

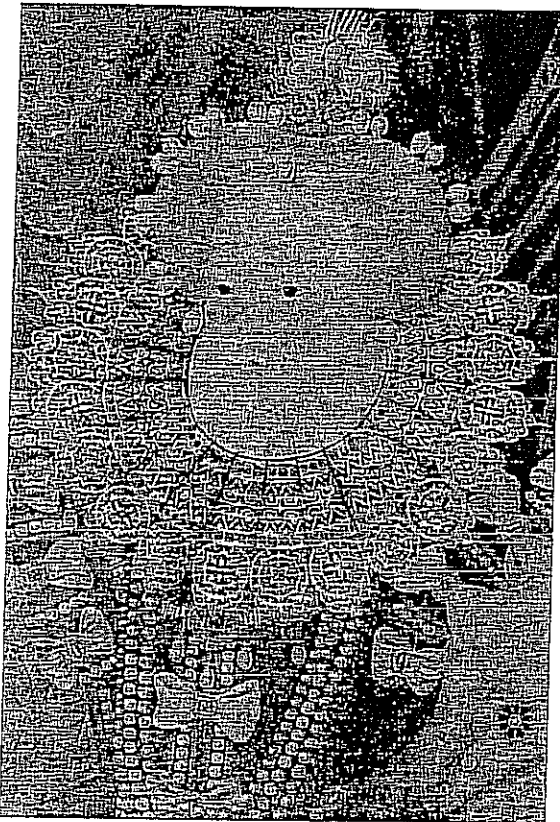
Shakespeare's England



Totus mundus agit histrionem;
All the World's a Stage

A Time in HISTORY:

Shakespeare's England



Queen Elizabeth I, who ruled from 1558 to 1603, gave her name to the age during which Shakespeare lived and wrote.

1558	Elizabeth I becomes Queen of England
1564	Shakespeare is born
1579	Shakespeare's main source for <i>Julius Caesar</i> , North's translation of <i>Plutarch's Lives</i> from the French, is printed
1580	Sir Francis Drake becomes the first man to sail around the world
1582	Shakespeare marries Anne Hathaway
1585-1592	Shakespeare disappears from public records; scholars refer to this time as "the lost years"
1588	Spanish Armada is defeated in its attempt to invade England
1592	First recorded mention of Shakespeare as a London actor and playwright
1592-1594	London's theaters closed by the Black Plague; Shakespeare writes <i>Venus and Adonis</i> and <i>Lucrece</i>
1594	Shakespeare joins the Lord Chamberlain's Men, a group of actors hired to present plays at Court; <i>Titus Andronicus</i> is the first of Shakespeare's plays to be printed
1599	The Lord Chamberlain's men build the Globe Theatre; <i>Julius Caesar</i> is one of the first plays performed there
1603	Black Plague breaks out in London; remains a menace until 1665
1603	Queen Elizabeth dies childless; King James I of Scotland is crowned King of England
1609	Shakespeare's <i>Sonnets</i> published
1613	Globe Theatre burns during a performance of <i>Henry VIII</i>
1616	Shakespeare dies at the age of 52
1623	<i>Julius Caesar</i> is printed in the First Folio

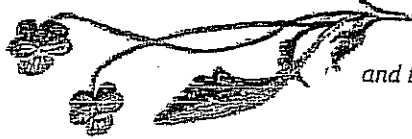
Elizabethan Spelling

Spelling wasn't as important to the Elizabethans as it is to us. Dictionaries hadn't been invented, and most writers, including Shakespeare, made up words when they couldn't find one they liked. Shakespeare himself suffered from the general spelling laziness of the day. Writers spelled his name

Saksper	Shakespert	Schakosper
Shexsper	Saxpere	Sashpierre
Chacsper	Sadspere	Shakbye
Shaxbee	Shakeshafte	and Shakstaff.

In fact, Shakespeare's grandfather spelled his own name as Shakyspere.

CHRONOLOGY

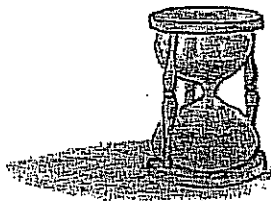


and there is pansies, that's for thoughts.

HAMLET, IV, 5

- 1564 Will born April (some guess 23rd) / Christened 26 April
- 1564 Christopher Marlowe born (d. 1593)
- 1572 Ben Jonson born (d. 1637)
- 1576 The Theatre built (Shoreditch)
- 1577 The Curtain built (Shoreditch)
- 1582 Will marries Anne Hathaway (1556–1623)
- 1583 Daughter Susanna born (d. 1649)
- 1585 Twins Hamnet (d. 1596) and Judith (d. 1662) born
- 1587 Will to London? / The Rose built (Bankside)
- 1592 The Plague / Playhouses closed for two years
- 1594 Lord Chamberlain's Men formed (formerly Lord Strange's Men)
- 1595 The Swan built (Paris Garden)
- 1597 Will buys New Place (Stratford) / James Burbage dies (b. 1531)
- 1599 Globe built (Bankside)
- 1601 Will's father dies (b. before 1530)
- 1603 Queen Elizabeth I dies (b. 1534) / James I (1566–1625) succeeds her
- 1608 Will leaves for Stratford? / Will's mother dies (b. 1540)
- 1608 Granddaughter Elizabeth born (d. 1670)
- 1613 Globe burns down (29 June)
- 1614 Globe II opens / The Hope built (Bankside)
- 1616 Will signs his will (25 March) / Will dies (23 April)
- 1623 *The First Folio* published

- 1949 Sam Wanamaker to London
- 1988 Groundbreaking for new Globe (International Shakespeare Day, 23 April)
- 1989 Remains of Rose and Globe discovered
- 1993 Sam dies (b. 1919)
- 1994 Theo Crosby dies (b. 1925)
- 1997 The new Globe opens (12 June)
- 1999 400th anniversary of first Globe playhouse



*Thereby to see the minutes how they run,—
How many makes the hour full complete;
How many hours brings about the day:*

SHAKESPEARE'S WORKS



There's rosemary, that's for remembrance . . .

HAMLET, IV, 5

The Plays

1589-90	<i>Henry VI, Part 1</i>	1599	<i>As You Like It</i>
1590-91	<i>Henry VI, Part 2</i>	1599	<i>Henry V</i>
1590-91	<i>Henry VI, Part 3</i>	1599	<i>Julius Caesar</i>
1590-94	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	1600-01	<i>Hamlet</i>
1592	<i>Richard III</i>	1600-01	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
1592-94	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	1601-02	<i>Troilus and Cressida</i>
1593-94	<i>Titus Andronicus</i>	1602-03	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>
1594	<i>The Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>	1604	<i>Measure for Measure</i>
1594-96	<i>King John</i>	1604	<i>Othello</i>
1595	<i>Love's Labour's Lost</i>	1604-05	<i>King Lear</i>
1595	<i>Richard II</i>	1606	<i>Macbeth</i>
1595-96	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	1606-07	<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>
1595-96	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	1607-08	<i>Coriolanus</i>
1596-97	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	1607-08	<i>Timon of Athens</i>
1596-97	<i>Henry IV, Part 1</i>	1607-08	<i>Pericles</i>
1597	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	1609-10	<i>Cymbeline</i>
1598	<i>Henry IV, Part 2</i>	1610-11	<i>The Winter's Tale</i>
1598	<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>	1611	<i>The Tempest</i>
		1613	<i>Henry VIII</i>

