

# EARLY MODERN LITERARY STUDIES



## **Heywood, Henslowe and Hercules: Tracking 1 and 2 Hercules in Heywood's *Silver and Brazen Ages***

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Henslowe's *Diary*, with its daily listing of plays performed by the Strange's and Admiral's companies between 1592 and 1597, is by far the most important source of information we have about the practices of an early modern theatre company. Unfortunately, most of the plays mentioned by Henslowe are no longer extant, and this fact seriously hampers our understanding of the nature of playwriting in this most important decade of the English theatre. Any further light, no matter how small, that can be shed on the repertoire of the Admiral's Men in particular must be regarded as significant. This is one of the reasons that the 'Lost Plays' website ([www.lostplays.org/](http://www.lostplays.org/)) overseen by Roslyn Knutson and David McInnis is so important; this site lists all the titles of plays we know existed in early modern Britain but whose texts are lost, and various attempts to fill in the blanks as to what those plays might have been like. A significant proportion of these titles are from the *Diary*. The most common technique for casting light on a lost play is to look at the likely subject matter of the play and the way it was treated in other contemporary sources, and to use these as an indication of the storyline of the missing text. Another possible tactic is to look at plays that are extant and seek to find in them evidence that they are wholly or in part identical with an earlier lost play. Although this technique is based on the known fact that plays were sometimes revised and retitled in this period, and that plays in the *Diary* often got their names changed or were carelessly referred to by Henslowe, it is more controversial, since it often involves a degree of speculation unacceptable to many theatre historians. In this essay, I make use of the latter technique, which Knutson has called 'clumping' since it involves clumping together a name and a text that otherwise would be

considered two separate entities.<sup>1</sup> While the result in this case remains a speculation, I believe it is more carefully grounded in fact than many such conjectural identifications have been in the past.

Henslowe recorded as 'ne' (usually meaning 'new') a performance of 'the firste part of Hercolous' on May 7, 1595 and the second part on May 23 of the same year; the former was performed eleven times until January 6, 1595/96, the latter eight times. The plays seem to have been subsequently revived since the two plays were repurchased from a former sharer in the company, Martin Slater, in May 1598<sup>2</sup> and in July of that year the actor Thomas Dowton was lent money to purchase 'a Robe to play Hercolas'.<sup>3</sup> Presumably he took over that role after the retirement of the company's leading actor, Edward Alleyn. Alleyn came out of retirement in 1600 and may have returned to the role in December 1601 when 'divers thinges' were purchased from a 'littell tayller' for at least one Hercules play.<sup>4</sup> In 1613 Thomas Heywood published *The Silver Age* and *The Brazen Age* as the second and third plays in a sequence beginning with *The Golden Age*, already published in 1611. *The Silver Age* portrays the conception and birth of Hercules and several incidents in his life, ending with his invasion of hell to rescue Proserpine; *The Brazen Age* portrays several further events in Hercules' life, along with other mythological material, and ends with his death. In 1632 Heywood published *The Iron Age*, and *The Second Part of the Iron Age*, dealing with the Trojan War, as further plays in the sequence.

In 1891, F. G. Fleay, whose often wild speculations have given 'clumping' a bad name, suggested that 1 and 2 *Hercules* were the *Silver* and *Brazen Ages*.<sup>5</sup> In 1908 W. W. Greg, who frequently took issue with Fleay's flights of fancy, agreed with him on this.<sup>6</sup> In 1923 the other great figure of twentieth-century theatre history, E. K. Chambers, was more

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1. Knutson used this term in the 'Lost Plays' seminar at the 2013 Shakespeare Association of America conference. She credits John Astington for inventing the term, but she may be said to have made it her own.

<sup>2</sup> R. A. Foakes (ed.), *Henslowe's Diary*, Second Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), p. 89. See also Carol Chillington Rutter (ed.), *Documents of the Rose Playhouse* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1984), p. 141.

<sup>3</sup> Foakes, p. 93.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 185.

<sup>5</sup> Frederick Gard Fleay, *A Biographical Chronicle of English Drama 1559-1642* 2 vols. (1891; rpt. New York: Burt Franklin, 1973), I, pp. 283-4.

<sup>6</sup> Walter W. Greg (ed.), *Henslowe's Diary*, 2 vols. (1904-08; rpt. Norwood, Pa.: Norwood Editions, 1977), II, p. 175.

cautious, saying ‘it may be so’.<sup>7</sup> In his biography of Heywood in 1931, Arthur M. Clark firmly rejected this theory, stating that the *Ages* plays were ‘beyond the shadow of a doubt, dramatizations of Heywood’s own *Troia Britannica*’, a long narrative poem published in 1609.<sup>8</sup> However, Allan Holaday, writing in 1946, pointed out that while *The Golden Age* and the first act of *The Silver Age* do indeed follow *Troia Britanica* (Heywood’s spelling) closely, the rest of the *Silver* and *Brazen Ages* do not. He noted that the 1598 lists of stage properties formerly in the Henslowe archive include a number of items that are needed for the *Silver* and *Brazen Ages*, suggesting that they were indeed the Hercules plays in Henslowe’s *Diary*.<sup>9</sup> Writing in 1960, Ernest Schanzer pointed out that *any* play about Hercules would require these properties; he also noted that Heywood’s description in *An Apology for Actors* of a Hercules play that he had seen does not match the content of the *Silver* and *Brazen Ages*. He argued from various similarities between the *Ages* plays and plays by Shakespeare, including *The Tempest*, that they must have been written close to their publication date.<sup>10</sup> And that appears to be where the matter stands. Subsequent commentators have generally assumed that Schanzer is correct.

In this essay I shall suggest that Heywood probably did write *1* and *2 Hercules* and that the *Silver* and *Brazen Ages* were based on them, but that there was significant revision. My argument has three main focuses: (1) that in fact the *Apology for Actors* description confirms that the *Silver* and *Brazen Ages* originated in *1* and *2 Hercules* and points to the likely nature of the revision; (2) that Heywood could well have been writing for Henslowe in 1595 and that many features of the Hercules scenes in the *Ages* suggest a mid-1590s date of composition; and (3) that there is evidence that Heywood wrote these scenes before he read Caxton’s *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troy*, which strongly influenced *Troia Britanica* and the rest of the *Ages*.

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<sup>7</sup> E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols. (1923; Oxford: Oxford UP, 1951), III, pp. 344-5.

<sup>8</sup> Arthur Melville Clark, *Thomas Heywood: Playwright and Miscellanist* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1931; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1967), p. 63.

<sup>9</sup> Allan Holaday, ‘Heywood’s *Troia Britannica* and the *Ages*’, *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 45 (1946), 430-39.

