

**THE BIRTHE OF HERCULES: WITH AN
INTRODUCTION ON THE INFLUENCE OF
PLAUTUS ON THE DRAMATIC
LITERATURE OF ENGLAND IN THE
SIXTEENTH CENTURY, A DISSERTATION**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649484331

The Birthe of Hercules: With an Introduction on the Influence of Plautus on the Dramatic Literature of England in the Sixteenth Century, a Dissertation by Malcolm William Wallace

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MALCOLM WILLIAM WALLACE

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BIRTHE OF HERCULES

WITH AN INTRODUCTION ON

THE INFLUENCE OF PLAUTUS ON THE DRAMATIC
LITERATURE OF ENGLAND IN THE
SIXTEENTH CENTURY

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ARTS, LITERATURE,
AND SCIENCE OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
(DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH)

BY

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CHICAGO
SCOTT, FORESMAN AND COMPANY
1903

144 146
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Harvard College Lib.

July 5 1900

By Exchange

Univ. of Chicago.

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TYPOGRAPHY BY
MANN, AITKEN & CURTIS COMPANY, CHICAGO

PREFACE

THE BIRTH OF HERCULES, which is preserved in a single manuscript — British Museum MS., Add. 28722 — is now published for the first time. I have attempted to follow the manuscript copy accurately except in two particulars: the punctuation has been modernized, and contracted words have been written in full. Practically all cases of contracted words occurring in the play together with their expanded forms, are included in the following list:

y ^e —the, thee	contentm ^t —contentment
y ^e —that	commaudem ^t —commaudemēt
w ^t —what	serūntes—seruautes
yo ^r —your	educacōn—educacion
hono ^r —honour	reputacōn—reputacion
w th —with	geñall—generall
w ^{ch} —which	mēchantes—merchantes
m ^r —master	pte—parte
m ^{rs} —mistres	pchance—perchance
should ^r —shoulders	deptare—departure
ord ^r —order	pswade—perswade
coñmend—commend	phapps—perhapps
coñytted—commytted	pfytlic—perfytlie

The spelling has been changed only to the extent of inserting the apostrophe in the expression “I’ faith”.

The beginning of a new folio of the manuscript has been indicated by a dagger. Original stage directions are preserved in parentheses; others are enclosed in brackets.

The present publication of the play is made possible by the courtesy of Professor F. I. Carpenter, of the University of Chicago, who, while studying in the British Museum, examined the manuscript, had a copy made, and ultimately gave it to the present writer to edit. Professor Carpenter has extended his courtesy to the reading of the proof of the play, and I am further under obligation to him, as well as to Professor A. H.

PREFACE

Tolman, of Chicago, for valuable suggestions in preparing the Introduction. But my chiefest debt of gratitude is due Professor John M. Manly, of Chicago. From the very beginning of my work his advice and criticism have been of inestimable value, and his unfailing kindness has ended only with the reading of the final proof sheets. I can not adequately express my grateful appreciation of his interest in my work.

MALCOLM W. WALLACE

BELoit, Wis., *January 20, 1903.*

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INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

A SKETCH OF THE EARLY HISTORY OF CLASSICAL STUDY IN ENGLAND

The English universities of the Middle Ages knew very little about the classic Latin authors. Theology, rhetoric, philosophy, and canon and civil law were the subjects upon which their efforts were concentrated, to the almost absolute exclusion of the arts. Latin, to be sure, was the one language used in the universities, both in text-books and disputations, but it was the Latin of comparatively late Christian writers—a “barbarous jargon” which had traveled far from the standard of the time of Tully. And yet the authors of the flowering time of Roman literature were not entirely forgotten. As early as 1178 and 1180 we find English transcriptions of Terence¹—the work of Henry of Winchester, and Benedict, Abbot of Peterborough—and references to classic authors are frequent in the writings of the monks. Hugh Pudsey, Archdeacon of Winchester and Bishop of Durham, who died in 1195, bequeathed among other books *Tullius de Amicitia*.² In 1248 the library of Glastonbury Abbey was the richest in England, and though its total wealth consisted of only four hundred volumes³ it contained copies of Livy, Sallust, Seneca, Tully *de Senectute et Amicitia*, Vergil, Persius, and Claudian. But the monks did not study the classical authors seriously, nor appreciate their literary excellence, nor in any way attempt to make them models of prose composition. “A university education,” Mr. H. E. D. Blakiston tells us, “commenced at an early age with the acquisition of a working knowledge of Latin, the language of theology, law, and science, in the *Schools of Grammar*, where the text-

¹ Not translations, however, as Reinhardtstœtner supposes them to have been; v. *Plautus und Terenz und ihr Einfluss auf die spätere Litteraturen*, I, p. 74.

² *Wills and Inventories* (Surtees Society, 1836), p. 4.

³ *Catalogi Veteres Librorum Ecclesie Cathedralis Dunelmensis* (Surtees Society, 1838).