Sinead Scott

2/25/20

QCQ8

Quotation:

Friar Timoteo: “There’s truth in the old saying that bad company leads men to the gallows; and often a person gets into trouble as much for being too easygoing and good-natured as for being too vicious…But my one consolation is that when there are many people involved in a thing, many have to look after it” (Scene 6, p. 47).

Comment:

This quote from Friar Timoteo comes in the midst of setting up the night for Callimaco and Lucrezia. The men plan on disguising Friar Timoteo as Callimaco so that Messer Nicia may not recognize him as another man and by doing so this frees Callimaco to be the man they capture to put to bed with Lucrezia. I think it’s a rather odd that in this play the Friar is the one who actually convinces Lucrezia to go along with this plan (well, at least her mother), even though it would seemingly go against all that the church theoretically stands for. However, I think this says something about Machiavelli’s opinion on the church’s role in society and perhaps even its corruption as the Friar takes some money in exchange. In regards to this quote more specifically, I think that the Friar begins to excuse his actions by referring to himself as being “too easygoing and good-natured.” Thus, he wants us to sympathize with his involvement by attributing it not to corruption or immorality but rather his willingness to going along with helping people. I also think the ending part is interesting because he kind of also implies that the many people involved also means that many people are at fault, thereby diffusing his guilt (perhaps). Overall, the fraud and deception which reigns over morals and even religions seems to be a recurring theme. Even the Friar, the one who should be the most difficult to persuade, is easily swayed.

Question:

I wonder how the role of the Friar was received by audiences when the play was first performed? Was it commentary on the state of affairs in Florence at the time?