

# Outline of Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* in Thomas North's Marginalia: Supplemental Material

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The table below includes a complete list of marginalia by Sir Thomas North in Harvard's copy of Fabyan's *Chronicle* (1533), with brief comments about the relevance to *Cymbeline*. Explanations for the table appear in greater detail in text below.

Note (page)	Introductory Timeline Coordinating the Chronologies of Plutarchan & British Leaders	Relevance to <i>Cymbeline</i>
1. (Aiii-v)	Alexander [time of Sicilius]	Sicilius (Character)
2. (Aiv)	Hannibal, Scipio African [time of Gobonianus]	
3. (Aiv-v)	Julius Caesar [time of Cassibelan]	Cassibulan/Caesar (Referenced)
4. (Aiv-v)	Octavian Augustus [time of Cymbeline]	Cymbeline (Character) Augustus (Referenced)
5. (Av)	Trajanus [time of Marius, son of Arviragus]	Arviragus (Character) Pict war (Theme)
<b>Body of Text</b>		
6. (9)	A strange rain of blood 3 days together	<i>FQ</i> /Morgan (Character)
7. (9v)	Rome built 407 years after the building of London	Theme
<b>Brennus/Guilthdacus Tribute War: Plot of King Brennus (<i>MM</i>), likely plot of <i>Cutlack</i> (1594)</b>		
8. (11)	Brennus sailed into Norway and marryeth daughter of Elfyng Duke of Norway	Son of Malmutius (Referenced)
9. (11)	Guilthdacus King of Denmark, fighteth by sea w(i)th Brennus and Norways, and put Brennus to flight	

10.	(11v)	Guilthdacus, King of Denmark, arriveth in Northumberland	
11.	(11v)	Guilthdacus did homage to the K. of Britain for Denmark and paid yearly a 1000 li	Tribute (Theme)
12.	(12)	Cenonenses Galli	<i>King Leir</i>
13.	(12)	Brennus marryeth the daughter of Gaufride Seginus, Duke of Little Britain	
<b>Cassibelan/ Julius Caesar Tribute War: Plot of Nennius, Irenglas (Hirelda), and Julius Caesar (MM)</b>			
14.	(16v)	5142 <sup>1</sup> [Start of Cassibelan Reign after Tenantius]	Cassibulan/Tenantius (Referenced)
15.	(17)	Caius Julius Caesar, Lucius Bibulus sent (as) consuls into France to conquer the same.	Storyline / Caius Lucius (Character)
16.	(17)	Julius Caesar w[ith] his Romans landed in Britain and were beaten back to the sea again.	Referenced
17.	(17)	Caesar invading the land again was put to flight the second time.	Referenced
18.	(17v)	Androgeus, Earl or Duke of Normandy.	<i>MM Poem (Source)</i>
19.	(17v)	A great fray betwixt the two young knights Hirelda, and Eulenius w. rose upon wrestling. Hirelda, the King's nephew, slain.	<i>MM Poem (Source)</i>
20.	(17v)	The king made war with Androgeus	<i>MM Poem (Source)</i>
21.	(17v)	Androgeus sent for Julius Caesar in his aid!	<i>MM Poem (Source)</i>
22.	(17v)	Dorobernia now Canterbury.	
23.	(18)	Cassibulan [uniquely misspelled] became tributary to Rome and paid yearly 3000 li	Tribute (Referenced)
24.	(18)	The tribute granted 48 or 50 years before Christ.	Tribute (Referenced)
25.	(18)	Androgeus, Earl of Kent	<i>MM Poem (Source)</i>
26.	(18v)	Androgeus, Earl of Kent and eldest son of Lud	Lud (referenced)
<b>Cymbeline/Guiderius/Arviragus vs. Romans: Plot of Guiderius and Hamo (MM)</b>			
27.	(18v)	Christ born 19 year of the reign of Kymbeline [Fabyan's spelling]. The year of the world 5199.	<i>FQ/Cymbeline (Character)/Theme</i>
28.	(19)	Guiderius denied tribute to the Romans.	Guiderius (Character)/Tribute (Storyline)

