

## **Titus suffers injustice upon injustice**

### ❖ **The killing of Mutius**

- In his killing of Mutius, Titus believed that he had not only defended Rome but exercised his right of *patria potestas*. Rather than honoring his sacrifice and acknowledging the justice of his actions, Emperor Saturninus condemned Titus and his entire family to Roman Hell.
- Shell-shocked by Saturninus' ingratitude, Titus was then confronted by the willingness of his three surviving sons and brother to engage in physical combat with him over his refusal to bury Mutius in the family tomb. It is only after they knelt before him in acknowledgment of his *patria potestas* that he allowed himself to be moved by their two-fold arguments that Mutius' death was honorable because his defiance arose out of protecting Lavinia's honor and not burying him would dishonor the family.

### ❖ **Saturninus' refusal of bail for sons Martius and Quintus**

- On account of having spent his entire lifetime in military service to the empire, his having chosen Saturninus as emperor in the first place, his offering to him of Lavinia's hand in marriage, and his disavowal of her betrothal to Bassianus, Titus had every reason to expect that Saturninus would grant surety. Not only did the emperor refuse the boys bail, he placed a virtual gag upon them (depriving them of their right of speech—a type of rape) and condemned them before trial.

### ❖ **The trial of Martius and Quintus**

- Just as Titus had not allowed himself to be moved by Tamora's pleas, neither did the judges honor Titus' service, sacrifices, and tears by granting clemency to his sons. Presumably, this was the first time in his life that Titus wept openly, publically, from grief; he even prostrated himself face down before them in deference to their collective *patria potestas*. Titus declared that his misery was such that his prodigious, ever flowing tears would keep the skin of his face soft and supple.

### ❖ **Lucius was banished**

### ❖ **The rape and dismemberment of Lavinia**

- For the suffering Titus, the attack upon Lavinia was overkill: already, he had been drowned in an ocean of grief (“added water to the ocean”), his universe had already been reduced to cinders (“brought a faggot to bright-burning Troy”), and he was crushed by the sheer weight of his sorrow (“like Nilus it disaineth bounds”).

### ❖ **Aaron’s deceit**

- By the time he beheld his victimized daughter, Titus considered his life (spent in Rome’s service) as misspent. So futile and wasted did he consider all the blows he had struck in military service to have been that he wanted to cut off both his hands in shame. When lied to by Aaron that his two sons would be mercifully dealt with if he would but cut off a hand, Titus willingly did so as a ransom for their lives.