

**EXAMINATION OF TWO ENGLISH DRAMAS:
THE TRAGEDY OF MARIAM BY ELIZABETH
CAREW; AND THE TRUE TRAGEDY OF
HEROD AND ANTIPATER WITH THE DEATH
OF FAIRE MARRIAM BY GERVASE
MARKHAM, AND WILLIAM SAMPSON**

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A general survey of all dramas dealing with Herod and Mariamne has been given by Landau (*Die Dramen von Herodes und Mariamne. Zeitschrift für vergleichende Literaturgeschichte*, ed. Koch. Neue Folge Bd. VIII und IX. Weimar 1895/96), and three English dramas founded on the same story, viz. Massinger's *Duke of Milan* (1623), Fenton's *Mariamne* (1723), and Stephen Phillips' *Herod* (1901) have been discussed by W. Grack in his „*Studien über die dramatische Behandlung der Geschichte von Herodes und Mariamne in der englischen und deutschen Literatur.*“ Königsberg 1901. Further a drama by Boyle, „*Herod the Great*“ (printed 1694) has been treated by Siegert in „*Roger Boyle, Earl of Orrery*“ (Wien und Leipzig, 1906).

Of the dramas by Elizabeth Carew (printed 1613) and by Markham and Sampson (printed 1622), very few copies exist, with the result that they have not yet been fully examined. Landau has little to say of the drama by Markham and Sampson, and was unable to read more than the opening passage of Elizabeth Carew's drama. Grack and Siegert were unable to obtain copies of these works. These dramas however deserve consideration, because they are the earliest English dramas treating the story of Herod and Mariamne. They are also particularly interesting because of their form. It seems to have escaped everyone's notice that Elizabeth Carew's drama with

its Chorus, its Nuntio, its division into five acts, its observation of the unities, its lack of action, its very long exposition, its lack of comic scenes, etc. is one of the most, if not the most, regular of all English Classical dramas.

The writer in Chambers' Cyclopaedia of English Literature (Vol. I p. 490) contents himself with calling it "a long-winded poem". Little more is found in the Dictionary of National Biography (Vol. IX p. 64), where it is called "a tedious poem" and in Ward, English Dramatic Literature (Vol. III p. 15). Further there is doubt concerning the authorship and the date of composition of the drama.

The drama by Markham and Sampson, on the other hand has nearly all the characteristics of the so-called Romantic drama. This has not yet been discussed (except very shortly by Landau). The Dictionary of National Biography (Vol. 36 pp. 166/8, Vol. 50 p. 233) only mentions the work, and gives as its source Josephus "Antiquities of the Jews" Books 14. 15.

In the following pages both dramas are discussed, and their relation to the other English dramas dealing with the story of Herod and Mariamne is shewn. Since these dramas are interesting, I intend to publish the text of them elsewhere.

The Source of the Dramas.

The source of both dramas is Josephus. Josephus has left two versions of the story, viz. in his "Jewish War", and in his "Jewish Antiquities". Markham and Sampson state three times that the source of their drama is Josephus' history. They state it on their title-page, in the "Printer's Epistle", and in the Prologue. It will be seen that the "Jewish

Antiquities" has been principally used in the case of both dramas, though the drama by Markham and Sampson has borrowed from the "Jewish War".

A short account of the story of Herod and Mariamne according to Josephus has been given both by Landau and by Grack. Since however our dramas treat different parts of the story it will be necessary to give these parts as Josephus relates them, in order to see how our dramas use this matter. The two accounts by Josephus vary in detail, as far as the death of Mariamne. After this point however the narratives become more similar. It will be necessary therefore to separate the versions to this point and afterwards we may combine them.

Jewish War.

Herod has killed Hyrcanus the grand-father of his wife, Mariamne, and her brother Aristobulus in order to make his throne secure. For this reason Mariamne begins to hate Herod and to insult his mother and sister. For the sake of revenge Herod's mother and sister accuse Mariamne of unchastity, and state that she has sent her portrait to Antonius with adulterous intent. Soon after this Herod is obliged to visit Antonius, so he leaves Mariamne to the charge of Josephus his brother-in-law, whom he secretly orders to kill Mariamne if he should not return. He does this because he does not wish anyone to obtain Mariamne after his death. Josephus reveals the secret to Mariamne to prove Herod's love for her. On Herod's return Mariamne upbraids him. Herod believes that the fact that Josephus has betrayed the secret is a proof that Josephus has persuaded Mariamne to be false to her husband. Herod's sister makes use of this opportunity to

revenge herself on Mariamne for the insults which she has suffered at her hands, and accuses her before Herod who orders both Josephus and Mariamne to be executed.

