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## Sources of Bonduca

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## Chapter 4



### Sources of *Bonduca*

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This chapter analyzes Fletcher's sources for his *Bonduca*. I will divide the issue into sections that are, at times, more or less discreet: the sources of (1) the story, of (2) characters, of (3) physical stage action (stage *topography*), of (4) fictional characteristics (fictional *décor*), and of (5) topical references (*topicality*). The studies of *Bonduca* which deal with its sources are either old and thus affected by the outdated information they use, or do not look into the relationships of the play and its sources in sufficient detail, their aim being different.<sup>1</sup>

*Bonduca* is generally taken to be John Fletcher's unaided play, dated around the years 1612–13, sometimes more liberally to a period of 1609–1614.<sup>2</sup> Some critics read the play as one of the dramas that appeared in connection with the sudden decease of Prince Henry in November 1612 and the marriage of James I's daughter Elizabeth and Frederick, the Elector Palatine, in February 1613.<sup>3</sup> Sharon Macdonald (1987) assumes a political reading of *Bonduca*, drawing parallels between the portrayals of the play's characters and the royal figures of the 1612/13 events (Hickman 1989: 143ff.).<sup>4</sup> As for the dramatic analyses of the play, these have been rather rare.

Treatments of the various aspects of relating a work to its sources have been rather unsystematic. The similarity of story lines in two separate works has a different quality and value for the study of sources than instances of verbal resemblance or similarities in stage techniques used in presenting a plot or a character. Likewise, the dramatist needs to know some of his sources in considerable depth

1 B. Leonhardt (1889) analyzes some of the sources only, adding to them a couple of others that I find irrelevant (see the discussion section I). Other works that, to a certain extent, comment on the sources are: Irving Ribner (1965: 265), Paul D. Green (1982), Sharon Macdonald (1987: 40–61, pages 49–50 deal with *Bonduca* in particular), Andrew Hickman (1989), Alison Calder (1996), Crawford (1999).

2 On the authorship and dating of Fletcher's plays see Bowers (1966–1996) and Gordon McMullan (1994).

3 The major plays in question are *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, Beaumont's *Masque of the Inner Temple and Gray's Inn*, *Four Plays in One*. For the political background of the plays see Lois Potter's Introduction to her New Arden Shakespeare *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (1997: 35–40). For the case of *Bonduca*, see Eugene M. Waith (1952); William W. Appleton (1956), Baldwin Maxwell (1966); Clifford Leech (1962: 163–168); Green (1982).

4 This view is commented on by Julie Crawford (1999: 371, 374).

(namely those connected with the storylines and characters), while others only in passing (as with topography or topicality). For the sake of transparency and facilitating the communication of these various aspects, I will divide the issue of possible indebtedness to sources into five categories, distinguishing the sources of:

1. the 'pure' story line, the *archetypal* story (sometimes called *mythos*), as Aristotle discusses it in *Poetics* (xvii); this category concerns subplots and plot specifics, such as variants of a story (e.g. King Lear's madness, which seems to have had no precedents in the Leir stories); the story proper, which I will refer to as the story archetype or the *mythos*, is taken as a sequence of incentives and consecutive reactions and developments, without the physical specifics such as names, place or even time;
2. the characters; the play's personae often stem from and build on generally recognizable character types (such as the braggart soldier, the shrewish wife, the Amazon woman-warrior, the doting father); sometimes these are specific to a particular author (such as the hungry knave or the licentious lady in Fletcher);<sup>5</sup>
3. physical stage action; I will call this category *stage topography*, in keeping with the definition of *topography* (see Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary: '2b: the physical or natural features of an object or entity and their structural relationships'). Much of what belongs into this category has been described as stage convention.<sup>6</sup> Stage *topography* covers customary stage realizations of fiction (such as when in *The Chances*, 3.4, Petruchio, Don John, and Fredrick are supposed to be on horseback).<sup>7</sup> Apart from that it also includes *theatergrams* such as the onstage murder of the King in *The Maid's Tragedy*; although this relatively rare instance of onstage regicide may have its precedents as a stage device; however, this need not have any other connection to the source of the regicide *mythos*.
4. fictional characteristics (*décor*); the *décor* is a set of expressions, suggestions and ideological peculiarities that generate the setting of the play; metaphorically speaking, they create the colours and atmospheres of the fictional world. The *décor*, in other words, sets the modality of the possible world of the play. It embraces for instance references to mythology or literature (such as Don John's 'Who calls Jeronimo from his naked bed?', in *The Chances*, 5.3.128), references to time (e.g. it is a characteristic of most Fletcherian plays that they are seldom fixed in a particular season of the year) or place names, among others. In general, *décor* is the mani-

