Coriolanus: In Shakespeare and the Historians

Robert Blackwood
Loyola University Chicago

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CORIOLANUS: IN SHAKESPEARE AND THE HISTORIANS

By

Robert Blackwood

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VITA

Robert Blackwood was born in Detroit, Michigan, on November 21, 1942. He received the A.B. degree in English from St. Joseph's College (Rensselaer, Indiana) in June of 1964. In the same year, he was awarded an N.D.E.A. Fellowship at Loyola University (Chicago, Illinois) where he began studies toward the doctoral degree in English. He was awarded a lectureship in September of 1966.

In January of 1967, he began an independent study on the sources of Shakespeare's Coriolanus and the Coriolanus legend under the direction of Professor Stanley A. Clayes. He completed taking his courses at Loyola University in the summer of 1967. In September of 1967, he accepted a position as an Instructor at Wilbur Wright College of the Chicago City Colleges. Since then, he has been advanced to Assistant Professor, has taught courses in literature and film, and has reviewed several books on literature and film for Choice magazine.
This dissertation contains a study of some seventeen historians who dealt with the Coriolanus legend from its earliest extant mention in Cicero's Brutus, written in 46 B.C., to Walter Raleigh's The History of the World, published in 1614 A.D. The seventh chapter also contains an examination of Alexandre Hardy's play Coriolan contrasted to William Shakespeare's Coriolanus.

The study of these historians and the examination of Hardy's play were done for two reasons: to trace a development of attitudes toward the Coriolanus legend and to present from historians the evidence from which conjectures might be drawn about the attitude toward Coriolanus with which Shakespeare's audience went to the theater. They went with certain attitudes toward Brutus, Caesar, Antony, and Cleopatra, and Shakespeare developed ironies based upon their expectations. These romantic and melodramatic expectations made irony potentially possible in the contrast with Shakespeare's realistic characterizations. That evidence from historians has been collected for Julius Caesar and Antony and Cleopatra by John Leeds Barroll in "Shakespeare and Roman History" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1956). An examination of a contemporary (c. 1600) French play Coriolan by Alexandre Hardy is also included both
for its evidence of contemporary attitudes toward the Coriolanus legend and to contrast the legend in a dramatic structure rather than an historical one.

In none of the discussion is there any attempt to revise the conclusions reached by Geoffrey Bullough about the sources of Coriolanus, though a few quite minor revisions of his observations are mentioned. Those interested in a study of Shakespeare's sources are referred to: Geoffrey Bullough's Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, Vol. 5 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964) and M. W. MacCallum's Shakespeare's Roman Plays and Their Background (New York: Russell & Russell, 1967). What this dissertation does do is to examine all of the sources of the Coriolanus legend, many omitted by Bullough as not having been "sources." One cannot study Plutarch as Shakespeare's source without wondering both about the sources that shaped Plutarch's attitude toward Coriolanus and about how later historians treated the Coriolanus legend. As far as extant texts make it possible, I have satisfied my curiosity about all historians from Cicero to Walter Raleigh. The real Coriolanus remains as elusive as ever, but Shakespeare's intention to structure the audience's attitude toward him in an ironical balance seems clearer.

I have also commented on how Hardy and Shakespeare dramatized the often idealized portrait which they received from their common major source, Plutarch. Hardy emphasized
the just pride and lofty grandeur of the Coriolanus figure. Shakespeare also maintained the just pride of his protagonist, but he added to it a vivid dramatization of the protagonist's tragic flaw. Shakespeare thus achieved a delicate balance in his treatment of the Coriolanus figure that at least equals, and certainly surpasses in tragic grandeur, the balance in Plutarch's account.

The reader will find that the first chapter of this dissertation differs from the other six in that it contains not only a study of how the seventeen historians treated Coriolanus as an aristocratic military hero but also biographical sketches of these historians along with a comment on the availability of their works to Elizabethan and Jacobean readers. The seventh chapter also differs from the others in its focus upon the works of only three of the historians, the three I deemed most pertinent to the Jacobean Englishmen who formed Shakespeare's audience. It is this final chapter that also examines Hardy's Coriolan. The reader should be warned to be careful in reading the sixth chapter because not only the names but also the spelling of the names of the women in Coriolanus' household often differ or are interchanged from one historian to another.

The text of Coriolanus cited in this dissertation was edited by Harry Levin and was contained in William Shakespeare: The Complete Text, edited by Alfred Harbage (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969). The spelling of the names of Roman,

I owe thanks to Professor George Engelhardt of Loyola University and Assistant Professor Rocco Blasi of Wilbur Wright College for translating into English a difficult passage from Valerius Maximus. I am grateful to Assistant Professor Gregory Chapman of Wilbur Wright College for translating into English Alexandre Hardy's *Coriolan*. And I am very grateful to my wife, Patricia O'Toole Blackwood, for sacrificing months from her own graduate studies to type the reader's copy of this dissertation and for displaying great forbearance. Finally, I greatly regret that I was unable to consult Clifford Chalmers Huffman's *Coriolanus in Context* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1971) until after I had written this dissertation, for it contains valuable information about the Coriolanus legend in the context of English and continental thought of Shakespeare's era.

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* The following five chapters also deal with these historians in this order and have summary sections on the audience's preconceptions.
CHAPTER ONE

THE ARISTOCRATIC MILITARY HERO UNTIL HIS EXILE

Cicero

The first author to deal with the Coriolanus legend was Cicero (106-43 B.C.) in his dialogue Brutus. It was written in the first quarter of the year 46 B.C. The participants in the dialogue are Cicero; the historian Titus Pomponius Atticus, whose non-extant Liber Annalis was Cicero's historical source; and Marcus Junius Brutus, the Brutus of Shakespeare's Julius Caesar. 2

Within the dialogue, Cicero himself comments favorably on Coriolanus both as an aristocrat and as a soldier. He yolks Coriolanus with the Athenian soldier and politician Themistocles. He mentions "the greatest of the Volscian wars, the one which Coriolanus took part in as an exile from Rome," speaks of Coriolanus and Themistocles as "two famous men" and concludes his comments on the reputations of both men by saying


that both were "great men in their respective states." The only conclusion that one can draw from these comments is that Cicero found him to be a typical aristocrat of his time and not to be censured for his actions.

Cicero's views on all aspects of Coriolanus would have been available to the scholar of Shakespeare's era. The earliest printed edition of Brutus in the collection of the British Museum was published on the continent in 1498. Many other collections of Cicero's works containing Brutus were published on the continent before Shakespeare's era, but a London publication of Cicero's complete works in Latin did not appear until 1585. It was the only edition containing Brutus until after Shakespeare's death. The earliest translation of

3Ibid., p. 45.


5Letters of patent were given to T. Vautrollier in London on June 19, 1574, to publish Marci Tulli Ciceronis, opera omnia, ed. Dionysius Lambinus, but apparently this proposed work was never published. See Henrietta R. Palmer, List of English Editions and Translations of Greek and Latin Classics Printed Before 1641 (London: Bibliographical Society, 1911), p. 27.

Brutus into English was not published until 1776.6

While Cicero's views on Coriolanus would have been known to the scholar of Shakespeare's era, they would probably not have been known through required reading in his schooling. Baldwin makes no mention of Brutus as a school text in either William Shakspere's Petty School or William Shakspere's Small Latine and Lesse Greeke, although he does mention extensive use of Cicero's Ad Herennium and Topica in the upper school.7 This omission of Brutus from the classroom was probably due to the nature of Brutus, a rather rambling work dealing more with specific orators rather than rhetorical principles. As Wagner observed, however, Thomas Wilson utilized Brutus in his vernacular rhetoric text published in 1554.8

Livy

The second author to deal with the Coriolanus legend was Livy (59 B.C.-A.D. 17 or 64 B.C.-A.D. 12) in his Roman history.9 Livy's history, Ab Urbe Condita, contains much more

6 Marcus Tullus Cicero, Cicero's Brutus or History of Famous Orators: Also His Orator or Accomplished Speaker, trans. E. Janes (London: B. White, 1776). Also see Cicero, Brutus and Orator, p. 12.


8 Baldwin, Small Latine, pp. 40-41.

of the Coriolanus legend than does Cicero's Brutus, which is limited to a brief exchange between Cicero and Atticus. Beginning with the siege of Corioli, just after the point where Shakespeare's play begins, Livy sketches the outline of Coriolanus' rise and fall. Livy's source was the non-extant annals of Valerius Antias. Livy often does not portray the complexity of motivation found in Plutarch's telling of the Coriolanus legend. According to Foster, Plutarch did, however, rely upon Livy's history in composing his Lives.

Livy gives us his introduction to Coriolanus by mentioning him as one of the noble youths in the camp before Corioli:

There was in the camp [before Corioli] at that time amongst the young nobles Gnaeus Marcius, a youth of active mind and ready hand, who afterwards gained the surname Coriolanus.

With the suspenseful comment about his gaining the surname Coriolanus and the reference to the "active mind and ready hand," Livy goes on to describe the heroic actions of Coriolanus:

They [the Romans] found themselves suddenly assailed by a Volscian army from Antium, and simultaneously by the besieged, who made a sortie from the town. It happened that Marcius was on guard. Taking a picked body of men he not only repelled the sally,

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10 Ibid., p. 615.


12 Ibid., p. 327.
but boldly forced his way through the open gate, and
having spread carnage through the adjacent part of the
town, caught up a firebrand on the spur of the moment,
and threw it upon the buildings which overhung the wall.
Thereupon the townspeople raised a shout.... This
brought new courage to the Romans and covered the
Volsci with confusion.... Thus the men of Antium were
routed and Corioli was won. So completely did the
glory of Marcius overshadow the consul's fame, that,
were it not for the record on a bronze column of the
treaty with the Latins ... men would have forgotten
that Postumus Cominius had waged war on the Volsci. 13
(Italics mine)

Although Coriolanus was presumably still leading his "picked
body of men" into Corioli, it was his quick thinking not only
in leading the men but in starting the fire that saved the day
for the Romans. In Livy's account, apparently all of Rome
recognized Coriolanus's worth as a soldier.

Coriolanus next figures in Livy's account as a
spokesman for the aristocracy in the corn dispute:

A large quantity of grain was imported from Sicily,
and the senate debated at what price it should be
sold to the plebians. Many thought the time had come
for repressing the commons, and resuming the rights
which they had violently extorted from the Fathers by
secession. Conspicuous among these was Marcius Corio-
lanus, an enemy to the tribunician power, who said:
"If they want corn at the old price let them restore
to the senate its ancient rights. Why do I see
plebian magistrates, why do I, after being sent beneath
the yoke and ransomed, as it were, from brigands,
behold Sicinius [a colleague of the tribunes of the
people] in power? Shall I endure these humiliations
any longer than I must? When I would not brook
Tarquinius as king, must I brook Sicinius? Let him
secede now and call out the plebs; the way lies open
to the Sacred Mount and the other hills. Let them
seize grain from our fields as they did two years ago.
Let them enjoy the cornprices they have brought about

13Ibid., pp. 327 and 329.
by their own madness. I make bold to say that this evil plight will so tame them that they will sooner till the land themselves than withdraw under arms and prevent its cultivation by others."14 (Italics mine)

But while Livy's Coriolanus may be speaking in what to Livy is a just cause, the defense of the aristocracy and its prerogatives, Coriolanus ultimately does not cut as noble a figure as he does in his brief mention in Brutus. True, he does challenge the authority of the tribunes to try him in a mob scene immediately after giving his corn speech. Yet, he fails to make an appearance at his hearing to answer charges for the incendiary speech against the tribunes and the common people which is quoted above. Livy portrays Coriolanus condemned to exile by the tribes in absentia. He might have avoided this exile by being present at his own trial, for the patricians had come out in a body to support him:

Then they [the senators] came out in a body—you would have said all the members of the senate were on their trial—and entreated the plebs to release them one citizen, one senator; if they were unwilling to acquit him as innocent let them give him up, though guilty, as a favour. But when Marcius himself, on the day appointed for the hearing, failed to appear men's hearts were hardened against him. Condemned in his absence, he went into exile with the Volsci, uttering threats against his country, and even then breathing hostility.15

Unlike Cicero's Brutus, Livy's history and his account of the aristocratic military hero would have been well known outside of the community of scholars in Shakespeare's era. As

14 Ibid., pp. 331 and 333.
15 Ibid., p. 335.
Cary notes, it found warm admirers in Dante, Petrarch, Pope Nicholas V, Machiavelli and other figures of the Italian Renaissance, and also it was recommended for the education of children. Juan Vives suggests Livy's history in his comments on the education of Princess Mary, daughter of Henry VIII.

Sir Thomas Elyot in The Governour also recommends Livy's work. Later in the century, Laurence Humphrey in his The Nobles, or Of Nobility (1560) advocates the study of Livy's history. Perhaps Humphrey was influenced by John Sturm's De Literarum Ludis Recte Aperiendis Liber (1538). According to Baldwin, the idea of a grammar school suggested by Sturm, a writer held in high esteem by Ascham, had much in common with the education of Edward VI and the grammar school curricula for the latter half of the sixteenth century. Bullough assures us that Shakespeare knew Titus Livy's "great history Ab Urbe Condita and used it for The Rape of Lucrece." Presumably not only Shakespeare and very well educated men and women knew Livy, for Philemon Holland thought it of sufficient interest to

16 Ibid., p. xxiv.
17 Ibid., Small Latine, 1: 190.
18 Ibid., p. 198.
19 Ibid., p. 318.
translate it into English in an edition that was published in London in 1600.22

Dionysius of Halicarnassus

The third author to deal with the Coriolanus legend was Dionysius of Halicarnassus (fl. 30 B.C.-7 B.C. and after) in his Roman Antiquities.23 The Roman Antiquities appeared in 7 B.C.24 and were preceded by the first sections of Livy's annals which appeared about 27-26 B.C.25 Dionysius, a Greek rhetorician, wrote his Roman Antiquities in his native language to justify the ways of Rome to his countrymen. In his concern for thoroughness and out of his desire to prove that the city of Rome was founded by Greeks, Dionysius poured over previous Roman annalists, whose works are non-extant, to provide the only extensive history of early Rome, with the exception of Livy's


annals, that has come down to us. 26 Not only is the account of Dionysius extensive in length but it is also filled with long orations to flesh out his subjects. It thus stands in contrast to Plutarch, whom Schwartz claimed used Dionysius as his sole source although this view has been challenged. 27 As Cary indicates, "It has generally been suspected that Dionysius invented a good many of his speeches outright, inserting them at points where there was no indication of any speech in his sources." 28

In any case, as in Livy, Coriolanus first appears in the battle before Corioli. And again as in Livy, the author comments upon the aristocratic aspects of Coriolanus: "This man was of patrician rank and of no obscure lineage, Gaius Marcius by name; he was sober and restrained in his private life and had the spirit of a freeman in full measure." 29 Dionysius goes on to tell of Coriolanus "exposing himself now with greater boldness" in the forefront of the battleline and advancing into the city of Corioli. 30 But when the other Romans fell to looting the city, "Marcius, who ... had distinguished himself above all the Romans both in the storming of the city and in the

26 Dionysius, Roman Antiquities, 1: xviii-xix.
27 Ibid., xxxv.
28 Ibid., xviii.
29 Ibid., 4: 129.
30 Ibid., p. 131.
struggles which took place inside" left the city with a small number of men to face the Antiates' relieving army.\textsuperscript{31} He received permission from the Roman consul Postumus to face the strongest force of the enemy. "The Antiates no longer ventured to engage him hand to hand, but . . . they surrounded him in a body, and retreating as he advanced . . . they assailed him with their missiles."\textsuperscript{32} Postumus then sent fresh troops to relieve him, and they found him covered with wounds: "Brave beyond all the rest was Marcius himself, who was without any doubt the chief cause of the victory."\textsuperscript{33}

As a reward for his distinctive heroism, on the next day Postumus praised Coriolanus before the entire army. He offered him "a war-horse adorned with the trappings belonging to that of a general," ten captives, all the silver that he could carry away himself, and other "fine first fruits of the booty."\textsuperscript{34} Coriolanus only accepted one captive, who was a personal friend, and the horse, "for the sake of the splendid trappings."\textsuperscript{35} Bullough makes no mention of the general's trappings which caused Coriolanus to accept the horse.\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{31}Ibid., pp. 131 and 133.
\textsuperscript{32}Ibid., p. 133.
\textsuperscript{33}Ibid., p. 135.
\textsuperscript{34}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{35}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{36}Bullough, \textit{Narrative and Dramatic Sources}, pp. 463-464.
Clearly, Coriolanus saw this as befitting his own conception of himself, that of an aristocratic soldier. Nor does Dionysius mention Coriolanus even accepting the surname "Coriolanus." Dionysius simply states that "From this action he was surnamed Coriolanus and became the most illustrious man of his age."37 The Coriolanus of Dionysius is definitely not an acquisitive man in any respect at this point in time.

Dionysius next mentions Coriolanus as leading a volunteer army of patricians, their clients and a small number of the plebiains in a raid upon the enemies of Rome, the Antiates, to secure corn. He was successful in obtaining some corn in the raid, which he distributed among those who went on the raid, but the corn problem still remained.

Subsequent to his raid, the Romans received some cheap corn and some free corn from Sicily. During the senate debate on how to dispense the corn among the people, Coriolanus was heard to speak for the oligarchic party and high prices "not, like the rest, who delivered their opinion with secrecy and caution, but with so much openness and boldness that many even of the plebeians heard him."38 Dionysius also notes that Coriolanus "had lately received some private provocations that seemed to justify his hatred of the plebeians" as the plebeians refused him for the election to consul out of fear that he

37 Dionysius, Roman Antiquities, 4: 137.
38 Ibid., 4: 209.
would overthrow their tribunes. According to Bullough, Dionysius implicitly condemns Coriolanus' open hatred for the plebeians when Dionysius comments that Coriolanus "assumed a haughty air, became conspicuous, and attained to the greatest distinction. And yet, for all this, he did not come to a fortunate end, as shall now be related." 

In his senate address on the corn problem, Coriolanus even went so far as to accuse the tribunes not just of taking political advantage of a bad situation but specifically of aiming at tyranny:

"For when their leaders, in their great power putting forward the specious pretence of coming to the aid of such plebeians as are wronged, sack and pillage whatever they please . . . which destroys even our liberty of speech as well as of action by imposing the penalty of death on all who utter a word befitting freemen, what other name . . . to this domination but . . . a tyranny?" (Italics mine)

Later in the same speech, he specifically accuses the tribunes of conspiring to commit treason:

"For, after asking for the tribunician power, not in order to inspire the senate, but to secure themselves from being injured by the senate, they no longer employ this power for the purposes they ought or on the terms on which they obtained it, but for the overthrow and destruction of the established government." (Italics mine)

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39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
41 Ibid., pp. 211 and 215.
42 Ibid., p. 215.
Bullough does not mention this specific charge made by Coriolanus on the senate floor of a treasonable conspiracy, but it should have been mentioned for two reasons. First, it accounts for the vehemence with which the tribunes pressed for their trial against Coriolanus, although there is no denying that they hated him before he made this particular charge. Secondly, it reveals that Dionysius was not tied to the patricians' position, for he does not mention such a conspiracy elsewhere; hence, the conspiracy may not have existed except in the mind of Coriolanus.

In his corn speech, Coriolanus goes on to suggest that starvation through high corn prices be used to drive out from Rome "the worst of them [the plebians] and those who were never pleased with the aristocracy" and the "more reasonable" of the plebians, therefore, will be compelled to behave themselves due to physical weakness. Along with the specific charge of a treasonable conspiracy by the tribunes, Bullough does not mention this use of starvation to keep the populace in line. This tactic was received favorably by the majority of the senate, although a minority "declared that the advice of Marcius was madness, not frankness of speech or liberty" because it would create domestic discord. While Coriolanus' oratorical powers swayed the majority of his fellow patricians in the

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43 Ibid., p. 217.

44 Ibid., p. 219.
senate, the corn price was not resolved at that senate session, for the tribunes met Coriolanus' attack with an even more violent attack of their own—see Chapters III and IV. Coriolanus' corn speech resulted in his trial for tyranny before the new tribal assembly.

The tribunes proposed a new assembly, a tribal assembly, for the trial of Coriolanus. Bullough gives an accurate summary of the difference between the tribal assembly, in which the patricians would have less influence, versus the old Comitia centuriata preferred by the patricians. He notes that before the Coriolanus trial there were only three major Roman assemblies for dispensing justice mentioned in the annals: the Comitia curiata, of patricians alone; the Comitia centuriata, including both orders; and the Comitia plebis, consisting of plebians alone. Bullough suggests that "perhaps it was the Comitia curiata rather than the Senate [as Dionysius has it] which passed the enabling bill allowing Marcius' trial by the people."45

Whether it was the Roman senate or the Comitia curiata, it was at this assembly of patricians where the real reasons for the trial of Coriolanus were aired, rather than in the circus-like atmosphere of the tribal assembly. Speaking in favor of the decree to enable the tribal assembly to try Coriolanus, the tribune Marcius Decius points out that

45 Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources, p. 468.
Coriolanus differed from his fellow patricians in his extraordinary degree of arrogance and in his lack of moderation:

Descend from that overbearing and tyrannical haughtiness to a more democratic behaviour, wretched man, and make yourself at last like other men.

Though they [the senators] . . . have displayed so many virtues both in war and in peace that I could not easily enumerate them in a very long time, yet they, the venerable and great, passed no cruel or haughty sentence against us, the common and humble folk, but even took the lead themselves in making overtures and offered us a reconciliation when Fortune had divided us from one another, and they agreed to make the compact upon the conditions we desired, rather than upon those they thought would be best for themselves. . . .46 (Italics mine)

Following the address of the tribune Marcius Decius, Appius Claudius, "the greatest enemy to the plebians of all the patricians," made an address which, in its opposition to the senate decree to permit Coriolanus' trial by the tribal assembly, stressed the traditional Roman aristocratic values: patriotism, noble birth, and valor.47 In commenting upon what he saw as the people's conspiracy against the aristocracy, Appius deplored the following:

"... their treatment of Marcius here, a lover of his country and a man who is neither of obscure birth nor inferior himself to any of us in valour, whom they accused of forming designs against and of giving evil advice in this place [the senate] and attempted to put to death without a trial.48 (Italics mine)

46 Dionysius, Roman Antiquities, 4: 257, 273, and 275.
47 Ibid., pp. 279-287.
48 Ibid., p. 287.
Manius Valerius, "the greatest friend to the plebians of all the senators," actually censured Coriolanus for his previous conduct when he argued in opposition to Appius Claudius and in favor of Coriolanus' trial by tribal assembly. 49

Dionysius, in a summary, condensed the argument of Manius Valerius thusly:

For he begged him [Coriolanus], since all men were filled with fear that because of him there would spring up sedition and all the irreparable evils which civil wars bring to their train, that he would not make true and valid the accusations against himself by persevering in his invidious way of life, but would change it to an humble deportment . . . and not decline to clear himself by a just defense of an unjust charge. 50 (Italics mine)

After the critical address of Manius Valerius, which still stressed the basic innocence of Coriolanus, the body started to draw up the decree permitting Coriolanus' trial by tribal assembly.

Contrary to Bullough's statement, before the decree was issued Coriolanus rose to speak, and, when he did so, he expressed anger at the senate, which is not mentioned at all in Bullough: 51

Your behaviour toward me [Coriolanus], has been contrary to my expectation, and you will know this even better when the action against me has ended. However, since the opinion of Valerius prevails, may these measures prove of advantage to you and may I prove a poor judge of future events. 52 (Italics mine)

49 Ibid., p. 301.
50 Ibid., p. 305.
51 Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources, p. 467.
52 Dionysius, Roman Antiquities, 4: 313.
Only after expressing his anger in an almost threatening manner to his fellow patricians did Coriolanus agree to the trial by tribal assembly on the charge of tyranny. This speech, though prophetic in its anticipation of trouble with the plebians, is also a dramatic example of the intemperate language that Coriolanus used against the plebians, but this time he directed it at his own class.

Although no reason is given as to why Coriolanus was willing to be tried on such a vague charge, Dionysius notes that the greater part of the senators "were well pleased that he was to be tried upon this charge" because the charge was not directed at curtailing free speech in the senate and also because they believed "that Marcius, who had led a modest and irreproachable life, would easily clear himself of that accusation."  

At his trial before the tribal assembly, Coriolanus began his speech by enumerating all of the campaigns that he had made in the service of Rome. Unlike Shakespeare's protagonist, he willingly rent his garments, "showed his breast full of wounds and every other part of his body covered with scars." Dionysius differs from Livy's account of the trial in that Dionysius' Coriolanus is not only present at his own trial but also gives an impassioned address. Regardless of who

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53 Ibid., pp. 315 and 317.
54 Ibid., pp. 329 and 331.
might be the more accurate historian, Dionysius is the more dramatic one. But even an impassioned speech could not save Coriolanus from the unexpected charge, leveled by Decius, of distributing the spoils of the Antityles' raid among his friends who had been on the raid with him. According to Decius' interpretation of the law, Coriolanus should have turned over part of the spoils to the treasury. Coriolanus was banished for this offense; at least, this was the formal charge.

After the tribal assembly had banished him, Coriolanus displayed a hitherto-unseen unimpassioned self which Dionysius praises highly:

But Marcus himself was not seen either to bewail or to lament his own fate or to say or to do the least thing unworthy of his greatness of soul; and he showed still greater nobility and resolution when he reached home . . . . For he was not moved at all by the tears and lamentations of the women, but merely saluted them and exhorted them to bear their misfortunes with firmness; then, recommending his sons to them . . . and without showing any other mark of tenderness or making provision for what would be needed in his banishment, he departed in haste to the gates of the city, informing no one to what place he proposed to retire.55

(Italics mine)

It should be noted that Coriolanus not only made no provision for himself but also made no provision for his family. Dionysius noted that Coriolanus did receive reports on the sort of treatment that his family was receiving from their fellow Romans, but he took no active hand in managing their affairs.

55 Ibid., p. 349.
In summary, Dionysius drew a picture of an aristocratic military hero flawed by intemperance. While his oratorical powers were sufficient to rally his adherents to his cause, he lacked both tact and the rhetorical gifts to persuade a hostile audience such as the tribal assembly. Dionysius, despite his bias for the noble and valorous, also shows that the tribunes had some justice on their side for their mistrust of Coriolanus.

In contrast to Livy or Plutarch's account, The Roman Antiquities of Dionysius of Halicarnassus was not common knowledge to the educated Englishman of Shakespeare's era. The university educated man would have known of the work, however, and it was Plutarch's source. The Roman Antiquities was first published at Treviso in a Latin translation by Lapus Biragus in 1480. The first edition in Greek was done by Robert Estienne in Paris in 1546. Before 1600, there were at least seven editions printed on the continent, some in both Greek and Latin. The first edition of The Roman Antiquities printed in England did not appear until 1704, however, and the first


English translation was not published until 1758. Nevertheless, the book was recommended by Sir Thomas Elyot in *The Governour*. According to Baldwin, however, Dionysius' works on rhetoric were more commonly known to the educated Englishman than his history.

**Valerius Maximus**

Much less is known about Valerius Maximus (fl. early first century, A.D.), the next author who dealt with the Coriolanus legend, than is known about Dionysius of Halicarnassus, although his work was better known in Shakespeare's era as shall be explained. Duff states that Valerius was a friend of Sextus Pompeius, who was consul in A.D. 14. He was also a friend of Germanicus, who was proconsul of Asia around A.D. 27.

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Croft explained in a footnote that some scholars had previously neglected *The Roman Antiquities* due to its mixture of rhetoric with historical data, but that Elyot "entertained a proper respect for the great historian Dionysius."


65 Ibid.
Valerius Maximus' work, *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia*, was dated by Duff at a few years after A.D. 30 and no later than A.D. 37. It was intended for use in the schools of rhetoric. It depicts historical persons and events within a context of didactic moralizing. Coriolanus is mentioned in a few places; two of them bear upon Coriolanus as the aristocratic military hero.

Much like Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Valerius Maximus is quite careful to note Coriolanus' noble bloodline; in fact he even made it a royal bloodline. But, what is more important in terms of his attitude toward Coriolanus, Valerius Maximus praised the temperance of Coriolanus in rejecting the following goods after the battle of Corioli:

... and reward given him of Military gifts besides a hundred Acres of Land, his choice of ten Captives, as many Horses with their Trappings, a Herd of a hundred Oxen, and a great weight of Silver; yet he refused all, accepting of nothing but the liberty of one Captive that was his Host, and one Horse for service. ...

Coriolanus rejected the goods offered and simply accepted the freedom of one captive and a horse which he used in battle. One cannot give too much praise for this lack of greed, for Dionysius also praised Coriolanus for this action. What is noticeable about Valerius Maximus' attitude is that while there

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67 *Fletcher, s.v. "Valerius Maximus."*
is praise for Coriolanus' temperance after the battle of Corioli, unlike in Dionysius there is no condemnation of Coriolanus for his intemperance before the Roman plebians and on the senate floor.

In his last comment on Coriolanus, Valerius Maximus clearly sympathizes with the aristocratic warrior:

Coriolanus, a person of vast Courage in Counsel, and well deserving of his Country, yet almost ruined under the oppression of an unjust Sentence, fled to the Volsci, who were Enemies to the Romans. For Virtue gets esteem wherever it goes.69

In summary, Valerius Maximus depicts him as a very noble aristocrat unjustly betrayed by the lowest elements of the republic.

As was mentioned before, the work of Valerius Maximus was very popular. Niebuhr even went so far as to declare that the work "was considered the most important book next to the Bible throughout the Middle Ages."70 Apparently the popularity carried over into the Renaissance era as the British Museum Catalogue lists forty-seven editions of the work printed on the continent between 1471 and 1606.71 The work was not printed in England, however, until 1678 in an English translation by S. Speed.72 Palmer did list a translation of A Little Epitomy of Valerius Maximus Concerning Dreames, published in London in

69 Ibd., pp. 228-229.
70 Duff, Literary History of Rome, p. 71.
72 Harris, First Printed Translations, pp. 154-155.
1606, but the title does not indicate that it would be likely to contain references to Coriolanus. 73

The reason why the work was not translated into English at an earlier date is probably because it was read very widely in Latin. Erasmus in his De Ratione Studii (1511) found Valerius Maximus useful for examples of memorable historical stories from which schoolboys could write themes. 74 In his provisions (1517) for Corpus Christi College, Oxford, Bishop Richard Fox wanted his public lecturer on Latin to speak on Valerius Maximus among other Roman authors. 75 Sir Thomas Pope, founder of Trinity College, Oxford, specified in 1555 that his lecturer in "Latin speech" should explicate Valerius Maximus among other authors. 76 Baldwin notes that Wilhelm Gräder lists Valerius Maximus as one of the fundamental authors for grammar schools in England at about 1520. 77 He continued to be used as the Eton curriculum, dating probably about 1560, indicates that Valerius Maximus was to be read by the fifth form. 78 Valerius Maximus was also supplementary reading for Westminster's fifth form at about 1560. 79 The 1566 statutes at the Norwich School, which was on

74 Baldwin, Small Latine, 1: 86.
75 Ibid., pp. 103-104.
76 Ibid., pp. 104-105.
77 Ibid., p. 108.
78 Ibid., p. 356.
the Paul's system, listed Valerius Maximus as reading for the higher forms. A copy of Valerius Maximus was listed among the school items of King James VI of Scotland, later James I of England, as Baldwin notes, "for moral material in composition." In his Rhetor (1577), Gabriel Harvey, a pedant well known to all Spenser scholars, praises his fellow educator Roger Ascham for his advocacy of "rich Valerius." In proof of the staying power of Valerius, it should be noted that C. I. Hoole in his A New Discovery of the Old Art of Teaching Schools (1660) advised the reading of Valerius Maximus for the fifth form.

Plutarch

The continuing influence of Plutarch (ca. A.D. 45/50-120/127), the next author who dealt with the Coriolanus legend, is beyond dispute. In A.D. 66, he left his native Chaeronea for Athens where he studied physics, natural science, and rhetoric, but his favorite subject was ethics. He eventually obtained Roman citizenship and may have made the acquaintance of

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80 Ibid., pp. 415 and 417.
81 Ibid., pp. 535-536.
82 Ibid., 2: 66-67.
83 Ibid., p. 291.
85 Ibid., p. 310.
the Emperors Trajan and Hadrian. In any case, he returned to Chaeronea where he held various civic offices and directed a school in which philosophy, especially ethics, held the central place.

It is not surprising that a Greek scholar with a penchant for the study of ethics and some acquaintance with both Roman and Greek government should be the author of *The Parallel Lives*. As he says in *Pericles*, his chief aim is to encourage his readers to emulate the virtuous deeds of great men and to avoid their mistakes. He also intended to encourage mutual respect between Greeks and Romans by comparing their great men and noting the presence or absence of various ethical qualities. In his coupling of the Athenian Alcibiades with the Roman Coriolanus, as two men who turned against their native states, he contrasts Alcibiades' hypocritical tongue and his pandering to the public's opinion to Coriolanus' bluntness and arrogance. His focus is always upon the actions of aristocratic men rather than upon the convolutions of political intrigue. For example, he is not primarily concerned with the study of early Roman politics and legal strategy found in Dionysius' account of the Coriolanus legend, although Dionysius' account was Plutarch's main source.

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87 Ibid.
88 Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources*, p. 472.
89 Ibid., pp. 472-473.
Although dedicated to Quintus Sosius Senecio, Roman consul in A.D. 99 and A.D. 107, and written in Plutarch's later years with an eye toward improving Roman and Greek relations, Plutarch's Parallel Lives has exhibited noble deeds and characters to provide patterns of behavior for generations of European and American students.

In his The Life of Caius Martius Coriolanus, Plutarch first introduces the noble house of the Martians. He also notes, as Dionysius did not, that royal blood flowed in the family bloodline. He proceeds from his comment on Coriolanus' family to comment upon Coriolanus as a child raised only by his mother. Plutarch immediately sets out Coriolanus' good and bad points:

But [that orphanage] doth not hinder him to become an honest man, and to excell in vertue above the common sorte. . . . This man also is a good proofe to confirme some mens opinions. That a rare and excellent witte untaught, doth bring forth many good and evill things together: like as a fat soile bringeth forth herbes and weedes that lieth unmanured. For this Martius naturall wit and great harte dyd marvelously sturre up his corage, to doe and attempt notable actes. But on the other side for lacke of education, he was so chollerick and impacient, that he would veld to no living creature: which made him churlishe, uncivill, andaltogether unfit for any mans conversation. . . . Now in those dayes, valliantnes was honoured in Rome above all other vertues: which they called Virtus, by the name of vertue selfe, as including in that generall name, all other special vertues besides.91 (Italics mine, except for Virtus)


From Plutarch's introductory remarks on Coriolanus' family and on his temperament, all else flows. Coriolanus is an aristocrat, but he is an early Roman aristocrat. The preservation of his family and his household, especially in a small city-state such as early Rome, often required exercise of the primary virtues of such unsettled times—courage in battle or "valliantnes." But though "valliantnes" must be highly prized by any aristocracy that is not in the process of decline, Plutarch, being the learned Greek that he is, points out that an excess of one virtue to the detriment of others will not produce a well balanced man. Moreover, in a small city-state such as early Rome, such an aristocratic military hero inevitably would cause friction because he could not be ignored.

After Plutarch's introductory narrative, which is largely critical of Coriolanus for his lack of discipline and his fiery temper although it does stress his "valliantnes," for the first time Plutarch turns to dramatic writing. He depicts a young Coriolanus astride a fallen Roman soldier, protecting him from the troops of the former Etruscan king of Rome, Tarquin. Plutarch has thus chosen to first illustrate Coriolanus' virtue in a dramatic manner rather than his failings, although one could argue that Plutarch is simply following chronological order. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that Coriolanus first appeared exemplifying that virtue, "valliantnes," which made Coriolanus a great man and a suitable subject for _The Parallel_
Lives, as shall be illustrated at greater length in Chapter VII.

Plutarch follows up this episode by mentioning that this valiant deed was but the first of many performed by Coriolanus. And while Plutarch is not as interested in the raising of armies and the causes of early Roman wars as was Dionysius, Plutarch does take the trouble to note that Coriolanus performed so many valiant deeds that "the captaines that came afterwards (for envie of them that went before) dyd contend who should most honour him, and who should heare most honourable testimonie of his valliantnes." 92

In Plutarch, as in Dionysius, Coriolanus is not only a man of valor but also a spokesman for the most haughty of the aristocrats. Coriolanus became worried when the plebians willingly went to repel the invaders of Roman territory following their short-lived, non-violent rebellion which resulted in the appointment of the peoples' tribunes:

Martius also, though it liked him nothing to see the greatness of the people thus increased, considering it was to the prejudice, and imbasing of the nobilitie, and also sawe that other noble Patricians were troubled as well as him selve: he dyd persuade the Patricians, to shewe them selves no less forward and willing to fight for their countrie, then the common people were: and to let them knowe by their deedes and actes, that they dyd not so muche passe the people in power and riches, as they dyd exceede them in true nobilitie and valliantnes. 93 (Italics mine)

92 Ibid., p. 146.
93 Ibid., pp. 149-150.
Plutarch continues his praise of Coriolanus' "valliantnes" and his aristocratic merit in the first specific battle mentioned after the quotation given above—the battle of Corioli:

For he [Coriolanus] was even such another, as Cato would have a soldier and a captaine to be: not only terrible, and fierce to laye about him, but to make the enemie afeard with the sound of his voyce, and grimnes of his countenaunce.  

Plutarch follows this praise with an almost blow by blow account of the taking of Corioli by the fierce soldier and a few of his troops. It is this kind of selection of detail from Dionysius' account that makes Plutarch, of all the historians in classical times, the historian who most clearly delineates Coriolanus as the aristocratic military hero.

After the battle of Corioli, Coriolanus rejected ten of the captured horses, prisoners, and other chattels; as MacCallum notes, the "tenth parte of the enemies goods" mentioned in North and carried over into Shakespeare is due to North's incorrect translation from Amyot. Coriolanus would only accept a warhorse and the freedom of an old friend. But unlike Shakespeare's play in which the old friend is a poor man, in Plutarch's account the friend is "an honest wealthie man," a fellow aristocrat whose loss in status aroused Coriolanus' 

94 Ibid., p. 150.


Plutarch's Coriolanus willingly accepts the praise of his fellow soldiers, unlike Shakespeare's character, but like Shakespeare's character he accepts very little booty from the looting of Corioli. Even the sophisticated Plutarch, perhaps because he lived in an era in which the more crass aspects of Roman splendor were becoming the order of the day, admired Coriolanus for his lack of greed, a quality which Plutarch placed above "valliantnes." "For it is farre more commendable to use riches well, then to be valliant: and yet it is better not to desire them, then to use them well." But Marcius did accept the name "Coriolanus" and the responsibility that the name would bring him.

After the battle of Corioli and a successful raid into the domain of the Antiates, Coriolanus stood for the election to consul. While Shakespeare chose to depict Coriolanus as reluctant to display his wounds in the market place to solicit the votes of the plebians, Plutarch's Coriolanus did as follows:

following this custome, [Coriolanus] shewed many woundes and cuttes upon his bodie, which he had receyved in seventeene yeres service at the warres, and in many sundrie battells, being over the formest man that dyd set out feete to fight.

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96 Plutarch, Plutarch's Lives, 8: 154.
97 Ibid.
98 Ibid., p. 159.
But the election was not held on the same day as Coriolanus' solicitation in the market place. By the time election day arrived, Coriolanus' partiality to the patricians and the consequent fear that he might "take away altogether the libertie from the people" caused them to elect someone else to the consulship. Unlike Shakespeare's Coriolanus, who had a moderate spokesman to the plebians in Menenius, Plutarch's Coriolanus kept company with the most haughty of the patricians. He was regarded by the common people as having a decided bias toward the patrician company that he kept.

As Plutarch noted, the Roman senate took the shame of the plebians' refusal "rather to redown to them selves, then to Martius, but Martius tooke it in farre worse parte then the Senate, and was out of all pacience." Plutarch followed this comment with a condemnation of Coriolanus as a willful hothead, although he is careful, as always, to praise him as a high minded man of courage. His condemnation describes Coriolanus as follows:

[One] that lacked the gravity, and affabilitie that is gotten with judgment of learning and reason, which only is to be looked for in a governour of state: and that remembred not how wilfulness is the thing of the world, which a governour of a common wealth for pleasing should shonne, being that which Plato called solitariness.

