe oder die grossmütige Mariamne* of Johann Christian Hallmann, "Juris utri Candidatus und Praktikus beim K. und K. Oberamte in Breslau."¹⁸ *The Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* gives the date of this play as 1672, but in his dedication, dated December 15, 1670, the author states that it had already been performed several times in Breslau. It is, therefore, roughly contemporaneous with Pordage's *Herod and Mariamne*. Like that play, it is written in couplets, but Hallmann's couplets are Alexandrines. Like it, also, it depends upon La Calprenède's *Cléopâtre*, depicts Herod as a jealous husband, and provides him with Tyridates for a rival. It is perhaps the bloodiest of all the Mariamne plays.

Hallmann's play seems to be the first German example of

¹⁷ See, in addition to Fitzmaurice-Kelly, *Relations between Spanish and English Literature*; M. Hume, *Spanish Influence on English Literature* (1905), chap. ix, G. Becker, "Spanisches und englisches Drama," *Shakespeare-Gesellschaft Jahrbuch* XLVI (1910).

¹⁸ The edition in J. Fellgiebel's *Trauer-Freuden- und Schafer-Spielen* is undated. It was published at Breslau. I am indebted to Landau for a number of facts concerning this play.

Mariamne tragedy since the time of Sachs. Whether its superficial similarity to the English heroic plays was due to a direct influence, perhaps through the mediation of the "English Comedians" who in the seventeenth century brought large repertories of English plays to the German cities, or simply to the fact that it was under the same influences as resulted in the heroic plays, is not clear. Spanish and Italian Mariamne plays were certainly not of common occurrence in Germany prior to this time, though a version of Calderón's *El Tetrarca* is on record as having been produced in Dresden in 1674. No French Mariamne play had made use of Tyridates; on the other hand, *Cléopâtre* enjoyed a considerable vogue throughout Europe, the French influence upon German literati was profound, and Hallmann certainly appears to have been familiar with Tristan's *Mariane*. It is thus quite likely that Hallmann made independent use of the material that served Pordage. That he also went directly to the source of the Mariamne story is indubitable. Few plays are so carefully documented as is *Die beleidigte Liebe*. In its copious notes Josephus is frequently cited, often in the Greek, and there are many citations also in other languages, including some from La Calprenède, but, as Landau has pointed out, none refers either to Tristan or to Dolce, though in the main the plot follows theirs.

Like D'Avenant's *Siege of Rhodes*, *Die beleidigte Liebe* is written as a music drama. It involves much spectacle, many scene changes, and a chorus. The form must have been relatively new in Germany. Like the heroic plays, Hallmann's drama makes an attempt to observe the unities. The poet informs us that the action takes place in the year 3922, or 25 B.C., begins at dawn, runs through the day and the night following, and ends the following noon. The scene shifts constantly, though always within sight of Jerusalem. The cast is extensive. It includes four generations of the Hasmonean family—Hyrcanus, Alexandra, Mariamne, and her sons—as well as Herod, Salome,

Pheroras, and Antipater; Salome's husband, Josephus; the eunuchs, Sohemus and Philo; Arsanes, the ambassador of Tyridates; twelve rabbis of the Sanhedrin; six maids of honor; and various court attendants, including, of course, the cupbearer and the executioner. There are, moreover, listed among the speaking parts the ghosts of Aristobulus, Josephus, Hyrcanus, and Mariamne, and no less a character than Mt. Zion in person.

This unusual figure opens the play with a song, accompanied by viols, in which King Herod's character is thoroughly blackened. The mountain prophesies an evil end for the tyrant; as for Mariamne, angels will shield her from his villainies. Upon this prophetic scene enter Salome, Antipater, and Pheroras to plot the downfall of Mariamne and her family. Antipater obligingly describes the beauties of the object of his hatred. The scene then shifts to Herod's state chamber, where the king is boasting to his court of his happiness, his power, and the beauty and virtue of his wife. Salome interrupts the panegyric somewhat peremptorily by accusing the queen of having adulterous relations with Josephus. Herod at once orders Josephus arrested.

As the second act opens, we find Mariamne suffering from the effects of a foreboding dream. Herod appears and pays her extravagant compliments couched in execrable verse. She retaliates by reproaching him with the secret command given to Josephus. The king instantly orders Josephus' head hacked off. When the head has been duly fetched and exhibited, the scene changes to a *Spatzier-Saal* where Alexandra and Hyrcanus are plotting their escape to Egypt. They are overheard and denounced by Antipater and Pheroras. A pageant follows, in the course of which Life, Death, and Freedom sing a chorus; to Death, Freedom dejectedly offers a crown of laurel and a blue banner inscribed "Libertas." In the next act, old Hyrcanus is strangled on the stage, to the accompaniment of flutes and of the chorus, "Holy, holy, holy." Salome then bribes the cupbearer

in the usual fashion, and the act closes on the spectacular funeral of Hyrcanus.

We pass now to the royal bedchamber. Their majesties are asleep, but the ghost of King David persists in annoying Herod until he awakes in fear and calls upon Mariamne to transform his anguish into joy by means of her sugar sweet lips. The queen answers shortly that the ship of his breast has missed its port. A nautical discussion is thus launched—it soon loses its cultistic character; the king grows threatening, the queen, defiant. In the midst of this, the cupbearer rushes in and delivers his accusation. Herod roars bloody murder. The court comes on the run into the royal chamber; in the confusion, Salome accuses Mariamne of adultery with Tyridates the Parthian as well as with the eunuch Sohemus. The king has Sohemus and his colleague Philon haled into his presence. They are at once racked on the stage—Herod presiding—and die protesting Mariamne's innocence. The queen is nevertheless thrown into prison, and, in the last act, tried, found guilty, and condemned to be beheaded. Tyridates' ambassador comes to plead for her. It makes matters worse. The queen sings a death song, and, amid general wailing, is executed.

We are now privileged to witness the remorse of Herod, who is thoroughly plagued by a motley array of ghosts. When the king's anguish is at its height, the ghost of King Solomon hails Leopold the Great as the coming protector of Christianity and deliverer of the Holy Land. Palestina (in person) cries enthusiastically,

Long live Leopold, the ornament of the sphere!
Long live Leopold, may he conquer far and near!

The emperor's image appears and is greeted by Palestina and Solomon with "humblest proffers of honor," and so the play ends—with Herod completely forgotten.

In its way, the plot of this curious concoction follows the

outlines laid down by Dolce and Tristan. The action begins in Act Two, with Mariamne's foreshadowing dream, and ends with Herod's remorse for her death—the rest is extraneous frippery. There is but a single secret command, but Herod manages to execute both Joseph and Sohemus on suspicion of having been seduced by the queen. Joseph has his usual role as husband of Salome; Sohemus appears in a new guise, Hallmann having somewhat gratuitously caponized him in the course of his researches.

Though the author seems to have had a scholarly regard for the classical rules, the play is obviously a blood tragedy with musical accompaniment. Everything is put in action. Josephus, Hyrcanus, and Mariamne are executed on the stage; the two eunuchs are grimly tortured before our eyes. The bedroom scene between Herod and Mariamne, simply referred to by Tristan, is played from beginning to end with naive realism. The pageantry is reminiscent of the dumb shows of Renaissance tragedy. The characters are puppets actuated in the simplest fashion. Herod is a bloodhound, lecherous, jealous, and fearful. Mariamne is innocent beauty outraged by the villainous tyrant. The outlines are perfectly sharp; there is no nuance.

Apart from the prologues, dumb shows, choruses, and music, Hallmann's play differs from its models in three particulars—the attempt of Alexandra and Hyrcanus to flee to Egypt, which is discovered and betrayed as in Markham and Sampson's play, the presence of Antipater as a villain, which is a characteristic also of *Herod and Antipater*, and the introduction of Tyridates. It must be granted that Hallmann's treatment of Tyridates lacks conviction, for he is evidently neither so audacious as to put La Calprenède's romantic Parthian on the stage, nor so scrupulous as to leave him out of the play altogether. He therefore has him, as it were, hovering in mid-air, to act his insignificant part by proxy.

Mariamne also suffers from the author's eclecticism. Hesitant to choose between the haughty princess of the *Antiquities*, the sharp-tongued shrew of Tristan, and the gentle queen of *Cléopâtre*, Hallmann compounds his Mariamne out of all three. His heroine is thus by turns gentle as an angel, and diabolically vicious. Her hatred of the king is not particularly in evidence at the beginning of the play, nor even after the death of Josephus. It is only in the bedroom scene, after the death of her grandfather, that she becomes violent. Then, it must be confessed, she curses the king in a manner totally unbefitting a queen.

The racking of Sohemus and Philo—which takes place also in Pordage's play off stage—is derived from La Calprenède. We cannot tell what motive prompted Hallmann to make a eunuch of Sohemus, especially since Herod makes a point of accusing him, as tradition requires, of adultery. As Joseph carries the blame for the betrayal of the secret command, there is of course, no use for Sohemus in the play. It is possible that the learned author did not wish to omit the execution of a character who had so often and so authoritatively been executed, and so included him in the action in this diminished capacity.

Much more incongruous, of course, than these details is the general structure of the play, which merges the Senecan and French traditions in the exuberant technique of blood tragedy and the lyricism of Italian music drama. The resulting concoction, set forth with considerable *schwulst* in bad verse patterned upon that of the contemporary Lohenstein, whose *Cleopatra* has been called the first German tragedy, must have been a cocktail strong enough for the stoutest stomach in Breslau.

A fifty year interval separated Massinger's *Duke of Milan* from Pordage's *Herod and Mariamne*; another fifty years elapsed before the next essay in Mariamne tragedy in England. The

century that separated *The Duke of Milan* from Fenton's *Mariamne* (1723) witnessed the gradual triumph of France in the world of letters and of art. The heroic play had been in part a French form. By 1680, it was on the decline. Meanwhile, the influence of Corneille was making itself felt. Joseph Rutter's version of *The Cid* had been acted as early as 1637 at the court of Charles I, but it was not until "the matchless Orinda," Mrs. Katherine Phillips, had translated Corneille into rhymed verse that the great French dramatist became truly popular in England. Mrs. Phillips' version of *Pompée* was produced in 1663 in Dublin and in London and caused a furore; the succeeding year saw the production of another version of *Pompée* and one of *Héraclius*. In the following years, English versions of Corneille, and later of Racine, appeared in increasing numbers. Soon Voltaire's tragedies began to be adapted for the English stage; in time, he was to become, strangely enough, the most popular writer of tragedy for the English theatre.¹⁹

The effect of the French plays upon the English stage was at first superficial. To some extent the French forms were copied, certainly, but Shakspeare, Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher still held the stage in the early years of the eighteenth century. The Queen Anne men inclined more readily to the classical restraint of their neighbors across the channel. Rowe's "she-tragedies"—*The Fair Penitent* (1703), *Jane Shore* (1714)—though modeled after the Elizabethan cut, showed the influence of the French in the restriction of action, the small cast, and the rejection of comic relief. In Ambrose Phillips and in Addison, the French genre found stouter partisans. The former did much to popularize the foreign form; the latter's *Cato* was enormously successful, and was hailed by Voltaire as the first *tragédie raisonnable* in English. On the whole, however, the English stage, insofar as it followed the French fashion, went no further than

¹⁹ See A. H. Thorndike, *Tragedy* (Boston and New York, 1908), pp. 300 ff., D. Canfield, *Corneille and Racine in England* (New York, 1904).

a compromise between the classical form and the more boisterous native tradition.

The dedication of Fenton's *Mariamne* tells us that the play is formed upon the model of an ancient Greek drama—in fact it was modeled upon Tristan's *La Mariane*. Evidently the intention was to make it a very regular play; it follows the unities of place and time exactly, not to say blatantly. Its action, as the characters from time to time remind us, begins on the night before Herod's arrival and runs through to the next night. In the interval a multitude of events take place—poisonings and stabbings on the stage, as well as the classical recognitions and reversals of fortune. A good bit of the action is decorously related, but nobody could mistake this for a classical tragedy; the violence of the action and the vastly complicated plot too clearly bespeak its English origin. It is a curious example of English blood tragedy masquerading in French guise.

As tragedy turned more and more to domestic themes in an age that was becoming increasingly conscious of its bourgeois character, Fenton felt obliged to develop, for what he evidently intended to be the main action of the drama, a new factor in the *Mariamne* tradition—the theme of mother love. This had long ago been touched upon by Dolce from the point of view of filial devotion; and the maternal feelings of *Mariamne* had been to some extent exploited by Tristan and Voltaire, but not in such a way as to become part of the machinery of the plot. In Fenton's play, this theme becomes significant for the first time. Herod's initial delinquency is laid to his lack of paternal feeling, his brutality is greatly minimized, he is given the character not of the tyrant of Orrery's play, but of the vacillating lover of Tristan; while *Mariamne* is transformed from the proud and spiteful queen of French tragedy into a gentle and forgiving wife and doting mother.

The onus of the tragedy falls therefore upon the villains. They are painted very black, and strict poetic justice is meted

out to them: they all die, in the manner of heroic drama, by each other's hand. The plot pattern is a cliché—the lovers ruined by the wicked sister—but the sister is, so to speak, geminated: the play has two villains, Salome and Sohemus, the former disgruntled, the latter ambitious. They desire the death not only of Mariamne but of Herod also. Their designs are successful. As they lose their own lives in the process, none of the principal characters survives the final curtain.

Elijah Fenton (1683-1730) produced little of importance aside from this play. The idea of writing it may have occurred to him while he was secretary to the Earl of Orrery, with whose father's *Herod the Great* he was perhaps familiar.²⁰ In the course of a life largely devoted to literature, he wrote some original verse, collaborated with Broome and Pope in the latter's translation of the *Odyssey*, amended the punctuation of *Paradise Lost*, and published an edition of Waller. Johnson called him an excellent versifier and a good poet, but in the *Lives of the Poets* criticized his peculiar system of versification, and particularly the extreme regularity of the decasyllables of *Mariamne*, which do not, in the Great Cham's opinion, sufficiently approximate real dialogue. Pope, who wrote Fenton's epitaph, found little to record save that he was a "foe to loud praise" and "a friend to learned ease."

As Fenton tells us in his dedication to *Mariamne*²¹ he was assisted by Southerne in its composition. The result, "rudely rejected" by Colley Cibber, was produced in 1723 at Covent Garden, and was so successful that the author's share of the profits was estimated at over a thousand pounds,²² five times the sum he received for the laborious translation of four books of the *Odyssey* into heroic couplets and more than twice the amount Goldsmith pocketed out of the proceeds of *She Stoops*

²⁰ It is possible that he was attracted to this theme, also, by the account of Herod and Mariamne which appeared in the *Spectator* for September 7, 1711.

²¹ To John, Lord Gower, Baron Stettenham

²² *Dictionary of National Biography*, "Elijah Fenton."

to Conquer. The success of *Mariamne* was not ephemeral. The play somehow appealed not only to its own age but to the immediately succeeding ages. The sententious tirades, the sentimentality, the bloody doings, and pitiful end kept it on the stage until well into the nineteenth century.²³ It must be confessed that it is not a very good play; none the less it appears to have been one of the most popular tragedies ever produced.

The play opens with a thirty-line prologue in heroic couplets, "written by a friend," in which we are told that the Herod we are about to see is not the tyrant but the lover,

Whose bold ambition trembling Jewry view'd,
In blood of half her royal race imbru'd.
But now reviving in the British scene,
He looks majestic with a milder mien:
His features softened with the deep distress
Of love—

Thus assured that the lion will roar us soft as any cooing dove, we are further set at ease concerning the historicity of the play. It is

No fancy'd tale; our opening scenes disclose
Historick truth, and swell with real woes.

Actually, the play parts company with history immediately after the opening scene, in which Narbal (in whom we recognize Tristan's Narbal and Voltaire's Narbas) announces Herod's triumphant return from Rhodes. Mariamne's young son is to be sent to Rome as a hostage. A certain Flaminius has come to take him. This Flaminius turns out to be the long-lost lover of Mariamne's confidante, Arsinoe, and in the touching scene in which the queen takes leave of her son, we witness also the joyful meeting of the lovers. But the viceroy Sohemus, who is engaged in plotting Mariamne's ruin, also loves Arsinoe; he has gone so far as to confide to her the secret command he has received from Herod.

²³ Thorndike, *Tragedy*, p. 308.

The king arrives early in the morning to find Mariamne talking of him in her sleep, dreaming that he is poisoned and covered with purple spots. He awakens her; she reproaches him with the loss of her son. There is a tender scene of reconciliation, then Arsinoe comes to bid her mistress farewell, before going to join her beloved in the Roman camp. As a parting gift, she tells the queen what she knows of the secret command left with Sohemus. Mariamne is so greatly shocked that she refuses to attend the feast given that day in honor of Herod.

Meanwhile, the warning ghost of Aristobulus has appeared to the high priest, who exhorts Sohemus to give up his evil designs against Mariamne. But Salome bolsters up the courage of her accomplice, and together they corrupt the cupbearer Sameas²⁴ to poison Herod's wine at the feast. As it turns out, Herod refuses to drink in Mariamne's absence: he hands the proffered cup to Hazeroth, the queen's relative, who drinks and instantly falls dead. Amid great consternation, the cupbearer accuses Mariamne of having bribed him to adulterate the wine, and produces, as evidence, a diamond—stolen from the queen by Salome. That night Herod, sleepless and lovelorn, goes to visit Mariamne in her prison. Fearful lest his plot be discovered, Sohemus stabs the cupbearer, who, as he falls, plucks out the dagger and plunges it into Salome. Thus is fulfilled the prophecy of a Chaldean soothsayer of whom Arsinoe has spoken—that Salome would die by a "dagger doom'd by heaven's decree to cut her half-spun thread."

In order to explain the deaths of his accomplices, Sohemus discloses the treachery of Sameas, adding that the cupbearer killed both himself and Salome out of remorse. As Mariamne is now exonerated, Herod summons her from her dungeon and invites her forthwith to the royal couch. But instead of a proper enthusiasm, the queen evinces fear and indig-

²⁴In Orrery's play, Sameas is a friend of Antipater; in Hebbel's play, he is, more properly, a fanatical Pharisee. He was actually the famous scribe, Shammai.

nation, and at last reproaches Herod with the secret command. The king concludes that she has had adulterous relations with Sohemus, sole custodian of the secret, and sends her at once to her death. At this point Arsinoë comes post-haste to the rescue and reveals the manner in which Mariamne learned the secret. News is brought that Sohemus has killed himself. Herod calls for Mariamne. She is brought in, dying, forgives him and, after a last tender embrace, expires. Herod swoons; he sees her soaring in the clouds toward heaven—he can bear no more: his heart breaks. Flaminius pronounces the moral of the tragedy.

Fenton's play is thus seen to be a crossroads of the traditions of Mariamne drama. The French theatre was at this time enlivened by the sensationalism of LaGrange-Chancel and of Crébillon. To the success of such plays as Crébillon's *Atrée et Thyeste* (1707) and *Rhadamiste et Zénobie* (1711) is in some measure attributable the series of plays of horror that took the stage in France in the early eighteenth century. Crébillon was fond of introducing love complications among his secondary characters. Furthermore, he had taken pains to justify the use of imagination to fill out the outlines of a well-known story.²⁵ Such imaginative alterations of history were, of course, by no means new in England; in France, they were at least as old as Jodelle's *Cléopâtre*. Voltaire had sneered at the fact that Crébillon presented his Electra with a lover, but he himself did not scruple to invent a lover for Mariamne.