5 For the mentioned stereotypes in Fletcher, see Maxwell (1966).

6 Muriel C. Bradbrook (1932), Alan C. Dessen (1984).

7 Towards the end of 3.1, Don John says to Frederick: 'Then make ye ready | For I am straight a horse-back.' (IV: 3.1.126–7). They plan to go to 'a Castle six mile hence' (2.4.55) to help Petruchio. This is the projection to their next appearance at the beginning of 3.4, when they meet Petruchio in a place from which they see a 'Troope ... below i'th valley there' (3.4.7); upon which Petruchio gives an order: 'Sirrah, draw backe the Horses till we call ye' (3.4.10).

festation of the archetype; it gives a corporeal, material expression to the 'immaterial' or 'insubstantial' archetypal story (e.g. *Monsieur Thomas*, as a carnivalesque variant of the prodigal-son story archetype, is set vaguely in a port in Europe, in a place with a nunnery).<sup>8</sup> This category will focus on a very specific aspect of the Beaumont and Fletcher canon, which has variously been called the Beaumont-Fletcher pastoral or the 'escapes from the tyranny of Jacobean incertitude into a world of its own making' (Ellis-Fermor 1958: 201).

5. topical references (*topicality*); this category needs little justification as the topical references in the Fletcherian plays have lately been a major subject of study. It is self-evident that an intended *topicality* becomes a factor in the process of composition, though sometimes only a minor change or shift is necessary. A prime example is Fletcher and Massinger's *Tragedy of Sir John Van Olden Barnavelt*, in which Sir George Buc crossed out several lines and adds a margin: 'I like not this: Neith<sup>r</sup> do I think y<sup>r</sup> the pr[ince]. was thus disgracefully vsed. besides he is to[o] much presented' (TLN 385–404).<sup>9</sup> The censor's objection was very likely caused by the dramatist's shift of the source towards political resonance.

Though the above categories may be, and often are discrete to some extent, yet, as in the last instance, they often permeate and influence one another. Lear's madness, mentioned under the category of the story, may well have been included on the level of characters; two of the most immediate precedents for it would be Titus Andronicus, or Jeronimo of *The Spanish Tragedy*. Similarly, many other of the points that I am going to make may well fall into another category. Two of them will necessarily show the most immediate correlation of the source and the play (or its lack): the archetypal story (*mythos*) and the *décor*. Arguably, it is the ironic *décor* of Cervantes's *Don Quixote* and that of other knight-errant stories that inspired *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*. Sometimes, however, the dramatist may use the story and change, or utterly ignore, the qualities of the source's fictional world (such as Chaucer's tale in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, or Sidney's *Arcadia* in the Gloucester plot of *King Lear*).

The study of source indebtedness cannot be exhaustive and mostly remains very uncertain. Besides, knowing the sources does not equal knowing the play proper. It may serve to show the choices the dramatist made in writing. To trace all to a precedent would mean to degrade the dramatists to mere epigones or copiers of someone else's ideas, and deny them any inventiveness of their own.<sup>10</sup> Simi-

8 In *Monsieur Thomas* there are references to 'Genoway Gallies' (IV: 1.1.34), to travelling in Valentia (1.1.49), Paris (1.2.78) and other places, to foreign languages (Launcelot's 'eight languages' (1.2.48) are used); however, the Fidler in 3.3 claims he 'can sing | The Duke of Norfolk, or the merry Ballad | Of Diverus and Lazarus, the Rose of England, [...]', etc. (3.3.38ff.).

9 Commented on in McMullan (1994: 87).

10 Such is the case of B. Leonhardt's strained attempt to see *Bonduca* as indebted to R. A.'s *The Valiant Welshman*, a romantic drama, which is, to my sight, a hotchpotch of misplaced

larly, to account for everything by topical reference would be to overintellectualize what was (presumably) primarily written to be popular entertainment.

### The Archetypal Stories of Bonduca

[*Caratach.*]

Our Registers,  
The *Romanes*

(*Bonduca* 1.1.142–3)

One of the earliest notes on Fletcher's sources is by J. St. L. Strachey, the editor of the 1887 edition of *Bonduca*:

The story of Bonduca (better known as Boadicea) and Caratach (Caractacus) is derived from the *Annals* of Tacitus (XIV, 29, *et seq.*). Fletcher used his materials with entire freedom, developing slight allusions (as the brief mention of the fate of Poenius Postumus) into long and brilliant scenes. (Strachley II 1887: 111).

