

# Conflicting notions of time in *Antony and Cleopatra*

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[journals.sagepub.com/home/tas](http://journals.sagepub.com/home/tas)**Maria Valentini**Department of Literature and Philosophy, University of  
Cassino and Lazio Meridionale, Cassino, Italy**Abstract**

The question of time is part of a general psychological reorientation which takes place in the Renaissance and appears in many of Shakespeare's plays as a theme upon which to reflect. Time, no longer beneficial, becomes a source of anxiety: feudal time, linked to land and cultivation, providing comfort because the eternal repetition of natural cycles gives the illusion of reversibility, and therefore of a time which is redeemable, gives way to the notion of linear time, irreversible, unredeemable, the time of History (cf. Le Goff, Panofsky, Deleuze).

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, we find these different concepts of time battling against each other; Rome's opposition to Alexandria, and Caesar's opposition to Antony represent also two contrasting notions of time. Caesar's time, and indeed Rome's time, is very close to this new, modern concept, whose roots lie also in the springs and coils of renaissance machinery, time linked to power and money; wasting time means 'being similar to beasts, he who wastes his time does not deserve to be called a man' (cf. Le Goff). This is the kind of time Antony cannot face. Antony is tied to the past, but also to time as *Aion*, Cleopatra and Egypt's time, associated with the ever-present, (cf. Heraclitus, Augustine), a time which is outside of history, a time which does not seem to lead inexorably to death and which is opposed to time as *Chronos*, linear and irreversible, time of history, the time of Rome. But *Chronos* is not simply 'time the destroyer'; it opposes itself to chaos, it also means order, it means law. Roman time and Egyptian time can be seen as belonging to these two categories as does Caesar's time when confronted with Antony's time.

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The questions of time and temporal response are, in Quinones' words, 'factors in distinguishing Renaissance from medieval'.<sup>1</sup> The notion of feudal time, linked to land and cultivation, which provided comfort because the eternal repetition of natural cycles gave the illusion of reversibility, of a recoverable past, gives way to the conception of linear time, unidirectional and irreversible, time of history. Power, originally linked with the ownership of land, a static-spatial element, passes into the hands of those who are 'mobile', able to take advantage of time and money. Jacques Le Goff in his study of the changing concept of time speaks in fact of the birth of 'merchant's time', urban and mechanical, marked by clocks and precious because inextricably linked to commerce and gain in which 'the idler who wastes his time and does not measure it was like an animal and not worthy of being considered a man'.<sup>2</sup> In this renewed climate, it is no longer possible to rely on the past in order to obtain present glory; action alone will allow recognition.

Naturally debate around 'time' was not new, and in the course of previous centuries, it had been at the centre of much religious and philosophical speculation as well as having various iconographic representations. One of the oppositions mentioned by Erwin Panofsky, among others, in his *Studies in Iconology* seems well suited to illustrate these transformations occurring in the Renaissance and, clearly, in Shakespeare's time. It is the concept of time as *Aion* of Iranian origin which is the 'the divine principle of eternal and inexhaustible creativeness',<sup>3</sup> which is represented as being equipped with attributes of power and, as with other ancient representations of time, lacks any symbols of advanced age or decay but exhibits, rather, signs of fertility. The elements which we generally link with time such as the hourglass or the scythe suggesting instead inexorability and destruction are associated with images connected with the Greek word for time which is *Chronos*; it was the similarity with the word *Kronos*, the Roman Saturn, patron of agriculture and therefore carrying a sickle, which gave rise to the connection which was then accepted by the Neoplatonics who reinterpreted the original features as symbols of time passing, and death approaching. Time as *Chronos* is time the destroyer, the kind we find in the *Sonnets*, 'Time [...] Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth/And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow'(60) and in some plays, but it is not simply that, it opposes itself to chaos, it is rigid, it does not allow delay, and it is also in this sense that it is opposed to *Aion* the more primitive and

almost sacred time of an ever-present which recalls the temporal conceptions of Heraclitus and St Augustine<sup>4</sup>; these divergent visions of time together with other direct and indirect references to temporal conceptions contribute to clarifying the fundamental oppositions in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* and, in my view, act as a substrate to the text as a whole. The main contrast between Alexandria and Rome, and between Antony and Octavius Caesar, implies these two notions of time. Caesar's time, and indeed Rome's time, is very close to this new concept whose roots lie also in the springs and coils of Renaissance machinery, the kind of time Antony cannot face, finding himself instead trapped in his own past and in the earlier conception of time as *Aion*, Cleopatra and Egypt's time.

