



Handout #2- Primary Sources

Passage 1- From Plutarch, *Lives of Noble Grecians and Romans*, trans. Thomas North

(1595) p.788.

STC 20067

About this source: Plutarch's Lives was William Shakespeare's primary source for the play "Julius Caesar." This excerpt come from the life of Julius Caesar and tells about Calpurnia's dream.

"Then going to bed the same night, as his manner was, and lying with his wife Calpurnia, all the windowes and doores of his chamber flying open, the noise awoke him, and made him afraid when he saw such light: but more when he heard his wife Calpurnia, being fast asleep weep and sigh and put forth many fumbling lamentable speeches. For she dreamed that Caesar was slain, and that she had him in her armes. Others also do deny that she had any such dreams, as among other, Titus Liuius, writeth that it was in this sort. The senate having set upon the top of Caesar's house, for an ornament and setting forth of the same, a certain pinnacle: Calpurnia dreamed she saw it broken down and that she thought she lamented and wept for it."

Passage 2- From Plutarch, *Lives of Noble Grecians and Romans*, trans. Thomas North

(1595) p.788.

STC 20067

About this source: Plutarch's Lives was William Shakespeare's primary source for the play "Julius Caesar." This excerpt come from the life of Julius Caesar and tells about the ides of March.

"Insomuch as Caesar rising in the morning, she{Calpurnia} prayed for him it were poffible, not to go out of the doores that day, but to ignore the session of the senate until another day. And if that he made no reckoning of her dream, yet that he would search further of the soothsayer by their sacrifices to know further what would happen him that day. Thereby it seemed that Caesar likewise did fear and suspect somewhat, because his wife Calpurnia until that time had never given to any fear or superstition and then for that he saw her so troubled in mind with this dream she had. But much more afterwards, when the soothsayer having sacrificed many beasts one after another, told him that none did like them: then he determined to send Antonius to adjourn the session of the senate."



Passage 3- From Plutarch, *Lives of Noble Grecians and Romans*, trans. Thomas North (1595) p.788.

STC 20067

About this source: Plutarch's Lives was William Shakespeare's primary source for the play "Julius Caesar." This excerpt comes from the life of Julius Caesar and tells about Decius Brutus coming to Caesar's home.

"But in the meantime came Decius Brutus, surnamed Albinus, in whom Caesar put such confidence that in his last will and testament he had appointed him to be his next heir, and yet was of the conspiracy with Cassius and Brutus: he fearing that if Caesar did adjourn the session on that day, the conspiracy would out, laughed the soothsayer to scorn, and reprov'd Caesar saying: that he gave the senate occasion to mislike with him, and that they might think he mocked them, considering that by his commandment they were assembled, and that they were ready willing to grant him all things, and to proclaim him king of all the provinces of the empire of Rome out of Italy, and that he should wear his Diadem in all other places by sea and land. And furthermore, if any man should tell them from him they should depart for the perfect time, and return again when Calpurnia should have better dreams: what would his enemies and ill wishers say, and how could they like of his friend's words? And who could persuade them otherwise, but that they would think his dominion a flattery unto them, and tyrannical in himself" and yet, if it be so, said he, that you utterly mislike of this day, it is better that you go yourself in person, and saluting the senate, to dismiss them till another time. Therewithal he took Caesar by the hand, and brought him out of his house."

Passage 4- Pierre Le Loyer, *A Treatise of Specters* (1605). p.106 (verso), 107 (recto).

STC 15448

About this source: Pierre Le Loyer's book was published in 1605. In it, he describes different kinds of ghosts, and visions. The passage below is from a chapter explaining who was most likely to have supernatural experiences.

"And I have read...one thing that was worthy the observation amongst the Ancient Romans: and which is very agreeing and consenting with our usages, manners and customs. For though at this day the written laws do conclude that women to be under the power and command of her husband...Seeing it is most certain, that women are naturally so frail and weak; it must needs be that fear is naturally attending upon them, and doth ever accompany them: and it doth easily imprint sundry imaginations in their minds, like as a man would make in waxe, in impression of some



character with a Ring or Signet.”

Passage 5- Pierre Le Loyer, *A Treatise of Specters* (1605). p110 (recto).

STC 15448

About this source: Pierre Le Loyer’s book was published in 1605. In it, he describes different kinds of ghosts, and visions. The passage below is from a chapter explaining who was most likely to have supernatural experiences.

“But to returne to our Discourse touching women; I say, That very feare dooth cause a thousand imaginations to come into their mindes that which being carried and conveyed thence even to their corporall eye, doe bring them into Foolish and fond conceits, that they have seene some spirites. Besides, there besome particular maladies proper to women which be barren, and to maydens likewise.”

Passage 6- Henry Howard, *A Defense Against the Poison of Supposed Prophecies* (1583).

P. 42 (recto).

STC 13859 copy 1

About this source: In his book, Henry Howard was trying to disprove all kinds of prophecies, including dreams. This excerpt is from a chapter about dreams and explains one possible cause of dreaming.

“Last of all, it is most evident to all men that take hold or ayme by Dreames, that (for the most part) eyther they flow from the nights distemper, or the dayes imagination. For as we see, that Bardges which are forced by the strength of oares, have a kind of gate or swing when the stroke doth cease; so the mindes which are sore labored and tyred with device and traverse of the braine by day, retaine a certain stampe and deepe impression thereof, which is presented...by the force of understanding in a slumber.”