<sup>10</sup> Ernest Schanzer, ‘Heywood’s *Ages* and Shakespeare’, *The Review of English Studies*, New Series 11 (1960), 18-28.

Let us begin with what seems to be Schanzer's strongest point, the passage from Heywood's *An Apology for Actors*; arguing for the value of seeing heroic figures enacted on the stage, Heywood describes his own experience:

*To see as I have seene, Hercules in his owne shape hunting the Boare, knocking downe the Bull, taming the Hart, fighting with Hydra, murdering Gerion, slaughtering Diomed, wounding the Stimphalides, killing the Centaurs, pashing the Lion, squeezing the Dragon, dragging Cerberus in Chaynes, and lastly, on his high Pyramides writing Nil ultra, Oh these were sights to make an Alexander.*<sup>11</sup>

This appears to be a description of a Hercules play very different from the *Silver* and *Brazen Ages*, since it includes many of Hercules' labours not found in these plays. These include capturing the Golden Hind, slaying the many headed Hydra, hunting the Erymanthian Boar and the episodes involving Gerion, Diomedes, and the Stymphalian birds. It is less clear whether the bull and the dragon should be included in this list. Hercules' classic labours include the capturing of the Cretan bull and the killing of the dragon guarding the golden apples in the garden of the Hesperides, neither of which is portrayed in the *Ages*; indeed, the version of the golden apples story mentioned by Homer, the narrator/presenter in the plays, seems to be one in which the dragon does not figure.<sup>12</sup> However, *The Brazen Age* does include Hercules wrestling with Achelous, who successively turns into a dragon and a bull, and the terms used - 'knocking down' and 'squeezing' - perhaps suggest wrestling rather than the more conventional ways of capturing and/or killing these creatures. This is especially so in the case of the dragon; the case of the bull is less clear, and I shall argue later that there is evidence that the Cretan bull episode was in the original play. At any rate, it is evident that there are at least six and possibly up to eight events in the play Heywood describes that are not in the *Silver* and *Brazen Ages*. *An Apology for Actors* was published in 1612, but it is generally believed to have been written around 1607.<sup>13</sup> It seems likely that Heywood's description refers to *1* and *2 Hercules*; certainly this is the only complete dramatization of Hercules' life that we are aware of from this period, and it was produced by the company Heywood was associated

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<sup>11</sup> Thomas Heywood, *An Apology for Actors* (London: Nicolas Okes, 1612), sig. B4r.

<sup>12</sup> Homer's speeches allude to the story that Hercules got Atlas to steal the apples, rather than killing the dragon and stealing them himself. See *The Brazen Age*, sig. C2r and sig. K2r.

<sup>13</sup> Chambers, IV, p. 250.

with.<sup>14</sup> It is true that *An Apology for Actors* is a somewhat flamboyant work that Heywood seems to have composed off the top of his head without much concern for accuracy. Even Schanzer admits that ‘it would be naïve to take these lines too literally as indicating that all the incidents mentioned formed part of a Hercules play which Heywood saw’.<sup>15</sup> Still, the absence from the *Ages* of six to eight major episodes mentioned by Heywood certainly suggests that he is describing a work significantly different from his own pair of plays published several years later.

On more careful consideration, however, this passage actually confirms the connection between the Hercules plays that Heywood saw and the *Ages*. In the last scene of *The Brazen Age* Hercules enters carrying ‘his two brazen pillars’; later he says ‘Here stand our pillars, with *non ultra* insculpt, / Which we must reare beyond the Pyrene Hills / At *Gades* in *Spaine* (*Alcides* utmost bounds)’.<sup>16</sup> The Pillars of Hercules were two mountains at the end of the Mediterranean (Gibraltar and another not clearly defined) that Renaissance commentators said Hercules marked with ‘ne plus ultra’ as a warning to sailors to go no further; in some versions of the story they were brazen pillars that Hercules erected in Gades (Cadiz).<sup>17</sup> Clearly, the play Heywood saw ended in the same way as does *The Brazen Age* with Hercules ‘lastly’ displaying ‘nil ultra’ on his ‘high Pyramides [obelisks].’ Since the pillars were supposed to be huge and erected far from Mount Oeta in central Greece where Hercules dies, the idea of having him enter for his death scene carrying the pillars is unusual to say the least; it is certainly not found in any other version of the story that I am aware of. While it is theoretically possible that the *Apology* play was by someone else and that Heywood merely borrowed the idea for *The Brazen Age*, one feels that the notion is so distinctive that it is more likely to have been a uniquely Heywoodian inspiration; its climactic position in his description of the play suggests it was one he was particularly proud of. The most likely conclusion is that the play Heywood celebrates in the *Apology* was an earlier incarnation of his own *Ages* plays.

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14. It is true, as Schanzer points out, that there clearly was at least one earlier play about Hercules; he cites several early sources, the latest of which is Bottom’s ‘I could play Ercles rarely’ (20). These all imply a rather primitive play written prior to the 1590s and unlikely to be the one celebrated by Heywood.

<sup>15</sup> Schanzer, 20.

<sup>16</sup> Heywood, *The Brazen Age* (London: Nicholas Okes for Samuel Rand, 1613), sig. K4r. All subsequent references are taken from this edition and will be cited parenthetically.

<sup>17</sup> Emma Stafford, *Herakles* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), pp. 192-3, 220.

The absence of episodes mentioned in the *Apology* description suggests that *1* and *2 Hercules* underwent significant revision in becoming the *Silver* and *Brazen Ages*, and there is some evidence from the plays about the nature of this revision. *1 Hercules* cannot have begun with the first act of *The Silver Age*, which clearly continues the story of Acrisius, Bellerophon, and Perseus that was begun in *The Golden Age*. This act is in fact unintelligible without *The Golden Age*. But there are signs that this section was grafted on to a play that originally began with the second act, which is an effective retelling of Plautus's *Amphitryon*, portraying Jupiter's seduction of Amphitryon's wife Alcmena, who will give birth to Hercules. The second act of *The Silver Age* begins with a long and elaborate dumb show that summarily completes the story of Perseus; then there is a complete change of topic with Homer's words 'Of Jupiter now deifi'd and made / Supreme of all the Gods, we next proceed'<sup>18</sup> and he gives the background to the Amphitryon story and yet another dumb show showing the victorious Amphitryon receiving a gold cup from his defeated enemies. Having two dumb shows in a row on completely different topics seems awkward, and is not found anywhere else in the *Ages* plays. It is also odd that Ganymede, who is portrayed as a heroic warrior who fights with Jupiter and then is befriended by him in *The Golden Age*,<sup>19</sup> is shown as a comic servant, clearly a clown role, in the second act of *The Silver Age*. This inconsistency may suggest that *The Golden Age* and the first act of *The Silver Age* were written at a different time from the second act of *The Silver Age*. It also suggests that one act of *1 Hercules* was omitted when it became *The Silver Age*, an act that might have contained one or more of Hercules' labours mentioned in the *Apology* description.