29.	(19)	Claudius, uncle to Caligula, the 4 Emperour of Rome, invaded Britain with a greater army of the Romans and by fight recovered again the tribute.	Tribute/Invasion (Storyline)
30.	(19)	A stratagem of Hamo a Roman Captain that slew Guiderius the King.	Guiderius (Character)/ Clothes-Switch (Storyline)
31.	(19v)	Hamo slain by Aviragus the King near unto the haven now called Southampton and then called Hamon's Haven: because after he was slain he was cut a pieces and thrown into the sea.	Arviragus (Character)/ Killing of Cloten (Storyline)
32.	(19v)	Arviragus married Genissa, Claudius' daughter, at Gloucester.	Arviragus (Character)
33.	(20)	Vespasian, a Duke of Rome: A legion is 6666.	Legions (Mentioned)
34.	(20)	Vespasian conquered the Isle of Wight.	
<b>Picts vs. Romans Storyline: Plot of Londricus and Severus (MM)</b>			
35.	(20)	Londricus king of the Picts landed with a great navy in Scotland.	Picts (Theme)
36.	(20)	Londricus and his Picts overcomen in battle by Marius the King, the battle being fought at Stanysmore in Westmerland	Picts (Theme)
37.	(22v)	A wall of turves [turfs] of a 112 miles long, made by Severus, Emperour of Rome and governor of Britain	Picts (Theme)/ Wall-of-Turf (Storyline)
38.	(24)	Livius Gallus a Roman slain by the Duke of Cornwall, and thrown into a brook in London after that called Wallus Brook and now is a street called Wallbroke.	Killing of Cloten (Storyline)
<b>Queen Helene Marries/Rules Rome: Plot of Queen Helena (MM)</b>			
39.	(24)	Coelus, Earl of Colchester and king of Britain	<i>FQ</i>
40.	(24v)	Ceasars: a dignity next of authority to the emperor	Caesar-as-title (Mentioned)
41.	(26v)	Constantine the great filled w(i)th leprosy. 1000 children brought to his palace to be slain to cure his leprosy with their blood.	
42.	(26v)	Trahern a Duke, Uncle unto Helene mother of Constantine, daughter of King Coelus	<i>FQ</i> /Helene (Character)
<b>Macbeth, Holinshed, Succession Anxiety, and the Cymbeline Propheesy: Plot of King Harold (MM)</b>			
43.	(133)	Earl Goodwin, Earl of Chester,	
44.	(133)	The tribute called Dane Gelt, discharged	Tribute/ <i>Hamlet</i>

45.	(134)	Earl of Northumberland	<i>Macbeth</i>
46.	(135)	[Underlined:] nunc aliud tempus alli pro tempore mores	Prelude to Fabyan Prophecy (Discussed)
47.	(135v)	The Death of Siward, Earl of Northumberland	<i>Macbeth</i>
48.	(136*)	Tosty, Earl of Northumberland	
49.	(136)	The death of Leofricus, Earl of Mercia and of Chester	
50.	(136)	Algarus, Earl of Chester	
51.	(136)	Strange things of a witch of Bakley in Barkshire	<i>Macbeth</i>
52.	(136v)	Harold sailing towards Normandy was taken prisoner and brought to Duke William of Normandy	
53.	(136v)	Harold bound by oath to marry Duke Williams' daughter and to keep the realm of England after King Edwards death, to his behoof	
Key: <i>Mirror for Magistrates</i> (MM); <i>Faerie Queene</i> (FQ); *136 is incorrectly marked cxxxv (135).			

Table. 5 Complete list of marginalia in Harvard's copy of Fabyan's *Chronicle* (1533).<sup>2</sup>

The shaded groupings represent the six pre-Norman histories that are relevant to *Cymbeline* and were the subject of corresponding poems in *Mirror for Magistrates*. Five of the six (all but the last one) relate to Roman conflict, and five of the histories (all but the section on Picts) relate to tributes. These themes are also at the heart of *Cymbeline*.

As discussed in the [main paper](#) and as will be shown below, North often closely paraphrases or essentially quotes lines of the various poems of *Mirror for Magistrates* in the margins next to the corresponding stories in Fabyan. This is significant for two reasons: first, it confirms that North was researching the true history behind the subjects of the poems; and second, source scholars have already shown the playwright did precisely the same thing—also borrowing from many of those same poems in *Mirror for Magistrates* and the related prose accounts in Fabyan. This establishes another compelling connection between North and *Cymbeline*.

In the main paper, we have also noted that the *Chronicle* comprises 852 pages—of which North has marked 53 passages on 27 pages. Essentially, and almost without exception, everything in Fabyan that interested the playwright also interested North, and what North ignored, the playwright ignored too. Indeed, *Cymbeline* includes nothing of note from any of the chapters in *Fabyan* that North has skipped.