The Poems

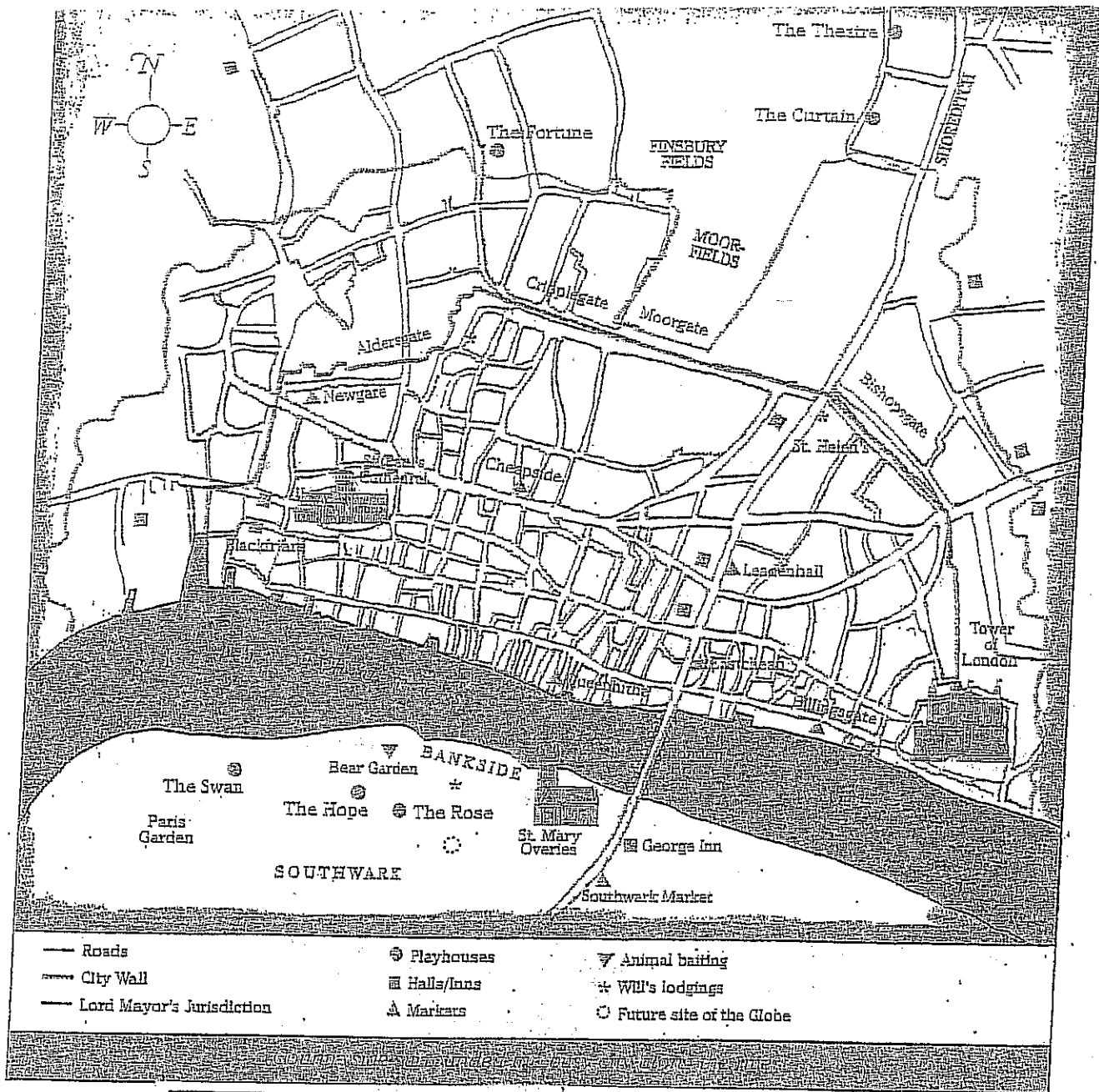
1592	<i>Venus and Adonis</i>
1592-96	<i>The Sonnets</i> (154 of them)
1594	<i>The Rape of Lucrece</i>
1599 ▲	<i>The Passionate Pilgrim</i>
1601	<i>The Phoenix and the Turtle</i>
1609 *	<i>A Lover's Complaint</i>

▲ Date of publication of the second edition

* Date of publication



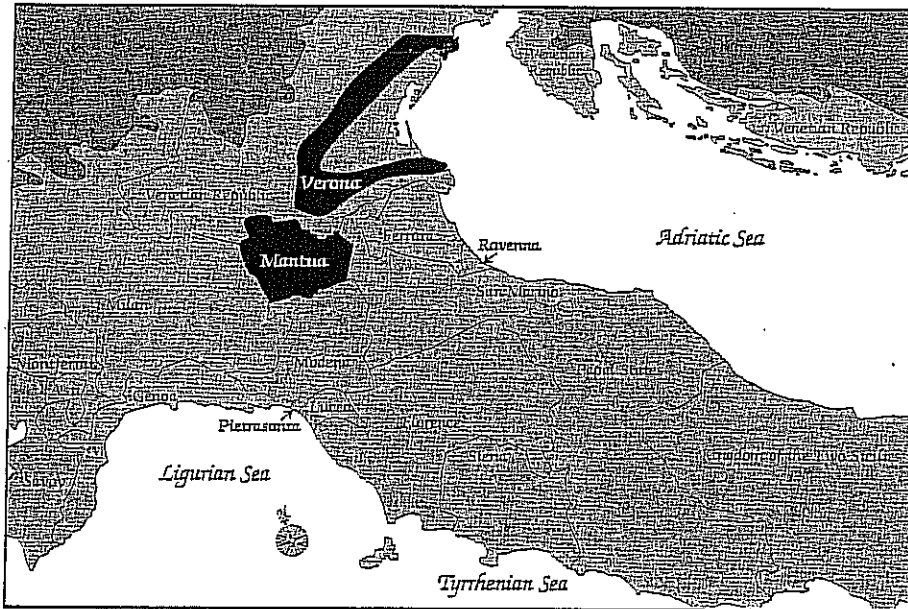
*. . . tragedy, comedy,
history, pastoral,
pastoral-comical,
historical-pastoral,
tragical-historical,*



Totus mundus agit histrionem.
 All the World's a Stage

VERONA IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Italian history is filled with accounts of nobles fighting one another for power and status. The following information tells of the power struggles in the city-state of Verona.



Between 1260 and 1387, there were close to 20 city-states in Italy. The city-states existed in constant power struggles with one another. Often a wall surrounded the city to protect it from enemies. Boundaries and names of city-states frequently changed, depending on who won the battle. The 15th-century pope Pius II summed it up well: "In our change-loving Italy, where nothing stands firm, and where no ancient dynasty exists, a servant can easily become a king."

Imagine living in a town or city that considers itself independent from the rest of the United States. This city would have its own set of laws, leaders, and customs. The ruler is more than likely a member of a royal family that has had control for decades. This is what Verona would have been like during *Romeo and Juliet's* time.

A city-state is like a small country that is independent of any other power. Many city-states were influenced by the Catholic church and the pope. Even though Verona was part of the city-state called the Venetian Republic, the city enjoyed a time of independence and grandeur from 1260 to 1387.

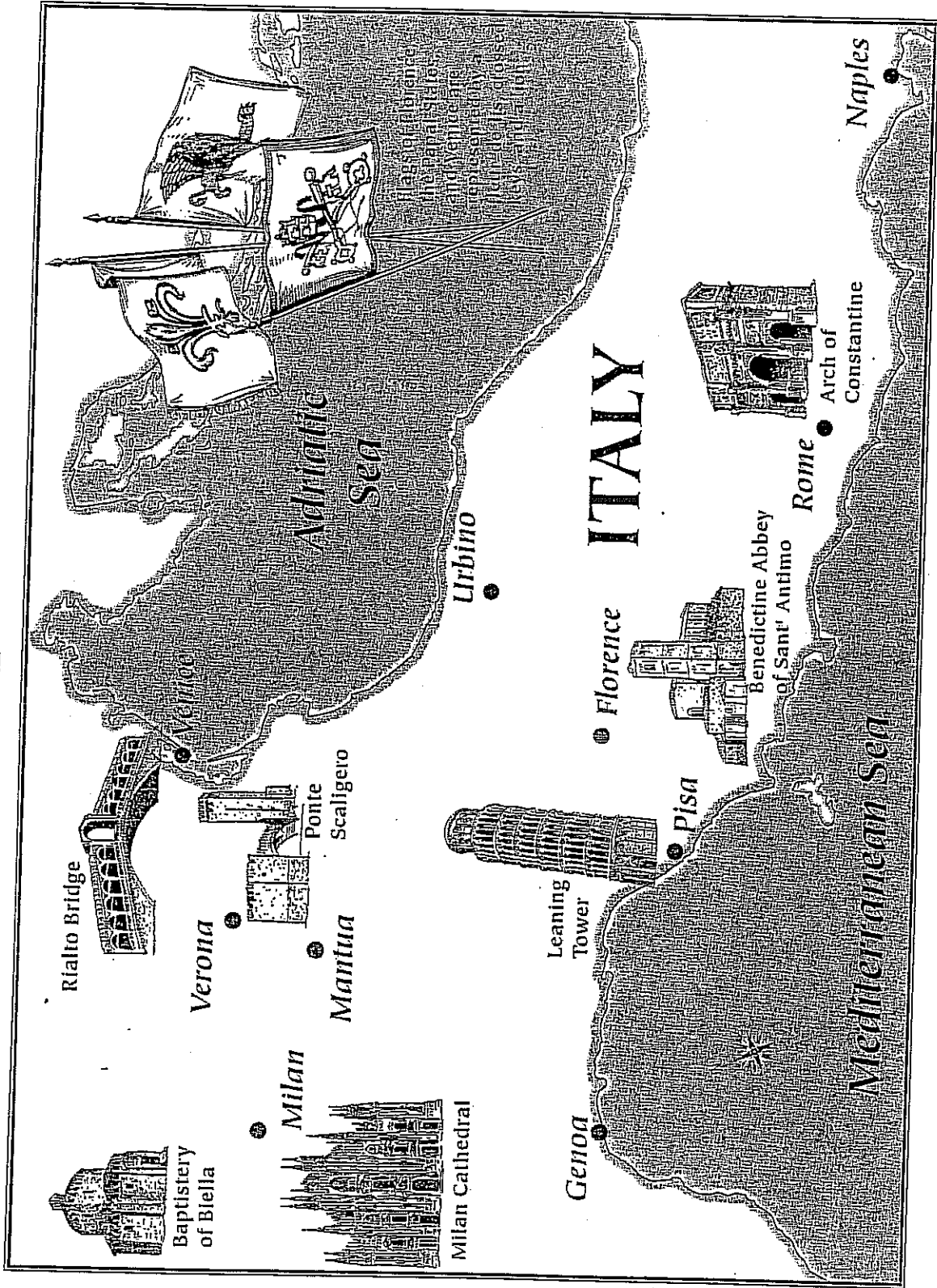
Power struggles between noble families were common in Italy. Prominent families competed for control by leading private armies of mercenaries and encouraging street fighting. These families often aligned themselves with one of two parties. One party was called the Ghibellines (White faction), who believed in a large Italian empire. The other was called the Guelphs (Black faction), who

avored independent city-states under the direction of the pope. Verona, like many of the Italian cities, was torn by these two factions.