In inventing the triangular love affair of Mariamne's maid of honor, Fenton was thus following the latest French models. This affair, which takes up a considerable part of the action of his *Mariamne* to very little purpose, is woven into the main plot with difficulty. The only consequence of the love of Sohemus for Arsinoë is his betrayal to her of the secret command, a circumstance that lacks reason or probability. The only advan-

²⁵ Preface to *Électre*, 1708.

tage of having Arsinoë reveal the command to Mariamne, instead of having it revealed directly by Sohemus, is that the maid of honor is enabled in this way to exonerate the queen completely. This indeed solves what is actually a difficult problem in the Mariamne plays, in most of which the exoneration of Mariamne, like her condemnation, rests upon the flimsiest grounds. We do not always feel the inadequacy of these; as we know Mariamne to be innocent, we are prepared to accept any grounds that may be advanced to establish the fact. But the conscientious playwright is called upon to satisfy not only the audience but the king as to Mariamne's innocence. The playwright usually lightens this task by fashioning Herod in such a way that he is as ready to believe in her innocence as in her guilt—the normal attribute of the Vacillating Lover. But Fenton has in Arsinoë an unimpeachable witness. Unfortunately, he does not take advantage of this circumstance to give Herod a new character, and the machinery necessary to elicit Arsinoë's testimony at the right moment is cumbrous and clumsy out of all proportion to the value of the device.

On the other hand, the affair of the poison plot is worked out in an unusual and ingenious manner: Fenton succeeds in giving this threadbare episode considerable dramatic value. The discovery of the death command by Mariamne usually has the effect of turning her against her husband; the gentle Mariamne devised by Fenton goes no further in her resentment than to refuse his invitation to dinner. That this refusal should put her under suspicion of having attempted to poison the king is an extremely ingenious turn, which demonstrates the influence of the well-made play pattern toward which the French had been working since the time of Corneille. It is unfortunate that the banquet-scene—probably the best scene of the play—is described instead of being represented: again we feel the French influence. But this influence does not go so far as to exclude

the wholesale murders of Act Five, which would doubtless have done better off the stage than on it.

The introduction of the children of Mariamne is, we have seen, as old as Dolce's *Marianna*. But the idea of having Mariamne's young son sent to Rome as a hostage is Fenton's very own.²⁶ Unhappily, this affair, which is carefully prepared and developed, dominating a good part of the first three acts, is completely forgotten by the beginning of the fourth, and the remainder of the play takes the line usual to French Mariamne tragedies.

The play is therefore somewhat peculiar in structure. It is as if Fenton had determined to compress the contents of the usual Mariamne play into two acts, and to append three acts of another plot which he had devised for the occasion. These two sections he then cemented together by means of Arsinoe, the confidante not only of Mariamne but of Sohemus, who is whisked away at the proper moment in order to reappear at the twelfth hour with her testimony.

The romantic and sentimental tendencies of Fenton's play are strikingly illustrated in the way in which Mariamne's love for Herod is made to persist through all her misfortunes until the very end. Fenton's is the gentlest of all Mariamnes; she is capable of anger, but not of spitefulness nor of harboring a grudge. Her resentment over the loss of her boy is profound; it is soon dissipated. Her love seems to reach its lowest ebb in the scene in Act Five, in which she is brought from her dungeon and is at once invited to Herod's bed. The scene is, we have noted, ultimately derived from Josephus, in whose account it precedes the cupbearer's accusation. It is the scene to which Hardy refers in his *argument* in speaking of the anger of Herod "pour certain refus qui se lit dans Iosephe, plus honneste à taire

²⁶ Mariamne's two sons were in fact sent to Rome, not as hostages, but to be educated.

qu'utile à reveler." Hardy nevertheless reveals it, in part, in its proper sequence. Tristan, out of motives of delicacy, plays the scene off stage, and shows us only the effect upon Herod; Hallmann conscientiously plays the entire scene. But while Fenton was evidently resolved to omit nothing that had been of value in his French models, he was forced by the peculiarity of his plot to have this scene follow the entire poison episode. Thus, Herod's amorous advances at a moment when his wife has just emerged from her dungeon, dressed in mourning for her relative, cannot but seem swinish and comical. Yet, though Mariamne repulses her husband at this time, her attitude toward him suffers no fundamental change at any time in the play; at the very point of death, she embraces him tenderly and grieves with him for his rashness which has ruined them both.

Fenton's drama thus binds together in a peculiar way a number of disparate lines of development in Mariamne tragedy. The influence of the French plays upon the plot is very clear. The prophecy of the Chaldean seer and the "doom'd dagger" point unequivocally to Calderón, as does also Herod's remark in Act Five that if Mariamne really loved him, they would be so joined "that when fate strikes we both might fall." This sentiment we shall meet again in Hebbel's *Mariamne*, while the diamond episode and the extended treatment of Mariamne's maternal affection turn up once more in Amélie Rives' *Herod and Mariamne*. The fatal flirtation of Sohemus with Arsinoe is, on the other hand, not duplicated elsewhere, nor is the story of the unfortunate Hazeroth, though, as we have noted, the names Arsinoe and Hazeroth reappear in Scevola's *Erode*.

After the spectacular success of Fenton's *Mariamne*, the Mariamne theme seems to have languished in England for a period of more than 175 years. During this period, Fenton's play was revived again and again, but until Stephen Phillips produced his *Herod* in 1900, the only new versions of the story to be published in England, as far as may be gathered, were, Francis

Peck's dramatic poem *Herod the Great* (1740) and William Waller's *Mariamne* (1839)—an anaemic tragedy which appears to have died so quietly that nobody was at all aware it had ever existed.

Among the papers of Sir Francis Nicholson (who died in 1728) there was found in 1931 part of the manuscript of a play concerning Herod and Mariamne, which had apparently been brought by Nicholson from America to England in 1725. The manuscript has been described by F. S. Boas.²⁷ It consists of some 900 lines in eight scenes, written in an early eighteenth-century hand, which is not that of Nicholson. The play is in blank verse; the plot seems to follow the outlines of the heroic dramas, and it is possible that the author knew La Calprenède's *Cléopâtre*, for one of the characters is the Parthian prince Phraates, who appears as the lover of "Solome." The theme of the play is, apparently, the oppression of Mariamne by the viceroy Sohemus.

This Sohemus, doubtless a villain of the deepest dye, pretends to be Phraates' rival for the love of Solome until the departure of Herod for Antioch, when the true object of his passion is seen to be Mariamne. In the course of the eight scenes, both Phraates and Mariamne are put in prison by the viceroy, who ultimately threatens Mariamne with instant execution unless she consents to love him. This she unequivocally refuses to do—here the manuscript breaks off, leaving the outcome wholly in the realm of conjecture.

This is the least bloody of the Mariamne tragedies; absolutely nobody is killed in it. But the few scenes that are extant seem to promise more than the usual toll of fatalities, and probably we may class this among the bloody tragedies, at least *in posse*. Its date and its provenience must remain as uncertain as its con-

²⁷ F. S. Boas, "A Herod Play from America," in *Contemporary Review* CXLIV (November, 1933), pp. 575 ff. I depend upon Professor Boas' analysis, as I have not seen the manuscript.

clusion. It may have been written long before 1725. The heroic pattern to which it in part adheres was pretty well out of fashion in England by that time. There is no certainty that it was written in America.

But in the latter years of the nineteenth century, the period which saw the rise of naturalistic drama in the *Théâtre libre* in Paris and the *Freie Bühne* in Berlin, two lurid examples of Mariamne drama appeared in America. Properly speaking, only one of these—the *Herod and Mariamne* of Amélie Rives—may be called a tragedy. The other play, Iliowizi's *Herod*, by reason of its scope and its episodic character, is more conveniently discussed as a history play.

It will hardly be necessary to dwell at length upon Amélie Rives' contribution. This blank-verse tragedy appeared in *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* for September 1888, some forty years after Hebbel's *Mariamne*, which to a certain extent it caricatures. A critical paper by Edgar Fawcett appended to the play, describes it as a "tragedy of uneven yet often astonishing vigor" exhibiting "more of fecund promise than of sterling accomplishment."—"Its gloom is unrelieved by any play of humor," the critic continues. "The character of Herod is too unbelievably ferocious and lurid. Mariamne is more successful. Miss Rives can always draw women more firmly and satisfactorily than she can draw men. . . ." And in conclusion:

I should call *Herod and Mariamne* the dramatic effort of a beginner, but it contains lines which insist on being recollected, and it bespeaks, throughout the whole richly passionate scope of its composition, that same inherent vitality of organization which has already set her so high among our younger competitors for secure distinction in the noble art of letters.

The gallant critic is, if anything, somewhat lenient with the authoress of *The Quick or the Dead?*. *Herod and Mariamne* is not to be classed among the major successes in Mariamne drama. The character of Herod is indeed "too unbelievably ferocious,"

but it is questionable whether that of Mariamne is more successful, and one looks in vain for lines that "insist on being recollected," save for one or two that insist on being recollected from Shakspeare. The plot is a salmagundi, stoutly spiced, in which is discernible a certain flavor of Fenton, and a distinct after-taste of Hebbel. In general it belongs, both in conception and expression, to the bad years of the seventeenth century.

The play begins in traditional fashion with an expository dialogue between Joseph and Sohemus, and some scenes illustrative of the discord in the palace. In the course of these scenes, Mariamne is accused of having sent her portrait to Antony, who has summoned Herod to answer for the murder of Aristobulus. As he is on the point of departing, Herod thereupon gives his secret charge to Joseph, and pauses to interrupt with a jealous tantrum an idyllic scene portraying Mariamne playing with her little children. The scene then shifts to Antony's court—where Herod discovers that the portrait was really sent by Alexandra—thence back to Jerusalem. Mariamne is still playing with her children; this time it is Salome who interrupts. She very wickedly strikes little Alexander: Mariamne forces her to her knees and makes her apologize to the child. Herod arrives. His homecoming is ruined by Cypros—his mother—and Salome, who come forward to accuse Mariamne of adultery with Joseph, and produce, as proof, a bracelet of the queen's which they have discovered in Joseph's closet. But little Aristobulus saves his mother: it was he who left the bracelet there. Herod, repentant, proposes to "new-betroth" his wife. Mariamne is of a different mind. She goes off in a huff. The good Joseph undertakes to comfort her; as a proof of the king's extraordinary love, he reveals the secret command. When next Mariamne sees her husband, she declares she is not his in anything, but scorns and despises him, since she knows all about the secret command. He calls her an adulteress. She flings her crown at his feet. He calls for wine—for he is choking with rage—then for blood.

He soon takes measures to quench his thirst. First, Sohemus is ordered to execute Joseph the Idumean, Herod's sometime treasurer.²⁸ It is in vain that Salome pleads for her husband; Herod would prefer to have him beheaded in her very lap. Now, also, the net begins to close around old Hyrcanus. But before this episode is developed, little Alexander runs in, crying that his uncle Joseph is being led to execution. Instead of stopping the execution, Herod holds the child up to the window to see his uncle's head chopped off. The boy, in horror, calls his father a devil, and snatching off the crown which, apparently, the king wears always, flings it out the window.

In the last act, Hyrcanus is executed. Then, the cupbearer delivers his customary accusation against Mariamne—the king, in a scientific spirit, experiments with the poisoned wine upon a slave; as the slave dies, the queen is sent off to prison. Salome comes to triumph over her enemy. But the queen finds the strength to break her chains, and stabs the villainess, in Calderonian fashion, with a dagger she wrested from her in the previous act. The executioners arrive. Mariamne commends her children to them, and marches bravely to her death. Now Herod attempts to retract his order. As Sohemus comes to announce that it is too late, the king runs him through and exits, raving. The final scene demonstrates Alexander's hatred of his father—at the boy's bitter words, the king bursts into lamentation, calls himself Herod the great in sin, and, in conclusion, falls on his face.

This gruesome travesty follows in the main the *Antiquities*, save that the two episodes of the story are telescoped so that Antony takes the place of Octavius, the battle of Actium does not take place at all, Sohemus is made a simple nuncio and killed for bearing evil tidings, and a great deal of emphasis is laid on the children. In line with Fenton's successful treatment, the au-

²⁸ Thus killing two birds with one stone. Joseph the Idumean, who figures in the second episode of the story, is not here distinguished from Joseph, Herod's uncle and brother-in-law, who meets his fate at the end of the first episode.

thor transforms the Mariamne story into a lurid and bombastic domestic tragedy. The plot is superficially one of lovers ruined by the wicked sister, as in Fenton's play; but Rives' Mariamne, unlike Fenton's, conceives a hatred of Herod as soon as she hears of the death command, and her Salome is not an important villain. The chief villain of the piece was evidently meant to be Herod, whose abnormal jealousy seems to turn to madness toward the end of the play.

His character has so much in it of the Wrathful King that he tinges the play with a certain quaintness. He is also a vacillating lover, and ready to forgive all for love. Of course, Mariamne will not grant him her love, once she finds out how bad he is. That gentle soul can be strong, if need be. She can curse and rave as loudly as anyone in Jerusalem; she breaks chains with her bare hands, handles a dirk, and is in addition an expert in jiu-jitsu. She is a nineteenth-century superwoman—the female counterpart of the Almanzors and Artabans of heroic drama, and her little son can well say of her

Oh thou art very queen
Without thy diadem, as night is night
Without the stars!

With all this, she is a good mother, and attentive to her duty. Her last words to her executioners have to do with the care they must take of her children—doubtless in their spare time:

See that they say their prayers,
And do not break the Sabbath with their games
And letter-cutting on the lintels . . .

The children of such a mother are naturally not ordinary children. They are perhaps drawn a little overripe in the manner of Greuze, and exhibit a good deal of nineteenth-century "cuteness," but, like their mother, they are mean customers in a pinch. Of all the plays in which Mariamne's children figure, this is the only one in which they receive such extended treatment.

Here they are given whole scenes to themselves, and virtually dominate the conclusion.

The chief motive of the play was evidently intended to be Herod's mistrust of Mariamne, as in Hebbel's play; accordingly, Herod is made to appear remarkably suspicious from his very first appearance. The development of this motive, in theory, is not illogical. Herod's actions cause Mariamne to cool toward him; her coldness serves further to infuriate him; he is thus incited to worse actions still, which in turn react upon Mariamne. To this excellent formula, unfortunately, the author does not consistently cleave. The action drifts almost immediately into the most vapid melodrama, while the childish exaggeration of the characters and the boisterous exuberance of the scenes make it impossible to treat the play seriously.

Thus the latest of these blood tragedies is a kind of *reductio ad absurdum* of the genre whose course we have traced from the Renaissance tragedy of horror through Massinger's stately scenes, the heroic extravaganzas of the Restoration, a lurid German attempt at Italian opera, and Fenton's domestic melodrama. Almost from the first, the French dramatists exhibited an interest in the emotional rather than the lurid aspects of the story. In the course of time, this came to be the tendency of the more capable dramatists who were attracted to the theme; few of the later blood tragedies are of value. In late years, the vogue in the theatre has swung from romanticism to realism thence to naturalism. Mariamne plays have gone little further than the romantic. Nothing like a thoroughgoing realistic treatment of the story has as yet appeared. The closest attempt at such a treatment is that of Hebbel, which is not free from romantic tendencies, and which is perhaps best considered as in the transition from the romantic to the realistic theatre.

HISTORY PLAYS

UNDER close consideration, the distinction between tragedy and history play tends to become vague. Yet, generally speaking, dramatists seem to have observed some differences in technique. The history play ordinarily presents, in order of their historical occurrence, certain selected episodes in the life of the principal character: these may be amplified imaginatively, but are not usually synthesized into a definite design. Tragedy, on the other hand, orders its events in a logical sequence, which may be other than historical, and treats them as causes and motives for a catastrophe which is usually carefully foreshadowed and prepared. The reality of tragedy, insofar as tragedy is "real," is essential; that of the history play depends upon the closeness of its adherence to the annals. Hence, with most dramatists, the history play is little more than a spectacle in episodic form, from which the author may derive observations of a didactic, satiric, or patriotic nature.

In the early histories, the didactic overshadowed all else. Bale's *Kynge Johan*, for example, is so strongly bound up with the Moralities that it is hardly distinguishable from them. But a genuine interest in history, as well as a patriotic motive, is discernible in such later productions as the *Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, the *Troublesome Raigne of John, King of England*, *Jack Straw*, Peele's *Edward I*, and the *True Tragedy of Richard III*. In these productions we may note also the progressively intensified interest in characterization which culminates in Marlowe's *Edward II*, and the histories of Shakspeare.

The form, though practiced elsewhere, seems to have received a complete development only in England; even there its heyday

was relatively short. But its revival in the romantic period, as a result of the search for a "fresh current of ideas" in the work of the Elizabethans, concomitant with the rising vogue of the historical novel and of biography, seems to have established it once more firmly on the stage. In the progression of successful plays from the romantic "histories" of the early nineteenth century to the innumerable "realistic" versions of history of the contemporary stage, is clearly demonstrated the gradual triumph of the genre.

Among the Mariamne plays, those of Sachs, Markham and Sampson, and Iliowizi may be taken to illustrate this type of drama. The dramas of Sachs and Iliowizi are, like the earlier English histories, frankly didactic. Markham and Sampson's "true tragedy" might well be classified as a blood tragedy, but the episodic nature of the action, its scope, content, and method of presentation certainly warrant its treatment as a history, and it is particularly interesting as a development of that form in the seventeenth century.

The *Herodes* of Hans Sachs was composed, according to the author, in 1552. In Sachs' manuscript "Register der Tragedi" it is set down as *Herodes mit sein Sun (Der Wüterich Herodes)*. The date is duly affixed to the end of the play: "Anno 1552 jar, am 2 tag Novembris." Whether the play was composed before or after Dolce's *Marianna*, which was first printed in 1565, it is not possible to say. As the two compositions are entirely independent, the question is of no particular interest.

By 1567, Sachs, according to his own reckoning, had composed 4,275 *Meisterlieder*, 1,700 tales and fables in verse, and 208 dramas; he continued his literary labors until 1573. The great mass of his work is, unhappily, of mediocre merit. His dramas are hardly more than stories in dialogue form. For his material, Sachs, who in a later day would probably have made a fortune as a writer of radio scripts, put practically every

available form of literature under contribution. Two of his plays deal with Herod. Of these, one, *Der Entpfengniss und Geburdt Johannis und Christi*, is drawn from the Bible and has nothing to do with the Mariamne story. The other, the *Tragedia —der Wütrich König Herodes*,¹ is a dramatization in octosyllabic couplets of the life of Herod, drawn from Josephus.

The play begins with a prologue, spoken by an *Ernholt*, which outlines the action and cites the source; it ends, as is usual in Sachs' dramas, with a moral. The action involves a good part of Herod's life, from his journey to Rhodes to his death. The secret command is given but once in the play; from this we may infer Sachs' good sense as a dramatist, for he was obviously acquainted with both the *Jewish War* and the *Antiquities*. In the first act the king departs for Rhodes, confiding the secret command, in writing, to Seemus. Seemus, without wasting any time, proceeds to disclose the secret to Mariamne. Salome then announces the plans by means of which she intends to ruin the queen: first, she will say that Mariamne has sent her portrait to Antony; second, that Mariamne has had illicit relations with Josippus; lastly, Salome has bribed the cupbearer to accuse Mariamne of attempting to poison the king.

It all turns out more or less as she plans. In the second act Seemus and Mariamne are executed. At the end of this act, Herod directs the *Herold* to call Mariamne in to dinner. When told that the queen has been killed according to orders, he flies into the usual fury.

