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Discandying Cleopatra: Preserving Cleopatra's Infinite Variety in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*

by Jennifer Park

Taking Shakespeare's unique use of the term "discandying" as a starting point, this essay argues that Shakespeare's preoccupation with food preservation in Antony and Cleopatra *extends and complicates a tradition interested in preservation more broadly construed, a tradition represented and embodied by the figure of Cleopatra as a medical, gynecological, and alchemical authority on renewal. Believed into the early modern period to be the author of an apparent* Book of Cleopatra, *Cleopatra as a figure comes to be intimately associated with preservation and the promise of immortality. Shakespeare reimagines the figure of Cleopatra as a product of an early modern preservative culture, drawing from both ancient tradition and contemporary domestic practices to produce a figure of and for consumption. Cleopatra demonstrates that far from being a process toward permanence, preservation is both dynamic and organic, requiring the potency of the "foreign" integrated with the domestic to rethink what it means to persevere in the face of discandying.*

IN one of the most enigmatic of her speeches, William Shakespeare's Cleopatra invokes the "discandying of this pelleted storm."[1] In the next act, Antony describes the hearts of his followers that "discandy" and "melt their sweets" on Caesar (4.12.22). The term "discandy" evokes a particularly visceral image of the reverse process of candying, a pro-

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[1] Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, ed. David Bevington (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 3.13.67. All subsequent quotations from *Antony and Cleopatra* are from this edition and will be cited parenthetically within the text by act, scene, and line number.

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cess involving the melting of sugar to form a hardened, "candied" shell. And yet the term that describes such a powerful and accessible image—discandying—is unique to Shakespeare and unique to the play.[2] The question is, why might Shakespeare have used discandying only in *Antony and Cleopatra*? And why does it appear twice in a play about Egypt?

Recent postcolonial readings of *Antony and Cleopatra*'s depiction of Egypt have emphasized the "'Otherness' of Egypt."[3] Readings of otherness have tended to view the play as a warning about the exotic as excess even while acknowledging the blurring of the proposed Rome/ Egypt dichotomy. Gluttonous surfeiting, lavish banquets, and feasting, as in the feast described by Enobarbus, are all depicted as a quality of Egypt's exoticism—the "'orientalism' of Cleopatra's court—with its luxury, decadence, splendour, sensuality, [and] appetite," which John Gillies sees as a "systematic inversion of the legendary Roman values of temperance, manliness, courage, and *pietas*."[4] Mary Thomas Crane notes how this is also reflected in the "cognitive orientation" of the Romans in the play, who perceive their world as "composed largely of hard, opaque, human-fashioned materials" and divided into "almost obsessively named—and conquered—cities and nations."[5] This speaks to what I see as a tradition of privileging monumentalism in the history of the West, drawing from classical tropes of memorial and permanence that figure into what I have argued elsewhere are the masculinely coded and externally directed "markers of identity" that were

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[2] The most recent entry in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) lists in the definition that future uses of the term are "Freq. with allusion to Shakespeare's use" (*OED Online*, s.v. "discandy, v.," June 2014, Oxford University Press, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/53657?redirectedFrom=discandy [accessed July 18, 2014]).

[3] Mary Thomas Crane, "Roman World, Egyptian Earth: Cognitive Difference and Empire in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*," *Comparative Drama* 43 (2009): 1. See also Ania Loomba, "The Theatre and the Space of the Other in *Anthony and Cleopatra*," in *Shakespeare's Late Tragedies: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Susanne L. Wofford (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1996), 235–48. Loomba discusses the various imperialist and racial implications of the Rome/Egypt dichotomy in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* for England, tracing the history of Western perceptions of the East and the conflation of Egyptians with Moors, Turks, and gypsies, all identified by darker skin.

[4] John Gillies, *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 118.

[5] Crane, "Roman World, Egyptian Earth," 2. See also Jyotsna Singh, "Renaissance Antitheatricality, Antifeminism, and Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*," *Renaissance Drama* 20 (1989): 99–121. Singh reads the Rome/Egypt dichotomy in conjunction with a male/ female binary, in which Cleopatra's "infinite variety" is the antithesis of the Roman model of stability and masculinity.

"historical, genealogical, and patriarchal."[6] Crane contrasts the hard surface "world" of the Romans with the Egyptian "earth," perceived as "yielding, encompassing, generative, and resistant to human division and mastery," reading the latter as a kind of "nostalgia for a declining theory of the material world, the pre-seventeenth-century cosmos of elements and humors." For Gillies that nostalgia is morally saturated through its ties to the present and "shapes Shakespeare's representation of marginal, outlandish, barbarous, and exotic non-European cultures, in need of control by the rational and self-controlled West."[7]

My argument here diverges from and complicates the exoticism put forward by scholars like Crane and Gillies, providing a closer look at how exactly the blurring between two disparate cultures occurs. If Shakespeare's "relatively positive description of Egypt" demonstrates a nostalgia for a declining sixteenth-century theory of the material world, as Crane suggests, my sense is that Shakespeare experiments with new models of materiality and physiology, developed out of culinary practices, to demonstrate just how the porousness of the boundaries between the Romans and Egyptians, the West and the "other," manifested itself. I argue that Shakespeare's primary purpose is not merely to construct Egyptian exoticism but rather to couch the exotic Egyptian queen in English domestic culture as a commentary on Roman and English consumption, creating an uneasy tension between the domestic and the exotic within the figure of the foreign woman.[8]

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[6] See my "Navigating Past, Potential, and Paradise: The Gendered Epistemologies of Discovery and Creation in Francis Godwin's *Man in the Moone* and Margaret Cavendish's *Blazing World,*" in *Gendering Time and Space in Early Modern England,* ed. Katherine R. Larson and Alysia Kolentsis, *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme* 35 (2012): 121.

[7] Crane, "Roman World, Egyptian Earth," 2–3; and Gillies, *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference,* 4.

[8] For an extensive look at the phenomenon of Cleopatra's foreignness and the history of the speculation about her race, see Francesca T. Royster, *Becoming Cleopatra: The Shifting Image of an Icon* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Carol Chillington Rutter, *Enter the Body: Women and Representation on Shakespeare's Stage* (New York: Routledge, 2001); Imtiaz Habib, *Shakespeare and Race: Postcolonial Praxis in the Early Modern Period* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2000); Sally-Ann Ashton, *Cleopatra and Egypt* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008); and Gillies, *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference.* Royster and Rutter interrogate the social constructions and performances of Cleopatra's race. Habib provides context for the history of Graeco-Egyptian interrelations and the formation of a mixed Graeco-Egyptian race to speculate about Cleopatra's likely mixed-race heritage, which Ashton, an Egyptologist, confirms. Gillies discusses Shakespeare's exoticizing of Cleopatra in the context of differing historical accounts of Cleopatra's ethnicity—ethnically Greek in Plutarch's account rather than "dangerously" Egyptian, or exotic, in Virgil's account.

She is at once "Salt Cleopatra" and "sweet queen." Even her description as "wrinkled deep in time" can be construed as a gustatory descriptor given to Shakespeare's Cleopatra that references preservation practices that kept things from immediate decay and heightened flavors from salty to sweet. The play that has been held to be a commentary on Egypt is deeply informed by the notion of food preservation—a concept that includes salting, pickling, brining, and candying. The Romans see their legacy played out in the fantasy of conquering Egypt, with Cleopatra as a stand-in for her nation as well, incorporating its qualities. In suggesting the irony in the Roman veneer of a stoic, monumental, marble solidity indicative of republican ideals of duty and self-sacrifice, the play demonstrates Roman republicanism masking as a front for a culture obsessed with destructive consumption; at the same time that they repudiate Egypt as a site of excess and extravagance, the Romans themselves are the ones who consume or seek to consume. As the Romans seek to indulge in foreign foods and foreign customs, Roman conquerors, like Antony and Caesar before him, seek to consume Cleopatra as a temptation to the sexual appetite that mirrored the tantalizing Egyptian appeal to gluttony and feasting. But Egypt's and Cleopatra's own preservative elements make them resistant, in some ways, to such incorporation. Egypt rather has longer standing associations with preservation due to the nature of its space and time—the regional climate and Egypt's identification as the oldest civilization, producing preserved bodies and dry complexions but also fecundity and generation.

Furthermore, Shakespeare's preoccupation with food preservation in this play extends and complicates an ancient tradition interested in preservation more broadly construed, a tradition represented and embodied by the figure of Cleopatra as a medical, gynaecological, and alchemical authority. Believed into the early modern period to be the author of an apparent *Book of Cleopatra,* Cleopatra as a figure comes to be intimately associated with preservation and the promise of immortality. Shakespeare, I argue, reimagines the figure of Cleopatra as an epitome of an early modern preservative culture alongside her long history in medical and scientific tradition as a mistress of preservation. Shakespeare uses his construction of Cleopatra to show how the English desired to incorporate some of her qualities—her place in history and her promise of longevity—but they sought these qualities, fascinatingly, through kitchen and domestic work. His Cleopatra provides a model and an embodiment of preservation that withstands or subverts Roman ideas of permanence, with Antony, too, adopting the image of discandying in the threat of his own unpreserving. Cleopatra demonstrates that far from being a process toward permanence, preservation is both dynamic and organic, requiring the potency of the "foreign" integrated with the domestic to rethink the nature of memory and identity and what it means to persevere in the face of discandying.

CLEOPATRA'S ANCIENT MEDICAL AUTHORITY

Overlooked in studies of circulating receipts in a growing early modern domestic culture is the remarkable example of a receipt tradition attributed to Cleopatra. Early modern records indicate that there was an apparent *Book of Cleopatra* of which the English were aware—a source of medical knowledge that no longer exists except in the various curious references to it from authors and writers spanning all the way back to ancient Greek and Roman authorities. Cleopatra's was a preservative legacy that was as real as it was complex and elusive; the *Book of Cleopatra* held information about preserving and touted the concept of preservation as the domain of "Cleopatra's" expertise.

The figure of Cleopatra closer to her time was closely associated with medicine, cosmetics, gynecology, and alchemy, and the construction of her medical authority is comprised of not one but three significant traditions of medical thought. The earliest is of ancient medical writing, most famously that of Galen, where is preserved cosmetic recipes that bear Cleopatra's name and are extracted from a book called *Cosmetics*. In the late antique Latin and medieval Latin traditions, Cleopatra is held to be an authority on gynecology, with her name used as author or authority of two gynecological works: the *Gynaecia*, containing gynecological treatments, and the *Pessaria*, containing receipts for vaginal suppositories.[9] During this time, Albertus Magnus wrote his *Boke of Secrets*, in which Cleopatra's recipes figure, and the earlier thirteenth-century Thomas of Cantimpré composed his primary work, *On the Nature of Things*, which contained a section on the human body, physiology, and gynecology based on Cleopatra alongside figures like Galen and Avicenna. Thirdly, we have the Arabic medical tradition, in which there are indications that Cleopatra is remembered as a "writer on *aphrodisiaca*,"[10] with expertise in recipes for aphrodisiacs. The Arabic medical author known in the West as Costa ben Luca (820–912 C.E.) referred to a book on aphrodisiacs by Cleopatra and appears to be the original source from which a number of early modern authors received the receipt for the renewal of love, desire, and the ability for sexual intercourse:

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[9] Steven Muir and Laurence Totelin, "Medicine and Disease," in *A Cultural History of Women in Antiquity*, ed. Janet H. Tulloch (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 102.

