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To Determine the Relative Shares of
Shakespeare and of Thomas Heywood in the
authorship of Troilus and Cressida.

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of
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Zoe Donaldson
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R E P O R T
of
COMMITTEE ON THESIS

THE undersigned, acting as a committee of the Graduate School, have read the accompanying thesis submitted byMiss Zoe Donaldson..... for the degree ofMaster of Arts..... They approve it as a thesis meeting the requirements of the Graduate School of the University of Minnesota, and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree ofMaster of Arts.....

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Chapter -

In the second book of The Iliad is the following passage: "Only Thersites still chattered on, the uncontrolled of speech, whose mind was full of words many and disorderly, wherewith to strive against the chiefs idly and in no good order * * And he was ill-favored beyond all men that came to Ilios. Bandy-legged was he, and lame of one foot, and his two shoulders, rounded, arched down upon his chest, and over them his head was warped and a scanty stubble sprouted on it. Hateful was he to Achilles and to Odysseus above all, for them he was wont to revile." Such is the Thersites described by Heywood in The Iron Age and in Troilus and Cressida, a low-thoughted and repulsive cynic, deformed in mind and in body, a crusty grumbling fault-finder, a "snarling curr". The amplification of his character which we find in the two plays is so identical in tone that we must ascribe it to one author. The Thersites portion of the Hector - Ajax - Thersites Story is now to be analyzed scene by scene to establish Heywood's authorship by means of parallels taken from The Iron Age.

Hector - Ajax - Thersites Story

Thersites Portion.

Act II sc 1

Act. II sc 3 lines 1-68.

Act III sc 3 lines 234-close.

Act V sc 1 lines 1-64 and 86-close.

Act V sc 2 (Thersites part of this scene from the
Troilus and Cressida Story).

Act V. Thersites appears frequently in appended
scenes 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.

The first references to Thersites which we find
in Troilus and Cressida are the following interpolated
passages from Act I sc 3.

Agamemnon: When rank

Thersites opes his

mastic jaws. ^{g-nd c.} I.3, 73.

Achilles: Dogged Thersites,

I'le cleave thee to thy Navell

if thou op'st

Thy venomous Jaws. - 1 I. A.

Nestor: Ajax * * sets

Thersites -

A slave whose gall coins

slanders like a mint -

To match us in compari-

sons with dirt. -

I.3, 192-194.

Ajax: Thersites? Canst

thou rayle?

Ther: Oh yes, yes; better

than fight.

Ajax: And curse?

Ther: Better than either:

rarely.

Ajax: And spit thy ven-
ome in the face of Greece?

Ther: Admirably.

Ajax: Doe, doe, let's heare,
prethee for Heavens sake
doe. - I. A. 342.

In The Iron Age we find Ajax actually doing what Nestor in Troilus and Cressida accuses him of doing; that is, setting Thersites on to rail against the other Grecian generals. The relation between these two passages is sufficiently striking. As for the vexed question of Thersites' "mastic jaws," one glance at the first parallels given above should settle it for all time in the mind of anyone who looks at them.

The first extended Thersites scene in Troilus and Cressida (T. and C. II. 1) should be compared carefully with the last Thersites scene in The Iron Age (I I. A. 341-343) that the larger points of resemblance may be immediately perceived. It will be found that in both plays the Thersites scenes are not in verse, but in prose, and that, furthermore, the style of this prose is identical in the two plays. Series of short sentences abound, as in the following juxtaposed sections.

Achilles: Thersites! What's the matter man?

Ther: You see him there, do you?

Achil: Ay, what's the matter?

Ther: Nay, look upon him.

Achil: So I do; what's the matter?

Ther: Nay, but regard him well.

Ajax: Thersites? Canst thou rayle?

Ther: Oh yes, yes; better than fight.

Ajax: And curse:

Ther: Better than either: rarely.

Ajax: And spit thy venome In the face of Greece?

Ther: Admirably. - l I. A.