The remaining three acts do not directly concern us. They develop, in summary fashion, the ruin of Mariamne's sons, the treachery of Ferore and Antipater, the death of Antipater, and finally that of Herod. In the last scene, the wicked Salome and her husband publish Herod's testament, and the *Ernholt* concludes with a collection of edifying sentiments.

¹ Edited by Keller and Goetze, *Bibl. des Litt. Vereins in Stuttgart* (Tubingen, 1878), CXXXVI, 132. See Creizenach, *Geschichte des neueren Dramas*, III, 425 ff.; R. Genée, *Hans Sachs und seine Zeit* (Leipzig, 1894).

Little need be said of the structure of this play. It is no more than a string of episodes in the life of the tyrant, with some superficial classical touches: the division into acts, a certain decorum which serves to keep the executioner's business off stage, and a kind of chorus in the persons of the two *Trabanten* who, here as elsewhere, form an important part of Sachs' dramaturgy. The action falls roughly into three parts—the first leads to the death of Mariamne; the second, to that of her sons; the last, to the death of Antipater and Herod. The first two parts are sufficiently connected by the sons' desire to avenge their mother's death, and by the continued machinations of the villains. The third part illustrates the final retribution which overtakes the wicked. The whole is, of course, bound together by the central character of Herod, whose crimes and punishment form the theme of the play. Though his character is not developed much beyond the bloodhound stage, the pathetic aspect of his case is not wholly lost sight of; this, one suspects, is due not to Sachs' insight into the character, but rather to the richness of the source material. To this also must be referred the sequential character of the action. Josephus' story is likely to lend form even to the most artless dramatization: the fact is again observable in Markham and Sampson's play, which approaches tragic form more closely.

The title page of the only edition (1622) of *Herod and Antipater* reads:

The True Tragedy of Herod and Antipater: with the Death of faire Marriam. According to Josephus, the learned and famous Jewe. As it hath beene, of late, divers times publiquely Acted (with great Applause) at the Red Bull, by the Company of His Maesties Revels. Written by Gervase Markham and William Sampson, Gentlemen.

Of Gervase Markham, Ben Jonson said that "he was not of the number of the Faithfull, and but a base fellow."² His

² *Conversations with Drummond* Jonson (or Drummond) was evidently fond of the phrase. It was applied also to Middleton.

career began in the military; he was but a mediocre poet and dramatist, and appears to have achieved distinction primarily as a writer on horse-breeding and equitation. In 1593, he published a poem called *Thyrsis and Daphne*, which he followed two years later with *The Most Honorable Tragedie of Sir Richard Grinville*. He collaborated with Lewis Machin on a play entitled *The Dumble Knight* (1608). This, together with the present play, seems to have been his total contribution to dramatic art. His collaborator in *Herod and Antipater*, William Sampson, seems to have achieved even less distinction. *The Vow Breaker* in prose and verse (1636) is all we possess from his pen.

Herod and Antipater consists of a prologue in heroic couplets and five acts of blank verse. The shift in the first act from Jerusalem to Rhodes proceeds without any break; with the exception of this and of several dumb shows, the action takes place in or near Jerusalem, partly in Herod's palace, partly in the house of Pheroas. The prologue, in the guise of "Time's eldest daughter (Truth)" promises us a certain modicum of comedy, though the play is tragic:

Though Her scoenes seeme grave and hie
She heere and there with a loose wing doth flye:
Striving to make you merry.

The comedy is in fact provided by a number of clownish characters who have small parts in the plot—Achitophel, a drug seller; Disease, his servant; Lime, a mason; Durt, a laborer; Handsaw, a carpenter; Tryphon, a barber. Of these, the first two are imaginary characters employed in the various poisonings that occur; the three artisans are employees of the division of public works which is building the Temple; the barber Tryphon is derived from Josephus, in whose account he plays a part in the story of the young princes.

The main action includes Herod's entire history from Alexandra's attempted flight to Herod's death. It necessitates a

lengthy cast: four generations of Herod's family; a goodly portion of the Hasmonean house; Augustus and his court; a number of lords, servants, soldiers, and slaves; a eunuch; an executioner; the ghosts of most of the principal characters; two furies; and Flavius Josephus himself, who plays the part of chorus and explains the dumb shows.

Antipater makes his debut as the villain of the piece by denouncing Alexandra's plot to escape with Aristobulus to Egypt. Herod is about to visit Caesar; impressed by his bastard son's devotion, he entrusts to him secret orders with regard to Aristobulus and Marriam. The orders are overheard by Joseph, and promptly revealed to the queen, who is thus put in a proper frame of mind to welcome her husband. When Herod returns to Jerusalem, Salumith and the butler Pheroas launch the customary accusations against Marriam; as she reveals the fact that Joseph has told her the secret, both she and Joseph are executed.

The play then proceeds to develop the misfortunes of all those implicated in the death of Marriam. Antipater, who purposely delayed Herod's order to stay the execution, is ambitious to attain to the kingship. Marriam's sons stand in his way. With the help of Salumith Antipater bribes a group of minor characters to accuse the young princes of plotting against their father's life. Marriam's sons are thereupon strangled (on stage) and Antipater is sent to Rome to be confirmed as Herod's heir.

But Antipater is not satisfied with the progress he is making and has purchased a vial of poison from the apothecary Achitophel, in order to accelerate the succession. The vial, in the absence of Antipater, is in the possession of Pheroas, who lies ill of a guilty conscience. Alexandra procures some of the drug; the entire affair is brought to the king's attention by an eavesdropping eunuch, and Alexandra and the apothecary

are made to drink the fatal draught. Before he dies, the wretched Achitophel discloses the fact that he was bribed by Salumith and Antipater to second Pheroas' false accusation against Marriam. The result of this confession is that Salumith is arrested and Antipater is summoned back from Rome and cast into prison.

Then follows a singular sequence. While in his dungeon, Antipater learns that Herod has committed suicide in remorse for the death of Marriam. The prince is overjoyed at the news, demands to be released, and, failing this, falls asleep on the stage. Thus he remains throughout the subsequent action. The news of Herod's death is false. Augustus has opportunely appeared in the city, and Herod, surrounded by the ghosts of nine of his victims, seizes the opportunity to confess his many crimes. At the end of the confession, the king's officers, in accordance with whispered instructions from Augustus, proclaim Antipater—whose sleep in the meantime has been disturbed by the ghosts—king of Juda. Antipater is crowned; soon after, the executioners appear and begin to erect a scaffold: we realize that the worst is about to happen. The new king is now, indeed, confronted with the old, who first edifies him with a fatherly estimate of his character, then orders him beheaded. The ghost of Salumith rushes in bearing a torch between two furies; Antipater calls to the shade to wait for him. His head falls—at the same moment, Herod dies. His grandson is then proclaimed king of Juda, and a short epilogue informs us that the play is true.

While *Herod and Antipater* has the scope and style of a history play, the construction shows that it was intended for a tragedy. The Mariamne theme underlies the action of the last three acts—Pheroas dies of remorse because of his part in Marriam's death; Salumith and Antipater are brought to justice as a consequence of the same crime; Herod dies with Marriam's

ghost before his eyes. Thus, while much of the play is irrelevant to the story of Herod and Mariamne, as a whole it belongs within our field.

It is a most ambitious attempt, and the plot is enormously complicated. It is also somewhat confusing, not only because of the episodic character of the development, the vast succession of intrigues, characters, and motives, but also because it exhibits something of the timeless quality of a mediaeval painting, and seems to take place all at once, without causation and without sequence. One wonders indeed at the capacities of an audience able to follow an action which slips about so *wonderfully in space and time that the modern reader is often at a loss to understand what is going forward.*

The somewhat puzzling sequence at the end of the fifth act must have been represented by the simultaneous use of the inner recess, or lower chamber of the tirehouse, and the fore-front of the stage. These must have been taken to represent separate localities at a considerable distance from each other—an instance, then, of the use of simultaneous settings on the Elizabethan stage. Antipater was probably led across the stage to the alcove and there incarcerated. The hangings were left open so that the palace scene could be played in the foreground with Antipater, asleep upstage, constantly before our eyes. It thus becomes natural that his sleep should be disturbed by the ghosts who are haunting his father, since in fact they are treading the stage but a few feet from him, though they are supposed to be in the palace, and he in the prison.

From Josephus the authors had learned that Antipater was "a monster of iniquity," that in order to secure the succession to himself he procured the death of Mariamne's sons, and, his plot against his father being discovered, that he was put to death five days before Herod died. In their play, they added immeasurably to the roll of his crimes: he is credited with drowning Aristobulus, suborning Salome, inventing the poison

plot; with the deaths of Joseph and Mariamne, and, indirectly, of almost all the other characters. Despite this attempt to unify the forces of evil, the play is full of villains, for Herod, Alexandra, Pheroas, and Salumith are all painted as black as soot. The utter baseness of these characters is relieved only by the spotless virtue of Marriam, who stalks saint-like through the first two acts, and ghost-like through the last.

This long, sad story is set forth in a great many scenes. The technique is, in the manner of the bloody tragedies of the early seventeenth century, entirely extrovert, and deeds of horror follow each other in rapid succession. Herod, Antipater, Tryphon, the two princes, Pheroas, Alexandra, Achitophel, even the humble Disease, die on the stage, and in their deaths the knife, the rope, poison, and the axe are employed with all possible realism. Adda's leap from the tower of her house and the drowning of Aristobulus are, perhaps because of the limitations of the theatre, reported. The death of Marriam—either to afford the messenger an opportunity to make the usual Senecan tirade, or because, as Dunstan suggests,³ the authors wished to show the effect upon Herod—is related in detail. All else is represented.

In view of the author's technique, we may well wonder at the inclusion of dumb shows to depict extraneous action. There are two dumb shows of this type, both presented and explained by Josephus. The first depicts Augustus acting as mediator in the reconciliation of Herod and his sons; the second represents the confirmation of Antipater by Augustus at Rome, and his summons to Jerusalem. Why these scenes should have been played in dumb show it is difficult to say. "Josephus" tells us it is to save time:

What Words

Cannot have time to utter; let your eyes

Out of this dumbe Shew, tell your memories.

³ A. C. Dunstan, *Examination of Two English Dramas* (Koenigsberg, 1908).

The saving could not have been very great. It is otherwise in *Pericles*, where Gower appears eight times to summarize action that is depicted in dumb show, for the play would obviously swell to unruly proportions were not some method employed to concentrate the action. But while Markham and Sampson have preserved the technique, they seem to have no special reason for its use.

The other two dumb shows of the play are not narrative in character. They serve to give us a picture, by means of historical analogies, of what is presumably passing in the mind of Antipater. They may have been quite entertaining:

Musique: and Enter Egystus and Clitemnestra dancing a Curranto, which is broken off by the sound of Trumpets: then enter Agamemnon and divers Noblemen in Triumph: Egystus whispers with Clitemnestra, and delivers her a sleeveless shirt, then steps aside. Clitemnestra embraces Agamemnon, he dismisses his Traine: She offers him the shirt, he offers to put it on and being intangled, Egystus and she kills him; then departs, leaving at Antipaters feete two scrowles of paper.

This is evidently calculated to furnish Antipater with food for thought. Such pantomimes are found quite early in English tragedy. Gascoigne's *Jocasta*, a version of Dolce's play of that name, includes a number of these tableaux—Sesostris of Egypt, Curtius the Roman, the Horatii and Curiatii, and so on. *Gismond of Salerne* (1567-68) is similarly furnished. *Lochrine* has a dumb show preceding each act, and represents Perseus and Andromeda, Omphale and Hercules, Jason and Medea, and other partners of Renaissance vaudeville, while in the *Misfortunes of Arthur* (1588), the dumb show becomes a charade of considerable complexity. This is a far cry from the artless *intermedii* of Italian Renaissance tragedy, which were simply little shows with dancing, in the entr'actes.

Extensive histories were still popular in the days of Markham and Sampson, but their popularity gradually waned in favor of tragedies with more closely knit plots. We do not again meet

with a drama which in itself combines the material presented in *Herod and Antipater*.

The immediate source of the play is doubtful. Silbermann makes a strong argument to prove that, contrary to the authors' assurance, the direct source is not Josephus, but Peter Morwyng's translation of a work which leads through several steps to *Gorionides*, a tenth-century adaptation of Josephus.⁴ The influence exerted by the play on subsequent Mariamne drama is equally doubtful. We have noted that it may have had some part in suggesting the theme of Massinger's *Duke of Milan*. Upon the dramas of Pordage and Orrery, it seems to have exerted no special influence, though the important and unusual part given to Antipater in Orrery's *Herod the Great* may perhaps be attributed to his prominence in the present play. We cannot, however, attribute any significance to the fact that Antipater also appears as a villain associated with Salome in Hallmann's *Die beleidigte Liebe*. Though a good many English blood tragedies were brought to the German theatres in the seventeenth century, it is not very likely that Hallmann had the advantage either of seeing or of reading *Herod and Antipater*.

Herod, a Historical Tragedy by the Reverend Henry Iliowizi was published in Minneapolis in 1884. It cannot be said to rival either of the foregoing works in scope, but it undoubtedly carries off the palm for minuteness of detail. This lengthy work is cut along traditional lines. Yet the naiveté of the conception and development is such as to give the action an absolutely novel aspect. The author was not troubled by any of the more abstruse conventions of the theatre. He was especially not concerned with dramatic economy; but he had evidently read Schiller, and he knew that the way to write a play

⁴ A. M. Silbermann, *Untersuchungen über die Quellen des Dramas, The True History of Herod and Antipater* (Wittenberg, 1922); Peter Morwyng, *History of the Jewes Commune Weale* (translated from Joseph ben Gorion), 1558.

properly was to write it in blank verse and to omit nothing. The fruit of his labor is five acts of "blank verse," divided into a multitude of scenes, in the course of which is worked out, with meticulous precision, an action extending from the siege of Jerusalem to the death of Mariamne, set not only in Jerusalem, but in Babylon, Jericho, Parthia, and Athens.

The theme is the unhappy career of Herod and the unpleasant consequences of his lust for power. The cast is unusually large, and the play unusually copious, for every event, no matter how trivial, is prepared for and developed in action. The plot is far from novel. It begins with Herod's triumph over Antigonus. Then are exhibited the diplomatic preparations of Saramellas, who is charged with the duty of enticing Hyrcanus back to Jerusalem. Next we are shown a street in Jerusalem, and witness the displeasure of the Jewish populace under Herod's administration. In this manner, scene by scene, are revealed Alexandra's plot to get young Aristobulus appointed to the priesthood, Hyrcanus' decision to leave Babylon in spite of Phraates' entreaties, and Herod's dubious acceptance of Aristobulus as high priest.

A "creature" named Eurycles⁵ appears in the second act, and by the fourth act has succeeded in seducing Salome, for whose pleasure he is willing to ruin Mariamne. By this time, Herod has personally supervised the drowning of Aristobulus, ordered the death of Hyrcanus, and, with considerable *schwulst*, quieted a disturbance at the palace gates. Mariamne's execution takes place, as usual, through the medium of the secret command, which is revealed to her by Joseph at the instigation of Salome, who is spurred on by Eurycles. When news of the queen's death is brought to Herod, he is so chagrined that he stabs the messenger to death,⁶ then falls into a trance. When

⁵ Actually a Spartan employed as *agent-provocateur* in a plot against Mariamne's sons.

⁶ As in Rives' *Herod and Mariamne*, which was published four years later Saramellas also turns up in that play.

he comes to, he sees Hyrcanus, Aristobulus, and Mariamne with harps and dazzling wings, flying gaily in the sky, while a "black crew of goblins" rises from the ground to threaten him. This gives him rather a start. Eurycles now brings up again the question of Mariamne's death; he too is stabbed—with his last breath, he reveals his treason and that of Salome. The king tries to kill himself, but is prevented by his brother Pheroras, and, as the curtain falls, we hear a voice which pronounces the dreadful words, "He lives a prey to guiltful shame."

It must be admitted that the Reverend Mr. Iliowizi's play sounds the very depths of bathos. As if it were meant to be a deliberate demonstration of how plays should not be written, it piles up in hopeless confusion a host of meaningless details. With this prodigal disregard of economy is coupled an obvious reverence for the clichés of dramatic practice. Disaster is thoroughly foreshadowed and prepared; every character continually foresees it: the first forty pages of the play consist of dire forebodings. Characterization is mainly accomplished by soliloquy. We are informed in advance of exactly what each character intends to do, we see the thing done, and are straightway given a careful report of it. The author, who evidently had considerable experience in the pulpit, by no means permits any of his ideas to fall lightly upon our souls.

At the end of the action a full measure of retribution is meted out—to the minor characters. The guiltful shame of the monarch, even with the presage of hell, however, hardly seems adequate punishment for one painted so black; the wicked Pheroras, who was chiefly concerned in the drowning of the high priest, goes scot-free; Salome, upon whose lascivious excesses the author has dwelt at every opportunity, is not punished at all upon this earth. In this respect, the author shows himself a realist and sedulously follows his source, punishing the creatures of his own invention, and leaving it to God to punish His.

The author of *Sol*⁷ probably intended *Herod*, as closet drama, to be read with care and meditation; undoubtedly a good deal of research went into its composition. The material appears to have been freshly culled from Josephus, but it is likely that the author worked also under the influence of some play such as Rückert's *Herodes der Grosse* or Neumeister's play of the same name. Herod's rapid and inexplicable change of heart after the death of Mariamne is obviously a naïve rendering of the account in the *Antiquities*; no dramatist, since the time of Hans Sachs, has treated the king in such cavalier fashion.

Iliowizi's tragic style seems to be the result of a brief application of the *Nürnberger Trichter* rather than of any extended study of the ways of English poetry. The following lines, spoken by Pheroras after the drowning of Aristobulus has sent the faithful servant Aesop running to his mistress, are a fair example of the verse:

That pious beast annoys me with his looks,
That godly ass perchance may smell the truth
And with his brays upstir the kicking herd,—
You did your duty, boys, but it behooves
Us to misguide suspicion off our track—
Come, let us overtake that howling clown.

A more intense passage, perhaps, is that in which the treacherous Sabion meditates upon how gradually the devil has taken him for his own:

He gently seized upon my finger first,
The wrist, the arm, he playfully secured,
The trunk he sneering jerked and called it his,
And now the soul resists, resists in vain.

⁷ Iliowizi was evidently no dilettante in literature; he appears to have labored assiduously and published often. His first production was an epic poem entitled *Sol*, published in Minneapolis in 1882, a work of some length (222 pages), which was followed two years later by *Herod*. In the succeeding year (1885), the author published at Minneapolis another dramatic work, *Joseph*, a "representation in 7 tableaux," which appears to have ended his career as a dramatist. The considerable body of his later work is in other and diverse fields.

Herod's dangerous sense of inferiority is brought out in a number of soliloquies, in the course of which he delivers himself of such lines as

The cream are they and I the sediment.

.

Mariamne, tremble when dread Majesty reluctant bows!—

When pliant Jove to Semele did yield

She found her ruin in his consuming love.

Mariamne, for her part, dwells often enough upon this consuming love of his, not always in ladylike language:

My grandsire slain, my brother slain,

Myself for slaughter marked, abused, and I

That hell-hound's grisly volume on my hips

Support!

But perhaps these extracts will suffice.

MARIAMNE TRAGEDIES OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

THE fortunes of the Mariamne theme in the theatre of the nineteenth century provide an interesting study. Almost every type of serious drama is represented, from the classical *Erode* to the "biblical" *comedia* of Franquelo y Martínez. Yet of the many Mariamne dramas composed from 1815 to 1938, only two seem to have made any noise in the world—Hebbel's *Herodes und Mariamne* and Phillips' *Herod*. The first of these, after a complete failure on the stage, became a German literary classic; the second was a brilliant stage success—it is now almost completely forgotten. Of the other nineteenth-century Mariamne plays, four have already received some consideration in the foregoing discussion. We shall consider, in some detail, six others—the dramatic narratives of Ruckert, Neumeister, and Maal-drink, and the tragedies of Waller, Hebbel, and Phillips.