[10] Ibid.

> I remember a great nobleman of this country who complained of being in a ligature that prevented him from having intercourse with women. . . . [I brought] him the Book of Cleopatra, the one she devoted to enhancing women's beauty, and [read] the passage where it says that one so ligated should take raven's gall mixed with sesame oil and apply it by smearing it all over the body. Upon hearing that, he had confidence in the words of the book and did it, and as soon as he was delivered [from the ligature] his desire for intercourse increased.[11]

In addition to the medical traditions, the preservative authority of Cleopatra also draws upon an ancient alchemical tradition. Cleopatra the alchemist is one of the great figures in ancient alchemy; a work called the *Dialogue of Cleopatra and the Philosophers,* in part attributed to Cleopatra, would, as Stanton Linden notes, influence "much of the alchemical imagery and rhetoric of the Renaissance."[12] In antiquity, gynecology had a large influence on alchemical imagery, and medical work in cosmetics, gynecological treatises, and sex manuals had a great deal of overlap. When we define these areas of expertise as characterized by a concern with preservation, we more easily see the connections between them: subsequently Cleopatra becomes as an expert in cosmetics, an authority in the preservation of beauty and health; as an expert in gynecology and alchemy, an authority on the preservation of reproduction and life; and as an expert in aphrodisiaca, an authority on the preservation of eroticism and sexual appeal.

Cleopatra's reputation thus exceeds her. In their discussion of ancient women in medicine, Steven Muir and Laurence Totelin describe a woman in the position of a medical authority as "a model or example whose legendary reputation lives on in the stories and practices of later generations."[13] Cleopatra's name attributed to these medical recipes was a "particularly good choice" given the queen Cleopatra's fame for beauty and luxury and her connection with Egypt, which was "famous for its production of scented oils and ointments."[14] Attributing to Queen Cleopatra a medical authority in this realm was so convincing that medical writers and compilers of receipts of the earlier periods believed the queen of Egypt had legitimately been active in the field of cosmetology, inspiring them to include recipes in later collections such as "an unguent of Queen Cleopatra" in Aetius's sixth-century *Medical Collection*, and a recipe for brightening the face attributed to a royal Cleopatra in the medical writings of Metrodora.[15] Additionally, that Queen Cleopatra was famous for her love affairs and skill in seduction lent credence to Costa ben Luca's reference to Cleopatra's book on aphrodisiacs.[16]

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[11] Quoted in Catherine Rider, *Magic and Impotence in the Middle Ages* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 50.

[12] Linden, *The Alchemy Reader: From Hermes Trismegistus to Isaac Newton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 44.

[13] Muir and Totelin, "Medicine and Disease," 84.

[14] Ibid., 102.

Thus beyond Cleopatra's fame in western culture as an Egyptian queen, there is evidence that early moderns associated her name with a rich culture of preservation dating back to antiquity. During Shakespeare's own time, and continuing well into the seventeenth century, the *Book of Cleopatra* appears in a range of early modern sources. Writers and texts that refer to Cleopatra and her *Book* as sources of ancient expertise include Magnus and his *Boke of Secretes* (1599), Robert Allott's *Wits Theater of the Little World* (1599), Edward Jorden's *A briefe discourse of a disease called the suffocation of the mother* (1603), Thomas Bonham's *The chyrugians closet* (1630), and Thomas Muffet's work on insects. From the sheer range of specialties covered by these texts—in secrets, compilations of beneficial reading material, surgery and medicine, and in natural philosophy and the natural sciences—we find that "Cleopatra's" work was found to be pertinent in multiple fields of expertise and held to be legitimate and efficacious. Even in the late seventeenth century, Swiss physician Johannes Jacob Wecker's work, published in English translation in 1660 as *Eighteen Books of the Secrets of Art & Nature, Being The Summe and Substance of Naturall Philosophy* and described in the preface as "an Encyclipaedia of Arts and Sciences," lists Cleopatra among its authors.[17]

It was thus that receipts advertised as secrets belonging to Cleopatra were sold and made accessible to the early modern English. The *Book of Cleopatra* makes its appearance in these early modern texts in the form of firsthand receipts as well as secondhand references. "Cleopatra writ a booke of the preseruation of womens beauty," Robert Allott begins his section on Beauty in his edited prose commonplace book, *Wits Theater of*

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[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid., 103.

[17] Wecker, *Eighteen Books of the Secrets of Art & Nature, Being The Summe and Substance of Naturall Philosophy* (London, 1660), A2r.

the Little World (1599).[18] This is confirmed by the appearance of receipts for preserving beauty in other early modern texts; the English translation of Magnus's *Boke of Secretes* (1599) states,

> And it is saide in the booke of Cleopatrr [sic]. If a woman haue not anie delectation with her husband take the marrowe of a wolfe, of his left foote, and beare it, and she will loue no man but him. And it is saide, when the lefte hippe or hance of a male Ostrich is taken and boiled, or seethed with Oile, and after the begining or grounde of haires are anointed with it they grow neuer againe.[19]

Here are two descriptive receipts, marked by their beginning "And it is saide [in the *Book of Cleopatra*]," the first of which reads as a recipe for a renewal of love between a woman and her husband, the second, for the permanent stopping of hair growth, both apparently taken from her book. Another cosmetically minded receipt, this time for hair growth, appears in Thomas Bonham's *The chyrugian's closet* (1630), in which Cleopatra is credited in the "Alphabeticall Catalogue of the Authors of this Worke." Bonham provides two brief receipts attributed to her in this "chyrugian's" compendium, listed in standard medical receipt format. The first, after listing ingredients for an unguent, reads,

> Rx. Cort: arundinis, & Spuma nitri, ana {ounce} ss. picis liquida, q. s. f. vng. *. To restore hayre in an inueterate Alopecia [or baldness]. It will be [B] very profitable daily to shaue the place, and to rub it with a lin|nen cloath, and then to anoint it, by which meanes the hayre will grow with more speed. Cleopatra.[20]

The second, after listing ingredients for another unguent and abbreviated instructions for preparation, notes simply:

> Rx. Brassicae aridae, q.s. stampe it cum aq: q.s. vnto the forme of an vng: *. To preserue haire from falling. Cleopatra. [C][21]

Both entries, purporting to aid hair growth or preserve hair from falling, end with the attribution "Cleopatra" to identify the source of the receipts. A related recipe from the *Book of Cleopatra* makes a perhaps unexpected appearance in Muffet's work on insects, which was completed in manuscript form in the 1590s and posthumously published and appended in English translation to Edward Topsell's work on beasts (1658). Muffet accounts in his section "On the use of Flies" yet another receipt for the cure for baldness:

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[18] Allott, *Wits Theater of the Little World* (London, 1599), 75v.

[19] Magnus, *Boke of Secretes* (London, 1599), G4r–v.

[20] Bonham, *The chyrugian's closet* (London, 1630), 283.

[21] Ibid.

> For Galen out of Saranus, Ascle|piades, Cleopatra, and others, hath taken many Medicines against the disease called Alopecia or the Foxes evill; and he useth them either by themselves or mingled with other things. For so it is written in Cleopatra's Book de Ornatu. Take five grains of the heads of Flies, beat and rub them on the head affected with this disease, and it will certainly cure it.[22]

Here again we find a descriptive receipt for the renewal of hair growth, described as a kind of cure. Additionally, here we receive another title for Cleopatra's book: the "Book de Ornatu" or book of ornamentation, as in beauty and cosmetology.

In addition to Cleopatra's hair remedies, Cleopatra's curative knowledge appears again in the form of more occult expertise. Edward Jorden mentions the *Book of Cleopatra* as a source for a receipt used as an example of "fasten[ing] some cure vpon" those who claim to be bewitched, in his treatise on the "suffocation of the mother," in which he furthers his argument that witchcraft can be explained away by natural causes:

> So that if we cannot moderate these perturbations of the minde, by reason and perswasions, or by alluring their mindes another way, we may politikely confirme them in their fantasies, that wee may the better fasten some cure vpon them: as *Constantinus Affricanus* (if it be his booke which is inserted among *Galens* workes, *De incantatione, adiuratione &c.*) affirmeth, and practized with good successe, vpon one who was *impotens ad Venerem*, & thought himselfe bewitched therewith, by reading vnto him a foolish medicine out of *Cleopatra*, made with a crowes gall, and oyle: whereof the patient tooke so great conceit, that vpon the vse of it he presently recouered his strength and abilitie againe.[23]

Cleopatra's name appears to stand in for her book, from which this "medicine" is taken. A similar receipt is echoed in Wecker's book of secrets, in a section on "Secrets of Generation and Venery [pursuit of sexual pleasure]." This recipe, "For those that are bewitched," reads,

> The Pye eaten will recover those that are bewitched, as some think: also the fume of a dead mans tooth, and if the whole body be annointed with a Crows gall, and oyl of Sesama, that will do it also. *Ex Cleopatra.*[24]

This receipt is reiterated in his later section on "Secrets against Conjuration." Regarding recipes for "What must be done when Men are hindered that they cannot lye with their Wives," Wecker includes the following advice:

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[22] Muffet, *The Theater of Insects: or, Lesser living Creatures, as, Bees, Flies, Caterpillars, Spidrs, Worms, &c. a most Elaborate Work* (London, 1658), 945.

[23] Jorden, *A Briefe Discourse of a Disease Called the Suffocation of the Mother* (London, 1603), 24v.

[24] Wecker, *Eighteen Books of the Secrets of Art & Nature,* 104.

> There is one reports that a Noble Man of his Countrey [this may well be Costa ben Luca, as per the reference earlier] swore that he enchanted a Man that he should never lye with his Wife, and that he was restored by a certain dexterity, whereby he confirmed the perswasion of another, bringing to him the Book of Cleopatra, which he had written concerning the ugliness of Women, and he read the place where it was prescribed that one that was so charmed should have his whole body annointed with the gall of a Crow, mingled with Oyl of Sesamam; and that the remedy was certain.[25]

Wecker directly references the *Book of Cleopatra* as a material text—"bringing to him the Book of Cleopatra"—and as the source of the aforementioned receipt. These early modern examples, from both medical experts and non-experts, show us how knowledge from the *Book of Cleopatra* came to be circulated and the figure of Cleopatra perpetuated as an authority on preservation.