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Achil: Well! Why, I do so.

T. and C. II. 1, 55-61.

These two passages do not correspond in material, but the prose style of the two is the same.

It will be noted also that the two scenes under discussion are identical in tone and similar in substance. In both Thersites "spits his venom in the face of Greece"; in both Ajax plays the fool; in both scenes Ajax beats Thersites.

Ther: Why how now mad Greek?

Ajax: Thou Bitch-wolf's son, canst thou not heare? Ulysses? thus and thus (Beating him) Feel, then. I'le hammer on thy proofer

Ther: The plague steel'd Burganet.

of Greece upon thee, thou mongrel beef-witted lord. divvell take thee

T. and C. II. 1, 10-13. hold; I am Thersites, hell rot thy fingers off.

1 I. A. 341-342.

The general resemblance between the two scenes is incontestable. 1 Iron Age 341-343 should be compared also with Troilus and Cressida II. 3, 1-68 and III. 3, 234-

close, for striking correspondence in thought and expression.

In order that the reader of this article may have before his eyes, for the purpose of comparison, one somewhat long passage from The Iron Age, I shall cite the whole of the short scene in which Thersites taunts Achilles (1 I. A. 312) in its relation to Act II sc 1 lines 28-40 of Troilus and Cressida, in which Thersites taunts Ajax.

Ther: Where's this great
sword and buckler man of
Greece?

We shall have him one of
sneakes noise,

And come peaking into the
Tents of the Greeks,

With will you have any
musicke Gentlemen;

Achi: Base groome, I'l
teare thy flesh like
falling Snow.

Ther: When thou art forth in the incursions, thou strikest as slow as another.

Ajax: I say, the proclamation.

Ther: Thou grumblest and raillest every hour on Achilles, and thou art as full of envy at

his greatness as Cerberus is at Proserpina's beauty, ay, that thou barkest at him.

Ajax: Mistress Thersites! Thou the Champion of Greece,

Ther: Thou should strike him.

Ajax: Cobloaf!

Ther: He would pun thee into shivers with his fist, as a sailor

Ther: If I had Hectors face thou durst not doo't.

Achi: Durst not?

Ther: Durst not, hee's in the field, thou in thy tent Hector playing upon the Greekish burgonets, Achilles fingering his effeminate Lute.

And now because thou durst not meet him in the field, thou hast counterfeited an honour of love, Achilles?

a meere bug-beare, a scar-crow, a Hobby-horse.

Achi: Ulysses taught thee this, deformed slave.

Ther: Coward thou durst not do this to Hector.

breaks a biscuit.

Ajax: (Beating him) you
whoreson cur!

Ther: Do, do.
T. and C. II. 1, 28-40.

Achi: On thee Ile practise

til I meete with him.

Ther: Ajax is valiant, and
in the throng of the Trojans
Achilles is turn'd Fidler in
the Tents of the Grecians.

1 I. A. 312.

It is plain that these are companion pieces. In both of them Thersites tauntingly reviles a Greek hero, and accuses him of cowardise; in both the outraged hero soundly belabors Thersites for his temerity. Both bristle with abusive epithets. The two passages correspond so closely in thought, style, and tone, that it is impossible to doubt that they were written by one author.

There follow a number of minor parallels from The Iron Age and Act II sc 1 of Troilus and Cressida.

Ajax: (to Thersites) Dog! Ajax: Amongst these what's
T. and C. II, 1, 7. Thersites?

Ajax: (to Thersites) You Ther: A Rogue, a rayling
whoreson cur! (etc. Rogue, a Curr, a barking dog,

ad infinitum).

T. and C. II. l, 39.

the Pox take me else. -

l I. A. 343.

Par: Peace Cinicke, barke
not dogge.-

l I. A. 281.

Achi: Dogged Thersites
I'le cleave thee to the Nav-
ell if thou op'st
Thy venomous Jawes. -

l I. A. 327.

Ther: I shall soon-
er rail.