Shakespeare's works contain abundant references to time with its many implications which have attracted much specific critical attention,<sup>5</sup> from the more explicit ones such as in the *Sonnets* where it is personified and directly invoked, to instances in the plays where it carries diverse meanings: it may be synonymous with rhythm and harmony, 'When time is broke and no proportion kept' (*Richard II*, 5,5,43) or can be called upon for help 'O time, you must unravel this, not I' (*Twelfth Night*, 2.2.39), identified in one of its attributes 'A great-sized monster of ingratitude' (*Troilus*, 3.3.146), observed in its relativity 'Time travels in diverse paces with diverse persons' (*As You Like It*, 3.2.308-9) or actually appear on stage as chorus with the promise to restore through the power of regeneration as in *A Winter's Tale*, to mention just a few examples. Nothing quite so overt occurs in *Antony and Cleopatra* and yet aspects of temporal dynamics are constantly at play from the very beginning.

The opening scene which in many ways functions as a thematic index of the play offers the Roman condemnatory view of an Antony whose heart 'in the scuffles of great fights hath burst/The buckles on his breast' and is now transformed into a 'strumpet's fool'<sup>6</sup> introducing that pervasive 'backward-looking'<sup>7</sup> which is characteristic of the play; Mark Antony's actions are always set against his heroic past which becomes 'significantly the only unquestioned ideal in the play',<sup>8</sup> but which no longer suffices for the demands of political affairs. However, it is not just the 'Roman view' which stresses the superiority of this past as in Octavius Caesar's words in the fourth scene of this same first act when he recalls the valiancy of the soldier Antony in previous battles who drank 'the stale of horses' and ate 'strange flesh,/Which some did die to look on' (1.4.62, 67-8), but it is Antony himself who is aware of this when he accuses Caesar for 'harping on what I am/Not what he knew I was' (3.13.142-3). This emphasis on the 'absent' valorous Roman general will of course reach its apotheosis through Cleopatra's creative memory after his death, but the Antony she imagines is not the one we have seen in this play; relying on the store of the past is no longer sufficient

as the events will demonstrate. The first lines of the play also introduce the distinction between the current 'overflowing' Egyptian conduct of Antony against the desirable Roman 'measure', two extremes which will characterize the play and which relate to the temporal conceptions delineated so far.

The announcement of messengers from Rome which follows and Antony's reluctance to see them is also a refusal to accept the pressures of Roman time and the exclamation, 'Now for the love of Love, and her soft hours,/Let's not confound the time with conference harsh' (1.1.44-7) suggests the smoothness of flowing time which will characterize the Egyptian scenes against the unforgiving hardness of the political time of Rome; Octavius himself will use the same term 'confound' (1.4.28) related to time when talking about Antony's behaviour with Cleopatra. Caesar's time, Roman time, as we shall see, is very close to the new 'merchant's time' mentioned by Le Goff and it is also to this quantified, calculable, fast moving and unidirectional time that Antony will oppose himself; interestingly Plutarch himself had said of Antony: 'he yielded himself to go with Cleopatra into Alexandria, where he spent and lost in childish sports (as man might say) and idle pastimes the most precious thing a man can spend, as Antiphon saith: and that is time'.<sup>9</sup> Antony's desire for his 'soft hours' not to be contaminated by the harshness of Roman time ties in with one of the main strands of metaphor in the play: the fluid, melting imagery of the Egyptian scenes against the solid measured and measurable tone of the Roman ones ('There's beggary in the love that can be reckon'd' Antony had said, 1.1.15). Similarly, time as *Aion*, essentially ahistoric, cyclical, associated as we saw with the ever-present, will be seen to rule in Alexandria whilst *Chronos*, the new time, in its almost mathematical linearity will be a prerogative in Rome. A difference in pace which emerges through the somnolent, drowsy atmosphere of Cleopatra's ladies with the eunuch and the soothsayer in the first part of the second scene compared to an apparently reborn Roman Antony who finally having accepted to see the messengers speaks in verse, exhibiting seriousness and responsibility, receiving information concerning war and death which demands his presence; in 20 verses, three messengers enter bearing news of the victory of Labenius and the death of Fulvia creating a dramatic sense of speed and urgency. Antony's farewell scene to the queen once again suggests the two time schemes: Cleopatra recalling 'the time for words; no going then;/Eternity was in our lips and eyes' to which significantly Antony replies 'The strong necessity of time commands/Our services awhile' (1.3.34-5, 43-4). The sense of stasis evoked by Cleopatra's lines is further reinforced by the final scene of the act dominated by the effect of mandragora through which the Egyptian queen wishes to annul time whilst her lover is away. Time