99 Ibid.
100 Ibid.
101 Ibid., p. 160.
After this critical description with its allusion to Plato, Plutarch comments unfavorably on the aristocratic hangers-on who flocked to the enraged Coriolanus and heightened his anger. Shakespeare did not feel the need to borrow this group from Plutarch, perhaps because the feeling of class hatred generated by the hangers-on changes the focus, to a certain degree, from Coriolanus to his fellow patricians and their vested interests.

His hatred heightened by his fellow patricians, Coriolanus made his attack upon the tribunes of the people in his corn speech. As in Dionysius, Coriolanus implored the senate to take from the plebians their newly won public offices. Unlike Dionysius' account, however, Plutarch's Coriolanus did not explicitly advise a policy of starving the plebians into submission. Plutarch's Coriolanus showed more compassion toward the plebians than either Dionysius' or Shakespeare's.

The corn speech resulted in actions which caused Coriolanus' trial, as shall be discussed in Chapter III. At the trial, Coriolanus was called upon to speak in his defense:

But where they thought to have heard very humble and lowly words come from him, he [Coriolanus] beganne not only to use his wonted boldnes of speaking (which of it selfe was very rough and unpleasaunt, and dyd more aggravate his accusation, then purge his innocencie) but also gave him selfe in his wordes to thunder, and looke therewithall so grimly, as though he made no reckoning of the matter.102 (italics mine)

102 Ibid., p. 164.
Having read the manner in which Coriolanus spoke, the reader should recall Plutarch's previous allusion to Cato's description of what a soldier should be: "not only terrible, and fierce to laye about him, but to make the enemie afeard with the sound of his voyce and grimnes of his countenaunce."¹⁰³

After his sentence of banishment was declared, as in Dionysius, Plutarch's Coriolanus suddenly assumed an unimpassioned demeanor. Unlike Dionysius, however, Plutarch very explicitly gives us Coriolanus' motivation for his change from raging soldier to seemingly calm aristocrat:

> But because he was so carried away with the vehemencie of anger, and desire of revenge, that he had no sence more feeling of the hard state he was in, which the common people judge, not to be sorrow, although in deed it be the very same.¹⁰⁴ (Italics mine)

The Coriolanus of Dionysius and Plutarch retreated into the cold anger the reader may associate with an aristocratic temperament, unlike Shakespeare who chose to retain a Coriolanus whose honesty and courage are a real basis for vanity and arrogance.

While the summary of Dionysius of Halicarnassus' opinion of Coriolanus resembles the summary of Plutarch's opinion of Cariolanus, that of an aristocratic military hero flawed by intemperance, it differs in at least two significant respects. First, Plutarch's Coriolanus shows little of the utter contempt for the plebians shown by Dionysius' Coriolanus and Shakespeare's

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 150.
¹⁰⁴Ibid., pp. 167-168.
character. Secondly, Plutarch highlights the intemperate personality of Coriolanus more than Dionysius does. In doing so, Plutarch seemingly condemns Coriolanus more harshly than Dionysius while at the same time somehow magnifying Coriolanus' stature. Plutarch accomplishes the magnification of Coriolanus' stature by measuring him against very high standards and by constantly keeping the focus upon Coriolanus rather than shifting to legal and economic affairs as Dionysius does in his account. Coriolanus' stature also improves when one reads of him after reading the paralleled life of Alcibiades, the Athenian politician-soldier who could give the appearance of being all things to all men and who eventually died almost unmourned in exile.

Plutarch's opinion of Coriolanus, as seen in The Parallel Lives, was readily available to the educated Englishman of Shakespeare's era. Although not mentioned in Bulloch, the opinions of Valerius Maximus and Florus were better known because their works were more commonly used for school texts than was The Parallel Lives. Plutarch was available, however, both in the original Greek and in translations.

For the education of Henry VIII's Princess Mary, Vives urged the reading of authors "who teach not only to know well but also to live well" and recommended Cicero, Seneca, and a Latin translation of Plutarch. Vives also urged reading

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105 Baldwin, Small Latin, 1: 564.
106 Ibid., pp. 187-188.
Plutarch in the original Greek in his plan of studies for Charles Mountjoy in 1523. Erasmas in his *Institutiones Principis Christiani* recommended "the Apothegeus and Morals of Plutarch; possibly also the *Lives*." The Eton curriculum of about 1560 and the Westminster curriculum of 1568 had, as an option, Plutarch in Greek to be read to the fifth form by the master.

In *The Nobles or of Nobility*, published in Latin in 1560 and in an English translation in 1563, Laurence Humphrey advised nobles to read "almost all Plutarches workes" for "historical knowledge." North's English translation of Amyot's French translation of Plutarch in 1579 insured Plutarch's availability to all literate men and women. It should be noted, however, that the availability of a good English translation did not rule out the reading of Plutarch in other languages. In 1598, Queen Elizabeth did English translations from Plutarch without the assistance of North's translation.

The *Parallel Lives* was translated into Latin separately from Plutarch's other works before 1450 by Guarinus, Bruni, and others. The British Museum possesses two complete works of


Plutarch in both Greek and Latin which were published on the continent in 1572 and 1599.\textsuperscript{113} By 1592, the British Museum General Catalogue of Printed Books shows that The Parallel Lives had been translated into French (ten editions), German (two editions), Italian (seven editions), and Spanish (two editions); four editions in Greek and twenty-one in Latin had also been published.\textsuperscript{114}

Although there were other French translators, Barrow indicates that the translator who made Plutarch a popular historical source not only in France but in all of Europe was Jacques Amyot.\textsuperscript{115} Indeed, North's translation of Amyot was not only the main historical source for Shakespeare's play but also the source of many phrases in Shakespeare's The Tragedy of Coriolanus, as MacCallum noted.\textsuperscript{116}

Florus

The next author to deal with the Coriolanus legend was Lucius Annaeus Florus (fl. late first-early second century, A.D.),

\textsuperscript{114}See footnotes 112 and 113.
\textsuperscript{115}Barrow, Plutarch and His Times, p. 162.
\textsuperscript{116}MacCallum, Shakespeare's Roman Plays, pp. 487-517 and 658-643.

Of particular importance to this chapter is MacCallum's mentioning on p. 489 that Shakespeare borrowed the concept of valor as the chief virtue. This can be seen in Cominius' panegyric II. ii. 87.
an African, who was a poet, rhetorician, and historian.\textsuperscript{117} In his youth, he was in Rome while Domitian reigned (A.D. 81-96), and, after self-imposed exile, he returned to Rome under Hadrian's rule (A.D. 117-138).\textsuperscript{118} His chief work, entitled \textit{Epitome bellorum omnium annorum DCC}, is sometimes called simply an abridgement of Livy, but Florus also used Sallust, Caesar, and probably the elder Seneca; all of his material on Coriolanus, however, could have been derived from Livy.\textsuperscript{119} This panegyric of Roman history from the founding of the city to the age of Augustus was probably written about A.D. 122.\textsuperscript{120}

In the abridgement of Florus which appeared in Philemon Holland's 1600 translation, Coriolanus' role as aristocratic military hero is briefly referred to in the context of his taking of Corioli, "taken by the valour and industrious meanes of Cn. Martius, who thereupon was surnamed Coriolanus."\textsuperscript{121} More complete Latin editions printed on the continent were available, however, and, as the Loeb edition reveals, the panegyric intention of Florus and his scorn for the early conquests of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{117} Duff, \textit{Literary History of Rome}, p. 644.
\item \textsuperscript{118} \textit{Ibid.}
\item \textsuperscript{119} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 646.
\item \textsuperscript{119} Edward Seymour Forster and Gavin B. Townend, s.v. "Florus," \textit{The Oxford Classical Dictionary}, p. 442.
\item \textsuperscript{120} Forster and Townend, s.v. "Florus."
\item \textsuperscript{121} Livius, \textit{The Romane Historie}, p. 43.
\end{itemize}
Rome, in contrast to the conquests of the Roman emperors, are more evident in the unabridged editions:

The capture of Corioli— alas for the shame of it! — was regarded as so glorious an achievement that Gnaeus Marcius became Coriolanus, taking the city into his name, as though he had conquered Numantia or Africa. 122

The other references to Coriolanus as aristocratic military hero list him among the Romans' "most illustrious chiefs" who were exiled because "they opposed their [the plebians'] will. 123 Florus indicates that this opposition was caused "when he [Coriolanus] ordered them to till their fields." 124 Presumably this last quotation alludes to Coriolanus' corn speech, which was the ultimate cause for the legal process leading to his exile from Rome.

From these brief references to Coriolanus, it would appear that Florus saw him as a valiant warrior and prominent patrician who was unjustly exiled by the unruly plebians.

Although Florus' work is merely an outline of Roman history, in contrast to Livy's, it was very well known to the educated Englishman of Shakespeare's day and to the continental scholar.

There were at least thirty-two Latin editions of Florus published on the continent between 1470-1606. An Italian

123 Ibid., p. 71.
124 Ibid.
translation was published in 1606; in addition, Philemon Holland's abridged edition of Florus in English was published in London in 1600.\textsuperscript{125}

Baldwin indicates that from 1550 to the end of the sixteenth century, the historians prescribed for study in grammar schools were, in order of frequency, "Sallust, Caesar, Livy, Justin, Valerius Maximus (so classed), and Florus." Baldwin justifies this list by specifying that one or the other of these authors is mentioned in twenty-six out of the twenty-nine curricula he had tabulated.\textsuperscript{126} To cite a few examples, the Eton system under Queen Elizabeth at about 1560 lists Florus as well as Valerius Maximus for reading for the fifth form to provide matter for student themes.\textsuperscript{127} In the school at Canterbury in 1582, Florus was taught to the second form.\textsuperscript{128} As early as the founding of Trinity College, Oxford, in 1555, Florus, along with Valerius Maximus, was specified as one of the authors to be read and interpreted in lectures on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.\textsuperscript{129}

Outside of school curricula, Vives advised Florus, as well as Valerius Maximus, for Princess Mary's education.\textsuperscript{130}

\textsuperscript{125}British Museum General Catalogue 74 (1961): 724-753.
\textsuperscript{126}Baldwin, Small Latine, 1: 564.
\textsuperscript{127}Ibid., pp. 356 and 363.
\textsuperscript{128}Ibid., pp. 167-168.
\textsuperscript{129}Ibid., pp. 104-105.
\textsuperscript{130}Ibid., pp. 187-188.
Florus' *Epitome* was listed among the textbooks purchased for James VI of Scotland at about 1575. Even as late as 1660, Hoole suggested Florus for the fifth form because of Florus' historical value. Shakespeare himself was probably familiar with Florus as Baldwin maintains that an allusion in *Antony and Cleopatra* was probably derived from Florus.

Appian

The next author to deal with the Coriolanus legend, Appian of Alexandria (A.D. 95-165), was probably not as well known in Shakespeare's era as Florus, but his work, *Appian's Roman History*, contains more material on Coriolanus.

Appian was a native of Alexandria, Egypt. He wrote his history in Greek. In his preface, Appian says that he reached a high station in Egypt and afterwards became a pleader of causes in the emperor's court at Rome. He was appointed procurator, a post which would have required him to be a Roman citizen of at least equestrian rank. His *Roman History* was written about A.D. 150. While White lists Appian's sources as Polybius,

Paulus Claudius, Hieronymus, Caesar, Augustus, and Asinius Follio and notes that Dionysius and Livy were within his reach, McDonald, on the other hand, lists only an unknown early annalist, Polybius, Posidonius, Sallust, and Asinius Follio in particular, then, the possibility of Livy, the memoirs of Augustus, and Nicolaus of Damascus. In any case, there is nothing in Appian that could not have come from his fellow Greek, Dionysius, or from Livy.

Appian makes two brief mentions of Coriolanus in his role as the aristocratic military hero. In Appian's second book, "Concerning Italy," which has not come down to us in its entirety, Appian first refers to Coriolanus and his standing for the office of consul:

The people refused to elect Marcus (Coriolanus) when he sought the consulship, not because they considered him unfit, but because they feared his domineering spirit. Appian gives no reason as to whether the people's fear was justified or not, but he shows no great sympathy for the cause of the plebians.

Contrary to the statements of Harris and Palmer, Norgaard claims that a complete edition, apparently non-extant, of Appian's history was available in an English translation by

136 Ibid., ix.


137Appian, Appian's Roman History, 1: 43.
In the incomplete translation of 1578, ascribed to William Barker, Appian's commentary, after it refers to the plebians' creation of the office of tribune of the people, reads as follows:

Of this great hatred and variance grew between these officers: the Senate and the people being divided for them, and stylized by ambition, sought the one to overrule the other. Martius Coriolanus, in such contention being unjustly banished, fled to the Volscians. . . .

(Italics mine)

As does Livy, Appian sees Coriolanus as a man unjustly banished from his fatherland. But this view of Coriolanus did not prevent Appian, as well as Florus, from having harsh words for Coriolanus' conduct subsequent to his exile.

As was mentioned in the introductory paragraph to Appian, his history was not as well known in Shakespeare's era as the Epitome of Florus, but it was available in a variety of translations as well as in the original Greek. Before 1608, including those editions which contained only Appian's history of the

1587. 138

138 Harris, First Printed Translations, p. 11.


Roman civil wars, the British Museum General Catalogue lists one edition in Greek, one in Greek and Latin, nine in Latin translations, three in French translations, ten in Italian translations, and one in a Spanish translation, all of them printed on the continent, plus the 1578 English translation of Appian's section on the Roman civil wars.\textsuperscript{140} White notes that the first publication of any of the works of Appian in modern times was a Latin translation by Petrus Candidus, private secretary to Pope Nicholas V, in 1452.\textsuperscript{141}

In England, before the 1578 English translation, Laurence Humphrey in The Nobles or of Nobility (published in Latin in 1560 and in English in 1563) names Appian as well as Plutarch and Thucydides as Greeks with the greatest name for historical knowledge.\textsuperscript{142} Young James VI of Scotland received a gift textbook of Appiandès Guerres de Romains in 1578.\textsuperscript{143} Also, Schanzer indicates that Shakespeare used Appian in Julius Caesar and Antony and Cleopatra.\textsuperscript{144}

\textsuperscript{140}British Museum General Catalogue 6 (1965): 173-178.

\textsuperscript{141}Appian, Appian's Roman History, 1: ix.

Sandys, however, says that the section including Appian's history of the civil wars was not finished until after Nicholas V's death in 1455. See John Edwin Sandys, A History of Classical Scholarship (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1908), 2: 70.

\textsuperscript{142}Baldwin, Small Latine, 1: 315-316 and 318.

\textsuperscript{143}Ibid., p. 544.

\textsuperscript{144}Appian, Shakespeare's Appian, pp. xix-xxviii.
As McDonald notes, Appian's material on the early Roman civil wars has preserved much valuable knowledge about them. Other authors have covered other areas of Roman history more completely. It would have been more likely, therefore, for Appian's history to have been read by the dedicated scholar of early Roman history than by the undergraduate seeking a thorough history of Rome.

Polyaenus

The next author to deal with the Coriolanus legend was Polyaeus (fl. second half of second century, A.D.), a Macedonian rhetorician who wrote his *Stratagems* in Greek. Polyaeus dedicated his collection of anecdotes to the Emperors Marcus and Verus, to aid them in Verus' Parthian wars. This dedication gives the work its approximate date of A.D. 162. Tarn indicates that Polyaeus produced his *Stratagems* very quickly and did not make his own extracts but utilized earlier compilations. Tarn goes on to pronounce that "theories about his Polyaeus' sources are useless." Hopefully it is not risking ridicule to observe that in Polyaeus' one paragraph treatment of Coriolanus there is nothing that could not be found in either Dionysius or Livy.

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147 Ibid.
Polyaenus' *Stratagems* essentially relates only those events which occurred after Coriolanus left Rome. Polyaeus

makes no judgment of Coriolanus' guilt or innocence. He simply

notes that "Coriolanus, after he had been banished Rome, 

offered his services to the Tuscans..." The only 
difference between Polyaeus' account and earlier ones is that he refers to the Volscians as Tuscans. But except for one 
sentence which is of no great consequence to this study, 

Polyaeus simply gives a very objective sketch of the Coriolanus 
legend.

Polyaeus' *Stratagems* was not very well known in Shakespeare's era. Baldwin makes no mention of the work. The British Museum possesses one Latin translation published in 1540, one Latin and Greek edition in 1589, and two Italian translations by different translators in 1552. The earliest English translation listed in the British Museum General Catalogue is Shepherd's 1793 translation, *Polyaeus's Stratagems of War*.  

Dio

Cassius Dio Cocceianus (A.D. 155/164-after 229), the next author to deal with the Coriolanus legend, narrated

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150 Ibid., column 575.
Coriolanus' actions at greater length than did Polyaenus in his 
Stratagems. Dio wrote his history of Rome, the Romaika, in 
Greek after serving in public offices in Rome. He served as a 
senator, and he also served as a consul in the years 205 and 
229. Dio's history, in eighty books, covers Rome from the 
founding of the city to A.D. 229. Unfortunately only books 
XXXVI-LIV (68-10 B.C.) are fully preserved. Other books are 
available in fragments and through quotations in the works of 
other historians. Books I-XXI, which deal with the Coriolanus 
legend along with the many other conflicts of early Rome, are 
largely preserved in the work of Zonaras. It was not until 
1895-1901, in three volumes edited by Boislevain, that the 
fragments of books I-XXXV were assigned to their respective 
books for the first time.

Dio's Roman history should be dated at around 229. Cary surmises that Dio worked on the history from 200-222 and 
added the last seven years (222-229) in a hurry as they were 
treated very summarily. McDonald gives the sources of Dio's

151 Dio Cassius, Dio's Roman History, trans. Earnest Cary, 
Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann, 1916), 1: 
vii.

152 Alexander Hugh McDonald, s.v. "Dio Cassius," The 

153 Ibid.

154 Ibid., p. xxvii.

155 Ibid., p. xi.

156 Ibid., pp. x-xi.
history of early Rome as republican annalistic tradition and
Livy or Livy's sources.  
Cary also notes that Dio believed that
details and anecdotes should give way to the larger aspects of
events, yet Dio was wont to adorn bare facts as he was a
rhetorician.

Dio's Book V, which contains his comments on Coriolanus,
has come down to us in fragments. Toward the beginning of
Book V, there is a paragraph that smacks strongly of Plutarch's
introduction of Coriolanus, although neither McDonald nor Cary
mentions this possibility:

For it is not easy for a man either to be strong at all
points or to possess excellence in the arts both of war
and of peace at the same time. Those who are physically
strong are, as a rule, weak-minded, and success that has
come in unstinted measure generally does not flourish
equally well everywhere. This explains why, after
having once been exalted by the citizens to the foremost
rank, he was not long afterward exiled by them, and how
it was that after making the city of the Volsci a slave
to his country he with the aid of that people brought
his own land in turn into the very extreme of danger.

Although Plutarch never reached the extreme of calling
Coriolanus "weak-minded," Plutarch does point out defects in
Coriolanus' education and his ethical imbalance in favor of the
virtue of "valiantnes" at the expense of other virtues, which
is precisely what Dio says in the paragraph above.

157 McDonald, s.v. "Dio Cassius."
158 Dio, Dio's Roman History, 1: xiii.
159 Ibid., p. 137.
Dio then notes the anger of Coriolanus:

The same man [Coriolanus] wished to made praetor, and upon failing to secure the office became angry at the populace; because of this and also because of his displeasure at the great influence of the tribunes he employed greater frankness in speaking to the people than was attempted by others whose deeds entitled them to the same rank as himself. ¹⁶⁰

Coriolanus' anger was caused both by his rejection for the office of praetor and by his hatred for the tribunes of the people.

This office of praetor, by the way, predated the establishment of the office of consul; it appears to be out of place in this era. The motivations for Coriolanus' anger are standard elements in the Coriolanus legend. A new element is Dio's indication that Coriolanus had the power to prevent the distribution to the plebians of the grain shipped from Sicily. In Act I, scene i, of Shakespeare's Coriolanus, for example, he only had the official power or personal influence to set grain prices. The phrase in the following quotation regarding grain distribution is somewhat ambiguous, however, and might possibly mean that he would not allow grain to be distributed in the way that the people wanted:

He [Coriolanus] would not allow them [the plebians] to receive allotments of it as they were demanding. Accordingly, the tribunes, whose office he was especially eager to abolish, brought him to trial before the populace on a charge of aiming at tyranny and exiled him.¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰Ibid., pp. 137 and 139.

¹⁶¹Ibid., p. 139.
Dio concludes his treatment of Coriolanus as the aristocratic military hero by noting that "he betook himself, raging at his treatment, to the Volsci. . . ." 162

In summary, Dio presents a less favorable picture of Coriolanus than any preceding historian. His weaknesses are commented upon; his victories in battle for Rome are not emphasized at all. But the reader must recall that Dio's Book V is only available in fragments. Some of the missing fragments possibly followed Plutarch's pattern of praising Coriolanus' martial exploits as well as noting his lack of balance in his virtues. It can be believed, however, that Dio presents Coriolanus as an aristocrat who attempted to starve the plebians into submission and a man who "brought his own land in turn into the very extreme of danger." 163

While there were volumes of Dio being published on the continent during Shakespeare's era, only a few of them might have contained the fragments of Book V that deal with the Coriolanus legend. The possible sources listed in the British Museum General Catalogue are a 1592 Greek and Latin edition, a 1542 French translation, and a 1533 Italian translation. 164 The first translation of Dio into English was not made until 1905 by Herbert B. Foster, a translation that Cary consulted in making his

162 Ibid.
163 Ibid., p. 137.
Sextus Aurelius Victor

The next work to deal with the Coriolanus legend was often ascribed to Sextus Aurelius Victor (fl. second half of fourth century). Written around A.D. 360 in Latin, De viris illustribus, along with the Origo gentis Romanae, was added to Aurelius' De Caesaribus by a contemporary compiler. The name of the author of De viris illustribus is not known; the work was also ascribed to Cornelius Nepos, Plinius Caecilius Secundus, and Suetonius Tranquillus. The work is considered here under Aurelius' name for two reasons: first, because the work is usually examined along with Aurelius' De Caesaribus by scholars and, second, to follow the example of E. T. Salmon, who outlined the sources of the Coriolanus legend.

Only one paragraph in the De viris illustribus narrates the Coriolanus legend. It begins by referring to his surname, earned by the capture of Corioli, and then praises him for his lack of greed:

165 Ibid., column 51.


Gnaeus Martius, called Coriolanus from [his] capture of Corioli, the city of the Volsci, receiving from Postumius a choice of gifts in return for his outstanding job of military service would accept only a horse and a guest-friend—a model of strength [literally "virtue"] and piety.¹⁶⁸

The work continues to indicate that Coriolanus, as consul, sold the grain to the plebians at a very high price. The work labels this action an injustice which led to his expulsion.¹⁶⁹

Except for the reference to Coriolanus as consul with the power to sell the grain at a high price, there is nothing unique in this treatment of the legend. In all, this work mentions both Coriolanus' military value to the state as well as indicating his too harsh position toward the plebians.

The British Museum General Catalogue lists several editions of De viris illustribus printed on the continent during and before Shakespeare's era. From 1579 to 1596, there were three complete editions in Latin of Sextus Aurelius Victor containing De viris.¹⁷⁰ There was also a separate edition of the

¹⁶⁸ This is the translation of Robert Firmauntgen, Wilbur Wright College (Chicago) Department of English, of the following passage from Sextus Aurelius Victor, Liber de Caesaribus praecedunt origo gentis Romanae et liber de viris illustribus urbis Romae subsequitur epitome de Caesaribus, ed. Franciscus Fichlmayr (Lipsiae: L. G. Teubneri, 1911), p. 37.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 37.

De viris published in 1468 in Latin. 171 Two editions of the De viris ascribed to Cornelius Nepos were published in 1525 and 1577. 172 Seventeen editions in Latin containing the De viris and ascribing the authorship to Plinius Caecilius Secundus were published from 1475 to 1577. 173 Two Italian translations which referred to Plinius Caecilius Secundus as the author were published in 1506 and 1562. 174 Two editions in Latin were published in 1509 and 1517 and referred to Suetonius Tranquillus as the author. 175

Eutropius

The next author to contemplate the Coriolanus legend was Eutropius (fl. second half of fourth century). Eutropius, a historian who wrote in Latin, took part in the Emperor Julian’s Persian campaign in A.D. 363 and was magister memoriae of Valens. His survey of Roman history in ten books, Breviarium ab urbe condita, began with Romulus. His source material for his account of republican Rome was based upon an epitome of Livy. The Breviarium was translated into Greek by Paenius at about 380. 176

171 Ibid., column 679.
174 Ibid.
175 Ibid., 232 (1964): 356.
Eutropius' account of the Coriolanus legend is only one paragraph long and is mixed with the account of the rise of the tribunes of the people. Eutropius makes the following comment upon Coriolanus' role as an aristocratic military hero:

In the yere following, the Volstians renued battaile against the Romaines, they were subdued: and loste moreover their first city called Corioli. Quintus Martius, a famous captain of the Romaines, who wan Coriolis a city of the Volscians, upon displeasure conceyved, went to the Volscians. . . .177

The above quotation is the sketchiest outline yet seen of Coriolanus' aristocratic military hero role. Eutropius notes that Coriolanus was a "famous captain" and does not give the reason for his going over to the Volscian side, merely referring to "displeasure conceyved." He does not even mention the sentence of exile.

The English scholar of Shakespeare's era would have had the option of reading Eutropius in English in a 1564 edition of Nicholas Haward.178 The British Museum General Catalogue indicates that there were also several editions published on the continent. There were at least fourteen editions published in Latin between 1475 and 1594, frequently combined with the work of other authors.179 One German translation of 1556 may have


178 Ibid.

179 British Museum General Catalogue 69 (1960): 767-768.
contained the Brevarium.\textsuperscript{180} A German translation was published in 1664, an Italian translation in 1544, and a Spanish translation in 1561.\textsuperscript{181} It is much more likely, therefore, that Eutropius' account of Coriolanus would have been available in Shakespeare's England than the works of Polyaeusus or Dio.

Zonaras

Johannes Zonaras (fl. early twelfth century), the next author to deal with the Coriolanus legend, wrote over 750 years after Eutropius. Zonaras, a Byzantine historian and canonist of the twelfth century, wrote his Epitome of Histories in Greek. Zonaras had served as commander of the imperial bodyguard and imperial secretary before retiring to monastic life at Hagia Glykeria on the isle of Niandro where he devoted himself to his writing. His Epitome of Histories is a universal history ending in A.D. 1118. Momigliano indicates that it was composed before 1143 under John II Comnenus.\textsuperscript{182} Both Momigliano and Cary agree that his main sources for early Roman history up to the destruction of Carthage were Plutarch and Dio's first twenty-one books, for the preservation of which Zonaras is the compiler most to be thanked.\textsuperscript{183} In turn, much of Zonaras has been presented to

\textsuperscript{180} Ibid., column 766.
\textsuperscript{181} Ibid., column 774.
\textsuperscript{182} Arnaldo Momigliano, s.v. "Zonaras, Johannes," The Oxford Classical Dictionary, p. 1147.
\textsuperscript{183} Ibid. Also, Dio, Dio's Roman History, 1: xxii-xxii.
the readers of English in Cary's Loeb edition of Dio's
history. 184

In Zonaras' account, Coriolanus is first mentioned at the
battle before Corioli where "a patrician, Gnaeus Marcius, showed
his prowess and repelled the assailants [the citizens of
Corioli]." 185 The account shows the familiar pattern of
exaltation followed by anger and exile:

For the time he was thus exalted, but not long afterward
he was anxious to be made praetor and failed, and there­
fore became angry with the populace and evinced dis­
pleasure toward the tribunes. Accordingly, the latter,
whose office he was especially eager to abolish . . .
exiled him from Rome. So, on being expelled, he forth­
with went over to the Volsci. 186

In his account of Coriolanus as an aristocratic military
hero, Zonaras is quite objective. He notes both Coriolanus'
martial value to the state and the venting of his anger. If
one can draw any inferences from this brief account, however, one
could perceive no chastisement of Coriolanus for showing his rage
nor any mention of an unjust action committed by Coriolanus to
merit his exile.

184 A comparison of the following Greek and Latin edition
of Zonaras to Cary's translation of Zonaras in Cary's Loeb
edition of Dio revealed that Cary had translated all that
Zonaras said about the Coriolanus legend.

Ioannes Zonaras, Ioannis Zonarum Annales. Corpus
Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae, edito assessidatio et copiosior,


186 ibid., pp. 137 and 139.
Zonaras' work was available to the scholar of Shakespeare's era in works published on the continent. Between 1556 and 1587, the British Museum General Catalogue shows that at least three Latin translations were published.\textsuperscript{187} A Greek and Latin edition was published in 1557.\textsuperscript{188} A French translation appeared in 1561.\textsuperscript{189} And three Italian translations were published from 1560 to 1572.\textsuperscript{190}

Tzetzes

Johannes Tzetzes, the next author to write about the Coriolanus legend, was a contemporary of Zonaras and a fellow Byzantine. In his youth at about A.D. 1143, Tzetzes wrote a commentary on the Iliad and verse works in Greek. His later work, the Chiliads, is a review of Greek literature and learning with quotations from over 400 authors.\textsuperscript{191} Cary noted that Tzetzes occasionally cites Dio among his various authorities, though "it is often difficult to determine exactly how much of Dio underlies his version."\textsuperscript{192} Also, Forbes and Browning noted

\textsuperscript{187} British Museum General Catalogue 263 (1966): 817.
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{189} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{190} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{191} Peter Barr Reid Forbes and Robert Browning, s.v. "Tzetzes, Johannes," The Oxford Classical Dictionary, p. 1102.
\textsuperscript{192} Dio, Dio's Roman History, 1: xxiii.
that at one point Tzetzes retained a copy of Plutarch in his library although he had sold all the rest of his manuscripts. 193 As with Zonaras, Tzetzes' account of the Coriolanus legend is presented in Cary's Loeb edition of Dio.

One can easily contrast the brief, objective account of Zonaras to Tzetzes' longer, more partisan account of Coriolanus as an aristocratic military hero. For example, Tzetzes gives a much more complete account of Coriolanus' actions at the siege of Corioli than Zonaras does:

When the Romans were warring against the city of Coriolanum, and had all turned to flight at full speed, he [Coriolanus] turned toward the hostile city, and finding it open, set fire to it all alone. As the flames rose brilliantly, he mounted his horse and fell with great violence upon the rear of the barbarians, who were causing headlong flight to the Romans. They wheeled about, and when they saw the fire consuming the city, thinking it was sacked, they fled in another direction. 194

(Later of mine)

Livy gives the detail of Coriolanus starting the fire in Corioli; Plutarch does not. Tzetzes, therefore, probably received Livy's account of the battle of Corioli second-hand through Dio in a now non-extant section of Dio's book V, as Livy or Livy's sources were used by Dio. 195 Of course, Tzetzes might have used Livy's work first-hand, but there is no reason to suppose that he would have preferred a Latin author, Livy, to a Greek one, Dio.

193 Forbes and Browning, s.v. "Tzetzes, Johannes."
194 Dio, Dio's Roman History, 1: 135.
After describing the battle, Tzetzes mentions that the title "Coriolanus" was bestowed upon the aristocratic military hero. He then mentions that "such is the treatment that jealousy accords to benefactors" that "they fined the man." The punishment in Tzetzes was a fine rather than exile, but Coriolanus still reacted in accord with other accounts:

And he [Coriolanus], grievously smarting with most just wrath, left his wife, his mother, and his country, and went to the Corioli, who received him. And they arrayed themselves against the Romans.197

Aside from confusing the name of the city and that of the people, calling the former Coriolanum (or Coriolanus?) and the other Corioli—an error which Cary noted, Tzetzes described an established pattern of behavior for Coriolanus.198

To summarize Tzetzes' comments on Coriolanus as an aristocratic military hero, Tzetzes must be placed in the column of those authors who treated Coriolanus in a favorable manner. His opponents were motivated by jealousy. And, when Coriolanus leaves Rome, he is smarting from "most just wrath."

If the British Museum General Catalogue is any indication, Tzetzes' Chiliads was not as easily available to the scholar of

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196 Dio, Dio's Roman History, 1: 137.

In Shakespeare's play, the tribune Sicinius considers imposing upon Coriolanus a fine, a death sentence, or banishment for punishment—see III. iii. 15-16.

197 Ibid.

198 Ibid., p. 135.
Shakespeare's era as was Zonaras' history. A Greek and Latin edition was published in 1546 on the continent. Also, various sections of Tzetzes' work were published in Greek and Latin editions on the continent in 1542, 1574, and 1603.

Higden

Approximately two centuries after Tzetzes wrote his account of the Coriolanus legend, Ranulf Higden (fl. late thirteenth-mid-fourteenth century), the first English chronicler of the legend, wrote his *Polychronycon* in Latin. Higden took monastic vows in Chester in 1299. He died in 1364. His *Polychronycon* is an universal history down to his own time. In 1387, John de Trevisa translated the work into English; another English translation was made in the fifteenth century.

Ranulf Higden's account of the Coriolanus legend is brief. His treatment of Coriolanus as an aristocratic military hero reads like a summary of the brief account of Eutropius, although Higden could have compiled his brief account from another source or sources:

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199 *British Museum General Catalogue* 242 (1964): 1058.


Higden notes Coriolanus' aristocratic position, calling him "Duke of Rome"; his success in war, he "hadde taken the Vultes before"; and his anger, he "was wrothe." Higden also notes that Coriolanus went to the "Vultes" although "he had rather taken" them and their cities.

Higden's account of Coriolanus as an aristocratic military hero is very brief. But placed in context with Higden's comments on the tribunes of the people—see Chapter III—it would seem that Higden is favorably disposed toward Coriolanus.

Both Kingsford and Galbraith note the popularity of Higden's work. Kingsford asserted that "it enjoyed great popularity for nearly two centuries." Galbraith noted that well over 100 manuscripts of the *Polychronicon* have survived to the present day. This would seem to be solid proof of the work's popularity. Three editions of the work were printed in English translation in 1482, 1495, and 1527.

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204 Kingsford, s.v. "Higden," *D.N.B.*


Lanquet

Slightly less than two hundred years later, Thomas Lanquet (1521-1545) wrote his An epitomie of Chronicles in English. Lanquet was a student at Oxford; he was devoted to historical research. He died in London while writing his universal history. It was completed by Thomas Cooper, later bishop of Winchester, and was published in 1549. The work is generally known as Cooper's Chronicle.

Lanquet's account of Coriolanus as an aristocratic military hero is quite brief. "Marcus Coriolanus, by the protectours of the communalte was exiled, the Volscians receiued him for theyr capitayn." The "protectours of the communalte" mentioned in this objective report were the tribunes of the people. An account of this brevity and objectivity, even when taken in context with all of Lanquet's other comment on the Coriolanus legend, leaves little room for interpretation.


Thomas Lanquet, An Epitomie of Chronicles (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1549). This edition was compared to the edition of Cooper's Chronicle given below from which all quotations were taken. The differences between the editions in their accounts of Coriolanus were only in spelling.

208 Archbold, s.v. "Lanquet," D.N.B.


210 Ibid., leaf 47.
Lanquet's universal history would have been available to the reader of English in Shakespeare's era. The British Museum General Catalogue lists four editions published in England between 1549 and 1565. The dates of Lanquet's publication indicate that it was published shortly after the last publication of Rigden's Polychronicon in 1527, another universal history printed in English.

Lloyd

The next English author to write about the Coriolanus legend was Ludovic Lloyd (fl. 1573-1610). Lloyd, the fifth son of an English noble, was a poet and compiler who wrote in English. He was a conspicuous figure at the court of Queen Elizabeth where, in his own words, he was "her Maisties Seargeant at Armes" and continued to serve as such under James I. Lloyd's history, The Consent of Time, was published only once in 1590.

For his account of the Coriolanus legend, Lloyd gives two sources printed right in the margin of his history—Nephi and Livy. Other authors that he cited in the margin include:

of his history as sources for other historical events include, in
the order in which they appear in this chapter, Cicero on p. 488,
Dionysius of Halicarnassus on p. 497, Valerius Maximus on p. 505,
Plutarch on p. 508, Florus on p. 509, and Sextus Aurelius Victor
on p. 553.214 All of these authors are cited more than once in
The Consent of Time. This listing hopefully provides yet another
indication of the popularity of those authors who dealt with the
Coriolanus legend.

Lloyd first mentions Coriolanus in connection with his
aristocratic ancestry:

... so that of the seven kings Numa onely excelled, of
whome some say that hee had no children but one daughter
called Pompilia, which was married to C. Martius
Coriolanus. Of this Pompilia was borne Ancus Martius
the fourth king of Rome: some say againe, that Numa had
foure sonnes ... . Reade of this king more in Plutarch,
and in Dionisius Halicarnassaeus.215 (Italics mine)

As Coriolanus was a young man when he helped expel the seventh
king of Rome, it is impossible to imagine him siring the fourth
king of Rome, who was an adult male. This allusion to
Coriolanus' royal ancestry is probably a mistranslation of the
following passage from Plutarch:

The house of the Martians at Rome was of the number of
the Patricians, out of the which hath sprong many noble
personages: whereof Ancus Martius was one, king Numaes
daughters sonne, who was king of Rome after Tullus
Hostilius.216

214 Ibid., pagination as indicated in the text.
215 Ibid., p. 477.
216 Plutarch, Plutarch's Lives 8: 143.
Lloyd mentions Coriolanus again about twenty pages later in the proper era. He begins with a description of Coriolanus' martial prowess:

In Rome dwelt a rare man of great service in the warres of Tarquine, whom Largius the first Dictator knewe to be such as deserved great prayse then, being a young man: for hee was crowned with Oken leaues according to the Romanes maners in Tarquinius dayes, and sithence profited Rome in divers services, in subduing the Volscans, in winning the citie Coriules, he invaded the Antiates, ... for there was no batell fought, no warre entered but Coriolanus returned from thence with fame and honour. 217

In the midst of this praise for Coriolanus' martial prowess, however, Lloyd notes that Coriolanus was a threat to the plebians:

[Coriolanus] often repressed the insolencie of the people, insomuch that the Romanes having many warres in those dayes, this Coriolanus was at them all. . . . 218

Coriolanus' participation in all of the wars of Rome is not explicitly contrasted to the plebians' non-violent refusal to serve, but it is implied in the above quotation.

Lloyd goes on to note that Coriolanus' "vertue and renowne gate him much enuie" and resulted in the aediles and the tribunes of the people exiling him from Rome. 219 Lloyd clearly has little sympathy for the plebians. He observed that the exile was accomplished against the patricians' will, and, thereafter, "the Romans made a roddie to beate themselves, when they

218 Ibid., p. 496.
219 Ibid., p. 497.
banished Coriolanus."\(^{220}\)

Lloyd, presumably a landless younger son with ambitions at court, probably reflects the values of Elizabeth's court and the court of James I. If he does, there is a definite and expected anti-democratic bias in Elizabethan England, a bias which is often heard from the mouths of several of Shakespeare's characters.

Ralegh

Sir Walter Ralegh (1552?-1618), the next English author to deal with the Coriolanus legend, was writing his *History of the World* in English between 1607 and 1614. Although his work was not published until 1614, well after Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* was written, it is included in this study both because it was written during the period that Shakespeare was writing his play and because of the subsequent popularity of Ralegh's work.\(^{221}\)

Ralegh spent three years at Oxford. After an adventurous career which has made him familiar to students of English history, he began his *History of the World* in the Tower of London. He was encouraged to write it by the young Prince Henry. Laughton and Lee comment that Ralegh's work "illustrates the sureness with which ruin overtakes 'great conquerors and other troublers of the

\(^{220}\) *Ibid.*

world' who neglect law, whether human or divine..."222
Ralegh's material for the Coriolanus legend might have been drawn entirely from Florus and Livy as is explained below.

Ralegh opens his commentary on Coriolanus with the conquest of Corioli:

In this conquest, T. Martius got the surname of Coriolanus: a name honourable then, as derived from a great victorie: although, by reason of the povertie of the Towne, a Roman Generall, in after times, would have beene ashamed of that title. But yet these graces had beene no occasion of disparagement...223

In his disparagement of the conquest of such a small town, Ralegh sounds much like Florus. Yet such details as indicating the problem of distributing the grain from Sicily which appear in Ralegh's work are not in Florus. These details are in Livy, however, and Florus' work, as it was regarded as a simple epitome of Livy, was published with Livy's history in Philemon Holland's

English translation of 1600.

In Ralegh's account, it is Coriolanus' advocacy of a high sale price for the Sicilian grain that leads to his banishment.