From these fragments of evidence we piece together an idea of who Cleopatra represented for the early moderns rather than a biography of a specific individual. The author who apparently wrote the *Book of Cleopatra* and any other medical treatises and recipes was not the Cleopatra we have inherited as arguably our most famous Cleopatra—Cleopatra VII, former queen of Egypt, Shakespeare's Cleopatra. However, this seems not to have mattered much in the transmission and preservation of the figure of Cleopatra and her book of expertise. As a scholar who focuses on classical history, Totelin has convincingly read Cleopatra in early Greek medical writings as an example of what she terms a "royal veneer," famous or well-known names that writers attributed to recipes for the purpose of giving them a kind of authority. As such, she and Muir argue, it is better to refer to such female figures as "authorities," rather than "authors of" these recipes.[26] Where Muir and Totelin refer to Cleopatra in these medical writings as a pseudonym, I think it fruitful for our purposes to consider the resulting composite Cleopatra of the medical traditions alongside the figure of Queen Cleopatra in the historical tradition as, together, a figuration. It seems to me that the definition of figuration—the action or process of forming into a figure, or the resulting form or shape, contour, outline—may most accurately describe what "Cleopatra" ends up being, or meaning, into the early modern period. From early on, the potency of the figure of Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, allowed it to subsume the other Cleopatras who have come and gone and contributed something to the study of preservation, whether that be Cleopatra the gynecologist or Cleopatra the alchemist.

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[25] Ibid., 281.
[26] Muir and Totelin, "Medicine and Disease," 100.

I want to pause here for a moment to consider the two Cleopatra figures—the medical authority and the historical queen of Egypt—separately in order to point out the two threads of memory-making that are at play here and that are being woven together to create the composite Cleopatra figuration. The one is Cleopatra the queen, in the historical tradition, constructed by "historical" (if embellished) narrative upon narrative throughout the centuries, as in her treatment as powerful ruler, gypsy, and seductress in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra.* The other, lesser known, and the one I highlight here, is this one of the medical or receipt tradition, constructed by the numerous fragments of evidence that attribute various medical and preservative expertise to "Cleopatra." The *Book of Cleopatra* proves a tradition, forgotten or overlooked, of a Cleopatra memorialized through receipts as opposed to narrative. Furthermore, as I argue, the preservation of Cleopatra's memory in the form of these receipts and fragments of medical knowledge constructs her cultural significance for Shakespeare in ways that her memory in narrative alone does not. Shakespeare thus, in inheriting these traditions, adds to them another, one that draws from his contemporary cultural milieu: a new English tradition of food preservation. By doing so, Shakespeare uses the culinary, as a newly developing addition to the definition of preservation, to bridge the gap between a cultural memory constructed by the tradition of Cleopatra's medical receipts and a historical memory of Cleopatra constructed by the narrative of her life and loves. In coupling these memorial lines, Shakespeare contributes to the memory-making efforts of preserving Cleopatra, drawing from a tradition of Cleopatra as preservative expert and exploring her in the realm of contemporary culinary preservation.

ANCIENT LEGACY AND EARLY MODERN DOMESTIC PRACTICES

What did it mean to preserve? The idea of preserving, in the English language, first applied to the vulnerable human body in the Middle Ages. The first known use of the verb "to preserve" appears in John Gower's 1393 *Confessio Amantis,* according to the *OED,* in which Gower states, "forto kepe and to preserve The bodi fro siknesses alle." Gower's example is listed for the primary definition of "to preserve": "To protect or save from (injury, sickness, or any undesirable eventuality)."[27] As the use of the word evolved, later definitions still focused, at first, on the human body as the object of preservation; to preserve meant "To keep alive; to keep from perishing," and in medicine "to prevent (a disease or its development, a complication); to palliate or keep from worsening." By 1427, the definition extended beyond the human body, defining "to preserve" more abstractly as "to keep in its original or existing state; to make lasting; to maintain or keep alive (a memory, name, etc.)."

It is not until the 1500s that we see the definition of "to preserve" expanded to include the culinary. The *OED* records 1563 as the first use of "to preserve" as "to prepare (fruit, meat, etc.) by boiling with sugar, salting, or pickling so as to prevent decomposition or fermentation." This corresponds with the sudden influx of food preservation recipes that entered en masse into sixteenth-century receipt culture, in tandem with what Jennifer Stead calls a "spectacular increase of activity in food preservation" in the sixteenth century,[28] both derived from and developing on receipts cultivated throughout the centuries. Accordingly, with the culinary entering into the primary definitions of "to preserve" in the English language, culinary preservation, as we see, would influence the culture's understanding of preservation as a concept. In time, the material processes of culinary preservation would serve as the primary metaphor for the idea of preservation more broadly construed; by the end of the seventeenth century Vincent Alsop would describe his religious concerns using the terms of culinary preservation:

> I would fain know how the Church was Conserved in the Early, purer times of Christ, and his Apostles? They had not recourse to the Ladies Closet open'd, They understood nothing of the Modern curious Arts of Conserving, candying, and preserving Religion in Ceremonious Syrrups; and yet Religion kept sweet, and Good.[29]

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[27] *OED Online*, s.v. "preserve, v.," June 2014, Oxford University Press, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/150728?rskey=CXAVsN&result=2&isAdvanced=false (accessed July 18, 2014).

[28] Stead, "Necessities and Luxuries: Food Preservation from the Elizabethan to the Georgian Era," in *"Waste Not, Want Not": Food Preservation from Early Times to the Present Day*, ed. C. Anne Wilson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), 66.

[29] Alsop, *Melius inquirendum, or, A sober inquirie into the reasonings of the Serious inquirie wherein the inquirers cavils against the principles, his calumnies against the preachings and practises of the non-conformists are examined, and refelled, and St. Augustine, the synod of Dort and the Articles of the Church of England in the Quinquarticular points, vindicated* (1678), 211.

Shakespeare's Cleopatra thus appears at a time when ideas of preservation and advancements in preservation in the early modern English kitchen were evolving side by side. Correspondingly, conserving, candying, and pickling began to serve as metaphors for preservation derived from advancements in food preservation in English domestic culture.

Thus, when Shakespeare uses the term "discandy," he does so intentionally at a moment in history during which culinary ingredients and culinary processes begin to define preservation. To fully emphasize the significance of Shakespeare's use of the term, I must begin by noting here that "discandy" is a term and a concept that is entirely Shakespeare's invention. Furthermore, the word "discandy" only appears in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra;* not only is it absent in all of his other works, but thus far it does not appear in any other work in the history of the English language. "Discandy" was one of Shakespeare's new words, developed out of a culinary image, derived from "candy" in its noun form (i.e., in "sugar-candy," another name for sugar), turning it into its verb form (candying as a preservative process using sugar-candy), and finally attaching the prefix "dis-" to coin "discandy" as the reverse of "to candy."[30] Candying, more specifically, was a process by which fruits, roots, and flowers were preserved using sugar; the candying process involved "boiling with sugar, which crystallizes and forms a crust."[31]

Early modern women were becoming increasingly familiar with candying as a culinary process, as well as recipes for preserving and conserving intended for the early modern English housewife. These were domesticated into the rapidly growing genre of the receipt book, both in private manuscript form kept within the familial household and in printed form, as recipe books and domestic manuals, for public consumption. One example of the latter was the anonymous *A Closet for Ladies and Gentlevvomen, Or, The Art of preseruing, Conseruing, and Candying. With the manner howe to make diuers kinds of Syrups: and all kind of banqueting stuffes. Also diuers soueraigne Medicines and Salues, for sundry Diseases* (1608), roughly contemporaneous with the writing of *Antony and Cleopatra.* From the title alone, we can gather several things: 1) that the anonymous manual was meant for "Ladies and Gentlewomen" implies that the following arts and receipts were considered the domain of the early modern woman; 2) the arts of preserving, conserving, and candying were grouped together—and I will speak of them as a grouping as the culinary preservative arts; and 3) the making of syrups, banqueting stuffs, and medicines, as diverse and various as they seem, were all related to the preservative arts.

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[30] Terttu Nevalainen, "Shakespeare's New Words," in *Reading Shakespeare's Dramatic Language: A Guide,* ed. Sylvia Adamson (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2001), 237–55.

[31] *OED Online,* s.v. "candy, v.," June 2014, Oxford University Press, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/27013?rskey=KRMTH9&result=4&isAdvanced=false (accessed July 18, 2014).

Within the domestic manual itself, the clean categories the title suggests did not exist, of course; rather, in broadly construed categories, such as "An especiall note of Confectionary," "Here beginneth Banqueting conceits, as Marmalades, Quodiniackes, and such like," and "Cordial Waters," recipes ranging from preserving gooseberries to making syrup of violets to "A medicine for Rupture in old or yong" were collected without strict organization. Only an occasional note at the bottom of a page, "Heere endeth the Preseruatiues," indicated any division of categories, but these, too, were misleading, because the preserves, for example, didn't always end as stated.[32] That preservative recipes appeared throughout the book shows how central the concept of preservation was to the cookery and kitchen experimentation of the early modern domestic household. Among recipes for preservation, those for candying boasted titles that were especially telling about what candying in particular promised for the early modern woman interested in preserving. One such receipt is titled, "To Candy Rose leaues as naturally as if they grew vpon the Tree"; the directions state,

> Take of the fayrest Rose leaues, red or dammaske, and on a Sun-shine day sprinkle them with Rose water, and lay them one by one vpon faire paper, then take some double refined suger, and beat it very fine, and put it in a fine lawne searce, when you haue layd abroad all the Rose leaues in the hottest of the sunne, searce suger thinly all ouer them, then anon the Sun will candy the suger, then turne the leaues, and searce suger on the other side, and turne them often in the Sun, sometimes sprinkling Rose water, & sometimes searsing suger on them, vntill they be ynough, and come to your liking: and being thus done, you may keepe them.[33]

The mimetic function of the recipe, to candy the leaves "as naturally as if they grew vpon the Tree," demonstrates the desire to preserve items as they are in nature, to "keepe them" in their natural state. This is echoed in another recipe, labeled "To Candy all manner of flowers in their naturall colours," for which one must take "the flowers with the staulkes, and wash them ouer with a little Rose water, wherein Gum-arabecke is dissolued, then take fine searsed suger, and dust ouer them, and set them a drying on the bottome of a siue in an ouen, and they will glister as if it were Suger-candy."[34] Other candying receipts continue to specify that the aim is to "keepe them all the yeare."[35] These receipts make explicit the purpose and benefit of candying: they enabled early modern women to preserve things as close as possible to how they "naturally" were in their living, or last present, state—in a sense, freezing them in time. These preservative aims of candying, alongside culinary preservation more broadly as prolonging shelf life, will prove crucial for Shakespeare's climactic moment of discandying in the play.

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[32] Anonymous, *A Closet for Ladies and Gentlevvomen, Or, The Art of preseruing, Conseruing, and Candying. With the manner howe to make diuers kinds of Syrups: and all kind of banqueting stuffes. Also diuers soueraigne Medicines and Salues, for sundry Diseases* (London, 1608), 15.