It must not be imagined that the list of Mariamne plays will then be exhausted. But the reader may be. It is our purpose here to discuss such of the Mariamne plays as may tend to edification. Of Laughton Osborn's *Mariamne* (New York, 1873), P. E. Benzon's *Mariamne, Skuespil i fem Akter* (Copenhagen, 1904), Thomas Sturge Moore's *Mariamne* (London, 1911), and Gottardo Mellerio's *Mariam, tragedia dell'amore in tre atti* (Novara, 1929) we shall content ourselves with saying, like Virgil under analogous circumstances, "Non ragionam di lor, ma guarda e passa."

In point of time, the first of the plays we have to consider is Rückert's *Herodes der Grosse*. It was published at Stuttgart in

1844, and consists of two parts, *Herodes und Mariamne* and *Herodes und seine Sobne*. Undoubtedly it is the least interesting of all the Mariamne plays of the period, a dull, pedantic, and thoroughly amorphous compilation of historical and archaeological material.

A delightful poet and skilful formalist in the field of the lyric, Rückert seems to have had no idea of dramatic form. But he was ambitious to try his hand at dramatic literature. In 1842 he decided to write a dramatic "history of the development of humanity from the oldest times to the dawn of the new era," a project vaguely reminiscent of that of the shoemaker Hans Sachs. It resulted in a not very different type of drama. Within three years' time, Rückert turned out a half-dozen historical plays: *König Arsak*, *Saul und David*, *Herodes der Grosse*, *Kaiser Heinrich IV*, and *Christoforo Colombo*. The historical sweep of these plays is impressive, but even Rückert's biographer, Beyer, admits that they were neither plays for the stage, nor, in the better sense, plays for reading.

Herodes und Mariamne treats, in episodic form, Herod's marriage, the storming and sack of Jerusalem, the installation of Aristobulus as high priest, his murder, Alexandra's plots, the sending of the portraits to Antony, Alexandra's attempt at flight, her disavowal of Mariamne, the execution of Hyrcanus, Herod's two journeys, the secret command and its repetition, Mariamne's foreboding dream, the poison plot, her death, the betrayal of Kostabarus, and the execution of the sons of Baba, together with certain elemental catastrophes, such as earthquake, famine, and plague, which are known to have afflicted the reign of Herod. At the end of the fifth act, there appear the three kings out of the East and the shepherds of Bethlehem, angels sing the *Gloria*, and a Gallic warrior disputes the Rhine boundaries with a Teuton, thus giving us a taste of future trouble.

Rückert was exceptionally well versed in the history of Herod's time. He was able to add much to what his dramatic

forbears had collected, and he was resolved, following Schiller, to draw in completely the background of his action. With characteristic German thoroughness—not the thoroughness of an Iliowizi, but that of a scholar—he omitted nothing from his play that could possibly go into it. The result is a history play without coherence or motivation, in which the characters have neither time nor place in which to come to life. In line, moreover, with the then fashionable Shakspearean practice, Rückert considered it necessary to achieve mass effects by the use of crowds and groups of citizens of Jerusalem and Samaria. The only result of these scenes is to clog the action and to interlard the lines with puns and very doubtful *jeux d'esprit*. The verse is far from the Shakspearean tradition; it is flat, prosy, without distinction either in the lyric or dramatic passages.¹

Nine years after the publication of Rückert's play, another *Herodes der Grosse* appeared. This was, like its namesake, a blank-verse tragedy in five acts. It was written by Rudolph Neumeister and published at Leipzig in 1853. In technique and in scope it is reminiscent of Rückert's play. It exhibits, besides, certain similarities to Hebbel's *Herodes und Mariamne*, which was published three years before it. Yet, we must admit, it gives the Mariamne story a very original turn.

Of the wealth of incident compiled by Rückert, Neumeister took the greater part. He omitted Herod's marriage, Mariamne's dream, the betrayal of Kostabarus by Salome, and the execution of the sons of Baba. All the rest, together with a number of details of his own invention, he packed into his drama, and tied it all up with a novel romantic ending. The keynote of this ending, as in Hebbel's tragedy, is Herod's defiance of God and man when he summons up his strength in the hour of his need. But while formal retribution, in Hebbel's play, is deferred, in Neumeister's drama, it is instantaneous and spectacular.

¹ Of *Herodes und seine Söhne*, much the same may be said. It is a continuation of the life of Herod, and ends with his death.

The first four acts of *Herodes der Grosse* offer nothing of particular interest. Act One begins with the sack of Jerusalem and demonstrates the soft and merciful nature of Mariamne, through whose intercession a certain Klopas is saved from death. In Act Two, the murder of Aristobulus is plotted, and in Act Three, Herod is summoned to Antony's court to answer for it. In the fourth act, Josephus makes an unsuccessful attempt to kill Mariamne in obedience to his secret orders, and is forced to reveal their nature. Herod unexpectedly returns to Jerusalem. The queen reproaches him with the command left with Josephus, and the king, instantly concluding that he has been cuckolded, runs off stage. When he returns, his sword is red with Josephus' blood. He means to go much further, he cries; he blames Alexandra principally for his misfortunes, and means to kill all the Maccabeans.

A considerable interval elapses before Act Five. Actium has been fought. On board the Roman flagship, Octavius receives the suppliant Herod with much pomp, pardons him, and confirms him in his kingship. News arrives of an uprising in Jerusalem. Herod sets sail at once.

In Jerusalem, we find the Maccabeans about to take power under the leadership of Alexandra and Sohemus. But Mariamne will not join the revolt. Suddenly, there is an outcry: Herod has arrived. The conspirators flee to Burg Antonium to make a stand. Mariamne is left behind with old Hyrcanus; to them comes Klopas with a letter from Manahem the Seer. There is a beautiful valley at the foot of Djebel-Heisch, the letter informs them, in Lebanon, far from the madding crowd. Klopas describes the trees that grow there—the cypresses, pines, and cedars. Mariamne is delighted. "Let us go there, grandfather," she cries, "let us go to this valley of peace and joy!" Hyrcanus blesses her. "God," she cries ecstatically, "is not a God of vengeance. He is a God of love!" She loves Herod; but by his actions he has driven her away; now she will seek happiness in nature.

Hand in hand, they go; then the scene shifts to Burg Antonium where Alexandra and Sohemus are besieged by the avenging king. The attack redoubles in fury. Salome is killed by a stone. A wall gives way, Alexandra is crushed by a falling beam, and Herod rushes in with the army.

It is God's vengeance, he remarks to Kostabar, as he chops off Alexandra's head. What has become of Mariamne? Soldiers run about vainly to find her; she has vanished. The stage darkens. Alone, Herod cries that the love of Mariamne was his only happiness, even his belief in God. Now that she is gone, only power is left him, the power of vengeance. Henceforth, he will be a real tyrant, for there is no God but might, no justice but reason and the unheeding laws of nature. A flash of lightning gleams in the cloudless sky. "Ah," cries Herod, looking upward, "will you blast me? No. You are a merciful God. But *I* am a God of vengeance upon earth!" A second shaft blasts him even as he utters the words.

Instantly a choir of angels begins a canticle; the Eastern star heaves into sight, and shepherds join in singing *Glory to God in the Highest* in cross-rhymed quatrains. An angel representing the Christian Life rises above the others. It is joined by one who represents Christian Mercy, finally by one in the guise of Mariamne, who sings that she has found peace in the company of these.

Thus, this extensive tragedy—309 pages long—ends on a note of natural Christian piety, in a manner somewhat remote from the usual outcome of the fable. The theme is evidently the futility and wickedness of human ambition. Through his lust for power, Herod conquers, slays, dominates; in so doing, he loses love and faith. Power, hate, and pride alone are left him—he is badly afflicted with *ὑβρις*, and God mercifully strikes him down in the midst of his atheistic ravings. With him perish Salome and Alexandra, who, furthering their ambitions, were responsible for much of the damage done by him. But Mariamne and Hyrcanus

return to the earth and its simple life, and thus find the happiness denied to the others. Mariamne, who is long torn between her husband and her mother, chooses neither; she chooses rather to be blessed.

Such is the lesson of the play. The amount of purely historical matter contained in the action is considerable, but the effect is incomparably better than that made by Rückert's play. As this is not simply a historical drama, but a play with a thesis, the breadth of the canvas is to some extent justified. It is not illogical to push back the point of attack as far as the siege of Jerusalem; this point marks Herod's rise to power, and it is there that the contrast is first noted between the ruthless Herod and the merciful Mariamne. This contrast is the core of the play. The action is intended to illustrate the progressive divergence of these characters—we are ultimately meant to understand them as embodiments of two ways of life, one inevitably leading to destruction, the other to peace and happiness.

But it is only at the end that the point of the play is revealed. As far as the seventh scene of Act Five, one seems to be dealing with the usual mishmash. Then, instead of going on to Mariamne's execution and Herod's madness, Neumeister unexpectedly brings off his novel denouement. It is as if a Sunday-school teacher were to climax a lesson in Hebrew history by materializing from his coattails a bowl of goldfish.

Whatever we may think of this nineteenth-century Herod whose materialistic speculations are so summarily dealt with, or of this eighteenth-century Mariamne who retires, like *Candide*, to cultivate her garden, it must be admitted that the play has its points. The action, clogged as it is with interminable talk, is swift enough. It is, indeed, so swift that without a working knowledge of the Mariamne story, it is not easy to follow the stream of events.

The author evidently envisaged a lavish production; there are ten indicated changes of scene and thirty-seven speaking parts,

to say nothing of augurs, lictors, soldiers, angels, mass effects, falling walls, sieges, and battles. In spite of all this, the play remains a purely literary effort. In character, the action is expository rather than dramatic, and the mystical conclusion sits badly upon the bulk of the play. There is, in fact, no indication that the play was ever produced, and it is probably a safe surmise that *Herodes der Grosse* remained within the covers of a book.

But, certainly, plays much less fitted for the stage than this were given production on the German stage. The Germans were accustomed to hardship. Goethe had written *Goetz von Berlichingen* (1771) with fifty-four scene changes and forty-one speaking parts, in imitation of Shakspeare. He was evidently reckless of the fact that the numerous changes of scene in Shakspeare were purely nominal as far as the stage crew was concerned. In Goethe's day it took ridiculously longer to shift scenery for a six-line scene than to play the scene; after the success of *Goetz* on the stage and the resulting vogue of the "curiosity-box" technique the German playwrights paid no heed to such considerations. Klinger's *Otto* has fifty-two scene changes, and presents a remarkable case of confusion, even in print. The fashion of writing plays with a very large number of scenes favored the composition of dramas of action rather than of talk. The sets demanded, after all, to be utilized. Klinger preferred "life, actions, and events"—the technique of Shakspeare—to the "resounding declamation" of the French, which as a result of the labors of Gottsched and Lessing, had supplanted Hans Wurst and Pikel-hering on the German stage.

Klinger's *Sturm und Drang* was produced in 1776. Two years before this, Lenz had defined tragedy as a "series of events following each other like thunderbolts, dominated by the principal character." But the restraining effect of actual production was bound to make itself felt. Practical difficulties forced the dramatists to curtail the number of scenes; difficulty of comprehension brought about a simplification of the action. Lenz began to

apologize for the irregularities of Shakspeare, which he had formerly extolled to the skies. The wheel swung full circle; the time came again for French influence to assert itself, and the well-made plays of Diderot, Mercier, and Saurin began to come to the fore in Germany.

Schiller's example did not favor the well-made play. He admired the work of Diderot, but as a writer he felt uncomfortable in such narrow artificial limits. He had learned from Shakspeare the dramatic value of the crowd, the mass effect. Dramatic economy, he never learned. Three whole plays were found necessary to develop the plot of *Wallenstein* (1799); *Wilhelm Tell* (1804) has no less than three actions.

The painstaking development of the environment of his characters was one of the responsibilities that Schiller felt most keenly as a dramatist. By the same token, his theatre was much inclined to prolixity and diffusiveness, and his attention was diverted from the immediate motivation of the action which these well-rooted characters were meant to play. Two other characteristics of his greatly influenced his successors—an inclination toward melodrama, and a tendency to use plays for the inculcation of morals: both detracted from the essential truth of his dramas. The former led to preposterous actions on the part of his characters; the latter inclined them to be mere mouthpieces of the author. In the hands of those who sedulously imitated his superficial characteristics, lacking his genius, it led to the wholesale manufacture of turgid and sprawling histories, full of spectacular effects and empty vaporings.

Neumeister's *Herodes der Grosse* was published nine years after Hebbel's *Maria Magdalena*, and four years after the production of his *Herodes und Mariamne*, but it gives no indication that the author was in any way conscious of the new type of drama that Hebbel was evolving. Neumeister's play, like Rückert's, illustrates the tradition of Schiller deteriorating under French romantic influence. It exhibits some of the virtues and

most of the defects of the tradition it follows—it is vast in scope, full of incident, melodramatic, sentimental, didactic. In expression it is poetic, but verbose and expository, clogged with schoolroom material, interlarded with the self-revealing monologues regarded as indispensable to romantic tragedy. It is swift insofar as it is continually propelled by new material; since it has no direction until the very end of its course, it cannot acquire momentum. Its characters are interesting only while they are in motion; like mechanical toys, they lose all semblance to reality the moment they come to rest. The strange conclusion is, in a sense, inevitable. The play gets nowhere—it requires an act of God to bring it to an end.

Of the three tragic dramas of this period, the earliest is William Waller's *Mariamme, or, the Court of Herod the Great*, a tragedy in five acts, published in London in 1839. Little need be said of it. It lies outside the main traditions of Mariamne drama, and has little connection with what came before or after.

It is a comparatively short play written in blank verse, of which it is best to say merely that it scans. The author was evidently not of the theatre. He writes without excitement, with a strong sense that much—or little—may be said for either side; he refrains therefore from committing himself emotionally in any way. None of the characters is entirely unsympathetic; none of them is likeable; none of them, in a dramatic sense, is anything at all. The result of the author's efforts cannot therefore be said to amount to drama.

In form, the play is modeled upon Elizabethan patterns, but the writer makes certain concessions to the opera—he includes a good deal of spectacle, horn blowing, and ceremonial, and even succeeds in introducing into his third act a ballet enlivened by “female dancers who perform Jewish evolutions” and Africans who perform evolutions after their kind.

While the plot concerns the usual complex of circumstances

from Herod's visit to Caesar to the death of Mariamne, it departs from the traditional sequence in several respects. Neither Salome nor Herod is the villain of the piece—that role is reserved to the cupbearer. The death of Mariamne is brought about by a purely personal grudge which originates in the subplot. The subplot, an early variation on the theme of *Abie's Irish Rose*, completely overshadows in importance what was intended to be the main action.

The author presents the situation at Herod's court as an opposition of Jews and Gentiles. The Jews look bitterly, in his play, upon their oppressors—Idumeans, Itureans, Parthians, Romans. These, in turn, or some of them, look upon the Jews with suspicion and hatred. The exposition proceeds by means of little inconsequential scenes between characters who pop in and out, making ambiguous remarks. Out of the preliminary confusion, there emerges at length an important character, Nicholas by name, a devoted retainer of Mariamne. His son Phares is in love with a certain Paulina, the daughter of the Parthian Pacorus, the king's butler. Nicholas is outspoken in his hatred of all foreigners, Parthians in particular, and he formally forbids his son to have any dealings with Paulina. This infuriates Pacorus. His hatred of Nicholas is speedily generalized into a kind of doctrinal anti-Semitism, and he determines to avenge himself upon Nicholas by ruining Mariamne.

In the meantime, Herod gives Sohemus his secret charge and sails for Rhodes; Sohemus promptly betrays the command to Mariamne. Herod returns. In the midst of an angry scene between the royal pair, Pacorus, on his own initiative, launches the poison accusation. The accusation results in the death of Nicholas and of Sohemus, the trial and execution of Mariamne, and the madness of Herod—all of this, save the trial, messengered in a manner calculated to cure the most persistent insomnia.

Apart from its specific defects, into which it seems hardly

worth our while to go, Waller's play is the unhappy result of an attempt to lend interest and verisimilitude to the Mariamne story through the introduction of extrinsic elements. The tendency is widespread. We may observe the result in the employment of romantic characters such as Tyridates, and of secondary actions such as that of Flaminius and Arsinoë. But Waller goes so far as absolutely to subordinate the tragedy of Herod and Mariamne to the love affair of Phares and Paulina—which, incidentally, is given a happy outcome in Act Five. Though they rarely go to such extremes as the wretched Waller, few if any of our playwrights manifest any marked inclination to come to grips with the essential conflict of the Mariamne story. Whatever else may be said in dispraise of Hebbel's *Herodes*, this reproach can certainly not be leveled against its author.

Hebbel's *Herodes und Mariamne* ranks high among the Mariamne tragedies. It has many faults. But it has many excellences also: a theme, a definite tendency, an attempt at realistic characterization, clear and vivid expression, and scenes of great power and beauty. One turns gladly to its pages after the exasperating confusion of Rückert and the insipid sermonizing of Neumeister.

Hebbel built his plot around the central figure of Mariamne. Yet when he began the play, he thought to concentrate the whole idea of the tragedy in Herod.² From this change in his fundamental conception of the drama—a change which must have taken place about the time he finished the second act—the whole play unfortunately suffers.

The play was written in the year following Hebbel's marriage to the wealthy actress Christine Enghaus. It was begun at the end of February, 1847. The first act was finished near

² At this time he wrote in his diary: "in den Charakter des Herodes hinein ist aber auch die ganze Bedeutung des Dramas zu legen." *Tagebücher*, 4 March 1847, ed. Bamberg (Berlin, 1885-87), II, 242.

the end of March; by August 22 the third and fourth acts were complete, and Hebbel wrote to his friend Bamberg, "seit der Genoveva habe ich eine so mächtige Aufregung meines ganzes Wesens nicht mehr verspürt; ich glaube längst, ihrer nicht mehr fähig zu sein." The play was finished in November, 1848; the following year, Rötischer published the first act in his *Jahrbücher für dramatische Kunst und Literatur*. The first and only edition of the play to be published in the author's lifetime appeared in Vienna in 1850.

In a letter prefixed to the one act published by Rötischer, we are given some idea of the intention of *Herodes und Mariamne*. It has to do, we are told,

with the conflict between the egotism of a highly endowed heroic character such as Herod and the delicately organized, profoundly feminine nature of Mariamne, who, through the mistrust and the egotistic demands of her husband, is wounded in her inmost being and, gradually estranged from him, at last seeks by a voluntary death, in which she makes Herod her accomplice, the ultimate compensation for her broken heart.

Herod has dared to define the limit of Mariamne's life. He has wounded the fundamental sanctity of her free humanity. He is therefore made to punish himself by being the cause of her death: such is the expiation the tragedy requires of him.

This profoundly human conflict is set upon the boundary of two worlds—the old world in its decline, the new not yet at its zenith; the Jewish kingdom divided into warring sects and parties, held together only by the significant personality of Herod, and the Roman empire divided by the conflict of Antony and Octavius. At the end of the historical perspective is the birth of the Child, with the rise of the new spirit which is to pervade the world. These, Rötischer explains, are the elements of the tragedy, which, we may be assured, is absolutely unbiased from the point of view of politics.³

³ The reference is to the political disturbances in Austria in 1848-49

The play is, in fact, much less complicated than one might imagine from this ambitious prospectus. The action begins some months after the murder of Aristobulus. During these months of mourning, Mariamne has refused to set eyes on her husband. The court is shot through with Alexandra's intrigues. Not even the king's personal guards are trustworthy.

