

Brutus' Appeal to Fate? (A Note to Analyze This At Some Point In the Future)

Post by "Cassius" of October 25, 2021 at 4:07 PM

The following from Shakespeare was brought to my attention today:

**There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat,
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures.**

Source:

[Julius Caesar](#)

Act 4 Scene 3 Line 249

I presume that this is a fictional line made up by Shakespeare, but it has that seductive quality of much of Stoicism's appeal to virtue and glory.

I decided to post this because I realized that it may essentially be an appeal to "fate" ("tide in the affairs of men" "take the current when it serves or lose our ventures")

I don't have time to do more research on this right now, but I would like to:

- (1) see what else is contained in this war council between Cassius and Brutus,
- (2) See how much of it is actually believed to be true, tracing presumably back to Plutarch or other ancient sources, and
- (3) See if there is enough historical information to come to any informed conclusions as to whether Brutus' position can be evaluated more "objectively" to assess how much he might in fact have been influenced by his Stoicism, or whether this was mainly lip service to support a plan he favored for other reasons.

Apparently Cassius gave in to the plan and "the rest is history" as to their defeat at Phillipi (though the outcome was very close and in fact it sounds like miscommunication may have been the ultimate cause of defeat).

Probably this is not a thread of wide interest but the "tide in the affairs of men" line is pretty well known, and it does seem to me that it rings of Stoicism - even though there clearly are going to be facts and times (literal tides) that need to be acted upon. That's part of what we can discuss here: Is this in fact a Stoic-influenced appeal to "fate"?