

THE NEW CAMBRIDGE SHAKESPEARE

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From the publication of the first volumes in 1984 the General Editor of the New Cambridge Shakespeare was Philip Brockbank and the Associate General Editors were Brian Gibbons and Robin Hood. From 1990 to 1994 the General Editor was Brian Gibbons and the Associate General Editors were A. R. Braunmuller and Robin Hood.

JULIUS CAESAR

Professor Spevack's critical discussion shows how private desires and public affairs are inextricable in *Julius Caesar* and how Shakespeare frames the world of this play – person, action, place, time – within the operations of larger forces, mysterious, ironical and undeniable. The result is the full impact of tragedy. The commentary is remarkable for its attention to questions of staging and to precise lexical glossing. For this updated edition, Marga Munkelt has added a new section and new pictures to the Introduction, surveying stage and critical interpretations since the 1980s of Shakespeare's most famous Roman play. The reading list has also been brought up to date.

THE NEW CAMBRIDGE SHAKESPEARE

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The Sonnets, edited by G. Blakemore Evans
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The Winter's Tale, edited by Susan Snyder and Deborah T. Curren-Aquino

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The First Quarto of King Lear, edited by Jay L. Halio
The First Quarto of King Richard III, edited by Peter Davison
The First Quarto of Othello, edited by Scott McMillin
The First Quarto of Romeo and Juliet, edited by Lukas Erne
The Taming of a Shrew: The 1594 Quarto, edited by Stephen Roy Miller

JULIUS CAESAR

Updated edition

Edited by

MARVIN SPEVACK

Professor of English, University of Münster



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For DIANNE AND BILLY

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M.S.
1988

Münster

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Münster

ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

Shakespeare's plays, when cited in this edition, are abbreviated in a style modified slightly from that used in the *Harvard Concordance to Shakespeare*. Other editions of Shakespeare are abbreviated under the editor's surname (Ridley, Sanders) unless they are the work of more than one editor. In such cases, an abbreviated series name is used (Cam.). When more than one edition by the same editor is cited, later editions are discriminated with a raised figure (Rowe²). References to Abbott's *Shakespearian Grammar* are to paragraph numbers. All quotations from Shakespeare, except those from *Julius Caesar*, use the text and lineation of *The Riverside Shakespeare*, under the general editorship of G. Blakemore Evans.

1. Shakespeare's plays

<i>Ado</i>	<i>Much Ado about Nothing</i>
<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>
<i>AWW</i>	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>
<i>AYLI</i>	<i>As You Like It</i>
<i>Cor.</i>	<i>Coriolanus</i>
<i>Cym.</i>	<i>Cymbeline</i>
<i>Err.</i>	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>
<i>Ham.</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>
<i>1H4</i>	<i>The First Part of King Henry the Fourth</i>
<i>2H4</i>	<i>The Second Part of King Henry the Fourth</i>
<i>H5</i>	<i>King Henry the Fifth</i>
<i>1H6</i>	<i>The First Part of King Henry the Sixth</i>
<i>2H6</i>	<i>The Second Part of King Henry the Sixth</i>
<i>3H6</i>	<i>The Third Part of King Henry the Sixth</i>
<i>H8</i>	<i>King Henry the Eighth</i>
<i>JC</i>	<i>Julius Caesar</i>
<i>John</i>	<i>King John</i>
<i>LLL</i>	<i>Love's Labour's Lost</i>
<i>Lear</i>	<i>King Lear</i>
<i>Mac.</i>	<i>Macbeth</i>
<i>MM</i>	<i>Measure for Measure</i>
<i>MND</i>	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>
<i>MV</i>	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>

Oth.	<i>Othello</i>
Per.	<i>Pericles</i>
R2	<i>King Richard the Second</i>
R3	<i>King Richard the Third</i>
Rom.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
Shr.	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>
STM	<i>Sir Thomas More</i>
Temp.	<i>The Tempest</i>
TGV	<i>The Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>
Tim.	<i>Timon of Athens</i>
Tit.	<i>Titus Andronicus</i>
TN	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
TNK	<i>The Two Noble Kinsmen</i>
Tro.	<i>Troilus and Cressida</i>
Wiv.	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>
WT	<i>The Winter's Tale</i>

2. Other works cited and general references

Abbott	E. A. Abbott, <i>A Shakespearian Grammar</i> , 3rd edn, 1870
Alexander	<i>Works</i> , ed. Peter Alexander, 1951
Anon.	anonymous
Appian	<i>Shakespeare's Appian</i> , ed. Ernest Schanzer, 1956
apud	in
Badham	Charles Badham, 'The text of Shakespeare', <i>Cambridge Essays</i> , vol. 2, 1856, pp. 261–91
Becket	Andrew Becket, <i>Shakespeare's Himself Again</i> , 2 vols., 1815
Bevington	<i>Works</i> , ed. David Bevington, 1980
Blair	<i>Works</i> , ed. Hugh Blair, 1753
Blake	N. F. Blake, <i>Shakespeare's Language: An Introduction</i> , 1983
Boswell	<i>Plays & Poems</i> , ed. James Boswell, 1821
BSUF	<i>Ball State University Forum</i>
Bulloch	John Bulloch, <i>Studies on the Text of Shakespeare</i> , 1878
Bullough	Geoffrey Bullough (ed.), <i>Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare</i> , vol. 5, 1964
CahiersE	<i>Cahiers Elisabethains</i>
Cam.	<i>Works</i> , ed. William George Clark and William Aldis Wright, 1863–6 (Cambridge Shakespeare)

Capell	<i>Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies</i> , ed. Edward Capell, [1768]
Capell MS.	MS. holograph of Capell's edition, before 1751 (Trinity College Library, Cambridge)
Cartwright	Robert Cartwright, <i>New Readings in Shakspeare</i> , 1866
Charney	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. Maurice Charney, 1969 (Bobbs-Merrill Shakespeare Series)
Collier	<i>Works</i> , ed. John Payne Collier, 1842–4
Collier ²	<i>Plays</i> , ed. John Payne Collier, 1853
Collier ³	<i>Comedies, Histories, Tragedies, and Poems</i> , ed. John Payne Collier, 1858
Collier ⁴	<i>Plays and Poems</i> , ed. John Payne Collier, 1875–8
Collier MS.	MS. notes by J. P. Collier in a copy of F2 (Perkins Folio in the Huntington Library), before 1852
conj.	conjecture
Craig	<i>Works</i> , ed. W.J. Craig, [1891] (Oxford Shakespeare)
Craik	<i>The English of Shakespeare</i> , ed. George L. Craik, 1857
Daniel	Peter A. Daniel, <i>Notes and Conjectural Emendations of Certain Doubtful Passages in Shakespeare's Plays</i> , 1870
Deighton	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. Kenneth Deighton, 1890 (Grey Cover Shakespeare)
Delius	<i>Werke</i> , ed. Nicolaus Delius, 1854–[61]
Dent	R. W. Dent, <i>Shakespeare's Proverbial Language: An Index</i> , 1981 (references are to numbered proverbs)
Dorsch	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. T. S. Dorsch, 1955 (Arden Shakespeare)
Douai MS.	Douai MS. 7.87, c. 1694 (Douai Public Library)
DR	<i>Dalhousie Review</i>
Dyce	<i>Works</i> , ed. Alexander Dyce, 1857
Dyce ²	<i>Works</i> , ed. Alexander Dyce, 1864–7
EDH	<i>Essays by Divers Hands</i>
EIC	<i>Essays in Criticism</i>
ELH	<i>Journal of English Literary History</i>
ELN	<i>English Language Notes</i>
Evans	<i>The Riverside Shakespeare</i> , ed. G. Blakemore Evans <i>et al.</i> , 1974
F1	<i>Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies</i> , 1623 (First Folio)
F2	<i>Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies</i> , 1632 (Second Folio)
F3	<i>Mr. William Shakespear's Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies</i> , 1663–4 (Third Folio)
F4	<i>Mr. William Shakespear's Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies</i> , 1685 (Fourth Folio)
Farmer	Richard Farmer, contributor to Steevens (1773 edn) and Steevens ² (1778 edn)
Folger MS.	Folger Shakespeare Library MS. V.a.85, c. 1665
Franz	Wilhelm Franz, <i>Die Sprache Shakespeares in Vers und Prosa</i> , 4th edn, 1939
Furness	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. Horace Howard Furness, Jr, 1913 (New Variorum Shakespeare)

Globe	<i>Works</i> , ed. William George Clark and William Aldis Wright, 1864 (Globe Edition)
Hall	‘Mr. Hall’ mentioned in Thirlby
Halliwell	<i>Works</i> , ed. James O. Halliwell, 1853–65
Hanmer	<i>Works</i> , ed. Thomas Hanmer, 1743–4
Heraud	John A. Heraud, contributor to Cam. (1863–6 edn)
Herr	J. G. Herr, <i>Scattered Notes on the Text of Shakespeare</i> , 1879
Hudson	<i>Works</i> , ed. Henry N. Hudson, 1851–6
Hudson ²	<i>Works</i> , ed. Henry N. Hudson, 1880–1 (Harvard Edition)
Hulme	Hilda M. Hulme, <i>Explorations in Shakespeare’s Language: Some Problems of Lexical Meaning in the Dramatic Text</i> , 1962
Humphreys	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. Arthur Humphreys, 1984 (Oxford Shakespeare)
John Hunter	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. John Hunter, [1869] (Hunter’s Annotated Shakespeare)
Joseph Hunter	Joseph Hunter, <i>New Illustrations of the Life, Studies, and Writings of Shakespeare</i> , 2 vols., 1845
Mark Hunter	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. Mark Hunter, 1900 (College Classics Series)
Irving	<i>Works</i> , ed. Henry Irving and Frank A. Marshall, 1888–90 (Henry Irving Shakespeare)
J.D.	J.D., 5 <i>N&Q</i> 8 (1877), 262–3
JEGP	<i>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</i>
Jennens	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. Charles Jennens, 1774
Jervis	Swynfen Jervis, <i>Proposed Emendations of the Text of Shakspeare’s Plays</i> , 1860
Johnson	<i>Plays</i> , ed. Samuel Johnson, 1765
Johnson ²	<i>Plays</i> , ed. Samuel Johnson, 1765
S. F. Johnson	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. S. F. Johnson, 1960 (Pelican Shakespeare)
S. F. Johnson ²	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. S. F. Johnson, 1969 (Pelican Shakespeare)
Thomas Johnson	<i>Plays</i> , ed. Thomas Johnson, 1711
Thomas Johnson ²	<i>Plays</i> , ed. Thomas Johnson, c. 1720
Keightley	<i>Plays</i> , ed. Thomas Keightley, 1864
Kittredge	<i>Works</i> , ed. George Lyman Kittredge, 1936; <i>Julius Caesar</i> , 1939
Knight	<i>Comedies, Histories, Tragedies, and Poems</i> , ed. Charles Knight, [1838–43] (Pictorial Edition)
Lettsom	William Nanson Lettsom, ‘New readings in Shakespeare’, <i>Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine</i> 74 (Aug. 1853), 181–202
Linthicum	M. Channing Linthicum, <i>Costume in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries</i> , 1936
Littledale	Richard Frederick Littledale, contributor to Macmillan (1902 edn)
Macmillan	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. Michael Macmillan, 1902 (Arden Shakespeare)
Malone 1780	Edmond Malone, Supplement to Steevens ² (1778 edn), 2 vols., 1780

Malone	<i>Plays & Poems</i> , ed. Edmond Malone, 1790
Mason	John Monck Mason, <i>Comments on the Last Edition of Shakespeare's Plays</i> , 1785
Mason 1919	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. Lawrence Mason, 1919 (Yale Shakespeare)
Mitford	John Mitford, 'Conjectural emendations on the text of Shakspeare', <i>Gentleman's Magazine</i> n.s. 22 (1844), 451–72
MLN	<i>Modern Language Notes</i>
MLR	<i>Modern Language Review</i>
Morley	Henry Morley, contributor to Mark Hunter (1900 edn)
N&Q	<i>Notes and Queries</i>
Nicholson	Brinsley M. Nicholson, contributor to William Aldis Wright, MS. Notes (Add. MS. b.58) in Trinity College Library, Cambridge
OCD	<i>The Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> , ed. N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard, 2nd edn, 1970
OED	<i>The Oxford English Dictionary</i> , ed. James A. H. Murray <i>et al.</i> , 12 vols. and supplement, 1933
Onions	C. T. Onions, <i>A Shakespeare Glossary</i> , revised by Robert D. Eagleson, 1986
Pauly	August Friedrich von Pauly, <i>Real-Encyclopaedie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> , ed. Georg Wissowa <i>et al.</i> , 33 vols. and supplement, 1893–1978
PBSA	<i>Publications of the Bibliographical Society of America</i>
Platner/Ashby	Samuel Ball Platner, <i>A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome</i> , completed and revised by Thomas Ashby, 1929
Plutarch	<i>The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romanes</i> , translated by Sir Thomas North, 1579 (page references are to the extracts given in the Appendix, pp. 154–83 below)
PMLA	<i>Publications of the Modern Language Association of America</i>
Pope	<i>Works</i> , ed. Alexander Pope, 1723–5
Pope ²	<i>Works</i> , ed. Alexander Pope, 1728
PQ	<i>Philological Quarterly</i>
Q (1684)	<i>Julius Caesar</i> quarto
Q (1691)	<i>Julius Caesar</i> quarto
QU1, QU2, QU3, QU4	Undated quartos of <i>Julius Caesar</i> issued between the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries
Rann	<i>Dramatic Works</i> , ed. Joseph Rann, 1786–[94]
Reed	<i>Plays</i> , ed. Isaac Reed, 1803
RenD	<i>Renaissance Drama</i>
RES	<i>Review of English Studies</i>
Ridley	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. M. R. Ridley, 1935 (New Temple Shakespeare)
Ripley	John Ripley, ' <i>Julius Caesar</i> ' on Stage in England and America, 1599–1973, 1980
Ritson	Joseph Ritson, contributor to Steevens ³ (1793 edn)
Rowe	<i>Works</i> , ed. Nicholas Rowe, 1709

Rowe ²	<i>Works</i> , ed. Nicholas Rowe, 1709
Rowe ³	<i>Works</i> , ed. Nicholas Rowe, 1714
Sanders	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. Norman Sanders, 1967 (New Penguin Shakespeare)
Schmidt	Alexander Schmidt, <i>Shakespeare-Lexicon</i> , 2 vols., 1874–5
SD	stage direction
SH	speech heading
S.St.	<i>Shakespeare Studies</i>
S.Sur.	<i>Shakespeare Survey</i>
Singer	Samuel W. Singer, contributor to Cam. (1863–6 edn) and Hudson ² (1880–1 edn)
Singer	<i>Dramatic Works</i> , ed. Samuel W. Singer, 1826
Singer ²	<i>Dramatic Works</i> , ed. Samuel W. Singer, 1856
Singer 1858	Samuel W. Singer, 2 <i>N&Q</i> 5 (1858), 289–90
Sisson	<i>Works</i> , ed. Charles Jasper Sisson, [1954]
<i>SJ</i>	<i>Shakespeare-Jahrbuch</i>
Spurgeon	Caroline F. E. Spurgeon, <i>Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us</i> , 1935
<i>SQ</i>	<i>Shakespeare Quarterly</i>
Staunton	<i>Plays</i> , ed. Howard Staunton, 1858–60
Staunton ²	<i>Works</i> , ed. Howard Staunton, 1864
Steevens	<i>Plays</i> , ed. Samuel Johnson and George Steevens, 1773
Steevens ²	<i>Plays</i> , ed. Samuel Johnson and George Steevens, 1778
Steevens ³	<i>Plays</i> , ed. Samuel Johnson and George Steevens, 1793
subst.	substantively
Suetonius	<i>Suetonius: Lives of the Caesars</i> , trans. J. C. Rolfe, The Loeb Classical Library, 2 vols., revised 1951
Theobald 1730	Lewis Theobald, letter to William Warburton (14 Feb. 1729/30)
Theobald	<i>Works</i> , ed. Lewis Theobald, 1733
Theobald ²	<i>Works</i> , ed. Lewis Theobald, 1740
Theobald ³	<i>Works</i> , ed. Lewis Theobald, 1752
Theobald ⁴	<i>Works</i> , ed. Lewis Theobald, 1757
Thirlby	Styan Thirlby, MS. Notes in eighteenth-century editions of Shakespeare, 1723–51
Tilley	Morris Palmer Tilley, <i>A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries</i> , 1950 (references are to numbered proverbs)
Tyrwhitt	Thomas Tyrwhitt, contributor to Steevens ² (1778 edn)
Upton	John Upton, <i>Critical Observations on Shakespeare</i> , 1746
Walker	William Sidney Walker, <i>A Critical Examination of the Text of Shakespeare</i> , ed. W. Nanson Lettsom, 3 vols., 1860
W. S. Walker	William Sidney Walker, <i>Shakespeare's Versification</i> , 1854

Warburton 1734	William Warburton, letter to Lewis Theobald (2 June 1734)
Warburton	<i>Works</i> , ed. William Warburton, 1747
Wells and Taylor	<i>Works</i> , ed. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, 1986 (Oxford Shakespeare)
White	<i>Works</i> , ed. Richard Grant White, 1857–66
White ²	<i>Comedies, Histories, Tragedies, and Poems</i> , ed. Richard Grant White, 1883 (Riverside Shakespeare)
Wilson	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. John Dover Wilson, 1949 (New Shakespeare)
Wordsworth	<i>Historical Plays</i> , ed. Charles Wordsworth, 1883
Wright	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. William Aldis Wright, 1878 (Clarendon Press Series)

INTRODUCTION

Date

There is little doubt among scholars today that *Julius Caesar* was written in 1599. Although the play appeared in print for the first time in the First Folio (1623) – see the Textual Analysis, p. 172 below – there is no entry for it in the Stationers' Register, and the earliest estimates (starting with those of Edward Capell and Edmond Malone in the late eighteenth century and continuing for about a hundred years) placed it among the later plays, about 1607.¹ The evidence for the precise earlier dating is considerable and varied. Direct and indirect, external and internal, it reflects many of the facets of the procedure for determining the chronology of Shakespeare's plays.

The *terminus a quo*, it must be admitted, has been established on the basis of rather scant, even negative, evidence. The play is not mentioned in Francis Meres's *Palladis Tamia* (1598) among the comedies and tragedies for which 'Shakespeare among the English is the most excellent', a fact which many find revealing, considering how popular a play *Julius Caesar* evidently was.² But Meres also fails to mention other plays which had preceded the publication of his work: the *Henry VI* trilogy, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, perhaps even *2 Henry IV*. And there is little reason to believe that Meres purported to be exhaustive or even accurate: his choice of six comedies and six tragedies, for example, seems to suggest rhetorical balance rather than an attempt to list Shakespeare's complete works.

Attempts to find clues in contemporary works that Shakespeare may have echoed have been frequent but not wholly accepted. Most often cited are lines from Samuel Daniel's *Musophilus*, published in 1599:

And who in time knowes whither we may vent
The treasure of our tongue, to what strange shores
This gaine of our best glorie shal be sent,
T'inrich vnknowing Nations with our stores?
What worlds in th'yet vnformed Occident
May come refin'd with th'accents that are ours? –

which are thought to resemble Cassius's

How many ages hence
Shall this our lofty scene be acted over
In states unborn and accents yet unknown!

And from John Davies's *Nosce Teipsum* (1599), especially the comparison of

Mine Eyes, which view all obiects, nigh and farre,
 Looke not into this litle world of mine,
 Nor see my face, wherein they fixed are

with Shakespeare's 1.2.51–8. If this 'parallel' were not already questionable, Dover Wilson's (p. 109) adding of further examples of the same idea in the same poem strains the credibility of the attempt:

All things without, which round about we see,
 We seeke to know, and how therewith to do:
 But that whereby we *reason, liue, and be*,
 Within our selues, we strangers are thereto . . .

Is it because the minde is like the eye,
 (Through which it gathers knowledge by degrees,)
 Whose rayes reflect not, but spread outwardly,
 Not seeing it selfe, when other things it sees?

These examples only help establish the sentiment as a commonplace, one not unsurprisingly found in Tilley and Dent (see Commentary, 1.2.52–3). Recent additions to Wilson's list are perforce likewise highly speculative.³ Finally, even while suggesting parallels between lines 1995–6 of the anonymous *A Warning for Faire Women* (1599) and the wounds that will speak (3.1.259–61, 3.2.215–16), Humphreys sensibly admits that the 'simile was not uncommon and its occurrence in both plays may be mere coincidence' (p. 2).

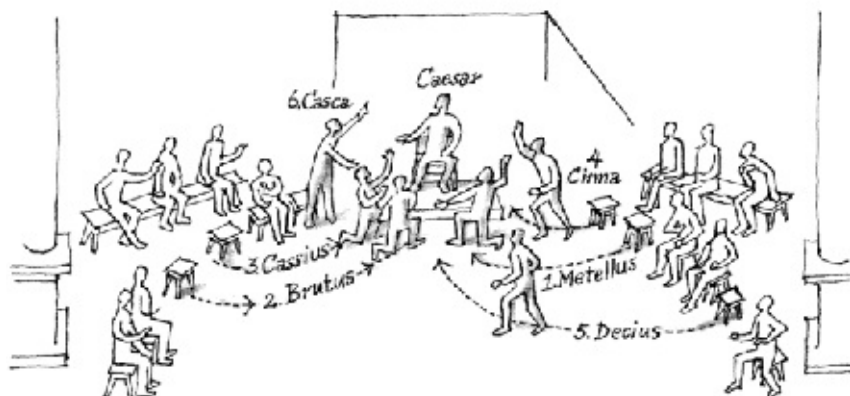
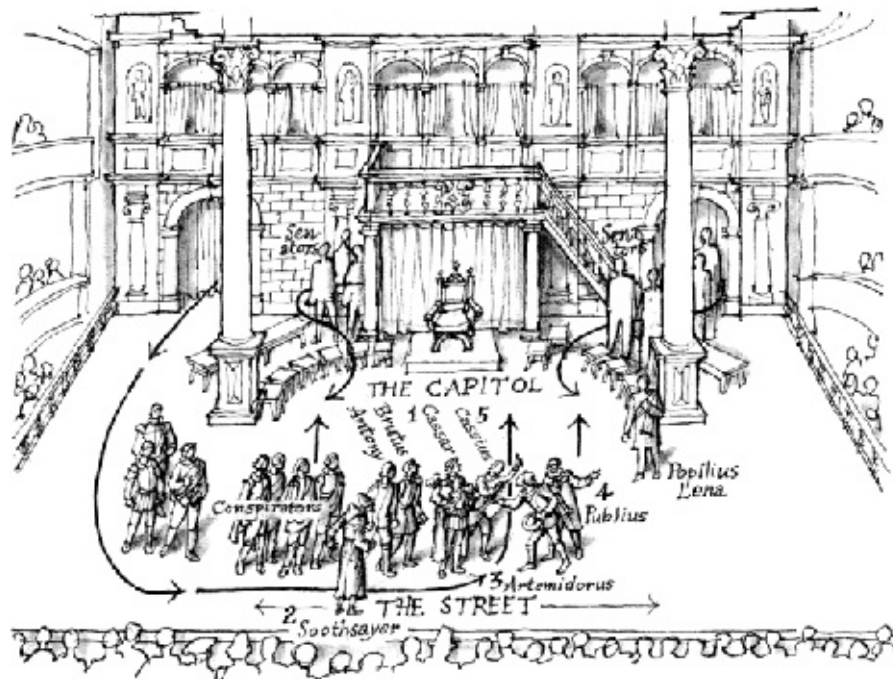
Stylistic or internal evidence, by nature less conclusive than hard facts or other external evidence, is of slight help. In analysing Shakespeare's vocabulary, for example, Alfred Hart notes many peculiarities: '*Julius Caesar* has a smaller vocabulary than any other play of Shakespeare except *Two Gentlemen* and *Comedy of Errors*, which is seven hundred lines shorter. It has the lowest number of both peculiar and compound words and makes a contribution to the vocabulary of the poet smaller than that made by any other play except *Pericles* and *Henry VIII*; both of these plays are only Shakespeare's in part.' However, he sees no connection with the chronology of the plays, except somewhat indirectly in attributing the sparseness to Shakespeare's coming 'about 1598–9 . . . for a time under the influence of Jonson and his theories of dramatic art and literary composition'.⁴ A study of line length is equally unrewarding. 'In that singular tragedy, *Julius Caesar*, the upwelling spring of the poet's plenty seems to have dried up, but the drought may have been intentional',⁵ Hart concludes, but although he does not hesitate to alter Chambers's chronology – for example, placing *The Merry*

Wives after *Henry V* and before *Julius Caesar* – he accepts the position of *Julius Caesar*. Given the nature of this kind of evidence, it is not surprising that the play may be considered ‘very early’ because some passages are very ‘stiff’,⁶ somewhat later because of the just-mentioned influence of Jonson, or even as late as 1607 because of its resemblance to the other Roman plays (a view first advocated by Capell) or its similarity to (or confusion with) other plays of the time, like Malone’s mentioning of William Alexander’s *Julius Caesar* or the anonymous *Caesar’s Revenge*.

Metrical analyses have also been inconclusive or noncommittal. Kerrl places the first act of *Julius Caesar* after *The Merchant of Venice* and perhaps at the same time as 2 *Henry IV*, but Acts 2–5 between *Henry V* and *Hamlet*;⁷ according to the criteria of Ingram, however, *Julius Caesar* belongs between *Measure for Measure* and *Othello*.⁸ In the most recent detailed study, Dorothy Sipe summarises stylistic, phonological, and lexical implications, but makes no assertions at all about chronology (even, for the sake of coherence with the *OED*, being obliged to accept its now questionable chronological order).⁹ Likewise, although *Julius Caesar* has fewer lines of rhyme (24) than any other play in the canon, no convincing attempt has been made to apply the data to the chronology: Ness’s conclusion is that ‘Shakespeare came to reserve rhyme for particular effects. Where the play seemed to require these effects, there the rhyme was used, whether the play was written in 1600 or in 1610.’¹⁰ Finally, imagery studies deal but slightly with *Julius Caesar* since it is generally agreed that it contains relatively few images or image patterns or clusters: Spurgeon devotes little more than a page to the entire play; Armstrong cites it but five times.¹¹ As a rule, the recurrence of the content and structure of imagery throughout Shakespeare’s career is studied rather than its use as a marker for a particular period.

A stronger case has been made for the *terminus ad quem*, for the external evidence is considerable, even if not totally verifiable. The main document is the report of the Swiss traveller Thomas Platter, who visited England from 18 September to 20 October 1599: ‘On the 21st of September, after dinner, at about two o’clock, I went with my party across the water; in the straw-thatched house we saw the tragedy of the first Emperor Julius Caesar, very pleasingly performed, with approximately fifteen characters.’¹² Chambers’s evaluation of this information as ‘fairly definitely’ fixing the date of production has been accepted by almost all scholars in this century: ‘He [Platter] does not name the Globe, but the theatre was south of the river, and the Swan was probably not in regular use. The Rose no doubt was, but as the Admiral’s had new Caesar plays in 1594–5 and again in 1602, they are not very likely to have been staging one in 1599. Platter’s “at least fifteen characters” agrees fairly with *Julius Caesar*, on the assumption that he disregarded a number of inconspicuous parts.’¹³ Ernest Schanzer’s ‘word of

caution about the use of Platter's evidence in attempting to date the composition and first performances' (p. 466) – based on his view that the Rose might also fit the description, that the Admiral's might well have had Caesar plays if they were so popular, and that Shakespeare's play has over forty speaking parts – has led at best to a certain qualification rather than a challenging of Chambers's conclusion.



1 A likely Elizabethan staging of Act 3, Scene 1, drawn by C. Walter Hodges

a Caesar's way towards the Capitol: (1) The Ides of March are come. (2) Ay, Caesar, but not gone. (3) Hail, Caesar! Read this schedule. (4) Sirrah, give place. (5) What, urge you your petitions in the street? Come to the Capitol. (6) I wish your enterprise today may thrive

b The Senate being seated, the conspirators approach Caesar from their places one by one

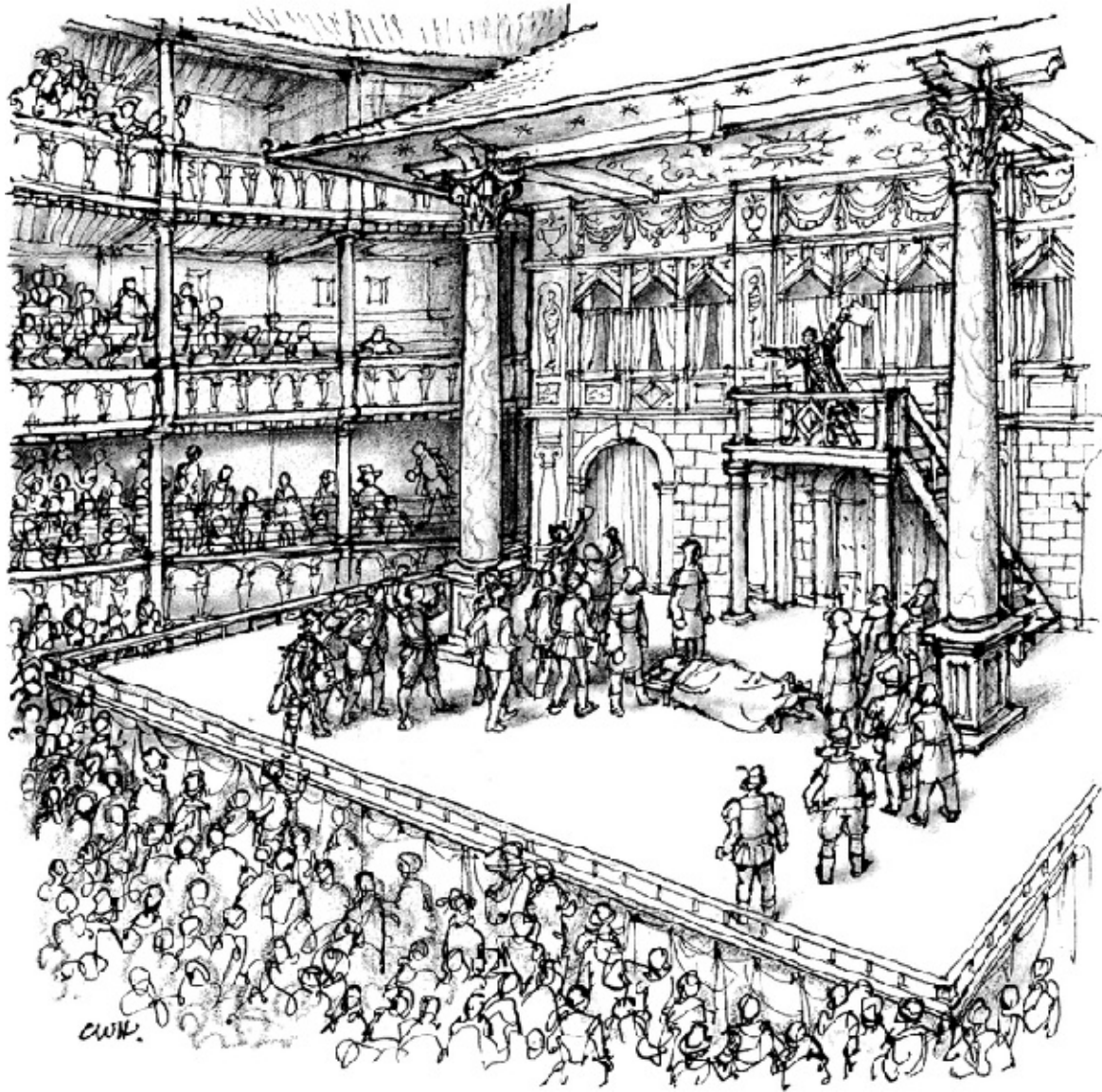
All agree with Chambers that the 'date of 1599 fits in well with other evidence',¹⁴ which consists in the main of an ever-increasing number of possible allusions – called rather indiscriminately 'echoes', 'quotations',

‘paraphrases’, ‘reminiscences’, ‘parallels’, and the like – to *Julius Caesar* found in contemporary works. Halliwell (p. 374) was the first to mention lines from John Weever’s *Mirror of Martyrs*, published in 1601 but which, as its dedication avers, was ‘some two yeares agoe . . . made fit for the Print’:

The many-headed multitude were drawne
By *Brutus* speach, that *Caesar* was ambitious,
When eloquent *Mark Antonie* had showne
His vertues, who but *Brutus* then was vicious?

A bit later, F. G. Fleay, arguing unconvincingly that Ben Jonson altered and abridged Shakespeare’s play,¹⁵ may have inadvertently instigated what is considered by many as telling confirmation: in a mocking context in *Every Man Out of His Humour* (5.6.79) Jonson seems to be repeating Shakespeare’s unhistorical ‘*Et tu, Brute*’ (3.1.77). A second reference from the same play of 1599, ‘*Reason long since is fled to animals*’ (3.4.33), is now almost unhesitatingly accepted as an ‘obvious quotation’ if not a parody of Shakespeare’s ‘O judgement, thou art fled to brutish beasts, / And men have lost their reason’ (3.2.96–7). Dorsch (pp. viii–x) summarises the host of further allusions from works written within a few years after *Julius Caesar*: among them are Jonson’s *Cynthia’s Revels*, *Timber*, and *A Staple of News*, as well as the anonymous *The Wisdom of Dr Dodypoll* (1600), Samuel Nicholson’s poem *Acolastus his Afterwitte* (1600), Michael Drayton’s *The Barons’ Wars* (1603), Philip Massinger and John Fletcher’s *T[ragedy] of Sir John Van Olden Barnavelt*. Among numerous others, Wilson (NS, p. x) adds lines 26–8 of the prologue of Act 5 of *Henry v*, to suggest that Shakespeare was ‘studying’ Plutarch in 1599.

Ironically, the more allusions offered, the less convincing the attempt to fix the date. For one thing, there is little agreement on the exact nature of the illustrations: Chambers, for example, calls the second Jonson reference a ‘quotation’,¹⁶ Dorsch an ‘echo’ (p. viii), Evans a ‘paraphrase’ (p. 53). For another, there is not always agreement on the evaluation of the allusions: in one of many instances, Simpson considers the second Jonson reference ‘less certain’,¹⁷ whereas Chambers finds it ‘obvious’.¹⁸ Finally, the content of the allusions tends to be general, almost proverbial or axiomatic. The widespread appearance of such passages may be attributable to Shakespeare’s popularity, but it may just as well be the result of the Elizabethan fondness for commonplaces and *sententiae*.



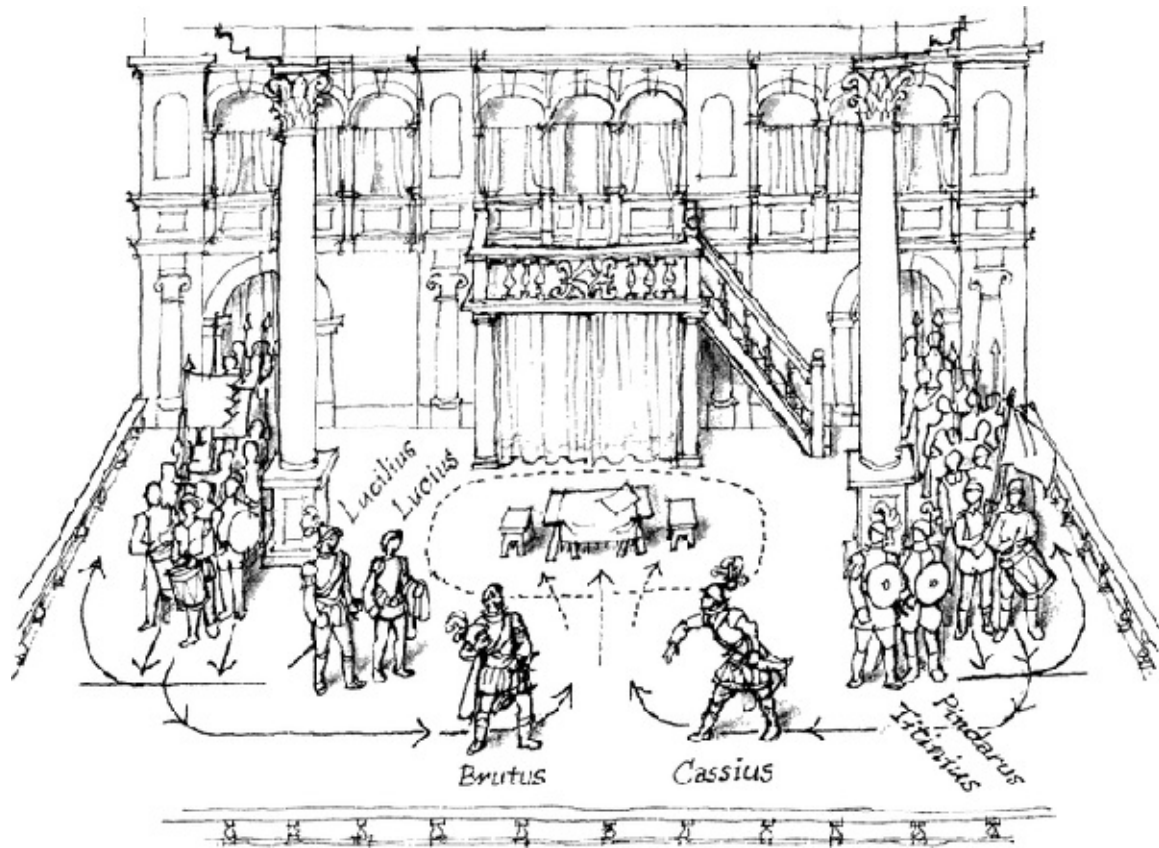
2 'You will compel me then to read the will? Antony's funeral oration, Act 3, Scene 2: a suggested Elizabethan staging, by C. Walter Hodges

Though abundant and various, the direct evidence for the precise dating of *Julius Caesar* is not completely conclusive. The weight of the evidence is, however, undeniable. The necessary caveat, 'in all probability', having been supplied or not, scholars seem determined to have 1599 as the year in which *Julius Caesar* was written. There is no reason to disagree.

Sources

Dealing with Shakespeare's sources calls to mind Diogenes' stroll across the market-place: he was pleasantly surprised, it is said, that there were so many articles he had no need of. That Shakespeare employed sources is indisputable; that he employed or was influenced by as many as have been proposed is, however, another matter. Or, to put it another way, distinctions

are necessary if the contours of Shakespeare's craft are to be sharply defined and the contributions of the prodigious industry of Shakespearean scholarship fairly evaluated. As with many other concerns, less may in the long run be more.



3 'Most noble brother, you have done me wrong.' The meeting of Brutus and Cassius, Act 4, Scenes 2 and 3: a possible Elizabethan staging, by C. Walter Hodges

The indisputable main source of *Julius Caesar* is Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romanes* (1579), more specifically, the lives of Caesar and Brutus (large sections of which are reproduced in the Appendix, pp. 178–207 below) and to a much slighter extent of Antony and perhaps Cicero. That they were directly and consciously used by Shakespeare, that they may be called 'sources', is clear not merely from the events portrayed but especially from the structuring, phrasing, vocabulary, and other stylistic characteristics which Shakespeare seems to have consciously adopted or modified. The distinction between sheer content and particular style must be stressed because, obviously, historical information of the kind that Shakespeare most frequently uses – the 'story', as it were – was part of the common heritage; in the unlikely event that Shakespeare did not know the broad outlines of the assassination of Caesar and its consequences, if he had been asleep on the school benches of Stratford, he could have had recourse to the 'story' in any number of

contemporary histories or dramas.

Unfortunately, simplicity is not always in favour. The scholarship dealing with Shakespeare's possible 'sources' is voluminous: W. C. Hazlitt's modestly sized six-volume *Shakespeare's Library* (1875) has given way in this century to Geoffrey Bullough's generous eight-volume *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* (1957–75); whole volumes have been devoted to single influences, like *Shakespeare's Holinshed*, *Shakespeare's Ovid*, *Shakespeare's Plutarch*, *Shakespeare's Appian*, and to particular subjects, like *Shakespeare and the Classics*, *Shakespeare and the Greek Romance*, *Classical Mythology in Shakespeare*, *Shakespeare's Biblical Knowledge*. There are book-length studies dealing, each in its own way, with Shakespeare's treatment of 'sources': T. W. Baldwin's *William Shakspeare's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke* (1944), Virgil Whitaker's *Shakespeare's Use of Learning* (1953), Kenneth Muir's *The Sources of Shakespeare's Plays* (1977; supplanting his *Shakespeare's Sources*, 1957), relevant sections of Reuben A. Brower's *Hero & Saint: Shakespeare and the Graeco-Roman Heroic Tradition* (1971), Emrys Jones's *The Origins of Shakespeare* (1977), Robert S. Miola's *Shakespeare's Rome* (1983).

The matter is a difficult one. Who can decide what books Shakespeare actually had in his hand, what pages he turned, and what he made direct use of? Who can estimate what he actually read, retained, and assimilated, copying it out or drawing it up when needed from the recesses of memory? Who can say what was just 'in the air', what conversations, events, acquaintances, experiences contributed to his work? Who can say with certainty what were simply commonplaces, clichés, locutions of the trade if not of the time? Who can draw the line between 'foreground' and 'background'? What is a 'source', what is an 'influence'? What is fact, what is speculation? Those seminal questions cannot be answered here,¹⁹ but they reflect the directions which Shakespeare scholarship has taken and must preface a discussion of the 'sources' of *Julius Caesar*, or any other Shakespeare play for that matter.

The heaviest concentration of research has, naturally, been on Shakespeare's use of North's translation of Plutarch's lives of Caesar and Brutus. More than a hundred years of almost microscopic comparison – Stapfer (1880), Delius (1882), MacCallum (1910), Honigmann (1959), Schanzer (1963), Bullough (1964), Maguin (1973), Homan (1976),²⁰ among many others, as well as extensive treatment in numerous editions, like Macmillan (1902), Wilson (1949), Dorsch (1955), Humphreys (1984) – has shown such detailed and convincing overlapping that it is easy to understand Muir's frank 'there is little new to be said on the subject'.²¹ Indeed, all the nooks and crannies have been searched and illuminated. And the long selections reprinted in the Appendix (pp. 178–207 below) should make

Shakespeare's debt immediately obvious and also illuminate the special talents and insights of both the popular dramatist and the moral historian, for it is natural that many treatments of Shakespeare and Plutarch tend to highlight differences, showing Shakespeare at work, the artist absorbing, adapting, modifying, departing within the inescapable frame of historical precedent. For Shakespeare's task (like Plutarch's) was not mainly to reconstruct the past but to superimpose the past upon the present, to make it a contemporary event, a kind of play-within-the-play, a piece of theatre within the *theatrum mundi*.

It is agreed that North's translation of Plutarch was Shakespeare's most carefully almost pedantically, followed source. History is history – at least in its general outlines. Thus Shakespeare had no choice but to follow the general outlines of the well-known story (a story found in other easily available works as well, like Appian and Suetonius) from the triumph of Munda in October 45 BC to the suicide of Brutus in October 42 BC. But story is not identical with plot: whereas Plutarch is chronological, Shakespeare is causal. Shakespeare creates and shapes *his* plot by selection, expansion, and dramatic spotlighting. He makes direct use of roughly the last quarter of Plutarch's life of Caesar, the last days of Caesar. Omitted are the events which made Caesar the 'foremost man of all this world', the 'noblest man / That ever livèd in the tide of times': the great military campaigns in Gaul, in England, in Asia, in Africa; the intrigues and discord in Rome with Cicero and Cato and Pompey and others; the adventures with pirates, the disguises, the romances, the feasts and fasts – in short, the cinemascope Caesar in Technicolor.

Shakespeare makes more extensive use of the life of Brutus, which is itself more concentrated than that of Caesar, focussing on the conspiracy after devoting only about half a dozen pages to the events of Brutus's life up to the point of Cassius's 'temptation'. But closer analysis reveals that a good part of the detail is likewise to be found in the life of Caesar. The overlapping signals Shakespearean (as well as Plutarchan) highlights, like the 'temptation' scene between Brutus and Cassius in 1.2, the scene between Caesar and Calpurnia on the eve of the assassination (2.2), the assassination itself (3.1), the mob's treatment of Cinna the Poet (3.3), and the appearance of the ghost of Caesar to Brutus in 4.3, among others. The focus is sharpened in a number of ways. It is usually said that Shakespeare compresses the action from three years to five or six days. But compression is a misleading word. Granted, certain events are telescoped: the triumph of Munda, which took place in October 45 BC, is moved to 15 February 44 BC, whereas in Plutarch intervening events, like Caesar's being named 'perpetual Dictator', the dedication of the Temple of Clemency for Caesar's 'courtesy', his plans for enlarging the Roman empire, his reform of the calendar, etc., are related; the proscriptions of November 43 BC seem to follow immediately after the Cinna the Poet episode, whereas in

Plutarch the account of the rivalry between Antony and Octavius separates the events; Shakespeare's brief fifth act – a bare 354 lines covering the two pitched battles at Philippi and the suicides of Cassius and Brutus – contrasts sharply with Plutarch's two dozen pages of military and other detail.

This kind of treatment is not so much a matter of compression as of concentration. For it is concentration, combined with repetition, which gives the real contours of the plot. A few examples will suffice. The action of the play consists of uninterrupted conflict situations, personal and political, or personal-political: the presentation of violence, ranging from the serio-comic altercation between the tribunes and the plebeians to the bloody assassination, the burning of Rome, civil war, two majestic battles, and two significant suicides. When there is no actual fighting, there are quarrels; when there are no public meetings, there is conspiracy or precaution. The violence is physical and verbal. And it is extended beyond the level of the activity of the public figures. Shakespeare focusses the plot by, on the one hand, giving greater and more continuous prominence to the plebeians than Plutarch does, thereby stressing a socio-political polarisation and underlining the disastrous consequences of self-interest, if not the unreliability and uncontrollability of all human desires; and, on the other hand, by complementing the public and private levels with the portentous inscrutability of the supernatural both in and outside of Rome. Thus Shakespeare achieves greater concentration by anticipation and repetition, not so much by reordering the events of the narrative as by stressing certain of them, if need be by inventing them (as is the case with the plebeians, especially the expansion of their encounter with Cinna the Poet), by conflating them (as in the two episodes in Plutarch before and after Lupercalia, which in Shakespeare take place in the Forum), and by repeating them (as in the stringing out of the portents over the course of the play).

One kind of Shakespearean spotlighting is attributable, of course, to the very nature of the genres. Plutarch's prose narrative is laced with dialogue, an obvious technique for actualising and stressing certain events. But in the material Shakespeare worked from, Plutarch uses direct discourse only rarely and in the main briefly, in one-line utterances or single-line exchanges. These bits of dialogue, many coming at the end of a little scene, are part of Plutarch's system, a way of enlivening and indeed punctuating dramatic moments. As such, they indicate certain priorities, situations and sentiments which Plutarch deemed important. It is interesting, therefore, to see, for one thing, which are taken over or ignored by Shakespeare and, for another, which bare statements are developed into dramatic units by Shakespeare. Surprisingly, perhaps, Plutarch's little scenes tend to highlight private and personal conflicts and tribulations, the most developed being Portia's desire to share her husband's plans and fate (p. 190 below), and surprising too is

Plutarch's use of dialogue in what are for Shakespeare relatively unimportant situations (like the concern of uneasy conspirators) or characters (like Lucius Pella or Lucilius). Shakespeare, for his part, not only dramatises personal situations as well as mainly political scenes lightly sketched in Plutarch, as in Cassius's 'temptation' in [1.2.25–177](#) (compare pp. 181, 188 below), and in the opening encounter of Murellus and Flavius with the plebeians, but also combines the personal and the political in scenes not found in Plutarch – among the most famous being Brutus's soliloquy at the beginning of the second act.

Perhaps the greatest area of dramatic concentration is the treatment of character, the feature which has received the most critical attention. The difference of genre, as well as of intent, makes comparisons difficult. Since the Shakespearean characters will be discussed below within the total context of the play, perhaps a few distinctions will suffice here. Shakespeare's expansion of the 'temptation' by Cassius from bare outlines in Plutarch and invention of soliloquies in 2.1 help to create a more doubting and introvert Brutus. He is also more charismatic than in Plutarch, exercising greater authority and influence, as in his 'oath' speech at [2.1.114–40](#) (Shakespeare's touch), his decision not to kill Cicero (in Plutarch the decision of all the conspirators) or Antony (moved by Shakespeare into this scene), and his being visited by the sick Ligarius (whereas in Plutarch it is Brutus who visits Ligarius). The presentation of Caesar by both authors is more elusive. Plutarch's Caesar, however, is portrayed favourably over a long and illustrious career. It is easy to understand the widespread view that Shakespeare's Caesar, so little speaking and seen, is to a large extent the creation of the personages around him. Shakespeare polarises his strength and weakness: Cassius condemns his weakness, Antony celebrates his strength, whereas in Plutarch Caesar's falling sickness and great exploits go together as mutually reinforcing, ultimately compatible traits. Brutus's soliloquy at [2.1.10–34](#), among other utterances, underlines the poise of opposites and to a certain extent their incompatibility. Cassius is much easier to deal with. Shakespeare tellingly omits Plutarch's simple motivation: 'But Cassius being a choleric man and hating Caesar privately, more than he did the tyranny openly' (p. 187 below). From no more than outlines in Plutarch Cassius becomes in Shakespeare a full-blown Elizabethan figure: friend, patriot, rebel, egotist, difficult to like or dislike. Casca appears to be all Shakespeare's, but for the name. And Antony, the remaining major figure, emerges in Shakespeare from a position approaching subservience in 1.2 to a powerful controller of forces such as the mob, such as destiny, which are almost impossible to control; his position is made stronger, among other ways, by Shakespeare's imbuing him with great rhetorical gifts and downplaying his rivalry with Octavius.

The source is apparent not only in plot manipulation and character drawing

but in direct quotations and verbal echoes. To mention but a few: the ‘wonderful’ portents before Caesar’s death (1.3.15 ff.; Plutarch, p. 182); Caesar’s depiction of the ‘fat, sleek-headed men’ and the ‘lean and hungry’ Cassius (1.2.192–5; Plutarch, p. 182); Portia’s assertion of her obligations as Brutus’s wife and not his ‘bedfellow and companion in bed and at board only’ (2.1.279–87; Plutarch, p. 190); Brutus’s declaration to Ligarius of ‘A piece of work that will make sick men whole’ (2.1.327; Plutarch, p. 189); Artemidorus’s exhortation that Caesar read his ‘bill’ (3.1.3–9; Plutarch, p. 183); Brutus’s response to the ‘evil spirit’: ‘then I shall see thee again’ (4.3.284; Plutarch, p. 198); Brutus’s calling Cassius the ‘last of all the Romans’ (5.3.99; Plutarch, p. 203).

What is perhaps more interesting than the simple verbal quotations is the influence of certain key words in Plutarch on the thematic focus and structure of *Julius Caesar*. Although such stylistic elements will be discussed in detail below, it might be well to illustrate one in the present context. The word ‘constant’ and its inflected forms ‘constancy’ and ‘constantly’ occur more often in *Julius Caesar* (eight times) than in any other work of Shakespeare’s. It is also a frequent and crucial word in Plutarch, where it appears (in the reproduced excerpts) five times in the life of Brutus and refers to five different persons or groups: to Brutus (p. 187), to Portia (p. 190), to the conspirators (p. 191), to the ‘unconstant’ multitude (p. 195), and to mankind in general (p. 201). Shakespeare parallels Plutarch in applying it (‘constancy’) to the conspirators (2.1.227) and to Portia (2.1.299, 2.4.6), but then has Brutus address it to Cassius (3.1.22) and Cassius apply it to himself (5.1.91) in a way not unlike the last instance cited in Plutarch, ‘To meet all perils very constantly’ in the Stoic manner. Most striking of all is Shakespeare’s giving it three times to Caesar (3.1.60, 72, 73) in his ironic and hubristic insistence on his ‘constant’ position and attitude just a few lines before he is struck down. (The contrast with the additional marginal gloss in Plutarch praising the ‘*wonderful constancy of Brutus* in matters of justice and *equity*’ is drastic.)

The indisputable reliance of Shakespeare on North’s translation of the lives of Caesar and Brutus, as well as relevant smaller parts of the life of Antony and perhaps Cicero, has not hindered critics from proposing other works as ‘sources’. Since this literature is extensive and at times not uncontroversial, it might be best here to survey the type of influence and indicate summarily the main recent advocates. Since much – if not most – of the criticism of *Julius Caesar* has dealt with character, it is not surprising that major attention has been paid to this feature in source study: Geoffrey Bullough’s introduction to his excerpts from what he terms sources, possible sources, and analogues is in large measure organised according to character. To illuminate details of individual characters as well as the ‘triple group-relationship’ (V, 56) of Caesar, Brutus, and Antony, he reprints, although admitting there is no proof

Shakespeare read them, selections of various lengths from Roman historians: *The Histories of Sallust* (whom Shakespeare ‘may possibly have read’ (V, 8)), Velleius’s *Roman History* (for information on Caesar), Lucan’s *Pharsalia*, Tacitus’s *Annals* (especially for the portrayal of Augustus), Suetonius’s *History of the Twelve Caesars* (which ‘contributed to the balanced view of the dictator’ (V, 14)), Appian’s *Civil Wars* (for details about the motivation of Caesar, Brutus, and ‘most striking[ly]’ Antony (V, 14–15)), and Florus’s *Roman Histories* (for a favourable picture of Caesar and an ‘antagonistic’ one of Brutus, Cassius, and Antony (V, 15)). For further details of events and character, Bullough suggests that Shakespeare ‘may have read’ Plutarch’s lives of Cicero and Cato (V, 36). In fact, other lives have been proposed for the understanding of characters: Honigmann draws attention to the ‘Comparison of Dion with Brutus’ as throwing light on Brutus; Homan concurs, adding the Life of Alexander (for, among other things, a passage on Caesar’s deafness) and the ‘Comparison of Demetrius and Antony’ (for traits of Antony’s character).

Among contemporary works Shakespeare ‘probably used’, Bullough reprints selections from Sir Thomas Elyot’s *Governour* (for illustrations in Caesar of ‘several qualities of a good prince’ – physical prowess, industry, learning, diligence – as well as Caesar’s ‘fault in withdrawing from Affability’ or embodying Ambition (V, 22–3)) and – although ‘there is no evidence that Shakespeare used it’ – selections from *The Mirror for Magistrates* as an ‘example of pre-Shakespearian moralizing’ (V, 24–5).

Verbal parallels beyond those in Plutarch’s lives of Caesar and Brutus are likewise abundant. Despite G. K. Hunter’s accurate perception that the ‘wisdom of the Elizabethans was nearly all traditional wisdom’²² and, it must be added, traditionally phrased, critics have been active in finding clusters of verbal similarities as well as single instances, which they group under ‘sources’, from authors as far apart as Cicero and Samuel Daniel. Among the many instances of clusters, Honigmann sees connections between Plutarch’s ‘Comparison of Dion with Brutus’ and 2.1.10–21 of *Julius Caesar*, his ‘Pompeius’ and Murellus’s long speech at 1.1.31–54, and his ‘Cicero’ and 2.1.150–2.²³ Bush, Maxwell, and Bullough present the case for Sir Thomas Elyot;²⁴ Schanzer, Muir, Bullough, and Pearson for the anonymous *Caesar’s Revenge*;²⁵ Rees for Daniel’s *Civil Wars* and Taylor for his *Musophilus* and *Letter from Octavia*;²⁶ Cairncross for the *Hystorie of Hamblet*;²⁷ Wilson (p. x) and Taylor for Davies’s *Nosce Teipsum*;²⁸ Brooks, Muir, and Bullough for the *Mirror for Magistrates*.²⁹ Among those to identify single parallels are Muir (for echoes of the portents in Ovid, Virgil, Lucan, and others);³⁰ Bullough (for Cicero’s *De Claris Oratoribus* and the orations in 3.2);³¹ Tobin (for Apuleius’s *Golden Ass* and the description of Lepidus at 4.1.12–40);³² and Humphreys (pp. 24–5) (for a summary of the various implications of *Et tu*,

Brute). As a whole, these attempts are so numerous and varied in quality that it is impossible to do more here than point in their direction. And one can do even less for a second ring of 'influences' representing Roman and Elizabethan historiography (like Appian and other Roman historians; Machiavelli, Bodin, and Montaigne) and also contemporary and native dramatic traditions (like the French Senecans, Thomas Kyd's *Cornelia*, Pescetti's *Il Cesare*, and Eedes's *Caesar Interfectus*). Except, of course, to mention their existence and, in doing so, to close the circle by repeating how difficult it is to define 'source'. As F. P. Wilson has written: 'Shakespeare knew when to stop even if his critics do not. North's Plutarch was sufficient for his Roman play.'³³ And Shakespeare's dependence on Plutarch is, it should be clear, the measure of his independence.

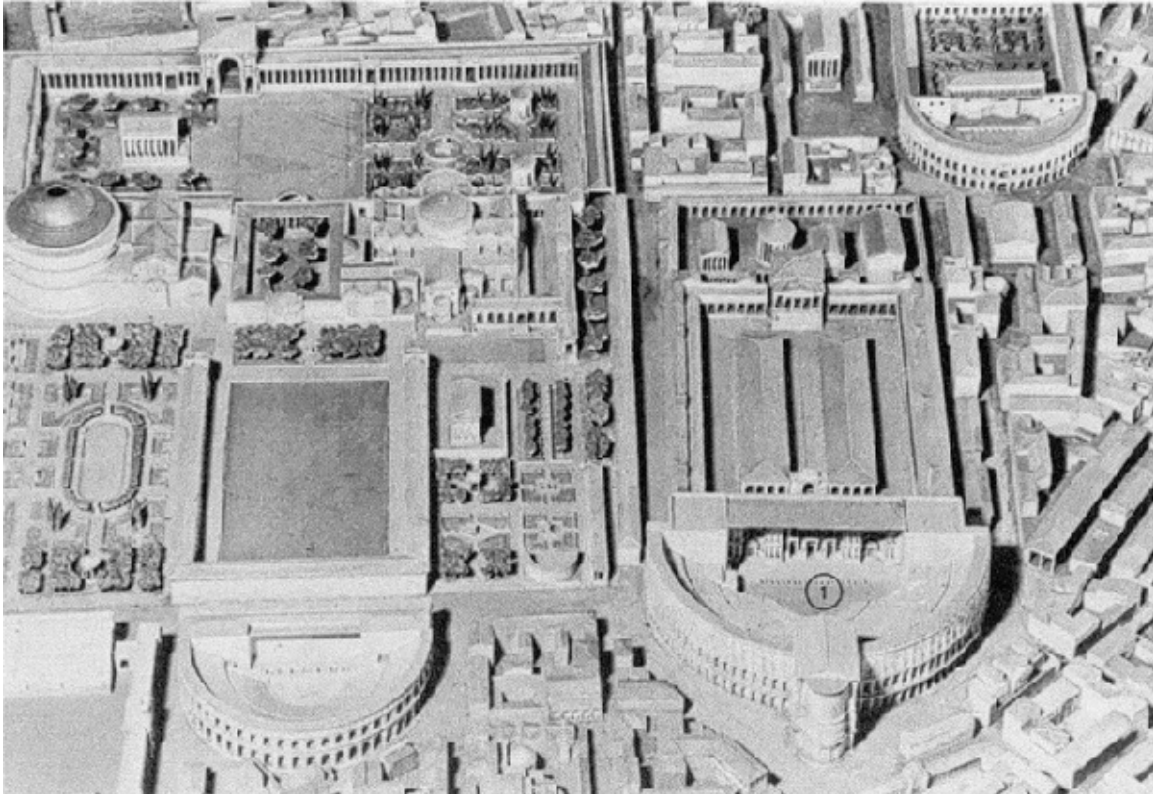
The play

In the discussion of the date and sources of *Julius Caesar*, as well as in the Textual Analysis, some of the main literary aspects have been touched on: stylistic influences in establishing the date, comparison with Plutarch in defining the Shakespearean focus and structure, bibliographical elements in deducing Shakespeare's conception and revision of his dramatic and poetic intentions. These approaches are essentially external, using evidence drawn from contemporary records, authors, printing practices, and the like to help establish an informed perception of Shakespeare's text. Not surprisingly, however, the analysis of the Shakespearean corpus offers perhaps the strongest evidence for the understanding of the play and the author. As G. K. Hunter wisely remarks, in a single sentence easily overlooked in his discussion of the intricacies involved in assessing Shakespeare's reading: 'Nor should we forget the amount that Shakespeare copied from himself.'³⁴ Indeed, by the end of 1599 Shakespeare had written 21 plays and the entire body of non-dramatic poetry: if not much is known about his person, certainly the impress of his work is unmistakable. For all the talk of its 'singularity' *Julius Caesar* is very recognisably Shakespearean.

THE FRAME

Broadly seen, Shakespeare's concern with the private sphere is most evident in his comedies and poetry, with the public sphere in the history plays. Had Shakespeare not resumed writing tragedies with *Julius Caesar*, the two tragedies which preceded it, *Titus Andronicus* and *Romeo and Juliet*, might *mutatis mutandis* be assigned to the histories and comedies respectively. But the question of genre need not be stretched or stressed. What is apparent from the Yorkist and Lancastrian tetralogies and *King John* is Shakespeare's interest in public affairs, in problems of power and rule, in the qualities of the

ideal governor, in the confrontation of ideologies, in the clash of armies, in civil conflict, in the collision of the high and low members of the body politic, in history *qua* history. What is even more apparent, and very typical of Shakespeare, is the crystallisation of character in history, the emergence of individual personalities, and thus the inextricability of public and private affairs. This focus, especially since it involves a leading figure who is the key to the fate of all the others, serves to illuminate his individualised psychological features as they emerge from or respond to overt bustle and battle, secret conspiracy and counsel, society and isolation. This inexorable mixture of concerns is in itself a record of human events, one of the major forms of historiography. And the interest in individual responses is also an added structural device for perceiving and ordering the episodes of history. In other words, chronology is complemented by psychology, both contributing to, but not entirely constituting, the overall *Weltanschauung* of *Julius Caesar*, for what else emerges with the regularity of ritual – and thus a further structural device – is a sense of the national past, present, and future: that continuity which takes the form of consciousness of one's forefathers, patriotism towards the existing state, responsibility to posterity for the outcome of events. Heritage, in fact, is coupled with destiny, whether personal or national. And destiny, an enveloping dimension, involves more than the accurate report of an individual plight or the dramatisation of the tide of the times. For Shakespeare blends in the extra-sensory: portents, visions, and dreams. He employs metadramatic allusions, analogies between the theatre and the world, playing and being: in the individual, by such means as the distancing use of apostrophes and the large store of mnemonic devices; in the action, by the presence of allegory and the enactment of ritual. Interfused with and yet crowning all is the super-natural: the reference to, if not the superimposed presence of, something 'outside': the interplay of a superlunary realm, the operations of fate, the gods, mysterious and undeniable metaphysical forces.



4 Model of Imperial Rome, showing the Theatre and Portico of Pompey (1), where Caesar was assassinated, and buildings of later date

STRUCTURE

Despite the fact that the action of *Julius Caesar* is chronological, a shadowing of the historical events outlined in Plutarch and other sources with some distinctive highlighting by Shakespeare, some critics have drawn attention to what appears to be a ‘two-peak’ action. Fleay was among the first to remark on the sharp division between the first three acts and the last two.³⁵ The first part portrays a steadily increasing tension beginning with the quarrel between the tribunes and the plebeians, which not only opens but also foreshadows the ensuing dissension, as do the supernatural omens and portents on a parallel level; continuing with the ‘temptation’ of Brutus by Cassius and the solitary self-questioning and self-divisiveness of Brutus; mounting with the resoluteness and consolidation of the conspirators set against the menacing power and isolation of Caesar; growing complicated with the ambiguities of assessing persons and interpreting events and prophecies; coming to a crescendo in a ritual of assassination which takes place almost privately in the confines of the Capitol; then reverberating in the public display of the body, the perversion of the plebeians, the dispersal of the conspirators, and the burning of Rome – with the disposing of Cinna the Poet in 3.3 as a devastatingly ironic rendition of all that has led up to the climax.³⁶ The second part, beginning with the likewise devastatingly ironic proscription scene

(which rehearses in but a few lines the earlier manoeuvring and ruthlessness and foreshadows personal and public conflicts to come), also mounts to a resolution, albeit in another key: the increasing political and military unrest and dissension reflected in the altercation and ultimate impossibility of reconciliation of Brutus and Cassius; the growing isolation of Brutus; the swift ascent and yet almost programmed decline of Antony against the growing prominence of a new young man, Octavius; the climactic battles with their ambiguous outcomes and mistaken consequences (like Cassius's suicide); and the final submission of Brutus (like the assassination of Caesar), at once a defeat and a victory – with the whole action of Acts 4 and 5, as in the first part, permeated by reminders of the past, portents regarding the present, and in the presiding ghost of Caesar the personal, political, and cosmological interactions and consequences of human actions.³⁷

Fleay interpreted this structure formally, as the result of a combining of two plays, *Caesar's Tragedy* and *Caesar's Revenge*. Although few would agree with his attribution of the structure to dual authorship and the pressure of contemporary dramatic fashions, many do remark that the structure is somehow striking and unusual, for them another indication of the singularity of *Julius Caesar*. Still, the contours of the action, the dramatic and tragic structure, accord with normal critical as well as Shakespearean modes. The major climax or climaxes in roughly the middle of the play are standard Shakespearean practice in comedy, history, and tragedy; critics from Aristotle to Freytag to Frye would approvingly agree. The apparent anti-climax of what is roughly the fourth and early parts of the fifth acts is not only Shakespearean but also quite natural. Certainly, apart from what is often a convulsive and frantic resolution at the very end, it is hardly surprising that the intensity of the central climaxes cannot be matched: the strain would be too great for audience and author alike. Besides, it is not that there is a lull in the action but that a certain deepening of effect and reorganisation forces take place. Thus *Julius Caesar* shares with *Romeo and Juliet*, recently finished, and *Hamlet*, in progress, a second half which is marked by the growing isolation of the hero, his estrangement from all around him, indeed his physical displacement to a foreign context (Romeo from Verona, Brutus from Rome, Hamlet from Denmark); by a series of smaller but nonetheless passionate altercations, acts of frustration leading (strangely) to a kind of resoluteness; by a feeling, after the main climaxes, of let-down, of chances missed or mismanaged or misadventured; By a growing awareness of the irreversibility of events and an acceptance of that situation: 'I am fortune's fool', Romeo admits; 'There's a divinity that shapes our ends', Hamlet acknowledges; 'Julius Caesar, thou art mighty yet', Brutus concedes. The catastrophes and dénouements are, in their outlines, so similar as to be ritualistic: a final burst of energy – be it in a graveyard, on the field of battle, in a royal palace – an explosive physical

action marked by error or misconception, an action so precipitate that the death of the hero seems self-willed, a suicide. And then the words of reconciliation, the apparent personal and public harmony in a final eulogy, the stillness and rest after the fray.

What is perhaps more precisely characteristic of Shakespearean tragedy, more striking and significant in *Julius Caesar* than in earlier tragedies, is the reversibility of public and private scenes. It is not so much that there are public and private scenes or that there is a conflict between a public and a private self as that the public scenes tend to develop private concerns as well as public ones, and that the private scenes are simultaneously public ones in intent and result. Notwithstanding modern designations of *Julius Caesar* – Roman play, revenge play, problem play, or whatever – this inside-out effect is certainly derived from the practice and indeed very nature of Shakespeare's history plays. Richard III's wooing of Lady Anne, widow of the heir to the throne, and Henry V's of Katherine, Princess of France, both employing the conventional military/sexual imagery of the courtship of comedy, are obvious and literal enactments of military and political victories, both soldier-kings portrayed as conqueror-husbands. Lady Anne's acceptance of Richard's ring after he has put up his sword and made his peace and the princess's serio-comic English lessons may be construed as signals of submission, as prefiguring the fall of the House of Lancaster to York in the one instance, the fall of France to England in the other. The lamenting choric diatribes against the 'hell-hound' Richard by the three mourning queens (*Richard III* 4.4.35 ff.), the garden scene (3.4) in *Richard II*, the tavern scenes in 1 and 2 *Henry IV*, to cite but three further examples from many, are public scenes in the guise of private ones. In *Julius Caesar* the great scenes between Brutus and Cassius are private in that the two are alone – as in 1.2.25–177 and, mirror-like, in 4.3.1–123 – and asserting their personal, almost domestic claims on each other and yet public in their issues (the first encounter being played against the public celebration of Lupercalia and the second within the context of the military campaign against Octavius and Antony). Their subject is always self and society, not by turns but simultaneously.

Most prominent are two domestic events derived from Plutarch but very typically Shakespearean in the direct presentation of immediately recognisable intimate scenes. Rulers who are uneasy about their crowns are the subjects of Shakespeare's histories and tragedies. They are characteristically sleepless, a state which portrays less their agitation or weakness or self-doubt than their isolation. In such instances Webster may have shown the skull beneath the skin, but Shakespeare is likely to show first the nightcap beneath the crown.³⁸ Both Brutus and Caesar, in the night, alone and awake, are joined by their sleepless wives, Portia and Calpurnia, in adjoining scenes, 2.1 and 2.2, the mighty Caesar in his nightgown. Portia's

concern for her husband's strange behaviour, the possibility of his catching cold in the dank morning, her desire to know his 'secret' may be traceable to her marriage vow, 'Which did incorporate and make us one' (2.1.273), just as it may explain Lady Hotspur's lighter inquisitiveness about her husband's likewise strange and secretive behaviour (1 *Henry IV* 2.3.37 ff.): both husbands have left the marriage bed, both wives are alarmed by the 'portents' signified by the odd behaviour, both use the adjective 'heavy' to describe the situation. The argument about husband and wife being 'incorporate' – made one – is likewise used by both wives (as it had been from the beginning of Shakespeare's career in Adriana's 'undividable incorporate' (*Comedy of Errors* 2.2.122)). What is remarkable about the private scene is its inflection of the public theme: an inquiry into the nature of man's relationship to himself and to the world about him, of rulers to subjects, of nobles to nobles, of husbands to wives.³⁹ The key words are 'unity', 'incorporate', 'one' – to which may be added even the polarities of disposition and weather, 'ungentle' against 'gentle', the 'dank morning' against the 'wholesome bed', among many others. And with special reference to the conspiracy as well is the resounding of the concern for secrecy, disclosure, keeping counsel. Above all, the keystone of personal and political behaviour, as of marriage, receives its fullest expression in the dominant word 'constancy', from the beginning to the end of Shakespeare's career, in poems, comedies, histories, and tragedies, at the heart of the Shakespearean ethic.

The nocturnal scene between Caesar and Calpurnia, which follows directly, deepens the concern. Like Portia, Calpurnia is worried about her husband's well-being. She too, who 'never stood on ceremonies' (2.2.13), is made uneasy by portents and omens. She has had bad dreams. Like others in the play – the Soothsayer, Decius, Antony – she is an interpreter and, more important perhaps, a proposer of action based on her assessment of 'these things . . . beyond all use' (25). She knows her husband: 'Your wisdom is consumed in confidence' (49). Her judgement, however, is not merely a wife's; it is the judgement of the conspirators. It is the judgement, further, upon which is based that tragedy, formal and human, of the fall of princes. Her reaction to a world of uncertainty and change is traditional: 'And I do fear them' (26), echoing or anticipating what constitutes a Shakespearean commonplace, as in 'Be wary then, best safety lies in fear', Laertes' caution to Ophelia (*Hamlet* 1.3.43). Calpurnia's specific advice is not unlike that which Brutus says must govern the conspirators: 'Hide it [the "monstrous visage" of conspiracy] in smiles and affability' (2.1.82). Calpurnia's attitude is climaxed in the last words she speaks in the play: they constitute a political message in a private formula. Emphasising Caesar's decision not to go to the Capitol, she instructs Decius to 'Say he is sick' (2.2.65).