[33] Ibid., 17–18.

But additionally, early modern English domestic practices were not isolated; rather, perhaps unexpectedly, these preservation processes were informed by foreign influence. By the time candying as a process reached early modern England, the English were already familiar with candied products via the exotic candied goods that were imported into Europe. Early modern domestic practices, executed in the safety of the private household, were not quite so safely domestic, as Shakespeare was well aware. The underlying threat of the exotic would play out in Shakespeare's depiction of Cleopatra as both a foreign queen of a foreign land and an early modern expert of domestic preservation culture.

Cleopatra is Shakespeare's only female protagonist of color. Her "tawny front" is a marker of difference, and that difference represented the encroachment of the foreign and "other" upon the safety of the early modern English domestic space. The prominent early modern European fear of miscegenation was complicated by the concept of empire that promoted the idea of alteration in the bodies, tastes, and beliefs of "imperial consumers": "You are what you eat, what you consume, what you own."[36] This mantra—that you are what you eat—was the basis for the Galenic dietetic framework of the humors, according to which one's makeup was constructed by what one ate and drank. Bodies were composed of and maintained by local diet, "the stuff that came off the land where the body itself lived and that was prepared as it was traditionally prepared."[37] The distinction of a local diet developed out of custom, the idea that "I cannot be hurt by the use of things that I have been long accustomed to," as Michel de Montaigne expressed in his essay "Of Experience."[38] Because bodies were accustomed to local fare, dietary "exoticism" put the domestic body at risk. At the same time, the colonizing impulse of the Age of Discovery spurred a sense of urgency among competing European nations to claim undiscovered regions of the world, and, for practical reasons, these European nations began experimenting with food preservation out of necessity to accommodate ships with food that would be able to last months and even years during the long journeys abroad.[39] Travel thus became the impetus for new advancements in food preservation. These voyages abroad not only brought back to Europe different and exotic foodstuffs, newly "discovered" flora and fauna of foreign regions, but also unprecedented quantities of preservative ingredients, like "the increased supply of sugar from Caribbean islands and North Africa," resulting in a "veritable explosion of new methods" of preservation.[40]

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[34] Ibid., 18–19.

[35] Ibid., 20.

[36] Mary Baine Campbell, "Maculophobia: Blackness, Whiteness and Cosmetics in Early Imperial Britain," in *Multicultural Europe and Cultural Exchange in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. James P. Helfers (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 121.

The context, thus, for the Roman anxiety about Cleopatra as a morsel and Egypt as a place of excess in Shakespeare's play is the concern of early modern European colonists, who were "anxious about the possible effects of exposure to an exotic environment, and especially to an exotic diet, on their own constitutions."[41] If foreign foods presented a threat to the European body, but travel was necessary for the European colonialist project, how much more significant the developing preservation techniques that would allow European colonists to bring with them what they could of their own local foodstuffs, preserved? At the heart of the threat of an exotic diet was the belief that foods had the capability of changing one's bodily constitution, even, and especially, to the point of altering one's racial or ethnic identity.

Shakespeare produces a composite figure in Cleopatra that combines her regional boundary-crossing, between the domestic and the exotic, with her historical boundary-crossing, between the ancient and the contemporary. The tradition of a Cleopatra associated with preservation and domestic practices was inherited through a receipt culture that was not isolated to the influx of receipt books that comprised much of domestic culture of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries but was rather a continuation of a culture of receipts that had been cultivated through a long tradition of recording, compiling, transmitting, and experimenting with a range of medical, alchemical, and occult knowledge. The evolution of ancient medical knowledge into domestic culture continued to be in play as early moderns developed their own household practices. Receipts made for a richly complicated textual culture, and the genre of receipt books was more open-ended than we might think today. The receipt culture that lay at the heart of early modern domestic culture included books of secrets, domestic manuals, health treatises, and commonplace books. Texts that contained receipts mixed recipes for medicine, baking pies, making ink, creating beautifying cosmetics, and protecting from curses and recasting magical spells, often all within the space of a single volume. Households would have had manuscript recipes in their homes as well as published books of secrets, surgical receipts, and home remedies, all of which often cited other books and receipts, including some Italian and French. Accordingly, the early modern woman was expected to cultivate an expertise in a variety of domestic concerns. A knowledge of plants, simples, and general physic in addition to experience in constructing face washes, dressing venison, and baking almond cakes, were all required for the purposes of proper and thorough domestic household management. But where the early modern housewife—or queen or duchess—may have *developed* an expertise in culinary, medical, and pharmacological knowledge, by way of the hands-on nature of acquiring such experimental and experiential knowledge in the kitchen, the figure of Cleopatra bypasses the developmental stage as already a figure of medical authority. With Cleopatra we get a female figure whose relationship to medicine and to receipt culture throughout the centuries was strikingly different from that of women in Shakespeare's time, and I argue that Shakespeare's Cleopatra demonstrates how "Cleopatra's" ancient legacy interacts with Shakespeare's modern-day practices and current concerns to produce a solution for preservation in the very act of becoming unpreserved.

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[37] Steven Shapin, "'You are what you eat': Historical Changes in Ideas about Food and Identity," *Historical Research* 87 no. 237 (2014): 380.

[38] Quoted in ibid.

[39] Stead, "Necessities and Luxuries," 66.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Shapin, "'You are what you eat,'" 383. Shapin notes earlier that by formulating distinctions between local and foreign fare, the "language of Galenic dietetics" contributed to forming collective dietary identities within groups: "what foods suited the English, the Scots, the Welsh, the French and the Spanish? In England, what suited people from the west country and what suited Essex man?" Ibid., 382.

PRESERVING AND UNPRESERVING SHAKESPEARE'S CLEOPATRA

To examine how Shakespeare integrates the ancient and the early modern, the domestic and exotic, in his construction of a preservative Cleopatra, I begin with Cleopatra's construction of her own self as a body of difference within the play. In one of her most celebratory narcissistic moments, Cleopatra imagines herself through Antony's eyes as the "serpent of old Nile . . . That am with Phoebus' amorous pinches black / And wrinkled deep in time" (1.5.26 and 29–30). In this description Cleopatra directs her audience's attention to the particularities of her physical and bodily presence on stage, forcing us to acknowledge or recognize her as a body of difference. By calling herself the "serpent of old Nile," she claims her Egyptian heritage; by describing herself as "pinche[d]" black by the sun, she recognizes the blackness or darkness of her skin tone; and by characterizing her body as wrinkled "deep in time," she both marks herself as an older, aged woman and gestures to her association with a kind of eternal timelessness. Cleopatra's tripartite description of herself—as Egyptian, black, and aged—consists entirely of qualities of marginalization in early modern England; at the same time, these qualities that would serve to marginalize her in Shakespeare's time combine to construct a powerful identity we have come to know as the exotic, foreign queen of Egypt. Cleopatra's emphasis on these marginalized qualities forces us to think about the physicality of her body. By bringing our attention to her Egyptian-ness, in addition to her being "wrinkled deep in time," Cleopatra celebrates her body as wrinkled, preserved flesh that was thought to be quintessentially Egyptian. Cleopatra's wrinkled, Egyptian body draws on early modern medical thought, in which the physical body was primarily understood through the influence of the four humors: blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile. The prevailing early modern humoral theory of health maintained that the body, its composition and its functions, were governed by these four humors, which were differentiated by levels of heat and moisture. Because of its susceptibility to changes in heat and moisture, the humoral body was constantly prone to the influence of external factors, and the influence of climate, environment, and region affected and altered the humors within the body in ways that had gendered and racial ramifications. The early moderns believed that the heat of the sun was responsible for darkening the skin of the Egyptians—thus we get the visual of Cleopatra's "tawny front"—as well as the cause for the drying out of the body's humors.

Shakespeare's description of Cleopatra, as a body already primed for preservation, thus derives from the idea that her Egyptian environment could preserve. In contrast, Antony is described as being more susceptible to change; for example, Antony's stay in Alexandria, as Caesar complains, effeminizes him:

> he . . . fishes, drinks, and wastes
> The lamps of night in revel; is not more manlike
> Than Cleopatra, nor the queen of Ptolemy
> More womanly than he.
> (1.4.4–7)

According to early modern assumptions about humoral differences between bodies from northern and southern regions, Antony's effeminization would have been seen as the result of the bodily changes he undergoes upon his extended stay in Alexandria. Antony's northern, Roman body, being colder and more moist, is more susceptible to influence from the southern climates. Cleopatra's southern Egyptian qualities, on the other hand, are more durable. While according to humoral theory Cleopatra's complexion should be "soft and impressionable" as a woman, as an Egyptian she takes on the hotter and drier qualities typically considered to be masculine. The durability of Cleopatra's southern qualities has much to do with the effect of the Egyptian environment upon the body; those who lived in Egypt were believed to have drier, darker skin due to the hot and dry environment, which preserved human bodies for longer than did colder and wetter climates, like England, which, instead, "preserve[d] internal moisture."[42] In this way, the bodies of Egyptians were thought to be embalmed by the environment in a way that northern bodies were not. Cleopatra's Egyptian qualities that mimic preservation contribute to what scholars have noted as her "ageless antiquity"; southerners like Cleopatra were seen to be "descendants of the oldest civilizations," and their natural qualities were correlated "with those of the elderly."[43] Its dryness made the southern complexion "less vulnerable to decay or physical change," giving it the quality of being well-preserved.

But Cleopatra's appeal to preservation goes beyond her environment. Indeed, beyond her regional, Egyptian physicality is the abstraction of her role as ancient authority and early modern English preservative expert. As we will see, these work in tandem to create a Cleopatra that proves both a preservative and altering threat from within and without. Even before Cleopatra's self-description, Shakespeare situates himself alongside the ancient traditions of Cleopatra early in the play and gestures to his emphasis on the culinary as a mediating, preserving presence that bridges space and time, region and history.

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[42] Mary Floyd-Wilson, "Transmigrations: Crossing Regional and Gender Boundaries in *Antony and Cleopatra*," in *Enacting Gender on the English Renaissance Stage*, ed. Viviana Comensoli and Anne Russell (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 74.

[43] Ibid., 75.

