

Doing Wrong with Just Cause? A History of *Julius Caesar* 3.1.47-48

by

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Relative to some of its fellows in the First Folio, the text of *Julius Caesar* appears at first glance to present few problems for editors and commentators. There are no troublesome quartos with readings that diverge wildly from the copy text. There is no incomprehensible “I see that men make rope’s in such a scarre” (AWW 4.2.38 / 2063). Nor does the play provide a spectacular opportunity to illuminate a passage with the mere substitution of a few letters, such as Lewis Theobald’s extension of Mistress Quickly’s pastoral conceit as she describes Falstaff *in extremis*, his “a babbl’d” for the Folio’s “a Table of greene fields” (H5 2.3.16-17 / 839).

However, in our work on the *New Variorum* edition of the play—compiling a commentary, collating editions, and writing performance appendices—we have found that the 1623 text cannot be described as problem-free.<sup>1</sup> Twenty-first century textual scholars tend to advise against emendation for sensible, if doctrinaire reasons. Surely no one would wish to violate a play’s textuality or deny her students the opportunity to purchase a multi-version *Hamlet* or *Lear*, a deprivation they would surely see as an impediment to their quest for knowledge. Yet many of our predecessors, even those of a fairly conservative bent such as Capell or Dr. Johnson, might well find such reasons for nonintervention ridiculous: or, as they spell one of their favorite euphemisms for strong disapproval, “surprizing.” Eighteenth and early nineteenth-century editors especially engage in somewhat ferocious combat about many passages in *Julius Caesar*.

The most recent editors of the play—Arthur Humphreys (Fourth Oxford), Marvin Spevack (Fourth Cambridge), and David Daniell (Third Arden)—list several notorious cruces, literary-lexical-interpretive as well as textual, any of which could have supplied matter for our essay. Two of these have led scholars to surmise that Shakespeare must have been in the process of revision but had not finished before his death in 1616, which the First Folio reflects. One is the strangely double account of Portia’s death that Brutus first

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<sup>1</sup> W. W. Greg: “It seems to be the common opinion that *Julius Caesar* is the best-printed play in the collection.” See *The Shakespeare First Folio: Its Bibliographical and Textual History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), 289. However, as Brents Stirling and Fredson Bowers explain in their essential articles on the 1623 text, it is certainly not without its problems, some of them quite vexing. See, respectively, “*Julius Caesar* in Revision,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 13 (1962): 187-205; and “The Copy for Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*,” *South Atlantic Bulletin* 43.4 (1978): 23-34.

confides to Cassius near the end of their magnificent quarrel, but of which he subsequently receives report from Messala as if it were indeed news to him (4.3.145-90 / 2134-89). Most commentators agree that the proposed emendations would make little or no difference to the meaning of the lines in question, nor enhance the reading or theatergoing experiences.<sup>2</sup>

The passage we address in our essay may also represent revision, with evidence of a metaphorical palimpsest. Most intriguing for us, it bears a long tradition of controversy that involves theatrical history and Ben Jonson, and occupies five pages of notes in eight-point type in our predecessor's 1913 *Variorum Julius Caesar*. With everything considered, it might constitute a truly insoluble problem if one does not choose to ignore it, "affording in the opinion of many," as John Dover Wilson said, "the only known instance in the Folio of an alteration made in deference to literary criticism."<sup>3</sup>

The most controversial passage in the play occurs just before the assassination. At the climax of Caesar's speech to Metellus Cimber, who has had the temerity to ask that his brother be recalled from banishment, the lines in the First Folio read: "Know, *Cæsar* doth not wrong, nor without cause / Will he be satisfied" (3.1.47-8 / 1254-5). It has struck some readers and playgoers as odd that he mentions "wrong" in a passage that epitomizes his illeistic arrogance, since his interlocutor does not, surely knowing better. He declares himself immune to an entreaty that "Might fire the blood of ordinary men" (37 / 1244), but not his. Fifty lines later, the conspirators strike, proving that he is ordinary enough to shed the very blood that he claims cannot be easily heated. However, Jonson remembered the utterance differently, as four sentences read in the posthumous set of recollections, *Timber, or Discoveries* (1641). Shakespeare's

wit was in his owne power; would the rule of it had beene so too. Many times hee fell into those things, could not escape laughter: As when hee said in the person of *Cæsar*, one speaking to him;

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<sup>2</sup> See Humphreys (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984); Spevack (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, rev. 2004); Daniell (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1998). The three most contested lexical-textual cruxes in our opinion are italicized: "if not the *Face* of men" (2.1.114 / 745), the first line of Brutus' long and nuanced speech to the conspirators regarding the ethical problems of swearing an oath as a means to murder, however well-intentioned and patriotic; second, Caesar's refusal of Cimber's request that his brother be recalled from banishment: "turne pre-Ordinance, and first Decree / Into the *lane* of Children" (3.1.38-9 / 1244-5); last, Antony's slighting assessment of Lepidus, whose brother he has just proscribed, "A barren spirited Fellow; one that feeds / On *Obiects*, *Arts*, and Imitations" (4.1.36-7 / 1892-3). Some of the most commonly proposed emendations (e.g., "*fate* of men"; "*law* of children"; *abject orts*."