The construction of the *Silver* and *Brazen Ages* confirms the likelihood that they were created by replacing Hercules material with other mythological stories. Although they are structured as if they were presenting a biography of Hercules from conception to death, in fact they contain at least four acts that are completely irrelevant to this story: act one of *The Silver Age* already mentioned; act four of the same play, which describes Jupiter's seduction of Semele; act two of *The Brazen Age*, which describes the story of Meleager;

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<sup>18</sup> Heywood, *The Silver Age* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1613), sig. C2v. All subsequent references are taken from this edition and will be cited parenthetically.

<sup>19</sup> This portrayal of Ganymede, so different from the classical image of him as an effeminate youth, derives from Caxton's *Recuyell*, which avoids any hint of homosexuality and instead casts Ganymede in the role of Jupiter's squire. See William Caxton (trans.), *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye* by Raoul Lefèvre, ed. by H. Oskar Sommer (London: David Nutt, 1894), pp. 159-73. All subsequent references are taken from this edition and will be cited parenthetically.

and act four of *The Brazen Age*, which describes Venus's affair with Mars.<sup>20</sup> This dramatic structure, in which an overall story contains acts which are completely irrelevant, involving characters that do not appear in the main story and incidents that are in no way tied to it, is unusual. While it is common for plays of the period to have subplots, some almost completely separate from the main plot, in this case the irrelevant sections are not linked together as a story but are isolated playlets in themselves. There were a few plays made up of a series of playlets (*Four Plays in One*, *The Seven Deadly Sins*), but the *Silver* and *Brazen Ages* are not constructed in that way either; they have a kind of hybrid structure in which a conventional hero-dominated plot-driven play is joined with some irrelevant one-act plays. I am not aware of a comparable format in any other drama of the period. The most likely explanation for this unusual form is that Heywood replaced acts of *1* and *2 Hercules* that contained depictions of some of Hercules' labours, no doubt ones mentioned in the *Apology* description, with other material. In doing so, he gave the plays titles which seem to justify a loosely connected structure. Heywood's justification in the prologue to *The Brazen Age* (sig. B1r) for using the terms Golden, Silver, and Brazen Ages, connecting them with the ages described at the beginning of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and elsewhere in classical literature, seems weak; we do not see in the plays the gradual deterioration of social and moral behaviour that Heywood seems to suggest. But the titles do justify the portrayal of a multiplicity of stories in each play.

There are other hints in the plays of the fact that the Hercules scenes have been curtailed. Juno announces in *The Silver Age*, after Hercules' killing of the Nemean lion, 'My Lyon slaine, I will provide a Boare' (sig. G1v); there follows a scene in which she gives a fearsome description of the boar, and Hercules resolves to hunt it, leading us to expect a Hercules vs. Boar scene to follow. This does not occur, however, and the event is only briefly alluded to later as having happened off-stage (sig. H2r). Later, in *The Brazen Age*, Heywood includes a similarly horrific description of a boar at the beginning of the Meleager episode (sig. C4v). It seems likely that *1 Hercules* contained the single episode mentioned in the *Apology* description of Hercules 'hunting the boare.' Later Heywood cut

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20. The story of Jason and Medea in Act III of *The Brazen Age* is also a diversion from the Hercules story, but it includes Hercules in a minor role (a common feature of many versions of the Argonauts story) and leads to Hercules' destruction of Troy and so does not have the same irrelevance of the others; moreover, the 1598 inventory of properties includes 'j gowlden flece' (Foakes (ed.), p. 319) and there is no obvious other play in the company's known repertoire that would require this item. And so this sequence was probably in the 1595 Hercules plays.

this scene so that the Meleager boar hunt could be shown in detail, a change that resulted in the redundant boar depictions.

The most striking hint of omitted Hercules scenes comes after his involvement in the Centaurs-Lapiths battle in *The Silver Age*. Hercules meets Ceres, who asks him to rescue her daughter Proserpine who has been abducted by Pluto; he of course agrees to do so, saying ‘Whom neither Harpyes, Boares or Bulls can tame, / The darke Cimerians must nexte sound his fame’ (sig. H4v). At this point in *The Silver Age* as it stands, Hercules’ exploits have been limited to fighting the lion, the boar (off stage), and the centaurs in a continuous sequence with no mention of and no space for harpies or bulls. Moreover, these would be odd choices if a generalized list of adversaries were intended. The Stymphalian birds were often seen as harpies by Renaissance commentators, and almost the only way one could imagine this episode being staged would be with actors portraying bird-women.<sup>21</sup> The most likely conclusion is that the Stymphalian Birds and the Cretan Bull were in *1 Hercules* and were omitted in *The Silver Age*, and that Heywood missed this now incongruent reference in his revision.

There are also some discontinuities in the Hercules narrative in the *Ages* plays, suggesting omissions. Homer’s statement in *The Brazen Age* that Hercules’ labours were ‘As Juno by Euritius [*sic*] had devised’ (sig. C2r) must have been puzzling to audiences, since the framing story of Eurystheus (normally spelled Euristeus by Heywood) imposing a series of labours on Hercules at the instigation of Juno has at this point long since disappeared from the plays. Also, Hercules’ appearance in the first act of *The Brazen Age* as suitor for Deianira seems abrupt. We aren’t shown how Hercules got to Oeneus’s kingdom or how he came to be part of the contest for Deianira’s hand. This may reflect Heywood’s decision to focus on the story of Meleager at the expense of Hercules material. The process of omitting some of Hercules’ labours and replacing them with other material was generally not difficult due to the episodic nature of the Hercules story and the fact that Homer as narrator

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21. The identification of the birds with harpies is not found in classical sources, but a number of Renaissance writers made it, notably Boccaccio in his influential *Genealogie Deorum Gentilium* (Lib. 13, Cap. 1) and Lefèvre/Caxton in *The History of Jason*. See Giovanni Boccaccio, *Genealogie deorum gentilium libri* (Biblioteca Italiana, 2004) [date accessed 12 September 2013], lib. 13, cap. 1, and Raoul Lefèvre, *The History of Jason* (c. 1477), trans. by William Caxton, ed. by John Munro, Early English Text Society (London: Kegan Paul and Oxford UP, 1913), p. 81. See also Pietro de Cortona’s 1633-39 fresco *Hercules Driving out the Harpies*. It is true that Heywood later has Hercules refer to ‘the fowles of Stymphaly’ (*The Brazen Age*, sig. L2v), but this perhaps does not exclude harpies.



is present to cover events that have been cut, but there are enough inconsistencies to make this process somewhat visible.