Naturally, in his marginalia North does comment on elements not directly included in *Cymbeline*. And in a few cases, those comments appear to have no relevance to the play—but rather denote something that North found striking or interesting. Consider marginal notes 6 and 41 (relating to a “strange rain of blood” and Constantine the Great’s leprosy respectively), and the notes in the final grouping on King Harold and Edward the Confessor. However, even in these cases, as we shall see, the comments appear in relevant sections perused by the playwright. They also have relevance to other Shakespeare plays, including *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*. These correspondences will be discussed in another upcoming publication.

To summarize, the playwright makes use of the information in the introductory timeline, skips to material found in pages 9 and 11, and then focuses heavily on passages running from 16v–20. North did exactly this too, beginning with the introductory timeline, marking up pages 9–12, and then extensively annotating pages 16v–20, helping provide many of the most significant details of the history plot of *Cymbeline* (as discussed in the main paper). In the case of Cassibelan’s tribute, North and the playwright even match on the same phrasing and even unique spelling, “Cassibulan.”

After the marginalia on Caesar, Cassibelan, Cymbeline, Guiderius and Arviragus, North then starts making notes about the Picts, jumps to Severus and the wall of turf, skips to the story of the Duke of Cornwall and the body thrown into a brook, jumps again to the story on Queen Helena, then jumps nearly 200 pages to the end of Edward Confessor’s life and the resulting Norman Conquest. Remarkably, as we shall see, the playwright appears to follow this same patten. After closely following North’s marginal notes on Cassibelan, Cymbeline, Guiderius, and Arviragus, he makes the same jumps to later sections—including material on the Picts, the wall of turf, the Duke of Cornwall and the body thrown in a book, the material from Queen Helena, and the history of Edward the Confessor and the Norman Conquest.

### **The Introductory Timeline / “Rome built 407 years after the building of London” / “Christ born 19 year of the reign of Kymbeline”**

Recall that one of the purposes of *Cymbeline* is to challenge opponents of James’ idea of recreating a unified Britain. For example, in the anti-union tract *Of the Union* (1604), Sir Henry Spelman argued that while the current reputation of England was glorious, the history of Britain was shameful, especially in comparison to Rome. He especially noted that Britons never appeared in history texts, except “to their own disgrace or at least to grace the tropheys and victoryes of their conquerors.”<sup>3</sup> *Cymbeline* counters this notion by romanticizing the history of early Britain, especially in contrast to Rome, even stressing that Britain’s traceable history extends farther back than their Mediterranean counterparts. This is why the play includes so many references to Cymbeline’s earlier ancestors. Cymbeline, for example, discusses his

ancestor Malmutius in response to Caius Lucius' reference to Julius Caesar—which Andrew Escobedo describes as:

...a crucial, nationalist response to Roman historiographical hegemony: Cymbeline reclaims the past for his nation, allowing Britain to compete with Roman antiquity. Caesar may have conquered the island several generations earlier, but Dunwallo (“Mulmutius”) established civilized British culture well before that.<sup>4</sup>

North's marginal note 7—“Rome built 407 years after the building of London”—shows that he too had this theme in mind: Britain is more venerable. And importantly, Mulmutius was the father of Brennus who is discussed in marginal notes 8–13.

Even North's first marginal comments in the table of contents help expose his interest in Britain's deep antiquity. Fabyan has written his table of contents as a summarial timeline linking British rulers with their more renowned chronological counterparts in Rome, Greece, and Africa. For example, North's first marginal comment was “Alexander” (1) in the margin next to Fabyan's reference that Alexander ruled during the end of Guithelinus' rule over Britain and at the beginning of the reign of his son, Sicilius. In *Cymbeline*, Sicilius was the name chosen for Posthumus' father, once again helping connect characters in the play to Britain's ancient past.

North then notes the era of Hannibal and Scipio African (2) and then Julius Caesar (3), writing the latter name next to the passage linking Caesar with Cassibelan. As noted earlier, Caesar's invasion of Britain during the reign of Cassibelan, which North also writes about in other marginalia (15–17), is discussed at length in the play.