The most powerful family during Verona's time of independence was the Scalinger family. The most infamous of that family was Can Grande della Scala, who supported the Ghibellines. His whole life was spent engaged in war against the Guelphs. Although brutal in battles, he filled Verona's courts with artists and writers.

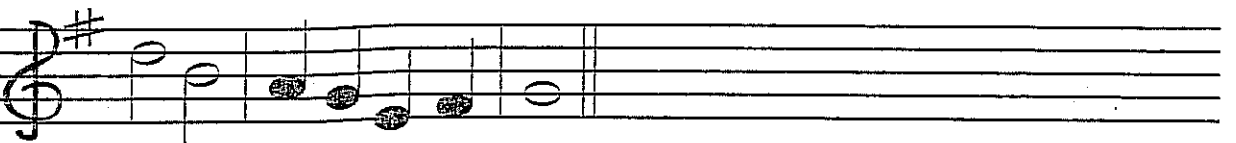
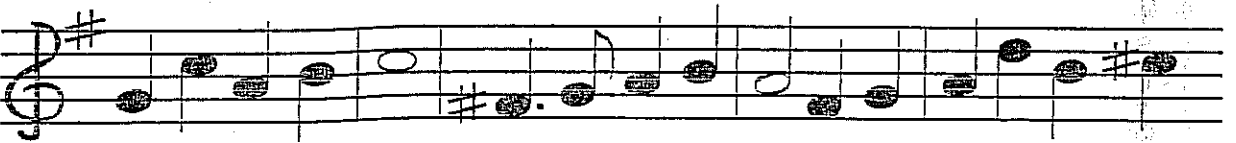
Some scholars believe that Prince Escalus in *Romeo and Juliet* is based on another member of the Scala family named Bartolommeo Scala. Bartolommeo lived in Florence during the 1400s. He was an unusual ruler for his time because he valued human life and human qualities. This made him quite different from rulers like Can Grande della Scala, who was merciless to his enemies and law breakers. Shakespeare's Escalus reflects Bartolommeo's style of ruling when he spares Romeo's life.

The Geographical Picture



"Heart's Ease"

Upon hearing of Juliet's death, Peter requests the musicians play "Heart's Ease," and he recites a few lines of the song. The music first appeared in 1776 in J. Hawkins' Supplement to General History under the title "When Griping Grief."



Music was an important part of the Renaissance culture. High fees were paid to musicians, and their popularity brought them a busy social life. The organ and lute, represented in the picture, were common instruments of the time.

The Black Plague *continued*

pestilential matter, as to pass not only from man to man, but, what is more strange, it has been often known, that anything belonging to the infected, if touched by any other creature, would certainly infect, and even kill that creature in a short space of time. One instance of the kind I took particular notice of: the rags of a poor man, just dead, had been thrown into the street; two hogs came up, and after rooting amongst the rags and shaking them about in their mouths, in less than an hour they both turned round and died on the spot.

These facts, and others of the like sort, occasioned various fears and devices amongst those who survived, all tending to the same uncharitable and cruel end, which was, to avoid the sick and everything that had been near them, expecting by that means to save themselves. And some holding it best to live temperately, and to avoid excesses of all kinds, made parties and shut themselves up from the rest of the world, eating and drinking moderately of the best, and diverting themselves with music, and such other entertainments as they might have within doors, never listening to anything from without to make them uneasy. Others maintained free living to be a better preservative, and would baulk no passion or appetite they wished to gratify, drinking and revelling incessantly from tavern to tavern, or in private houses yet strenuously avoiding, with all this brutal indulgence, to come near the infected. And such, at that time, was the public distress, that the laws, human and divine, were no more regarded; for the officers to put them in force being either

dead, sick, or in want of persons to assist them, every one did just as he pleased. A third sort of people chose a method between these two, not confining themselves to rules of diet like the former, and yet avoiding the intemperance of the latter; but eating and drinking what their appetites required, they walked everywhere with odours and nosegays to smell to, as holding it best to corroborate the brain, for the whole atmosphere seemed to them tainted with the stench of dead bodies, arising partly from the distemper itself and partly from the fermenting of medicines within them. Others, with less humanity, but perchance, as they supposed, with more security from danger, decided that the only remedy for the pestilence was to avoid it; persuaded, therefore, of this, and taking care for themselves only, men and women in great numbers left the city, their houses, relations and effects, and fled to the country, as if the wrath of God had been restrained to visit those only within the walls of the city, or else concluding that none ought to stay in a place thus doomed to destruction.

Thus divided as they were in their views, neither did all die, nor all escape; but falling sick indifferently, as well those of one as of another opinion, they who first set the example by forsaking others now languished themselves without pity. I pass over the little regard that citizens and relations showed to each other, for their terror was such that a brother even fled from his brother, a wife from her husband, and, what is more uncommon, a parent from his own child. Hence, numbers that fell sick could have no help but what the charity of friends, who were very

few, or the avarice of servants supplied; and even these were scarce and at extravagant wages, and so little used to the business that they were fit only to reach what was called for, and observe when their employers died, and this desire of getting money often cost them their lives.



In Francesco Traini's painting *Triumph of Death*, a hunting party comes across the open coffins of three plague victims in various stages of decay.

THE

BLACK PLAGUE

*When Friar John is quarantined on his journey to Mantua, the Black Plague is the likely cause. The plague left no part of Europe untouched. In 1348, Giovanni Boccaccio recorded the ghastly effects of the plague in Florence, Italy. This excerpt is from the *Decameron*, which is a collection of stories told to Boccaccio by residents of Florence in the mid-1300s.*

In the year then of our Lord 1348, there happened at Florence, the finest city in all Italy, a most terrible plague; which, whether owing to the influence of the planets, or that it was sent from God as a just punishment for our sins, had broken out some years before in the Levant [trade route that includes the region east of the Euphrates River to the Nile Valley, including Greece and Egypt], and after passing from place to place, and making incredible havoc all the way, had now reached the west. There, spite of all the means that art and human foresight could suggest, such as keeping the city clear from filth, the exclusion of all suspected persons, and the publication of copious instructions for the preservation of health; and notwithstanding manifold humble supplications offered to God in processions and otherwise; it began to show itself in the spring of the aforesaid year, in a sad and wonderful manner. Unlike what had been seen in the east, where bleeding from the nose is the fatal prognostic, here there appeared certain tumours in the groin or under the arm-pits, some as big as a small apple, others as an egg; and afterwards purple spots in most parts of the body; in some

cases large and but few in number, in others smaller and more numerous, both sorts the usual messengers of death. To the cure of this malady, neither medical knowledge nor the power of drugs was of any effect; whether because the disease was in its own nature

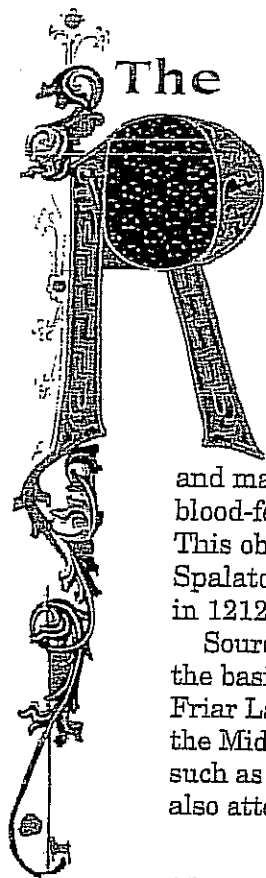
mortal, or that the physicians could form no just idea of the cause, nor consequently devise a true method of cure; whichever was the reason, few escaped; but nearly all died the third day from the first appearance of the symptoms, some sooner, some later, without any fever or other accessory symptoms. What gave the more virulence to this plague was that, by being communicated from the sick to the hale, it spread daily, like fire when it comes in contact with large masses of combustibles. Nor was it caught only by conversation with, or coming near the sick, but even by touching their clothes, or anything that they had before touched. It is wonderful [unbelievable] what I am going to mention, and had I not seen it with my own



Few people were willing to tend the sick. Only the wealthiest of nobles could offer enough money to ensure care. This ink drawing of a plague victim and his doctor is from *Fasciculus Medicinae*, 1493.

eyes, and were there not many witnesses to attest it besides myself, I should never venture to relate it, however worthy it were of belief. Such, I say, was the quality of the

The Role of a Friar in the Middle Ages



"His dress was poor, his person contemptible, his face without beauty; but God inspired his words with so much power that great scholars were astounded

and many noble families, divided by blood-feuds, were reconciled forever." This observation is from Thomas of Spalato, a student of Francis of Assisi, in 1212.

Sources such as this may have been the basis for Friar Laurence. However, Friar Laurence, as well as all friars of the Middle Ages, filled many other roles, such as counselor and adviser. Friars also attended the sick. In the times of

the plague, friars often lived in the most diseased areas, hoping to provide for the neediest victims. Friars who were ordained as priests could perform marriages, give sermons, and hear confessions.