Such is the situation when Joab comes from Antony's court to summon the king on the charge of murder laid against him by Alexandra. He has even more disturbing news—the dissolute Roman possesses a portrait of Mariamne. Quite unexpectedly, the queen is announced. She has decided to forgive her husband. But Herod now requires her to promise that she will kill herself in the event of his death, since he cannot endure the thought that she may become Antony's mistress. Although in an aside she tells us she has no idea of surviving her husband, Mariamne scorns to promise such a thing. Struck by her peculiar coldness, and fearing to trust her, since he knows himself culpable, Herod secretly confides the death sentence to Joseph, whose interests, it appears, will necessitate its execution.

In the second act, the Roman general Titus is called upon to quell an uprising instigated by Alexandra and the Pharisee Sameas. In consequence of the uprising, Joseph puts Alexandra and Mariamne under arrest. Mariamne disputes his authority. In the course of the argument, the secret command is revealed. Salome enters—it looks suspicious to her that Joseph and Mariamne should be alone together, and she threatens to tell the king of their intimacy. Herod is immediately announced.

He opens the third act with an enthusiastic report of his triumph at the court of Antony. But Mariamne does not appear to welcome him. As he is visibly disturbed, Salome judges the moment opportune to accuse the queen of having had adulterous relations with Joseph. Herod summons the queen, who does not conceal the fact that she is aware of Joseph's secret. Herod at once orders that Joseph be put to death. To save her hus-

band, Salome attempts to recant her accusation. Herod remains obdurate. As for Mariamne, she declares that the king can expect no more from her; he has wounded her deepest "humanity." Orders now arrive for Herod to engage the Arabs in battle since Antony is about to close with Octavius. Now, Mariamne feels, fate has turned back the clock; they are all to have another chance to work out their salvation. But she refuses to tell Herod how she came to discover Joseph's secret, and as Herod now more than ever feels that he cannot trust her, he puts her once again under the sword, this time that of the Galilean Soemus.

In Act Four, news is brought of the disaster at Actium. Soemus, certain that this means the end of Herod, releases the rebel Sameas. Mariamne reproaches Soemus with his disregard of Herod's commands. Does the queen, asks Soemus, desire him to execute the command he has received with regard to herself? Her hurt this time is so great that she attempts suicide; recollecting herself, she orders a feast of rejoicing for that very evening. Soemus justifies his treason: he cannot be true to one who treats him as if he were a soulless instrument.

At the height of the feast, Herod enters. His wife greets him as Death and bitterly invites him to kill her. He at once orders the execution of Soemus—Mariamne is put in prison. In the last act, she stands her trial for adultery. As she will say nothing in her defense, she is speedily condemned. Before she goes to her death, she takes Titus aside and discloses to him the motives for her behavior: she has acted in a suspicious manner for the purpose of forcing Herod either to trust her or to kill her. Titus is to say nothing until she is dead; after that, he may do as he pleases.

When she has been led off to execution, the three Magi are announced, and, in due course, sent off to Bethlehem. News is brought of Mariamne's death. Titus instantly tells what he knows; Alexandra adds further details—Mariamne is com-

pletely exonerated, and Herod bitterly laments the power of adverse destiny. But when Alexandra triumphantly proclaims that Aristobulus is now avenged, Herod makes a gesture of defiance. He would gladly give up all for Mariamne, he cries; it is too late for that. Now he can but hold what is left to him—and in defiance of the powers that oppose him, he orders the extermination of the children of Bethlehem. Then he collapses.

And the play ends on a discord in which sound together all possible motives—destiny, vengeance, the triumph of Christianity, the conflict between the individual and the whole, freedom against necessity, church against state, the battle of the sexes, the inviolability of the ego, to say nothing of other philosophic shrillings and drummings not so easily identified in the hurly-burly of the *finale*.

Hebbel's drama is obviously much more complicated in its intention than any previous attempt to handle the Mariamne material. While Hebbel was primarily a dramatist, he was strongly inclined toward the philosophic and speculative, and his plays invariably exhibit a critical tendency. With *Maria Magdalena* he initiated a far-reaching reaction against bourgeois drama, which, having sounded all the stops between *The London Merchant* and *Menschenbass und Reue*, was by the middle of the nineteenth century no longer heard with favor. Hebbel felt that this type of drama had declined primarily because it dealt with externals rather than with inner elements of character.* "Tragedy," he wrote, "arises from the obstinate extension of the ego," the conflict of the individual will and the will inherent in the universe,

das bedenkliche Verhältniss, worin das aus dem ursprunglichen Nexus entlassene Individuum dem Ganzen, dessen Teil es trotz seiner unbegreiflichen Freiheit noch immer geblieben ist, gegenübersteht.

It follows, he reasoned, that tragedy rests upon character, rather than upon the dramatic fable. But as art is symbolic, the

* Preface to *Maria Magdalena* (1844).

characters of drama must, in the last analysis, be symbols. The ego exists only as part of a greater whole, a final unity; to express the whole, it is necessary to exaggerate the detached. Moreover, the dramatic fable cannot be wholly realistic—here, too, must be some exaggeration, art must round out fate's circle if it is to deal satisfactorily with universals.

In this Hegelian manner, Hebbel reconciled his tendency toward realism with the very unreal situations he was able to set down in his dramas. *Maria Magdalena* is a study of middle-class pride, but it can hardly be called a study of real life or of real people, though the characters speak more or less naturally in plain prose and the events depicted are such as might conceivably take place in this world. Realism is not a matter simply of making characters refer to veal broth and cabbage. To secure an effect of reality, the action and the characters must be tied together in such a way that the one belongs naturally, even inevitably, to the other. Such is certainly not the case in *Maria Magdalena*. Though it marks a great advance over the bourgeois drama that preceded it, it tends to substitute philosophy for life; it is an abstract demonstration of the working of certain principles represented by typical characters in a hypothetical case. Only the character of the old carpenter Anton, whose arrogant honesty and merciless rectitude drive his hapless daughter to suicide, has reality. But Anton is not an abstract character like the others. He is obviously drawn from life, and we grant him at once a more immediate reality than any amount of close reasoning can confer upon the other characters of the play. The sad end of Clara is capable of convincing us, but it cannot move us, for she speaks only to the intellect. The bewilderment of Anton at the end of the play speaks directly to the heart.

Few of Hebbel's characters, and certainly none in *Herodes und Mariamne*, have this kind of reality. In the poetic dramas, especially, Hebbel's men and women are extremely expressive; we are kept constantly in touch with their thoughts and feel-

ings. We understand their thoughts. We seldom share their emotions. They do not feel or act as people do, and their inner life is intensified beyond anything we can regard as credible. They are, and remain for us, in Hebbel's phrase, exaggerations of the detached.

The extraordinary inner life of these characters, Hebbel theoretically justified in much the same way as the lack of external reality. Drama is more self-conscious than life, he argued, for it is an art form; the mental processes of its characters must be natural, but intensified—as a matter of technique, it is through the articulate introspection of the characters that we get at their truth. But with this reasoning—which is in any event little more than a justification of the traditional self-revelatory soliloquy of tragedy—Hebbel overlooked the fact that when we narrow the scope of our vision in order to examine a portion of the character's mental contents, as it were through a microscope, the rest of the psyche is lost sight of. But to function naturally, a character must function as a whole. When the coördinating influence of the whole upon the part is diminished by the "exaggeration of the detached" which Hebbel advocates, the mental processes of the character tend to become monstrous. In *Gyges and his Ring*, Rhodope might well have felt deeply offended by Kandaules' behavior, but a woman who is shamed by her husband's indiscretion does not normally kill both him and herself. Her normal tendency, if she be human, is to compromise and to forgive: the parts maintain their detached existence only by endless compromise with the whole. They do not in nature continually destroy each other, but coexist without harmony—and this condition of existence is incomparably more tragic than the instances of mutual destruction which Hebbel invariably depicts.

The fact is that we cannot express the whole less adequately than by exaggerating the detached; the resulting conflict is illusory and melodramatic. It is probably not unjust to remark that none of Hebbel's heroines has any kind of reality. They are

all artificial creations; all bear the unmistakable hallmark not of nature but of Hebbel, whose *idée fixe* with regard to the aggressive character of the female results in a curious distortion of almost every one of his plays. For in order to justify the remarkable things he requires of his female characters, Hebbel forces them to insist hysterically upon the requirements of an inner life which defies comprehension. As the other characters are forced to cooperate in these artifices, they too are twisted out of their natural shape. Thus, while Hebbel deals almost exclusively with neurotic types, he permits them to follow not even a natural neurotic pattern, so that ultimately his characters are incapable of exhibiting anything save the distortion to which they have been subjected by the author.

In Hebbel's phraseology, the tragic situation in *Herodes und Mariamne* arises out of the fact that two individuals who have merged resume their individualities and seek to extend them at the expense of each other. The same theme is exemplified in the conflicts of Judith and Holofernes, Golo and Genoveva, Herzog Ernst and Agnes, Kandaules and Rhodope. The case of Herod is the inverse of that of Kandaules. The former wishes to bury the beauty of his wife with him; the latter wishes to reveal it to the world. Herod cannot bear the thought that his rival and his wife will inhabit the same world; Kandaules cannot be happy unless his rival is in his wife's bedroom. In both cases, the injury to the wife's "humanity" is more than she can bear, and in both cases she insists on sacrificing both herself and her husband to her outraged ego. The plays, with their royal and legendary trappings, are thus not much more than domestic tragedies. While the epithet is not used in their dispraise, it is well to realize where Hebbel's interest chiefly lay. For him, Herod and Mariamne play a bourgeois drama on a princely scale.

The initial situation in *Herodes und Mariamne* is excellently conceived. The author's avowed intention was to reduce the "almost fantastic story" of Josephus "to the most solid reality." As

he interprets it, the king's nature is passionate and can be violent, his position is precarious:

Ich gleiche
Dem Mann der Fabel, den der Löwe vorn,
Der Tiger hinten packte, dem die Geier
Mit Schnabeln und mit Klau'n oben drohten,
Und der auf einem Schlangenkumpfen stand. . .

Mariamne is morbidly sensitive. Between the two stands the ghost of Aristobulus. It is not surprising that Herod should feel uneasy in this *ménage à trois*. The news that Alexandra has accused him of murder and that Antony has summoned him is instantly coupled in his mind with the fact that Mariamne is the sister of the murdered man and that Antony desires her. In these circumstances, it is natural that he should wish to be assured of his wife's devotion; it is also natural that if his wife loved him she would reassure him in this respect. If she did so, however, the play would vanish.

In order to make a tragedy, Mariamne is forced to tease her husband most unnaturally with half-assurance and enigmatic utterance, until he flatly requires her to promise that she will not survive him. The demand is, of course, preposterous; it is understandable that she should refuse. It is, nevertheless, capricious of her to swear this to herself and not to him, and the mental calisthenics involved in justifying the course that leads to her death complicate the situation to the point where it completely loses touch with reality.

The rest of the play is simply a development of Mariamne's elaborate method of committing suicide, the exacting of a revenge as horrible as that of Rhodope, without nearly so great a provocation. For Herod is not anywhere depicted as unreasonable, but Mariamne desperately insists upon his implicit trust the while she deliberately feeds his suspicions until he can bear no more and must make an end:

ich will
Nicht Tag für Tag mich mit dem Räthsel qualen,
Ob solch ein Trotz das widerwartigste
Gesicht der Unschuld, ob die frechste Larve
Der Sünde ist . . .

Ja, bei dem Schauder, der mich eben mahnt
Dass ich in ihr mich selbst vernichten werde:
Ich mach' ein Ende, wie's auch stehen mag!

As Mariamne does not really wish to die at all, but only to get the last word in this strange marital quarrel in which Hebbel has involved her, the contrast between the refined cruelty of her actions and the expressed purity of her motives results, long before her death, in the loss of all her vitality as a character. She becomes then no more than a puppet in the author's hand. As the interest thereupon shifts back to Herod, the play tends to fall into the mold of Tristan's *La Mariane*. But Hebbel does not permit this to happen. He forces Mariamne to absorb more and more of the action at the expense of the only vital character left in it, until, with the advent of the three Magi, the play—which began indeed in a spirit of “most solid reality”—avowedly becomes a puppet show.

The situation as Josephus gives it is infinitely richer than this, though it proves nothing. In his story, these lovers are not playing a game of spiritual blindman's buff; Mariamne detests her husband, and wishes him dead. Herod has therefore every reason to fear and to mistrust her, and we may be certain that she has no thought of killing herself in the event of his death. There is no question in Josephus of a misunderstanding which a moment of straightforward talk would clear up. When Herod first places his wife under the sword in the *Antiquities*, he does so for reasons which are difficult but not impossible to understand. We can readily comprehend, also, Mariamne's anger when she discovers what Herod has done. Finally, when she goes to

her death bravely and composedly, we can say truly that her end is tragic; we are conscious of the working of ineluctable destiny, and the release that tragedy gives. Far from this is Hebbel's drama with its unnatural action, unreal characters, quixotic posturings, and, at the end, its utter confusion.

For it is not merely upon Mariamne's silence that the catastrophe depends in Hebbel's play. A conspiracy of silence is necessary to bring it about. Alexandra knows of Mariamne's oath and of her innocence—she sacrifices her daughter to avenge her son. Titus also knows of it, since Mariamne makes a point of telling him. Had Titus chosen to keep silent, Herod would have continued under the impression that he had executed a guilty Mariamne. But if Mariamne were careless of what Herod might think of her after her death, she would have no motive for enlightening Titus as to her innocence. On the other hand, if she is willing to seek death in order to teach her husband a lesson, it is hardly conceivable that she would leave its administration to the whim of a stranger.⁵

It is idle to speculate on what the dramatic consequences would have been had Hebbel caused Mariamne to be as silent in death as in life. Mariamne obviously means Titus to speak after she is dead; her posthumous insistence upon her injured *Menschheit* is not far from that of the litigious wife of the fable who, after her husband has amputated her tongue, persists in making the sign of the shears with her fingers.

It is obviously one thing to develop a thesis, another to develop a character. Where an author is intent upon the former, it is not easy for him to avoid twisting the latter out of all semblance to humanity. Undoubtedly Hebbel meant his thesis to grow out of his characters, but in this, as in most of his plays, it turned out the other way. The characters do not stand up well; the thesis is carefully illustrated—the play pro-

⁵ For Hebbel's position on this point, see his letter to Zimmerman, 22 May 1850 in *Fr. Hebbels Briefe*, Nachlese, ed. Werner (Berlin, 1900), I, 288.

vides three examples of the consequences of infringing upon another's personality. Mariamne would rather die than be treated as a chattel; the faithful Soemus repudiates his allegiance to a master who would use him as a tool; only the slave Artaxerxes is resigned—his brother and his father were human clocks, and he does not object to following their trade. The contrast between his abjectness and the spirited reaction of Mariamne is not, however, pointed since the two characters are not connected in any way.

Much objection has been made on the part of the critics to the introduction of the three Magi. Very early in the life of the play, Bamberg protested that they were "talking wax-figures." Hebbel replied that this was how he wanted them, that his intention "hier ganz auf den Holzschnittstil ging."⁶ His reasons are clear for introducing these two-dimensional figures upon a stage crowded with figures whom he meant so far to treat in the round. The Magi are creatures not of the plot, but of the Hegelian dialectic. From the antithetical relation of the old world—illustrated in Herod and Artaxerxes—and the new—represented by Antony and Titus—springs the synthesis, the ennobling spirit of Christianity. Mariamne and Soemus are its first martyrs; the Magi, its harbingers. Mariamne has sacrificed her life in affirmance of the essential nobility of the human soul. At the moment of Mariamne's death, there is born the new soul of the world, the Christ. Herod, who can think only in terms of old-world despotism, has crushed the rebellious soul of Mariamne; but the resurgent soul of humanity he cannot crush. Such is the significance of the Magi. A noble idea, it has never had the slightest success on the stage.⁷ Bulthaupt observes that at the Berlin performance, part of the audience

⁶ Letter to Bamberg, 31 August 1850.

⁷ M. L. Hiller, *Friedrich Hebbels Herodes und Mariamne auf der Bühne, 1849-1925* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1930). For recent criticism see pp. 21-22 of that work. See also O. Walzel, *Fr. Hebbel und seine Dramen* (3d ed., Leipzig and Berlin, 1927), pp. 106 f.

was offended at the sacrilege, while the rest greeted the Wise Men with laughter.

Much more serious from a dramaturgical point of view is the repetitiousness which results from the inclusion of both the episodes of the *Antiquities*, that which ends with the death of Joseph, and that which closes with the death of Mariamne. The repetition is generally avoided by dramatists. Hebbel regarded it as the pinnacle of his whole edifice, an artistic triumph.

In his estimation, the second situation was essentially different from the first. It is hard to say what makes it so. To the ordinary eye, it seems as if the sole function of the second episode is to confirm what has already been done. This has of course some advantage. It permits us to observe the cumulative effect upon Mariamne. Doubtless before resorting to extreme measures, she requires proof that she is not trusted, that Herod considers her a chattel. Furthermore, the repetition permits a note of realism to enter the play: obviously it is intolerable for Mariamne to be continually facing the executioner. Finally, the situation brought about by the repetition is highly interesting from a psychological point of view.

But it is doubtful if the doubling of the plot can be justified by this line of argument, or whether there is a significant gain in putting the first episode in action rather than in recital. The middle of the third act is to all intents the point at which the denouement should occur—the secret order has been given and revealed, Joseph is unjustly dead, Mariamne deeply offended: it is time now, if ever, to unknot the drama. Instead, the action is interrupted, Herod goes off again in peril of his life, Soemus is given a charge similar to Joseph's, and at the beginning of Act Four, we find ourselves just where we were at the end of Act One, save that as we have grown somewhat more familiar with the characters, we know that Mariamne will not take the matter tamely.

Perhaps some amends could have been made for this lack

of continuity in the action by the introduction of new material. However, there is no new material, nothing but a recapitulation, with the substitution of the earnest Soernus for the pompous Joseph. Once more the command is revealed, once more its bearer executed; the denouement of Act Three comes in Act Five, and we have seen the play twice in one performance.

Certain elements of the drama seem to indicate the influence of the French plays. Titus is possibly related to the Varus of Voltaire's first *Mariamne*; certainly his role is reminiscent of that of Narbas who in the analogous scene of *Mariamne* knows the queen to be innocent yet withholds his information until after she is dead. It is not at all unlikely that Hebbel knew Voltaire's play, especially as he came under French influence early in life. It is possible too that he knew Calderón's *El Tetrarca*, which together with that writer's other work had enjoyed a considerable vogue in Germany; if so, its chief influence must be looked for in the role of Mariamne, who in that play, as here, has it in mind to teach her husband a lesson. The character of Mariamne and that of Marcelia in *The Duke of Milan*, similarly, have a certain resemblance, but from Hebbel's letter to Rótscher of December 22, 1847, and his statement concerning Deinhardstein's version of *The Duke of Milan*, we are forced to conclude that he did not know Massinger's play.