becomes a kind of non-time, a suspension of time; if, as Aristotle claimed, time is the measure of motion and change, here in the absence of Antony nothing happens, everything is stillness and fantasy. The only time which is mentioned here is that witnessed by Cleopatra's wrinkles ('Wrinkled deep in time', 1.5.29), but there is no sense of a nostalgic past in her, she does not long for her 'salad days' or consider her old passion for Julius Caesar superior to her current love; unlike Antony, her present is superior to her past, and it is only after his death that a nostalgic memory appears transforming itself into images. David Kaula has associated the three main characters in this play with a temporal dimension: Antony with the past, Cleopatra with the present and Caesar with the future; in Cleopatra's case, this is primarily justified by the images connected with her, 'such as those of the ebb and flow of the Nile, having to do with the cyclical processes of nature',<sup>10</sup> this cyclic temperament which allows her to see life and death as part of a single experience contributes to her incorporation into time as *Aion*.

The second act which is mostly 'Roman' does not reveal the picture we might have expected from the comments which opposed Roman values to Egyptian frivolity in the first act, rectitude, morality, constancy,<sup>11</sup> coherence in judgment, in fact 'the Romans who should be able to provide a framework of moral reference for the play, hardly succeed in doing so [...] No fixed moral center can be located in the Roman sphere, for most of the information that circulates there is unreliable'.<sup>12</sup> This is part of the difficulty in finding moral bearings in this play where, as Janet Adelman has pointed out, uncertainty features as one of the prime characteristics and 'almost every major action [...] is in some degree inexplicable'.<sup>13</sup> So Antony himself now calls his Egyptian time 'poisoned hours' and apparently seamlessly accepts the marriage with Octavia immersing himself in the Roman *Chronos* time where swiftness and progress require action rather than pondering: 'Time calls upon's/Of us must Pompey presently be sought' (2.2.157-8) says Lepidus and Antony, momentarily free from his *Aion* time has now adopted the language and the rhythm of the time of the merchant '*Haste* we for it [...] *despatch* we the business we have talk'd of' and Caesar will take Antony to Octavia '*Wither straight I'll lead you*' and Lepidus adds '*Not* sickness should *detain* me' (2.2.164-70, my italics). Yet the rhythm and time of Egypt breaks in through the words of Enobarbus who implies that in Alexandria, they are not slaves of time but rather it is time which serves their desires 'we did sleep day out of countenance; and made the night light with drinking' (2.2.177-8) and who provides the famous description of Cleopatra on the Cydnus, a Cleopatra who is not subject to time ('Age cannot wither her'), who appears as a true emanation of *Aion*, of that ever-present, regenerating time which knows no end ('she makes hungry where most she satisfies') and it is against

this image which Octavia will be measured when she appears. Like her brother and in the typical Roman fashion, she promises to act rationally not annulling time but using it to pray for Antony while he's away.