North's “Octavian Augustus” appears next to a passage noting Augustus was emperor when Christ was born, in the Biblical year 5199. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> column next to that passage, we discover that this is also when Cymbeline ruled Britain. North also makes this point in a later marginal note (27): “Christ born 19 year of the reign of Kymbeline [Fabyan's spelling]. The year of the world 5199.” Of course, the playwright also needs to know Augustus was the emperor who ruled during the reign of Cymbeline—and *Augustus* is referred to five times in *Cymbeline*. Indeed, the same man figures in both *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Julius Caesar*, but in these earlier plays he is exclusively referred to as *Octavius*. This is because North always used *Octavius* in the chapters in his *Plutarch's Lives* that were the source for *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*.<sup>5</sup> In this marginal note, however, North records his later honorific, *Augustus*, which is how he is referred to in *Cymbeline*.

North's marginal note stressing Cymbeline's reign during the birth of Christ is also consistent with the commonly recognized Christian motifs in the play. In one analysis, Robin Moffet discusses some of these themes, contending that it is “the birth of Jesus Christ which made the

reign unique” and that this answers the question, “Why did Shakespeare choose Cymbeline as title figure...?”<sup>6</sup> New Cambridge Editor Martin Butler also observes instances that indicate the “play’s hidden awareness of the ‘fact’ that Christ was born in Cymbeline’s reign.”<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, in this same passage next to North’s marginal note, Fabyan writes that Kymbeline was the son of the prior King, Tenantius. And the reign of Tenantius is also referred to twice in *Cymbeline* (1.1.31; 5.4.53).

Finally, the timeline begins with the first legendary King of England, “Brute, the son of Silvius Posthumus”—and Posthumus is the name of the main character in *Cymbeline*. Also, on the page just prior to North’s first marginal note, also in the timeline, Fabyan writes, “*Mulmutius* Dunwallo...son of *Cloten*, duke or king of Cornwall...was the first that bear crown in Britain.” This too is significant (see below.)

### **Mulmutius, Cloten, Sicilius, Morgan, Posthumus, and Lud’s Town**

The playwright also took other names from Fabyan passages near his marginalia. His first marginal note (6) after the introductory timeline appears in the text at the top of page 9. It marks a striking moment also referenced in Spenser’s *Fairie Queene*: “A strange rain of blood 3 days together.”<sup>8</sup> Also, at the top of this same page, Fabyan refers to Morgan—whose death in a battle in Wales resulted in the region being named Glenmorgan (just as the slaying of Hamo led to the name Hamon’s Haven). In *Cymbeline*, Morgan is the alias that Belarius chose for himself—and much of the setting of the play is in Wales.

At the top of the next page (9v), North writes another marginal note (7)—“Rome built 407 years after the building of London,” which, as noted, shows his interest in Britain’s greater antiquity than Rome, an important theme of *Cymbeline*. Next to North’s comment, Fabyan discusses the start of the reign of Sicilius, whose reign had coincided with that of Alexander the Great, as recorded in the passage that North marked in the table of contents. Again, Sicilius is the name chosen for Posthumus’ father.

Three pages later, on page 11, North writes his next marginal note (8) on Brennus, the son of Malmutius, the original king of all of Britain and ancestor to Cassibelan, Cymbeline, Guiderius and Arviragus. This page concludes a brief discussion of Malmutius’ reign:

**Mulmutius** Dunwallo...son of **Cloten**... **made** many good **laws** the which were long after used & called **Mulmutius’ laws**.... He **ordained** him a **crown** or diadem of **gold** & caused **himself** to be **crowned**.... And for this cause, after the opinion of some writers he is **named** the **first king of Britain**. And all the other before rehearsed are named rulers, dukes, or governours. (10v–11)

Here we not only find the origin of the name of Cloten, the main villain in the play, but this passage too:

Cymbeline: Say, then, to Caesar,  
Our ancestor was that **Mulmutius** which  
**Ordain'd our laws...**  
**Mulmutius made our laws,**  
Who was **the first of Britain** which did put  
His brows within a **golden crown** and call'd  
**Himself a king.**

We see once again an extraordinary and persistent match between the pages that North marked and the material used in *Cymbeline*.

The first page of North's longest string of marginalia begins on 16v, which is where Fabyan discusses briefly—in two paragraphs—the reign of Lud and then begins discussing the reign of Cassibelan. Next to this passage, North has marked the biblical date of the start of Cassibelan's reign (14). In the section on Lud in the preceding paragraphs, Fabyan focuses on his lone claim to fame: He built the walls around the ancient city of London, including the western gate known as "Lud's Gate." And, as Fabyan notes, Lud so often stayed in the city that it became known as "Caerlud or Lud's Town." In *Cymbeline*, London is exclusively referred to as "Lud's Town" four times (3.1.32; 4.2.99, 122; 5.5.480).