[Coriolanus] in a great time of dearth, advised to sell corne, which they procured from Sicil, at too high a rate, to the people: whereupon, Decius Mus, their Tribune, in their behalfe, accused him, and after judgement, banished him. Coriolanus flying to the Volsci, whom lately before he had vanquished...224

222 Ibid.
224 Ibid.
Ralegh injects no note of praise or condemnation for Coriolanus other than the affected criticism of the title "Coriolanus" which he presumably borrowed from one of his sources--Florus. One can imply a criticism of Coriolanus' judgment in setting too high a price for the Sicilian grain, however, but this decision can be balanced against his value to the state as a general.

Ralegh's History of the World was popular in the England of James I and afterwards. The first edition was published in 1614, the second in 1617. Eleven other editions were published between 1621 and 1736. It is a massive work, the largest encountered in this study with the possible exceptions of Livy's and Dionysius' works, and a tribute to diligent work done under adverse conditions.

Summary of Preconceptions About Coriolanus Held

By Shakespeare's Audience

In my opinion, there were six historians--Livy, Valerius Maximus, Plutarch, Florus, Ludovic Lloyd, and Walter Ralegh--whose works as studied in school or, in the case of Lloyd and Ralegh, whose set of values were the most familiar to the literate subjects of James I. A survey of their works should reveal the possible preconceptions that Shakespeare's audience held about Coriolanus as the aristocratic military hero. At

225 Laughton and Lee, s.v. "Ralegh," E.N.E.
times, Shakespeare fulfilled his audience's expectations, and, at other times, he surprised the audience with his use of irony.

Livy, Valerius Maximus, Florus, and Ludovic Lloyd tend to exonerate Coriolanus and praise him. Their attitude toward Coriolanus most probably would have influenced the greater number of Shakespeare's audience, for only Plutarch and Raleigh criticized Coriolanus before his exile. These four historians stress the noble blood of Coriolanus, his role as a leader of his fellow patricians, and his value to Rome as a soldier. Though Livy implies some criticism of Coriolanus for his absence at his own trial, the other three historians maintain that he was unjustly exiled and, hence, worthy of the reader's sympathy. Ludovic Lloyd even goes so far as to imply that the subsequent damage that Coriolanus inflicted upon the Romans was their just due for their harshness to Rome's foremost aristocratic military hero.

Shakespeare chose to follow the complex historical personage found in Plutarch's account rather than the personification of aristocratic values found in the accounts of the four historians previously mentioned. Plutarch's Coriolanus is a mixture of great courage and great, hot-tempered arrogance. He possesses the most highly prized virtue of the early Romans, courage, but he is flawed by his pride. Plutarch's Coriolanus, 226

226 It should be noted that Raleigh's History of the World was not published until 1614, six years after the customary date given for the first performance of Coriolanus.
therefore, is a more complex personage, more suitable for a play that dramatizes the interdependency of the family and the state.

Shakespeare kept much of the essential plot found in Plutarch. Where Shakespeare did cut it, he did so to place the focus more squarely upon Coriolanus. He increased the anger and the arrogance of Coriolanus beyond Plutarch’s account. He humanized the plebians by dramatizing their plight. He also added to Plutarch’s account the figure of Menenius, so that the audience could see that the protagonist always had the option of accepting advice which would have conciliated the plebians. He deepened this last irony when he had the arrogant Coriolanus attempt to follow the advice of Menenius; the protagonist’s instinctive reactions made the situation even worse.

If Shakespeare’s audience held the objective view of Coriolanus which Raleigh came to formulate, then they would not necessarily be surprised by the irony of Shakespeare’s drama. Raleigh draws the sketch of an aristocratic military hero with bad political judgment. It is only when Raleigh’s sketch is fleshed out with a richness of human emotion, which can be found in Shakespeare’s play, however, that Coriolanus’ tragedy moves the human heart.
CHAPTER TWO

MENENIUS AGRIPPA: THE DIPLOMATIC ANTAGONIST

Cicero

As Cicero's dialogue *Brutus* does not contain a reference to Menenius Agrippa, the historical personage whom Shakespeare used as the voice of moderation and reason in *Coriolanus*, the first author to consult is Livy.

Livy

Menenius Agrippa (sometimes written Agrippa Menenius in Livy's account) is first mentioned upon his serving as consul in 503 B.C. In this year, he and Publius Postumius, his fellow consul, defeated a great army of the Aurunci which had been bolstered by the rebellious Latin colonies of Pometia and Cora; no quarter was given in this battle. A triumph was celebrated in Rome for this victory.¹

Menenius next appears after the plebian soldiers have seceded from Rome and marched to the Sacred Mount. The senate, fearing the plebians who had stayed in Rome as well as the


constant threat of foreign invasion, asked Menenius to be its
ambassador to the plebian soldiers.

So it was thought good and agreed upon, that one Menenius
Agrippa (a faire spoken and eloquent man, gratious with-
all and wellbeloved among the commons, for that he was
from them descended) should be sent as an Orator to treat
with them.²

There is some question as to whether or not Livy meant that
Menenius was a plebian. The passage given above, translated by
Philemon Holland, states that he was "descended" from plebians
but does not state that he was one himself; perhaps he had some
relationship to a patrician family as well. Foster's transla-
tion of Livy in the Loeb edition indicates that Menenius was a
plebian. In a footnote, however, Foster contends that if he was
a plebian, it is improbable that he was also, as Livy implies,
a senator, for the first definite notice of a plebian senator
does not occur until 400 B.C. in Livy's account.³

Upon entering the plebians' camp, Livy states that
Menenius wasted no time but immediately used "that old and
harsh kind of eloquence" of telling a fable.⁴ It was the fable
of the Belly and the Members of the Body, a fable that dates
back at least to Aesop's collection of fables in the sixth

century B.C. 5 Since MacCallum, Muir, and Bullough cite Philemon Holland's translation of Livy as one of Shakespeare's sources, it is cited here with an italicized sentence which indicates part of Shakespeare's borrowing: 6


Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources, 5: 477.

Muir bases his contention upon Holland's specific references to "blood" and "veines" which appear in Shakespeare's play as well as upon the close similarity of the italicized sentence in the text to the following passage from Shakespeare's account.

   But, if you do remember,
   I send it through the rivers of your blood
   Even to the court, the heart, to th' seat o' th' brain;
   And, through the cranks and offices of man,
   The strongest nerves and small inferior veins
   From me receive that natural competency
   Whereby they live. (I. i. 129-135.)

Muir also contends, on pp. 240-241, that Shakespeare read an account of the fable in Sidney's Defence of Poesy. Both he and Bullough, on p. 477, imply that Shakespeare may have also been influenced by Camden's Remaines of a Greater Worke, Concerning Britaine (published 1605). And, although Bullough does not mention it, Muir, on pp. 240-241 gives a good case for Shakespeare being influenced by the account of the fable given in William Averell's A Marvelous Combat of Contrarieties. On p. 240, Muir posits that Shakespeare also "doubtless came across it [the fable] at school in one form or another" and cites Baldwin's Small Latine as his source. In conclusion, the beginning of Shakespeare's account of the fable reveals his obvious debt to North's translation of Plutarch's Parallel Lives; see Muir, pp. 240-241.
Whilome (quoth he) when as in mans bodie, all the parts thereof agreed not, as now they do in one, but each member had a several intent & meaning, yea and a speech by it selfe: so it befel, that all other parts besides the belly, thought much & repined that by their carefulnes, labor, & ministerie, all was gotten, & yet all little enough to serve it: and the bellie it selfe lying still in the midis of them, did nothing else but enjoy the delightsome pleasures brought unto her. Wherupon they mutinied & conspired altogether in this wise, That neither the hands should reach & convey food into the mouth, nor the mouth receive it as it came, ne yet the teeth grind & chew the same. In this mood & fit, whiles they were minded to famish the poor bellie, behold the other lims, yea & the whole bodie besides, pined, wasted, & fell into an extreme consumption. Then was it well seen, that even the very belly also did no small service, but fed the other parts, as it received food it selfe: seeing that by working and concocting the meat throughlie, it digesteth and distributeth by the veines into all parts, that fresh and perfect blood whereby we live, we like, and have our full strength.7 (Italics mine)

This fable moved the plebians when Menenius compared them to the rebellious members of the body. They immediately effected a compromise with the senators—see Chapters III and IV for details. This entire event was a triumph of Menenius' political skill, the same skill that caused him to give no quarter when fighting Rome's avowed enemies, the Aurunci.

The same year in which the plebian secession took place also saw the death of Menenius Agrippa. There is no mention of his having any relationship with Coriolanus during this year, although this was also the year in which Coriolanus won his surname. One can surmise that Shakespeare chose to develop a relationship between the two men for two reasons. First, the

fable of Menenius would be valuable for relating an aristocratic theory of government in a compact manner. Secondly, Menenius Agrippa with his diplomatic skill and his way of handling the plebians would stand in contrast to his aristocratic military hero.

Before the secession, Livy is clear in saying that Menenius was loved by both patricians and plebians alike. Livy's comment on Menenius' death indicates that both classes had more reason to honor him for effecting a compromise, even though the plebians were more open in displaying their gratitude, as the following passage shows:

This truchman, this mediator for civile attonement, this Embassadour and messenger from the Senatours to the commons, this reconciler and reducer of the commons home againe into the cittie, had not at his death sufficient to defray the charges of his funerals: the commons therefore made a purse and a contribution of a Sextant by the poll, and were at the cost to interre and burie him worshipfully.8

Dionysius of Halicarnassus

Menenius Agrippa first appears in the account of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, as he does in Livy, upon his election to the consulship with Publius Postumius. Dionysius indicates that he was also "called Lanatus."9 In Livy's account, Menenius Agrippa was a different person from the Agrippa Menenius Lanatus

8 Ibid., p. 66.
who was first mentioned as one of the triumvirs for establishing a colony at Ardea in 442 B.C., fifty-one years after the Menenius Agrippa of the Coriolanus legend had died.\textsuperscript{10} It is surprising that Cary, the translator of the Loeb edition of \textit{The Roman Antiquities}, did not comment on this apparent discrepancy.

As consul, Menenius earned a triumph for a victory over the Sabines, not the Aurunci as in Livy.\textsuperscript{11} There is no mention of any plebian blood in the consul's veins. About twelve years later, Menenius again appears to give a long oration, typical of the many long orations in Dionysius' account, to urge the senate to make an accommodation with the secessionist plebian soldiers. His oration is prefaced by Dionysius' description of him as a man who "pursued a middle course, being inclined neither to increase the arrogance of the aristocratic party nor to permit the people to have their own way in everything."\textsuperscript{12}

Menenius' oration stressed both the dangers to the state from foreign invasion and from internal discord. He stressed the plebians' service to the state in past wars. He made an early allusion to the metaphor of the state as a human body—"that neither the ailing part of a human body ought always to be lopped off (for that would be to render the appearance of the

\textsuperscript{10}Livy, \textit{Livy}, Loeb Classical Library, 2: 295 and 301.

\textsuperscript{11}Dionysius, \textit{The Roman Antiquities}, Loeb Classical Library, 3: 137.

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., 4: 5.
rest ugly and its term of life brief)—which was developed at
greater length in his fable. Finally, he suggested that the
senate send an embassy to the secessionists. For this oration,
he was praised by the elder of the consuls. As Dionysius
tended to favor the older senators and to mistrust the younger
ones who urged repression of the plebians, this praise may be
taken as a token of Dionysius' approval as well as that of the
elder consul's.

Manius Valerius also voiced his agreement with the
oration of Menenius. Appius Claudius then attacked Manius
Valerius, but he did not win the argument except in the eyes of
the younger senators. After a few days of adjournment, the
senate met again after having sampled public opinion and having
discovered it was in Menenius' favor. The senate appointed an
embassy consisting of Menenius, Manius Valerius, and eight of
the older and more distinguished senators.

Within the plebian camp, Manius Valerius spoke first, as
he was the oldest of the envoys and most in sympathy with the
plebians. He urged reconciliation and negotiation. He was
answered by the plebian leaders, Sicinius and Lucius Junius
Brutus. At that point, Brutus made a very long oration about the
perfidy of the senators and the sacrifices that the plebians had

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13 Ibid., p. 19.
14 Ibid., p. 27.
15 Ibid., p. 31.
16 Ibid., p. 61.
made for the state. Titus Larcius, a distinguished envoy who appears in Plutarch and Shakespeare as a general against the Volscians, made a response that was intended to mollify the plebians, but it did not reassure most of them, especially after Sicinius gave a rabble-rousing address stressing the plebians' sufferings. Dionysius built up this scene of harsh exchanges; as a result, Menenius looked quite the diplomat when he resolved the issue.

Menenius began his oration with "the most persuasive arguments possible and those which gauged well the inclinations of his audience." These arguments included the forgiveness of all past debts owed by plebian debtors and the promise of meaningful negotiations with the senate. Despite these arguments, it was the fable, told near the end of his oration, which won over the plebians. It is essentially the same tale as in Livy, though, as might be expected, Dionysius takes much longer to recount it.

The fable brought forth tears and lamentations from the repentant plebians, which Menenius played upon to good effect. The plebians would have left the city immediately had not Brutus

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17 Ibid., p. 101.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid., pp. 109-115.

Muir noted Dionysius' account of the fable, but he apparently found no unique correspondences between it and Shakespeare's account. See Muir, "Menenius's Fable," p. 240.
Immediately proposed the election of plebian magistrates to protect their rights. Menenius agreed to the proposal in principle and sent Manius Valerius with some of the envoys to get the senate's confirmation. Upon reception of the senate's confirmation, the plebians asked Menenius to draw up the law for the creation of their own magistrates, an indication of the plebians' trust in Menenius which was more than a mere gesture.

Shortly after the battle of Corioli, Menenius died. As in Livy and in other historians to come, Menenius is not recorded as having any particular relationship with Coriolanus. Menenius' death, however, presumably saddened Coriolanus as it saddened everyone else in the republic.

The tribunes of the people seized upon his death as a chance to extoll the virtues of a wise man who refrained from amassing riches. Indeed, his estate was so small that it could not bear the expense of the magnificent funeral usually given in honor of an ex-consul. The tribunes therefore proposed that they assess each plebian a sum to bury Menenius. The plebians responded with a large amount of money.

Upon hearing of the tribunes' actions, which again revealed their ability to seize upon an opportunity for political advantage, the senate was ashamed. In what should be taken as Dionysius' final comment on Menenius, the senate resolved to do something about the burial of "the most illustrious of all the
The senate contracted for the funeral and paid for it out of public funds. The tribunes were not to be outmaneuvered, however, for they presented the money they had raised to Menenius' children out of compassion for their poverty and "to prevent them from engaging in any pursuits unworthy of their father's virtue." 21

In summary, Dionysius depicted Menenius as a successful soldier, a practical politician, and a skillful orator. He had few, if any, enemies in Rome; for example, even in the heat of debate over compromising with the secessionists, Appius Claudius attacked Manius Valerius rather than the moderate Menenius. It was difficult to attack a man with few enemies who had the gift of getting along with the proponents of either side of an argument. Menenius thus stood in marked contrast to the intemperate Coriolanus, a man with many enemies.

Valerius Maximus

As the account of Valerius Maximus does not deal with Menenius, the next work to consider is Plutarch's Parallel Lives.

Plutarch

Menenius Agrippa makes a brief appearance in Plutarch's


21 Ibid.
"The Life of Caius Martius Coriolanus" simply to deliver his fable. Neither his previous actions nor his death are recorded in Plutarch's account. As always, Plutarch kept his focus on Coriolanus.

The passage relating to Menenius opens with the plebians' secession at the Sacred Mount. As the senate was frightened, they sent an embassy to them of "certaine of the pleasaunterste olde men, and the most acceptable to the people among them." Presumably they were of patrician rank. Plutarch differs from Dionysius in making Menenius the chief of the embassy and in mentioning only him by name. This difference may be attributed to some annalist that Plutarch was using, or it may be another example of Plutarch's selection of pertinent details. Menenius was the only member of the embassy that Plutarch needed from either Livy or Dionysius' account, for only Menenius with his fable gave vivid memorable advice about political relationships.

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22 Plutarch, Plutarch's Lives, trans. Sir Thomas North, 8: 149.

23 MacCallum in Shakespeare's Roman Plays, p. 499, states, "There is no hint in Plutarch of his Menenius being himself one of the patricians..." But since Plutarch previously implied, in contrast to Dionysius, that all of the "poore common people" (Plutarch's Lives 8: 148) had already left Rome in their secession, one wonders how MacCallum can be so certain that Menenius was not a patrician. He attempts to verify his assertion by alluding to Holland's translation of Livy, but he does not cite a passage from that translation but instead cites from Weissenborn and Muller's Latin edition. As previously noted in this chapter, the Holland translation states that there was plebian blood in Menenius' family but does not specifically state that Menenius was a plebian himself.
Perhaps for the sake of his didactic purpose, Plutarch took the classical rhetorician's prerogative of rewriting history.

Plutarch summarizes Menenius' oration by simply stating that "after many good persuasions and gentle requests made to the people, on behalf of the Senate: [he] knit up his oration in the ende, with a notable tale, in this manner." He then goes into the fable itself:

That on a time all the members of mens bodie, dyd rebell against the bellie, complaining of it, that it only remained in the middest of the bodie, without doing any thing, neither dyd beare any labour to the maintaunce of the rest: whereas all other partes and members dyd labour paynefully, and was very carfull to satisfie the appetites and deserers of the bodie. And so the bellie, all this nowithstanding, laughed at their follioe, and sayed: It is true, I first receyve all meates that norische mans bodie: but afterwardes I send it againe to the norishment of other partes of the same. Even so (quote he) O you, my masters, and citizens of Rome: the reason is a like betweene the Senate, and you. For matters being well digested, and their counsells throughly examined, touching the benefit of the common wealth: the Senatours are cause of the common commoditie that commeth unto every one of you.

Plutarch closes his book on Menenius right after his fable by saying that his persuasion "pacified the people" upon condition of the creation of the tribunes of the people. This embassy thus calmed the plebians and reunited the city. Although Plutarch does not refer to him again, presumably he regarded Menenius as a responsible citizen with a grasp of political

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25 Ibid.
26 Plutarch, Plutarch's Lives, trans. Sir Thomas North, 8: 149.
realities and the gift of simple eloquence. Plutarch does not comment upon Menenius but rather lets his actions and words speak for themselves. Thus, he provided a character that Shakespeare, while maintaining the structure of a diplomatic politician drawn by Plutarch, could flesh out for his own purposes.

Florus

The abridgement of Florus' account, which appeared within Philemon Holland's translation of Livy in 1600, treats Menenius in a brief but complimentary fashion:

The commons rising, for being enthralled unto their creditors, retired themselves into the mount Sacer, and were by the policie and counsaile of Menenius Agrippa, reclaimed from their sedition, and appeased. The same Agrippa being deceased, was by reason of his poverty, buried at the citties charges.27

In Florus' unabridged account, which appears in the Loeb edition, he goes to the trouble of repeating the fable. However, he gives a short version of it, however, but he takes care to praise Menenius:

The common people took up arms and seceded to the Sacred Mount, and were with difficulty induced to return (and then only after their demand for a tribune had been granted) at the instance of the eloquent and wise Menenius Agrippa. The fable, quite in the old style of oratory, which was most efficacious in promoting concord, is still remembered, in which he said that the members of the human body once revolted, on the ground that, while they all performed their functions, the stomach

alone lived without doing any duty, but afterwards, when they found themselves dying, owing to their separation from it they returned to a good understanding with it, because they found that its service was to convert food into the blood which flows in them.\(^{28}\) (italics mine)

As in Plutarch, Menenius appears as an eloquent and wise man.

Appian

In that part of Appian's \textit{Roman History} which appears in the English translation of 1578, there is no mention of the role of Menenius, although it does note the plebians' secession to the Sacred Mount and the negotiations leading to their return.\(^{29}\) The Loeb edition of Appian's \textit{Roman History} reveals that this is the extent to which Appian went in detailing the secession; Appian, therefore, does not mention Menenius.\(^{30}\) One can wonder why Appian did not recount the fable as other historians saw fit to do. It should be noted, however, that neither White nor MacDonald cited either Livy or Dionysius of Halicarnassus as primary sources for Appian, and that they did not cite Plutarch at all as a possible source.\(^{31}\)

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\(^{28}\) Florus, \textit{Epitome of Roman History}, Loeb Classical Library, pp. 71 and 73.

\(^{29}\) Appianus, \textit{An Ancient Historie}, p. 1.

\(^{30}\) Appian, \textit{Appian's Roman History}, Loeb Classical Library, 3: 3.

\(^{31}\) \textit{Ibid.}, 1: vii.


Polyaenus

As Polyaeous in his *Stratagems of War* does not mention Menenius at all, the next author to consider is Cassius Dio Cocceianus.

Dio

Dio's account does not mention Menenius' election to the consulship. Menenius does not enter his account until after the secessionist plebians "at first maintained a bold front, but were brought to reason in a remarkable way."32

As Dio wrote it, Menenius, who was the only one of the envoys mentioned by name, was facing a very hostile plebian audience:

When they kept up a series of disorderly shouts, Agrippa, one of the envoys, begged them to hearken to a fable, and having obtained their consent, spoke as follows: "Once all the Members of Man began a contention against the Belly, declaring that they worked and toiled without food or drink, being at the beck and call of the Belly in everything, whereas it endured no labour and alone got its fill of nourishment. And finally they voted that the Hands should no longer convey aught to the Mouth nor the latter receive anything, to the end that the Belly might so far as possible come to lack both food and drink and so perish. Now when this decision had been reached and put into execution, at first the entire body began to wither away and next it gave out and collapsed. Accordingly, the Members through their own desperate state grew conscious that in the Belly lay their own salvation and restored to it its nourishment."33

32 Dio, *Dio's Roman History*, Loeb Classical Library, 1: 119 and 121.
Dio's version of the fable reads like a condensed version of Livy's account of it. As McDonald observed, Livy was a primary source for Dio—see Chapter I. Regardless of its source, as in every account which mentions it, the fable was immediately successful in swaying the plebians:

On hearing this [fable] the multitude comprehended that the abundance of the prosperous also supports the cause of the poor; therefore they became milder and were reconciled on being granted a release from their debts and from seizures therefor. These terms, then, were voted by the senate.34

This passage concludes Dio's treatment of Menenius Agrippa. From this treatment, Menenius emerges as a skilled diplomat capable of facing and persuading a hostile audience.

Sextus Aurelius Victor

In the De viris illustribus, often ascribed to Sextus Aurelius Victor, the account of Menenius opens with his victory over the Sabines:

Menenius Agrippa, of the family Lanatus, having been chosen leader against the Sabines, triumphed over them. And when the plebians withdrew from the patricians because they carried the weight of taxes and military service and were not able to be called back, Agrippa [spoke] with them: . . . .35

34 Ibid., pp. 123 and 125.

35 Aurelius, Liber de Caesaribus . . . et liber de viris illustribus . . . ., Teubner edition, p. 36.

Menenius Agrippa cognomento Lanatus dux electus adversus Sabinos de his triumphavit. Et cum populos a patribis
This account of Menenius reads like a summary of the account of Dionysius of Halicarnassus even to the allusion to the name Lanatus. The De viris illustribus goes on to say, after relating a condensed version of the fable of the Belly and the Members of the Body, that Menenius' fable caused the plebians to return to Rome, though, at the same time, they insisted upon the creation of a tribune of the people.

The De viris illustribus contains a final reference to Menenius which showed the high esteem in which he was held by both plebians and patricians. As in those accounts that mention his death, this account refers to his poverty, but, in a departure from other accounts, both classes participate in his burial. The plebians gave their collection of money to pay the expenses of the funeral ceremony while the senate donated the land for Menenius' tomb. As in other accounts, therefore, Menenius appears in the De viris illustribus as one of the most respected soldiers and one of the most honored statesmen in the city.

Eutropius

As Eutropius does not mention Menenius, the next author to consider is Zonaras.

secessisset, quod tributum et militum toleraret, nec revocari posset, Agrippa apud eum: . . . Translated by Pirmantgen.

36 Ibid., p. 37.
Zonaras opens his account of Menenius by noting that he came to the rescue of his fellow consul, Postumius, in a battle with the Sabines. He saved the army of Postumius by his actions and defeated the Sabines.  

Menenius next appears at the secession of the plebians. Zonaras drew a picture of Rome in very great danger, though he still had sympathy for the plebians' cause—see Chapter IV. Against this background of fear of foreign invasion and increasing civil discord, the senate "promised to do everything for them [the secessionists] that they desired." This plea from the senate did not immediately appease the plebians, however, for they then "displayed a bolder front than ever and would accept no offer." At this desperate point, "one of the envoys, Menenius Agrippa, begged them to hearken to a fable. After obtaining their consent he spoke as follows: . . . ."

Menenius' fable convinced the previously hostile plebians that "the abundance of the prosperous tends also to the advantage of the poor." They thus became reconciled to the

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38 Ibid., p. 119.
39 Ibid., pp. 119 and 121.
40 Ibid., p. 121.
41 Ibid., p. 123.
patricians "after the senate had voted a lightening their debts and release from seizures therfore." Subsequent to the settling of the secession, there is no mention of Menenius' death in Zonaras' account.

One could draw from Zonaras' account the opinion that Menenius was a capable soldier and a persuasive politician.

Tzetzes

Tzetzes does not mention Menenius.

Higden

As Ranulf Higden does not mention Menenius, the next author to consider is Thomas Lanquet.

Lanquet

Menenius is mentioned only once, though in a favorable manner, in Lanquet's Chronicle: "The common people rose up against the Senators for defense of their libertee, but by the upsedome of Memmius Agrippa, they were pacified." This reference to the wisdom of Menenius is in keeping with the reputation that Menenius had gained from earlier historians.

42 Ibid., p. 125.

43 Cooper, Cooper's Chronicle containing Lanquettes Chronicle, leaf 47.
Lloyd

Ludovic Lloyd goes into some detail in describing the secession of the plebians, but he does not mention the role of Menenius in resolving the issue—see Chapters III and IV for details of the secession.\(^4\)

Ralegh

In his \textit{History of the World}, Sir Walter Ralegh mentions Menenius in connection with the secessionist plebians, but he only makes the briefest of allusions to the fable:

\begin{quote}
Thinking themselves wrongfully oppressed by the Senate and Consuls, they made an uproare in the holy Mount, untill by Menenius Agrippa, his discreet allusion of the inconuenience in the head and bellies discord, to that present occasion, they were reconciled. . . .\(^5\)
\end{quote}

In this brief glimpse of him, Menenius appears simply to be a skillful politician who can calm the unruly plebians. Perhaps Ralegh did not repeat the fable because he felt that it was sufficiently well known to his readers through its use in the education of English children.\(^6\) In any case, Ralegh's Menenius, a man of discretion and courage, showed the ability of a patrician to handle a disruptive mob of plebians.

\(^4\) Lloyd, \textit{The Consent of Time}, p. 496.


Summary of Preconceptions About Menenius
Held by Shakespeare's Audience

Of the six historians who presumably were either the most read in Shakespeare's era or possibly reflected contemporary attitudes, two of them, Valerius Maximus and Ludovic Lloyd, make no mention of Menenius Agrippa. None of the historians connect Menenius with Coriolanus, however, for this relationship is an invention of Shakespeare.

All of the four authors who mention Menenius praise his skill as a politician in handling the secessionist plebians. Livy goes into the most detail, noting that Menenius had served as a consul and defeated the Aurunci while he was in office. He also implies that Menenius had some ancestors in the plebian class; this ancestry presumably served him well when he came to negotiate with the secessionist plebians and delivered his fable of the Belly and the Members of the Body. Plutarch gives a rather condensed account of Menenius, who appears to be a patrician, dealing with the secessionist plebians. He praises Menenius for his eloquence and wisdom. Florus gives an even more condensed version of Menenius and the secessionist plebians and also praises Menenius for his wisdom and eloquence. Ralegh's account is the most objective in that he does not ascribe wisdom and eloquence to Menenius but rather describes him as a skillful politician who calmed the unruly mob of plebians.
For the most part, Shakespeare fulfills the expectations of his audience. His Menenius is a skillful politician, well loved by both classes just as in Livy and Plutarch. He is the voice of moderation and compromise, political qualities always necessary in a republic. Yet Shakespeare's audience comes to see that such an accomplished politician, though his advice would always be good for a reasonable man, fails when he is dealing with an arrogant, blunt soldier. Only a person with a deep emotional hold on Coriolanus could temper his arrogance.
CHAPTER THREE

THE TRIBUNES OF THE PEOPLE: THE POLITICAL ANTAGONISTS

Cicero

As there is no mention of the role played by the tribunes of the people in Cicero's account of the Coriolanus legend mentioned briefly in Brutus, the first author's work to consider is Livy's Ab Urbe Condita.¹

Livy

Livy describes in detail the bitter arguments that took place in Rome from 495-494 B.C. between the money-lenders, whose position was supported by the patricians, and the plebians, who complained loudly that while they were abroad fighting for liberty and dominion they had been enslaved and oppressed at

¹Momigliano notes that the term tribuni plebis ("tribunes of the people") is evidently connected with tribus, but it is uncertain whether the tribunes were at first chiefs of the tribes, who later became officers of the plebs, or whether the name simply imitated that of the tribuni militum already existing. See: Arnaldo Momigliano, s.v. "Tribuni Plebis," The Oxford Classical Dictionary, p. 1092.

Parker and Walson note that the tribuni militum of the Republican army were the senior officers of the legions. Elected by the people, they ranked as magistrates and six were assigned to each legion." See: Henry Michael Denne Parker and George Ronald Walson, s.v. "Tribuni Militum," The Oxford Classical Dictionary, pp. 1091-1092.
home by fellow citizens...· "2 This argument had led to great bitterness and hostility between the two classes. Finally, after fighting numerous battles with Rome's enemies, in 494 B.C. the plebians refused to obey a draft call from the consuls. The plebians then were faced with one from Manius Valerius, the subsequently appointed dictator.3 The plebians observed the levy of troops made by the dictator and enrolled in the largest army to that date in Roman history--ten legions.4 The Aequi, the Volscians, and the Sabines were repelled by segments of this large army. The time then came for the army to be disbanded; not only was the enemy defeated but also the dictator had resigned his office.

At this point, the role of the tribunes of the people began to emerge:

... although the levy had been held by order of the dictator, yet because the men had been sworn in by the consuls, they regarded the troops as bound by their oath, and, under the pretext that the Aequi had recommenced hostilities, gave orders to lead the legions out of the City. This brought the revolt to a head. At first, it is said, there was talk of killing the consuls, that men might thus be freed from their oath; but when it was explained to them that no sacred obligation could be dissolved by a crime, they took the advice of one Sicinius, and without orders from the consuls withdrew to the Sacred Mount, which is situated across the river Anio, three miles from the City. ... without any leader, they fortified their camp ... and continued quietly, taking nothing but what

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3Ibid., pp. 309-315.
4Ibid., p. 315.
they required for their subsistence, for several days, neither receiving provocation nor giving any.\(^5\)

(italics mine)

One cannot attribute to Sicinius the advice not to kill the consuls, which would have been a praiseworthy bit of advice. One can attribute to him the advice to refuse to march at the consuls' order, however, and the advice to install themselves in a fortified camp. Also, possibly at Sicinius' direction, the plebian troops helped themselves to necessary amounts of food, a fact that Coriolanus would refer to in his angry corn speech.

This secession of the plebian soldiers caused great fear in Rome between the plebians who stayed in the city and whose friends were not there to protect them, and the patricians who were unsure of the plebians who had stayed behind. The patricians were also fearful of incursions by foreign enemies. The fear was ended by the actions of Menenius Agrippa—see Chapter II. As the ambassador of the patricians to the secessionist plebian soldiers, he persuaded the plebian troops to end their secession by recounting his fable of the body and its members and by agreeing to a compromise:

... a compromise was affected on these terms: the plebians were to have magistrates of their own, who should be inviolable, and in them should lie the right to aid the people against the consuls, nor should any senator be permitted to take this magistracy. And so they chose two "tribunes of the people," Gaius Licinius and Lucius Albinus. These appointed three other to be their colleagues. Amongst the latter, Sicinius, the promoter of the revolt, was one, as all agree:

\(^{5}\)Ibid., pp. 321 and 323.
the identity of the other two tribunes is less certain. (Italics mine)

This election was held in 493 B.C.

Following the election, Marcius gained his surname by burning Corioli. Menenius Agrippa passed away. And in 492-491 B.C., a famine occurred "from men's failure to cultivate the fields during the withdrawal of the plebs." Luckily, agents of the Romans were eventually able to buy grain. The following year, a large quantity of grain was imported from Sicily. The debate over the price at which to sell the grain led to Coriolanus' corn speech. In this speech on the senate floor, he advocated selling the grain at high prices and attacked Sicinius by name:

When I would not brook Tarquinius as king, must I brook Sicinius? Let him secede now and call out the plebs; the way lies open to the Sacred Mount and the other hills. Let them seize grain from our fields as they did two years ago. Let them enjoy the corn-prices they have brought about by their own madness.

Right after Coriolanus made this speech, Livy injects a comment of his own on Coriolanus' suggestion:

It is not so easy to say whether it would have been right to do this, as it is clear, I think, that it lay within the Fathers' power to have made such conditions for reducing the price of corn as to have freed themselves from the tribunician authority and all the terms which they had unwillingly agreed to.

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6 Ibid., pp. 325 and 327.
7 Ibid., p. 329.
8 Ibid., p. 333.
9 Ibid.
Livy reveals himself here to be no proponent of "the tribunician authority." He does seem to recognize the need of the plebians for grain at a reasonable price, however, unlike the hot-tempered Coriolanus.

After Coriolanus' corn speech, the plebians were angry at the threat of starvation and at the threat to the tribunes mentioned in his speech. Their anger grew as they milled about outside the Curia:

When he [Coriolanus] came out from the Curia, they would have set upon him, had not the tribunes, in the nick of time, appointed a day to try him; whereupon their anger subsided, for every man saw that he was himself made his enemy's judge, and held over him the power of life and death. With contempt at first Marcius heard the threats of the tribunes, alleging that the right to help, not to punish, had been granted to that office, and that they were tribunes not of the Fathers, but of the plebs.10

One could argue that Livy's account shows the tribunes as restoring order and preventing the murder of a Roman citizen. On the other hand, if successful with their proposed trial, the tribunes would have obtained the right, disputed by Coriolanus, to try a patrician who had challenged the power of the tribunes.

Perhaps the tone of the line following the quotation given above indicates Livy's opinion. "But the commons had risen in such a storm of anger that the Fathers had to sacrifice one man to appease them."11 The sacrifice mentioned here was the unwilling acquiescence of the patricians to have one of their own tried.

10 Ibid., pp. 333 and 335.
11 Ibid., p. 335.
before a hostile plebian court; it is not clear in Livy's account how strong a voice the patricians would have had in such a court. Yet through an intimidating appearance by the patricians' clients and by the assembling of the patricians on masse to ask the plebians to spare Coriolanus, the patricians demonstrated active support for him. When the day for the trial came, however, Coriolanus did not appear; then "men's hearts were hardened against him." One could argue that Coriolanus would have been foolish to stay before such a hostile assembly. On the other hand, he did have the solid support of the patricians and their clients. In any case, apparently all "men's hearts" turned from him when he failed to appear at his own trial and then ran off to the Volscians.

In Livy, this is the last mention of this specific group of the tribunes of the people, those elected on the Sacred Mount. The tribunes were not mentioned as having led those plebians who clamoured for peace when Coriolanus was at the gates of Rome. In 484-483 B.C., some tribunes of the people agitated for a land law giving land to the plebians, but their names were not given. In 482-480 B.C., Spurius Licinus, a tribune of the people, tried to prevent a draft call of the consuls in order to obtain "a land-law on the patricians by the direst necessity,"

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12 Ibid.
13 Ibid., p. 347.
14 Ibid., pp. 357 and 359.
but he was unsuccessful due to the opposition of both the consuls and the other tribunes of the people.\textsuperscript{15}

In 480 B.C., Appius Claudius, the chief patrician opponent of the plebians, made the telling argument on the weakness of the tribunes of the people when yet another tribune, Tiberius Pontificus, tried to obtain a land law:

\ldots Appius Claudius told them that the tribunician power had been overcome the year before, actually for the time being, and potentially for ever. \ldots For there would always be some tribune who would be willing to gain a personal victory over his colleague and obtain the favour of the better element. \ldots There would be a number of tribunes \ldots to help the consuls; and a single one was enough. \ldots\textsuperscript{16}

Appius Claudius' strategy proved successful with Tiberius Pontificus and was employed more than once against the personally ambitious tribunes.

In summary, Livy's opinion of the tribunes of the people is that they were power-hungry men. In Livy, they appear more often as the political opponents of the patricians than as men concerned with the welfare of the entire state. While he seems to recognize the legitimate concerns of the plebian soldiers in their secession on the Sacred Mount, Livy does not endorse the "tribunician power." And as Livy's history continues, one can see that the early tribunes of the people were often simply ambitious, self-seeking demagogues.

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 361.

\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 363 and 365.
Dionysius of Halicarnassus was the next author to deal with the role of the tribunes of the people in the Coriolanus legend. His account of the strife between the money-lenders and their patrician supporters vs. the plebians and their plight parallels Livy's account, for the most part, although Dionysius goes into greater detail. For example, Dionysius notes that Manius Valerius, the dictator appointed to levy troops from the reluctant plebians in 492 B.C., was the most democratic of the senators who also advised the senate to forbid "the hauling to prison of the debtors whose obligations were overdue, and advised them to encourage rather than compel the poor to take the military oath. . . ."18 Dionysius' Manius Valerius, even though he had dictatorial powers, won the plebians to his side by means of a stirring oration and not by means of force.19 This was one of the many orations which should cause the readers to recall that Dionysius was a professional rhetorician.

In Dionysius, Manius Valerius resigned angrily after receiving a good deal of adverse criticism from the patricians about his supposed leniency toward the plebians. Following Valerius' resignation, the plebian soldiers began actually

18 Ibid., p. 311.
19 Ibid., pp. 355-361.
planning a secession before the consuls ordered them out of Rome to march on the pretext of facing not only the Aequians, as mentioned in Livy, but also the Sabines. Sicinius Bellutus not only instigated the revolt but also was made the plebians' "leader in all matters," a point not mentioned in Livy. He spoke for the plebian soldiers when the consuls implored them to return to Rome:

"With what purpose, patricians, do you now recall those whom you have driven from their country and transformed from free men into slaves? What assurances will you give us for the performance of those promises which you are convicted of having often broken already?"

In the context of the angry resignation of Manius Valerius, this speech seems justified. Dionysius goes on to indicate, however, that foreign powers then attacked Roman territory, which Livy doesn't indicate, and that the fortified camp of the plebian soldiers became the haven of all the riff-raff of Rome. The senate sent a group of ambassadors to deal with the secessionists, but they received disdainful replies and threats to their request for the return of the plebian soldiers.

Shortly after this rebuff, Agrippa Menenius made a moving speech to the senate urging accommodation with the plebian soldiers—see Chapter II. Manius Valerius rose to agree with

20 Ibid., p. 371.
21 Ibid., p. 373.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid., pp. 375-381.
24 Ibid., 4: 5-25.
him; soon Agrippa Menenius was appointed as one of the envoys to effect a compromise with the secessionists. After a long exchange of speeches that are given in great detail, Menenius won the plebian soldiers over with his fable of the body and its members. One of the speakers was Lucius Junius, characterized by Dionysius as a "laughing stock because of his vain pretentiousness, and when they the plebian soldiers wished to make sport of him, they called him by the nickname Brutus." Lucius Junius Brutus suggested the idea of annual plebian magistrates (tribunes of the people). Among the first five magistrates picked were "Lucius Junius Brutus and Gaius Sicinius Bellutus, whom they had had as their leaders up to that time." The tribunes' persons were declared sacrosanct. Also, two aediles were appointed to assist them.