The natural order of time presiding in Rome is in some way subverted through the presence of the Egyptian soothsayer who prophesizes Caesar's better luck when confronted with Antony; the future by its very nature is unknown to man and hearing it in advance, as *Macbeth* teaches us, can only bring on tragedy. Antony seems aware of the truthfulness of the soothsayer's words, 'my better cunning faints/Under his chance' (2.3.33-4) and his actions, already unfavourably measured against his glorious and irrecoverable past, now face an ineluctable future. The introduction of the element of chance is linked to another temporal dimension: chance, like fortune, is often determined by performing an action at the 'right moment', the most opportune time, and once again we can observe a classical representation of time, the one known as *Kairos*, the 'brief, decisive moment which marks a turning-point in the life of human beings' a concept 'illustrated by the figure vulgarly known as Opportunity'.<sup>14</sup> It is also in this sense that time is on Caesar's side, it is not simply, as Northrop Frye observes, that Octavius is luckier in a precise moment, but that his fortune is better synchronized with the natural course of events; the lack of respect for this natural order is what often determines Shakespearian tragedy.<sup>15</sup> Octavius who respects time as *Chronos* is also favoured by it, but good luck here is not a recompense of the gods; it is rather fortune in the Machiavellian sense, the result of political promptness and shrewdness, the consequence of *Kairos*.

The temporal opposition of the Egyptian and Roman scenes appears in its full force in the central part of the play where the fifth scene of the second act is an exact continuation of the previous Alexandria scene where Cleopatra abandoned herself to Mandragora, though it must be occurring after enough time to have allowed Antony to reach Rome, get married, and the messengers to return to Egypt with the news; an identity of atmosphere which will continue into the third scene of the third act where Cleopatra calls back the messenger she brutally sends away at the end of the second act. This creates an Egyptian continuum of stasis, of memories and fantasy upon which the Roman scenes containing action and news are inserted, two time schemes which hark back to a flowing effeminate Egypt with eunuchs and ladies led by a queen, where wine and Mandragora distort and dilate time compared to a busy, political Roman world, the world of policy and important decisions. And yet the scenes which show the triumvirs with Pompey are tinted with anecdotes of the past, prophecies, and curiosity into the habits of the Egyptians and what in Plutarch was a simple feast to celebrate the agreements becomes an orgy of drunkenness ending in song and dance. During the frequently incoherent

dialogue taking place on Pompey's galley, Antony says to Octavius 'Be a child o' the time' to which Caesar replies 'Possess it, I'll make answer' (2.7.98-9); on no occasion can Caesar succumb or abandon his *Chronos* time, his final victory depends on his rigid conformity to the requirements of modern time.

The crisis following Antony's predictable return to Cleopatra once again echoes two ways of inhabiting time. Octavius in trying to comfort his abandoned sister, like Antony, associates time with 'strong necessities':

Be you not troubled with the time, which drives  
O'er your content these strong necessities,  
But let determin'd things to destiny  
Hold unbewail'd their way (3.6.82-5)

In Antony's case, the strong necessities of time brought about his departure for Rome from Alexandria, whereas here Caesar is suggesting that Octavia should not to suffer for what could not have been otherwise. What has occurred is intrinsic to the development of time in a historical-political sense, and Caesar's words confirm his faith in the future; in fact convinced of his own power, he applies to Roman time the form of a necessary universal destiny. Antony's fate seems instead marred; his decision to fight at sea being stronger on land and to let Cleopatra be by his side meets with disapproval particularly from Enobarbus and once again whilst Antony indulges in conversation, we note the emphasis on his incredulity concerning Caesar's rapid movements: 'Is it not strange, Canidius,/That from Tarentum, and Brundisium/He could *so quickly* cut the Ionian sea? (3.7.20-2), *Can he be there in person?*'Tis impossible;/Strange that his power should be' (3.7.56-7) and Canidius shares his surprise '*This speed of Caesar's* carries beyond belief' (3.7.73-4) (my italics).

