



Bussy d'Ambois

©2010 eNotes.com, Inc. or its Licensors. Please see [copyright information](#) at the end of this document.

Places Discussed

Royal courts. In tribute to Queen Elizabeth of England, George Chapman has France's King Henry III contrast the French and English courts. A place of dignity, decorum, and respect, the English court exposes the deficiencies of the French court, whose rooms of state are a rude marketplace, its lords and ladies rural bumpkins. Chapman uses location to satirize the people at the royal courts, who include unprincipled sycophants who exchange insults, seduce married ladies, fawn at banquets, and, in private chambers, formulate plots. The satiric spirit of the play calls for luxury, excess, and signs of decadence and corruption. Reports to the king visually depict offstage violence in Homeric epithets.

Count of Montsurry's home. Multiroomed mansion with secret passageways, and, near the countess's bedchamber, a secret vault. On stage, the main action occurs in or near the vault. There a friar and Bussy d'Ambois enter secretly at the lady's request; d'Ambois beds Tamyra, the count of Montsurry's wife; Montsurry sets a trap for d'Ambois and kills him. Montsurry's house contains a room filled with instruments of torture, including a rack on which Montsurry has his faithless wife stretched.

Bibliography:

Bartlett, Phyllis B. *Poems of George Chapman*. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1941. Discusses Chapman's use of drama and poetry as a vehicle for philosophy. Excellent starting point for studying the debate over the frequently difficult language and ambiguous thematic elements of Chapman's plays.

Ferguson, A. S. "The Plays of George Chapman." *Modern Language Review* 13 (1918): 1-24. Concise and still useful essay on Chapman's indebtedness to Seneca.

Rees, Ennis. *The Tragedies of George Chapman*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954. Reads Bussy's view of himself as subjective; argues that, given the protagonist's actions, the play must be read ironically. Demonstrates one of the interpretative extremes the play has provoked.

Schwartz, Elias. "Seneca, Homer, and Chapman's *Bussy d'Ambois*." *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 56 (1957): 163-176. Accepts the protagonist's estimate of himself and his situation as basically correct. With Rees's essay, suggests the widely divergent poles of criticism on the play.

Wieler, John. *George Chapman: The Effect of Stoicism upon His Tragedies*. New York: King's Crown Press, 1949. Excellent introduction to the philosophical background of the play. Asserts the play should be read as a straightforward Christian tragedy; however one reads it, the influence of Stoicism appears throughout the play.

Copyright Notice

©2010 eNotes.com, Inc.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

No part of this work covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, Web distribution or information storage retrieval systems without the written permission of the publisher.

For complete copyright information, please see the online version of this work:
<http://www.enotes.com/bussy-dambois-salem>