Why, then, did Heywood revise so extensively a play that a few years earlier he seemed very proud of in the *Apology*? Although the first part at least was successful in its initial run and was probably revived at least twice, Heywood may have been conscious that *1* and *2 Hercules* had some dramaturgical problems. The traditional story of Hercules is episodic and somewhat monotonous, largely consisting of a series of fights that Hercules invariably wins. The need for greater variety is clearly hinted at in Homer's introduction to the comic Venus-Mars scenes; 'Loath are we (courteous auditors) to cloy / Your appetites with viands of one tast' (sig. H2r) he says, justifying the abrupt shift in tone and subject matter. It is notable that all the interpolated episodes are significantly contrasting to the Hercules story, adding comedy, eroticism or tragedy into a narrative line that would otherwise be mostly devoted to fighting. In spite of the lack of cohesiveness of the *Silver* and *Brazen Ages*, they provide a more satisfying theatrical experience than *1* and *2 Hercules* probably did.

The part of Hercules seems clearly to have been written for Edward Alleyn and designed to exploit his particular talents; it must also in the original plays have been extraordinarily demanding on both voice and physique. Almost all we know about the original staging of the *Ages* is that *The Silver Age* was performed at Court on January 12, 1612/13, by two companies, Queen Anne's Men, in which Heywood was a sharer, and the King's Men, the leading company of the era. That this joint production was not a one-off event for the Court is suggested by Heywood's note to the 1632 publication of *The Iron Age*, in which he states that 'these were the Playes, often (and not with the least applause,) Publickely Acted by two Companies, upon one Stage at Once, and have at sundry times thronged three severall Theaters, with numerous and mighty Auditories'.<sup>22</sup> Although he seems here to be referring to the *Iron Age* plays, he may mean all the *Ages* plays. This is an intriguing sidelight on the theatre business of the time: how could it have benefited rival commercial companies to combine to produce one play?<sup>23</sup> It is possible that Richard Burbage, the leading actor of the King's company, played Hercules in the original *Ages* productions, a role to which he

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<sup>22</sup> Thomas Heywood, *The Iron Age* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1632), sig. A4v.

<sup>23</sup> The curious but apparently undeniable fact of the two-company staging of the *Ages* plays somewhat casts doubt on the notion that the plays were distinctively typical of the sort of play and the kind of staging to be found at the Red Bull. While *The Golden Age* is specifically attributed to the Queen Anne's Men on its title page, the later published *Ages* plays lack any company designation.

would have been much less well-suited than was Alleyn. Whoever played the role may have lacked Alleyn's special talents, and the reduction of the length and centrality of the role may have been necessary for that reason. Probably also this kind of role and the acting style appropriate to it were no longer as much appreciated by audiences, and Heywood was seeking in effect to modernize the plays by reducing their importance. It should be noted that the episodic nature of the *Ages* plays, as well as their very large casts, make them quite suitable to be shared by two companies; in the case of the *Silver* and *Brazen Ages*, for example, one cast could prepare the Hercules scenes and one the non-Hercules scenes with little need for joint rehearsal. On the other hand, what I conjecture to have been the original *1* and *2 Hercules*, in which Hercules was in almost every scene, would not be well adapted to this. Perhaps Heywood may have been partly motivated to revise *1* and *2 Hercules* to make them suitable for this mode of production.

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There are a number of features of the Hercules scenes in the *Ages* plays that suggest Heywood wrote them in 1595 rather than after 1610. Fashions, production methods and playwriting techniques changed significantly during this period. It is true that playwrights were free to use techniques of the past as well as those of the present and that the bustling and diverse world of London theatre, not to mention the diverse body of Heywood's theatre work, do not show anything like an orderly pattern of development. While these scenes certainly could have been written in 1610, I believe this section demonstrates that a 1595 date for these parts of the plays is a more likely possibility.

Although he was a young man, probably in his early twenties, Heywood could well have been writing for the Admiral's in 1595. His Ovidian narrative poem, *Oenone and Paris*, was published in 1594, showing that he was already active as an author at that time.<sup>24</sup> The fact that there is no reference to Heywood in Henslowe's *Diary* at the time of the *Hercules* performances has no significance. The *Diary* does not in general record payments to playwrights prior to the autumn of 1597; in fact, the entry from October 1596 - 'lent unto

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<sup>24</sup> It is not absolutely certain that Heywood wrote *Oenone and Paris*, since the poem was published simply as written 'by T.H.' However, its modern editor, Joseph Quincy Adams, makes a very strong case for Heywood's authorship and it has been widely accepted. See Joseph Quincy Adams (ed.), *Oenone and Paris* by T[homas]. H[eywood]. (Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1943).

them for hawodes bocke' - seems to be the first reference to a playwright in the *Diary*.<sup>25</sup> Some scholars have suggested that Heywood's *The Four Prentices of London* should be dated 1594 or earlier and may have been presented by the Admiral's under another name;<sup>26</sup> other historians reject this theory, but the matter remains unsettled. The inclusion of Heywood in Meres's *Palladis Tamia* (1598) suggests he was well established by then:

the best for Comedy amongst us bee *Edward Earle* of Oxforde, Doctor *Gager* of Oxforde, Maister *Rowley* once a rare Scholler of learned Pembroke Hall in Cambridge, Maister *Edwardes* one of her Majesties Chappell, eloquent and wittie *John Lilly*, *Lodge*, *Gascoyne*, *Greene*, *Shakespeare*, *Thomas Nash*, *Thomas Heywood*, *Anthony Munday* our best plotter, *Chapman*, *Porter*, *Wilson*, *Hathway*, and *Henry Chettle*.<sup>27</sup>

While social standing clearly was the main criterion for Meres's ordering of his catalogue, there is a distinct element of chronology as well, and so Heywood's early position in the list of Admiral's dramatists may be significant. It would certainly not be surprising if he wrote a play that premiered at the Rose in May 1595.

We also know that Heywood was thinking about Hercules in 1594. In *Oenone and Paris* he devotes two stanzas to describing the relationship between Iole and Hercules; in this version of the story, Hercules was so infatuated with her that he agreed to don women's clothes and spin with a distaff. As Joseph Quincy Adams notes, the portrayal of the relationship between Hercules and Omphale (who seems to be interchangeable with Iole in much Renaissance writing) in *The Brazen Age* contains strong reminiscences of this passage. For example, in the poem we find 'The Imperious boy made Hercules to stoope / That tamed tyrants, and did master monsters';<sup>28</sup> in the play, Omphale says 'Is't not strange to see / A woman's beauty tame the Tyrant-tamer? / And the great Monster-maister ouer-match?' (sig. K1r). In the poem we find 'For his victorious clubbe, he holds a rocke

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<sup>25</sup> Foakes (ed.), *Henslowe's Diary*, p. 50.