### ***Mirror for Magistrates* and Fabyan in North's Marginalia**

As noted previously, North's marginalia also coordinate Fabyan's passages with the verse-histories of *Mirror for Magistrates*, especially John Higgins' 1587 version. North's use of both makes sense. The series of poetic odes in *Mirror for Magistrates* would have provided North with a romantic view of Britons. But Fabyan's tome would then provide a more detailed, accurate, and prosaic treatment of the same subject matter. Below are three examples of North's marginalia near-quoting a poem title from *Mirror for Magistrates*:

*MM*: How Laelius **Hamo the Roman Captain** was **slain** after the slaughter of **Guiderius**<sup>9</sup>  
North: A stratagem of **Hamo a Roman Captain** that **slew Guiderius** the King (30)

*MM*: **Londricus the Pict** slain by **King Marius** of Britain ...<sup>10</sup>  
North: **Londricus and his Picts** overcomen in battle by **Marius the King** (36)

*MM*: **Severus the Emperor of Rome and governor of Britain** ...<sup>11</sup>  
North: ... **Severus, Emperour of Rome and governor of Britain** ... (37)

These lines establish unique connections between North's marginalia and *Mirror for Magistrates*. For example, the nearly identical eight-word string "Severus Emperour of Rome and Governour of Britain" was not actually his formal and official title. Rather, Fabyan writes that "Severus was made Emperor" and then notes several lines later that after 16 years of "rule it should appear that he should be taken for governor of this realm of Britain." A search of EEBO for all works that refer to Severus as "Emperor of Rome and Governor of Britain" (including spelling variations) yields only Higgins' poem. In fact, even without Severus, that particular word-string occurs nowhere else on Google or Google Books either, except in a work quoting *Mirror for Magistrates*.<sup>12</sup> Likewise, EEBO finds no other work that similarly juxtaposes *Hamo*, *Roman Captain*, and *Guiderius*.<sup>13</sup> These are unique connections necessarily establishing North's familiarity with these poems.

But as we have seen in the discussion of Hamo's murder and as we will continue to see below, North had also used much more than just these poem titles, often echoing lines or stressing the same subject material from these and other poems too. All told, North's marginalia show influence from ten of the dozens of poems of *Mirror for Magistrates*: 1) Brennus; 2) Nennius (a soldier fighting for Cassibelan), 3) Irenglas [Hirelda in North's Fabyan] cousin to King Cassibelan, 4) Caius Julius Caesar, 5) Guiderius, 6) Hamo, 7) Londricus the Pict, 8) Severus, 9) Helena, and 10) Harold.<sup>14</sup> All of them have some sort of relevance to *Cymbeline*—and, in fact, source scholars have already underscored the relevance of five of them: Nennius, Irenglas, Ceasar, Guiderius and Hamo.<sup>15</sup> We have also discussed the significance of two other poems— involving the warrior Picts and the defensive wall-of-turf built by Severus.

The three remaining poems that influenced North are on Brennus, Helena, and Harold. North's first marginal notes in the body of the text are on Brennus and his war with Guilthdac (i.e., Cutlack), and his notes closely match the highlights of the poem on the British king in *Mirror for Magistrates*. The story includes two major points of relevance to *Cymbeline*: Brennus sacked Rome, and he got into a war over tribute. But the story of Brennus vs. Cutlack is often mentioned in analyses of *Cymbeline* for another reason: *Cutlack* was the title of a now-lost play performed as early as 1594, and *Cutlack* might have served as a model for or otherwise influenced *Cymbeline* in some way. As Matthew Steggle wrote: "*Cutlack* would have been a member of the large group of early modern plays derived from Galfridian history. The most famous examples of the group might be *King Lear* and *Cymbeline*."<sup>16</sup> Scholars have also noted many similarities between the Brennus/Cutlack conflict and the story of *Hamlet*. Finally, as discussed above, the Brennus chapter mentions that he is the son of Malmutius, and the same page concludes a comment about Malmutius used in *Cymbeline*.

In the next sections, we will address the relevance of the final two poems—on Queen Helena and King Harold.

