Archives of Shame in William Shakespeare’s drama

Elisabeth Szanto
in the hope of thereby preserving from decay the remembrance of what men have done, and of preventing the great and wonderful actions of the Greeks and the Barbarians from losing their due need of glory; and withal to put on record what were their grounds of feud.

_Herodotus, Histories_, Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions limited, 1996, p. 3
Bodily Archives of Shame in Shakespeareare’s Histories and Tragedies

Heads on Old London Bridge.
https://www.british-history.ac.uk/old-new-london/vol2/pp9-17

MACDUFF
“Behold where stands/Th’usurper’s cursèd head” (M 5.7.84-5), exposed “to be the show and gaze o’th’ time” (M 5.7.54), as a “rarer monster[s]”, “Painted upon a pole, and underwrit/[…] the tyrant”” (Macbeth 5.7.55-7)

IDEN
And there cut off thy most ungracious head, Which I will bear in triumph to the king, Leaving thy trunk for crows to feed upon. (2Henry VI 4.10.81-3)

Queen Margaret: “So York may overlook the town of York” (3 Henry VI 1.4.180)
Alarbus's limbs are lopped,/And entrails feed the sacrificing fire (TA 1.1.143-4)

[...] what I mean to do

See here in bloody lines I have set down;
And what is written shall be executed. (TA 5.2.13-5)

Witness this wretched stump, witness these crimson lines,
Witness these trenches made by grief and care, (TA 5.2. 22-3)

Enter[s] [...] Lavinia, her hands cut off, her tongue cut out, and ravished (TA 2.4)

crimson river of warm blood,/ [...] Doth rise and fall between thy [her] rosèd lips (Titus Andronicus 2.4.22-4)

Lavinia, in the Shakespeare Globe Production Titus Andronicus, 2014
MENENIUS
The warlike service he has done, consider. Think
Upon the wounds his body bears, which show
Like graves i’th’ holy churchyard. (C 3.3.47-9)

THE VOLSCIAN PEOPLE
Tear him to pieces! […]
He killed my son!–My daughter!–He killed my
Cousin Marcus!–He killed my father! (C 5.6.121-3)