<sup>26</sup> Mary Ann Weber Gasior (ed.), *The Four Prentices of London* by Thomas Heywood (New York: Garland, 1980), pp. xi-xv.

<sup>27</sup> Francis Meres, *Palladis Tamia: Wits Treasury: Being the Second Part of Wits Commonwealth* (London: Cuthbert Burbie, 1598), 283v.

<sup>28</sup> Adams (ed.), *Oenone and Paris*, ll. 673-4.

[distaff] / Bound by his mistresse to a daylie taske’;<sup>29</sup> in the play we have ‘And makes of his club a rocke’ (sig. I4v) and ‘[Hercules is] there at his taske’ (sig. K1v). This does not prove, of course, that Heywood wrote this scene in *The Brazen Age* in 1595; he could have been borrowing from his youthful poem much later in his career. But it is surely more likely that he would have been remembering his 1594 poem in 1595 than in 1610.

The model for *1* and *2 Hercules* was clearly *1* and *2 Tamburlaine*. Both pairs of plays focus on an over-reaching hero; indeed, it has been suggested that *Tamburlaine* was to some degree modeled on the Renaissance conception of Hercules.<sup>30</sup> The Hercules scenes in the *Ages* suggest *1* and *2 Hercules* had a similar structure to that of Marlowe’s plays; Part I shows the rise of a courageous, powerful and at times ruthless conqueror, ending with an enormous triumph; Part II begins to show some setbacks (the death of Zenocrate, bondage to Omphale) and ends with the painful death of the hero from an internal fire (but not before each gives a long speech in which he boasts of his many past triumphs). The roles of *Tamburlaine* and *Hercules* are very similar, demanding great stature and larger-than-life vitality, often exhibited in speeches full of hyperbolic rhetoric. Much of the language in the Hercules scenes in the *Ages* seems to imitate Marlowe’s show of learning and delight in exotic names. Although Marlowe’s plays continued to be produced and could have influenced Heywood at any point in his career, they were at the height of their popularity in the early 1590s, when a beginning playwright might well have sought to emulate them. There was also available an actor in the Admiral’s company who clearly excelled in such roles. As I have already suggested, not only does the part of Hercules as it survives in the *Ages* seem tailored to Alleyn’s talents, but there can have been few other actors who could carry it off successfully.

The use in the *Ages* plays of dumb shows with Homer as presenter between the acts probably indicates a 1590s origin as well. The use of shows between the acts was generally a feature of early academic and ‘university wit’ plays, clearly influenced by the choruses of classical tragedy; these include such plays as *Gorboduc*, *Jocasta*, *Tancred and Gismunda*, *Lochrine*, *Soliman and Perseda*, *James IV*, and *The Battle of Alcazar*. Few post-Elizabethan plays used this structure. It is true that the shows in the *Silver* and *Brazen Ages* clearly manifest a key feature of later dumb shows; while the early ones usually present an

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid, ll. 679-80.

<sup>30</sup> Eugene M. Waith, *The Herculean Hero in Marlowe, Chapman, Shakespeare and Dryden* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1962), p. 63.

allegorical scene only indirectly related to the play, later dumb shows most commonly present mimed events from the story being told,<sup>31</sup> as is the case in the *Silver* and *Brazen Ages*. One might guess that these plays were originally conceived at the point when inserting shows between the acts was not quite passé and the plot-relevant dumb show was just coming into fashion. Although we do not have enough information to make any kind of definitive statement about this, since so few plays of the period are extant, 1595 seems about right as an approximate date of this transition. This is consonant with the *Silver* and *Brazen Ages* having originated in *1* and *2 Hercules*.

It is true that the extant play in which the use of dumb shows most resembles that in the *Ages* is *Pericles*, first presented in 1607 or 1608; in each case the presenter is the legendary author (Homer or Gower), and each dumb show portrays a further development of the story. Indeed, the similarity between these two features is Schanzer's strongest argument for Heywood's debt to Shakespeare in the *Ages* plays. But in the first place it is perfectly possible that the debt was the other way around; Wilkins, who is generally believed to have written most if not all of Gower's speeches in *Pericles* and likely devised the overall concept of the play, might well have been influenced by *1* and *2 Hercules*, which were probably still on stage at the Fortune in 1601 if not later. Moreover, a notable feature of *Pericles* is its deliberate archaism; Gower is presented as telling an old fashioned story, one that includes divine intervention to reward the good characters and punish the bad and a rambling plot structure reminiscent of earlier dramatizations of tales of knightly valour such as *Clyomon and Clamydes*.<sup>32</sup> The dumb shows between the acts seem part of the play's evocation of a by-gone age of drama. This purpose is not shared by Heywood in the *Ages*; here his use of the device probably simply reflects the fact that he is rewriting plays that are fifteen years old.

*1* and *2 Hercules* were written when the vogue for Ovidian themes was at its height, thanks to the popularity of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* (1593).<sup>33</sup> Heywood's *Oenone and Paris* is a close imitation of Shakespeare's poem, and was one of many examples in this

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<sup>31</sup> See Dieter Mehl, *The Elizabethan Dumb Show: The History of a Dramatic Convention* (London: Methuen, 1965), pp. 25-6.

<sup>32</sup> I discuss the 'deliberate archaism' of *Pericles* at greater length elsewhere. See Douglas Arrell, 'King Leir at Gowthwaite Hall', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 25 (2012), 83-93 (pp. 85-6).

<sup>33</sup> For the popularity of *Venus and Adonis*, see Katherine Duncan-Jones, 'Much Ado with Red and White: The Earliest Readers of *Venus and Adonis* (1593)', *The Review of English Studies*, New Series 44 (1993), 479-501 (pp. 490-99).

decade of what one critic has called ‘erotic neo-Ovidianism’.<sup>34</sup> Heywood was fresh out of an educational system that relied heavily on Ovid. Probably at about this time he was busy translating Ovid’s *Ars Amatoria*.<sup>35</sup> Most of the material upon which the Hercules scenes in the *Silver* and *Brazen Ages* are based comes from Ovid. Although Ovid was an important influence throughout Heywood’s career, and indeed throughout the early modern English theatre, we can at least say that the most likely time for these scenes to be written was in the 1590s.