<sup>3</sup> For Dover Wilson, see "Ben Jonson and *Julius Caesar*," *Shakespeare Survey* 2 (1949): 38; 36-43; for our predecessor, see *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: "The Tragedie of Iulivs Cæsar,"* ed. H. H. Furness (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1913), 136-40. A close second for the sheer length of a note in this volume (249-53) is Brutus's speech on "that Philosophy" 5.1.116-23 (2442-49) concerning suicide, Stoicism, and morality.

*Cæsar thou dost me wrong.* Hee replied: *Cæsar did neuer wrong, but with just cause:* and such like; which were ridiculous. But hee redeemed his vices, with his vertues. There was ever more in him to be praysed, then to be pardoned.<sup>4</sup>

According to this anecdote, Cimber indeed prompted Caesar into an answer most different from the 1623 reading. It is truly illogical, yet curiously descriptive of its soon-to-be murdered speaker, his assassins, and his revengers, all of whom are somewhat aware of the wrong, even evil, that they do, but console themselves as “honorable men” that their causes are just.<sup>5</sup> Could this have been misreported by William Drummond, the compiler of *Discoveries*, or attributed to his subject maliciously? “He cites by memory, which is often treacherous,” concludes the eminent Spenser editor John Upton (1748), but according to many, apparently not.<sup>6</sup> Jonson seems quite clearly to be parodying the lines again in an exchange between Expectation and the Prologue in *The Staple of Newes* (1631, first acted 1626): “Ex. *I can doe that too, if I haue cause.* / Pro. *Cry you mercy, you neuer did wrong, but with iust cause.*” Possibly, the change in font indicates that the playgoers were to understand the words as a quotation.<sup>7</sup> The statement was notorious enough to have been remembered later in the manuscript jottings of the Reverend Thomas Plume near the end of the Protectorate (1657): “One told Ben Johnson—Shakespear never studied for any thing he wrott.

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<sup>4</sup> *Timber, or Discoveries*, in *Workes*, (London: n.p., 1640-1), 98.

<sup>5</sup> In a variation on this idea, see Clement Mansfield Ingleby, whose observation first appeared in *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare-gesellschaft* (Berlin, 1867) 240-1: “The public acts of a public man often entail private wrongs, while they are not only expedients of necessity, but concessions to a supreme duty to the state.” Jonson was wrong to criticize the passage if he is quoting it correctly. He simply failed to understand it. In *Shakespeare Hermeneutics, or, The Still Lion: Being an Essay towards the Restoration of Shakespeare's Text* (London: Trubner & Co., 1874/5), Ingleby elaborates: “Where was the blunder? We say it was Jonson's and his fellow censors': that the line they laughed at was and is unimpeachable good sense, and that it is the editor's duty to use Jonson's censure for the purpose of correcting the Folio reading, and restoring the passage to that form in which, as we believe, it flowed from the pen of Shakespeare” (138-39). See also John Palmer, *Political Characters of Shakespeare* (London: Macmillan, 1945), 44-46: if Jonson quotes accurately, it is Shakespeare's “finishing touch to the portrait of a dictator. It is the last, if it be not also the first, assumption of the man who lives for power that the wrong he does is right.” Dover Wilson: the line's “very isolation and abruptness give it just that hint of menace and air of inflexible finality which the end of such a speech demands” (41).

<sup>6</sup> *Critical Observations on Shakespeare*, 2nd ed. (London: Printed for G. Hawkins, 1748), 83n4. Upton is better known to literary history for his magisterial edition of *The Faerie Queene*, with its fulsome commentary that illustrated for the first time Spenser's wide knowledge of Anglo-Saxon and Middle English words, and Latin and Greek literature in the original tongues (1758).

<sup>7</sup> Dover Wilson, on the other hand, declares about the matter, “there can be no doubt. . . . It must have been a pretty familiar quotation too” (40). For *Newes*, see *The Workes of Beniamin Jonson* (London: [John] Beale, et al., 1640[i.e., 1641]), 4. Each text therein is individually paginated. Peter Whalley, Jonson's first nineteenth-century editor, notes: “This is meant as a satire on a line in Shakspeare's *Julius Cæsar*, though it no where occurs as it is here represented.” See *The Dramatic Works of Ben Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher*, 4 vols., (London: Printed for John Stockdale, 1811), 1:520.