## Helene and Innogen: the Symbolic Threat of Invasion of a British Princess's Bedroom by an Italian

In *Cymbeline* 2.2., as Innogen is about to fall asleep, she hands a book to her waiting woman, Helene, and asks her to turn the corner of the page down where she had left off. The book recounts a classical tale of ravishment--the story of Philomela—and the page that Helene is asked to bend is at the point of the story where the violation occurs. This is relevant as the evil Iachimo is hiding in the trunk in Innogen's bedroom, waiting for Helene to leave and Innogen to fall asleep.

The reference to Philomel is not the only classical allusion to rape in the scene. When Iachimo describes the sleeping Innogen, he compares himself to Tarquin, the attacker of Lucrece. But the choice of the name Helene for the waiting woman, and the playwright's gratuitous use of it—the scene opens with Innogen asking, "Who's there? My woman Helene?" (2.2.1)—seems to offer a third such example.

Scholars have frequently noted that the Italian Iachimo's threatening invasion of the bedchamber of the British Princess was an analogous foreshadowing of Rome's invasion of Britain. Quoting Valerie Wayne:

It is structured by a relation between two forms of territorial invasion: in the first half, Britain's heir is at risk of being raped by a decadent Italian, who goes on to dishonor her reputation; in the second half the Romans invade Britain to retain it as part of their empire. First the princess' body natural is threatened, and then the country's geo-political territory must defend itself. The two halves are linked through an analogy between the physical body of the heir to the throne and the political realm of Britain.<sup>17</sup>

But few have noted that a similar analogy also appears in a poem in *Mirror for Magistrates* on Queen Helena, the great-great granddaughter of Cymbeline, in which the Roman Emperor Constantius first enters the British Court in order to take Helena without marriage, but she fends him off:

Then flitting Fame the truth to testify,  
**Against my will**, at Rome made such report,  
That *Constantius* thence did hither hie,  
And being **come unto** my Britain Court,  
**With lovers looks he striv'd to scale the Fort**  
Of my good will: but when it would not be,  
He sighing, thus addressed his talk to me<sup>18</sup>

By stressing the name of the waiting woman, Helene, the playwright was perhaps adding another classical allusion to ravishment to this same scene. Like Innogen, Helene avoids the assault. She also triumphed over Rome by marrying Constantius and then controlling him—or as Queen Helena herself puts it in *Mirror for Magistrates*: “His mightie Mace did rule the Monarchie,/ My wit did rule (some writers say) his Mace.”<sup>19</sup> The poem also stresses that she had brought Christianity to Britain—and then to Rome itself—and ended forever Britain’s obligation to pay Rome tribute (the same tribute first paid by Cassibelan): “For which I caus'd my husband to ordain, / ...that to Rome no *Briton* borne, for aye,/ Should tax, or toll, or tenth, or *tribute* pay.”<sup>20</sup> She also would then give birth to Emperor Constantine, representing Britain’s ultimate conquest. Rather than Rome ruling Britain, a Briton and her son were now ruling Rome. All of these elements have obvious thematic relevance to *Cymbeline*.

In other words, in this story of Helena we appear to find the origin of the *Cymbeline* analogy connecting the threat of ravishment of a British princess by an Italian to British-Roman conflict over tribute, all culminating in a British victory over Rome. Of course, it is well-known the Iachimo-Innogen story line also derives from a story in Boccaccio’s *Decameron* and the German *Frederyke of Jennen*, but now we see the motivation behind the choice of this subplot.

But most importantly of all, the name of Innogen’s waiting woman who turns this page down, is *Helene*—ending with an “e” not an “a.” And this is a close match to the spelling in North’s marginal comment (42): *Heleyne*.

### **Edward the Confessor’s Dream-Like Prophecy and Posthumus’ Prophecy**

North’s comment on Queen Heleyne appears on page 26v, ending a string of 37 marginal notes from the beginning chapters of Fabyan. North’s final set of marginal notes run through pages 133–136v, more than 200 pages later. The chapter discusses the end of the life of Edward the Confessor, renowned as a Virgin King and one of the last Anglo-Saxon monarchs, and introduces Duke William of Normandy, better-known as William the Conqueror. William famously invaded and defeated King Harold, Edward’s legal English successor, at the battle of Hastings in 1066. The Norse-French Normans then ruled England until 1154.