*The Brazen Age* actually includes the story of Venus and Adonis, which follows Shakespeare’s version closely. It is true that this story is attached to the Meleager episode, which I am suggesting was not part of the original play. But the same Venus and Adonis episodes could have been attached to the Erymanthian boar hunt which I conjecture to have been in *I Hercules*; this hunt could as easily be the occasion of Adonis’s death as the Caledonian boar hunt in *The Brazen Age*. It would not be unusual in the theatre of the 1590s for a company to produce a stage version of such a topical and popular work as Shakespeare’s poem, and Heywood’s is the only dramatization of it that we are aware of.<sup>36</sup>

The pattern of audience attendance at the Hercules plays may suggest that they were particularly popular with upper class audience members: students at the Inns of Court and gallants about town who were the main readers of *Venus and Adonis*. *The Comedy of Humours* by Chapman, which we know attracted many upper-class men who were not regular theatre-goers, had unusually heavy gallery attendance at its first half dozen

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<sup>34</sup> M. L. Stapleton (ed.) *Thomas Heywood’s Art of Love: The First Complete English Translation of Ovid’s Ars Amatoria* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2000), p. 6.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, pp. 16-17.

<sup>36</sup> A significant number of plays from the late Elizabethan period seem to have dealt with subjects that were also featured in contemporary printed sources, suggesting that theatre companies did indeed try to exploit the popularity of published works being currently read and talked about by Londoners. Plays that were produced close to the date of publication of a ballad, chapbook or longer prose narrative on the same subject include *Long Meg of Westminster*, *The Orphan’s Tragedy*, *Mother Red Cap*, *Page of Plymouth*, *Bellendon*, *Thomas Merry*, *Tristram de Lyons*, and *The Conquest of the West Indies*. Stage versions of more literary works were less common, but Greene’s *Orlando Furioso* (1591) no doubt capitalized on the interest created by Sir John Harrington’s verse translation of Ariosto’s work published in the same year, and the play *Owen Tudor* (1600) may have been inspired by two poems from Drayton’s *England’s Heroical Epistles* (1598). More significant for this study is the fact that Heywood’s *The Rape of Lucrece* (1608) is conjectured by Allan Holaday to be a version of a play written shortly after the publication of Shakespeare’s poem (1594), which it clearly imitates (see Holaday, 1945).

performances.<sup>37</sup> The same is true of Chapman's other play in Henslowe's schedule, *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria*. These plays feature comedy about cuckolding, misogynist portrayals of women and a cynical world view, features that will reappear in racy city comedies at the private theatres. Both *1* and *2 Hercules* had relatively short runs but had very high attendance at their first few performances, suggesting a similar vogue among upper class audience members. With their staging of Shakespeare's poem, as well as their comic cuckolding, misogyny, lack of poetic justice, and general Ovidian atmosphere, the Hercules scenes in the *Ages* could certainly have been part of plays that attracted such an audience.<sup>38</sup>

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Caxton's *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troy*, the first book printed in English, appeared in 1473-74. It was a translation from the French of Raoul Lefèvre, who in turn was adapting a work by Guido delle Colonne (for simplicity I shall refer to its author as Caxton). It is a long prose narrative derived from classical mythology that begins with the birth of Jupiter, devotes a large section to the activities of his son, Hercules, and ends with an account of the Trojan War. The book attempts to translate Greek myth into a medieval romance of knightly quests and combats. Jupiter and the other gods are portrayed as human kings and queens, and Hercules is the perfect knight, notable for his honour, valour and courtesy to ladies, although Caxton cannot always disguise the ruthlessness, intemperance and faithlessness inherent in the Hercules legend. The fantastic elements in the myths are played down as much as possible, and so the stories are reduced largely to military combats and confrontations between heroes and villains or monsters. Most of the material derives from classical sources, but Caxton invented quite a bit as well. Although the result often

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37. See John Chamberlain's letter, cited in Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, Third Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004) p. 227.

38. Here are Henslowe's receipts at the six new plays achieving the highest gallery attendance at their first eight performances (the entire run in the case of *2 Hercules*) during the period of the Admiral's Men covered by Henslowe's accounts (disregarding pence): *Comedy of Humours* £23 4s; *7 Days of the Week* £22 17s; *1 Hercules* £20 19s; *Wise Man of Westchester* £20 18s; *Blind Beggar of Alexandria* £19 10s; *2 Hercules* £17 6s (the next would be *Crack Me This Nut* at £16 3s). Although this list includes two blockbusters of (probably) wide conservative appeal, *Seven Days of the Week* and *The Wise Man of Westchester*, the other four are all plays that might have brought out gallants who were not regular attenders at the Rose. While it is true that completely different plays about Hercules might have done so as well, one can at least say that the Hercules scenes in the *Ages* plays are clearly compatible with the possible fashionable appeal of *1* and *2 Hercules*.

seems weak and repetitive to the modern reader, Caxton's version of Greek mythology continued to be popular. After being out of circulation since 1553, it was republished in 1596 in a somewhat modernized version. The success of this edition is suggested by the fact that it was reprinted again in 1607 and subsequently there were reprints in 1617, 1636, 1663 and so on into the eighteenth century.

Equally puzzling to the modern reader is the extraordinary popularity of William Warner's long poem, *Albion's England*, first published in 1586 and frequently reissued. Written in rhyming fourteeners, it is a kind of history of the world, beginning with Noah and ending in the reign of Elizabeth; although often moralistic in tone, it is enlivened by lighter tales, occasionally somewhat risqué. Warner derived a great deal of material from Caxton; the poem includes a kind of précis of the sections in the *Recuyell* devoted to Jupiter and Hercules, sometimes so compressed that the story is difficult to follow. While his treatment of Caxton's text is generally unimaginatively slavish in its fidelity, there are occasional rearrangements, omissions, and added touches, including moralistic comments.

There are good reasons to think Heywood was familiar with *Albion's England*. His own *Troia Britanica* (1609) was probably written as a kind of updating of that work, no doubt in the hope of sharing in its popularity. Like Warner's work it is a long narrative poem that covers the history of the world, contains much material from Caxton's *Recuyell*, includes the history of Britain up to the present, and is interspersed with lighter stories. Heywood's updating includes replacing Warner's old-fashioned verse form with *ottava rima*, and softening Caxton's medievalization of Greek mythology; he also differentiates his poem from Warner's by the fact that whereas Warner gives much space to the Hercules story and skips very rapidly over the Trojan War, Heywood does the opposite; he also gives a detailed retelling of the Jason and Medea story that is omitted from the *Recuyell* (and hence from Warner) because Lefèvre/Caxton devoted a separate book to it (*The History of Jason* c.1477). Although this merely suggests that Heywood had become familiar with Warner's poem by 1609, its popularity and Heywood's interests make it likely that he knew it much earlier; it was certainly easily available to him when, as I conjecture, he wrote *1* and *2 Hercules* in 1594-95.