Herodes und Mariamne was first produced at the Burg-theater in Vienna on April 19, 1849, with Christine Enghaus in the title-role. Hebbel had cherished high hopes for the production. "I hope," he had written, "to win with this work the favor of the masses." The play received a chilly reception. The production, Hebbel notes, "was excellent, the mounting splendid, the reception utterly cold." He blamed principally the stupidity and unresponsiveness of the audience. For the mass of the spectators, he wrote, the confusion lay in the second

impulse of the drama, the motivation of which was too profound for them to grasp. But the critics responded no better than the untutored masses; the second impulse of the drama was almost universally condemned.

With the passing of time, Hebbel's reputation has steadily gained ground in Germany. Subsequent audiences have proved more indulgent, but the play has been successful chiefly on the printed page, where its fine literary qualities appear to excellent advantage and its deficiencies are not so marked as they would be in production. That these deficiencies are perhaps fundamental was indicated by the failure in October, 1938, of an English prose adaptation by "Clemence Dane," designed for the New York public, with Katherine Cornell in the role of Mariamne. This production did not survive its tryout in Pittsburgh.⁸

The influence of Hebbel's *Herodes und Mariamne* upon the subsequent Mariamne dramas was both insidious and widespread. None of the later playwrights appears to have followed Hebbel's plot, yet none of the Mariamne plays after *Herodes und Mariamne* is free from some trace of Hebbel. This author's contribution to Mariamne drama was, as we have seen, especially noteworthy in the development of the character of the queen; in this respect his influence appears to have been most widely felt. We have noted instances of this influence in Rives' *Herod and Mariamne* and in Neumeister's *Herodes der Grosse*, and shall have occasion to mention it once more in connection with Phillips' *Herod*. In D. M. Maaldrink's romantic *Herodes*, it comes out in a somewhat peculiar manner.

Maaldrink's *Herodes—Historisch Drama in vier Bedrijven, met een Voor-en- Naspel*, was published at 's Gravenhage in 1885, and is, we learn from the foreword, the author's first attempt in the drama. The historical source was evidently a

⁸ For the fortunes of Hebbel's play in Germany see Hiller, *op. cit.*

Dutch translation of Hausrath's famous *Neutestamentliche Zeitgeschichte* (1868-73). The nature of Maaldrink's conception of the character of Herod may be judged from the quotations from Hausrath prefixed to the play: "He loved her with all the wildness of his Arabian blood," and "He could not bear to think that anyone should possess his beautiful wife after him."

Dutch drama after Hooft and Vondel offers, generally speaking, little of interest to the student. By the eighteenth century, the Dutch stage was almost completely under French domination, and the influence of Corneille, Racine, and Voltaire persisted until the romantic era ushered in new models from France and Germany.⁹ Maaldrink's play was thus composed more or less under the same auspices as that of Neumeister, though it was written a generation later. As in most plays of the type of Neumeister's, the cast of Maaldrink's *Herodes* is large, the scope of the action ample, and the conception and technique of a decidedly romantic order. Though the play gives evidence of some research into Hebrew history for the purpose of providing background, the action is quite fanciful and proceeds by means of situations unknown to Josephus. In a misguided effort to develop through a single motive the entire story of Herod's life, Maaldrink chooses as the mainspring of his action the revenge of Doris, the wife whom Herod cast off in order to marry Mariamne. This revenge is managed, after Doris' death, by her son Antipater. As he is no more than a little child in the prologue and, eight years later by the author's reckoning, is sufficiently matured for viceroys to confide to him the weightiest secrets, he is seen to have been a youth of some precocity. At any rate, and however the arithmetic may be adjusted with regard to his age, it must be granted that his

⁹ Droste's *Mariamne* ('s Gravenhage, 1714) adheres resolutely to the rules established for tragedy in France. It is little more than a pedantic rendering of Tristan's *La Mariamne*. There is no reason to believe that Maaldrink knew Droste's play.

character—a curious compound of Hamlet, Iago, and Mas-singer's Francisco—is for the first time delineated with a high degree of imagination.

The action is coextensive with that of Neumeister's play; the prologue, really an act, begins before the final assault upon Jerusalem in 37 B.C., and the epilogue develops the trial of Antipater and the death of Herod in 3 B.C.¹⁰ That the technique is not intended to be that of a history play is evident from the manner in which the body of the play is divided from the outlying portions of the action. Though the play involves the passage of 34 years, the four acts into which the main action is divided take place within a short interval and perhaps accord with the unity of time.

The development is quite banal; on the other hand, the author evidently had a certain amount of skill in playwriting. Each of the divisions of the play works up to a strong curtain, and an effort is made to bind the action together with motives which are carefully enunciated at the outset and worked out at the end. These motives—the prophecy of Menahem and the vengeance of Doris—are, unfortunately, not related, and the latter does not bear sufficiently on the main theme of the play, so that these devices, intended to give coherence to the action, serve mainly to confuse it. The oracle, in respect to which Maaldrink shows himself well under the influence of German destiny drama, is put in terms of a riddle. It differs from the prophecy in *El Tetrarca*, but there can be no doubt that Menahem the Essene is to be identified with Calderón's soothsayer. Menahem does not figure in any of the Mariamne plays before the nineteenth century. He is the only prophet mentioned by Josephus in connection with Herod, however, and his eventual identification with the prophet invented by Calderón could be no more than a matter of time.

Of the vengeance of Doris there is some hint in E. C.'s

¹⁰ The date is usually reckoned as 4 B.C.

Tragedy of Mariam. Apart from this, nobody seems to have been particularly interested in her, and the plays which deal with Antipater usually ascribe his villainies to his ambition. The theme of Maaldrink's *Herodes* is not the king's shabby treatment of Doris, nor, as in Neumeister's play, the tragic futility of the king's lust for power. With all its machinery of prophecy and revenge, this is a strictly domestic tragedy, the moral of which is that one must do right by one's wife. The moral is not, as in Hebbel's play, implicit in the development and the outcome; it is entirely explicit, and the author, with the aid of the prophet Menahem, thoroughly rubs Herod's nose in it. The essence of the play, as in Hebbel, is the conflict between the suspicious and mistrustful character of Herod and the haughty self-respect of Mariamne. The ponderous machinery which the author employs to bring about the tragic outcome therefore serves simply to grind the plot to bits.

The prologue of the play, set before the walls of the beleaguered city, is a sort of *tableau*, in which we meet all the principal characters, including Doris, who makes the child Antipater swear upon her blood that he will avenge her upon Mariamne. At the end of the prologue, Menahem the Seer utters the mystic words which remain a riddle throughout the play. Act One takes place eight years later. It opens in an inner court of Herod's palace in front of the harem wall. Antipater has grown into a shrewd and revengeful young man. He comes upon the officer Soëm, who tells him that he means to scale the wall that very night to visit his beloved Glycera, the confidante of Mariamne. Antipater cunningly directs Soëm to the wrong window, with the result that the officer is surprised in Mariamne's bedroom by Herod, who, however, is not able to recognize the intruder before he escapes. The king's suspicions are allayed for the time; in the second act they are again aroused, and when, in Act Three, Soëm, by Antipater's advice, decides to flee the country, Herod is driven into a fury of jealousy. In

the meantime, Antipater has learned of the secret command once given to Pheroras by Herod. With this secret in his possession, Antipater feels himself master of the situation. Unfortunately, he is foiled in his revenge—at the last moment it dawns upon him that he is passionately in love with the beautiful Mariamne. So, when he has almost ruined her, he comes to her rescue and makes a clean breast of the entire affair of Soëm. But Herod will not believe him and goes off in a huff to build the Temple, leaving the lovelorn prince alone with Mariamne. She gratefully gives the young man her hand to kiss. To her surprise, he breaks into extravagant proffers of love—the consequence is that he meets with a violent repulse, and falls back upon his plans for revenge.

The issue is not long deferred. In the fourth act, an anonymous letter, skilfully interpreted by Salome, convinces Herod that Mariamne and Soëm were plotting to kill him. The king accuses Mariamne of the plot. The hitherto gentle queen turns fiercely upon him and berates him with all his misdeeds, including the affair of the secret command, of which she has evidently just been informed. She will now leave him, she declares, forever. "Don't go," says Herod. She will; she detests him. "Another step," says Herod, "and you are dead!" She takes another step. Herod calls the guard, and pointing his finger at Mariamne says, "Death." The queen is led off, and Herod is left to a long soliloquy, at the end of which he decides to recall the fatal command. Just then the door opens and the guard announces the queen is dead. In the shadow of the door is seen Antipater. He cries, "Mother, you have triumphed!"

The epilogue takes place 32 years after this. Antipater is by this time being tried for an attempt to poison his father. The poison is tried on a criminal; it works splendidly, and Antipater is held guilty of the charge. He now confesses all his crimes, he exults in his revenge, for it was he, he cries, who brought about the death of Mariamne, much as he loved her.

"Ha-ha," cries Herod, "then *you* have drunk the cup intended for me!" And he sends him to his death.

When the court has adjourned, the king collapses. News is brought that the populace is storming the palace. Herod comes to, and sees old Menahem silently standing before him. The prophet proceeds to unriddle his prophecy: while Herod was a good husband, he was more than a king, says the good Menahem, but when he turned the blessing God gave him in the form of Mariamne into a curse, he brought ruin upon his head. The king attempts to stab himself. Cries are heard off stage: "The tyrant is dying!" Indeed it is so, and when the rioters break into the room, Herod turns his eyes upon them and dies.

Thus ends what is doubtless among the most melodramatic of the Mariamne plays; although it is seen to be sadly deficient in the more solid qualities of workmanship, it must be conceded that from the point of view of action it leaves little to be desired. In the plot, and in the character of Herod, may be discerned a number of familiar elements—the king's pathetic nature, his vacillation, the final scene of lamentation, and the inevitable popular uprising. The scene in which Salome proffers friendship to Mariamne, who scornfully rejects it:

Gij, gij vergeeft?

Zóó schenkt de schorpioen vergiffenis

Wien eerst hij stak! Mevrouw! 'k eisch van den doorn

Geen druiventros, geen vijgen van de distel . . .

may be compared with the analogous scenes in Hardy, Tristan, and Voltaire. There are details also which are reminiscent of Calderón—the prophecy, the affair of the queen's bedroom, the sad song which Mariamne sings in the second scene of Act Three:

Daar klinkt een stemme

Zoo droevig mij,

Een stem die flustert:

Voorbij! Voorbij!

Much more striking are the novel aspects of the play, novel, that is, as regards Mariamne drama, for if we consider the drama in general, the affair of the wrong window, the rivalry of father and son, and the young man's passion for his beautiful enemy are situations which have grown hoary in service.

The fact that the author depends largely upon such clichés for the development of the Mariamne story indicates how far he must have been from sensing the dramatic richness of the source material. The motivation of these theatrical gewgaws should perhaps not be taken too seriously—it is far from adequate. The affair of Soëm and his Romeo-like escalade of the harem wall is much too light a circumstance to weigh so heavily in the plot. The fact that Herod will not believe the simple and truthful explanation which Antipater gives, makes the king out a good deal of a dunce. The way in which Soëm lets himself be ruled by Antipater after his initial betrayal is a bad parody of the Iago-Roderigo affair in *Othello*. Equally ingenuous is the logic which connects Soëm's flight with the charge that he was conspiring against the king with Mariamne, who, as Herod himself admits, has been so far a model wife. It is only by means of stage logic, also, that we can justify the king's growing suspicions in the absence of anything suspicious, and the unexpected manner in which he orders the queen's death.

In portraying the character of Antipater, the author outdoes himself. The character is made so complex, indeed, that the young prince may well be forgiven for being somewhat confused as to his intentions. In Act Three, after having arranged for the flight of Soëm in order to incriminate Mariamne, he at once proceeds to exonerate her. Whether he does this to impress the queen with his good intentions or as the result of a sudden access of passion, we cannot tell. But it is certain that in the scene in which his childish advances are repulsed by Mariamne, all his former subtlety goes for nothing, and he puts himself

completely at the mercy of his enemy. Such is the power of love—on the stage.

The last of the Mariamne plays under consideration is Stephen Phillips' *Herod*. Few plays have been more enthusiastically heralded, or received with greater applause. It was produced by Beerbohm Tree. He first played the title role on that "memorable evening of October 31, 1900, which sent a strain of living poetry vibrating through the prose-laden atmosphere of the modern English theatre."¹¹ Its strain of living poetry kindled both public and critics into instant fire. The critic of the *World* discerned in it "the elder Dumas speaking with the voice of Milton." *The Daily Graphic* was impressed with "an intensity which entitles it to rank with the works of Webster and Chapman"; the *Globe* asserted that its "grim imagination and fantasy may be compared with that of Webster," and the *Athenaeum* that it was "not unworthy of the author of the *Duchess of Malfi*." *The Morning Leader* declared it was "splendidly opulent in conception; perfect in construction; far beyond all contemporary English effort in the aptitude of its verse to the subject and to the stage." In short, Phillips was compared with Marlowe, Milton, Dante, and Shakespeare; this "almost dangerous unanimity of praise," wrote Edmund Gosse, he owed to "no fictitious aids, but to his inherent dignity, skill and devotion to beauty."¹²

In this paean of praise, now unhappily diminished to a whisper, we hear but one discordant note. In the *Quarterly Review* for April, 1902,¹³ Arthur Symonds takes issue with the other critics. He likes, he says, neither Phillips' verse, which he finds heavily mortgaged to the young Tennyson, nor his drama, which is insincere and theatrical. "In all Mr. Phillips' plays,"

¹¹ William Archer, *Poets of the Younger Generation* (1901), p. 352.

¹² *The Century* (January, 1901), p. 430. Foreign critics, however, were not so unanimous in their praise. See *Preussische Jahrbucher* for June, 1901, p. 539, and Grack, *op cit*, p. 114.

¹³ Pages 486 ff.

he writes, "the action is conceived first, the characters are fitted into it afterwards and the verse is embroidered upon a stiff and empty canvas, with a merely decorative intention." Those who praise Phillips, he continues, lose sight of the difference between what is dramatic and what is theatrically effective. And again, "Nothing that is said by Herod might not as well be said by Mariamne; nothing that is said by Herod and Mariamne might not better be said by a third person." And after this puzzling remark he concludes, "Herod is almost frankly a melodrama."

It must be conceded at the outset that in spite of the somewhat shrewish asperity of these remarks, posterity seems to have concurred with Symons rather than with his contemporaries. Fifteen years after the triumph of *Herod* and the overwhelming success of *Paolo and Francesca*, the applause had subsided so far that the author's death was scarcely marked by an obituary.

Stephen Phillips made his mark as a poet before he began his career as a dramatist. His predilection from the first was for the stage. He left Cambridge to join F. R. Benson's Shakspearean company, with which he spent a half-dozen years. While Gosse notes that the only notable success he achieved as an actor was in the role of the Ghost in *Hamlet*, there is no doubt that the practice he gained in speaking blank verse stood him in good stead in his later work. In 1900, three years after the publication of Phillips' *Poems*, George Alexander, the manager of the St. James, commissioned him to write *Paolo and Francesca*. The same year saw the production of *Herod*: Phillips suddenly became the most popular dramatic writer of his time. There were further triumphs. Alexander produced *Paolo and Francesca* in 1902; Beerbohm Tree produced *Ulysses* the same year, and four years later *Nero*, and in 1908, *Faust*. But critical and popular taste had already begun to turn. Of his later dramas,

Pietro of Siena (1910) and *The King* (1912), neither was given a production.

Symons blames the success of Phillips as a playwright upon the stupidity of the middle-class mind, which loves spectacle, and to which Phillips gave the illusion of "for once being in touch with an art 'dealing greatly with great passions.'" But however this may do for the public, one cannot dispose merely with a trenchant phrase of such critics as Archer and Gosse. Undoubtedly, *Herod* has its points. It is true that there appears to be some disproportion between its intrinsic merit and the extravagant praise it received. But its spectacular success is perhaps more justly referred to the situation in the English theatre at the time of its production than to the stupidity of the public.

There had been a century of marked subservience to French models. Dumas had said in the preface to *Un Père prodigue*: "A man without any value as a thinker, as a moralist, as a philosopher, as a writer, can be a man of the first order as a dramatic author . . . To be a master in this art, one must be clever in the business." Under the guidance of such masters, particularly of such masters as Scribe, clever artificers developed the popular English drama into forms that were mechanically perfect and perfectly unvital. Boucicault and Sardou became the tyrants of the English theatre; melodrama usurped the place left vacant by tragedy. Overworked hacks harnessed to playhouses ransacked all available sources, particularly French and German drama and French and English novels, for plot and incident that could be suited to the stage. The practice that had already grown up in the time of Voltaire kept pace with the demand for new plays: as late as the 1880's, adaptation from the French was regarded as the natural occupation of the English playwright.

Then the tide began to turn. A chief reason for the sterility

of the English playwrights was that they had succeeded in finding nothing to write about. But the rise of serious social drama abroad—the work of Hebbel, Ibsen, Hauptmann, Strindberg, Tolstoy, and Bjørnsen—could not fail to give them food for thought. Five of Ibsen's plays were acted in London in the years 1889 to 1893. It must not be imagined that the English received the new social drama with gratitude or enthusiasm; on the contrary, with very few exceptions the English critics—the same who hailed Stephen Phillips as *stupor mundi et immutator mirabilis*—vied with each other in vituperative dispraise of Ibsen.¹⁴ But there was no withstanding the current. After Pinero's *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* (1893), the way was prepared for the new theatre of Barrie, Shaw, Barker, and Galsworthy.

The opposition to Ibsen and the new "prose-laden" drama manifested itself in repeated demands for a display of English poetic genius in the theatre. But the great Victorian poets failed lamentably in their efforts to bring poetic tragedy upon the stage. It was obviously necessary to be a poet in order to write great tragedies, but it was also necessary to be "clever in the business." They were not. A number of turgid imitations of Webster, Massinger, and Fletcher, a meagre handful of historical and domestic dramas by such authors as Sheridan Knowles, Tom Taylor, and Watts Phillips were all that the partisans of the poetic drama could point to as evidence of the persistence of tragic genius in England.

The debut of Stephen Phillips was miraculously opportune. As a poet he had reaped the fruits of the reaction against Tennyson. As a dramatist, he found himself for the moment in complete control of the field. He was clever in the business; he was able to employ his facility in writing blank verse with a sure comprehension of what was effective on the stage. The

¹⁴ G. B. Shaw, *Quintessence of Ibsenism* (New York, 1917), pp. 3 ff.; Shaw's prefaces to his early plays give, in general, an excellent criticism of the English theatre in this period.

triumph of *Herod* and of *Paolo and Francesca* was hailed as a decisive vindication of native tragic genius. There was to be a Renaissance of English poetic tragedy. Phillips was its prophet. In him was resurgent the genius of Shakspeare and of Webster.

Of *Paolo and Francesca*, William Watson wrote, "Since the *Cenci*, no drama at all approaching it in the essential qualities of passion and beauty has been written, and this is, what the *Cenci* is not, an acting play."¹⁵ *Paolo and Francesca* is indeed an "acting play," and the qualities which made it successful in its day would probably make it successful in ours. The comparison with *The Cenci* is not a happy one. Phillips had undeniable ability, but not genius. His plays, like his poems, depend for their effect upon simple and powerful themes, in the choice of which he was invariably sagacious. But Phillips had neither a true insight, nor the ability to construct solidly for the stage. The slipshod manner of the first act of *Herod* could not escape the censure even of his fervent admirer William Archer, who is forced to apologize for it on the ground that the political basis of the play is not suited to the writer's poetic gifts.

Herod is a short play in three acts of blank verse. The plot is freely adapted from Josephus. It deals chiefly with the death of Aristobulus, which is closely followed by that of Mariamne. All the usual materials are, however, in some way employed—the rivalry of the royal houses, the secret command, the poison plot, and the various other intrigues, trials, and jealousies. These hardly serve to complicate the action, which very properly centres on a single and simple situation, that of a man who commits a terrible offense against the woman he loves. To the fact that the action is thus centred, we may attribute the greater part of whatever tragic effect the play is able to achieve.