B. Leonhardt (1889: 43), apart from Cornelius Tacitus's *Annals*, enumerates other three sources that, as he claims, come into question: Dio Cassius's *Roman History*, Holinshed's *Chronicles*, and a booklet with the title *Le Vite Delle Donne Illustri* etc. (1591), by Petruccio Ubaldino.<sup>11</sup> His own conclusion is

dass die dichter [Leonhardt takes the play to be a Beaumont and Fletcher collaboration] aus den übersetzungen als den ihnen zunächst liegenden und daher auch bequemsten quellen schöpfen. Ich entschliesse mich um so mehr für diese annahme, als einestheils die dichter in Holinshed die übersetzung beider originale vereint vorfanden, und als andernteils die berichte über Caratacus und Bonduica bei dem englischen chronisten weit näher bei einander stehen als bei den classischen autoren. (Leonhardt 1889: 44)<sup>12</sup>

Though Leonhardt's argumentation is perhaps slightly oracular, my conclusions, as far as story sources are concerned, are similar. The major plot elements of the story lines of *Bonduca* are these:<sup>13</sup>

1. Bonduca is dishonoured and her daughters are raped by the Romans; seeking revenge, their army wins a battle against the aggressors. With her, Caratach is the joint commander-in-chief;

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magnanimous poetry, bad taste and no dramatic art. If the author of *The Valiant Welshman* could be credited with inventing his plots, why should not Fletcher be able to do that in *Bonduca* too?

11 *The Lives of Illustrious Women of the English Kingdom and of the Kingdom of Scotland* [...]. *Written in the Italian by Petruccio Ubaldino, citizen of Florence. London 1591.* (I am grateful to Oliver Bleskie for his help with the translations.)

12 '[T]he poets were composing out of the translations as these were the most available and besides the most comfortable resources. I am opting for this assumption all the more as, firstly, the poets could find the translations of both the originals submerged in Holinshed, and secondly, the narratives of Caratacus and Bonduca are closer to one another with the English chronicler than with the classical authors' (Leonhardt 1889: 44).

13 The back-formed plot of *Bonduca* is available in the Appendices.

2. Swetonius is absent (conquering the Mona island, or Anglesey) when this rebellion takes place; instantly he returns to join with the other Roman legions;
3. The Roman army eventually conquer the Britains;
4. Roman Judas and his companions foray into the enemy territory for food and are taken by Bonduca's daughters; Caratach releases them;
5. Junius falls in love with Bonduca's younger daughter; by a ruse he and his companions are drawn into a trap and taken; Caratach releases them again;
6. Penyus disagrees with Swetonius, and refuses to join in the fight; when the Romans win, he kills himself with a sword (for the dishonour of having robbed his soldiers of the glory);
7. Petilius is ordered to attempt the reconciliation of Swetonius with Penyus; instead, he urges Penyus on, eager to get the position of the commander of his regiment; he is accused of it, but eventually is tacitly cleared and is invested with the office;
8. Bonduca and her daughters escape after the defeat, take refuge in a fort, and eventually commit suicide;
9. Caratach takes Hengo, escapes and is chased; in the end, Hengo is killed by treachery, and Caratach is delivered into Roman hands;
10. Petilius falls in love with Bonduca's elder sister.

In Tacitus's *Annals*, as in Dio Cassius and in Holinshed's *Historie of England*, Caratach (Caractacus) and Bonduca (Voadicia, Bunduica, or Boudicca) are at a remove of at least a generation from one another. Their military revolts against the Romans have, however, similar features (as any two insurrections arguably have). From the point of view of archetypes, there is no need to distinguish between the narratives of the former and the latter revolt and their attributes. Caractacus led his army against the Romans under Publius Ostorius (*Annals XII*) and was eventually defeated; likewise did Boudicea rebel against the Roman invaders, and her forces were defeated by the Roman general Suetonius Paulinus (*Annals XIV*).

Hector Boece's *The Chronicles of Scotland* (1531) contain another account of Bonduca. In this, as Macdonald (1987: 46) has pointed out, the stories of Caratach and Bonduca are interlinked. Bonduca (called Voada) is the sister of Caratach (Caratak) and with her other brother, Cobreid, defends her honour against her willful husband.<sup>14</sup> Some time after this campaign Voada leads her own insurrection against the Romans; this narrative is very likely fully based on Tacitus, as Boece admits (Bk. 4, ch. 4). Boece's legend is taken over by Holinshed in the fifth volume of the *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* (1587–8), in *The Description of Scotland*.<sup>15</sup> Holinshed's version is shorter and collates the Scottish chronicle with

14 The summary of the story in Boece is given in the Appendix.

15 The appropriate extracts from Holinshed's *Chronicles* are given in the Appendix; it is copied from the 1807–8 London edition. For the sake of reference, I applied numbers to the passages.

the classical sources. It is here that the two revolts come closest to each other, which no critic seems to have noticed so far.

The story of the insurrection against (Roman) oppressors, pivotal to *Bonduca*, may be found in all the mentioned sources. In the above outline it is represented by points 1–3, partly 8 (in the sources, the daughters survive), and partly 9 (without Hengo). It is plot specifics and their conjunctions that are essential in pointing to Fletcher's possible sources.