But this particular time-period in British history had important parallels to early 17<sup>th</sup> century England. Specifically, Edward’s life as a Virgin Monarch with no sure successor had seemed to imperil the future of the monarchy—something that would have been relatable to an anxious audience at the end of the Virgin Elizabeth’s reign. And as pointed out by H.L. Rogers in an important article in *The Review of English Studies*, Edward’s death-bed dream-vision of a tree offered a useful new-era prophesy that could be re-used at the end of *Cymbeline* to help quell these anxieties.

As with Edward the Confessor, Posthumus also has a prophetic dream about a tree that was symbolic of first the dismemberment and reunification of a nation. The shared elements include the following:

- 1) In Edward’s vision, people familiar to him deliver the prophecy from God. Likewise, in Posthumus’ dream, his family members deliver the prophecy from Jupiter.
- 2) Both dream-like visions do *not* refer simply to a dead tree revived, but to a much more peculiar and supernatural event: a tree with branches that are lopped off and separated from it. These branches then miraculously migrate, somehow and without the aid of people, back to the tree.
- 3) Afterward, both Edward’s and Posthumus’ dream were considered irrational illusions with no deeper significance.
- 4) In both play and history, the allegorical prophecy is then coherently explained, element by element, and shown to have come true.

On page 135, North underlines (46), *nunc aliud tempus alii pro tempore mores* (“This is another time, and you frame your manners to the time”).<sup>21</sup> This was the rationalizing reply of the clergy to the accusation that they were now living wasteful lives of extravagance—and were not the ascetic followers of God that the clergy had used to be. After a few intervening stories, Fabian returns to the sinfulness of the clergy as prompting Edward the Confessor’s prophecy. North’s last marginal note (53) occurs on 136v, noting the “realm of England after King Edward’s death.” Edward dies and the chapter concludes on the next pages—137–137v—with tapering end-of-chapter text that concludes Edward’s prophecy. As shown below, it is quite clear that Fabian’s passage is necessarily the inspiration for the similar prophecy in *Cymbeline*:

Fabian’s <i>Chronicle</i> :	<i>Cymbeline</i> :
<p><b>when</b> a green tree is hewn down, and a part thereof cut <b>from</b> the <b>stock</b>, and laid .iii. furlong from <b>the stock</b> and without man’s help or hand <b>shall</b> return to his <b>stock</b> or root, and take again his shape, and <b>then flourish</b> and bring forth <b>fruit</b>, when this is done / <b>then</b> maybe hope of <b>comfort</b> and of remedy.</p>	<p><b>when</b> from a stately cedar shall be lopped branches, which, being dead many years, <b>shall</b> after revive, be jointed <b>to the old stock</b> and freshly grow; then shall Posthumus end his miseries, Britain be fortunate and <b>flourish</b> in peace and plenty.”</p>
<p>The which said unto the other, that the king raved or else doted for age and sickness, as</p>	<p>'Tis still a dream, or else such stuff as madmen Tongue and brain not; either both or nothing; Or senseless speaking or a speaking such</p>

old men done and accompted these words for folly and vanity. (137v)	As sense cannot untie. (5.4.110–118)
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Holinshed also takes this prophecy from Fabian, and Rogers assumes Shakespeare borrowed it from Holinshed. But had Rogers checked Fabian’s recounting of this same vision, he would have discovered that Fabian includes another important element not found in Holinshed that nevertheless inspired an important subplot in the play. Famously, Edward the Confessor fell into a long coma before he died. Just prior to that, however, Edward had strangely told the miracle-story of the seven sleepers of Ephesus, who, trying to avoid persecution for their faith, had allegedly escaped to and become sealed off in a cave in Mount Ceylon. They then slept there for 200 years until the cave was unsealed, and they woke up on being found. This story, which does not appear in Holinshed, foreshadows Edward’s own divinely inspired sleep. This also helps explain the mountain-cave setting of *Cymbeline* and Innogen’s deathlike-sleep in that cave, as well as the tragicomedy’s obsession with deep-sleep and people falling asleep on stage [2.2, 4.2, 5.5].

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> North’s date looks more like 5542 than 5142, but if so, it is just a slip of the pen, as the date in the paragraph is clearly 5142.

<sup>2</sup> Two other hands are also discernible in the marginalia.

<sup>3</sup> Valerie Wayne, ed., *Cymbeline*, The Arden Shakespeare Third Series (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 54. See also Henry Spelman, “Of the Union,” in *The Jacobean Union: Six Tracts of 1604*, ed. Bruce R. Galloway and Brian P. Levack (Edinburgh: Scottish Historical Society, 185), 161-84; 170.