There are in fact clear echoes of *Albion's England* in Heywood's Hercules scenes. Describing Hercules' attachment to Iole, Warner refers to him as 'This Monster-Master



*Hercules*, this Tyrant-Tamer’.<sup>39</sup> As we have seen, these epithets of Hercules are repeated in *Oenone and Paris* and in *The Brazen Age* in the same context. Warner says of Hercules in his death throes that ‘his verie Marrow fryde’ (sig. G3r); Heywood’s Hercules says ‘Hell is within me, for my marrow fries’ (sig. K4v). Warner begins the scene in which Nessus will carry Deianira across the river with the words ‘When over deepe Evenus’ foord the passage did not fit’ (sig. D3r); in the corresponding scene in *The Brazen Age*, Hercules refers to ‘the deepe *Evenus* foord’ (sig. C1r). In Warner’s version it really is a ford, and Nessus, portrayed as a giant by Caxton and Warner, will wade across the river carrying Deianira. In Heywood, the river is a raging torrent, and Nessus, portrayed as a centaur, will swim across carrying Deianira on his back. Calling it a ford does not seem quite right, and the fact that the phrase is a little out of place may confirm that it is a borrowing. Also, in Warner we find this statement about Laomedon, King of Troy: ‘Of *Neptunes* and of *Phoebus* priests (The Goddes of Sea and Sunne) / He borrowed money’ (B2r); in *The Brazen Age*, Priam says to Laomedon: ‘You borrowed of the Priests / Of *Neptune* and *Apollo*, Sea, and Sunne’ (sig. E4r). In classical versions of the story it is the gods themselves who do the work of building Troy and who demand payment; Heywood may have got the idea of Laomedon’s borrowing from their priests from Warner, slightly echoing him at the same time. In both texts, Laomedon offers Hercules the reward of ‘two milk-white steeds’ (Warner, sig. B2v; Heywood, sig. F1r). Cumulatively, these small echoes are enough to suggest that Heywood had read Warner and probably had *Albion’s England* in front of him when he wrote the Hercules scenes.

While Heywood’s main source for the Hercules story was undoubtedly the *Metamorphoses*, he also drew on other material, including some that had its origin in Caxton. Although it is often very difficult to trace the classical sources of Elizabethan writings, since there were innumerable Renaissance retellings, compendia and mythological dictionaries available, I have found at least three significant elements that seem definitely to come from the Caxton version of Hercules’ life and nowhere else. It seems that Caxton is the only source for two important plot elements in *The Silver Age*: the idea that Hercules goes down to Hades to rescue Proserpine, and the idea that Theseus and Pirithous precede him, fight with Cerberus, and that Pirithous is killed and Theseus rescued by Hercules. The traditional story is that Hercules is assigned the task of bringing back Cerberus in chains by Eurystheus, with no connection with the Proserpine story. Another classical story has

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<sup>39</sup> William Warner, *The First and Second Parts of Albion’s England* (London: Thomas Orwin, 1589), sig. G2v. Subsequent references are taken from this edition and will be cited parenthetically.

Theseus and Pirithous going down to Hades to kidnap Proserpine; Pirithous dies in the attempt but Hercules rescues Theseus. One of Caxton's notable techniques is the weaving of disparate mythological threads into a coherent narrative, as he does in this case, and Heywood follows him here. In addition, among the lists of Hercules' many achievements that appear towards the end of *The Brazen Age* is his killing of the 'Cremona giants,' mentioned twice (sig. K1r, sig. K2r). As far as I can discover, this episode in Hercules' career was invented by Caxton (428-36).

Heywood could certainly have got these elements from Warner, who presents briefer versions of Caxton's descriptions of Hercules' trip to hell (sig. C2r-C2v) and the killing of the Cremona giants (sig. F4r, sig. G1r). Since there is clear evidence of Warner's influence on the Hercules scenes, it seems likely that all the Caxtonian elements in these scenes derive from Warner. It is significant that there is no reference to the colour of Laomedon's horses in Ovid<sup>40</sup> or in Caxton (277), the 'milk-white steeds' being one of Warner's added touches.<sup>41</sup> This fact definitely suggests that Heywood is following Warner and not the *Recuyell*. Moreover, it seems reasonable to conclude that Heywood had not read Caxton in the original when he wrote these scenes; if he had, he probably would not have paid so much attention to Warner's poem, with its highly abbreviated and at times cryptic version of Caxton's narrative. This conclusion is compatible with Heywood's having written these scenes in 1594-95, prior to the reissue of the *Recuyell* in 1596.

When he came to write *Troia Britanica*, *The Golden Age* and the first act of *The Silver Age*, Heywood certainly had read Caxton. These works show a much stronger influence of the *Recuyell*. Indeed, the first six cantos of *Troia Britanica* are more or less a versification of the corresponding sections of the *Recuyell*, and *The Golden Age* and Act I of *The Silver Age* are dramatisations of the same material. Hercules's career is treated only rather briefly in *Troia Britanica*, but the poem does cover a number of his exploits and his death. Here too, although he stays closer to Ovid than does Caxton, the influence of the *Recuyell* is very obvious, much more so than in the corresponding scenes in the *Silver* and *Brazen Ages*.

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<sup>40</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, with an English translation by Frank Justus Miller, 2 vols, Loeb Classical Library (London: Heinemann, 1919), bk.11.line 214.

<sup>41</sup> Nor is the colour specified in Golding's translation of the *Metamorphoses* (see *Shakespeare's Ovid: Being Arthur Golding's Translation of the Metamorphoses*, ed. by W. H. D. Rouse, London: De La More Press, 1904, bk.11.l. 239), which Heywood certainly used at times; Golding's translation of Medea's magical incantation (bk.7.ll.258 ff.) is echoed in *The Brazen Age* (sig. G1v) and also (coincidentally?) in *The Tempest*.