In 1.2, Shakespeare stages a scene in which Cleopatra's servants interact with a soothsayer who claims "In nature's infinite book of secrecy / A little I can read" (1.2.8–9). When Cleopatra's servant Alexas then tells Charmian to "Show him your hand," the scene is interrupted by the entrance of Enobarbus, who suddenly interjects, "Bring in the banquet quickly" (1.2.9–10). Charmian continues as if to ignore the interjection, requesting the soothsayer to "give me good fortune" (1.2.12). In the exchange that follows, the soothsayer presents the following bits of foresight: in the first, he tells Charmian that "You shall be yet far fairer than you are," which Iras interprets as "you shall paint when you are old" (1.2.15 and 17); in the second, he tells her that "You shall be more beloving than beloved" (1.2.21); in the third, he tells her that "You shall outlive the lady whom you serve" (1.2.29); and finally, to Charmian's question about how many children she will have, the soothsayer responds that "If every of your wishes had a womb, and fertile every wish, a million" (1.2.35–36). What is striking about the soothsayer's main points is that they address, respectively, books of secrets, painting (or cosmetics and beauty), love, prolonged life, the womb, and fertility, all of which correspond to how Cleopatra has been remembered through her apparent medical expertise in cosmetics, aphrodisiacs, gynecology (and alchemy) and, altogether, the secrets of preservation and the renewal of life.[44]

The soothsayer is dismissed by a disgruntled Charmian: "Out, fool!" (1.2.37), but she then invites him to tell Iras her fortune. At this point, Enobarbus interrupts yet again, saying that his and all of their fortunes will be going drunk to bed; we can assume that he has started on the banqueting festivities he requested in his earlier interjection. Iras and Charmian then attempt to soothsay themselves; Iras observes, "There's a palm presages chastity, if nothing else," to which Charmian replies, "E'en as the o'erflowing Nilus presageth famine" (1.2.43–44). Charmian's reference to famine is telling at this moment. Times of famine were the primary reason for the need to preserve foods. In times of glut, surplus foods would be preserved in order to prolong their shelf life for times of need. Charmian's remark about the famine marks the end of any further "productive" soothsaying.

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[44] The soothsayer is also introduced into the scene by Alexas, who, as Cyrus Hoy has pointed out, was likely a reference to Alexis of Piemont, whose book of secrets was published widely—in England alone (in English translation) in 1558, 1560, 1562, 1569, 1595, and into the seventeenth century. Hoy makes this connection in his notes to Thomas Dekker's *Satiromastix*, in which "Alexis's secrets" appear in relation to Antony and Cleopatra in an otherwise bizarre reference in the play: "Come, busse thy little Anthony now, / now, my cleane Cleopatria; so, so, goe thy waies, / Alexis secrets" (*Introductions, Notes, and Commentaries to Texts in The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980], 256).

Both of Enobarbus's interjections occur just as the soothsayer has been asked to provide information, silencing the soothsayer both times until he is requested to speak again. Thus, Shakespeare inserts references at specific moments that are related to his interest in food preservation, interrupting or dismissing the soothsayer's knowledge of secrets or dismissing soothsaying altogether. In addition, throughout this scene, as requested by Enobarbus, we have the backdrop of the banquet on stage, which at this time was not necessarily synonymous with a feast as we might think of today but rather more typically meant the final, dessert course that would have consisted in large part of preserved food items, such as preserved fruits, sweets, and other confections. It is thus that in this rather strange scene near the beginning of the play, Shakespeare introduces the cultural memory of Cleopatra's medical receipt tradition and also launches his own intervention through Enobarbus's and Charmian's passing mentions: his investment in a culinary form of preservation and how that changes his audience's notion of a preservative Cleopatra.

Just as Charmian enigmatically concludes, "the o'erflowing Nilus presageth famine," the idea of a preservative Cleopatra is significant for early modern concerns with famine, and the juxtaposition of excessive fecundity with famine sets the stage for the dietary contrast between Egypt (Cleopatra) and Rome that Antony faces. Antony's, and the Romans', relationship to the culinary begins as an image of famine, as a point of anti-excess. Caesar produces a memory of Antony that distinguishes him from Egyptian food culture and fecundity, arguing that on the contrary Antony had previously thrived in circumstances where food was scarce. Bemoaning Antony's carousings in Alexandria, Caesar pleads to an absent Antony to "Leave thy lascivious wassails" (1.4.57), remembering fondly when

at thy heel
Did famine follow, whom thou fought'st against,
Though daintily brought up, with patience more
Than savages could suffer. Thou didst drink
The stale of horses and the gilded puddle
Which beasts would cough at. Thy palate then did deign
The roughest berry on the rudest hedge.
Yea, like the stag when snow the pasture sheets,
The barks of trees thou browsed. On the Alps
It is reported thou didst eat strange flesh,
Which some did die to look on.
(1.4.59–69)

Caesar finds admirable the Roman Antony who was forced to eat food that had not been preserved but was rather what uncivilized "savages" might eat: the "stale of horses," "barks of trees," and "strange flesh" (unpreserved). Caesar here depicts an environment that contrasts not only with Antony's own dainty upbringing but also with the Egypt's landscape. Caesar, in a masculine discourse, implies that the preservation of Antony's life depended not on the bounty produced by food preservation but on deprivation and a diet characterized as barbarous.

However, as Antony's exposure to Egypt begins to alter him, the introduction of culinary metaphors in the play enters into his domestic interactions in contrast to the realm of his public or political affairs. Pompey, when considering the optimistic state of his own affairs compared to Caesar's and Antony's, snidely dismisses any real threat they pose to him, remarking that "Mark Antony / In Egypt sits at dinner, and will make / No wars without doors" (2.1.11–13). Similarly, in a conversation between Lepidus and Enobarbus, as they anticipate a tense meeting between their respective leaders, Caesar and Antony, Lepidus is reluctant that they should meet with warring personal agendas and tells Enobarbus, "'Tis not a time for private stomaching" (2.2.9), casting the culinary as, again, a private domain.

Yet in the meeting between the two leaders, Lepidus opens by asking both to "Touch you the sourest points with sweetest terms." Dietary knowledge promoted balance between different categories of food, pairing opposite "humoral" qualities of foods together; thus vinegar was often paired with sugar or salt, and other substances like honey or other spices were often added to combinations of foods in ways that would seem extravagant or incongruous to us today. The experience of "private stomaching," then, speaks to knowledge of the balance required for the health of consumers. After Antony and Caesar make peace through the agreed marriage between Caesar's sister Octavia and Antony, bonding the two men as brothers, Maecenas comments that "We have cause to be glad that matters are so well digested" but follows immediately by noting that Enobarbus "stayed well by't in Egypt" (2.2.186–87). The matters well digested between Antony and Caesar are immediately juxtaposed against the excessive Egyptian feast: "Eight wild boars roasted whole at a breakfast, and but twelve persons there" (2.2.190–91). Enobarbus's subsequent visually and sensorially rich description of Cleopatra's entrance into Antony's life via the river Cydnus—full of burnished gold, tissue, and the "strange invisible perfume" which made the winds lovesick and hit "the sense / Of the adjacent wharfs" (2.2.222–23)—is missing only the sensory satisfaction of taste, which yet is promised; Antony "goes to the feast, / And for his ordinary pays his heart / For what his eyes eat only" (2.2.234–36). That which "his eyes eat only" is, of course, Cleopatra, and for the rest of the play, Cleopatra is described as a thing for culinary consumption. In her own self-description Cleopatra announces, "I was a morsel for a monarch." Pompey later echoes this, calling Cleopatra Antony's "fine Egyptian cookery," upon whom "Julius Caesar / Grew fat with feasting there" (2.6.63–65). So too Enobarbus calls her Antony's "Egyptian dish" (2.7.124). However, Cleopatra's culinary portrayal serves not to limit her to the role of an object of desire and for consumption but rather to frame her as a master/mistress of preservation.

While the descriptors that portray Cleopatra's appeal to the appetite have always been linked to her reputation as the lustful queen, taking the gustatory—and cannibalistic—metaphors of appetite literally helps us to understand the material ways the early modern English may have imagined the threat of the foreign and how Cleopatra's mastery of preservation becomes a source of power over those who seek to consume her. Cleopatra's culinary power is best exemplified by Enobarbus's and Pompey's descriptions of her, in which they reflect—from a more objective standpoint—on the culinary appeal she provides to those around her. In Enobarbus's earlier speech, he rejects Maecenas's conclusion that Antony will "leave . . . [Cleopatra] utterly" upon taking Octavia as his wife; rather, this is an impossibility precisely because of the allure of Cleopatra's appeal:

> Never. He will not.
> Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale

> Her infinite variety. Other women cloy
> The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry
> Where most she satisfies.
>
> (2.3.244–48)

The significance of Cleopatra's exoticism and appeal is its longevity, as Enobarbus so powerfully describes. Hers is an appetizing appeal that the passing of time does not diminish: "Age cannot wither her." Nor does familiarity and prolonged exposure to Cleopatra; custom cannot "stale / Her infinite variety." Her age does not take away from her "flavor," as it were; rather than becoming stale, she continues to provide temptation to the appetite. So too is Cleopatra pitted against the idea of cloying; where other women would have such an effect of "overload[ing] with food, so as to cause loathing; to surfeit or satiate with over-feeding," or, particularly in this case, "with sameness of food,"[45] Cleopatra rather continues to renew the appetite rather than weary it. The appetite that she provokes is one that is long-lasting, fed by an eternal freshness that can never be satisfied; her appeal is eternal because it is constantly renewed—she provides an "infinite variety," always new although eternal, always making hungry.

Thus we begin to see the contours of a state of preservation as a constant renewal. Shakespeare's use of "stale" here, against which to pit Cleopatra as its opposite, is a striking and intentional verbal echo of the "stale" of horses drunk by the famine-afflicted Antony that Caesar so admired. The shocking moment of drinking horses' stale was Antony's response to the ravages of famine; having no access to fresh food, nor to preserved items, his only option was to scavenge for whatever nutrition he could find, which included horses' urine. In contrast, we are presented with a Cleopatra who is decidedly the opposite of "stale," not only in its form as the horse's urine that became a necessity during a time of famine but also in its myriad senses of having "lost its freshness, novelty, or interest."[46] Cleopatra represents, rather, a different option to the problem of famine in a form that resists the staleness prone to the passing of time: through culinary preservation, Cleopatra's embodiment reconciles the paradox between longevity and eternal freshness.

Shakespeare grounds this concept, of an infinite variety that constantly makes hungry, in a powerful image—Pompey's wonderfully strange descriptor, "Salt Cleopatra." Pompey here elaborates Cleopatra's preservative-inspired draw as he encourages Cleopatra's bewitchment of Antony as a means of distracting him from war:

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[45] *OED Online*, s.v. "cloy, v.1," December 2014, Oxford University Press, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/34772 (accessed December 10, 2014).

[46] *OED Online*, s.v. "stale, adj.1," June 2014, Oxford University Press, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/188800?rskey=ePEknt&result=8&isAdvanced=false (accessed July 18, 2014).