The simultaneity of public and private concerns implies still another

overlapping of structural and thematic consequence. By most medieval and Renaissance historians and poets, history was regarded as a window to the past, the present, and the future. More accurately, perhaps, it was, on the one hand, continuous – updating, the adding of new figures and new scenes, was the standard practice. It was, on the other hand, still to a good measure figural – omnitemporal ('synchrony might be a better translation than 'omnitemporalness' of Erich Auerbach's *Jederzeitlichkeit*), if not in the view that all events in universal history are contained in the one great Christian drama from the Creation to the Last Judgement, then at least in the general habit of thinking and organising human experience in this manner, as is evident – *inter alia* – in the persistence of mythical or legendary personages and events in Elizabethan historiography and of course in the popularity of allegory.⁴⁰ This penchant towards synchrony is apparent in various ways in *Julius Caesar*, affecting structure, theme, and style.

A dominant concern in the play is time. For various dramatic reasons Shakespeare, as has been mentioned earlier, takes liberties with time: it is his general practice to modify, to compress or expand, time as need be. Within the play, moreover, there is an inordinate interest in time, the vocabulary of which is extensive, the major word-classes amply represented. Apart from the obvious but powerful employment of night and day (affording a context, setting off and emphasising many of the polarities in the play) and the frequent references to the time of day (literally and symbolically useful for events dependent upon synchronisation and precision, like conspiracies, assassinations, battles), the characters and action are not simply looking at an event but are looking back and looking forward in time. Looking back is not a nostalgic view of Rome in the good old days or an easy appeal to patriotic sentiments. For one thing, the Brutus 'once that would have brooked / Th'eternal devil to keep his state in Rome' (1.2.159–60) is not merely Brutus's ancestor, he is also his namesake – a neat way of superimposing the past upon the present.⁴¹ For another, history superimposes other ancestors, legendary figures of identification, like Aeneas (ever-recurring in Elizabethan times), even larger than life- or legend-size figures, like the Colossus. Similarly, looking forward is not a short-sighted view of Rome in the time of or just after Caesar, concentrating on political and military matters, on 'who's in, who's out'; it involves more than what will happen tomorrow, on the Ides of March. The future finds expression in omens and prophecies. The future is connected with the present, as with the past, but not simply by the ceaseless movement of the clock – 'from hour to hour, we ripe and ripe, / And then from hour to hour, we rot and rot', as Touchstone puts it (*As You Like It* 2.7.26–7) – but by 'irrational' and unpredictable forces. The portents and predictions, signs and spirits – the whole assembly of melodramatic clap-trap devices and appearances – are more than Shakespeare's employment of the

paraphernalia of the revenge play or some other fashion of the time: they are his expression of something beyond as well as within. In the seemingly cold and calculating Roman world, and for all the rational planning and logical deductions, they prove an undeniable and inexorable force of the future in the present. For the future is not what is to come but the working out of destiny in the moment.

Given this context, it is not necessary to fault Shakespeare for using anachronisms (like the clock striking at [2.1.191](#)) or to apologise for him by pointing out that some are found in North and Amyot or that he was too concerned with more important matters to be bothered by trifles or that he was habitually careless. They are as natural to the historiography he was reflecting as they were to the dramatic tradition which he inherited, as, indeed, to the visual arts around him and of course to the architecture of theatres (not to mention the name and motto of his own theatre) as well as to matters ranging from theatrical gesture and enunciation to staging and costuming.⁴² In all, there was hardly purity or singleness of form or focus, the age itself tending towards practical eclecticism or at least the co-existence of various styles, even opposites, which marks an age of transition. Seen both within the immediate dramatic context and the larger historiographic one, the discussion of anachronisms as lapses or curiosities is by and large irrelevant.

A further dimension, connecting the structural with the stylistic, is to be found in inflections of a self-conscious historicity practised by the characters themselves. They are not merely characters in a play but characters who seem, at crucial moments, to be aware of the fact that they are characters performing and that what they are performing is being viewed by others and will be so in the future.⁴³ This added dimension, which conveys a certain historical verisimilitude, takes various forms: in actions, stance, even grammar and vocabulary.

Actions of this kind are to be found in enacted rituals, like the Lupercalia, in which the actors assume roles; in Antony's historical identification of Caesar – 'Thou art the ruins of the noblest man / That ever livèd in the tide of times' ([3.1.256–7](#)) – and then his assumption of the role of augurer in interpreting the wounds 'Which like dumb mouths do ope their ruby lips / To beg the voice and utterance of my tongue' ([3.1.260–1](#)); in Brutus's abstracting and transforming the literal event – 'Let's be sacrificers, but not butchers, Caius' ([2.1.166](#))⁴⁴ – and in Cassius's famous prophetic utterance in which the ritual becomes the mythic:

How many ages hence
Shall this our lofty scene be acted over
In states unborn and accents yet unknown!

([3.1.111–13](#))

To which Brutus replies, with some irony (Shakespeare can seldom resist the temptation to make fun of his profession) about the way the scene will be played: ‘How many times shall Caesar bleed in sport’. Actions of this kind are also to be found in the numerous plays-within-plays, most obviously in Cassius’s re-enacting (in 1.2), with dialogue and stage business, his saving of the drowning Caesar; and in the quadruple presentation of Caesar’s refusing the crown in 1.2: its historicity is confirmed in the first instance by off-stage sounds commented on by Cassius and Brutus and, in the second, by the playlet of Casca, who re-enacts the scene he has witnessed, supplying it synaesthetically with the sight, sound, smell, feel, and taste of the off-stage event. Among many other examples – randomly chosen from some not often noticed – are the ominous and unusual events surrounding and thus punctuating the literal actions: the universal perspective of ‘The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes’ (2.2.31); Brutus’s assurance to the plebeians that ‘The question of [Caesar’s] death is enrolled in the Capitol’ (3.2.32–3); the strikingly ritualistic and self-conscious flyting, even the formula describing it, ‘Words before blows’ (5.1.27); Cassius’s reference to the conquered being ‘led in triumph / Through the streets of Rome’ (5.1.108–9); the action-within-the-action of Pindarus’s report of Titinius’s plight (5.3.28–32); and Brutus’s delivering posterity’s eulogy of himself for the act of suicide he is about to perform:

I shall have glory by this losing day
More than Octavius and Mark Antony
By this vile conquest shall attain unto.

(5.5.36–8)

These performed or visualised actions-within-the-actions are complemented by a certain histrionic stance and expression. Quite apart from Shakespeare’s obvious intention to write a noble, a Roman, play⁴⁵ (the remoteness of the original event and the glamour of the illustrious characters adding an immediate statuesqueness to their presence), Shakespeare employs certain linguistic devices to stress the distance of the characters from the event. Inset speeches, notably the funeral orations of Brutus and Antony, are, as various analyses have shown,⁴⁶ rhetorical exercises following traditional models, not the characters’ normal discourse. A further dimension is added, in the one, by the fact that Brutus’s oration is delivered almost in a vacuum of formality, and the reaction of the plebeians appropriately mechanical; and, in the other, by Antony’s vigorously self-conscious awareness that he is delivering a speech, his attention to the effect of his speech as he delivers it, indeed his comments during his speech on the response of his audience. Another form of distancing is evident in the numerous images and references from the theatre itself: actors and players acting parts, plays, scenes, shows,

spectacles in a theatre to audiences who applaud, clap, hiss, hoot. Still another form of distancing is to be found in the numerous apostrophes, especially those beginning with 'O' and addressing abstractions – 'O grief' (1.3.111), 'O conspiracy' (2.1.77), 'O constancy' (2.4.6), 'O judgement' (3.2.96), 'O murd'rous slumber' (4.3.267), 'O hateful error' (5.3.67), 'O error' (5.3.69) – as well as personalising places, as in 'O Rome, I make thee promise' (2.1.56) and 'O world' (3.1.207, 208).

The use of the third person in reference to oneself serves likewise to supplement the actual person with another whose being and actions are somehow separate and observable, co-existing, but on another level of the action. This dissociation – not necessarily pathological but certainly stressing the simultaneity of public and private selves – is not solely evident in Caesar, though practised by the historical Caesar in his own writings (as it was by Thucydides) to give them an official or objective character. It is more than just the royal prerogative: 'The Queen is not amused' may be taken lightly, but the captured Richard II's 'What must the king do now?' is quite another matter. Caesar may refer to himself as Caesar nineteen times in the play – almost always evoking a negative response in critics⁴⁷ – but others, interestingly enough, refer to themselves in the third person as well: among the major characters, Antony three times, Brutus thirteen times, Casca once, Cassius fourteen times, and Portia once.⁴⁸ In addition to the psychological and other implications,⁴⁹ the overall effect is a certain stateliness, a classical look, a consciousness on the part of the actors that they are acting in a not so everyday context. The audience too is constantly reminded that it is in the theatre, that it is not witnessing the action through the naturalistic invisible fourth wall, and in fact that it is observing actions which are themselves being observed, and, given these conditions, that these actions are not so much literal as exemplary: that, in other words, 'the purpose of playing', as Hamlet, who should know, puts it, 'whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature: to show virtue her feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure' (*Hamlet* 3.2.20–4).

Hamlet's characterisation implies more than a literal rendition in what is usually called a naturalistic manner. The 'nature' he refers to is general nature, the recognisable and repeated outlines of the human experience. It is not surprising that Shakespeare adapts his style to frame and enforce, through moralising didacticism, the enacted events. At times he takes a small hint from Plutarch and phrases it in the manner of a sententious statement. Plutarch's explanation for Caesar's not consenting to 'have a guard for the safety of his person' is to report that Caesar 'said it was better to die once than always to be afraid of death' (p. 155); Shakespeare doubles the sentiment:

Cowards die many times before their deaths,
The valiant never taste of death but once.
Of all the wonders that I yet have heard
It seems to me most strange that men should fear,
Seeing that death, a necessary end,
Will come when it will come.

(2.2.32–7)

In Plutarch, Caesar, ‘talk falling out amongst them, reasoning what death was best . . . cried out aloud: “Death unlooked for”’ (p. 182); Shakespeare transfers the sentiment to Brutus and transforms it tellingly: ‘That we shall die we know: ’tis but the time, / And drawing days out, that men stand upon’ (3.1.99–100). Brutus, sententiously, becomes the main spokesman for the philosophical and tragic locus of the play. In responding to Messala’s report of the death of Portia, Brutus (in a much-discussed and often misunderstood response⁵⁰) says

We must die, Messala.
With meditating that she must die once,
I have the patience to endure it now.

(4.3.190–2)

Before the fateful battle, Brutus intones:

O, that a man might know
The end of this day’s business ere it come!
But it sufficeth that the day will end,
And then the end is known.

(5.1.122–5)

THEME

The purpose of the *sententiae* is not confined to theatrical distancing by means of mnemonic phrasing, nor to didactic moralising. The stylistic devices serve to inflect the all-embracing theme of the play – the tension between the ‘tide of times’ and ‘the necessary end’. In *Julius Caesar* change is so often inflected and stressed that the play becomes, on all levels, a dramatisation not merely of instances of change, however drastic, but of uncertainty and instability in the affairs of men. From the opening scene, with its emphasis as much on the change of heroes (from Pompey to Caesar) as on the changeability of the plebeians, to the confusion over the outcome of the battle at Philippi and the ‘mistaken’ suicide of Cassius, there is hardly an action or scene which does not give evidence of change. It may be in alchemical images, as in Cassius’s appraisal of Brutus – ‘I see / Thy honourable metal may be wrought / From that it is disposed’ (1.2.297–9) – or Casca’s ‘His countenance, like richest alchemy, / Will change to virtue and to worthiness’

(1.3.159–60), both echoes of the tribunes' indictment of the fickle commoners: 'See where their basest metal be not moved' (1.1.60). It may be in the countless references to standing and falling, ebbing and flowing, and the 'full circle of events'.⁵¹ It is found in the construction of scenes which often consist of opposing interpretations of a particular issue or event: portents and omens, for example, are normally interpreted in dramatically opposite ways, either by being ignored ('He is a dreamer', says Caesar of the Soothsayer) or by being advocated by two or more juxtaposed characters (as in Calpurnia's and Decius's advice to Caesar to avoid or not to avoid going to the Capitol). Or apparent incompatibles are presented side by side, producing not simply a lack of clarity or an ambiguity but an inevitable collision and even impossibility: Pompey may give way to Caesar, Caesar to the conspirators, Brutus and Cassius to Octavius and Antony, Antony to Octavius, each change doubtful in its stated or implied motivation. Neither ambiguity *per se* nor irony alone will suffice for the concurrence of Caesar, 'the foremost man of all this world' (4.3.22), of Brutus, 'the noblest Roman of them all' (5.5.68), and Cassius 'The last of all the Romans . . . It is impossible that ever Rome / Should breed thy fellow' (5.3.99–101).

The fluidity and unpredictability of the action is reinforced by Shakespeare's minute attention to the motivation of the characters. Of course, the much-discussed and widely accepted discussion of a deliberate ambiguity of response (see below, pp. 27–30) supplies some part of the explanation. But it focusses largely on the response of the audience, not on a character's own response to his situation. Caesar may be an enigma: to some critics he is an arrogant tyrant, to others he is more sinned against than sinning.⁵² But Caesar himself has few doubts about his role. Even Brutus, whom Cassius does not so much tempt as confirm in that which has already been in his thoughts, has doubts not so much about the assassination as about how it is to be linguistically phrased so as to be publicly (as well as personally) acceptable. What seems to unite all the characters, to be the motor of their thoughts and actions, is self-justification, which serves both for self-characterisation and, most important here, as a way of structuring the overall unsatisfactory – that is, unstable – situation. The important characters tend to define themselves in terms of a fixed trait. And that trait, which is to focus and clarify, to shackle accidents, to stem the tide, is constancy. Whether used naïvely or shrewdly, simply or ironically, constancy – like 'true' in *1 Henry IV* – is the major dramatic, psychological, social, and political ideal, whatever its ultimate consequences.⁵³ Caesar's repeated application of it to himself is answered by the repeated stabs of the conspirators, and his '*Et tu, Brute*' seems his surprised, puzzled, and certainly disappointed response to Brutus's lack of constancy. Brutus's constancy to his Roman heritage binds him to a course involving an act resembling regicide, if not parricide. Cassius's constancy to

his own course is the basis of his bond to Brutus and at the same time the cause of their estrangement. Antony emerges as individual and leader when he recognises his constancy to Caesar. Portia, in her nocturnal scene with Brutus, apostrophises constancy as the key to all human relationships. Brutus's last and most comforting awareness, the crowning assertion of the unchanging value of constancy, is the prologue to his suicide: 'Countrymen, / My heart doth joy that yet in all my life / I found no man but he was true to me' (5.5.33–5). The absoluteness of the statement – 'in all my life, 'no man', 'true' – is less the result of Brutus's naïve or blind idealism, less an ironic reflection on his unsuccessful action, than the assertion of the only satisfactory answer to the way the world is: This above all . . .

Between the prevalence of change and the desire for constancy lies the world which is Rome. One response to the gap, a major psychological and existential one, is fear. Plutarch's not infrequent use of the word and its inflections (a total of seventeen times in the extracts given in the Appendix) is expanded by Shakespeare to 41 instances spoken by no fewer than sixteen characters and covering the semantic spectrum from timorousness to concern to apprehension to dread. In the entire canon this total is surpassed only by *Macbeth* (45) and *Richard III* (43). Since all but three occurrences are in the first three acts, in which are found all the usages by the two leading practitioners, Cassius (nine) and Caesar (seven), the effect on the portrayal of Rome needs little discussion. Another major mode of response, perhaps less noticed but also to be found in Plutarch and emphasised by Shakespeare, is the verb 'prevent', the noun 'prevention'. It appears at six crucial moments: it is uttered by Brutus in soliloquy as his answer to the 'question' of Caesar's nature being changed if he is crowned: 'So Caesar may. / Then lest he may, prevent' (2.1.27–8); it is spoken again by Brutus in his soliloquy on conspiracy: 'Not Erebus itself were dim enough / To hide thee from prevention' (2.1.84–5); it is used twice by Cassius, once as justification for the murder of Antony as well as Caesar (2.1.158–61) and again, just before the assassination, as he nervously urges Casca to 'be sudden, for we fear prevention' (3.1.19) and elicits Brutus's 'Cassius, be constant' (22); it is spoken by Caesar urging Cimber not to kneel, but, ironically perhaps, has the effect of a kind of prelude to the hubristic utterances (punctuated by the repetition of 'constant') which programme his death; and finally and climactically it is characterised by Brutus as the opposite of his Stoic philosophy: 'But I do find it cowardly and vile, / For fear of what might fall, so to prevent / The time of life' (5.1.103–5). 'Prevent' – to anticipate and take precautions, to act before or more quickly than another – is essentially a defensive reaction to a real or imaginary threat, reflecting insecurity and characterising a world of poised tensions and dangerous instability. It is the mark of a world of mistrust and conspiracies. It is the ally of fear, the enemy

of constancy.

On a larger scale the opposition in the play which embraces ‘fear–prevent’ and ‘constant’ is between the rational and the irrational. Rome may be cold and sober and calculating, with marble columns and statues, and in the fields of Philippi the battles are drawn up and ordered in the formal Roman manner, but both Rome and Philippi are beset with ‘things that do presage’, which wondrously and irresistibly come true. Against the plots and fears and preventions are the portents and omens and prophecies. Against conspirators are set soothsayers; against soldiers, seers; against arithmetic, alchemy; against calculation, coincidence; against arrangement, accident; against counsel, ceremony; and against ratiocination, divination. If constancy is the desired end – and there is little doubt that it is – then the answer to the turbulence which marks the action of the play lies, paradoxically perhaps, not in the rational but in the irrational. For reason, be it in Brutus’s attempts to justify his part in the assassination or in Antony’s to justify his seizure of power, is essentially limited. It cannot foresee or prevent miscalculations or mischances. And it may itself be suspect, be not so much ratiocination as rationalisation, a way of phrasing one’s behaviour in a manner which is publicly and personally agreeable: as in the motivation of the conspirators, in which the line between personal grievance and public policy is difficult to discern, in the impossibility of their separating Caesar the man from Caesar the tyrant (despite Brutus’s rather stiff and contrived attempt), in the response of the plebeians to Antony’s demagoguery (they receive ‘reasons’ – the physical testimony of the will, the parks and money – for supporting Caesar with which to cover their fickleness and greed), and in the majestically ‘rational’ madness of the mob which dispatches Cinna the Poet: after rejecting the ‘reason’ that Cinna the Poet is not Cinna the Conspirator, they find the ‘reason’ for their actions in the quality of his verse.

What truth, what permanence, what constancy exists in the play is connected with the ‘irrational’. The omens and portents and prophecies are ambiguous only when men attempt to explain them rationally. To the seers they are clear. They come true. And it must be added that among the soothsayers are Calpurnia, whose advice, which is drawn from ‘things . . . beyond all use’ (2.2.25) – she is often played as a Cassandra-type figure – would have preserved Caesar, had he followed it; Antony, who, wondrously inspired by the wounds of Caesar, recognises his destiny; and in the end Brutus himself, who realises that his fate is in the hands of the *spirit* of Caesar

The ghost of Caesar hath appeared to me
Two several times by night, at Sardis once
And this last night here in Philippi fields.
I know my hour is come.

(5.5.17–20)

It is the power of the *spirit* that Brutus acknowledges:

O Julius Caesar, thou art mighty yet,
Thy spirit walks abroad and turns our swords
In our own proper entrails.

(5.3.94–6)

The might of the dead Caesar is continuous: ‘yet’ spans then and now and to be. It reverses the rational attempts of man: their swords are turned against themselves. It dictates, as the *ultima ratio*, as the means of overcoming chance and the limitations of reason, suicide. Against the harshness and meanness of the world – its jaggedness stressed in a dominant cluster of verbs describing carving, chopping, cutting, dismembering, hacking, hewing, piercing, plucking, pricking, quartering, rending, riving, running through, scratching, splitting, spurring, stabbing, stinging, striking, tearing, thrusting, whetting, wounding; its aggressiveness evident in the frequent images of strife and storm; its garish ugliness in the semantic fields of fire and blood;⁵⁴ its infirmity in references to sickness⁵⁵ – against all this, and furthermore against the impact of impending time and the urgency of action, against agitation and prevention, only the tranquillity of death assures constancy. It is more than the necessary end: it is the noble end. It is the act which is best described by the often repeated patrician adjective ‘gentle’.

The continuity with Richard II, Romeo, and Hamlet – in terms both of person and of play – is obvious. In *Julius Caesar* the essential tragedy of the human condition is once again unflinchingly depicted: all are fortune’s fools. In a larger sense all the characters share the same destiny. For *Julius Caesar*, which begins with references to the supplanting of Pompey by Caesar and ends with the supplanting of Brutus by the newly arrived Octavius (who, in still another of the many successions, is apparently edging out the not quite established Antony), contains many tragedies or rather victims of relentless change. No one is spared in the explicit *Zusammenschau* (to use Auerbach’s term) which contains all the tragedies. Plutarch’s lives are, in contrast, ‘parallel’ and sequential. Tragedy is implicit at best, for in Plutarch human affairs can be managed in different ways by different personalities; opposites can be resolved in composites. Both Caesar and Brutus can be praised: they exist side by side; preferences are not prescriptive. For Shakespeare the essential unmanageability of human affairs is the core of tragedy; opposites are polarised and irreconcilable except in death. Caesar and Brutus are entangled; choice is obligatory.

PERSONS AND POLITICS

In this light it is perhaps not surprising that so much critical attention has been

paid to the question of who the hero of the play is. But the discussion is nevertheless puzzling. For it cannot seriously be doubted that Brutus is the focus – dramatically, psychologically, politically, and morally. It is no accident that he is present throughout: in the beginning he is the motor of the action; in the end his death resolves the action. Further proof, though abundant, would be tedious. And little is to be gained by such well-meaning Solomonic distinctions as ‘Caesar is the titular hero, Brutus the dramatic hero’: naming a play after a character does not necessarily confer hero status, as a handful of Shakespeare’s histories demonstrates. That many of his plays are named for the main characters or characters who do turn out to be the heroes or heroines does not of itself solve the problem of the title of this play. What is really at issue in the matter of the hero, especially since it is Caesar or Brutus who is proposed, is politics. Hudson’s often-quoted appraisal, made more than a hundred years ago, is still relevant and typical: ‘As here represented, [Caesar] is indeed little better than a grand, strutting piece of puff-paste; and when he speaks, it is very much in the style of a glorious vapourer and braggart, full of lofty airs and mock-thunder.’⁵⁶ Putting aside the question of how Caesar’s minuscule speaking part and his undistinguished vocabulary could account for this portrait, or the question of how critics can talk of the play’s classical dignity and manner⁵⁷ in the light of a thrasonical⁵⁸ Caesar, or how an infatuate could be eulogised by Brutus, worried about by Calpurnia, and revered by Antony – putting aside such questions, Hudson attempts to account for the ‘contradiction between Caesar as known and Caesar as rendered’ by musing that he ‘sometimes thought that the policy of the drama may have been to represent Caesar, not as he was indeed [“that colossal man”], but as he must have appeared to the conspirators . . . For Caesar was literally too great to be seen by them.’⁵⁹ From this view – which conveniently serves as well to clear the way for the hero Brutus – it is but a step towards the depersonalising of Caesar. ‘The real man Caesar disappears for himself under the greatness of the Caesar myth’,⁶⁰ writes Edward Dowden a short while later – from which Paul Stapfer develops the formula for a major portion of ensuing criticism: ‘It is not the spirit of any one man, but the spirit of a new era about to begin – the spirit of *Cæsarism* – that fills Shakespeare’s play and gives it its unity and moral significance.’⁶¹ Indeed, much of the discussion of the conflicting claims on behalf of Caesar and Brutus as hero has in reality dealt with the conflict between monarchism and republicanism, tyranny and freedom, dictatorship and democracy, or any of the political polarities which, not unexpectedly, frame practically all stage presentations. Caesar as Hitler, Brutus as Che Guevara, are no longer uncommon.

The ambiguity of Caesar: five sixteenth-century versions



5 *The Emperor Julius Caesar on Horseback*. An engraving by Antonio Tempesta from *The First Twelve Roman Caesars* (Rome, 1596)



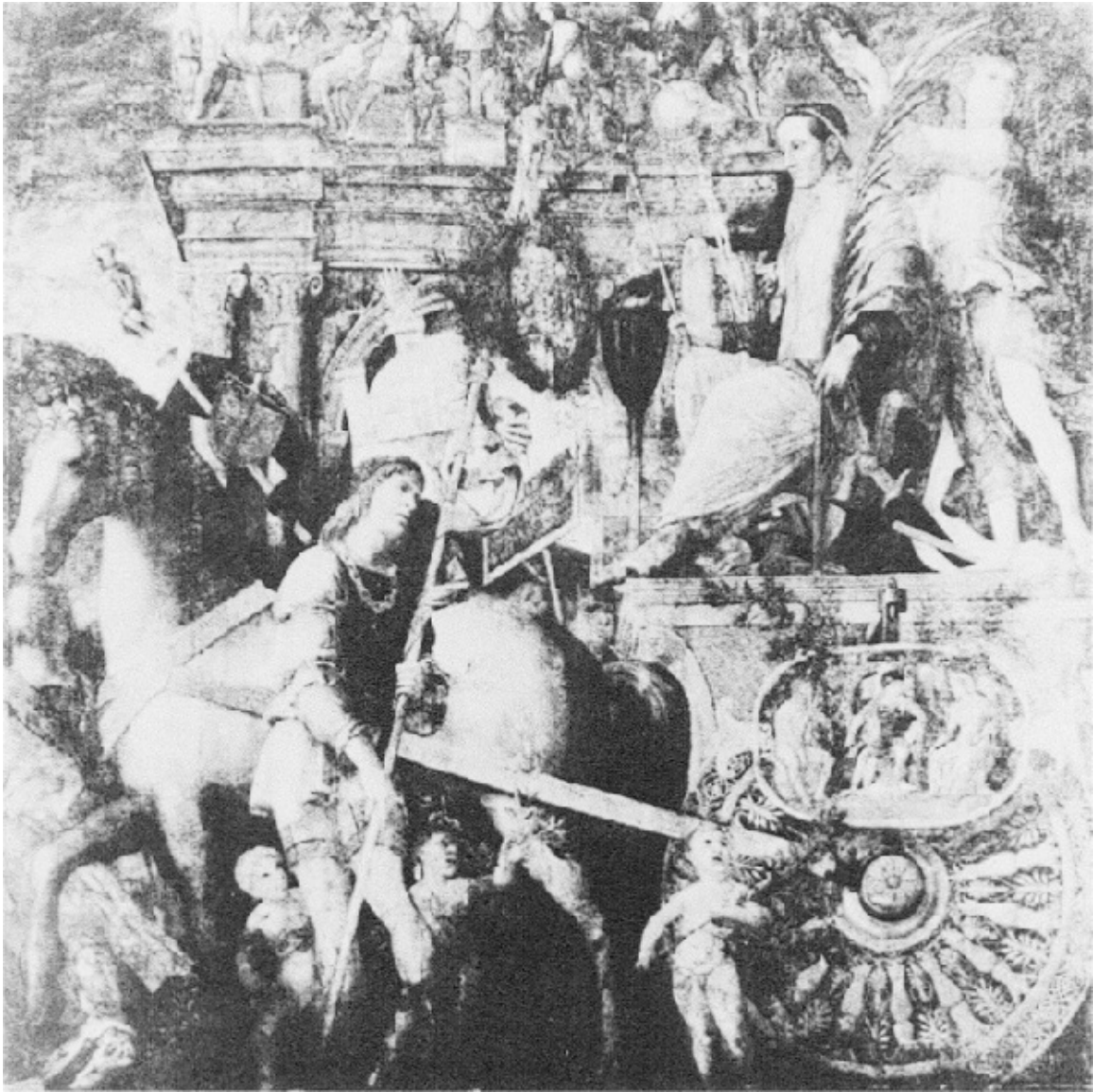
6 Julius Caesar. An engraving by Marcantonio Raimondi from the series *The Twelve Caesars* (c. 1520)



7 Julius Caesar. An engraving by Martino Rota from *Twenty-Four Portraits of Roman Emperors* (Venice, 1570)



8 Julius Caesar. An engraving by Egidius Sadeler (c. 1593) after Titian's series *Roman Emperors*



9 *The Triumphator Julius Caesar on his Chariot*. From *The Triumphs of Caesar* by Andrea Mantegna at Hampton Court (late fifteenth century)

This is not to say, however, that Marx has replaced Freud. On the contrary, perhaps the major technical achievement of the play is its remarkable sense of individual character and the interaction of characters (unlike Plutarch, who tends to concentrate on one, subordinating the others often to the point of reducing or even eliminating the contours of their personalities). And the attractive complexity of Brutus is the most interesting aspect of the play, for it combines all the qualities associated with heroes – adjectives like ‘noble’ and ‘gentle’; an inner life made known through soliloquy, which as it delineates also separates; self-doubts and rationalisations; the inevitable attempt to impose a personal set of values on a public one. Above all, Brutus is the only character to whom the heroic criterion, a moral sense, is searchingly and deeply applied. Those who reject him do so on the basis of moral failings, but they have no other serious candidate. Or they propose that there is no hero at

all.⁶² Or that plot is of major importance, not character.⁶³ Or, as is the case with the difficulty of pinpointing the political intent of the play, they make a virtue of the difficulty of defining characters or their relationships. Not untypical is Mark Hunter's view that the 'personal interest in this play, the appeal of individual character, is not concentrated, as it is in the normally constructed tragedies, on one dominating figure which overshadows all the rest. It is distributed.'⁶⁴ Very early on, many critics have responded by proposing that ambiguity is the major intent, if not theme, of the play: from Gustav Freytag (commenting on actors' different interpretations of the same character: 'Who is right? Each of them'⁶⁵) and Michael Macmillan ('The poet's aim was to produce . . . an even balance in our sympathies, so that they should waver to and fro, inclining alternately to Caesar and the conspirators', p. xxv) to Ernest Schanzer (treating *Julius Caesar* as a 'problem' play, one which evokes 'uncertain and divided responses . . . in the minds of the audience'⁶⁶) and Mildred Hartsock ('*Julius Caesar* is not a problem play, but a play about a problem: the difficulty – perhaps the impossibility – of knowing the truth of men and of history'⁶⁷). This drift, it is important to note, emphasises the inextricability of character and politics, as is evident in the personalising adjectives applied to a political situation in so typical a formulation as Hartsock's 'Is Caesar an egocentric, dangerous dictator – a genuine threat to Rome; or is he the "noblest man / That ever lived"?'⁶⁸

Whether the entire presentation is indeed ambiguous or whether the view is mainly based on a modern relativistic reaction away from either/or solutions or from solutions altogether, the critical discussion of 'good', 'bad', or 'mixed' characters and political constellations has been relentless.⁶⁹ The answer, in short, is elusive. This is no small tribute to a 'simple', 'straightforward' and yet 'singular' play.

***Julius Caesar* on the stage**

Julius Caesar was probably performed for the first time on 21 September 1599 at the Globe Theatre.⁷⁰ Although there exist only three more records of performances for the time up to the closing of the theatres in 1642, contemporary references to the play testify to a popularity far greater than this number would suggest, and the play has continued to attract audiences after the Restoration and up to the present time.

Julius Caesar has been performed in England and America with only minor interruptions for almost four centuries mainly because the characters and situation are sufficiently complex, if not ambiguous, for each age to extract what best suits its taste or circumstances: actor-managers and directors could use the play as a star vehicle, stress its patriotic and nationalistic features, indulge their audiences' enthusiasm for Rome (although this was often

directed more towards imperial Rome than the Republican era) or for elocution and rhetoric, and relate it to contemporary political events. By twentieth-century standards, this easy adaptability was often achieved at a great cost. Shakespeare's text was freely tampered with in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the reasons for cutting, adding, rewriting, and redistributing speeches ranging from economical ones (decreasing the original cast of 40 speaking parts, for instance) to attempts at clarifying syntax, preserving decorum (as in the omission of supposedly anachronistic references to nightgowns, cloaks; hats, and the like), heightening the tragic effect, and imposing a unity, supposedly lacking, on the play. Ludwig Tieck, visiting London and the London theatres in 1817, wrote of the 'carelessness' of the English in preparing Shakespeare's texts for the stage and complained about their lack of 'the sense of the play as a whole', resulting in what Sprague has called a 'scenes-from-Shakespeare-heavily-upholstered type of production'.⁷¹

The slender evidence we have of seventeenth-century productions suggests that actors spoke a text close to the Folio. But towards the end of the century, when Thomas Betterton took over the role of Brutus, elimination of minor characters and redistribution of speeches – a great number of passages amplifying Casca's and Trebonius's parts, regardless of their being in character or not – had already begun. Betterton established the interpretation of Brutus as philosopher and patriot and thus continued the earlier tendency to regard *Julius Caesar*, despite its title, as more appropriately the tragedy of Brutus, a tradition that was dominant through most of the nineteenth century. Cassius seems to have been portrayed as basically a man of emotion, whose rash temper served as a foil to Brutus's equanimity in the quarrel scene (4.3) which emerged as the prominent one of the play.⁷² Eighteenth-century actors followed the trends set by their predecessors, supported in their endeavours by acting-versions of the text that eliminated ambiguities in Shakespeare's character portrayals and accelerated the pace of the action. In addition to further juggling of characters and speeches – merging the roles of Artemidorus and the Soothsayer, for instance, and cutting 3.3, the scene in which Cinna the Poet meets his death – and, in accordance with eighteenth-century rationalism, reducing extensive references to the supernatural to a minimum, the so-called Dryden-Davenant version of 1719 produced a Brutus purged of expressions and sentiments unsuited to a tragic hero and, most of all, endowed him with a more dignified death, an 'improvement' actors were not willing to dispense with before the present century: in 5.5, Brutus invites only one of his followers, whose name varies in different texts, to kill him,⁷³ and when he is refused Brutus proceeds to commit suicide without external help after delivering a death-speech appropriate for a patriot and tragic hero. Leading actors, with the notable exception of Garrick – and Kean, Irving, and

Olivier in the following centuries – took the parts of Brutus, Antony, and Cassius while the play's titular hero Caesar received no special attention and was generally played as a stock stage tyrant without individuality or even majesty. It is a noteworthy feature of eighteenth-century productions that the mob, so important in 3.2 – 3.3 being cut – consisted of an average of six actors, often comedians, who were not really called upon to interact.⁷⁴



10 *Brutus and the Ghost of Caesar*. A drawing of 1806 by William Blake, from an extra-illustrated Second Folio

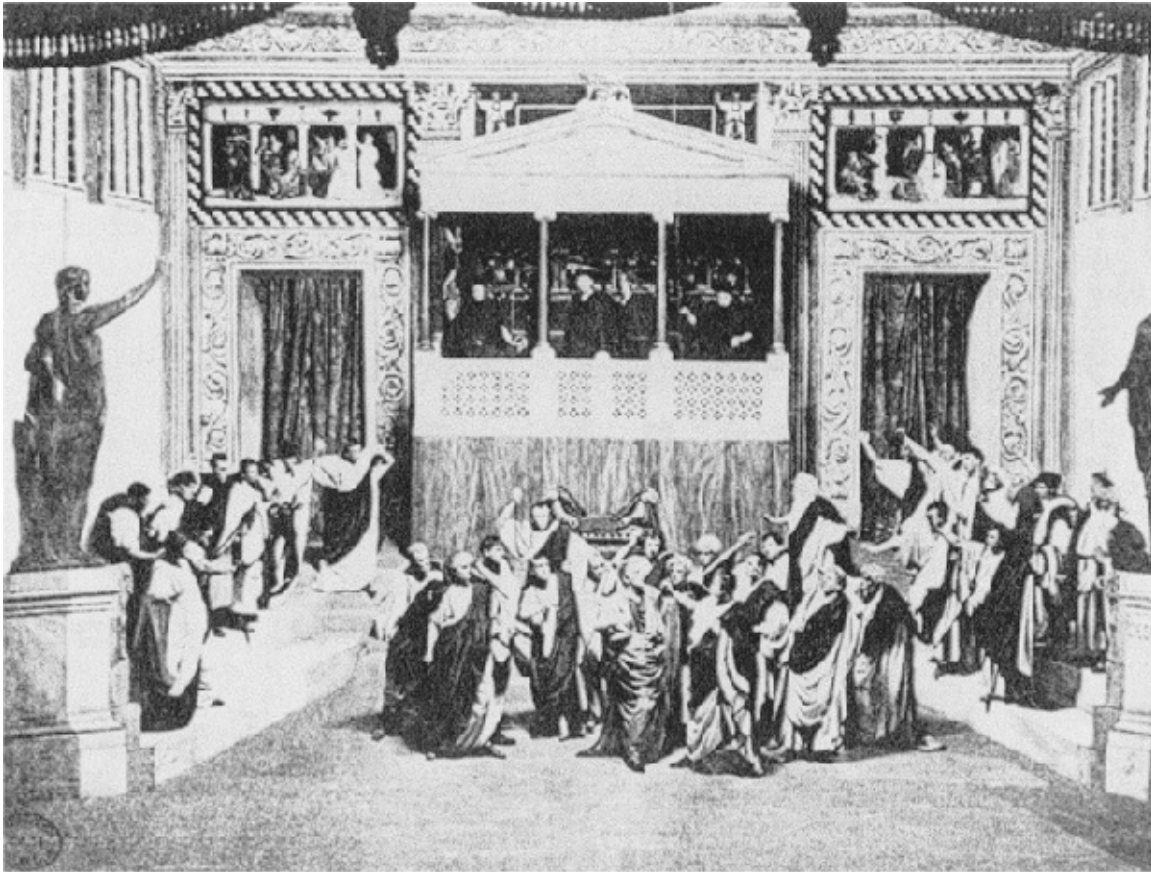
The nineteenth century radically changed this tradition, filling – and sometimes crowding – the stage with supers whose number could vary from 79 to 250 and who were often employed for purely visual effects.⁷⁵ Historical accuracy of costumes and scenery was no tenet of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, actors wearing more or less imaginary Roman dress, whereas the nineteenth-century actor-managers considered authenticity a

major asset. Often this did not hinder them, however, from reproducing the splendour of Imperial Rome instead of the more austere buildings of the Republican era. Two major productions – John Philip Kemble’s at Covent Garden and Herbert Beerbohm Tree’s at Her Majesty’s – mark the beginning and the end of the nineteenth century and serve as examples of changing ideas and interpretations. Kemble, who staged *Julius Caesar* in 1812, created the ‘grand style’ of acting, characterised by its special emphasis on visual effects – splendour of scenery and costume, colourful and stately processions, statuesque groupings of performers – and elevation of the action on to the plane of the ideal. The aesthetic principles governing this conception paralleled closely those laid down by Sir Joshua Reynolds in his *Discourses on Art* in which he advised young artists to strive for ‘perfect form’ and ‘ideal beauty’ but reminded them at the same time not to forget the ‘nobleness of conception’ and the ‘art of animating and dignifying the figures with intellectual grandeur, of impressing the appearance of philosophick wisdom, or heroick virtue’. Only the combination of these aspects could bring forth a painting in what he termed ‘great style’.⁷⁶

In order to fit these preconceived ideas Kemble subjected Shakespeare’s text to a new and drastic revision which became, with only minor alterations, the standard one for the first half of the century. Not surprisingly, reduction of speaking parts, cutting and reallocation of speeches were again the methods employed to tighten the structure of the play and smooth out inconsistencies in action and characterisation. The attempt at presenting a straight-line interpretation was carried far beyond anything essayed in the eighteenth century. For Kemble, who played Brutus, his beau idéal Roman’s dominant quality was stoic discipline. Philosophy enabled him to stifle any personal considerations and to be guided and motivated in his actions almost exclusively by his profound patriotism. In his death-speech, influenced by its eighteenth-century predecessors, Brutus was allowed to drive home this point forcefully, apostrophising his ‘Beloved country!’⁷⁷ Cassius, played by Charles Mayne Young, underwent the same kind of simplification and became once again a man characterised by an explosive temper. The two conspirators were opposed by Charles Kemble’s Antony, a young and athletic nobleman motivated only by the purest motives. Anything smacking of ruthlessness or opportunism was banned from the text – the proscription scene (4.1) disappearing entirely, of course – and what remained was Caesar’s youthful friend and revenger. Kemble’s preoccupation with visual effects and impressive groupings induced him to bring his supers into play almost everywhere; they even remained on stage during the assassination scene, silent spectators of a ritualised, ballet-like killing of the titular hero.⁷⁸ Kemble’s text and style of production strongly influenced his successors in the following decades, even though they restored some humanity to his over-

dignified Romans. The only important and trend-setting innovation was made by William Charles Macready, who, feeling a need for more realistic action, rescued his supers from the fate of passive onlookers; in the Forum scene, the plebeians finally became in deed a decisive force.

The company of the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, which brought their German production of *Julius Caesar* to London in 1881, carried on and expanded Macready's new design. The Meininger were known for disciplined and realistic ensemble acting and they turned the Forum scene into the climax of the play, displacing the assassination and the long-popular quarrel scene.⁷⁹ From this performance Herbert Beerbohm Tree took his cue when he staged *Julius Caesar* at Her Majesty's in 1898. The newly acquired prominence of the Forum scene and the persuasiveness of the actor who had played Antony convinced Tree that Antony was the leading role. He did not hesitate to break with a centuries-long tradition and heavily blue-pencilled Shakespeare's text in order to substantiate Antony's claim to stardom. In an attempt to prevent Acts 4 and 5 from becoming utterly anti-climactic, a fate that had attended the Meininger performance, he retained only Antony's appearances and the parts necessary in terms of plot movement. The result of this tailoring was a three-act play – Act 2 taken up entirely by the Forum scene – with a tableau curtain for Antony at the end of each act. It is a curious feature that Tree, despite his relegating Brutus to an unrewarding second place, continued to concede him the time-honoured suicide, though without Kemble's patriotic death-speech. Tree approached his production of *Julius Caesar* in the firm belief that his audiences expected scenic realism and spectacle and he was prepared to fulfil these wishes which happily coincided with his own conviction that Rome and its people were of a far greater importance than earlier producers had admitted. His portrayal of daily life before the tribunes enter in 1.1 is probably unique in the stage history of *Julius Caesar*,⁸⁰ and in the Forum scene he had his plebeians force Antony to exert himself to the utmost in order to draw them over to his side. Tree's sumptuous scenery, for the most part historically accurate, the extraneous stage business he felt free – and indeed obliged – to insert,⁸¹ and his deliberate accelerating or slowing down of the action helped to underscore his aim. Even if the acting did not earn the same applause as the mob orchestration and the scenery – Shaw called the set-designer Lawrence Alma-Tadema 'the real hero of the revival'⁸² – and even if he greatly overstated Antony's importance and simplified Shakespeare's ambiguous character, Tree deserves credit for releasing him from the restraints of the beau idéal tradition, for firmly establishing the crowd as meriting attention in the performance, and for choosing an actor for the role of Caesar – Charles Fulton – who gave this character a human dignity he had not often been endowed with.



11 The assassination of Julius Caesar, Act 3, Scene 1. Herbert Beerbohm Tree's production at Her Majesty's Theatre in 1898. Set designed by Lawrence Alma-Tadema

American productions of the nineteenth century were mainly stock performances, catering to audiences steeped in revolutionary ideals but coming to the theatre mainly in search of fine declamation and great stars.⁸³ Oratory being an important factor in American politics in the nineteenth century, *Julius Caesar* with its many rhetorical passages would have seemed to be ideally suited, but only one production, Edwin Booth's New York revival in 1871, deserves special mention.⁸⁴ Booth did not conceive of the action as continuous and linear but as a sequence of separate events, with a linkage provided by the characters, and he accordingly divided the play into six acts, Acts 3 and 4 being dedicated to the assassination and Forum scenes respectively. On the whole he followed Kemble's emphasis on visual effects, but instead of neo-classical grandeur his *Julius Caesar* displayed romantic overtones, most poignantly in the portrayal of a Brutus whose sensibility and idealism were particularly stressed and whose aversion to violent action was made palpable in his reluctance to strike at Caesar in the assassination scene. This sentimentalised Brutus, seconded by a vigorous and passionate Cassius and a purely noble Antony, found such favour with his audiences that Booth was assured of a long-standing popularity although reviewers invariably remarked that his physical appearance was completely at odds with a

convention that demanded a tall, heroic-looking Roman.⁸⁵



12 'Grand Square in Rome': setting for the opening scene of Edwin Booth's New York production of 1871. A watercolour by the set-designer, Charles Witham

In the stage history of *Julius Caesar* at Stratford, the turn of the century was marked by Frank Benson's productions. Between 1892 and 1915, the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre saw eleven revivals of this play, adhering, as far as text and acting style were concerned, to the nineteenth-century heroic conception and declamation, but turning away from the sumptuous scenery that had threatened to smother the text. Benson did not feel authorised to rewrite speeches or interpolate new ones, sharply differing from the older actor-managers in this, or to cut the text in order to set off one character, as Tree had not hesitated to do, but he blue-pencilled with abandon in order to achieve structural clarity, leaving the text as mutilated as ever, only differently so. His Brutuses and Antonys were of the Kemble breed, but the Caesars struck out in a new direction. The portrayal of Caesar as a man whose former strength and power are clearly declining but who preserves his dignity and is still a force to be reckoned with was an innovation later productions took notice of.

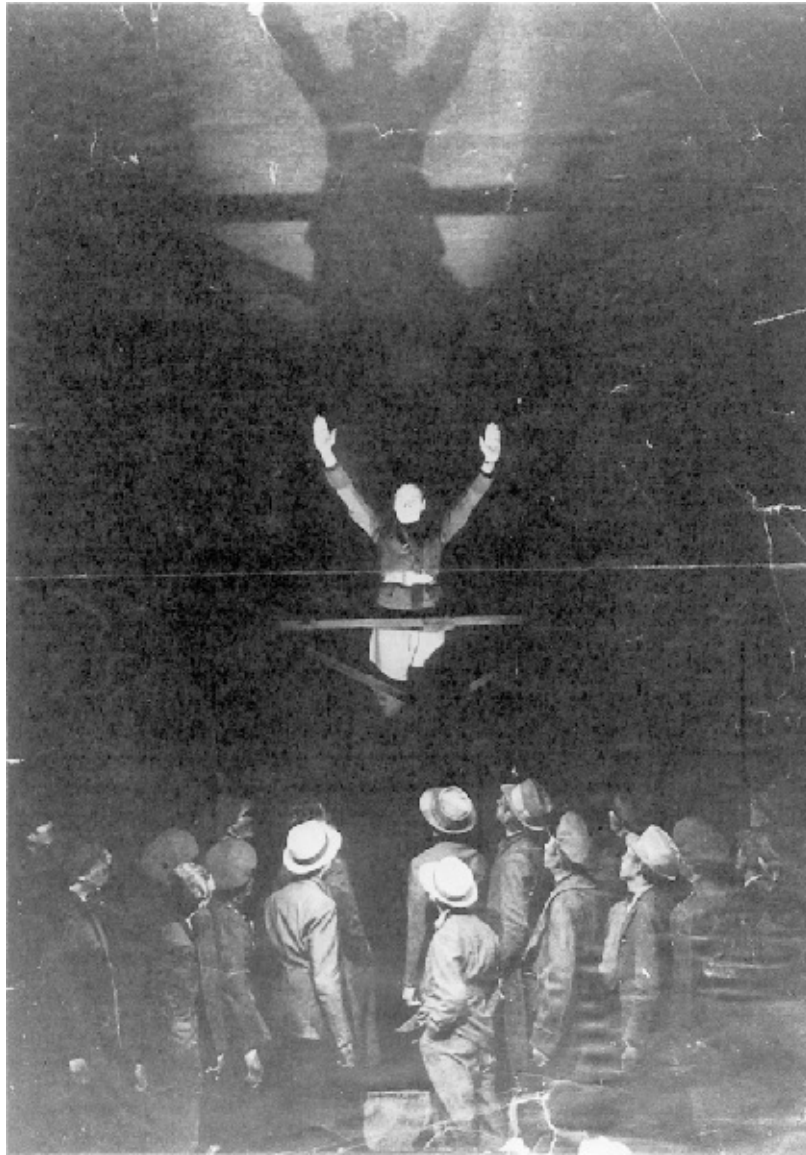
Benson's successor at Stratford, William Bridges-Adams, a director, not actor-manager, strongly influenced by William Poel and Harley Granville-Barker, brought to his production of *Julius Caesar* notions that differed as much as possible from those of Tree or Benson. For the first time since the Restoration a near full-text production of the play was seen in performance, putting an end to straight-line interpretations, a change that affected most

strongly the role of Antony. After a century's absence the proscription scene (4.1) returned to the stage, among many other important passages, but Cinna the Poet continued to be omitted owing to the inexperience of the available supers.⁸⁶ Bridges-Adams altered the traditional stage, using almost exclusively the fore-stage for action. He eliminated all the extraneous stage business and the emphasis on one or two star roles so dear to his predecessors, replaced their sumptuous and rather static set with a less elaborate and more flexible one, and accelerated the pace of speech and acting in order to accommodate the considerably longer text to the usual length of performance. For a number of years the diametrically opposed approaches of Tree and Bridges-Adams coexisted on the British stage, until the latter's style of production carried the day. Directors like Robert Atkins and Harcourt Williams, who put on *Julius Caesar* at the Old Vic during the 1920s, continued the trend set by Bridges-Adams – Williams laying special emphasis on psychological character studies, a notion he had gained from Granville-Barker's *Prefaces*.

But it was in America that *Julius Caesar* was given a completely new direction. In 1937, Orson Welles staged a highly personal vision of the play, subtitled 'Death of a Dictator', in which he drove home contemporary parallels by stressing 'the issues of political violence and the moral duty of the individual in the face of tyranny'.⁸⁷ Welles must have considered Shakespeare's Roman tragedy simply as a vehicle for his ideas about the effective theatrical realisation of a burning political issue, for he mercilessly hacked the text. His almost exclusive concentration on Caesar, Brutus, and the mob produced something even farther removed from the original than its eighteenth- and nineteenth-century predecessors. In this political context the masses in all their fickleness, easy persuadability, and unreflecting cruelty acquired an unsurpassed prominence, with the Cinna the Poet scene (3.3) – in a complete reversal of a centuries-long tradition – as a haunting experience. Welles obviously had to play in modern dress – Fascist uniforms and everyday clothes – and, with a sure instinct for producing spectacular impressions, made extensive use of cinematic lighting effects. His production set a precedent never to be forgotten by later directors.

Welles's immediate followers in Britain, however, came up with two rather grotesque versions. A 1938 production in Cambridge, drastically modernising, presented Caesar breakfasting on grapefruit and coffee and telephoning the augurers, and compressed the supernatural events into a *Daily Express* article. A year later at the Old Vic Henry Cass's actors donned a mixture of Spanish, British, and ss uniforms and confronted their audience with sensationalised melodrama. More than twenty years had passed when in 1962 the Greek director Minos Volanakis approached *Julius Caesar*, parting from the conviction that Shakespeare in this play had been exploring 'the possibility of

salvation through politics'.⁸⁸ His Rome was a gloomy and spellbound place on the brink of a new era; his Brutus, a man whose attempt to save the old ideals backfired on him, unleashing precisely those dark forces he was fighting. Because Volanakis's Old Vic production sacrificed characterisation to the abstract message, the experiment eventually backfired on him: 'a plain text and provocative commentary in an insecure binding', as Trewin remarked.⁸⁹ John Blatchley staged the play at Stratford a year later but his understanding of *Julius Caesar* as portraying the dirty business of politics at any given time found equally little favour with critics, who complained about monochrome scenery, a hodge-podge of costumes, and an incredibly slow pace.⁹⁰ But Blatchley had placed Caesar firmly at the centre of the tragedy and in this respect he was followed by Trevor Nunn in 1972. With the titular hero a compelling personality and powerful character, Brutus's nervousness, his impatience, and sometimes violent outbursts did not prove too successful an interpretation, although some critics hailed it as the one Shakespeare had intended.⁹¹ Nunn drew overt parallels to Fascism while staging *Julius Caesar* as part of his 'Roman cycle', which sought to exemplify 'the rise and fall of the Roman state from "tribalism to authoritarianism, to colonialism, to decadence"'.⁹² If Nunn failed in his attempt to link the plays thematically, Octavius certainly profited. He was allowed to emerge from his hitherto marginal position in order to foreshadow his role in *Antony and Cleopatra* as a real match for his fellow triumvir.



13 Antony's funeral oration, Act 3, Scene 2, from Orson Welles's modern-dress production at the Mercury Theatre, New York, in 1937. Antony was played by George Coulouris

Directors in the late 1970s and 1980s obviously felt a need for more immediate contemporary parallels and turned to different countries and models. Gerald Freedman at the Stratford, Connecticut, Shakespeare Festival in 1979 conceived of Caesar as a Latin American dictator and of the crowd as tourists brandishing cameras, but on the whole he employed modern elements rather eclectically. The connection with Latin America had been made ten years earlier by Edward Payson Call in Minneapolis, but his costumes, ranging from Aztec-style to contemporary military dress, had made it of all times and no time at all. At Belfast in 1981, Leon Rubin sought a new and striking association with current events and hit on the idea of drawing a parallel with the assassination of the Egyptian president Sadat and with the plight of Latin American countries. This interpretation must have suited Jerry Turner, for he adopted it a year later at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. His

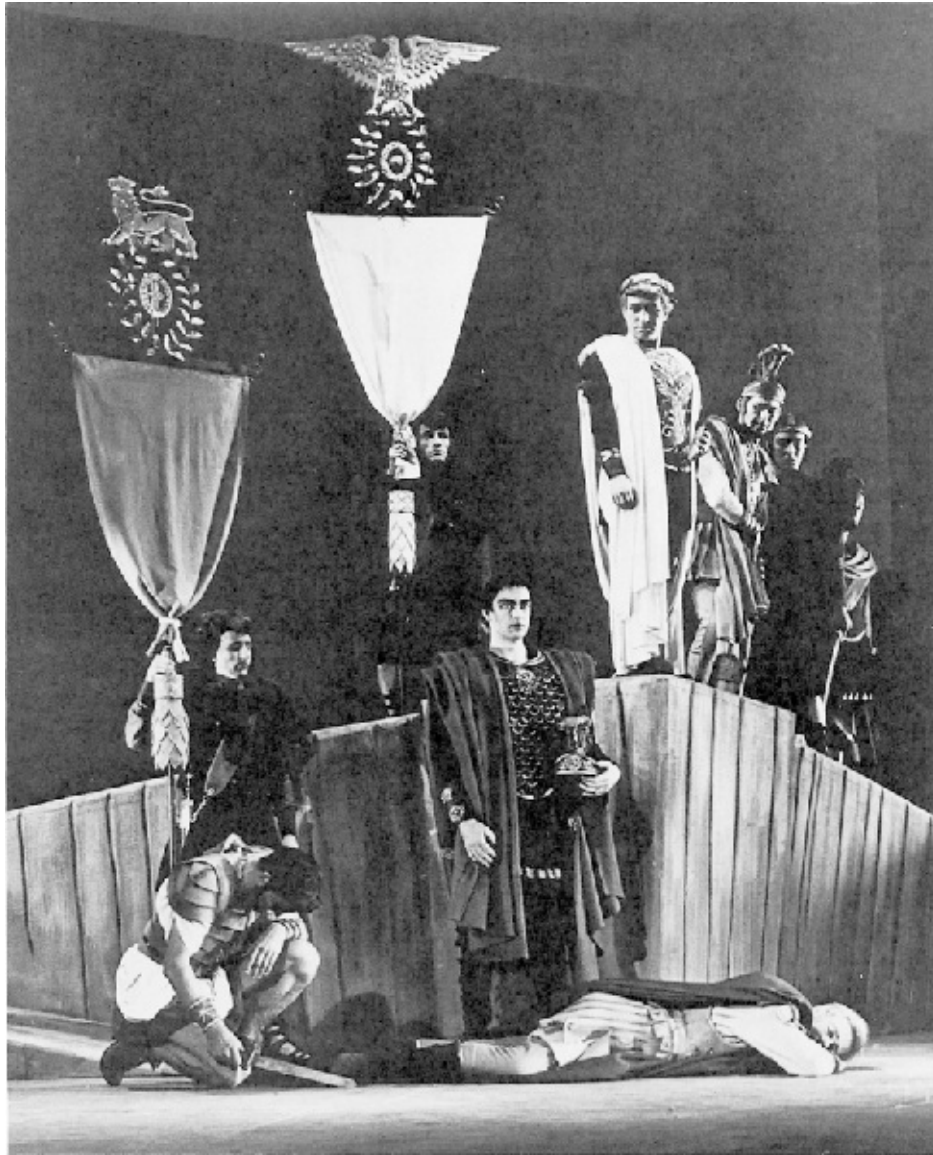
Caesar reminded one reviewer of Che Guevara; the Soothsayer was turned into a 'bag lady' or female tramp and Casca into 'a cigarette-smoking, pistol-packing, female revolutionary' whose striking at Caesar had sexual overtones.⁹³

While a number of directors thus succumbed to the pressure of ever more modernising *Julius Caesar*, no doubt in order to enhance its relevance to contemporary audiences, others struck out in the opposite direction and tried their skill at producing the play Elizabethan-style. At the Westminster Theatre in 1953, Michael MacOwan, one of the first, was unsuccessful owing to the inadequacy of his resources – actors, properties, and stage. Deficient scenery or a modern proscenium stage were not problems Michael Langham had to contend with two years later. At the Canadian Stratford Festival he employed a thrust stage, seated the audience on three sides of it, and had his actors make their entrances and exits passing among the audience along five aisles. His view of *Julius Caesar* as chronicle rather than tragedy prepared the ground for unbroken, fast-paced movement; Renaissance costumes, a lavish but functional use of supers, and some memorable and meaningful stage business (like having the sleeping soldiers shudder and groan in the presence of Caesar's ghost) proved further assets of this production, but Shakespeare's poignant characterisation eluded the director and this seriously marred the otherwise successful attempt. More recent productions sometimes confined the 'Elizabethanness' to Renaissance costumes or fell prey to a fate similar to MacOwan's.⁹⁴ The most drastic of all Elizabethan approaches was probably a student production at Cambridge in 1952. Under John Barton, later a director of the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Marlowe Society set out to recreate the architecture and atmosphere of Shakespeare's Globe, and even to approximate Elizabethan pronunciation: Casca met 'a lay-on' near the Capitol (1.3.20), Cassius bared his 'boozim to the thoonder sto-erm' (1.3.49), Caesar was warned of the 'Ades of March', and 'Breutus' became 'an hounerable mun' (3.2).⁹⁵ The experiment was generally applauded, but when Barton revived *Julius Caesar* with the RSC in 1968, his aims had become quite different. He concentrated on character study, stressing negative facets in Brutus and Cassius and bringing out the ambiguous and conflicting in Antony through costume changes and some telling business, like his appearing at Caesar's house in 2.2 visibly marked by the excesses of the previous night. Ripley found himself reminded of 'a veritable portrait gallery, paying lip service to a warts-and-all vision, but specializing in warts',⁹⁶ while Speaight confessed himself very much impressed.⁹⁷ Brewster Mason's Caesar was a real threat and his commanding personality continued to dominate the play even after his death so that Barton's allowing the ghost two more appearances – crossing the battlefield after 5.1 and looming over the dead Brutus – seemed rather superfluous.

One of the outstanding productions of this century was certainly the 1950 Stratford revival under the direction of Anthony Quayle and Michael Langham. A conservative staging in that fewer than a hundred lines were cut and togas and Roman military dress employed, this *Julius Caesar* was convincing because pure acting skill brought Shakespeare's complex characters alive. John Gielgud clearly made Cassius the driving force; his conspirator's nature was a mixture of frustrated ambition, envy, amazing energy, awareness of the ingredients of 'Realpolitik', and nobility. If, against his better judgement, he gave way to Brutus in important matters, he thereby only recognised the other's moral superiority. Octavius, often considered such a minor figure as to deserve no special attention, became in Alan Badel's portrayal 'the Emperor Augustus in embryo, every word and twitch of muscle etching a portrait in bronze'.⁹⁸ If the Quayle–Langham revival stands almost alone in having conveyed a sense of the tragic dimension and heroism inherent in Shakespeare's play, it was surpassed in one respect by that of Glen Byam Shaw seven years later. Shaw and his actors grasped the essence of 'Caesarism', so often drowned in over-emphasis on the titular hero's bombastic and self-confident speeches, and presented the picture of a great leader whose weaknesses did not prove detrimental to his high standing but simply made him human and mortal; the danger of a powerful but statue-like and ultimately unconvincing and unmoving Caesar was thus admirably averted. His spirit was ever-present, and after the assassination this aspect was effectively stressed by the appearance of a blazing star at crucial moments. John Schlesinger obviously had Shaw in the back of his mind when he set out to revive *Julius Caesar* with the National Theatre Company in 1977. As Caesar he cast John Gielgud, who endowed the titular hero with a great natural authority, and it was clear from the outset that the conspirators would not be able to conquer his spirit. Caesar's ghost haunted the battle scenes and then, 'an astonishing atmospheric close', appeared 'in quadruplicate . . . on the plains of Philippi: four mask-faces staring out into the darkness' – Caesar dominating to the end.⁹⁹ A Caesar of human stature was an asset of John Wood's revival at the Stratford Festival Canada a year later, but his production was – and remains – remarkable for his experiment of dispensing with the crowd. Although their absence was not much regretted in the first acts – after all, Lindsay Anderson at the Royal Court in 1964 had made it clear that Shakespeare's jokes were no longer funny and could be cut without causing any damage to the play – Act 3 destroyed the illusion that the populace has no essential function in the play. Antony's Forum speech had some response in indistinct noises, but on the whole he delivered it, like Brutus before him, in a vacuum. The entire tension of the third act, that crucial moment when the people assume power and can turn the scales either way, got lost in this interpretation and the audience was presented with 'a

power struggle totally confined to the Roman elite'.¹⁰⁰

There were other ingenious and innovative attempts. In 1972, Jonathan Miller, staging *Julius Caesar* with the Oxford and Cambridge Shakespeare Company, chose to treat the play as a terrifying dream world with actors moving and speaking in somnambulistic slow-motion. Reviewers were unable to find the deeper meaning of this approach and they were again puzzled when Martin Cobin at the 1981 Colorado Shakespeare Festival presented the events following 4.3 as Brutus's dream, a device only recognised as such when Brutus, who had earlier fallen asleep, rose from his bed, ready to meet the fate announced in his nightmare. The play's extensive references to supernatural events, so little congenial to eighteenth-century taste, filled two directors with a sense of awkwardness, prompting widely different solutions. Bekki Jo Schneider in a 1979 Louisville revival opted for rigorous cutting, which resulted in a rather short playing time – 105 minutes – and 'a tragedy of cabals and corporation men, among whom Caesar seemed the last non-taskforce member'.¹⁰¹ Ron Daniels at Stratford in 1983, on the other hand, exploited the contrast between the belief in omens and fate, rhetoric and the tragic conception, all firmly rooted in another time, and the political issues – political assassination, democracy versus dictatorship – that lend themselves to comparison with contemporary events. But this attempt at illustrating man's ultimate smallness and perhaps even insignificance in the larger frame of events outside his sphere of influence and his inability to control the forces around him did not yield satisfying results, because the heavily accented contrasts and contradictions overwhelmed the play.



14 The death of Brutus, Act 5, Scene 5, from Glen Byam Shaw's production at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1957. Brutus (lying) was played by Alec Clunes, Antony by Richard Johnson, and Octavius by Clive Revill. Peter Palmer as Strato is kneeling next to the dead Brutus



15 Paul Richard as Julius Caesar in the German production of the Company of the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, brought to London in 1881



16 Sir John Gielgud as Cassius in the production by Anthony Quayle and Michael Langham at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 1950



17 Marlon Brando as Antony in the film version directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz, 1953



18 'I have made strong proof of my constancy,/ Giving myself a voluntary wound/ Here, in the thigh.'
Christine Kaufmann as Portia (Act 2, Scene 1) in Michael Bogdanov's production at the Deutsches Schauspielhaus, Hamburg, 1986

Throughout the four centuries of its stage history, *Julius Caesar* has been subjected to many changes, some of them radical: nationalistic interpretations gave way to idealistic ones, great poses and declamation to realistic stagings, authenticity, and an emphasis on 'Romanness' to neo-Elizabethan approaches and a quest for contemporary parallels. In the twentieth century the obsession with novelty has been reflected in an at times bewildering array of dramatic interpretations and styles. Esther Cloudman Dunn in 1939 concluded her study of *Shakespeare in America* with the words

Ben Jonson wrote more truly than he knew when he described Shakespeare as 'not for an Age but for all time'. He will survive each separate time, inviolate and indestructible. But he yields, too, to the manipulation, the 'form and pressure' of each succeeding era, and, in the process, turns himself into the most delicate barometer of social and cultural history.¹⁰²

Her judgement has lost nothing of its validity almost fifty years later.

- ¹ A convenient recapitulation of opinions up to 1910 is to be found in Furness, p. 292.
- ² Evidence of its popularity is most often deduced from the commendatory verses by Leonard Digges, which are believed to have been intended for inclusion in the Folio but appeared later in the 1640 edition of Shakespeare's *Poems*.
- ³ See, for example, Gary Taylor, 'Musophilus, Nosce Teipsum, and Julius Caesar', *N&Q* 229 (1984), 191–5.
- ⁴ Alfred Hart, 'Vocabularies of Shakespeare's plays', *RES* 19 (1943), 135.
- ⁵ Alfred Hart, 'The growth of Shakespeare's vocabulary', *RES* 19 (1943), 254.
- ⁶ E. H. C. Oliphant, 'Shakspeare's plays: an examination. III', *MLR* 4 (1908–9), 191.
- ⁷ Anna Kerri, *Die metrischen Unterschiede von Shakespeares King John und Julius Caesar: Eine chronologische Untersuchung*, 1913, p. 152.
- ⁸ John K. Ingram, 'On the "weak endings" of Shakspeare, with some account of the history of the verse-tests in general', *New Shakspeare Society Transactions* 1 (1874), 450.
- ⁹ Dorothy L. Sipe, *Shakespeare's Metrics*, 1968.
- ¹⁰ Frederic W. Ness, *The Use of Rhyme in Shakespeare's Plays*, 1941, p. 109.
- ¹¹ Edward A. Armstrong, *Shakespeare's Imagination*, 1946.
- ¹² The literal translation appears in Ernest Schanzer, 'Thomas Platter's observations on the Elizabethan stage', *N&Q* 201 (1956), 466. The German text, reprinted by E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare*, 2 vols., 1930, II, 322, is first discussed by Gustav Binz, 'Londoner Theater und Schauspiele im Jahre 1599', *Anglia* 22 (1899), 462.
- ¹³ Chambers, *Shakespeare*, I, 397.
- ¹⁴ Chambers, *Shakespeare*, I, 397.
- ¹⁵ F. G. Fleay, 'On two plays of Shakspeare's: Part II. *Julius Caesar*', *New Shakspeare Society Transactions* I (1874), 357–66.
- ¹⁶ Chambers, *Shakespeare*, I, 245.
- ¹⁷ Percy Simpson, 'The date of Shakspeare's "Julius Caesar"', *N&Q* 54 (1899), 106.
- ¹⁸ Chambers, *Shakespeare*, I, 397.
- ¹⁹ They have been discussed by various critics. See, for example, G. K. Hunter, 'Shakespeare's reading', in *A New Companion to Shakespeare Studies*, ed. Kenneth Muir and S. Schoenbaum, 1971, pp. 55–66. F. P. Wilson, 'Shakespeare's reading', *S.Sur.* 3 (1950), 14–21, gives an instructive example of the commonplace that is Hamlet's 'There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so' (p. 19). The most recent and probing treatment is Robert S. Miola, 'Shakespeare and his sources: observations on the critical history of *Julius Caesar*', *S.Sur.* 40 (1987), 69–76.
- ²⁰ Paul Stapfer, *Shakespeare and Classical Antiquity*, trans. Emily J. Carey, 1880; Nicolaus Delius, 'Shakespeare's Julius Caesar und seine Quellen im Plutarch', *SJ* 17 (1882), 67–81; M. W. MacCallum, *Shakespeare's Roman Plays and their Background*, 1910; E. A. J. Honigmann, 'Shakespeare's Plutarch', *SQ* 10 (1959), 25–33; Ernest Schanzer, *The Problem Plays of Shakespeare*, 1963; Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, 8 vols., 1957–75; Jean-Marie Maguin, 'Preface to a critical approach to *Julius Caesar*', *CahiersE* 4 (1973), 15–49; Sidney Homan, 'Dion, Alexander and Demetrius – Plutarch's forgotten *Parallel Lives* – as mirrors for *Julius Caesar*', *S.St.* 8 (1976), 195–210.
- ²¹ Kenneth Muir, *Shakespeare's Sources*, 1957, p. 187. In the 1977 version, *The Sources of Shakespeare's Plays*, Muir omits the assertion.
- ²² G. K. Hunter, 'Shakespeare's reading', p. 55.
- ²³ Honigmann, 'Shakespeare's Plutarch', pp. 26–7, 29, 30.
- ²⁴ Douglas Bush, '*Julius Caesar* and Elyot's *Governour*', *MLN* 52 (1937), 407–8; J. C. Maxwell, '"Julius Caesar" and Elyot's "Governour"', *N&Q* 201 (1956), 147; Bullough, *Sources*, V, 166–8.
- ²⁵ Ernest Schanzer, 'A neglected source of "Julius Caesar"', *N&Q* 199 (1954), 196–7; Muir, *Sources*, 1977, pp. 120–1; Bullough, *Sources*, V, 196–211; Jacqueline Pearson, 'Shakespeare and *Caesar's Revenge*', *SQ* 32 (1981), 101–4.