Of the three coordinates in the evolution of the representations of Father Time noted so far, the figure of *Kairos*, associated with the idea of chance, is most prominent from the battle scenes onwards when Caesar's fortune rises higher, as the soothsayer had predicted, leading Enobarbus to speak of 'wounded chance of Antony' (3.10.36) and Antony himself to observe 'Fortune knows,/We scorn her most, when most she offers blows' (3.11.73-4), while Cleopatra will say of Caesar 'Not being Fortune, he's but Fortune's knave/A minister of her will' (V.2., 2-3). A.H. Bell has in fact hypothesized that 'Time in this play seems identical with Fortuna herself, the enigmatic goddess who hurls opportunities and demands, pleasures and sorrows with seemingly senseless abandon'<sup>16</sup> which however seems only one aspect of the more complex interactions of the time schemes at play. Antony's inability to keep up with Roman pace and its corollaries is

particularly clear in his remark 'I am so *lated* in the world that I/Have lost my way forever (3.11.3-4, my italics) after his first defeat; late and out of time, just as too late the news of Cleopatra's false suicide will reach him with irremediable consequences. This continuous hovering between two worlds and two temporal modes revealing Antony's inability to inhabit the more modern concept of *Chronos* is demonstrated also by the repeated emphasis placed on the youth of Caesar ('scarce-bearded Caesar', 1.1.21; 'the boy Caesar', 3.13.17; 'young Roman boy', 4.12.48) with respect to an ageing Antony, which makes them appear as belonging to successive periods of time, the nascent one of Octavius and the waning one of the older general. Antony's behaviour is in fact often made to appear as anachronistic, almost as if linked to an older world of chivalry, as in his insistence on fighting Caesar in a personal duel or in his apparent role as an ancient warrior when leaving Cleopatra ('I go from hence/Thy soldier, servant, making peace or war,/As thou affects', 1.3.69-71) a difference in generation which enhances the frequently remarked opposition between a sensual and irrational Antony and a cold, calculating Caesar. And almost in an attempt to catch up with this 'lateness' in preparing for the next battle, Antony twice exclaims 'To business that we love, we rise betime' (4.4.20) and 'This morning [...] begins betime' (26-7), with an expression that suggests the attempt to finally conquer the opportune moment. But the preceding scene in which the God Hercules abandons him and the news of Enobarbus' defection are both omens of the forthcoming tragedy.

The episode of Enobarbus' demise reveals a further aspect of contrasting notions of time. We know it takes place in less than an hour as we hear at the beginning of the scene the sentry saying 'If we be not reliev'd within this hour' and after the death of Enobarbus 'our hour is fully out' (4.9. 1, 31). During this time, believing he has only the moon as a witness, Enobarbus faces his own *anagnorisis* 'O Antony,/Nobler than my revolt is infamous,/Forgive me in thine own particular' (18-20), whilst the sentries stand by unnoticed approaching him only after his death. The few verses which compose this scene oppose chronological time, the objective time of clocks, which clearly will continue after the death of Enobarbus to what we can consider subjective time. Sypher observes that 'tragic recognition or *anagnorisis* is like an arrest of time', an existential lived time, a suspension of clock time, whereas chronicle time is a sort of dead time, a neutral time which cannot constitute tragedy, a 'chronology untouched by poetry'.<sup>17</sup> In this short scene, exactly these two temporal modes are seen to coexist, the personal, tragic and poetic time of the Roman deserter, which is arrest of time, within the framework of continuing mechanical time inexorably marked by reference to clock time which will not allow the audience to forget the demands of history. Interestingly, this distinction finds



correspondence in Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*, where he proposes the concept of *Umwelt* for what he terms the world as environment, the chronological succession of events, and of *Eigenwelt* for what we might call subjective, personal time which corresponds to authentic individuality, an interior process which cannot be measured by the traditional before and after, in which chronology is irrelevant, the time Enobarbus seems to be experiencing at this moment against the time surrounding him.<sup>18</sup>

In the final part of the play, after Cleopatra's presumed treason and Antony's untamable anger, we observe the protagonists' attempts to escape from time. The false news of the Egyptian queen's death, leads Antony to exclaim that 'for now/All length is torture' (4.14.45-6), no time exists that can provide his comfort, not the adherence to the political, merchant's time of *Chronos*, which he has never succeeded in mastering, nor the reassuring *Aion* with its sense of durability, but only the flight into the atemporal, 'where souls do couch on flowers' (51), a world outside of time. And even resorting to memory, which has been Antony's refuge, assumes more the tone of raving 'I, that with my sword/Quarter'd the world' (56-7), his time is over, submission to Caesar and to his time is unthinkable, like a true Roman he must take his life, but with the aid of Eros whom he orders: 'Do't, the time is come' (67). Eros' own sacrifice leads to Antony's bungled suicide, but the end is near as the guards who find him realize, as they realize that there is something definitive in the death of the triumvir 'time is at his period' (107-8). The death of Antony is the end of a cycle, the end of a time which is also the end of a historical-political phase, the end of the alliance of Rome with the Oriental states, favoured by Antony and which will end with him. And yet at the same time, the scene manifests the impossibility of pure tragedy, constantly reiterated in the play; even in his final attainment, Antony is the victim of deception.