B. J. said—the more to blame He—said—Cesar never punishes any but for a just Cause.”<sup>8</sup> And, more than one commentator has noted that it resembles similar statements of fiendish moral ambiguity in the Shakespearean canon, such as Bassanio’s “To do a great right, do a little wrong” (*MV* 4.1.216 / 2127).<sup>9</sup>

All seventeenth-century texts of *Julius Caesar* follow the First Folio reading, as do Rowe (1709) and Thomas Johnson (1711). However, Alexander Pope (1725), in one of his few explanatory notes, basically ignites the controversy for his century as he comments on two lines attributed to various plebeians, which echo the earlier passage: “If thou consider rightly of the matter, / *Cæsar* ha’s had great wrong” (3.2.109-10 / 1646-7). Strangely, however, he chooses this locus to recall Jonson’s version of Caesar’s statement, and to propose an emendation:

*3 Pleb. Cæsar had never wrong, but with just cause. If ever there was such a line written by Shakespear, I shou’d fancy it might have its place here, and very humorously in the character of a Plebeian. One might believe Ben Johnson’s remark was made upon no better credit than some blunder of an actor in speaking that verse near the beginning of the third act, Know Cæsar doth not wrong, nor without cause / Will he be satisfy’d—But the verse as cited by Ben Johnson does not connect with—Will he be satisfy’d. Perhaps this play was never printed in Ben Johnson’s time, and so he had nothing to judge by, but as the actor pleas’d to speak it.*<sup>10</sup>

Pope, who as an editor should have known perfectly well that Jonson lived to see the play printed in the first two Folios and contributed his commendatory verses, nevertheless notes a significant discrepancy between the passage as we have it and Jonson’s memory. His omission of “Will he be satisfied,” among other things, signifies Caesar’s deadly hubris, his failure to realize that the godlike omnipotence he perceives in himself is not recognized by all. At least in the 1623 reading, he is still reasonable enough so that any “cause” on which he may act must have an explanation that satisfies him. More important, Pope

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<sup>8</sup> In E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), 2:248. The Reverend Plume (1630-1704), Archdeacon of Rochester, book collector, and philanthropist, left his library of some 7000 volumes to the town of Maldon, which subsequently founded the Plume Library with this bequest in the remains of St. Peter’s Church. He also founded the chair of Plumian Professor of Astronomy and Experimental Philosophy at Cambridge in the year of his death.

<sup>9</sup> George Lillie Craik may well have been the first to see this parallel. See *The English of Shakespeare Illustrated in a Philological Commentary on His “Julius Caesar*, 3rd ed. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1864; first ed. 1857), 221. Alfred Harbage preferred Jonson’s version, and cites the same example from *MV*. Shakespeare constantly interrogates such problems in morality in his plays, enjoying the sense of philosophical experimentation and inquiry. See *As They Liked It: An Essay on Shakespeare and Morality* (London: Macmillan, 1947), 83.

<sup>10</sup> *Works*, 7 vols., ed. Pope and Sewall (London: Printed for Jacob Tonson, 1725), 5:271.

reaffirms that Jonson may have originally heard the lines in the theater in what may have been a lost acting version of the play—one that at this juncture may have represented what Shakespeare wanted Cimber and Caesar to say, as ridiculous or tautological as it may sound.

Pope's presumption demanded an answer and met spirited resistance from a predictable quarter. Lewis Theobald (1733), always happy to root out his deadly rival's editing lapses and expose them to air and light, argues that these allusions constitute a "sneer" at Shakespeare's expense:

"I can't pretend to guess, for what Reason *Ben* has left this Sarcasm upon our Author; when there is no Room for it from any of the printed Copies: nor should I have thought it worth while to revive the Memory of such a Remark, had not Mr. *Pope* purposely *deviated* into a Criticism upon the Affair. There is a sort of Fatality attends some People, when they aim at being hypercritical. . . . The surly *Laureat* therefore cannot stand excus'd, from any Blunder of an Actor, for wounding the Memory of a Poet; when the Absurdity, reflected on, is not to be found in his Works."<sup>11</sup>

Just as Pope had reanimated the theatrical strain of the crux, Theobald extended the theory of a textual palimpsest even as he denied that it existed, and began the tradition of finding other passages in Jonson's works that seem to corroborate the account in *Discoveries*, attributing them to monstrous jealousy. Styan Thirlby comments twice on the Folio text: once in Theobald's 1733 edition, "Note the breaking of the verses & y<sup>t</sup> nor without cause will he be satisfied seems to carry some resemblance of correction. I have