- ²⁶ Joan Rees, 'Shakespeare's use of Daniel', *MLR* 55 (1960), 79–82; Taylor, 'Musophilus', pp. 191–5.
- ²⁷ Andrew S. Cairncross, 'A source for Antony', *ELN* 13 (1975), 4–6.
- ²⁸ Taylor, 'Musophilus', pp. 194–5.
- ²⁹ Harold Brooks (in Dorsch, notes on 2.3.1–5, 3.1.1–2, 6–10, 77); Muir, *Sources*, 1977, pp. 121–2; Bullough, *Sources*, V, 168–73.
- ³⁰ Muir, *Sources*, 1977, pp. 123–5.
- ³¹ Bullough, *Sources*, V, 7.
- ³² J. J. M. Tobin, 'Apuleius and the proscription scene in *Julius Caesar*', *Archiv* 216 (1979), 348–50.
- ³³ F. P. Wilson, 'Shakespeare's reading', p. 18.
- ³⁴ G. K. Hunter, 'Shakespeare's reading', p. 59.
- ³⁵ Frederick Gard Fleay, *A Chronicle History of the Life and Work of William Shakespeare*, 1886, p. 215.
- ³⁶ Nicholas Brooke, *Shakespeare's Early Tragedies*, 1968, p. 158, calls it a 'final emblem . . . the brutal little farce'; John W. Velz, "'If I were Brutus now . . .': role-playing in *Julius Caesar*", *S.St.* 4 (1968), 153, a 'pathetic microcosm of the assassination'. For an attempted application in Christian terms, see Norman N. Holland, 'The "Cinna" and "Cynicke" episodes in *Julius Caesar*', *SQ* 11 (1960), 439–44.
- ³⁷ The interrelationship – repetitions, parallels, mirrorings, pairings, and foreshadowings – of the first three and the last two acts has from the beginning been one of the favourite subjects of *Julius Caesar* criticism – see, for example, Albert Lindner, 'Die dramatische Einheit im *Julius Cäsar*', *SJ* 2 (1867), 90–5; John Palmer, 'Marcus Brutus', in his *Political Characters of Shakespeare*, 1945, pp. 1–64, esp. pp. 33–46; Adrien Bonjour, *The Structure of Julius Caesar*, 1958, p. 30, n. 33; R. A. Yoder, 'History and the histories in *Julius Caesar*', *SQ* 24 (1973), 309–27, esp. pp. 311–14.
- ³⁸ *The Tatler* (no. 53, 11 August 1709; reprinted in *Anglistica & Americana* 100, 1970, p. 33) finds Caesar's appearance in his nightgown in no way diminishing that 'great soul; on the contrary, it is enhanced since 'his genius was above . . . mechanic methods of showing greatness'.
- ³⁹ Robert S. Miola, *Shakespeare's Rome*, 1983, p. 97: These two wives represent forces and ideals crucial to the city . . . Their anguish conveys Shakespeare's increasingly critical conception of Rome and Roman values.'
- ⁴⁰ Although a distinction is to be made between medieval and Renaissance historiography, it is undeniable that they co-existed, to one degree or another, in the time of Shakespeare. See, for example, R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, 1946, pp. 46–58; Irving Ribner, 'The Tudor history play: an essay in definition', *PMLA* 69 (1954), 591–609 (esp. p. 602), and his *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare*, 1957, esp. pp. 21–6; and J. G. A. Pocock, 'The sense of history in Renaissance England', in *William Shakespeare: His World, His Work, His Influence*, ed. John F. Andrews, 3 vols., 1985, I, 143–57; for views of Roman history in Shakespeare's time, T. J. B. Spencer, 'Shakespeare and the Elizabethan Romans', *S.Sur.* 10 (1957), 27–38, and J. Leeds Barroll, 'Shakespeare and Roman history', *MLR* 53 (1958), 327–43. It is self-evident that Shakespeare was very much in the tradition of the older, providential view of history. H. B. Charlton, *Shakespearian Tragedy*, 1948, pp. 72–4, finds evidence for this view both in Philemon Holland, Plutarch's Elizabethan translator, and indeed in Plutarch's *Morals*.
- ⁴¹ Ralph Berry, 'Julius Caesar: a Roman tragedy', *DR* 61 (1981), 327, mentions the 'obsessive awareness of ancestry' as an important feature of the Romanness, the 'communal identity' of the Romans: What the Romans imitate is their ancestry; what they aspire to be is the reflection of the dead' (335).
- ⁴² G. Wilson Knight, *The Imperial Theme*, 1931, pp. 35–6, feels many of the anachronisms referring to 'ordinary things' contribute to a 'peculiar sensitiveness to human appearance and human "spirit": a vivid apprehension of human life' (p. 34).
- ⁴³ For various views on the function of role-playing, Velz, 'Role-playing in *Julius Caesar*', p. 150: 'Numerous characters . . . adopt, or consider adopting, roles which other characters have played'; Thomas F. Van Laan, *Role-Playing in Shakespeare*, 1978, p. 153: 'the act of projecting a representation

of the self which is superior to the reality is . . . without doubt the most characteristic act of the play'; Berry, 'Julius Caesar', p. 329: 'The Romans are playing the roles, not of others, but of themselves.'

⁴⁴ The most often mentioned treatment of ritual and ceremony is Brents Stirling, "'Or else this were a savage spectacle'", *PMLA* 66 (1951), 765–74.

⁴⁵ Chambers, *Shakespeare*, I, 399, speaks for the many: 'Shakespeare is deliberately experimenting in a classical manner, with an extreme simplicity both of vocabulary and of phrasing.' For the style of Plutarch and its connection to Shakespeare, see Reuben A. Brower, 'The discovery of Plutarch: *Julius Caesar*', in his *Hero & Saint: Shakespeare and the Graeco-Roman Tradition*, 1971, pp. 204–38.

⁴⁶ See, for example, Walther Azzalino, 'Stilkundliche Betrachtung der Reden des Brutus und des Antonius in Shakespeares "Julius Caesar" (III, 2)', *Neuphilologische Monatsschrift* 11 (1940), 249–71; for Brutus's Forum speech based on the principles of Quintilian and Cicero, Maria Wickert, 'Antikes Gedankengut in Shakespeares Julius Cäsar', *SJ* 82/83 (1948), 11–33; for wider ranging applications: Jean Fuzier, 'Rhetoric versus rhetoric: a study of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, act III, scene 2', *CahiersE* 5 (1974), 25–65; John W. Velz, 'Orator and Imperator in *Julius Caesar*: style and the process of Roman history', *S.St.* 15 (1982), 55–75; Anne Barton, '*Julius Caesar* and *Coriolanus*: Shakespeare's Roman world of words', in *Shakespeare's Craft*, ed. Philip H. Highfill, Jr, 1982, pp. 24–47.

⁴⁷ Already evident in earlier critics, like Edward Dowden, *Shakspeare: A Critical Study of His Mind and Art*, 1897, p. 285: 'He is a *numen* to himself, speaking of Caesar in the third person, as if of some power above and behind his consciousness.' This stylistic feature, illeism, which Shakespeare 'may have thought characteristically Roman', is mentioned in John W. Velz, 'The ancient world in Shakespeare: authenticity or anachronism? A retrospect', *S.Sur.* 31 (1978), 9–10, in his larger treatment of what Rome was to Shakespeare (7–12).

⁴⁸ The exact references are to be found in the concordances to the speakers' parts, in volume 3 of my *Complete and Systematic Concordance to the Works of Shakespeare*, 9 vols., 1968–80. The statistics mentioned do not include the instances of ambiguity between the third person in direct discourse and the vocative discussed in the Commentary at [2.1.255](#), [3.1.76](#), [3.1.77](#).

⁴⁹ For various functions of names, see, for example, R. A. Foakes, 'An approach to *Julius Caesar*', *SQ* 5 (1954), 265–8; Lawrence Danson, *Tragic Alphabet: Shakespeare's Drama of Language*, 1974, pp. 61–3; Berry, 'Julius Caesar', p. 328.

⁵⁰ See below, p. 173.

⁵¹ See, for example, Bonjour, *Structure*, pp. 62–73; John W. Velz, 'Undular structure in "Julius Caesar"', *MLR* 66 (1971), 21–30; Foakes, 'An approach', p. 260.

⁵² The literature on the subject is vast, discussed by practically all the works on the Reading List (pp. 208–9 below). For a survey of the way Caesar was viewed in the dramatic, especially Senecan, tradition in the Renaissance, see Harry Morgan Ayres, 'Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* in the light of some other versions', *PMLA* 25 (1910), 183–227, and T. J. B. Spencer, '*Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*', in *Shakespeare: Select Bibliographical Guides*, ed. Stanley Wells, 1973, pp. 203–15. For the Caesar 'Mythos' from his time to the Renaissance, see Bullough, *Sources*, V, 4–25.

⁵³ For 'the presence of opposite implications within the single word' – among them 'constant' – see Robert C. Reynolds, 'Ironical epithet in *Julius Caesar*', *SQ* 24 (1973), 330. To the list may be added a number of abstractions, like 'virtue', 'honour', and 'humour'. For the Elizabethan 'ambivalence toward the ancient virtue of constancy', see Ruth M. Levitsky, "'The elements were so mix'd . . .'", *PMLA* 88 (1973), 244. A recent discussion of the simultaneity of opposites is Jan H. Blits, 'Caesar's ambiguous end', in his *The End of the Ancient Republic: Essays on 'Julius Caesar'*, 1982, pp. 63–91. Constancy, especially in connection with Stoicism, is focussed on by, for example, John Anson, 'Julius Caesar: the politics of the hardened heart', *S.St.* 2 (1966), 11–33; and Marvin L. Vawter, "'Division 'tween our souls": Shakespeare's Stoic Brutus', *S.St.* 7 (1974), 173–95. The inaccurate and contradictory use of the term 'Stoic' in discussions of the play is summarised and criticised by Gilles D. Monsarrat, *Light from the Porch: Stoicism and English Renaissance Literature*, 1984, pp. 139–44.

⁵⁴ See, for example, Knight, *The Imperial Theme*, pp. 45–50, and Foakes, 'An approach', pp. 261–2.

⁵⁵ See, for example, Knight, *The Imperial Theme*, pp. 40–2.

⁵⁶ H. N. Hudson, *Shakespeare: His Life, Art, and Characters*, 2 vols., 1872, 234.

⁵⁷ See above, p. 21.

⁵⁸ A favourite appellation, perhaps but not convincingly traceable to the braggart Hercules of the Senecan tradition; see Ayres, 'Julius Caesar', esp. pp. 202–12.

⁵⁹ Hudson, *Shakespeare*, II, 237.

⁶⁰ Dowden, *Shakspeare*, p. 285.

⁶¹ Stapfer, *Classical Antiquity*, p. 328.

⁶² See, for example, Waldo F. McNeir, *Shakespeare's 'Julius Caesar': A Tragedy without a Hero*, 1970, p. 52.

⁶³ See, for example, Foakes, 'An approach', p. 270.

⁶⁴ Mark Hunter, 'Politics and character in Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar"', in *EDH, Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature*, n.s. 10 (1931), 114.

⁶⁵ Gustav Freytag, *Die Technik des Dramas*, 1894, p. 221. The German text reads: 'Wer hat Recht? Jeder von ihnen.'

⁶⁶ Ernest Schanzer, *The Problem Plays of Shakespeare*, 1963, p. 6 (developed from his 'The problem of *Julius Caesar*', *SQ* 6 (1955), 297–308).

⁶⁷ Mildred E. Hartsock, 'The complexity of *Julius Caesar*', *PMLA* 81 (1966), 61.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 56. Hartsock summarises some of the leading views of Caesar as person and political force (pp. 56–7).

⁶⁹ A useful brief summary of opinions concerning Brutus, for example, is given by Spencer, '*Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*', p. 208. More recent and representative views may be found in Levitsky, "'The elements'", p. 241: 'We repeatedly see in Brutus the purity of motive, steadfastness of purpose, and strength of will characteristic of the Stoic, mixed with a tendency toward human passion and compassion which render him more vulnerable to suffering but also more lovable than the obdurate Caesar'; in J. L. Simmons, *Shakespeare's Pagan World: The Roman Tragedies*, 1974, p. 69: 'The moral schizophrenia that Brutus manifests when he translates the ideal into action seems to be derived from Plutarch's inchoate paradox'; in E. A. J. Honigmann, *Shakespeare: Seven Tragedies*, 1976, p. 33: 'Shakespeare turned Brutus into an intellectual hideously corrupted by high-mindedness'; and in Richard A. Levin, 'Brutus: "Noblest Roman of them all"', *BSUF* 23 (1982), 16: 'Brutus merely has too much of the natural human desire to think well of oneself; refusing to see his own faults, he lets them run free . . . satisfying his conscience . . . by protesting his virtue too strongly and by finding socially approved forms for his destructive emotions; his public-mindedness conceals personal envy.'

⁷⁰ This survey is greatly indebted to John Ripley's detailed study '*Julius Caesar*' on Stage in England and America, 1599–1973, 1980. For the date of the first performance, see p. 3 above.

⁷¹ Ludwig Tieck, *Dramaturgische Blätter*, 3 vols., 1826, III, 3–4; Arthur Colby Sprague, *Shakespeare and the Actors*, 1948, p. xxii.

⁷² For a contemporary account of Betterton's acting powers, see *An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber*, ed. B. R. S. Fone, 1968, pp. 59–70; the passage on Betterton's rendering of Brutus, quoted by Ripley, p. 20, can be found on p. 62 of the *Apology*.

⁷³ Some texts follow the original in having Brutus address two friends in turn, but follow the Dryden–Davenant version in making the essential alteration of having both reject Brutus's request.

⁷⁴ Ripley quotes Francis Gentleman, who recalled an instance of 'wretched buffoonery on the part of the comedians: to while away their time on stage they diverted themselves and the audience with taking Antony's metaphorical language during the Forum speech – 'lend me your ears!' (3.2.65), for instance – literally (p. 37).

⁷⁵ Samuel Phelps, who had only a modest budget at his disposal for his productions at Sadler's Wells from 1846 to 1862, nevertheless felt he could not do without '32 plebeians, 6 boys, 4 priests, 6 senators . . . 12 guards with spears, 12 guards with fasces, and 7 ladies' (Ripley, p. 96). Herbert Beerbohm Tree's record number of approximately 250 supers on the stage of Her Majesty's in 1898 was surpassed in this century only by a gigantic *Julius Caesar* at the Beechwood Amphitheatre near Los

Angeles, which was forced to make use of multiple stages in order to accommodate 5,000 actors and supers (see *The Christian Science Monitor* of 23 May 1916, referred to in Ripley, pp. 221, 338).

⁷⁶ Ed. Robert R. Wark, 1959, no. 3, pp. 44–5, 50.

⁷⁷ Kemble inserts this apostrophe at 5.5.50, retaining the second half of the line ('Caesar . . . still') and the following one. For the entire death-speech, see Ripley, p. 54. There is also a facsimile reproduction of Kemble's 1814 acting-version published in 1970.

⁷⁸ The comparison of the assassination to a formal ballet was made by Ludwig Tieck in 1817 and can be found in *Dramaturgische Blätter*, III, 10–11. He thought the staging of this scene 'most strange' and 'grotesque', but sought the reason for this arrangement partly in the depth and height of the stage.

⁷⁹ For the Saxe-Meiningen company, see Robert Speaight, *Shakespeare on the Stage*, 1973, pp. 108–12, but esp. p. 108, and Michael R. Booth, 'The Meininger Company and English Shakespeare', *S.Sur.* 35 (1982), 13–20.

⁸⁰ For a detailed account of this scene, see Ripley, pp. 155–7.

⁸¹ For instance, Tree had Calpurnia enter as Antony prepared to carry Caesar's body out of the Senate, seemingly imploring him through her gestures to revenge her husband's violent death – a device which, as George Bernard Shaw conceded, produced an 'effective curtain', even if it seemed slightly melodramatic (*Our Theatres in the Nineties*, 3 vols., 1932, 111, 300–1).

⁸² *Our Theatres*, III, 302.

⁸³ In her study, *Shakespeare in America*, 1939, pp. 132–48, Esther Cloudman Dunn analyses the mentality and expectations of the American playgoer of the first half of the nineteenth century.

⁸⁴ In addition to Ripley, pp. 115–39, see Charles H. Shattuck, *Shakespeare on the American Stage*, 1976, pp. 145–7.

⁸⁵ See Shattuck, *American Stage*, p. 146.

⁸⁶ See Ripley, p. 200, for Bridges-Adams's explanation of this cut.

⁸⁷ Quoted in Ripley, p. 222.

⁸⁸ Ripley, p. 260. See also Samuel L. Leiter (ed.), *Shakespeare Around the Globe: A Guide to Notable Postwar Revivals*, 1986, pp. 271–2.

⁸⁹ J. C. Trewin, 'The Old Vic and Stratford-upon-Avon, 1961–1962', *SQ* 13 (1962), 510.

⁹⁰ Trewin's remark was especially devastating – '*Julius Caesar* . . . seemed to be about some minor plot in an unimportant hole or corner' (*Shakespeare on the English Stage 1900–1964*, 1964, p. 250) – but Robert Speaight considered speech and characterisation unfairly condemned, although he too criticised a good many aspects ('Shakespeare in Britain', *SQ* 14 (1963), 425–7).

⁹¹ See, for instance, Benedict Nightingale, *The New Statesman and Nation*, 12 May 1972, quoted in Leiter, *Around the Globe*, p. 274.

⁹² Leiter, *Around the Globe*, p. 274.

⁹³ W. R. Streitberger, 'Shakespeare in the Northwest: Ashland and Seattle', *SQ* 34 (1983), 348.

⁹⁴ See J. C. Trewin, 'Shakespeare in Britain', *SQ* 29 (1978), 218, for one such failed attempt.

⁹⁵ See Leiter, *Around the Globe*, p. 264.

⁹⁶ Ripley, p. 266.

⁹⁷ Speaight, 'Shakespeare in Britain', *SQ* 19 (1968), 373–4.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 374.

⁹⁹ Trewin, 'Shakespeare in Britain', p. 217.

¹⁰⁰ Ralph Berry, 'Stratford Festival Canada', *SQ* 30 (1979), 170.

¹⁰¹ Catherine R. Lewis, 'Shakespeare in Louisville', *SQ* 31 (1980), 228. (By 'non-taskforce member' the reviewer meant 'old-fashioned individual entrepreneur'.)

¹⁰² *Shakespeare in America*, p. 306.

Recent Film, Stage and Critical Interpretations

by Marga Munkelt

Recent critical approaches

Surveys

The critical reception of *Julius Caesar* in the last fifteen years has, to a large extent, continued the pursuit of questions raised earlier. There are a number of surveys viewing the play from all angles – the textual history, the use of sources, structural and thematic aspects, critical studies, and the stage history. Most of these are not fresh interpretations of the play but surveys of scholarship. Jo McMurty's '*Julius Caesar*': *A Guide to the Play*¹ is valuable because the author, in the section on 'Critical Approaches' (pp. 85–98), not only identifies and classifies the approaches under the headings 'traditional' or 'postmodern', 'old and new historicist', 'feminist' or 'homosexual', but also advances short definitions of these terms, whereas Richard Wilson's *Julius Caesar*² is restricted to a new historicist approach throughout and Vivian Thomas's *Julius Caesar*³ offers a traditional (close and analytical) reading⁴ – a helpful study guide although it sometimes tends towards oversimplification. Derrick Thomas,⁵ in his *Understanding Shakespeare's 'Julius Caesar'*, focuses less on the play itself than on the availability of historical documents and textual analogues for use in the classroom. Two substantial articles evaluate the critical reception of the play – John W. Velz's '*Julius Caesar* 1937–1997: where we are; how we got there',⁶ surveying interpretations in the twentieth century, and Stanley Wells's '*Julius Caesar* in its own time',⁷ discussing issues that were relevant at the time of composition.⁸

Genre / roots of tragedy / ritual

The inclusion of extra-literary disciplines in the attempt to define the nature of drama was developed in the 1950s by such eminent scholars as Northrop Frye (in nearly all his work) and C. L. Barber.⁹ Their approaches, based on cultural anthropology, have strongly influenced recent investigations of Shakespeare's tragedies in general and *Julius Caesar* in particular. The title of Naomi Conn Liebler's book, *Shakespeare's Festive Tragedy: The Ritual Foundations of Genre*¹⁰ announces its indebtedness to this line of research.

Her study is partly anticipated by François Laroque, who acknowledges the same tradition in his *Shakespeare's Festive World* and discusses all genres. The foundations of drama are located in rituals, captured in the word *festive*, which is not a synonym of 'merry', as Liebler stresses, but derived from Latin *festum* ('feast'), which 'incorporates the sacramental, patterned, and entirely serious functions and meaning of ritual as communal activity' (p. 12). Liebler's third chapter, 'The Ritual Groundwork' (pp. 51–111), is devoted to *Richard ii* and *Julius Caesar*.¹¹ The feast of Lupercal is at the core of Shakespeare's play: beyond its function as a fertility ritual in 1.2, it is recalled in Brutus's justification of the assassination as an act of purgation, in the presentation of Caesar's death as sacrifice, and in the fact that Brutus, too, is ready to sacrifice himself (3.2.37–39).¹²

The connection between ritual as 'communal activity' and theatre is significant throughout the play in the evident awareness among the dramatis personae that what they are and do is personal and theatrical at the same time. Casca's account of Caesar's epileptic fall is only one example of the many metatheatrical references in the play (1.2.252–4). This connection between ritual and theatricality is elaborated by Anthony Dawson's remark that 'the assassination is the model for a potentially infinite series of future enactments, in both the actual world and on the stage'.¹³ He sees a 'Eucharistic valence' (p. 58) in the blood bath.¹⁴

Edward Tetsuya Motohashi¹⁵ and Robert F. Willson, Jr.¹⁶ are concerned with the political, sociological and topical experiences in the theatre which they find especially resonant in the assassination and forum scenes (Willson) and in the proclamation scene (Motohashi). Krystyna Kujawinska-Courtney distinguishes the two (Aristotelian) artistic strategies *mimesis* and *diegesis* (i.e., showing vs. telling) in *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus* and their effects on the audience.¹⁷

Contemporary contexts

As Robert S. Miola has pointed out, a 'cultural drift' is inevitable when classical works are transferred into a 'Judaean-Christian universe',¹⁸ and quite a few scholars have tackled this question by addressing the 'Romanness' of Shakespeare's Roman plays or that in the works of his contemporaries. Gary B. Miles¹⁹ touches particularly on the deficiencies but also on the positive possibilities of language translation: a word like *honorable*, for example, means clearly one thing in its Latin original (where *honorabilis* refers 'only to outward condition'),²⁰ but in English it can be made to yield wordplay and ambiguity when juxtaposed with *honest* – and is utilised by Antony in his forum speech to cast doubt on Brutus's character as 'honest' although he still possesses an 'honorable' position (p. 277).²¹

The development of Roman drama in early modern England and the Elizabethan and Jacobean adjustment of classical figures and themes to their own social, political and ethical concerns is presented by Uwe Baumann in his bipartite article ‘Das Drama der englischen Renaissance als politische Kunst: Die zeitgenössische Aktualität der Römerdramen.’²² The Caesar image in Shakespeare (as well as before and after Shakespeare) is discussed in Part I – with emphasis on the correspondence in both periods of the dangers of tyranny.²³ A closer attention to Roman values is paid by Clifford Ronan,²⁴ who arranges his book thematically, considering pride, rhetoric, blood-rites, stoicism and suicide, and he discusses the play as one of the forty-three extant early modern *Julius-Caesar* plays.

Claudia Corti sees Shakespeare’s play as a direct address to Queen Elizabeth I: as warning the monarch of ‘the danger of narcissistic and despotic temptation’²⁵ and doing so primarily by deflating the myth of Caesar’s greatness. Shakespeare presents Caesar as inconsistent – superstitious but simultaneously indifferent to Calpurnia’s warnings (p. 116) – and either omits the characteristics of Caesar that are used as symptoms of greatness in Plutarch or transforms them into weaknesses (such as his epilepsy, headaches and deafness).

Robin Headlam Wells²⁶ deals with the need to interpret history and the attendant difficulty of doing so. He refutes the assumption that Shakespeare, like Foucault, did not believe in the continuity of history by pointing to the frequency of parallels between Shakespeare’s Rome and Elizabethan England. As obvious examples he cites the resonance of the Sidney-Essex alliance in the conspiracy in Shakespeare’s play and the fact that ‘Essex’s querulous *Apologie*’ was published ‘just before Shakespeare wrote *Julius Caesar*’ (p. 210).

Sources, echoes and analogues

Source study has always been and continues to be a productive field in Shakespeare criticism. Vivian Thomas’s *Shakespeare’s Roman Worlds*²⁷ does not advance new investigations but summarises what has already been achieved. The focus is on Plutarch and, in Shakespeare’s plays (*Titus Andronicus*, *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus*), on character and theme. By the transformation of his sources, Shakespeare creates values shared by all Roman plays – such as valour, friendship, loyalty and constancy. Clifford J. Ronan draws on Lucan’s *Pharsalia* to elucidate the play’s civil-war images²⁸; in another source study,²⁹ Ronan finds two new ‘derivations’ from *Pharsalia*, one in 1.3.62–79, where Casca and Cassius muse about providence, the other in Calpurnia’s dream of Caesar’s statue spouting blood (2.2.75–9). Barbara Parker illustrates that Shakespeare used

Plato's *Republic* as source not only for the characterisation of Caesar and Brutus but also for some of the major themes, for instance the metaphor of moral deterioration which is caused 'by the perversions of the ruling principle in the state', for which the head of state is responsible.³⁰ Cynthia Marshall sees Shakespeare's transformation of Plutarch in his 'representation of an inner dimension of character'³¹ – particularly concerning the decision-making of Caesar and Brutus. Francis Teague's approach includes a comparison of Plutarch and Sidney's *Arcadia* with *Julius Caesar* and *King Lear*. Shakespeare deviates from his source by making the letter in *Julius Caesar* given by Cassius to Cinna (1.3.142–6) a forgery and later adopts this instance as 'source' for Edmund's forged letter in *Lear* 1.2. Teague also suggests that Cassius's corruption is thereby emphasised but also made worse by associating him with Edmund.³² Another such possible instance of Shakespeare's use of his own work as source is advanced by Daniel E. Gershenson, who points out that in Shakespeare's historical source Caesar dies silently and that the notorious last words 'Et tu, Brute?' are quoted, in fact, for the first time not in *Julius Caesar* but in *The True Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke* (Q1 1595; i.e., the 'bad' quarto of 3H6) and are originally borrowed from the anonymous *Caesar's Revenge*.³³

In a different kind of 'source' study, J. A. Bryant, Jr calls attention to those classical works which Shakespeare did not use as direct sources but which were 'somewhere in the back of his mind'.³⁴ Bryant suggests this was the case with *Hecuba* and *Phoenissae* by Euripides. He thinks that Euripides must have been Shakespeare's model for the idea of a sacrifice that turns out to have been made in vain. Bryant finds that the 'fragmentation of the traditional hero's role' is another Euripidean trait in *Julius Caesar* (p. 146).

A group of scholars has been occupied with detecting parallels between Shakespeare and his contemporaries (for this aspect, see Marvin Spevack's original Introduction above, pp. 5–6 and 12–13). Albert H. Tricomi, for example, compares the play with other Caesar-plays of the time – especially with Chapman's *Caesar and Pompey* – to set off Shakespeare's handling of providence from Chapman's.³⁵ Eric C. Brown discusses Shakespeare's indebtedness to Sidney's *Arcadia* – especially in terms of the centaur image³⁶ (in 4.1.31–3 he follows Sidney almost verbatim). Ian Donaldson compares Shakespeare's play with Ben Jonson's *Sejanus* and probes for indications of censorship. Although both plays represent different attitudes towards history and politics, they resemble each other in their concern 'with questions of interpretation: with how one interprets the past, and the present, and their relationship to one another'.³⁷ An example is 5.3.9–35 in *Julius Caesar*, where Cassius, because Pindarus misinterprets the state of the battle for him, commits suicide.³⁸

A link between Shakespeare's Rome and twentieth-century Germany is

forged by Günter Walch,³⁹ who describes (in an indirect way) political parallels between the presentation of dictatorship in the play and the regime in the German Democratic Republic (East Germany). Martin Orkin uses the apartheid regime in South Africa to ponder on possible traits in the play that might be used as justifications for the application of ‘state violence’.⁴⁰

Philosophy / Stoicism / suicide

The doubt entertained by some critics about the compatibility of suicide and Stoicism is often based on Brutus’s words in 5.1.100–7 when he criticises Cato for having committed suicide. Geoffrey Miles points out that in contrast to the historical Brutus, who was not a Stoic, Shakespeare’s Brutus is, but, due to the combination of Stoic elements from various sources, the term *constancy* seems preferable to Stoicism.⁴¹ Shakespeare’s Brutus combines, according to Miles, Seneca’s *constantia sapientis*, Cicero’s *decorum*, and elements of Plato’s philosophy and is, therefore, a representation of ‘Romanity’. On the one hand, constancy is set off against the background of change and uncertainty in the play (p. 127). On the other hand, however, Brutus’s problem is the ‘ambiguity of constancy as a principle’ i.e., ‘a steadfast sticking to one’s post’ in Plato’s sense, or the possible necessity for ‘a Senecan suicide’ in the Stoic sense (p. 126). Dominique Goy-Blanquet shifts the focus slightly to a discussion not only of reasons and justifications for suicide but also of ways of committing it – depending on the ‘various schools of philosophers’.⁴² Brutus’s censure of Cato’s death is a foreshadowing of the beginning of Christianity when suicide would be generally condemned. In Goy-Blanquet’s opinion, however, the play’s suicides are not nearly so significant as the identification of Caesar’s death as murder or butchery or sacrifice (p. 31).

Robert B. Pierce contrasts Brutus the Stoic with Cassius the Epicurean, but he stresses that neither of them is a model of their respective philosophies. Cassius’s deficiency is apparent when he shows an inclination towards omens (in 5.1.70–88, before the battle of Philippi), and Brutus’s ambiguity (the textual uncertainty notwithstanding) becomes apparent in his two opposing responses to Portia’s death.⁴³ Tetsuo Kishi, finally, calls attention to the fact that in a non-Christian culture suicide would not automatically entail eternal damnation. Japanese tragedies, both in *Kabuki* or in *Bunraku* style, often solve their tragic conflicts with one or more suicides at the end of the play.⁴⁴

Verbal and visual signals

Style in *Julius Caesar*, the language in the play and its connection with themes and characters as well as the linguistic distinction of public and private spheres – including their ‘reversability’ – has been discussed or

touched on in nearly all studies about the play (see Marvin Spevack's original Introduction above, pp. 17–19, 27–31). More recent studies have singled out the use of rhetoric (especially in the forum scene) to build up and perhaps exaggerate the contrast between Brutus and Antony. This interest coincides with a tendency in stage productions to endow Antony with characteristics that make him eligible to be seen as the hero of the play (a process initiated in the 1930s and 1950s with the Orson Welles and Joseph L. Mankiewicz films).⁴⁵

The fullest rhetorical analysis is offered by Wolfgang A. Müller,⁴⁶ who examines Antony's rhetorical triumph over Brutus. Harold Fisch discusses Brutus's use of prose and sees his speech as a confession of his belief rather than a rhetorical tool,⁴⁷ whereas the language of Antony is manipulative.⁴⁸ Don J. Kramer, Jr.⁴⁹ points out that Antony and Brutus use the same rhetorical figure, amplification, for different purposes but quite in character with their different functions in the play: they '[showcase] Quintilian's distinction between ethos and pathos' (p. 169).⁵⁰

Martin Orkin⁵¹ focuses on proverb allusions as a contribution 'to character formation' in the play to show how their alleged truth can be abused for political manipulation. Antony makes rich use of proverbs or sententious sayings in his forum speech to give weight to his statements (pp. 215–16), but so also do Caesar and Brutus. Orkin points out that although proverbs are generally thought 'to originate with the "people"', in *Julius Caesar* they are used as support mainly by the patricians (p. 228).

The body language in the play is discussed in several studies.⁵² The symbol of hands is exploited, as, for example, in Casca's 'Speak hands for me!' (3.1.76) while he stabs Caesar. In hindsight, the gesture of handshaking can lose its unambiguous note of courtesy, friendship, agreement or reconciliation, as is shown in Cassius's and Brutus's quarrel when they accuse each other of having violated each other's trust. Also Caesar's embrace of Brutus as Brutus stabs him is such a signal with two meanings. (See below, pp. 62–63, for the various stagings of this moment as either a fight or an embrace.) A history of the hand as a cultural symbol since classical antiquity is conclusively presented by Michael Neill,⁵³ who calls attention to the association of hand and mind – not only in early modern punishments in the form of hand amputations but also in the association of poets with their work. Neill refers, among other examples, to Sonnet 65 and to the dedicatory material in *F1* ('To the Great Variety of Readers'), where it is stressed that Shakespeare's 'mind and hand went together'. To Neill it is significant that the most expressive hand-references in *Julius Caesar*, in Calpurnia's dream and in the 'hand-washing ritual' after the assassination, are invented by Shakespeare and not found in his sources (pp. 35–6).

Character / gender / class

Discussions of who is the protagonist of *Julius Caesar* (the titular hero or Brutus) have been numerous (see Marvin Spevack's original Introduction above, pp. 27–31) and are still of current interest.⁵⁴ Peter Thomson⁵⁵ points out that Brutus is not well-versed in the 'art' of decision-making: nearly all his decisions turn out to be wrong; Barbara Arnett Melchiori⁵⁶ labels him as almost a fool. Fumio Yoshioka⁵⁷ takes Brutus's reference to the 'weakness of [his] eyes' (4.3.276–7), when he tries to ignore the appearance of Caesar's ghost, to be symptomatic of an inability to perceive things and persons as they really are. The failure to understand is, for John E. Cunningham,⁵⁸ a reason for classifying Brutus, despite his Roman qualities, as someone without insight.

Julius Caesar is a tragedy of misunderstandings, of miscalculations, and of the abuse of misunderstandings, says Wolfgang Baumgart.⁵⁹ He demonstrates these qualities in Brutus and Mark Antony. Significantly, Brutus's understanding of friendship and service induces him to sacrifice Caesar and his own love-friendship for the common good (pp. 102–3). Harry Keyishian⁶⁰ emphasises that the reason for Antony's vindictiveness is embarrassment due to his wrong assessment of Cassius (1.2.196–7); in his destructive manipulation of the plebeians Antony is similar to Iago (p. 93) – an interpretation supported by several recent stage productions (see below, p. 64). In contrast to other critics, Keyishian does not attribute Cassius's suicide to personal failures but to the power of providence. The fact that Caesar's ghost appears only to Brutus and not to the other conspirators illustrates Caesar's wish for revenge, motivated by his disappointment in his friend (p. 91) – a view not supported in those stage productions that stage Caesar's murder as a last embrace with Brutus (see below, p. 63).

As is generally assumed, women were not represented by women on the Elizabethan stage. Twentieth-century stage productions have often 'amended' this absence of actresses but have also experimented with reconstructions of early modern stage conditions (see below, pp. 65–7). Women in *Julius Caesar* are scarce, and the two scenes in which they appear, Portia in 2.1 and Calpurnia in 1.2 and 2.2, have appropriately been interpreted as domestic scenes, intended to give insight into the private lives of Brutus and Caesar respectively (see Marvin Spevack's original Introduction above, pp. 17–18).

More recent interpretations have approached the function and presentation of women from new angles although some of them draw on observations made centuries ago. Mary Hamer,⁶¹ for example, reproduces a woodcut (which she identifies as 'probably the earliest visual account of Caesar's murder to be circulated widely in Europe') from Boccaccio's *Lives of Famous Women* (ed. 1473) and uses it as an epigraph to set the tone for her book. The

three situations shown in the woodcut appear to be of equal significance. Caesar's murder, presented in the centre (with Brutus stabbing Caesar who is held by Cassius), is framed by Portia and Brutus, as a couple, on the left, whereas on the right, Portia is shown wounding herself. 'This image', says Hamer, 'invites readers to compare the treachery that Caesar encounters with the attacks that Portia makes on her own body.' Hamer calls attention to the silence of the women in this play and even more the lack of interaction between them. Thus, she argues, Shakespeare does not advocate but rather exposes the misogynist society to which it belongs (pp. 27–8). Shakespeare also shows the two women as different individuals in their different responses to their husbands: while Portia accepts Brutus's plan, Calpurnia resists Caesar's decision.

Naomi Conn Liebler⁶² focuses on Portia, demonstrating that although Shakespeare varies and changes his Plutarchian source in several ways, he adopts nearly verbatim 'what is arguably the most "feminist" line he ever gave to a male character: "O ye gods! Render me worthy of this noble wife!"' (2.1.302–3). Likewise Shakespeare did not alter the manner of Portia's death (reported in 4.3.152–6), and it is significant to note that, whereas in Graeco-Roman tragedies men usually die by stabbing, women traditionally die 'by strangulation, suffocation, or poison, which leave no unsightly marks on the female body to offend the survivors' eyes, and which, moreover, [may] close off the body's passages for air and speech' (p. 19). In wounding herself and fighting Brutus's silence afterwards, Portia demonstrates her 'Stoic upbringing', and also her death is 'excruciatingly Stoical' in that it guarantees the truth of her promise, 'Can I bear that with patience / And not my husband's secrets?' (2.1.301–2).⁶³ Wolfgang Müller's approach, more rhetorical than visual, emphasises that Portia, although she knows her traditional assignment, does not accept it. The novelty consists in her awareness of her situation and her attempt at defining herself.⁶⁴

Gail Kern Paster⁶⁵ examines the bodily signs of blood and bleeding in *Julius Caesar* with the aim of reconstructing early modern views of the male and female bodies and their connotations of gender difference. Her discussion emanates from and expands Maurice Charney's examination of blood imagery in the play. Paster uses standard Renaissance analogues to distinguish bodily fluids of men and women: female (menstrual) bleeding is involuntary whereas male bleeding is planned and voluntary. Accordingly, she argues, Portia's and Caesar's gender reversal in the play becomes apparent when one juxtaposes the moment when Caesar is stabbed and bleeds to death with the imagined moment when Portia inflicts a bleeding wound on herself. Paster asserts that Caesar, like Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus*, 'cannot prevent his political victimization' and needs others to explain the meanings of his bleeding (p. 290), whereas Portia speaks her own explanation. In Paster's view, several

other images applied to Caesar – for example, Decius Brutus’s re-interpretation of Calpurnia’s dream (2.2.85–9) – can be seen as a feminisation of Caesar.⁶⁶

In her important book, *Roman Shakespeare: Warriors, Wounds, and Women*, Coppélia Kahn identifies the quality of Romanness in Shakespeare’s Roman plays as *virtus*, which, in turn, is associated with masculinity and heroic action; its female counterpart is chastity, which ‘is what makes women socially valuable in Roman patriarchy’.⁶⁷ In *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Titus Andronicus*, women are aware of and draw attention to these social demands. Moreover, Portia is, as Kahn demonstrates, neither the one nor the other but constructs herself as a being with the idealised qualities of both genders.

Today, discussions of gender nearly always go together with those of race and class. Race is not really an issue in *Julius Caesar* (except in colour-blind performances) whereas class is – or rather could be. As Ralph Berry has pointed out, class plays a decisive role in the play – not, however, in terms of identifying the social strata in Rome but rather as regards the degrees of nobility within the elite of the patricians.⁶⁸ Jerald W. Spotswood adds that while the senators are individuals with proper names, the plebeians are, if identified at all, named by their occupations. Spotswood also notices a treatment of the lower classes that is similar to the presentation of women: both groups serve to let the ruling class appear more powerful.⁶⁹ In his article “‘Passion, I see, is catching’: The Rhetoric of *Julius Caesar*”,⁷⁰ Michael Mooney sees the plebeians not at all as Romans, but ‘as English workingmen’ who are used by Shakespeare to establish ‘a relation between the world of the spectators and the world of the play’ (p. 32). This means that both groups ‘make holiday to see Caesar’ (1.1.29) – the workmen in the play to see their emperor, the spectators in the auditorium to see the play about this emperor (p. 32 and *passim*). In Thomas Moisan’s examination of ‘comic business’⁷¹ the line of argument is that although, often, in the ‘exchange between a social superior and his inferior wherein verbal misprision produces a comic impasse’ (p. 276), it is not the distinction of social status as such which is demonstrated but rather the opposite: the emphasis on the comedy is meant to ‘marginalize’ the class distinctions (p. 278).

Recent stage interpretations

Julius Caesar is often considered to be ‘one of Shakespeare’s driest works’ – not only because it is ‘a play that engages the brain but only rarely touches the heart’,⁷² but also because many people associate it with bad teaching in their schooldays or undergraduate years. These connotations do not, however, keep directors from staging the play. The schedules of the Royal Shakespeare

Company (RSC) indicate ‘previous productions at an average of every three or four years since the 1950s’.⁷³ In the years between 1978 and 1998, *Julius Caesar* is second among the eight most popular Shakespeare plays performed by the RSC.⁷⁴ The theatrical reception of the play in the twentieth century is less consistent in continental Europe than in Great Britain and North America. In Germany, for example, *Julius Caesar* was among the most frequently staged plays during and after the Nazi era⁷⁵ but its popularity has subsided considerably, and reviews of Dutch, French, and German productions often qualify the play as ‘rarely put on stage’. Despite the play’s reputed ‘dryness’, the stage productions of the last fifteen years reveal a surprising degree of innovation and experimentation. Even though not all attempts are convincing, they, nevertheless, invariably result in the encouragement of fresh thoughts and insights.

Historical references

Quite a few modern productions use stage designs and/or costumes to provide Roman or Italian backgrounds for their stage interpretations. Not infrequently, the time of composition and the time of the dramatic action are combined to form a historical context of ‘Renaissance Italy rather than Caesar’s’,⁷⁶ as in Steven Pimlott’s production of 1991 at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford (RST); an interval of 35 minutes was necessary to remove the heavy, elaborate set of Acts 3 with which ‘the production looks back to Classical Rome through an Italian Renaissance frame’.⁷⁷ The designer for Peter Hall’s RSC production (1995 in Stratford and 1996 at the Barbican in London) created an ‘epic black-and-red Rome, with towering walls, great flights of stairs sliding in and out, giant golden emblems of empire, a band playing curly Roman trumpets’.⁷⁸ But at the Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival of 1997 at Allentown College, the play was ‘set in Rome 44 BC’: the stage was ‘flanked by two enormous oyster white columns. From the one on the left, a horizontal beam [projected] half way across the stage, on it the letters SPQA [i.e., Senatus Populusque Allentown].’⁷⁹

Political analogues

Bertolt Brecht’s opinion that classical plays cannot continue to exist unless their ideas are re-evaluated or reshaped⁸⁰ has been followed in many twentieth-century stagings of *Julius Caesar*. Directors have tried ‘to find a context for Rome that has meaning for contemporary audiences and also relates to the world of the Renaissance’.⁸¹ Since the 1930s, it has become customary to suggest analogues with political personalities, situations, or issues. Politicians like Mussolini or Hitler, Charles de Gaulle, Fidel Castro, Tito and Ceausescu – or even Margaret Thatcher (in Ron Phillips’s adaptation

performed at the Barons Court Theatre, London, 1993), who was thought by some to be ‘the archetypal Caesar’⁸² – have been used as models for updated Caesars (and sometimes also for updated conspirators)⁸³ in the theatre. In David Thacker’s 1993 production at The Other Place (Stratford-upon-Avon), Caesar was ‘a silver-haired Ceausescu figure’,⁸⁴ and the programme notes additionally informed the audience about the ‘political thrust’ of the production, i.e., ‘various political uprisings from 1985 to 1993 in Poland, the USSR, the Philippines, China, Czechoslovakia, Chile, Haiti, and other countries, along with striking photographs of revolutionary moments in Berlin, Prague, Beijing, and Romania – all in 1989.’⁸⁵

The play’s concern with power, moral values, and honour was sometimes presented before a background of criminality and political corruption without exactly identifying time, place, and persons – so as to make it more universally valid. Such a suggestion was made in the 2002 production at the Chicago Shakespeare Theatre (CST) directed by Barbara Gaines. The costumes had a Mafia look, and Caesar and Mark Antony were identified as military dictators.⁸⁶ Features of the twentieth century (the sound of jet bombers, for example) were combined with national details in the production of *Aluin* at the Akademietheater Utrecht (1999), where citizens were waving little orange flags as if they were in a soccer stadium.⁸⁷ The association of Caesar, Cassius, Brutus, and Antony with modern mafia bosses was reinforced by music from *The Godfather*.⁸⁸ The use of microphones and tape recorders for soliloquies and of television sets for the forum speeches of Brutus and Antony (3.1) emphasised twentieth-century characteristics here as well as in several other productions.

In some revivals of *Julius Caesar*, parallels were established with regional or local politics. Thus, the production by Chicspeare at the TinFish Theatre, Chicago (1998) used a recording of ‘Sweet Home Chicago’⁸⁹ to identify the place as Chicago; it recalled the racial conflicts of the 1980s by casting ‘blacks in the roles of Caesar and his supporters and whites as his assassins’.⁹⁰ Spectators of a Dutch performance of the play by Het Nationale Toneel at the Nieuwe Stadhuis van Den Haag (September 1995) experienced a moment of political agitation when two citizens of the Hague, who had been hired as extras for the crowd scenes, used the tumults during Caesar’s assassination (3.1) to step out of their roles and protest against recent decisions of their city parliament.⁹¹

Key properties

Irrespective of whether their sets were modern or historical or whether they were undefined and timeless, most productions of *Julius Caesar* in the last fifteen years have made ample use of visual or acoustic devices to underline

their concepts. It has, for example, become customary to have a statue of Caesar on stage – sometimes throughout the entire play, sometimes in the two acts after his death – to demonstrate that the assassins have freed themselves of Caesar’s body but not of his spirit. This way, Caesar’s statue anticipates the appearance of his ghost to Brutus (4.3) and proves visibly true what Brutus says before the final fight: ‘O Julius Caesar, thou art mighty yet, / Thy spirit walks abroad and turns our swords / In our own proper entrails’ (5.3.94–6).

More ingenious variations of the statue device suggested the inevitability of destruction or death in favour of the birth of something new. At the Stratford (Ontario) Festival 1998, ‘a huge Bread and Puppet Theatre style Caesar puppet’ appeared as Caesar’s ghost in 4.3, and when Brutus asked it to speak, it became Caesar again – dressed, however, ‘like a common man’.⁹² The production at the Guthrie Theatre, Minneapolis, 1999 ‘[opened] with a statue of the Roman leader in the square, and [concluded] with a new Caesar rising from the masses – at the very same spot on the stage’.⁹³ At the Alabama Shakespeare Festival 2001, instead of Caesar’s bust, ‘a large gold wreath bisected by a horizontal spear of the same color, on which the name CAESAR was displayed, dominated the set. The same name was written many times on the back wall, apparently ascending stair-like from stage right to left, but the dim light never showed more than the bottom two rows. The point, of course, was that . . . Caesar would dominate the play and the consciousness of all the participants in the story.’⁹⁴

A statement on Caesar’s claim of greatness – visible only to himself and Antony – was made in Peter Hall’s production (RST 1995 and Barbican 1996), which used the projection of a giant head of Caesar on a screen (see illustration 19)⁹⁵ – and which was perhaps anticipated by the ‘projected imprint of Caesar’s body’⁹⁶ in Terry Hands’s 1987 production. It seems that the striking dissimilarity between Hall’s Caesar and the picture of his head illustrated the idea that Caesar was ‘less than the pretence’ of his greatness.⁹⁷ The contrast between image and man was also the point in a performance of the play at the Festival D’Automne in Paris, 2001, in which Antony’s forum speech received visual comments from a bust of Caesar that descended from the flies ‘upside down’ and which the ‘small corpse of the emperor’ when Antony mentioned ‘great Caesar’⁹⁸ contrasted.

The crowds

In *Julius Caesar*, the people of Rome, collectively, have been seen as of major importance, even as rivalling Caesar, Brutus or Antony. The two crowd scenes (3.2 and 3.3) have been good for experiments in nearly all productions, and especially the interaction in 3.2 of the forum speakers with the crowd has always been one of the main concerns of productions on stage. A traditional

presentation of the people as ‘fickle’ and easily swayed was given in Peter Stein’s production in 1991 (revived for the Salzburg Festival in 1992 and for the Edinburgh Festival in 1993). For the gigantic stage of the Felsenreitschule in Salzburg, Stein recruited more than one hundred extras as the people of Rome. In 3.2, in which the Folio text indicates frequent interjections of plebeians as well as visible signs of mutiny, Stein handled the uncontrollable mob in such a controlled way as to be reminiscent of Max Reinhardt’s or Fritz Lang’s choreographies.⁹⁹



19 Mark Antony, Octavius and the dead Brutus before a backdrop with Caesar’s head in the 1995/6 production at the RST Stratford/Barbican London, directed by Sir Peter Hall

In less traditional stagings, as, for example in Terry Hands’s production (RST 1987), no crowds were visible on stage but, instead, were created acoustically by ‘quadrophonic sounds of cheering . . . from the back of the theatre’ and ‘a prerecorded chorus of “The will! The will!” . . . ’¹⁰⁰ J. C.

Trewin¹⁰¹ and Michael Billington¹⁰² complained that the forum scene ‘is meaningless unless we can see [Antony] exercise his demagogic skill on actual people.’¹⁰³ Antony’s demagogy showed the opposite effect in Peter Hall’s production (RST 1995), where the crowd – ‘fifty “extra”-Citizens of Rome, Senators and Soldiers drawn from the citizens of Stratford’¹⁰⁴ – was visible but not heard. The tenor of the forum scene was even more drastically altered in the yoked performance of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* at the Alley Theatre, Houston 1996 (directed by Corin Redgrave), where Antony gave his funeral oration surrounded by plebeians who ignored Antony while preparing Caesar’s body for burial.¹⁰⁵ This action, accompanied by a ‘stony collective silence,’¹⁰⁶ indicated the absolute failure of Antony’s rhetoric. In the Stratford (Ontario) Festival of 1998, the citizens were wearing masks that turned them into a ““faceless” mob.’¹⁰⁷ What all these experiments have in common is an emphasis on the unpredictability of mass response – not so much in the uncontrollable chaos invited by the printed text as in the incalculable quality of the reaction.

Audience involvement

Not infrequently, crowds have been created in recent productions by placing actors among the spectators in the auditorium. Examples of this practice are Joe Dowling’s production at the Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis 1999, Edward Hall’s production at the RST in 2001, and Barbara Gaines’s revival at the Chicago Shakespeare Theatre in 2002.¹⁰⁸ Often, however, this innovation seems to have been induced by necessity.

The spectators in Shakespeare’s time and theatre had a dual role of observing and being observed, because plays were performed in daylight and actors and audience were able to see one another throughout the performance.¹⁰⁹ In the anniversary production of *Julius Caesar* at the London New Globe (1999), the same conditions were re-created, and Andrew Gurr found the almost automatic identification of the groundlings with the ‘ordinary Roman citizens . . . right and inevitable’.¹¹⁰ The active involvement of the groundlings, however, was, according to Gurr, ‘not Shakespeare’s way’,¹¹¹ and John Peter pointed out that the so-called audience-involvement was ‘really only a way of making audiences feel coyly self-conscious: the very opposite of involvement’.¹¹²

Audience involvement of a different kind has been used to adjust the political issues of the play to current situations. Spectators in the *Julius Caesar* performance of the Tygres Heart Shakespeare Company (Portland, 1998), for example, automatically became involved in an American-style election campaign, when ‘along with programs, ushers handed out buttons proclaiming “Julius Caesar for Rome”, which most spectators promptly

pinned to their clothing and wore throughout the play. Spectators thus became supporters of the candidate they were about to see on the “public stage” . . . ¹¹³ In the first scene, the cobbler, in addition, encouraged the audience ‘to shout for Caesar’, and in 1.2, Caesar, the candidate, appeared with members of his entourage and shook hands with spectators. ¹¹⁴

Violence/Caesar’s death

A relish for blood and violence has been noticeable in recent revivals of the play. In Peter Hall’s production (RST 1995), for example, Caesar’s and Cinna’s murders (3.1. and 3.3) were particularly bloody and violent – exceeded by Edward Hall’s production (RST 2001), where Cinna the Poet was strung up by the heels and a ‘woman cut some organ from his belly’. ¹¹⁵ It is not quite clear whether the ‘running wound’ ¹¹⁶ on Portia’s thigh in 2.1 of the 1995 production was intended to call attention to such feminist issues as explored by Liebler and Paster (see above, pp. 54–5).

Several recent productions use the manner of Caesar’s death to comment on the various secret motivations of the conspirators, on the one hand, and on Caesar’s and Brutus’s personal relationship, on the other. In Steven Pimlott’s production, Caesar, played by Robert Stephens (RST 1991), was presented as a natural human animal: he ‘[went] down fighting, pulling a knife on his assassins and staggering round the stage with the lingering menace of a wounded bull’. ¹¹⁷ In the production at Central Park, New York (2000), Caesar likewise ‘broke free from the attacking senators’, but when he embraced Brutus and asked ‘Et tu, Brute?’, ‘it was . . . a dignified and resigned acknowledgment of the inevitable’. ¹¹⁸

By contrast, Caesar not only refrained from fighting for his life in a number of productions but invited the last blow given him. ¹¹⁹ This presentation of Caesar’s death shifts the play’s dichotomy of private and public concerns in favour of the private and, in addition, reduces Brutus’s stature. The sight of Caesar defending his life against the other conspirators in order to welcome Brutus’s deathblow especially illustrates this point. In the production at the Alley Theatre, Houston (1996), a senile and grumpy Caesar fought for his life ¹²⁰ and then spoke his ‘Et tu, Brute’ *before* Brutus stabbed him – as if he wanted to save himself for his friend.

In two productions, Caesar sacrificed himself *only* for Brutus – as if to help him finish his task: At the Pennsylvania Festival 1997, he opened his arms and ‘[impaled] himself on Brutus’ knife in the act of embracing his assassin’, ¹²¹ and in the production by the Judith Shakespeare Company at the Mint Space, New York (in 1990 and 2000), Caesar ‘[ran] himself on Brutus’ dagger, dying . . . more as a suicide than a victim of murder’. ¹²² In Edward Hall’s revival of *Julius Caesar* at the RST in 2001, by contrast, the first

senator stabbed Caesar in the back,¹²³ exposing the act as cowardly, and at the Alabama Festival 2001, it was an underhand Brutus who stabbed Caesar in the back during Caesar's embrace.¹²⁴

The two most opposing renditions of Caesar's death were David Thacker's (*The Other Place* at Stratford-upon-Avon, 1993) and the Festival D'Automne at Paris, 2001. In the former, Caesar's murder became to those spectators who were involved, 'not an efficient ritualized sacrifice but clumsy, awkward butchery by men inexperienced in killing';¹²⁵ the latter enacted Caesar's murder as reminiscent of Christ's crucifixion, when a yellow neon cross was hung from the flies while the conspirators were washing Caesar's body and a woman dried his feet with her hair – and all 'to the accompaniment of religious choral music'.¹²⁶

Dramatis personae

Traditionally, non-Elizabethan Julius Caesars are cast as robust men, of middle age, with natural authority but also inclined to pleasure and passion, as Caesar's famous statement, 'Let me have men about me that are fat' (1.2.192), suggests. That his view (and that of his admirers) of himself as a 'Colossus', who 'doth bestride the narrow world' (1.2.135) does not coincide with what his opponents see in him becomes obvious in Cassius's account of Caesar's physical weaknesses (1.2.100–31).

Caesar's split identity – the arrogant tyrant vs. the trusting friend – is best summarised in his statement to Antony, 'I rather tell thee what is to be feared / Than what I fear: for always I am Caesar. / Come on my right hand, for this ear is deaf . . . ' (1.2.211–13); he is open with his friends, not self-conscious about his ailments. Cassius, who has a 'lean and hungry look' (1.2.194), is 'dangerous' (1.2.195) but also in need of moral support. Brutus is characterised as a modest, Stoic, honest thinker, but also as trusting as he is trustworthy (1.2.298–304), whereas Antony and Octavius are contrasted, the one as a charismatic lover of life (Antony), the other (Octavius) a cold, calculating lover of politics.

Only rarely were these concepts picked up in twentieth-century productions, but in David Thacker's production (1993 at *The Other Place*, Stratford-upon-Avon) and also Peter Hall's (1995 at the RST and 1996 at the Barbican) casting was according to type – in the latter with Julian Glover as Cassius and John Nettles as Brutus. A deviation in Peter Hall's production from traditional casting was Hugh Quarshie as Antony, whose colour, however, was not used to serve a multi-racial concept. But in another way Quarshie became the precursor of a new type of Antony: in the forum scene, Quarshie's Antony was miraculously transformed from Caesar's friend into a 'machavel using the will without ever making clear how the transition came

about'.¹²⁷ This new image of Antony made him nearly indistinguishable from the conspirators.

Antony's loss of ambiguity became symptomatic of several other productions as well as his interchangeability with others involved in the dirty business of politics. Actor Gert Voss as Antony in Peter Stein's production (Salzburg 1992) was a tactician without a vision; like other recent Antonys, he was a political actor.¹²⁸ The production at the Akademietheater Utrecht (1999) made Antony a Iago-type villain.¹²⁹ Antony as a calculating opportunist lost his ambiguity also at the Pennsylvania Festival of 1997, where he was presented as the 'master manipulator'.¹³⁰ Thus, he was seen to soak Caesar's cloak in the blood after the murder and before he '[revealed] the pierced and bloodied cloak that the dead man was not wearing at the time of the murder'.¹³¹

Examples of the protagonists' interchangeability made visible in recent productions of the play are numerous. Barry Lynch, the Antony in David Thacker's production in 1993 was, according to Daniel Watermeier, 'among . . . the most compelling',¹³² but Alastair Macaulay found he looked too much like Cassius.¹³³ In Peter Stein's production (Salzburg 1992 and Edinburgh 1993), the principle of similarity was applied by casting old men as the conspirators (Martin Benrath as Caesar; Thomas Holtzmann as Brutus; Hans Michael Rehberg as Cassius; Branko Samarowski as Casca), making them images of age and decay. The message was that old men were trying to re-establish an old political system, i.e., the old republic.¹³⁴ In the modern-dress production at Utrecht (1999), the senators' black suits and sun glasses not only suggested their Italian Mafia connections but also the characters' similarities: the protagonists were almost as interchangeable in their physiognomies as in their greed for power.¹³⁵

Blurred differences was also the line of the New York Festival production at Central Park in 2000.¹³⁶ Here, the similarity of the characters' motivations was paralleled by a levelling of time periods and cultures: the costumes suggested a 'semimodern period' of multiple origins and cultural orientation.¹³⁷ In order to avoid a confusion resulting from the intended interchangeability – especially of Brutus and Cassius – the latter used a British accent.¹³⁸

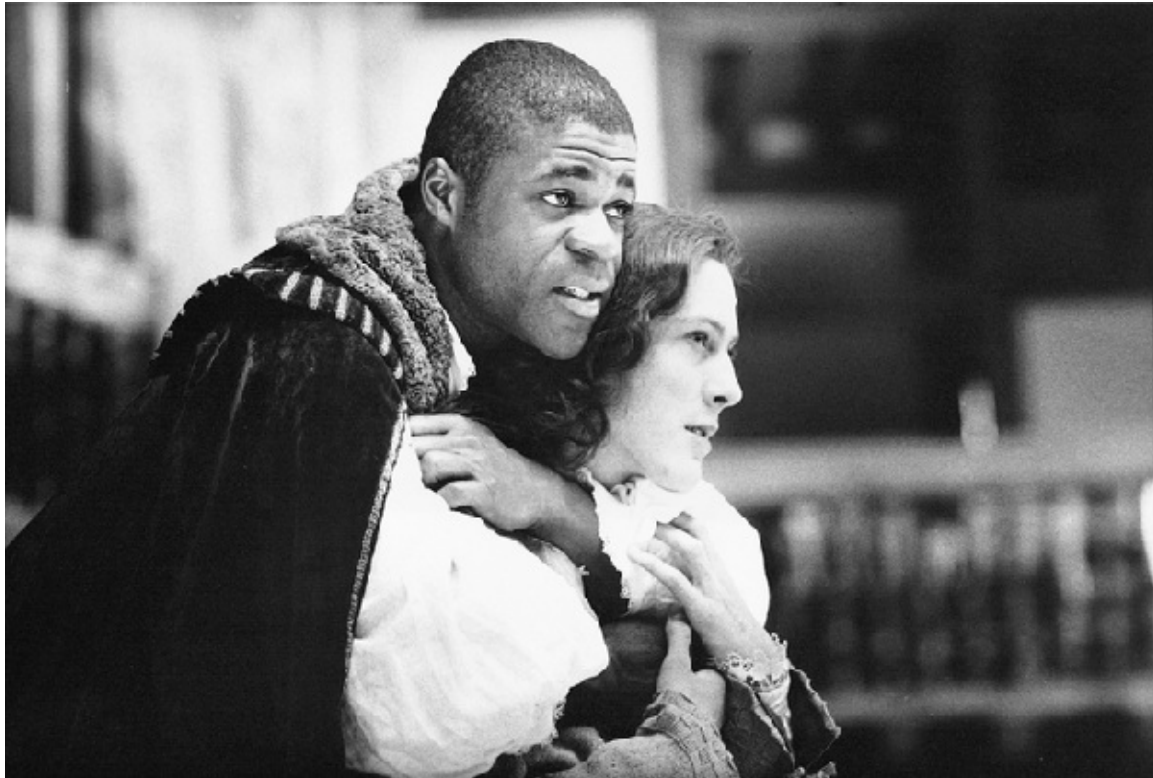
Provocative productions

A number of *Julius-Caesar* productions in the last decade were innovative in various respects and different ways. They had in common a non-traditional casting that was utilised for explorations and new interpretations of the play. Not always, however, were these renditions received in the intended manner. David Thacker did his production at The Other Place in Stratford (1993) in

the so-called promenade style – a style that ‘can be traced back to . . . medieval staging conventions’¹³⁹ and implies that the ‘spectators were invited to stand, sit, and walk more or less en masse, following the unfolding dramatic action as it moved to different parts of the theatre’.¹⁴⁰ This means that, in Brecht’s fashion, spectators were alienated by being reminded throughout the performance that they were watching a play and each other as well. A spectator concluded: ‘I’m not sure I was in Rome – Thacker sees the politics of the play as universal . . . impress[ing] upon us that this is documentary theatre.’¹⁴¹ A similar experience was created in another memorable production, the 1999 revival at the London New Globe.¹⁴² Director Mark Rylance adopted Elizabethan stage conditions on the reconstructed stage (illustration 20 shows the ‘groundlings’ surrounding the stage during Brutus’s soliloquies in his orchard in 2.1). Lois Potter summarises: in the performance of *Julius Caesar*, ‘some of [the] moments seemed so right that one might imagine them happening in the original Globe, but others clearly were not’.¹⁴³ Those moments that she thought were ‘not right’ included all the goings on with and around the participation of the audience in 1.1 and 3.2: Unlike Elizabethan audiences, twentieth-century spectators would not voluntarily shout Antony down during his oration – even ‘when egged on by the “Citizens” planted among them’, so that Antony did not have to shout either.¹⁴⁴



20 Brutus in his orchard in 2.1 on the stage of the London New Globe, with ‘groundlings,’ in the anniversary production 1999, directed by Mark Rylance



21 Danny Sapani as Brutus and Toby Cockerel as Portia in 2.1 of the all-male anniversary production at the London New Globe 1999, directed by Mark Rylance

Conforming with sixteenth-century acting conventions, the casting in the Globe revival involved men only. Although Lois Potter thought that ‘in the largely male *Julius Caesar* an all-male cast hardly makes any difference,’¹⁴⁵ the practice convincingly showed to current audiences that men made up as women do not have to look like Flute dressed up as Thisbe in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (illustration 21 shows Toby Cockerel as Portia and Danny Sapani as Brutus in 2.1). The multi-racial casting at the New Globe was not exploited thematically, but the young and beautiful black Brutus hugging Portia seemed unlikely behaviour from a Stoic.¹⁴⁶

Not all experimental productions made immediate sense. The Seattle Shakespeare Festival in 1998, for example, made ample use of cross-gendered casting. A reviewer mused that director Rita Giomi ‘[seemed] to be aiming for a sexless neutrality, a gender ground-zero, rather than an enriched or subverted reading of an ancient history’.¹⁴⁷ Thus the decision to have Cassius played by a woman did not capitalise on gender,¹⁴⁸ whereas in the production of *Tygres Heart* in Portland, 1998, the female Cassius ‘emphasized her gender when she said to Brutus, “There is my dagger / And here my naked breast” [4.3.100–1] . . . The lines spoken by a female actor suggested another dimension in the relationship between Brutus and Cassius.’¹⁴⁹

The two most significantly innovative recent productions of the play were staged by the Judith Shakespeare Company at the Mint Space, New York in

1999 (repeated in 2000) and by the German Bremer Shakespeare Company in Bremen (2000 and on tour in 2001, using a translation by Rainer Iwersen). Whereas director Joanne Zipay of the Judith Shakespeare Company had a gender-crossed and multi-racial cast, Sebastian Kautz of the Bremer Shakespeare Company directed an almost all-female cast. The Judith Shakespeare Company '[featured] a black woman in braids as Antony, an Hispanic woman as Octavius, a tall well-built man playing Portia, and a smaller man as Calpurnia'¹⁵⁰ and did not make any effort at disguising the women as men and vice versa.¹⁵¹ One of the messages of this production may have been 'that maneuverings for power are not the property of a single sex'¹⁵² – a concept that was enhanced by the androgynous costumes. This 'neutrality' did, however, not blur the individual traits of the protagonists. Clarity was achieved by the 'casting of actors of distinctly different physical types – age, shape, and race – and then sustaining their individuality through costumes and hairstyles.'¹⁵³

The production in Bremen had a cast of only five, but there was one man (Antony) and four women playing eight male parts. Like the members of the Judith Shakespeare Company, the actresses did not try to look like men; as a result, Antony became a caricature.¹⁵⁴ A mish-mash of costumes and styles showed a lack of seriousness in the Bremen production, to which the organised audience involvement largely contributed. Thus the spectators rose upon cue when Caesar gave his last speech, and those in the front row gathered around Caesar's body to listen to Brutus's justification.¹⁵⁵ The spectators' violation of decorum was welcomed: at the beginning of the performance, they were encouraged to switch on their mobile phones and to shout comments to the actors whenever they liked.¹⁵⁶ The message seemed to be that terrorism and violence are possible only with the participation of the people. Consistent and interpretative use was made of a Hammond organ which supported the individual characters. Not everybody, however, understood the musical code.¹⁵⁷

Although the Bremen production obtained mostly favourable reviews (even in small local papers), a few critics stressed the absurdity of its conception. The murder instrument, for example, was not a dagger but a drill. Caesar's physical and mental weakness was only imaginary (he was played by a young woman whose run-down condition was indicated by her wheelchair). Brutus was probably the least absurd character: The sense that he was wavering between moral principles and that he was not really free in his decisions was illustrated ingeniously when after his suicide a servant cut his invisible puppet-strings.¹⁵⁸

Film interpretations

The stage history of *Julius Caesar* in no way mirrors its representation on film. While film versions of, say, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, or *A Midsummer Night's Dream* have flourished since the 1960s, only one *Julius-Caesar* film has been a great success – Joseph L. Mankiewicz's film of 1953 (produced by MGM) starring Marlon Brando as Antony, John Gielgud as Cassius, James Mason as Brutus, and Louis Calhern as Julius Caesar (see illustration 17 in Marvin Spevack's original Introduction above). Only three other English language films of the play exist to date. A BBC television version was transmitted in 1959, directed by Stuart Burge and in which Eric Porter as Brutus was the only actor to receive praise from the critics.¹⁵⁹ According to Kenneth Rothwell, 'Stuart Burge was able to use this television production as preparation for his 1969 film version',¹⁶⁰ produced 1969/70 by Commonwealth United. This second version is described as a 'spectacle in the style of Cecil B. DeMille'.¹⁶¹ Both movies by Stuart Burge are not serious rivals of the Mankiewicz film although the 1969/70 production shares with the 1953 product the star-draw (Charlton Heston as Antony; Jason Robards as Brutus; John Gielgud as Julius Caesar). The third film after Mankiewicz was, again, produced by the BBC in 1979/80 for television.¹⁶² To director Herbert Wise, 'Shakespeare's play was not really about Rome at all but a tale of Elizabethan England disguised as a Roman history play.'¹⁶³ The Wise film is significant because it is one of the last 'direct' or 'straight' film versions, i.e., of a Shakespeare text not 'couple[d] creatively with popular culture'.¹⁶⁴

Other *Julius-Caesar* films are based not on Shakespeare's play alone but in combination with historical sources and material from *Antony and Cleopatra*, as, for example, the BBC television series of 1963 *The Spread of the Eagle*.¹⁶⁵ They all share an interest in battle sequences and historical spectacle in general. Yet others are filmed versions of theatre performances; and still another group – which seems to be, in the view of some critics, an anticipation of a new genre of Shakespeare movies – consists of original plays merged with issues of popular culture and which are excluded from my discussion, as are those movies that were made for educational purposes and which present mainly individual clips and selected scenes.¹⁶⁶

The Mankiewicz film has continued to be successful. It was revived, for example, in a technically updated version on video (1989); it was also chosen to be shown, thirty-two years after its original release, at the 1985 Valladolid Film Festival, Spain and, in 1994, as part of the Everybody's Shakespeare International Festival, London, England.¹⁶⁷ But, more significantly, as John W. Velz and Robert F. Willson, Jr have shown, it has influenced critical approaches to the play as much as interpretations of *Julius Caesar* on stage.¹⁶⁸ The film brings out the 'common man's potential nobility' but also the force of 'Antony's dangerous rhetoric'¹⁶⁹ in the forum scene; it also suggests, however, 'that an ongoing process of history, not the moral worth of Caesar or

Brutus, is the real subject of the play'.¹⁷⁰

¹ Jo McMurty, *'Julius Caesar': A Guide to the Play*, Greenwood Guides to Shakespeare, 1998.

² Richard Wilson, *Julius Caesar*, Penguin Critical Studies, 1992.

³ Vivian Thomas, *Julius Caesar*, Harvester New Critical Introductions to Shakespeare, 1992.

⁴ The use of the adjective 'new critical' in the series title should be understood to indicate its being brought up to date (perhaps also as expressing an affinity with the New Criticism) and does not necessarily indicate a new approach. See also David Lindley's review in *S.Sur.* 46 (1993), 217–18.

⁵ Thomas Derrick, *Understanding Shakespeare's 'Julius Caesar'*, The Greenwood Press Literature in Context Series, 1998.

⁶ John W. Velz, 'Julius Caesar 1937–1997: where we are; how we got there', *The Shakespearean International Yearbook* 1 (1999), 257–65.

⁷ Stanley Wells, 'Julius Caesar in its own time', in *Shakespeare, Julius Caesar: Texte et représentation. Actes du Colloque de Tours . . . Novembre 1994*, ed. Michel Bitot and Marie-Hélène Besnault, 1995, pp. 11–31.

⁸ Steve Sohmer labels his own work, *Shakespeare's Mystery Play: The Opening of the Globe Theatre 1599*, 1999, as 'literary detective work' (p. xi) and advances evidence which, he believes, characterises *Julius Caesar* not only as an 'occasional work' but also demonstrates that the first performance was on 12 June 1599, the summer solstice – and not, as has been assumed, on 21 September.

⁹ C. I. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*, 1959.

¹⁰ Naomi Conn Liebler, *Shakespeare's Festive Tragedy: The Ritual Foundations of Genre*, 1995. And see François Laroque, *Shakespeare's Festive World: Elizabethan Seasonal Entertainment and the Professional Stage*, trans. Janet Lloyd, 1991.

¹¹ The material draws on an earlier article by Liebler, "'Thou bleeding piece of earth": the ritual ground of *Julius Caesar*', *S.St.* 14 (1981), 175–96.

¹² For a detailed analysis of this fertility ritual in the play, see also François Laroque, 'La fête des Lupercalles dans *Jules César*', in *Julius Caesar*, ed. Pierre Iselin and François Laroque, 1994, pp. 33–41. For more details about Brutus's and Caesar's role in a sacrificial context, see René Girard, 'Collective violence and sacrifice in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*', in *Salmagundi* 88–9 (1990–1), 399–419 and, by the same author, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. P. Gregory, 1977.

¹³ Anthony Dawson, 'The arithmetic of memory: Shakespeare's theatre and the national past', *S.Sur.* 52 (1999), 55.

¹⁴ See also John Drakakis, "'Fashion it thus": *Julius Caesar* and the politics of theatrical representation', in *Shakespeare's Tragedies: Contemporary Critical Essays*, ed. Susan Zimmerman, 1998, pp. 140–54.

¹⁵ Edward Tetsuya Motohashi, "'The suburbs of your good pleasure": theatre and liberties in *Julius Caesar*', *S.St.* 26 (1987–8; publ. 1990), 41–75.

¹⁶ Robert F. Willson, 'Julius Caesar the forum scene as historic play-within', *The Shakespeare Yearbook* 1 (1990), 14–27.

¹⁷ Krystyna Kujawinska-Courtney, 'Th' Interpretation of the Time': *The Roman Dramaturgy of Shakespeare's Roman Plays*, 1993.

¹⁸ Robert S. Miola, "'An alien people clutching their gods?": Shakespeare's ancient religions', *S.Sur.* 54 (2001), 32.