Jewish Antiquities.

Mariamne's mother Alexandra, and her brother Aristobulus in fear of Herod make preparations to flee to Cleopatra. Knowing that they are watched they have resort to a stratagem. They have two coffins made with the intention of making their escape in these. Their stratagem is however betrayed to Herod. He pardons the offenders and promises them protection. As a sign of his favour he creates Aristobulus High Priest. After the lapse of a year Herod causes some servants to drown Aristobulus whilst he is bathing. Herod pretends that the death of Aristobulus is accidental, he pretends to mourn and arranges a costly funeral for him. Herod however is unable to deceive Mariamne and Alexandra. The latter informs Cleopatra of the events, and Cleopatra persuades Antonius to summon Herod to answer for the death of Aristobulus. Herod goes to Antonius having intrusted his kingdom to his brother-in-law Josephus, with the command to kill Mariamne should he not return. Herod cannot bear to think that another man may possess his wife. Josephus reveals Herod's secret order to Mariamne to prove Herod's love to her. On Herod's return Mariamne upbraids him for his cruelty. Herod suspects that Mariamne has a guilty intrigue with Josephus, and listens to Salome's accusations. He executes Josephus, imprisons Alexandra, whilst Mariamne falls into disfavour. Herod now begins to fear his relatives, and therefore kills Hyrcanus, Mariamne's grandfather.

In the meantime Antonius has been defeated by Octavianus off Actium, and has committed suicide. Herod fears that Octavianus will revenge himself on the friends of the dead Antonius and so goes to meet him. During his absence he leaves the government in the hands of his brother Pheroras. He gives Mariamne and Alexandra into the charge of his treasurer Joseph and Soemus, with the command to kill both women should he not return. Herod shews a bold front to Octavianus, defends his friendship with Antonius, and so pleases Octavianus that the latter offers him his friendship. Soemus, on receiving presents, betrays Herod's secret command to the two women. Mariamne receives Herod coldly on his return, and Herod gradually becomes cool towards her. Mariamne insults Herod's mother and sister because of their low birth. There arises a great hatred between her and the king's relatives. Mariamne now accuses Herod of having killed Hyrcanus and Aristobulus. Salome bribes a cup-bearer to bring Herod poison saying that it is a love-potion from Mariamne. He announces at the same time that it is a poison. On the rack the cup-bearer confesses that Mariamne is displeased because Soemus has told her something. Herod at once suspects an intrigue between Soemus and Mariamne, and Soemus is executed, and the Queen is condemned to death. On hearing the sentence Alexandra, in fear for herself, begins to accuse her daughter. Mariamne refuses to answer the charge, and goes in silence to death. Josephus says that Mariamne has only one failing — she has no moderation, and is quarrelsome.

As soon as Mariamne is dead, Herod's love for her revives. He cannot believe her dead, and becomes insane. Alexandra seizes this opportunity

to attempt to secure the throne. On Herod's recovery Alexandra is executed. Herod's mind still remains disturbed, and he kills many friends and relatives. Amongst these is Salome's husband Costobar. Salome having quarrelled with Costobar, gives him a bill of divorce. To gain Herod's favour, she tells him that her husband has secretly preserved the sons of Babas, whom Herod had ordered to be killed. Herod therefore has Costobar and the sons of Babas executed.

It will be seen thus far that the two accounts differ considerably in detail. The versions of the other events which concern our dramas, agree well enough to make a combined account possible.

Before Herod had married Mariamne, his wife was Doris, by whom he had had a son Antipater. Mariamne had borne him two sons Aristobulus and Alexander. Salome and Pheroras in fear of Mariamne's sons begin to accuse them falsely to Herod. Gradually Herod brings his elder son Antipater into his favour and Antipater begins also to work secretly against his half-brothers. The Emperor Augustus brings about a reconciliation which is short-lasting. Antipater craftily contrives that a series of treasonable charges against the young Princes shall be brought before Herod, whilst he himself pretends to defend his half-brothers. The intrigues of Antipater, Salome, and Pheroras last a considerable period. There are endless complications, during which Herod is led to suspect Pheroras and Salome. Herod is displeased with Pheroras because Pheroras will not marry Herod's daughter, preferring a favourite slave. Salome wishes to marry a certain Arabian, Syllaëus. In the meantime a trial of the young Princes takes place in their absence. A mad barber, Tryphon,