T. and C. II l, 16.

Ajax: I bade the vile
owl go learn me the
tenour of the proclama-
tion, and he rails upon
me.

T. and C. II. l, 89-90.

Ther: (of Ajax): He beats Ajax: Thersites? Canst

Diom: Thersites is a rayler.

l I. A. 274.

Ther: And doe and will,
and can, when all else
fayle.

Though neither sooth nor
speak wel: bravely rayle,
And that's Thersites humour.

l I. A. 302.

me, and I rail at him. thou rayle?

T. and C. II. 3, 3. Ther: Oh yes, yes; better

Patroclus: Good Ther- than fight.

sites come in and rail. - 1 I. A. 342.

T. and C. II. 3, 21. Ther: * * and had he but
my rayling,

He were a man complete.

2 I. A. 358.

Ajax: Toadstool, learn
me the proclamation.

T. and C. II. 1, 20

Ther: * * be my sweet Urchin
Syn: I will,

And thou shalt be mine
ugly Toade.

2 I. A. 358-359.

Ther: (to Ajax) Thou art
proclaimed a fool, I think.foole. -

T. and C. II. 1, 24.

Ther: (to Ajax) Thou art a

1 I. A. 342.

Ther: Do, do.

Ther: Doe, doe, good Dog-

When hosten!

T. and C. II. 1, 40.

killer. - 1 I. A. 327.

Ther: Mars his

Ajax: Doe, doe, let's heare,

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idiot! do, rudness, do, prethee for heavens sake doe.
camel, do, do. l I. A. 342.
T. and C. II. l, 52.

Ther: Ay, do, do;
thou sodden-witted lord!
thou hast no more brain
than I have in mine
elbows: an assinego
may tutor thee. Thou
scurvy-valiant ass!
thou art here but to
thrash Trojans; and thou
art bought and sold
among those of any wit
like a barbarian slave. -
T. and C. II. l, 42-46.

Ther: Who thou the son of
Telamon, thou art a foole,
an Asse, a very bloke.
What makest thou here at
Troy to ayde a Cuckold,
beeing a Bachelour? Paris
hath stolen no wife of
thine: if Ajax had been
ought but the worst of
these he might have kept
his Countrey, solac'd his
father, and comforted his
mother. l, I. A. 342.

Both these passages lay stress on Ajax' lack of wit.

Ther: I will begin
at thy heel, and tell

Ther: With whom shall I
begine?

thee what thou art by
inches. -

Ajax: Beginne with the head.

1 I. A. 342.

W. W. M. T. and C. II. 1, 48.⁵³

Patroclus: No more
words, Thersites, peace!
Ther: I will hold
my peace * * *
T. and C. II 1, 110.

Ajax: Peace.

Ther: Yes peace for shame.

1. I. A. 342.

Ther: Achilles' brach. - Ther: Prity puppy,
T. and C. II. 1, 111. Of such a common brach. -
2. I. A. 406.

Ther: Ulysses and
old Nestor * * yoke you
(Ajax and Achilles) like
draught-oxen and make
you plough up the wars.
T. and C. II. 1, 102-104.

Ther (to Ajax): * * what art
thou now reckoned? a good
moyle, a horse that knows
not his own strength, an
asse fit for burthens, to
carry gold, and feede on
thistles - 1 I. A. 342.

These minor parallels require no comment. The cumulative evidence which they afford of Heywood's authorship of Act II sc 1 of Troilus and Cressida is conclusive.

The evidence in favor of Heywood's authorship of Act II sc 3 lines 1-68 is almost equally strong. In both plays Thersites' "spiteful execrations" are spoken of as his prayers. The amens scattered down the pages (T. and C. II. 3, 19 and 30 and 1 I. A. 343) strikingly emphasize Thersites' curses, and form a definite point of similarity between the two scenes. In Troilus and Cressida Thersites curses Patroclus:

Thersites: The common curse of mankind, ignorance and folly, be thine in great revenue! Let thy blood be thy direction till thy death! * * * Amen.