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<sup>11</sup> The passage in its entirety: "*Ben. Jonson* in the Induction to his *Staple of News* has a sneer upon this Passage—'Cry you Mercy, You never did wrong but with just Cause.' The Words are constantly printed in a different Character, and, that they are levell'd at *Shakespeare*, is fully clear'd up by another Passage in *Ben's Discoveries*, where he thus speaks of our Author: 'Many times he fell into those things could not escape Laughter; as when he said in the Person of *Cæsar*, one speaking to him, —*Cæsar, thou dost me wrong*; he reply'd, *Cæsar did never wrong, but with just Cause.*'—I can't pretend to guess, for what Reason *Ben* has left this Sarcasm upon our Author; when there is no Room for it from any of the printed Copies: nor should I have thought it worth while to revive the Memory of such a Remark, had not Mr. *Pope* purposely *deviated* into a Criticism upon the Affair. There is a sort of Fatality attends some People, when they aim at being hypercritical. 'He thinks, *Ben Jonson's* Remark was made upon no better Credit, than some Blunder of an Actor in speaking the Verse now under Debate: And, perhaps, (*says He*,) this Play was never printed in *B. Jonson's* Time; and so he had nothing to judge by, but as the Actor was pleas'd to speak it.' I don't know how this Gentleman's Head was employ'd, when he made this profound Observation: for He could not but know, that *B. Jonson* liv'd to the year 1637, fourteen Years before which the Players had put out their Edition of all *Shakespeare's* genuine Plays in *Folio*. The surly *Laureat* therefore cannot stand excus'd, from any Blunder of an Actor, for wounding the Memory of a Poet; when the Absurdity, reflected on, is not to be found in his Works." See *Works*, 7 vols., ed. Theobald (London: Printed for A. Bettesworth, et al., 1733), 6:162. Theobald certainly enjoyed writing this note, and must have been disappointed that he had not thought of it in time for *Shakespeare Restored: Or, a Specimen of the Many Errors, as well Committed, as Unamended, by Mr. Pope in his Late Edition of This Poet. Designed Not Only to Correct the Said Edition, but to Restore the True Reading of Shakespeare in all the Editions Ever Yet Publish'd* (London: Printed for R. Francklin, 1726).

heard hurt & wrong confounded” (as at 3.1.170 / 1391, “And pitty to the generall wrong of Rome”); and then in William Warburton’s 1747 edition, an echo of the proverb *Rex non potest peccare* [the king can do no wrong].<sup>12</sup> A wider, even allusive context for Shakespeare’s line was thereby provided, and handsomely, the first of many such extensions.<sup>13</sup> Dr. Johnson’s note (1765) appears at the same locus at which Pope had commented (i.e., 3.2.109-10 / 1646-7), only to be critical of him, as Theobald had been, both editors gleefully noting the howler (by a man who claimed to have collated the first two Folios) that the play may not have been printed before Jonson’s death in 1637: “I have inserted this note, because it is *Pope*’s, for it is otherwise of no value. It is strange that he should so much forget the date of the copy [i.e., 1623] before him, as to think it not printed in *Johnson*’s time.” George Steevens (1778) also thought Jonson malicious, and concluded that he “quotes this line unfaithfully” in his recollection of Caesar’s riposte.<sup>14</sup>

Thomas Tyrwhitt, in the second eighteenth-century Johnson-Steevens *Variorum* (1778), is probably the first to attribute something besides malice to Shakespeare’s contemporary, and proposes the first serious emendation, albeit conjectural and, with two exceptions that we will discuss further, unadopted, that incorporates Jonson’s purported theatrical reading. Before he lapses into the demonizing tradition, he answers the Steevens note printed just above his own, which his predecessor generously allowed to stand:

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<sup>12</sup> For the proverb, see Morris Palmer Tilley, *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: A Collection of the Proverbs Found in English Literature and the Dictionaries of the Period* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950), K61. See also James Wood, *Dictionary of Quotations from Ancient and Modern English and Foreign Sources: Including Phrases, Mottoes, Maxims, Proverbs, Definitions, Aphorisms, and Sayings of Wise Men, in Their Bearing on Life, Literature, Speculation, Science, Art, Religion, and Morals Especially in the Modern Aspects of Them* (London: Frederick Warne, 1899), 375. Thirby’s annotations may be found, respectively, in *Works*, ed. Theobald, 6: 162, and *Works*, 8 vols., ed. Warburton et al. (London: Printed for J. and P. Knapton [and] S. Birt, 1747), 7:47.

<sup>13</sup> For example, see William Guthrie’s appraisal of Johnson’s 1765 edition in *Critical Review* 21 (February 1766): 81-8:82: “This passage seems to have been given up by all the editors and commentators upon Shakespeare, by their admitting the modern emendations into the text. We are, perhaps, singular in thinking that even Ben Jonson’s observation is a hypercriticism, and that Shakespeare is not guilty of such a bull as is commonly thought, supposing Ben Jonson’s reading to be Shakespeare’s, as we make no doubt it was. What does Caesar do more than paraphrase the words of the poet? Decipimur specie recti; that is, if he did wrong he was misled by the appearances of justice, or, he thought he had just cause for what he did.” The allusion is to Horace: “maxima pars vatium, pater et iuvenes patre digni, / decipimur specie recti” (*Ars poetica* 24-25) [the greatest number [of us] poets, father and worthy sons, deceive ourselves by the semblance of truth.]

