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A NOTE ON THE TRANSLATIONS

The translations in this volume have been undertaken by the three editors, with extensive help from Anthony Mortimer, whose vast experience in translating from various languages into English (including Petrarch and Michelangelo from Italian, Villon from French, and Silesius from German) has been invaluable. The translation of the verse passages in *Kunst über alle Künste* (see below) is essentially Mortimer's, and he also much improved the prose text.

Like any translation, ours needs to steer a course between a literal, word-for-word version, which would come at the cost of readability, and a more free approach which would not preserve enough of the linguistic and semantic make-up of the original. Our edition is particularly concerned with the relationship between the German adaptations and the Shakespearean originals, and this can only be revealed by a reasonably close translation. On the other hand, we have tried to arrive at a text that feels natural and is easily readable in English, and that occasionally entails a departure from what the German text literally says. When such departures are significant, we draw attention to our translation choices in the commentary.

Of the two previous translations of *Tito Andronico*, one (see below) adopts now archaic second-person familiar pronouns (thou, thee, etc.) and corresponding verb forms. There may be good reasons for this: the English playtext of which *Tito* is a translation and adaptation included those linguistic features, and so a retranslation that reproduces them may reflect a significant aspect of the relation between German adaptation and English original. Yet any attempt to translate a text into early modern English or an approximation thereof also comes with a series of problems. Early modern English is a language

no one now speaks, and its supposed recreation runs the danger of coming across as pastiche. Many early modern terms would need notes since they are not familiar to all readers, and it seems more sensible to translate into a language that does not sound alien to modern readers. Other words have changed their meaning since the early modern period, and a translation into pseudo-early-modern English would raise the question of which meaning is intended and create the need for more notes. The decision to translate a text into the English language of another period would also raise the question of which period to choose: the late sixteenth century, when *Titus Andronicus* and *The Taming of the Shrew* came into being; the early seventeenth century when *Tito* was printed; or the later seventeenth century, when *Kunst* came into being? Any one of these options would be hard to justify and even harder to maintain in any consistent and coherent fashion.

We have therefore decided to translate the texts into modern (British) English. Yet while we have tried to steer clear of the awkwardly archaic, we have also favoured options that do not feel aggressively modern. Given the origins of the texts we have translated, we think there is a limit to how modern the translations should sound. We also make an exception in our avoidance of early modernisms by using ‘exit’ and ‘exeunt’ in stage directions, in keeping with Arden Shakespeare practice. Apart from this exception, we have striven for diction that is neither recognizably archaic nor specifically of the twentieth and twenty-first century.

We use contracted verb forms (don’t, isn’t, he’ll, etc.) when there seems to be a good reason to do so. For instance, short forms may indicate a more relaxed mood, a class difference or a certain absence of emphasis, and of course they impact the overall rhythm of a sentence. The German text of *Kunst* has a fairly colloquial feeling throughout, and contracted forms thus often seem appropriate. In *Tito* the short form is reserved for Morian (it suits his sardonic nature) and the midwife (as a

matter of class difference). We similarly used short forms for Pickelherring in the translation of *Romio und Julieta*.

The translation of *Kunst* comes with challenges over and above those of the other seventeenth-century German Shakespeare adaptations. The language is often idiosyncratic, with passages that are hard to make sense of, and many phrases sound proverbial but are not recorded and explained in any of the standard reference works (see pp. 116–17). Even the play's only previous editor, Reinhold Köhler, a well-known German scholar in his time, who was the head librarian of the Duchess Anna Amalia Library in Weimar, was repeatedly left nonplussed by the text (e.g. pp. 215, 220, 224, etc.), though, in the 1860s, he was still considerably closer in time to the German of *Kunst* than we are today. Translating *Kunst* thus occasionally involves conjectures, as acknowledged in the commentary.

Tito is exclusively in prose, but *Kunst* contains several passages in verse (3.1.46–50, 3.1.67–70, 3.1.143–78, 5.2.224–60, 5.2.352–59), which we have translated as verse. The first two passages, dactylic compositions by Felix and Sabina during the poetry lesson, have been translated so as to preserve the dactylic metre. In the third, Alfons' song performed for Sabina during the music lesson, the translation preserves the original's iambic trimeter couplets. The fourth, Felix's hunting poem, has rather rough iambic octameter couplets in the original, which our translation renders as fourteeners to convey the impression of a fairly rudimentary verse technique. In the last verse passage, a poem by Fabian, our translation preserves the original's (rather awkward) iambic trimeter couplets. We have rhymes where the German does, although we make occasional use of half rhyme where the German has full rhyme (e.g., 3.1.143–6).

Kunst has not been previously translated, but there are two earlier translations of *Tito* into English. We have benefited from them but have also tried to improve on them. Moritz Lippner's translation in Cohn's *Shakespeare in Germany* (1865) is

generally reliable, although its English is partly archaic, not least in its adoption of second-person familiar pronouns (thou, thee, etc.) and corresponding verb forms. The translation by Ernst Brennecke in *Shakespeare in Germany 1590–1700* (1964) is considerably less formal than Lippner's and sometimes rather loose. We have tried to avoid the former's archaisms and the latter's looseness, striving for a text that combines readability with conservative modern English.