> But all the charms of love,
> Salt Cleopatra, soften thy waned lip!
> Let witchcraft join with beauty, lust with both.
> Tie up the libertine in a field of feasts,
> Keep his brain fuming. Epicurean cooks
> Sharpen with cloyless sauce his appetite,
> That sleep and feeding may prorogue his honor
> Even till a Lethe'd dullness—[.]
> (2.120–27)

The remarkable depiction of a gastronomically alluring Cleopatra centers on that powerful image of a "Salt Cleopatra." David Bevington convincingly suggests that the use of salt as a descriptor here refers to "salted or preserved meat," which was "more appetizingly reconstituted."[47] We can almost taste such a Cleopatra, and it is that salt that plays a role in the culinary witchcraft that we imagine with flavorful foods. The resulting experience is aesthetic, sensory, and sensuous, in which witchcraft joins with beauty and with lust. Pompey's investment in Cleopatra's culinary magnetism is for her power over Antony; "Tie up the libertine" he exclaims, "in a field of feasts, / Keep his brain fuming." The fuming brain was an image and an experience that suggested for early moderns a complicated threat to the preservation of the body and health. Some fumes were thought to be sweet and nourishing for the brain, but more often a fuming brain suggested a level of intoxication brought about by the reaction of certain foods in the stomach. Cleopatra's effect on Antony's fuming brain, Shakespeare suggests, derives from an insatiability; his appetite is "sharpen[ed] with cloyless sauce," again emphasizing Cleopatra's cloylessness, which works to postpone Antony's distraction from his military duties but also to extend him in time toward the process of a kind of preservation and prolonging of his current state, at the center of which is Salt Cleopatra.

Advancements in salt preservation won England renown for the "quality of their cured and salted meats and fish" among other countries. Thus what would become a major staple of English cuisine depended on the foreign import of Bay salt. Cleopatra, as "Salt" Cleopatra, reconstituted into a food item preserved and flavored in England's most celebrated way, is not only more "appetizingly reconstituted" and flavorful, but Shakespeare presents her as an example of the intersection of domestic process and exotic matter, a flesh product successfully preserved by virtue of the imported ingredients that worked more effectively to preserve flesh to last longer. The appeal of Cleopatra to the Romans and to Shakespeare's viewers as salted meat was thus grounded in the desire to incorporate and appropriate her.

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[47] Bevington, ed., *Antony and Cleopatra* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 121.

Not only was Salt Cleopatra a preserved food item herself, but Shakespeare depicts her as having mastery over those methods of preservation. Charmian reminds Cleopatra of a trick she once played on Antony, when she had her diver "hang a salt fish upon his hook, which he / With fervency drew up" (2.5.17–18). "Salt" here has fittingly been glossed as "preserved" and refers quite literally to salted fish, which were among the first food items to undergo mass preservation. As herself a salted morsel, Cleopatra, as Shakespeare implies, would have been aware of the parallel between herself and the salted fish, a traditionally Egyptian product and export, and her awareness informs her mastery and manipulation of Antony, who "with fervency" draws up both the salted fish and Cleopatra herself.

It is thus that we begin to see evidence of Cleopatra's mastery of culinary preservative methods as a form of knowledge of the behavior of flesh toward preservation. Immediately following, Cleopatra threatens to punish a messenger by whipping him and having him "stewed in brine, / Smarting in ling'ring pickle!" (2.5.66–67). He had just delivered the unfortunate news that Antony has remarried, and Cleopatra's response is to strike him and threaten to subject him to food preservation processes as a form of torture and the execution of her area of expertise. Brining and pickling were forms of salt-based preservation known as wet-salting, according to which fish or meats could be stewed and preserved in brine in jars or wooden barrels until use.[48] It was additionally perceived to be an Egyptian burial practice by the early moderns; in his 1606 treatise against interment, William Birnie notes among various cultural funeral preparations that "the Greke and Romane did burne their dead, in rogo, as they styled their funerall fire; the Indean with Got-seame did besmeare, the Schithean swallied, the Egiptian pickled with bryme."[49] That Cleopatra calls upon brining and pickling for a whipped servant constructs not only an uneasy parallel between the human body and food that is likely to spoil but conjures up the visceral harm that flesh is prone to and the idea that preservation can involve a kind of violence. The explicit conflation of food and bodies here only reinforces the play's nod to a system of not-so-metaphorical cannibalism, in which Cleopatra clearly understands herself to be implicated and which for early modern audiences would not have been so incredible as it is today. Notably, Cleopatra's command here literalizes the process of preserving flesh, and her choice of brining and picking integrates the two conflicting domains of the exotic and the domestic—as Egyptian burial practice and as early modern English culinary preservation—to produce a punishment that takes advantage of the vulnerability of flesh.

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[48] C. Anne Wilson, introduction, in *"Waste Not, Want Not,"* ed. Wilson, 16–17.

[49] Birnie, *The blame of kirk-buriall, tending to persvvade cemiteriall ciuilitie First preached,*

What Cleopatra realizes as a master of preservation is that preservation occurs through the interaction of incorruptible substances with vulnerable or corruptible substances—that in fact incorruptible substances form the primary ingredient needed for preservation to occur. The workings of incorruptible substances on corruptible flesh foods followed the logic of humoral physiology. According to humoral theory, all creatures and plants had their own inherent complexions, and when used for food, their humoral properties would transfer to our bodies, which would assimilate those qualities. For example, a food that was "choleric" (hot and dry) would transfer those qualities to the individual who consumed it. Foods in the vulnerable or corruptible category that required these incorruptible substances for preservation were called "flesh" foods, making "flesh" a marker of vulnerability. Flesh foods included meats and fish as well as fruits and were foods that were particularly prone to putrefaction with time and heat. Cleopatra's use—and abuse—of food preservation in violent ways work to showcase flesh as prone and vulnerable. Early modern dietary authors were concerned about the corruptibility of flesh foods, and it took other substances that were qualitatively "hot" themselves to resist corruption. These incorruptible substances would prevent putrefaction by preventing unnatural heat—the cause of putrefaction—and moisture that would spoil food.[50]

Cleopatra's earlier warning resonates with both preservation practices and her knowledge of such incorruptible ingredients that in-

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then penned, and now at last propyned to the Lords inheritance in the Presbyterie of Lanerk, by M. William Birnie the Lord his minister in that ilk, as a pledge of his zeale, and care of that reformation (Edinburgh,1606).

[50] Ken Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 159.

cluded other substances that were thought to have preservative powers by virtue. The same messenger in danger of being pickled had moments before been imperiled by Cleopatra; even before he speaks, she threatens that if he does so "The gold I give thee will I melt and pour / Down thy ill-uttering throat" (2.5.34–35). Gold and pearls, incorruptible substances, were similarly used for preservative purposes, ground into foods or drink as "life-preserving fluids" such as drinkable gold or "aurum potabile."[51] Pliny the Elder was said to have written the legend that Cleopatra dissolved a pearl in vinegar and drank the result;[52] the gold Cleopatra threatens to melt and pour down the messenger's throat recalls the idea of drinkable gold as a life-preserving fluid. The unfortunate messenger thus serves as a kind of marionette for Cleopatra with which to experiment, showcasing her mastery of preservation practices. But the sinister nature of the melted gold poured down his throat in addition to his potential salt-preservation in brine combine to demonstrate Cleopatra's understanding of the paradoxical valences between the vulnerability of flesh to pain and violence—human flesh as human—and the protection that preservation provides—human flesh as food.

Best exemplified in Cleopatra's anxiety about discandying, Cleopatra's manipulation of preservation demonstrates her intimate knowledge of the vulnerabilities of flesh and the powers of preservation. So too, her intimate dialogue with Antony reveals her self-awareness of the threat of unpreserving. Antony, following Cleopatra's retreat during a sea battle with Caesar, is brought to a fury at seeing Cleopatra entertain Thidias, whom Caesar has sent to persuade her to join with him: "To flatter Caesar," Antony pushes, "would you mingle eyes / With one that ties his points?" (3.13.160–61) Antony continues, "Cold-hearted toward me?" (3.13.162) to which Cleopatra replies,

> Ah, dear, if I be so,
> From my cold heart let heaven engender hail,

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[51] Ibid., 103 and 159.

[52] See Prudence J. Jones on the history and criticism of this story, in "Cleopatra's Cocktail," *Classical World* 103 (2010): 207–20. For more on vinegars with a gloss on the aforementioned "cocktail," see also Stefano Mazza and Yoshikatsu Murooka, "Vinegars Through the Ages," in *Vinegars of the World*, ed. Lisa Solieri and Paolo Giudici (Milan: Springer-Verlag Italia, 2009), 17–39, esp. 18. Mazza and Murooka speculate that the Egyptians were probably the first to discover and use vinegar, explaining the effect of climate in regions such as Egypt on the production of vinegar: "the hot, dry climate of the desert encouraged a quick fermentation, rapidly turning grape juice into an indeterminate alcoholic-acidic beverage" (18).

And poison it in the source, and the first stone
Drop in my neck; as it determines, so
Dissolve my life! The next Caesarion smite,
Till by degrees the memory of my womb,
Together with my brave Egyptians all,
By the discandying of this pelleted storm
Lie graveless till the flies and gnats of Nile
Have buried them for prey!
(3.13.162–71)

It is important to note here how the image of "discandying" in Cleopatra's speech is integrated into a larger imagined process that parallels texts from earlier traditions of Cleopatra. Placing Cleopatra's speech side by side with the *Dialogue of Cleopatra and the Philosophers*, considered among one of the earliest alchemical texts, we can see the ways in which her speech draws on much of the *Dialogue*'s imagery. In the *Dialogue*, the philosophers tell Cleopatra,

> In thee is concealed a strange and terrible mystery. Enlighten us, casting your light upon the elements. . . . tell us how the blessed waters visit the corpses lying in Hades fettered and afflicted in darkness and how the medicine of Life reaches them and rouses them as if wakened by their possessors from sleep; and how the new waters . . . penetrate them at the beginning of their prostration and how a cloud supports them and how the cloud supporting the waters rises from the sea.[53]

To this, Cleopatra responds,

> The waters, when they come, awake the bodies and the spirits which are imprisoned and weak. For they again undergo oppression and are enclosed in Hades, and yet in a little while they grow and rise up . . .
>
> For I tell this to you who are wise. . . . plants, elements, and stones . . . are nourished in the fire and the embryo grows little by little nourished in its mother's womb, and when the appointed month approaches is not restrained from issuing forth. . . . The waves and surges one after another in Hades wound them in the tomb where they lie. When the tomb is opened they issue from Hades as the babe from the womb.[54]

Linden notes that much of the imagery reflects "the vaporization and condensation of the liquids undergoing distillation."[55] Relatedly, the imagery of death and resurrection references the production of the philosopher's stone, one of the primary end goals of alchemy, and Cleopatra's statement above is "a very early instance of use of the analogy between the birth of a child and preparation of the philosopher's stone."[56] The alchemical imagery of the *Dialogue* mixes meteorological, gynecological, and death imagery in order to produce an analogy for the production of the Philosopher's Stone, which was also referred to as "Medicine" or "Elixir," one of the purposes of which was "healing the human body of its diseases and extending longevity."[57] The figure of Cleopatra the alchemist was, Linden notes, "one of very few ancient female adepts who possessed the secret of the philosopher's stone."[58]

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[53] Quoted in Linden, *The Alchemy Reader*, 45.
[54] Quoted in ibid.
[55] Ibid.