A possible source for Hengo could have been Voada's son. Following Hector Boece, in Holinshed's *The Description of Scotland*, 'Voada, the sister of Caratake king of the Scottishmen' had 'a son and two daughters', 'hir sonne [called] Guiderius' (Caratake, 2–3, 10). However, when the narrative of Voada is resumed in the chapter on Corbreid, her son is not mentioned any more (omitted in Boece). If one is to attempt any consistency in the history, the absence of Guiderius might have indirectly suggested Hengo's death in *Bonduca*. This assumption may, however, be too farfetched. In Holinshed, Voada's brother Corbreid

had three sons in all, Corbreid, Tulcane, and Bréeke. The eldest had beene brought vp with Voada, quéene of the Britains, whereby he had learned the maners and vsages of the British nation. (*Dardar*: 1)

The eldest son, who was nicknamed Corbreid Gald (ie. Briton), may have suggested or contributed to the relationship of Hengo and Bonduca.

In the manuscript of the play the initial stage direction in the first scene reads: '*Enter Bonduca: (hir Daughter) Hengo: (hir Sonne) | Nennius: & Soldiers*' (*Bonduca MS*: 2). If this is an indication of an earlier stage of the play, as W. W. Greg suggests in the Introduction to his edition of the manuscript,<sup>16</sup> not just a scribal error, it seems to support the argument that Hengo developed from Guiderius of the chronicle, and was gradually transformed into the archetypal Corbreid Gald. Boece strengthens the ties that Caratac has to his nephew (nevo Guyderius); Voada asks her brother to 'tak the gouernance of thair realme, quhill his nevo war of perfite aige' (115). His 'affeccioun ... to his sister and nevo' (115) is referred to as well. This seems to concur with Bonduca's 'And *Hengo* to thy charge I here deliver' (1.1.176) and Caratac's later 'No boy, thy fortune's mine, | I must not leave thee' (3.5.155–6).

At this point I will digress to the name of the character, the onomastic *décor*. Jodi Mikalachki claims that

Hengo's name (Fletcher's invention) points to Hengist, the first Saxon ruler in Britain, often used in early modern iconography as the representative of England's Saxon heritage. (Mikalachki 1995: 314)

16 Greg (1951: xiii): 'It may be noted as a point of some interest that when Fletcher began writing his foul papers he seems to have been rather uncertain about some of his characters. ... Hengo is certainly not Bonduca's son: he speaks of her throughout as his aunt, and of Caratac as his uncle.'

W. W. Appleton suggests that Hengo as the proclaimed ‘hopes of *Britain*’ and a ‘Royall graft’ (5.3.160–161) is ‘an appropriate tribute to young prince Henry’ (Appleton 1956: 55). If so, Henry’s name may as well have suggested Hen-go, taking over the form of similar ‘o’-ended names in Holinshed, such as Hamo or Iago.

Hengo’s death, if the plausible topical reference to Henry is valid, perhaps needs no other source; as mentioned above, the absence of Voada’s son in her later rebellion, might have, however, suggested his death. For Fletcher, this could have been a suitable pretext for a tribute to the deceased prince Henry. As to the capture of Caratach, it follows Caratacus’s fate in the sources; he is used with honour; in her letter, Young Bonvica (Bonduca’s younger daughter) asks Junius to ‘Use my Mother | (If you intend to take her) with all honour’ (3.2.26–7), and Bonduca is promised by the Romans to receive fair treatment (4.4.96–97, 155–6).

The whole plot of Penyus (point 6) was suggested by a short mention in either Tacitus (XIV, 37) or Holinshed’s version (13:17). However, neither of the sources gives a clue to the origin of the Petilius-Penyus subplot. The contentious nature of the Romans might further have been suggested by the conflict Suetonius had with Julius Classicianus (or Holinshed’s Ilius Cassicianus), and the following mission of ‘one Polycletus’ sent into Britain ‘to reconcile the legat and procurator’ (Hol. 13:21, and 13:23; Tac. XIV:39). Like the acquitted Petilius of *Bonduca* Petillius Cerealis of the sources was appointed lieutenant (Tac. XIV:39f.; Hol. 14:3).

The escape of Bonduca and her daughters, their refuge in the fort after the battle, and the daughters’ suicides do not seem to have any particular precedents in history. As an aftermath of the defeat, it might be a parallel to Caratach’s escape (Tac. XII, and in Holinshed, *Caratake*: 18; more elaborately then in Hol. 6:14). The narrative of the rebellion of Voadicia, the daughter of Voada, in Holinshed gives an instance of an escape; her troops were put to flight and later she was taken prisoner (*Corbreid Gald*: 2–4). However, Green (1982: 311n.) points out the similarity between Cleopatra and Bonduca, and suggests *Bonduca*’s indebtedness to Shakespeare’s play. Leonhardt and Green suggested that the fortress and Bonduca’s death scene were taken over from the final scene (5.2) in *Antony and Cleopatra* (Leonhardt 1889: 63; Green 1982: 311n.). This scene also has a parallel in the final ‘blackmailing scene’ (5.3) of *Love’s Cure*; McMullan (1994: 268) takes the play for Massinger’s revision (1625?) of an early Beaumont and Fletcher collaborative play, dated before 1610. Like Cleopatra, the proud and defiant Bonduca tries to avoid the shame of being exposed to the Roman multitude:

Voada the quèene, doubting to come into the hands of hir enimies, slue hir selfe.  
Two of hir daughters were taken prisoners, and brought armed, euen as they were  
found fighting in the battell, vnto Suetonius. (*Corbreid*: 30)

The conclusion concerning these plot specifics might be, as Green puts it, that ‘it is quite likely that Fletcher was influenced by the Shakespearean play’ (Green 1982: 311n.).<sup>17</sup> From a different perspective, Fletcher may have made use of the

17 Green’s suggestion, though disputable in its implications at times, as Hickman (1989) and Calder (1996) argue, is the following: ‘As in *Bonduca*, *Antony and Cleopatra* shifts its focus



powerful monument scene of *Antony and Cleopatra*, and reused the *theatergram* in his play.

Bonduca (like Judas) has some characteristics in common with the treacherous Cartemandia as she is portrayed in Holinshed (Ch. 6:14, and Ch. 8:4–10) and Tacitus (XII, 36). For a possible parallel with the scene in question in *Bonduca* (4.4) and the outcome see Hol. 8:9–10. Cartemandia too may well have been the model of the *ruse de guerre* that Young Bonvica schemes to capture Junius and his companion.<sup>18</sup> Holinshed writes that, when fighting against her former husband Venutius, ‘the quéene by a craftie policie found meanes to catch the brother and coosens of Venutius’. The parallel story continues in a similar vein. Despite this trick, her ‘enimies nothing therewith discouraged, ... ceased not to go forward with their purpose’ (Hol. 8:7).

Leonhardt attempted to trace the Junius-Bonvica plot (point 5) in the ingenuous episode of Morion, ‘the foolish knight’, who falls in love with the Fairy Queen in a wedding masque (*The Valiant Welshman*, 2.1 and 2.5).<sup>19</sup> There is a less remote source for the love-affair. In Boece and Holinshed (*Scotland*), after Voada’s suicide, her daughters are taken prisoners. The account continues:

The eldest of them within a few moneths after was married vnto a noble Romane named Marius, who had defloured hir before time. He was also created king of Britaine by the emperours authoritie, that thereby the state of the countrie might be reduced vnto a better quiet. (*Cobreid.* 31–2)

Marius may have been the model of Junius and the eldest daughter may well have suggested Young Bonvica.<sup>20</sup> If so, Fletcher ‘reconstructed’ their plot as he did the

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back and forth between the warring camps, and the opposition between Octavius Caesar’s Rome and Cleopatra’s Egypt embodies the same kind of male-female polarity as that between Swetonius’s Rome and Bonduca’s Britain. Both Bonduca and Cleopatra demonstrate inadequacies as military leaders, and both flee from battle. Like Cleopatra, Bonduca kills herself to avoid falling into Roman hands; moreover, both queens are eulogized by the victorious Roman generals. There are also similarities between Enobarbus and Caratach, both of whom are examples of a new kind of Jacobean hero: the gruff, unpolished soldier, plain-spoken and eminently courageous. ... Both men defect to the enemy camp, but with somewhat different motives and attitudes; and the fact that Enobarbus dies of a broken heart for having deserted Antony, whereas Caratach is greeted in triumph by Rome’s noblest soldiers, helps to suggest the nature of these differences’ (Green 1982: 311n.).

18 I am using for Bonduca’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Daughter the name of ‘Young Bonvica’, as it appears in the signature of her letter, for convenience’s sake. Within the play, however, her signed name (the only occurrence of her name) is no more than decorative; it has only local significance (cf. the local function of the names of Coriolanus’ Mother and Wife discussed in Lower 1998: 231–50).

19 Morion is fooled by the Juggler (‘a rare fellowv, that | can tell misfortunes, and can coniuere’, 2.5.11–12) into pursuing naked the mirage of the Fairy Queen into the ditch, from which his man Ratsbane drags him out. Quoted from the LION (Literature Online), the Chadwyck-Healey online collection of English plays.

20 Holinshed mentions that the name ‘Bonuica’ is used by Dio Cassius as a variant for Voadicia or Boudicia. (13:3)

Penyus plot. He extended the episode into the past, which in its juxtaposition with other plots, offered abundant dramatic potential.