¹⁹ Gary B. Miles, 'How Roman Are Shakespeare's "Romans"?', *SQ* 40 (1989), 257–83.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

²¹ The problem itself is not new; see, for example, T. J. B. Spencer, 'Shakespeare and the Elizabethan Romans', *S.Sur.* 10 (1957), 27–38.

²² Uwe Baumann, 'Das Drama der englischen Renaissance als politische Kunst: Die zeitgenössische

Aktualität der Römerdramen', *Literaturwissenschaftliches Jahrbuch* 33 (1992), 101–31 and 35 (1994), 63–100.

²³ The connections between the changing political conditions in the play and fears of change under Elizabeth I are discussed by Barbara Bono, 'The birth of tragedy: action in *Julius Caesar*', *English Literary Renaissance* 24 (1994), 449–70.

²⁴ Clifford J. Ronan, 'Antike Roman': *Power Symbolology and the Roman Play in Early Modern England, 1585–1635*, 1995.

²⁵ Claudia Corti, 'Shakespeare's uncultured Caesar on the Elizabethan stage', in *Italian Studies in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*, ed. Michele Marrapodi and Giorgio Melchiori, 1999, p. 122.

²⁶ Robin Headlam Wells, 'Julius Caesar, Machiavelli, and the uses of history', *S.Sur.* 55 (2002), 209–18.

²⁷ Vivian Thomas, *Shakespeare's Roman Worlds*, 1989.

²⁸ Clifford J. Ronan, 'Lucan and the self-incised voids of *Julius Caesar*', *Comparative Drama* 22 (1988), 215–26 (reprinted in *Drama and the Classical Heritage: Comparative and Critical Essays*, ed. Clifford Davidson, Rand Johnson and John H. Stroupe, 1993, pp. 132–43).

²⁹ Clifford J. Ronan, 'Lucanic omens in *Julius Caesar*', *Comparative Drama* 22 (1988), 138–44.

³⁰ Barbara Parker, '"A thing unfirm": Plato's *Republic* and Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*', *SQ* 44 (1993), 32.

³¹ Cynthia Marshall, 'Shakespeare, crossing the Rubicon', *S.Sur.* 53 (2000), 81.

³² Francis Teague, 'Letters and portents in *Julius Caesar* and *King Lear*', *Shakespeare Yearbook* 3 (1992), 87–104.

³³ Daniel E. Gershenson, 'Caesar's last words', *SQ* 43 (1992), 218–19.

³⁴ J. A. Bryant, 'Julius Caesar from a Euripidean perspective', in *Drama and the Classical Heritage: Comparative and Critical Essays*, ed. Clifford Davidson, Rand Johnson and John H. Stroupe, 1993, p. 145.

³⁵ See Albert H. Tricomi, 'Shakespeare, Chapman, and the Julius Caesar play in Renaissance humanist drama', in *Reconsidering the Renaissance: Papers from the Twenty-First Annual Conference*, ed. Mario Di Cesare, 1992, pp. 395–412.

³⁶ Eric C. Brown, '"Many a civil monster": Shakespeare's idea of the centaur', *S.Sur.* 51 (1998), 175.

³⁷ Ian Donaldson, '"Misconstruing everything": *Julius Caesar* and *Sejanus*', in *Shakespeare Performed: Essays in Honor of R. A. Foakes*, ed. Grace Ioppolo, 2000, p. 93.

³⁸ Victor Kiernan, *Eight Tragedies of Shakespeare: A Marxist Study*, 1996, is less concrete in supporting his thesis that *Julius Caesar* reflects sixteenth-century politics on nearly all levels. See also Horst Breuer, 'Politische Perspektiven in Shakespeares *Julius Caesar*', *Literatur in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 25 (1992), 227–240.

³⁹ Günter Walch, 'The historical subject as Roman actor and agent of history: interrogative dramatic structure in *Julius Caesar*', in *Shakespearean Illuminations: Essays in Honor of Marvin Rosenberg*, ed. Jay L. Halio and Hugh Richmond, 1998, pp. 220–41.

⁴⁰ Martin Orkin, 'Proverbial allusion in *Julius Caesar*', *Pretexs* 7 (1998), 213.

⁴¹ Geoffrey Miles, *Shakespeare and the Constant Romans*, 1996, p. 125.

⁴² Dominique Goy-Blanquet, '"Death of liberty": the fashion in shrouds', *CahiersE* 38 (1990), 26.

⁴³ Robert B. Pierce, 'Shakespeare and the ten modes of scepticism', *S.Sur.* 45 (1993), 149. For a book-length treatment of the Brutus myth and Brutus as Hamlet's predecessor, see Manfredi Piccolomini, *The Brutus Revival: Parricide and Tyrannicide during the Renaissance*, 1991.

⁴⁴ Tetsuo Kishi, 'When suicide becomes an act of honour: *Julius Caesar* and *Hamlet* in late nineteenth-century Japan', *S.Sur.* 54 (2001), 108.

⁴⁵ See Velz, 'Julius Caesar 1937–1997'.

⁴⁶ Wolfgang Müller, 'Ars Rhetorica und Ars Poetica: Zum Verhältnis von Rhetorik und Literatur in der englischen Renaissance', in *Renaissance-Rhetorik / Renaissance Rhetoric*, ed. Heinrich Plett, 1993,

pp. 225–43.

⁴⁷ Harold Fisch, *The Biblical Presence in Shakespeare, Milton and Blake: A Comparative Study*, 1999. See also Wolfgang Baumgart, 'Freundschaft, Ironie und Opfer in Shakespeares Tragödie *Julius Caesar*', in *Ars et Amicitia: Beiträge zum Thema Freundschaft in Geschichte, Kunst und Literatur. Festschrift für Martin Bircher zum 60. Geburtstag am 3. Juni 1998*, ed. Ferdinand van Ingen and Christian Juranek, 1998.

⁴⁸ Harry Keyishian, 'Destructive revenge in *Julius Caesar* and *Othello*', in *The Shapes of Revenge: Victimization, Vengeance, and Vindication in Shakespeare*, 1995, pp. 81–99.

⁴⁹ Don J. Kramer, Jr, "'Alas, thou hast misconstrued every thing": amplifying words and things in *Julius Caesar*', *Journal of the History of Rhetoric* 9.2 (Spring 1991), 165–78.

⁵⁰ Analyses of the forum speeches are provided by John McClelland, 'Text, rhetoric, meaning', *TEXT* 3 (1987), 11–26, and Michael Mangan, "'I am no orator": the language of public spaces', in *Julius Caesar*, ed. Linda Cookson and Bryan Loughrey, Longman Critical Essays, 1992, pp. 66–78.

⁵¹ Martin Orkin, 'Proverbial allusion in *Julius Caesar*', *Pretexts* 7 (1998), 213–34.

⁵² See, for example, Anna Busi, 'Hands and handshaking: La simbologia della mano in *Julius Caesar*', in '*Julius Caesar*' dal testo alla scena, ed. Mariangela Tempera, 1992, pp. 93–100, and J. R. Mulryne, "'Speak hands for me": image and action in *Julius Caesar*', in *Shakespeare et le corps à la Renaissance: Société Française Shakespeare Actes du congrès 1990*, 1991, pp. 101–12.

⁵³ Michael Neill, "'Amphitheatres in the body": playing with hands on the Shakespearian stage', *S.Sur.* 48 (1995), 23–50.

⁵⁴ Members of the SHAKSPER chat-list on the Internet were, for example, preoccupied with this topic for several weeks in February and March 2003.

⁵⁵ Peter Thomson, 'The significance of decisions in *Julius Caesar*', in *Julius Caesar*, ed. Linda Cookson and Bryan Loughrey, Longman Critical Essays, 1992, pp. 57–65.

⁵⁶ Barbara Arnett Melchiori, 'A brute part to kill so capital a calf', in *Le forme del teatro: Saggi sul teatro elisabettiano e della Restaurazione*, 1994, pp. 25–38.

⁵⁷ Fumio Yoshioka, 'Theatre, identity, and Brutus' grand illusion', *Studies in English Literature* (The English Literary Society of Japan, Tokyo) 70 (1994), 129–47; reprinted in *To Know A Man Well: Representation of Identity in Shakespearean Tragedy*, 1997, p. 155.

⁵⁸ John E. Cunningham, 'Elements so mixed', in *Julius Caesar*, ed. Linda Cookson and Bryan Loughrey, Longman Critical Essays, 1992, pp. 28–38.

⁵⁹ Wolfgang Baumgart, 'Freundschaft, Ironie und Opfer in Shakespeares Tragödie *Julius Caesar*', in *Ars et Amicitia: Beiträge zum Thema Freundschaft in Geschichte, Kunst und Literatur. Festschrift für Martin Bircher zum 60. Geburtstag am 3. Juni 1998*, ed. Ferdinand van Ingen and Christian Juranek, 1998, p. 100.

⁶⁰ Harry Keyishian, 'Destructive revenge in *Julius Caesar* and *Othello*', in *The Shapes of Revenge: Victimization, Vengeance, and Vindication in Shakespeare*, 1995, pp. 82–3.

⁶¹ Mary Hamer, *Julius Caesar*, Writers and their work, 1998.

⁶² Naomi Conn Liebler, 'What Portia knew', *Shakespeare* 2.3 (1998), 17–19.

⁶³ See also Cynthia Marshall, 'Portia's wound, Calphurnia's dream: reading character in *Julius Caesar*', *English Literary Renaissance* 24 (1994), 471–88.

⁶⁴ Wolfgang Müller, 'Das Problem weiblicher Identität bei Shakespeare', in *Die Frau in der Renaissance*, ed. Paul Gerhard Schmidt, Wolfenbütteler Abhandlungen zur Renaissanceforschung, 1994, p. 226. Anita Weston corresponds with this view when she calls Shakespeare an 'unconscious feminist' in 'Et tu brut(t)o: what's in a name?', in *Julius Caesar dal testo alla scena*, ed. Mariangela Tempera, 1992, pp. 93–100.

⁶⁵ See Gail Kern Paster, "'In the spirit of men there is no blood": blood as trope of gender in *Julius Caesar*', *SQ* 40 (1989), 284–98.

⁶⁶ Barbara Parker examines the subtext of *Julius Caesar* and finds maleness associated with sexuality and religion. She argues that, on a figurative level, it is possible to read the presentation of Caesar's

death as not so much a gender change as the phases of sexual intercourse of which Caesar's funeral is the climax. See 'The whore of Babylon and Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*', *Studies in English Literature* 35 (1995), 251–69. This idea of death as sexual intercourse seems to find confirmation in some of the recent productions that stage Caesar's murder as a love scene (see below, p. 63).

⁶⁷ Coppélia Kahn, *Roman Shakespeare: Warriors, Wounds, and Women*, 1997, p. 156.

⁶⁸ Ralph Berry, *Shakespeare and Social Class*, 1989, p. 147.

⁶⁹ Jerald W. Spotswood, "'We are undone already': disarming the multitude in *Julius Caesar* and *Coriolanus*", *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 42 (2000), 62 and 67.

⁷⁰ Michael Mooney, "'Passion, I see, is catching": the rhetoric of *Julius Caesar*', *JEGP* 90.1 (1991), 31–50.

⁷¹ Thomas Moisan, "'Knock me here soundly": comic misprision and class consciousness in Shakespeare', *SQ* 42 (1991), 276–90.

⁷² Charles Spencer, *Daily Telegraph*, 1 November 1991.

⁷³ Gerald Berkowitz in his review of Peter Hall's production (RST 1995), *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Winter 1996, p. 10.

⁷⁴ Gary Taylor, 'Shakespeare performed: theatrical proximities. The Stratford Festival 1998', *SQ* 50 (1999), 347.

⁷⁵ Wilhelm Hortmann, *Shakespeare on the German Stage: The Twentieth Century*, 1998, p. 166 (German edition: *Shakespeare und das deutsche Theater im XX. Jahrhundert*, 2001).

⁷⁶ Charles Spencer, *Daily Telegraph*, 1 November 1991.

⁷⁷ Paul Lapworth, *Stratford Herald*, 8 November 1991.

⁷⁸ Russell Jackson, *SQ* 47 (1996), 322.

⁷⁹ Peter Newman, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Spring 1998, p. 24.

⁸⁰ Hortmann, *Shakespeare on the German Stage*, p. 83.

⁸¹ Stewart McGill, *Stage*, 28 November 1991.

⁸² See Stephen Dorrell, *Around the Globe* 10, Summer 1999, p. 32.

⁸³ For example, Brutus and Cassius were made to resemble Fidel Castro and Che Quevera in the 1998 production of the Tygres Heart Shakespeare Company (at the Dolores Winningstad Theatre, Portland Oregon, 1998). See Michael W. Shurgot, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Spring 1999, p. 27.

⁸⁴ Alastair Macaulay, *Financial Times*, 7 August 1993.

⁸⁵ Daniel J. Watermeier, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Winter 1994, pp. 9–10.

⁸⁶ Ed Vincent, *Windy City Times*, 11 December 2002.

⁸⁷ Kester Freriks, *NRC Handelsblad*, 19 May 1999, p. 9.

⁸⁸ Pieter Bots, *Het Parool*, 7 May 1999, p. 13.

⁸⁹ Albert Williams, *Chicago Reader*, 6 March 1998.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Algemeen Dagblad*, 11 September 1995, p. 21.

⁹² Daniel J. Watermeier, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Spring 1999, p. 38.

⁹³ Rohan Preston, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 5 March 1999, p. 7E.

⁹⁴ William T. Liston, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Fall 2001, p. 31.

⁹⁵ Russell Jackson, *SQ* 47 (1996), 324.

⁹⁶ Michael Billington, *The Guardian*, 10 April 1987.

⁹⁷ The dissimilarity was noticed by Benedict Nightingale, *The Times*, 7 July 1995, p. 26, and Paul Taylor, *The Independent*, 7 July 1995.

⁹⁸ Janet Savin, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Winter 2001, pp. 29–30.

⁹⁹ Hortmann, *Shakespeare on the German Stage*, p. 456.

¹⁰⁰ Irving Wardle, *The Times*, 10 April 1987.

¹⁰¹ J. C. Trewin, *Birmingham Post*, 9 April 1987.

- ¹⁰² Michael Billington, *The Guardian*, 10 April 1987.
- ¹⁰³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰⁴ Russell Jackson, *SQ* 47 (1996), 322.
- ¹⁰⁵ Michael Greenwald, *SQ* 48 (1997), 88.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰⁷ Daniel J. Watermeier, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Spring 1999, p. 37.
- ¹⁰⁸ See Jonathan Abarbanel, *Windy City Times*, 11 December 2002, Michael Billington, *The Guardian*, 30 July 2001, and Rohan Preston, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 5 March 2002.
- ¹⁰⁹ See Tom Deveson, *Around the Globe* 11, Autumn 1999, p. 10.
- ¹¹⁰ Andrew Gurr, *Around the Globe* 11, Autumn 1999, p. 33.
- ¹¹¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹² John Peter, *Sunday Times*, 5 August 2001.
- ¹¹³ Michael W. Shurgot, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Spring 1999, p. 27.
- ¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁵ William T. Liston, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Winter 2002, p. 11.
- ¹¹⁶ Russell Jackson, *SQ* 47 (1996), 324.
- ¹¹⁷ Michael Billington, *The Guardian*, 1 November 1991.
- ¹¹⁸ Patricia Lennox, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Fall 2000, p. 8.
- ¹¹⁹ It seems that this interpretation reverses Fritz Kortner's famous production (1955 at the Residenztheater in Munich) in which it was Brutus who embraced Caesar as he killed him lovingly. See Hortmann, *Shakespeare on the German Stage*, p. 207.
- ¹²⁰ Michael Greenwald, *SQ* 48 (1997), 89.
- ¹²¹ Peter Newman, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Spring 1998, p. 24.
- ¹²² Robert Kole, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Summer 1999, pp. 14–15.
- ¹²³ William T. Liston, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Winter 2002, p. 10.
- ¹²⁴ William T. Liston, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Fall 2001, pp. 31–2.
- ¹²⁵ Daniel J. Watermeier, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Winter 1994, p. 9.
- ¹²⁶ Janet Savin, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Winter 2002, pp. 29–30.
- ¹²⁷ Peter Holland, *S.Sur.* 49 (1996), 252.
- ¹²⁸ Hortmann, *Shakespeare on the German Stage*, p. 456.
- ¹²⁹ Kester Freriks, *NRC Handelsblad*, 19 May 1999.
- ¹³⁰ Peter Newman, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Spring 1998, p. 24.
- ¹³¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹³² Daniel J. Watermeier, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Winter 1994, p. 9.
- ¹³³ Alastair Macaulay, *Financial Times*, 7 August 1993.
- ¹³⁴ Hortmann, *Shakespeare on the German Stage*, p. 456.
- ¹³⁵ Pieter Bots, *Het Parool*, 7 May 1999.
- ¹³⁶ Robert Macdonald, *Shakespeare Newsletter*, Summer 2000, p. 41.
- ¹³⁷ Patricia Lennox, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Fall 2000, p. 8.
- ¹³⁸ Patricia Lennox, *ibid.*, p. 9. The differentiation of accents was unthinkable in productions on both sides of the Atlantic before 1969. In the American Mankiewicz movie all actors – ‘even Marlon Brando – tried to speak with impeccable English accents’; see Neil Taylor, ‘National and racial stereotypes in Shakespeare films’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Film*, ed. Russell Jackson, 2000, p. 262.
- ¹³⁹ Daniel J. Watermeier, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Winter 1994, p. 9.
- ¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴¹ Richard Edmonds, *Birmingham Post*, 6 October 1993. Thacker's production went on tour for 17

weeks in 1993 and 1994 and played in places like the Braintree Leisure Centre, the Rainbow Centre in Coulby Newham, or the Wrekin College Sports Hall in Telford, to name only a few. Obviously 'the tour [kept] away from conventional theatres, and [aimed] to bring the best of the RSC to schools or leisure centres in areas not well served for live theatre'; see Terry Grimly, *Birmingham Post*, 12 October 1993.

¹⁴² The Folio text was staged uncut, but minor changes were made in the numbering of the plebeians and in the punctuation; see <www.rdg.ac.uk/globe/research/1999/jc1999.htm>, pp. 4–5. *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* were staged as a sequel and as part of a Roman season which included also a rehearsed reading of Massinger's *The Roman Actor*; see Lois Potter, *SQ* 50 (1999), 509–11.

¹⁴³ Potter, *ibid.*, p. 512.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 514.

¹⁴⁶ This portrayal of Brutus may have anticipated the emotional Brutuses in the Central Park (New York 2000) and RST (director Edward Hall, 2001) productions; see Patricia Lennox, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Fall 2000, pp. 8–9, and William T. Liston, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Winter 2002, p. 11. It may also be worth mentioning that the New Globe's Caesar was much younger and more vigorous than suggested by Cassius's description in 1.2.90–131 – and also younger than in most productions; see Robert Smallwood, *S.Sur.* 53 (2000), 245.

¹⁴⁷ Misha Berson, *Seattle Times*, 1 October 1998.

¹⁴⁸ Michael W. Shurgot, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Spring 1999, p. 25. By contrast, in the 'gender-bending' casting of director Joe Dowling's production at the Guthrie Theater (Minneapolis 1998) the gender reversal was too slight to convey a message, and it rather made the impression of having been used as an emergency measure; see Kate Sullivan, *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, 6 March 1999, p. 9D.

¹⁴⁹ Michael W. Shurgot, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Spring 1999, p. 27.

¹⁵⁰ Robert Kole, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Summer 1999, p. 15.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² Patricia Lennox, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Fall 2000, p. 14.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15.

¹⁵⁴ Christine Krause, 'Neue Lust aufs alte Rom', *Foyer*, September 2000, p. 20.

¹⁵⁵ Silke Weber, *Westfälisches Volksblatt*, 5 April 2001.

¹⁵⁶ Dietmar Gröbing, *Neue Westfälische*, 5 April 2001.

¹⁵⁷ Compare Johannes Bruggaier, 'Das Bremer Bohrmaschinenmassaker', *TAZ*, 19 September 2000, and Johannes Brüne, *Goslarsche Zeitung*, 21 December 2000.

¹⁵⁸ Johannes Brüne, *Goslarsche Zeitung*, 21 December 2000.

¹⁵⁹ Kenneth S. Rothwell and Annabelle Henkin Melzer, *Shakespeare on Screen: An International Filmography and Videography*, 1990, p. 119. I have treated film and television together despite 'the distinctions inherent in each medium'; see José Ramón Díaz-Fernández, 'Shakespeare on television: a bibliography of criticism', *Early Modern Studies* 6 (May 2000), 1.

¹⁶⁰ Rothwell and Henkin Melzer, *Shakespeare on Screen*, p. 119.

¹⁶¹ Eddie Sammons, *Shakespeare: A Hundred Years on Film*, 2000, p. 52.

¹⁶² See Díaz-Fernández, 'Shakespeare on television', p. 4.

¹⁶³ Rothwell and Henkin Melzer, *Shakespeare on Screen*, p. 124.

¹⁶⁴ Harry Keyishian, 'Shakespeare and movie genre', in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Film*, ed. Russell Jackson, 2000, p. 72.

¹⁶⁵ See Rothwell and Henkin Melzer, *Shakespeare on Screen*, p. 120, for more details. The most recent product of this kind is a mammoth television-film, *Julius Caesar*, directed by Uli Edel in 2000 (produced by Victoria Media) with, among others, Richard Harris and Christopher Walken.

¹⁶⁶ For a survey of all filmed versions of *Julius Caesar*, see Rothwell and Henkin Melzer, *Shakespeare on Screen*, pp. 112–26, and Douglas Brode, 'A tide in men's lives: *Julius Caesar*', in *Shakespeare in the Movies: From the Silent Era to 'Shakespeare in Love'*, 2000, pp. 100–13. For a more detailed

comparison of the versions, see Jo McMurty, 'Film versions', in *'Julius Caesar': A Guide to the Play*, Greenwood Guides to Shakespeare, 1998, pp. 120–6, and 'Julius Caesar for television', in *ibid.*, pp. 126–8.

¹⁶⁷ Sammons, *Shakespeare*, p. 51.

¹⁶⁸ See Velz, 'Julius Caesar 1937–1997', p. 260, and Robert F. Willson, Jr, 'The populist *Julius Caesar*', *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Summer 1995, pp. 37–8.

¹⁶⁹ Willson, 'The populist *Julius Caesar*', p. 28.

¹⁷⁰ Velz, 'Julius Caesar 1937–1997', p. 260.

NOTE ON THE TEXT

The copy-text for this edition is the First Folio of 1623 (F), the sole authority. All substantive departures, together with their origin, are recorded in the collation, as are substantive emendations and conjectures which have been adopted in well-known editions or are of textual interest or are plausible orthographic alternatives. Changes involving accidentals, modernisation or normalisation of spelling, metre, or the like have not as a rule been recorded. Obsolete forms have been silently modernised when there is little phonetic or euphonic variation – ‘strook’, for example, is rendered as ‘struck’. Variations in morphology, including inflections, are retained – ‘strucken’, for example, is not replaced by ‘struck’. As for lineation, departures from F are recorded, and other significant alternatives given; in some important instances alternatives are given even when F is retained. Obvious or inevitable combinations of short lines to produce single verse lines, generally following Steevens³, are not recorded. The placing of stage directions involving a change of one or two lines only is also normally not recorded. Italicised names in entrance directions indicate mutes. Readings from the Folger and Douai MSS., as well as the six quartos, have been supplied by John W. Velz. Also consulted was G. Blakemore Evans, ‘Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* – a seventeenth-century manuscript’, *JEGP* 41 (1942), 401–17, and ‘The Douai manuscript – six Shakespearean transcripts (1694–95)’, *PQ* 41 (1962), 158–72. The dating and description of the quartos – QU1–4, Q (1684), Q (1691) – are based on John W. Velz, “‘Pirate Hills’ and the quartos of *Julius Caesar*”, *PBSA* 63 (1969), 177–93. The uncorrected F readings in the collation are from Charlton Hinman, *The Printing and Proof-reading of the First Folio of Shakespeare*, 2 vols., 1963, 1, 300. In the format of the collations the authority for this edition’s reading follows immediately after the square bracket enclosing the quotation from the text. Other readings, if any, follow in chronological order. A conjecture not made in an edition is placed in round brackets and is preceded by the first edition to adopt it. The origins of a very select group of unadopted conjectures are also to be found in the List of Abbreviations. Additional information may at times be found in the Commentary, where also asterisks in the lemmas indicate words emended in the text. The punctuation of the text in this edition is considerably lighter than that employed by the compositors of F, about which something is said in the Textual Analysis, pp. 148–53 below.

NOTE ON THE COMMENTARY

The Commentary, which has profited from a long editorial and critical tradition, is designed to assist the reader by providing information rather than interpretation. Semantic information is derived in the main from the *OED*, unless specified otherwise. The dictionary definitions are phrased in a neutral manner in order to avoid the dangers of glosses and paraphrases which dictate a point of view and restrict the linguistic and especially poetic potential of a word or passage (such as the common use of ‘atoned’ to gloss ‘answered’ at [3.2.72](#)) or which befuddle by presenting an array of ‘meanings’ often listed or numbered in no particular sequence. In other words, an attempt is made to remain as close as possible to the literal meaning. When this procedure is not practicable, the literal meaning from which a figurative gloss is derived may be given, as in ‘fret’ ([2.1.104](#)). Grammatical information, essential for the understanding of the Shakespearean idiolect, is normally keyed to Abbott (although it is inferior to the German work of Franz, which is used, however, when Abbott is lacking). Encyclopedic information is taken from the *OCD*, with occasional citations from detailed works like Pauly or Platner/Ashby. References to passages in Plutarch which are not reproduced in the Appendix are to page numbers in Bullough (whose spelling has been modernised) or (in one case) to the 1579 edition of North’s Plutarch.

Julius Caesar

LIST OF CHARACTERS

CAESAR	(Caius Julius Caesar)	
OCTAVIUS	(Caius Octavius Caesar)	
MARK ANTONY	(Marcus Antonius)	<i>Triumvirs after the death of Julius Caesar</i>
LEPIDUS	(Marcus Aemilius Lepidus)	
CICERO	(Marcus Tullius Cicero)	
PUBLIUS	(not clearly identified in Plutarch, possibly Publius Silicius Corona, who spoke up against the persecution of Brutus by Octavius and was proscribed. See 4.1.4–5 n.)	<i>Senators</i>
POPILLIUS LENA	(Caius Popillius Laenas, erroneously Publius Laena and Laenas in Appian)	
BRUTUS	(Marcus Junius Brutus)	
CASSIUS	(Caius Cassius Longinus)	
CASCA	(Publius Servilius Casca Longus)	
TREBONIUS	(Caius Trebonius)	
CAIUS LIGARIUS	(Quintus Ligarius)	<i>Conspirators against Julius Caesar</i>
DECIUS BRUTUS	(Decimus Junius Brutus)	
METELLUS CIMBER	(Lucius Tullius Cimber, called Metellus in Plutarch's <i>Caesar</i> , Tullius in the <i>Brutus</i>)	
CINNA	(Lucius Cornelius Cinna)	
FLAVIUS	(Lucius Caesetius Flavius)	
MURELLUS	(Caius Epidius Marullus)	<i>Tribunes</i>
ARTEMIDORUS OF CNIDOS	<i>a Doctor of Rhetoric</i>	
SOOTHSAYER	(called Vestritius Spurinna by Suetonius)	
CINNA, a poet	(Caius Helvius Cinna, probably the poet and the tribune are one and the same)	
ANOTHER POET	(Marcus Favonius in Plutarch, erroneously Phaonius in North)	
LUCILIUS TITINIUS	no further identification possible	
MESSALA	(Marcus Valerius Messala Corvinus)	<i>Friends to Brutus and Cassius</i>
YOUNG CATO	(Marcus Porcius Cato)	
VOLUMNIUS	(Publius Volumnius)	
STATILIUS	(non-speaking)	
FLAVIUS	(non-speaking)	
LABEO	(non-speaking)	<i>Officers or</i>

VARRUS	(Varro)	<i>Servants to Brutus</i>
CLAUDIO	(Claudius)	
CLITUS	(Cleitus)	
STRATO	(Straton)	
LUCIUS	(not in Plutarch)	
DARDANIUS	(Dardanus)	
PINDARUS,	<i>servant to Cassius</i>	
CALPURNIA,	<i>wife to Caesar</i>	
PORTIA,	<i>wife to Brutus</i>	
CARPENTER, COBBLER, MESSENGER, PLEBEIANS, SENATORS, SERVANTS, SOLDIERS		

SCENE: *Rome, near Sardis, fields of Philippi*

Notes

As is often the case in Shakespeare there is inaccuracy and confusion in the names of the characters: historical names are garbled or misunderstood, others are invented or ghosts. The perpetrator, intentional or not, may well be Shakespeare or a compositor or an editorial tradition. Thus F's spelling of the name of the tribune Murellus has been changed by almost all editors since Theobald to Marullus, the authentic name and the spelling to be found in North's translation and in Plutarch. F's spelling of the name of the conspirator Decius Brutus is retained in all editions, however, although the authentic name is Decimus Brutus, the spelling to be found in Plutarch, Suetonius, Appian, and in one of the two instances in North's translation (the other has Decius). Similarly, other perversions in F of historical names are retained in all editions: the tribune Flavus is called Flavius, presumably because North and Plutarch spell it so; Brutus's shield-bearer Dardanus is called Dardanius, however, although North and Plutarch employ the former. Varrus and Claudio – F's spellings – are changed by almost all editions to Varro and Claudius, forms which do not appear in Plutarch, North, Suetonius, or Appian but which are presumably held to be Roman rather than Italian.

Under the circumstances it seems best to retain F spellings, followed by the full historical names and remarks about their authenticity. Other information may also be found in the Commentary. Small alterations, usually of only a single letter, designed to bring the name up to the received standard, are made silently: for example Labeo (for Labio), Calpurnia (for Calphurnia); others, for general recognisability, are unchanged: Clitus (for Cleitus), Portia (for Porcia), and Sardis (for Sardes).

JULIUS CAESAR

Act I, Scene i

**Enter FLAVIUS, MURELLUS, and certain COMMONERS over the stage*

FLAVIUS

Hence! Home, you idle creatures, get you home!
Is this a holiday? What, know you not,
Being **mechanical*, you ought not walk
Upon a labouring day without the sign
Of your profession? Speak, what trade art **thou*?

5

CARPENTER

Why, sir, a carpenter.

MURELLUS

Where is thy leather apron and thy rule?
What dost thou with thy best apparel on?
You, sir, what trade are you?

COBBLER

Truly, sir, in respect of a fine workman, I am but, as you would
say, a **cobbler*.

10

MURELLUS

But what trade art thou? Answer me directly.

COBBLER

A trade, sir, that I hope I may use with a safe conscience, which
is indeed, sir, a mender of bad soles.

**FLAVIUS*

What trade, thou knave? Thou **naughty* knave, what trade?

15

COBBLER

Nay, I beseech you, sir, be not **out* with me; yet if you **be* out, sir,

I can mend you.

MURELLUS

What mean'st thou by that? Mend me, thou saucy fellow?

COBBLER

Why, sir, cobble you.

FLAVIUS

Thou art a cobbler, art thou? 20

COBBLER

Truly, sir, *all that I live by is with the awl. I *meddle with no tradesman's matters, nor women's matters; but *withal I am indeed,

sir, a surgeon to old shoes: when they are in great danger I *recover

them. *As *proper men as ever trod upon *neat's leather have gone upon my handiwork. 25

FLAVIUS

But wherefore art not in thy shop today?

Why dost thou lead these men about the streets?

COBBLER

Truly, sir, to wear out their shoes, to get myself into more work.

But indeed, sir, we make holiday to see Caesar and to rejoice in his *triumph. 30

MURELLUS

Wherefore rejoice? What conquest brings he home?

What tributaries follow him to Rome

To grace in *captive bonds his chariot wheels?

*You blocks, you stones, you worse than *senseless things!

O you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome, 35

Knew you not *Pompey? Many a time and oft

Have you climbed up to walls and battlements,

To towers and windows, yea, to chimney tops,

Your infants in your arms, and there have sat
The livelong day, with patient expectation, 40
To see great Pompey *pass the streets of Rome.

And when you saw his chariot but appear
Have you not made an universal shout,
That Tiber trembled underneath her banks
To hear the replication of your sounds 45
Made in her concave shores?

And do you now put on your best attire?
And do you now cull out a holiday?
And do you now strew flowers in his way,
That comes in triumph over *Pompey's *blood? 50
*Be gone!

Run to your houses, fall upon your knees,
Pray to the gods to intermit the plague
That needs must light on this ingratitude.

FLAVIUS

Go, go, good countrymen, and for this fault 55

Assemble all the poor men of your sort,
Draw them to Tiber banks, and weep your tears
Into the channel till the lowest stream
Do kiss the most exalted shores of all.

Exeunt all the Commoners

See where their basest *metal be not moved: 60
They vanish tongue-tied in their guiltiness.
Go you down that way towards the Capitol,
This way will I. *Disrobe the *images
*If you do find them decked with ceremonies.

MURELLUS

May we do so? 65
You know it is the *feast of Lupercal.

FLAVIUS

It is no matter; let no images

Be hung with Caesar's *trophies. I'll about
 And drive away the *vulgar from the streets;
 So do you too, where you perceive them thick.
 These growing feathers plucked from Caesar's wing
 Will make him fly an ordinary *pitch,
 Who else would soar above the view of men
 And keep us all in servile fearfulness.

70

Exeunt

Collation notes for Act I, Scene i

1.1] *Actus Primus. Scoena Prima.* F

Location] *Theobald (after Rowe)*

0 SD MURELLUS] F (*throughout*); Marullus *Theobald (after Plutarch)*

14 soles] Q (1684); soules F

15 SH FLAVIUS] F; *MUR.* / *Capell (Capell MS.)*

15] *As verse, Johnson; as prose, F*

18 SH MURELLUS] *Mur.* F; *Flav.* / *Theobald*

18] *As verse, Capell; as prose, F*

22 tradesman's] *Tradesmans* F; *tradesmen's Warburton (Folger MS.); man's Hanmer; trade, – man's Steevens² (conj. Farmer apud Steevens²); trades, man's conj. Staunton*

22 women's] *womens* F; *womans* F2

22 matters; . . . withal] F; *matters; . . . with all. Capell; matters, . . . with awl. Jennens (conj. Farmer apud Steevens)*

31] *Rowe; Wherefore reioyce? / . . . home? F*

36 Pompey? . . . oft] *Rowe³ (Folger MS.); Pompey . . . oft? F*

60 where] F; *whether Thomas Johnson*

60 metal] *Theobald³; mettle F*

Commentary notes for Act I, Scene i

Location Rome. A street. Unless otherwise indicated, the location or place of the action is modern, as supplied by the editors mentioned in the collation.

0 SD over the stage 'A conventional phrase indicating that the actors enter and cross the stage before they come to a halt' (Kittredge). Although the persons are named, according to convention, in descending order of rank, it is obvious that the Commoners enter first. Compare F's SD in *Oth.* 2.3.144: *Enter Cassio pursuing Rodorigo*. The stage itself is illustrated by C. Walter Hodges on p. 4.

3 mechanical of the artisan class. In Plutarch, Cassius refers to 'cobblers, tapsters, or suchlike base mechanical people' (p. 164).

5 thou 'Thou' is generally the familiar pronoun but the formal, non-familiar 'you' (as at 9 below) can be found after the appellative 'sir'. See Abbott 232.

11 cobbler one who mends clumsily (with the obvious pun on one who mends soles/souls).

15 SH FLAVIUS Many editors (starting with Capell) assign to Murellus, finding it consistent with his character, a follow-up to his question (12), and connected with his 'me' in 18. But Johnson's argument that Flavius should not 'stand too long unemployed upon the stage' is cogent. Besides, there is no textual evidence to warrant a reassignment.

15 naughty worthless (more pejorative than in modern usage).

16 out at variance.

16 be out i.e. of a normal state of mind (with a play on the soles being in need of repair).

21 all . . . awl Possibly proverbial (Tilley A406): ‘Without awl (all) the cobbler’s nobody.’

21 meddle For illustrations of the sexual innuendo, see *OED* sv v 5.

22 withal nevertheless. To the glaring pun on ‘awl’, A. Jonathan Bate (‘The cobbler’s awl: *Julius Caesar*, I.i.21–24’, *SQ* 35 (1984), 461–2) adds the sexual innuendo implicit in *OED*’s definition of the ‘small tool, having a slender, cylindrical, tapering, sharp-pointed blade, with which holes may be pierced; a piercer, pricker, bodkin’.

23 recover The inevitable pun on ‘repair’ and ‘save’.

24 As . . . leather Proverbial (Dent M66): ‘As good a man as ever trod on shoe (neat’s) leather’.

24 proper fine.

24 neat’s leather cowhide. ‘In order to encourage the home industry, Englishmen were urged to wear neat’s leather, and scorn the Spanish product’ (Linthicum, p. 239).

30 triumph The entrance of a victorious commander with his army and spoils in solemn procession into Rome. Shakespeare overlaps this occasion – held in October 45 BC in celebration of the victory at Munda (see 50 n.) – with the Feast of Lupercal (see 66 n.).

33 captive bonds i.e. bonds of captives. For the adjective in the passive sense, see Abbott 3.

34 The repetition and rhythm in the line resemble ‘like blockes and stockes and senselesse stones’ used in Henry Bullinger’s popular *Decades* (1577, p. 285) to describe the unnatural numbness resulting from overstringent Stoicism. Proverbial (Dent s866.1): ‘As senseless (etc.) as stock(s) and stone(s)’.

34 senseless incapable of sensation or perception.

36 Pompey Cneius Pompeius (106–48 BC), called Magnus after 81, allied with Caesar and Crassus in the First Triumvirate in 60, defeated by Caesar at Pharsalus on 9 August 48, and stabbed to death after flight to Egypt on 28 September 48.

41 pass For the frequent omission of prepositions after verbs of motion, see Abbott 198. Compare – ‘arrive’, 1.2.110.

50 Pompey’s The first of numerous orthographic ambiguities. Although the *es* in the old-spelling ‘Pompeyes’ is most likely the genitive singular, it could as well be the plural. See also ‘winter’s’, 1.2.99; ‘praetor’s’, 1.3.143; ‘time’s’, 2.1.115; *et passim*.

50 blood blood-relations. Meant are Pompey’s sons Cneius and Sextus Magnus Pius, who were defeated by Caesar at Munda in Spain in 45 BC.

51 Abbott (512) notes the ‘custom of placing ejaculations, appellations, &c. out of the regular verse’. He also cites 2.1.209 and 3.1.281.

60 metal The interchangeable spellings ‘metal’/ ‘mettle’ lead here to parallel meanings: literally, the basest metal in alchemy is lead, which melts rapidly; figuratively, the basest spirit (‘mettle’) yields rapidly too. Of the four other instances of the word (always spelt ‘mettle’ in F), only 1.2.298 is difficult to render unambiguous.

63–4 Disrobe . . . ceremonies ‘To disrobe the images was to disturb the peace at this time of religious observance. Besides, the “scarfs” . . . might also be regarded as decorations for the Lupercalia. On both grounds the action urged . . . would be sacrilegious’ (Kittredge).

63 images statues.

64 ceremonies External accessories of worship, state, or pomp. See also 2.1.197, 2.2.13.

66 feast of Lupercal Roman festival in honour of Lupercus, protector of flocks against wolves and a patron of agriculture, held on 15 February at the Lupercal, a cave below the western corner of the Palatine. Youths – called Luperci – ‘naked except for girdles made from the skins of [sacrificial goats] ran about the bounds of the Palatine settlement, striking those whom they met, especially women, with strips of the goat-skins, a form of fertility magic combined with the ritual beating of the bounds and with purificatory rites’ (*OCD* Lupercalia). See Plutarch, p. 156.

68 trophies Arms or other spoils taken from the enemy as a memorial of victory (not simply ‘ornaments’, as commentators often suggest).

69 vulgar Persons belonging to the ordinary or common class in the community.

72 pitch The height to which a falcon or other bird of prey soars before swooping down on its prey.

Act I, Scene ii

****Enter CAESAR, ANTONY for the course, CALPURNIA, Portia, Decius, Cicero, BRUTUS, CASSIUS, CASCA, a SOOTHSAYER, [a great crowd following]; after them Murellus and Flavius*

CAESAR

Calpurnia.

CASCA

Peace ho, Caesar speaks.

CAESAR

Calpurnia.

CALPURNIA

Here, my lord.

CAESAR

Stand you directly in *Antonio's way
When he doth run his course. Antonio.

ANTONY

Caesar, my lord.

5

CAESAR

Forget not in your speed, Antonio,
To touch Calpurnia, for our elders say
The barren, touchèd in this holy chase,
Shake off their *sterile curse.

ANTONY

I shall remember:

When Caesar says, 'Do this', it is performed.

10

CAESAR

Set on, and leave no ceremony out.

SOOTHSAYER

Caesar!

CAESAR

Ha? Who calls?

CASCA

Bid every noise be still – peace yet again!

CAESAR

Who is it in the press that calls on me?

15

I hear a tongue shriller than all the music

Cry ‘Caesar!’ Speak, Caesar is *turned to hear.

SOOTHSAYER

Beware the *Ides of March.

CAESAR

What man is that?

BRUTUS

A soothsayer bids you beware the Ides of March.

CAESAR

Set him before me, let me see his face.

20

CASSIUS

Fellow, come from the throng, look upon Caesar.

CAESAR

What say’st thou to me now? Speak once again.

SOOTHSAYER

Beware the Ides of March.

CAESAR

He is a dreamer, let us leave him. Pass.

**Sennet. Exeunt [all but] Brutus and Cassius*

CASSIUS

Will you go see the *order of the course?

25

BRUTUS

Not I.

CASSIUS

I pray you, do.

BRUTUS

I am not *gamesome: I do lack some part
Of that quick spirit that is in Antony.
Let me not hinder, Cassius, your desires;
I'll leave you.

30

CASSIUS

Brutus, I do observe you now of late:
I have not from your eyes that gentleness
And show of love as I was wont to have.
You *bear too stubborn and too *strange a hand
Over your friend that loves you.

35

BRUTUS

Cassius,
Be not deceived. If I have veiled my look
I turn the trouble of my countenance
*Merely upon myself. Vexèd I am
Of late with passions of *some difference,
Conceptions only *proper to myself,
Which give some soil, perhaps, to my *behaviours.
But let not therefore my good friends be *grieved
(Among which number, Cassius, be you one)
Nor construe any further my neglect
Than that poor Brutus, with himself at war,
Forgets the shows of love to other men.

40

45

CASSIUS

Then, Brutus, I have much *mistook your passion,
By means whereof this breast of mine hath buried
Thoughts of great value, worthy cogitations.
Tell me, good Brutus, can you see your face?

50

BRUTUS

*No, Cassius, for the eye sees not itself
But by reflection, by some other things.

CASSIUS

'Tis *just,
And it is very much lamented, Brutus, 55
That you have no such mirrors as will turn
Your hidden worthiness into your eye
That you might see your *shadow. I have heard
Where many of the best respect in Rome
(Except immortal Caesar), speaking of Brutus 60
And groaning underneath this age's yoke,
Have wished that noble Brutus had *his eyes.

BRUTUS

Into what dangers would you lead me, Cassius,
That you would have me seek into myself
For that which is not in me? 65

CASSIUS

*Therefore, good Brutus, be prepared to hear.
And since you know you cannot see yourself
So well as by reflection, I, your glass,
Will *modestly *discover to yourself
That of yourself which you yet know not of. 70
And be not *jealous *on me, *gentle Brutus,
Were I a common *laughter, or *did use
To stale with ordinary oaths my love
To every new *protester. If you know
That I do fawn on men and hug them hard 75
And after scandal them, or if you know
That I *profess myself in banqueting
To all the *rout, then hold me dangerous.

**Flourish and shout*

BRUTUS

What means this shouting? I do fear the people
Choose Caesar for their king.

CASSIUS

Ay, do you fear it? 80
Then must I think you would not have it so.

BRUTUS

I would not, Cassius, yet I love him well.
But wherefore do you hold me here so long?
What is it that you would impart to me?
If it be aught toward the general good, 85
Set honour in one eye and death i'th' other
And I will look on both *indifferently.
For let the gods so *speed me *as I love
The name of honour more than I fear death.

CASSIUS

I know that virtue to be in you, Brutus, 90
As well as I do know your outward *favour.
Well, honour is the subject of my story:
I cannot tell what you and other men
Think of this life, but for my single self
I had as lief not be as live to be 95
In awe of such a thing as I myself.
I was born free as Caesar, so were you;
We both have fed as well, and we can both
Endure the winter's cold as well as he.
For once, upon a raw and gusty day, 100
The troubled Tiber chafing with her shores,
*Caesar said to me, 'Dar'st thou, Cassius, now
*Leap in with me into this angry flood
And swim to yonder point?' Upon the word,
*Accoutred as I was, I plungèd in 105
And bade him follow; so indeed he did.
The torrent roared, and we did buffet it
With lusty sinews, throwing it aside
And stemming it with hearts *of controversy.
But ere we could *arrive the point proposed, 110
Caesar cried, 'Help me, Cassius, or I sink!'

Ay, as *Aeneas, our great ancestor,
 Did from the flames of Troy upon his shoulder
 The old Anchises bear, so from the waves of Tiber
 Did I the tired Caesar. And this man 115
 Is now become a god, and Cassius is
 A wretched creature and must bend his body
 If Caesar *carelessly but nod on him.
 **He had a fever when he was in Spain,
 And when the fit was on him I did mark 120
 How he did shake. 'Tis true, this god did shake,
 *His coward lips did from their colour fly,
 And that same eye whose *bend doth awe the world
 Did lose *his lustre. I did hear him groan,
 *Ay, and that tongue of his that bade the Romans 125
 Mark him and write his speeches in their books,
 *'Alas', it cried, 'give me some drink, Titinius',
 As a sick girl. Ye gods, it doth *amaze me
 A man of such a feeble temper should
 So *get the start of the majestic world 130
 **And bear the *palm alone.

Shout. Flourish

BRUTUS
 Another general shout!
 I do believe that these *applauses are
 For some new honours that are heaped on Caesar.

CASSIUS 135
 Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world
 Like a Colossus, and we petty men
 Walk under his huge legs and peep about
 To find ourselves dishonourable graves.
 Men at some time are masters of their fates:
 The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars 140
 But in ourselves, that we are underlings.
 Brutus and Caesar: what *should be in that 'Caesar'?
 Why *should that name be sounded more than yours?

Write them together, yours is as fair a name;
Sound them, it doth become the mouth as well; 145
Weigh them, it is as heavy; conjure with 'em,
'Brutus' will *start a spirit as soon as 'Caesar'.
Now in the names of all the gods at once,
Upon what meat doth this our Caesar feed
That he is grown so great? Age, thou art shamed! 150
Rome, thou hast lost the breed of noble bloods!
When went there by an age since the *great flood
But it was famed with more than with one man?
When could they say, till now, that talked of Rome,
That her wide *walks encompassed but one man? 155
Now is it *Rome indeed and room enough
When there is in it but one only man.
O, you and I have heard our fathers say
There was *a Brutus once that would have brooked
Th'*eternal devil to *keep his state in Rome 160
As *easily as a king.

BRUTUS

That you do love me, I am *nothing *jealous;
What you would work me to, I have some *aim.
How I have thought of this, and of these times,
I shall recount hereafter. For this present, 165
I would not (so with love I might entreat you)
Be any further moved. What you have said
I will consider; what you have to say

I will with patience hear and find a time
Both *meet to hear and answer such high things. 170
Till then, my noble friend, chew upon this:
Brutus had rather be a villager
Than to repute himself a son of Rome
Under these hard conditions as this time
Is like to lay upon us. 175

CASSIUS

I am glad that my weak words
Have struck but thus much show of fire from Brutus.

Enter CAESAR and his TRAIN

BRUTUS

The games are done and Caesar is returning.

CASSIUS

As they pass by, pluck Casca by the sleeve
And he will (after his sour fashion) tell you
What hath proceeded *worthy note today. 180

BRUTUS

I will do so. But look you, Cassius,
The angry spot doth glow on Caesar's brow
And all the rest look like a chidden train:
Calpurnia's cheek is pale, and Cicero
Looks with such *ferret and such *fiery eyes 185
As we have seen him in the Capitol,
Being crossed in *conference by some senators.

CASSIUS

Casca will tell us what the matter is.

CAESAR

Antonio. 190

ANTONY

Caesar.

CAESAR

*Let me have men about me that are fat,
*Sleek-headed men and such as sleep a-nights.
Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look,
He thinks too much: such men are dangerous. 195

ANTONY

Fear him not, Caesar, he's not dangerous,
He is a noble Roman and well given.

CAESAR

Would he were fatter! But I fear him not.

Yet if my name were liable to fear

I do not know the man I should avoid 200

So soon as that spare Cassius. He reads much,

He is a great observer, and he looks

Quite through the deeds of men. He loves no plays,

As thou dost, Antony, he hears no music;

Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort 205

As if he mocked himself and scorned his spirit

That could be moved to smile at any thing.

Such men as he be never at heart's ease

Whiles they behold a greater than themselves,

And therefore are they very dangerous. 210

I rather tell thee what is to be feared

Than what I fear: for always I am Caesar.

Come on my right hand, for this *ear is deaf,

And tell me truly what thou think'st of him.

Sennet. Exeunt Caesar and his train

CASCA

You pulled me by the cloak, would you speak with me? 215

BRUTUS

Ay, Casca, tell us what hath chanced today

That Caesar looks so *sad.

CASCA

Why, you were with him, were you not?

BRUTUS

I should not then *ask, Casca, what had chanced.

CASCA

Why, there was a crown offered him, and being offered him he put 220

it by with the back of his hand thus, and then the people *fell

a-shouting.

BRUTUS

What was the second noise for?

CASCA

Why, for that too.

CASSIUS

They shouted *thrice; what was the last cry for? 225

CASCA

Why, for that too.

BRUTUS

Was the crown offered him thrice?

CASCA

Ay, *marry, *was't, and he put it by thrice, every time gentler than other; and at every putting-by *mine honest neighbours shouted.

CASSIUS

Who offered him the crown? 230

CASCA

Why, Antony.

BRUTUS

Tell us the manner of it, gentle Casca.

CASCA

I can as well be hanged as tell the manner of it. It was mere foolery, I did not mark it. I saw Mark Antony offer him a crown – yet 'twas not

a crown neither, 'twas one of these coronets – and, as I told you, he 235
put it by once; but for all that, to my thinking he would fain have had

it. Then he offered it to him again; then he put it by again; but to my thinking he was very loath to lay his fingers off it. And then he offered

it the third time; he put it the third time by, and *still as he refused it,

the rabblement *hooted, and clapped their *chopped hands, and
threw
up their sweaty nightcaps, and uttered such a deal of stinking breath
because Caesar refused the crown that it had, almost, choked
Caesar,
for he *swounded and fell down at it. And for mine own part i durst
not
laugh for fear of opening my lips and receiving the bad air.

CASSIUS

But *soft, I pray you; what, did Caesar *swound? 245

CASCA

He fell down in the market-place, and foamed at mouth, and was
speechless.

BRUTUS

'Tis very *like, he hath the *falling sickness.

CASSIUS

No, Caesar hath it not, but you, and I,
And honest Casca, we have the falling sickness. 250

CASCA

I know not what you mean by that, but I am sure Caesar fell down.
If the *tag-rag people did not clap him and hiss him according as he
pleased and displeased them, as they use to do the players in the
theatre,
I am no true man.

BRUTUS

What said he when he came unto himself? 255

CASCA

Marry, before he fell down, when he perceived the common herd
was glad he refused the crown, he plucked *me *ope his doublet
and
offered them his throat to cut. *And I had been a man of any
*occupation, if I would not have taken him at a word I would I
might go

to hell among the rogues. And so he fell. When he came to himself again, he said if he had done or said anything amiss, he desired their worships to think it was his infirmity. Three or four wenches where

I

stood cried, 'Alas, good soul', and forgave him with all their hearts. But there's no heed to be taken of them: if Caesar had stabbed their mothers they would have done no less.

BRUTUS

*And after that he came thus sad away?

CASCA

Ay.

CASSIUS

Did Cicero say anything?

CASCA

*Ay, he spoke Greek.

CASSIUS

To what *effect? 270

CASCA

Nay, *and I tell you that, I'll ne'er look you i'th'face again. But those that understood him smiled at one another and shook their heads; but for mine own part it was *Greek to me. I could tell you more

news too. Murellus and Flavius, for pulling *scarves off Caesar's images, are *put to silence. Fare you well. There was more foolery yet, 275
if I could remember it.

CASSIUS

Will you sup with me tonight, Casca?

CASCA

No, I am promised forth.

CASSIUS

Will you *dine with me tomorrow?

CASCA

Ay, if I be alive, and your mind hold, and your dinner worth the eating. 280

CASSIUS

Good, I will expect you.

CASCA

Do so. Farewell both. *Exit*

BRUTUS

What a blunt fellow is this grown to be!
He was *quick mettle when he went to school. 285

CASSIUS

So is he now in execution
Of any bold or noble enterprise,
However he puts on this *tardy form.
This *rudeness is a sauce to his good *wit,
Which *gives men stomach to digest his words 290
With better appetite.

BRUTUS

And so it is. For this time I will leave you.
Tomorrow if you please to speak with me,
I will come home to you; or if you will,
Come home to me and I will wait for you. 295

CASSIUS

I will do so. Till then, think of the world.

Exit Brutus

Well, Brutus, thou art noble; yet I see
Thy honourable *metal may be wrought
*From *that it is disposed. Therefore it is meet
That noble minds keep ever with their likes; 300
For who so firm that cannot be seduced?
Caesar doth *bear me hard, but he loves Brutus.
If I were Brutus now and he were Cassius,

He should not *humour me. I will this night,
 In several *hands, in at his windows throw, 305
 As if they came from several citizens,
 Writings, all tending to the great opinion
 That Rome holds of his name, wherein obscurely
 Caesar's ambition shall be glanced at.
 And after this let Caesar seat *him *sure, 310
 For we will shake him, or worse days endure. *Exit*

Collation notes for Act I, Scene ii

- 1.2]** *Pope (after Folger MS.)*
Location] *Capell (Capell MS.)*
0 SD a . . . following] *Capell*
3 Antonio's] *F; Antonius.' / Pope*
4, 6 Antonio] *F; Antonius / Pope*
9 curse] *F; Course Rowe³*
21 SH CASSIUS] *Cassi. F; Casca / Theobald⁴*
52–3] *Rowe; No Cassius: / . . . reflection, / . . . things. F*
53 reflection, by] *F; reflection from Pope*
58] *Rowe; That . . . shadow: / . . . heard, F*
62 his] *F; their conj. Thirlby*
63] *Rowe (Folger MS.); Into . . . you / . . . Cassius? F*
72 laughter] *F; Laughter Rowe; lover conj. Herr; loffer [obsolete form of love and laugh] conj. Wilson*
79–80] *Steevens³ (Capell MS.); Bru. . . Showing? / . . . Caesar / . . . King. F; Bru. . . People / . . . King. / . . . it? Rowe*
87 both] *F; Death Theobald (conj. Warburton apud Theobald)*
101 chafing] *F; chasing F2*
105 Accountred] *F; Accounted F2*
107–8 it . . . sinews,] *F; it, . . . sinews Bevington*
112 Ay] *Bevington; I F*
123 bend] *F; beam conj. Daniel*
125 Ay] *Rowe; I F*
127 'Alas'] *Quotation marks, Hudson*
131–2] *As one line, Collier (Capell MS.)*
132 shout!] *Pope; shout? F*
155 walks] *F; Walls Rowe² (Folger MS.)*
160 eternal] *F; infernal conj. Thirlby*
166 (so with] *Thomas Johnson; so (with F*
170 Both] *F; But Rowe²*
175–7] *F; Is . . . words [omitting that and weak] / . . . Brutus. conj. Ritson (apud Steevens³); Is . . . words / . . . Brutus. Collier; Is . . . glad, / . . . shew / . . . Brutus. White (conj. Walker)*
178] *Rowe; The . . . done, / . . . returning. F*
179] *Rowe; As . . . by, / . . . Sleeue, F*
183 glow] *F; blow F3 (hlow F2); grow Folger MS.*
188 senators] *F; senator Dyce² (conj. Walker)*
190 Antonio] *F; Antonius / Pope*

215–16] *As prose*, F; *as verse*, Pope²
219 ask, Casca,] Q (1691); *aske Caska* F
230–1] F; *as one line*, Mason 1919
240 hooted] *howted* F; *shouted Hanmer*
248 like,] Rowe; *like* F
266 away?] *Theobald*; *away*. F
291–2] Rowe; *With . . . Appetite. / . . . is: / . . . you:* F
297 art noble;] F; *art: Noble* F2
298 metal] F2; *Mettle* F

Commentary notes for Act I, Scene ii

Location Rome. A public place.

0 SD for the course The entrance ‘for’ a particular purpose implies the appropriate dress, as well as other requisites.

0 SD course race.

0 SD Decius The erroneous spelling ‘Decius’ is found in Holland’s 1606 translation of Suetonius, too late to account for its appearance in Shakespeare. In the second edition of Amyot’s translation of Plutarch (Paris, 1565) the ‘Table Alphabétique’ lists the ‘trahison de Decius Brutus contre Iul. Caesar’, but the name in the text appears as ‘Decimus’.

3 Antonio’s Steevens² comments on the spellings ‘Antonio’, ‘Octavio’, ‘Flavio’: ‘The players were more accustomed to Italian than Roman terminations, on account of the many versions from Italian novels, and the many Italian characters in dramatic pieces formed on the same originals.’

9 sterile curse i.e. curse of sterility. For the construction, see 1.1.33 n.

17 turned The view that Caesar turns because he is deaf in one ear is over-ingenious, especially since Shakespeare always uses the verb in the transferred sense of ‘bend’ or ‘direct’.

18 Ides In the old Roman calendar the fifteenth of March (later known as the Day of the Parricide), as well as of May, July, October, but the thirteenth day of the other months.

24 SD Sennet A signal call or fanfare on trumpet or cornet to announce entrances and exits of persons of high rank. Compare *Flourish*, 1.2.78 n.

25 order ritualistic proceeding.

28 gamesome Commentary ranges from ‘fond of sport’ to ‘merry’ with recent editors characterising the tone as ‘contemptuous’.

35 bear . . . a hand assert yourself in too stubborn and too unfriendly a manner. See *OED* Bear v¹ 3e ‘maintain or assert to or against (a person)’.

35 strange unfriendly. Most commentators prefer ‘unfamiliar’, ‘distanced’.

39 Merely Entirely.

40 some difference considerable diversity, conflict.

41 proper belonging, peculiar. See Abbott 16.

42 behaviours In Shakespeare both singular (in the main) and plural.

43 grieved vexed.

48 mistook Abbott (343) notes that when the commonly dropped ‘en’ inflection was in danger of being confused with the infinitive – here ‘take’ – the past tense was used for the past participle. See also ‘took’, 2.1.50; ‘Stole’, 2.1.238; ‘chose’, 2.1.314; ‘spoke’, 3.2.53.

52–3 Classified as ‘sententious’ by Dent (E231a): ‘The eye sees not itself but by reflection.’

54 just exact, accurate (of a description).

58 shadow reflected image.

62 his Most commentators find the reference is to Brutus, a few to the ‘speaker’, and a few to both.

66 Therefore Commentary is equally divided between ‘hence’ and ‘as to that’.

69 modestly without exaggeration, with due measure.

69 discover uncover, expose to view. See also 2.1.75. For *dis-* used for *un-*, see Abbott 439.

71 jealous mistrustful.

71 on ‘Used where we use “of” in the sense of “about”’ (Abbott 181).

71 gentle well born, noble (the dominant sense in the play). See also [1.2.232](#), [2.1.171](#), *et passim*.

72 laughter subject or matter for laughter. Compare [4.3.114](#).

72–3 did . . . stale was in the habit of staling. For the construction ‘use’ followed by the infinitive, see Franz 620, Anm. 2.

74 protester one who makes a solemn affirmation.

77 profess myself profess friendship or attachment.

78 rout assemblage (often pejorative).

78 SD Flourish A fanfare of brass instruments to announce entrances and exits of persons of high rank. See [131 SD n.](#) and [225 n.](#)

87 indifferently with unconcern (*OED* sv 3 cites this instance). Many commentators prefer ‘impartially’, however.

88 as For the construction ‘so . . . as’ for modern ‘so . . . that’, see Abbott 133.

88 speed cause to succeed or prosper. See also [2.4.41](#).

91 favour appearance. See also [1.3.129](#), [2.1.76](#).

102–3 An instance of Caesar’s leaping into the sea (but demonstrating his courage) is reported by Suetonius, I, 85.

105 Accoutred Dressed.

109 of controversy contentious (as to one’s rights). *OED* Controversy 1a cites this instance.

110 arrive See [1.1.41 n.](#)

112 Aeneas . . . ancestor Son of Anchises and the goddess Aphrodite whose legendary wanderings and association with the founding of Rome were developed into the great national theme of Virgil’s *Aeneid*.

118 carelessly unconcernedly, heedlessly.

119–31 Plutarch, however, reports otherwise: Caesar ‘but yet therefore yielded not to the disease of his body, to make it a cloak to cherish him withal, but, contrarily, took the pains of war as a medicine to cure his sick body, fighting always with his disease’. See *Caesar* (Bullough, p. 66).

119–20 ‘He was . . . often subject to headache, and otherwhile to the falling sickness (the which took him the first time . . . in Corduba, a city of Spain).’ See Plutarch (*Caesar*, Bullough, p. 66, also p. 76). Suetonius (p. 63) reports that Caesar suffered two attacks during his campaigns.

122 The possibility of wordplay – lips white from fever, cowards fleeing their flag – is perhaps weakened by the fact that the noun following ‘their’ is normally plural in Shakespeare. Still, a similar wordplay is found in *The Rape of Lucrece* 476.

123 bend glance.

124 his The normal genitive of ‘it’. See Abbott 228 and also [2.1.251](#) *et passim*.

125–6 According to Plutarch (*Caesar*, Bullough, p. 60), ‘it is reported that Caesar had an excellent natural gift to speak well before the people; and, besides that rare gift, he was excellently well studied, so that doubtless he was counted the second man [to Cicero] for eloquence in his time’. Plutarch also mentions (*Caesar*, Bullough, p. 59) that Caesar, even while prisoner of pirates, ‘would write verses and make orations, and call them together to say them before them; and if any of them seemed as though they had not understood him or passed not for them, he called them blockheads and brute beasts, and laughing threatened them that he would hang them up’.

127 ‘Alas’ This is the first of many instances in the play which may be interpreted as either direct or indirect discourse. The presence here of quotation marks indicates that Cassius is quoting Caesar, their absence that the word is his own.

128 amaze stupefy.

130 get the start Nearly all commentators gloss as ‘outstrip’, although *OED* Start sb² 6, citing this instance, gives ‘priority or position in advance of others in any competitive undertaking’.

131 palm leaf or branch as sign of victory.

131 SD Humphreys reverses the order of the directions, since ‘the flourish heralds the offering of the crown and the shout hails Caesar’s refusal’. See also [78 SD n.](#) and [225 n.](#)

133 applauses The only use of the plural in Shakespeare, here apparently for metrical reasons.

142, 143 should Blake (p. 96) notes that ‘in interrogatives *should* has an emphatic implication which adds a sense of surprise to the question’.

147 start startle so as to raise.

152 great flood Brought about by Zeus to destroy all mankind for the sins of the Bronze Age.

155 walks tracts of land. See *OED Walk sb*¹ 10, which cites *3H6* 5.2.24.

156 room A homophonic pun on 'Rome' earlier in the line. See [3.1.289](#), or *John* 3.1.80.

159 a Brutus once Lucius Junius Brutus, the traditional founder of the Roman Republic in the sixth century BC. See also [2.1.54 n.](#)

160 eternal 'Used to express extreme abhorrence' (Schmidt).

160 keep . . . state observe the pomp and ceremony befitting a high position.

161 easily comfortably.

162 nothing Often used adverbially. See Abbott 55.

162 jealous doubtful.

163 aim conjecture, guess.

170 meet suitable. See also 299 *et passim*.

181 worthy note For the omission of the preposition after some verbs and adjectives that imply 'value' or 'worth', see Abbott 198a.

186 ferret Literally, 'red', but here used attributively, referring to the hunting or worrying of rats by the ferret. Compare *H5* 4.4.29.

186 fiery angry. Eyes are so characterised in *Venus and Adonis* 219 and *3H6* 2.5.131.

188 conference Those who gloss are unanimous for 'debate', a sense not in *OED* as such. Compare [4.2.17](#).

192 Possibly proverbial (Dent F419): 'Fat folks are faithful.'

193 Sleek-headed Agreeable, free of deep thoughts (from 'smooth'). Plutarch reports (*Caesar*, Bullough, p. 61) that Cicero observed 'how finely he [Caesar] combeth his fair bush of hair, and how smooth it lieth' and thus 'should not have so wicked a thought in his head as to overthrow the state of the commonwealth'.

213 ear is deaf Shakespeare's invention, although some critics believe that deafness (especially of the left ear) is associated with epilepsy. An interesting illustration is found in the complaint (of 20 August 1596) against John Clark, who was relieved of his job as 'Waite' in York because, among other things, he was 'diuerse tymes trobled with the falling sicknesse & his hearing vnperfit or almost deaf' (A. F. Johnston and M. Rogerson (eds.), *York (Records of Early English Drama*, vol. 1, 1979), p. 469). For medical and other explanations, see Douglas L. Peterson, "'Wisdom consumed in confidence": an examination of Shakespeare's Julius Caesar', *SQ* 16 (1965), 20–2. Peterson himself argues for a figurative use, as in the proverbial locution 'To turn (give) a deaf ear' (Dent E13).

217 sad grave, serious. See also [2.1.308](#).

219 ask, Casca, See [2.1.255 n.](#)

221 fell began.

225 thrice It is not clear to some commentators why the stage directions mention only two instances ([78](#), [131](#)). Frances Ann Shirley (*Shakespeare's Use of Off-Stage Sounds*, 1963, p. 125) suggests a third *Flourish and shout* before 'And' ([115](#)) or, better, after [147](#) (following Jennens). In Plutarch (p. 157) the crown is offered only twice, followed by two loud shouts by the 'whole people'. In none of the possible sources is it offered three times. Although it is likely that a stage direction is indeed missing, it is at least conceivable that Caesar, preceded by a flourish, could be entering the market-place (off-stage) to the shouts of the crowd at [78 SD](#); at [131 SD](#) the flourish after the shout may signal his departure, in order for him to reappear on stage at [177 SD](#). The exit of Caesar ([24 SD](#)), the two responses of the crowd, and his re-entry are, interestingly enough, spaced symmetrically.

228 marry Originally the name of the Virgin Mary used as an oath. In the sixteenth century it was a mere interjection; used here to answer a question and imply surprise that it should be asked: = 'why, to be sure'.

228 was't For the transposition of verb and subject after emphatic words (like interjections), see Abbott 425 and [3.2.102 n.](#)

229 mine Unemphatic, often found before words beginning with vowels for the purposes of euphony. See Abbott 237.

239 still as whenever.

240 hooted made a loud inarticulate noise. The sense is not always as disapproving as Casca and modern usage would have it. Plutarch (p. 157) refers to shouts and outcries of ‘rejoicing’ and ‘joy’.

240 chopped chapped.

243 swooned swooned; a later form with excrescent *d*.

245 soft An exclamation with imperative force, either to enjoin silence or deprecate haste. See also 3.1.122.

245 swoon swoon. See 243 above.

248 like likely. The absence of the *-ly* ending may be due to the metre.

248 falling sickness See 119–20 n.

252 tag-rag people i.e. rabble (from ‘dressed in tags and rags’).

257 me For the use of the dative to call attention to the speaker himself, see Abbott 220.

257 ope The only prose instance in Shakespeare, this obsolete adjectival form suits Casca’s mocking tone.

258 And See 271 n.

259 occupation handicraft, trade (*OED* sv 4c). A few prefer ‘action’.

266 This is the first of a number of sentences with declarative (or at least ambiguous) word order for which a question mark seems more appropriate than a full stop. See also 3.2.148, 4.3.229, 5.1.35, 109. The reverse is to be found at 4.3.240.

269 Scant comment finds the words appropriate to Cicero’s cautious, if not evasive, mode of behaviour or his habit of expressing witticisms in Greek. Both views may have some connection with Plutarch’s description (*Life of Cicero*, 1579 edn, p. 914): ‘When he came to Rome, at the first he proceeded very warily and discreetly, and did unwillingly seek for any office; and when he did, he was not greatly esteemed, for they commonly called him the Grecian and scholar, which are two words, the which the artificers (and such base mechanical people at Rome) have ever ready at their tongues’ end.’

270 effect purpose.

271 and I tell Abbott (102) notes that the ‘hypothesis, the *if*, is expressed not by the *and*, but by the subjunctive, and that *and* merely means *with the addition of*’.

273 Greek to me The remark is to be taken rhetorically since Casca knew Greek. See Plutarch, pp. 160, 168.

274 scarves Plutarch (pp. 157, 164) refers to diadems; it is Suetonius (p. 103) who mentions the removal from the laurel wreath of a ‘ribbon’, a white fillet emblematic of royalty.

275 put to silence Plutarch (p. 157) says they were ‘deprived . . . of their Tribuneships’. Shakespeare’s phrase is regarded by some as a cynical euphemism for ‘put to death’.

279 dine The main Roman meal, the *prandium*, was taken at midday; although no attempt is made here to apply Roman standards, dinner was the midday meal, supper the evening meal in Shakespeare’s time.

285 quick endowed with life, energetic. See ‘metal’, 1.1.60 n.

288 tardy form For a similar application to speech which is not lively or smooth, compare 2*H4* 2.3.26: ‘speak low and tardily’.

289 rudeness roughness.

289 wit intelligence.

290 gives . . . stomach inclines. See also 5.1.66.

298 metal See 1.1.60 n.

299 From Away from. See Abbott 158 and 1.3.35, 64, *et passim*.

299 that Abbott (244) notes that the relative – ‘to which’ – ‘is frequently omitted, especially where the antecedent clause is emphatic and evidently incomplete’.

302 bear me hard ‘endure [me] with a grudge’ (*OED* Bear v¹ 16, citing this instance). See also 2.1.215, 3.1.157.

304 humour influence (by complying with the peculiar nature of someone).

305 hands handwritings.

310 him himself (the shortened form often used for metrical reasons). See also 1.3.156.

310 sure The form without the *-ly* ending was most likely chosen because of the metre and the rhyme (with ‘endure’).

Act I, Scene iii

**Thunder and lightning. Enter [from opposite sides] CASCA and CICERO*

CICERO

*Good even, Casca, brought you Caesar home?
Why are you breathless, and why stare you so?

CASCA

Are not you moved when all the *sway of earth
Shakes like a thing unfirm? O Cicero,
I have seen tempests when the scolding winds 5
Have rived the knotty oaks, and I have seen
Th'ambitious ocean swell, and rage, and foam,
To be *exalted with the threatening clouds;
But never till tonight, never till now,
Did I go through a tempest dropping fire. 10
Either there is a civil strife in heaven,
Or else the world, too *saucy with the gods,
Incenses them to send destruction.

CICERO

Why, saw you anything more *wonderful?

CASCA

A common slave – you know him well by sight – 15
Held up his left hand, which did flame and burn
Like twenty torches joined, and yet his hand,
Not *sensible of fire, remained unscorched.
Besides – I ha' not since put up my sword –
*Against the Capitol I met a lion 20
*Who *glazed upon me and went surly by
Without *annoying me. And there were *drawn
*Upon a heap a hundred *ghastly women,
Transformèd with their fear, who swore they saw
Men, all in fire, walk up and down the streets. 25
And yesterday the *bird of night did sit
Even at noon-day upon the market-place,

Hooting and shrieking. When these *prodigies
Do so conjointly meet let not men say,
‘These are their reasons, they are natural’, 30
For I believe they are portentous things
Unto the *climate that they *point upon.