The play is set in a single scene, a court of Herod's palace in Jerusalem. The king is not on stage when the curtain rises;

¹⁵ "Poetry of Mr Stephen Phillips," *Edinburgh Review* (January, 1900), p 151.

he is taking his noonday rest, watched over by Sohemus the Gaul¹⁶ and the counselor Gadias.¹⁷ There are shouts off stage—Aristobulus, the new high priest, enters from the sacrifice at the head of a procession, in the company of Mariamne. Herod now appears and silently assumes the throne. There are cheers for Aristobulus. The procession withdraws. Then Herod for the first time speaks. In his midnight wanderings, he tells Gadias, he has heard of a child who is to be king of the Jews—can it be Aristobulus who was meant? Messengers enter with news of Antony's death; then come captains full of counsel. Herod has already made up his mind what to do; he is leaving for Caesar's camp that very night. Gadias privately reminds him of the danger of leaving Aristobulus behind. As the boy passes on his way to the swimming pool, Herod hands Sohemus his signet, and signs to him to follow Aristobulus. The queen now appears and invites her husband to come to her apartment. Under the circumstances, she finds him a little diffident; half-way to her room, he remembers he has something important to attend to at the pool, on the instant. But Mariamne persuades him that nothing can be important at this moment, and so, with music, they go.

The day darkens. In the cool of evening, Cypros and Salome come forth to conspire. They have a phial of poison, and speak of a certain astrologer who has predicted that Herod would become famous, but would kill the thing that most he loves. Indeed, says Cypros, she intends to have Mariamne's life.

When the two women have gone, the king and queen enter in the soft mood of love's surfeit. Mariamne tells her husband she loves him because of his strength and greatness; she is ex-

¹⁶ In the *Jewish War*, the Gauls are said to have drowned Aristobulus, in this play Sohemus is made to drown Aristobulus. *argal*, Sohemus is a Gaul. Grack makes the absurd suggestion that Phillips confused Gaul with Galilean. (Grack, *op. cit.*, p. 124.)

¹⁷ Gadias was actually a friend of Herod, said to have been slain by him after Mariamne's death.

alted in his love—but she warns him to do nothing which may hurt her soul; in such a case, she says, her love would die in an instant. At once there come sounds of mourning, and Aristobulus is brought in, dead. The queen swoons. The king sets off for Rhodes. When she comes to, the queen questions Sohemus. He promptly reveals the guilt of Herod.

When Herod returns triumphantly in Act Two, Mariamne will have no more to do with him. Herod laments his ill fortune and retires to his room. As the cupbearer passes with the posset which the queen, according to custom, has prepared for Herod, Cypros surreptitiously empties her poison into the cup. Then she accuses Mariamne of having poisoned it. Herod is warned by the cupbearer, becomes furious, and orders Mariamne to drink the draught. She takes lyric farewell of Jerusalem; she raises the cup to her lips—the king dashes it from her hand. Immediately, there is a crash at the gates. The city is up in arms. Sohemus runs out and is mortally wounded; reinforcements are summoned; the crowd rushes in. But Herod quiets the people, speaks of his success at Rhodes, and orders the Temple rebuilt. He then bares his breast for the rioters to strike. They kiss his garments.

The scene with Mariamne continues. Herod protests his great love for her. She reproaches him with the conditional death sentence he confided to Sohemus.¹⁸ Sohemus is brought in. He mutters the enigmatic words, "Forgive me, Herod," and dies. Herod orders Mariamne executed: haste is made to kill her before he changes his mind. In fact, he changes his mind at once, but at this moment envoys arrive from Rome with news of further favors. When Herod goes joyfully to tell Mariamne of them, she is dead.

A crowd of priests and artisans surrounds the king at the opening of the last act. He has gone mad, and insists on pre-

¹⁸ There has been no previous mention of this in the play

tending that the queen is still alive. Vainly they seek to distract him with plans and jewels—he desires only to see Mariamne. When she is at last brought in, embalmed, he falls into a catalepsy. Envoys arrive with presents from Caesar; he does not see them, he cannot take his eyes from the corpse of Mariamne. His physician, like the Doctor of the Moralities, ends the play with the reflection that those who have power must pay for it.

The most striking thing about the structure of this play is the difference between the first two acts and the third. The former are full of action—alarms, uprisings, plots, and deaths. The last act is barren of action. It is the calm after the storm. It is also the conventional last act of French Renaissance tragedy. But it is questionable whether a modern three-act play can be constructed after this pattern without serious disproportion. The last act of *Herod* impresses one as nothing more than a repetitious postscript. The play ends with Act Two.

Undoubtedly, Phillips meant Herod to be the central figure of the drama; it must have been with this intention that he employed the last act for the description of Herod's sorrow. But, by the time half the play has elapsed, it is Mariamne who becomes the chief character. While Herod's attitudes are unchanged from one end of the play to the other, Mariamne is a developing figure, and upon her actions and reactions the attention is necessarily focused. She moves against an abiding background of Herod; when she dies, the play is at an end. By a Herculean effort, conceivably, the author might have brought Herod once more to the fore, and by giving him new and important action in Act Three, preserved the balance of the play. It is conceivable, but, as a matter of fact, the author had nothing to present in the third act save a tableau.

The theme of the tragedy, as we are reminded in the curtain speech, is the disastrous effect upon a man's life of his lust for power. The Doctor tells us,

To me it seems that they who grasp the world,
The kingdom and the power and the glory,
Must pay with deepest misery of spirit.

In order to maintain his station, Herod must resort to extreme measures. This is a clear and forceful motive, and Phillips underscores it cleverly by exaggerating the historical importance of Aristobulus to the point where he becomes a positive menace to the government, and any dictator would consider it his duty to remove him. His sister is very fond of Aristobulus: this, too, is essential; Phillips underscores it by exaggerating Mariamne's love for her brother almost to the point of abnormality:

MARIAMNE: O thou art holy, child.
About thee is the sound of rushing wings
And a breathing as of angels thro' thy hair.
Yet, brother, even now forget me not.

ARISTOBULUS: O Mariamne, tell me not. I am tired.

Aristobulus evidently finds her affection tiresome, for when she goes to kiss him, he repeats

O sister, kiss me not. I am tired.

Herod is not moved to jealousy by this exaggerated attachment of his wife for her brother. He is thinking in terms of politics; the strange scene between Mariamne and Aristobulus is simply dismissed and no more said about it. The exposition is thus managed adroitly but not profoundly: the plot falls into a pattern which has resulted in countless melodramas—a man loves a woman whose brother is his enemy. In this well-explored situation, we should expect the king, who is not supposed to be a fool, to feel himself torn between his love for Mariamne and his love of power, or duty to his country. At any rate, he should feel himself faced with a serious problem. This is the core of the play, and the fact that Herod does not seem conscious of it obviously works to his disadvantage as a character.

This is elementary, and could not fail to be observed. In the detailed appreciation included in his *Poets of the Younger Generation*, William Archer recognizes the fact that "Herod's determination to murder Mariamne's brother offers opportunities for soul-searching which Mr. Phillips ignores. A man does not resolve upon such an action without some balancing of motives and probabilities." The fact is that Phillips probably meant Herod to make a summary decision with regard to Aristobulus for the purpose of having him discover, too late, that his statesmanship was likely to interfere with his love life. Thus, to pile up the effect of the discovery, the author endows the king with a one-track mind. When the order to drown Aristobulus has been given, and Herod is about to retire with Mariamne, knowing that her brother is at that very moment in mortal danger, he realizes for the first time the difficulty he is getting himself into, and mutters something about "important business," "some necessary violence," and "the pool." Similarly, after he has changed his mind about executing Mariamne, he proceeds to forget all about her when the envoys arrive from Rome, and is positively astonished to find that she has already been put to death.

The difficulty with this interpretation of Herod's mental processes is that it results in a somewhat flimsy character. If his mind is so strongly bent upon politics, he should simply brush Mariamne aside when she becomes obstreperous. But if he burns all the time with such love for her that his life is absolutely emptied when she stops loving him—

Where's now the boast, the glory, O where now?

What was this triumph but in the telling of it to you. . .

I arise

And spill the wine of glory on the ground:

I turn my face into the night.

—it is inconceivable that he should murder her brother without realizing the probable effect upon her.

Herod, then, comes off none too well in the play. But Mariamne comes off no better. We may pass over the artificiality of the love scenes,

HEROD: That star is languorous with divine excess!

MARIAMNE: O world of wearied passion dimly bright!

HEROD: Now the armed man doth lay his armour by,
 And now the husband hasteth to his wife. . .

together with the new note that creeps mysteriously into this idyll,

MARIAMNE: The brother to the sister maketh home.

HEROD: Now cometh the old lion from the pool—

MARIAMNE: And the young lion having drunk enough—

as *fin-de-siècle* hocus-pocus, but how are we to dispose of Mariamne's sudden changes of temper? She is at first completely wrapped up in her brother, to the point where she scarcely notices her husband. On her next appearance, she all but drags the reluctant Herod to her bed. In the next scene, she interrupts his protestations of love with admonitions as to the fragility of her own deathless passion—at a moment when nothing should be further from her mind. The fact is that Mariamne is no true character. She is made to adore Aristobulus to furnish a motive; her noonday love for Herod burns at fever heat only to furnish a contrast; her ill-timed warnings serve but to forebode disaster. She is obviously pushed about without any consideration for the integrity of her character or the probability of her actions, simply to serve the author's needs. As she is not required to do anything about Aristobulus until she discovers who killed him, she does not bother even to inquire how it happened that he was drowned, until Gadias and Sohemus all but force the truth upon her. Similarly, as Sohemus is required by the plot to confess his share in the crime, he does so at once without wasting time, as if it were the most natural

HEROD: I'll break this barrier down as I have others.

MARIAMNE: Never—never!

HEROD: When first I wooed was I
Not blood-stained?

MARIAMNE: Not with blood of his!

HEROD: O still
You shall forget him. He is dead and I
Live still, and glow and sigh and burn for you.

MARIAMNE: Almost I am moved to laughter at that passion
Which once could sway and thrill me to the bone.
Terrible when we laugh at what we loved!

HEROD: My brain, my brain, I shall go mad! One kiss!

MARIAMNE. Never!

HEROD: One touch!

MARIAMNE: No more.

HEROD: One word!

MARIAMNE: Farewell.

William Archer, like Dick Easy, would rather have composed this one strong word than have been the author of the *Aeneid*. "This 'farewell,'" he writes, "a true dramatic invention if there ever was one, is the culminating point of a noble and poignant scene. It is followed by a speech which recalls Othello's valediction."¹⁹

O! since my birth I have lived in fierce contrast,
For ever half in lightning, half in gloom;
The brighter still the public brilliance glows
The deeper falls the shadow of the hearth. . .

Then follow the lines about spilling the wine of glory on the ground, which have already been quoted. Perhaps the passage will recall to the reader Othello's valediction.

The second act of *Herod* must have made a fine effect upon the stage. It is well constructed, and in scope corresponds more

¹⁹ Archer, *Poets of the Younger Generation*, p. 349

or less with the entire action of the ordinary Mariamne play. Beginning with the return from Rhodes, it runs the entire gamut of the chilly reception, the poison plot, the affair of the secret command, the hero's vacillation, the uprising, the death of Sohemus, and the death of Mariamne. These incidents, crowded as they are together in a single act, are necessarily somewhat sketchily dealt with, but they follow each other in breathless succession and rise to a sure climax. The chilly reception is treated at length: it concerns the main action. The other incidents serve little purpose, for Herod kills his wife only because she hates him, and he stands ready to forgive her for whatever she is supposed to have done, at the slightest sign that she will be reconciled to him. The formula is basically the same as that of Tristan.

The popular uprising serves a triple purpose. It beclouds the issues by furnishing a political motive for Mariamne's death; it furnishes a spectacle; it interrupts a scene which can go no further. When Herod has dashed the poisoned cup from Mariamne's hand, the climax is such that it can be capped only by a thunderbolt, or the curtain. Phillips gives us the thunderbolt in the form of a crash at the palace gates, sends the actors scurrying, and fills the stage with uproar. The episode takes up a reasonable interval and gives Herod an opportunity for some melodramatic posturing. We can then once more turn our attention to Mariamne. This is obviously not badly arranged from a theatrical point of view; it has the added advantage of disposing neatly of Sohemus without further bloodying Herod's hands. It may be objected that the uprising is not well motivated, since Aristobulus has been dead some time and no good reason can be assigned for the indignation of the populace at this juncture. None the less, the incident is effective; indeed, indispensable in the action as it is developed.

The uprising, of which we hear some faint choral rumblings in Dolce's *Marianna*, thus bursts, three and a half centuries later,

into plain view. It is a traditional attribute of Mariamne drama. In fact, Josephus tells us of several uprisings, mostly in consequence of the king's sacrilegious practices. None of these involves Aristobulus or Mariamne, though mention is made of the possibility of an uprising at the time of the execution of Mariamne. The popular reaction to the injustice of a tyrant was, however, a cliché of the classical stage, a means of enhancing the enormity of the tyrant's behavior by reference to the outraged feelings of the disinterested multitude. In *Octavia*, the Romans threaten to burn Nero's palace out of sympathy with the maltreated Octavia, as in Sophocles' *Antigone* the Thebans cry out against the brutal sentence pronounced by Creon against Antigone. In Martelli's *Tullia*, there is, similarly, an uprising against Lucio, the Orestes of the play: many examples may be collected of the popular uprising in the drama of the Renaissance.

In Dolce's *Marianna*, the revolt amounts to no more than the exclamations of the chorus at the barbarity of Herod. In *La Mariane*, Herod himself calls rhetorically upon the people to rise and crush him. By the time of Voltaire's *Mariamne*, they actually attempt to do so, off stage, under the leadership of Sohême; they do as much, and somewhat more, in Scévola's *Erode*. On the English stage, long before the time of Voltaire, the young princes in *Herod and Antipater* had led an uprising against their tyrannical father. But the riot which bursts upon the stage in Phillips' *Herod* was probably started on its way by Hebbel, who depicts its inception but forbears to give us any more than some descriptions of its progress. Hebbel's uprising had far-reaching results. We may find other repercussions of it in the plays of Neumeister, Iliowizi, and Maaldrunk.

Almost all the material in *Herod* is derived from Josephus, but a good deal of ingenious telescoping and transposition is necessary to bring the murder of Aristobulus and the death of Mariamne within the compass of a single action. In order to do this, Phillips is forced to place the death of Aristobulus after

that of Antony; hard upon it comes the voyage to Rhodes. The rest follows pretty much the usual pattern. The incidents of the last act are invented from hints out of Josephus. The counselor Gadias carries on the traditional role of Voltaire's Mazael. Sohemus is given a new nationality.

The great astrologer referred to by Cypros, who predicted that Herod would kill "that thing which most he loves," can have been none other than the soothsayer who frightened Calderón's Mariene: no other authority exists for this prophecy.²⁰ The extended scene of lamentation at the end of the play is, we have noted, in the best Renaissance tradition—it is not unlikely that Phillips derived it from either Tristan or Voltaire. The introduction of the embalmed corpse of Mariamne is strongly reminiscent of the last act of the *Duke of Milan*. It is not possible to say where Phillips got the idea of making the fulcrum of the action the murder of Aristobulus. It may have been an original thought. Many of the Mariamne plays emphasize the importance of Aristobulus' murder, but in no play before that of Phillips' does this murder seem to have so important a part as in Hebbel's *Herodes*. Upon the close resemblance between Phillips' Mariamne and Hebbel's, it is hardly necessary to dwell.

It appears, then, that for all his air of originality, Phillips levied important contributions upon his predecessors. Doubtless, in some respects he improved upon them, though by no means upon the best of them. His talent was eclectic. It was not critical in any profound sense. This much he had in common with the spirit of his time and country; and perhaps in these terms we can account most readily for the overwhelming success of *Herod* in its day and the oblivion into which it has since sunk. The play came at a marvelously opportune moment in the course of English drama. It was an effective play, splendidly staged and splendidly cast. It seemed a triumphant affirmation of the

²⁰ The hero threatened by a dire prophecy became in time a favorite with Phillips.

enduring vitality of the poetic tragedy which England had been so persistently and so hopelessly trying to recover since the close of the Golden Age of its theatre. To those who ardently desired it to be what they hoped—the harbinger of a genuine poetic revival on the stage—it gave for a time a happy illusion of fulfillment. It was a mirage. And those who had hailed it with open-mouthed wonder hardly had time to take stock of this marvel before they began to wonder what it was precisely that they had seen.

Of Clemence Dane's *Herod and Mariamne*,²¹ it may be sufficient to remark that while it makes some superficial changes in its original, it hardly amounts to more than a free translation of Hebbel's *Herodes und Mariamne*. With the exception of Miss Dane's play, no new tragedy based upon the story in Josephus has come to the stage since Phillips' *Herod*.

²¹ Winifred Ashton, *Herod and Mariamne* (New York, 1938). Produced October 26, 1938 at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

EPILOGUE

THE importance of Josephus' attitude toward Herod, the nature of the account of Herod in the Gospel, and its interpretation in the Mysteries, as predisposing causes in the development of the Mariamne story should certainly not be overestimated. But there is no doubt of the existence of a widespread tendency among dramatists to accept Herod as a type fixed by sacred history, a character whom it would be idle or even impious to analyze. The normal result of such a tendency, particularly under the Senecan influences which for a time dominated the tragic stage, was the adaptation of the story in Josephus as a more or less conventional tragedy of persecution, with Herod in the role of tyrant. In this guise, the forms which the Mariamne dramas were to take in succeeding ages were differentiated almost simultaneously in the sixteenth century—in Dolce's *Marianna*, a tragedy, and in Sachs' *Herodes*, a history play.

In the early seventeenth century, the theme received an extraordinary development at the hands of Hardy and Tristan. The tradition established by them passed through Voltaire, on the one hand, to Scevola, to Fenton on the other. At the end of this tradition stands the *Herodes und Mariamne* of Hebbel, unquestionably the most considerable achievement in the field since the time of Tristan.

Apart from this, we may trace several lines of development, in the course of which a good many of the possibilities of the theme were worked out in some fashion. Of the plays thus produced, some are mere spectacles; others are tragedies based upon motives of revenge or ambition; some are plays of jealousy.

Many of these plays are interesting; few have any considerable value. A good deal of ingenuity has been expended in these adaptations of the Mariamne story, all sorts of trivialities have been gone into, all sorts of innovations made, borrowed, re-shaped and re-borrowed, but it may justly be observed that the majority of the dramatists who have handled the theme have chiefly demonstrated their ingenuity in getting away from the tragic conflict, rather than in mastering it.

Under these circumstances, the question of why the story has proved itself so generally fascinating to dramatists becomes somewhat puzzling. It is, of course, the type of story which permits us to rejoice in the ultimate discomfiture of an unduly aggressive character. This is a rather primitive formula in the drama, but undoubtedly it conforms with a profound human desire, and we cannot doubt its popularity in every age. There appears, however, to be considerably more in the Mariamne story than this.

As we have seen, the result of Hardy's interpretation was to shift dramatic sympathy from the persecuted to the persecutor, to emphasize the pathetic character of Herod, and so to transform a bloody tale into a character study of tragic proportions. Of the best of the Mariamne plays after Hardy, not all conform to this pattern, but none of them fails to take some cognizance of it, and most of them are profoundly influenced by it.