Following the selection of the magistrates, Coriolanus earned his surname at Corioli, and Menenius Agrippa died. In 490 B.C., a Roman embassy set sail for Sicily to obtain grain, as the hostilities between the plebians and patricians had deprived the fields of farmworkers, but the embassy did not return for some time. The grain supplies grew so short in Rome

25 Ibid., pp. 27-61.
26 Ibid., pp. 65, 115 and 117.
27 Ibid., p. 121.
28 Ibid., p. 125.
29 Ibid., pp. 145-149.
that the senate ordered colonists to be sent to Velitrae, a Volscian city which had requested Roman colonists, and Norba, a Latin city. The plebian colonists went under protest, as they did not wish to leave Rome. Shortly after their departure, the plebians met in the Forum in an angry mood. Sicinius and Brutus, who were then aediles, were called upon to speak:

These [Sicinius and Brutus], having long before prepared the most malicious speeches, came forward and enlarged upon those points that were welcome to the multitude, alleging that the dearth of corn had been occasioned by the contrivance and treachery of the rich, against whose will the people had acquired their liberty by the secession.31

This summary of the former tribunes' speeches clearly indicates that Dionysius regarded them as malicious demagogues. On the following day, the duplicity of Sicinius became even more clear when he promised the consuls that he would end the tumult caused by an angry crowd of plebians and patricians. Instead of calming them, he whipped up the plebians, claimed a victory over the patricians, and then sent the plebians home.32 This speech led to another angry meeting at which Brutus and Sicinius forced the senate to pass a law making it illegal to interrupt a tribune giving a speech to the people. The subsequent actions

31 Ibid., p. 189.
32 Ibid., pp. 193 and 195.
of the tribunes and the aediles led to increased hostility but not to physical violence.33

The plebians refused to serve in a conscript army to obtain grain from Rome's enemies due to the hostility between the classes. Coriolanus, therefore, led out an army of volunteers—patricians, their clients, and a few plebians. The volunteers obtained for themselves grain, slaves, and cattle in the land of the Antiates. Dionysius notes that these plebians 'who had remained at home were greatly dejected and blamed their demagogues, through whom they felt they had been deprived of the same good fortune.34 Despite his victory and the plebians' dissatisfaction with their tribunes, Coriolanus was turned down by the plebians for the consulship. Finally, the Sicilian grain arrived, but it proved to be the source of great controversy.

As is mentioned in the first chapter of this dissertation, Coriolanus' corn speech in Dionysius' account is a long diatribe advocating high grain prices and attacking the tribunes and the plebians' demagogues for plotting tyranny, although he does not mention any one plebian politician by name.

As they were present in the senate during Coriolanus' corn speech, the tribunes accused Coriolanus of the following:

... uttering malicious words against the populace; and unless the patricians should prevent his design of introducing civil war into the state by punishing him with

33 Ibid., pp. 199 and 201.
34 Ibid., pp. 203 and 205.
death or banishment, they said they would do so themselves. 35

Bullough did not mention this warning made by the tribunes on the senate floor. The warning clearly indicated the future course of the tribunes' action, however, and removes them from the charge of cowardice for not facing Coriolanus on his own ground, a charge which can be inferred from Bullough's summary of the events. 36

Following the tribunes' warning, Coriolanus threatened violence against the tribunes, as is mentioned in the first chapter of this dissertation. The tribunes rushed from the senate's meeting place, gathered the plebians together, and summoned Coriolanus to defend himself before them. As Bullough observes, the powers of the tribunes were in their infancy, and it was not clear whether they could legally summon Coriolanus to defend himself before them. 37 It cannot be denied, however, that the tribunes went through some, if not all, of the legal formalities. They first sent attendants to request Coriolanus' presence, but they were repulsed with abusive words. The tribunes then advanced with other citizens and their aediles, but the aediles, who shared in the sacrosanctity of the tribunes and whose responsibility it was to handle prisoners, were rebuffed by force by Coriolanus' patrician supporters.

36 Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources, 5: 465.
37 Ibid.
It would seem that neither the tribunes in their haste to try and punish Coriolanus nor the patricians in their resorting to force to repulse the aediles had the aims of Roman law and Roman order in mind. It should be remembered that on the following day, however, whether through feelings of guilt or a sense of political realities, it was the senators who felt the necessity to go to the assembly of plebians at the Forum to refute "the charges brought against their whole order and of asking the people not to come to any irreparable decision against Coriolanus."38

At this assembly of plebians, Sicinius, having been re-elected to the tribuneship, spoke. After having taunted Coriolanus into making an insulting speech, Sicinius proclaimed that the tribunes had condemned Coriolanus to death for his insolence toward the aediles on the day before. A taunting scene on the senate floor including both Sicinius and Brutus takes place in Shakespeare's play, III. i. 80-88.

Sicinius then ordered that Coriolanus immediately be thrown from the Tarpeian Rock. This unprecedented act of punishing a patrician without a public trial caused a near-riot between patricians and plebians, prevented only by the intervention of the consuls. Following the consuls' actions, Brutus, who also had been re-elected to the tribuneship, went to Sicinius "and taking him aside, advised him not to persist

38 Dionysius, Roman Antiquities, 4: 221-225.
contentiously in attempting to carry out a reckless and illegal undertaking. . . ."39 Sicinius then suggested that Coriolanus be tried before a tribal assembly, and his suggestion was adopted.

After attempting to distract the plebians by selling grain at low prices and proposing a levy of troops to fight the Antiates, which failed when the Antiates promptly surrendered, the senate met to discuss and eventually to pass a pre-trial decree enabling Coriolanus to be tried before the tribal assembly. At the senate meeting, the tribunes had decided to indict Coriolanus on a vague charge, rather than a specific one, to insure his conviction before an assembly which the tribunes hoped to control:

The tribunes . . . charged him with aiming at tyranny and ordered him to come prepared to make his defense against that charge. For they were unwilling to confine their accusations to a single point, and that neither a strong one in itself nor acceptable to the senate, but were scheming to obtain for themselves the authority to bring any charges they wished against Marcius, and were expecting to deprive him of the assistance of the senators.40 (Italics mine)

Coriolanus was willing to be tried on the charge of tyranny, apparently because neither he nor his fellow patricians believed that he was seeking the role of tyrant. Dionysius does not give Coriolanus' specific reasons for his willingness to be tried on this charge, however, but merely indicates his ready agreement to it. The majority of the

39 Ibid., pp. 237-245.
40 Ibid., p. 315.
senate, as is mentioned in the first chapter of this dissertation, believed that he had led an irreproachable life and would easily clear himself of the charge.41

On the day appointed for the trial, the tribunes proposed that Coriolanus be tried before a tribal assembly; the patricians favored their customary centuriate assembly, in which the patrician votes might have decided the issue before the plebians could even have a chance to vote. The tribunes won the dispute.42 Surprising as it may seem since Bullough takes more than a page to describe the differences between the assemblies, Bullough does not mention that Dionysius thought that the tribal assembly was more just for this trial than the centuriate assembly:43

The claim of the tribunes seemed to be more just than that of the patricians in that they thought the tribunal of the people ought to be a popular, not an oligarchic, tribunal, and that the cognizance of crimes committed against the commonwealth ought to be common to all.44

At first, though the clever Sicinius was pressing the prosecution's case, Coriolanus held the plebians' favor as he related his military exploits performed for Rome. Then Decius, another tribune, accused Coriolanus of not turning over to the public treasury the booty from the incursion of Coriolanus'

41Ibid., pp. 315 and 317.
42Ibid., pp. 319-325.
43Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources, 5: 468-469.
44Dionysius, Roman Antiquities, 4: 325.
volunteer army into the land of the Antiates. This speech caused a shift in sentiment:

For those who were more reasonable and were zealously working for the acquittal of Marcius, upon hearing these things, grew less confident and all the malevolent, who constituted the larger part of the populace and were of course eager to destroy him at all costs, were still more encouraged in their purpose now that they had got hold of an important and clear ground for their attack.45 (Italics mine)

Dionysius then explained that in his opinion Coriolanus was justified in dividing the spoils only among the volunteer troops and not giving a portion to the public treasury. He pointed out that Coriolanus' troops were all volunteers and not a regular conscript army due to the "sedition" of the majority of the plebians and their refusal to serve in the regular conscript army.46

After a close vote, the tribal assembly banished Coriolanus from Rome. Dionysius hazards the guess, not mentioned in Bullough, that the tribunes fixed perpetual banishment for Coriolanus' punishment because of "their fear that he could not be convicted if death were set as the penalty."47

46 Ibid., p. 337.

Although Dionysius does not mention it in this argument, he had previously noted a case in which the Consul Servilius in 495 B.C. led a regular Roman army, whose plebian members had to be cajoled to join, against the Volscians and also had distributed the spoils among his troops—see 3: 331. Although Appius Claudius attacked him for doing it, Servilius received no punishment for his division of the spoils other than the hatred of the patricians.

After he described the trial, Dionysius deliberated at greater length upon the institution of bringing powerful men to a trial in which the populace is in control. And, although Bullough does not mention this either, Dionysius clearly favored this institution, although he had some reservations about the tribunes' role:

I believe that the institution, considered by itself, is advantageous, and absolutely necessary to the Roman commonwealth, but that it becomes better or worse according to the character of the tribunes.  

Dionysius' generally unfavorable comments on the specific tribunes in charge of the Coriolanus trial indicate that he placed them in the category of "wicked, intemperate and avaricious men" who give bad service in their official capacity. Perhaps Dionysius is echoing Coriolanus' opinion before the assembled Volscian elders at Ecetra, where Coriolanus referred to the tribunes as "those most unprincipled leaders of the populace."

Although no leaders of the plebians are mentioned by name, Dionysius noted that, when Coriolanus was first devastating Roman territory, "the leaders of the populace" were declaring that the invasion was a treacherous act devised by the senators against the plebians. It remained for the older Roman plebians and the senate to rally the populace, as the plebian leaders

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48 Ibid., p. 343.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid., 5: 19.
did nothing to meet the danger but make more accusations.\textsuperscript{51}

Another condemnation of the tribunes comes in Dionysius' final summary of Coriolanus' character when he refers to "the seditious element of the city" who "hindered his \textit{[Coriolanus']} measures."\textsuperscript{52}

After Coriolanus' expulsion from Rome, Dionysius does not again mention by name those tribunes of the people chosen on the Sacred Mount. Presumably, their life in public office ended about the same time as Coriolanus' invasions of Roman territory. Shortly after the death of Coriolanus when Cassius, an aspiring patrician politician, was endeavoring to win favor with the plebians through promises of free land, the current tribunes did act responsibly in Dionysius' eyes when they joined "the better element" (the patricians) in opposing Cassius.\textsuperscript{53} But Dionysius is willing to guess that their motivation was not only to prevent the corruption of the plebians but also rank envy of Cassius' growing power with the plebians.\textsuperscript{54} Thus, the tribunes varied in quality from politically ambitious demagogues to the honest Gaius Rabuleius, the tribune "not lacking in intelligence" who finally faced down Cassius in an assembly of the populace.\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{51}Ibid., pp. 39 and 41.
\textsuperscript{52}Ibid., p. 177.
\textsuperscript{53}Ibid., p. 213.
\textsuperscript{54}Ibid., p. 215.
\textsuperscript{55}Ibid., pp. 217 and 219.
In summary, Dionysius gives the fine points of political argument in lengthy speeches, the justification for both the positions of the plebians and the patricians, and the reasons for his taking different sides on different issues. While Dionysius indicates no contempt for the office of tribune, he does condemn some of those men who first held the office—specifically Sicinius Bellutus and Lucius Junius Brutus. Dionysius portrays them as malicious demagogues setting the plebians against the patricians during the grain shortage. He disapproves of their rushing Coriolanus to trial. He is shocked by their attempt to execute Coriolanus without a formal trial. And after Coriolanus' trial, he categorizes their actions as the actions of "wicked, intemperate, and avaricious men." It would be difficult to imagine a harsher condemnation of these men as tribunes and a more objective view of the office of tribune as those given by Dionysius of Halicarnassus.

Valerius Maximus

Valerius Maximus does not specifically mention the role of the tribunes of the people as the political antagonists of Coriolanus. He does, however, make a brief reference to the trial of Coriolanus and the peoples' plight as Coriolanus was encamped outside the walls of Rome:

For this reason [Coriolanus' encampment] the People that were so haughty, as not to value their own happiness, were forced to supplicate an Exile, whose
offense they would not pardon before. 56

This reference to the haughtiness of the people who would not pardon Coriolanus probably implies a criticism of the tribunes as n all other accounts, they were the chief advocates of a trial for Coriolanus.

Plutarch

Plutarch's account of the rise of the tribunes of the people parallels Dionysius' account, Plutarch's main source. If anything, Plutarch saw even more justice in the plebian soldiers' protest against the moneylenders and their patrician supporters. Yet, Plutarch is quick to note that the enemies of Rome entered Roman territory upon hearing of the class struggle within the city; he notes an enemy invasion even before the secession of the plebian soldiers. At the time of the invasion, Plutarch's Coriolanus, unlike Dionysius' Coriolanus, spoke out publicly against showing any leniency to the plebian soldiers in their struggle with the moneylenders and in favor of strictly enforcing the conscription of the reluctant plebian soldiers. 57

Shakespeare makes no use of Plutarch's report of Coriolanus' speech as he sets his play three years after this conflict.

Those members of his audience who were familiar with Plutarch's


Lives, however, would be aware of the deep enmity the plebians held toward Coriolanus because of his speech.

Coriolanus' speech, which summed up one segment of patrician opinion, and the senate's inaction led the plebian soldiers to secede to the Sacred Mount. Menenius Agrippa was chosen as the chief of the senate's negotiators. After telling his fable of the body and its members, the plebians returned to Rome after receiving authority to choose five magistrates annually "which they now call Tribuni Plebs, whose office should be to defend the poore people from violence and oppression." 58

The first two of the five tribunes were So. Iunius Brutus and Sicinius Vellutus, "who had only bene the causers and procurers of this sedition." 59 Thus, the reader learns of the character of two of the tribunes.

The tribunes next appear following the war with the Volscians in which Coriolanus earned his surname:

Now when this warre was ended, the flatterers of the people beganne to sturre up sedition againe, without any new occasion, or just matter offored of complainte. . . . Now these busie pratlers that sought the peoples good will, by suche flattering wordes, perceiving great scarrisie of corn to be within the cittie . . . they spread abroad false tales and rumurs against the Nobilitie, that they in revenge of the people, had practised and procured the extreme dearthe among them. 60 (Italics mine)

58 Ibid., p. 149.
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid., p. 156.
The tribunes appeared in as bad a light again when they opposed the Roman colonization of Velitres and the war against the Volscians, which the consuls had trumped up as a means of uniting the populace against a common enemy—a measure which met with Plutarch's approval. For their opposition, Sicinius and Brutus were characterized by Plutarch as "two seditious Tribunes." 61

Coriolanus, who had garnered a great reputation with "the noblest men of Rome," at this time "openly spake against these flattering Tribunes" and led off an expedition into the land of the Antiates. 62 Plutarch is careful to mention that though Coriolanus' troops, when returning from the expedition, were loaded down with the spoils, Coriolanus "reserved nothing for him selfe." 63 As Coriolanus would later be indicted for not giving any of this booty into the public treasury, it is interesting to note this addition to the Coriolanus legend which Plutarch either invented or received from a non-extant source.

As time passed, Coriolanus was rejected for the consulship, and the Sicilian grain shipment finally arrived. Coriolanus, in Plutarch's version of his corn speech, advocated the taking of the tribuneship from the people because of the tribunes' seditious actions. The seditious actions in Rome were paralleled by outright combat in Shakespeare's England on

61 Ibid., p. 157.
62 Ibid.
63 Ibid., p. 158.
June 8, 1607. A thousand British farmers, protesting a food scarcity caused by the gentry's enclosures of public land and small farms for grazing land, were routed by a group of "mounted gentlemen." Public criticism of the aristocracy continued into 1608.

The tribunes did not immediately warn Coriolanus of the possible outcome of his speech on the senate floor as in Dionysius' account, however, but instead they immediately ran from the senate floor to rally their followers. The tribunes' messengers set forth to "arrest" Coriolanus and were rebuffed, as in Dionysius' account. Then the tribunes and their aediles came to apprehend Coriolanus, but, unlike Dionysius' account, they came with the intention of using force and "laid violent hands upon him." On the next day, the senate met, the consuls went forth to the people, apologies were given to the people, and cheap grain prices were promised.

The apologies of the consuls and the promise of cheap grain prices pleased "the most parte of the people," but the tribunes arose and demanded that Coriolanus be tried for his attempt to deprive the tribunes of power, for disobeying and resisting the tribunes' messengers, and for harming the

64 Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources, 5: 456-457.
66 Ibid.
They implied that Coriolanus' actions amounted to inciting the Romans to civil war. As in Dionysius, Coriolanus came to face the tribunes, spoke contemptuously to them, was condemned to death by Sicinius Vellutus, but was spared—not, as in Dionysius, by the intervention of Tribune Brutus but by the intervention of friends and kinsmen of the tribunes—for trial before the people.  

Prior to the trial, the tribunes on the senate floor announced that they would indict Coriolanus for aspiring to tyranny. Unlike Dionysius, Plutarch gives more detail for Coriolanus' motivation for accepting their indictment on this charge:

Martius with that, rising up on his feete, sayed: that thereupon he dyd willingly offer him self to the people, to be tried apon that accusation. And that if it were proved by him, he had so muche as once thought of any suche matter, that he would then refuse no kinde of punishment they would offer him: conditionally (quoth he) that you charge me with nothing els besides, and that ye doe not also abuse the Senate.  

Plutarch, by showing the tribunes so implacably set upon having Coriolanus' downfall by any means and by having Coriolanus so boldly declare his innocence while showing concern for his fellow senators, has highlighted the tribunes' faults while emphasizing Coriolanus' virtues of honesty and self-sacrifice.

67 Ibid., p. 163.
68 Ibid., pp. 164-165.
69 Ibid., p. 166.
At Coriolanus' trial, as in Dionysius, the tribunes won the right to have the vote cast by tribes. They brought not one but four charges against him: of aspiring to tyranny, of hindering the distribution of cheap corn, of advocating the removal of the tribunes of the people, and of not distributing to the common treasury the spoils of the Antiates' raid. Instead of directly responding to the charges, Coriolanus fell to praising the actions of those volunteers who had served with him on the raid. "But those that were not with him [on the Antiates' raid], being the greater number, cried out so lowde, and made such a noyse, that he could not be heard."70 The tribunes had struck the right chord when they played upon Coriolanus' military pride and the envy of the plebians.

This was the last appearance of the tribunes as Coriolanus' political antagonists. Although the people pleaded for a repeal of the condemnation and exile of Coriolanus when Coriolanus was besieging Lavinium, the tribunes are not mentioned as having had a hand in voicing that plea.71 There is no comment about the tribunes per se in Plutarch's "The Comparison of Alcibiades with Martius Coriolanus," for Plutarch focuses upon the virtues and failings of his great men, not upon their opponents. Plutarch does make this comment upon the "Romaines," however, which seems to be a comment upon the plebians' actions

70 Ibid., p. 167.
71 Ibid., p. 176.
under the tribunes' direction: "So dyd the Romaines malice also Coriolanus government, for that it was to arrogant, prowde, and tyrannical: whereby neither the one nor the other was to be commended."72

There is no difficulty in summarizing Plutarch's opinion of the tribunes of the people. As in Shakespeare's play, they are the unscrupulous political opponents of Coriolanus. Brutus and Sicinius are first mentioned as the "causers and procurers" of sedition on the Sacred Mount. Flattering the people, the tribunes stirred up class hatred during the grain shortage with false tales. They showed no courtesy when they tried to arrest Coriolanus for trial. And, finally, they would have executed Coriolanus without a trial had not their confederates advised them against it. It is true that Plutarch was sympathetic with the plebian soldiers' protests against the money-lenders, but Plutarch was not at all sympathetic to the tribunes of the people nor to their methods.

Florus

In the abridgement of Lucius Annaeus Florus' *Epitome* which appeared in Philemon Holland's 1600 translation, there seems to be no judgment made upon the tribunes of the people:

The commons rising, for being enthralled unto their creditors, retired themselves into the mount Sacer, and were by the policie and counsaile of Menenius

72Ibid., p. 190.
Agrippa, reclaimed from their sedition, and appeased.

There were created five Tribunes of the Commons.73

If one examines the unabridged text which was available only in Latin during Shakespeare's era, however, one can determine something of Florus' opinion.

In his tribute to Roman accomplishments, Florus treats rather light-heartedly an era of great anxiety. To his chapter "Of Civil Discords," he gave the following introduction:

This period forms the second age, which may be called the youth, of the Roman people, during which it was most vigorous, and showed fire and heat in the flower of its strength. Hence there was still in it a certain spirit of ferocity inherited from shepherd ancestors, and an untamed spirit yet breathed.74

Florus then proceeded to turn from this florid prose to describe three serious mutinies by Roman armies which eventually led to the plebians' refusal to be conscripted.

Florus blames Coriolanus' exile both on this mutinous mood of the plebians and on Coriolanus' corn speech—see Chapter I—rather than upon his division of spoils from the Antiates' raid.75 His condensation of early Roman history does not mention specifically the tribunes' role in Coriolanus' exile.

Florus does refer to the revolt against the money-lenders, however, as the first civil, as distinguished from military,

74 Florus, Epitome of Roman History, Loeb Classical Library, p. 69.
75 Ibid., p. 71.
The first dispute was due to the tyranny of the usurers. When these actually vented their fury upon their persons as though they were slaves, the common people took up arms and seceded to the Sacred Mount, and were with difficulty induced to return (and then only after their demand for a tribune had been granted) at the instance of the eloquent and wise Menenius Agrippa. . . .

The reader will note that, in the unabridged Loeb edition of Florus quoted above, Florus refers to the appointment of a single tribune. If one may presume that Forster's Latin text is accurate, this is probably an error on Florus' part rather than information from a non-extant source--see the "Appian" section of this chapter. The five tribunes referred to in Philemon Holland's abridgement of Florus probably was a correction made by Holland upon consulting Livy's accompanying text.

For further comments on Florus' opinion of the plebians of early Rome, the reader should see Chapter IV. As there are no specific references to the tribunes of the people chosen on the Sacred Mount, perhaps it would be best to conclude with two observations on Florus. First, he views the history of early Rome through the rose-colored glasses fashioned by imperial Rome. His point of view is decidedly aristocratic, but he is willing to make condescendingly kind remarks upon the early Roman plebians. Secondly, within his hymn of praise to early Rome,

76 Ibid.

77 Ibid.
which includes a reference to Coriolanus as one of its "most illustrious chiefs," Florus does mention that "as was to be expected in a large and daily increasing community, dangerous citizens arose from time to time."\(^7\)\(^3\)

Appian

Appian of Alexandria, like Florus, mentioned the creation of the office of tribune of the people and indicated that only one person held the office at first. It is possible that both historians mentioned only a single tribune after consulting a non-extant, early Roman annalist whose work was not used by Livy or Dionysius of Halicarnassus. On the other hand, it is possible that both authors are in error—either by both authors consulting an erroneous, non-extant summary of early Roman histories, or by Appian consulting Florus, a borrowing not considered by those historians whose works were consulted for this dissertation. One is more inclined to believe that Appian is in error rather than faithful to a non-extant Roman annalist after consulting the Loeb edition of his history:

Once when the plebians were entering on a campaign, they fell into a controversy of this sort, but they did not use the weapons in their hands, but withdrew to the hill, which from that time on was called the Sacred Mount. Even then no violence was done, but they created a magistrate for their protection and called him the Tribune of the Plebs, to serve especially

\(^7\)\(^8\) \textit{Ibid.}, p. 75.
as a check upon the consuls, who were chosen by the Senate, so that political power should not be exclusively in their hands.\textsuperscript{79} (Italics mine)

In a footnote, White observes that during the republican era the consuls were not chosen by the senate alone but by the whole people.\textsuperscript{80} And, furthermore, Appian contradicts himself here, for in his earlier book "Concerning Italy" he contended that "the people refused to elect Marcius (Coriolanus) when he sought the consulship"\textsuperscript{81} (Italics mine). Hence, one is inclined to believe that Appian is in error about the number of tribunes.

In Appian's history, the tribune appears simply to represent the plebian class interest rather than as a manipulative politician in his own right. A comparison of the 1578 Bynniman edition to the Loeb edition reveals that both editions show the tribune and the consuls as merely acting out the roles written for them by their proponents:

From this [the creation of the tribune] arose still greater bitterness, and the magistrates were arrayed in stronger animosity to each other from this time on, and the Senate and plebians took sides with them, each believing that it would prevail over the other by augmenting the power of its own magistrates. It was in the midst of contests of this kind that Marcius Coriolanus, having been banished contrary to justice, took refuge with the Volsci. . . .\textsuperscript{82}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{79}Appian, \textit{Appian's Roman History}, Loeb Classical Library, 3: 3.
\item \textsuperscript{80}\textit{Ibid.}
\item \textsuperscript{81}\textit{Ibid.}, 1: 43.
\item \textsuperscript{82}\textit{Ibid.}, 3: 3 and 5.
\end{itemize}
In conclusion, Appian saw a certain inevitability in the struggle between the patricians and plebians. Though he noted that Coriolanus was unjustly banished from Rome, Chapter IV will indicate further that his sympathies did not lie too strongly with either the patricians' military hero or the plebians' political spokesmen.

Polyaenus

As Polyaenus says nothing about the role of the tribunes of the people in connection with the Coriolanus legend, the next author to consider is Cassius Dio Cocceianus.

Dio

Dio opens his account of the bitterness felt by the plebians toward the money-lenders with remarks critical of the "well-to-do classes," but he also is critical of the plebian soldiers for seizing food and for their secession. Agrippa's tale, however, "brought to reason" the plebian soldiers. Unlike other accounts, Dio does not mention the creation of the office of tribune of the people on the Sacred Mount. Instead, he indicates they settled for the following compact:


84 Ibid., pp. 119 and 121.

85 Ibid., p. 121.
They the plebian soldiers became milder and were reconciled on being granted a release from their debts and from seizures therefor. These terms, then, were voted by the senate.86

In Dio's next book, Book V, however, the tribunes suddenly appear to disturb Coriolanus:

The same man [Coriolanus] wished to be made praetor, and upon failing to secure the office became angry at the populace; because of this and also because of his displeasure at the great influence of the tribunes he employed greater frankness in speaking to the people than was attempted by others whose deeds entitled them to the same rank as himself.87

Perhaps one can presume that the failure to mention the creation of the tribunes of the people, along with the question of whether there was more than one tribune of the people, is symptomatic of a tendency of imperial era Roman historians to gloss over early Roman history.

After the sudden appearance of the tribunes, Dio quickly summarizes the role of the tribunes as the political antagonists of Coriolanus:

Coriolanus had invariably shown contempt for the people, and after grain had been brought in from many sources, most of it sent as a gift from princes in Sicily, he would not allow them to receive allotments of it as they were demanding. Accordingly, the tribunes, whose office he was especially eager to abolish, brought him to trial before the populace on a charge of aiming at tyranny and exiled him. It availed naught that all the senators cried out and expressed their indignation at the fact that the tribunes dared to pass such sentence upon their

86 Ibid., p. 125.
87 Ibid., pp. 137 and 139.
order. So on being expelled he betook himself, raging at his treatment, to the Volsci. ... (italics mine)

As Coriolanus appears in quite a bad light in Dio's account—see Chapter I—it is quite easy to assume that the tribunes are in a good light. But the reader must recall that Dio observed that the tribunes had a decided self-interest in the destruction of the chief patrician threat to their office. Also, Dio made the following comment, immediately before the quotation given above, upon the plebians' fears of the patricians during the grain famine and the colonization of Norba. "For whenever persons come to suspect each other, they take amiss everything even that is done in their behalf, judging it all in a spirit of party hatred." 89

In conclusion, one might say that Dio charges the tribunes of the people with over-reacting to the threat to the plebians posed by Coriolanus. On the other hand, there was the question of Coriolanus' influence on the grain distribution, but that was discussed at some length in Chapter I.

Sextus Aurelius Victor

In the De viris illustribus, often ascribed to Sextus Aurelius Victor, the author briefly alludes to the role of the tribune of the people as Coriolanus' political antagonist.

88 Ibid., p. 139.
89 Ibid.
The causes for the plebian soldiers' revolt in the De viris illustribus were heavy taxes and conscription.\textsuperscript{90} As in other accounts, the plebians were mollified by Menenius' tale, but they also demanded the appointment of a single tribune of the people, as in Florus and Appian, "who might defend their liberty against the arrogance of the nobility."\textsuperscript{91}

The arrogance of the nobility was soon seen again. The author contends that the Consul Coriolanus, another example of error by a Roman historian of the imperial era, unjustly maintained high prices for the Sicilian grain.\textsuperscript{92} This led the people to revolt against him. He was exiled subsequently at the command of Decius, the tribune of the people.

In the brief account given in the De viris illustribus, Decius, the tribune of the people, seems to have acted quite responsibly in the light of Coriolanus' injustice toward the plebians.

\textbf{Eutropius}

Eutropius makes no mention of the role of the tribunes of the people as Coriolanus' political antagonists because he

\textsuperscript{90}Aurelius, \textit{Liber de Caesaribus . . . et liber de viris illustribus} . . . ., Teubner edition, p. 36.

\textsuperscript{91}Ibid., p. 37. Translated by Pirmantgen, "... qui libertatem suam adversum nobilitatis superbiam defenderent."

\textsuperscript{92}Ibid.
sums up Coriolanus' reason for leaving Rome as "uppon displeasure conceived."—see Chapter I.

Eutropius does go into the election of the tribunes in the same paragraph as he writes of Coriolanus, however, although he does not give specific details to any great extent:

In the XVI years [after the expulsion of Tarquin] did the commons of Rome make a commotion, pretending the cause to be, for that the senatorus and Consuls woulde have oppressed them: At which time, they created 11 whom they called Tribuni Plebis, and assigned them to be peculiar decisers and determiners of their causes only: by whose meanes they might be in safety, and defended against the consuls.

There is no mention of these tribunes attacking Coriolanus in any way. The reader should notice in the above quotation, however, that there appears to be some question in Eutropius' mind whether their office was needed during this particular time in Roman history.

Zonaras

Zonaras' Epitome of histories contains detailed information on the populace's discontent with the money-lenders and criticized the "uncompromising attitude at this time of the rich toward the poor." Zonaras also took a dim view of the actions of the secessionist plebian soldiers, however, both for their

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93 Eutropius, A Breiefe Chronicle, trans. Nicholas Haward, Fol. 9
94 Ibid., Fol. 4 and 9.
95 Dio, Dio's Roman History, Loeb Classical Library, pp. 115 and 117.
seizing food and for exposing their country to attack from foreign enemies. Menenius' tale calmed them sufficiently for them to be reconciled with the senate, following the senate's lightening of the plebians' debts and releasing them from fear of seizure by the money-lenders. Before the plebian soldiers disbanded, however, they elected two tribunes of the people and later chose some assistants for them.

Zonaras details the actions of the tribunes of the people to a great extent; only part of his lengthy account is given below:

Now these tribunes of the people (or demarchoi) became responsible for great evils that befall Rome. For though they did not immediately secure the title of magistrates, they gained power beyond all the others ... rescuing every one who called upon them. ... If any one ever invoked them when absent, he, too, was released ... and was either brought before the populace by them or was set free. And if ever they saw fit that anything should not be done, they prevented it, whether the person acting were a private citizen or a magistrate; and if the populace or the senate was about to do or vote anything and a single tribune opposed it, the action or the vote became null and void. ... And in the case of anything that was unlawful for them to do, they gained their point by their uncontestable opposition to every project undertaken by others.97

This condemnation of the actions of the tribunes for their grasping for power by any means is unparalleled for its documentary of evil practices among the historians considered in this dissertation. Zonaras calls many of their actions unwarrantable, "for they threw even consuls into prison and

96 ibid., pp. 119 and 121.
97 ibid., pp. 127 and 129.
put men to death without granting them a hearing." Their only weakness, as Zonaras pointed out, became their growing distrust of each other. While most of the immoral or illegal actions listed by Zonaras were committed by tribunes other than those in the first group chosen on the Sacred Mount, the first group planted the bad seed.

Following this condemnation of the tribunes of the people, Zonaras immediately goes into the Coriolanus legend. Though the offences of Coriolanus are large, in this context they are dwarfed by the catalog of evils committed by the tribunes. After failing to become praetor, Coriolanus became mad at the populace and expressed displeasure toward the tribunes:

Accordingly, the latter [the tribunes of the people], whose office he was especially eager to abolish, heaped up accusations against him, fixed upon him a charge of aiming at tyranny, and exiled him from Rome.

The above quotation is the last reference in Zonaras' *Epitome* to the original group of tribunes.

Tzetzes

As Tzetzes does not deal with the role of the tribunes of the people in the Coriolanus legend, the next author to consider is the English chronicler, Ranulf Higden.

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In his *Polychronycon*, Ranulf Higden makes a very brief allusion to the tribunes:

The people of Rome made stryfe as though they were mys­ledded by the Senatours. Therefore they made them trybunes as defendours of the people aagnast the consuls. Quintus Marcius Duke of Rome that hadde taken the Vultes before/ was put oute of Cyte and was wrothe and wenete to the Vultes. . . .101

In Higden's account, the tribunes appear to be simply partisans of the plebians, created out of the plebians' unreasoning fear of the patricians and the consuls. They certainly do not appear as statesmen, nor does Higden show them as having any influence on Coriolanus' being "put oute of Cyte."

Lanquet

In his brief account of the Coriolanus legend, Thomas Lanquet stressed the wisdom of Menenius rather than any justice in the plebians' position when the plebians revolted:

The common people rose up against the Senatours for defense of their libertee, but by the wysedome of Memmius Agrippa, they were pacified, and had graunted unto them the tribuneship, that is protectours of the communaltee.102

It is difficult to determine exactly what opinion Lanquet held toward the tribunes, although he does seem to have a certain
reticence about the plebians' revolt.

Later in his account, Lanquet does blame the tribunes for the exile of Coriolanus. "Marcius Coriolanus, by the protectours of the communaltye was exiled, the Volscians received him for their capitayn. . . ." 103 As Lanquet gives no details on what offenses Coriolanus might have committed against the plebians, the tribunes certainly appear in a bad light in Lanquet's brief account.

Lloyd

Ludovic Lloyd gave a new interpretation for the creation of the office of tribune of the people. He begins his account of the tribunes by mentioning the creation by the senate of the offices of dictator and magister equitum, an assistant to the dictator. The dictator, though limited to six months in office, had such power in the Roman state that he could decide any issue without any legal recourse being available to the citizens.

This concentration of power disturbed the plebians: 104

And therefore the people much complaining, beganne to make vpwores, and sel to dissension, and to require for an officer to aide and defende the people: and for that the Senatours and Consuls (as the people pretended the cause) woulde haue them oppressed, a comocion was thereby in Rome by the commons, and therefore they created two men whom they called Tribuni Militum Tribunes of the people: they were assigned to bee peculiar Decisers and Determiners in causes

103 Ibid., leaves 47-48.
104 Lloyd, The Consent of Time, p. 496.
belonging to the people. This office continued until Sillas time, by whom the office of Tribuneshippe was abrogated, but after by Pompey the great restored.\(^{105}\) (Italics mine)

The above passage indicates that Lloyd was not convinced of the necessity for the tribunes of the people. One can infer that the people had their own self-interest at heart rather than the peacefulness of the state in the creation of the tribunes of the people.

In their first significant action, Lloyd indicates that the tribunes clearly made an error in judgment when dealing with the famous aristocratic warrior Coriolanus:

> But his [Coriolanus'] vertue and renowne gat him muche envie; for hereby hee was banished Rome by the Ediles & Tribunes of the people, against the Patricians will: but the Romanes made a roddde to beate themselves when they banished Coriolanus: for he came in armes against his owne Countrie and Citie with the Volscans. \(^{106}\)

This is the last mention in Lloyd's *Consent of Time* of the tribunes of the people in connection with the Coriolanus legend.

All things considered, Lloyd presents the tribunes and the aediles as an interfering group of troublemakers. His sympathies clearly were with the patricians.

\(^{105}\)Ibid.

The reader will note that the italicized passage in this quotation resembles Eutropius' description of the tribunes' duties--see the Eutropius section of this chapter. Lloyd gives Eutropius as his source for the paragraph which follows the paragraph which contains this quotation.

\(^{106}\)Ibid., p. 497.
Ralegh

Sir Walter Ralegh begins his consideration of how the tribunes came into being with the mention of an "uproare" on the Sacred Mount instigated by some desperate bankrupt plebians.\(^{107}\) The plebians were reconciled to the senate through the persuasive fable of Menenius:

\[\ldots\text{ with condition, that they might have some new Magistrates created, to whom they might appeale in cases of variance, and make them Solicitors in their controversies, the Consuls authority notwithstanding. This was enacted: and they were called the Tribunes of the people.}^{108}\] (Italics mine)

One can see from this passage that Ralegh's opinion of the tribunes of the people was rather low, as is the case with all of the English chroniclers here considered. Ralegh regarded the tribunes as a threat to the stability of the state. Specifically, Ralegh noted the hand of a tribune in Coriolanus' exile: "In a great time of dearth, Coriolanus advised to sell corne, which they procured from Sicil, at too high a rate, to the people: whereupon, Decius Mus, their Tribune, in their behalfe, accused him, and after judgement, banished him."\(^{109}\) While Ralegh is critical of Coriolanus in this passage for setting too high a rate for the Sicilian corn, his entire account implies distrust of the tribunes for the harm they brought upon Rome in exiling Coriolanus.


\(^{108}\) Ibid.

\(^{109}\) Ibid.
Summary of Preconceptions about the Tribunes
Held by Shakespeare's Audience

Of the six historians chosen for these summary sections, five of them mentioned the tribunes of the people, and all of them communicated some measure of mistrust about the tribunes. Livy portrays them as demagogues anxious to take advantage of the legitimate protests of the plebians over grain prices in order to seize more power. The tribunes bear primary responsibility for the exile of Coriolanus. At all times, they are pictured as power-hungry and self-seeking. Plutarch goes farther than Livy in stating the legitimate complaints of the people against money-lenders and high grain prices, and he also goes farther than Livy in condemning the tribunes as seditious men willing to risk the existence of the state to win favor with their constituents. He deplores their attempt to condemn Coriolanus to death without a just trial. Florus makes no specific comment upon the tribunes, but he seems to associate them with dangerous citizens who take advantage of bad situations. Lloyd portrays the tribunes from their inception as simply the partisans of their class rather than as statesmen. He notes that Coriolanus was banished because of their envy. Ralegh regards them as a danger to the authority of the consuls and distrusts them for the harm that they brought to Rome with Coriolanus' exile.

Shakespeare not only fulfilled his audience's preconceived mistrust of the tribunes of the people but he also
amplified it. The tribunes are men determined to undermine Coriolanus through intrigues as well as by direct attack. In the fourth act of Coriolanus, they appear and add cowardice to their other vices. They are an example of demagogues at their worst.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE PEOPLE: THE REASONABLENESS OF THEIR CAUSE

Cicero

In Cicero's dialogue Brutus, there is a brief judgment made by Cicero upon the "people," presumably meaning the plebians.1 Cicero opens his comment on Coriolanus by comparing him toThemistocles:

For the greatest of the Volscian wars, the one which Coriolanus took part in as an exile from Rome, was fought at about the same time as the Persian War, and the fortunes of these two famous men [Coriolanus and Themistocles] were not unlike. For both, though great men in their respective states, were unjustly exiled by an ungrateful people...2 (Italics mine)

As is mentioned in Chapter I, Cicero's viewpoint is decidedly aristocratic. He has no sympathy for either the people, who are "ungrateful," or for their cause for disliking Coriolanus, which he does not even mention.

Livy

Livy gives in great detail the continuing argument between the patricians and the plebians which eventually led to

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1Cicero, Brutus and Orator. Loeb Classical Library, p. 45
2Ibid.
the exile of Coriolanus. It started in 495 B.C. when Appius
Claudius and Publius Servilius were chosen consuls.

War was imminent with the Volscians. At that point, dissension broke out between the patricians and plebians on account of those plebian soldiers who had been "bound over" to moneylenders to work out their debts. Some of the plebians were actually bound in chains.³ The plebian soldiers maintained that "the freedom of the plebians was more secure in war than in peace, amongst enemies than among [fellow] citizens."⁴ Livy then indicates that a disturbance was caused by the appearance of a battle-scarred, old plebian soldier in the Forum. He had been stripped of his property and tortured by his creditors. Soon all of the plebians who had been bound over poured into the streets. Only the consuls were able to quiet the crowd. While it is clear in Livy's writing that civil disturbance was to be avoided at all cost, it is also clear that Livy had some sympathy for the plebians' cause, for he depicted at great length the old soldier's pitiful condition and the harshness of the treatment that he received from his creditors.⁵

The senate met to discuss the plebians' complaint. The Consul Appius advised arresting one or two of the plebians. The Consul Servilius suggested gentle measures to assuage the

³Livy, Livy, Loeb Classical Library, 1: 289.
⁴Ibid., p. 291.
⁵Ibid., pp. 291 and 293.
plebians' fury. Their debate was interrupted by news of an invading Volscian army. Noting the reluctance of the plebians to fight in a cause which they felt was not their own, the senate turned to Servilius to rally the people:

He Servilius commanded that no one should hold a Roman citizen in chains or durance so that he should not be able to give in his name to the consuls, and that none should seize or sell a soldier's property so long as he was in camp, or interfere with his children or his grandchildren.