One of the options the Junius-Bonvica plot offered was the parallel prurient love of Petillius towards the elder, 1<sup>st</sup> Daughter (point 10). There is a germ of the relation between the two of them in the sources. In Boece and Holinshed (*Scotland*) again, one of Voada's daughters, called Voadicia, triggers an insurrection at several towns and leads a night attack against a Roman camp. This happens while Petilius Cerealis, the lieutenant in Britain, is 'occupied ... in the conquest of Galloway' (*Cobreid Gald.* 2). She is put to flight and later

was taken prisoner hir selfe, and being brought alieue vnto Petilius, vpon hir stout answer made vnto him, as he questioned with hir bold enterprises, shée was presentlie slaine by the souldiors. (*Corbreid Gald.* 4)

As for the plot of Judas and his companions, and their foray into the Briton territory for food (point 4), there are several mentions of famine or shortage of victuals in Holinshed.<sup>21</sup> At the beginning of chapter 13, Suetonius prepares to 'giue battell', as is explained parenthetically 'chieffie because vittels began to faile him' (13:1). This is very likely to have suggested the setting. It is earlier in the narrative, namely after Caratake returns from Rome, that the following account is given:

At one time the Britains surprised two bands of footmen that were with the Romans in aid, and sent foorth to forreie abroad vnaduisiedlie, through couetousnesse of the capteins. (7:12)

The Britons' lament at their misery in chapter 9 could be seen as another resounding passage, helping to define Judas and company:

There was nothing frée from the couetous extortion and *filthie concupiscence of these vn-satiabie* persons, for in these daies (say they) the greatest spoiler is the valiantest man, and most commonlie our houses are robbed and ransacked by a sort of *cowardlie raskals* that haue no knowledge of anie warlike feats at all. (9:12, my emphasis)

### The Décor of *Bonduca*

The *décor* of *Bonduca* concerns features that root the play in the historical period or may create a fictional 'atmosphere' that points to antiquity and/or to pagan times. However, most of what is *authentic décor* in *Bonduca* (that which fixes the archetypal stories in ancient Britain's struggle against Rome) is infiltrated with conventional, that is, with temporally neutral, Elizabethan/Jacobean stylistic imagery, such as references to ancient myths, sayings or turns of speech ('there he swears he will

<sup>21</sup> For instance: 'nothing more afflicted [the Britons] than famine' (13:20); 'the Romans refusing to fight a generall battell, yet scoured so the fields on ech side abroad, that neither the Britains nor Scots could go forth anie waies for forage or vittels, but they were still snatched vp' (*Caratake.* 8); the Scots advised that the Romans 'should in no wise be fought withall, but rather to suffer them wearie themselues, till vittels and other prouision should faile them, and then take aduantage of them, as occasion serued' (*Corbreid Gald.* 1).

keep his Christmas', 5.2.102). This may be used, and is commonly used, in any play regardless of the era it is set in.

Clifford Leech (1962), in his section on *Bonduca*, tried to show similarities between Fletcher's play and *Cymbeline*. In my view, though the two plays treat almost contemporaneous histories, they are far from each other in their *décor*, in their fictional world. There are some analogies and similarities; however, under scrutiny they turn out to be superficial.<sup>22</sup> He admits however that Fletcher is following his sources more closely than Shakespeare in respect of his attempt at re-creating the world of Roman-Celtic Britain. As to the nature of these features, which I will try to trace in the sources, they are mostly fragmentary pieces of information. From these the spectator/reader extrapolates the illusory world of the play. Given this fragmentariness, the next section will be rather a sequence of points than a continuous text. Its objectives remain the same: to expose the elements that are active in the play for the sake of further analysis, and to suggest their possible sources.

#### *Names of characters*

**Bonduca** – the variants of the name are as follows: *Bondicca* (Tac. XIV:31ff.), *Buduica* (Βουδουίκα, Dio Cassius LXII), *Vodicia* (Polydore Vergil, Bk. 2), *Voada*, *Vodicia* (Boece 3:9; 4:9), *Woada*, *Woyoda*, *Woyada*, *Wodicia*, *Voyeda*, *Woida* (metrical Boece), *Voadicia*, *Bunduica*, *Boudicia*, *Bonuica* (Hol. 10:3ff.), *Voada* (Hol. Caratake: 2), *Bunduca* (Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, Book 2, Canto x, verse liv); 'Voadicea, or Boodicea; By some Bvndvica, and Bvndvca: queene of the Icenii' (Jonson's *The masque of Queenes*), *Uoada* (*The Valiant Welshman*).<sup>23</sup> Fletcher's variant, the Latinate 'Bon-duca', suggests 'the good leader'.

**Caratach** – Caractacus (Tac. XII:33), Caratacus (Καράταχος, Dio Cassius LX), Caratacus (Polydore Vergil, Bk. 2), Caratak (Boece 3:9), Caratac, Caratacus (metrical Boece), Caratacus, Caratake (Hol.), Caradoc (*The Valiant Welshman*). The ending '-ach' might have been suggested by 'Charanach king of the Picts' (Holinshed, *Corbreid*: 12), who joins in league with Corbreid in support of Voada against the Romans.

**Nennius** – a possible source for the name could have been 'Nenius brother to Cassibelane' in Holinshed (Book 3, Ch. 13). Otherwise, Nennius is a name common enough (for instance, it is one of Old English chroniclers).