CICERO

Indeed, it is a strange-disposéd time.
But men may construe things after their fashion
Clean *from the purpose of the things themselves. 35
Comes Caesar to the Capitol tomorrow?

CASCA

He doth, for he did bid Antonio
Send word to you he would be there tomorrow.

CICERO

Good night then, Casca. This disturbèd sky
Is not to walk in.

CASCA

Farewell, Cicero. 40
Exit Cicero

Enter CASSIUS

CASSIUS

Who’s there?

CASCA

A Roman.

CASSIUS

Casca, by your voice.

CASCA

Your ear is good. Cassius, *what night is this!

CASSIUS

A very pleasing night to honest men.

CASCA

Who ever knew the heavens menace so?

CASSIUS

Those that have known the earth so full of faults. 45
For my part I have walked about the streets,
Submitting *me unto the perilous night,
And, thus *unbracèd, Casca, as you see,
Have bared my bosom to the *thunderstone;
And when the *cross blue lightning seemed to open 50
The breast of heaven, I did present myself
Even in the aim and very flash of it.

CASCA

But wherefore did you so much *tempt the heavens?
It is the part of men to fear and tremble
When the most mighty gods by tokens send 55
Such dreadful heralds to *astonish us.

CASSIUS

You are dull, Casca, and those sparks of life
That should be in a Roman you do *want,
Or else you use not. You look pale, and gaze,
And put on fear, and cast yourself in wonder 60
To see the strange impatience of the heavens.
But if you would consider the true cause
Why all these fires, why all these gliding ghosts,
Why birds and beasts *from *quality and kind,
Why old men, *fools, and children *calculate, 65
Why all these things change from their ordinance,
Their natures, and preformèd faculties,
To monstrous quality – why, you shall find
That heaven hath infused them with these spirits
To make them instruments of fear, and warning 70
Unto some monstrous state.
Now could I, Casca, name to thee a man
Most like this dreadful night,

That thunders, lightens, opens graves, and roars
As doth the lion in the Capitol – 75
A man no mightier than thyself, or me,
In personal action, yet *prodigious grown
And *fearful, as these strange eruptions are.

CASCA

'Tis Caesar that you mean, is it not, Cassius?

CASSIUS

Let it be who it is, for Romans now 80
Have *thews and limbs like to their ancestors'.
But, woe the while, our fathers' minds are dead
And we are governed with our mothers' spirits;
Our yoke and *sufferance show us womanish.

CASCA

Indeed, they say the senators tomorrow 85
Mean to establish Caesar as a king,
And he *shall wear his crown by sea and land,
In every place save here in Italy.

CASSIUS

I know where I will wear this dagger then:
Cassius from bondage will deliver Cassius. 90
Therein, *ye gods, you make the weak most strong;
Therein, ye gods, you tyrants do defeat.
Nor stony tower, nor walls of beaten brass,
Nor airless dungeon, nor strong links of iron,
Can be retentive to the strength of spirit; 95
But life, being weary of these worldly bars,
Never lacks power to dismiss itself.
If I know this, know all the world besides,
That part of tyranny that I do bear
I can shake off at pleasure.

**Thunder still*

CASCA

So can I, 100
So every bondman in his own hand bears
The power to cancel his captivity.

CASSIUS

And why should Caesar be a tyrant then?
*Poor man, I know he would not be a wolf
But that he sees the Romans are but sheep; 105
He were no lion, were not Romans hinds.
Those that with haste will make a mighty fire
Begin it with weak straws. What *trash is Rome,
What rubbish and what *offal, when it serves
For the base matter to *illuminate 110
So vile a *thing as Caesar? But, O grief,
Where hast thou led me? I perhaps speak this
Before a willing bondman, then I know
My answer must be made. But I am armed,
And dangers are to me indifferent. 115

CASCA

You speak to Casca, and to such a man
That is no *fleering tell-tale. *Hold, my hand.
Be *factious for redress of all these *griefs,
And I will set this foot of mine as far
As *who goes farthest.

CASSIUS

There's a bargain made. 120
Now know you, Casca, I have moved already
Some certain of the noblest-minded Romans
To undergo with me an enterprise
Of *honourable dangerous consequence.
And I do know by this they stay for me 125

In *Pompey's Porch. For now, this fearful night,
There is no stir or walking in the streets,
And the *complexion of the *element
In *favour's like the work we have in hand,

Most bloody, fiery, and most terrible.

130

Enter CINNA

CASCA

Stand *close a while, for here comes one in haste.

CASSIUS

'Tis Cinna, I do know him by his gait.

He is a friend. Cinna, where haste you so?

CINNA

To find out you. Who's that? Metellus Cimber?

CASSIUS

No, it is Casca, one *incorporate

135

To our attempts. Am I not stayed for, Cinna?

CINNA

I am glad *on't. What a fearful night is this!

There's two or three of us have seen strange sights.

CASSIUS

Am I not stayed for? Tell me.

CINNA

Yes, you are.

O Cassius, if you could

140

But win the noble Brutus to our party –

CASSIUS

Be you *content. Good Cinna, take this paper

And look you lay it in the *praetor's *chair,

Where Brutus *may but find it; and throw this

In at his window; set this up with wax

145

Upon old Brutus' statue. All this done,

Repair to Pompey's Porch, where you shall find us.

*Is Decius Brutus and Trebonius there?

CINNA

All but Metellus Cimber, and he's gone

To seek you at your house. Well, I will hie, 150
And so bestow these papers as you bade me.

CASSIUS

That done, repair to *Pompey's Theatre.

Exit Cinna

Come, Casca, you and I will yet, ere day,
See Brutus at his house. Three parts of him
Is ours already, and the *man entire 155
Upon the next encounter yields *him ours.

CASCA

O, he sits high in all the people's hearts,
And that which would appear offence in us
His countenance, like richest alchemy,
Will change *to virtue and to worthiness. 160

CASSIUS

Him and his worth and our great need of him
You have right well *conceited. Let us go,
For it is after midnight, and ere day
We will awake him and be sure of him.

Exeunt

Collation notes for Act I, Scene iii

1.3] *Capell*

Location] *Capell (Capell MS.)*

0 SD from opposite sides] *Capell (Capell MS.)*

15 know] F; knew *conj. Craik*

21 glazed] F; glar'd *Thomas Johnson*; gaz'd Q (1691) (*Folger MS.*); glased [= glazed or glassed] *conj. Nicholson*

30 reasons] F; seasons *Collier*² (*Collier MS.*)

37 Antonio] F; *Antonius /Pope*

39] Rowe; Good-night . . . Caska: / . . . in. F

42] Rowe; Your . . . good. / . . . this? F

42 what] F; what a *Craik*

42 this!] *Johnson*; this? F

57–60] Rowe; You . . . Caska: / . . . Roman, / . . . not. / . . . feare, / . . . wonder, F

60 cast] F; case *White (conj. Jervis)*

65 men, fools] F; men fools *Steevens*² (*Folger MS.*); men fool *White (conj. Mitford)*

71–3] F; Unto . . . Casca, / . . . night; *Hanmer (conj. Thirlby)*

74 roars] F; teares F2

- 79]** Rowe; 'Tis . . . meane: / . . . Cassius? F
- 81 ancestors']** *This edn*; Ancestors F
- 85 say]** Blair; say, F
- 111 Caesar?]** F (*question mark after offal at 109*); Caesar! / Jennens
- 117 Hold,]** F; Hold *Theobald*
- 124 honourable dangerous]** F; *hyphen, Capell*; honourable, dangerous *Collier* ³
- 125 know by this]** F; know, by this Rowe
- 129 In favour's]** Q (1691); Is Fauors F; is favorable *Folger MS.*; Is Feav'rous Rowe; Is favour'd *Capell* (*conj. Thirlby*); It favours *Steevens*
- 130 bloody, fiery]** F; *hyphen, Dyce*² (*conj. Walker*)
- 130 SD]** F; at 133 after friend Dyce
- 131]** As verse, Q (1684); as prose, F
- 134]** As verse, Q (1684); as prose, F
- 137]** Rowe; I . . . on't. / . . . this? F
- 139–41]** *Delius*², *Singer*² (*conj. W. S. Walker*); *Cassi. . . me. / . . . Cassius, / . . . Brutus / . . . party – F; Cas. . . me. / . . . are. / . . . Brutus / . . . Party – Rowe; Cas. . . me. / . . . could / . . . party – Johnson; CAS. . . me. [adding Cinna after for,] / . . . Yes, / . . . win / . . . party – Capell (Capell MS.); Cas. . . me. / . . . Yes, / . . . win / . . . party – Steevens; Cas. . . Cassius! / . . . party . . . Keightley; CASSIUS . . . Cassius, / . . . Brutus / . . . party – Charney*
- 144 but]** F; best *Hudson* ² (*conj. Craik*)

Commentary notes for Act I, Scene iii

Location Rome. A street.

0 SD. 1 Thunder and lightning Thunder was produced by rolling a cannon-ball down a wooden trough, the 'thunder run', by drums or cannon-fire; lightning, by some kind of fireworks.

1 In Elizabethan stage practice the exchange of greetings, farewells, and other information at the beginning or end of a scene implies the use of the two stage doors. See also [2.4.46 SD n.](#) and illustration [3](#) on p. 7.

3 sway sovereign power or authority (the customary meaning in Shakespeare); 'balanced swing' (Craik) is unlikely.

8 exalted raised.

12 saucy insolent towards superiors. Used by Shakespeare 'as a term of serious condemnation' (*OED* SV 2b).

14 wonderful such as to excite wonder or astonishment.

18 sensible of liable to be affected by.

20 Against In front of (most commentators prefer 'Opposite').

21 Who 'Often used of animals . . . where action is attributed to them' (Abbott 264).

21 glazed stared (*OED* Glaze v² cites this instance).

22 annoying harming.

22 drawn assembled.

23 Upon a heap 'In a prostrate mass' (*OED* Heap sb 5c).

23 ghastly causing terror (influenced by 'ghost-like', wan). For adjectives with active and passive sense, see Abbott 3.

26 bird of night screech-owl. Pliny (*Naturall Historie*, trans. Philemon Holland, 1601, 10:12, p. 276) notes that this 'verie monster of the night . . . betokeneth alwaies some heaue newes, and is most execrable and accursed, and namely, in the presages of public affaires'.

28 prodigies something extraordinary from which omens are drawn. *Prodigia* or *monstra* were believed to be divinely sent. See also [77 n.](#) and [2.1.198](#).

32 climate region of the earth.

32 point are directed.

35 from away from. See [1.2.299 n.](#)

42 what night For the omission of 'a' after 'what' in the sense of 'what kind of', see Abbott 86.

- 47 me** i.e. myself. See Abbott 223.
- 48 unbracèd** with dress or part of dress unfastened or loosened. See also [2.1.262](#).
- 49 thunderstone** thunderbolt. A popular belief was that destruction caused by lightning was due to objects hurtled from the sky.
- 50 cross** ‘criss-crossing’ or, perhaps figuratively, ‘adverse’.
- 53 tempt** test. See also [2.1.266](#), [4.3.36](#), [4.3.62](#).
- 56 astonish** terrify.
- 58 want** lack.
- 64 from** away from. See [1.2.299 n](#).
- 64 quality and kind** Practically synonymous with ‘character’ or ‘nature’. For ‘quality’, see also [68](#) and [3.1.41](#), [61](#).
- 65 fools** Most likely ‘natural’ or ‘born’ fools. See *OED* sv *sb* 4.
- 65 calculate** The gloss ‘prophesy’ (given by Johnson, and before him by Warburton) is unnecessarily specific, as Craik pointed out, since the customary ‘reckon’ fits the sense here.
- 77 prodigious** abnormal, ominous. See also [28 n](#).
- 78 fearful** inducing fear. For the active and passive sense of adjectives ending in *-ful*, see Abbott 3. See also [2.1.98](#), [3.1.169](#), [5.1.10](#).
- 81 thews** sinews (F3’s reading).
- 84 sufferance** patient endurance.
- 87 shall** is to. See Abbott 315.
- 91 ye gods, you** Blake (p. 79) notes that the ‘ye’ before ‘gods’ is ‘understandably unemphatic, but the [emphatic] *you* afterwards is used to stress their power’.
- 100 SD still** constantly. See also [3.1.145 et passim](#).
- 104–5** Proverbial (Dent S300): ‘He that makes himself a sheep shall be eaten by the wolf.’
- 108 trash** ‘That which is broken, snapped, or lopped off anything in preparing it for use . . . as twigs, splinters, “cuttings from a hedge”’ (*OED* sv *sb*¹ 1).
- 109 offal** ‘That which falls off or is thrown off, as chips in dressing wood’ (*OED* sv 1).
- 110 illuminate** The image calls for the literal meaning ‘set alight, light, kindle’ (*OED* sv v 7).
- 111 thing** Applied to men, with connotations dependent usually on the qualifying words. See also [2.1.29](#).
- 117 fleering** laughing coarsely, sneeringly.
- 117 Hold** Here! take it! Used in the imperative when offering or presenting something.
- 118 factious** of the faction.
- 118 griefs** grievances.
- 120 who** i.e. anyone who. See Abbott 257.
- 124 honourable dangerous** Many editors insert a hyphen, regarding the construction as a compound adjective, the first word – see Abbott 2 – being a ‘kind of adverb qualifying the second’.
- 126 Pompey’s Porch** *Porticus Pompei*, built in 55 BC by Pompey at the same time as his theatre (see [152](#)) and adjoining its *scaena*. The purpose of the *porticus* was to afford shelter for the spectators in case of rain. It was a rectangular court in which were four parallel rows of columns (Platner/Ashby). In Plutarch it is the scene of the assassination; Shakespeare chooses the Capitol.
- 128 complexion** visible aspect, condition.
- 128 element** sky.
- 129 *favour** appearance; as at [1.2.91](#).
- 131 close** ‘so as not to stir’ (Schmidt *adv.* 2), ‘concealed’ (Onions). The latter sense is preferred by most.
- 135 incorporate** united in one body.
- 137 on’t** of it. See [1.2.71 n](#).
- 142 content** satisfied in mind, calm; used in the imperative. See also [4.2.41](#).
- 143 praetor** Brutus was made *praetor urbanus* by Caesar in 44 BC, a position just below consul.
- 143 chair** Most likely the curule, ‘a chair or seat inlaid with ivory and shaped like a camp-stool with curved legs’ (*OED* Curule *a* 1).
- 144 may but** cannot but. For the original sense of ‘may’ = ‘can’, see Abbott 307. Abbott (128) notes

that ‘possibly . . . *but* may be transposed, and the meaning may be “Brutus only,”*i.e.* “Brutus alone”’. Craik wonders, however, whether ‘but’ may not be a misprint for ‘best’.

148 Is . . . there Abbott (335) notes that when the plural subject ‘is as yet future and . . . unsettled, the third person singular might be regarded as the normal inflection’.

152 Pompey’s Theatre *Theatrum Pompei*, the first permanent theatre in Rome, built of stone by Pompey in his second consulship in 55 BC and located in the Campus Martius (Platner/Ashby).

155 man entire The not uncommon transposition of the adjective for the purposes of emphasis and metre. See Abbott 419.

156 him himself. See [1.2.310 n.](#)

160 to virtue and to worthiness Most likely doublets operating on both the moral and alchemical levels, the latter in reference to the inherent, often magical, power found in precious stones (see *OED* Virtue 9).

162 conceited apprehended. See also [3.1.192](#). Some very recent commentators detect a pun on ‘expressed in metaphorical language’.

Act II, Scene i

Enter BRUTUS in his orchard

BRUTUS

*What, Lucius, ho!

I cannot by the progress of the stars

Give guess how near to day. Lucius, I say!

I would it were my fault to sleep so soundly.

*When, Lucius, when? Awake, I say! What, Lucius!

5

Enter LUCIUS

LUCIUS

Called you, my lord?

BRUTUS

Get me a taper in my study, Lucius.

When it is lighted, come and call me here.

LUCIUS

I will, my lord.

Exit

BRUTUS

It must be by his death. And for my part

10

I know no personal cause to *spurn at him

But for the general. He would be crowned:

How that might change his nature, there's the question.

It is the bright day that brings forth the adder

And **that craves wary walking. Crown him that,

15

And then I grant we put a sting in him

That at his will he may do danger with.

Th'abuse of greatness is when it disjoins

*Remorse from power. And to speak truth of Caesar,

I have not known when his *affections *swayed

20

More than his reason. But 'tis a common *proof

That lowliness is young ambition's ladder,

Whereto the *climber-upward turns his face;

But when he once attains the upmost *round
He then unto the ladder turns his back, 25
Looks in the clouds, scorning the base *degrees
By which he did ascend. So Caesar may.
Then lest he may, *prevent. And since the *quarrel
Will *bear no colour for the *thing he is,
Fashion it thus: that what he is, augmented, 30
Would run to these and these extremities.
And therefore think him as a serpent's egg
(Which, hatched, would *as his kind grow *mischievous)
And kill him in the shell.

Enter LUCIUS

LUCIUS
The taper burneth in your *closet, sir. 35
Searching the window for a flint, I found
This paper, thus sealed up, and I am sure
*It did not lie there when I went to bed.

Gives him the letter

BRUTUS
Get you to bed again, it is not day.
Is not tomorrow, boy, the *Ides of March? 40

LUCIUS
I know not, sir.

BRUTUS
Look in the calendar and bring me word.

LUCIUS
I will, sir. *Exit*

BRUTUS
The *exhalations whizzing in the air
Give so much light that I may read by them. 45

Opens the letter and reads

'Brutus, thou sleep'st. Awake, and see thyself!
Shall Rome, etc. Speak, strike, redress!'

*‘Brutus, thou sleep’st. Awake!’
Such instigations have been often dropped
Where I have *took them up. 50
‘Shall Rome, etc.’ Thus must I piece it out:
Shall Rome stand under one man’s awe? What, Rome?
My ancestors did from the streets of Rome
The *Tarquin drive when he was called a king.
‘Speak, strike, redress!’ Am I entreated 55
To speak and strike? O Rome, I make thee promise,
If the redress will follow, thou receivest
Thy full petition *at the hand of Brutus.

Enter LUCIUS

LUCIUS
Sir, March is wasted *fifteen days.
*Knock within

BRUTUS
*’Tis good. Go to the gate, somebody knocks. 60
[Exit Lucius]

Since Cassius first did whet me against Caesar
I have not slept.
Between the acting of a dreadful thing
And the first *motion, all the interim is
Like a phantasma or a hideous dream. 65
The *genius and the *mortal *instruments
Are then *in council, and the state of a man,
Like to a little kingdom, suffers then
The nature of an insurrection.

Enter LUCIUS

LUCIUS
Sir, ’tis your *brother Cassius at the door, 70
Who doth desire to see you.

BRUTUS
Is he alone?

LUCIUS

No, sir, there are *mo with him.

BRUTUS

Do you know them?

LUCIUS

No, sir, their *hats are plucked about their ears

And half their faces buried in their cloaks,

That by no means I *may *discover them 75

By any mark of *favour.

BRUTUS

Let 'em enter.

[Exit Lucius]

They are the faction. O conspiracy,

Sham'st thou to show thy dang'rous brow by night,

When evils are most free? O then by day

Where wilt thou find a cavern dark enough 80

To mask thy monstrous visage? Seek none, conspiracy,

Hide it in smiles and affability,

For if thou *path, thy *native semblance on,

Not *Erebus itself were dim enough

To hide thee from *prevention. 85

Enter the conspirators, CASSIUS, CASCA, DECIUS, CINNA, METELLUS, and TREBONIUS

CASSIUS

I think we are too bold upon your rest.

Good morrow, Brutus, do we trouble you?

BRUTUS

I have been up this hour, awake all night.

Know I these men that come along with you?

CASSIUS

Yes, every man of them; and no man here 90

But honours you, and every one doth wish

You had but that opinion of yourself

Which every noble Roman bears of you.
This is Trebonius.

BRUTUS

He is welcome hither.

CASSIUS

This, Decius Brutus.

BRUTUS

He is welcome too.

95

CASSIUS

This, Casca; this, Cinna; and this, Metellus Cimber.

BRUTUS

They are all welcome.

What *watchful cares do interpose themselves
Betwixt your eyes and night?

CASSIUS

Shall I entreat a word?

100

**They whisper*

DECIUS

Here lies the east, doth not the day break here?

CASCA

No.

CINNA

O, pardon, sir, it doth, and yon grey lines
That *fret the clouds are messengers of day.

CASCA

You shall confess that you are both deceived.

105

Here, *as I point my sword, the sun arises,
Which is a great way *growing on the south,
*Weighing the youthful season of the year.

Some two months hence, up higher toward the north

He first presents his fire, and the high east

110

Stands, as the Capitol, directly here.

BRUTUS

[*Advancing with Cassius*] Give me your hands *all over, one by one.

CASSIUS

And let us swear our resolution.

BRUTUS

No, not an oath! If not the *face of men,
The *sufferance of our souls, the time's abuse – 115
If these be motives weak, break off *betimes,
And every man hence to his *idle bed;
So let *high-sighted tyranny range on,
Till each man drop by *lottery. But if these
(As I am sure they do) bear fire enough 120
To kindle cowards and to steel with valour
The melting spirits of women, then, countrymen,
What need we any spur but our own cause
To prick us to redress? What other bond
*Than secret Romans that have spoke the word 125
And will not *palter? And what other oath
Than honesty to honesty engaged
That this shall be or we will fall for it?
*Swear priests and cowards and men *cautelous,
Old feeble *carrions, and such *suffering souls 130
That welcome wrongs: unto bad causes swear
Such creatures *as men doubt. But do not stain
The *even virtue of our enterprise,
Nor th'*insuppressive mettle of our spirits,
To think that *or our cause or our performance . 135
Did need an oath, when every drop of blood
That every Roman bears, and nobly bears,
Is guilty of *a several bastardy

If he do break the smallest particle
Of any promise that hath passed from him. 140

CASSIUS

But what of Cicero? Shall we sound him?
I think he will stand very strong with us.

CASCA

Let us not leave him out.

CINNA

No, by no means.

METELLUS

O, let us have him, for his *silver hairs
Will purchase us a good opinion 145
And buy men's voices to commend our deeds.
It shall be said his judgement ruled our hands;
Our youths and wildness shall no whit appear,
But all be buried in his gravity.

BRUTUS

O, name him not, let us not *break with him, 150
For he will never follow anything
That other men begin.

CASSIUS

Then leave him out.

CASCA

Indeed he is not fit.

DECIUS

Shall no man else be touched but only Caesar?

CASSIUS

Decius, well urged. I think it is not meet 155
Mark Antony, so well beloved of Caesar,
Should outlive Caesar. We shall find of him
A *shrewd contriver. And, you know, his means,

If he *improve them, may well stretch so far
As to *annoy us all, which to *prevent, 160

Let Antony and Caesar fall together.

BRUTUS

Our course will seem too bloody, Caius Cassius,
To cut the head off and then hack the limbs –
Like wrath in death and *envy afterwards –
For Antony is but a limb of Caesar. 165

Let's be sacrificers, but not butchers, Caius.
We all stand up against the spirit of Caesar,
And in the spirit of men there is no blood.
O, that we then could come by Caesar's spirit
And not dismember Caesar! But, alas, 170

Caesar must bleed for it. And, gentle friends,
Let's kill him boldly, but not wrathfully;
Let's carve him as a dish fit for the gods,
Not hew him as a carcass fit for hounds.

And let our hearts, as *subtle masters do, 175
Stir up *their servants to an act of rage
And after seem to chide 'em. This shall *make
Our purpose necessary, and not *envious;
Which so appearing to the common eyes,
We shall be called purgers, not murderers. 180

And *for Mark Antony, think not of him,
For he can do no more than Caesar's arm
When Caesar's head is off.

CASSIUS

Yet I fear him,
For in the engrafted love he bears to Caesar –

BRUTUS

Alas, good Cassius, do not think of him. 185
If he love Caesar, all that he can do
Is to himself – *take thought and die for Caesar;
And that were much he should, for he is given
To sports, to wildness, and much company.

TREBONIUS

There is no fear *in him, let him not die, 190
For he will live and laugh at this hereafter.

**Clock strikes*

BRUTUS

Peace, count the clock.

CASSIUS

The clock hath stricken three.

TREBONIUS

'Tis time to part.

CASSIUS

But it is doubtful yet
Whether Caesar will come forth today or no,
For he is superstitious grown of late, 195
Quite *from the main opinion he held once
Of *fantasy, of dreams, and *ceremonies.
It may be these *apparent *prodigies,
The unaccustomed terror of this night,
And the persuasion of his augurers 200
May hold him from the Capitol today.

DECIUS

Never fear that. If he be so resolved
I can o'ersway him, for he loves to hear
That *unicorns may be betrayed with trees,
And bears with glasses, elephants with holes, 205
Lions with *toils, and men with flatterers.
But when I tell him he hates flatterers
He says he does, being then most flatterèd.
*Let me work:
For I can give his *humour the true bent, 210
And I will bring him to the Capitol.

CASSIUS

Nay, we will all of us be *there to fetch him.

BRUTUS

By the eighth hour, is that the *uttermost?

CINNA

Be that the uttermost, and fail not then.

METELLUS

Caius Ligarius doth *bear Caesar hard, 215
Who *rated him for speaking well of Pompey.
I wonder none of you have thought of him.

BRUTUS

Now, good Metellus, go along *by him.
He loves me well, and I have given him reasons.
Send him but hither and I'll *fashion him. 220

CASSIUS

The morning comes upon's. We'll leave you, Brutus,
And, friends, disperse yourselves, but all remember
What you have said and show yourselves true Romans.

BRUTUS

Good gentlemen, look fresh and merrily:
Let not our looks put on our purposes, 225
But bear it as our Roman actors do,
With untired spirits and *formal *constancy.
And so good morrow to you every one.

Exeunt [all but] Brutus

Boy! Lucius! Fast asleep? It is no matter,
Enjoy the honey-heavy dew of slumber. 230
Thou hast no *figures nor no fantasies
Which busy care draws in the brains of men,
Therefore thou sleep'st so sound.

Enter PORTIA

PORTIA

Brutus, my lord.

BRUTUS

Portia! What mean you? Wherefore rise you now?
It is not for your health thus to commit
Your weak condition to the raw cold morning.

235

PORTIA

Nor for yours neither. Y'have ungently, Brutus,
*Stole from my bed; and yesternight at supper
You suddenly arose and walked about,
Musing and sighing, with your arms *across,
And when I asked you what the matter was,
You stared upon me with ungentle looks.
I urged you further, then you scratched your head
And too impatiently stamped with your foot.
Yet I insisted, yet you answered not,
But with an angry wafture of your hand
Gave sign for me to leave you. So I did,
Fearing to strengthen that impatience
Which seemed too much enkindled, and withal
Hoping it was but an effect of humour
Which sometime hath *his hour with every man.
It will not let you eat nor talk nor sleep;
And could it work so much upon your *shape
As it hath much prevailed on your *condition,
I should not *know you, Brutus. Dear my lord,
Make me acquainted with *your cause of grief.

240

245

250

255

BRUTUS

I am not well in health, and that is all.

PORTIA

Brutus is wise, and were he not in health
He would embrace the means to come by it.

BRUTUS

Why, so I do. Good Portia, go to bed.

260

PORTIA

Is Brutus sick? And is it *physical
To walk unbracèd and suck up the *humours
Of the dank morning? What, is Brutus sick?
And will he steal out of his wholesome bed
To dare the vile contagion of the night 265
And *tempt the rheumy and *unpurged air
To add unto his sickness? No, my Brutus,
You have some *sick offence within your mind,
Which by the right and *virtue of my place
I ought to know of. And upon my knees 270
I *charm you, by my once commended beauty,
By all your vows of love, and that great vow
Which did *incorporate and make us one,
That you unfold to me, your self, your half,
Why you are heavy and what men tonight 275
Have had resort to you, for here have been
Some six or seven who did hide their faces
Even from darkness.

BRUTUS

*Kneel not, gentle Portia.

PORTIA

I should not need if you were *gentle Brutus.
Within the bond of marriage, tell me, Brutus, 280
Is it excepted I should know no secrets
That appertain to you? Am I your self
But, as it were, *in sort or limitation,
To *keep with you at meals, *comfort your bed,
And talk to you sometimes? Dwell I but in the *suburbs 285
Of your good pleasure? If it be no more
Portia is Brutus' harlot, not his wife.

BRUTUS

You are my true and honourable wife,
As dear to me as are the *ruddy drops

That visit my sad heart. 290

PORTIA

If this were true, then should I know this secret.

I grant I am a woman, but withal

A woman that Lord Brutus took to wife.

I grant I am a woman, but withal

A woman *well reputed, *Cato's daughter. 295

Think you I am no stronger than my sex,

Being so fathered and so husbanded?

Tell me your *counsels, I will not disclose 'em.

I have made strong proof of my *constancy,

*Giving myself a voluntary wound 300

Here, in the thigh. Can I bear that with patience

And not my husband's secrets?

BRUTUS

O ye gods,

Render me worthy of this noble wife!

Knock

Hark, hark, one knocks. Portia, go in a while,

And by and by thy bosom shall partake 305

The secrets of my heart.

All my *engagements I will *construe to thee,

All the *charactery of my *sad brows.

Leave me with haste.

Exit Portia

Lucius, who's that knocks?

Enter LUCIUS and LIGARIUS

LUCIUS

Here is a sick man that would speak with you. 310

BRUTUS

Caius Ligarius, that Metellus spake of.

Boy, stand aside.

[Exit Lucius]

Caius Ligarius, *how?

LIGARIUS

*Vouchsafe good morrow from a feeble tongue.

BRUTUS

O, what a time have you *chose out, *brave Caius,
To wear a *kerchief! Would you were not sick!

315

LIGARIUS

I am not sick if Brutus have in hand
Any exploit worthy the name of honour.

BRUTUS

Such an exploit have I in hand, Ligarius,
Had you a healthful ear to hear of it.

LIGARIUS

By all the gods that Romans bow before,
I here discard my sickness!

320

[He pulls off his kerchief]

Soul of Rome,
Brave son, derived from honourable loins,
Thou, like an exorcist, hast conjured up
My *mortifièd spirit. Now bid me run
And I will strive with things impossible,
Yea, get the better of them. What's to do?

325

BRUTUS

A piece of work that will make sick men *whole.

LIGARIUS

But are not some whole that we must make sick?

BRUTUS

That must we also. What it is, my Caius,
I shall unfold to thee as we are going
To whom it must be done.

330

LIGARIUS

Set on your foot,
And with a heart new fired I follow you
To do I know not what; but it sufficeth
That Brutus leads me on.

Thunder

BRUTUS

Follow me then.

Exeunt

Collation notes for Act II, Scene i

2.1] *Actus Secundus*. F; ACT II. SCENE 1. Rowe

Location] F (*subst.*)

23 climber-upward] *Hyphen*. Warburton

40 Ides] *Theobald* (*conj.* Warburton *apud Theobald*); first F

52 What,] Rowe; What F

56 thee] F; the F2

59 fifteen] F; fourteen *Theobald*

60 SD] *Theobald*

67 a] F; *omitted in F2*

74 cloaks] F; Cloathes F2

76 of] F; or *Folger MS.*

76 SD] Rowe

79 O then] QUI; O then, F, O, then *Globe*

83 path,] path F; hath QU3; march, *Pope*; hadst *conj.* *White*; put Dyce² (*Folger MS.*); pass, *Hudson*² (*conj.* *Cartwright*); parle, *conj.* *Nicholson*; pall [*replacing on with o'er*] *conj.* *Heraud* (*apud Cam.*); pace, *conj.* *Anon*, (*apud Cam.*)

96] *As verse*, *Thomas Johnson*²; *as prose*, F; This . . . *Cinna*; / . . . *Cimber*. / Rowe

99–100] *As one line*, *Keightley*

101] *As verse*. *Theobald*; *as prose*, F

112 SD] *Staunton* (*subst.*)

114 not the face] F; that the face *Theobald*; that the Fate *Warburton* (*conj.* *Warburton 1734*); not the faith *conj.* *Thirlby*; not the faiths *conj.* *Malone*; not the fate *Singer*²

118 high-sighted] F; high-seated *conj.* *Theobald*

118 range] F; reign *Folger MS.*; rage *Thomas Johnson*

126 palter] F; falter *Thomas Johnson*

132 stain] F; strain *conj.* *Warburton*

152–3] *Steevens*³; That . . . begin. / . . . out. / . . . fit. F; That . . . begin. / . . . fit. *Capell MS.*

166 Caius] F; Cassius *Rowe*; *omitted in Pope*

177 make] F; mark *Collier*² (*Collier MS.*)

184 Caesar –] *Rowe*; *Caesar*. F

196 main] F; mean QU4

215 hard] F; Hatred F2

218 by] F; to *Pope*

221] *Rowe*; The . . . vpon's: / . . . *Brutus*, F

230 honey-heavy dew] Q (1684); hony-heauy-Dew F; heavy honey-dew *Collier*² (*Collier MS.*)

255 you,] Q (1684); you F

263 dank] F; darke F2
267 his] F2; hit F
271 charm] F; charge *Thomas Johnson*
274, 282 your self] F; yourself *Theobald*⁴
279 gentle] F; gentle, *Staunton*
284 comfort] F; consort *Theobald (conj. Theobald 1730)*
295 reputed,] reputed: F; reputed *Warburton*
309 who's] F; who's there *Pope*; who's that *Capell (conj. Thirlby)*; who is *Steevens*; who is't *Rann (conj. Thirlby)*
312 SD] *Capell (Capell MS.)*
313 SH LIGARIUS] *Hanmer; Cai. F (throughout)*
321 SD] *Collier*² (*subst.*) (*Collier MS.*)
326 Yea] F; Yet *Rowe*²
327] *Row*; A . . . worke, / . . . whole. F
330 going] *Capell*; going, F

Commentary notes for Act II, Scene i

Location Rome. Brutus's garden.

1, 5 What, When Exclamations of impatience.

11 spurn kick.

15 that craves Most likely the demonstrative 'that', although possibly the relative whose antecedent is 'the bright day'.

15 that 'The emphatic *that* appears to be used exactly as so often is' (Craik). Most recent editors paraphrase as 'emperor' or 'king'; earlier ones put a dash or similar punctuation before it, as elliptical for 'do that'.

19 Remorse Compassion, scruple.

20 affections emotions.

20 swayed ruled, held sway.

21 proof experience (*OED* sv *sb* 5).

23 climber-upward Most editions hyphenate, although Craik, preferring F's omission, quotes *Mac.* 4.2.24–5: 'Things at the worst will cease, or else climb upward / To what they were before.'

24 round rung (of a ladder).

26 degrees rungs (as at 24).

28 prevent use precautionary measures, forestall. See also 160 and 5.1.104, and 'prevention', 85 n. and 3.1.19.

28 quarrel ground or occasion of complaint (a legal term).

29 bear no colour support or endure no specious appearance.

29 thing Applied to a human being; as at 1.3.111.

33 as his kind Commentators are about equally split between 'according to his nature' and 'like the rest of his species'.

33 mischievous harmful (the sense is stronger than in current usage).

35 closet private room. See also 3.2.121.

38 SD Gives Stage directions in the present tense are generally thought to be of a literary nature and not infrequently authorial. Compare *knock*, 2.1.59 SD n.

40 *Ides Theobald explains F's 'first' as a misreading of a manuscript contraction *I^s*, but most believe, following John Hunter, that 'Shakspeare must either have inadvertently quoted from a passage in Plutarch [see p. 164 below] not applicable here, but which refers to Cassius asking Brutus if he intended to be in the senate-house on the first of March . . . or else the poet must have meant to represent Brutus as exceedingly oblivious, and even Lucius as rather too unobservant of time's progress.'

44 exhalations enkindled vapours, meteors.

48 Editors are split about evenly as to whether this line is part of the letter (first in Q (1691)) or is

Brutus's re-reading or quotation of 46 (first in Capell). A few editors, starting with Theobald, even regard 52–4 as a quotation.

50 took For the form, see 1.2.48 n.

54 Tarquin Tarquinius Superbus (traditionally 534–510 BC), held to be the last king of Rome, is believed to have been expelled by Lucius Junius Brutus, the traditional founder of the Roman Republic. See also 1.2.159 n.

58 at from.

59 fifteen That it is the morning of the fifteenth day is a more likely explanation than that Lucius is correcting his master's forgetfulness at 40 (due to his absorption in his thoughts) or that Shakespeare had erred in not writing 'fourteen'.

59 SD The imperative is normally thought to be a reminder for the prompter, as is 'within', a theatrical SD which refers to the tiring-house – i.e. the action is off-stage; as at 4.2.24 SD, 4.3.142 SD.2, 5.5.42 SD.

60 'Tis good One of the few to comment, John Hunter remarks that 'This expression may be merely a mannerly acknowledgment of the servant's attention; or perhaps the pronoun *it* refers to the fact announced, and Brutus may be here welcoming the near termination of that hideous interim to which he presently refers.'

64 motion 'inward prompting or impulse' (*OED* sv *sb* 9).

66 genius The tutelary god or attendant spirit allotted to every person at his birth, according to classical pagan belief, to govern his fortunes and determine his character.

66 mortal human.

66 instruments vital organs.

67 in council i.e. are deliberating. Compare 4.1.45 n.

70 brother i.e. brother-in-law. Cassius had married Brutus's sister, Junia Tertia (Tertulla). For a similar usage, compare *Ant.* 2.7.119.

72 mo more. Used only with count nouns in the plural. See also 5.3.101.

73 hats Pope substituted a blank for what he considered an unacceptable anachronism.

75 may am able to. See Abbott 307.

75 discover identify. See 1.2.69 n.

76 favour appearance; as at 1.2.91.

83 path pursue one's course.

83 native natural (the shorter form perhaps for metrical reasons).

84 Erebus Son of Chaos and Darkness, he came to signify the nether world or Darkness itself.

85 prevention 'The action of . . . securing an advantage over another person by previous action' (*OED* sv 4a). See also 3.1.19 and 'prevent', 28 n.

98 watchful i.e. causing watchfulness. For the *-ful* suffix, see 1.3.78 n.

100 SD Brutus and Cassius most likely move or turn away from the others. To speculate, as some commentators do, about the subject of their conversation is idle.

104 fret variegate (from fret = 'adorn with interlaced work', *OED* v² 1a and b).

106 as 'in proportion as, according as' (Franz 578), not 'where' (Abbott 112). See also 3.2.21.

107 growing advancing.

108 Weighing Considering. For the participle without a noun employed almost as preposition, see Abbott 378.

112 all over from all sides, all included.

114 face appearance. See also 5.1.10.

115 sufferance suffering.

116 betimes without delay, speedily.

117 idle Commentators are equally divided between 'unoccupied' and 'in which he is idle'. For the active and passive sense of the adjective, see Abbott 3.

118 high-sighted having the sight directed aloft, supercilious (*OED* High 22b). Some commentators suggest a secondary meaning: in connection with 'range', hawks or eagles flying in search of prey.

119 lottery Steevens was the first commentator to draw attention to the Roman practice of decimation, 'the selection by *lot* of every tenth soldier, in a general mutiny, for punishment'.

- 125 Than** i.e. than that of. For the ellipsis, see Abbott 390.
- 126 palter** shift position (from ‘speak indistinctly’).
- 129 Swear** i.e. let swear. For the subjunctive used optatively or imperatively, see Abbott 364.
- 129 cautelous** ‘cautious, wary’ (*OED* sv 2) here, rather than ‘deceitful, crafty’ (*OED* 1).
- 130 carrions** carcases. Used contemptuously of a living person.
- 130 suffering** patient, all-enduring.
- 132 as** that. For ‘as’ = ‘that’ after ‘such’, see Abbott 109.
- 133 even** impartial, just (from the literal sense ‘level’).
- 134 insuppressible** i.e. not suppressible. For the passive sense of the adjective and the alternation of the *-ive* and *-ible* suffixes, see Abbott 3.
- 135 or our cause** either our cause. For the development from ‘other . . . other’, see Abbott 136, and also 5.4.24, 5.5.3.
- 138 a several bastardy** a separate or distinct act of baseness. See also 3.2.232, 5.5.18.
- 144 silver** Wright notes that ‘silver’ suggests ‘purchase’ (145) and ‘buy’ (146).
- 150 break with** reveal (the plan) to (as in ‘to break news’).
- 158 shrewd** malicious.
- 159 improve** make good use of.
- 160 annoy** harm; as at 1.3.22.
- 160 prevent** forestall; as at 28.
- 164 envy** malice.
- 175 subtle** wickedly cunning.
- 176 their servants** i.e. our passions.
- 177 make** ‘make to seem’ (Craik).
- 178 envious** malicious. See also 3.2.166.
- 181 for** as for, as regards. See Abbott 149.
- 187 take thought** ‘turn melancholy’ (Johnson). Compare *Ant.* 3.13.1: ‘Think, and die.’
- 190 in** For the metaphorical use meaning ‘in the case of’, etc., see Abbott 162.
- 191 SD** Possibly produced by a bell believed to have hung in the huts at the top of the tiring-house.
- 196 from** away from; as at 1.2.299.
- 197 fantasy** delusive imagination. See also 3.3.2.
- 197 ceremonies** portents, omens (or rites of divination?). *OED* Ceremony 5 cites this instance, suggesting that it implies the portents or omens discovered during an act of divination by priest or soothsayer.
- 198 apparent** visible (from ‘appearing’).
- 198 prodigies** omens. See 1.3.28 n.
- 204–6 unicorns . . . toils** ‘Unicorns are said to have been taken by one who, running behind a tree, eluded the violent push the animal was making at him, so that his horn spent its force on the trunk, and stuck fast . . . *Bears* are reported to have been surprised by means of a *mirror*, which they would gaze on, affording their pursuers an opportunity of taking the surer aim . . . *Elephants* were seduced into pitfalls, lightly covered with hurdles and turf, on which a proper bait to tempt them, was exposed’ (Steevens).
- 206 toils** nets.
- 209** For the use of the short line, see 1.1.51 n.
- 210 humour** disposition.
- 212 there** i.e. Caesar’s house.
- 213 uttermost** furthest limit (of time).
- 215 bear . . . hard** endure with a grudge. See 1.2.302 n.
- 216 rated** reprovved vehemently.
- 218 by** to (from the original sense ‘near the side’). See Abbott 145.
- 220 fashion** transform (*OED* sv v4 cites this instance).
- 227 formal** in outward form or appearance.
- 227 constancy** firmness, resolution. See also 299, 2.4.6; ‘constant’, 3.1.22, 60, 72, 73; ‘constantly’, 5.1.91, and see pp. 11–12 above.

231 figures imaginary forms, phantasms.

238 Stole For the form, see [1.2.48 n.](#)

240 across crossed, folded (denoting melancholy).

251 his its.

253 shape appearance of the body.

254 condition mental disposition.

255 know you, Brutus Many editors omit the comma and interpret as ‘recognise you as Brutus’, while admitting that ‘in the old punctuation a vocative is frequently printed without a separating comma’ (Kittredge). Plutarch (p. 164), in one instance, has Cassius ask, ‘What, knowest thou not that thou art Brutus?’ See also ‘ask, Casca,’ [1.2.219](#); ‘fall, Caesar’, [3.1.77 n.](#); ‘you, Antony,’ [3.1.225](#); and ‘Speak hands’, [3.1.76](#).

256 your cause of grief i.e. the cause of your grief. For transpositions of noun clauses containing two nouns connected by ‘of’, see Abbott 423.

261 physical beneficial to health.

262 humours moisture, vapours.

266 tempt test; as at [1.3.53](#).

266 unpurgèd not cleansed of baser elements or admixture (vaporous night air was believed to be impure).

268 sick offence ‘harmful disorder’ (Schmidt, offence 1). For the construction, see [1.1.33 n.](#)

269 virtue power.

271 charm entreat in some potent name. *OED* sv v¹ 6 cites this instance.

273 incorporate combine into one body.

278 Kneel not See [2.2.56 n.](#)

279 gentle Brutus For the punctuation, see [255 n.](#)

283 in sort in some sort or manner. Like ‘limitation’, this is a legal term; both are perhaps suggested by ‘bond’ ([280](#)), according to Wilson.

284 keep with stay, associate with.

284 comfort give pleasure to. *OED* sv v 5 cites this instance.

285 suburbs Frequently regarded as places of ‘inferior, debased, and esp. licentious habits of life’ (*OED* Suburb 4b). Shakespeare is evidently superimposing London on Rome.

289 ruddy drops i.e. blood.

295 well reputed Warburton is almost alone in assuming that ‘well reputed’ refers to Cato, not to Portia.

295 Cato Marcus Porcius Cato Uticensis (95–46 BC), Republican, who committed suicide to avoid being taken by Caesar. See also [5.1.101](#).

298 counsels private or secret purposes, designs or opinions. See also [2.4.9 n.](#) and ‘in counsel’, [4.1.45 n.](#)

299 constancy firmness. See [227 n.](#)

300–1 Giving . . . thigh The detail is from Plutarch (p. 166).

307 engagements formal agreements, compacts.

307 construe Probably ‘explain for legal purposes’; like ‘engagements’, it is a technical term.

308 charactery expression of thought by characters or symbols. ‘Coined by Dr Timothy Bright as a convenient name for his pioneer shorthand . . . it served as the title of his book [1588] and he defined it as “an art of short, swift and secret writing by character”’ (W. J. Carlton, ‘Charactery’, *N&Q* n.s. 15 (1968), 366–7).

308 sad grave, serious; as at [1.2.217](#).

312 how ‘An exclamation, particularly to express surprise’ (Schmidt) is the gloss of earlier commentators; more recent ones prefer ‘how are you?’

313 Vouchsafe Receive graciously. *OED* sv v 3b cites this instance.

314 chose For the form, see [1.2.48 n.](#)

314 brave worthy, good (a general epithet of admiration or praise; the dominant sense in the play).

315 kerchief a head-covering (commonly worn by the sick).

324 mortifièd deadened, numbed.

327 **whole** hale.

Act II, Scene ii

*Thunder and lightning. Enter JULIUS CAESAR *in his nightgown*

CAESAR

Nor heaven nor earth have been at peace tonight.
Thrice hath Calpurnia in her sleep cried out,
'Help ho, they murder Caesar!' Who's within?

Enter a SERVANT

SERVANT

My lord?

CAESAR

Go bid the priests do *present sacrifice
And bring me their opinions of *success.

5

SERVANT

I will, my lord.

Exit

Enter CALPURNIA

CALPURNIA

What mean you, Caesar, think you to walk forth?
You shall not stir out of your house today.

CAESAR

Caesar shall forth. The things that threatened me
Ne'er looked but on my back; when they shall see
The face of Caesar they are vanishèd.

10

CALPURNIA

Caesar, I never stood on *ceremonies,
Yet now they fright me. There is one within,
Besides the things that we have heard and seen,
Recounts most horrid sights seen by the watch.
A lioness hath whelpèd in the streets,
And graves have yawned and yielded up their dead;
Fierce fiery warriors fight upon the clouds

15

In ranks and *squadrons and *right *form of war, 20
Which drizzled blood upon the Capitol;
The noise of battle hurtled in the air,
Horses did neigh and dying men did groan,
And ghosts did shriek and squeal about the streets.
O Caesar, these things are beyond all *use, 25
And I do fear them.

CAESAR

What can be avoided
Whose end is purposed by the mighty gods?
Yet Caesar shall go forth, for these predictions
Are to the world in general as to Caesar.

CALPURNIA

When beggars die there are no comets seen, 30
The heavens themselves *blaze forth the death of princes.

CAESAR

*Cowards die many times before their deaths,
The valiant never taste of death but once.
Of all the wonders that I yet have heard
It seems to me most strange that men should fear, 35
Seeing that death, a necessary end,
Will come when it will come.

Enter a SERVANT

What say the augurers?

SERVANT

They would not have you to stir forth today.
*Plucking the entrails of an offering forth,
They could not find a heart within the beast. 40

CAESAR

The gods do this *in shame of cowardice.
Caesar should be a beast without a heart
If he should stay at home today for fear.

No, Caesar shall not. Danger knows full well
That Caesar is more dangerous than he: 45
We *are two lions littered in one day,
And I the elder and more terrible.
And Caesar shall go forth.

CALPURNIA

Alas, my lord,
Your wisdom is consumed in confidence.
Do not go forth today. Call it my fear 50
That keeps you in the house, and not your own.
We'll send Mark Antony to the Senate House
And he shall say you are not well today.
Let me, upon my knee, prevail in this.

CAESAR

Mark Antony shall say I am not well, 55
*And for thy *humour I will stay at home.

Enter DECIUS

Here's Decius Brutus, he shall tell them so.

DECIUS

Caesar, all hail! Good morrow, worthy Caesar,
I come to fetch you to the Senate House.

CAESAR

And you are come in very *happy time 60
To bear my greeting to the senators
And tell them that I will not come today.
Cannot is false, and that I dare not, falser:
I will not come today. Tell them so, Decius.

CALPURNIA

Say he is sick.

CAESAR

Shall Caesar send a lie? 65
Have I in conquest stretched mine arm so far

To be afeard to tell *greybeards the truth?
Decius, go tell them Caesar will not come.

DECIUS

Most mighty Caesar, let me know some cause,
Lest I be laughed at when I tell them so.

70

CAESAR

The cause is in my will. I will not come:

*That is enough to satisfy the Senate.

But for your private satisfaction,

Because I love you, I will let you know:

Calpurnia here, my wife, stays me at home.

75

She dreamt *tonight she saw my *statue,

Which like a fountain with an hundred spouts

Did run pure blood, and many lusty Romans

Came smiling and did bathe their hands in it.

And these does she apply *for warnings and portents

80

And evils imminent, and on her knee

Hath begged that I will stay at home today.

DECIUS

This dream is all amiss interpreted,

It was a vision fair and fortunate.

Your statue spouting blood in many pipes,

85

In which so many smiling Romans bathed,

Signifies that from you great Rome shall suck

Reviving blood and that great men shall press

*For tinctures, stains, relics, and *cognisance.

This by Caipurnia's dream is signified.

90

CAESAR

And this way have you well expounded it.

DECIUS

I have, when you have heard what I can say.

And know it now: the Senate have concluded

To give this day a crown to mighty Caesar.

If you shall send them word you will not come, 95
Their minds may change. Besides, it were a mock
Apt to be rendered for someone to say,
'Break up the Senate till another time,
When Caesar's wife shall meet with better dreams.'
If Caesar hide himself, shall they not whisper, 100
'Lo, Caesar is afraid'?
Pardon me, Caesar, for my dear dear love
To your *proceeding bids me tell you this,
And reason to my love is liable.

CAESAR
How foolish do your fears seem now, Calpurnia! 105
I am ashamed I did yield to them.
Give me my robe, for I will go.

*Enter BRUTUS, Ligarius, Metellus, Casca, TREBONIUS, Cinna, and *PUBLIUS*

And look where Publius is come to fetch me.

PUBLIUS
Good morrow, Caesar.

CAESAR
Welcome, Publius.
What, Brutus, are you stirred so early too? 110
Good morrow, Casca. Caius Ligarius,
Caesar was ne'er so much your *enemy
As that same ague which hath made you lean.
What is't o'clock?

BRUTUS
Caesar, 'tis stricken eight.

CAESAR
I thank you for your pains and courtesy. 115

Enter ANTONY

See, Antony, that revels long a-nights,

Is notwithstanding up. Good morrow, Antony.

ANTONY

*So to most noble Caesar.

CAESAR

[*To Calpurnia*] Bid them prepare within,

[*Exit Calpurnia*]

I am *to blame to be thus waited for.

Now, Cinna, now, Metellus. What, Trebonius, 120

I have an hour's talk in store for you.

Remember that you call on me today;

Be near me that I may remember you.

TREBONIUS

Caesar, I will. [*Aside*] And so near will I be

That your best friends shall wish I had been further. 125

CAESAR

Good friends, go in and taste some wine with me,

And we, like friends, will straightway go together.

BRUTUS

[*Aside*] *That every like is not the same, O Caesar,

The heart of Brutus *earns to think upon.

Exeunt

Collation notes for Act II, Scene ii

2.2] Rowe

Location] *Globe (after Rowe)*

1] *Rowe (Folger MS.); Nor . . . Earth, / . . . night: F*

19 fight] *F; fought White (conj. Thirlby)*

22 hurtled] *F; hurried F2*

23 did] *F2; do F*

37 augurers] *F; augures QUI*

46 We are] *Capell (conj. Thirlby); We heare F; We heard Rowe (Folger MS.); We were Theobald (conj. Thirlby); Here are Sampath Thathachariar (privately)*

81 And] *F; Of Hanmer (conj. Thirlby)*

103 proceeding] *F; proceedings QUI (Folger MS.)*

107 SD] *Wells and Taylor add Cassius*

117–18] *Boswell (Capell MS.); Is . . . Antony. / . . . Caesar. / . . . within: F; Is . . . up:- / . . . Caesar. / . . . within: - Steevens³*

118 SD.1] *Wilson; to an Att[endant] /Capell (Capell MS.)*

118 SD.2] *Wilson (subst.); at 119, Humphreys*

124 SD] *Rowe (Douai MS.)*

128 SD] *Pope (Douai MS.)*

Commentary notes for Act II, Scene ii

Location Rome. Caesar's house.

0 SD nightgown dressing-gown. Caesar (and Calpurnia at 7) may well use the curtained central entry.

5 present immediate.

6 success result. See also 5.3.65.

13 ceremonies external accessories of worship. But see 1.1.64 n. and 2.1.197 n.

20 squadrons soldiers arranged in square formation.

20 right appropriate, regular (from the literal meaning 'straight').

20 form formation.

25 use custom, usual experience.

31 blaze forth proclaim (as with a trumpet); from blaze = 'blow' (*OED* Blaze v² 2b, citing this instance).

32–3 Proverbial (Dent C774): 'A coward dies many deaths, a brave man but one.'

39–40 A most important form of artificial divination during a long period of time and over a wide geographic range, extispicy (or haruspicy) was based on the observation of the entrails – especially the liver (hepatoscopy) of sacrificial animals.

41 in shame of cowardice to shame cowardice.

46 *are Commentators, seeking to explain the emended homophone 'heare', detect either a complicated error of the copyist (repeating 'he' of line 45 to form 'He are', correcting to 'We are' but failing to delete 'he', or failing to recognise a compressed 'Here') or a fairly improbable Latinate use of 'heare' in the sense of 'prefer to be addressed or called' (*OED* Hear v 12b).

56 humour Most commentators gloss as 'whim, caprice', but 'temporary state of mind' or 'mood' (*OED* Humour sb 5) would be more in accord with Calpurnia's character, not to mention the omens.

56 Beginning with Collier², some commentators add the SD *Raising her* to emphasise the parallel with Brutus and Portia at 2.1.278.

60 happy appropriate, opportune.

67 greybeards Often contemptuously of old men.

72 'Not . . . enough to insure their being satisfied, but enough for me to do towards that end' (Craik).

76 tonight last night (Rowe's emendation).

76 statue The final *e*, probably not of French but of Latin origin (*statua*), is pronounced (see Abbott 487). See also 3.2.179.

80 for as, in the capacity of. See Abbott 148.

89 Johnson was the first to remark on the heraldic terms: 'tinctures' (and the almost synonymous 'stains') referring to colours and 'cognisance' to a device, both identifying retainers of a noble house. While he isolated 'relics' as pertaining to martyrdom, Warburton (as do some other commentators) saw all the terms in that light, from the practice of dipping handkerchiefs in the blood of those who were considered martyrs. This view may be excessive, since 'relics' is not normally associated with martyrdom in Shakespeare; in fact, the other terms are not necessarily associated with heraldry. But the overall interpretation is to be found everywhere, despite Johnson's assertion that the speech is 'somewhat confused'. The more recent connection of 'tinctures' with 'overtones of the alchemical meaning' (Sanders) does not simplify matters.

89 cognisance Considering the other items in the series, this may well be a plural (as in Hanmer's emendation to 'cognisances'), which, as suggested by W. S. Walker (p. 259), could be rendered with an apostrophe after the *e* to avoid an extra syllable.

103 proceeding Most commentators gloss as 'advantage'.

107 SD PUBLIUS Wilson (pp. 95–6), ingeniously but without compelling support, finds the appearance of Publius may be an 'afterthought' of Shakespeare's or the prompter's since 'Ligarius and

Cassius were played by the same actor, and therefore could not appear together'. Unconvinced, Humphreys speculates that Cassius's absence was caused by the actor being required for another part at this moment in the play.

112 enemy 'Ligarius, who had taken part in the Civil War on Pompey's side, had recently been pardoned by Caesar and restored to civil rights' (Kittredge).

118 SD.1 Commentators are split as to whether the address is to Calpurnia or to an Attendant.

119 to blame The Elizabethan interchangeability of 'to' and 'too' (F's reading here) is so common that some believe 'blame' may be an adjective, with 'too' meaning 'excessively' (though no edition has 'too' here). See Abbott 73.

128 Proverbial (Dent A167): 'All that is alike is not the same.'

129 earns 'grieves' (*OED* Earn v³ 2) is the interpretation of most editors, but it has occasionally been glossed as 'desires' (*OED* v³ 1) and 'trembles' (*OED* v³ 3).

Act II, Scene iii

Enter ARTEMIDORUS [reading a paper]

ARTEMIDORUS

‘Caesar, beware of Brutus, take heed of Cassius, come
not near Casca, have an eye to Cinna, trust not Trebonius, mark well
Metellus Cimber, Decius Brutus loves thee not, thou hast wronged
Caius Ligarius. There is but one mind in all these men, and it is bent
against Caesar. If thou beest not immortal look about you: *security 5
gives way to conspiracy. The mighty gods defend thee!

Thy *lover,
Artemidorus.’

Here will I stand till Caesar pass along,
And as a suitor will I give him this.

My heart laments that virtue cannot live

*Out of the teeth of emulation. 10

If thou read this, O Caesar, thou mayst live;

If not, the fates with traitors do contrive. *Exit*

Collation notes for Act II, Scene iii

2.3] Rowe

Location] Rowe

0 SD *reading a paper*] Rowe

1 SH ARTEMIDORUS] Capell (*Capell MS.*)

14 SD] F; *he stands aside* / Wilson

Commentary notes for Act II, Scene iii

Location Rome. A street.

5 security absence of apprehension, carelessness.

7 lover friend. See also 3.2.13 n.

12 Out of the teeth Away from the direct opposition. Some gloss ‘teeth’ with ‘reach’, an anonymous conjecture in Cam.

Act II, Scene iv

Enter PORTIA and LUCIUS

PORTIA

I prithee, boy, run to the Senate House.
Stay not to answer me but get thee gone.
Why dost thou stay?

LUCIUS

To know my errand, madam.

PORTIA

I would have had thee there and here again
Ere I can tell thee what thou shouldst do there.
[*Aside*] O *constancy, be strong upon my side,
Set a huge mountain 'tween my heart and tongue!
I have a man's mind, but a woman's might.
How hard it is for women to *keep counsel! –
Art thou here yet?

5

LUCIUS

Madam, what should I do?
Run to the Capitol, and nothing else?
And so return to you, and nothing else?

10

PORTIA

Yes, bring me word, boy, if thy lord look well,
For he went sickly forth, and take good note
What Caesar doth, what suitors press to him.
Hark, boy, what noise is that?

15

LUCIUS

I hear none, madam.

PORTIA

Prithee listen well:
I heard a bustling *rumour, like a fray,
And the wind brings it from the Capitol.

LUCIUS

Sooth, madam, I hear nothing.

20

Enter the SOOTHSAYER

PORTIA

Come hither, fellow, which way hast thou been?

SOOTHSAYER

At mine own house, good lady.

PORTIA

What is't o'clock?

SOOTHSAYER

About the ninth hour, lady.

PORTIA

Is Caesar yet gone to the Capitol?

SOOTHSAYER

Madam, not yet. I go to take my stand
To see him pass on to the Capitol.

25

PORTIA

Thou hast some suit to Caesar, hast thou not?

SOOTHSAYER

That I have, lady, if it will please Caesar
To be so good to Caesar as to hear me:
I shall beseech him to befriend himself.

30

PORTIA

Why, know'st thou any harm's intended towards him?

SOOTHSAYER

None that I know will be, much that I fear may chance.
Good morrow to you. Here the street is narrow:
The throng that follows Caesar at the heels,
Of senators, of *praetors, common suitors,
Will crowd a feeble man almost to death.

35

I'll get me to a place more void, and there
Speak to great Caesar as he comes along.

Exit

PORTIA

*I must go in. [*Aside*] Ay me, how weak a thing
The heart of woman is! O Brutus,
The heavens speed thee in thine enterprise!
Sure the boy heard me. Brutus hath a suit
That Caesar will not grant. O, I grow faint. –
Run, Lucius, and *commend me to my lord,
Say I am merry. Come to me again
And bring me word what he doth say to thee.

40

45

**Exeunt* [*severally*]

Collation notes for Act II, Scene iv

2.4] *Capell*

Location] *Capell*

3 my] *thy Macmillan (Folger MS.)*

6 SD] *Capell*

16–17] *Steevens*³ (*Capell MS.*); Hearke . . . that? / . . . Madam. / . . . well: F; Hark . . . Madam./ . . . well;
Keightley

20 SD SOOTHSAYER] F; Artemidorus *Rowe*

20–3] *Delius*²; *Luc.* . . . nothing./ . . . *Soothsayer.* / . . . bin?/ . . . good Lady./ . . . clocke?/ . . . Lady. F;
LUC. . . . fellow: / . . . good lady./ . . . lady. *Steevens*³ (*Capell MS.*); [*at 22–3*] *Art.* At . . . clock?
White

28–9 if . . . me:] F; If . . . me, *Johnson*

30 befriend] F; defend *Rowe*³

31] *As verse, Theobald; as prose, F*

31 harm's] F; harms QU2; harm *Pope*

32] *Capell*; None . . . be, / . . . chance: F; None . . . fear, [*omitting may chance*] *Pope*

39] *Rowe*; I . . . in: / . . . thing F

39 SD] *Dyce*² (*after Rowe*)

46 SD severally] *Theobald*

Commentary notes for Act II, Scene iv

Location Rome. Before Brutus's house.

6 constancy firmness. See [2.1.227 n.](#)

9 keep counsel keep a matter secret or confidential. Possibly proverbial (Dent W706.1): 'Women can keep no counsel.' See also [2.1.298 n.](#) and 'in counsel', [4.1.45 n.](#)

18 rumour noise, clamour.

35 praetors administrators of justice.

39 SD The vagaries of punctuation, as well as the changes of focus in [39–43](#), make it difficult to discern the exact extent of the aside. The variation of interpretation seems considerable; some of the less ambiguous instances are to be found in Craik, Dorsch, and Charney. See also [3.1.232 SD n.](#)

44 commend me remember me kindly, present my kind regards.

46 SD *severally* i.e. at separate doors. See also [3.2.10 n.](#)

Act III, Scene i

**Flourish. Enter CAESAR, BRUTUS, CASSIUS, CASCA, DECIUS, METELLUS, TREBONIUS, CINNA, ANTONY, Lepidus, ARTEMIDORUS, PUBLIUS, [POPILLIUS, Ligarius,] and the SOOTHSAYER*

CAESAR

The Ides of March are come.

SOOTHSAYER

Ay, Caesar, but not gone.

ARTEMIDORUS

Hail, Caesar! Read this **schedule*.

DECIUS

Trebonius doth desire you to o'er-read
(At your best leisure) this his humble suit.

5

ARTEMIDORUS

O Caesar, read mine first, for mine's a suit
That touches Caesar nearer. Read it, great Caesar.

CAESAR

What touches us ourself shall be last served.

ARTEMIDORUS

Delay not, Caesar, read it instantly.

CAESAR

What, is the fellow mad?

PUBLIUS

Sirrah, give place.

10

CASSIUS

What, urge you your petitions in the street?
Come to the Capitol.

[Caesar enters the Capitol, the rest following]

POPILLIUS

I wish your enterprise today may thrive.

CASSIUS

What enterprise, Popillius?

POPILLIUS

Fare you well.

[Leaves him and joins Caesar]

BRUTUS

What said Popillius Lena?

15

CASSIUS

He wished today our enterprise might thrive.

I fear our purpose is discoverèd.

BRUTUS

Look how he *makes to Caesar, mark him.

CASSIUS

Casca, be *sudden, for we fear *prevention.

Brutus, what shall be done? If this be known

20

Cassius *or Caesar never shall *turn back,

*For I will slay myself.

BRUTUS

Cassius, be constant.

Popillius Lena speaks not of our purposes,

For look he smiles, and Caesar doth not change.

CASSIUS

Trebonius knows his time, for look you, Brutus,

25

He draws Mark Antony out of the way.

[Exeunt Antony and Trebonius]

DECIUS

Where is Metellus Cimber? Let him go

And *presently *prefer his suit to Caesar.

BRUTUS

He is *addressed, press near and second him.

CINNA

Casca, *you are the first that rears your hand. 30

CAESAR

Are we all ready? What is now amiss
That Caesar and his Senate must redress?

METELLUS

Most high, most mighty, and most puissant Caesar,
Metellus Cimber throws before thy seat
An humble heart.

CAESAR

I must prevent thee, Cimber. 35
These *couchings and these lowly *courtesies
Might fire the blood of ordinary men
And turn *preordinance and first decree
Into the *law of children. Be not *fond
To think that Caesar bears such rebel *blood 40
That will be thawed from the true quality
*With that which melteth fools – I mean sweet words,
Low-crookèd curtsies, and base spaniel fawning.
Thy brother by decree is banishèd:
If thou dost bend, and pray, and fawn for him, 45
I *spurn thee like a cur out of my way.
Know Caesar doth not wrong, nor without cause
Will he be satisfied.

METELLUS

Is there no voice more worthy than my own
To sound more sweetly in great Caesar's ear 50
For the *repealing of my banished brother?

BRUTUS

I kiss thy hand, but not in flattery, Caesar,
Desiring thee that *Publius Cimber may
Have an immediate *freedom of repeal.

CAESAR

What, Brutus?

CASSIUS

Pardon, Caesar! Caesar, pardon!

55

As low as to thy foot doth Cassius fall

To beg *enfranchisement for Publius Cimber.

CAESAR

I could be well moved, if I were as you;

If I could *pray to move, prayers would move me.

But I am *constant as the northern star,

60

Of whose *true-fixed and *resting quality

There is no fellow in the firmament.

The skies are painted with *unnumbered sparks,

They are all fire, and every one doth shine;

But there's but one in all doth hold *his place.

65

So in the world: 'tis furnished well with men,

And men are flesh and blood, and *apprehensive;

Yet in the number I do know but one

That unassailable holds on his rank,

Unshaked of motion, and that I am he

70

Let me a little show it, even in this:

That I was *constant Cimber should be banished,

And *constant do remain to keep him so.

CINNA

O Caesar –

CAESAR

Hence! Wilt thou lift up Olympus?

DECIUS

Great Caesar –

CAESAR

Doth not *Brutus bootless kneel?

75

CASCA

*Speak *hands for me!

They stab Caesar

CAESAR

**Et tu, Brute?* – *Then fall, Caesar!

Dies

CINNA

Liberty! Freedom! Tyranny is dead!

Run hence, proclaim, cry it about the streets.

CASSIUS

Some to the *common *pulpits, and cry out,
'Liberty, freedom, and *enfranchisement!'

80

BRUTUS

People and senators, be not affrighted,

Fly not, stand still! Ambition's debt is paid.

CASCA

Go to the pulpit, Brutus.

DECIUS

And Cassius too.

BRUTUS

Where's Publius?

85

CINNA

Here, quite confounded with this *mutiny.

METELLUS

Stand fast together lest some friend of Caesar's
Should chance –

BRUTUS

Talk not of standing. Publius, good cheer,
There is no harm intended to your person,
Nor to no Roman else. So tell them, Publius.

90

CASSIUS

And leave us, Publius, lest that the people,

Rushing on us, should do your age some mischief.

BRUTUS

Do so, and let no man *abide this deed

But we the doers.

95

[Exeunt all but the conspirators]

Enter TREBONIUS

CASSIUS

Where is Antony?

TREBONIUS

Fled to his house *amazed.

Men, wives, and children stare, cry out, and run

As it were doomsday.

BRUTUS

Fates, we will know your pleasures.

*That we shall die we know: 'tis but the time,

And drawing days out, that men stand upon.

100

CASCA

Why, he that cuts off twenty years of life

Cuts off so many years of fearing death.

BRUTUS

Grant that, and then is death a benefit.

So are we Caesar's friends, that have abridged

His time of fearing death. Stoop, Romans, stoop,

105

*And let us bathe our hands in Caesar's blood

Up to the elbows and besmear our swords.

Then walk we forth, even to the *market-place,

And waving our red weapons o'er our heads

Let's all cry, 'Peace, freedom, and liberty!'

110

CASSIUS

Stoop then and *wash. How many ages hence

Shall this our lofty scene be acted over

In states unborn and accents yet unknown!

BRUTUS

How many times shall Caesar bleed in sport,
That now on Pompey's *basis lies along 115
No worthier than the dust!

CASSIUS

So oft as that shall be,
So often shall the knot of us be called
The men that gave their country liberty.

DECIUS

What, shall we forth?

CASSIUS

Ay, every man away.
Brutus shall lead, and we will grace his heels 120
With the *most boldest and best hearts of Rome.

Enter a SERVANT

BRUTUS

*Soft, who comes here? A friend of Antony's.

SERVANT

Thus, Brutus, did my master bid me kneel,
Thus did Mark Antony bid me fall down,
And, being prostrate, thus he bade me say: 125
Brutus is noble, wise, valiant, and *honest;
Caesar was mighty, bold, *royal, and loving.
Say I love Brutus, and I honour him;
Say I feared Caesar, honoured him, and loved him.
If Brutus will vouchsafe that Antony 130

May safely come to him and be *resolved
How Caesar hath deserved to lie in death,
Mark Antony shall not love Caesar dead
So well as Brutus living, but will follow
The fortunes and affairs of noble Brutus 135

*Through the hazards of this untrod state
With all true faith. So says my master Antony.

BRUTUS

Thy master is a wise and valiant Roman,
I never thought him worse.
Tell him, *so please him come unto this place,
He shall be satisfied and by my honour
Depart untouched.

140

SERVANT

I'll fetch him *presently.

Exit Servant

BRUTUS

I know that we shall have him well *to friend.

CASSIUS

I wish we *may. But yet have I a mind
That fears him much, and my misgiving still
Falls *shrewdly to the purpose.

145

Enter ANTONY

BRUTUS

But here comes Antony. Welcome, Mark Antony!

ANTONY

O mighty Caesar! Dost thou lie so low?
Are all thy conquests, glories, triumphs, spoils
Shrunk to this little measure? Fare thee well!
I know not, gentlemen, what you intend,
Who else must be let blood, who else is *rank.

150

If I myself, there is no hour so fit
As Caesar's death's hour, nor no instrument
Of half that worth as those your swords made rich
With the most noble blood of all this world.

155

I do beseech ye, if you *bear me hard,
Now, whilst your *purpled hands do *reek and smoke,

Fulfil your pleasure. *Live a thousand years,
I shall not find myself so *apt to die: 160
No place will please me so, no *mean of death,
As here by Caesar, and by you cut off,
The choice and master spirits of this age.

BRUTUS

O Antony, beg not your death of us.
Though now we must appear bloody and cruel, 165
As by our hands and this our present act
You see we do, yet see you but our hands
And this the bleeding business they have done.
Our hearts you see not, they are *pitiful;
And pity to the general wrong of Rome – 170
*As fire drives out fire, so pity pity –
Hath done this deed on Caesar. For your part,
To you our swords have leaden points, Mark Antony;
Our arms in strength of *malice, and our hearts
Of brothers' temper, do receive you in 175
With all kind love, good thoughts, and reverence.