A major difference between a friar and other members of the Catholic clergy is the friars' vow of poverty. Friars can't own any possessions or property. During the Middle Ages, they wandered the countryside going where they were needed. Often writers, including Shakespeare, portray them as alchemists and herbalists with a high regard for nature.



RULES FOR FRIARS

*St. Francis of Assisi was a favorite saint among the middle class in the Middle Ages. He preached a life of poverty, humility, social service, and love of all living things. His teachings led to an established book of rules called the Rules of St. Francis. The following list of rules was adapted from **Christian Monasticism: A Great Force in History** by Ian C. Hannah.*



Franciscan friars typically dressed in brown robes.

- The brothers shall own nothing, neither housing nor lands, but like pilgrims and strangers in this world, in poverty and meekness serving Almighty God.
- The brothers shall receive no money, unless for the care of the sick. They shall faithfully, boldly, and surely and meekly go for donations. They shall not nor ought to be ashamed, for the Lord made Himself poor in this world.
- Any brother able to work shall work, knowing that idleness is the enemy of the soul.
- All the brothers must wear simple and vile clothing. They shall be happy with a single robe, a cord and underclothes and they shall wish for no more. They may piece them and fix them with pieces of sackcloth.
- The brothers must not fight. Instead, they should be meek, peaceable, soft, gentle, and courteous. They should speak to every person as needed.
- They may not be gossips of men or women, because rumor and slander could pit brother against brother.

A PARTY AT THE CAPULETS'

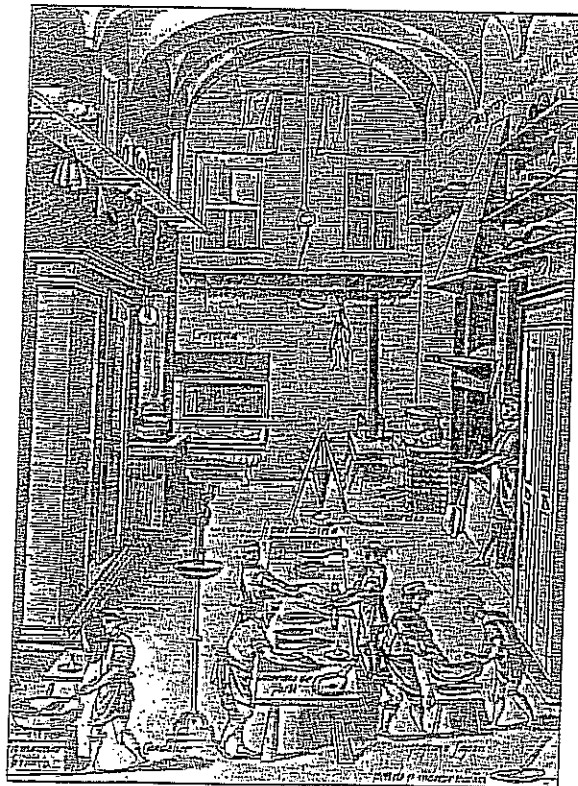


Romeo and his friends arrive at the Capulets' celebration wearing masks. "Masking" at upper-class feasts and dances was common in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. In the following eyewitness account from the book *Life, Englishman George Cavendish* describes masked nobles entering a ballroom.

With masks and mummeries in so gorgeous a sort, and costly manner, that it was a heaven to behold...I have seen the king suddenly come in thither in a mask, with a dozen of other maskers, all in garments like shepherds, made of fine cloth of gold and fine crimson [dark red] satin paned [sections], and caps of the same, with visors [face masks] of good proportion of

visnomy; their hairs, and beards, either of fine gold wire, or else of silver, and some being of black silk; having sixteen torch bearers, besides their drums, and other persons attending upon them, with visors, and clothed all in satin, of the same colours.

The following foods were typical at an upper-class party.



An upper-class family's feast is prepared in a 16th-century kitchen.

Fruits & Vegetables	Meats	Drinks
fruit soups	beef	ale
lemons	ducklings	milk
melons	fish	wine
oranges	geese	Sweets/
raisins	mutton (sheep)	Starches
salads	peacock	bread
spinach	pigeons	jam and jelly
strawberries	pork	marchpane
	rabbits	pastry
	swan	pudding
	veal (calves)	rice
	venison (deer)	

Roasted Peacock Take a peacock, break its neck, and cut its throat, and flay it, skin and feathers together, with the head still attached to the skin of the neck, and keep the skin and the feathers whole together. Draw the bird like a hen, and keep the bone to the neck whole, and roast it. And set the bone of the neck above the spit, as the bird was wont to sit when it was alive, and bend the legs to the body. And when it is roasted enough, take it off and let it cool, and then wind the skin with the feathers and the tail about the body, and serve as if the bird were still alive; or else pluck it clean and roast it and serve it as you do a hen.

A Family-of-Man Affair

Order in the Universe	Order in Denmark as the play opens	Order of Families in Hamlet	Order and Disorder of Prince Hamlet
God	Royal Family	Order of Families in Hamlet	Order _____ Disorder
Angels	King Claudius Queen Gertrude	(Uncle)	his father murdered
Spiritual	King Hamlet Prince Hamlet	King Claudius Queen Gertrude	his mother remarried (incestuous)
Temporal	Courtiers (Nobles)	King Hamlet Prince Hamlet	his throne taken by his uncle
Man _____	Horatio, Polonius, Laertes, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Cornelius and Voltemand, Reynaldo, Osrlic	Polonius (wife is dead)	his fiancée and friends set to spy upon him
King	Soldiers	Ophelia Laertes	his mind distraught by mystery, bafflement
Nobles	Marcellus, Bernardo, Francisco	(Uncle) King of Norway	his spirit overwhelmed by task of vengeance
Merchants/Craftsmen	Servants	King Fortinbras (died in duel with King Hamlet)	his personality almost split by his feigned madness, his playing god in his search for revenge
Peasants/Serfs	The Players, Gravediggers	Prince Fortinbras	
Faithful	Universal order in Denmark has been disrupted by the murder of King Hamlet		
Animals			
Plants			
Inanimates			
Chain of being binds fact and value—what a whole is tells us where the part ought to be.			

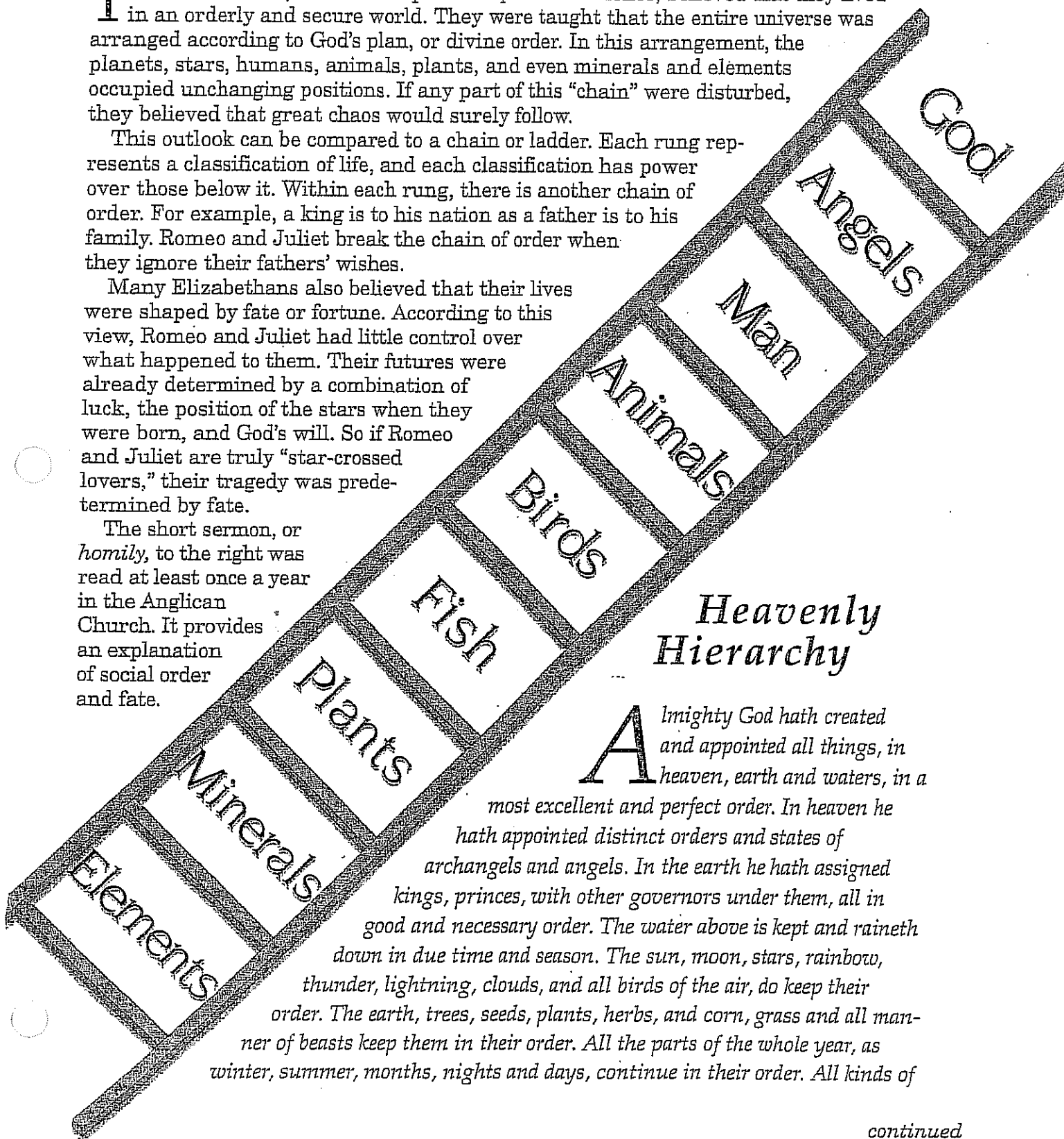
Divine Order

The Elizabethans, who made up Shakespeare's audience, believed that they lived in an orderly and secure world. They were taught that the entire universe was arranged according to God's plan, or divine order. In this arrangement, the planets, stars, humans, animals, plants, and even minerals and elements occupied unchanging positions. If any part of this "chain" were disturbed, they believed that great chaos would surely follow.