<sup>14</sup> “Ben Jonson quotes this line unfaithfully among his *Discoveries*, and ridicules it again in the Introduction to his *Staple of News*. ‘Cry you mercy; *you never did wrong, but with just cause?*’” See the 1778 *Variorum*, i.e., *Plays*, ed. Johnson and Steevens, 10 vols. (London: Printed for C. Bathurst [and] W. Strahan, 1778), 8:58. For Dr. Johnson’s comment, see *Plays*, 10 vols. (London: Printed for J. and R. Tonson, 1765), 7:62. For Theobald’s similar comment, see note 11, *supra*.

It may be doubted, I think, whether Jonson has *quoted this line unfaithfully*. The turn of the sentence, and the defect in the metre (according to the present reading), rather incline me to believe that the passage stood originally thus: *Know, Cæsar doth not wrong, but with just cause; / Nor without cause will he be satisfied*. We may suppose that Ben started this formidable criticism at one of the earliest representations of the play, and that the players, or perhaps Shakespeare himself, over-awed by so great an authority, withdrew the words in question; though, in my opinion, it would have been better to have told the captious censorer that his criticism was ill-founded; that *wrong* is not always a synonymous term for *injury*; that, in poetical language especially, it may be very well understood to mean only *harm*, or *hurt*, what the law calls *damnum sine injuriâ*; and that, in this sense, there is nothing absurd in Cæsar's saying, that he *doth not wrong* (i.e. doth not inflict any evil, or punishment) *but with just cause*. But, supposing this passage to have been really censurable, and to have been written by Shakespeare, the exceptionable words were undoubtedly left out when the play was printed in 1623; and therefore what are we to think of the malignant pleasure with which Jonson continued to ridicule his deceased friend for a slip, of which posterity, without his information, would have been totally ignorant?"<sup>15</sup>

He clarifies some of the previous speculations about the theater, Shakespeare's purported revisions, and Jonson's "malignant" attitude toward him, and, perhaps motivated by Thirlby's example, attempts to clarify the meaning of an important word, "wrong." Edmund Malone takes much the same tack, although in his usual conservative way, he does not emend: "The Induction to *The Staple of News*, which appeared in 1625, not very long after the publication of our author's plays in folio, contains a sneer at a passage in *Julius Cæsar*: 'Know, Cæsar doth not wrong; nor without cause / Will he be satisfied.' which for the purpose of ridicule is quoted unfaithfully; and in the same play may be found an effort, as impotent as that of Voltaire, to raise a laugh at Hamlet's exclamation when he kills Polonius." Jonson's dreadful behavior can be ascribed to eccentricity and a defective habit of mind: "His misquoting of a line of *Julius Caesar*, so

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<sup>15</sup> See *Plays*, ed. Johnson and Steevens, 8:58. Dover Wilson erroneously claims that Tyrwhitt first published this observation in 1766, but gives no source for this information (40). It appears nowhere in his single Shakespearean publication of that year, *Observations and Conjectures upon Some Passages of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1766). G. B. Evans confirms that the 1778 *Variorum* is indeed the first place that the passage appears. See *The Riverside Shakespeare* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), 1179.

as to render it nonsense, at a time when the play was in print, is a strong illustration of this part of his character [i.e. Drummond's observation that his friend "interprets best sayings and deeds often to the worst"]. The plea of an unfaithful memory cannot be urged in his defence, for he tells us in his Discoveries, that till he was past forty, he could repeat every thing that he had written."<sup>16</sup> The dominant impression throughout the eighteenth century seems to have been that Jonson was motivated entirely by ill will, a narrative that appears to have made the most sense to Enlightenment literary culture's construction of him as envious and spiteful toward the blameless, long-suffering Shakespeare.<sup>17</sup>

Naturally, even this somewhat conservative solution—a conjecture that Tyrwhitt would not have dreamed of insisting that his 1778 editors adopt—seemed just as presumptuous to some early nineteenth-century commentators as Pope's speculations appeared to his successors in the eighteenth. E. H. Seymour (1805) devotes a rather spirited paragraph to demolishing the idea that the editors of the 1803 *Variorum* had the slightest idea of what Shakespeare really meant by "wrong," at least in the mouth of Caesar, and that Jonson might have had a point after all.<sup>18</sup> Thus prompted, his editors, such as Peter Whalley (1811) and William Gifford (1816), smarting from the imputations against their man, decided to fire back. Gifford's note for the Induction to *The Staple of Newes* could be described as virulent, even harsh in its tone toward