Shakespeare's Cleopatra notably combines the same sets of imagery—meteorology, gynecology, and death/resurrection—in professing a verbal commitment to the constancy of her love for Antony. The intermingling of different kinds of imagery explains and perhaps clarifies some of the enigmatic nature of the speech and its convoluted syntax, which has been difficult to interpret, but Shakespeare uses it toward the production of a renewal of love between Antony and Cleopatra. In the play, Cleopatra uses this as a kind of self-imposed curse if she fails to love Antony and directs her use of the imagery toward death and an image of anti-preservation. If she is cold-hearted toward Antony, "From my cold heart let heaven engender hail," which poisons her at the source and leads to the dissolving of her life, the smiting of her next child, and the process, "by degrees," of a kind of de-preserving of the "memory of her womb" and her "brave Egyptians all." The memory of her womb and her Egyptians, all of which comprise the bodily manifestations of the memory of Cleopatra, are, in this curse, left "graveless till the flies and gnats of Nile / Have buried them for prey"—an image of the decay and decomposition that accompanies death—as the result of the "discandying of this pelleted storm." While the image of discandying has usually been read as but another synonym for a dissolution, political or otherwise,[59] the image's significance derives from its culinary reference; when Cleopatra calls upon the act of "discandying," she also persuades her audience to reconceptualize this entire process—of the hail and "pelleted storm"—as complicit in a culinary transformation. The "pelleted storm," for example, Bevington has glossed as culinary: "as a compressed meat ball," which, I imagine, becomes almost a type of sweet meat that has been candied.[60] From the vantage point of an early modern audience who would have been familiar with candying as one such method of using sugar for preservation, the "discandying of this pelleted storm" would have had resonances with food, flesh, and mortality.

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[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid., 16.

[58] Ibid., 44.

[59] Peter A. Parolin notes that critics have often seen *Antony and Cleopatra* as a play about dissolution; see his "'A Cloyless Sauce': The Pleasurable Politics of Food in *Antony and Cleopatra*," in *Antony and Cleopatra: New Critical Essays*, ed. Sara Munson Deats (London: Routledge, 2005), 213–29. A few scholars have examined discandying in the context of melting imagery. C. H. Hobday associates the specific imagery of melting sweets primarily with dogs in early modern dining areas who would lick sweetmeats and drop them "in a semi-melting condition all over the place." In his reading of the use of "discandy" in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Hobday focuses on the cluster of images that relate dogs,

If candying promised a near-perfect state of preservation, Shakespeare's discandying dismantled that ideal. In Antony's echo of Cleopatra's discandying, he posits the two in contrast to each other—he is left unpreserved by an episode of discandying that, in turn, results in a candied Caesar:

> O sun, thy uprise I shall see no more.
> Fortune and Antony part here; even here
> Do we shake hands. All come to this? The hearts
> That spanieled me at heels, to whom I gave
> Their wishes, do discandy, melt their sweets
> On blossoming Caesar.
> (4.12.18–23)

Antony's supporters, the "hearts / That spanieled me at heels," undergo the process of discandying, losing their protected and preserved state. Instead, the hearts of his once-followers "melt their sweets" on Caesar, and in doing so, the process of discandying turns back into the process of candying, melting off of Antony onto Caesar upon whom the melted "sugar-candy" will harden once more to a protective and preserving candied shell. Caesar is figuratively being candied by these melted

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sugar, and flattery as evidence of melting and sweets as images of flattery and dog-like fawning. While I do see, particularly in Antony's use of "discandy," the relationship to flattery in the way Hobday suggests, I argue that this is not enough in exploring the implications of Shakespeare's invention of this word. I suggest there is more going on here, particularly in locating the process of discandying in the context of food preservation. See Hobday, "Why The Sweets Melted: A Study in Shakespeare's Imagery," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 16 (1965): 3–17. Floyd-Wilson also takes a look at the melting imagery of "discandy," noting that "The discandying that Cleopatra envisions appears to mirror Antony's own dissolving state, with the exception that her melting is an imagined punishment for betrayal, couched in an invocation that preserves her authority. Antony, in contrast, when his followers desert him, associates 'discandying' with the ultimate surrender of one's self to another" ("Transmigrations," 83–84).

[60] Bevington, *Antony and Cleopatra*, 204.

sweets, and like flowers that were candied, "blossoming" Caesar can be figuratively preserved and kept in a state that prolongs his current status, both politically and mortally. In other words, Antony imagines Caesar's preservation as a process of candying that will keep Caesar intact against time's decaying.

The image of a candied Caesar is meant to demonstrate the merits of being preserved intact, and the parallel between the state of being candied and the state of being embalmed would not have been missed. Cleopatra, after all, would have been thought to be embalmed as an Egyptian by virtue of Egypt's hot and dry climate that produced, in a sense, already embalmed bodies that were well-preserved. Furthermore, the image of the embalmed, candied body necessarily invites association with the embalmed, mummified bodies of the Egyptians. Embalming, the preservation of the human corpse, was famously an Egyptian death ritual, sometimes appropriated in Roman funeral rituals using Roman "variations" of "traditional Egyptian techniques."[61] In a historical reconstruction of his speech before his final defeat of Antony and Cleopatra, Octavian comments on the Egyptian practice of embalming "their own bodies to give them the semblance of immortality."[62] These bodies were often prepared with an aromatic substance generally called "balm," a soothing and healing ointment that would preserve the bodies in a candied-like state.[63] Cleopatra herself ends her life in the play with an exclamation of her death "As sweet as balm" (5.2.305), inviting the association of her death with the preferred state of being preserved, candied.[64] The image of candying as embalming thus circles back to Cleopatra as herself an example of an Egyptian body whose potential was to be embalmed.

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[61] Derek B. Counts, "Regum Externorum Consuetudine: The Nature and Function of Embalming in Rome," *Classical Antiquity* 15 (1996): 191. Counts seeks to explain evidence for embalming in Rome and to address some motives for and implications of the use of embalming in early Imperial Rome, where cremation was the dominant rite after death. Embalming was typically ridiculed as something less civilized people did to their dead.

[62] Dio, 50.24, trans. E. Carey, Loeb edition. Quoted in ibid.

[63] The *OED* lists this definition of balm as "An aromatic preparation for embalming the dead," used between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries. See *OED Online*, s.v. "balm, n.1," December 2015, Oxford University Press, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/15016?rskey=LQWTpn&result=1&isAdvanced=false (accessed February 05, 2016).

[64] While I do not go further into embalming and funereal practices in early modern England here, I do want to note that embalming was practiced "among the middle and upper classes" as a "fairly common practice," and by the eighteenth century, embalming was practiced "by all except the lower classes." For more on embalming practices in England, see Jolene Zigarovich, "Preserved Remains: Embalming Practices in Eighteenth-Century England," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 33 (2009): 65–104, esp. 67–68.

It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that embalmed Egyptian bodies, as representative of preservation and immortality, were sought after by early modern Europeans. The protection of such bodies in their embalmed state fed into the early modern assumptions about the substances that derived from those bodies, substances such as mummy, or mumia. In early modern medical texts, there is frequent reference to the consumption of "mummy," sometimes described as a substance, dried fluid, or powder made from mummified bodies. Mummy was thought to contain leftover traces of vital spirit and was originally thought to be taken or prepared from actual Egyptian mummies, thus having the power to preserve human bodies through a transference of life essences and an embalmed, preserved state in the process of ingestion.[65] The strong cannibalistic implications of Cleopatra's portrayal as something to be eaten or fed upon lock into her connection to mummy, itself a form of sanctioned, medicinal cannibalism in which early modern England and Europe-at-large took part.[66] Mummy provided in practice what Shakespeare's portrayal of Cleopatra theorized—an Egyptian culinary morsel, exotic and foreign like Cleopatra, that the English literally incorporated into or onto their bodies in the hopes of preservation.

If Caesar could be imagined to be candied over, so, too, could Cleopatra—all the more given her depiction as a preserved morsel to be consumed: a veritable mummy to be ingested for what she promised. But even more so was Cleopatra's body quite literally a body that was candied over; her status as a potentially candied, embalmed morsel intersects with her portrayal as a "painted" or cosmeticized woman, an intersection that also finds its way into the early modern English kitchen in the form of what I term culinary cosmetics. Both cuisine and cosmetics were part of a network of an early modern domestic, preservative culture that used many of the same incorruptible ingredients. Sugar in particularly, given its tempering qualities, was used in a vastly large number of cosmetic recipes. A candied Cleopatra was thus, in a sense, very literally sugared over.

Thus, in depicting Cleopatra as a preserved morsel to be tasted, Shakespeare is forcing us to consider quite literally the salts and sugars on her skin—to rethink the implications of Cleopatra's cosmeticization. In a discourse that was already racialized in the period, cosmetics and paints straddled the porous divide between preservation and alteration.[67] On the one hand, what cosmetics promised was the preservation of youth and beauty. On the other hand, it was thought that cosmetics, as part of a network of culinary production and consumption that included washes, salves, and ingestible items, had the potential to actually transform English bodies. As a part of culinary domestic culture, the production and use of cosmetics resonated with concerns about poisonous foods and the threat of foreign ingredients as detrimental to the English body. But the culinary and cosmetic practices that allowed for the preservation of foods and of bodies were predicated on the incorporation of those foreign ingredients into the English kitchen for use in methods of preserving. The paradox of the use of cosmetics is indicated by the tensions between widespread private use among women of cosmetics and strong public objections to cosmetics that included the "ethnocentric fear of foreign ingredients and commodities of a cosmetic nature."[68]

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[65] Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance*, 69.