This outlook can be compared to a chain or ladder. Each rung represents a classification of life, and each classification has power over those below it. Within each rung, there is another chain of order. For example, a king is to his nation as a father is to his family. Romeo and Juliet break the chain of order when they ignore their fathers' wishes.

Many Elizabethans also believed that their lives were shaped by fate or fortune. According to this view, Romeo and Juliet had little control over what happened to them. Their futures were already determined by a combination of luck, the position of the stars when they were born, and God's will. So if Romeo and Juliet are truly "star-crossed lovers," their tragedy was predetermined by fate.

The short sermon, or *homily*, to the right was read at least once a year in the Anglican Church. It provides an explanation of social order and fate.



Heavenly Hierarchy

Almighty God hath created and appointed all things, in heaven, earth and waters, in a most excellent and perfect order. In heaven he hath appointed distinct orders and states of archangels and angels. In the earth he hath assigned kings, princes, with other governors under them, all in good and necessary order. The water above is kept and raineth down in due time and season. The sun, moon, stars, rainbow, thunder, lightning, clouds, and all birds of the air, do keep their order. The earth, trees, seeds, plants, herbs, and corn, grass and all manner of beasts keep them in their order. All the parts of the whole year, as winter, summer, months, nights and days, continue in their order. All kinds of

continued

fishes in the sea, rivers and waters, with all fountains, springs, yea, the seas themselves keep their comely course and order.

And man himself also hath all his parts, both within and without, as soul, heart, mind, memory, understanding, reason, speech, with all and singular corporal members of his body, in a profitable, necessary and pleasant order. Every degree of people, in their vocation, calling, and office, hath appointed to them their duty and order. Some are in high degree, some in low, some kings and princes, some inferiors and subjects, priests and laymen, masters and servants, fathers and children, husbands and wives, rich and poor, and every one hath need of other, so that in all things is to be lauded and praised the goodly order of God, without the which, no house, no city, no common wealth, can continue and endure. For where there is no right order, there reigneth all abuse, carnal liberty, enormity, sin, and Babylonical confusion. Take away kings, princes, rulers, magistrates, judges, and such states of God's order, no man shall ride or go by the highway unrobbed, no man shall sleep in his own house or bed unkilld, no man shall keep his wife, children, and possession in quietness, all things shall be common, and there must needs follow all mischief and utter destruction, both of souls, bodies, goods and common wealths.

Fortuna was the Roman goddess of chance. She told of omens and future happenings. Shakespeare wrote in *Henry V*: "Fortune is painted blind, with a muffler afore her eyes, to signify to you that Fortune is blind; and she is painted also with a wheel, to signify to you...that she is turning, and inconstant, and mutability, and variation...."

FORTUNE'S FOOL

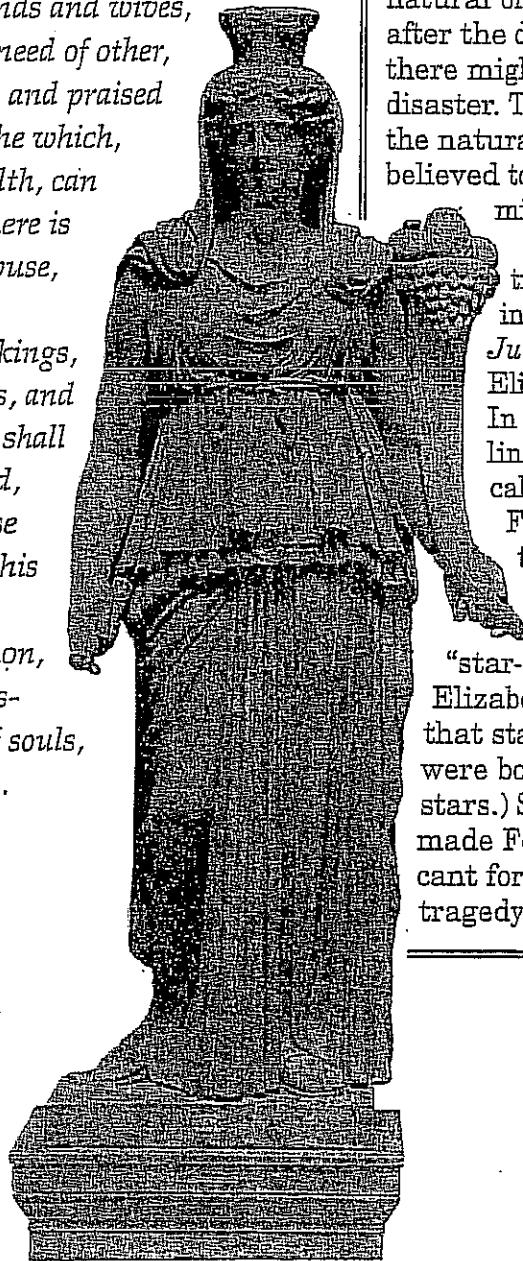
For centuries, the goddess Fortuna has been considered unpredictable. During the Middle Ages, writers tried to reconcile the pagan idea of Fortune with their Christian faith. Eventually, Fortune's workings were seen as an instrument of God's will.

The workings of God's will were also seen in the natural order. For example, after the death of a king, there might be a natural disaster. Those who violated the natural order were believed to meet with misfortune.

Shakespeare's tragedies, including *Romeo and Juliet*, reflect these Elizabethan ideas.

In act 3, scene 1, line 137, Romeo calls out, "I am

Fortune's fool." In the prologue, the lovers are referred to as "star-crossed." (The Elizabethans believed that star-crossed people were born under unlucky stars.) Shakespeare made Fortune a significant force in the lovers' tragedy.



CROSS CURRENTS

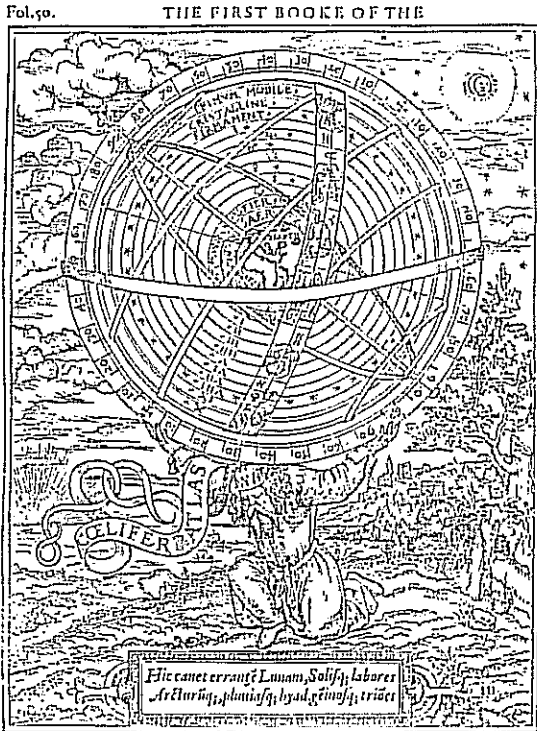
The Elizabethan World View

ORDER IN THE LAND

The Elizabethans viewed the world as an ordered, rational place. Each person occupied a specific rung on the social ladder. With each rank came responsibilities to those above and below in the chain. Everyone understood and accepted this hierarchy, and it was constantly reinforced in daily life.

On Sunday, during compulsory services at the Established Church of England, for example, ministers explained that "Every degree of people . . . hath appointed to them their duty and order. Some are in high degree, some are in low, some kings and princes, some inferiors and subjects. Almighty God hath created and appointed all things . . . in a most excellent and perfect order."

This sort of ranking extended to everything in the universe; each element, creature, and spiritual being occupied a fixed place in the universe.



THE PRIMUM MOBILE from THE COSMOGRAPHICAL GLASSE, 1559
from William Cuninghame
The Huntington Library, San Marino, California

HEAVENLY BODIES

This divinely directed order began with the heavens themselves. To the Elizabethans the entire universe was enclosed by a sphere called the *primum mobile*. Beneath it lay the fixed stars. Next came the planets, whose motion was directed by the *primum mobile*. While opinion differed on exactly how many planets made up the universe—was it nine? Ten? Eleven?—no one with any sense doubted that these spheres circled around a fixed Earth. Copernicus had a wild idea that the sun, not the Earth, was the center of the universe. He even went so far as to claim that the Earth was actually in motion, not fixed in place!