The desire to look more deeply into the character of the evil-doer, exemplified in Tristan's treatment of Herod, does not, of course, stand by itself. It is an example of a trend which became progressively more significant in literature and in the drama after the Renaissance. Literature which bases its judgments chiefly upon abstract moral principles is usually content with a conventional depiction of human types. When in the late Renaissance this typically mediaeval habit of thought was gradually discarded in favor of judgments based upon the exercise of the intellectual rather than the ethical faculties, modern literature

may be said to have begun. In the drama, the change became perceptible in an impetus toward the elucidation of the springs of human action, the clarification of the distinction between what men seem to be and what they are, which has given rise to whatever is best and most noteworthy in the theatre.

The Mariamne theme owes its most fruitful development to the interpretation given it by Tristan. Evidently, more than one writer has felt that this interpretation uncovers certain aspects of the story which are not immediately apparent and yet which give it its peculiarly illusive poignancy—namely: that the supposedly tyrannical Herod is himself no free agent, but from first to last completely in the hands of a superior necessity which forces him not only to exhibit his aggressiveness against the world, but ultimately to turn his aggression upon himself; further, that for reasons inherent in his character he has created, and must continue to create, situations in which he is certain to suffer. This view has sometimes been formulated in terms of destiny. In our day it would ordinarily be felt to involve a psychological problem. We cannot pretend that any dramatist has made a thoroughgoing study of Herod from this point of view. It is not easy for a playwright to identify himself very closely with such a character as Herod, and the difficulty of identification is likely to result in some uncertainty in treatment. But it is fairly evident from the turn given the story by such writers as Hardy, Tristan, and Hebbel that it is something of this sort they had in mind to convey.

Let us pursue the implications of the hypothesis some steps further. In the mind of Herod, the identification of Mariamne with himself is apparently so complete that he cannot abide the thought that she may survive him. It is obvious that such love can be no other than self-love. Neumeister's Herod makes an interesting declaration on this point. Mariamne, he says in effect, is his own softer side, his good and merciful side. This is, of course, a manner of speaking, but one wonders whether

it is not also a sound intuition on the part of the dramatist. For it is quite possible to think of Neumeister's Mariamne as a part of Herod—a particularly refractory part of him—just as Lady Macbeth may be considered a significant side of Macbeth's personality, and Iago a part of Othello. It is congruous with such an hypothesis that Herod should deem it natural for Mariamne to die simultaneously with him: both Calderón and Hebbel cause him to express himself to this effect. But, as it turns out, Mariamne is a part of Herod only in the mind of Herod. She does not acquiesce in his identification. She splits herself off from him; and for the widening rift between the two personalities, it is significant that Herod himself is to blame. Moreover, as this rift widens, Mariamne begins to stand in relation to her husband in the guise of a living reproach which becomes progressively more poignant.

His love for her is very great. Her constant approval of him is therefore a condition of his happiness; he is particularly vulnerable with regard to her. As under these circumstances he insists upon becoming guilty of actions which he knows she cannot possibly approve, she becomes for him an exquisite means of self-torture. Although Herod has deliberately put himself in this position, he cannot rest there. It is necessary for his peace of mind that he prove to himself that Mariamne tortures him not because he has so willed it, but because she is an evil woman and desires to injure him.

However unusual these psychic goings-on may seem, they have at least the merit of furnishing us with some clues to the extraordinary behavior of Herod. Whether this partial interpretation is in a sufficient relation with what may be termed the "facts," is a question the reader will decide for himself. It is important for our purposes only to observe that before the Mariamne story can acquire any considerable significance on the stage, a rather thorough interpretation of Herod's behavior must underlie the action.

This much is clear—the germ of the action is a psychic conflict. It has an objective counterpart. The forces which brought Herod and Mariamne together in the first instance, inevitably work toward the disruption of their union. The king feels himself under the necessity of destroying the Maccabeans with whom he found it necessary to ally himself. The queen cannot passively contemplate the succession of crimes of which her husband is guilty, particularly as they touch her closely. Notwithstanding these circumstances, the king is passionately in love with her, and insists on retaining the full measure of her affection.

It is evident that a catastrophe is inherent in this situation. The particular events by which it is brought about are described in detail by Josephus. A number of playwrights have found them difficult, improbable, or unpleasant to deal with, and have accordingly altered or dispensed with them. Thus, for example, Voltaire and Scevola have dispensed with the affair of the secret command, and Phillips has given it a marginal place so precarious that he might better have omitted it entirely. But neither Voltaire nor Scevola has at all improved the plot by substituting a conventionally triangular situation for the affair which impressed Josephus so much that in the *Antiquities* he caused the king to go through it twice.

The plot given us by Josephus involves primarily two characters: it is in its essence bilateral in structure. The most successful attempts to deal with it on the stage have preserved this pattern. We may note that with very few exceptions whatever has been done to impose upon it a triangular or quadrilateral shape has been unfortunate in result. The reasons why dramatists have been at pains to provide Mariamne with a lover, Herod with a rival, and Salome with romantic motives for furthering the ruin of Mariamne are not at all complex. It seems probable that they are ultimately founded upon some inability to grasp the essence of the story, perhaps an aversion for some of its details, and certainly an unwillingness to cope with its difficulties.

These difficulties are of several sorts; principally they involve questions of balance, motivation, and verisimilitude. They appear to arise chiefly out of the attempt to treat the neurotic king as if he were a normal but very unpleasant person. Thus considered, the king has a tendency to spoil the play by taking on an evil guise. We have seen to what lengths Voltaire went to avoid this result. In the usual course of events, the greater part of the action necessarily devolves upon Herod. As almost all his actions are aggressive in nature, the conflict naturally tends to become one-sided, until in an extreme case, it takes the form of a string of episodes dominated by the unpleasant character of the tyrant. For a proper equilibration of the action, however, it is necessary that Herod be not much stronger in character than Mariamne and hardly less sympathetic.

Two simple methods of balancing the plot have been extensively used. One involves the introduction of the scheming Alexandra as a counterpoise to Herod. This may result in placing Mariamne in a neutral or fulcral position; we may observe the effect quite clearly in Neumeister's play. As Mariamne is, in such a case, hardly involved in the conflict, it is likely that the dramatist will cause her to walk out of it in some implausible manner—unless he himself departs from his formula. The other method attempts to lighten Herod's villainies by involving in the plot a character who shall bear some part of the onus of bringing about the catastrophe. Josephus indicates Salome as a likely villain; we have seen widespread use made of her in this capacity, both alone and in conjunction with others. Her role is almost always the same: she is made to play upon the king's fears and suspicions until he is forced into the fatal step.

Salome is a useful character. She exemplifies, in part, the necessity motivating the actions of the king; she serves to bring out in her scenes with Mariamne certain aspects of the queen's character which might otherwise remain doubtful. But her usefulness is fraught with grave drawbacks. Her activity as an

individual, if she is obtrusive, tends to obscure the conflict between the principals, bringing into prominence an unsympathetic and uninteresting character who is, on the whole, not very important save as a means of accelerating the denouement. The difficulty is aggravated when it is sought to motivate Salome's actions by means of causes extraneous to the basic conflict, for example, by making Mariamne and Salome rivals in love. Such a scheme necessarily involves some elaboration of the relation of Mariamne to a lover other than Herod. When this relationship is made to assume importance, as in the plays of Scevola, Pordage, or Lozano, it naturally works to destroy the complex relation of Herod and Mariamne which it should be the first care of the dramatist to preserve. If it is not important, it is likely to be a nuisance. Salome's love scenes are in any case a nuisance.

The use of these auxiliary characters, then, calls for great delicacy in handling. When the main conflict is adequately conceived, it is most unlikely that the plot will be out of balance. Such characters as Alexandra, Salome, Cypros, and Pheroras may be used advantageously to illustrate the conflict. This is perhaps the limit of their usefulness.

The main action develops, normally, through two groups of events. The first is necessary to motivate the change in Mariamne. The second must furnish Herod with a pretext for putting her to death. The chief problem with regard to the dramatization of these events is one of verisimilitude. Doubtless the entire action is, and must remain, out of the ordinary. It is not necessary that it be rendered ordinary. It is necessary only that in some fashion it be rendered plausible. No matter how extraordinary the events may be, they will appear plausible if they are related to each other in a necessary sequence which springs from an understandable cause.

The first action is Herod's; it is such as to alienate Mariamne from him. In Phillips' play, this action is the murder of Aris-

tobulus, a climactic incident. The incident is capable of forceful motivation and, in turn, furnishes an unquestionable motive for the queen's change of heart. It appears to spring from a political necessity; at the same time, it raises serious doubts as to Herod's true attitude toward Mariamne. It makes the king culpable, but not entirely inexcusable: in short, it raises questions, and is thus a most useful method of initiating the conflict. In the plays of Hebbel and of Phillips, the murder of Aristobulus is very properly given a most important place. Its importance appears to have been more dimly felt by Dolce, Hardy, and Tristan, who present its causal aspect in the conventional manner of Senecan revenge tragedy. In a large number of plays, it is muddled away among the many crimes of Herod.

The secret command may be rationalized as a consequence of the murder of Aristobulus, or it may be treated as an independent incident. In every case, its effectiveness depends upon adequate preparation, for its motives can hardly be self-evident. Obviously, the motives behind the giving of the command must be in some relation to those that result in the catastrophe; very likely they are the same. It will hardly be sufficient to describe them as jealousy: the question will remain, what are the motives of this extraordinary jealousy? The abnormal nature of Herod's attachment to Mariamne is implicit in the secret command; but it is unlikely that the command will make much sense unless its motives are clarified in psychological rather than in romantic or political terms.

If one adopts a matter-of-fact attitude with regard to the king's action, it becomes extremely difficult to render it plausible. Unless Herod has cogent reasons for believing that his wife is likely to become the mistress of Antony or of Caesar, his action in putting her under conditional sentence of death will appear preposterous. For this reason, doubtless, Calderón put Octavius into his play as the visible cause of Herod's anxiety. We have seen the result. But in Lozano's play, as in so

many others, Antony is present in name only, and the sight of Herod gnashing his teeth at the thought that an imaginary Antony possesses an imaginary portrait of Mariamne cannot but provoke a smile.

The case is not much improved if we assume that Herod's action proceeds from rational motives of a political nature. Let us suppose that Herod is given adequate reason to suspect that Alexandra has plotted to ruin him; that Mariamne has concurred in the plot, and has offered herself to Antony as his reward for consummating Herod's ruin. It then becomes credible that the king will attempt to thwart this plan in the only way open to him, that is, through the secret command. Unfortunately, this interpretation, logical though it may be, offers little of dramatic interest. For its purposes the king and queen must stand not in the relation of unhappy lovers, but of ruthless antagonists. The shrewd king who can cold-bloodedly give such an order out of political motives may interest us as an historical character, but he cannot move us as a tragic figure. If the king and queen evince a constant desire to cut each other's throats, we can sympathize only with their wishes.

It is essential to the tragedy that the king's order proceed from the heart, not the brain. Indeed, when we consider the improbability of such a command being executed, much less kept secret, it is obvious that it could not have issued from a brain of any proportions as the result of a rational process.

The disclosure of the command, in whatever way it is managed, is ordinarily calculated to bring about a profound change in Mariamne. Undeniably, the discovery that her husband has put her under the sword must cause Mariamne to look upon him with an altered eye. But the instantaneous change from love to hate cannot be accepted as anything more than a conventional representation of what might conceivably take place in her. In plays such as that of *Tristan*, the point of attack is so placed that the scene need not be depicted—a very con-

siderable advantage, for the representation of such a change can never be a simple matter, even if we assume that the change is necessary or possible.

A number of playwrights have been unwilling to admit such a possibility. Massinger's *Marcella* and Calderón's *Mariene* are depicted as highly resentful of the command, and they determine to teach their husbands a lesson, but their love does not change to hatred. Neumeister's heroine leaves her husband without ceasing to love him. Tirso's *Mariadnes* becomes furious, yet she declares she would have killed herself had Herod died. From these romantic interpretations to Hebbel's reconstruction is not a long step. In *Herodes und Mariamne*, Mariamne's love does not suddenly turn to hatred. Essentially her wish is the same as Herod's: she intends not to survive him; but she cannot bear his distrust and his arrogance in attempting to force the issue. She insists, in short, that he act in accordance with the compulsions of her neurosis rather than his own.

We cannot lose sight of the fact that the reactions of Hebbel's Mariamne become plausible only in clinical terms. The reaction of a normal woman to the disclosure of Herod's command would probably be not humiliation so much as fear. A normal Mariamne would very likely feel that she was married to a dangerously unbalanced man; she might think of escaping from him; she would hardly wish to tease him into a fury. Hebbel's Mariamne, however, in the latter part of the play, wishes Herod to kill her. Her desire seems very noble to Titus; in general it will seem pathological. But Hebbel has no intention of studying his characters as pathological cases. He treats Herod as if the king were acting ignobly in a normal situation. This puts the action at once in a false light, and as the author develops Mariamne's subsequent conduct as if it were the normal and predictable reaction of a fine woman, the play depends for its meagre reality upon our unaided intuitions.

The effect of the secret command upon Mariamne will de-

pend, of course, upon the sort of person she is. Whatever her reaction may be, it is somewhat naïve to expect her to be profoundly shocked, unless she has been very much a stranger to her husband. It is probable that the disclosure of the command will confirm what she already knows or suspects. If she already fears Herod, her fears will be augmented. If she is disposed to suffer, she will somehow feel more closely drawn to him. In any case, the chief importance of Mariamne's first reaction is in its repercussion upon Herod.

The second group of events, the proximate cause of the catastrophe, may be simple or quite complex. The nucleus of this action is, ordinarily, Herod's discovery that Mariamne knows his secret. The scene in which this is developed usually involves some sort of quarrel; in the course of it, Mariamne reproaches Herod with the secret command; the king at once infers that Mariamne has been unfaithful to him and proceeds to punish everyone very severely, most of all himself.

The king's inference is neither necessary nor plausible. Obviously, the disclosure might have been made for any of a number of reasons. The fact that the king will consider none but the most painful and most improbable one serves to give us some insight into his character. According to his rationalization, he gave the command in the first place because he suspected Antony; as soon as he finds his fears groundless in this direction, he turns them in another. One would say he was determined to find reasons for doubting his wife's fidelity.

If the dramatist treats Herod as a man of normal desires though somewhat inclined to jealousy, he is faced with the problem of making the king's inference plausible. A chain of predisposing causes is usually set up for this purpose—the chilly reception, Salome's insinuations, the cupbearer's accusation, and so on. Unfortunately, the chain in every case parts at its weak link, the assumption that the viceroy would not betray the secret unless he were Mariamne's lover.

All sorts of expedients have been devised to remedy or obscure this deficiency. The Spanish playwrights cause Herod to burst in upon scenes calculated to arouse the jealousy of a saint. Maaldrink devotes a good part of his play to the business of getting Sohemus into Mariamne's bedroom. Rives employs a lost bracelet to cast suspicion upon Joseph. Lozano makes Josef and Mariamne lovers. But all this is little to the purpose: few of these plays make a tragic effect. In some cases the result is so far from what we expect of the Mariamne story that we wonder why the playwright found it necessary to wade through its intricacies; he has arrived at a situation so banal that it seems scarcely worth the trouble of interpolating new names into the formula.

As the difficulty is fundamental, it is probable that the scenes involving the secret command and its consequences will not play smoothly in any plot sequence in which Herod is depicted as a man more or less normally engaged in the pursuit of happiness. A person of normal desires would probably never think of giving such a command. A person of normal intelligence would realize that the command had little possibility of execution and involved considerable probability of disclosure. We have no reason to disparage Herod's intelligence. What then could have been his motive in giving such an order?

To answer this question is to interpret the entire story. Let us assume that Herod desires the command to be revealed to Mariamne, that this is, in fact, his chief motive in giving it. The remainder of Herod's known actions with regard to Mariamne then become in a measure comprehensible, though on a somewhat peculiar basis, namely: that his behavior is generally dictated by a desire to provoke the aggression of the woman he loves. Such a desire would not readily reach the level of consciousness. It would take the form perhaps of a nameless compulsion, akin to that of a little boy who persists in provoking his mother into hurting him. It may seem preposterous to accuse

a grown man of acting in accordance with such motives—possibly we tend to flatter ourselves with inflated ideas as to the rationality of adult behavior. But we are faced with the fact that Herod actually behaves in a rather childish fashion. Our assumption, at least, is a way of coming at the heart of the tragedy. For the childish desire has terrible consequences.

Its first consequence is the needless murder of Aristobulus, rationalized as a political necessity. The secret command is rationalized in another and less satisfactory fashion. Instinctively, the king chooses a weak character to entrust with it: the affair turns out just as one might expect. Then Salome takes a hand in the game, and the cupbearer's accusation detonates the situation the king has so carefully prepared.

The improbability of the cupbearer's accusation has led a number of dramatists to omit it from the plot. It is not easy to imagine, in normal circumstances, that an intelligent person should credit such a charge in the absence of any evidence to support it. Our hypothesis, however, makes it clear that Herod cannot dismiss the accusation. On the contrary, as all his efforts have been aimed at provoking Mariamne to hurt him, he finds it imperative to elicit proof that she has done so. He fails in this. But he does elicit evidence that Sohemus has betrayed his secret. It is predictable that the king will put the worst possible construction upon this betrayal. It is equally predictable that he will desire to exhibit his painful position to the world. In fact, he convokes judges and jury and insists that they believe he is a cuckold.

Ultimately, he does not at all desire the death of Mariamne. With the trial, his fantasy has run its course. He has shown everyone where he has been hurt, has succeeded in putting his wife, as he thinks, in the wrong, and has condemned her to die. He desires no more. But the logic of the fictitious situation asserts itself. He cannot stop. The dream becomes confused with the reality, and, faced with the necessity for further

action, he begins to waver between substance and shadow. In this twilight mood, he comes again under the baleful influence of Salome. And gives the fatal order.

He awakens to madness. Evidently, it is not reasonable that Mariamne should be dead in reality. Yet here for a moment substance and shadow have merged and may now no longer dis sever. There is no escape in this moment from the one to the other. It is the end of the play.

Whether or not this is a correct interpretation is not of importance. It may serve. What is important to note is the very close relation between the dramaturgical and the psychological aspects of the plot. It is certainly predictable that the former will be found difficult in proportion as the latter are slighted. The Mariamne story is emphatically not suited to superficial treatment.

Of all Mariamne plays, Hebbel's seems principally to be read in our day. It is perhaps unfortunate that the Mariamne traditions should be preserved in an example which is, however beautifully written, of all these plays the most difficult and perverse from a dramatic standpoint. But whatever drawbacks it may have as a model—and they are many—Hebbel's *Herodes* is undoubtedly destined to exert a wholesome influence upon future Mariamne drama. For Hebbel understood very well that the essential richness of the story lies not in its spectacular elements, but in the psychological relationship of a man and a woman to each other and to the complex field of forces in which they lived. He makes it sufficiently evident that in the writing of Mariamne plays one must chiefly come to grips with this relationship, and not with the motivation of Salome, the revenge of Doris, the romantic potentialities of Sohemus, the loves of Mariamne, or the numberless other irrelevancies which so insistently present themselves.

That the future genius who will at last succeed in molding

the story into a great work of art will be aware of this, we may safely prophesy. What more he will see and be able to uncover is a question which will no doubt one day find its answer. Until then we shall do well to speak our conclusions softly, lest once again the overword be,

*That which was expected has not been
accomplished. For that which was
unexpected, has God found
the way. Such was the
end of this story.*

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