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Escobedo, “From Britannia to England: Cymbeline and the Beginning of Nations,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 59 (2008): 60-87; 68.

<sup>5</sup> This is also historically accurate. “Augustus” was an honorific that was added to Octavian Caesar’s title in 27 BC, which is after the events of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*—but before the events of *Cymbeline*.

<sup>6</sup> Robin Moffet, “Cymbeline and the Nativity,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 13 (1962): 207–218; 207.

<sup>7</sup> Martin Butler, ed., *Cymbeline*, The New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 222. See also Patricia Parker, “*Cymbeline*: Arithmetic, Double-Entry Bookkeeping, Counts,

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and Accounts,” *Sederi: Yearbook of the Spanish and Portuguese Society for English Renaissance Studies* 23 (2013), 95–119: 104

<sup>8</sup> A description of “showers of blood, rain’d from the wounds” and a “crimson tempest should bedrench/The fresh green lap of fair King Richard’s land” also appears in *Richard II* (3.3.45-9). This does not necessarily demand a connection, but it shows the playwright’s interest in such imagery.

<sup>9</sup> John Higgins, *The mirour for migistrates [sic]...newly imprinted, and with the addition of diuers tragedies enlarged* (London: Henry Marsh, 1587), 88v.

<sup>10</sup> Higgins, 95v.

<sup>11</sup> Higgins, 96v.

<sup>12</sup> When we search Google and Google Books for “Emperour of Rome and Gouvernour of Britaine,” we find only one work, a book that recreates the table of contents of *Mirror for Magistrates*. Also, Google and Google Books confirm that no work contains that word-string when spelling has been modernized or Americanized, e.g., “Emperor of Rome and Governor of Britain.”

<sup>13</sup> An EEBO search for Hamo NEAR/10 Roman\* PRE/0 Captain NEAR/10 Guiderius results only in an edition of *Mirror for Magistrates*.

<sup>14</sup> Nearly all of these poems appear in John Higgins, *The mirour for migistrates [sic]...newly imprinted, and with the addition of diuers tragedies enlarged* (London: Henry Marsh, 1587), including Nennius (66v-71v), Irenglas (72- 76v), Caius Julius Caesar (77-83); Guiderius (87v-88v), Hamo (88v), Londricus (95v-96), and Severus (96v-99). But North also seems to have looked at three poems in an earlier edition: Thomas Blenerhasset, *The Seconde Part of the Mirror for Magistrates Containing the Falls of the Infortunate Princes of This Land, from the Conquest of Caesar unto the Coming of Duke William the Conqueror* (London: Richard Webster, 1578), especially for Guiderius—another version of the poem on Guiderius—(2v-8v), Queen Helena (18-23), and Harold (62-65). Importantly, Harold Brooke and Kenneth Muir also firmly restate Harold F. Brooke’s position that the playwright has used both these editions of *Mirror for Magistrates*: “Professor Harold F. Brooks has shown conclusively that Shakespeare made extensive use of *The Mirror for Magistrates* in his dramatization of the refusal to pay tribute—not merely of Benerhasset’s ‘Guiderius,’ but also of four tragedies by Higgins in the 1587 edition.” Kenneth Muir, *The Sources of Shakespeare’s Plays* (New York: Routledge, 1977), 260. See also note below.

<sup>15</sup> See Kenneth Muir, *Shakespeare’s Sources: Comedies and Tragedies* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 260-62, and Harold F. Brooks, “Act III and Scene 1 and *The Mirror for Magistrates*,” in *Cymbeline*, New Arden Edition, ed. J. M. Nosworthy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), 209-12.

<sup>16</sup> Matthew Steggle, *Digital Humanities and the Lost Drama of Early Modern England: Ten Case Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

<sup>17</sup> Wayne, *Cymbeline*, 64.

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<sup>18</sup> Thomas Blennerhasset, *The Seconde Part of the Mirror for Magistrates...* (London: Richard Webster, 1578), 19.

<sup>19</sup> Blennerhasset, 21.

<sup>20</sup> Blennerhasset, 21v.

<sup>21</sup> This is fairly close to lines in *The Taming of the Shrew*: “‘tis no time to jest, /And therefore frame your manners to the time” (1.1.212-13).