[66] For more on mummy as medicinal cannibalism, see Louise Noble, *Medicinal Cannibalism in Early Modern Literature and Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

Recipes for cosmetics and for food were found side by side in receipt books and miscellanies of the period, and cosmetic recipes often called for some of the same culinary ingredients as food recipes in domestic manuals like Hugh Platt's *Delightes for Ladies*, which was published in sixteen editions between 1602 and 1656, a testament to its popularity and widespread use among women in the early modern household. Most scholarship on domestic cosmetics use in early modern England has focused on face-painting and its adverse effects on women's bodies. However, for women, cosmetic culture was primarily about preserving youth and life, or at least preserving the appearance thereof. When Charmian asks for her fortune and is told that she "shall yet be far fairer than you are" (1.2.16), she interprets, "He means in flesh," as preservation of youth or the return to a more youthful physical fairness (1.2.17). In response, Iras reinterprets the soothsayer to mean not a return to a youthful physical fairness but rather to mean the inevitability of cosmetics use: "No, you shall paint when you are old," to which Charmian responds with an anxiety-ridden "Wrinkles forbid!" (1.2.30–31). Charmian's anxiety reveals the (early modern) female concern with the physical repercussions of age on the body in the form of wrinkles, decidedly contrary to Cleopatra's celebration of being wrinkled "deep in time" and the use of paints to hide evidence of age. Although such face-painting practices often stemmed from a fear of aging and a fear of mortality, many ingredients used in cosmetic recipes we know now to be detrimental to our bodies, like mercury and lead, and these ingredients covered up the body and face while contributing to their deterioration. Thus, while women were attempting to preserve their youth and fight off the effects of age, their use of cosmetics brought on these deteriorating effects much more rapidly.[69]

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[67] For more on cosmetics, race, and performance in early modern England, see Campbell, "Maculophobia"; Farah Karim-Cooper, *Cosmetics in Shakespearean and Renaissance Drama* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006); Kimberly Poitevin, "Inventing Whiteness: Cosmetics, Race, and Women in Early Modern England," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 11 (2011): 59–89; Tanya Pollard, "'Polluted with Counterfeit Colours': Cosmetic Theater," in her *Drugs and Theater in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Edith Snook, "'The Beautifying Part of Physic': Women's Cosmetic Practices in Early Modern England," *Journal of Women's History* 20.3 (2008): 10–33; and Andrea Stevens, *Inventions of the Skin: The Painted Body in Early English Drama, 1400–1642* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).

[68] Karim-Cooper, *Cosmetics in Shakespearean and Renaissance Drama*, 34.

Advertising for cosmetics, of course, claimed the opposite—that recipes would enable women to create cosmetics that could "retrace the steps of youth, and transforme the wrinkled hide of *Hecuba* into the tender skin of a tempting *Helena*"; in other words, what advertisers argued was that "wearing cosmetics will sustain life."[70] The idea that cosmetics could sustain or preserve life was verified by a more accepted and acceptable branch of cosmetics known as "beautifying physic," legitimized as a part of an early modern professional medical culture concerned with the preservation of health. As such, beautifying physic did not inspire the "vitriolic antifeminist attack" that face paints did. The distinction between condemned face paints and approved washes was voiced by various doctors and anti-cosmetics writers; one Spanish physician, in English translation in Thomas Tuke's 1616 tract against the use of paints, writes,

> Yet do I not altogether mislike, that honest women should wash themselves, and seeke to make their faces smooth, but that they should use the barly water, or the water of Lupines, or the juice of Lymons, and infinite other things, which Dioscorides prescribes as *cleanely*, and delicate to *clear the face*. [emphasis mine][71]

The rhetoric of washing, cleaning, and clearing, in addition to the focus on the use of culinary ingredients associated with transparency, legitimizes this cosmetic practice as concerned with the virtuous care of personal hygiene. Edith Snook has brought attention to a large number of recipes recorded for beautifying physic rather than face paints, including recipes for "face washes and ointments, beautifying concoctions that *transform* the skin rather than *cover* it [emphasis mine]."[72]

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[69] Ibid., 45.

[70] From Thomas Jeamson, *Artificiall Embellishments* (quoted in ibid., 58).

[71] Tuke, *A discourse against painting and tincturing of women* (London, 1616), B3v–B4r.

The distinction between transformation and covering is significant. In practice the distinction was rather ambiguous—cosmetics could and did both cover and transform. The key to cosmetic *transformation*, however, comes from what I term the *gastrohumoral* properties of the ingredients used. Sugar, for example, was "a thinge verye temperate and nourysshynge," easy on the stomach and capable of balancing other ingredients.[73] As such, sugar was used in various recipes for medicinal washes; a manuscript recipe for "An Excellent wash for the face" calls for the use of "a quarter of a pound of white suger candie pounded small."[74] The production of cosmetics was thus connected to kitchen physic and domestic medical preparations that included healing potions and medicinal syrups, various forms of medications for consuming and for applying. But distinctions between poisonous face paints and healing medical treatments were much more porous in actuality; as Snook identifies, "paint could be a medicine and washes and pomatums could be paints."[75] Recipe books reflected the imprecision of these distinctions—certain cosmetics "both covered and transformed"[76]—and thus, cosmetics straddled a complexly porous boundary between poison and preservative.

As a part of culinary domestic culture, the production and use of cosmetics resonated with concerns about poisonous foods and the threat of foreign ingredients as detrimental to the English body. At the same time, cosmetics were used widely for their preservative—or transformative—potential for beauty and youth. Additionally, the conflation of food and bodies, and of food and cosmetics, prompts us to examine Cleopatra's candied appeal as both culinary and cosmetic—the culinary body as cosmeticized and thus the cosmeticized body as culinary. Shakespeare's Cleopatra, rather than the ancient, abstracted author or authority on cosmetics, is materialized as a product herself of such cosmetic, or culinary, expertise. Her reference to candying and discandying brings attention to her cosmeticization, engaging us to ask how her candied cosmetics play into her threat or promise of exoticism.

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[72] Snook, "'The Beautifying Part of Physic,'" 10.

[73] From Thomas Elyot's *Castel of Helth* (1547), an example of the kind of early modern domestic and medical manual that contained information about maintaining good health.

[74] Recipe in a seventeenth-century manuscript of cookery and medicinal recipes at the Folger Shakespeare Library (MS V.a.562).

[75] Snook, "'The Beautifying Part of Physic,'" 13.

[76] Ibid., 34.

Because the very application of cosmetics was inherently performative, early modern anxieties about cosmetics primarily concerned the dangerously porous boundaries between appearance or performance and reality or truth. Mimetic representation for Shakespeare's contemporaries was dangerous because it encroached upon the real.[77] What made culinary cosmetics all the more dangerous was that the dangers of mimetic representation were also dangers of material alteration. If the environment and food affected one's racial identity, cosmetics inhabited a middle ground between external and internal influence on the body's humors; cosmetics were applied externally, on the surface of the skin, but its culinary properties worked to manipulate the body's inherent humoral composition in the way the same culinary ingredients did when ingested. In fact, even mummy was an ingredient for substances to be ingested and those to be applied as a kind of cosmetics in early modern English recipes, the aims of which ranged from the preservation of dead flesh against putrefaction, the healing of wounds, longevity, and beautifying the face when combined with sugar in a face wash.[78]

The paranoia about cosmetics, then, is in dialogue with dietary paranoia, and the danger of both was latent in the process of discandying. Antony's echo of Cleopatra's discandying serves to define discandy per Shakespeare's usage as "To melt or dissolve out of a candied or solid condition."[79] If the purposes of candying were to preserve things as they were, Cleopatra's call for a process of discandying would seem to be a troubling image indeed, one that she points out has ramifications for the undoing of a protective, embalmed state. Considering the sugared materiality of the discandying of Cleopatra's "pelleted storm" forces us to imagine a highly visceral process of un-preserving that reverses that of candying, a melting away of the once-melted and hardened, candied preserved state. The threat of discandying can be seen as a failure of preservation; for Antony, the process of discandying reflects his anxiety about depending upon external followers for the preservation of his fortune, his life, and thus his self. In Cleopatra's discandying speech, which is difficult to parse and enigmatic, what is clear is that the discandying registers as a curse.

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[77] Dympna Callaghan, *Shakespeare Without Women: Representing Gender and Race on the Renaissance Stage* (London: Routledge, 2000), 4.

[78] See Wellcome Library manuscripts MS.761, MS.762.

[79] *OED Online*, s.v. "† dis'candy, v.," November 2010, Oxford University Press (accessed January 23, 2011).

The process of discandying that Cleopatra imagines connects to her exclamation "Dissolve my life!" Critics are right in noting that this process is one of dissolution; Cleopatra uses the word "discandy" as a type of violence—to destroy distinctions, to dissolve. But furthermore, discandying, by removing or melting away the candied, protective, and preservative shell, would leave the pelleted flesh food vulnerable to the threat of putrefaction and decay. This is how Cleopatra ends: with the image of "the memory of my womb / Together with my brave Egyptians all, / . . . Lie graveless till the flies and gnats of Nile / Have buried them for prey!" Bevington's gloss is helpful here: the flies and gnats have buried them by eating them. The pelleted storm, imagined as candied meatballs, may be thought to be themselves discandying—the literal discandying of the pelleted storm. So, too, Cleopatra imagines the bodies of relation to her discandying: the memory of Cleopatra's womb—her progeny—as well as her Egyptians, her people, once embalmed by the preservative qualities of Egypt, are by virtue of the "discandying of this pelleted storm" stripped of that protection, left to decay and decompose. Cleopatra voices the fear that discandying or being discandied leaves one prone to putrefaction and dissolution, resonating not only with the decay of dead bodies but also with the failure to memorialize one's legacy.

At the same time, discandying is what allows Cleopatra as a morsel to exert power over her consumers. In a sense, what results through her discandying is the potential to leave another kind of legacy, perpetuating in a different way, preserving as an infinite variety. Cleopatra as preserved food and as preservative is the racial, foreign, exotic threat, and her threat of discandying ultimately voices both the danger and the promise she would pose as a foreign preservative, as potential mummy that could transfer her properties to those who ingested her. In melting gastronomically, she dissolves to become a part of her consumer, transferring her inherently racially and regionally "other" qualities, foreign, exotic, preservative, and/or poisonous. In other words, as culinary she embodies the threat and promise of both transformation and preservation. Cleopatra's threats to discandy echo the melting process that happens gastronomically in the body, making her body not only vulnerable to decay but also susceptible to a dissolution that, in the body, would alter the state of whoever consumed her.

In a sense, Shakespeare's portrayal of Cleopatra as a preserved food item can be read as a futile early modern English attempt at domesticating her. Cleopatra-qua-mummy provides the intersection of the culinary and the cosmetic, the fear of and desire for the exotic, and the desire at once for preservation and transformation. Her immense power over other bodies upon being consumed demonstrates Cleopatra's resistance to being appropriated in the ways the Romans and the English desire. She instead reveals early modern English domestication attempts as a denial of foreign influence and a simultaneous anxiety about its efficacy. Fittingly, Cleopatra does not die "graveless" as she feared, nor is she embalmed and preserved after death in an immortal candied state. Rather, she is to be "buried by her Antony" (5.2.352), and the threat she posed while living continues in her dying the same way she lived: in a liminal state between immortal preservation and instant decay in an inevitable process of (gastronomic) discandying; Cleopatra, to prevent the decay/dissolution of her memory, perseveres by altering her consumer. It is thus that she perseveres by altering her early modern consuming audience. Cleopatra's definition of preservation as a constant renewal thus provides a commentary on the preservative ends of performance for Shakespeare's viewers: "The quick comedians / Extemporally will stage us, and present / Our Alexandrian revels," she proclaims. Such unpremeditated staging, however, requires an understanding deeply engrained in collective cultural memory and the traditions of preservation Cleopatra represents. Although she bemoans the "squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness / I' the posture of a whore," it is through her embeddedness in the cultures of preservation that her "Immortal longings" find fruition: in the "infinite variety" of her preservation and her performance.

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