Patroclus: What, art thou devout? wast thou in prayer?

Thersites: Ay: the heavens hear me! -
T. and C. II. 3, 24-32,

and in The Iron Age he curses Ulysses:

Ajax: But what's Ulysses my base adversary?

Ther: A dam'd politician, Scilla and Charibdis

swallow him.

Ajax: And greedily devour him.

Ther: And utterly consume him.

Ajax: And eate up his posterity.

Ther: And rot out his memory.

Ajax: In endlesse infamy.

Ther: And everlasting oblique.

Both: Amen;

Ajax: Enough, no more: * * away Thersites, flye,
Our prayeres now sayd, we must prepare to
dye. -

1 I. A. 343.

In both scenes the amens to the curses abound, and the curses are called prayers. The significant resemblance is perfectly evident.

Some minor resemblances follow:

Achil: * why, my cheese. Ther: By this hee's gnawing
T. and C. II. 3, 35. Menelaus Cheese. - l I. A.287.

Achil (to Ther): Come, Ajax (to Ther): What's Aga-
what's Agamemnon? - memnon our great Gen-
T. and C. II. 3, 37. erall. -1 I. A. 343.

Ther: Peace, fool! -
T. and C. II 3, 50.

Ther: Agamemnon is a fool - T. and C. II 3,52.

Patroclus: Why am I a foole? Menelaus: I am a foole then say.

Ther: Make that de- Ther: And so thou art. -
mand of the prover. It 1 I. A. 280.
suffices me thou art. -
T. and C. II. 3, 59-61.

Ther: * * all the argu- Ther: I came to laugh at
ment is a cuckold and a madmen, thou art one;
whore; a good quarrel to The Trojans are all mad, so

draw emulous factions are the Greeks,
and to bleed to death To kill so many thousands
upon.- T. and C. II 3,65-66. for one drabbe,
 For Hellen; a light thing, doe
 thou turne wise
And kill no more. - 1 I. A.325.

Ther: (to Ajax): * thou art
a foole * * *. What makest thou
here at Troy to aid a Cuckold:
* * * what thanks hast thou
for loosing thy blood, in dan-
gering thy life? And all
for a --. 1 I. A. 342.

Act II sc 3 lines 1-68 is plainly Heywoods.

On the other hand Act II sc 3 lines 234-307 shows a trace of Shakspeare. Thersites' language, instead of being merely filthy and abusive as it has been up to this point, has sparks of genuine humour in it. The picture of Ajax, for instance, 'ruminating like an hostess that hath no arithmetic but her brain to set down her reckoning', is a rare stroke, almost too humorously human for

Heywood. There is humour in the dazed stupidity of Ajax' self-conceit. In the scene as a whole there is more restraint and better character-drawing than is usual in Heywood. But even this scene has a companion scene in The Iron Age. Here Ajax mistakes Thersites for Agamemnon.

Thersites: He knows not me: I said 'Good-morrow, Ajax!' and he replies, 'Thanks, Agamemnon'. What think you of this man that takes me for the general? - T. and C. III, 3, 259-261.

There Ajax mistakes Thersites for Ulysses:

Ther: Why how now mad Greeke?

Ajax: And art thou come Ulysses? thus and thus
I'le hammer on thy prooфе steel'd Burganet.

Ther: Hold Ajax, hold, the divell take thee,
hold, I am Thersites. - 1 I. A. 341-342.

One other resemblance, concerning the character of Ajax, may be noted:

Ther: (of Ajax): * * he wears his tongue in's arms.
T. and C. III 3, 67-68.

Ajax: I had rather fight than talk. -

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1 I. A. 338.

But This scene as a whole ^{however} has elements in it that cannot be referred to Heywood.