CASSIUS

Your voice shall be as strong as any man's
In the disposing of new dignities.

BRUTUS

Only be patient till we have appeased
The multitude, beside themselves with fear, 180
And then we will deliver you the cause
Why I, that did love Caesar when I struck him,
Have thus proceeded.

ANTONY

I doubt not of your wisdom.
Let each man render me his bloody hand.
First, Marcus Brutus, will I shake with you; 185
Next, Caius Cassius, do I take your hand;

Now, Decius Brutus, yours; now yours, Metellus;
 Yours, Cinna; and, my valiant Casca, yours;
 Though last, not least in love, yours, good Trebonius.
 Gentlemen all – alas, what shall I say? 190
 My credit now stands on such slippery ground
 That one of two bad ways you must *conceit me,
 Either a coward or a flatterer.
 That I did love thee, Caesar, O, 'tis true.
 If then thy spirit look upon us now, 195
 Shall it not grieve thee dearer than thy death
 To see thy Antony making his peace,
 Shaking the bloody fingers of thy foes –
 Most noble – in the presence of thy corse?
 Had I as many eyes as thou hast wounds, 200
 Weeping as fast as they stream forth thy blood,
 It would become me better than to *close
 In terms of friendship with thine enemies.
 Pardon me, Julius! Here wast thou *bayed, brave hart,
 Here didst thou fall, and here thy hunters stand, 205
 Signed in *thy spoil and crimsoned in thy *Lethe.
 O world! Thou wast the forest to this hart,
 And this indeed, O world, the heart of *thee.
 How like a deer stricken by many princes
 Dost thou here lie! 210

CASSIUS

Mark Antony –

ANTONY

Pardon me, Caius Cassius,
 The enemies of Caesar shall say this;
 Then, in a friend, it is cold *modesty.

CASSIUS

I blame you not for praising Caesar so,
 But what compact mean you to have with us? 215
 Will you be *pricked in number of our friends,

Or shall we on and not depend on you?

ANTONY

Therefore I took your hands, but was indeed
Swayed from the point by looking down on Caesar.
Friends am I with you all, and love you all, 220
Upon this hope, that you shall give me reasons
Why and wherein Caesar was dangerous.

BRUTUS

Or else were this a savage spectacle.
Our reasons are so full of good regard
That were *you, Antony, the son of Caesar 225
You should be satisfied.

ANTONY

That's all I seek,
And am, moreover, suitor that I may
Produce his body to the market-place,
And in the pulpit, as becomes a friend,
Speak in the *order of his funeral. 230

BRUTUS

You shall, Mark Antony.

CASSIUS

Brutus, a word with you.
[*Aside to Brutus*] *You know not what you do. Do not consent
That Antony speak in his funeral.
Know you how much the people may be moved
By that which he will utter?

BRUTUS

[*Aside to Cassius*] By your pardon, 235
I will myself into the pulpit first
And show the reason of our Caesar's death.
*What Antony shall speak, I will *protest
He speaks by leave and by permission,

And that we are contented Caesar shall 240
Have all true rites and lawful ceremonies.
It shall advantage more than do us wrong.

CASSIUS

[*Aside to Brutus*] I know not what may *fall, I like it not.

BRUTUS

Mark Antony, here take you Caesar's body.
You shall not in your funeral speech blame us, 245
But speak all good you can devise of Caesar
And say you do't by our permission,
Else shall you not have any hand at all
About his funeral. And you shall speak
In the same pulpit whereto I am going, 250
After my speech is ended.

ANTONY

Be it so,
I do desire no more.

BRUTUS

Prepare the body then and follow us.

Exeunt [all but] Antony

ANTONY

O, pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth,
That I am meek and gentle with these butchers! 255
Thou art the ruins of the noblest man
That ever livèd in the tide of times.
Woe to the hand that shed this costly blood!
Over thy wounds now do I *prophesy –

Which like dumb mouths do ope their ruby lips 260
To beg the voice and utterance of my tongue –
A curse shall light upon the *limbs of men:
Domestic fury and fierce civil strife
Shall *cumber all the parts of Italy;
Blood and destruction shall be so in use 265

And dreadful objects so familiar
That mothers shall but smile when they behold
Their infants quartered *with the hands of war,
All pity choked with custom of *fell deeds;
And Caesar's spirit, ranging for revenge, 270
*With Ate by his side come hot from hell,
Shall in these confines with a monarch's voice
Cry *havoc and *let slip the dogs of war,
That this foul deed shall smell above the earth
With carrion men groaning for burial. 275

Enter Octavio's SERVANT

You serve Octavius Caesar, do you not?

SERVANT

I do, Mark Antony.

ANTONY

Caesar did write for him to come to Rome.

SERVANT

He did receive his letters, and is coming,
And bid me say to you by word of mouth – 280
[Seeing the body]

*O Caesar!

ANTONY

Thy heart is big, get thee apart and weep.
Passion, I see, is catching, for mine eyes,
Seeing those beads of sorrow stand in thine,
Began to water. Is thy master coming? 285

SERVANT

He lies tonight within seven leagues of Rome.

ANTONY

Post back with speed and tell him what hath chanced.
Here is a mourning Rome, a dangerous Rome,
No *Rome of safety for Octavius yet:

Hie hence and tell him so. Yet stay awhile, 290
 Thou shalt not back till I have borne this *corse
 Into the market-place. There shall I *try
 In my oration how the people take
 The *cruel issue of these bloody men,
 According to the which thou shalt discourse 295
 To young Octavius of the state of things.
 Lend me your hand.

Exeunt [with Caesar's body]

Collation notes for Act III, Scene i

3.1] *Actus Tertius*. F; ACT III. SCENE 1. Rowe

Location] Rowe

0 SD POPILLIUS] F2

0 SD Ligarius] *This edn*

8 us ourself] F; us? ourself *Collier*² (*Collier MS.*)

12 SD] *Steevens (after Capell)*

14] *Reed (Capell MS.); Cassi. . . . Popillius? / . . . well. F*

14 SD] *Capell (Capell MS.)*

21 or] F; on *Craik (conj. Malone)*

26 SD] *Capell (Capell MS.)*

31 Are . . . ready?] *Assigned to Cassius, QU1; to Cinna, conj. Ritson (apud Steevens*³*); to Casca, Collier*² (*conj. Thirlby, reading We are all ready*)

36 couchings] F; crouchings *Hanmer (conj. Thirlby)*

38 first] F; fixt *conj. Craik*

39 law] *Malone (conj. Johnson); lane F; love conj. Thirlby; line conj. Thirlby; play Hudson*² (*conj. Mason); lune conj. Macmillan*

43 Low-crookèd] F; Low-crouched *Collier*²

47–8 wrong . . . satisfied] F; wrong, but with just cause, / Nor . . . satisfied. *conj. Pope after wrong at 3.2.102; Hudson*² (*conj. Tyrwhitt apud Steevens*²)

61 true-fixed] *Hyphen, Capell (Capell MS.); true fixt, F; true, fixt, Rowe*

69 rank] F; race [i.e. course] *conj. Johnson*

74–5] *Steevens*³ (*Capell MS.*); *Cinna . . . Caesar. / . . . Olympus? / . . . Caesar. / . . . kneele? F; Cin. . . . Olympus? / . . . Caesar, – / . . . kneel? Hudson*

75 Doth] F; Do F2

76–7] *As one line, Keightley*

76 Speak hands] F; Speak, hands, *Capell (Capell MS.)*

77 fall,] QU4; fall F

84–5] *Steevens*³; *Cask. . . . Brutus. / . . . too. / . . . Publius? F; CASCA . . . Brutus. / . . . Publius? Bevington*

95 SD.1] *Capell; at 77, Knight; at 82, Wells and Taylor*

95–6] *Steevens*³; *But . . . Doers. / . . . Trebonius. / . . . Antony? / . . . amaz'd: F; But . . . Antony? / . . . amaz'd: Knight*

101 SH CASCA] *Cask. F; Cas. / Pope*

105–10 Stoop . . . liberty] *Assigned to Brutus, F; to Casca, Pope*

- 113 states]** F2; State F
113 accents] F; Nations QU4
114 SH BRUTUS] F; *Casc.* / *Pope*
115 lies] F2; lye F
116 SH CASSIUS] F; *Bru.* / *Pope*
118 their] F; our *Malone*
147] *Pope* (*Folger MS.*); But . . . *Antony:* / . . . *Antony.* F
154 death's] deaths F; death QU2
174 in strength of malice] F; no strength of malice *Thomas Johnson*; exempt from malice *Pope*; in strength of welcome *Collier*² (*Collier MS.*); in strength of manhood *Collier*⁴; in strength of amity *Hudson*² (*conj. Singer apud Hudson*²); unstrung of malice *Wells and Taylor* (*after Badham*, unstring their malice)
204 hart] F; Heart F2
206 Lethe] F; death *Pope*
208 heart] *Theobald*; Hart F
225 you,] Q (1691); you F
232 SD] *Rowe*
235 utter?] Q (1684); vtter. F
235 SD] *Capell*
241 true] F; due *Pope*
241 ceremonies.] *Rowe* (*subst.*); Ceremonies, F
243 SD] *Capell*
244 here] F; here, Q (1691)
251–2] *Steevens*³ (*Capell MS.*); After . . . ended. / . . . so:/ . . . more. F
254 SH ANTONY] Q (1691)
254 bleeding piece of] F; piece of bleeding *Reed*
258 hand] F; hands *White* (*conj. Thirlby*)
262 limbs] F; kind *Hanmer*; ne *Warburton*; lymms *conj. Johnson*; loines *Collier*² (*Collier MS.*); lives *Dyce* (*conj. Johnson*); tombs *conj. Staunton*; sonnes *conj. White*; heads *conj. John Hunter*; minds *Dyce*² (*conj. Jervis*); times *conj. Walker*
275 SD Octavio's] F; Octavius's QU3
280 SD] *Rowe*
283 catching, for] F2; catching from F
285 Began] F; Begin QU1
287] *Rowe*; Post . . . speede, / . . . chanc'd: F
291 corse] Coarse F3; course F
297 SD with Caesar's body] *Rowe*

Commentary notes for Act III, Scene i

Location Rome. The Capitol. The staging of the opening lines of this scene has been much commented on. As the inserted stage direction after 12 indicates, the locus shifts from the street into the Capitol. For a likely staging, see illustration 1, p. 4.

0 SD Lepidus Disturbed by the apparent absence of Ligarius and the presence of the mute Lepidus, Ringler (see Textual Analysis, p. 151 below) suggests a compositor's 'misreading "Li" as "Le" . . . and so improperly expanding . . . to "Lepidus" instead of "Ligarius" which Shakespeare had intended' (p. 116). But mutes are not uncommon in public scenes and Plutarch (p. 160) does mention Lepidus's fleeing the Capitol with Antony after Caesar's assassination (although Appian, p. 22, says Lepidus heard of 'what was done'). It is likely that Ligarius is also present since he is mentioned in Artemidorus's 'paper' (2.3.4).

3 schedule A slip or scroll of parchment or paper containing writing.

18 makes to proceeds towards.

19 sudden swift of action; in this sense, used of persons.

- 19 prevention** being forestalled. See ‘prevent’, [2.1.28 n.](#)
- 21 or** ‘Neither’ must be understood before ‘Cassius’.
- 21 turn back** return.
- 22 constant** See ‘constancy’, [2.1.227 n.](#)
- 28 presently** immediately. See also [142](#), [4.1.45](#), [4.3.197](#).
- 28 prefer** put forward, present (for acceptance). See also [5.5.62](#).
- 29 addressed** ready (for the purpose).
- 30 you . . . that rears your** Abbott (247) attributes the construction to the ‘distance of the relative from the antecedent’.
- 36 couchings** bowings in reverence or subserviency.
- 36 courtesies** curtsies; this is the most likely meaning. Compare [43](#).
- 38 preordinance and first decree i.e.** ‘the natural and immutable laws of the universe that have been preordained and decreed from the beginning of time’ (Charney). The doublet is used for emphasis; the almost synonymous terms have legal and ecclesiastical overtones.
- 39 *law** All conjectures have in common the unreliability of children. The meanings are obvious except perhaps for ‘lane’, which Steevens² explains as the ‘narrow conceit’, and Hulme (p. 210) holds is a variant pronunciation of ‘line’ in its now obsolete sense ‘rule, canon, precept’.
- 39 fond** foolishly credulous.
- 40–1 blood . . . quality** For a similar image from alchemy, see [1.2.297–9](#).
- 42–3** For the association in Shakespeare of fawning dogs with melting sweets and flatterers, see Spurgeon, pp. 195–9. See also [5.1.41](#).
- 46 spurn** kick; as at [2.1.11](#).
- 51 repealing** recalling from exile.
- 53 Publius Cimber** Little is known of the brother of the conspirator but it is reasonably certain that he had been a senator who was indeed ‘repealed’ after the death of Caesar. See Pauly, Tillius 1.
- 54 freedom of repeal** ‘Permission to be recalled’ is, among editors, the favoured interpretation, with others ranging from ‘free, unconditional recall’ (Craik) to ‘freedom *in consequence* of his recall’ (Furness).
- 57 enfranchisement** (restoration of) citizenship. See also [81](#).
- 59 pray** entreat (others).
- 60, 72, 73 constant** See ‘constancy’, [2.1.227 n.](#)
- 61 true** sure, secure.
- 61 resting** remaining stationary.
- 63 unnumbered** numberless.
- 65 his** its.
- 67 apprehensive** possessed of intelligence or understanding.
- 75 bootless** uselessly.
- 76 Plutarch** (pp. 160, 168) records that Casca was the first to strike (‘but gave him no great wound’). Tradition has it that Brutus was the last.
- 76 hands** The ambiguity of construction has led some editors to punctuate ‘hands’ as a vocative. Compare [2.1.255 n.](#)
- 77 Et tu, Brute** Suetonius (p. 111) reports that ‘when Marcus Brutus rushed at him, [Caesar] said in Greek, “You too, my child?”’, an allusion perhaps to the not uncommon belief that Caesar was his father. The non-historical Latin line is to be found in various Renaissance works, most notably in the ‘bad’ quarto of *3 Henry VI, The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York* (1595). The *e* in the Latin vocative *Brute* is pronounced, as the accent in F indicates.
- 77 Then fall, Caesar** Because Caesar often refers to himself in the third person (see p. 22 above), the temptation is to omit the comma after ‘fall’, which might then be glossed as ‘let fall’. See also [2.1.255 n.](#) and [3.1.76 n.](#)
- 80 common** public. See also [3.2.240](#).
- 80 pulpits** Scaffolds, stages or platforms for public representations, speeches, or disputations. Most likely, the *rostra* in the Forum.
- 81 enfranchisement** citizenship. Compare [57 n.](#) above.

86 mutiny discord.

94 abide Hulme (pp. 312–13) detects a double sense: ‘in opposition to “leauē”, it has the meaning “stay”; with “this deede” as its object it means “to pay for, meet the consequence of”’. Earlier, Mark Hunter had pointed to the confusion of the former for the latter. See *OED Abide* v 17b and [3.2.106 n.](#)

96 amazed stupefied; as at [1.2.128](#).

99–100 Possibly proverbial (Dent N311): ‘Nothing more certain than death and nothing more uncertain than the time of its coming.’

106 The view that Shakespeare is inflecting the ancient custom of drinking human blood in swearing oaths seems far-fetched. More likely is an allusion to the practice of hunters (with whom the conspirators are often compared) dipping their hands in the blood of slain animals.

108 market-place i.e. the Forum.

111 wash Not ‘cleanse’ but ‘immerse’ (hands and swords).

115 basis pedestal (as of a statue); the literal meaning.

121 most boldest The common double superlative used often for emphasis. See Abbott 11 and also [3.2.174](#).

122 Soft See [1.2.245 n.](#)

126 honest An adjective with a wide spectrum, here most likely meaning ‘honourable’.

127 royal noble, generous (*OED* sv *adj.* 9). See also [3.2.234](#).

131 resolved satisfied, convinced. See also [3.2.170](#).

136 Through F’s ‘Thorough’, common in Shakespeare, may be used for metrical purposes here. See Abbott 478 and also [5.1.109](#).

140 so if, provided that. For this use of the subjunctive, see Abbott 133.

142 presently immediately; as at [28](#).

143 to i.e. as a. Abbott (189): ‘To, from meaning “like,” came into the meaning of . . . “equivalence,” “apposition”.’

144 may can. See [1.3.144 n.](#)

146 shrewdly grievously, intensely, seriously (*OED* 5). An adverb of condition qualifying a word or phrase expressive of a painful or adverse condition (*OED* sv *adv.* 6) passing into a mere intensive.

152 rank ‘Excessively great or large; esp. swollen, puffed up, grossly fat’ (*OED* sv *adj.* 6); to be understood in connection with the medical connotations of ‘shrunk’ ([150](#)) and ‘let blood’.

157 bear me hard endure me with a grudge. See [1.2.302 n.](#)

158 purpled blood-stained (from ‘purple’, the precious crimson dye used for royal or imperial robes).

158 reek and smoke The terms are practically synonymous and are applied to ‘blood freshly shed, or [to] things smeared with this’ (*OED* Reek v 2C).

159 Live i.e. if I live (subjunctive).

160 apt ready.

161 mean means. Shakespeare favoured ‘means’ over ‘mean’ by a margin of almost seven to one.

169 pitiful full of pity. See [1.3.78 n.](#)

171 Proverbial (Dent F277, P369.1): ‘One fire drives out another’; ‘Pity destroys pity.’

174 malice power to harm.

192 conceit imagine. *OED* v 2 cites this instance.

202 close come to an agreement.

204 bayed brought to bay; this is the dominant interpretation, but ‘bayed’ may also imply ‘enclosed, cornered’ and ‘barked at’.

206 thy spoil slaughter of thee; ‘spoil’ in hunting = the capture of the quarry and the division of rewards.

206 Lethe The river in Hades whose waters, when drunk, caused forgetfulness of the past. It is equated here with Caesar’s life-blood and in general with oblivion and death.

208 thee For the use of the pronoun (‘thee’) instead of the pronominal adjective (‘thine’), see Abbott 225. It is used here perhaps for antithesis.

213 modesty moderation.

216 pricked marked (by a ‘prick’ or tick).

225 you, Antony, See [2.1.255 n.](#)

230 order prescribed form of ceremony or rite. See also ‘ordered’, [5.5.79](#).

232 SD The exact limits of the aside are, as at [2.4.39](#) SD, difficult to ascertain. Fairly clear alternatives are offered by Capell, Keightley, and Wilson.

238 What . . . shall Whatever Antony may. ‘With verbs of seeing, thinking and finding, *shall* was commonly found in the sense of “may” or “will”’ (Blake, p. 94).

238 protest assert publicly.

243 fall befall, happen. See also [5.1.104](#).

259 prophesy ‘Very important [in divination] is prophecy, in which the *vates* acts as the medium or mouthpiece of a divine or demonic power possessing him’ (*OCD* divination).

262 limbs F’s reading is preferable to the numerous conjectures (see collation) in both the literal and metaphorical sense of the ‘body politic’.

264 cumber All commentators gloss as ‘burden’ or ‘harass’ or both, but *OED* sv v 1 ‘overwhelm’ seems more appropriate.

268 with ‘Often used to express the juxtaposition of cause and effect’ (Abbott 193).

269 fell fierce, cruel.

271 Daughter of Strife and sister of Lawlessness, Ate is the symbol of infatuation or moral blindness. In Homer she is banished by Zeus to the lower world; in Aeschylus she (like Nemesis) avenges evil deeds. Shakespeare equates her with discord, as in *John* 2.1.63.

273 havoc destruction; originally, to give an army the order ‘Havoc!’ was the signal for the seizure of spoil.

273 let slip unleash. A slip is a leash so contrived that the dog can be readily released.

281 For the use of the short line, see [1.1.51 n](#).

289 Rome Upton’s conjecture ‘room’ (p. 246) points up the possible wordplay, as at [1.2.156](#).

291 corse corpse.

292 try attempt to find out, test. See also [4.3.214](#), [5.3.110](#).

294 cruel issue outcome of the cruelty. For the construction, see [1.1.33 n](#).

Act III, Scene ii

Enter BRUTUS and Cassius with the PLEBEIANS

ALL

We will be satisfied! Let us be satisfied!

BRUTUS

Then follow me and give me audience, friends.

Cassius, go you into the other street

And part the numbers.

Those that will hear me speak, let 'em stay here; 5

Those that will follow Cassius, go with him;

And *public reasons shall be rendered

Of Caesar's death.

1 PLEBEIAN

I will hear Brutus speak.

2 PLEBEIAN

I will hear Cassius and compare their reasons

When *severally we hear them rendered. 10

[Exit Cassius with some of the Plebeians]

[Brutus goes into the pulpit]

3 PLEBEIAN

The noble Brutus is ascended, silence!

BRUTUS

Be patient till the last.

Romans, countrymen, and *lovers, hear me for my cause, and be silent
that you may hear. Believe me for mine honour, and *have respect to
mine honour that you may believe. *Censure me in your wisdom, and 15

awake your *senses that you may the better judge. If there be any in this
assembly, any dear friend of Caesar's, to him I say that Brutus' love to
Caesar was no less than his. If then that friend demand why Brutus

rose against Caesar, this is my answer: not that I loved Caesar less,
but that I loved Rome more. Had you rather Caesar were living, and 20
die all slaves, than that Caesar were dead, to live all freemen? *As

Caesar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honour him; but, as he was ambitious, I slew him. There is tears for his love, joy for his fortune, honour for his valour, and death for his ambition. Who is here so base that would be a bondman? If any, speak, for him have I offended. Who is here so *rude that would not be a Roman? If any, speak, for him have I offended. Who is here so vile that will not love his country? If any, speak, for him have I offended. I pause for a reply. 25

ALL
None, Brutus, none. 30

BRUTUS
Then none have I offended. I have done no more to Caesar than you shall do to Brutus. The question of his death is *enrolled in the Capitol, his glory not extenuated wherein he was worthy, nor his offences *enforced for which he suffered death.

Enter MARK ANTONY [and others] with Caesar's body

Here comes his body, mourned by Mark Antony, who, though he had 35
no hand in his death, shall receive the benefit of his dying, a place in the commonwealth, as which of you shall not? With this I depart:
that,
as I slew my best lover for the good of Rome, I have the same dagger
for myself when it shall please my country to need my death.
[Comes down]

ALL
Live, Brutus, live, live! 40

1 PLEBEIAN
Bring him with triumph home unto his house.

2 PLEBEIAN
Give him a statue with his *ancestors.

3 PLEBEIAN

Let him be Caesar.

4 PLEBEIAN

Caesar's better parts
Shall be crowned in Brutus.

1 PLEBEIAN

We'll bring him to his house
With shouts and clamours.

BRUTUS

My countrymen –

45

2 PLEBEIAN

Peace, silence, Brutus speaks!

1 PLEBEIAN

Peace ho!

BRUTUS

Good countrymen, let me depart alone,
And, for my sake, stay here with Antony.
Do grace to Caesar's corpse, and grace his speech
*Tending to Caesar's glories, which Mark Antony
(By our permission) is allowed to make.
I do entreat you, not a man depart,
Save I alone, till Antony have *spoke.

50

Exit

1 PLEBEIAN

Stay ho, and let us hear Mark Antony.

3 PLEBEIAN

Let him go up into the public chair,
We'll hear him. Noble Antony, go up.

55

ANTONY

For Brutus' sake, I am *beholding to you.

[Goes into the pulpit]

4 PLEBEIAN

What does he say of Brutus?

3 PLEBEIAN

He says for Brutus' sake
He finds himself *beholding to us all.

4 PLEBEIAN

'Twere best he speak no harm of Brutus here!

60

1 PLEBEIAN

This Caesar was a tyrant.

3 PLEBEIAN

Nay, that's certain:
We are blest that Rome is rid of him.

2 PLEBEIAN

Peace, let us hear what Antony can say.

ANTONY

You gentle Romans –

ALL

Peace ho, let us hear him.

ANTONY

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears!

65

I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.

The evil that men do lives after them,

The good is oft interrèd with their bones:

So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus

Hath told you Caesar was ambitious;

70

If it were so, it was a grievous fault,

And grievously hath Caesar answered it.

Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest –

For Brutus is an honourable man,

So are they all, all honourable men –

75

Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral.

He was my friend, faithful and just to me,

But Brutus says he was ambitious,

And Brutus is an honourable man.

He hath brought many captives home to Rome, 80
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill;
Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?

When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept:
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff;
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious, 85
And Brutus is an honourable man.

You all did see that on the Lupercal
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse. Was this ambition?
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious, 90
And sure he is an honourable man.

I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,
But here I am to speak what I do know.
You all did love him once, not without cause;
What cause withholds you then to mourn for him? 95
O judgement, thou art fled to *brutish beasts,
And men have lost their reason! Bear with me,
My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,
And I must pause till it come back to me.

1 PLEBEIAN
Methinks there is much reason in his sayings. 100

2 PLEBEIAN
If thou consider rightly of the matter,
Caesar has had great wrong.

3 PLEBEIAN
*Has he, masters!
I fear there will a worse come in his place.

4 PLEBEIAN
Marked ye his words? He would not take the crown,
Therefore 'tis certain he was not ambitious. 105

1 PLEBEIAN
If it be found so, some will dear *abide it.

2 PLEBEIAN

Poor soul, his eyes are red as fire with weeping.

3 PLEBEIAN

There's not a nobler man in Rome than Antony.

4 PLEBEIAN

Now mark him, he begins again to speak.

ANTONY

But yesterday the word of Caesar might 110

Have stood against the world; now lies he there,

And *none so poor to do him reverence.

O masters, if I were disposed to stir

Your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage,

I should do Brutus wrong and Cassius wrong, 115

Who (you all know) are honourable men.

I will not do them wrong; I rather choose

To wrong the dead, to wrong myself and you,

Than I will wrong such honourable men.

But here's a parchment with the seal of Caesar, 120

I found it in his closet, 'tis his will.

Let but the commons hear this testament –

Which, pardon me, I do not mean to read –

And they would go and kiss dead Caesar's wounds

And dip their *napkins in his sacred blood, 125

Yea, beg a hair of him for memory,

And, dying, mention it within their wills,

Bequeathing it as a rich legacy

Unto their issue.

4 PLEBEIAN

We'll hear the will. Read it, Mark Antony. 130

ALL

The will, the will, we will hear Caesar's will!

ANTONY

Have patience, gentle friends, I must not read it.
It is not meet you know how Caesar loved you:
You are not wood, you are not stones, but men,
And, being men, hearing the will of Caesar,
It will inflame you, it will make you mad.
'Tis good you know not that you are his heirs,
For if you should, O, what would come of it?

135

4 PLEBEIAN

Read the will, we'll hear it, Antony.
You shall read us the will, Caesar's will!

140

ANTONY

Will you be patient? Will you stay awhile?
I have o'ershot myself to tell you of it.

I fear I wrong the honourable men
Whose daggers have stabbed Caesar, I do fear it.

4 PLEBEIAN

They were traitors. Honourable men!

145

ALL

The will! The testament!

2 PLEBEIAN

They were villains, murderers! The will, read the will!

ANTONY

You will compel me then to read the will?
Then make a ring about the corpse of Caesar
And let me show you him that made the will.
Shall I descend? And will you give me leave?

150

ALL

Come down.

2 PLEBEIAN

Descend.

3 PLEBEIAN

You shall have leave.

[Antony comes down from the pulpit]

4 PLEBEIAN

A ring, stand round. 155

1 PLEBEIAN

Stand from the *hearse, stand from the body.

2 PLEBEIAN

Room for Antony, most noble Antony.

ANTONY

Nay, press not so upon me, stand *far off.

ALL

Stand back! Room, bear back!

ANTONY

If you have tears, prepare to shed them now. 160

You all do know this mantle. I remember

The first time ever Caesar put it on,

'Twas on a summer's evening, in his tent,

That day he overcame the *Nervii.

Look, in this place ran Cassius' dagger through; 165

See what a rent the *envious Casca made;

Through this the well-belovèd Brutus stabbed,

And as he plucked his cursèd steel away,

Mark how the blood of Caesar followed it,

As rushing out of doors to be *resolved 170

If Brutus so *unkindly knocked or no,

For Brutus, as you know, was Caesar's *angel.

Judge, O you gods, how dearly Caesar loved him!

This was the *most unkindest cut of all.

For when the noble Caesar saw him stab, 175

Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms,

*Quite vanquished him. Then *burst his mighty heart,

And, in his mantle muffling up his face,
Even at the base of Pompey's *statue
(Which all the while ran blood) great Caesar fell. 180

O, what a fall was there, my countrymen!
Then I, and you, and all of us fell down,
Whilst bloody treason *flourished over us.
O, now you weep, and I perceive you feel
The *dint of pity. These are gracious drops. 185

Kind souls, what weep you when you but behold
Our Caesar's vesture wounded? Look you here,
Here is himself, marred as you see with traitors.

1 PLEBEIAN

O piteous spectacle!

2 PLEBEIAN

O noble Caesar! 190

3 PLEBEIAN

O woeful day!

4 PLEBEIAN

O traitors, villains!

1 PLEBEIAN

O most bloody sight!

2 PLEBEIAN

We will be revenged!

ALL

Revenge! *About! Seek! Burn! Fire! Kill! 195
Slay! Let not a traitor live!

ANTONY

Stay, countrymen.

1 PLEBEIAN

Peace there, hear the noble Antony.

2 PLEBEIAN

We'll hear him, we'll follow him, we'll die with him.

ANTONY

Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up 200

To such a sudden flood of mutiny.

They that have done this deed are honourable.

What private *griefs they have, alas, I know not,

That made them do it. They are wise and honourable,

And will no doubt with reasons answer you. 205

I come not, friends, to steal away your hearts.

I am no orator, as Brutus is,

But – as you know me all – a plain blunt man

That love my friend, and that they know full well

That gave me public leave to speak of him. 210

For I have neither **wit, nor words, nor worth,

Action, nor utterance, nor the power of speech

To stir men's blood. I only speak right on.

I tell you that which you yourselves do know,

Show you sweet Caesar's wounds, poor, poor, dumb mouths, 215

And bid them speak for me. But were I Brutus,

And Brutus Antony, there were an Antony

Would *ruffle up your spirits and put a tongue

In every wound of Caesar, that should move

The stones of Rome to rise and mutiny. 220

ALL

We'll mutiny.

1 PLEBEIAN

We'll burn the house of Brutus.

3 PLEBEIAN

Away then, come, seek the conspirators.

ANTONY

Yet hear me, countrymen, yet hear me speak.

ALL

Peace ho, hear Antony, most noble Antony!

ANTONY

Why, friends, you go to do you know not what. 225
Wherein hath Caesar thus deserved your loves?
Alas, you know not! I must tell you then:
You have forgot the will I told you of.

ALL

Most true. The will, let's stay and hear the will!

ANTONY

Here is the will, and under Caesar's seal: 230
To every Roman citizen he gives,
To every *several man, seventy-five *drachmaes.

2 PLEBEIAN

Most noble Caesar, we'll revenge his death!

3 PLEBEIAN

O *royal Caesar!

ANTONY

Hear me with patience. 235

ALL

Peace ho!

ANTONY

Moreover, he hath left you all his walks,
His private arbours and new-planted orchards,
*On this side Tiber; he hath left them you,
And to your heirs for ever – *common *pleasures, 240
To walk abroad and recreate yourselves.
Here was a Caesar! When comes such another?

1 PLEBEIAN

Never, never! Come, away, away!
We'll burn his body in the holy place
And with the brands fire the traitors' houses. 245

Take up the body.

2 PLEBEIAN

Go fetch fire!

3 PLEBEIAN

Pluck down benches!

4 PLEBEIAN

Pluck down *forms, windows, anything!

Exeunt Plebeians [with the body]

ANTONY

Now let it work. Mischief, thou art afoot,

250

Take thou what course thou wilt!

Enter SERVANT

How now, fellow?

SERVANT

Sir, Octavius is already come to Rome.

ANTONY

Where is he?

SERVANT

He and Lepidus are at Caesar's house.

ANTONY

And thither will I straight to visit him.

255

He comes *upon a wish. Fortune is merry,

And in this mood will give us anything.

SERVANT

I heard him say Brutus and Cassius

*Are rid like madmen through the gates of Rome.

ANTONY

Belike they had some notice of the people,

260

How I had moved them. Bring me to Octavius.

Exeunt

Collation notes for Act III, Scene ii

3.2] Rowe

Location Rowe

10 SD. 1 Exit . . . Plebeians] Capell

10 SD.2 Brutus . . . pulpit] F (at o SD)

21 freemen] Q (1691); Free-men F; free men F2

34 SD and others] Malone (after Capell)

39 SD] Capell

42, 43 SH 2 PLEBEIAN . . . 4 PLEBEIAN] F; on the assumption that the 'actual' Second Plebeian has left at 9 to hear Cassius, Humphreys substitutes FOURTH for SECOND and FIFTH for FOURTH throughout the rest of the scene. In 3.3, however, he reverts to F's four Plebeians. Bevington retains the 'arbitrary' numbering but notes, 'Not the same person who exited at l.10'

42 ancestors] F; ancestor's conj, Velz (privately)

43–6] Globe; 3. . . Caesar. / . . . parts, / . . . Brutus. / . . . House, / . . . Clamors. / . . . Country-men. / . . . speakes. / . . . ho. F; 3 Pleb. . . Caesar. / . . . parts / . . . Brutus. / . . . clamours. QU4; 3. CIT. . . . parts / . . . Brutus. / . . . clamours. / . . . speaks. / . . . ho! Steevens³

57 SD] Globe (after Capell/goes up)

62 blest] F; glad F2

64 SH ALL] F; SECOND PLEBEIAN Sanders

96 art] F2; are F

96 beasts] F; Breasts QU4

102 Has he] Ha's hee F; Has he my Capell (conj. Thirlby); Has he not Craik; That has he Mark Hunter (conj. Morley apud Mark Hunter); Ha! has he conj. Anon. (apud Cam.)

102–3] As verse, Steevens³ (Capell MS.); as prose (turnover), F

126 Yea] F; Nay Capell

145–6] F; as one verse line, Keightley

146–7] F; ALL . . . villains, / . . . Read the will! S. F. Johnson²

147] As prose, F as verse, splitting after murderers, Irving; as one verse line, Craig

148 will?] Pope; Will: F

152–5] F; Cit . . . ring;/ . . . round. Keightley (conj. Thirlby)

154 SD] Rowe (after 161)

174 cut] F; act Folger MS.

186 what] F; what, Pope

189–98] F; 1 Cit. . . Caesar! / . . . sight! / . . . burn,- / . . . live. / . . . Antony. Keightley. There are numerous attempts to make verse of all or some of these lines

194–6] As prose, Pope; as verse, We . . . Reuenge / . . ., slay, / . . . liue. F

195 SH ALL] Collier² (Collier MS.)

199] F; as verse, Johnson²

205 reasons] F; Reason QU4

210 gave] F; give F2

211 wit] F2; writ F

234–6] F; as one line, Keightley; O . . . patience. / . . . ho! Bevington

239 this] F; that Theobald (after Plutarch)

245 fire] F; fire all F2

246–9] F; as F, adding The before benches as separate line, Capell; Take . . . benches. / . . . thing. Keightley

249 SD with the body] Rowe

251 Take thou] F; Take now conj. Craik; Take then conj. Anon. (apud Cam.)

258 him] F; them Capell

Commentary notes for Act III, Scene ii

Location Rome. The Forum.

7 public Commentary is divided: ‘concerning the public’ or ‘given in public’ or both. See Abbott 3.

10 severally separately, each in turn. See also 2.4.46 SD.

10 SD.2 pulpit For a possible rendition of this structure, see illustration 2, p. 6.

13 lovers friends (Pope’s emendation), well-wishers.

14 have respect to consider, heed. See also 4.3.69.

15 Censure Judge (not necessarily negative in connotation).

16 senses Normally plural: ‘mental faculties . . . one’s “reason” or “wits”’ (*OED* Sense *sb* 10).

21 As In proportion as. See 2.1.106 n.

26 rude Apparently synonymous with ‘base’ (25) and ‘vile’ (28).

32 enrolled written upon a roll or parchment.

34 enforced put forward (too) strongly, emphasised. Compare 4.3.112 n.

42 ancestors John W. Velz (privately) suggests the possessive singular, noting Plutarch’s reference (p. 164) to a statue of Junius Brutus in the Capitol. But his citing of Brutus’s reference to his ancestors (2.1.53) would seem to diminish the attractiveness of his effort to remove ambiguity.

50 Tending Relating, referring.

53 spoke For the form, see 1.2.48 n.

57, 59 beholding Common for modern ‘beholden’, the form may derive from a confusion of ‘beholden to’ and ‘holding to’ (Abbott 372, Franz 169).

96 brutish Possibly a pun on Latin ‘brutus’ (= ‘dull’, ‘without reason’) and the name ‘Brutus’. See Plutarch, p. 157.

102 Has he, masters! Most likely an assertion (as the conjectures indicate) rather than a question. For a similar inversion, see 1.2.228.

106 abide pay for (‘through confusion of form with *abye*’: *OED* Abide v 17b). See also 3.1.94n.

112 none so poor ‘The meanest man is now too high’ (Johnson).

125 napkins handkerchiefs.

156 hearse bier.

158 far F’s ‘farre’ suggests the comparative ‘farther’. See Franz 220 and 5.3.11.

164 Nervii A mixed Celto-German tribe, occupying parts of Hainault and Flanders and called by Plutarch ‘the stoutest warriors of all the Belgae’, they were defeated by Caesar in 57 BC.

166 envious malicious; as at 2.1.178.

170 resolved satisfied, convinced; as at 3.1.131.

171 unkindly unnaturally (with, as often in Shakespeare, a possible play on the sense ‘cruelly’).

172 angel Most take this to mean ‘best beloved, darling’ rather than ‘guardian angel’ or ‘genius’.

174 most unkindest The double superlative is used for emphasis, as at 3.1.121. E. L. Dachslager (‘“The most unkindest cut”: a note on *Julius Caesar* 3.2.187’, *ELN* 11 (1973–4), 258–9) detects the possibility of an ‘oblique’ reference to a detail from Plutarch (p. 160) which Shakespeare omits: that in the assassination of Caesar ‘Brutus himself gave him one wound about his privities’.

177 Quite Completely.

177 burst Citing contemporary works of physiology, Alan R. Smith (*Explicator* 42:4 (1984), 9–10) finds ‘Antony’s use of *burst* a panegyric, for it suggests to the mob that Caesar, despite his loss of blood from the dozens of wounds, yet had enough blood to “burst his mighty heart” when grief overcomes him at the sight of Brutus among the conspirators’.

179 statue The final *e* is pronounced. See 2.2.76 n.

183 flourished Most recent interpretations extend ‘thrived’ to ‘exulted, triumphed’ and combine with a sword image.

185 dint blow; especially one given with a weapon.

195 About Get to work, bestir yourself (Onions); an imperative use.

203 griefs grievances; as at 1.3.118.

211–13 wit . . . blood Renaissance rhetoric, as exemplified by Thomas Wilson (*The Arte of Rhetorique*, 1553), would equate ‘wit’ with ‘invention’ (fol. 3^v), ‘words’ with ‘elocution’ (‘an applying of apte wordes and sentences to the matter’, fol. 4), and would consider ‘Action’ as an aspect of

‘utterance’ (‘a framying of the voyce, countenaunce, and gesture, after a comely maner’, fol. 4). Kittredge’s neat explanation is popular: ‘A complete list of the qualities of a good orator: (1) intellectual cleverness (*wit*); (2) fluency (*words*); (3) *auctoritas*, the weight that comes from character or standing (*worth*); (4) gesture and bearing (*action*);, (5) skilful elocution, good delivery (*utterance*) – and finally (6) *the power of speech to stir men’s blood*, without which all other accomplishments avail but little’. His terminology may be somewhat misleading, however.

211 *wit F’s ‘writ, conceivable but doubtful in the semantics and alliteration of the line, is possibly a misprint stemming from the proximity of the final *r* in ‘neither’, if not the *w* and *r* presence in ‘words’ and ‘worth’.

218 ruffle up stir up to indignation or rage (more intense than in modern usage).

232 several separate, individual; as at [2.1.138](#).

232 drachmaes silver coins. F’s spelling may indicate a double plural.

234 royal noble, generous; as at [3.1.127](#).

239 On this side ‘A prepositional phrase is condensed into a preposition’ (Abbott 202). According to Plutarch’s description it should be on ‘that’ side. The error is North’s (from Amyot).

240 common public; as at [3.1.80](#).

240 pleasures pleasure grounds (the dominant interpretation).

249 forms Probably synonymous with ‘benches’ (see *OED* Form *sb* 17), although *OED* (19a) records ‘window frames’ as well.

256 upon a wish ‘according to one’s wish’ (*OED* *Wish sb*¹ 1c).

259 Are rid For the use of ‘be’ with intransitive verbs, mostly of motion, see Abbott 295.

Act III, Scene iii

Enter CINNA THE POET, and after him the PLEBEIANS

CINNA THE POET

I dreamt tonight that I did feast with Caesar,
And things *unluckily *charge my *fantasy.
I have no will to wander forth *of doors,
Yet something leads me forth.

1 PLEBEIAN

What is your name?

5

2 PLEBEIAN

Whither are you going?

3 PLEBEIAN

Where do you dwell?

4 PLEBEIAN

Are you a married man or a bachelor?

2 PLEBEIAN

Answer every man directly.

1 PLEBEIAN

Ay, and briefly.

10

4 PLEBEIAN

Ay, and wisely.

3 PLEBEIAN

Ay, and truly, *you were best.

CINNA THE POET

What is my name? Whither am I going? Where do I
dwell? Am I a married man or a bachelor? *Then to answer every man
directly and briefly, *wisely and truly. Wisely I say I am a bachelor.

15

2 PLEBEIAN

That's as much as to say they are fools that marry. You'll

bear *me a bang for that, I fear. Proceed directly.

CINNA THE POET

*Directly I am going to Caesar's funeral.

1 PLEBEIAN

As a friend or an enemy?

CINNA THE POET

As a friend.

20

2 PLEBEIAN

That matter is answered directly.

4 PLEBEIAN

For your dwelling – briefly.

CINNA THE POET

Briefly, I dwell by the Capitol.

3 PLEBEIAN

Your name, sir, truly.

CINNA THE POET

Truly, my name is Cinna.

25

1 PLEBEIAN

Tear him to pieces, he's a conspirator.

CINNA THE POET

I am Cinna the poet, I am Cinna the poet.

4 PLEBEIAN

Tear him for his bad verses, tear him for his bad verses.

CINNA THE POET

I am not Cinna the conspirator.

4 PLEBEIAN

It is no matter, his name's Cinna. Pluck but his name out of

30

his heart and *turn him going.

3 PLEBEIAN

Tear him, tear him! Come, brands ho, firebrands! To
Brutus', to Cassius', burn all! Some to Decius' house, and some to
Casca's, some to Ligarius'! Away, go!

Exeunt all the Plebeians [forcing out Cinna]

Collation notes for Act III, Scene iii

3.3] *Capell*

Location *Capell (Capell MS.)*

2 unluckily] F; unluckey Warburton (*Folger MS.*); unlikely Collier² (*Collier MS.*)

5–12] F; 1 *Cit* . . . dwell? / . . . bachelor? / . . . briefly. / . . . best. Keightley

15 Wisely I say *Hudson*; wisely I say, F; Wisely, I say – Rowe; wisely, I say Collier³

28] F; as one verse line, Staunton (*Capell MS.*)

33 Brutus' . . . Cassius'] *Apostrophes, Capell*

33 Decius'] *Apostrophe, F4*

34 Ligarius'] *Apostrophe, Capell*

34 SD forcing out Cinna] Collier²

Commentary notes for Act III, Scene iii

Location Rome. A street.

2 unluckily inauspiciously, with ill omen.

2 charge place a load on, burden.

2 fantasy imagination. Compare 2.1.197 n.

3 of out of.

12 you were best 'The old idiom . . . where *you* may represent either nominative or dative, but was almost certainly used by Shakespeare as nominative' (Abbott 230).

14–15 Then . . . bachelor 'The Plebeians intend that each of Cinna's answers should be given in all of the four adverbial ways; Cinna makes fun of them by choosing to interpret their ritual catalogue as a set of pairs: one adverbial mode for each answer. The comedy is enhanced when the Plebeians fall into his mocking pattern' (John W. Velz, privately).

15 Wisely The word is placed so 'that it may express either the wisdom of the answer or the wisdom of being a bachelor' (Macmillan).

17 me i.e. from me. Abbott (220) calls it the 'old dative'.

18 Directly Like 'wisely' at 15, 'Directly' is 'purposely made ambiguous . . . It may express either the straightforwardness of the answer or that Cinna is going straight to Caesar's funeral' (Macmillan).

31 turn him going drive him off.

Act IV, Scene i

Enter ANTONY, OCTAVIUS, and LEPIDUS

ANTONY

These many then shall die, their names are pricked.

OCTAVIUS

Your *brother too must die; consent you, Lepidus?

LEPIDUS

I do consent.

OCTAVIUS

Prick him down, Antony.

LEPIDUS

Upon condition *Publius shall not live,
Who is your sister's son, Mark Antony.

5

ANTONY

He shall not live – look, with a *spot I *damn him.
But, Lepidus, go you to Caesar's house,
Fetch the will hither, and we shall determine
How to cut off some *charge in legacies.

LEPIDUS

What, shall I find you here?

10

OCTAVIUS

*Or here or at the Capitol.

Exit Lepidus

ANTONY

This is a slight, unmeritable man,
Meet to be sent on errands; is it fit,
The *threefold world divided, he should stand
One of the three to share it?

OCTAVIUS

So you thought him

15

And took his *voice who should be pricked to die
In our black sentence and proscription.

ANTONY

Octavius, I have seen more days than you,
And though we lay these honours on this man
To ease ourselves of divers *slanderous loads, 20
He shall but bear them as the ass bears gold,
To groan and sweat under the business,
Either led or driven, as we point the way;
And having brought our treasure where we will,
Then take we down his load and turn him off 25
(Like to the empty ass) to *shake his ears
And graze in *commons.

OCTAVIUS

 You may do your will,
But he's a tried and valiant *soldier.

ANTONY

So is my horse, Octavius, and for that
I do *appoint him store of provender. 30
It is a creature that I teach to fight,
To *wind, to stop, to run directly on,
His corporal motion governed by my spirit.
And, in some *taste, is Lepidus but so:
He must be taught and trained and bid go forth, 35
A barren-spirited fellow, one that feeds
On *objects, arts, and imitations,
Which, out of use and *staled by other men,
Begin his *fashion. Do not talk of him
But as a *property. And now, Octavius, 40
*Listen great things. Brutus and Cassius
Are levying powers; we must straight *make head.
Therefore let our alliance be combined,
Our best friends made, our means stretched,
And let us *presently go sit *in counsel, 45

How covert matters may be best disclosed
And open perils surest answerèd.

OCTAVIUS

Let us do so, for we are *at the stake
And *bayed about with many enemies,
And some that smile have in their hearts, I fear,
Millions of *mischiefs.

50

Exeunt

Collation notes for Act IV, Scene i

4.1] *Actus Quartus*. F; ACT IV. SCENE 1. Rowe

Location] Rowe, Capell

10–11] F; *LEP*. . . . at / . . . Capitol. Steevens³ (*Capell MS.*)

23 point] F; print F2

37 objects, arts] F; abject Orts *Theobald*; abject arts *conj. Becket*; abjects, orts *Staunton*; objects, orts *White*²

38 staled] F; stall'd F4

44 our means stretched] F; and our best meanes stretcht out F2; our best means stretch'd out QU4; our best means stretcht *Johnson (Capell MS.)*; our meinies [*i.e.* followers] stretched *Wells and Taylor (conj. J.D.)*

45 counsel] *This edn*; Councell F; Council F3

47 surest] F; soonest *Folger MS.*

Commentary notes for Act IV, Scene i

Location Rome. Antony's house. Although the scene is traditionally placed in Rome, the triumvirs in reality met on a small island in the river Lavinius near Bononia.

2 brother Mentioned in Plutarch (*Antony*, Bullough, pp. 268–9), Lucius Aemilius Paullus, elder brother of Lepidus, was named in the proscriptions but allowed to escape.

4–5 Publius . . . sister's son Plutarch (*Antony*, Bullough, p. 268) mentions Antony's offering his uncle, Lucius Julius Caesar, the brother of his mother. For a Publius who was also proscribed, see [List of Characters](#). J. and S. Velz ('Publius, Mark Anthony's sister's son', SQ 26 (1975), 69–74) attribute the substitution to Shakespeare's 'remembering imperfectly . . . [Plutarch's] vivid account . . . [of the proscription of] Publius Silicius' (p. 71) and to Plutarch or a folk tradition (or both) . . . [for] the presence of a "sister's son" (p. 70).

6 spot mark or stigma. See also [4.3.2 n.](#)

6 damn condemn as guilty (from Latin *damnare*).

9 charge expense, cost.

11 Or Either. For 'or . . . or', see Abbott 136.

14 threefold world A reference to the trine structure of the world, consisting of Europe, Asia, and Africa; the Roman world, consisting of the East and West provinces and Africa was divided among the triumvirate: Antony received Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul, Lepidus Old Gaul and all Spain, and Octavius Africa, Sicily, and Sardinia.

16 voice vote (this sense is more frequent in Shakespeare than 'opinion').

20 slanderous giving cause for slander. For the passive sense of adjectives ending in '-ous', see Abbott 3.

26–7 shake . . . graze The movement of the ears which accompanies grazing is at least as fitting as the common figurative interpretation: ‘act uselessly or aimlessly’.

27 commons lands belonging to the community.

28 soldier Final *-ier* is most likely disyllabic for metrical reasons, as also in [4.3.51](#). See Abbott 479.

30 appoint decree formally.

32 wind turn.

34 taste degree.

37 objects, arts, and imitations Most commentators, especially in this century, interpret as ‘curiosities, artifices, and followings of fashions’, whereas some earlier commentators are more neutral, glossing the first term as ‘whatever is presented to the eye’ (Malone apud Steevens³) and the second as ‘*mechanic operations*’ (Steevens).

38 staled out of date, uninteresting (*OED* v² 2, citing this instance); many commentators prefer ‘made common or cheap’.

39 fashion custom.

40 property means to an end, instrument.

41 Listen i.e. listen to. ‘The preposition is . . . sometimes omitted before the *thing* heard after verbs of hearing’ (Abbott 199).

42 make head ‘raise a force’ is preferred by most commentators although *OED* (Head *sb* 52a) has ‘advance, press forward’, distinguishing it from ‘*make a head*’ (52b).

45 presently immediately; as at [3.1.28](#).

45 in counsel in private. All commentators prefer ‘in council’ (as at [2.1.67](#)), but see *OED* Counsel *sb* 5c, and ‘covert’, [46](#), [2.1.298 n.](#), [2.4.9 n.](#)

48 at the stake i.e. like a bear tied to a post (in the Elizabethan sport of bear-baiting).

49 bayed held at bay (and surrounded by hostile – some say barking – dogs).

51 mischiefs harms (stronger than in modern usage).

Act IV, Scene ii

***Drum. Enter BRUTUS, LUCILIUS, [Lucius,] and the army. Titinius and PINDARUS meet them*

BRUTUS

Stand ho!

LUCILIUS

Give the word ho, and stand!

BRUTUS

What now, Lucilius, is Cassius near?

LUCILIUS

He is at hand, and Pindarus is come

To *do you salutation from his master. 5

BRUTUS

*He greets me well. Your master, Pindarus,
In his own change or by ill officers,
Hath given me some *worthy cause to wish
Things done undone, but if he be at hand
I shall be satisfied.

PINDARUS

I do not doubt 10
But that my noble master will appear
Such as he is, full of regard and honour.

BRUTUS

He is not doubted.

[Brutus and Lucilius draw apart]

A word, Lucilius,
How he received you; let me be *resolved.

LUCILIUS

With courtesy and with respect enough, 15
But not with such familiar *instances,
Nor with such *free and friendly *conference,
As he hath used of old.

BRUTUS

Thou hast described
A hot friend cooling. Ever note, Lucilius,
When love begins to sicken and decay 20
It useth an *enforcèd ceremony.
There are no tricks in plain and simple faith,
But hollow men, like horses hot *at hand,
Make gallant show and promise of their mettle.

**Low march within*

But when they should endure the bloody spur 25
They fall their crests, and like deceitful jades
Sink in the trial. Comes his army on?

LUCILIUS

They mean this night in *Sardis to be quartered.
The greater part, the horse *in general,
Are come with Cassius.

Enter CASSIUS and his powers

BRUTUS

Hark, he is arrived. 30
*March gently on to meet him.

CASSIUS

Stand ho!

BRUTUS

Stand ho, speak the word along!

1 SOLDIER

Stand!

2 SOLDIER

Stand! 35

3 SOLDIER

Stand!

CASSIUS

Most noble brother, you have done me wrong.

BRUTUS

Judge me, you gods! Wrong I mine enemies?
And if not so, how should I wrong a brother?

CASSIUS

Brutus, this sober form of yours hides wrongs, 40
*And when you do them –

BRUTUS

Cassius, be content,
Speak your *griefs softly, I do know you well.
Before the eyes of both our armies here –
Which should perceive nothing but love from us –
Let us not wrangle. Bid them move away. 45
Then in my tent, Cassius, *enlarge your *griefs
And I will give you audience.

CASSIUS

Pindarus,
Bid our commanders lead their charges off
A little from this ground.

BRUTUS

Lucius, do you the like, and let no man 50
Come to our tent till we have done our conference.
Let Lucilius and Titinius guard our door.

Exeunt [all but] Brutus and Cassius

Collation notes for Act IV, Scene ii

4.2] Rowe

Location] Rowe

0 SD Lucius] Capell

1–2] F; as one line, Keightley

2 SH] The speech heading/ Luc. / here and following, in all editions from F2 to Singer², may have contributed to the confusion of Lucilius and Lucius in this scene

7 change] F; charge QU3

13 SD] Continues to 30, Sanders (after Capell)

13–14 Lucilius, . . . you;] F (subst.); Lucilius, – / . . . you, Rowe (Folger MS.)

24 SD] F; placed after **30**, Capell

34, 35, 36 SH 1 SOLDIER, 2 SOLDIER, 3 SOLDIER] Globe (after Capell, 1. O[fficer], etc.)

50, 52 Lucius . . . Lucilius] Craik (omitting Let at **52**); Lucilius . . . Lucius F

Commentary notes for Act IV, Scene ii

Location Camp near Sardis. Before Brutus's tent.

0 SD The staging of the opening of the scene and of some later movements has caused discussion. Ever since Jennens's explicit comment, F's stage direction and the subsequent dialogue have generally been understood to mean that Brutus, having already arrived and perhaps accompanied by Lucius, meets Lucilius, who brings with him Pindarus and Titinius (some are of the opinion that Pindarus and Titinius enter at the other door and Wilson holds that the latter enters with Cassius at **30**). For the staging and the transition to Scene 3, see illustration **3**, p. 7.

0 SD.1 Drum The usual accompaniment for troops on the march. It is nearly interchangeable with *march* (**24**).

5 do The transitive use with objective noun. See Abbott 303.

6 He . . . well Most editors do not accept Capell's suggestion that Pindarus presents a letter from Cassius but rather that Brutus finds him a worthy ambassador.

8 worthy justifiable (Onions 3); however, many commentators prefer 'considerable', 'substantial'.

14 resolved informed.

16 instances evidences, tokens.

17 free frank. See *OED* sv *adj.* 23.

17 conference conversation (not necessarily on important or serious subjects).

21 enforcèd forced, constrained.

23 at hand at the start.

24 SD Considered by Wilson a marginal prompter's note anticipating the response to the drums at **30**. He also cites (p. 92) **5.3.96 SD** and **5.5.23 SD** among the 'noises off' which suggest prompt-book origin since 'they sometimes duplicate directions in the centre of the page'.

28 Sardis The chief city of Lydia, made by the Romans the capital of a *conventus* (administrative division) of the province Asia. See also **5.1.79**.

29 in general in a body, collectively.

31 March gently on Since Cassius has already arrived, Brutus's words imply not necessarily movement but a military command (see *OED* March v² 1e) that Cassius is to be met 'gently' – i.e. not (as most editions gloss) 'slowly' or 'quietly' but in response to the *Low march within* (**24 SD**) perhaps with dignity, with noble bearing. See **5.3.96 SD n**.

41 content satisfied in mind. See **1.3.142 n**.

42, 46 griefs grievances; as at **1.3.118**.

46 enlarge give free vent to.

Act IV, Scene iii

CASSIUS

That you have wronged me doth appear in this:
You have condemned and *noted Lucius Pella
For taking bribes here of the Sardians,
Wherein my letters, *praying on his side,
Because I knew the man, *was slighted off.

5

BRUTUS

You wronged yourself to write in such a case.

CASSIUS

In such a time as this it is not meet
That every *nice offence should bear *his comment.

BRUTUS

Let me tell you, Cassius, you yourself
Are much condemned *to have an itching palm,
To sell and mart your offices for gold
To undeservers.

10

CASSIUS

I, an itching palm?
You know that you are Brutus that speaks this,
Or, by the gods, this speech were else your last.

BRUTUS

The name of Cassius honours this corruption,
And chastisement doth therefore hide his head.

15

CASSIUS

Chastisement?

BRUTUS

Remember March, the Ides of March remember:
Did not great Julius bleed for justice' sake?
What villain touched his body, that did stab
And not for justice? What, shall one of us,

20

That struck the foremost man of all this world,
But for supporting robbers, shall we now
Contaminate our fingers with base bribes
And sell the mighty space of our large honours 25
For so much *trash as may be graspèd thus?
I had rather be a dog and bay the moon
Than such a Roman.

CASSIUS

Brutus, *bait not me,
I'll not endure it. You forget yourself
To hedge me in. I am a soldier, I, 30
Older in practice, abler than yourself
To make *conditions.

BRUTUS

Go to, you are not, Cassius!

CASSIUS

I am.

BRUTUS

I say you are not.

CASSIUS

Urge me no more, I shall forget myself. 35
Have mind upon your health, *tempt me no farther!

BRUTUS

Away, slight man!

CASSIUS

Is't possible?

BRUTUS

Hear me, for I will speak.
Must I give way and room to your rash choler?
Shall I be frightened when a madman stares? 40

CASSIUS

O ye gods, ye gods, must I endure all this?

BRUTUS

All this? Ay, more. Fret till your proud heart break.
Go show your slaves how choleric you are,
And make your bondmen tremble. Must I *budge?
Must I *observe you? Must I stand and crouch
Under your testy humour? By the gods,
You shall digest the venom of your *spleen
Though it do split you. For, from this day forth,
I'll use you for my mirth, yea, for my laughter,
When you are waspish.

45

CASSIUS

Is it come to this?

50

BRUTUS

You say you are a better soldier:
Let it appear so, make your vaunting true
And it shall please me well. For mine own part
I shall be glad to learn of noble men.

CASSIUS

You wrong me every way, you wrong me, Brutus.
I said an elder soldier, not a better.
Did I say 'better'?

55

BRUTUS

If you did, I care not.

CASSIUS

When Caesar lived, he durst not thus have moved me.

BRUTUS

Peace, peace, you durst not so have tempted him.

CASSIUS

I durst not?

60

BRUTUS

No.

CASSIUS

What? Durst not *tempt him?

BRUTUS

For your life you durst not.

CASSIUS

Do not presume too much upon my love,
I may do *that I shall be sorry for.

BRUTUS

You have done *that you should be sorry for. 65

There is no terror, Cassius, in your threats,

For I am armed so strong in honesty

That they pass by me as the idle wind,

Which I *respect not. I did send to you

For certain sums of gold, which you denied me, 70

For I can raise no money by vile means.

By heaven, I had rather coin my heart

And drop my blood for drachmaes than to wring

From the hard hands of peasants their vile trash

By any *indirection. I did send 75

To you for gold to pay my legions,

Which you denied me. Was that done like Cassius?

Should I have answered Caius Cassius so?

When Marcus Brutus grows so covetous

To lock such *rascal *counters from his friends, 80

Be ready, gods, with all your thunderbolts,

Dash him to pieces!

CASSIUS

I denied you not.

BRUTUS

You did.

CASSIUS

I did not. He was but a fool that brought
My answer back. Brutus hath rived my heart. 85
A friend should bear his friend's infirmities,
But Brutus makes mine greater than they are.

BRUTUS
I do not, till you practise them on me.

CASSIUS
You love me not.

BRUTUS
I do not like your faults.

CASSIUS
A friendly eye could never see such faults. 90

BRUTUS
A flatterer's would not, though they do appear
As huge as high Olympus.

CASSIUS
Come, Antony, and young Octavius, come,
Revenge yourselves alone on Cassius,
For Cassius is a-weary of the world: 95
Hated by one he loves, *braved by his brother,
*Checked like a bondman, all his faults observed,
Set in a notebook, learned, and conned by rote,
*To cast into my teeth. O, I could weep
My spirit from mine eyes! There is my dagger 100
And here my naked breast: within, a heart
*Dearer than *Pluto's mine, richer than gold.
If that thou beest a Roman take it forth,

I that denied thee gold will give my heart:
Strike as thou didst at Caesar. For I know 105
When thou didst hate him worst thou loved'st him better
Than ever thou loved'st Cassius.

BRUTUS

Sheathe your dagger.
Be angry when you will, it shall have scope;
Do what you will, dishonour shall be *humour.
O Cassius, you are yokèd with a lamb 110
That carries anger as the flint bears fire,
*Who, much *enforcèd, shows a hasty spark
And straight is cold again.

CASSIUS

Hath Cassius lived
To be but mirth and laughter to his Brutus
When grief and blood *ill-tempered vexeth him? 115

BRUTUS

When I spoke that, I was *ill-tempered too.

CASSIUS

Do you confess so much? Give me your hand.

BRUTUS

And my heart too.

CASSIUS

O Brutus!

BRUTUS

What's the matter?

CASSIUS

Have not you love enough to bear with me
When that *rash humour which my mother gave me 120
Makes me forgetful?

BRUTUS

Yes, Cassius, and from henceforth
When you are over-earnest with your Brutus,
He'll think your mother chides, and leave you so.

Enter a POET, [LUCILIUS and Titinius]

POET

*Let me go in to see the generals.

There is some grudge between 'em, 'tis not meet
They be alone.

125

LUCILIUS

You shall not come to them.

POET

Nothing but death shall stay me.

CASSIUS

How now, what's the matter?

POET

For shame, you generals, what do you mean?
Love and be friends, as two such men should be,
For I have seen more *years, I'm sure, than ye.

130

CASSIUS

Ha, ha, how *vildly doth this *cynic rhyme!

BRUTUS

Get you hence, *sirrah; saucy fellow, hence!

CASSIUS

Bear with him, Brutus, 'tis his fashion.

135

BRUTUS

*I'll know his humour when he knows his time.
What should the wars do with these *jigging fools?
*Companion, hence!

CASSIUS

Away, away, be gone!

Exit Poet

BRUTUS

Lucilius and Titinius, bid the commanders
Prepare to lodge their companies tonight

140

CASSIUS

And come yourselves, and bring Messala with you
Immediately to us.

[*Exeunt Lucilius and Titinius*]

BRUTUS

[*To Lucius within*] Lucius, a bowl of wine!

CASSIUS

I did not think you could have been so angry.

BRUTUS

O Cassius, I am sick *of many griefs.

CASSIUS

Of *your philosophy you make no use 145
If you give place to *accidental evils.

BRUTUS

No man bears sorrow better. Portia is dead.

CASSIUS

Ha? Portia?

BRUTUS

She is dead.

CASSIUS

How scaped I *killing when I crossed you so? 150
O insupportable and touching loss!
Upon what sickness?

BRUTUS

*Impatient of my absence,
And grief that young Octavius with Mark Antony
Have made themselves so strong – for with her death
*That tidings came. With this she *fell distract 155
And, her attendants absent, *swallowed fire.

CASSIUS

And died so?

BRUTUS

Even so.

CASSIUS

O ye immortal gods!

Enter BOY [LUCIUS] with wine and tapers

BRUTUS

Speak no more of her. Give me a bowl of wine.

Drinks In this I bury all unkindness, Cassius.

CASSIUS

My heart is thirsty for that noble pledge.

160

Fill, Lucius, till the wine o'erswell the cup,

I cannot drink too much of Brutus' love. [*Drinks*]

[*Exit Lucius*]

Enter TITINIUS and MESSALA

BRUTUS

Come in, Titinius; welcome, good Messala.

Now sit we close about this taper here

And *call in question our necessities.

165

CASSIUS

Portia, art thou gone?

BRUTUS

No more, I pray you.

Messala, I have here received letters

That young Octavius and Mark Antony

Come down upon us with a mighty power,

Bending their *expedition toward Philippi.

170

MESSALA

Myself have letters of the selfsame tenor.

BRUTUS

With what addition?

MESSALA

That by *proscription and bills of outlawry
Octavius, Antony, and Lepidus
Have put to death an hundred senators.

175

BRUTUS

Therein our letters do not well agree:
Mine speak of seventy senators that died
By their proscriptions, Cicero being one.

CASSIUS

Cicero one?

MESSALA

Cicero is dead,
And by that order of proscription.
*Had you your letters from your wife, my lord?

180

BRUTUS

No, Messala.

MESSALA

Nor nothing in your letters writ of her?

BRUTUS

Nothing, Messala.

MESSALA

That, methinks, is strange.

BRUTUS

Why ask you? Hear you aught of her in yours?

185

MESSALA

No, my lord.

BRUTUS

Now as you are a Roman tell me true.

MESSALA

Then like a Roman bear the truth I tell,

For certain she is dead, and by strange manner.

BRUTUS

Why, farewell, Portia. We must die, Messala. 190

With meditating that she must die *once,

I have the patience to endure it now.

MESSALA

*Even so, great men great losses should endure.

CASSIUS

I have as much of this *in art as you,

But yet my nature could not bear it so. 195

BRUTUS

Well, to our work *alive. What do you think

Of marching to Philippi *presently?

CASSIUS

I do not think it good.

BRUTUS

Your reason?

CASSIUS

This it is:

'Tis better that the enemy seek us,

So shall he waste his means, weary his soldiers, 200

Doing himself offence, whilst we, lying still,

Are full of rest, defence, and nimbleness.

BRUTUS

Good reasons must *of force give place to better:

The people 'twixt Philippi and this ground

Do stand but in a forced *affection, 205

For they have grudged us contribution.

The enemy, marching along by them,

By them shall make a fuller number up,

Come on refreshed, new added, and encouraged,

From which advantage shall we cut him off 210

If at Philippi we do face him there,
These people at our back.

CASSIUS

Hear me, good brother.

BRUTUS

Under your pardon. You must note beside
That we have *tried the utmost of our friends,
Our legions are brimful, our cause is ripe; 215
The enemy increaseth every day,
We, at the height, are ready to decline.
There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life 220
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat,
And we must take the current when it serves
Or lose our *ventures.

CASSIUS

Then with your will go on,
We'll along ourselves and meet them at Philippi. 225

BRUTUS

The deep of night is crept upon our talk,
And nature must obey necessity,
Which we will niggard with a little rest.
There is no more to say?

CASSIUS

No more. Good night.
Early tomorrow will we rise and hence. 230

BRUTUS

Lucius!

Enter LUCIUS

My gown.

[*Exit Lucius*]

Farewell, good Messala.

Good night, Titinius. Noble, noble Cassius,
Good night and good repose.

CASSIUS

O my dear brother!

This was an ill beginning of the night.

Never come such division 'tween our souls!

235

Let it not, Brutus.

Enter LUCIUS with the gown

BRUTUS

Everything is well.

CASSIUS

Good night, my lord.

BRUTUS

Good night, good brother.

TITINIUS AND MESSALA

Good night, Lord Brutus.

BRUTUS

Farewell every one.

Exeunt [Cassius, Titinius, Messala]

Give me the gown. Where is thy instrument?

LUCIUS

Here in the tent.

BRUTUS

What, thou speak'st drowsily.

240

Poor knave, I blame thee not, thou art *o'erwatched.

Call Claudio and some other of my men,

I'll have them sleep on cushions in my tent.

LUCIUS

Varrus and Claudio!

Enter VARRUS and CLAUDIO

VARRUS

Calls my lord? 245

BRUTUS

I pray you, sirs, lie in my tent and sleep,
It may be I shall *raise you by and by
On business to my brother Cassius.

VARRUS

So please you, we will *stand and *watch your pleasure.

BRUTUS

I will not have it so. Lie down, good sirs, 250
It may be I shall otherwise bethink me.

[Varrus and Claudio lie down]

Look, Lucius, here's the book I sought for so,
I put it in the pocket of my gown.

LUCIUS

I was sure your lordship did not give it me.

BRUTUS

Bear with me, good boy, I am much forgetful. 255
Canst thou hold up thy heavy eyes awhile
And touch thy instrument a strain or two?

LUCIUS

Ay, my lord, *an't please you.

BRUTUS

It does, my boy.
I trouble thee too much, but thou art willing.

LUCIUS

It is my duty, sir. 260

BRUTUS

I *should not urge thy duty past thy might,
I know young bloods look for a time of rest.

LUCIUS

I have slept, my lord, already.

BRUTUS

It was well done and thou shalt sleep again,
I will not hold thee long. If I do live 265
I will be good to thee.

Music, and a song

This is a sleepy tune. O murd'rous slumber,
*Layest thou thy leaden mace upon my boy,
That plays thee music? Gentle knave, good night,
I will not do thee so much wrong to wake thee. 270
If thou dost nod thou break'st thy instrument.
I'll take it from thee and, good boy, good night.
Let me see, let me see, is not the leaf turned down
Where I left reading? Here it is, I think.

Enter the GHOST OF CAESAR

How ill this taper burns! Ha, who comes here? 275
I think it is the weakness of mine eyes
That shapes this monstrous apparition.
It comes upon me. Art thou any thing?
Art thou some god, some angel, or some devil,
That mak'st my blood cold and my hair to *stare? 280
Speak to me what thou art.

GHOST

Thy evil spirit, Brutus.

BRUTUS

Why com'st thou?

GHOST

To tell thee thou shalt see me at Philippi.

BRUTUS

Well, then I shall see thee again?

GHOST

Ay, at Philippi. 285

BRUTUS

Why, I will see thee at Philippi then.

[Exit Ghost]

Now I have taken heart thou vanishest.

Ill spirit, I would hold more talk with thee.

Boy, Lucius! Varrus! Claudio! Sirs, awake!

Claudio! 290

LUCIUS

The *strings, my lord, are false.

BRUTUS

He thinks he still is at his instrument.

Lucius, awake!

LUCIUS

My lord?

BRUTUS

Didst thou dream, Lucius, that thou so cried'st out? 295

LUCIUS

My lord, I do not know that I did cry.

BRUTUS

Yes, that thou didst. Didst thou see anything?

LUCIUS

Nothing, my lord.

BRUTUS

Sleep again, Lucius. Sirrah Claudio!

[To Varrus] Fellow, thou, awake! 300

VARRUS

My lord?

CLAUDIO
My lord?

BRUTUS
Why did you so cry out, sirs, in your sleep?

BOTH
Did we, my lord?

BRUTUS
Ay. Saw you anything?

VARRUS
No, my lord, I saw nothing.

CLAUDIO
Nor I, my lord.

305

BRUTUS
Go and commend me to my brother Cassius.
Bid him set on his powers *betimes before,
And we will follow.

BOTH
It shall be done, my lord.