Even Antony's last piece of advice to Cleopatra, that of trusting only one of Caesar's men, Proculeius, will reveal itself to be fallacious, confirming that the future, in this case in the form of prediction, is hostile to him. His final lines instead corroborate once again his reliance on the past, evoking the memory of himself as 'greatest prince o'the world'(4.15.53), and stress his desire to be remembered as one who was not overthrown but rather triumphed over himself; the quasi-obsessive repetition of his own name implies the need to establish an imposing identity which he hopes will outlive him. This quest for fame – which Cleopatra will follow in the final act – is also part of the Renaissance reorientation concerning time, one of the fundamental impulses which ensure eternity and defeat of time:<sup>19</sup> what matters is which story, or rather, whose story will remain for posterity. After Antony's death, Caesar tries to arrange that a living Cleopatra be brought back to Rome to ensure his complete triumph, whilst the Egyptian

queen will of course stage her own death and in her own way defeat the future Augustus.

Cleopatra's proposed suicide is expressed in her famous verses 'it is great/To do that thing that ends all other deeds/Which shackles accidents and bolts up change' (5.2.3-5), verses which allow us to think of the end of Aristotelian time, time defined as measure of movement, time as change which Cleopatra now wishes to bolt up. Time becomes now the time of dream and imagination, and the glorious Antony of the past becomes a mythical figure, one whose 'legs bestrid the ocean' and whose 'rear'd arm/Crested the world' (5.2.82-3); memory blends with fantasy creating an image which surpasses time entering the world of myth and therefore an atemporal dimension. Memory in the course of the play has held a particular role; it has magnified the absent character enlarging past deeds – not just those of Antony but also in Enobarbus' description of Cleopatra on the Cydnus for instance – and reaches in the final scene a kind of apotheosis. It is what Edmund Husserl calls 'secondary memory', distinguishing it from 'primary memory' or 'retention'; 'primary memory' is an act still held in grasp by the mind, a recent event which is still present in our thoughts, whereas 'secondary memory', which has been predominant throughout the play, rather than presenting the past represents it, recreates it, involving consciousness and imagination.<sup>20</sup> *Antony and Cleopatra* is in fact anomalous for the amount of space allotted to the recounted past; memory and memories have occupied more space than actual events and Cleopatra now recreates the image of her dead lover attempting to give it fixity as she will do with herself when dying with her robe and crown in the Roman fashion. The creation of the mythical pair, *Antony and Cleopatra*, escapes time or, rather, obtains eternity if, as Roland Barthes claims, myth 'transforme l'histoire en nature',<sup>21</sup> and nature cannot be modified or be subjected to interpretation. Cleopatra's death as the end of her time, the time of her 'infinite variety', is expressed in her own words as a journey towards a fixed state 'now from head to foot/I am marble constant' (237-8) and her desires are no longer for the time of *Aion*, the ever-present, but for time as eternity 'I have/Immortal longings in me' (279-80).