But the next scene pertaining to Thersites (T. and C. V. 1, 1-62) is wholly in Heywood's vein. Thersites' unclean curses and prolific use of epithets, among them "fool", "cur", and "varlet", are such as have been abundantly paralleled in preceding scenes. He again compares the Grecian generals with beasts of burden, as in the passage from The Iron Age quoted above on page 12. The whole scene is identical in characterization, style, and abusive railing tone with the Thersites passages in The Iron Age which have been referred to. Contempt for Menelaus is apparent in both plays:

Thersites: To be a dog, a mule **, I would not care, but to be Menelaus! I would conspire against destiny. - T. and C. V. 1, 57-60.

Paris (to Menelaus): Achilles, Diomed, Ajax, one
of three

Were noble prise, thou art no spoyle for mee.

1 I. A. 319.

Ther: (of Menelaus): Ha, ha, ha,
Why, this is well, for he that's borne to dye
A branded Cuckold huggs his destiny:-

2 I. A. 388.

It is especially noteworthy that in both plays Thersites acts as a servant and prepares the tent for the banquet:

Achilles: Come, come, Thersites, help to trim my tent;

n This night in banqueting must all be spent. -

T. and C. V. 1, 43-44.

Enter Thersites with Souldiers bringing in a table with chayres and stooles plac'd above it.

Ther: Come, come, spread, spread, up with the pulpits straight.

Seates for the Judges, all the Kings of Greece,
Why when you lazy drudges? -

1 I. A. 334.

The bit at the close of the scene (V. 1, 86-close) is in the same Heywood vein.

Parallel with Troilus and Cressida Act V sc 2, the

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The scene is similar

Thersites portion of which is now to be analyzed, is a scene in the second part of The Iron Age pages 362-366. These scenes should be compared. They are more closely parallel in general thought than in the phrasing of particular verses. In both scenes Cressida is solicited by one Greek, while another, a hidden witness, is convinced thereby of her faithlessness. In the one case it is Diomed who solicits Cressida; in the other, Synon (simply another name for the character of Thersites): in Troilus and Cressida it is Troilus who is convinced of Cressida's guilt; in The Iron Age, Diomed. It is plain that the foundation idea of both scenes is the same. But what concerns us most in this comparison is the character of Thersites. It should be recognized that wherever Synon is spoken of in The Iron Age we may understand the character of Thersites, because Heywood makes Synon and Thersites twin characters having the same attributes. The dominant note in the Thersites character in these two scenes is a cynical attitude towards women.

Ther: And any man

Synon: * * doe thou but put

may sing her if he can into one scale
take her cliff; she's noted. A feather, in the other Cres-
T. and C. V. 2, 10-11. sid's truth,
Ther: Now she sharpens The feather shall downe weigh
- Well said, whetstone.- it - 2 I. A. 363.
T. and C. V. 2, 74. Synon: And now faire Tro-
Ther: A proof of jan Weather-hen adew,
strength she could not And when thou next lovest,
publish more, thinke to be more true.-
Unless she said My mind 2 I. A. 366.
is now turn'd whore. -
T. and C. V. 2, 112-113.

Thersites and Synon have the same attitude toward Cressida. Two other parallels deserve mention:

Troilus: Let it not be Synon: * * nought more believed for womanhood! grieves me then to thinke, Think, we had mothers. - A woman was my mother. - T. and C. V. 2, 128-129. 2 I. A. 366.

Ther: Lechery, lech- Ther: Now all the World's

ery! still wars and lech- turn'd wenchers. -
ery! nothing else holds l I. A. 301.
fashion. - T. and C. V 2,
193-194.

The similarity in tone between the remarks of Thersites and Synon, considered in the light of all the Thersites evidence up to this point, stamps the Thersites portion of Troilus and Cressida Act V sc 2 as Heywood's.

Act V sc 4 of Troilus and Cressida also offers some interesting Thersites material. To begin with, in the first long speech, lines 1-16, there are a number of Thersites words, the same words that are repeated ad infinitum in the Thersites speeches of The Iron Age. Some of them follow, with illustrations from The Iron Age.