**Hengo** – discussed above.

**Bonvica** – see under 'Bonduca'.

**Swetonius, Penys, Petillius** – derive from the sources. The variant *Swetonius* appears in the metrical Boece (289ff.). The remaining Roman names, to my knowl-

22 Leech's observation, although stressing similarities and claiming indebtedness, is that Shakespeare's objectives are very different from Fletcher's. He does not approach *Bonduca* as an autonomous play with its own aims but sees it with a view of assumed Shakespearean precepts.

23 Tacitus (1956: 157); Dio (1961: 85); Polydore (1846: 70); Boece (1938: 113, 155); Metrical Boece (1858: 193ff., 294ff.); Edmund Spenser (1987); Ben Jonson, *The masque of Queenes* (1609), published in his *Workes* (1616), pp. 945–964: p. 961, mentioned by Green (1982: 307).

edge, have no specific sources and seem to be rather arbitrary; most of those characters are named once or twice only, and the function of their names—if there is any—is local.

*References to names*

**Germans** (1.1.13) – mentioned twice in the relevant passages by Holinshed; in the Britons' complaint (9:14) and as subsidiary forces sent into Britain (13:18). In Tacitus Caesar 'sent over from Germany two thousand legionaries, eight cohorts of auxiliaries, and a thousand cavalry' (XIV:38).

**Druides** (1.1.42) – appear both in Holinshed and in Tacitus ('Druidaeque circum *etc.*', XIV:30).

**The Volans Regiment** (1.2.159) – this is obscure; I have not traced the name of the Regiment anywhere. Both in Tacitus (XII:36, XIV:39f.) and in Holinshed (8:1, 14:1) one Manlius Valens and one Victius Volanus are mentioned. The former was the commander of a legion that the Britons conquered.

**Mona** (1.2.182) – so Tacitus (14:29); Boece has *Man* (4:4), metrical Boece: *Mone*, Holinshed: *Man*, *Angleseie* and *Môn* (*Corbreid*: 3; the *History of Britain* has *Anglesey*).

**Tiranes** (3.1.17) – not traced.

**Prosutagus** (3.1.46) – the variant Prasutagus appears in Tacitus as well as Holinshed.

**Andate** (3.1.59, 74) – so Dio Cassius (Ἀνδάτης, which is probably gen. sing. of Ἀνδάτη); Holinshed has 'Andates'.

**Icenian Queen** (4.4.6) – Tacitus (XIV:30), Holinshed (10:2).

As to other features of the play that refer to the history, these are partly generating the setting of the military conflict or the autochthonous politics of honour and shame in which the characters operate. Some of the instances Fletcher uses may have had their historical precedents. Others may have been required by the need to create a certain effect, such as Bonduca's

[*Bonduca*.]                    'tis fitter I should reverence  
 The thatched houses where the Britains dwell                    20  
 In careless mirth, where the blest household gods  
 See nought but chaste and simple puritie.

(*Bonduca* 4.4.19–22)

These and like 'generators' of *décor* need not be traced to any particular source, though they draw on the tradition of pastoral innocence and purity, which Fletcher used several times.<sup>24</sup>

24 Apart from the obvious and well-known case of *The Faithful Shepherdess*, it is also found in the ironic pseudo-pastoral argumentation of Palamon and Arcite in the prison, discussed in Chapter 2 (*The Two Noble Kinsmen* 2.2).

In one of Caratach's first speeches, which are expository as to the nature of the conflict between Britons and Romans, he refers to a noble episode during which he was captured by the enemy,

[*Caratach.*] But that the son of vertue, *Penyus*,  
 Seing me steer thorow all these storms of danger,  
 My helm still in my hand (my sword), my prow,  
 Turn'd to my fo (my face), he cri'd out nobly,  
 Go, Britain, bear thy Lions whelp off safely; 120  
 Thy manly sword has ransom'd thee: grow strong,  
 And let me meet thee once again in arms;  
 Then if thou stand'st, thou art mine.  
(*Bonduca* 1.1.116–123)<sup>25</sup>

This might possibly have been suggested by the releasing of the historical Carac-tacus by Claudius as described in Tacitus (XII:37) and Holinshed (7:10).

The other decorative features referring to the period generate the setting of the conflict between Britons and Romans. Such is the case of Petillius's remark on the enemy: 'The hills are wooded with their partizans' (1.2.193). Its possible source was Tacitus's description of skirmishes in the woods or morasses in the country of the Silures (Tac. XII:39). Holinshed mentions Britains who were over-powered by Ostorius and 'withdrew to the top of the hilles' (Hol. 6:13). Likewise the nature of the adversary as described by Petillius, as well as Swetonius's reas-suring scepticism and the others' reactions to it, are traceable in both Tacitus (XIV:30) and Holinshed (9:4–6):