One of the notable features of the treatment of Hercules' career in the *Recuyell* is that it portrays him as destroying Troy twice. This idea seems to be original to Caxton, and reflects his wish to combine two versions of the story; in one (most familiar), Hercules seeks revenge for Laomedon's failure to give him the two horses promised for the rescue of Hesione; in the other (found in some sources) his revenge is due to Laomedon's refusal to allow the Argonauts to take refuge in the Trojan port after a storm. *Troia Britanica* follows Caxton here in showing Hercules sacking Troy twice. By contrast, the Hercules scenes in the *Ages* present an orthodox version of the story, in which Hercules as one of the Argonauts swears revenge on Laomedon for the denial of the horses on the way to obtaining the golden fleece and then sacks the city (once only) and kills Laomedon on the way back.<sup>42</sup>

As we have seen, Caxton presents a very original portrayal of Hercules' trip to hell, managing to join it with the Proserpine story and the story of Theseus and Pirithous. He also allies it with yet a third famous myth, that of Orpheus. In the *Recuyell*, Orpheus is Proserpine's husband; he goes to Hell to regain her, but loses her again when he turns to look at her while leaving; it is then Orpheus who informs Ceres about what has happened to her ravished daughter. In *Troia Britanica*, less shockingly to those familiar with Ovid, Orpheus goes to hell seeking Eurydice, not Proserpine, but returns without her and informs Ceres about her daughter's fate. Orpheus is completely absent in *The Silver Age*, where Ceres learns of the location of her daughter from the river Arethusa, as in Ovid. Also, Caxton avoids the intervention of Jupiter and the allegorisation of the end of the story that is found in both Ovid and *The Silver Age*. In the *Metamorphoses*, Jupiter orders Proserpine to spend six months in Hades and six months on earth, clearly as a goddess of fertility; in *The Silver Age*, he orders Proserpine as the Moon to spend half the month in Hades and half the month in the skies. In the *Recuyell* there is no divine intervention; Hercules simply beats Pluto and brings Proserpine back to her husband. Heywood in *Troia Britanica* is close to Caxton; there is no intervention by Jupiter, no allegorisation, but Proserpine is forced to remain in Hell and Hercules returns without her. In both the *Recuyell* and *Troia Britanica*,

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42. It is true that in Homer's last speech in *The Silver Age* he refers to the 'thrice raz'd wals of Troy' (L1v), implying the Caxton story (the two sacks by Hercules and the third by the Greeks in the Trojan War). I assume that many of Homer's speeches must have been written, or largely adjusted, when Heywood revised the *1* and *2 Hercules* for the *Ages* plays.

Hercules brings back Cerberus to Pirithous's widow, Hippodamia, to be tormented, a detail not present in *The Silver Age* or Ovid.

It is clear then that *Troia Britanica* is much closer to Caxton than are the Hercules scenes in the *Ages*. If Heywood had written the Hercules scenes in 1610-12, at the same time that he wrote *The Golden Age* and the first act of *The Silver Age*, one would have expected him to continue to follow Caxton, at least to the extent that he did in *Troia Britanica*. The very limited amount of Caxtonian influence on the Hercules scenes is further evidence that he did not write them at that time. It seems more likely that in creating the *Silver* and *Brazen Ages* he simply reused parts of plays he had written in his youth, when he was infatuated with Ovid and knew Caxton only through the narrow lens of Warner's poem. In other words, he recycled material he had first created for *1* and *2 Hercules*.

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In summary, then, there are good reasons for thinking that the Hercules scenes in the *Silver* and *Brazen Ages* were originally part of *1* and *2 Hercules*. In the *Apology for Actors* Heywood describes a play that it seems almost certain was *1* and *2 Hercules*; its ending included Hercules appearing with his brazen pillars, a very unusual plot element that is also found in *The Brazen Age*. A number of features of the *Ages* plays suggest that they may have originally contained most of the labours mentioned in the *Apology* description (although not necessarily all, since the tone of the passage makes one suspect overstatement); the plays' unusual construction suggests that many of these labours were replaced by other material when they became the *Silver* and *Brazen Ages*. Heywood was active as a writer in 1594 and his early poem *Oenone and Paris* is echoed in *The Brazen Age*. A number of features of the Hercules scenes, including their debt to *Tamburlaine*, their adaption to the unique talents of Edward Alleyn, their use of a presenter and shows between the acts, their Ovidian subject matter, and their attempt to exploit the popularity of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, suggest a date in the mid-1590s. Finally, their apparent reliance on Warner's *Albion's England* for the few elements they contain that are derived from the Caxton version of Hercules' life suggests a date before Heywood read the *Recuyell*, which strongly influenced Heywood's later treatments of Greek mythology, including his portrayal of Hercules in *Troia Britanica*. It is unlikely these scenes were written at the same time as the *Golden Age* and the first act of the *Brazen Age*, which show

a strong influence of Caxton, and they certainly could have been written in 1594-95, prior to the reissue of the *Recuyell*.

If it is granted that Heywood wrote *1* and *2 Hercules* and that elements of these plays survive in the Hercules scenes in the *Silver* and *Brazen Ages*, one must not overstate our knowledge of this 'lost' two-part play in Henslowe's *Diary*. Obviously, the plays contained a number of scenes that are not extant, containing most or all of Hercules' other labours mentioned in the *Apology* description. Presumably many of Homer's speeches were altered to reflect the cuts and additions of the new plays. Changing production practices may also be reflected. The very elaborate spectacle that is one of the most notable features of all the *Ages* plays may not reflect what the Admiral's Men were capable of in 1595. And many other details could have been changed, as Heywood rewrote the old plays. His play *The Escapes of Jupiter*, which survives in manuscript and is essentially made up of the Jupiter seduction scenes from the *Ages* plays, illustrates the kind of updating that Heywood probably engaged in when rewriting *1* and *2 Hercules*.<sup>43</sup> The adaptation was probably created about 1620, and while many scenes are reproduced almost verbatim, one senses Heywood's attempt to adapt to the theatrical climate of the times. One of the most notable changes is the elimination of many of the rhymes in the earlier version.<sup>44</sup> There are also signs of Heywood trying to keep up with the changing language.<sup>45</sup> On the other hand, the most striking feature of *The Escapes of Jupiter* is how little is changed; only two short bridging scenes are added, and in spite of tinkering with the language the sense of the lines is rarely altered and the original layout of the dialogue is almost invariably followed. And so I think we can take the Hercules scenes in the *Silver* and *Brazen Ages* as likely to be largely reflective of the playwriting of the 1590s and the repertoire of the Admiral's Men, which otherwise is so minimally known to us.

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<sup>43</sup> See Thomas Heywood, *The Escapes of Jupiter*, ed. by Henry D. Janzen, Malone Society Reprints (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1978).

<sup>44</sup> W. W. Greg, 'The Escapes of Jupiter' in *Collected Papers*, ed. by J. C. Maxwell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 156-83 (pp. 171-2).

<sup>45</sup> One of the areas in which language seems to have been changing the fastest is that of sexuality. Thus in *The Escapes of Jupiter* Heywood changes 'wench' in the *Ages* to 'night-peece,' (64), a term whose first recorded *OED* usage in this sense is 1621; other relatively newly-coined words introduced into *The Escapes of Jupiter* include (with their *OED* dates): 'wantonisd' (1592) instead of 'been lavish' (*Escapes* 23); 'prostitute' (1607) instead of 'strumpet' (43); 'catamite' (1601) as a term for Ganymede (44); 'pandarism' (1601) instead of 'being a 'baud' (58).