The angels too obeyed a strict hierarchy. The three different classes ranged from the highest, the Seraphs, to the lowest, the angels. Shakespeare commented on this order in *Troilus and Cressida* when Ulysses remarked that "The heavens themselves, the planets, and this center/Observe degree, priority, and place."

THE GREAT CHAIN OF BEING

Heaven and its inhabitants were linked to the rest of the universe through a concept called The Great Chain of Being. It stretched from the humblest thing in the universe all the way up to God, and the order of each world was reflected in all others. England's rulers, for example, were ranked in an order that corresponded to the order of the rest of creation. The sovereign was analogous to fire, the chief element; the sun, the chief planet; and the eagle, the chief bird, for instance.

Naturally, humans, with their superior intellect, were superior to the other worlds. A woman in *The Comedy of Errors* points this out while lecturing to her sister:

The beasts, the fishes, and the
winged fowl,
Are their males' subjects and at
their controls.
Man, more divine, the master of all
these,
Lord of the wide world and wilde
watery seas,
Endued with intellectual sense and
souls,
Of more preeminence than fish and
fowls,
Are masters to their females, and
their lords;
Then let your will attend on their
accords.

Although her sister resents being told she ought to be submissive to men, the Elizabethans saw the dominance of the man within the family as a model for the broader world order.

FATHER KNOWS BEST

As the king ruled over the kingdom, so the man of the family ruled over his wife and children. He had absolute right to dispose of his daughters in marriage, for example. Old Capulet would be considered an extremely considerate father to the Elizabethans, for when the question of Juliet's marriage to Paris is first discussed, he is willing to let her refuse. It is not until she defies him that he gives commands. Children were brought up to fear and respect their parents. They called their father "Sir" and stood in his presence. The power and authority of the father was recognized as part of the social order.

DRESS FOR SUCCESS

This rigid hierarchy was even seen in the clothing laws, which decreed who was allowed to wear what. Clothing Acts were passed to halt the "intolerable abuse and unmeasurable disorder" caused by the poorer people dressing as their betters. No one under the rank of knight, for example, could wear velvet cloaks or silk stockings; only countesses and higher appeared in purple silk; gold and silver cloth were allowed only for nobles. But most people ignored the laws, much to the dismay of the lawmakers.

THE LINKS WEAKEN

Dramatic advances in knowledge prompted some to stress the old idea of hierarchy, but the quickening pace, combined with the avalanche of invention and discovery, relentlessly undermined the previously accepted notions of order. *



The Great Chain of Being



In theory, there are but two classes of people: Nobles and Commoners. In practice, there are a huge number or gradations of both classes. These gradations are thought of as parts of a Great Chain of Being, which extends from God down to the lowest forms of life, and even to the trees and stones of the earth. This Great Chain, first described by St. Thomas is what holds the world together. The Great Chain is as follows:

God
Angels
Kings/Queens
Archbishops
Dukes/Duchesses
Bishops
Marquises/Marchionesses
Earls/Countesses
Viscounts/Viscountesses
Barons/Baronesses
Abbots/Deacons
Knights/Local Officials
Ladies-in-Waiting
Priests/Monks
Squires
Pages
Messengers
Merchants/Shopkeepers
Tradesmen
Yeomen Farmers
Soldiers/Town Watch
Household Servants
Tenant Farmers
Shephards/Herders
Beggars
Actors
Thieves/Pirates
Gypsies
Animals
Birds
Worms
Plants
Rocks

Notes:

- For Catholics, the Pope is at the same level or above the King.
- Speaking of clergy, the Church hierarchy is actually separate from the secular hierarchy. I have inserted churchmen into the Chain at the best approximation of their ranks.
- In terms of deference, personal threat matters. In other words, you might bow to a pirate even if you technically out-rank him, because he is armed and you are not!
- Office also makes a difference. The King's most trusted advisor gains deference greater than that to which his rank entitles him.
- The term "Yeoman" is used here to distinguish a farmer who owns his own fields from one who is merely a tenant on someone else's fields. The term does have several other meanings in other contexts. Be thou not confused!
- Children have, in general, a rank one or two beneath their parents while they remain minors.
- There are as many gradations among the non-human orders as among people.

<http://jackytappet.tripod.com/chain.html>

The Great Chain of Being

From M.H. Abrams' *Glossary of Literary Terms*, 4th. Edition (New York: Holt, 1981. pp. 73-74)

The concept is grounded in ideas about the nature of God, or the first cause, found in Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus, and was developed by later thinkers into an inclusive world view. This view was already prevalent in the Renaissance, but was given further philosophical refinement by Leibniz early in the eighteenth century, and was adopted by many thinkers of the Enlightenment. In its comprehensive eighteenth-century form it held that the essential "excellence" of God consists in His illimitable creativity, an unstinting overflow into the fullest possible variety of beings. From this premise were deduced three consequences:

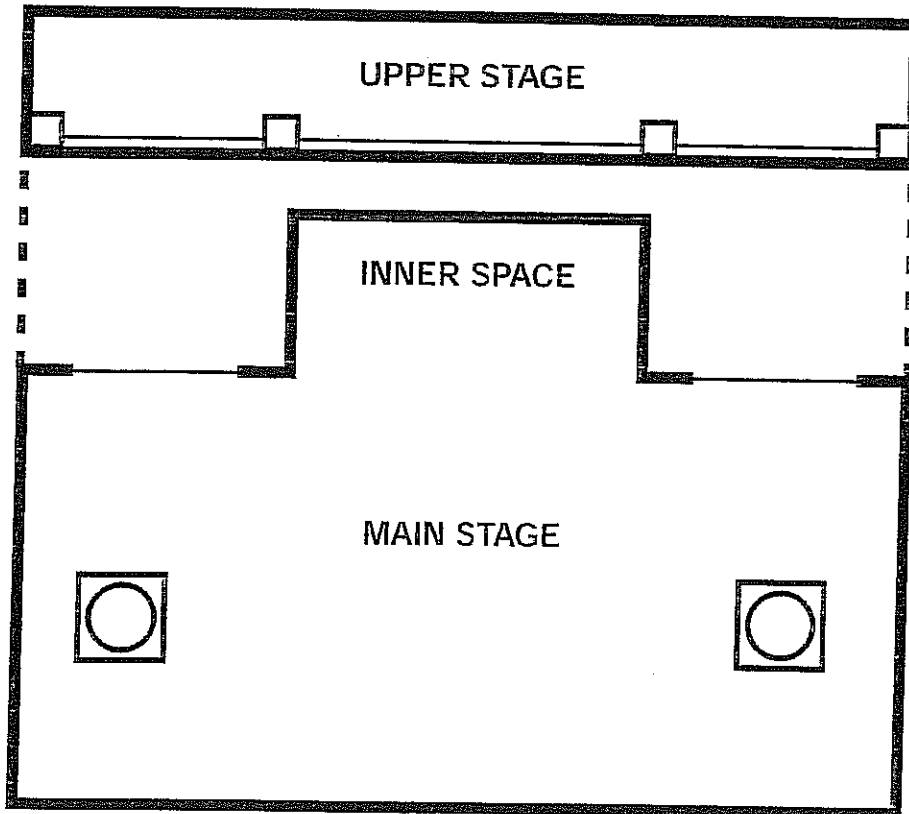
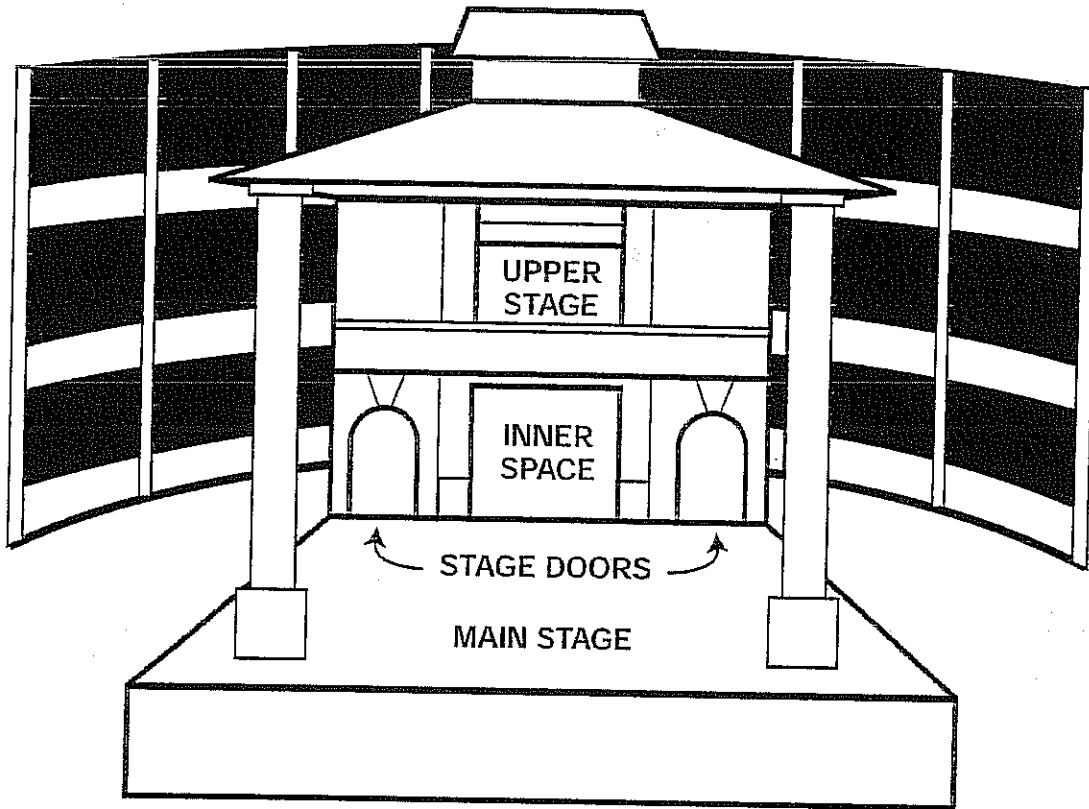
- (1) Plenitude. The universe is absolutely full of every possible kind and variety of life; no conceivable species of being can remain unrealized.
- (2) Continuity. Each species differs from the next by the least possible degree, and so merges all but imperceptibly into its nearest related kinds.
- (3) Gradation. The existing species exhibit a hierarchy of status and so compose a great chain, or ladder, of being, extending from the lowliest condition of the merest existence up to God Himself. In this chain man occupies the middle position between the animal kinds and the angels, or purely spiritual beings.