T. and C. V. 4, 2. varlet. Syn: And now you witches, varlets, drabes, and queanes.-
2 I. A. 367.

T. and C. V. 4, 3. foolish. Men: I am a foole then say.
Ther: And so thou art. -
l I. A. 280.

T. and C. V.4, ll. cur.

Ther: A Rogue, a rayling

T. and C. V. 4, 12. dog.

Rogue, a Curr, a barking

Dog. - 1 I. A. 343.

Such a similarity of vocabulary helps to make the
Thersites scenes in Troilus and Cressida and The Iron
Age homogeneous in character.

Lines 1-16 which we have just been examining are followed by a little combat scene (V. 4, 24-30) which should be compared in its entirety with a similar combat scene in The Iron Age.

Hector: What art thou, Ther: Hold if thou bee'st a
Greek? Art thou for man.

Hector's match? Troi: Stand if thou bee'st
Art thou of blood and honour? souldier, do not shrinke.

Ther: No, no, I am Ther: Art not thou Troilus,
a rascal, a scurvy rail- young and lusty Troilus?
ing knave, a very filthy Troi: I am, what then?
rogue. Ther: And I Thersites, lame

Hector: I do believe thee, and impotent,
live. What honour can'st thou get

Ther: God - a - mercy, by killing mee?

that thou wilt believe me; I cannot fight.

but a plague break thy Troi: What mak'st thou
neck for frightening me! - in the field then?

T. and C. 4, 24-30 Ther: I came to laugh at
madmen * * *.

Troi: But proud Achilles
Slew my bold brother, and
you Grecians all
Shall perish for the noble
Hector's fall.

Ther: Hold, the Pox take thee
hold, whilst I have breath,
I am bound to curse thy
fingers.- 1 I. A. 325.

Both these scenes emphasize the clownish behavior of Thersites in the battle, and his great cowardise. They are companion pieces. Still more convincing is the fact that certain lines of Act V sc 4, 24-30 are still more closely paralleled by other passages in The Iron Age, as for instance:

Hector: What art thou, Greek?

Ther: * * I am a rascal; a scurvy railing knave,
a very filthy rogue. - T. and C. V. 4, 24-27.

Ajax: Amongst these what's Thersites?

Ther: A Rogue, a rayling Rogue, a Curr, a barking
Dog, the Pox take mee else.- l I. A. 343.

It is impossible to doubt the common authorship of these scenes. It may be worth while to note in passing the similar characterization of Hector and of Troilus to be found in the two plays.

Ther: * I am a ras- Hector: Dishonourable Greeke,
cal, a scurvy railing Hector nere dealt
knavе, a very filthy On base advantage, or ever
rogue. lift his sword

Hector: I do believe Thee, Over a quaking foe, but as
live. T. and C. V 4, 26-28. a spoyle

Troi: When many Unworthy us, still left him
times the captive to his fear.- l I. A. 321.
Grecian falls,

Even in the fan and

wind of your fair
sword,
You bid him rise and
live,- T. and C. V. 3,
40-42.

Troilus: Let's leave the hermit pity with our mothers. Troilus: * * you Grecian all Shall perish for the noble Hector's fall. l I. A. 325.

And when we have our
armours buckled on,
The venom'd vengeance
ride upon our swords,
T. and C. V. 3. 45-47.

There is one more short Thersites scene.

Troilus and Cressida Act V, sc 7, lines 9-close, which is paralleled in fundamental idea by the scene from 1 Iron Age 325 quoted above.

The last line of this scene closely resembles
lines in The Iron Age.

Margarelon: The devil take thee, coward, -
T. and C. V. 7,22

Troilus: Let Cowards fight with Cowards and
both feare.

The case Thersites is no match for mee. - 1 3 A 326

The above analysis makes it clear that the "ugly
toad" Thersites, with his venom, his deformity, his
cowardise, and his cynicism, who, as Coleridge said
"despised and was despicable," vs a character that
belongs, not in Shakespere's gallery, but in Heywood's.