

glibly. And first we must examine it in its context. After a preliminary avowal of intentions, Jonson begins his subject.

I, therefore will begin. Soule of the Age!
 The applause! delight! the wonder of our Stage!
 My *Shakespeare*, rise; I will not lodge thee by
Chaucer, or *Spenser*, or bid *Beaumont* lye
 A little further, to make thee a roome:
 Thou art a Monument, without a tombe,
 And art aliue still, while thy Booke doth liue,
 And we haue wits to read, and praise to giue.
 That I not mixe thee so, my braine excuses;
 I meane with great, but disproportion'd *Muses*:
 For, if I thought my iudgement were of yeeres,
 I should commit thee surely with thy peeres,
 And tell, how farre thou didst our *Lily* out-shine,
 Or sporting *Kid*, or *Marlowes* mighty line.
 And though thou hadst small *Latine*, and lesse *Greeke*,
 From thence to honour thee, I would not seeke
 For names; but call forth thund'ring *Aeschilus*,
Euripides, and *Sophocles* to vs,
Paccuius, *Accius*, him of *Cordoua* dead,
 To life againe, to heare thy Buskin tread,
 And shake a Stage: Or, when thy Sockes were on,
 Leau thee alone, for the comparison
 Of all, that insolent *Greece*, or haughtie *Rome*
 sent forth, or since did from their ashes come.
 Triump, my *Britaine*, thou hast one to showe,
 To whom all Scenes of *Europe* homage owe.
 He was not of an age, but for all time!
 And all the *Muses* still were in their prime,
 When like *Apollo* he came forth to warme
 Our eares, or like a *Mercury* to charme!

Shakspeare was the soul of the age. Chaucer, Spenser, and Beaumont are great, but not equal to Shakspeare, who also surpassed Lyly, Kyd, and Marlowe. Not only does Shakspeare surpass all Englishmen, but though he had small Latin and less Greek, yet Jonson would call forth all the greatest Latin and Greek tragedians to do him honor, and to make the list impressive he adds Pacuvius and Accius, whose works have perished. Nor do the comedians of these countries or any of their successors in Europe compare with Shakspeare. In fact, then, he was not of an age but for all time.

If Jonson's list of Greek and Latin tragedians gives us any idea of what he would consider great Latin and only less Greek, then