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<sup>16</sup> Both observations first appeared in the 1778 *Variorum* (1:303 and 304n, respectively), and then in Malone's own 1790 edition, i.e., *Plays & Poems*, 10 vols. (London: H. Baldwin, 1790), 1.1:322-3n and 323n, respectively. (The first volume of 1790 is divided into two parts that are sometimes bound together and sometimes not, which can cause confusion.) Voltaire's slighting reference, in the same loci, runs: "Ah! ma mere, s'écrie-t-il, il y a un gros rat derrière la tapisserie; —Il tire son épée, court au rat, et tue le bon homme Polonius" [Ah, my mother, he cries out, there's a huge rat behind the tapestry; he draws his sword, takes a run at the rat, and kills the good man Polonius]. In both a note on the passage in the 1785 *Variorum* and the 1790 edition (7:359, *ad loc.*), Malone supports Tyrwhitt's reading of *wrong* with *Luc.* 943: "To wrong the wronger till he render right." Similarly, Charles Knight uses Jonson's ridicule of the original version to suggest that Shakespeare meant *wrong* as "impropriety," not harsh punishment. See *Works*, ed. Knight, 8 vols. (London: Virtue, 1838-43; 1841): 7:218.

<sup>17</sup> Dover Wilson gives this conjecture his tentative imprimatur: "Tyrwhitt's solution . . . involves two difficulties: first, it implies that Jonson's verbal memory, well known for its accuracy, was less precise than usual; secondly, the line as he recollected it is so manifestly superior to the line and a half of Tyrwhitt's reconstruction that it is hard to believe the recollection anything but exact" (39-40). See also Dover Wilson's edition of the play (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1949).

<sup>18</sup> "I wish that Mr. Tyrwhitt, who undertook to defend this expression, as it is supposed originally to have stood, had favoured us with an example, in any other English author, of 'wrong's' being used with a meaning different from that of injury. Until this can be shown, I fear the votaries of Shakspeare's muse must abide the sarcasms of Jonson, howsoever they disrelish his malignity." The example from *Luc.* is forced in "for the sake of the jingle." See Seymour, *Remarks, Critical Conjectural, and Explanatory, upon the Plays of Shakspeare; Resulting from a Collation of the Early Copies, with that of Johnson and Steevens*, edited by Isaac Reed, Esq., Together with Some Valuable Extracts from the Mss. of the Late Right Honourable John, Lord Chedworth, 2 vols. (London: Printed by J. Wright, 1805), 2:18. Friedrich August Leo counters that whether *wrong* is a verb or a noun, it means the same thing in the perfectly clear 1623 reading: "is not unjust." See *Shakespeare-notes* (London: Trubner, 1885), 58.



Steevens, Tyrwhitt, and especially Malone, defending his poet and his alleged earlier version of Caesar's lines as eminently good sense.

According to Gifford, the "attacks on Jonson" that have "multiplied beyond credibility" depend on two interrelated ideas: his "malignity" toward Shakespeare compelled him to lie about the matter. It would be equally fatuous, then, to assume that the lines that Jonson recounted to Drummond were not uttered in the theater. So the Folio reading could not possibly represent Shakespeare's intentions, for the passage as it stands is truly ridiculous: "How satisfied, and of what? Here is no congruity, and the poetry is as mean as the sense." The version in *Discoveries*, which includes the helpful prompt by Cimber (i.e., "thou dost me wrong"),

is, at least, a reference to something. The fact seems to be that this verse, which closely borders upon absurdity without being absolutely absurd, escaped the poet in the heat of composition, and being unluckily one of those quaint slips which are readily remembered, became a jocular and familiar phrase for reproving, as here, the perverse, and unreasonable expectations of the male or female gossips of the day.

Accordingly, in his view, the 1778 *Variorum* editors suffered from prodigious ignorance about the theater of the time that they in turn inflicted upon their readers. Indeed, "those gentlemen choose to forget" that Jonson, like other theatrical types, surely knew Shakespeare and his work from watching his plays, must have seen *Julius Caesar* a number of times, and therefore would have had no reason to consult the 1623 Folio to jog his memory even three decades later. As for consulting a promptbook shoddily pasted together by players,

He had no occasion to look into it for what he already knew; and if he had opened it at all, the probability is, that he would have paid no attention to their botchery (for theirs I am persuaded it was) when the genuine words were already so familiar to him. He wrote and spoke at a time when he might easily have been put to shame, if his quotation had been unfaithful.