[*Petillius.*] No ground left us 195  
 To charge upon, no room to strike: ...  
of desperate women,  
 That neither fear, or shame ere found, the devill  
 has rank amongst 'em multitudes: say the men fail. 200  
 they 'll poison us with their petticoats: say they fail,  
 they have priests enough to pray us into nothing.  
*Swetonius.* These are imaginations, dreams of nothings,  
 The man that doubts or fears.  
*Decius.* I am free of both.  
*Demetrius.* The self-same I.  
*Petillius.* And I as free as any; 205  
(*Bonduca* 1.2.195–205)

Both the sources give the relevant passages as descriptions of Suetonius's cam-paign to the island of Mona. This is Tacitus's account:

On the beach stood the adverse array, a serried mass of arms and men, with women flitting between the ranks. In the style of Furies, in robes of deathly black and with dishevelled hair, they brandished their torches; while a circle of Druids, lifting their hands to heaven and showering imprecations, struck the troops with such an awe at

25 Though this is an episode and as such may be grouped with the archetypal stories of the play, I deliberately mention it as decorative since what it really contributes to the plot is the moral and honourable lesson that Caratach teaches.

the extraordinary spectacle that, as though their limbs were paralysed, they exposed their bodies to wounds without an attempt at movement. Then, reassured by their general, and inciting each other never to flinch before a band of females and fanatics, they charged ...

(Tacitus 1956: 155–56)

Swetonius encourages the Roman officers and makes them exhort the soldiers to enthusiasm (2.4.29–35). This has its model in Tacitus (XIV:36), Dio (LXII, pp. 97–101) and Holinshed (13:8–9).

The Druids, or Petillius's 'priests', are mentioned by Caratach earlier ('The holy *Druides* composing songs | Of everlasting life to Victory', 1.1.42–3). This decorative feature is important for the modality of the play; the Druids enter in the sacrificial procession in 3.1. By iteration in the exposition, ground is prepared for their future entry.

As for Judas, as Green has mentioned, he is

this least heroic character in the play, while in a drunken stupor, shouts to his comrades, 'Awake ye men of Memphis' (II.iv.93), a line from Marlowe's *Tamburlaine, Part I* (IV.i.1), the embodiment of Renaissance heroic aspiration. (1982: 316n.)

Fletcher uses the quotation to parodic purposes. I will comment on this particular mood of the play in Chapter 5.

The motive that Penys has for his suicide is that he has deprived his soldiers of the glory of victory. This motive is common with that of the source. Similarly, the notion of the fight against a much greater army and the argument that the glory of the victory grows greater in proportion to the size of the adversary (2.3.43–45, 75–76), is traceable in Holinshed. This seems to have been a commonplace technique of propaganda; it reappears several times in the chronicles as well as in plays (*Edward III* 1535f.; *Henry V* 4.3).

The wantonness and negligence of the Romans may be felt in Tacitus's critical tone, as in: 'Nor did there seem any great difficulty in the demolition of a colony unprotected by fortifications—a point too little regarded by our commanders, whose thoughts had run more on the agreeable than on the useful' (Tac. XIV:31). In a similar way, the Roman fastidiousness may have been suggested by the Dionian oration of Voadicia in Holinshed (11:23). The finicky Roman soldiers are criticised by Petillius:

[*Petillius.*] and they want but Mustard, they're in uproars:  
 No oil but Candy, Lucitanian figs,  
 And wine from Lestos, now can satisfie 'em: 170  
 The British waters are grown dull and muddy,  
 The fruit disgustful: Orontes must be sought for,  
 And Apples from the happie Isles

(*Bonduca* 1.2.168–173)

In *Bonduca*, there are several references to animals and their connotative features. These are analyzed in sufficient length by Green (1982: 306), and in reaction to Green by Hickman (1989: 157f.). Some of the connections might have been sug-

gested by references to animals in Dio and mainly Holinshed. However, the enumeration would be tedious and of little profit to my purpose.

Unless Caratach's line 'Our Registers, | The *Romanes*' (1.1.142–3) is taken for internal evidence, the main sources may well have been restricted to Holinshed's *The Historie of England* and *The Description of Scotland* in his *Chronicles*. The only facts that cannot be found in Holinshed are, to my view, the variants of the name 'Mona', and one detail of the plot (namely the tie between Caratach and his nephew), which is not in Holinshed but is to be found in Boece. If this conclusion is correct, there still is, I take it, no special reason to argue too strongly for other textual sources than Holinshed. Conjecturally, Fletcher could have consulted someone or discussed the plot, and received some feedback that could modify and enrich his archetypal stories and *décor*. By the same token he seems to have modified the role of Bonduca as a mother to Hengo and 'un-mothered' her. As for the other sources, which Leonhardt claims were the most available, there is no need to take into consideration Ubaldino's booklet or other works; if Fletcher did consult Polidore Vergil, Spenser, Ubaldino, or knew Jonson's *The Masque of Queens*, he did not use them in more than subtle details. One may safely assume that Holinshed's twin retelling of the story (which has passed heretofore largely unnoticed) was a sufficient source for the archetypal stories as well as for much of the *décor*.