From E.M.W. Tillyard's *The Elizabethan World Picture* (London: Chatto, 1960. pp. 23, 25-26) :

"This metaphor (of 'the vast chain of being') served to express the unimaginable plenitude of God's creation, its unfaltering order, and its ultimate unity. The chain stretched from the foot of God's throne to the meanest of inanimate objects. Every speck of creation was a link in the chain, and every link except those at the two extremities was simultaneously bigger and smaller than another: there could be no gap. The precise magnitude of the chain raised metaphysical difficulties; but the safest opinion made it short of infinity though of a finitude quite outside man's imagination The account of the chain of being found here (in Raymond de Sebonde's *Natural Theology*) must have been the common property of western Europe in the sixteenth century. First there is mere existence, the inanimate class: the elements, liquids, and metals. But in spite of this common lack of life there is a vast difference of virtue; water is nobler than earth, the ruby than the topaz, gold than brass: the links in the chain are there. Next there is existence and life, the vegetative class, where again the oak is nobler than the bramble. Next there is existence life and feeling, the sensitive class. In it there are three grades. First the creatures having touch but not hearing memory or movement. Such are shellfish and parasites on the base of trees. Then there are animals having touch memory and movement but not hearing, for instance ants. And finally there are the higher animals, horses dogs, etc., that have all these faculties. The three classes lead up to man, who has

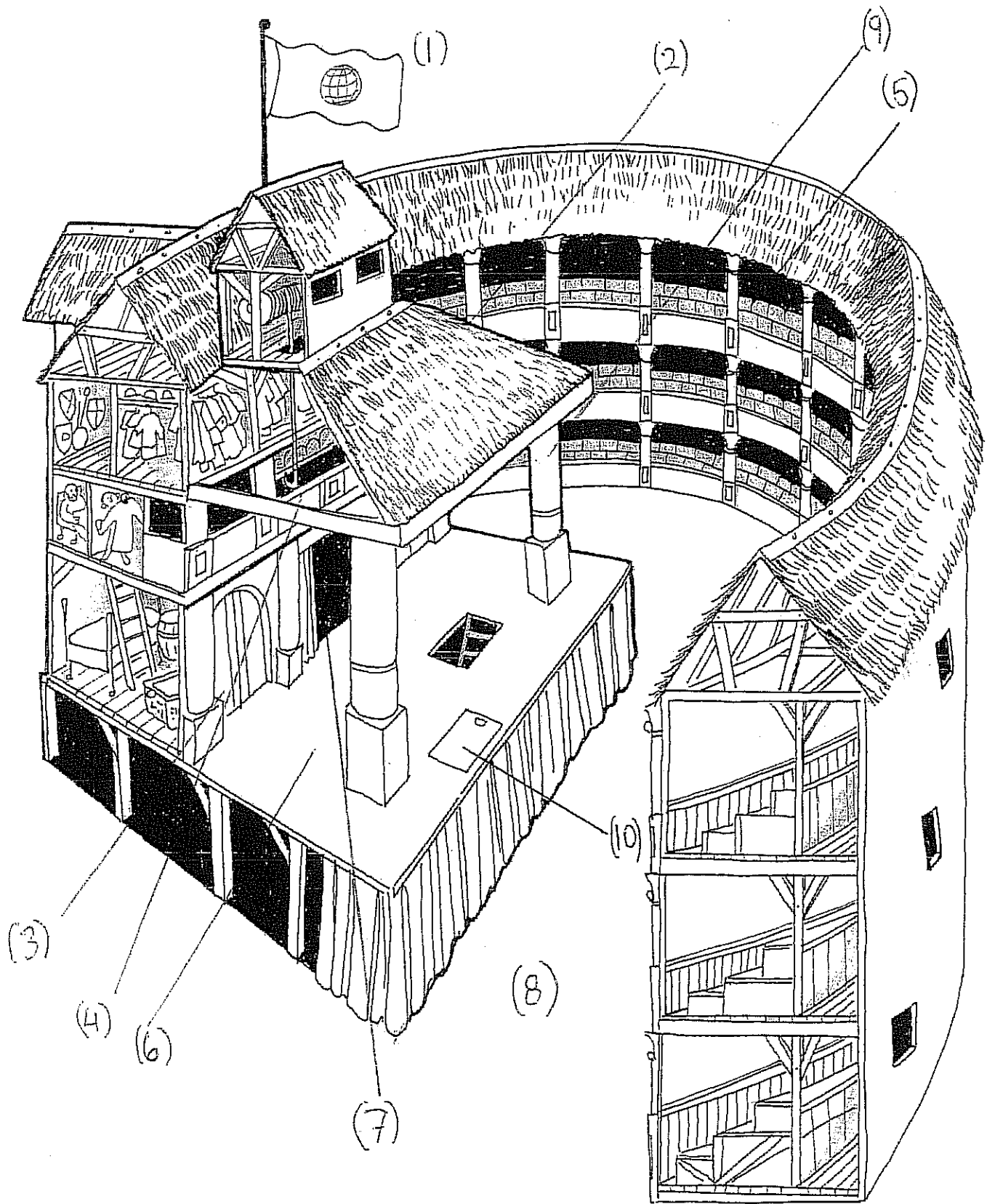
not only existence life and feeling, but understanding: he sums up in himself the total faculties of earthly phenomena. (For this reason he was called the little world or microcosm). But as there had been an inanimate class, so to balance it there must be a purely rational or spiritual. These are the angels, linked to man by community of the understanding, but freed from simultaneous attachment to the lower faculties. There are vast numbers of angels and they are as precisely ordered along the chain of being as the elements or the metals. Now, although the creatures are assigned their precise place in the chain of being, there is at the same time the possibility of change. The chain is also a ladder. The elements are alimantal. There is a progression in the way the elements nourish plants, the fruits of plants beasts, and the flesh of beasts men. And this is all one with the tendency of man upwards toward God."