Malone, Gifford continues, is especially unreliable, because "whenever Jonson is concerned, Mr. Malone is the weakest of all reasoners, the blindest of all accusers," a man "who forgets himself from page to page, comes two centuries afterwards, and charges him with a deliberate falsehood," a willful misreading of the famous anecdote about having "never blotted out a line" from the 1623 Folio. Jonson's memory and

knowledge of his milieu, on the other hand was extremely reliable, even impeccable. Even if one wishes to misconstrue the episode as an attack on Shakespeare, Gifford concludes, it is rather a mild one, and shows no little affection.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Gifford's long note constitutes a short essay that deserves to be savored in its entirety: "The commentators are right at last. Here is evidently an allusion to Shakspeare, and, for once, 'old Ben speaks out.' The attacks on Jonson for this quotation, which are multiplied beyond credibility, are founded on two charges, first, that he has falsified the passage, and secondly that he was actuated by malignity in adverting to it at all. I cannot believe that the passages is 'quoted (as Steevens says) unfaithfully.' It is sufficient to look at it in the printed copy, to be convinced that it never came, in this form, from the pen of Shakspeare. One of the conspirators, Metellus Cimber by name, kneels at the feet of Cæsar, with this short address, 'Metellus Cimber throws before thy seat, / An humble heart'—[163] And what is Caesar's reply? 'Know Cæsar *doth not wrong*, nor without cause / Will he be satisfied.' How satisfied, and of what? Here is no congruity, and the poetry is as mean as the sense. In Jonson it stands thus: '*Met. Cæsar, thou dost me wrong. Caes. Cæsar did never wrong*, but with just cause.' Here is, at least, a reference to something. The fact seems to be that this verse, which closely borders upon absurdity without being absolutely absurd, escaped the poet in the heat of composition, and being unluckily one of those quaint slips which are readily remembered, became a jocular and familiar phrase for reproving, as here, the perverse, and unreasonable expectations of the male or female gossips of the day. To suppose, with Steevens and Malone, that Jonson derived all his knowledge of Shakspeare from his printed works, is not a little ridiculous: those gentlemen choose to forget that he passed his life among play-houses and players, and that he must have frequently seen *Julius Cæsar* on the stage. There he undoubtedly heard the expression which he has quoted. He tells us himself that, till he was past the age of forty, he could repeat every thing that he had written. His memory therefore was most retentive, and his veracity was never called in question, but by the duumvirate just mentioned, I cannot but believe that he has faithfully given the words as they were uttered. When the *Staple of News* was written, cannot be told, but it was acted in 1625, nine years after Shakespeare's death; it seems, however, not to have been published till 1641, when the author himself had long been dead; though the title page bears [the] date 1631. *Julius Cæsar* was printed in 1623; but it does not necessarily follow from this, that Jonson consulted the players' copy. He had no occasion to look into it for what he already knew; and if he had opened it at all, the probability is, that he would have paid no attention to their botchery (for theirs I am persuaded it was) when the genuine words were already so familiar to him. He wrote and spoke at a time when he might easily have been put to shame, if his quotation had been unfaithful. I am sorry to be compelled to repeat so often, that whenever Jonson is concerned, Mr. Malone is the weakest of all reasoners, the blindest of all accusers. Similar to the case before us, is the attack made on the poet in a previous passage. 'I *remember* (says Ben) the players *have often mentioned* it as an honour to Shakspeare, that in writing (whatsoever he penned) he never blotted out a line.' Here Mr. Malone bristles up, and gives him *the lie valiant*. 'This is {NOT} true,' he exclaims, '*they only say, in their preface to his plays, that his mind and hand went together, and what he thought, he uttered with that easiness, that a blot in his papers has scarce been received from him.*'<sup>19</sup> This is playing at cross purposes with a witness! Jonson, who remembered every thing, and who lived in habits of daily intercourse with all the players, the contemporaries of Shakspeare, gives us the results of his *frequent conversations* with them; Mr. Malone, who forgets himself from page to page, comes two centuries afterwards, and charges him with a deliberate falsehood because—Heminge [sic] and Condell, two of them, *print*, in a preface which was not extant, perhaps, when Jonson wrote the passage just quoted, that they had *scarce received a blot* in Shakspeare's papers! To have done with this long note—After relieving Jonson from the heaviest part of the charge---that of sophisticating a line 'for the gratification of his malignity,' I have no desire to push the matter further, or seek, in any way, to exonerate him from the crime of having produced it at all. *Valeat quod valent*. Whether it be a *satire*, as Whalley, a *sneer*, as Malone, a *scoff*, as Steevens, a piece of wanton *malice*, as Tyrwhitt calls it, or all of them together, as others say, the reader may determine at his pleasure. I would only remind him that this is {THE FIRST PLACE} in Jonson's works, in which I have found any expression that could be construed (whether fairly or not) into an attack on Shakspeare, and that a small portion of the tenderness which is felt for this great poet, would not be altogether cast away on Marlow,