Servilius' proclamation caused the plebians to enlist in large numbers. In short order, they fought three successful battles against the Volscians, the Sabines, and the Auruncians.

Having routed the Auruncians, the plebians were anticipating relief from Servilius in the matter of being bound over when the other consul, Appius, began delivering harsh judgments against plebian debtors. Servilius was of little help. Though he was moved by the plebians' cause, he was fearful of the patrician party's power. Thus, the plebians hated both consuls.

It was natural, therefore, that when the senate asked the people to decide which consul should dedicate a temple to Mercury, the people rejected both of them and chose, instead, Marcus Laetorius, a centurion of the first rank. The consul the people were to have chosen for the dedication was also to have control of the corn-supply. Livy does not indicate which of the consuls, if not Marcus Laetorius, gained this power. It should be remembered, however, that the people chose one of their own.

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6Ibid., p. 297.
station to humiliate the consuls and, perhaps, also to indicate their rising aspirations to power. The senate's willingness to give the people some small say over who would control the corn-supply apparently indicates the senate's awareness that this was a sensitive issue. 7

As Appius continued to render verdicts against plebian debtors, violence erupted:

[Violence] was the order of the day, and fear and danger had quite shifted from the debtors to the creditors, who were singled out and maltreated by large numbers in full sight of the consul. 8

Livy disliked these incidents and labeled them as "troubles" crowned by fear of a Sabine invasion. By this time, however, the plebians were in no mood to answer a call to arms, and none of them obeyed the draft call despite Appius' efforts. At this point, the annual election resulted in two new consuls.

The new consuls, Aulus Verginius and Titus Vetusius, were faced with the plebians assembling at night to hold meetings at different places in Rome rather than assembling in the Forum during the day. Livy condemned this practice, "This seemed to the consuls, as indeed it was, a mischievous practice." 9 Livy goes even further in his desire for order in the state when he says the following. "One single man—a more significant word than consul—of the type of Appius Claudius

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7 Ibid., pp. 303 and 305.
8 Ibid., p. 305.
9 Ibid., p. 307.
would have dispersed these assemblages in a moment.\textsuperscript{10}

Despite senate meetings and an attempt to forcibly draft an individual plebian, the senators could not raise an army until Appius Claudius, whom Livy labeled "naturally harsh and rendered savage by the hatred of the plebs on the one hand and the praises of the Fathers on the other," suggested that the senate appoint a dictator.\textsuperscript{11}

Manius Valerius, a man of gentle disposition whose family had been always friendly to the plebians, was appointed dictator with the support of the consuls and the older senators. This appointment was made quite to the dismay of Appius Claudius, who desired the job, but who, in Livy's judgment, "would infallibly have estranged the commons."\textsuperscript{12} Manius Valerius promptly promulgated an edict favoring the plebian debtors, which essentially conformed to the edict of Servilius. He then had no difficulty in raising the largest Roman army to that date—ten legions. Segments of this army repelled the Aequi, the Volscians, and the Sabines.

Though a threefold success had thus been gained in the war, neither senators nor plebians had been relieved of their anxiety respecting the outcome of affairs at home, so great was the artfulness, as well as influence with which the money-lenders had laid their plans to baffle not only the commons but even the dictator himself.\textsuperscript{13} (Italics mine)

\textsuperscript{10}Ibid., p. 309. \hfill \textsuperscript{11}Ibid., p. 313. \hfill \textsuperscript{12}Ibid., pp. 313 and 315. \hfill \textsuperscript{13}Ibid., pp. 319 and 321.
This passage implies a criticism of the money-lenders, a criticism that Valerius delivered orally in the senate after the senate defeated his resolution regarding the treatment of those bound over for debt. He forecasted that a mutiny would break out, which indeed eventually happened. He then resigned from office as dictator and was hailed on the way home by the plebians for keeping faith with them.

Immediately after Valerius' resignation, as mentioned in Chapter III, the consuls tried to keep the army from disbanding and possibly harming the state "under the pretext that the Aequi had recommenced hostilities." This attempt brought the revolt to a head. As detailed in Chapter III, the plebian soldiers encamped across the river Anio at the urging of Sicinius, and panic ensued in the city until Menenius effected a compromise resulting in the creation of the inviolable tribunes of the people. In Livy's account, it was the plebians alone who showed their gratitude to Menenius for his intervention by contributing a sextans each to the cost of his burial.

The brief secession of the plebian soldiers was long enough to prevent the cultivation of the fields which led to a famine in Rome during 492-491 B.C. Livy labeled this a "serious misfortune," more serious than the secession itself. Only

14 Ibid., pp. 321 and 323.
15 Ibid., p. 329.
16 Ibid.
corn from the Tuscans temporarily saved the slaves and plebians from starvation. In 491 B.C., a large grain shipment arrived from Sicily. The Senate debate over the sale price of corn led Coriolanus to give his corn speech advocating high prices and repression of the plebians—see Chapter I for details. Livy's comments on the reactions to Coriolanus' speech reveal an implicit criticism of Coriolanus for stirring up the plebians:

Even the Senate deemed the proposal too harsh, and the plebs were so angry that they almost resorted to arms. Starvation, they said, was being employed against them ... in him [Coriolanus] a new executioner had risen up against them, who bade them choose between death and slavery.17

As explained at greater length in Chapter III, the plebians were only restrained from physically attacking Coriolanus by the tribunes' setting a day to try him.

While Livy is sympathetic to the plebians' cause and judged both of their prominent opponents, Appius and Coriolanus, as harsh, Livy still maintained his traditional concern for order in the state. When Coriolanus would have spurned the tribunes' attempt to bring him to trial, the patricians reluctantly agreed to it, for "the commons had risen in such a storm of anger that the Fathers had to sacrifice one man to appease them."18 The "sacrifice" was limited to having Coriolanus stand trial, however, and the patricians supported him fully before the trial—see Chapter III for details. When Coriolanus failed to appear at his

hearing, however, he lost his support. He did, however, receive a warm welcome from the Volscians.

The plebians' last appearance as an active force in Livy's account occurred when Coriolanus was marching upon Rome. Though the tribunes of the people were attempting to arouse the plebians against Rome's leaders, the dread of foreign invasion, "the common bond of harmony," caused the plebians to reject the tribunes' rabble rousing. 19 The plebians would not accept, however, the advice of the senate and the consuls to place their faith in arms. The plebians "preferred anything to war," perhaps because they were acquainted with Coriolanus' martial prowess. 20 While the consuls were reviewing Rome's defenses, a great mass of the plebians descended upon them demanding peace, terrifying the consuls "with their rebellious clamour," and forcing them to call the senate together for the sending of envoys to Coriolanus. 21 The envoys received a stern reply from Coriolanus which mentioned "the wrong his fellow citizens had done him." 22 Thus ended the active role of the plebians in the Coriolanus legend.

To sum up Livy's opinion on the plebians and the reasonableness of their cause, as distinct from the tribunes'
role, is not difficult. Livy saw the plebians as an essential part of the Roman state providing both farm workers and soldiers. It was the responsibility of the patricians to see that the plebians' legitimate needs were met and to keep them content. Civil strife which occurred when the plebians' needs were not met--specifically, the demonstration in the Forum touched off by the old plebian soldier's recitation of his plight--was not to be tolerated despite the reasonableness of the plebians' cause. But as indicated in the case of the Dictator Manius Valerius' warning to the senate about the coming plebian mutiny, it was the patricians who hold the balance of power and they who had to accept ultimate responsibility for any civil strife by the plebians and not the plebians themselves. In conclusion, Livy could accept the reasonableness of the plebians' cause at times, but he could never accept any extralegal actions to implement it. He preferred a Rome in which a benevolent aristocracy maintained control.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, in contrast to Livy, indicated that the problem of the money-lenders collecting from their plebian soldier debtors dated back at least to the beginning of the appointment of Aulus Sempronius Atratinus and Marcus Minucius to the consulship in 495-494 B.C.23 Happily for

23Dionysius, Roman Antiquities, Loeb Classical Library, 3: 239.
these consuls, the senate previously had decreed an injunction against the exaction of debts until the war with the Latins could be safely terminated.

After the end of their foreign wars, civil strife again erupted among the Romans. Dionysius noted "great storms and terrible instances of outrageous behaviour" between the plebians, "pretending they were unable to pay their debts" owing to the ravages of war, and the money-lenders, "alleging that these misfortunes of war had been common to all and not confined to the debtors only."24 The consuls Appius Claudius Sabinus and Publius Servilius Priscus were divided on how to quiet the plebians and how to induce them to submit to conscription for an expedition against the Volscians. Appius Claudius favored inflicting harsh legal penalties; Publius Servilius favored either lessening or abolishing the debts, or, failing that, forbidding the imprisonment of debtors whose obligations were overdue. It should be noted that, while Claudius was attempting to exert his legal authority over the plebians, it was Servilius who was able by gentle persuasion to induce some of the populace to join him in a volunteer army which subsequently gained victory over the Volscians.25 Servilius thus set a precedent for the raising and leading of a volunteer Roman army in the Republican era.

24 Ibid., pp. 305 and 307.
25 Ibid., pp. 313 and 315.
Following Servilius' expedition, the problem of civil strife over debts remained. Dionysius dramatizes the appearance of the old, battle-scarred, plebian soldier in the Forum at greater length and with more dramatic detail than does Livy. After the old soldier's speech on the cruelties inflicted upon him by his creditors and the subsequent tumult by the plebians in the Forum, Dionysius makes the following judgment upon Appius Claudius: "Appius, therefore, fearing to be attacked by the populace, since he had been the cause of the evils and all this trouble was believed to be due to him, fled from the Forum." (Italics mine). After this condemnation of Appius, Dionysius notes that Servilius stayed in the Forum, quieted the crowd, promised that the senate would consider the matter and ordered that no citizen be jailed for debts until the senate had met, and, finally, ended the disturbance.

As in Livy, the senate's meeting on the next day was interrupted by the word of a Volscian army on the march. The plebians responded to the senators' alarm by showing their chains and fetters and asking the senators whether it was worth their while to make war in order to preserve their blessings. By including such dramatic details as the showing of the plebians' chains and fetters, Dionysius, though he begins his

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26 Ibid., p. 319.
27 Ibid., pp. 319 and 321.
28 Ibid., pp. 321 and 323.
account of the controversy between the two classes in an objective manner, weighs the case heavily in favor of the plebians. The Volscian army was turned back eventually by a Roman army conscripted and led by the wise Servilius, who had promulgated an edict freeing from bondage those plebians who joined the army.\textsuperscript{29} Many other battles were fought between 495-492 B.C. before the plebians finally seceded.

In 492 B.C., the plebians were not only refusing to be conscripted but also they frequently were assembling in a body to rescue any plebian who had been taken by the consuls' lictors. The city seethed with sedition.\textsuperscript{30} After some debate in the senate, the senators decided, at the urging of Appius Claudius, to appoint a dictator, although Dionysius notes that many of the older senators opposed the idea and the younger ones who favored it "used much violence" in their debate.\textsuperscript{31} The consuls excluded Appius Claudius from the office and appointed Manius Valerius, a man favorable to the plebians, instead.

In his speech to the plebians, Manius Valerius pleaded for their support and alluded to the problem of his credibility which, in itself, was an admission of extreme candour:

But there is one thing which, having suffered from others, you seem with reason to suspect of all: you have ever observed that one or another of the consuls,

\textsuperscript{29}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 325 and 327.
\textsuperscript{30}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 343.
\textsuperscript{31}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 355.
when they want to engage you to march against the enemy, promises to obtain for you what you desire of the senate, but never carries out any of his promises. That you can have no just grounds for entertaining the same suspicions of me also, I can convince you chiefly by these two considerations: first that the senate would never have made the mistake of employing me, for this service, when there are others better suited for it, and, second, that they would not have honoured me with an absolute magistracy by which I shall be able to enact whatever I think best, even without their participation.32 (Italics mine)

In this address, Manius Valerius admitted that the plebians had just cause not to trust the senate and the consuls, although Servilius apparently did all in his power when he was consul to assist the plebians. He also assured them that he would use his power to aid them and did so, later in his address, by proclaiming all possessions, rights, and persons free from seizure for debts or other obligations. Ten legions were soon raised from the willing plebians to defend Rome.

Upon returning to the senate from a successful campaign, Manius Valerius discharged four of the legions. He then asked the senate to fulfill the promises to the plebians which he, as their appointed dictator, had made. The faction that Dionysius termed "the young and violent men" in the senate defeated his efforts and accused him of destroying the patricians' power.33 He then uttered some dire prophecies about Rome which, as Dionysius notes, were "inspired in part by the emotion he was

32 Ibid., p. 357.
33 Ibid., p. 367.
then under and in part by his superior sagacity." He left the senate chamber after uttering his prophecies. He then addressed the assembled plebians, condemned the senate for its failure to fulfill the promises made in its name to the plebian class, and resigned his office. It was with this background that the plebians began to plan a secession. The consuls then used the pretext of war with the Aequians and Sabines to attempt to remove from the city the six legions that remained under arms.

For information on the secession of the plebian soldiers to their camp outside of the city, see the Dionysius of Halicarnassus section of Chapter III. It is noteworthy that Dionysius praised the oldest senators' views on the secession, views which indicated that the plebians had not made the secession with any malicious intent but were partly compelled by "irresistible calamities" and partly deluded by their advisers. Dionysius gave an implicit criticism of the younger senators here. Along with his explicit criticism of them in other places, the reader inevitably receives a bad impression of those fiery, young patricians who were to become Coriolanus' most devoted adherents.

After much argument, the senate sent a group of envoys to deal with the secessionist soldiers. After listening to the speech of Lucius Junius Brutus which cataloged the abuses of the

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34 Ibid.
plebians at the hands of the money-lenders, Titus Larcius, one of the foremost of the patrician envoys, censured the money-
lenders "for having acted with cruelty and inhumanity." He then proceeded, however, also to censure the plebians for resorting to violence rather than petitioning the senate for redress of their grievances. When Menenius Agrippa spoke, he also admitted that "the harsh exaction of debts had been the cause of present ills" before he told the fable of the body and its members—see Chapter II for more information. Dionysius goes out of his way to show the justice of these envoys by citing their records of service and the respect accorded them by the senate. Both of these envoys admitted that the plebians had just cause for their anger, although both would have had the plebians express their anger in a less explosive manner. This meeting of envoys and plebians quickly led to the appointment of the tribunes of the people and their aediles.

In the war against the Volscians that followed the secession, Coriolanus earned his name. Unlike the cowardly plebian soldiers of Shakespeare's play, however, the plebian soldiers proved themselves brave and did not have to be driven into battle, except for a moment under the onslaught of the attacking Coriolani when some of the Romans retreated while some others stayed with Coriolanus. Referring to the subsequent

[36]Ibid., 4: 95 and 97.

[37]Ibid., p. 103.
battle with the Volscian relieving army, Dionysius stated that "all the Romans displayed notable valour in this action" though Coriolanus displayed the most.\textsuperscript{38}

The Volscian war was followed by the grain famine. The famine, in turn, inflamed the plebians against the patricians. The enforced colonization of Velitrae and Norba was meant to appease the plebians, but it only inflamed those plebians who remained hungry at home. Sicinius and Brutus were whipping up class hatred—as see Chapter III for more information. Despite the tumultuous conditions in Rome, Dionysius saw fit to compliment both the plebians and the patricians for their behaviour during the famine:

For, on the other hand, the poor did not attack the houses of the rich, where they suspected they should find stores of provisions laid up, nor attempt to raid the public markets, but consented to buy small quantities for a high price, and when they lacked money, they sustained life by using roots and grasses for food. Nor, on the other hand, did the rich, in the confidence of their strength and that afforded by their clients ..., offer violence to the weaker citizens ...,\textsuperscript{39}

From a twentieth-century, Christian viewpoint, of course, the plebians may seem the more meritorious in their restraint, but by the aristocratic viewpoint of Dionysius' age both classes are commendable.

To relieve the food shortage in Rome, Coriolanus formed a volunteer army to raid the land of the Antiates. Some

\textsuperscript{38}Ibid., p. 135.

\textsuperscript{39}Ibid., p. 201.
The greater part of the plebians who now took up arms were encouraged to do so upon seeing him [Coriolanus] take the field, some of them out of affection for him, and others in the hope of a successful campaign; for he was already famous. . . . 40 (Italics mine)

This passage indicates that Coriolanus had some sort of following among the plebians and possibly not only for his martial prowess.

Coriolanus' army captured and divided up among themselves a great deal of corn and cattle as well as many slaves. Their success caused those plebians who had remained at home to become greatly dejected. "These plebians blamed their demagogues through whom they felt they had been deprived of the same good fortune." 41 Surprisingly enough, Bullough does not mention this anger that the plebians felt toward their demagogues, although it showed that the plebians were not mere dupes of the demagogues.

Following the raid, Coriolanus made his corn speech with its attack upon the tribunes of the people and the plebian class—see Chapter I. The tribunes, in turn, summoned Coriolanus to answer for his threats against them—see Chapter III. At a meeting of plebians, the Tribune Gaius Sicinius Bellutus goaded Coriolanus by asking him to plead his own case before the plebians and not rely upon other patricians to plead his case. Sicinius knew, of course, that Coriolanus was too

40 Ibid., p. 205.
41 Ibid.

In contrast, Plutarch's plebians did not criticize their demagogues. See the Plutarch section of this chapter.
arrogant to moderate his expression of opinion.

For when silence prevailed and almost all the plebiains felt a strong desire to acquit him if he would make the most of the present opportunity, he showed such arrogance... that he did not deny a single thing he had said in the senate against them [the plebiains].

(italics mine)

Though the plebiains were offended by the reports they had heard of his corn speech, the plebiains were still willing to forgive Coriolanus. Coriolanus' actions thus appear as the culmination of a historical process, for Dionysius gives the reader a long history of the strife between the classes in Rome that Shakespeare does not give in his play.

Sicinius responded to Coriolanus' outburst by proclaiming Coriolanus' death for the insolence that he had shown to the tribunes' aediles on the day before. This proclamation led to the starting of a riot between the patricians and the plebiains. The violence was quelled by Lucius Junius Brutus, a demagogue and "a man of great sagacity in all matters, but particularly in finding possible solutions in impossible situations." He not only advised Sicinius that his actions to kill Coriolanus immediately were "reckless and illegal" but also noted that "the studiest element among the people were hesitating and in no mood readily to acquiesce in delivering up to death the most illustrious person in the city and that without a trial." This

42 Ibid., p. 241.
43 Ibid., pp. 245 and 247.
44 Ibid., p. 247.
reluctance to accede to mob rule by the respectable element among
the plebians is not mentioned in Bullough, but it caused Sicinius
to take Coriolanus' case before a tribal assembly.

The Senate was moved to give the plebians a reduction in
"the prices of commodities necessary for daily subsistence" when
the senators saw that Coriolanus was due for trial. But while
the consuls' corn price offer was readily accepted by the
tribunes, the tribunes refused to accept the accompanying request
for a dismissal of charges against Coriolanus. Bullough does not
mention the senate's accompanying request although it places the
senators in a bad light. It looks as if they were offering a
bribe to the tribunes. But though they accepted the bribe, the
tribunes would only agree to a postponement of Coriolanus' trial.

In addition to the delay won from the tribunes by the
bribe of cheap corn, the consuls contrived another delay by waging
war against theAntiates who had seized some ambassadors sent
from Sicily to Rome. In raising an army "consisting of all who
were of military age, both consuls took the field, after getting
a decree of the senate ratified for the suspension of private and
public suits for as long a time as they should continue under
arms." The suspension was soon lifted, however, for the
Antiates surrendered upon hearing that a Roman army was in the
field.

46 Ibid., pp. 251 and 253.
Since it was impossible to delay the trial any longer, the senators decided to make the best of a bad situation by passing a decree permitting Coriolanus to be tried before the people rather than by risking the tribunes' attempting to drag Coriolanus into court again. Although there was much controversy over passing the decree, Manius Valerius, "who was the greatest friend to the plebians of all the senators," made the convincing speech:

He [Manius Valerius] showed them also that there would be no small element among the populace which loved the right and hated the wrong, and an even larger number who knew how to sympathize with human misfortunes and to feel compassion for men in positions of honour when their fortunes have suffered reverse.

Through these words of Manius Valerius, Dionysius reinforces the idea that Coriolanus did have an element among the plebians who either saw him as being unfairly treated or who simply sympathized with an underdog. In addition to his other remarks, Dionysius, through the mouth of Manius Valerius, is making sure that the reader notes Coriolanus' support among the plebians.

At the third market day after the passage of the senate's decree, the tribal assembly met to consider Coriolanus' case. Hincius, one of the consuls, first addressed the assembly on the defendant's behalf, asking the plebians to remember Coriolanus' service to the state and acquit him. In response to Sicinius, he also said that the senate had acquitted

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47 Ibid., p. 301.
48 Ibid., p. 305.
Coriolanus of the general charge of aiming at tyranny. Therefore, he expected very specific charges from the plebians if they were going to try Coriolanus. Sicinius, on the attack, then talked at length about all of Coriolanus' speeches against the plebians.

Finally, Coriolanus rose to speak. First, he listed all of his military exploits performed for Rome. Then, unlike the protagonist of Shakespeare's play, he willingly bared his breast to show his scars gained in Rome's service. At this point, the crowd was swayed in his favor:

> While he was yet speaking, *those of the plebians who were fairminded and lovers of the right* cried out to acquit him, and were ashamed that a man who had so often scorned his own life to preserve them all was even being brought to trial in the first place upon such a charge. *Those, however, who were by nature malevolent, enemies of the right, and easy to be led into any kind of sedition, were sorry they were going to have to acquit him*, but felt that they could not do otherwise, *since they could find no evidence of his having aimed at tyranny*, which was the point upon which they had been called to give their votes.49 (Italics mine)

Despite the temporary victory won by Coriolanus' dramatic declamation, Marcus Decius, one of the tribunes of the people, made a fiery accusation. He reminded those disgruntled plebians of how Coriolanus divided the spoils of his Antiates' incursion only among his volunteer troops. He managed to intimidate the "more reasonable" section of the plebians and to excite "all the malevolent, who constituted the larger part of the populace."50


Without pause, the tribunes called on the tribes to vote and then fixed perpetual banishment as the punishment. Although it is not mentioned in Bullough, Dionysius hazarded the guess that the tribunes settled upon exile rather than death because of "their fear that he [Coriolanus] could not be convicted if death were set as the penalty."\(^{51}\) Dionysius also noted that if two more of the twenty-one tribes had voted for Coriolanus he would have been acquitted, thus emphasizing the closeness of the decision.\(^{52}\) Although Dionysius did not agree with this decision, he nevertheless complimented the Romans for settling the affair without bloodshed.\(^{53}\)

It is not mentioned in Bullough's commentary, but the plebians next played an active role in the Coriolanus legend when Coriolanus was making his third and most serious incursion into Roman territory at the head of a Volscian army. The plebians wanted to allow Coriolanus to return to Rome:

The tribunes too wished to introduce a law for the annulment of his condemnation; but the patricians opposed them, being determined not to reverse any part of the sentence which had been pronounced.\(^{54}\)

Dionysius noted that the patricians did not give their reasons

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\(^{51}\) Ibid., p. 339.

\(^{52}\) Ibid.

See Cary's footnote on pp. 338-341 for a discussion of Dionysius' ballot count.

\(^{53}\) Ibid., p. 347.

\(^{54}\) Ibid., 5: 59.
for holding this position. But he gave the opinion that it may have been either to boost morale among the plebians or to disassociate their class from any complicity with the acts of Coriolanus while he was at war with Rome.

There is another reference to the role of the plebians in the Coriolanus legend made by Marcus Minucius, head of the envoys to Coriolanus in his camp before Rome. Marcus Minucius mentioned specifically in his plea for mercy that not even all of the plebians desired his banishment and that he was exiled by a very small majority of votes. Dionysius' repeated emphasis upon Coriolanus' support among a large number of the plebians is referred to again in Dionysius' concluding remarks on Coriolanus:

For when he ought to have made reasonable concessions to the plebians, and by yielding somewhat to their desires to have gained the foremost place among them, he would not do so, but by opposing them in everything that was not just he incurred their hatred and was banished by them.

Coriolanus' passion for exact justice, which Dionysius considered more of a fault than a virtue in Coriolanus, deprived him of the place of honor that the plebians would have been forced to have given him.

In summary, in his account of the Coriolanus legend, Dionysius saw the plebians as a bit more of an active element in the political life of the republic than did Livy. He clearly

55 Ibid., p. 61.
56 Ibid., p. 67.
57 Ibid., p. 179.
sympathized with the plebians when the patrician money-lenders were pressuring them for money which they did not have as they (the plebians) were newly returned from the wars. Secondly, he is highly critical of that bloc of young arrogant senators who constantly attacked the plebians, the same group that supported Coriolanus in his domestic policy. Finally, he was careful to note that there was a large element of responsible plebians who saw that exiling Coriolanus was bad policy. They felt that he had served the state well in the past and might do so again. Dionysius also saw, however, that the majority of the plebians could be swayed by their clever and unscrupulous tribunes.

Valerius Maximus

Valerius Maximus makes three references to the plebians in his work; none of them favor the plebians' cause. First, he comments upon their refusal to accept Coriolanus as consul. "And it happened that he, who was by the Romans refused for their Leader, had like to have proved their most fatal enemy." This ironic comment upon the plebians' imprudence is followed by an even more explicit irony: "For this reason the People that were so haughty, as not to value their own happiness, were forced to supplicate an Exile, whose offense they would not pardon before." As their supplications were rejected, the plebians

59 Ibid.
and others could only fear the worst: "The Senators were at their wits end, the People trembled, both Men and Women bewail'd their approaching Calamity." Valerius had no sympathy for the plebians' cause and could see no justification for their exiling such a noble soul as Coriolanus.

Plutarch

Plutarch's focus is not at all upon the plebians but upon Coriolanus. His comments on the plebians are set largely in the context of a comment upon Coriolanus, as the first one indicates:

But for all that [a catalog of Coriolanus' virtues], they [the Romans] could not be acquainted with him, as one citizen useth to be with another in the cittle. His behaviour was so unpleasaunt to them, by reason of a certain insolent and sterne manner he had, which because it was to lordly, was disliked.

The arrogance of Coriolanus earned him no favor with his fellow citizens. Plutarch does not even specify that the dislike for Coriolanus was limited to the plebian class. Moreover, Plutarch makes it quite clear that Coriolanus is to blame for this dislike.

Later in Plutarch's account, in his description of the struggle between the money-lenders and the plebian debtors, Plutarch is quick to label the results of the plebians' actions

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60 Ibid.

as "sedition." Yet he does give a sympathetic slant to the plebians' plight:

For those that had little, were yet spoyle[d] of that little they had by their creditors, for lacke of abilitie to paye the userie: who offered their goodes to be solde, to them that would gave most. Plutarch continues in this vein to describe how old soldiers were seized by their creditors as slaves. Although MacCallum is not specific about stating it, Plutarch takes great pains to note that the plebians had faithfully served in battle but were denied the gentle treatment regarding their debts promised in the senate's name by the dictator Marcus Valerius. But though Plutarch is sympathetic to the plebians' cause, just like Dionysius of Halicarnassus he is not sympathetic to their sedition which brought on an attack by Rome's enemies.

Just before the plebians' secession, Coriolanus spoke to an assembly of senators. The thesis of his speech was that the potential loss of the money-lenders' investments was not the prime issue. What was of concern to him was that the senate should exert its authority and show no leniency to the plebians as this leniency would only be an invitation to anarchy.

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62 Ibid., p. 147.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid., pp. 147-148.

Marcus Valerius is the same person as Dionysius' Manius Valerius.
65 Ibid., p. 148.
the senate could not reach a conclusion on the matter of the plebians' debts, the plebians finally seceded.

Following the secession and the plebians' return to Rome, Coriolanus distinguished himself before Corioli by rallying the faltering plebian troops during the attack of Corioli's troops. He displayed his anger at the troops when, as in Shakespeare's play, many of the troops preferred looting Corioli to assisting their fellow Romans who were fighting the Volscian relieving army. His anger was quite just there, for Plutarch depicted a hard battle between the Romans and the Volscian army.

The plebians next appeared in Plutarch's account during the corn famine when they were stirred up by the false tales of their tribunes. The people responded by refusing to accept conscription for the wars and, in a departure from Dionysius' account, by refusing to colonize Velitres. Through political influence, however, Coriolanus was able to compel the chosen colonists to leave Rome, but he could not force conscription upon the reluctant plebians. Hence, he could depart only with volunteer troops into the land of the Antiates for what proved to be a successful raid. 66

Unlike Dionysius' account, Plutarch's work does not mention that the plebians who did not go on the successful raid were angry at their tribunes. Instead, Plutarch merely recorded their envy of the victorious troops and the malice they felt

66 Ibid., pp. 156-157.
toward Coriolanus. Yet, at the same time, the common people favored Coriolanus' suit for the consulship "thinking it would be a shame to them to deny . . . the chiefest noble man of bloude . . . and specially him that had done so great service and good to the common wealth." This shametaced acceptance was also their reaction upon seeing Coriolanus' wounds during his electioneering in the market place. When he came into the market place "with great pompe" on election day surrounded by the senate and all of the patricians, however, the plebians rejected him out of fear for his bias toward the patricians.

When Coriolanus returned to his home from the market place, he was accompanied by "all the lustiest young gentlemen." This is the group that Dionysius always expressed reservations about. Flutarch did not hesitate to say that "they floct about him, and kept him companie, to his muche harme: for they dyd but kyndle and inflame his choller more and more." Thanks in part to these young patricians, Coriolanus went to the senate floor at a later date and made his inflammatory corn speech which was opposed by "only a fewe olde men that spake against him, fearing least some mischief might fall out apon it, as in deede there followed no great good afterward."

67 Ibid., p. 153.
68 Ibid., p. 159.
69 Ibid., p. 160.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid., p. 162.
The people completely supported their tribunes in the ensuing civil disruptions which followed this verbal attack by Coriolanus: "We should if we were wise take from them their Tribuneshippe, which most manifestly in the embasing of the Consulshippe, and the cause of the division of the cittie."^72

It cannot be denied that Plutarch's personal opinion of the tribunes' role in Rome's division is echoed in Coriolanus' attack—see Chapter III. It also cannot be denied that in this speech Coriolanus was also fulfilling Plutarch's description of him as an intemperate man—see Chapter I—for the speech with its threat ignited the tinderbox that was Rome and resulted in further disruptions rather than resolving the problems which had caused the disruptions.

The disruptions in the streets were eventually quelled. In the same streets, Coriolanus faced the tribunes' charges before an informal assembly composed of both classes. Despite the plebians' support for their tribunes, many of them protested Sicinius' command to have Coriolanus cast from the Tarpeian Rock without formal trial.^73

Despite the feeling of some of the plebians toward Sicinius' kangaroo court justice, the majority of the plebians took pleasure in Coriolanus' defeat at the formal trial. After the sentence of exile was declared, the plebians rejoiced more

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^72 Ibid.

^73 Ibid., p. 164.
They were not reluctant to flex their newly found political muscle, and, indeed, according to Marxian analysis, they had defeated the apotheosis of their greatest enemy, the ruling class.

The plebians next appeared in Plutarch's account when Coriolanus was completing his first raid into Roman territory. As Coriolanus was only looting and burning plebian farms and sparing patrician lands, the plebians were accusing the patricians of having some complicity with Coriolanus' depredations. The patricians, in turn, were angered at the people for having banished such a competent soldier as Coriolanus in the first place.75

During Coriolanus' second raid, neither the plebians nor the patricians would take the field against Coriolanus because of their mistrust of each other. After a time, the plebians proposed the repeal of Coriolanus' condemnation and exile. Although, like Dionysius, Plutarch is not sure of the senate's motivation for refusing to repeal Coriolanus' exile, he offers different reasons for the senate's action:

who either dyd it of a selfe will to be contrarie to the peoples desire: or because Martius should not returne through the grace and favour of the people. Or els, because they were thoroughly angrie and offended with him, that he would set apon the whole,

74Ibid., p. 167.
75Ibid., p. 175.
being offended but by a fewe, and in his doings would showe him selue an open enemie besides unto his countrie: notwithstanding the most parte of them tooke the wrong they had done him, in marvelous ill parte, and as if the injurie had bene done unto them selves.\textsuperscript{76}

Plutarch explicitly indicated in this piece of writing a high degree of hatred and distrust between the classes. Also, he theorized that some of the senators could have felt that Coriolanus was a traitor to both his country and his class and that he had been "offended but by a fewe." This is the last extensive reference to the plebians in the "Life" of Coriolanus proper.

In "The Comparison of Alcibiades with Martius Coriolanus," Plutarch amplifies his comment upon Coriolanus' harshness toward the plebians in contrast to Alcibiades' pandering to their desires:

So dyd the Romaines malice also Coriolanus government, for that it was to arrogant, prowde, and tyrannicall: whereby neither the one nor the other was to be commended. Notwithstanding, he is less to be blamed, that seeketh to please and gratifie his common people: then he that despiseth and disdaineth them, and therefore offereth them wrong and injurie because he would not seeme to flatter them, to winne the more authoritie.\textsuperscript{77}

Plutarch repeats this critical view of Coriolanus in his conclusion of this "Comparison." "For he that disdaineth to make much of the people, and to have their favour, shoulde much

\textsuperscript{76}Ibid., pp. 176-177.

\textsuperscript{77}Ibid., pp. 190-191.
more scorne to secke to be revenged, when he is repulsed." 78

In summary, rather than detailing the broken promises made to the plebians as Dionysius did, Plutarch concentrated upon showing the plebians as the rough tool of their clever tribunes. As soldiers, most of Plutarch's plebians faltered at two crucial moments, and only Coriolanus saved the day by the exercise of his unparalleled martial prowess. As citizens, they laughed in glee at the exiling of their former leader, yet, shortly thereafter, these same plebians begged the senate to revoke Coriolanus' punishment and permit him to return. Though the plebians were unjustly treated by the money-lenders, they compounded the injustice by seceding from the state and inviting foreign invasion.

On the other hand, through Plutarch's selection of details from Dionysius' account, Coriolanus appears to be even more of a harsh authoritarian figure. Coriolanus is condemned both at the beginning and at the end of Plutarch's biography as an arrogant man who needlessly offended people. In his public speech, he is an implacable, uncompromising enemy of the plebians at all cost. One can say, therefore, that Plutarch selected those details from Dionysius' account which place both Coriolanus and the plebians in the worst possible light.

78 Ibid., p. 195.
Florus

The abridgment of Lucius Annaeus Florus' *Epitome* which appeared in Philemon Holland's 1600 edition simply states that the "commons" became seditious because they were "enthralled unto their creditors":79--see Chapter III. In the unabridged text of the Loeb edition, however, Florus appears to be a bit more sympathetic to the plebians. By way of apology, he notes "a certain spirit of ferocity inherited from shepherd ancestors" in the Roman plebians.80 From this patronizing observation, he proceeds to make a value judgment upon the patrician money-lenders:

The first dispute was due to the tyranny of the usurers, when these actually vented their fury upon their persons as though they were slaves, the common people took up arms and seceded to the Sacred Mount.81

Florus takes care to give praise to Menenius Agrippa for resolving the secession, however, rather than to the plebians for their willingness to compromise.

Florus makes it clear that Coriolanus inherited a bad situation when he became a Roman leader, for he cites Coriolanus' treatment of the plebians only after citing this sad history of three previous military commanders:

80 *Florus, Epitome of Roman History*, Loeb Classical Library, p. 69.
Hence it was that the army mutinied in camp and stoned the general Postumius, when he denied them the spoils which he had promised; that under Appius Claudius they refused to defeat the enemy when it was in their power to do so; that when under the leadership of Valerius many refused to serve, the consul's fasces were broken. Hence it was that they punished with exile their most illustrious chiefs, because they opposed their will; Coriolanus, for example, when he order them to till their fields. . . .

The only other exile that Florus cites at this point in his account is Camillus, who lived approximately a hundred years after Coriolanus and whose exile is questioned by modern historians. Apparently, therefore, Coriolanus' exile was not a common occurrence as Florus might lead the reader to believe.

In summary, Florus depicted a hot-tempered lot of plebians. As many other authors did, he showed sympathy for the plebians who had served Rome well and were mistreated by the money-lenders. On the other hand, the only individuals cited by name in his account are patricians. And while some military commanders may possibly have given the plebians less than their due, Florus' sympathies were with the patricians whom he saw as having the real obligation to govern.

Appian

As was mentioned in Chapter III, the tribunes of the people appear to be simply the representatives of the plebians'

82 Ibid., pp. 69 and 71.

self-interest rather than manipulative politicians in Appian's *Roman History*. Appian's introduction to Book I of "The Civil Wars" implies that a continuing political-economic process was responsible for the plebians' discontent rather than a few demagogues:

The plebians and Senate of Rome were often at strife with each other concerning the enactment of laws, the concelling of debts, the division of lands, or the election of magistrates. Internal discord did not, however, bring them to blows. . . .84

Appian even gives praise to the plebians for their secession, for it did not involve the use of violence but simply a withdrawal from the city. He even notes with impartiality that a tribune of the people could serve as a check upon the power of the consuls. But he also comments that the appointment of what he recorded as a single tribune of the people was sufficient to increase animosity between both classes—see Chapter III. 85

Appian observes that Coriolanus was banished "contrary to justice" during a contest of wills between the plebian and patrician classes. 86 This is an explicit censure of the plebian class, but, in the context of his other observations, it cannot be taken as a severe one. In his other comment on the plebians' treatment of Coriolanus, Appian makes the same sort of mild rebuke: "The people refused to elect Marcius (Coriolanus) when

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he sought the consulsip, not because they considered him unfit, but because they feared his domineering spirit."\textsuperscript{87}

In his final mention of the plebians' reaction to Coriolanus, Appian makes no value judgment on what would be a crime in nearly any country's eyes—a threat of treason in the face of the enemy:

> When Marcius had been banished, and had taken refuge with the Volsci, and made war against the Romans, and was encamped at a distance of only forty stades from the city, the people threatened to betray the walls to the enemy unless the Senate would send an embassy to him to treat for peace. The senate reluctantly sent pleni-potentiaries to negotiate a peace befitting the Roman nation.\textsuperscript{88} (italics mine)

In summary, Appian is somewhat sympathetic to the plebians' cause. He even countenances the plebians' secession, although as his mention of the appointment of only one tribune of the people may indicate, this may be because he was ignorant of the danger from foreign invasion that the young republic faced. Moreover, he glosses over the plebians' threat of treason. Appian is less willing, however, to forgive Coriolanus' actions after his banishment. In Appian's mind, presumably Coriolanus had to bear more responsibility for his actions than the plebians did for their actions.

\textbf{Polyaenus}

As Polyaenus says nothing about the plebians' cause in

\textsuperscript{87}Ibid., 1: 43.

\textsuperscript{88}Ibid., p. 45.
his account of the Coriolanus legend, the next author to consider is Cassius Dio Cocceianus.

Dio

Dio dated the beginning of friction between the plebians and patricians with the resignation of the dictator Valerius from office. He criticized the money-lenders of the "sell-to-do classes" for failing to recognize that extreme poverty is a grievous curse which breeds desperation and is very difficult to combat.89 "Thus, the uncompromising attitude of the rich class toward the poor was responsible for very many ills that befall the Romans."90

Dio was not sympathetic, however, to the secession of the plebian troops. He noted that they were finally "brought to reason" by Agrippa with his fable.91 He summarized the secessionists and their actions in a scornful manner:

Whenever a large number of men band together and seek their own advantage by violence, they have for the time being some equitable agreement and display boldness, but later they become divided and are punished on various pretexts.92

Nor was Dio sympathetic when he reported the plebians as blaming the patricians for the grain famine and the necessity

89 Dio, Dio's Roman History, Loeb Classical Library, 1: 115 and 117.

90 Ibid., p. 117.

91 Ibid., p. 121.

92 Ibid., p. 125.
to colonize Norba. "For whenever persons come to suspect each other, they take amiss everything even that is done in their behalf, judging it all in a spirit of party hatred."\textsuperscript{93} Dio's last reference to the plebians notes that this party hatred had kept both classes "so bitterly at variance" that not even the danger of a Volscian occupation of Rome was sufficient to unify them.\textsuperscript{94}

In summary, Dio is quite critical of the money-lenders of the wealthy class and thus is somewhat sympathetic to the plebians' cause. By the same token, however, he was critical of the plebians' secession. Dio regarded the plebians, as well as the patricians, of being so blinded by party hatred that they placed the existence of the republic in danger.