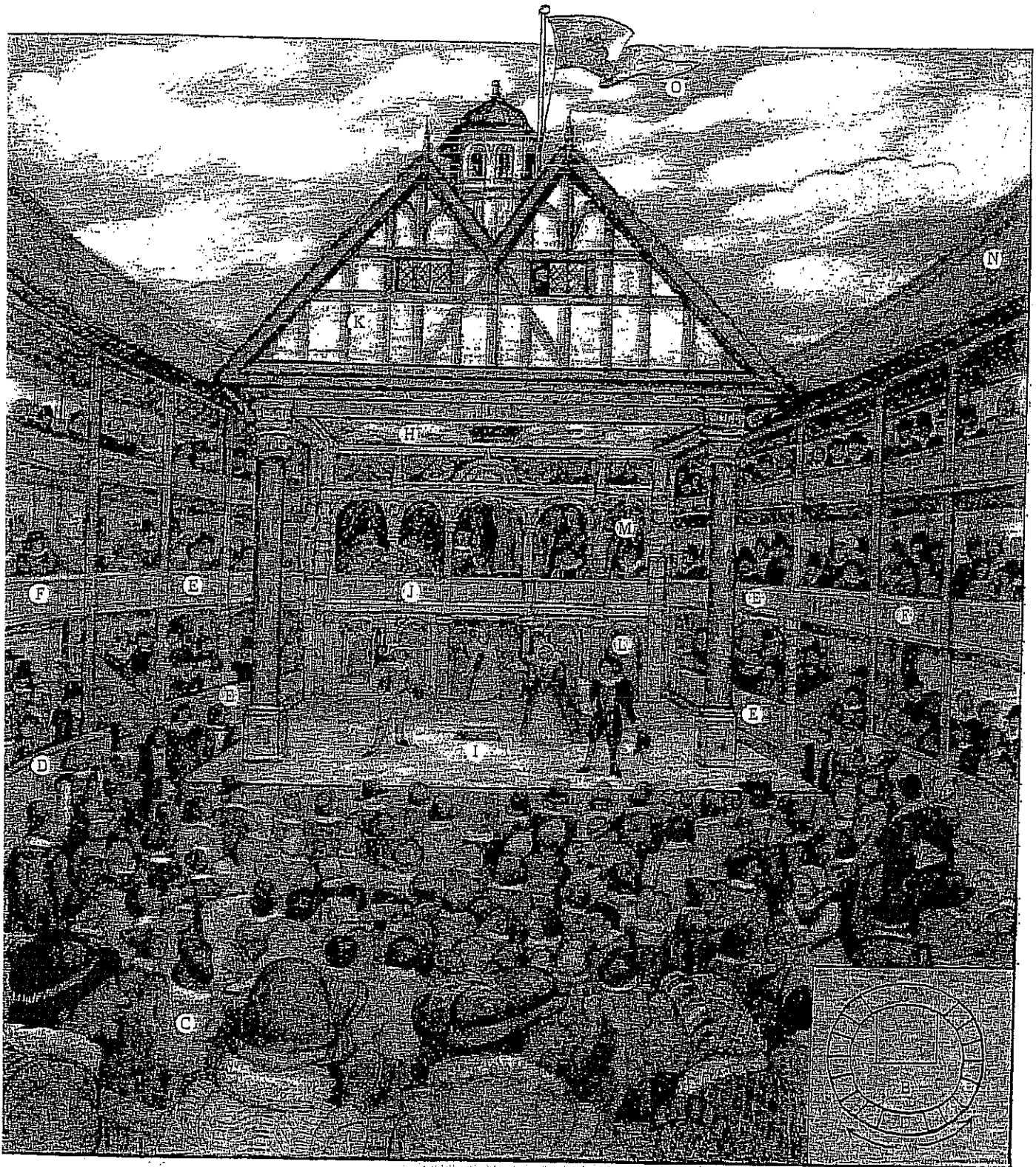
Staging a Scene



1. Flag: The flag signified which type of play was being performed (black for tragedy, white for comedy, and red for history). The flag was flown high enough so most of London could see it waving from the top of the Globe. This is important because the theater was located on the outskirts of the city across the Thames River.
 2. The heavens: The ceiling over the stage that protected the audience from sun and rain. It also represented the sky and heavens and was painted blue with golden stars. Actors who played the angels or spirits descended from the hut on the top of the "roof" to the main stage. The hut was also used to store sound effects, such as alarm bells, cannon fire, and thunder.
 3. Tiring House: The tiring house was the dressing and storing room. Actors could rest here between scenes and they could change into their lavish costumes. All props were stored here too. The doors were the main entrance and exit for actors.
 4. Upper Stage: Used for most of the bedroom and balcony scenes.
 5. Galleries: Three covered seating sections. Audiences paid more to sit on these tiered wooden benches under the thatched roof to keep out the sun and rain. For an additional penny, cushions were available.
 6. Main Stage: Where most of the action took place, especially outdoor scenes of battlefields, forests, or cityscapes. It was often called the apron stage because audiences could sit around all three sides. The stage was intentionally built four to five feet high so the audiences could not jump up into the action. For a larger fee, patrons could sometimes sit up on the stage, next to the actors.
 7. Inner Stage: This stage was used mostly for the indoor scenes. It had a curtain that could be opened or closed for scene changes.
 8. Open Yard: Audiences paid one penny to stand here and watch a performance, rain or shine. Often these patrons, called groundlings, would participate in the play by cheering, shouting, or throwing snacks at the actors.
 9. Support Pillars: These wooden pillars supported the roof and were painted to look like marble. Actors used these pillars to hide on the main stage and observe other characters while speaking in "asides" to the audience.
 10. Trap Door: Actors playing ghosts or witches could rise or descend through this trap door built into the main stage. The cellarge underneath was referred to as "hell."
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The Globe Cutaway





- | | | |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| A Entrances | G Stage | L Frons Scenae (stage wall) |
| B Yard | H Heavens | M Tiring House/Dressing Rooms (backstage) |
| C Groundlings | I Hell (trap to below) | N Thatched Roof |
| D Galleries (benches) | J Musicians' Gallery
and Lords' Rooms | O Raised flag shows play is on |
| E Gentlemen's Rooms | K Hut (contains cannon) | |
| F Two-penny Rooms | | |

Elizabethan playhouses had no scenery and few props. The glory of the Globe was the adornment of the stage—the richly painted Heavens, columns, and stage wall, and the hangings covering the central opening. Special effects were provided by musicians and a stage cannon that shot blanks. Often the elaborate costumes were discarded clothes—gifts from noblemen to their servants, who sold them to the company.

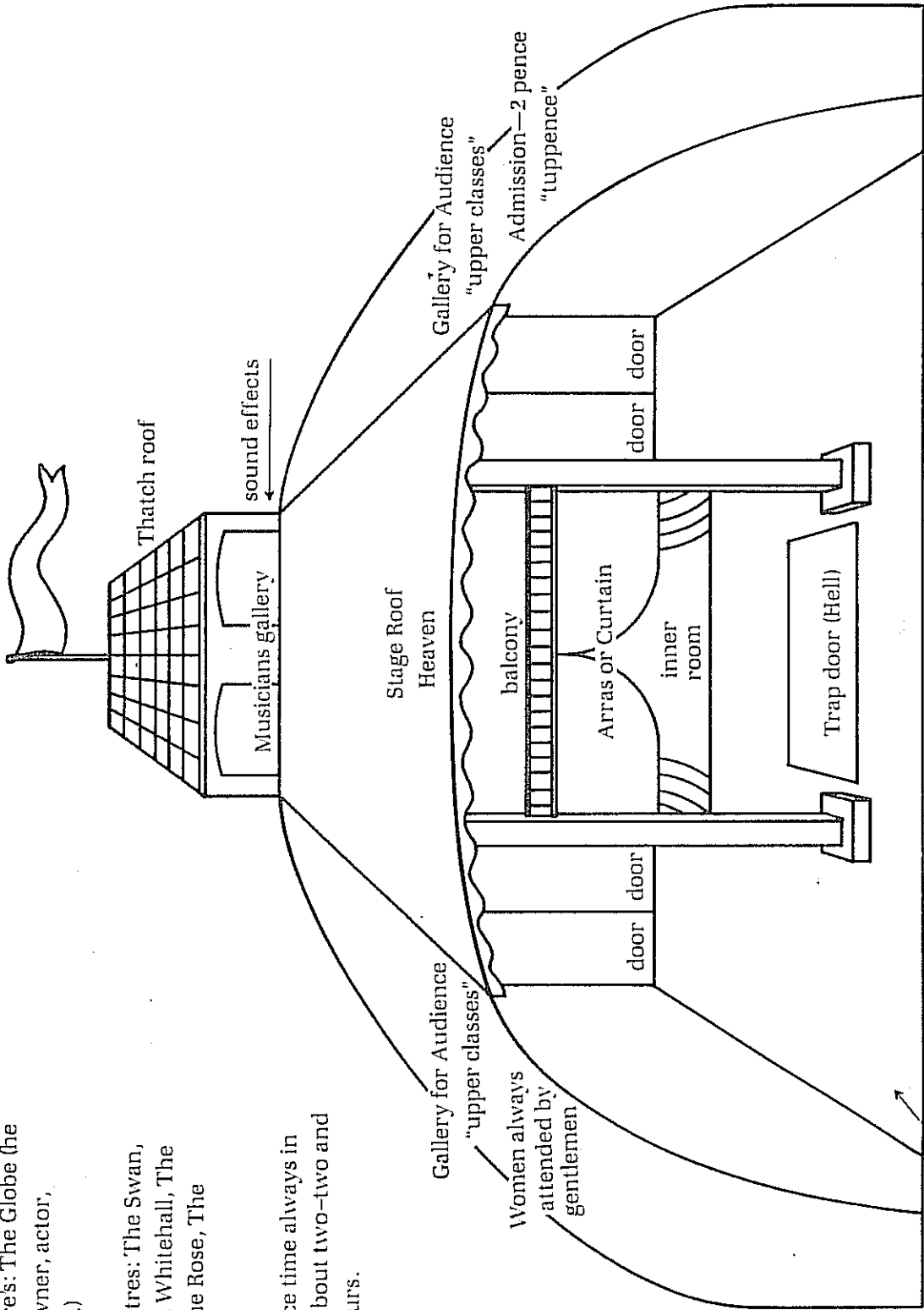
Shakespeare's Theater - The Globe

First Theatre: The Theatre

Shakespeare's: The Globe (he was part owner, actor, playwright.)

Other Theatres: The Swan, Blackfriars, Whitehall, The Fortune, The Rose, The Curtain

Performance time always in afternoon about two-two and one half hours.



Young nobles often sat on folding stools here for three pence or "thrupence"

Women always attended by gentlemen

Admission—1 pence

Students from colleges, Inns of Court, farmers, laborers, tradespeople, apprentices, housewives

Admission—2 pence "tuppence"

Trap door (Hell)

inner room

Arras or Curtain

balcony

Stage Roof

Heaven

musicians gallery

sound effects

Thatch roof

Gallery for Audience "upper classes"

Gallery for Audience "upper classes"

door

door

door

door

door

door

Court yard—Pit crowd—standing room only (Admission—one pence)