The end of the play has received much critical attention: in many ways, the deaths of the protagonists appear as a victory over the demands of Rome and its policy maker Octavius, and yet even the magnificent death of Cleopatra is somewhat tinged with imperfection with the wanted detail of the crown 'awry' which Shakespeare adapted from Plutarch's description of Charmian 'trimming the diadem which Cleopatra wore on her head'<sup>22</sup> in order to suggest the impossibility of a purely tragic death. It is however Cleopatra's hyperbolic language and her death as the Egyptian queen which remain as the final image of this Roman play even though the last lines

belong to Octavius and his men and through them we can once again note an association with temporal dimensions. The apparently negligible words of Dolabella which confirm that Caesar's fears have come true 'you are too sure an augurer' (5.2.332) indicate that – unlike Antony – the future once again is on Caesar's side, and his pragmatism is made clear by his direct, almost scientific, questions 'the manner of their deaths'/I do not see them bleed'(335-6). Although he claims that no grave on earth shall hold 'a pair so famous' (357), for him *Antony and Cleopatra* already belong to a dead past, and his ritualistic expression 'Our army shall/In solemn show attend this funeral' remind us of his words after the death of Brutus in *Julius Caesar* 'According to his virtue let us use him./With all respect and rites of burial' (5.5. 76-7). The past will be given due consideration but it cannot and must not persist into the present as is shown by the line immediately following 'And then to Rome', words which imply political necessities, the strong necessities of time, we might say, in line with that *Chronos* which he has rigidly observed from the beginning. In fact these four words, according to Vivian Thomas, are what distance this play from the four great tragedies in which time stops with the deaths of Hamlet, Othello, Lear or Macbeth; here instead we are shown that these deaths are nothing more than an episode in a larger historical process.<sup>23</sup> It could be argued that the words of Fortinbras or of Edgar can be said to have a similar effect, but what is different here is perhaps that it is the 'rival' who speaks them, a character with whom the audience has hardly sympathized but whose *pax Romana* they know to be near. It is fair that time should not stop, that *Chronos*, the time of history, should take its course, history that will lead to the ascent of Augustus but in which the myth of *Antony and Cleopatra* has already taken shape.

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2. Cf. Le Goff J (1980) *Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages* (trans A Goldhammer). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 51.

3. Panofsky E (1972 [1939]) *Father time. Studies in Iconology*. New York: Icon Editions, p. 72.
4. Gilles Deleuze offers a more articulated reading of the opposition between *Aion* and *Chronos* which however, appears to confirm the basic distinction. He considers the former as 'past-future, which in an infinite subdivision of the abstract moment endlessly decomposes itself in both directions at once' and the latter as making 'of the past and future its two oriented dimensions, so that one goes always from the past to the future'. Deleuze G (2013) *The Logic of Sense*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, p. 89.
5. Cf. for instance, Frye N (1967) *Fools of Time*. Toronto: Toronto University Press; Sen Gupta SC (1961) *The Whirligig of Time, The Problem of Duration in Shakespeare's Plays*. Calcutta: Orient Longmans; Turner F (1971) *Shakespeare and the Nature of Time*. Oxford: Clarendon Press; Sypher W (1976) *The Ethic of Time*. New York: Seabury Press; Iwasaki S (1973) *The Sword and the Word, Shakespeare's Tragic Sense of Time*. Tokyo: Shinozaki Shorin; Kastan DS (1982) *Shakespeare and the Shapes of Time*. Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, to name just the main monographs.
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14. Panofsky E (1972 [1939]) *Studies in Iconology*, p. 73.
15. Cf. Frye, *Fools of Time*.
16. Bell AH (1973) Time and convention in *Antony and Cleopatra*. *Shakespeare Quarterly* 24: 255. On this topic, see also Hallet CA (1976) Change, fortune and time: aspects of the sublunar world in *Antony and Cleopatra*. *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 75: 75–89; Lloyd M (1962) Antony and the game of chance. *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 61: 548–554.
17. Sypher, *The Ethic of Time*, p. 21.
18. Cf. Heidegger M (1996) *Being and Time* (trans Joan Stambaugh). Albany: State University of New York Press, especially pp. 49–168 (*Sein und Zeit*, 1926).
19. Cf. Quinones, *The Renaissance Discovery of Time*, pp. 22–27.

20. Cf. Husserl E (1966) *Husserliana, Band X*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, p. 35 (*Zur Phänomenologie des Inneren Zeitbewusstseins*, 1893–1917).
21. Barthes R (1957) *Mythologies*. Paris: Edition du Seuil, p. 215.
22. Spencer, *Shakespeare's Plutarch*, p. 292.
23. Thomas V (1989) *Shakespeare's Roman Worlds*. London: Routledge, pp.142–143.