Sextus Aurelius Victor

In the \textit{De viris illustribus}, often ascribed to Sextus Aurelius Victor, there are brief allusions to both the secession and Coriolanus' management of the grain price.

The work states that the motivation for the plebians' withdrawal was that the plebians had to bear the weight both of taxes and military service. Luckily, Menenius was enough of a rhetorician to convince them to return. The \textit{De viris illustribus}, however, gives no condemnation of the plebians for

\textsuperscript{93}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 139.

\textsuperscript{94}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 143.
their secession.\textsuperscript{95}

Also, as mentioned in Chapter III, the work states that it was an injustice for Coriolanus to maintain a high price for the grain brought from Sicily. It is no surprise, therefore, that the plebians supported their tribune, Marcus Decius, in his expulsion of Coriolanus.\textsuperscript{96}

All in all, the \textit{De viris illustribus} carries an account quite favorable to the plebians' cause and quite unfavorable to Coriolanus.

\textbf{Eutropius}

Eutropius' comment upon the plebians of Coriolanus' day is very brief and very biting:

\begin{quote}
In the XVI yeare [after the expulsion of Tarquin] did the commons of Rome make a commotion, pretending the cause to be, for that the senatours and Consuls woulde have oppressed them. . . .\textsuperscript{97}
\end{quote}

As the only motive given by Eutropius for Coriolanus' leaving Rome is "uppon displeasure conceyved," the only appearance of the plebians in Eutropius' account depicts them as a rowdy and unfaithful lot of troublemakers.\textsuperscript{98} Even the undiscerning reader would find Eutropius' attitude similar to the aristocratic prejudices mouthed in many of Shakespeare's plays.

\textsuperscript{95}Aurelius, \textit{Liber de Caesaribus . . . et liber de viris illustribus . . . .}, Teubner edition, p. 36.

\textsuperscript{96}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 37.

\textsuperscript{97}Eutropius, \textit{A Briefe Chronicle}, Fol. 4 and 9.

\textsuperscript{98}\textit{Ibid.}, Fol. 9.
Zonaras

Zonaras' account of the friction between the patricians and the plebians closely follows his source, Dio—see Chapter I. Like Dio, in response to the money-lenders' dispute with the plebians, Zonaras comes to the conclusion that "the uncompromising attitude at this time of the rich toward the poor was responsible for many ills that befell the Romans."99 Unlike Dio, however, Zonaras takes care to note that the plebians were hard pressed for money because of the military campaigns in which they had been forced to serve. They had not been able to remain at home and tend their fields.100 Thanks to Menenius' fable, Zonaras depicts the secessionists as coming to the realization that money-lenders were a necessity if the poor were to survive periods of want. This realization, of course, still did not prevent them from appointing two tribunes to protect their political and economic interests.

The secession was followed by Rome's enemies commencing hostilities which were quickly quelled by the reunified Roman army.101 And though Coriolanus distinguished himself in the battle at Corioli during the period of hostility, Zonaras noted that his glory was not great enough for him to be voted the

99 Dio, Dio's Roman History, Loeb Classical Library, p. 117.
100 Ibid.
101 Ibid., p. 135.
office of praetor. Coriolanus blamed his defeat on the tribunes, but he was angry with the populace as well. 102

The populace next appear in Zonaras' account when Coriolanus was marching against Rome. In a passage which is probably a condensation of Plutarch, one of Zonaras' sources as mentioned in Chapter 1, Zonaras noted that, "instead of making a vigorous use of arms," the plebians censured the patricians because Coriolanus was a member of their class, and the patricians raged at the plebians for having unjustly exiled Coriolanus. 103 Zonaras even went to the extent of writing, for the first time in an extant text, that the Romans' fear was so great that the Roman senate voted to recall Coriolanus. 104

In summary, Zonaras drew a more favorable picture of the plight of the plebians than Dio did. Zonaras did not focus at length upon the plebians' reactions to Coriolanus, although he did have many bad things to say about the actions of the tribunes—see Chapter III. But, Zonaras does definitely criticize both classes for their quarrelling at a moment when Rome's existence was at stake. It can be said that Zonaras was a proponent of the plebians' cause, a harsh critic of the tribunes, and a man who placed the safety of the city above all.

102 Ibid., p. 137.
103 Ibid., p. 143.
104 Ibid.
Tzetzes begins his account of the Coriolanus legend with the capture of Coriolanus. Though he does not comment on any class hatred in his account of Coriolanus, he does bring in the problem of jealousy:

And he, as a result of saving the Romans and sacking the city, which we have already said was called Coriolanum, received, in addition to his former names, Marcus and Gnaeus, the title of Coriolanus, from his victory. But--such is the treatment that jealous, accords to benefactors--after a little in the course of their reflections they fined the man. And he, grievously smarting with most just wrath, left his wife, his mother, and his country.

Perhaps in noting that Coriolanus was a benefactor, Tzetzes is implying that the plebian class in particular was jealous of him, but this is by no means certain. At most, one can say that the Romans treated Coriolanus most unjustly in Tzetzes' account; Tzetzes was no adherent of the plebians' cause.

Higden

Ranulf Higden's *Polychronycon* contains one brief allusion to the plebians and another to the Romans in general. First, "The people of Rome made stryfe as though they were mysledded by the Senatours." This "stryfe" led to the creation of the office of the tribunes, but one can see that


Higden did not see any justification for the plebians' cause as it was based on a misrepresentation of the senators' position. In the general remark made about the Romans, Higden noted that the Romans proffered peace, but Coriolanus "ceased not too warre and greve the Cyte." 107 Apparently, the Romans feared Coriolanus as much in Higden's account as in most others. Also, Higden rejected the plebians' cause completely as did many other historians.

Lanquet

Thomas Lanquet made a brief reference to the plebians' cause in his Chronicle. "The common people rose up against the Senatours for defense of their libertee, but by the wysedome of Memmius Agrippa, they were pacified." 108 There may be a bit of reservation in Lanquet's observation about the plebians' uprising, but at least he does not ascribe the uprising to base motives but rather "for defense of their libertee." Perhaps Lanquet had some sympathy for the plebians' cause; at least he did not express any antipathy toward it.

Lloyd

As was noted in Chapter III, Ludovic Lloyd attributes the immediate cause of the dissension between the plebians and

107 Ibid.
108 Cooper, Coopers Chronicle containing Lanquettes Chronicle, leaf 47.
patricians to the creation of the new offices of dictator and magister equitum. He has little sympathy for the plebians' fears, however, as this passage indicates:

And for that the Senators and Consuls (as the people pretended the cause) would have them oppressed, a commotion was thereby in Rome by the commons, and therefore they created two men whom they called . . . Tribunes of the people . . .

After the tribunes had taken office, Coriolanus conquered Corioli and raided the Antietes. Lloyd notes that Coriolanus "often repressed the insolence of the people" by appearing voluntarily at every battle to display his martial prowess. This glory earned him much envy from the tribunes of the people and their acclilies, however, so he was banished from Rome despite the support of the patricians.

As in other accounts, Coriolanus' invasion of Roman territory caused the patricians and plebians "to fall to civil dissension." This is an appropriate reference on which to end this section as Lloyd had nothing but contempt for the plebians whom he saw as quarrelsome cowardly rogues. Perhaps this was a common attitude among aristocratic social climbers in the court of Elizabeth I.

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110 Ibid.

111 Ibid., p. 497.
Sir Walter Ralegh begins his account of the role of the plebians in the Coriolanus legend by mentioning an uproar on the Sacred Mount instigated by some desperate bankrupts, "thinking themselves wrongfully oppressed by the Senate and Consuls." But just before this uproar on the Sacred Mount, in a passage reminiscent of the patronizing observations of Florus, Ralegh made the following comment:

After this the Roman fierce spirits, having no object of valour abroad, reflected upon themselves at home, and the sixteenth year after the King's expulsion... they made an uproare... Like Florus, Ralegh was willing to pass off the uproar as largely a result of the fierce spirit of the early Romans, that same spirit which presumably conquered an empire when properly directed. Ralegh was careful, however, to bring in villains in the form of desperate bankrupts who served as the catalysts for this domestic disruption.

Following the settling of the secession and the wars which followed it, Ralegh is critical of Coriolanus for advising the Senate to set the corn price "at too high a rate" for the plebians. Of course, he is equally, if not more, critical of

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113 Ibid.
114 Ibid.
the tribunes for the harm they brought upon Rome by exiling Coriolanus.

In summary, Ralegh had a sense of *noblese oblige* toward the plebians. He would not countenance their disruption of the state in the form of secession. On the other hand, he felt free to criticize Coriolanus when he acted unwisely in advising the senate about the grain price. On the whole, he felt that the aristocracy were the proper determiners of the course of the nation, but that they should keep in mind the actual needs of the people.

**Summary of the Preconceptions about the Plebians' Cause**

*Held by Shakespeare's Audience*

The reactions of the six key historians to the plebians' cause lies within an aristocratic viewpoint, but within that viewpoint there are differences.

Valerius Maximus and Ludovic Lloyd have little but contempt for the plebians. Valerius Maximus notes that the man they were too proud to name as their leader became their most dreaded enemy before whom they cowered. Lloyd dismisses the plebians as insolent and quarrelsome. Plutarch's position is somewhat similar to that of Valerius Maximus except that he does mention the plight of the plebian soldiers oppressed by their patrician creditors. At the same time that he is portraying the plebians' cause in the worst light, however, he
is also condemning Coriolanus for needlessly offending the plebians.

Plutarch's concern that his aristocratic personages perfect their skills as political leaders is paralleled in the accounts of Livy, Florus, and Ralegh. In general, they take a paternalistic view toward the plebians. Livy maintains that the patricians should hold the balance of power, but they should recognize the legitimate needs of the people and always act to satisfy them. He would not countenance, however, any flouting of law and order in the state regardless of the seeming justification of the cause. Florus' views are similar to Livy's except that the passing of centuries has caused him to view the plebians' plight with condescension. He has sympathy for the good soldiers among the plebians, yet he is basically concerned with chronicling the actions of aristocrats. Ralegh views the plebians with less condescension. He regards the plebians as basically good and attributes the secession to the actions of some desperate bankrupts. Like Plutarch, he is also critical of Coriolanus and, to a certain extent, regards the politically unsophisticated plebians as the tools of their tribunes.

More than any of the historians, Shakespeare drew a sympathetic picture of the plebians' plight. After all, the plebians are caught between their own duplicit tribunes and a Coriolanus who is even more beastial toward the plebians than he appears to be in Plutarch's account. Of course, Shakespeare still maintains an aristocratic point of view; nevertheless, it
is not a paternalistic one. He shows the plebians faltering in battle and also in a state of panic at Coriolanus' advance upon Rome. He blames them for their vacillation toward Coriolanus. At the same time, he shows them as hungry people who seriously consider electing as consul the chief enemy of their class out of reverence for his service to the state. It should not be forgotten, also, that Menenius Agrippa always was heard with respect. Though Shakespeare does not come to a democratic point of view, his aristocratic point of view takes into account the needs of the plebians, their honest efforts to make the right decision regarding Coriolanus, and the quality of Coriolanus' leadership.
Cicero

Cicero does not mention Tullus Aufidius in his account of the Coriolanus legend in Brutus.

Livy

The Tullus Aufidius figure first appears in Livy's account upon Coriolanus' leaving Rome. Coriolanus' host was "Attius Tullius, at that time by far the foremost of the Volscian name and ever unfriendly to the Romans."¹ He was also a knowledgeable politician, for he knew that it would be no easy matter to induce the often-defeated Volscians to take up arms against the Romans again. Tullius and Coriolanus, therefore, plotted an incident to inflame the Volscians.

The Roman senate had decreed games of the greatest possible splendor. Tullius urged a great number of Volscians to attend the games and set out with them to Rome. Just before the games were to begin, however, Tullius went to the Roman consul, was granted a private audience, and warned the Romans that the

¹Livy, Livy, Loeb Classical Library, 1: 355.
city was in great potential danger with such a large number of young Volscian men in the city. He told them that he was leaving Rome right away lest he become implicated in any disturbance, and he immediately departed.

Livy takes great care to state that the senate regarded Tullius as a reliable source. Apparently he had a persuasive personality, as well as a distinguished reputation, which convinced people that he was a trustworthy person. Taking Tullius' word, therefore, the senate decreed that all of the Volscians in the city should depart before nightfall. The Volscians left the city in great anger, for they had simply intended to enjoy the games. Outside the city, they were met by Tullius who stopped all of the Volscian leaders to whip up their anger against the Romans. He orated about the ancient wrongs done to the Volscians by the Romans. These Volscian leaders carried his message to their cities, and soon all of the Volscians were demanding war.

The Volscians chose Attius Tullius and Coriolanus as their generals, but Livy notes that Coriolanus "inspired rather more hope than did his colleague."\(^2\) This hope does not so much cast a bad light on Attius Tullius, as it does affirm the Volscians' faith in Coriolanus, for Livy notes that "Rome's commanders were a greater source of strength to her than her armies were."\(^3\)

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 345.

\(^3\)Ibid.
Coriolanus took to the field with a Volscian army and conquered Circei, Satricum, Longula, Polusca, Corioli, Lavinum, Corbio, Vetelia, Trebium, Labici, and Pedum. At five miles distance from Rome, he made his camp and laid waste to the plebian farms in the countryside. The senate, thus, sued for peace, but Coriolanus' terms were too demanding. Only the speech of his mother and the embraces of his wife and children could cause him to withdraw from the walls of Rome.

Livy's account states that his authorities differ as to how Coriolanus met his death after he withdrew from Rome. Apparently many of them state that he "perished beneath the weight of resentment which this act his withdrawal caused."[^4] In any case, Livy does not indicate that Tullius had a hand in Coriolanus' death.

Attius Tullius appears for the last time, apparently shortly after Coriolanus' withdrawal, at the head of an army of Volscians and Aequians which was invading Roman territory. The Aequians, however, "would no longer put up with Attius Tullius for their general."[^5] The dispute over which group would chose the army's general led to a battle between the two peoples. Thus, the Romans were spared the necessity of meeting this army as the battle destroyed it. Attius Tullius does not appear again in Livy's account, although in the account of Dionysius

In summary, Livy’s account depicts Tullius Attius as a sly politician but as an inept general. When he had sole control over a situation, as he did over the Volscians attending the Roman games, he could manipulate people simply by employing deception. He was not a clever enough politician, however, to make the right decision in a relatively unstructured situation. We know that the Volscians had little confidence in him as a general. Still, they supported him when the Aequians would have overthrown him as their general. A man who cannot keep control over his army, even though it is in hostile territory and he has a large faction supporting him, is certainly a bad general and is probably not much of a practical politician either.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus

As in Livy, the Tullus Aufidius figure does not appear in The Roman Antiquities of Dionysius of Halicarnassus until Coriolanus has departed from Rome. At Antium, therefore, Coriolanus entered the following place:

... the house of an influential man named Tullus Attius, who by reason of his birth, his wealth and his military exploits had a high opinion of himself and generally led the whole nation. ...

Coriolanus threw himself upon Tullus’ mercy. Tullus responded

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to Coriolanus' plea with the greatest of courteous welcomes, praised his valor, and declared that receiving him was "no small honour." He also promised Coriolanus that he would make the Volscians his friends; Dionysius observed that Tullus kept all of his promises.

At a later meeting, the two generals resolved to war upon Rome. Dionysius depicts a headstrong Tullus advocating a quick march against Rome while the city was in a state of civil discord. The more prudent Coriolanus, on the other hand, said that the Volscians should avoid an open breaking of their sacred peace treaty with the Romans both to avoid the displeasure of the gods and of their fellow men. He proposed a plot to make the Romans appear to be violating the treaty.

The plot was basically the same plot as the one related in Livy's account, except that Dionysius goes one step further in showing Coriolanus' cleverness by making him the sole author of the plot. Tullus, who simply carried out Coriolanus' plan, went to Rome with the Volscians and had an informer go to the Roman consuls to warn of possible dangers from the Volscian visitors. By using an informer, Tullus was more protected from any possible charge of being responsible for the senate's decree than if he had carried the word to the consuls himself. He was careful to be the first Volscian out of the gates of Rome. He assembled the Volscians to whip up their rage and to order an

7Ibid., p. 7.
assembly from all of the Volscian cities. At this assembly, Tullus maneuvered the outraged representatives to vote unanimously for war against the Romans for their supposed transgression of the treaty.

The representatives asked Tullus for advice on waging the war. At this point, he brought forward Coriolanus as a man who knew both the weaknesses and strengths of the Romans. Coriolanus won their acceptance by a stirring oration which played upon the aristocratic perspective of his Volscian listeners. In this oration, he advised them to first send ambassadors to demand the Volscian land and property that had been seized by the Romans, though he knew full well that the Romans would not grant them. After their ambassadors returned with the anticipated rejection, another Volscian assembly declared war and appointed Tullus and Coriolanus as generals.

Immediately after the assembly, Tullus marched out with an army of volunteers to raid into the territory of the Latins, Rome's potential allies, while Coriolanus marched into Roman territory, which presumably was the tougher nut to crack. Both armies were successful. They returned to the Volscian cities loaded with booty.

The generals assembled their troops at a central location. Coriolanus suggested that they divide them into two armies: the best troops would march on the Romans while the others would defend the Volscian cities. He gave the choice of armies to Tullus. Tullus, "knowing the man's Coriolanus"
energy and good fortune in battle, yielded to him the command of the army that was to take the field."8 Dionysius is implying that though Tullus may have had a high opinion of himself, he still had sense enough to recognize the superior general.

Coriolanus was again successful. He captured Circeii, the city of the Tolerienses, Bola, Labici, Pedum, Corioli, Bovillae, and began the siege of Lavinium. Then, hearing of increased turmoil in Rome, he encamped only forty stades from the city.9 After the Roman envoys entered his camp, he listened to their warning, gave them thirty days to consider his conditions for peace, and broke camp. He then captured Longula, Satricum, Cetia, as well as the cities of the Poluscini, the Albietes, the Mugillani, and the Chorielani. He then returned to Rome and encamped only thirty stades from the city.10 Only the women of his family could cause him to break this camp. They eventually came to him, and he then broke camp and returned to the land of the Volscians.

The veterans of Coriolanus' campaign were pleased to return to their cities loaded down with the spoils of war, but the young men who had remained at home were both envious of the affluent veterans and disappointed in their hopes of seeing the

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This army apparently included a number of Aequians as well as Volscians. See pp. 75 and 183.


Romans humbled. It was Attius Tullius, out of his jealousy of Coriolanus, who whetted their anger to cause them to commit "an impious deed."\(^{11}\)

If Marcius succeeded and returned to the Volscians after destroying Rome, he [Tullus] would make away with him secretly and by guile, or if, failing in his attempt, he came back leaving the task unfinished, he would deliver him over to his faction as a traitor and have him put to death—a plan which he now proceeded to carry out.\(^{12}\)

Dionysius takes care to show Tullus as driven solely by jealousy. Tullus did not care whether Coriolanus was successful or not in taking Rome; he was determined to kill him so that no other man would stand higher than he among the Volscians. As the two lines of Aufidius¹ from Shakespeare's play reveal, however, Shakespeare's character took an active pleasure in destroying Coriolanus, his lifelong opponent.

> When, Caius, Rome is thine,  
> Thou art poorest of all; then shortly art thou mine.  
> IV. vii. 56-57.

As he was general of the Volscians' home defense forces, Tullus had the authority both to call an assembly and to summon a defendant to trial. He wanted to exercise this authority to summon Coriolanus to appear before an assembly at a single city "in which the greater part of the citizens had been corrupted by Tullus."\(^{13}\) Summoning Coriolanus to trial presented a problem, however, as Coriolanus was also a general among the

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\(^{11}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 171.}\)

\(^{12}\text{Ibid.}\)

\(^{13}\text{Ibid.}\)
Volscians and held equal prestige. Also, Coriolanus preferred to give his account of the war to an assembly with representatives from all of the Volscian cities and then answer any charges brought against him. Tullus opposed Coriolanus’ speaking before an assembly of the entire Volscian nation for two reasons. First, he feared the eloquence of Coriolanus in reciting his many "splendid actions," and, second, he feared that Coriolanus’ prestige as a general would sway the assembly. After a long delay in which both generals tried to win their way, Tullus forced the issue by proclaiming a day for Coriolanus to appear "for the purpose of laying down his office and standing trial for treason."15

On that day, Tullus spoke against Coriolanus and urged the people to use all of their force to depose him if he would not resign his command. When Coriolanus had ascended the tribunal to make his defense, Tullus’ faction prevented him from being heard by creating a loud disturbance. The most daring in Tullus’ clique surrounded him, crying, "Hit him," "Stone him," and stoned him to death.16

The murderers’ actions were regarded as lawless by those citizens who were present "at the tragedy," a term that a Greek author of Dionysius’ era would presumably not use lightly.17

14 Ibid., p. 173.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid., p. 175.
17 Ibid.
Though these citizens longed to bring the murderers to justice, apparently they were unable to do it. Dionysius makes it clear that none of the men involved in Coriolanus' death gained any distinction from it, especially in the minds of Coriolanus' former troops. While Dionysius did not write an explicit condemnation of Tullus Atticus, his account implies that his actions were both illegal and unethical. Dionysius' account of the magnificent hero's burial given Coriolanus and his long summary of Coriolanus' strengths and weaknesses indicate the passing of a great man, and, in contrast, the reader only remembers the jealousy of Tullus Attius.

The following year, Titus Siccius the new Roman consul, set out with an army to punish the Volscians. With the flower of the Roman army, he met the best troops of the Volscians, commanded by Tullus Attius, in the territory of Velitrae. Tullus had planned to follow Coriolanus' tactic of first harassing Rome's allies. It should also be noted that the Volscian foot soldiers had adopted all of the armaments of the Romans. Also, they had adopted Roman battle tactics learned under Coriolanus.

The battle was evenly fought for the greater part of the day, as the numbers of foot soldiers was approximately equal. At this point, Roman cavalrymen, proceeding on foot because of the rough terrain, attacked the right flank and rear of the Volscian army. The Volscian right wing collapsed, and the Volscian army retreated to within the walls of their camp.
The consul, Titus Siccius, literally cut his way through the main gate of the Volscian camp at the head of his onrushing troops:

_Here Tullus Attius encountered him with the sturdiest and most daring of the Volscians, and after performing many gallant deeds—for he was a very valiant warrior though not competent as a general—at last, overcome by weariness and the many wounds he had received, he fell dead._ (Italics mine)

For defeating this valiant warrior and incompetent general, the Roman people decreed a triumph for Titus Siccius.

In summary, it should be remembered that despite his relative objectivity, Dionysius is reluctant to speak ill of a nobleman without mentioning some good aspect of his character. This is the case with Tullus Attius.

Dionysius sketches Tullus Attius as a man from a wealthy noble house who had been a successful warrior and had earned a high position in the Volscian leadership. He knew what he was, and he had a good opinion of himself. He saw in Coriolanus a good tool to be put to use for the Volscian nation. In whipping up the angered Volscians, after they had been unjustly expelled from Rome, the reader sees that Tullus had some oratorical gifts, though he was reluctant to match his eloquence against Coriolanus' oratory before a group of his fellow Volscians.

On the other hand, the reader also sees that Tullus is a conniver, content to deceive his own people as long as it turns out to his own advantage, as one sees both in the plot

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18 _Ibid._, p. 201.
to foment war and in the plot to kill Coriolanus. He is not much of a general; indeed, he cannot even defend a fortified camp against the onslaught of a tired enemy army of almost the same number. Finally, though he is puffed up by his pride as a leader and warrior, one perceives him as a jealous little man, not content to fill the niche that he could have filled. In contrast to the lionlike majesty of Coriolanus, Tullus Aufidius appears to be a pit viper.

Valerius Maximus

There is no mention of the Tullus Aufidius figure in the account of the Coriolanus legend given by Valerius Maximus in his *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia*.

Plutarch

As in the previous accounts, Tullus Aufidius does not appear in Plutarch’s account until Coriolanus has been exiled from Rome. "Now in the city of Antium, there was one called Tullus Aufidius, who for his riches, as also for his nobility and valiantness was honoured among the Volscies as a King." The immediate allusions to Aufidius’ wealth, his noble family, his military success, and his foremost position among the Volscians are reminiscent of Dionysius’ description of his

Tullus Aufidius figure. Plutarch develops the tension between the meeting of the aristocratic military hero and his aristocratic military opponent by adding an element not found in any of the earlier, extant accounts:

Martius knewe very well, that Tullus dyd more malice and envie him, then he dyd all the Romaines besides: because that many times in battels where they met, they were ever at the encounter one against another, like lustie coragious youthes, striving in all emulation of honour, and had encountered many times together. In so muche, as besides the common quarrell betweene them, there was bred a marvelous private hate one against another. Yet . . . considering that Tullus Aufidius was a man of a great minde, and that he above all other of the Volsces, most desired revenge of the Romans . . . .

It was Plutarch, therefore, who inserted the idea expanded by Shakespeare of the pre-existing rivalry between the two warriors. Coriolanus' knowledge not only of the rivalry but also of Tullus' jealousy made Coriolanus' decision to enter Tullus' home in Antium the decision of a desperate, hate-driven man. Only such a man would dare to place his life in the hands of his greatest enemy. Shakespeare further heightened Plutarch's increasing of the tension between Coriolanus and Tullus by inventing a dramatized example of their rivalry, the duel on the battlefield which had taken place just after the taking of Corioli.

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20 See the Dionysius of Halicarnassus section in this chapter.

Though he was driven by a mad hate, Coriolanus was prudent enough to enter the city of his enemies in disguise. Plutarch compares this disguised passage of Coriolanus to a disguised foray made by Ulysses—a prudent, indeed even sly, warrior who also created a legend about himself. Coriolanus' majestic mien, however, impressed the servants of Tullus' house; Coriolanus was soon orating to Tullus about his passion for revenge upon the Romans. As in Dionysius, Tullus greeted his ideas most warmly. Soon, they were both trying, although unsuccessfully, to persuade the most prominent citizens of Antium to take advantage of the Romans while they were suffering from civil discord. Shortly after their unsuccessful attempt to persuade the citizens of Antium, however, the expulsion of the Volscian visitors from Rome provided them with the cause for war.

Unlike Dionysius, Plutarch does not say definitely that Coriolanus plotted the expulsion. Plutarch simply reports the expulsion, and then he indicates that "some thincke this was a crafte and deceipt of Martius, who sent one to Rome to the Consuls, to accuse the Volsces falsely..." Perhaps Plutarch did not wish to definitely associate Coriolanus with such an act of trickery, but he has no compunction about commenting upon Tullus' willingness to inflame the rage of the expelled Volscians.

\[22\] Ibid., p. 169.
\[23\] Ibid., p. 173.
The Volscians sent ambassadors to Rome demanding the return of Volscian lands seized by the Romans. In turn, the Romans threatened the Volscians. Upon reception of the Roman threat, Tullus called an assembly of all of the Volscian cities which issued a call for war. Tullus advised this assembly to accept Coriolanus, and it did, especially after Coriolanus made an eloquent oration. "Thus he was joyned in commission with Tullus as generall of the Volsces, having absolute authoritie betwene them to follow and pursue the warres."24

In a departure from Dionysius, Plutarch has Coriolanus alone lead out a troop of volunteers for a fast raid; Tullus does not lead out a troop on his own. The raid was limited to Roman territory and even further limited to the property of Roman plebians. Coriolanus brought back the Volscian troops heavily laden with loot and without the loss of a single man. It was no surprise after such success, therefore, that Tullus chose to give Coriolanus the command of the Volscian field army:

Tullus made him [Coriolanus] aunswer, he knewe by experience that Martius was no less valliant then him selfe, and howe he ever had better fortune, and good happe in all battella, then him selfe had. Therefore he thought it best for him to have the leading of those that should make the warres abroade: and him selfe would keepe home, to provide for the safety of the citties and of his countrie.25

Even more than in Dionysius' account, Plutarch's Tullus is aware of his limitations as a general, though he explains

24Ibid., p. 174.
25Ibid., p. 175.
them away by alluding to Coriolanus' "better fortune."

Coriolanus went off with the army to capture the city of the Circees and some Latin towns of the Tolerinians, the Vicanians, the Fedanians, and the Bolanians. At this point, many of the Volscians at home left Tullus' command and rushed to join the victorious Coriolanus, vowing to serve under "no other capitaine but him." This popularity must have exacerbated Tullus Aufidius, for the reader soon sees him become the chief critic of Coriolanus. The newly augmented army then besieged Lavinium, which contained many temples and images sacred to the Latins and the Romans. Hearing of the raging debate in Rome over how to deal with him—see Chapter IV—Coriolanus lifted his siege and marched on Rome, encamping within forty furlongs of the city.

After receiving the Roman envoys, Coriolanus gave the Romans thirty days to accede to his terms. His terms specified the return of all Volscian lands and cities as well as better treatment for Volscian visitors to Rome. He then departed from Rome.

Coriolanus' withdrawal from Rome sparked the first criticism of him by his Volscian allies:

This was the first matter wherewith the Volsces (that most envied Martius glorie and authoritie) dyd charge Martius with. Among these Tullus was chief; who

26 Ibid., p. 176.

27 Ibid.
though he had receyved no private injurie or displeasure of Martius, yet the common faults and imperfection of mans nature wrought in him, and it grieved him to see his owne reputation beamished, through Martius great fame and honour, and so him selfe to be less esteemed of the Volscos then he was before. 28

While Plutarch condenses Dionysius' account in most places, he has lengthened it here to give his readers an extensive look at the envy that grew in Tullus' heart. Plutarch goes on to say that other Volscian leaders grew to hate Coriolanus because he cast such a long shadow that he eclipsed them before the Volscians. Indeed, though not in response to the criticism of him which was not public knowledge but rather "secret mutterings," Coriolanus demonstrated his right to cast a long shadow by capturing seven cities during the thirty days' respite that he had granted to the Romans. 29

Neither Coriolanus' return to his camp before Rome nor his successful campaign during the thirty days' respite caused the Romans to agree to his terms. The Romans' state of panic, however, led the women of Coriolanus' family to approach the head of their household. Faced with his wife and children plus a long oration from his mother, Coriolanus resolved to spare Rome. He knew that his decision, however, would place him in danger: "Oh mother, sayed he Coriolanus, you have wonne a happy victorie for your countrie, but mortall and unhappy for your sonne: for I see my selfe vanquished by you alone." 30

28 Ibid., p. 178.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid., p. 186.
When Coriolanus withdrew from Rome, the criticism of him increased. The Volscians were not all of one mind nor were they all content. Some disliked Coriolanus for his decision; some were pleased. Unlike Dionysius, however, Plutarch indicates that not all of Coriolanus' troops were his enthusiastic supporters, although they all obeyed his command to leave "more for respect of his worthiness and valiance, then for fear of his authority." 

Now when Martius was returned again into the city of Antium from his voyage, Tullus that hated and could no longer abide him Coriolanus for the fear he had of his authority: sought divers means to make him out of the waye. Only Tullus Aufidius acted on the basis of fear and hate.

The struggle between Coriolanus and Tullus in Plutarch is largely a condensed version of Dionysius' account. Finally, although Coriolanus refused to hand over his commission, he willingly went to meet an assembly of the people of Antium, unlike the Coriolanus of Dionysius' account who only went after Tullus had applied pressure. Coriolanus met an unfriendly audience, for "certen oratours," presumably appointed by Tullus and his conspirators, had stirred up the common people against him. Despite the hostile noise coming from these "mutinous people," they quieted when Coriolanus appeared out of their

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31 Ibid.
32 Ibid., p. 188.
33 Ibid.
reverence for his "valliantnes." 34 And "the honestest men of the Antiates, and who most rejoiced in peace" greeted him in a rather friendly manner and indicated their impartiality. 35 This respectful reception threw Tullus into a panic. As in Dionysius, Tullus feared both the eloquent tongue of Coriolanus as well as the list of his victories won for the Volscians.

Also, Plutarch goes one step further than Dionysius in justifying Coriolanus' withdrawal from Rome:

Furthermore, the offence they layed to his charge, was a testimonie of the good will they ought him, for they would never have thought he had dome them wrong for that they tooke not the cittie of Rome, if they had not bene very neere taking of it, by meanes of his approache and conduction. 36

At some signal from Tullus, the conspirators cried out that Coriolanus should not be heard and that "they would not suffer a traytor to usurpe tyrannical power over the tribe of the Volsces." 37 They then fell upon him and killed him. Though the conspirators had done their best to defame Coriolanus, the murder only gave the Volscians a final opportunity to display their reverence for Coriolanus by giving him a large funeral and "the tombe of a worthie persone and great captaine." 38

34 Ibid.
36 Ibid., p. 189.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
the entire nation of the Volscians "hertely wished him alive againe" for a variety of reasons. 39

First, the Volscians had a falling out with the Aequians, as in Livy, "touching prebeminence and place." 40 This led to skirmishes and murders, although apparently nothing to the extent of the battle mentioned in Livy. Secondly, as in Dionysius, the Romans overcame the Volscians in battle. Tullus, presumably still the commander of the Volscians, was slain on the field along with the flower of the Volscian army. Finally, the Volscians were compelled to accept "most shamefull conditions of peace" when they yielded to the Romans. 41

In summary, even when he was driven by hatred for Rome to seek solace from his enemy, Coriolanus displayed a certain prudence in entering Antium in disguise. He never could have had his revenge upon Rome had he been spotted and killed before he spoke to Tullus. On the other hand, Tullus displayed very little prudence in handling his hatred for Coriolanus. Instead of laying a careful trap for Coriolanus by playing upon his arrogance as the Roman tribunes did and thereby condemning him out of his own mouth, Tullus chose to commit a political assassination that only served to heighten the reputation of the dead Coriolanus. Furthermore, he invited the attack of the

39Ibid.
40Ibid.
41Ibid., p. 190.
Romans by immediately killing the only military commander that they feared.

Tullus met his death on the battlefield at the head of his troops. Coriolanus died at the hands of assassins. Yet Plutarch does not mention the Volscians showing the same honor to the burial of one of their own generals who died defending his own country as they gave to the burial of a former enemy. Despite his cleverness, wealth, reputation, and noble family, Tullus Aufidius appears to be a very small, envious man in contrast to the great-hearted, though prideful, Coriolanus.

Florus

Florus did not mention Tullus Aufidius in his account of the Coriolanus legend.

Appian

There is a brief allusion to the Tullus Aufidius figure at the end of the account of Coriolanus in Appian's *Roman History*. It occurs after Coriolanus' final withdrawal from Rome:

So saying he [Coriolanus] led back the army, in order to give his reasons to the Volsci and to make peace between the two nations. There was some hope that he might be able to persuade the Volsci even to do this, but on account of the jealousy of their leader Attius he was put to death.42

In Appian's account, the Volscian leader has the same bad

reputation for jealousy that he had in the accounts of Dionysius and Plutarch, despite the fact that Livy, rather than either of these authors, is considered to be the source for Appian—see Chapter I. Livy does not mention the Volscian's jealousy.

Aside from his jealousy, Appian has commented upon Attius' political judgement. In killing Coriolanus, he killed the chance for peace between the two nations. The Volscians subsequently suffered from Attius' exercise of his jealous nature.

Polyaenus

Polyaenus does not mention the Tullus Aufidius figure in his *Stratagems of War*.

Dio

There is no mention of the Tullus Aufidius figure in *Dio's Roman History*.

Sextus Aurelius Victor

There is a brief reference to the Tullus Aufidius figure in the *De viris illustribus*, the work often ascribed to Sextus Aurelius Victor:

Therefore [commanded] by Decius, tribune of the people, on a given day he went over to the Volsci and under the leadership of Titus Tatius, stirred
them up against the Romans, and pitched camp four miles from the city.43

Apparently in this account, the Volscian leader, Titus Tatius, served as little more than the agent for Coriolanus. In this brief account, there is no allusion to his character. Someone, however, brought Coriolanus to reckoning for this departure from Rome. The conclusion of the Coriolanus account states that "since the war was terminated, the traitor was killed."44 Whether Coriolanus was regarded as a traitor to the Volscians or whether the author was referring to Coriolanus' status with the Romans is not clear from the context.

In any case, the Tullus Aufidius figure emerges from this account as a man who was not comparable to Coriolanus.

Eutropius

There is no reference to the Tullus Aufidius figure in Eutropius' Breviarium ab urbe condita.

Zonaras

The Tullus Aufidius figure appears in Zonaras' account as an enthusiastic backer of the exiled Coriolanus:

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43 Aurelius, Liber de Caesaribus ... et liber de viris illustribus, Teubner edition, p. 37. Translated by Firmatgen.

Ergo a tribuno plebis Decio die dicta ad Volscos concessit eosque duce Tito Tatio adversus Romanos concitavit et ad quartum ab urbe lapidem castra posuit.

44 Ibid.

... omissio bello ut proditor occisus.
The chief men there and the magistrates were delighted and again made ready for war. Attius Tullius was urging this course upon them all, but the multitude was lacking in enthusiasm. So when the leaders could prevail upon them neither by exhortation nor by intimidation to take up arms, they concocted the following scheme.45

Zonaras' account of the scheme to inflame the Volscians by the expulsion of the Volscian visitors from Rome seems to owe as much to Livy as it does to Dionysius or Plutarch, Zonaras' main sources for early Roman history—see Chapter I. For example, Zonaras, like Livy, has Tullius, "as a pretended friend of the Romans," go in person to the Roman praetors to warn them to keep watch on their Volscian visitors.46 Also, as in Livy, neither Coriolanus nor Tullius has sole responsibility for creating the scheme. But when Zonaras refers to the Volscian field army swelling after the accession of the Latins, he clearly is indebted to Plutarch—see the Plutarch section of this chapter.47

Zonaras does not refer to Attius Tullius again after he mentions that both Tullius and Coriolanus were made leaders of the Volscian army. As Zonaras refers to Coriolanus retiring peacefully among the Volscians, there was no opportunity for Tullius to display his character by plotting against Coriolanus.

45 Dio, Dio's Roman History, Loeb Classical Library, I: 141.
46 Ibid.
47 Ibid., p. 143.
In summary, therefore, Zonaras saw Attius Tullus as a Volscian leader with the desire to manipulate his own people and the ability to convince his enemies that he was telling them the truth when he was lying.

Tzetzes

Tzetzes does not comment upon the Tullus Aufidius figure in his version of the Coriolanus legend.

Higden

Ranulf Higden makes no reference to the Tullus Aufidius figure in his Polychronicon.

Lanquet

Thomas Lanquet briefly mentions the Tullus Aufidius figure in his chronicle, although he does not cite him by name.

Lanquet states that the Volscians received the exiled Coriolanus as their "capitayn" and declared war against the Romans. After taking many cities of the Latins, they besieged Rome and left only at the request of Coriolanus' mother and wife. Because Coriolanus "roised up his siege, . . . the kynge of the Volscians slye hym." There is no mention here that the "kynge of the Volscians" was jealous of Coriolanus. He simply slew him.

48Cooper, Coopers Chronicle [containing Lanquettes Chronicle], leaves 47-48.

49Ibid., leaf 48.
for raising his siege of Rome. The only inference that one can
draw from this reference is that Lanquet's Volscian leader was a
demanding and unforgiving ruler.

Lloyd

Ludovic Lloyd makes a brief reference to Tullus Aufidius
in *The Consent of Time*.

There is no mention of Tullus Aufidius in the beginning
of Lloyd's account of the Coriolanus legend. Coriolanus was the
only general of the Volscians. After a successful campaign into
Roman territory, he retreated out of compassion for his mother,
wife, and children. The retreat brought Tullus Aufidius to the
fore:

But the fickle mindes of the people by the conspiracie
of Tullus Aufidius were such, that Coriolanus was
murthered in the Citie of Antium, at his very returne
from that voyage.  

In Lloyd's aristocratic perspective, Tullus is linked to
the tribunes of the people and their aediles. All of these
demagogues manipulated the fickle people against a valiant,
aristocratic warrior. As Lloyd had nothing good to say about
any of them, one presumes that Tullus Aufidius, a murderer, was
regarded by Lloyd as being beneath contempt.