Exeunt

Collation notes for Act IV, Scene iii

4.3] *Pope; although, as the / Mane[n]t / in F indicates, the scene obviously continues, the tradition since Pope (with very few exceptions) has been to observe the scene break*

Location *Theobald*

4 Wherein] F; Whereas *Hudson*²

4–5 letters . . . was] F; Letter . . . was F2; letters . . . were *Malone*

5 man,] F2; man F

5 off] F; of *Rowe*³ (*Folger MS.*)

6 case] F; cause *conj. Thirlby*

12 I] F; Ay *Rowe*

13 speaks] F; speak *Pope*

27 bay] F; baite F2

28 bait] F; bay *Theobald*

30 soldier, I] F; soldier, ay *Steevens*

32 not,] QU4; not F

32–4] Steevens³; To . . . Conditions. / . . . Cassius. / . . . am. / . . . not. F; To . . . Cassius. / . . . not. Wordsworth (*Capell MS.*); To . . . conditions. / . . . am. / . . . not. *Humphreys*
54 noble] F; abler *Collier*² (*Collier MS.*); able *conj. Singer* (*apud Cam.*); better *conj. Cartwright*; nobler *conj. Nicholson*
60 not?] Q (1684); not. F
81 thunderbolts,] F; thunderbolts *Collier*
83–5] Dyce; Bru. . . did. / . . . Foole / . . . hart: F; BRU. . . fool. / . . . heart: Steevens³ (*Capell MS.*)
88 not, till] F; not: will *Hanmer*; not. Still *Warburton* (*conj. Warburton apud Theobald*)
102 Pluto's] F; *Plutus' / Pope*
109 humour] F; honour *conj. Craik*
110 lamb] F; man *Pope*
123 SD LUCILIUS . . . TITINIUS] Rowe; followed by *Lucilius, Titinius, and Lucius / Globe*; entrance placed after **128**, *Theobald*
126–7] F; as one line, *Sisson* (*Capell MS.*)
137 jiggling] F; jingling *Pope*
142 SD.1 Exeunt . . . Titinius] Rowe
142 SD.2 To Lucius within] Evans
157] Dyce (*Capell MS.*); Cas. . . so? / . . . so. / . . . Gods! F
157 SD LUCIUS] *Hanmer* (omitting BOY)
162 SD.1 Drinks] *Capell* (*Folger MS.*)
162 SD.2 Exit Lucius] *Globe*
163] Rowe; Come . . . *Titinius*: / . . . *Messala*: F
179–80] *Thomas Johnson*² (adding yes before Cicero is); Cicero one? / . . . proscription F
181–95] First version of report of *Portia's* death; final version at **143–58**, **166**
185] Rowe; Why . . . you? / . . . yours? F
193 so,] *This edn*; so F
209 new added] F; new-hearted *Collier*² (*Collier MS.*); new aided *Singer*² (*after Hall apud Thirlby*)
224–5] *Capell*; Or . . . Ventures. / . . . along / . . . *Philippi*. F
229 say?] *Capell*; say. F
231 SD.2 Exit Lucius] Q (1691)
236 SD] F; placed after **239**, *Capell*
238 SD Cassius . . . Messala] Q (1691)
239 thy] F; my QU4
240 drowsily.] *This edn* (*after Keightly*); drowsily? F
242 Claudio] F; Claudius Rowe
244 Varrus and Claudio] F; Varro and Claudius / Rowe
244–5] F; as one line, *Wells and Taylor*
244 SD] F; Varro and Claudius Rowe
249] Rowe; So . . . stand, / . . . pleasure. F
250 will] F2; will it F
251 SD] *Capell* (*subst.*)
284–5] F; Well; / . . . *Philippi*. Steevens³
286 SD] Rowe (*after 285*); placed as in Dyce
287–8 vanishest. Ill spirit,] F; vanishest, Ill Spirit; Rowe
289–90 Varrus! Claudio . . . Claudio] F; Varro! Claudius . . . Claudius / Rowe
290–1] F; as one line, *Bevington*
295] As verse, *Theobald*; as prose, F
299 Claudio] F; Claudius / Rowe
299–302] *Capell*; Bru. . . . Fellow, / . . . Awake. / . . . Lord. / . . . Lord. F; Bru. . . . Claudius! / . . . lord . . . lord? *Dorsch* (*Capell MS.*)
300 SD] *Globe* (*conj. Warburton*)

Commentary notes for Act IV, Scene iii

Location Camp near Sardis. Brutus's tent.

2 noted stigmatised. See 4.1.6 n.

4 praying entreating.

5 was The apparent lack of concord – a singular verb with a plural subject, 'letters' – may be attributed to confusion caused by the proximity of 'man'. See Abbott 412. Or it may be that 'letters' is plural with a singular meaning like Latin *litterae* (*OED* Letter *sb*¹ 4b).

8 nice slight, trivial.

8 his its.

10 to have of having. For the gerundial use of the infinitive, see Abbott 356.

26 trash 'Contemptuously applied to money' (*OED* sv *sb*¹ 3d).

28 bait Cassius plays on the dog image in 'bay' by extending it to apply to attacks by dogs on chained animals.

32 conditions agreements, treaties.

36 tempt test; as at 1.3.53.

44 budge wince, flinch.

45 observe show respectful or courteous attention to.

47 spleen The seat of the sudden emotions and passions.

62 tempt test.

64, 65 that For the omission of the relative 'that', perhaps because of the identity of the demonstrative and the relative, see Abbott 244.

69 respect heed; as at 3.2.14.

75 indirection deviousness.

80 rascal common, wretched.

80 counters counterfeit coins (applied to debased coin, and contemptuously to money generally).

96 braved defied. Compare 5.1.10.

97 Checked Rebuked.

99 To . . . teeth To be reproached, upbraided. For the infinitive used passively, see Abbott 359.

102 Dearer More precious.

102 Pluto Plutus, son of Demeter and Iasion, who symbolises wealth. He is closely connected – in the Renaissance perhaps confused – in idea with Pluton (the Rich One), lord of the lower world. Some consider 'Pluto' the Italian form of 'Plutus'.

109 humour mental disposition.

112 Who Strictly speaking, the antecedent is 'flint'. For the use of 'who' with 'irrational antecedents', often animals (here, 'lamb'), see Abbott 264.

112 enforced used force upon (*OED* sv 8b). Compare 3.2.34 n.

115, 116 ill-tempered Wordplay on 'badly mixed' (applied to the humours) and the modern 'bad-humoured'.

120 rash humour The reference is to choler, one of the four humours or temperaments. Earlier in the scene Brutus has mentioned Cassius's 'rash choler' (39) and his being 'choleric' (43).

124–8 Some editors, beginning with Theobald, have these lines spoken 'within', the characters entering thereafter.

132 ye Often interchangeable with 'you' (see Abbott 236), 'ye' may be preferred here because of the rhyme.

133 vildly Most likely not a variant of 'vile' with an excrescent *d* but derived from the past participle of 'avile'. See Franz 60.

133 cynic One of the school of philosophy which advocated extreme asceticism, hence a rough, sneering railer. In Plutarch it is Marcus Favonius (erroneously Phaonius or Faonius in North (p. 173 below).

134 sirrah A term of address expressing contempt or reprimand.

136 'I will admit his right to be eccentric when he chooses a proper occasion to exhibit his eccentricity' (Kittredge). There is also a pun on 'time' in connection with poetic metre.

137 jiggling Another reference to the nature of his verse. Compare the opening of Marlowe's

Tamburlaine: 'From jiggling veins of rhyming mother wits'.

138 Companion A term of familiarity or contempt. Here 'fellow, a bad sense' (Schmidt 4).

144 of as a result of. See Abbott 168.

145 your philosophy A reference to Stoic philosophy, especially the influence of Panaetius, one of the chief representatives of the Middle Stoa, who tried to adapt Stoic ethics to the needs of active statesmen and soldiers. See also [5.1.100 n.](#)

146 accidental caused by chance.

150 killing i.e. being killed. For the passive sense of participles, see Abbott 374.

152 Impatient of 'Unable or unwilling to endure' (*OED* sv *adj.* 1b).

155 That tidings Always spelt with an -s ending, the form is used for the singular or the plural.

155 fell distract became (esp. suddenly) anxious, perplexed. Shakespeare prefers the form 'distract' to 'distraught' (which implies madness) and to 'distracted' (which normally precedes a noun).

156 swallowed fire Plutarch relates (p. 183) that she 'took hot burning coals and cast them into her mouth, and kept her mouth so close that she choked herself'. That she committed suicide because Brutus neglected her is a theory which is not substantiated.

165 call in question 'summon for trial or examination' (*OED* Call v 18).

170 expedition speedy journey (though 'warlike enterprise' is also a possible meaning).

173 proscription . . . bills of outlawry The *proscriptio* was a list of Roman citizens who were declared outlaws and whose goods were confiscated. The procedure was employed by Antony, Lepidus, and Octavius (43–42 BC) to get rid of personal and political opponents and to obtain funds. See Plutarch (*Antony*, Bullough, pp. 268–9), and also 'proscription', [4.1.17](#).

181–95 See p. 149 below.

191 once in any case (*OED* sv *adv.* 2b). The customary gloss 'at some time or other' seems inexact since Portia is already dead.

193 Even so 'Used to answer in the affirmative, = indeed, yes' (Schmidt, even 4).

194 in art as an acquired faculty (as opposed to 'nature').

196 alive in full force or vigour (*OED* sv *adv.* 3); however, most commentators gloss as 'with the living', and some as 'of present concern'.

197 presently immediately; as at [3.1.28](#).

203 of force perforce, of necessity.

205 affection Final -ion is most likely disyllabic for metrical reasons, as also in 'contribution' ([206](#)), 'apparition' ([277](#)), *et passim*. See Abbott 479.

214 tried proved by a test. See [3.1.292 n.](#)

224 ventures 'A figure from seafaring. The amount invested in a ship or cargo was regularly spoken of as a man's *venture*; and persons who took risks of this kind were called *adventurers*' (Kittredge).

241 o'erwatched wearied with too much watching.

247 raise rouse.

249 stand i.e. stand watch.

249 watch wait for, look out for.

258 an't if it; see [1.2.271 n.](#)

261 should ought. See Abbott 323.

268 'The metaphor is from the bailiff touching persons on the shoulder with his mace or staff in token of arrest' (Mark Hunter).

280 stare stand on end.

291 strings . . . false i.e. the strings are badly woven and produce an uncertain and untrue tone.

307 betimes Not so much 'without delay' (as [2.1.116](#)) as 'early in the morning'.

Act V, Scene i

Enter OCTAVIUS, ANTONY, and their army

OCTAVIUS

Now, Antony, our hopes are answerèd.
You said the enemy would not come down
But keep the hills and upper regions.
It proves not so: their *battles are at hand,
They mean to *warn us at Philippi here,
Answering before we do demand of them.

5

ANTONY

Tut, I am in their *bosoms, and I know
Wherefore they do it. They could be content
To visit other places and *come down
With *fearful *bravery, thinking by this *face
To fasten in our thoughts that they have courage.
But 'tis not so.

10

Enter a MESSENGER

MESSENGER

Prepare you, generals,
The enemy comes on in gallant show,
Their *bloody sign of battle is hung out,
And something to be done immediately.

15

ANTONY

Octavius, lead your battle *softly on
Upon the left hand of the even field.

OCTAVIUS

Upon the right hand I, keep thou the left.

ANTONY

Why do you cross me in this *exigent?

OCTAVIUS

I do not cross you, but I will do so.

20

March

Drum. Enter BRUTUS, CASSIUS, and their army; [LUCILIUS, Titinius, MESSALA, and others]

BRUTUS

They stand and would have parley.

CASSIUS

Stand fast, Titinius, we must out and talk.

OCTAVIUS

Mark Antony, shall we give sign of battle?

ANTONY

No, Caesar, we will answer on their charge.

Make forth, the generals would have some words. 25

OCTAVIUS

Stir not until the signal.

BRUTUS

Words before blows; is it so, countrymen?

OCTAVIUS

Not that we love words better, as you do.

BRUTUS

Good words are better than bad strokes, Octavius.

ANTONY

In your bad strokes, Brutus, you give good words. 30

Witness the hole you made in Caesar's heart,

Crying, 'Long live, hail, Caesar!'

CASSIUS

Antony,

The *posture of your blows *are yet unknown;

But for your words, they rob the *Hybla bees

And leave them honeyless.

ANTONY

Not stingless too? 35

BRUTUS

O yes, and soundless too,
For you have stolen their buzzing, Antony,
And very wisely threat before you sting.

ANTONY

Villains! You did not so when your vile daggers
Hacked one another in the sides of Caesar. 40
You *showed your teeth like apes and *fawned like hounds,
And bowed like bondmen, kissing Caesar's feet,
Whilst damnèd Casca, like a cur, behind
Struck Caesar on the neck. O you flatterers!

CASSIUS

Flatterers? Now, Brutus, thank yourself. 45
This tongue had not offended so today
If Cassius might have ruled.

OCTAVIUS

Come, come, the cause. If arguing make us sweat,
The *proof of it will turn to redder drops.
Look, 50
I draw a sword against conspirators;
When think you that the sword goes up again?
Never, till Caesar's three and *thirty wounds
Be well avenged, or till another Caesar
Have added slaughter to the sword of traitors. 55

BRUTUS

Caesar, thou canst not die by traitors' hands
Unless thou bring'st them with thee.

OCTAVIUS

So I hope.

I was not born to die on Brutus' sword.

BRUTUS

O, if thou wert the noblest of thy strain,

Young man, thou couldst not die more *honourable. 60

CASSIUS

A *peevish schoolboy, *worthless of such honour,
Joined with a *masker and a reveller!

ANTONY

Old Cassius still!

OCTAVIUS

*Come, Antony, away!
Defiance, traitors, hurl we in your teeth.
If you dare fight today, come to the field; 65
If not, when you *have stomachs.

Exeunt Octavius, Antony, and army

CASSIUS

Why now blow wind, swell billow, and swim bark!
The storm is up, and all is on the hazard.

BRUTUS

Ho, Lucilius, hark, a word with you.

Lucilius and Messala stand forth

LUCILIUS

My lord.

[Brutus speaks apart to Lucilius]

CASSIUS

Messala!

MESSALA

What says my general?

CASSIUS

Messala, 70
This is my birthday, *as this very day
Was Cassius born. Give me thy hand, Messala.
Be thou my witness that against my will
(As Pompey was) am I compelled to set
Upon one battle all our liberties. 75

You know that I held *Epicurus strong
And his opinion. Now I change my mind
And partly credit things that do presage.
*Coming from *Sardis, on our *former *ensign
Two mighty eagles fell, and there they perched, 80
Gorging and feeding from our soldiers' hands,
Who to Philippi here consorted us.
This morning are they fled away and gone,
And in their steads do ravens, crows, and kites
Fly o'er our heads and downward look on us 85
As we were sickly prey. Their shadows seem
A canopy most *fatal under which
Our army lies, ready to give up the ghost.

MESSALA

Believe not so.

CASSIUS

*I but believe it partly,
For I am fresh of spirit and resolved 90
To meet all perils very *constantly.

BRUTUS

Even so, Lucilius. [*Advancing*]

CASSIUS

Now, most noble Brutus,
*The gods today stand friendly that we may,
Lovers in peace, lead on our days to age!
But since the affairs of men *rests still *incertain, 95
Let's reason with the worst that may befall.

If we do lose this battle, then is this
The very last time we shall speak together.
What are you then determined to do?

BRUTUS

Even by the rule of *that philosophy 100
By which I did blame *Cato for the death

Which he did give himself – I know not how,
But I do find it cowardly and vile,
For fear of what might *fall, so to *prevent
The time of life – arming myself with patience 105
To *stay the providence of some high powers
That govern us below.

CASSIUS

Then if we lose this battle,
You are contented to be led in triumph
*Through the streets of Rome?

BRUTUS

No, Cassius, no. Think not, thou noble Roman, 110
That ever Brutus will go bound to Rome:
He bears too great a mind. But this same day
Must end that work the Ides of March begun.
And whether we shall meet again I know not,
Therefore our everlasting farewell take: 115
For ever and for ever, farewell, Cassius!
If we do meet again, why, we shall smile;
If not, why then this parting was well made.

CASSIUS

For ever and for ever, farewell, Brutus!
If we do meet again, we'll smile indeed; 120
If not, 'tis true this parting was well made.

BRUTUS

Why then, lead on. O, that a man might know
The end of this day's business ere it come!
But it sufficeth that the day will end,
And then the end is known. Come ho, away! 125

Exeunt

Collation notes for Act V, Scene i

5.1] *Actus Quintus. F; ACT V. SCENE 1. Rowe*

Location] *Capell (after Rowe)*

5 warn] F; wage *Hanmer*; wait *conj. Mason*

12 Prepare you,] Q (1691); Prepare you F; Prepare, you *Jennens*

20 SD.2 LUCILIUS . . . others] *Capell*

33 posture] F; puncture *conj. Singer 1858*; portents *conj. Bulloch*

35 too?] *Macmillan (conj. Thirlby)*; too. F

35–6] *Steevens*³; And . . . Hony-lesse. / . . . too. / . . . soundlesse too: F; And . . . honeyless. / . . . soundless too. *Bevington (Capell MS.)*

41] *Rowe*; You . . . Apes, / . . . Hounds, F

41 teeth] F3; teethes F

50–1] *Steevens*³; Looke . . . Conspirators, F

53 thirty] F; twenty *Theobald (after Plutarch)*

55 sword] F; word *Collier*² (*Collier MS.*)

57 So I hope.] So I hope: F; So I hope QU1; So; I hope *Collier*⁴

67] *Rowe*; Why . . . Billow, / . . . Barke: F

69 SD.2 Brutus . . . Lucilius] *Rowe*

70–1] *Pope*; Cassi Messala. / . . . General? / . . . day F

79 former] F; foremost *Rowe*; forward *Collier*² (*Collier MS.*)

79 ensign] F; ensigns *Humphreys (conj. Lettsom)*

92 SD] *Staunton*

94 Lovers in peace,] F; Lovers, in peace, *Capell*; Lovers, in peace *conj. Furness*

105 time] F; turn [of death] *conj. Thirlby*; term *Capell*

106 some] F; those *Collier*²

109 Rome?] Q (1691); Rome. F

110] *Rowe*; No . . . no: / . . . Romane, F

Commentary notes for Act V, Scene i

Location The plains of Philippi.

4 battles troops in battle array, usually the main force.

5 warn Not ‘summon’ (the customary gloss) but ‘resist’ (*OED Warn* v²).

7 bosoms Considered to be the repository of secret thoughts and counsels.

9 come down attack (by surprise). See also 5.2.6.

10 fearful Commentators are split between the active sense (‘inducing fear’) and the passive (‘full of fear’). Most recent ones give both. See also 1.3.78 n.

10 bravery defiance. Compare 4.3.96.

10 face appearance; as at 2.1.114.

14 bloody sign of battle Plutarch (pp. 176–7) refers to the ‘signal of battle . . . an arming scarlet coat’. Coat-armour (*OED* sv 1) was a ‘vest of rich material embroidered with heraldic devices’.

16 softly slowly (*OED* sv 3).

19 exigent critical occasion.

20 SD.1 March See 4.2.0 SD.1 n.

20 SD. 2 Drum See 4.2.0 SD.1 n.

33 posture position (of a weapon in warfare). See *OED* sv sb 2b.

33 are A plural verb with a singular subject is frequent in Shakespeare owing to ‘confusion of proximity’ (Abbott 412) – i.e. because ‘blows’ directly precedes ‘are’.

34 Hybla Town in Sicily famous for the honey produced in the surrounding hills.

41 showed . . . teeth Most commentators gloss as ‘grinned insincerely’, although *OED* (Tooth sb 8f) has ‘show[ed] hostility’. Shakespeare’s customary treatment of apes would support the former view.

41 fawned like hounds See 3.1.42–3 n.

49 proof i.e. the use of the sword.

53 thirty In Plutarch (p. 160), Appian (p. 21), and Suetonius (p. 111), twenty. ‘Such mistakes in copying and in printing were very common on account of the practice of using Roman numerals’

(Kittredge).

60 honourable Probably the adjective used as adverb (Abbott 1) rather than a pronounced final *e*.

61 peevish silly, foolish.

61 worthless unworthy. *OED* sv *adj.* 3 cites this instance, the only such usage in Shakespeare.

62 masker one who takes part in a masque or masquerade (used pejoratively). Earlier, Caesar had praised Antony for loving plays (1.2.203–4).

63 Come . . . away F's colon after 'Antony' has led some commentators to the belief that Octavius addresses 'away' not to Antony but to the troops.

66 have stomachs incline; as at 1.2.290.

71 as i.e. as I may say. See Abbott 114 for this redundant use with definitions of time.

76 Epicurus Moral and natural philosopher (341–270 BC), whose main doctrine, that 'pleasure is the beginning and end of living happily', entailed a distrust of the supernatural. Plutarch twice mentions Cassius's aberration: before the murder of Caesar (p. 159) and before the battle at Philippi (p. 176).

79 Coming i.e. as we came. For the participle with pronoun implied, see Abbott 379.

79 Sardis See 4.2.28 n.

79 former foremost (Plutarch's adjective, see p. 175).

79 ensign banner, standard.

87 fatal 'foreboding . . . ominous' (*OED* sv *adj.* 4c).

89 I . . . partly I but partly believe it. For the common transposition of the adverb, see Abbott 420.

91 constantly resolutely. See 'constancy', 2.1.227 n.

93 The gods . . . stand May the gods stand. The optative subjunctive, with 'may'. See Abbott 365.

95 rests Most probably, the third-person plural in -s. See Abbott 333.

95 incertain Shakespeare usually prefers the *un*-prefix with negations whereas early-seventeenth-century usage favours *in*-.

100 that philosophy According to almost all commentators, this alludes to Stoicism, whose main tenet is explained in 103–7. See also 4.3.145 n. But J. C. Maxwell ('Brutus's philosophy', *N&Q* n.s. 17 (1970), 128) finds describing Brutus as a Stoic 'harmless, perhaps, if it is meant as a description of temperament, but quite wrong if applied to doctrine. As so often, M. W. MacCallum had got it right long ago, quoting Plutarch on Brutus's preference for "Platoes sect", and citing the *Phaedo* (*Shakespeare's Roman Plays and their Background* (1910), p. 237, n. 1).'

101 Cato See 2.1.295 n.

104 fall befall; as at 3.1.243.

104 prevent forestall; see 2.1.28 n.

106 stay await, stay for.

109 Through For an explanation of F's 'Thorow', see 3.1.136 n.

Act V, Scene ii

**Alarum. Enter BRUTUS and Messala*

BRUTUS

Ride, ride, Messala, ride, and give these **bills*
Unto the legions on the other side.

Loud alarum

Let them set on at once, for I perceive
But **cold* demeanour in Octavio's wing,
And sudden push gives them the overthrow.
Ride, ride, Messala, let them all **come down*.

5

Exeunt

Collation notes for Act V, Scene ii

5.2] *Capell*

Location] *Capell*

4 Octavio's] F; *Octavius' / Thomas Johnson*²

5 And] F; One *Hanmer* (*Folger MS.*); A *Warburton*

Commentary notes for Act V, Scene ii

Location The field of battle.

0 SD Alarum Originally a call to arms (from Italian *all'arme*), later accompanied by a signal produced by a musical instrument.

1 bills written orders.

4 cold In contemporary physiology 'cold' (in association with dry or moist) was applied to the elements, complexions, humours, etc. (see [5.5.73 n.](#)) and conveyed, among other things, 'Smallnesse of courage', if cold and moist, or the 'Tymerous and fearefull', if cold and dry (Sir Thomas Elyot, *The Castel of Helthe* (1541), fols. 2b, 3).

6 come down attack (by surprise); as at [5.1.9](#).

Act V, Scene iii

Alarums. Enter CASSIUS and TITINIUS

CASSIUS

O, look, Titinius, look, the villains fly!
Myself have to mine own turned enemy.
This *ensign here of mine was turning back;
I slew the coward and did take it from him.

TITINIUS

O Cassius, Brutus gave the word too early, 5
Who, having some advantage on Octavius,
Took it too eagerly. His soldiers fell to spoil
Whilst we by Antony are all enclosed.

Enter PINDARUS

PINDARUS

Fly further off, my lord, fly further off!
Mark Antony is in your tents, my lord, 10
Fly therefore, noble Cassius, fly *far off.

CASSIUS

This hill is far enough. Look, look, Titinius,
Are those my tents where I perceive the fire?

TITINIUS

They are, my lord.

CASSIUS

Titinius, if thou lovest me,
Mount thou my horse and hide thy spurs in him 15
Till he have brought thee up to yonder troops
And here again that I may rest assured
Whether yond troops are friend or enemy.

TITINIUS

I will be here again *even with a thought. *Exit*

CASSIUS

Go, Pindarus, get higher on that hill, 20
My sight was ever *thick: regard Titinius
*And tell me what thou not'st about the field.

[Pindarus goes up]

This day I breathèd first, time is come round
And where I did begin there shall I end:
My life is run his compass. Sirrah, what news? 25

PINDARUS

(Above) O my lord!

CASSIUS

What news?

PINDARUS

Titinius is enclosed round about
With horsemen that make to him on the spur,
Yet he spurs on. Now they are almost on him. 30
Now Titinius – Now some *light; O, he lights too.
He's ta'en.

(Shout)

And hark, they shout for joy.

CASSIUS

Come down, behold no more.
O, coward that I am to live so long
To see my best friend ta'en before my face. 35

Pindarus [descends]

Come hither, sirrah.

*In Parthia did I take thee prisoner,
And then I swore thee, saving of thy life,
That whatsoever I did bid thee do
Thou shouldst attempt it. Come now, keep thine oath. 40
Now be a freeman, and with this good sword,
That ran through Caesar's bowels, search this bosom.
Stand not to answer; here, take thou the *hilts
And when my face is covered, as 'tis now,

Guide thou the sword.

[Pindarus stabs him]

Caesar, thou art revenged 45
Even with the sword that killed thee. *[Dies]*

PINDARUS

So I am free, yet would not so have been
Durst I have done my will. O Cassius,
Far from this country Pindarus shall run,
Where never Roman shall take note of him. *[Exit]* 50

Enter TITINIUS and MESSALA

MESSALA

It is but *change, Titinius, for Octavius
Is overthrown by noble Brutus' power,
As Cassius' legions are by Antony.

TITINIUS

These tidings will well comfort Cassius.

MESSALA

Where did you leave him?

TITINIUS

All disconsolate, 55
With Pindarus his bondman, on this hill.

MESSALA

Is not that he that lies upon the ground?

TITINIUS

He lies not like the living. O my heart!

MESSALA

Is not that he?

TITINIUS

No, this was he, Messala,
But Cassius is no more. O setting sun, 60
As in thy red rays thou dost sink to night,

So in his red blood Cassius' day is set.
The sun of Rome is set. Our day is gone,
Clouds, dews, and dangers come. Our deeds are done.
Mistrust of my *success hath done this deed. 65

MESSALA

Mistrust of good success hath done this deed.
O hateful error, melancholy's child,
Why dost thou show to the *apt thoughts of men
The things that are not? O error, soon conceived,
Thou never com'st unto a happy birth 70
But kill'st the mother that engendered thee.

TITINIUS

What, Pindarus? Where art thou, Pindarus?

MESSALA

Seek him, Titinius, whilst I go to meet
The noble Brutus, thrusting this report
Into his ears. I may say 'thrusting' it, 75
For piercing steel and darts envenomèd
Shall be as welcome to the ears of Brutus
As tidings of this sight.

TITINIUS

Hie you, Messala,
And I will seek for Pindarus the while.

[Exit Messala]

Why didst thou send me forth, brave Cassius? 80
Did I not meet thy friends? And did not they
Put on my brows this wreath of victory
And bid me give it thee? Didst thou not hear their shouts?
Alas, thou hast misconstrued everything.
But hold thee, take this garland on thy brow; 85
Thy Brutus bid me give it thee, and I
Will do his bidding. Brutus, come apace,
And see how I regarded Caius Cassius.
By your leave, gods! – This is a Roman's part.

Come, Cassius' sword, and find Titinius' heart.

Dies 90

Alarum. Enter BRUTUS, MESSALA, YOUNG CATO, Strato, Volumnius, and Lucilius, [Labeo, and Flavius]

BRUTUS

Where, where, Messala, doth his body lie?

MESSALA

Lo yonder, and Titinius mourning it.

BRUTUS

Titinius' face is upward.

CATO

He is slain.

BRUTUS

O Julius Caesar, thou art mighty yet,
Thy spirit walks abroad and turns our swords
In our *own proper entrails.

95

Low alarums

CATO

Brave Titinius!

Look whe'er he have not crowned dead Cassius.

BRUTUS

Are yet two Romans living such as these?
The last of all the Romans, fare thee well!
It is impossible that ever Rome
Should breed thy fellow. Friends, I owe *mo tears
To this dead man than you shall see me pay.
I shall find time, Cassius, I shall find time.
Come therefore and to *Thasos send his body;
His *funerals shall not be in our camp
Lest it *discomfort us. Lucilius, come,
And come, young Cato, let us to the field.
Labeo and *Flavio, set our *battles on.
'Tis three o'clock, and, Romans, yet ere night

100

105

We shall *try fortune in a *second fight.

110

Exeunt

Collation notes for Act V, Scene iii

5.3] *Capell*

Location] *Capell*

20 higher] F; thither F2

22 SD] *Dyce (after Hanmer / Exit Pin.)*

28–33] As *Pope (not omitting Now before Titinius at 31); Pind.* . . . about / . . . Spurre, / . . . him: / . . . too. / . . . Showt. / . . . ioy. / . . . more: F; *Pin.* . . . is / . . . that / . . . on.— / . . . Titinius! - / . . . hark! / . . . joy. / . . . more. —*Malone; as Malone, except 32–3: They . . . more. — Steevens*³; as *Pope, except 31–3: Now . . . ta'en; — / And . . . more. — Boswell; as Pope, except 32–3: He's . . . more. — Singer*²; as *Pope, except 31–3: Now, Titinius! — / . . . too: — / . . . hark! / . . . joy. / . . . more. Craik; as Pope, except 31–3: Now . . . Now, / . . . hark! / . . . more. — Wordsworth; as Pope, except 31–3: Now, Titinius! — / . . . hark! / . . . more. — Dyce*²; as *Pope, except 31–2: Now . . . he / . . . joy. Bevington (conj. Nicholson, who adds now after Now)*

31 Titinius—] *Jennens; Titinius. F*

35 SD] *Dyce (Douai MS.); Enter Pindarus F*

36–7] *Pope; Come . . . Prisoner, F*

41 freeman] F3; Free-man F; free man *Humphreys*

45 SD] *Globe (Douai MS.)*

46 SD] *Capell (Folger MS.); Kills him F2; Kills himself / Rowe*²

47] *Rowe; So . . . free, / . . . beene F*

50 SD. 1 Exit] *Rowe (Folger MS.)*

61 to night] F; to-night *Thomas Johnson*

62 is] F; it F2

63 sun] F; Sonne F2; Son F3

79 SD] Q (1691)

90 SD.2 Labeo, and Flavius] *Wilson*

95 walks] F; wa'kes F2; wakes *Folger MS.*

97 whe'er] whe'r *Capell*; where F

97 not] F; omitted in F (*uncorrected*)

99 The] F; Thou *Rowe*

101 owe mo] F; owe no F (*uncorrected*); own mo Q (1684); own my QU3; own more Q (1691); owe more *Rowe (Folger MS.)*

104 Thasos] *Thassos Theobald (after Plutarch): Tharsus F*

108 Flavio] F; *Flavius F2 (after Plutarch)*

108 Flavio,] F4, *Flavio F*

109 and, Romans, yet] *Rowe; and Romans yet F; and, Romans yet, conj. this edn*

Commentary notes for Act V, Scene iii

Location Another part of the field.

3 ensign standard-bearer; formerly 'officer of the lowest grade in the infantry'; the reference may also be to the standard itself (as in 4, 'it'), although Plutarch (p. 179) mentions the soldier.

11 far farther (usually indicated by F spelling 'farre'). Compare 9; see also 3.2.158 n.

19 even . . . thought as swift as thought, in an instant.

21 thick misty, dim. Compare 'thick-ey'd', 1H4 2.3.46.

22 SD Pindarus most likely uses the same structure that served as the pulpit in 3.2. See illustration 2 on p. 6.

31 light alight.

37 ‘Cassius held a command under Crassus in the disastrous expedition against the Parthians 53 BC, and it was at the battle of Carrhae . . . that he captured Pindarus’ (Mark Hunter).

43 hilts Found as a singular on three occasions in Shakespeare and as a plural six times. See also 5.5.28.

51 change exchange.

65 success result; as at 2.2.6.

68 apt susceptible to impressions.

96 own proper Pleonastic, often for emphasis. See 1.2.41 n.

96 SD Low ‘Of or in reference to musical sounds: Produced or characterised by relatively slow vibrations; grave’ (*OED* sv *adj.* 10a). Probably misunderstood in uncorrected F’s *Loud*, which is possibly a compositorial misreading of a final *e* as *d*. See also 5.5.23 SD for the same sound in connection with the sad end of a battle, as well as *Loud*, 5.2.2 SD, signalling the beginning of an attack. See also *Low march within*, 4.2.24 SD.

101 mo more; see 2.1.72 n.

104 *Thasos An island in the north Aegean Sea, not far from Philippi.

105 funerals Although mainly singular in Shakespeare (24 instances), the plural is to be found also in *Tit.* 1.1.381, *MND* 1.1.14, and Plutarch (pp. 161, 170, 171).

106 discomfort dishearten.

108 Flavio, The majority of editions follow F4 in adding a comma, thus creating a vocative and making Labeo and Flavius mutes. This seems preferable, especially since the context would call for the present perfect of the following verb (i.e. ‘have set’) and not a simple past.

108 battles troops in battle array, usually the main force; as at 5.1.4.

110 try test; see 3.1.292 n.

110 second fight Shakespeare merges the two battles, although they actually took place some twenty days apart.

Act V, Scene iv

**Alarum. Enter BRUTUS, Messala, [YOUNG] CATO, LUCILIUS, and Flavius, [Labeo]*

BRUTUS

Yet, countrymen, O, yet hold up your heads!

[Exit with Messala, Flavius, and Labeo]

CATO

What bastard doth not? Who will go with me?

I will proclaim my name about the field.

I am the son of *Marcus Cato, ho!

A foe to tyrants, and my country's friend.

5

I am the son of Marcus Cato, ho!

Enter SOLDIERS and fight

*LUCILIUS

And I am Brutus, Marcus Brutus, I,

Brutus, my country's friend. Know me for Brutus!

[Young Cato is slain]

O young and noble Cato, art thou down?

Why, now thou diest as bravely as Titinius

10

And mayst be honoured, being Cato's son.

1 SOLDIER

Yield, or thou diest.

LUCILIUS

*Only I yield to die.

*There is so much that thou wilt kill me straight.

Kill Brutus and be honoured in his death.

1 SOLDIER

We must not. A noble prisoner!

15

Enter ANTONY

2 SOLDIER

Room ho! Tell Antony, Brutus is ta'en.

1 SOLDIER

I'll tell the news. Here comes the general.
Brutus is ta'en, Brutus is ta'en, my lord!

ANTONY

Where is he?

LUCILIUS

Safe, Antony, Brutus is safe enough. 20

I dare assure thee that no enemy
Shall ever take alive the noble Brutus.
The gods defend him from so great a shame!
When you do find him, *or alive or dead,
He will be found like Brutus, like himself. 25

ANTONY

This is not Brutus, friend, but, I assure you,
A prize no less in worth. Keep this man safe,
Give him all kindness. I had rather have
Such men my friends than enemies. Go on,
And see whe'er Brutus be alive or dead, 30
And bring us word unto Octavius' tent
How everything is chanced.

Exeunt

Collation notes for Act V, Scene iv

5.4] *Capell*

Location] *Capell*

0 SD YOUNG] *Dyce*

0 SD Labeo] *This edn*

1 SD] *Wilson (subst.)*

7 SH LUCILIUS] *Macmillan; Bru./Rowe*

8 SD] *Cato falls/Capell*

9 O young] *Macmillan; Luc. O yong F*

12, 15 SH 1] *Capell*

17 the news] *Q (1684) (Folger MS.); thee newes F*

30 whe'er] *whe'r Capell (whether Folger MS.); where F*

Commentary notes for Act V, Scene iv

Location Another part of the field.

0 SD It is likely that Labeo, who is coupled with Flavius at 5.3.108, also enters here and exits after

line [1](#). Plutarch mentions Brutus's grieving over his friends slain in battle, 'specially when he came to name Labio and Flavius' (p. 182).

4 Marcus Cato See [2.1.295 n.](#)

7 SH Most editors assign to Lucilius, who impersonates Brutus to protect him from harm. The ruse is referred to by Antony at [26](#). For this action, see Plutarch (p. 181).

12 Only I yield i.e. I yield only. For the construction, see [5.1.89 n.](#)

13 Most interpretations follow Hanmer's stage direction *Giving him money*; some, however, take the line as a reference to the 'announcement in the next line that he is Brutus' (Evans).

24 or . . . or either . . . or; see [2.1.135 n.](#)

Act V, Scene v

Enter BRUTUS, DARDANIUS, CLITUS, STRATO, and VOLUMNIUS

BRUTUS

Come, poor remains of friends, rest on this rock.

CLITUS

Statilius showed the torchlight but, my lord,
He came not back. He is *or ta'en or slain.

BRUTUS

Sit thee down, Clitus. Slaying is the word,
It is a deed in fashion. Hark thee, Clitus. [*Whispering*]

5

CLITUS

What, I, my lord? No, not for all the world.

BRUTUS

Peace then, no words.

CLITUS

I'll rather kill myself.

BRUTUS

Hark thee, Dardanius. [*Whispers*]

DARDANIUS

Shall I do such a deed?

CLITUS

O Dardanius!

DARDANIUS

O Clitus!

10

CLITUS

What ill request did Brutus make to thee?

DARDANIUS

To kill him, Clitus. Look, he meditates.

CLITUS

Now is that noble vessel full of grief,
That it runs over *even at his eyes.

BRUTUS

Come hither, good Volumnius, list a word.

15

VOLUMNIUS

What says my lord?

BRUTUS

Why, this, Volumnius:
The ghost of Caesar hath appeared to me
Two *several times by night, at Sardis once
And this last night here in Philippi fields.
I know my hour is come.

VOLUMNIUS

Not so, my lord.

20

BRUTUS

Nay, I am sure it is, Volumnius.
Thou seest the world, Volumnius, how it goes:
Our enemies have *beat us to the pit.

Low alarums

It is more worthy to leap in ourselves
Than tarry till they push us. Good Volumnius,
Thou know'st that we two went to school together;
Even for that our love of old, I prithee
Hold thou my sword-hilts whilst I run on it.

25

VOLUMNIUS

That's not an office for a friend, my lord.

Alarum still

CLITUS

Fly, fly, my lord, there is no tarrying here.

30

BRUTUS

Farewell to you, and you, and you, Volumnius.

Strato, thou hast been all this while asleep:
Farewell to thee too, Strato. Countrymen,
My heart doth joy that yet in all my life
I found no man but he was true to me. 35
I shall have glory by this losing day
More than Octavius and Mark Antony
My this vile conquest shall attain unto.
So fare you well at once, for Brutus' tongue
Hath almost ended his life's history. 40
Night hangs upon mine eyes, my bones would rest,
That have but laboured to attain this hour.
Alarum. Cry within, 'Fly, fly, fly!'

CLITUS
Fly, my lord, fly!

BRUTUS
Hence! I will follow.
[Exeunt Clitus, Dardanius, and Volumnius]

I prithee, Strato, stay thou by thy lord.
Thou art a fellow of a good respect, 45
Thy life hath had some *smatch of honour in it.
Hold then my sword and turn away thy face,
While I do run upon it. Wilt thou, Strato?

STRATO
Give me your hand first. Fare you well, my lord.

BRUTUS
Farewell, good Strato.

[Runs on his sword]
Caesar, now be still, 50
I killed not thee with half so good a will. ** *Dies*

Alarum. Retreat. Enter ANTONY, OCTAVIUS, MESSALA, LUCILIUS, and the army

OCTAVIUS
What man is that?

MESSALA

My master's man. Strato, where is thy master?

STRATO

Free from the bondage you are in, Messala.

The conquerors can but *make a fire of him:

55

For Brutus *only overcame himself,

And no man else hath honour by his death.

LUCILIUS

So Brutus should be found. I thank thee, Brutus,

That thou hast proved Lucilius' saying true.

OCTAVIUS

All that served Brutus I will *entertain them.

60

Fellow, wilt thou bestow thy time with me?

STRATO

Ay, if Messala will *prefer me to you.

OCTAVIUS

Do so, good Messala.

MESSALA

How died my master, Strato?

STRATO

I held the sword, and he did run on it.

65

MESSALA

Octavius, then take him to follow thee,

That did the latest service to my master.

ANTONY

This was the noblest Roman of them all:

All the conspirators, save only he,

Did that they did in envy of great Caesar.

70

He only, in a general honest thought

And common good to all, *made one of them.

His life was *gentle, and the *elements

So mixed in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, 'This was a man!'

75

OCTAVIUS

According to his *virtue let us use him,
With all respect and rites of burial.
Within my tent his bones tonight shall lie,
Most like a soldier, *ordered honourably.
So call the *field to rest, and let's away
To *part the glories of this happy day.

80

Exeunt

Collation notes for Act V, Scene v

5.5] *Capell*

Location] *Pope*

1] *As verse, Pope²; as prose, F*

5 SD] *Rowe (Douai MS.)*

8 SD] *Capell (Douai MS.)*

23 SD Low] *F; Loud F (uncorrected)*

28 sword-hilts] *Malone; Sword Hilts F; Swords Hilt QU 3; Sword's hilt Rowe*

33 thee too] *Thomas Johnson; thee, to F*

43 SD] *Capell*

50 SD] *Rowe (after 51)*

63–4] *F; as one line, omitting good, Steevens³ (Capell MS.); as one line, Singer*

71 He only,] *Q (1691); He, onely F*

71–2 general . . . And] *F; generous . . . Of Collier² (Collier MS.)*

Commentary notes for Act V, Scene v

Location Another part of the field.

3 or . . . or either . . . or; see [2.1.135 n.](#)

14 even Used for emphasis, like modern 'very'. See Franz 438.

18 several separate; as at [2.1.138](#).

23 beat . . . pit i.e. driven us with blows into a hole (like animals) or the grave.

46 smatch taste, flavour (later supplanted by 'smack', the reading in Steevens (conj. Thirlby)).

51 SD.2 Retreat 'The recall of a pursuing force' (*OED* sv *sb* 2b), presumably by a trumpet call.

51 SD.2 Enter . . . army In many editions since Capell it is Octavius who leads the entrance.

55 make a fire Burning on a pyre or *rogus* was the general burial practice. Plutarch (p. 161) reports that the people 'plucked up forms, tables, and stools, and laid them all about the body [of Caesar], and setting them afire burnt the corse'.

56 only alone. The position of the adjective after the noun may be for emphasis; see Abbott 419.

60 entertain them take them into (my) service.

62 prefer me recommend me; see [3.1.28 n.](#)

72 made one of them The few editors who comment refer to Brutus's joining the conspiracy. See Schmidt, make 10. The expression is Plutarch's (p. 164).

73 gentle noble.

73 elements Strictly speaking, the elements are ‘those originall thinges vnmyxt and vncompounde, of whose temperance and myxture all other thynges, hauynge corporall substaunce, be compacte . . . Erthe. Water. Ayre and Fyre’ (Sir Thomas Elyot, *The Castel of Helthe* (1541), fol. 1b). Here the humours are meant: ‘In the body of Man be foure principall humours, whiche contynuinge in the proportion, that nature hath lymytted, the body is free from all syckenesse . . . Bloudde, Fleume, Choler, Melancoly’ (Elyot, fol. 8a).

76 virtue *virtus*, inherent worth.

79 ordered dealt with, treated; see also [3.1.230 n.](#)

80 field army.

81 part share.

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

The overwhelming consensus of opinion is that the Folio text of *Julius Caesar*, the only one with authority, is the ‘best-printed play’¹ in the whole Folio. It is further held that the textual problems are ‘comparatively simple’.² The text is described as ‘unusually clean’³ and ‘exceptionally tidy’ (Dorsch, p. xxiii) on the evidence of relatively few substantive or semi-substantive mistakes, the treatment of accidentals also demonstrating a careful and caring understanding of the play. But, as is the case with many other features of the play – from the date to the two-part structure to the dramatic focus of the tragedy – ‘simple’ is a term which must be reserved for only the superficial consideration of these features. It is not to be construed as meaning that there are no problems, still less that the problems have been or can be definitively solved.

A measure of the difficulties involved in the appraisal of the text (inseparable from an appraisal of the nature of the play itself) is to be found in the fact that, as E. K. Chambers wrote, ‘in no play of the canon have recent critics more persistently sought other hands’.⁴ It is not necessary to detail the views of J.M. Robertson, William Wells, and E. H. C. Oliphant,⁵ all of whom find a core of Christopher Marlowe with modifications, in one degree or another, by such leading contemporaries as George Chapman, Michael Drayton, Ben Jonson, and Francis Beaumont. These theories have never achieved general acceptance, of course, although it should be noted that Chambers’s not untypical rejection of them is based on his blank acceptance of the ‘two peaks’ action (the death of Caesar at the Capitol and of Brutus at Philippi), while at the same time admitting that this type of structure does not accord with the movement of Shakespeare’s tragedies in a ‘single curve to a catastrophe in the death of the title-character’, and on his equally blunt conviction that Shakespeare is ‘deliberately experimenting in a classical manner, with an extreme simplicity both of vocabulary and of phrasing’.⁶ In other words, he acknowledges the singularity and finds it Shakespearean, while the others tend to regard the singularity as un-Shakespearean.

Two concerns emerge. The first and overriding one is that the evidence for both positions is speculative. Chambers, for example, uses Jonson’s (mis)quoting in *Timber* of 3.1.47, ‘*Caesar did never wrong, but with just cause*’, as ‘testimony . . . to Shakespeare’s authorship’;⁷ F. G. Fleay uses a slightly altered version of the same line (with the prefixing of ‘Cry you

mercy') in the Induction to Jonson's *Staple of News* to 'imply that Shakespeare did not make the alterations himself'.⁸ Obviously, this concern involves an assessment of stylistic features, especially verbal parallels, treated earlier (see p. 11 above). The second is that revision, in one form or another by Shakespeare or whoever, is generally agreed upon. It is one of the more interesting textual features, both in itself and for what it may have to say about the copy for the setting up of the text. The discussion has far exceeded Chambers's laconic acknowledgement of a 'trace of a revision'.⁹

Since at least the middle of the nineteenth century scholars have commented on the double revelation of the death of Portia: the first is Brutus's report of the suicide to Cassius (4.3.147–57), the second is Messala's announcement and Brutus's reaction (4.3.181–95). Warren D. Smith¹⁰ and Thomas Clayton¹¹ are the main apologists for the non-revisionists. After summarising the 'somewhat tenuous position of either humbly apologizing for Brutus' concealment of Portia's death, especially for his calm acceptance of Messala's praise, or of admitting that, for reasons not forthcoming, the dramatist decided at this point in the play to disparage his protagonist in the eyes of the audience', Smith asserts that 'a consideration of Shakespeare's text with reference to its source, North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives*, demonstrates not only that the Messala–Brutus passage . . . is wholly authentic as it stands in the Folio, but also that the dramatist intended it to be unmistakable witness to the unselfishness, fortitude, and able generalship characteristic of Brutus in other parts of the play'.¹²

Expanding Smith's point of view, and perhaps inspired by his remark that 'interpretation could easily be made clear in the acting',¹³ Clayton defends the 'duplicate revelation' as being 'variously consonant with both [a worse and a better Brutus]', grounding his view on three kinds of inferential evidence: '(1) histrionic effect consistent with the text, and character as in one way a function of the text; (2) general, dramatic, and contextual casuistry, as "that part of Ethics which resolves cases of conscience, applying the general rules of religion and morality to particular instances which disclose special circumstances, or conflicting duties," as the *SOED* succinctly puts it; and (3) what may be inferred about intentions from sources and other comparable materials in and out of the play'.¹⁴ Coupled with his rejection of bibliographical evidence, Clayton goes so far as to suggest that both versions may have been added after the original writing, for a '*Julius Caesar* without revelations of Portia's death is both tenable and playable'.¹⁵

The dominant case for the prevailing revision theory has been made by Brents Stirling,¹⁶ whose study of the variant Cassius speech headings leads him to assert that they are 'inconsistent with compositorial responsibility and consistent with copy as a determining factor'.¹⁷ Since *Cassi.* is the normal prefix, and the variants *Cas.* or *Cass.* appear only in the passages in question,

Stirling concludes specifically that the revision, not the compositor, accounted for the variants. He goes on to extend this type of examination to 2.1.86–228, which he also finds to have been subject to authorial revision. Agreeing, Fredson Bowers¹⁸ carries the discussion to the relationship between the revisions and the copy for the play. Since two important revisions can be identified as not being ‘organic’ – ‘insertion’ is the word most often used¹⁹ – they throw light on the question ‘whether a prompt-book that had represented the final stage of the organization of the text for acting would be revised in such a manner by Shakespeare, or whether the revisions were made in an intermediate manuscript used for its own purposes by the company before the inscription of the prompt-book was ordered’.²⁰ Explicit in Bowers’s argument is the whole drift, if not history *in nuce*, of textual transmission over the past hundred years. Most striking are the increasing injections over this period of the findings of compositor analysis, as well as the growing acceptance of large-scale revision as a feature of Shakespeare’s craft.

Although the art of compositor analysis is far from satisfactory,²¹ the general consensus is that *Julius Caesar* was set by Jaggard’s Compositors A and B. More specifically, Charlton Hinman²² has postulated that A set kk2^v–3 and most likely the lower part of ll5b while B set all the rest, kk1, 2^r, 4, 5, 6, and ll 1–5. The presence of identifiable compositorial characteristics – especially those of B, who was largely responsible for the play, like his fondness for such heavier pointing as colons and commas at the ends of verse lines – as well as the absence of what have been considered Shakespearean spellings, has counteracted the theory that the copy for the ‘clean’ Folio text of *Julius Caesar* was the author’s own manuscript, a position taken by the editors of the nineteenth-century Cambridge edition and accepted even by Stirling, whose data ‘strongly point to a finished play in fair-copy form antedating the addition [in Act 4]’.²³ The weakness of the position is evidenced in the fact that W. W. Greg used the same characteristics, adding his special favourite, stage directions, to postulate a promptbook with possible annotations as copy,²⁴ a theory much in favour in the first half of this century. Most recent textual criticism has tended to focus on intermediate copy between an author’s manuscript – fair or foul – and a promptbook. In the case of *Julius Caesar*, all are now agreed – on the basis of evidence ranging from orderly speech headings to typical compositorial spellings – that there must have been a ‘careful’ (Dorsch, p. xxiv) or ‘clean’²⁵ scribal copy or transcript from Shakespeare’s ‘foul’ (Dorsch, p. xxiv) or ‘working’²⁶ papers. More refined explanations – like J. Dover Wilson’s arguing that a ‘transcript was specially made for the printer’, because the ‘company was unwilling to part with the promptbook and no foul papers were available’ – are lacking in what Greg calls ‘compelling’ evidence.²⁷ In fact, it must be admitted that positions of this kind can never be absolutely convincing, much less compelling, being

deduced from partial evidence, bits and pieces at best, whose total is far below that required for certainty.

Two other textual features – mutes and short lines – have variously been mentioned in connection with revision, especially as evidence of cuts. Fleay's unsupported assertion that the 'play has been greatly shortened, [as] is shown by the singularly large number of instances in which mute characters are on the stage; which is totally at variance with Shakespeare's usual practice'²⁸ has made its way into critical discussions without being effectively substantiated or rejected. Of the 22 instances (not counting unnamed characters) twelve mutes are addressed directly and three are at least mentioned.²⁹ The appearance of the remaining seven is usually explained by either one or both of the following lines of argument: Ringler's 'there is no necessity to assume that Labio and Flavio are present on the stage [in 5.3]'³⁰ and Greg's 'There is no reason why they [Messala and Flavius in 5.4] should not be present.'³¹ Even Greg's larger thesis (in commenting on the mutes Lamprius, Rannius, and Lucillius in 1.2 of *Antony*) that 'Shakespeare has evidently jotted down the names of characters . . . that he thought he might use and did not'³² is a tempting but nevertheless still speculative attempt to describe Shakespeare's work habits. In so 'clean' a text as *Julius Caesar* it is highly unlikely. Even more unlikely is Fleay's finding equal confirmation of his hypothesis about abridgement in the 'large number of incomplete lines in every possible position, even in the middle of speeches'.³³ Chambers's reference to only 'a few abrupt short lines [which] may be evidence of cuts',³⁴ noted and quoted by Wilson (as if doctrine) as among the 'indications of change in the text' (p. 95) – although neither writer identifies them – is less convincing an explanation than that of compositorial practice.

Symptomatic of the inevitable, if not indispensable, interaction of literary interpretation and textual analysis is likewise the recent and ongoing discussion of short lines. Surprisingly, the matter has been discussed only scantily in editions of the play, although it presents implications for theories of authorship, revision, compositorial analysis, and ultimately transmission. The surmises of Fleay and Chambers just mentioned were followed by only a brief exchange between A. P. Rossiter, who argued against the conversion of short lines into split lines (the practice formalised by Steevens in his edition of 1793) at the expense of a 'perceptible change of tone or sense',³⁵ and R. B. McKerrow, who countered that 'few of the split lines . . . could have been printed as a single line without either a turnover or undue crowding',³⁶ basing his position on the compositor's dislike of turnovers. A monograph-length article by Fredson Bowers³⁷ in 1980 and a briefer monograph by Paul Bertram³⁸ in 1981 have reinforced the arguments of McKerrow and Rossiter respectively, and a very recent article by Carol Sicherman³⁹ in 1984, without explicit mention of McKerrow, has defended – on dramatic and rhetorical

grounds, especially in connection with characterisation – F’s use of lineation to reflect deliberate ‘metrical and extrametrical pauses’. It is, of course, debatable whether the typographical arrangement of short lines coincides with actual pauses in delivery, still less with a system of elocution, just as it is debatable whether Elizabethan pointing is coherent and systematic. The statistical evidence produced by Bowers is admittedly selective and dependent on an instinctive willingness to equate the sample with the whole; even what is deemed a *donnée* – Bowers’s reference to Compositor B’s ‘habit of breaking in two a pentameter that was too long for his measure’⁴⁰ – is not beyond question. But the weight of opinion – however undeniable the growing scepticism towards textual analysis – seems to favour even a few hard facts over keen interpretations of pentameters which are ‘dreary’ or ‘strong’ or pauses which are ‘daring’ or ‘silence filled’.⁴¹ Sicherman may be missing the point in basing her essay on Bowers’s leaving the interpretation of short lines to others, since his 57-page article would seem to make it clear that he does not put much store on such interpretation.

¹ W. W. Greg, *The Shakespeare First Folio: Its Bibliographical and Textual History*, 1955, p. 289.

² T. J. B. Spencer, ‘*Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*’, in Stanley Wells (ed.), *Shakespeare: Select Bibliographical Guides*, 1973, p. 206.

³ Greg, *First Folio*, p. 289.

⁴ E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare*, 2 vols., 1930, I, 398.

⁵ J. M. Robertson, ‘The origination of *Julius Caesar*’, in his *The Shakespeare Canon*, 1922, I, 66–154; William Wells, *The Authorship of ‘Julius Caesar’*, 1923; E. H. C. Oliphant, *The Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher*, 1927.

⁶ Chambers, *Shakespeare*, I, 399.

⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 397–8.

⁸ F. G. Fleay, *A Chronicle History of the Life and Work of William Shakespeare: Player, Poet, and Playmaker*, 1886, p. 216.

⁹ Chambers, *Shakespeare*, I, 396.

¹⁰ Warren D. Smith, ‘The duplicate revelation of Portia’s death’, *SQ* 4 (1953), 153–61.

¹¹ Thomas Clayton, “‘Should Brutus never taste of Portia’s death but once?’: text and performance in *Julius Caesar*”, *SEL* 23 (1983), 237–55.

¹² Smith, ‘Duplicate revelation’, p. 154.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

¹⁴ Clayton, ‘Portia’s death’, p. 246.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

¹⁶ Brents Stirling, ‘*Julius Caesar* in revision’, *SQ* 13 (1962), 187–205.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

¹⁸ Fredson Bowers, ‘The copy for Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*’, *South Atlantic Bulletin* 43 (1977–8), 23–36.

¹⁹ See Chambers, *Shakespeare*, 1, 397, and Greg, *First Folio*, p. 291.

²⁰ Bowers, ‘The copy’, p. 31.

²¹ A measure of the difficulty is reflected in the ever-increasing number of compositors postulated on

the basis, as the whole is divided into more and more parts, of less and less evidence – not to mention the general caveat that the actual printing-house conditions, the supposed key to the problem, are not only far from having been reconstructed but may never be so, at least with the detail needed to concretise what is still for the most part printing of the mind (to paraphrase D. F. McKenzie). Even interesting attempts to refine data, like John Jowett's recent 'Ligature shortage and speech-prefix variation in *Julius Caesar*' (*The Library* 6:6 (1984), 244–53), whose aim is to prove that the speech heading variants depend on the shortage of ssi ligatures rather than on printer's copy, serve in the long run to expose the fragility of the approach. In this particular instance, the bibliographical evidence, in 'suggesting that there may be no secure grounds for considering that either of the episodes concerning Portia's death is a revision' (*ibid.*, p. 253), ironically serves to support the dramatic and theatrical interpretations. For a strong criticism of compositor analysis based on spelling habits, see A. C. Partridge, *Orthography in Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama*, 1964, pp. 111–15.

²² Charlton Hinman, *The Printing and Proof-reading of the First Folio of Shakespeare*, 2 vols., 1963, 1, 298–9. In his privately printed *A Reassessment of Compositors B and E in the First Folio Tragedies*, 1977, pp. 9–11, T. H. Howard-Hill presents, on the basis of speech headings and non-spaced commas, an admittedly cautious case for E's having set the second column of 113. A recent analysis, detailing characteristics of Compositors A and B and focussing on distinguishing compositorial work on part-pages, is J. K. Rogers, 'The Folio compositors of *Julius Caesar*: a quantitative analysis', *Analytical and Enumerative Bibliography* 6 (1982), 143–72. It also contains useful references to the continuing discussion of compositorial analysis, as well as to the claims for other compositors (like E).

²³ Stirling, '*Julius Caesar*', p. 205.

²⁴ Greg, *First Folio*, pp. 290–1. In *The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare*, 1942, p. 143, Greg finds the stage directions 'normal enough for prompt copy . . . "Enter Boy with wine and tapers" [4.3.157] is in character for the book-keeper, and so are some flourishes and the like – "Low alarums [5.3.96] . . . Alarum still [5.5.29]"'. Another example of alteration is put forward by Wilson (pp. 93–4), who contends that 3.1.47 (see above, pp. 148–9) was changed 'in deference to [Jonson's] literary criticism' by a scribe or even by Ben Jonson himself.

²⁵ Bowers, 'The copy', p. 23.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Greg, *First Folio*, p. 289.

²⁸ Fleay, *Life and Work*, p. 215.

²⁹ For a complete list, see William A. Ringler, Jr, 'The number of actors in Shakespeare's early plays', in *The Seventeenth-Century Stage*, ed. Gerald Eades Bentley, 1968, pp. 118–19. The inclusion by Ringler of Messala as mute in 4.2 is perhaps questionable; his omission of Flavius is likewise so.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

³¹ Greg, *First Folio*, p. 291. Chambers, *Shakespeare*, 1, 231, puts it more convincingly: 'We must of course allow for mutes, especially in court or processional scenes.'

³² Greg, *First Folio*, p. 401.

³³ Fleay, *Life and Work*, p. 215.

³⁴ Chambers, *Shakespeare*, I, 397.

³⁵ A. P. Rossiter, 'Line-division in "Julius Caesar"', *TLS* (23 July 1939), 454. Rossiter was responding to the policy regarding line arrangement in Ronald B. McKerrow, *Prolegomena for the Oxford Shakespeare*, 1939, pp. 44–9.

³⁶ R. B. McKerrow, 'Line division in "Julius Caesar"', *TLS* (19 August 1939), 492. The effect of faulty casting-off of copy has been touched on only fleetingly and without urgency. For a most recent instance, see Humphreys, p. 74.

³⁷ Fredson Bowers, 'Establishing Shakespeare's text: notes on short lines and the problem of verse division', *Studies in Bibliography* 33 (1980), 74–130.

³⁸ Paul Bertram, *White Spaces in Shakespeare: The Development of the Modern Text*, 1981. The impetus comes from G. B. Harrison's *Penguin Shakespeare* (1937–59), which on closer examination turns out to be little more than a reprint of the Folio.

³⁹ Carol Marks Sicherman, 'Short lines and interpretation: the case of *Julius Caesar*', *SQ* 35 (1984), 195.

⁴⁰ Bowers, 'Shakespeare's text', p. 90.

⁴¹ Sicherman, 'Short lines', pp. 183–6.

Appendix: Excerpts from Plutarch

The following excerpts are from Sir Thomas North's translation (1579) of Plutarch's lives of Julius Caesar and Marcus Brutus, the two major sources of Shakespeare's play. Longer, continuous sections are given for a better understanding not merely of the characters and events but also of the distinctive art of both Plutarch and Shakespeare. Although the life of Caesar is used mainly for the first half of the play, and of Brutus for the second, there is some overlapping (at times mentioned by Plutarch himself), which in itself contributes to the density of both Plutarch's narrative and Shakespeare's drama. The spelling has been modernised except for a few older forms which are headwords of a full *OED* entry. Occasionally, the spelling of names has been very slightly altered to accord with recognised usage. The punctuation reflects North's, though somewhat modified.

The Life of Julius Caesar

After all these things were ended, he was chosen Consul the fourth time, and went into Spain to make war with the sons of Pompey; who were yet but very young, but had notwithstanding raised a marvellous great army together, and showed to have had manhood and courage worthy to command such an army, insomuch as they put Caesar himself in great danger of his life. The greatest battle that was fought between them in all this war was by the city of Munda. For then Caesar seeing his men sorely distressed, and having their hands full of their enemies, he ran into the press among his men that fought, and cried out unto them: 'What, are ye not ashamed to be beaten and taken prisoners, yielding yourselves with your own hands to these young boys?' And so, with all the force he could make, having with much ado put his enemies to flight, he slew above thirty thousand of them in the field, and lost of his own men a thousand of the best he had. After this battle he went into his tent, and told his friends that he had often before fought for victory, but, this last time now, that he had fought for the safety of his own life. He won this battle on the very feast day of the Bacchanalians, in the which men say that Pompey the Great went out of Rome, about four years before, to begin this civil war. For his sons, the younger scaped from the battle; but, within few days after, Didius brought the head of the elder.

This was the last war that Caesar made. But the Triumph he made into Rome for the same did as much offend the Romans, and more, than anything

that ever he had done before; because he had not overcome captains that were strangers, nor barbarous kings, but had destroyed the sons of the noblest man in Rome, whom fortune had overthrown. And, because he had plucked up his race by the roots, men did not think it meet for him to triumph so for the calamities of his country, rejoicing at a thing for the which he had but one excuse to allege in his defence unto the gods and men – that he was compelled to do that he did. And the rather they thought it not meet, because he had never before sent letters nor messengers unto the commonwealth at Rome, for any victory that he had ever won in all the civil wars, but did always for shame refuse the glory of it.

This notwithstanding, the Romans inclining to Caesar's prosperity, and taking the bit in the mouth, supposing that, to be ruled by one man alone, it would be a good mean for them to take breath a little after so many troubles and miseries as they had abidden in these civil wars, they chose him perpetual Dictator. This was a plain tyranny. For to this absolute power of Dictator they added this, never to be afraid to be deposed. Cicero propounded before the Senate that they should give him such honours as were meet for a man. Howbeit others afterwards added to honours beyond all reason. For, men striving who should most honour him, they made him hateful and troublesome to themselves that most favoured him, by reason of the unmeasurable greatness and honours which they gave him. Thereupon, it is reported that even they that most hated him were no less favourers and furtherers of his honours than they that most flattered him, because they might have greater occasions to rise, and that it might appear they had just cause and colour to attempt that they did against him.

And now for himself, after he had ended his civil wars, he did so honourably behave himself that there was no fault to be found in him; and therefore, methinks, amongst other honours they gave him, he rightly deserved this – that they should build him a Temple of Clemency, to thank him for his courtesy he had used unto them in his victory. For he pardoned many of them that had borne arms against him, and, furthermore, did prefer some of them to honour and office in the commonwealth: as, amongst others, Cassius and Brutus, both the which were made Praetors. And, where Pompey's images had been thrown down, he caused them to be set up again. Whereupon Cicero said then that Caesar setting up Pompey's images again he made his own to stand the surer. And when some of his friends did counsel him to have a guard for the safety of his person, and some also did offer themselves to serve him, he would never consent to it, but said it was better to die once than always to be afraid of death.

But to win himself the love and good will of the people, as the honourablest guard and best safety he could have, he made common feasts again and general distribution of corn. Furthermore, to gratify the soldiers also, he

replenished many cities again with inhabitants, which before had been destroyed, and placed them there that had no place to repair unto; of the which the noblest and chiefest cities were these two, Carthage and Corinth; and it chanced so that, like as aforetime they had been both taken and destroyed together, even so were they both set afoot again, and replenished with people, at one self time.

And, as for great personages, he won them also, promising some of them to make them Praetors and Consuls in time to come, and unto others honours and preferments, but to all men generally good hope, seeking all the ways he could to make every man contented with his reign . . . Furthermore, Caesar being born to attempt all great enterprises and having an ambitious desire besides to covet great honours, the prosperous good success he had of his former conquests bred no desire in him quietly to enjoy the fruits of his labours, but rather gave him hope of things to come, still kindling more and more in him thoughts of greater enterprises and desire of new glory, as if that which he had present were stale and nothing worth. This humour of his was no other but an emulation with himself as with another man, and a certain contention to overcome the things he prepared to attempt . . .

But the chiefest cause that made him mortally hated was the covetous desire he had to be called king, which first gave the people just cause, and next his secret enemies honest colour, to bear him ill will. This notwithstanding, they that procured him this honour and dignity gave it out among the people that it was written in the Sibylline prophecies how the Romans might overcome the Parthians, if they made war with them and were led by a king, but otherwise that they were unconquerable. And furthermore they were so bold besides that, Caesar returning to Rome from the city of Alba, when they came to salute him, they called him king. But the people being offended, and Caesar also angry, he said he was not called king, but Caesar. Then, every man keeping silence, he went his way heavy and sorrowful.

When they had decreed divers honours for him in the Senate, the Consuls and Praetors accompanied with the whole assembly of the Senate went unto him in the market-place, where he was set by the pulpit for orations, to tell him what honours they had decreed for him in his absence. But he, sitting still in his majesty, disdaining to rise up unto them when they came in, as if they had been private men, answered them that his honours had more need to be cut off than enlarged. This did not only offend the Senate, but the common people also, to see that he should so lightly esteem of the magistrates of the commonwealth; insomuch as every man that might lawfully go his way departed thence very sorrowfully. Thereupon also Caesar rising departed home to his house, and tearing open his doublet collar, making his neck bare, he cried out aloud to his friends that his throat was ready to offer to any man

that would come and cut it. Notwithstanding, it is reported that afterwards, to excuse this folly, he imputed it to his disease, saying that their wits are not perfect which have his disease of the falling evil, when standing of their feet they speak to the common people, but are soon troubled with a trembling of their body and a sudden dimness and giddiness. But that was not true. For he would have risen up to the Senate, but Cornelius Balbus one of his friends (but rather a flatterer) would not let him, saying: 'What, do you not remember that you are Caesar, and will you not let them reverence you and do their duties?'

Besides these occasions and offences, there followed also his shame and reproach, abusing the Tribunes of the People in this sort. At that time the feast Lupercalia was celebrated, the which in old time men say was the feast of shepherds or herdmen and is much like unto the feast of the Lycians in Arcadia. But, howsoever it is, that day there are divers noblemen's sons, young men – and some of them magistrates themselves that govern then – which run naked through the city, striking in sport them they meet in their way with leather thongs, hair and all on, to make them give place. And many noblewomen and gentlewomen also go of purpose to stand in their way, and do put forth their hands to be stricken, as scholars hold them out to their schoolmaster to be stricken with the ferula; persuading themselves that, being with child, they shall have good delivery, and also, being barren, that it will make them to conceive with child. Caesar sat to behold that sport upon the pulpit for orations, in a chair of gold, apparelled in triumphing manner. Antonius, who was Consul at that time, was one of them that ran this holy course. So, when he came into the market-place, the people made a lane for him to run at liberty; and he came to Caesar and presented him a diadem wreathed about with laurel. Whereupon there rose a certain cry of rejoicing, not very great, done only by a few appointed for the purpose. But when Caesar refused the diadem, then all the people together made an outcry of joy. Then, Antonius offering it him again, there was a second shout of joy, but yet of a few. But when Caesar refused it again the second time, then all the whole people shouted. Caesar, having made this proof, found that the people did not like of it, and thereupon rose out of his chair, and commanded the crown to be carried unto Jupiter in the Capitol.

After that, there were set up images of Caesar in the city with diadems upon their heads, like kings. Those the two Tribunes, Flavius and Marullus, went and pulled down; and furthermore, meeting with them that first saluted Caesar as king, they committed them to prison. The people followed them rejoicing at it, and called them 'Brutes', because of Brutus, who had in old time driven the kings out of Rome and that brought the kingdom of one person unto the government of the Senate and people. Caesar was so offended withal that he deprived Marullus and Flavius of their Tribuneships, and,

accusing them, he spake also against the people, and called them *Bruti* and *Cumani* (to wit, 'beasts' and 'fools').

Hereupon the people went straight unto Marcus Brutus, who from his father came of the first Brutus and by his mother of the house of the Servilians, a noble house as any was in Rome, and was also nephew and son-in-law of Marcus Cato. Notwithstanding, the great honours and favour Caesar showed unto him kept him back, that of himself alone he did not conspire nor consent to depose him of his kingdom. For Caesar did not only save his life after the battle of Pharsalia when Pompey fled, and did at his request also save many more of his friends besides. But, furthermore, he put a marvellous confidence in him. For he had already preferred him to the Praetorship for that year, and furthermore was appointed to be Consul the fourth year after that, having through Caesar's friendship obtained it before Cassius, who likewise made suit for the same. And Caesar also, as it is reported, said in this contention: 'Indeed Cassius hath alleged best reason, but yet shall he not be chosen before Brutus.' Some one day accusing Brutus while he practised this conspiracy, Caesar would not hear of it, but, clapping his hand on his body, told them: 'Brutus will look for this skin' – meaning thereby that Brutus for his virtue deserved to rule after him, but yet that for ambition's sake he would not show himself unthankful nor dishonourable.

Now they that desired change and wished Brutus only their prince and governor above all other, they durst not come to him themselves to tell him what they would have him to do, but in the night did cast sundry papers into the Praetor's seat where he gave audience and the most of them to this effect: 'Thou sleepest, Brutus, and art not Brutus indeed.' Cassius, finding Brutus' ambition stirred up the more by these seditious bills, did prick him forward and egg him on the more for a private quarrel he had conceived against Caesar – the circumstance whereof we have set down more at large in Brutus' *Life*.

Caesar also had Cassius in great jealousy and suspected him much. Whereupon he said on a time to his friends: 'What will Cassius do, think ye? I like not his pale looks.' Another time, when Caesar's friends complained unto him of Antonius and Dolabella, that they pretended some mischief towards him, he answered them again: 'As for those fat men and smooth-combed heads', quoth he, 'I never reckon of them. But these palevisaged and carrion lean people, I fear them most' – meaning Brutus and Cassius.