Ralegh

Walter Ralegh in his *History of the World* makes a

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regrettably brief reference to the Tullus Aufidius figure:

Coriolanus flying to the Volsci, whom lately before he had vanquished, incensed him [sic] to renew their forces againe, which being committed vnto him, and to Attius Tullius, he prevailed in field. As in those accounts that mention the joint command, Ralegh makes it clear that it was Coriolanus who won the victories in the field.

There is also a brief reference to Coriolanus meeting his death at the hands of the Volscians for neglecting the opportunity to seize Rome, although Ralegh also refers to other sources which say that Coriolanus died peacefully in his old age among the Voliscians. Ralegh does not indicate, however, that Attius Tullius was involved in the killing of Coriolanus. Also, there is the question of whether Coriolanus was executed or simply murdered:

Hereupon Coriolanus dismissing his Armie, was after put to death among the Volsci, as a Traitor, for neglecting such opportunitie: or (as others surmise) living with them vntill old age, he died naturally.

If Coriolanus was murdered, Tullius would certainly stand to benefit as the only other military leader of the Volsci.

In summary, Attius Tullius is an enigmatic figure in Ralegh's account who was certainly overshadowed by Coriolanus' reputation.

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52 Ibid.
Summary of Preconceptions about Tullus Aufidius

Held by Shakespeare's Audience

Of the six historians to be examined here, only four of them deal with the Tullus Aufidius figure—Livy, Plutarch, Lloyd, and Ralegh.

Livy portrays him as the foremost of the Volscian leaders, a sly politician but an inept general whose generalship inspired little confidence among his fellow Volscians. Livy does not indicate that he had a hand in Coriolanus' death nor does Ralegh, who only mentions that Tullus Aufidius held joint command of the Volscians with Coriolanus. Lloyd, in contrast, just relates that Tullus created a conspiracy to kill Coriolanus.

It is Plutarch who gives some depth to Tullus Aufidius, for he adds the element of rivalry between Coriolanus and Tullus Aufidius. He also comments on Tullus Aufidius' envy of Coriolanus. Shakespeare picked these elements of rivalry and envy and expanded upon them. He shows us a battle between the two soldiers at Corioli. He indicates Tullus Aufidius' determination to kill Coriolanus from his first entrance. Shakespeare emphasizes that Tullus Aufidius' hatred was more than a rivalry but was the insane jealousy of a lesser man for a greater one, a jealousy that is an element in Iago's relationship to Othello.

Some of Shakespeare's audience, therefore, anticipated Coriolanus' treacherous antagonist, and Shakespeare fulfilled their expectations with an antagonist to equal Coriolanus, his envy highlighting Coriolanus' virtues.
CHAPTER SIX

VOLUMNIA: THE ARISTOCRATIC MOTHER

Cicero

There is no mention of Coriolanus' mother in Cicero's 

Brutus. 

Livy

In Livy's account, Veturia, the mother of Coriolanus, does not appear until Coriolanus is encamped before the walls of Rome. As he had told the Romans that he would end the war only upon the return of Volscian land and had refused to negotiate further, the Romans were in desperate straits. As he would receive neither another Roman embassy nor a group of Roman priests, only the members of his family might reach him. At this point, the married women of Rome, presumably the patrician married women, gathered in large numbers at the house of Veturia, Coriolanus' mother, and Volumnia, his wife:¹

Whether this [gathering] was public policy or woman's fear I cannot find out; in any case they prevailed with them that both Veturia, an aged woman, and

¹Plutarch was the first of the sources examined in this dissertation to associate the name "Volumnia" with Coriolanus' mother rather than his wife.
Volumnia should take the two little sons of Marcius and go with them to the camp of the enemy, and that, since the swords of the men could not defend the City, the women should defend it with their prayers and tears.  

It is rather ironic that in the same sentence Livy refers to "woman's fear," a phrase which carries the connotation that the gathering could have been motivated solely by the tendency of Roman women to panic easily, and that he also suggests that the Roman men could not defend the city with their swords--see Chapter IV for a reference to the terror that the plebians felt. The fear which the patrician matrons may have felt would certainly not be just "woman's fear" but the same, genuine fear that most of the Romans, both men and women, felt.

When the gathering of women arrived at the Volscian camp, Coriolanus, "one whom neither the nation's majesty could move, as represented in its envoys, nor the awfulness of religion, as conveyed . . . by the persons of her priests," showed great strength in resisting the women's tears.  

He was not moved until one of his friends noticed Veturia's "conspicuous sadness . . . as she stood between her son's wife and his babies." Although Veturia is framed by Coriolanus' wife and babies, it is the mother's presence that Coriolanus' friend emphasized when he said, "'Unless my eyes deceive me,

2Livy, Livy, Loeb Classical Library, 1: 347.
3Ibid., p. 349.
4Ibid.
your mother is here and your wife and children."  \(^5\)

Coriolanus' reaction to his mother's presence is quite in contrast to the unruffled appearance that he had presented.

Livy states that he "started up like a madman from his seat, and running to meet his mother would have embraced her. . . ."  \(^6\) He would have embraced her, but his mother had another card to play in her game:

> Her entreaties turned to anger, and she said: "Suffer me to learn, before I accept your embrace, whether I have come to an enemy or a son; whether I am a captive or a mother in your camp."  \(^7\)

His mother chose to greet him as a stern Roman matron reproving an errant son, not as a weeping woman begging favors from a conqueror.

One can see the mother's Roman patriotism in the following rhetorical questions which she posed to her son:

> Is it this to which long life and an unhappy old age have brought me, that I should behold in you an exile and then an enemy? Could you bring yourself to ravage this country, which gave you birth and reared you? Did not your anger fall from you, no matter how hostile and threatening your spirit when you came, as you passed the boundary? Did it not come over you, when Rome lay before your eyes: "within those walls are my home and my gods, my mother, my wife, and my children?" So then had I not been a mother Rome would not now be beseiged! Had I no son I should have died a free woman, in a free land!  \(^8\)  (Italics mine)

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\(^5\) Ibid.
\(^6\) Ibid.
\(^7\) Ibid.
\(^8\) Ibid.
The reader should note that within the italicized litany of things which Coriolanus should have valued, the mother placed Coriolanus' home first. Presumably, the "home" here was not just a physical structure but was also a representation of Coriolanus' family name and reputation. The men of the house would bear the primary responsibility for preserving this reputation. Second to the home, his mother listed the gods, who had to receive their due for the family's well-being and reputation to flourish. And next to the gods, his mother listed herself followed by his wife and children.

Coriolanus' mother concluded her speech by alluding to the "untimely death or long enslavement" which she now faced and which would reflect disgrace upon her son. Her appeal centered upon the damage he had done both to his family's reputation and to his own honor because of his pride which had driven him into demanding revenge.

His mother's speech was followed by his wife and children embracing him plus the crying of the entire company of Roman matrons. Livy notes that the combination of the oration plus the actions of his family and the women of Rome "at last broke through his resolution." He promptly embraced his family and sent them back to the city. Then he withdrew his forces from before Rome. To preserve the fame which the women

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9Ibid., pp. 349 and 351.
10Ibid., p. 351.
of Rome earned, the Romans built a temple and dedicated it to Fortuna Muliebris, women's Fortune.

In summary, Livy places Coriolanus' mother, Veturia, at the center of Coriolanus' decision to give up the siege of Rome. Though his wife and children and the matrons of Rome had an effect upon Coriolanus, it was his mother who brought Coriolanus to the realization of just how far he had gone beyond the pale of behavior that existed for even the most aristocratic of military heroes. He had betrayed his own noble house. He had betrayed his gods. And he had betrayed the person who had inculcated in him those martial virtues which had served him so well in the past. This pattern of argument is repeated in greater or less detail in other sources.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus

The account of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, like the account of Livy, does not mention Coriolanus' mother until he is encamped before the walls of Rome. Dionysius goes into considerably more detail than Livy does, however, about the women's mission to Coriolanus and about the mother's plea to her errant son.

The account of Coriolanus' mother opens with the reaction of the matrons of Rome. Seeing the danger then at hand and, thus, abandoning the sense of propriety that kept them in the seclusion of their homes, they ran to the shrines of the
gods and prayed madly. The temple of Jupiter Capitolinus was overflowing with weeping women; this was a scene of mass hysteria:

Then it was that one of them, a matron distinguished in birth and rank, who was then in the vigour of life and quite capable of discreet judgment, Valeria by name... moved by some divine inspiration, took her stand upon the topmost step of the temple, and calling the rest of the women to her, first comforted and encouraged them, bidding them not to be alarmed by the danger that threatened. \(^{11}\) (Italics mine)

While Livy alludes to the possibility that the assembly of women at Coriolanus' house may have been due simply to the women's fear, Dionysius makes it clear that one wise woman, Valeria, knew what she was doing. Dionysius is the first author to mention Valeria. It is no wonder that Shakespeare chose to expand this character in his drama. Had he read Dionysius, perhaps he would have included this scene at the temple:

Valeria said: "Wearing this squalid and shabby garb, let us go to the house of Venturia, the mother of Marcius; and placing the children at her knees, let us entreat her with tears to have compassion both upon us, who have given her no cause for grief, and upon our country, now in the direst peril, and beg of her to go to the enemy's camp, taking along with her grandchildren and their mother and all of us... and becoming the supplicant of her son, to ask and implore him not to inflict any irreparable mischief on his country." \(^{12}\) (Italics mine)

The reader will observe that Valeria considered the possibility that Veturia might be holding a grudge against the Roman men for

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\(^{12}\) Ibid., p. 115.
exiling her son but not against her fellow women. Also, Valeria felt assured that an appeal to Veturia's love of Rome would not be spurned, despite the treatment that the Romans gave her son.

At the conclusion of her address to the Roman women in the temple, Valeria makes it doubly clear that she is counting mainly on Veturia to sway Coriolanus. "His heart is not so hard and invulnerable that he can hold out against a mother who grovels at her knees."\(^{13}\) As her advice was taken by all of the women in the temple, a band of matrons with their children were soon on their way to the house of Veturia.

It is Volumnia, Coriolanus' wife, who spots the approaching band and who voices a description of the plight of their whole family. "What is it you want, women, that so many of you have come to a household that is distressed and in humiliation?"\(^{14}\) Though Volumnia is the person who addressed the band of women, Valeria addresses her reply to Veturia, the mother of Coriolanus. She begs her to take Coriolanus' wife and children with them to the Volscian camp to plead for peace. Her conclusion sums up the substance of her plea: "It is a glorious venture, Veturia, to recover your son, to free your native land, to save your countrywomen, and to leave to posterity an imperishable reputation for virtue."\(^{15}\)

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\(^{13}\) Ibid.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., pp. 115 and 117.

\(^{15}\) Ibid., p. 119.
appeal to Veturia's maternal nature and her sense of family pride, an appeal to her patriotism, an appeal to her fellowship with the Roman matrons, and a final appeal to her place in history. It is part of such a carefully structured and rather lengthy oration, in fact, that it smacks of Dionysius the rhetorician rather than of Valeria, the clever matron, though this observation must remain speculative. At least, it appears odd that a woman who has just finished such a well-articulated plea should suddenly burst into a flood of tears, which is the way in which Dionysius ends Valeria's oration.16

Veturia responded to Valeria's appeal as well as to her tears by observing that ever since Coriolanus' banishment, her son "has hated his whole family together with his country."17 She then recounted her son's bitterness which he expressed at his home during his departure. He had told his family that he could no longer accept responsibility for their welfare. This revelation prompted her to proclaim her son's innocence and her hatred of his enemies in Rome. She begged the matrons to leave her and Volumnia alone "to lie abased as we have been cast down by Fortune."18

Neither Valeria nor the matrons, however, would permit her to rest in her sorrow. They begged her to go forth with

16 Ibid.
17 Ibid., p. 119.
18 Ibid., p. 125.
them. Finally, she agreed to take her family with them into the Volscian camp. At this point, the senate met to debate the advisability of sending a large number of potential hostages into the Volscian camp:

However, the proposal to allow the women to go prevailed, implying a great compliment to both parties—to the senate for its wisdom, in that it perceived best what was going to happen, without being disquieted at all by the danger, though it was so great, and to Marcius for his piety, inasmuch as it was not believed that he would, even though an enemy, do anything impious toward the weakest element of the state when he should have them in his power.19 (Italics mine)

The next day, the procession of Roman matrons and their children marched forth to the Volscian camp. Coriolanus was shocked at the thought of so many "free-born and virtuous women" walking into an enemy's camp.20 He resolved to go out of his camp with a few men "to meet his mother, after first ordering his lictors . . . when he should come near his mother, to lower their rods."21 This lowering of the rods was a custom observed by the Romans when inferior magistrates met their superiors. "So great was his reverence and concern to show his veneration for the tie of kinship."22

His mother advanced from the procession clad in mourning garments. Coriolanus embraced her and kissed her as

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19 Ibid., p. 127.
20 Ibid., p. 131.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
he was completely overcome by his emotions. He then greeted his wife but only terms of her treatment of his mother:

You have acted the part of a good wife, Volumnia, in living with my mother and not abandoning her in her solitude, and to me you have thereby done the dearest of all favours.23

His concern for his mother was paramount. He did not even inquire about his wife's welfare.

As Veturia indicated that she wanted to speak to him, Coriolanus led her to the general's tribunal, removed his special seat so that he would not occupy a higher position than her, and bade her speak. Veturia opened her speech by referring to the many kindnesses that his family had received from the Roman women during his exile. She then begged him to spare the city.

Coriolanus interrupted her at this point. He reminded her that he must keep his faith with the Volscians. He again demanded the return of all Volscian lands held by the Romans and, also, the same privileges for the Volscian citizens that the Latin citizens then enjoyed. He condemned the Romans for their arrogance. He concluded his impassioned outburst by requesting that she live with him among the Volscians.

Veturia responded that she did not ask him to become a traitor to the Volscians, but she wished him to negotiate a compromise agreement leading to peace which would please both Volscians and Romans. She reminded him that he had already given the Volscians great victories. Having made this point,
she began her reflections upon his exile, which was what she saw as his real bone of contention:

I have just one point left to speak of—a strong one if you judge of it by reason, but weak if you judge by passion. I refer to the unjust hatred you bear toward your country.24 (Italics mine)

His hatred was deemed unjust both because he was exiled by "only the baser element . . . which had followed evil leaders" and because "all who are high-minded . . . bear their misfortunes like men and with moderation, and remove to other cities . . . without causing harm to their fatherland."25 She then went on at great length to castigate her son for his anger which surpassed even that of the gods. Reminding him at great length of the obedience that he owed her as his mother, she cast herself to the ground and kissed his feet. At this point, even "the Volscians who were present at the assembly could not bear the unusual sight."26

Coriolanus picked up his mother. He embraced her and made this prophetic speech while shedding many tears:

Yours is the victory, mother, but a victory which will be happy for neither you nor me. For though you have saved your country, you have ruined me, your dutiful and affectionate son.27

He spent the rest of the day talking to his family, perhaps

24 Ibid., p. 145.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid., pp. 157 and 159.
27 Ibid., p. 159.
sensing his coming death at the hands of the Volscians.

The grateful Roman senate met on the day following the women's return to the city. The women requested the founding of a temple to Fortuna Muliebris. The senate granted their request and directed that the sacrifices should be performed at the public's expense. Valeria was chosen to begin the rites.

In summary, Dionysius portrayed Veturia, the mother of Coriolanus, as a strong, aristocratic woman. She could bare great sorrow uncomplainingly as she proved in her greeting to Valeria's embassy of Roman matrons. But she also had a sense of compassion for her peers; this empathy led her to go forth to the Volscian camp. In addressing her son, she was composed, rational, and learned in her speech. The learned aspect, at least, as well as the length of her speech betray the hand of the professional rhetorician, Dionysius. When her son interrupted her, she felt free to turn a barrage of emotion upon him, wrapping herself in the dignity of her motherhood and daring him to reject her. As an aristocrat, she displayed all the grace of her class. As a mother, she overwhelmed her errant son with the strength of her emotion.

Valerius Maximus

Valerius Maximus first referred to the mother of Coriolanus in reference to the Temple of Women's Fortune:

The Image also of the Women's Fortune, about four miles from the City upon the Latine Road, consecrated together with her Temple, at the same time that
Coriolanus was diverted from the destruction of the City by his Mothers tears, was heard, not once, but twice to speak these words: In due manner have you seen me, Matrons, and in due manner dedicated me.28 (The first set of italics are mine.)

The chief motivation for Coriolanus to spare the city in Valerius' view, therefore, was the tears of his mother. Though this temple, dedicated to the influence of women, was not the oldest in Rome, it does emphasize the role of Roman woman in producing the males who would one day conquer much of the known world. Valerius confirms this interpretation in his next reference to Coriolanus' mother.

In this reference, Valerius also alludes to the influence of Coriolanus' wife, Volumnia:

Let us take into our consideration Marcius Coriolanus, who invading his own Country, and having brought a very great army of the Volsci to the very Gates of the City, threatening [sic] the utter destruction of the Roman Empire; yet at the intercession of his Mother Vituria [sic], and his wife Volumnia, he was persuaded to give over his violent Enterprise. In memory whereof the Senate gave very great Priviledges to the Order of Matrons. For they order'd that men should give the upper hand to women in the street, as acknowledging the Women's Garment to have been a greater safety to their City than their Arms . . . and more than all this, they erected a Temple and an Altar to Women's Fortune. . . .29

Perhaps the Roman senate's actions were designed, to a certain extent, to humble the Roman men in punishment for their squabbling which made them an ineffective military force.

28 Valerius, Romae antiquae descriptio, trans. S. Speed, p. 42.

29 Ibid., p. 215.
In Valerius' last reference to Coriolanus' mother, in the chapter entitled "Of Piety toward Parents," he again emphasizes that the predominant influence upon Coriolanus' motivation was his mother's tears, though the presence of his wife is also noted:

The Senators were at their wits end, the People trembled. . . . But then Veturia, Coriolanus' Mother, taking along with her Volumnia his Wife and Children also, went to the Camp of the Volsci: Whom as soon as her Son espied, O my Countray, thou hast overcome my anger, said he, by virtue of this Woman's tears, and for the Wombs sake that bare me, I forgive thee, though my enemy; and immediately he withdrew his Army from the Roman Territories. And his Piety encountered and overcame all Obstacles, as well his revenge of the Injury received, the hopes of Victory, as the fear of Death upon his return. And thus the fight of one Parent changed a most severe War into a timely Peace.

In summary, therefore, Valerius Maximus saw Coriolanus primarily as a dutiful son and his mother as the savior of Rome. Though Valerius had no words in favor of Coriolanus' violent enterprise, he seized upon the event as an opportunity to extoll the virtues of obedience to one's parents and of parental control of one's offsprings rather than as an opportunity to praise an oppressed aristocrat or to condemn an arrogant military hero.

Plutarch

As is mentioned at greater length in the first chapter of this dissertation, Plutarch opens his account of Coriolanus

30 Ibid., p. 229.
by noting that he was raised by his widowed mother, Volumnia, a name previously associated with his wife. Plutarch praised her for raising a son who was honest and who excelled in martial virtue "above the common sorte." On the other hand, she had not overseen his education properly, for Coriolanus was "insolent" and "sterne" in his manner.

Coriolanus' martial virtue earned him a high place in the esteem of the Romans, yet he believed that this esteem was due more to his mother's training than to his own efforts:

But Martius thinking all due to his mother, that had bene also due to his father if he had lived: dyd not only content him selfe to rejoice and honour her, but at her desire tooke a wife also, by whom he had two children, and yet never left his mothers house therefore.

Those critics who employ Freudian analysis in their work could no doubt cite this passage to strengthen their contention that Coriolanus had a fixation upon his mother.

Later, after Coriolanus received his sentence of banishment, he enacted this scene with his mother and wife:

For when he was come home to his house againe, and had taken his leave of his mother and wife, finding them weeping, and shreeking out for sorrowe, and had also comforted and persuaded them to be content with his chaunce.

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32 Ibid.
33 Ibid., p. 147.
34 Ibid., p. 168.
Unlike other accounts, Plutarch's account shows in some detail the interaction between Coriolanus and the women of his family. In showing this interaction, Plutarch, to a small degree, ameliorates the impression of the arrogant, aristocratic, military hero that Coriolanus gives to the plebians and, on occasion, to his fellow aristocrats as well.

The women of Coriolanus' family next appear in Plutarch's account when Coriolanus is encamped outside of the walls of Rome. As Coriolanus had refused to accept the embassy of Roman priests, just as in Dionysius' account, the Roman women were gathered in the temples to pray for divine succor. Plutarch, unlike Dionysius, takes up many lines in delineating the divine inspiration that moved Valeria to lead the Roman matrons to the home of Volumnia.

At Volumnia's home, Valeria and the matrons found both Volumnia and Virgilia, Coriolanus' wife, who had her two children in her lap. Valeria pleaded with Volumnia to intercede with her son to spare Rome for two reasons. First, Volumnia could gain glory in Roman history. Secondly, the Romans had always given her good treatment despite the fact that her son's troops had looted the countryside and were besieging the city. In her answer, Volumnia refers in her sorrow to her awareness of "the losse of my sonne Martius former valiancie and glorie," which also serves as a reminder to the matrons that her son had accomplished much in Rome's service, yet her greatest grief
is "to see our poore countrie brought to suche extremitie."\textsuperscript{35}

We see in Volumnia the patriotic Roman matron triumphing over the proud aristocratic mother.

When the procession of Roman women entered the Roman camp, Corioliанus, upon seeing his wife, at first attempted to persist in his uncompromising attitude. When the whole family came into view, however, he was "overcomen in the ende with naturall affection."\textsuperscript{36} First, he kissed his mother and embraced her for a while. Only after greeting his mother did he greet his wife and children; Shakespeare departed from Plutarch in having Corioliанus embrace his wife first. Plutarch's priority in greeting might simply reflect a tradition of pre-Christian protocol in which the elder mother would take precedence in formal greetings over the younger wife. Taken in context with Plutarch's previous comments upon Corioliанus' devotion to his mother, however, it may reflect Corioliанus' priority of emotional commitment rather than any formal protocol. In any case, it is the mother, Volumnia, not the wife, Vergilia, who carries on the argument with Corioliанus. Volumnia's speech in North's translation so impressed Shakespeare that, as MacCallum observed, it is the longest passage in which Shakespeare closely follows the lead of his source.\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{35}Ibid., pp. 182-183.

\textsuperscript{36}Ibid., p. 183.

\textsuperscript{37}MacCallum, \textit{Shakespeare's Roman Plays}, p. 631.
In the first part of her speech, Volumnia alluded to the poor state of their bodies and clothing and to the "spiteful fortune" which makes her and her daughter-in-law view her son besieging the walls of his native city. She pointed out that his wife and children must choose between the head of their family or their city. She had already made her choice and would willingly die in the city if she could not persuade her son to cease his siege. Yet, at the same time, she knew he would not commit a dishonorable act upon the Volscians who had placed their trust in him. She begged him to find a compromise which would result in peace and ended her plea for a compromise with the following words:

Of which good, if so it came to passe, thy selfe is thonly authour, and so hast thou thonly honour. But if it faile, and fall out contrarie: thy selfe alone deservedly shall carie the shamefull reproche and burden of either partie. So, though the ende of warre be uncertaine, yet this notwithstanding is most certaine: that if it be thy chance to conquer, this benefit shalt thou reape of thy goodly conquest, to be chronicled the plague and destroyer of thy countrie. And if fortune also overthowe thee, then the world will saye, that through desire to revenge thy private injuries, thou hast for ever undone thy good friends, who dyd most lovingly and courteously receyve thee.

Coriolanus responded to this plea by listening intently, refraining from interrupting, and by a reflective silence. This silence prompted his mother to speak again. She castigated him severely for pursuing his private revenge and for not

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39 Ibid., p. 185.
acknowledging the sovereignty of his mother:

No man living is more bounde to shewe him selfe thankefull in all partes and respects, then thy selfe: who so unnaturally sheweth all ingratitude. Moreover (my sonne) thou hast sorely taken of thy countrie, exacting grievous payments apon them, in revenge of the injuries offered thee: besides, thou hast not hitherto shewed thy poore mother any curtesie. And therefore, it is not only honest, but due unto me, that without compulsion I should obtaine my so just and reasonable request of thee. But since by reason I cannot persuade thee to it, to what purpose doe I deferre my last hope?\textsuperscript{40} (Italics mine)

Having rhetorically rejected reason, though she has stated a very convincing argument for Coriolanus' seeking a compromise, Volumnia, Virgilia, and the children fell down upon their knees before Coriolanus.

Plutarch had indicated by Coriolanus' reflective silence that Coriolanus was moved by his mother's reasoned argument. A compromise would preserve his reputation as a noble warrior both among his contemporaries and in the eyes of future generations. When his mother struck him with a harsh emotional bast, however, followed by the sight of his entire family kneeling before him, Coriolanus gave in. He could not resist the combination of rational argument and emotional reproach. He approached his mother first:

Martius seeing that, could refraine no longer, but went straight and lifte her up, crying out: Oh mother, what have you done to me? And holding her hand by the right hande, oh, mother, sayed he, you have wonne a happy victorie for your countrie, but mortal and unhappy for your sonne: for I see my selfe vanquished by you alone.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{40}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{41}Ibid., p. 186.
After this prophecy of doom for himself, he spoke with his mother and wife for a time and then permitted them to return to Rome.

In gratitude to the women of Rome for saving the city, the senate offered to do anything that the women requested. Unlike the account of Valerius Maximus which cites a courtesy demanded by the women, Plutarch's women demanded only "a temple of Fortune of the women."^{42}

In summary, Plutarch has drawn the picture of a woman who created an aristocratic military hero but who initially failed in making her son aware of his responsibility to others. In her emotional argument, which Shakespeare used in V. iii. 154-168, she insisted that his magnanimity, must outweigh his private thirst for revenge; his honor must overcome his pride:

Doest thou thinke it good altogether to give place unto thy choller and desire of revenge, and thinkest thou it not honestie for thee to graunt thy mothers request, in so weighty a cause? doest thou take it honourable for a noble man, to remember the wronges and injuries done him. . . .^{43}

She had the greatest influence upon her son of all of his family and friends, an influence which he acknowledged. It was up to her, therefore, to finish the education of her son and make him aware that his honor was dependent upon service to the state. She accomplished it with both rational discourse and a whiplash of that same emotion that Coriolanus so often dealt out to the people around him. Concerned for his reputation, humbled by his

^{42} ibid.

^{43} ibid., p. 185.
mother's chastisement, and moved by her apparent helplessness, how could any dutiful son deny his mother's wish?

Florus

Philemon Holland's abridged version of Florus' work published in England in 1600 gives more detail on Rome's danger and Coriolanus' family than does the unabridged Loeb translation. The abridged version reads as follows:

Cn. Martius Coriolanus after he was banished became general of the Volscians, and with an armie of enemies approached the citty of Rome: unto whom, first Embassadors were of purpose sent, and afterwards the Priests and whole Cleargie persuaded with him, not to make warre against his native countrey, but all in vaine. Howbeit Veturia his mother, and Volumnia his wife entreated him and obtained, that hee should depart backe againe.44

This abridged version of Florus, probably supplemented with Holland's knowledge of Livy, informs the reader that both Coriolanus' wife, Volumnia, and mother, Veturia, were instrumental in his changing his mind. The unabridged Loeb translation, however, reveals a crucial weapon in Veturia's armory:

And he [Coriolanus] would have avenged his wrongs by force of arms with even greater severity, if his mother Veturia had not disarmed him by her tears when he was already advancing.45 (Italics mine)

The emotional pull of a mother in tears cannot be overlooked in its influence upon even the most severe of sons.


In Appian's work, a fragment reveals that Appian's Coriolanus intended to keep the same distance between himself and his family that Dionysius' Coriolanus attempted to maintain. "He said that he came to the Volsci having renounced country and kin, holding them of no account, and intending to side with the Volsci against his country." He could not maintain this distance, however, for, as in Dionysius' account, Valeria's procession of Roman matrons caused him to admire "the high courage of the city, where even the women-folk were inspired by it." He advanced to meet them, had his lictors pay his mother deference, embraced his mother, and brought her into the council of the Volscians to make her speech.

Veturia began by stating that both of them had been wronged by his exile, but she noted that the Romans had already paid a penalty at the hands of his victorious Volscian troops. She begged for mercy for herself and for his native city. As in Dionysius' account, Coriolanus replied that he had to keep faith with his new allies and invited her to join him among the Volscians. She interrupted him in a burst of anger:

"Two processions of women," said she, "have set forth from Rome in times of great distress, one in the time of King Tatius, the other in that of Caius Marcius.


Of these two Tatius, a stranger and downright enemy, had respect for the women and yielded to them. Marcius scorns so great a delegation of women, including his wife, and his mother besides. May no other mother, un­blessed in her son, ever be reduced to the necessity of throwing herself at his feet. But I submit even to this: I will prostrate myself before you."48

She then threw herself to the ground.

Again, as in Dionysius' account, Coriolanus burst into tears, caught hold of her, and made this prophecy. "Mother, you have gained the victory, but it is a victory by which you will undo your son."49 Attius saw that Coriolanus' prophecy was fulfilled.

In summary, Appian's Veturia parallels Dionysius' Veturia, though the reader is spared the flourishes of the professional rhetorician. Veturia is in control of the situation when facing her son both through her own composure and through the deference which she receives from her son. When the appropriate moment comes, she moves her son through her anger and by demonstrating her enforced helplessness.

Polyaenus

Polyaenus, in his *Stratagems of War*, differs very slightly from Dionysius and Appian in his brief account of Veturia's appeal:

At last he [Coriolanus] advanced against Rome, determined to storm the city. A procession of Roman matrons,

48 Ibid., pp. 49 and 51.
49 Ibid., p. 51.
with Veturia the mother of Coriolanus at their head, advanced to meet the exasperated foe; and to try the force of entreaties to win from his purpose. They prostrated themselves before him, and embraced his knees; Veturia thus concluded their supplications: "If however you are determined not to spare your country; first slay your mother, and this venerable band of Roman matrons." Coriolanus moved with compassion, dropped a tear, and retreated; affording an eminent instance of filial duty, but fatal to himself.50

Polyaenus differs from Dionysius and Appian in specifically stating that Veturia led the procession. His account thereby gives more emphasis to the mother of Coriolanus and to her determination. Also, all of the matrons prostrated themselves before Coriolanus rather than just his family. Presumably, however, it was Veturia alone who embraced his knees before she gave her speech.

Veturia asked Coriolanus personally to slay her if he was determined to attack Rome. Even Dionysius did not have Veturia stoop this low in bathos. In any case, Polyaeus stresses the emotional appeal of the mother at the expense of the rational argument. Regardless of her means, she moved her son to tears, to retreat, and to his death at the hands of his allies.

Dio

Dio's Roman history opens its account of Veturia, the mother of Coriolanus, and Volumnia, the wife of Coriolanus, at

50 Polyaeus, Stratagems of War, trans. R. Shepherd, p. 334.
the Volscian encampment before the walls of Rome. Dio has eliminated Valeria's function by indicating that Veturia and Volumnia gathered together on their own a company of the most distinguished matrons. Taking Coriolanus' children with them, they went to the Volscian camp. They were admitted at once. At this point, Veturia took over "while the rest wept in silence." 51

"Why are you surprised, my son? Why are you startled? Hence if even now you are angry, kill us first. Yield to me, my child, unless you would see me dead by my own hand. 52"

This threat of suicide is followed by even more dramatic actions. At the end of this speech, Veturia burst into tears. Tearing her clothing, she bared her breasts and touched her belly exclaiming, "See, my child, this brought you forth, these reared you up." 53 Though Dio does not have Veturia beg her son to kill her himself as Polyaenus does, he certainly sets up quite an exaggerated scene for a proper Roman matron. Perhaps the citizens of imperial Rome, who were Dio's readers, might not have regarded this display of the body in such a bad light as the rugged, relatively puritanical citizens of republican Rome would have. In Dionysius' account, Coriolanus was even a bit

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51 Dio, Dio's Roman History, Loeb Classical Library, 1:145.
52 Ibid., pp. 145 and 147.
53 Ibid., p. 147.
shocked at the lack of modesty shown by the matrons in merely displaying their faces to strangers.54

In any case, Coriolanus was moved by his mother's exhibition. Embracing and kissing her, he said that he yielded to her alone, but he would have no part of Rome personally. He made no prophecy about the Volscians' probable response to his retreat, possibly because Dio was not sure just how Coriolanus died—"either as the result of a plot or from old age."55

In summary, Dio's Veturia is probably the most energetic of the mothers yet seen in this study. She organized the embassy to her son. She confronted her son, threatened suicide, and made the most emotional appeal possible. Perhaps for the sake of decorum in an enemy camp, it was just as well that Coriolanus' father did not survive. Though Veturia's methods are purely emotional, her results are the same as in all the other accounts. One can not help but notice, however, a gradual deterioration in Veturia's rational argument as presented in Livy, Dionysius, and Plutarch.

Sextus Aurelius Victor

In the De viris illustribus, often ascribed to Sextus Aurelius Victor, there are references to both of the women in Coriolanus' family:

54Dionysius, Roman Antiquities, Loeb Classical Library, 5: 129.

Though he [Coriolanus] remained uninfluenced by the
delegations of fellow citizens, he was moved by [his]
mother, Veturia, and [his] spouse, Volumnia, accom-
panied by a number of matrons; [since] the war had
been terminated, the traitor was killed. There a
temple to Fortuna Muliebris was founded. 56

In this account, there is no indication that Veturia, Coriolanus'
mother, had more influence upon Coriolanus than his wife. The
term "traitor" in this context probably refers to the opinion
that the Volscians had toward him after his termination of the
war. As in other accounts, in any case, the Romans displayed
their gratitude to the women for their aid in ending the war.

Eutropius

In Eutropius' work, there is a brief mention of the
influence of the women in Coriolanus' family:

And regardinge nothing the Legates, which the Romaines
sent to him to entreate for peace, he determyned to
have invaded his owne country, had not his owne mother
Veturia, and his wife Volumnia came forth of the citye
to intreate him. Throughe whose request myxte with
tear, he was overcome, and so withdrew his armye. 57

As in the De viris illustribus, neither woman is shown as
having more influence over Coriolanus than the other. As in
other accounts, however, their request for peace is amplified

56 Aurelius, Liber de Caesaribus . . . et liber de viris
illustribus, Teubner edition, p. 57. Translated by Pirmantgen.

Cumque nullis civium legationibus fleteretur, a Veturia
matri et Volumnia uxore matronarum numero comitatis
motus omisso bello ut proditor occisus. Ibi templum
Fortunae muliebri constitutum est.

57 Eutropius, A Brief Chronicle, trans. Nicholas Haward,
Vol. 9.
by their tears. Again, the emotional element is given more weight than the rational. No mention is made of the consequences to Coriolanus of heeding their request.

Zonaras

Zonaras' account of Coriolanus' mother begins at the Volscian camp and closely parallels Dio's version of the confrontation between mother and son.

Volumnia, Coriolanus' wife, and Veturina, his mother, gathered together Coriolanus' children and a company of distinguished matrons for a march to the camp. While the others wept silently, Veturina asked for death if Coriolanus was still angry at the Romans. She made no rational arguments at all; she simply preyed upon his emotions. She culminated her diatribe against his anger by baring her breasts and touching her belly and alluding to what she had done for him in the past.

Coriolanus was overcome by emotion. "See, mother, I yield to you." He would not return to Rome, however, but instead settled down among the Volscians for a long life.

This portrayal of Coriolanus' mother under a new name, "Veturina," follows the pattern of lessening the mother's rational argument and emphasizing her emotional appeal. There is no question, as there is in the accounts of Eutropius and

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58 Dio, Dio's Roman History, Loeb Classical Library, 1: 149.
in the *De viris illustribus*, that Coriolanus' mother, rather than his wife, has control over the victorious general.

*Tzetzes*

The account of Tzetzes also parallels Dio's version of Coriolanus' meeting with the women of his family, but he goes one step further. Tzetzes noted that both Volumnia (sic?) and Volumnia "rent their tunics and stood about him [Coriolanus] naked and checked him . . . from battle against the Romans. . . ." 59 Tzetzes goes on to say that Coriolanus was persuaded by the prayers of his mother and of his wife; surely, however, the display of his wife and mother must have been an element in his decision as well. In any case, he was so disturbed that he left both his new allies and the Romans behind him and "hurried to another land, smitten with sorrow." 60

In summary, Tzetzes' portrayal of Coriolanus' mother completely avoids her stating any rational argument for his reaching peace with the Romans. Both she and her daughter use only an emotional appeal to move Coriolanus.

*Higden*

Ranulf Higden in his *Polychronicon* made only the briefest of references to Coriolanus' mother, and she is not


distinguished from her daughter-in-law in her influence upon
Coriolanus: "And [Coriolanus] ceased not too warre and greve
the Cyte/ till his mother and his wyfe came out of the Cyte and
prayed for the Cyte."

Higden makes no reference to any
physical display nor to an extensive rational argument. In this
account, apparently the simple request from the women of
Coriolanus' family to stop the war was sufficient. Higden does
not tell of the Volscians' response to the cessation of
hostilities.

Lanquet

Thomas Lanquet's Chronicle parallels Higden's account as
far as the mention of Coriolanus' wife and mother is concerned,
but Lanquet adds an element not found in Higden's account:
"Finally at the humble prayers of his mother and wyfe, he
reised up his siege, for whiche course, the kynge of the
Volscians slue him."

While Lanquet notes that it was the
simple requests of his mother and wife which moved Coriolanus to
action, Lanquet also mentions Coriolanus' subsequent death at
the hands of the leader of the Volscians.

61 Higden, Polychronycon, trans. John Trevisa, Fo. cii.
62 Cooper, Coopers Chronicle containing Lanquettes
Chronicle, leaf 48.
Lloyd

Ludovic Lloyd's *The Consent of Time* contains some detail on the confrontation between mother and son, in contrast to the two earlier British historians, though it also contains an error in Lloyd's reference to his source.

In a marginal note, Lloyd made an error in citing Livy as the source for the passage on the confrontation between mother and son. Livy used the names "Venturia" for Coriolanus' mother and "Volumnia" for his wife while Lloyd used "Volumnia" for Coriolanus' mother and "Virgillia" for his wife. As Lloyd's use of names corresponds to Plutarch's use of names and as both authors mention Valeria and Livy does not mention her at all, it would seem likely that Plutarch, rather than Livy was Lloyd's source for this passage—particularly since Lloyd cites Plutarch in other marginal notes.63

Lloyd's passage reads as follows:

He [Coriolanus] likewise denied the Augurers, the sacrificers, and the ministers of the goddes, vntill Volumnia his mother, and Virgillia his wife with their two young sonnes gotten by Coriolanus, with Valeria the sister of Publicola, and divers of the Ladies of Rome come to meete Coriolanus, to entreate for peace vnto the Volscans campe, and what time hee had compassion of his mother, of his wife, and of his two sonnes, and of the other Ladies being his neere kinswomen: then hee withdrew his armie from Rome, and veelded to the teares of his mother. . . .64 (Italics mine)


See Chapter I for references to Lloyd's sources.

64 Ibid.
Again, although Coriolanus' whole family, including distant relatives, was present in the Volscian camp, it was the tears of his mother which had the greatest effect upon Coriolanus. This maternal influence, unfortunately, was unable to protect him from the hands of Tullus Aufidius' conspirators in Antium.

Ralegh

Walter Ralegh opened his account of Coriolanus' mother and wife at the moment of confrontation:

He would not relent, by any supplications of Embassadours, until his Mother Veturia, and Volumnia his wife, with a pittifull tune of deprecation, showing themselves better Subjects to their Countrie, than friends to their sonne and husband, were more available to Rome, than was any force of armes.65 (Italics mine)

In Ralegh's account, neither wife nor mother predominates over the other in their influence upon the son. Their appeal was a purely emotional one; there is no mention of the mother giving a rational argument. The reference to their being better Roman patriots than friends to Coriolanus may be an allusion to one or more of the accounts that Ralegh had read. This account or accounts cited Coriolanus' murder among the Volscians for his supposed treachery to the Volscians—see Chapter V for more details. The reader will also note that this reference to Coriolanus' unfortunate demise reveals that Ralegh must have felt some sympathy for Coriolanus. Perhaps he was reflecting upon the possibility of his own execution.

Summary of Preconceptions about Coriolanus' Mother
Held by Shakespeare's Audience

Of the six historians chosen for these summary sections, all but Ralegh point to the mother as the chief reason for Coriolanus' raising the siege of Rome. Some of them mention the presence of Coriolanus' wife and others his children, but these other members of the family are a secondary influence upon Coriolanus. In fact, in the accounts of Valerius Maximus, Florus, and Ludovic Lloyd, the mere tears of Coriolanus' mother unaccompanied by a long address are sufficient to move the stern heart of her errant son. Ralegh, who mentions both Coriolanus' wife and mother and gives predominance to neither, also indicates that the women made an emotional appeal to Coriolanus.

Livy has Coriolanus' mother give an emotional appeal, but it is a more structured one than in the accounts of the previously mentioned historians. In her appeal, Coriolanus' mother alludes to his home, gods, and his family. Plutarch adds even more details to her plea. After her initial display of sorrow, Plutarch has her making a rational argument for her son to effect a compromise between the Romans and the Volscians, a compromise which will protect his reputation. After her rational argument fails, however, she engages in an emotional outburst which surpasses any that even her hot-tempered son had delivered.

If Shakespeare's audience had not read Plutarch, they would have been anticipating a warm-hearted matron who moves her
son through her sorrow. They would have been surprised to find a woman, who, though wide in her emotional range, is also a match for her son in strength of character. Shakespeare gives us a hint of the mother's determination in Act I, scene iii, an episode which he invented. In this scene, his audience saw the vivid dramatization of the stern mother who alone raised her warlike son. Though Plutarch was concerned with both praising the mother for raising a great soldier and criticizing her for not tempering his stern manner, Shakespeare is basically concerned with dramatizing the clash of wills and the final, tragically late completion of her son's education.
CHAPTER SEVEN

THE TRAGIC HERO AS TRAITOR

It should be illuminating to Shakespeare's concept of the tragic hero as traitor to compare and contrast it with the same concept in the earliest known play written about the Coriolanus legend, Alexandre Hardy's Coriolan. MacCallum claimed that Hardy's play was certainly written by 1607 and probably was written in the last years of the sixteenth century. Bullough claimed that it was written by 1600. The volume of Hardy's collected plays in which the play was published did not appear until 1625, however, though the copy of this volume in the Newberry Library bears the date "1607" inked in on the title page of Coriolan. Despite the nearness of the 1607 date to the date usually given for Shakespeare's play, 1608, both Bullough and MacCallum claimed that Shakespeare was not influenced by Hardy's play and that he probably was not familiar with it. As Hardy's

1 MacCallum, Shakespeare's Roman Plays, p. 475.
2 Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources, 5: 474.
3 Alexandre Hardy, Le Theatre d'Alexandre Hardy, Parisien (Paris: Chez Jacques Quesnd, 1625), 2: 103.
4 Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources, 5: 476.

MacCallum, Shakespeare's Roman Plays, pp. 476-477.

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play was written at about the same time as Shakespeare's play, however, it has an interest for us.

Shakespeare did not borrow from Hardy, though they both followed Plutarch rather closely. MacCallum's remark that "the scaffolding of the plays is very similar," however, may mislead the reader. For example, as MacCallum himself admitted, there are seven locations of action, or "mansions," in Hardy's play as opposed to a probable twenty-two in Shakespeare's play. Furthermore, Hardy's play is written in the Senecan manner of Jodell and Garnier and, therefore, relies heavily upon declamatory speech to move its audience rather than upon Shakespeare's dramatization of attitude and irony through eloquent speech and stage action.

The attitude of Shakespeare and Hardy in relation to their protagonists is different as will become evident.

Despite the differences between the plays of Shakespeare and Hardy, there are similarities between the two plays which should be examined. It is valuable to look at Hardy's play as a treatment of the same legend as Shakespeare's play written at about the same time, because Hardy shared the same aristocratic values as many of the members of the courts of Elizabeth I and James I of England. Furthermore, the play is worth examining

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5 MacCallum, Shakespeare's Roman Plays, pp. 476-477.

This figure of twenty-two different locations of action is MacCallum's. An examination of the Pelican Coriolanus edited by Harry Levin indicates a possible 15-17 different locations of action within a total of 29 scenes.

because of its author alone, perhaps the most important French
dramatist before Corneille.\textsuperscript{7} It is known that Corneille's first
contact with the theater was through Hardy, whose plays Corneille
saw in Rouen.\textsuperscript{8}

Perhaps as a result of the conventions of the French
stage of the period, Hardy, whose plays could have only a small
number of "mansions," began his play later in the life of
Coriolanus than Shakespeare did. Hardy's play does not open
until after Coriolanus is almost executed by the vengeful tribunes:
this opening indicates Hardy's intention to win the audience's
sympathy for the noble Coriolanus. Act I, scene i, opens with
Coriolanus giving an oration in which he addresses Jupiter almost
as an equal. It does not open as Shakespeare's play does with an
arrogant Coriolanus berating a crowd of hungry plebians:

\begin{quote}
What's the matter, you dissentious rogues,
That, rubbing the poor itch of your opinion,
Make yourselves scabs? (I. i. 159-161)
\end{quote}

In contrast, the substance of Coriolanus's oration is an
attack upon the plebians and a recitation of his victories over
Rome's enemies rather than an arrogant exercise in name-calling.
Coriolanus states that he won his victories rather to please his
mother than to pile up spoils of war. He then vows vengeance
upon the tribunes. At that moment, his mother enters. She begs
him to lower his pride, but only to a degree, in order to charm

\textsuperscript{7} "Hardy, Alexandre," \textit{The Oxford Companion to the Theatre},
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid.
the multitude. Coriolan responds by saying that he will do whatever he can, without endangering his honor, to quiet the mob. MacCallum noted that this scene between mother and son was not in Plutarch; both Shakespeare and Hardy spontaneously invented it.9

Hardy wastes no time in setting up the primary conflict between Coriolan's private pride and his public honor. Would Coriolan satiate his pride by seeking vengeance upon the Romans, or would he listen to his mother and retain his public honor?

Act I, scene ii, is a trial scene which focuses upon a confrontation between Coriolan and a tribune, Licinius, who condemns Coriolan to exile. Coriolan responds to Licinius and the plebians by labelling them "ingrates."10 And the audience of Hardy's play would agree with Coriolan's term for the plebians. The audience had just heard a long soliloquy from Coriolan which trumpeted his martial glory and aristocratic values. This sililoquy was bolstered by the comments of Coriolan's mother who, even when urging him to condescend to the common people, praised Coriolan's honor and sense of values. After all, the tribunes and their minions had attempted to execute the foremost hero of the state "without process of law."11

9 MacCallum, Shakespeare's Roman Plays, p. 478.

10 Hardy, Le Theatre d'Alexandre Hardy, 2: 122. Translated by Gregory Chapman, unpublished.

11 Ibid., p. 110.

À la morte condamne sans forme de procès,
As further evidence of Hardy's intention to sway the audience's sympathy in favor of Coriolanus, Licinius, the prosecutor, gives only a brief summary of the plebians' charges against Coriolanus. Coriolanus gives a longer and much more eloquent argument than Licinius. The Roman chorus of plebians even displays a disguised deference to Coriolanus in their condemnation of him when they call him a "rogue lion." Hardy's audience would certainly have agreed with the point of view expressed by the Roman senators:

Shall we basely endure a chaos of misrule?
A maddened people, envious, blinded,
To balance its fortunes against the foremost of the senate? 

It is a weakness in the balance of Hardy's play that he relies upon brief appearances of the senate at this point and at the point of Coriolanus's advance upon Rome rather than relying upon a Menenius figure, who for the entire play can be seen as the voice of moderation and reason. Without a Menenius figure, Hardy cannot create a spokesman to the plebians who can show an awareness both of the plebians' genuine human needs as well as their failings.

12 Ibid., p. 121.

Nostre rogue Lyon commence à s'abaisser,

13 Ibid.

Lâches souffrirons-nous un cahos déréglé?
Un peuple de fureur, enuiex, aveuglé,
Du premier du Senat balancer la fortune?
After Licinius finally pronounces the sentence of exile, the chorus of Roman plebians replies to Coriolan's "ingrates" by calling him a "prideful monster" with "brutally savage ways" in his dealings with people. This condemnation is followed in Act II, scene i, by Coriolan vowing to turn Rome into a sepulchre and to ruin all factions within it, plebians and senators alike, for the sins of commission and omission committed against him.

Like Shakespeare, Hardy built up the rivalry between Coriolan and the Volscian leader, Amfidie, from Plutarch's account. Hardy gives some added depth to this rivalry when he parallels the characterization of Coriolan and Amfidie. This parallel characterization is noticeable in Amfidie's soliloquy in Act II, scene ii. In this soliloquy, Amfidie, in a manner much like Coriolan's in the first scene of the preceding act, questions the gods as to why Rome has been so successful in its conquests. He notes all of his valiant efforts. He even begins to question whether the gods have any interest at all in the affairs of men or if, in fact, "fortune should be credited with ruling the world." Amfidie thus reveals his anger against the

14 Ibid., pp. 122-123.

Va, va, Monstre orgueilleux, cherche autre demeure,
Trouve un peuple couard que ta menace espeure,
Hé! quel peuple, sinon des obscures forests,
Conviendroit en tes moeurs brutallement sauvages?

15 Ibid., p. 131.

Que du monde regi fortune auroit la gloire,
apparent ingratitude which he had received from divine forces whom he had always respected and served. He begins to question his ability to have any effect upon the world around him. His question is answered in Act II, scene iii, when one of his pages brings Coriolan to him.

Coriolan begs to repay with blood the ingratitude of the Romans, the people whom he had always served so very well. Coriolan seeks this revenge "to remove the mad pride from the Romans" and threatens suicide if he is rebuffed. Amfidie is pleased to accept Coriolan and, in turn, castigates the Volscians for not showing more gratitude to him as their leader.

Both Coriolan and Amfidie, especially in this scene in the latter's case, reveal their essential similarity to Corneille's protagonists as Cecil V. Deane saw them:

In his Corneille's tragedies the incidents are disposed so as to bring out to the full the conflict between an overmastering will and the forces of Fate, but the interest centres on the dauntless endurance of the individual, and there is little attempt to envisage or suggest the universal moral problem inherent in the nature of Tragedy, nor do his chief characters submit to ordinary morality; each is a law unto himself by virtue of his particular kind of heroism.

Shakespeare's protagonist, in contrast, can be judged by ordinary morality as long as pragmatic considerations are made for his necessity to the state.

16 Ibid., p. 133.

A distraire l'orgueil forcé de des Romains;

In the middle of Act II, scene iii, Amfidio expresses his incredulity that the Roman senators would not have gone to any length to protect a fellow aristocrat. This view may represent the author's aristocratic values. In any case, both leaders regard the harsh treatment given to Coriolan as sufficient justification for their tricking the Romans into war.

Act III, scene i, opens with a chorus of Roman plebians bewailing both their banishment of Coriolan and the devastation of their fields by the Volscians. They note that Coriolan has become like a child in that he is deprived of counsel and the virtues of his ancestors. This reference to his childlikeness is another argument for interpreting the Coriolanus figure as a child-man dependent upon his mother. The senators respond to the plebians' complaint by comparing them to a madman who persisted in the error of his ways. They remind the plebians that they had warned them of the danger in arousing Coriolan's anger. Though the plebians would have picked a quarrel on the spot with the senators over Coriolan's orders to the Volscians to spare the fields of the senators, the senators reveal the political astuteness of their aristocratic class by vowing solidarity with the plebians in the face of the oncoming Volscians. The senators also reveal their prudence when they restrain the impulsive plebians from going forth immediately, sword in hand, to die noble deaths at the hands of Coriolan and his Volscians.
Act III, scene ii, opens with Coriolan stating his belief that he is an instrument of the gods' anger against the Romans. As he rambles on in his speech, he reveals an implicit comparison between himself and the gods. He proclaims his destiny is to punish the Romans' "haughty pride, seduced by too much liberty." He is resolved to humble this pride and to cover himself with martial glory. Despite the overwhelming sense of pride inherent in his speech, in Act III, scene ii, Coriolan feels free to say to the Roman ambassadors, "No passion carries my soul away." And by his strange emotional makeup, he is correct. He is not moved by an emotion such as hatred. He is moved by a pride that is at the core of his being; one cannot view him as simply being swept up by an emotion. Hegel commented upon this singularity in the tragic hero:

They act in accordance with a specific character, a specific pathos, for the simple reason that they are this character, this pathos. In such a case there is no lack of decision and no choice. The strength of great characters consists precisely in this that they do not choose, but are entirely and absolutely just that which they will and achieve. They are simply themselves, and never anything else, and their greatness consists in that fact. Weakness in action, in other words, wholly consists in the division of the personal self as such from its content, so that

18 Hardy, Le Theatre d'Alexandre Hardy, 2: 150.

D'instrument comme moy pour la rogue fierté Des Romains, abusans de trop de liberté.

19 Ibid., p. 153.

Aucune passion mon ame ne transporte,
character, volition and final purpose do not appear as absolutely one unified growth. . . . 20

This unity is paramount in Hardy's tragic hero. In contrast, Shakespeare's tragic hero is at times overcome by his hot temper, shows greater warmth for his mother, and displays more unselfishness in his decision to spare Rome. Yet Coriolanus, as well as Coriolan, also possesses this unity of pride, though he is a much more complex character.

Act IV, scene i, opens with Valeria rallying the Roman matrons. In the next scene, Amfidid speaks at length about his envy for Coriolan. Amfidid sees that he will have a chance to revenge himself upon Coriolan, for Coriolan had granted a thirty days' truce to the Romans which Amfidid plans to turn to his benefit. Referring to Coriolan, he thunders that, "The faith of a traitor is meaningless." 21 Amfidid's sudden decision at this point to turn against Coriolan stands in contrast to the consistency of Shakespeare's Aufidius who reveals his envy upon his first entrance:

for where
I thought to crush him in an equal force,
True sword to sword, I'll potch at him some way;
Or wrath or craft may get him. (I. x. 13-16)


21 Hardy, Le Theatre d'Alexandre Hardy, 2: 159.
La foy d'un traitre est nulle.
In the following scene, Volumnia appears and is quite conscious of the danger that threatens Rome. Though she proclaims her devotion to her native city, she makes this comment about her son and about her ability to persuade him in a despairing tone:

O, his mother, will move a magnanimous hero,
Who has always made more of his noble country,
Preferred his glory to the love of his relatives. . . .

Valeria responds to Volumnia's doubts by saying that maternal power surpasses all other power. She recalls that Coriolan was always a model of piety toward his mother, yet Volumnia still has her doubts. She questions whether she, who is simply Coriolan's mother, can influence Coriolan where the Roman ambassadors, who represent the glory of Rome, have failed; in this respect, she is much different from Shakespeare's Volumnia. Hardy's Volumnia sees Coriolan's motivation for action as being determined by his desire to enhance and preserve his martial glory. Volumnia, continuing to compare her son to the gods, finally agrees to try to persuade her son to spare the city; She says that she and her daughter-in-law will try to "appease the moody bitterness of this Mars."23

22 Ibid., p. 161.

Flechiroy-ie (sa mere) un Hero magnanime,
Qui toujours a plus faite de son pais estime,
A preferé sa gloire a l'amour des parens,

23 Ibid., p. 164.

Appraiser de ce Mars la rancure funeste,
Act IV, scene iv, is a scene invented by Hardy in which Coriolan addresses the council of the Volscians in the camp before Rome. In this address, Coriolan advises the Volscians not to press for immediate battle with the Romans, because of the greater number of Romans, but to settle down for a long siege. He is confident that the Romans will deteriorate under the psychological pressure of a siege. Presumably the audience would agree with his prediction about the deterioration of the Romans, for in Act III, scene i, the audience saw that the Roman plebians, who formed the bulk of the soldiery, were already on the verge of panic.

Coriolan's prediction was prevented from its presumed fulfillment by the sudden appearance in the Volscian camp of the procession of Roman women with his mother and his wife at the forefront. At first, Coriolan resolved to keep his distance, but, at the sight of their tears, his resolution melted so quickly that one wonders if it isn't out of character. As in Plutarch, who more than Hardy is the cause for this quick change in character, it is the sight of Coriolan's mother in tears that moves Coriolan, though he does acknowledge his wife's presence:

I see them in tears, oh chaste wife!
Provoke me no more to pity with your tears,
Be comforted with hope, and you too, mother,
You from whom I received the light of life,
You whom above all I honor, to whom I owe everything,
Tell me, what brings you here?24

24 Ibid., pp. 167-168.
Je les voi larmoyant, 0 pudique moitié!
Ne me prouvoque plus par tes pleurs à pitié,
Volumnia answers him at great length about what brought her there. She says that she would temper his anger with reason. She condemns the ignorant Roman public who exiled him. In yet another allusion to Coriolanus's desire to acquire glory, she claims that he can gain glory not only on the battlefield but also by settling a peace upon the warring nations. She reminds him again that he owes her the gift of life. She begs him not to yield to his private anger. Instead, she urges that both of them should put their lives on the line to bring peace to these stern nations.25

This long oration reveals a difference in the way that Hardy and Shakespeare use their common source, Plutarch. Hardy's Volumnia shows none of the anger found in Plutarch's description.25

Conforte toy d'espoir, & vous aussi ma mere,
Vous de qui l'ay receu la vitale lumiere,
Qui vous amene icy maintenant, dites moy?

Oh my son, oh my son, for mercy's sake consider
That we must not always yield to anger,
Only think what I have done for you: come, let us kiss
And if we are rebuked, let us die at their feet,
Let their implacable sternness kill us both,
Let all of their vengeance be taken out upon us.

Hé! mon fils. Ah! non fils de grace considere,
Qu'il ne faut pas toujous ceder a sa colere,
Ce que i'ay fait pour toy: Venez & l'embrassons,
Et s'il nous e conduit, a ses pieds trespassons,
Que sa rigeur ensemble implacable nous tue,
Que sur nous sa vengeance entiere s'effectue.
She is deferential to her son. She does not lack courage, though, for at one point she indicates that his Volscians will have to march over her corpse if they enter Rome. As further proof of her courage, she senses, to an extent, the mortal danger which both she and her son face in attempting to bring peace to these fierce combatants, yet she urges him to take the chance. This sense of danger does not cause her to lose control of herself, however, for through her speech she maintains a consistent tone of calm reasonableness and sweet emotional persuasion.

Shakespeare's Volumnia, in contrast to Hardy's, shows tragic grandeur as well as calm reasonableness. Shakespeare amplifies the heroic irony found in Plutarch. Shakespeare's Volumnia does not beg her son to risk his life in an attempt to bring peace; tragically, she mistakenly assumes that he can save his own life while saving Rome. By her speech and action, she defies him to spurn her and conquer Rome:

Come, let us go,
This fellow had a Volscian to his mother;
His wife is in Corioles, and this child
Like him by chance. Yet give us our dispatch.
I am hushed until our city be afire,
And then I'll speak a little. (V. iii. 177-182)

After the address of Shakespeare's Volumnia, Coriolanus becomes aware that his honor is dependent upon his service to mother, wife, child, and his native city. It is not an isolated quality which he can possess as he does his martial prowess. His honor is dependent upon the recognition of his countrymen; only his pride may be borne alone.
In contrast to Shakespeare's Coriolanus, Hardy's Coriolan responds to his mother's gentle and genteel pleas, a plea lacking the heroic tone of Shakespeare's, by indicating that he has simply been moved by an emotional appeal against his better judgment:

Ah, mother, what you have done to save your country,
My life, my honor, you cruelly betray,
For them you have won a happy victory,
But fatal for your own defeated blood, and deadly.  
(Italics mine)

Coriolan's giving in to an emotional appeal at the expense of his honor makes him a weaker character than Shakespeare's Coriolanus, for Coriolan chooses his mother's tears instead of, as in Shakespeare's play, a new realization of his sense of honor. Coriolan does not see that his honor is in some way dependent upon his service to the state; Shakespeare's Coriolanus comes to realize this dependency. Coriolan's sense of honor is his private pride, his particular arrogance. He is setting aside this pride for the sake of Volumnia, but he has learned nothing from this experience. And Hardy's Volumnia lacks the shaping of Shakespeare's irony and the force of his characterization, for

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26 Ibid., p. 170.

Ah! Mere, Qu'as-tu fait pour sauver ton paix,
Ma vie & mon honneur, cruelle tu trahis,
Pour luy tu as vaincu une victoire heureuse,
Mais à ton sang dompté fatale, & funereuse.

she is willing for her son to accept death at the hands of the Volscians if it might bring peace to Rome.

Act V, scene i, opens with Coriolan speaking of his unsettled soul, of phantoms, of the aroused Volscians, and of a dream of dying. He prepares to meet the council of the Volscians with courage, despite his fears, as "immortal renown is to be gained." In the next scene, before the council Amfidie labels Coriolan a traitor, who is only awaiting the repeal of his exile, and also calls him saint-hearted. Amfidie then orders Coriolan to defend himself. Coriolan says he has nothing to fear, whereupon Amfidie calls him a traitor again for raising the siege of Rome without consulting the Volscians.

At this point in Shakespeare's trial scene, Shakespeare's Coriolanus is roaring out this line:

Measureless liar, thou hast made my heart
Too great for what contains it. (Italics mine)
(V. vi. 101-102)

Coriolanus directs at Aufidius the rage which he had shown before to the Roman plebians. But what is the response of Hardy's Coriolan?

Kindly hear my statement with patience;
For certainty it will not be found
That I have shown any contempt or disloyalty
In any way reprehensible towards the community. 29

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28 Hardy, Le Théâtre d'Alexandre Hardy, 3: 175.

Rasserene, couard, oree tes sens troublez,
Va trouver resolu ton salut, ou ta perte,
Certes toujours d'un los immortel recouuerte.

29 Ibid., p. 179.
Hardy is concerned with creating an aristocratic ideal, a man who can display grace under pressure. Shakespeare is concerned with creating a Coriolanus at this point in his play who is a logical consequence of the arrogant Coriolanus he has depicted all along.

Coriolanus meets his death before the council of the Volscians. He does not meet it roaring in anger as Shakespeare’s Coriolanus does, however, but rather with rational arguments of defense and a call to his friends to help him:

Help me, friends, help, I am to be killed.30

Contrast this call for aid to the call of Shakespeare’s protagonist before the lords of the Volscians:

Cut me to pieces, Volsces. Men and lads, Stain all your edges on me. Boy? False hound! If you have writ your annals true, ’tis there That, like an eagle in a dovecote, I Fluttered your Volscians in Corioles. 

Alone I did it. (Italics mine) (V. vi. 110-115)

Shakespeare’s protagonist, the man who had entered Corioles alone, never called for aid to defend himself. Also, unlike Hardy’s protagonist, Shakespeare’s Coriolanus did not have the false confidence based upon aristocratic self-esteem that is shown by Hardy’s protagonist. Perhaps, though his statement can

Vous plaise mes raisons ouir en patience; Il ne se trouvera de certaine science; Que j’aye rien mepris, que de déloyauté Reprochable ie sois vers la Communauté.


Au secours mes amis, a l’aide, on m’homicide.
be attributed to his anger, Shakespeare's Coriolanus again became aware that, in some sense, he was inalienably dependent upon the Romans and that many of the Volscians were still his enemies. After all, Shakespeare's protagonist, in contrast to Shakespeare's Aufidius, was no skilled politician able to build a following among the Volscians but rather an aristocratic military hero who made his evaluations of people and situations with his pride rather than with his reason. This emphasis upon pride is an example in Coriolanus of the unity which Hegel found in the tragic hero.

In Act V, scene iii, Volumnia learns of the murder of her son through a messenger. In his long explanation, the messenger reports that the chief persons of the council of the Volscians favored Coriolan. As with the Roman senators, who favored Coriolan but were too prudent to carry their favor to the point of risking the very existence of the republic, the aristocrats of the Volscians recognized and would have protected a fellow aristocrat. Hardy could not avoid implying through this messenger that the members of the aristocracy ought to retain their solidarity.

Hardy's Volumnia states that her country owes her much. In turn, she owes her son her life. To repay this debt and to join her son in the netherworld, she stabs herself. In committing suicide under these circumstances, presumably she received the approval of Hardy's audience. Cecil V. Beane observed that the more one of the characters in a heroic French
drama sacrifices his or her love to honor, in this case specifically a sacrifice of one's love for the honor of one's country, the more the additional heroism acquired deserves affection. Furthermore, Deane noted that these sacrifices often result in the suicide of the person who makes it.  

A summary of the contrasts between Hardy's play and Shakespeare's play reveals the difference between the creation of an aristocratic ideal and the creation of an aristocratic hero who, though naturally superior, is vain, arrogant, and fails to see both the plebians' point of view and his own duty to Rome. Though both plays climax in the portrayal of protagonists who make magnanimous choices, Shakespeare's play moves the audience to the greater catharsis. This greater catharsis is accomplished through the greater humanity and arrogance of Shakespeare's protagonist.

Coriolan and other protagonists of French classical drama exemplify a heroic ideal. There is little in the character of Hardy's ideal aristocrat that the members of the audience must fear in themselves. The arrogance, vanity, and blindness of Shakespeare's Coriolanus, on the other hand, make him more terrible to his audience. Yet he remains a hero driven to excess, and, hence, arouses more pity and fear.

In further examining Shakespeare's tragic hero as traitor and in exploring his presumed reception by the audience of

31 Deane, Dramatic Theory, p. 31.
Shakespeare's era, the reader should consider Shakespeare's source and two other works which may reflect contemporary attitudes toward Coriolanus. Plutarch's Lives gave Shakespeare his basic plot and was readily available to the Englishmen of Shakespeare's era in North's excellent translation. Ludovic Lloyd's Consent of Time reveals the opinion of a relatively sedate member of the Elizabethan court upon a fellow aristocrat. Walter Ralegh's comments in his History of the World upon the troubled career of Coriolanus are invaluable, for Ralegh combined in his person both the qualities of the educated historian and the aristocratic adventurer.

Plutarch begins his treatment of Coriolanus after his exile with an explicit condemnation of his desire for revenge:

In the ende, seeing he [Coriolanus] could resolve no waye, to take a profitable or honorable course, but only was pricked forward still to be revenged of the Romaines: he thought to raise up some great warres against them, by their neerest neighbours.

Shakespeare gains more power in his condemnation of Coriolanus by treating his actions subsequent to the exile almost objectively, by reserving an explicit judgment upon the actions of the tragic hero until almost the end of the play, and by having only the tragic hero's mother deliver the condemnation of her son.

When Coriolanus enters the house of Aufidius, Plutarch notes that the servants of the house were impressed by the

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majesty of the muffled figure and received him in silent awe. Shakespeare's disguised and shabbily dressed Coriolanus, however, is greeted by the servants with coarse comments and an invitation to leave. As always, Shakespeare is conscious of the more likely response of servants to any incident that is not provided for in the established protocol.

Bullough seems to have misread Shakespeare on this detail. He goes so far as to say that Shakespeare's Coriolanus was "'beaten like a dog' before Aufidius comes and he can reveal himself." Quite the opposite was true, however, for Coriolanus, always the gruff soldier, manhandled the mocking servants. They didn't have a chance to beat him. Had Bullough cited the complete line from Shakespeare's play, he would have realized that the second servingman uses the conditional tense to indicate that he had not beaten Coriolanus:

Here, sir, I'd have beaten him like a dog, but for disturbing the lords within. (IV. v. 51-52)

( Italics mine)

The contrast between the treatment of Coriolanus in Plutarch and his treatment in Shakespeare's play reveals Shakespeare's determination to give another example of Coriolanus' harshness toward the lower class, his personal courage, and his isolation among his enemies. This isolation is the perspective from which Shakespeare images Coriolanus in all of his relations.34

33 Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources, 5: 488.
34 Brower, Hero and Saint, pp. 366-371, in particular, and elsewhere in his chapter "The Deeds of Coriolanus."
Coriolanus recites his complaints against the plebians and the patricians of Rome. As Bullough noted, this inclusion of the patricians is somewhat surprising. It was Dionysius of Halicarnassus rather than Plutarch who made much clearer the divided opinions in the senate on Coriolanus' case and the likelihood that Coriolanus would have been surrendered to the plebians had he not agreed to stand trial. 35

Shakespeare expanded the warm reply given by Aufidius to Coriolanus. Perhaps Shakespeare intended to show the diplomatic speech of Aufidius in contrast to the blunt speech of Coriolanus. Note the opening of Coriolanus' address to Aufidius which is hardly a model of persuasive oratory:

My name is Caius Marcius, who hath done To thee particularly and to all the Volsces Great hurt and mischief: thereto witness may My surname, Coriolanus. (IV. v. 66-69)

Contrast Coriolanus' blunt opening comment to the flowery introductory remark by Shakespeare's Aufidius with its metaphor and divine allusion:

O Marcius, Marcius!
Each word thou hast spoke hath weeded from my heart
A root of ancient envy. If Jupiter
Should from yond cloud speak divine things,
And say 'Tis true,' I'd not believe them more
Than thee, all-noble Marcius. (IV. v. 102-107)

Dissimilar though these characters may be in speech, Shakespeare shows their similarity in intent by cutting extraneous material and immediately having them make a plan for war.

35 Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources, 5: 489.
Shakespeare avoided Plutarch's complex description of the plot to engage the Romans in war, Coriolanus' elevation to military leadership among the Volscians, and the string of Coriolanus' victories—see Chapter V for details. What was taken from these events was narrated by the tribunes and citizens of Rome along with Menenius and Cominius in IV. vi, or was given through a conversation between Aufidius and his lieutenant in IV. vii. Shakespeare was more concerned with getting to the heart of the drama—Coriolanus' confrontations with Aufidius, Menenius, and Volumnia. Coriolanus next appears, therefore, at the confrontation with Menenius in the Volscian camp.

The reception of Menenius in the Volscian camp is a complete invention by Shakespeare as Plutarch's Menenius had died previously—see Chapter II. Shakespeare used this scene, V. ii, for at least three reasons. First, it gave Shakespeare's Coriolanus the opportunity to show that he could not be moved by a simple plea for mercy even from the one man that Coriolanus might have considered a wise friend. It would take ties of blood and a new awareness on Coriolanus' part of his conception of honor to move him. Secondly, although Menenius does not give a rational argument to Coriolanus in the Volscian camp, throughout the rest of the play he had appeared as the voice of reason and moderation. In refusing to let Menenius speak at any length, Coriolanus shut his ears to wise counsel with tragic results. Thirdly, it dramatizes Coriolanus' refusal to compromise and, thus, builds up suspense for the following scene with
his wife and his mother.

Bullough commented on the following scene, V. iii, by saying that Shakespeare chose to cut what could have been a fine scene, Valeria rallying the Roman matrons, to increase the force of the scene of confrontation between Coriolanus and his mother. As related in Chapter VI, there is quite an elaborate ritual involved in Plutarch's description of Coriolanus meeting his family. Shakespeare cuts almost all of this ritual as extraneous detail and simply has Coriolanus recognize his family and then kneel before his mother.

Volumnia's long appeal, following North's translation of Plutarch closely, develops the ideas of "nature" and nobility found in Plutarch, with particular reference to Coriolanus' duty to Rome and to his family--see Chapter VI for more details on Plutarch's version of the speech. At first, Shakespeare's Coriolanus responds to the end of Volumnia's appeal by holding her hand in silence. He then says these words:

O mother, mother!
What have you done? Behold, the heavens do ope,
The gods look down, and this unnatural scene
They laugh at. O my mother, mother! O!
You have won a happy victory to Rome;
But for your son--believe it, O believe it!--
Most dangerously you have with him prevailed,
If not most mortal to him. But let it come.
(V. iii. 182-189)

36 Ibid., p. 491.

37 Ibid., p. 492.

For comments on Coriolanus' nature and its conflict with the nature of the state, see Brower, Hero and Saint, pp. 361-366.
About this response and his brief exchange with Aufidius about arranging peace, Brower makes the following comment:

For a moment he seems to see his dilemma more clearly, and to understand that in giving in to his mother he is responding to the demands of his native country and state. But he soon is talking as if all can be well: he can give in to his mother, he false to the Volscians, and "frame convenient peace."

Brower implies that Coriolanus does not really see his dilemma clearly and that he thinks he can smooth things over with the Volscians. I disagree. That silence which prefaced Coriolanus' speech was a rare thing. It enabled Coriolanus, who had always been impulsive, to ponder his words. Since Coriolanus never explicitly lies in Shakespeare's play, one can presume that he is telling the truth when he says that his decision may be fatal to him. But he knowingly accepts this self-sacrifice, as he has accepted all the dangers of the battlefield for his glory and for the glory of Rome. He deliberately makes a magnanimous choice; he does not simply make an inept mistake in judgment as Brower implies. His attempt to win Aufidius to his side was an afterthought. It was a pitiful attempt at diplomacy, especially pitiful as Shakespeare's dramatic irony has made the audience aware of Aufidius' hatred for Coriolanus, but his subsequent angry outburst before the Volscians in Corioli revealed that he had not really mistakenly judged the hatred that some of the Volscians felt toward him.

Plutarch ends his "Life of Caius Martius Coriolanus" with comments on the Volscians' sorrow over Coriolanus' passing and, subsequently, their sorrow at their defeat by the Romans when they were forced to rely upon the military skill of Tullus Aufidius. Shakespeare ends his play with the Volscians and even Tullus Aufidius, ever the agile politician, lamenting Coriolanus' death. Shakespeare's ending demands a recognition that a great man has passed from the earth.

The problem for M. W. MacCallum was that, in Plutarch's "The Comparison of Alcibiades with Martius Coriolanus," Plutarch went on to harshly criticize Coriolanus:

It [Coriolanus' decision to spare Rome] may mean the triumph of a natural tendency that happens to be good over other natural tendencies that happen to be bad, but it does not mean the acceptance of duty as duty, or anxiety to satisfy the claims that different duties impose. Hence Coriolanus, to the very end, leaves unredeemed his inherited obligations to Rome, while he leaves unfulfilled his voluntary pledges to his allies.⁴⁹

It is true that Plutarch makes this criticism in his "Comparison." But had Shakespeare wanted to make this criticism, he would have made it. He would not have had Volumnia stress his duty to the state in her moving address to her son. He would not have had Coriolanus so willingly accept the possibility of death. And he would not have placed the major criticism for Coriolanus' sparing Rome in the mouth of Tullus Aufidius, a sly politician and a man envious of Coriolanus. Despite Plutarch's relatively

⁴⁹MacCallum, Shakespeare's Roman Plays, p. 621.
harsh judgment of Coriolanus, Shakespeare wanted his audience to feel sorrow at the passing of a heroic man who learns magnanimity too late and sacrifices himself for his country.

In contrast to Plutarch's relatively harsh judgment of Coriolanus, Ludovic Lloyd treats him as a great man subject to attacks from those less worthy than himself. One can tell where Lloyd's sympathies lie quite early in his account:

But his Coriolanus' vertue and renowne gat him much enuiue: for hereby hee was banished Rome by the Ediles & Tribunas of the people . . . but the Romanes made a rodde to beat themselves when they banished Coriolanus: for he came in armes against his owne Countrie and Citie with the Volscans. . . . 40 (Italics mine)

Lloyd notes the envy of the petty officials for a noble warrior. In his "rodde" metaphor, Lloyd implies that the Romans deserved what they subsequently received from the invading army led by Coriolanus.

Even though Coriolanus was fighting against his own country, Lloyd treats Coriolanus' conquests and subsequent actions against Rome in an admiring tone as the actions of a strong, self-confident noble:

Hee with great furie invaded the Territories of Rome, hee caused the communaltie of Rome and Nobilitie to fall to ciuill dissension, hee so plagued the Romanes divers wayes vnto the very gates of Rome, hee was so much moved against them, that hee refused three seuerall Embassadours to heare them, being his chief friends, sent vnto him by the Senate to entreat for peace. . . . 41

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41 Ibid.
After reporting Coriolanus' rejection of other ambassadors, Lloyd notes that only the ties of his family's noble blood were strong enough to deprive the triumphant military hero of his ultimate victory:

> What time hee had compassion of his mother, of his wife, and of his two sones, and of the other Ladies being his neere kinswomen: then hee withdrewe his armie from Rome, and yeelded to the teares of his mother. . . .

As was noted in Chapter V, Lloyd attributes Coriolanus' death to "the fickle mindes of the people moved by the conspiracie of Tullus Aufidius." If Shakespeare had wished to write a play which ignored all of the harsh judgments upon Coriolanus made by Plutarch, which is just about what Alexandre Hardy did, he could have used Lloyd's *The Consent of Time* for his source. Using Lloyd's version of the Coriolanus legend, however, would have presented a problem for any English dramatist of Shakespeare's era.

It was one thing to write a history of classical Rome and show sympathy for a fellow aristocrat who, as all historians admit, was treated badly by the populace. It was quite another thing to put on a play in England which would only glorify a traitor to his country, however noble a traitor he might be.

Aside from the political consequences of using Lloyd's text as a basis for a play, its lack of balance would not have

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42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.
appealed to a playwright of Shakespeare's sophistication. In Lloyd's text, only Coriolanus is described in any detail. In contrast, Shakespeare's play reflects the complexities of political life, balances the needs of the plebians against the aristocratic vision of the state, and balances the private demands of pride against the public demands of honor. Lloyd's attitude suggests a willingness by certain members of Shakespeare's potential audience to admire Coriolanus with an indifference to his arrogance which is rarely found in the twentieth century.

In Walter Ralegh's *History of the World*, Coriolanus is not treated in as favorable a manner as he is in Lloyd's *Consent of Time*. This treatment may be attributable to at least two factors. First, this work was being composed while Ralegh, a favorite of Elizabeth, was in the Tower, having been convicted of treason on slim evidence in the reign of James I. Had he written and published an account highly favorable to a traitor, it might have been used as an argument by Ralegh's enemies to demand his immediate execution. Secondly, Ralegh maintained an air of distance from the historical personages in his account that Lloyd does not. Perhaps Ralegh, who was much more a man of action that the social-climbing Lloyd, was more confident of his own place in the scheme of things, even though he was confined in the Tower at the time. He may not have felt the urgent necessity to identify with the aristocratic personages who formed his material that Lloyd felt.
In any case, Ralegh treated this traitorous hero with great objectivity. He noted that Coriolanus made an error in judgment in advising that the Sicilian grain be sold at "too high a rate." But Ralegh does not explicitly condemn Coriolanus for leading the Volscian forces against Rome. He did not speculate about Coriolanus' motivation. He simply reports that the deed was done; the Volscian army was before Rome:

_Incamping there hee [Coriolanus] made so sharpe warre and was at such defiance, with his Countrie, that hee would not relent, by any supplications of Embassadours, vntill his Mother Veturia, and Volumnia his wife, with a pittifull tune of depreciation, shewing themselves better Subjects to their Countrie, than friends to their sonne and husband, were more available to Rome, then was any force of armes._

Perhaps in the italicized section, Ralegh is reflecting his own feelings. He follows this cited passage with an account of the killing of Coriolanus among the Volscians as a traitor for not capturing Rome. Ralegh does not call Coriolanus a traitor, however; he even cites the accounts of other historians that Coriolanus may have lived among the Volscians for a long time and died naturally. This citation of other accounts as an alternative to Coriolanus' end seems like wishful thinking in contrast to the irony of Ralegh's earlier comment.

In conception and in actuality, Ralegh's Coriolanus figure lacks the emotional intensity of Shakespeare's protagonist.

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45 Ibid.
Shakespeare's protagonist invites an emotional response from his audience, whether it is their outrage at his scornful remarks to the hungry plebians upon his first entrance in the play or their admiration for his heroism when he is facing the Volscians on the field of battle. In the relatively few modern productions of Shakespeare's play, however, one can imagine the difficulty of the educated persons, who form the modern Shakespeare audience for the most part, in developing their sympathy for such a glorious butcher of men. His virtues are those of the gifted soldier and aristocrat: courage in battle and magnanimity. The events of this century have caused educated persons to prize other virtues more highly.

In conclusion, however, one may surmise that this play could be produced in such a way as to make its universality apparent to even a twentieth century audience, for the problem that it poses is an eternal one. Among those members of a society who have been raised with all of its privileges, there occasionally arises a man or woman who displays a natural superiority in some quality valuable to that society, whether it is courage on the battlefield or executive ability behind a polished desk. Such a highly gifted person can develop a vanity and arrogance that must come in conflict with the less privileged and less gifted members of that society. Any society that depends upon a privileged class, however, dares not sacrifice such a person without fearing grave internal disruptions. If a
work of art can depict such a person rising above his vanity and arrogance to sacrifice himself for the state which has offended him, then the audience can confront the tragic fate that makes such sacrifices necessary.
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The dissertation by Robert Blackwood has been read and approved by members of the Department of English.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation, and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

August 18, 1972
Date

Signature of Advisor