Certainly destiny may easier be foreseen than avoided, considering the strange and wonderful signs that were said to be seen before Caesar's death. For, touching the fires in the element and spirits running up and down in the night, and also these solitary birds to be seen at noondays sitting in the great market-place – are not all these signs perhaps worth the noting, in such a wonderful chance as happened? But Strabo the Philosopher writeth that divers

men were seen going up and down in fire; and, furthermore, that there was a slave of the soldiers that did cast a marvellous burning flame out of his hand, insomuch as they that saw it thought he had been burnt, but, when the fire was out, it was found he had no hurt. Caesar self also, doing sacrifice unto the gods, found that one of the beasts which was sacrificed had no heart; and that was a strange thing in nature, how a beast could live without a heart.

Furthermore, there was a certain soothsayer that had given Caesar warning long time afore to take heed of the day of the Ides of March (which is the fifteenth of the month), for on that day he should be in great danger. That day being come, Caesar, going unto the Senate-house and speaking merrily unto the soothsayer, told him: 'The Ides of March be come.' 'So be they', softly answered the soothsayer, 'but yet they are not past.' And the very day before, Caesar, supping with Marcus Lepidus, sealed certain letters as he was wont to do at the board; so, talk falling out amongst them, reasoning what death was best, he preventing their opinions cried out aloud: 'Death unlooked for.'

Then going to bed the same night as his manner was and lying with his wife Calpurnia, all the windows and doors of his chamber flying open, the noise awoke him and made him afraid when he saw such light; but more, when he heard his wife Calpurnia, being fast asleep, weep and sigh and put forth many fumbling lamentable speeches. For she dreamed that Caesar was slain, and that she had him in her arms. Others also do deny that she had any such dream; as, amongst other, Titus Livius writeth that it was in this sort: the Senate having set upon the top of Caesar's house, for an ornament and setting forth of the same, a certain pinnacle, Calpurnia dreamed that she saw it broken down and that she thought she lamented and wept for it. Insomuch that, Caesar rising in the morning, she prayed him if it were possible not to go out of the doors that day, but to adjourn the session of the Senate until another day. And if that he made no reckoning of her dream, yet that he would search further of the soothsayers by their sacrifices, to know what should happen him that day. Thereby it seemed that Caesar likewise did fear and suspect somewhat, because his wife Calpurnia until that time was never given to any fear or superstition, and then, for that he saw her so troubled in mind with this dream she had. But much more afterwards, when the soothsayers, having sacrificed many beasts one after another, told him that none did like them; then he determined to send Antonius to adjourn the session of the Senate.

But in the meantime came Decius Brutus, surnamed Albinus, in whom Caesar put such confidence that in his last will and testament he had appointed him to be his next heir, and yet was of the conspiracy with Cassius and Brutus. He, fearing that if Caesar did adjourn the session that day the conspiracy would out, laughed the soothsayers to scorn, and reprov'd Caesar, saying that he gave the Senate occasion to mislike with him, and that they might think he mocked them, considering that by his commandment they

were assembled, and that they were ready willingly to grant him all things, and to proclaim him king of all the provinces of the Empire of Rome out of Italy, and that he should wear his diadem in all other places both by sea and land; and furthermore, that if any man should tell them from him they should depart for that present time, and return again when Calpurnia should have better dreams – what would his enemies and ill-willers say, and how could they like of his friends' words? And who could persuade them otherwise, but that they would think his dominion a slavery unto them, and tyrannical in himself? 'And yet, if it be so', said he, 'that you utterly mislike of this day, it is better that you go yourself in person, and saluting the Senate to dismiss them till another time.'

Therewithal he took Caesar by the hand and brought him out of his house. Caesar was not gone far from his house but a bondman, a stranger, did what he could to speak with him; and, when he saw he was put back by the great press and multitude of people that followed him, he went straight unto his house, and put himself into Calpurnia's hands to be kept till Caesar came back again, telling her that he had great matters to impart unto him. And one Artemidorus also, born in the isle of Cnidos, a doctor of rhetoric in the Greek tongue, who by means of his profession was very familiar with certain of Brutus' confederates and therefore knew the most part of all their practices against Caesar, came and brought him a little bill written with his own hand, of all that he meant to tell him. He, marking how Caesar received all the supplications that were offered him, and that he gave them straight to his men that were about him, pressed nearer to him and said: 'Caesar, read this memorial to yourself, and that quickly, for they be matters of great weight and touch you nearly.' Caesar took it of him, but could never read it, though he many times attempted it, for the number of people that did salute him; but holding it still in his hand, keeping it to himself, went on withal into the Senate-house. Howbeit other are of opinion that it was some man else that gave him that memorial, and not Artemidorus, who did what he could all the way as he went to give it Caesar, but he was always repulsed by the people.

For these things, they may seem to come by chance. But the place where the murder was prepared, and where the Senate were assembled, and where also there stood up an image of Pompey dedicated by himself amongst other ornaments which he gave unto the Theatre – all these were manifest proofs that it was the ordinance of some god that made this treason to be executed specially in that very place. It is also reported that Cassius – though otherwise he did favour the doctrine of Epicurus – beholding the image of Pompey before they entered into the action of their traitorous enterprise, he did softly call upon it to aid him. But the instant danger of the present time, taking away his former reason, did suddenly put him into a furious passion and made him like a man half besides himself. Now Antonius, that was a faithful friend to

Caesar and a valiant man besides of his hands, him Decius Brutus Albinus entertained out of the Senate-house, having begun a long tale of set purpose.

So, Caesar coming into the house, all the Senate stood up on their feet to do him honour. Then part of Brutus' company and confederates stood round about Caesar's chair, and part of them also came towards him, as though they made suit with Metellus Cimber, to call home his brother again from banishment; and thus, prosecuting still their suit, they followed Caesar till he was set in his chair; who denying their petitions and being offended with them one after another, because the more they were denied, the more they pressed upon him and were the earnestest with him. Metellus at length, taking his gown with both his hands, pulled it over his neck, which was the sign given the confederates to set upon him. Then Casca behind him strake him in the neck with his sword. Howbeit the wound was not great nor mortal, because, it seemed, the fear of such a devilish attempt did amaze him and take his strength from him, that he killed him not at the first blow. But Caesar, turning straight unto him, caught hold of his sword and held it hard; and they both cried out, Caesar in Latin: 'O vile traitor Casca, what doest thou?' And Casca in Greek to his brother: 'Brother, help me.' At the beginning of this stir, they that were present, not knowing of the conspiracy, were so amazed with the horrible sight they saw that they had no power to fly, neither to help him, not so much as once to make any outcry. They on the other side that had conspired his death compassed him in on every side with their swords drawn in their hands, that Caesar turned him nowhere but he was stricken at by some, and still had naked swords in his face, and was hacked and mangled among them, as a wild beast taken of hunters. For it was agreed among them that every man should give him a wound, because all their parts should be in this murder. And then Brutus himself gave him one wound about his privities. Men report also that Caesar did still defend himself against the rest, running every way with his body. But when he saw Brutus with his sword drawn in his hand, then he pulled his gown over his head and made no more resistance, and was driven, either casually or purposedly by the counsel of the conspirators, against the base whereupon Pompey's image stood, which ran all of a gore-blood till he was slain. Thus it seemed that the image took just revenge of Pompey's enemy, being thrown down on the ground at his feet and yielding up his ghost there for the number of wounds he had upon him. For it is reported that he had three-and-twenty wounds upon his body; and divers of the conspirators did hurt themselves, striking one body with so many blows.

When Caesar was slain, the Senate, though Brutus stood in the midst amongst them as though he would have said somewhat touching this fact, presently ran out of the house, and flying filled all the city with marvellous fear and tumult; insomuch as some did shut-to their doors, others forsook their shops and warehouses, and others ran to the place to see what the matter

was; and others also that had seen it ran home to their houses again. But Antonius and Lepidus, which were two of Caesar's chiefest friends, secretly conveying themselves away, fled into other men's houses and forsook their own.

Brutus and his confederates on the other side, being yet hot with this murder they had committed, having their swords drawn in their hands, came all in a troop together out of the Senate, and went into the market-place, not as men that made countenance to fly, but otherwise boldly holding up their heads like men of courage, and called to the people to defend their liberty, and stayed to speak with every great personage whom they met in their way. Of them, some followed this troop and went amongst them as if they had been of the conspiracy, and falsely challenged part of the honour with them. Among them was Caius Octavius and Lentulus Spinther. But both of them were afterwards put to death, for their vain covetousness of honour, by Antonius and Octavius Caesar the younger; and yet had no part of that honour for the which they were put to death, neither did any man believe that they were any of the confederates or of counsel with them. For they that did put them to death took revenge rather of the will they had to offend than of any fact they had committed.

The next morning Brutus and his confederates came into the market-place to speak unto the people, who gave them such audience that it seemed they neither greatly reprov'd nor allowed the fact. For by their great silence they showed that they were sorry for Caesar's death, and also that they did reverence Brutus. Now the Senate granted general pardon for all that was past and, to pacify every man, ordained besides that Caesar's funerals should be honoured as a god, and established all things that he had done, and gave certain provinces also and convenient honours unto Brutus and his confederates, whereby every man thought all things were brought to good peace and quietness again. But when they had opened Caesar's testament and found a liberal legacy of money bequeathed unto every citizen of Rome, and that they saw his body (which was brought into the market-place) all bemangled with gashes of swords, then there was no order to keep the multitude and common people quiet. But they plucked up forms, tables, and stools, and laid them all about the body, and setting them afire burnt the corse. Then, when the fire was well kindled, they took the firebrands and went unto their houses that had slain Caesar, to set them afire. Other also ran up and down the city to see if they could meet with any of them to cut them in pieces; howbeit they could meet with never a man of them, because they had locked themselves up safely in their houses.

There was one of Caesar's friends called Cinna, that had a marvellous strange and terrible dream the night before. He dreamed that Caesar bade him to supper, and that he refused, and would not go; then that Caesar took him by

the hand, and led him against his will. Now Cinna hearing at that time that they burnt Caesar's body in the market-place, notwithstanding that he feared his dream and had an ague on him besides, he went into the market-place to honour his funerals. When he came thither, one of the mean sort asked what his name was. He was straight called by his name. The first man told it to another, and that other unto another, so that it ran straight through them all that he was one of them that murdered Caesar; for indeed one of the traitors to Caesar was also called Cinna as himself. Wherefore, taking him for Cinna the murderer, they fell upon him with such fury that they presently dispatched him in the market-place.

This stir and fury made Brutus and Cassius more afraid than of all that was past; and therefore, within few days after, they departed out of Rome. And touching their doings afterwards, and what calamity they suffered till their deaths, we have written it at large in the *Life of Brutus*.

Caesar died at six-and-fifty years of age; and Pompey also lived not passing four years more than he. So he reaped no other fruit of all his reign and dominion, which he had so vehemently desired all his life and pursued with such extreme danger, but a vain name only and a superficial glory that procured him the envy and hatred of his country. But his great prosperity and good fortune, that favoured him all his lifetime, did continue afterwards in the revenge of his death, pursuing the murderers both by sea and land, till they had not left a man more to be executed, of all them that were actors or counsellors in the conspiracy of his death. Furthermore, of all the chances that happen unto men upon the earth, that which came to Cassius above all other is most to be wondered at. For he, being overcome in battle at the journey of Philippes, slew himself with the same sword with the which he strake Caesar. Again, of signs in the element, the great comet, which seven nights together was seen very bright after Caesar's death, the eighth night after was never seen more. Also the brightness of the sun was darkened, the which all that year through rose very pale and shined not out, whereby it gave but small heat; therefore the air being very cloudy and dark, by the weakness of the heat that could not come forth, did cause the earth to bring forth but raw and unripe fruit, which rotted before it could ripe.

But, above all, the ghost that appeared unto Brutus showed plainly that the gods were offended with the murder of Caesar. The vision was thus. Brutus, being ready to pass over his army from the city of Abydos to the other coast lying directly against it, slept every night, as his manner was, in his tent; and being yet awake thinking of his affairs – for by report he was as careful a captain and lived with as little sleep as ever man did – he thought he heard a noise at his tent door; and, looking towards the light of the lamp that waxed very dim, he saw a horrible vision of a man, of a wonderful greatness and dreadful look, which at the first made him marvellously afraid. But when he

saw that it did him no hurt, but stood by his bedside and said nothing, at length he asked him what he was. The image answered him: 'I am thy ill angel, Brutus, and thou shalt see me by the city of Philippes.' Then Brutus replied again, and said: 'Well, I shall see thee then.' Therewithal the spirit presently vanished from him.

After that time Brutus being in battle near unto the city of Philippes against Antonius and Octavius Caesar, at the first battle he won the victory, and, overthrowing all them that withstood him, he drave them into young Caesar's camp, which he took. The second battle being at hand, this spirit appeared again unto him, but spake never a word. Thereupon Brutus, knowing he should die, did put himself to all hazard in battle, but yet fighting could not be slain. So, seeing his men put to flight and overthrown, he ran unto a little rock not far off; and there setting his sword's point to his breast fell upon it and slew himself, but yet, as it is reported, with the help of his friend that dispatched him.

The Life of Marcus Brutus

Now there were divers sorts of Praetorships at Rome, and it was looked for that Brutus or Cassius would make suit for the chiefest Praetorship, which they called the Praetorship of the City, because he that had that office was as a judge to minister justice unto the citizens. Therefore they strove one against the other, though some say that there was some little grudge betwixt them for other matters before, and that this contention did set them further out, though they were allied together. For Cassius had married Junia, Brutus' sister. Others say, that this contention betwixt them came by Caesar himself, who secretly gave either of them both hope of his favour. So their suit for the Praetorship was so followed and laboured of either party that one of them put another in suit of law. Brutus with his virtue and good name contended against many noble exploits in arms which Cassius had done against the Parthians. So Caesar, after he had heard both their objections, he told his friends with whom he consulted about this matter: 'Cassius' cause is the juster', said he, 'but Brutus must be first preferred.' Thus Brutus had the first Praetorship, and Cassius the second; who thanked not Caesar so much for the Praetorship he had, as he was angry with him for that he had lost. But Brutus in many other things tasted of the benefit of Caesar's favour in anything he requested. For, if he had listed, he might have been one of Caesar's chiefest friends and of greatest authority and credit about him. Howbeit Cassius' friends did dissuade him from it (for Cassius and he were not yet reconciled together sithence their first contention and strife for the Praetorship) and prayed him to beware of Caesar's sweet enticements and to fly his tyrannical favours; the which they said Caesar gave him, not to honour his virtue but to weaken his constant

mind, framing it to the bent of his bow.

Now Caesar on the other side did not trust him overmuch, nor was not without tales brought unto him against him; howbeit he feared his great mind, authority, and friends. Yet, on the other side also, he trusted his good nature and fair conditions. For, intelligence being brought him one day that Antonius and Dolabella did conspire against him, he answered that these fat long-haired men made him not afraid, but the lean and whitely-faced fellows, meaning that by Brutus and Cassius. At another time also when one accused Brutus unto him and bade him beware of him: 'What', said he again, clapping his hand on his breast, 'think ye that Brutus will not tarry till this body die?'—meaning that none but Brutus after him was meet to have such power as he had. And surely, in my opinion, I am persuaded that Brutus might indeed have come to have been the chiefest man of Rome, if he could have contented himself for a time to have been next unto Caesar and to have suffered his glory and authority which he had gotten by his great victories to consume with time.

But Cassius being a choleric man and hating Caesar privately, more than he did the tyranny openly, he incensed Brutus against him. It is also reported that Brutus could evil away with the tyranny, and that Cassius hated the tyrant, making many complaints for the injuries he had done him, and, amongst others, for that he had taken away his lions from him. Cassius had provided them for his sports, when he should be Aedilis, and they were found in the city of Megara when it was won by Calenus, and Caesar kept them. The rumour went that these lions did marvellous great hurt to the Megarians. For, when the city was taken, they brake their cages where they were tied up, and turned them loose, thinking they would have done great mischief to the enemies, and have kept them from setting upon them. But the lions, contrary to expectation, turned upon themselves that fled unarmed, and did so cruelly tear some in pieces that it pitied their enemies to see them. And this was the cause, as some do report, that made Cassius conspire against Caesar. But this holdeth no water. For Cassius even from his cradle could not abide any manner of tyrants, as it appeared when he was but a boy, and went unto the same school that Faustus the son of Sylla did. And Faustus, bragging among other boys, highly boasted of his father's kingdom. Cassius rose up on his feet, and gave him two good wirts on the ear. Faustus' governors would have put this matter in suit against Cassius. But Pompey would not suffer them, but caused the two boys to be brought before him, and asked them how the matter came to pass. Then Cassius, as it is written of him, said unto the other: 'Go to, Faustus, speak again, and thou darest, before this nobleman here, the same words that made me angry with thee, that my fists may walk once again about thine ears.' Such was Cassius' hot stirring nature.

But for Brutus, his friends and countrymen, both by divers procurements

and sundry rumours of the city and by many bills also, did openly call and procure him to do that he did. For, under the image of his ancestor Junius Brutus, that drove the kings out of Rome, they wrote: 'O, that it pleased the gods thou wert now alive, Brutus.' And again: 'That thou wert here among us now.' His tribunal, or chair, where he gave audience during the time he was Praetor, was full of such bills: 'Brutus, thou art asleep, and art not Brutus indeed.' And of all this, Caesar's flatterers were the cause; who beside many other exceeding and unspeakable honours they daily devised for him, in the night-time they did put diadems upon the heads of his images, supposing thereby to allure the common people to call him King, instead of Dictator. Howbeit it turned to the contrary, as we have written more at large in *Julius Caesar's Life*.

Now when Cassius felt his friends and did stir them up against Caesar, they all agreed and promised to take part with him, so Brutus were the chief of their conspiracy. For they told him that so high an enterprise and attempt as that did not so much require men of manhood and courage to draw their swords, as it stood them upon to have a man of such estimation as Brutus, to make every man boldly think that by his only presence the fact were holy and just. If he took not this course, then that they should go to it with fainter hearts; and when they had done it they should be more fearful, because every man would think that Brutus would not have refused to have made one with them, if the cause had been good and honest. Therefore Cassius, considering this matter with himself, did first of all speak to Brutus since they grew strange together for the suit they had for the Praetorship. So when he was reconciled to him again, and that they had embraced one another, Cassius asked him if he were determined to be in the Senate-house the first day of the month of March, because he heard say that Caesar's friends should move the council that day that Caesar should be called King by the Senate. Brutus answered him, he would not be there. 'But if we be sent for', said Cassius, 'how then?' 'For myself then', said Brutus, 'I mean not to hold my peace, but to withstand it, and rather die than lose my liberty.' Cassius, being bold and taking hold of this word, 'Why', quoth he, 'what Roman is he alive that will suffer thee to die for the liberty? What, knowest thou not that thou art Brutus? Thinkest thou that they be cobblers, tapsters, or suchlike base mechanical people, that write these bills and scrolls which are found daily in thy Praetor's chair, and not the noblest men and best citizens that do it? No, be thou well assured that of other Praetors they look for gifts, common distributions amongst the people, and for common plays, and to see fencers fight at the sharp, to show the people pastime. But at thy hands they specially require, as a due debt unto them, the taking away of the tyranny, being fully bent to suffer any extremity for thy sake, so that thou wilt show thyself to be the man thou art taken for, and that they hope thou art.' Thereupon he kissed Brutus,

and embraced him; and so, each taking leave of other, they went both to speak with their friends about it.

Now amongst Pompey's friends there was one called Caius Ligarius, who had been accused unto Caesar for taking part with Pompey, and Caesar discharged him. But Ligarius thanked not Caesar so much for his discharge, as he was offended with him for that he was brought in danger by his tyrannical power. And therefore in his heart he was alway his mortal enemy, and was besides very familiar with Brutus, who went to see him being sick in his bed, and said unto him: 'O Ligarius, in what a time art thou sick!' Ligarius, rising up in his bed and taking him by the right hand, said unto him: 'Brutus', said he, 'if thou hast any great enterprise in hand worthy of thyself, I am whole.'

After that time they began to feel all their acquaintance whom they trusted, and laid their heads together consulting upon it, and did not only pick out their friends, but all those also whom they thought stout enough to attempt any desperate matter, and that were not afraid to lose their lives. For this cause they durst not acquaint Cicero with their conspiracy, although he was a man whom they loved dearly and trusted best. For they were afraid that he being a coward by nature, and age also having increased his fear, he would quite turn and alter all their purpose, and quench the heat of their enterprise (the which specially required hot and earnest execution), seeking by persuasion to bring all things to such safety as there should be no peril.

Brutus also did let other of his friends alone, as Statilius Epicurean and Fa[v]onius, that made profession to follow Marcus Cato: because that having cast out words afar off, disputing together in philosophy to feel their minds, Fa[v]onius answered that civil war was worse than tyrannical government usurped against the law. And Statilius told him also that it were an unwise part of him to put his life in danger for a sight of ignorant fools and asses. Labeo was present at this talk, and maintained the contrary against them both. But Brutus held his peace, as though it had been a doubtful matter and a hard thing to have decided. But afterwards, being out of their company, he made Labeo privy to his intent, who very readily offered himself to make one. And they thought good also to bring in another Brutus to join with him, surnamed Albinus, who was no man of his hands himself, but because he was able to bring good force of a great number of slaves and fencers at the sharp, whom he kept to show the people pastime with their fighting; besides also that Caesar had some trust in him. Cassius and Labeo told Brutus Albinus of it at the first, but he made them no answer. But when he had spoken with Brutus himself alone, and that Brutus had told him he was the chief ringleader of all this conspiracy, then he willingly promised him the best aid he could. Furthermore the only name and great calling of Brutus did bring on the most of them to give consent to this conspiracy; who having never taken oaths

together nor taken or given any caution or assurance, nor binding themselves one to another by any religious oaths, they all kept the matter so secret to themselves and could so cunningly handle it that, notwithstanding the gods did reveal it by manifest signs and tokens from above and by predictions of sacrifices, yet all this would not be believed.

Now Brutus (who knew very well that for his sake all the noblest, valiantest, and most courageous men of Rome did venture their lives) weighing with himself the greatness of the danger, when he was out of his house he did so frame and fashion his countenance and looks that no man could discern he had anything to trouble his mind. But when night came that he was in his own house, then he was clean changed. For, either care did wake him against his will when he would have slept, or else oftentimes of himself he fell into such deep thoughts of this enterprise, casting in his mind all the dangers that might happen, that his wife, lying by him, found that there was some marvellous great matter that troubled his mind, not being wont to be in that taking, and that he could not well determine with himself. His wife Porcia (as we have told you before) was the daughter of Cato, whom Brutus married being his cousin, not a maiden, but a young widow after the death of her first husband Bibulus, by whom she had also a young son called Bibulus, who afterwards wrote a book *Of the Acts and Gestes of Brutus*, extant at this present day.

This young lady being excellently well seen in philosophy, loving her husband well, and being of a noble courage, as she was also wise – because she would not ask her husband what he ailed before she had made some proof by her self – she took a little razor such as barbers occupy to pare men's nails, and, causing all her maids and women to go out of her chamber, gave her self a great gash withal in her thigh, that she was straight all of a gore-blood; and, incontinently after, a vehement fever took her, by reason of the pain of her wound. Then, perceiving her husband was marvellously out of quiet and that he could take no rest, even in her greatest pain of all, she spake in this sort unto him: 'I being, O Brutus', said she, 'the daughter of Cato, was married unto thee, not to be thy bedfellow and companion in bed and at board only, like a harlot, but to be partaker also with thee of thy good and evil fortune. Now for thyself, I can find no cause of fault in thee touching our match. But for my part, how may I show my duty towards thee and how much I would do for thy sake, if I cannot constantly bear a secret mischance or grief with thee, which requireth secrecy and fidelity? I confess that a woman's wit commonly is too weak to keep a secret safely. But yet, Brutus, good education and the company of virtuous men have some power to reform the defect of nature. And for myself, I have this benefit moreover: that I am the daughter of Cato and wife of Brutus. This notwithstanding, I did not trust to any of these things before, until that now I have found by experience that no pain nor grief

whatsoever can overcome me.’ With those words she showed him her wound on her thigh and told him what she had done to prove herself. Brutus was amazed to hear what she said unto him, and, lifting up his hands to heaven, he besought the gods to give him the grace he might bring his enterprise to so good pass, that he might be found a husband worthy of so noble a wife as Porcia. So he then did comfort her the best he could.

Now a day being appointed for the meeting of the Senate, at what time they hoped Caesar would not fail to come, the conspirators determined then to put their enterprise in execution, because they might meet safely at that time without suspicion, and the rather, for that all the noblest and chiefest men of the city would be there; who when they should see such a great matter executed, would every man then set-to their hands, for the defence of their liberty. Furthermore, they thought also that the appointment of the place where the council should be kept was chosen of purpose by divine providence and made all for them. For it was one of the porches about the Theatre, in the which there was a certain place full of seats for men to sit in, where also was set up the image of Pompey which the city had made and consecrated in honour of him, when he did beautify that part of the city with the Theatre he built, with divers porches about it. In this place was the assembly of the Senate appointed to be, just on the fifteenth day of the month of March, which the Romans call *Idus Martias*. So that it seemed some god of purpose had brought Caesar thither to be slain, for revenge of Pompey’s death.

So, when the day was come, Brutus went out of his house with a dagger by his side under his long gown, that nobody saw nor knew, but his wife only. The other conspirators were all assembled at Cassius’ house, to bring his son into the market-place, who on that day did put on the man’s gown, called *toga virilis*; and from thence they came all in a troop together unto Pompey’s porch, looking that Caesar would straight come thither. But here is to be noted the wonderful assured constancy of these conspirators in so dangerous and weighty an enterprise as they had undertaken. For many of them being Praetors, by reason of their office, whose duty is to minister justice to everybody, they did not only with great quietness and courtesy hear them that spake unto them or that pleaded matters before them, and gave them attentive ear as if they had had no other matter in their heads; but moreover they gave just sentence and carefully dispatched the causes before them. So there was one among them who, being condemned in a certain sum of money, refused to pay it and cried out that he did appeal unto Caesar. Then Brutus, casting his eyes upon the conspirators, said: ‘Caesar shall not let me to see the law executed.’

Notwithstanding this, by chance there fell out many misfortunes unto them which was enough to have marred the enterprise. The first and chiefest was Caesar’s long tarrying, who came very late to the Senate. For, because the

signs of the sacrifices appeared unlucky, his wife Calpurnia kept him at home, and the soothsayers bade him beware he went not abroad. The second cause was when one came unto Casca being a conspirator, and, taking him by the hand, said unto him: 'O Casca, thou keptest it close from me, but Brutus hath told me all.' Casca being amazed at it, the other went on with his tale and said: 'Why, how now, how cometh it to pass thou art thus rich, that thou dost sue to be Aedilis?' Thus Casca being deceived by the other's doubtful words, he told them it was a thousand to one he blabbed not out all the conspiracy. Another Senator, called Popilius Laena, after he had saluted Brutus and Cassius more friendly than he was wont to do, he rounded softly in their ears and told them: 'I pray the gods you may go through with that you have taken in hand. But withal, dispatch I rede you, for your enterprise is bewrayed.' When he had said, he presently departed from them, and left them both afraid that their conspiracy would out.

Now in the meantime there came one of Brutus' men post-haste unto him and told him his wife was a-dying. For Porcia being very careful and pensive for that which was to come and being too weak to away with so great and inward grief of mind, she could hardly keep within, but was frightened with every little noise and cry she heard, as those that are taken and possessed with the fury of the Bacchants, asking every man that came from the market-place what Brutus did, and still sent messenger after messenger to know what news. At length, Caesar's coming being prolonged as you have heard, Porcia's weakness was not able to hold out any lenger, and thereupon she suddenly swoounded, that she had no leisure to go to her chamber, but was taken in the midst of her house, where her speech and senses failed her. Howbeit she soon came to herself again, and so was laid in her bed and tended by her women. When Brutus heard these news, it grieved him, as it is to be presupposed. Yet he left not off the care of his country and commonwealth, neither went home to his house for any news he heard.

Now it was reported that Caesar was coming in his litter; for he determined not to stay in the Senate all that day, because he was afraid of the unlucky signs of the sacrifices, but to adjourn matters of importance unto the next session and council holden, feigning himself not to be well at ease. When Caesar came out of his litter, Popilius Laena, that had talked before with Brutus and Cassius and had prayed the gods they might bring this enterprise to pass, went unto Caesar and kept him a long time with a talk. Caesar gave good ear unto him. Wherefore the conspirators (if so they should be called), not hearing what he said to Caesar, but conjecturing, by that he had told them a little before, that his talk was none other but the very discovery of their conspiracy, they were afraid every man of them; and, one looking in another's face, it was easy to see that they all were of a mind that it was no tarrying for them till they were apprehended, but rather that they should kill themselves

with their own hands. And when Cassius and certain other clapped their hands on their swords under their gowns to draw them, Brutus marking the countenance and gesture of Laena, and considering that he did use himself rather like an humble and earnest suitor than like an accuser, he said nothing to his companion (because there were many amongst them that were not of the conspiracy), but with a pleasant countenance encouraged Cassius. And immediately after, Laena went from Caesar and kissed his hand; which showed plainly that it was for some matter concerning himself that he had held him so long in talk.

Now all the Senators being entered first into this place or chapter house where the council should be kept, all the other conspirators straight stood about Caesar's chair, as if they had had something to have said unto him. And some say that Cassius, casting his eyes upon Pompey's image, made his prayer unto it, as if it had been alive. Trebonius, on the other side, drew Antonius at one side as he came into the house where the Senate sat, and held him with a long talk without.

When Caesar was come into the house, all the Senate rose to honour him at his coming in. So, when he was set, the conspirators flocked about him, and amongst them they presented one Tullius Cimber, who made humble suit for the calling home again of his brother that was banished. They all made as though they were intercessors for him, and took him by the hands and kissed his head and breast. Caesar at the first simply refused their kindness and entreaties. But afterwards, perceiving they still pressed on him, he violently thrust them from him. Then Cimber with both his hands plucked Caesar's gown over his shoulders; and Casca that stood behind him drew his dagger first, and strake Caesar upon the shoulder, but gave him no great wound. Caesar, feeling himself hurt, took him straight by the hand he held his dagger in, and cried out in Latin: 'O traitor, Casca, what doest thou?' Casca on the other side cried in Greek and called his brother to help him. So divers running on a heap together to fly upon Caesar, he looking about him to have fled, saw Brutus with a sword drawn in his hand ready to strike at him. Then he let Casca's hand go, and, casting his gown over his face, suffered every man to strike at him that would. Then the conspirators thronging one upon another because every man was desirous to have a cut at him, so many swords and daggers lighting upon one body, one of them hurt another; and among them Brutus caught a blow on his hand, because he would make one in murdering of him, and all the rest also were every man of them bloodied.

Caesar being slain in this manner, Brutus, standing in the midst of the house, would have spoken, and stayed the other Senators that were not of the conspiracy, to have told them the reason why they had done this fact. But they, as men both afraid and amazed, fled one upon another's neck in haste to get out at the door; and no man followed them. For it was set down and

agreed between them that they should kill no man but Caesar only, and should entreat all the rest to look to defend their liberty. All the conspirators but Brutus, determining upon this matter, thought it good also to kill Antonius, because he was a wicked man and that in nature favoured tyranny; besides also, for that he was in great estimation with soldiers, having been conversant of long time amongst them; and specially, having a mind bent to great enterprises, he was also of great authority at that time, being Consul with Caesar. But Brutus would not agree to it. First, for that he said it was not honest; secondly, because he told them there was hope of change in him. For he did not mistrust but that Antonius, being a noble-minded and courageous man, when he should know that Caesar was dead, would willingly help his country to recover her liberty, having them an example unto him, to follow their courage and virtue. So Brutus by this means saved Antonius' life, who at that present time disguised himself and stole away.

But Brutus and his consorts, having their swords bloody in their hands, went straight to the Capitol, persuading the Romans, as they went, to take their liberty again. Now at the first time, when the murder was newly done, there were sudden outcries of people that ran up and down the city, the which indeed did the more increase the fear and tumult. But when they saw they slew no man, neither did spoil or make havoc of anything, then certain of the Senators and many of the people, emboldening themselves, went to the Capitol unto them. There a great number of men being assembled together one after another, Brutus made an oration unto them to win the favour of the people and to justify that they had done. All those that were by said they had done well, and cried unto them that they should boldly come down from the Capitol. Whereupon Brutus and his companions came boldly down into the market-place. The rest followed in troop; but Brutus went foremost, very honourably compassed in round about with the noblest men of the city, which brought him from the Capitol, through the market-place, to the pulpit for orations.

When the people saw him in the pulpit, although they were a multitude of rakehells of all sorts and had a good will to make some stir, yet, being ashamed to do it for the reverence they bare unto Brutus, they kept silence, to hear what he would say. When Brutus began to speak, they gave him quiet audience. Howbeit, immediately after, they showed that they were not all contented with the murder. For when another called Cinna would have spoken and began to accuse Caesar, they fell into a great uproar among them and marvellously reviled him. Insomuch that the conspirators returned again into the Capitol. There Brutus, being afraid to be besieged, sent back again the noblemen that came thither with him, thinking it no reason that they, which were no partakers of the murder, should be partakers of the danger.

Then the next morning the Senate being assembled and holden within the

Temple of the goddess Tellus (to wit, 'the Earth'), and Antonius, Plancus, and Cicero having made a motion to the Senate in that assembly that they should take an order to pardon and forget all that was past and to stablish friendship and peace again, it was decreed that they should not only be pardoned, but also that the Consuls should refer it to the Senate what honours should be appointed unto them. This being agreed upon, the Senate brake up, and Antonius the Consul, to put them in heart that were in the Capitol, sent them his son for a pledge. Upon this assurance, Brutus and his companions came down from the Capitol, where every man saluted and embraced each other; among the which Antonius himself did bid Cassius to supper to him, and Lepidus also bade Brutus, and so one bade another, as they had friendship and acquaintance together.

The next day following, the Senate being called again to council did first of all commend Antonius, for that he had wisely stayed and quenched the beginning of a civil war. Then they also gave Brutus and his consorts great praises; and lastly they appointed them several governments of provinces. For unto Brutus they appointed Creta, Afric unto Cassius, Asia unto Trebonius, Bithynia unto Cimber, and unto the other Decius Brutus Albinus, Gaul on this side the Alps. When this was done, they came to talk of Caesar's will and testament, and of his funerals and tomb. Then Antonius thinking good his testament should be read openly, and also that his body should be honourably buried and not in hugger-mugger, lest the people might thereby take occasion to be worse offended if they did otherwise, Cassius stoutly spake against it. But Brutus went with the motion, and agreed unto it; wherein it seemeth he committed a second fault. For the first fault he did was when he would not consent to his fellow conspirators that Antonius should be slain; and therefore he was justly accused that thereby he had saved and strengthened a strong and grievous enemy of their conspiracy. The second fault was when he agreed that Caesar's funerals should be as Antonius would have them, the which indeed marred all. For first of all, when Caesar's testament was openly read among them, whereby it appeared that he bequeathed unto every citizen of Rome seventy-five drachmas a man, and that he left his gardens and arbours unto the people, which he had on this side of the river of Tiber (in the place where now the Temple of Fortune is built), the people then loved him and were marvellous sorry for him.

Afterwards, when Caesar's body was brought into the market-place, Antonius making his funeral oration in praise of the dead, according to the ancient custom of Rome, and perceiving that his words moved the common people to compassion, he framed his eloquence to make their hearts yearn the more; and, taking Caesar's gown all bloody in his hand, he laid it open to the sight of them all, showing what a number of cuts and holes it had upon it. Therewithal the people fell presently into such a rage and mutiny that there

was no more order kept amongst the common people. For some of them cried out: 'Kill the murderers.' Others plucked up forms, tables, and stalls about the market-place, as they had done before at the funerals of Clodius; and, having laid them all on a heap together, they set them on fire, and thereupon did put the body of Caesar, and burnt it in the midst of the most holy places. And furthermore, when the fire was thoroughly kindled, some here, some there, took burning fire-brands, and ran with them to the murderers' houses that had killed him, to set them a-fire. Howbeit the conspirators, foreseeing the danger before, had wisely provided for themselves, and fled.

But there was a poet called Cinna, who had been no partaker of the conspiracy but was alway one of Caesar's chiefest friends. He dreamed, the night before, that Caesar bade him to supper with him and that, he refusing to go, Caesar was very importunate with him and compelled him, so that at length he led him by the hand into a great dark place, where, being marvellously afraid, he was driven to follow him in spite of his heart. This dream put him all night into a fever. And yet, notwithstanding, the next morning when he heard that they carried Caesar's body to burial, being ashamed not to accompany his funerals, he went out of his house, and thrust himself into the press of the common people that were in a great uproar. And because some one called him by his name, Cinna, the people thinking he had been that Cinna who in an oration he made had spoken very evil of Caesar, they falling upon him in their rage slew him outright in the market-place.

This made Brutus and his companions more afraid than any other thing, next unto the change of Antonius. Wherefore they got them out of Rome, and kept at the first in the city of Antium, hoping to return again to Rome when the fury of the people were a little assuaged; the which they hoped would be quickly, considering that they had to deal with a fickle and unconstant multitude, easy to be carried, and that the Senate stood for them; who notwithstanding made no inquiry of them that had torn poor Cinna the poet in pieces, but caused them to be sought for and apprehended that went with fire-brands to set fire of the conspirators' houses . . .

After that, these three, Octavius Caesar, Antonius, and Lepidus, made an agreement between themselves, and by those articles divided the provinces belonging to the Empire of Rome among themselves, and did set up bills of proscription and outlawry, condemning two hundred of the noblest men of Rome to suffer death; and among that number Cicero was one. News being brought thereof into Macedon, Brutus, being then enforced to it, wrote unto Hortensius that he should put Caius Antonius to death, to be revenged of the death of Cicero and of the other Brutus, of the which the one was his friend and the other his kinsman. For this cause therefore, Antonius afterwards taking Hortensius at the battle of Philippes, he made him to be slain upon his brother's tomb. But then Brutus said that he was more ashamed of the cause

for the which Cicero was slain than he was otherwise sorry for his death; and that he could not but greatly reprove his friends he had at Rome who were slaves more through their own fault than through their valiantness or manhood which usurped the tyranny, considering that they were so cowardly and faint-hearted as to suffer the sight of those things before their eyes, the report whereof should only have grieved them to the heart.

Now when Brutus had passed over his army (that was very great) into Asia, he gave order for the gathering of a great number of ships together, as well in the coast of Bithynia, as also in the city of Cyzicum, because he would have an army by sea; and himself in the meantime went unto the cities, taking order for all things and giving audience unto princes and noblemen of the country that had to do with him. Afterwards he sent unto Cassius in Syria, to turn him from his journey into Egypt, telling him that it was not for the conquest of any kingdom for themselves that they wandered up and down in that sort, but, contrarily, that it was to restore their country again to their liberty; and that the multitude of soldiers they gathered together was to subdue the tyrants that would keep them in slavery and subjection. Wherefore, regarding their chief purpose and intent, they should not be far from Italy, as near as they could possible, but should rather make all the haste they could to help their countrymen. Cassius believed him and returned. Brutus went to meet him; and they both met at the city of Smyrna, which was the first time that they saw together since they took leave of each other at the haven of Piraea in Athens, the one going into Syria and the other into Macedon. So they were marvellous joyful, and no less courageous when they saw the great armies together which they had both levied; considering that they departing out of Italy like naked and poor banished men, without armour and money, nor having any ship ready, nor soldier about them, nor any one town at their commandment; yet, notwithstanding, in a short time after they were now met together, having ships, money, and soldiers enow, both footmen and horsemen, to fight for the Empire of Rome.

Now Cassius would have done Brutus as much honour as Brutus did unto him. But Brutus most commonly prevented him and went first unto him, both because he was the elder man, as also for that he was sickly of body. And men reputed him commonly to be very skilful in wars, but otherwise marvellous cholerick and cruel, who sought to rule men by fear rather than with lenity; and on the other side he was too familiar with his friends and would jest too broadly with them. But Brutus in contrary manner, for his virtue and valiantness was well-beloved of the people and his own, esteemed of noblemen, and hated of no man, not so much as of his enemies; because he was a marvellous lowly and gentle person, noble minded, and would never be in any rage, nor carried away with pleasure and covetousness, but had ever an upright mind with him, and would never yield to any wrong or injustice, the

which was the chiefest cause of his fame, of his rising, and of the good will that every man bare him; for they were all persuaded that his intent was good. For they did not certainly believe that if Pompey himself had overcome Caesar he would have resigned his authority to the law; but rather they were of opinion that he would still keep the sovereignty and absolute government in his hands, taking only, to please the people, the title of Consul or Dictator, or of some other more civil office. And as for Cassius, a hot, choleric, and cruel man, that would oftentimes be carried away from justice for gain, it was certainly thought that he made war, and put himself into sundry dangers, more to have absolute power and authority than to defend the liberty of his country. For they that will also consider others that were elder men than they – as Cinna, Marius, and Carbo: it is out of doubt that the end and hope of their victory was to be lords of their country; and in manner they did all confess that they fought for the tyranny and to be lords of the Empire of Rome. And in contrary manner, his enemies themselves did never reprove Brutus for any such change or desire. For it was said that Antonius spake it openly divers times that he thought that of all them that had slain Caesar there was none but Brutus only that was moved to do it as thinking the act commendable of itself; but that all the other conspirators did conspire his death for some private malice or envy that they otherwise did bear unto him.

Hereby it appeareth that Brutus did not trust so much to the power of his army as he did to his own virtue, as is to be seen by his writings. For, approaching near to the instant danger, he wrote unto Pomponius Atticus that his affairs had the best hap that could be. ‘For’, said he, ‘either I will set my country at liberty by battle, or by honourable death rid me of this bondage.’ And furthermore, that, they being certain and assured of all things else, this one thing only was doubtful to them: whether they should live or die with liberty. He wrote also that Antonius had his due payment for his folly. For, where he might have been a partner equally of the glory of Brutus, Cassius, and Cato, and have made one with them, he liked better to choose to be joined with Octavius Caesar alone, ‘with whom, though now he be not overcome by us, yet shall he shortly after also have war with him’. And truly he proved a true prophet, for so came it indeed to pass.

Now, whilst Brutus and Cassius were together in the city of Smyrna, Brutus prayed Cassius to let him have some part of his money, whereof he had great store, because all that he could rap and rend of his side he had bestowed it in making so great a number of ships, that by means of them they should keep all the sea at their commandment. Cassius’ friends hindered this request and earnestly dissuaded him from it, persuading him that it was no reason that Brutus should have the money which Cassius hath gotten together by sparing and levied with great evil will of the people their subjects, for him to bestow liberally upon his soldiers and by this means to win their good wills by

Cassius' charge. This notwithstanding, Cassius gave him the third part of his total sum . . .

About that time Brutus sent to pray Cassius to come to the city of Sardis; and so he did. Brutus, understanding of his coming, went to meet him with all his friends. There, both their armies being armed, they called them both emperors. Now, as it commonly happeneth in great affairs between two persons, both of them having many friends and so many captains under them, there ran tales and complaints betwixt them. Therefore before they fell in hand with any other matter, they went into a little chamber together, and bade every man avoid, and did shut the doors to them. Then they began to pour out their complaints one to the other, and grew hot and loud, earnestly accusing one another, and at length fell both a-weeping. Their friends that were without the chamber hearing them loud within and angry between themselves, they were both amazed and afraid also lest it would grow to further matter. But yet they were commanded that no man should come to them. Notwithstanding, one Marcus Fa[v]onius, that had been a friend and follower of Cato while he lived, and took upon him to counterfeit a philosopher, not with wisdom and discretion but with a certain bedlam and frantic motion, he would needs come into the chamber, though the men offered to keep him out. But it was no boot to let Fa[v]onius, when a mad mood or toy took him in the head, for he was a hot hasty man and sudden in all his doings, and cared for never a senator of them all. Now though he used this bold manner of speech after the profession of the Cynic philosophers (as who would say, 'dogs'), yet this boldness did no hurt many times, because they did but laugh at him to see him so mad. This Fa[v]onius at that time, in despite of the doorkeepers, came into the chamber, and, with a certain scoffing and mocking gesture which he counterfeited of purpose, he rehearsed the verses which old Nestor said in Homer:

*My lords, I pray you hearken both to me,
For I have seen mo years than suchye three.*

Cassius fell a-laughing at him. But Brutus thrust him out of the chamber, and called him dog and counterfeit Cynic. Howbeit his coming in brake their strife at that time, and so they left each other.

The self-same night Cassius prepared his supper in his chamber, and Brutus brought his friends with him. So when they were set at supper, Fa[v]onius came to sit down after he had washed. Brutus told him aloud, no man sent for him; and bade them set him at the upper end, meaning indeed at the lower end of the bed. Fa[v]onius made no ceremony, but thrust in amongst the midst of them, and made all the company laugh at him. So they were merry all supper-time and full of their philosophy. The next day after, Brutus, upon complaint of the Sardians, did condemn and noted Lucius Pella for a defamed person,

that had been a Praetor of the Romans and whom Brutus had given charge unto; for that he was accused and convicted of robbery and pilfery in his office. This judgement much misliked Cassius, because he himself had secretly, not many days before, warned two of his friends, attainted and convicted of the like offences, and openly had cleared them; but yet he did not therefore leave to employ them in any manner of service as he did before. And therefore he greatly reprov'd Brutus for that he would show himself so strait and severe in such a time as was meeter to bear a little than to take things at the worst. Brutus in contrary manner answered that he should remember the Ides of March, at which time they slew Julius Caesar; who neither pill'd nor polled the country, but only was a favourer and suborner of all them that did rob and spoil by his countenance and authority. And, if there were any occasion whereby they might honestly set aside justice and equity, they should have had more reason to have suffered Cacsar's friends to have robbed and done what wrong and injury they had would, than to bear with their own men. For then, said he, they could but have said they had been cowards, 'And now they may accuse us of injustice, beside the pains we take, and the danger we put ourselves into.' And thus may we see what Brutus' intent and purpose was.

But, as they both prepared to pass over again out of Asia into Europe, there went a rumour that there appeared a wonderful sign unto him. Brutus was a careful man and slept very little, both for that his diet was moderate, as also because he was continually occupied. He never slept in the day time, and in the night no lenger than the time he was driven to be alone, and when everybody else took their rest. But now whilst he was in war and his head ever busily occupied to think of his affairs, and what would happen, after he had slumbered a little after supper, he spent all the rest of the night in dispatching of his weightiest causes; and after he had taken order for them, if he had any leisure left him, he would read some book till the third watch of the night, at what time the captains, petty-captains, and colonels did use to come unto him.

So, being ready to go into Europe, one night very late, when all the camp took quiet rest, as he was in his tent with a little light, thinking of weighty matters, he thought he heard one come in to him and, casting his eye towards the door of his tent, that he saw a wonderful strange and monstrous shape of a body coming towards him, and said never a word. So Brutus boldly asked what he was, a god or a man, and what cause brought him thither. The spirit answered him: 'I am thy evil spirit, Brutus; and thou shalt see me by the city of Philippes.' Brutus, being no otherwise afraid, replied again unto it: 'Well, then I shall see thee again.' The spirit presently vanished away; and Brutus called his men unto him, who told him that they heard no noise, nor saw anything at all. Thereupon Brutus returned again to think on his matters as he

did before. And when the day brake he went unto Cassius to tell him what vision had appeared unto him in the night. Cassius being in opinion an Epicurean, and reasoning thereon with Brutus, spake to him touching the vision thus: 'In our sect, Brutus, we have an opinion that we do not always feel or see that which we suppose we do both see and feel; but that our senses being credulous, and therefore easily abused, when they are idle and unoccupied in their own objects, are induced to imagine they see and conjecture that which they in truth do not. For our mind is quick and cunning to work, without either cause or matter, anything in the imagination whatsoever. And therefore the imagination is resembled to clay, and the mind to the potter, who, without any other cause than his fancy and pleasure, changeth it into what fashion and form he will. And this doth the diversity of our dreams show unto us. For our imagination doth upon a small fancy grow from conceit to conceit, altering both in passions and forms of things imagined. For the mind of man is ever occupied, and that continual moving is nothing but an imagination. But yet there is a further cause of this in you. For, you being by nature given to melancholic discoursing, and of late continually occupied, your wits and senses having been overlaboured do easilier yield to such imaginations. For, to say that there are spirits or angels, and, if there were, that they had the shape of men, or such voices, or any power at all to come unto us, it is a mockery. And for mine own part I would there were such, because that we should not only have soldiers, horses, and ships, but also the aid of the gods, to guide and further our honest and honourable attempts.' With these words Cassius did somewhat comfort and quiet Brutus.

When they raised their camp, there came two eagles that, flying with a marvellous force, lighted upon two of the foremost ensigns, and always followed the soldiers, which gave them meat, and fed them, until they came near to the city of Philippes; and there, one day only before the battle, they both flew away.

Now Brutus had conquered the most part of all the people and nations of that country. But if there were any other city or captain to overcome, then they made all clear before them, and so drew towards the coasts of Thasos. There Norbanus lying in camp in a certain place called the Straits, by another place called Symbolon (which is a port of the sea), Cassius and Brutus compassed him in in such sort that he was driven to forsake the place, which was of great strength for him, and he was also in danger beside to have lost all his army. For Octavius Caesar could not follow him because of his sickness, and therefore stayed behind. Whereupon they had taken his army, had not Antonius' aid been, which made such wonderful speed that Brutus could scant believe it. So Caesar came not thither of ten days after; and Antonius camped against Cassius, and Brutus on the other side against Caesar.

The Romans called the valley between both camps, the Philippian fields;

and there were never seen two so great armies of the Romans, one before the other, ready to fight. In truth, Brutus' army was inferior to Octavius Caesar's in number of men. But, for bravery and rich furniture, Brutus' army far excelled Caesar's. For the most part of their armours were silver and gilt, which Brutus had bountifully given them, although in all other things he taught his captains to live in order without excess. But, for the bravery of armour and weapon which soldiers should carry in their hands or otherwise wear upon their backs, he thought that it was an encouragement unto them that by nature are greedy of honour, and that it maketh them also fight like devils, that love to get and be afraid to lose; because they fight to keep their armour and weapon, as also their goods and lands.

Now when they came to muster their armies, Octavius Caesar took the muster of his army within the trenches of his camp, and gave his men only a little corn, and five silver drachmas to every man to sacrifice to the gods and to pray for victory. But Brutus, scorning this misery and niggardliness, first of all mustered his army and did purify it in the fields, according to the manner of the Romans. And then he gave unto every band a number of wethers to sacrifice, and fifty silver drachmas to every soldier. So that Brutus' and Cassius' soldiers were better pleased, and more courageously bent to fight at the day of battle, than their enemies' soldiers were.

Notwithstanding, being busily occupied about the ceremonies of this purification, it is reported that there chanced certain unlucky signs unto Cassius. For one of his sergeants that carried the rods before him brought him the garland of flowers turned backwards, the which he should have worn on his head in the time of sacrificing. Moreover it is reported also that at another time before, in certain sports and triumph where they carried an image of Cassius' victory of clean gold, it fell by chance, the man stumbling that carried it. And yet further, there were seen a marvellous number of fowls of prey, that feed upon dead carcasses. And beehives also were found, where bees were gathered together in a certain place within the trenches of the camp; the which place the soothsayers thought good to shut out of the precinct of the camp, for to take away the superstitious fear and mistrust men would have of it. The which began somewhat to alter Cassius' mind from Epicurus' opinions, and had put the soldiers also in a marvellous fear. Thereupon Cassius was of opinion not to try this war at one battle, but rather to delay time and to draw it out in length, considering that they were the stronger in money and the weaker in men and armours. But Brutus in contrary manner did alway before, and at that time also, desire nothing more than to put all to the hazard of battle, as soon as might be possible, to the end he might either quickly restore his country to her former liberty, or rid him forthwith of this miserable world, being still troubled in following and maintaining of such great armies together. But perceiving that in the daily skirmishes and

bickerings they made his men were alway the stronger and ever had the better, that yet quickened his spirits again, and did put him in better heart. And furthermore, because that some of their own men had already yielded themselves to their enemies, and that it was suspected moreover divers others would do the like, that made many of Cassius' friends which were of his mind before (when it came to be debated in council whether the battle should be fought or not) that they were then of Brutus' mind. But yet was there one of Brutus' friends called Atilius, that was against it, and was of opinion that they should tarry the next winter. Brutus asked him what he should get by tarrying a year lenger? 'If I get nought else', quoth Atilius again, 'yet have I lived so much lenger.' Cassius was very angry with this answer; and Atilius was maliced and esteemed the worse for it of all men. Thereupon it was presently determined they should fight battle the next day.

So Brutus all supper time looked with a cheerful countenance, like a man that had good hope, and talked very wisely of philosophy, and after supper went to bed. But touching Cassius, Messala reporteth that he supped by himself in his tent with a few of his friends, and that all supper time he looked very sadly, and was full of thoughts, although it was against his nature; and that after supper he took him by the hand, and holding him fast, in token of kindness as his manner was, told him in Greek: 'Messala, I protest unto thee, and make thee my witness, that I am compelled against my mind and will, as Pompey the Great was, to jeopard the liberty of our country to the hazard of a battle. And yet we must be lively and of good courage, considering our good fortune, whom we should wrong too much to mistrust her, although we follow evil counsel.' Messala writeth that Cassius having spoken these last words unto him, he bade him farewell and willed him to come to supper to him the next night following, because it was his birthday.

The next morning, by break of day, the signal of battle was set out in Brutus' and Cassius' camp, which was an arming scarlet coat; and both the chieftains spake together in the midst of their armies. There Cassius began to speak first, and said: 'The gods grant us, O Brutus, that this day we may win the field and ever after to live all the rest of our life quietly one with another. But sith the gods have so ordained it that the greatest and chieftest things amongst men are most uncertain, and that, if the battle fall out otherwise today than we wish or look for, we shall hardly meet again, what art thou then determined to do – to fly, or die? Brutus answered him: 'Being yet but a young man and not over greatly experienced in the world, I trust (I know not how) a certain rule of philosophy by the which I did greatly blame and reprove Cato for killing of himself, as being no lawful nor godly act, touching the gods, nor, concerning men, valiant; not to give place and yield to divine providence, and not constantly and patiently to take whatsoever it pleaseth him to send us, but to draw back and fly. But being now in the midst of the

danger, I am of a contrary mind. For, if it be not the will of God that this battle fall out fortunate for us, I will look no more for hope, neither seek to make any new supply for war again, but will rid me of this miserable world, and content me with my fortune. For I gave up my life for my country in the Ides of March, for the which I shall live in another more glorious world.' Cassius fell a-laughing to hear what he said, and embracing him, 'Come on then', said he, 'let us go and charge our enemies with this mind. For either we shall conquer, or we shall not need to fear the conquerors.'

After this talk, they fell to consultation among their friends for the ordering of the battle. Then Brutus prayed Cassius he might have the leading of the right wing, the which men thought was far meeter for Cassius, both because he was the elder man, and also for that he had the better experience. But yet Cassius gave it him, and willed that Messala, who had charge of one of the warlikest legions they had, should be also in that wing with Brutus. So Brutus presently sent out his horsemen, who were excellently well appointed; and his footmen also were as willing and ready to give charge.

Now Antonius' men did cast a trench from the marsh by the which they lay, to cut off Cassius' way to come to the sea; and Caesar, at the least, his army stirred not. As for Octavius Caesar himself, he was not in his camp, because he was sick. And for his people, they little thought the enemies would have given them battle, but only have made some light skirmishes to hinder them that wrought in the trench, and with their darts and slings to have kept them from finishing of their work. But they, taking no heed to them that came full upon them to give them battle, marvelled much at the great noise they heard, that came from the place where they were casting their trench. In the meantime Brutus, that led the right wing, sent little bills to the colonels and captains of private bands, in the which he wrote the word of the battle; and he himself, riding a-horseback by all the troops, did speak to them and encouraged them to stick to it like men. So by this means very few of them understood what was the word of the battle, and, besides, the, most part of them never tarried to have it told them, but ran with great fury to assail the enemies; whereby, through this disorder, the legions were marvellously scattered and dispersed one from the other.

For first of all, Messala's legion, and then the next unto them, went beyond the left wing of the enemies, and did nothing, but glancing by them overthrew some as they went; and so going on further fell right upon Caesar's camp, out of the which (as himself writeth in his *Commentaries*) he had been conveyed away a little before, through the counsel and advice of one of his friends called Marcus Artorius; who, dreaming in the night, had a vision appeared unto him, that commanded Octavius Caesar should be carried out of his camp, insomuch as it was thought he was slain, because his litter, which had nothing in it, was thrust through and through with pikes and darts. There was great

slaughter in this camp. For amongst others there were slain two thousand Lacedaemonians, who were arrived but even a little before, coming to aid Caesar. The other also that had not glanced by, but had given a charge full upon Caesar's battle; they easily made them fly, because they were greatly troubled for the loss of their camp, and of them there were slain by hand three legions. Then, being very earnest to follow the chase of them that fled, they ran in amongst them hand over head into their camp, and Brutus among them.

But that which the conquerors thought not of, occasion showed it unto them that were overcome; and that was the left wing of their enemies left naked and unguarded of them of the right wing, who were strayed too far off, in following of them that were overthrown. So they gave a hot charge upon them. But notwithstanding all the force they made, they could not break into the midst of their battle, where they found men that received them and valiantly made head against them. Howbeit they brake and overthrew the left wing where Cassius was, by reason of the great disorder among them, and also because they had no intelligence how the right wing had sped. So they chased them, beating them into their camp, the which they spoiled, none of both the chieftains being present there. For Antonius, as it is reported, to fly the fury of the first charge, was gotten into the next marsh; and no man could tell what became of Octavius Caesar after he was carried out of his camp; insomuch that there were certain soldiers that showed their swords bloodied, and said that they had slain him, and did describe his face and showed what age he was of. Furthermore, the vaward and the midst of Brutus' battle had already put all their enemies to flight that withstood them, with great slaughter; so that Brutus had conquered all of his side, and Cassius had lost all on the other side. For nothing undid them but that Brutus went not to help Cassius, thinking he had overcome them, as himself had done; and Cassius on the other side tarried not for Brutus, thinking he had been overthrown, as himself was. And, to prove that the victory fell on Brutus' side, Messala confirmeth it, that they won three eagles and divers other ensigns of their enemies, and their enemies won never a one of theirs.

Now Brutus returning from the chase after he had slain and sacked Caesar's men, he wondered much that he could not see Cassius' tent standing up high as it was wont, neither the other tents of his camp standing as they were before, because all the whole camp had been spoiled and the tents thrown down, at the first coming in of the enemies. But they that were about Brutus, whose sight served them better, told him that they saw a great glistening of harness and a number of silvered targets, that went and came into Cassius' camp and were not, as they took it, the armours nor the number of men that they had left there to guard the camp; and yet that they saw not such a number of dead bodies, and great overthrow, as there should have been if so many legions had been slain.

This made Brutus at the first mistrust that which had happened. So he appointed a number of men to keep the camp of his enemy which he had taken, and caused his men to be sent for that yet followed the chase, and gathered them together, thinking to lead them to aid Cassius, who was in this state as you shall hear. First of all he was marvellous angry to see how Brutus' men ran to give charge upon their enemies and tarried not for the word of the battle nor commandment to give charge; and it grieved him beside that, after he had overcome them, his men fell straight to spoil and were not careful to compass in the rest of the enemies behind. But with tarring too long also, more than through the valiantness or foresight of the captains his enemies, Cassius found himself compassed in with the right wing of his enemies' army. Whereupon his horsemen brake immediately, and fled for life towards the sea. Furthermore, perceiving his footmen to give ground, he did what he could to keep them from flying, and took an ensign from one of the ensign-bearers that fled, and stuck it fast at his feet, although with much ado he could scant keep his own guard together. So Cassius himself was at length compelled to fly, with a few about him, unto a little hill from whence they might easily see what was done in all the plain; howbeit Cassius himself saw nothing, for his sight was very bad, saving that he saw, and yet with much ado, how the enemies spoiled his camp before his eyes. He saw also a great troop of horsemen whom Brutus sent to aid him, and thought that they were his enemies that followed him. But yet he sent Titinius, one of them that was with him, to go and know what they were. Brutus' horsemen saw him coming afar off, whom when they knew that he was one of Cassius' chiefest friends, they shouted out for joy; and they that were familiarly acquainted with him lighted from their horses, and went and embraced him. The rest compassed him in round about a-horseback, with songs of victory and great rushing of their harness, so that they made all the field ring again for joy.

But this marred all. For Cassius thinking indeed that Titinius was taken of the enemies, he then spake these words: 'Desiring too much to live, I have lived to see one of my best friends taken, for my sake, before my face.' After that, he got into a tent where nobody was, and took Pindarus with him, one of his freed bondmen, whom he reserved ever for such a pinch, since the cursed battle of the Parthians where Crassus was slain, though he notwithstanding scaped from that overthrow. But then casting his cloak over his head and holding out his bare neck unto Pindarus, he gave him his head to be stricken off. So the head was found severed from the body. But after that time Pindarus was never seen more. Whereupon some took occasion to say that he had slain his master without his commandment.

By and by they knew the horsemen that came towards them, and might see Titinius crowned with a garland of triumph, who came before with great speed unto Cassius. But when he perceived, by the cries and tears of his

friends which tormented themselves, the misfortune that had chanced to his captain Cassius by mistaking, he drew out his sword, cursing himself a thousand times that he had tarried so long, and so slew himself presently in the field. Brutus in the meantime came forward still, and understood also that Cassius had been overthrown. But he knew nothing of his death, till he came very near to his camp. So when he was come thither, after he had lamented the death of Cassius, calling him the last of all the Romans, being impossible that Rome should ever breed again so noble and valiant a man as he, he caused his body to be buried and sent it to the city of Thasos, fearing lest his funerals within the camp should cause great disorder.

Then he called his soldiers together and did encourage them again. And when he saw that they had lost all their carriage, which they could not brook well, he promised every man of them two thousand drachmas in recompense. After his soldiers had heard his oration, they were all of them prettily cheered again, wondering much at his great liberality, and waited upon him with great cries when he went his way, praising him for that he only of the four chieftains was not overcome in battle. And, to speak the truth, his deeds showed that he hoped not in vain to be conqueror. For with few legions he had slain and driven all them away that made head against him. And yet if all his people had fought, and that the most of them had not out-gone their enemies to run to spoil their goods, surely it was like enough he had slain them all and had left never a man of them alive . . .

The self-same night, it is reported that the monstrous spirit, which had appeared before unto Brutus in the city of Sardis, did now appear again unto him in the self-same shape and form, and so vanished away, and said never a word. Now Publius Volumnius, a grave and wise philosopher, that had been with Brutus from the beginning of this war, he doth make [no] mention of this spirit; but saith that the greatest eagle and ensign was covered over with a swarm of bees, and that there was one of the captains whose arm suddenly fell a-sweating, that it dropped oil of roses from him, and that they oftentimes went about to dry him, but all would do no good. And that, before the battle was fought, there were two eagles fought between both armies, and all the time they fought there was a marvellous great silence all the valley over, both the armies, being one before the other, marking this fight between them; and that in the end the eagle towards Brutus gave over and flew away. But this is certain, and a true tale: that, when the gate of the camp was open, the first man the standard-bearer met that carried the eagle was an Ethiopian, whom the soldiers for ill-luck mangled with their swords.

Now after that Brutus had brought his army into the field and had set them in battle ray, directly against the vaward of his enemy, he paused a long time before he gave the signal of battle. For Brutus riding up and down to view the bands and companies, it came in his head to mistrust some of them, besides

that some came to tell him so much as he thought. Moreover, he saw his horsemen set forward but faintly, and did not go lustily to give charge, but still stayed to see what the footmen would do. Then suddenly one of the chiefest knights he had in all his army, called Camulatus [the Celt Camulatus], and that was alway marvellously esteemed of for his valiantness until that time, he came hard by Brutus a-horseback and rode before his face to yield himself unto his enemies. Brutus was marvellous sorry for it, wherefore, partly for anger and partly for fear of greater treason and rebellion, he suddenly caused his army to march, being past three of the clock in the afternoon. So, in that place where he himself fought in person he had the better and brake into the left wing of his enemies, which gave him way, through the help of his horsemen that gave charge with his footmen, when they saw the enemies in a maze and afraid. Howbeit the other also on the right wing, when the captains would have had them to have marched, they were afraid to have been compassed in behind, because they were fewer in number than their enemies; and therefore did spread themselves and leave the midst of their battle. Whereby they having weakened themselves, they could not withstand the force of their enemies, but turned tail straight and fled. And those that had put them to flight came in straight upon it to compass Brutus behind, who in the midst of the conflict did all that was possible for a skilful captain and valiant soldier, both for his wisdom as also for his hardiness, for the obtaining of victory. But that which won him the victory at the first battle did now lose it him at the second. For at the first time the enemies that were broken and fled were straight cut in pieces; but at the second battle, of Cassius' men that were put to flight, there were few slain; and they that saved themselves by speed, being afraid because they had been overcome, did discourage the rest of the army when they came to join with them and filled all the army with fear and disorder.

There was the son of M. Cato slain, valiantly fighting amongst the lusty youths. For, notwithstanding that he was very weary and overharried, yet would he not therefore fly but manfully fighting and laying about him, telling aloud his name and also his father's name, at length he was beaten down amongst many other dead bodies of his enemies which he had slain round about him. So there were slain in the field all the chiefest gentlemen and nobility that were in his army, who valiantly ran into any danger to save Brutus' life.

Amongst them there was one of Brutus' friends called Lucilius, who seeing a troop of barbarous men making no reckoning of all men else they met in their way, but going all together right against Brutus, he determined to stay them with the hazard of his life, and, being left behind, told them that he was Brutus; and, because they should believe him, he prayed them to bring him to Antonius, for he said he was afraid of Caesar, and that he did trust Antonius

better. These barbarous men being very glad of this good hap, and thinking themselves happy men, they carried him in the night, and sent some before unto Antonius to tell him of their coming. He was marvellous glad of it, and went out to meet them that brought him. Others also understanding of it that they had brought Brutus prisoner, they came out of all parts of the camp to see him, some pitying his hard fortune and others saying that it was not done like himself, so cowardly to be taken alive of the barbarous people for fear of death. When they came near together, Antonius stayed awhile bethinking himself how he should use Brutus. In the meantime Lucilius was brought to him, who stoutly with a bold countenance said: 'Antonius, I dare assure thee that no enemy hath taken nor shall take Marcus Brutus alive; and I beseech God keep him from that fortune. For wheresoever he be found, alive or dead, he will be found like himself. And now for myself, I am come unto thee, having deceived these men of arms here, bearing them down that I was Brutus; and do not refuse to suffer any torment thou wilt put me to.' Lucilius' words made them all amazed that heard him. Antonius on the other side, looking upon all them that had brought him, said unto them: 'My companions, I think ye are sorry you have failed of your purpose, and that you think this man hath done you great wrong. But, I do assure you, you have taken a better booty than that you followed. For, instead of an enemy, you have brought me a friend; and for my part, if you had brought me Brutus alive, truly I cannot tell what I should have done to him. For I had rather have such men my friends as this man here, than enemies.' Then he embraced Lucilius and at that time delivered him to one of his friends in custody; and Lucilius ever after served him faithfully, even to his death.

Now Brutus having passed a little river walled in on either side with high rocks and shadowed with great trees, being then dark night he went no further, but stayed at the foot of a rock with certain of his captains and friends that followed him. And looking up to the firmament that was full of stars, sighing, he rehearsed two verses, of the which Volumnius wrote the one, to this effect:

*Let not the wight from whom this mischief went,
O Jove, escape without due punishment.*

And saith that he had forgotten the other. Within a little while after, naming his friends that he had seen slain in battle before his eyes, he fetched a greater sigh than before; specially when he came to name Labio and Flavius, of the which the one was his lieutenant and the other captain of the pioneers of his camp.

In the meantime, one of the company being a-thirst and seeing Brutus a-thirst also, he ran to the river for water and brought it in his sallet. At the self-

same time they heard a noise on the other side of the river. Whereupon Volumnius took Dardanus, Brutus' servant, with him to see what it was; and, returning straight again, asked if there were any water left. Brutus, smiling, gently told them all was drunk; 'but they shall bring you some more'. Thereupon he sent him again that went for water before, who was in great danger of being taken by the enemies, and hardly scaped, being sore hurt. Furthermore, Brutus thought that there was no great number of men slain in battle; and, to know the truth of it, there was one called Statilius that promised to go through his enemies, for otherwise it was impossible to go see their camp, and from thence, if all were well, that he would lift up a torch-light in the air, and then return again with speed to him. The torch-light was lift up as he had promised, for Statilius went thither. Now Brutus seeing Statilius tarry long after that, and that he came not again, he said: 'If Statilius be alive, he will come again.' But his evil fortune was such that as he came back he lighted in his enemies' hands and was slain.

Now, the night being far spent, Brutus as he sat bowed towards Clitus, one of his men, and told him somewhat in his ear, the other answered him not, but fell a-weeping. Thereupon he proved Dardanus, and said somewhat also to him. At length he came to Volumnius himself, and, speaking to him in Greek, prayed him, for the study's sake which brought them acquainted together, that he would help him to put his hand to his sword, to thrust it in him to kill him. Volumnius denied his request, and so did many others. And, amongst the rest, one of them said, there was no tarrying for them there, but that they must needs fly. Then Brutus rising up: 'We must fly indeed', said he, 'but it must be with our hands not with our feet.' Then, taking every man by the hand, he said these words unto them with a cheerful countenance: 'It rejoiceth my heart that not one of my friends hath failed me at my need, and I do not complain of my fortune, but only for my country's sake. For, as for me, I think myself happier than they that have overcome, considering that I leave a perpetual fame of our courage and manhood, the which our enemies the conquerors shall never attain unto by force nor money, neither can let their posterity to say that they, being naughty and unjust men, have slain good men, to usurp tyrannical power not pertaining to them.'

Having said so, he prayed every man to shift for themselves. And then he went a little aside with two or three only, among the which Strato was one, with whom he came first acquainted by the study of rhetoric. He came as near to him as he could, and, taking his sword by the hilts with both his hands and falling down upon the point of it, ran himself through. Others say that not he, but Strato, at his request, held the sword in his hand, and turned his head aside, and that Brutus fell down upon it; and so ran himself through, and died presently.

Messala, that had been Brutus' great friend, became afterwards Octavius

Caesar's friend. So, shortly after, Caesar being at good leisure, he brought Strato, Brutus' friend, unto him and weeping said: 'Caesar, behold, here is he that did the last service to my Brutus.' Caesar welcomed him at that time, and afterwards he did him as faithful service in all his affairs as any Grecian else he had about him, until the battle of Actium. It is reported also that this Messala himself answered Caesar one day, when he gave him great praise before his face that he had fought valiantly and with great affection for him at the battle of Actium (notwithstanding that he had been his cruel enemy before, at the battle of Philippos, for Brutus' sake): 'I ever loved', said he, 'to take the best and justest part.'

Now, Antonius having found Brutus' body, he caused it to be wrapped up in one of the richest coat-armours he had. Afterwards also, Antonius understanding that this coat-armour was stolen, he put the thief to death that had stolen it, and sent the ashes of his body unto Servilia his mother. And for Porcia, Brutus' wife, Nicolaus the philosopher and Valerius Maximus do write that she, determining to kill herself (her parents and friends carefully looking to her to keep her from it), took hot burning coals and cast them into her mouth, and kept her mouth so close that she choked herself. There was a letter of Brutus found written to his friends, complaining of their negligence, that, his wife being sick, they would not help her but suffered her to kill herself, choosing to die rather than to languish in pain. Thus it appeareth that Nicolaus knew not well that time, sith the letter (at the least if it were Brutus' letter) doth plainly declare the disease and love of this lady and also the manner of her death.

READING LIST

This list contains some of the more important books referred to in the Introduction, together with a few additional items of interest, and may serve as a guide for those who wish to undertake further study of the play.

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