In the 1821 *Variorum*, James Boswell, that son of a very famous father, includes Malone's *Life* of Shakespeare, and in a note to his predecessor's comments from 1790 incorporated within that Gifford attacks so bitterly, he says: "I have already stated that, in superintending Mr. Malone's work in its passage through the press, I did not feel justified in withdrawing any of his opinions, however erroneous I might think them, unless where I was authorized, either by his papers, or by something which I might have collected from him in conversation. I have, therefore, suffered this note to remain as it was originally written; although at the same time, I do not hesitate to express my conviction that the charge against Jonson, which it contains, has been satisfactorily answered by Mr. Gifford. With this avowal, to prevent my being misunderstood, I quit a most unpleasing topick."<sup>20</sup> Considering Boswell's reverence for his predecessor, this is quite a statement. By the 1820's, then, the "most unpleasing topick" had bifurcated itself into ammunition for its rival advocates in order to defend their respective, and to them, mutually emulous playwrights. The prevalence of encrusted layers of commentary that built up on the text and remained attached to it may well have motivated later editors to remove the barnacles, so to speak. Samuel Singer (1826), Charles Knight (1841), and John Payne Collier (1843) basically begin anew (in Collier's case, quite anew indeed) with perspectives that would at least appear fresher to post-1821 *Variorum* readers than those of the tribe of Enlightenment commentators.

Nevertheless, Victorian Shakespeareans tend to take sides on the subject that ultimately derive from those of the previous century. The heirs and guardians of Gifford's position agree that Caesar's statement in the 1623 text is illogical, and that Jonson's memory accurately represented what Shakespeare wrote, or how the promptbook in 1599 directed the actor who spoke the lines. James O. Halliwell-Phillipps (1864) praises Gifford and contends that the anecdote from *Discoveries* "enables us to make poetry of lines in Shakespeare which are absolutely mean and unintelligible without such assistance," and that the Folio reading is senseless, "a lame and impotent conclusion." Frederick Gard Fleay (1874, 1876) takes a similar stance, and draws the following conclusions from the apparent allusion, all of which help date the play:

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Lilly, Kidd, and others of some note in their day, whom he incessantly ridicules without stint and without mercy, though he had obligations to some of them, and had received provocation from none." See *The Works of Ben Jonson; with Notes and a Biographical Memoir*, by W. Gifford, 9 vols. (London: G. & W. Nicol, 1816), 5:162-3n1, 164.

<sup>20</sup> See *Plays and Poems*, 21 vols. (London: Printed for F. C. and J. Revington, 1821), 2:364. Boswell does not even list himself on the title page of this *Variorum*, happy to leave the field to Malone, and takes Gifford to task for his tone toward him elsewhere.

Jonson's quotation was the original reading that the Folio corrected, which someone made in the acting copy for *Julius Caesar*. Although Jonson's claim that it was an alteration did not, of course, appear until at least 1637, it does represent one instance of many examples of the same phenomenon, more likely an accurate report because such changes were uncommon. Finally, given the "probability" Shakespeare collaborated on *Sejanus* in 1600-01, it is equally likely that Jonson graciously returned the favor for the complementary Roman play. If Polonius's allusion (*Ham.* 3.2.98-106 / 1953-61) is indeed to Shakespeare's tragedy, it suggests that a poor actor played Caesar, which implies that this first substandard production excited the indignation of his theatrical colleague. Clement Mansfield Ingleby (1867, 1874 /5) argues that Jonson was wrong to laugh at the line that he parodies, for he failed to understand it as perfectly Shakespearean "good sense." However, in spite of these ingenious speculations, only two editions of the play actually emend the Folio text to reflect the anecdote, Henry N. Hudson's *Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar," with Introduction, and Notes Explanatory and Critical, for Use in Schools and Classes*, the expurgated "School Shakespeare." In what might be described as editing in bad faith, especially for gullible youngsters, the Reverend Hudson makes no effort on the page of the actual locus (3.1.47-8 / 1254-55) to explain that what he has supplied is indeed conjectural, preferring to relegate such information to the Critical Notes at the back of the volume.<sup>21</sup> In the twentieth century, the Second Oxford (1986) edition incorporates part of Jonson's version as Tyrwhitt posited it, which is explained more fully in its

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<sup>21</sup> For Halliwell-Phillipps, see *Works*, 16 vols. (London: Printed for the Editor by J. and C. Adlard, 1843-65; 1864): 13: pg. For Fleay, see *Shakespeare Manual* (London: Macmillan, 1876), 266-70. The material appeared originally as "On two plays of Shakspeare's: Part II. *Julius Caesar*," in the inaugural publication of *New Shakspeare Society Transactions* 1 (1874): 357-66; 357. In Hudson's *Caesar* (Boston: Ginn, 1879) the locus (104) is far from the explanation (199): "I here restore a genuine piece of the poet's text as preserved and authenticated to us by Ben Jonson. . . . How came the passage to be as the Folio gives it? . . . As Jonson had some hand in getting up the Folio, it is nowise unlikely that he may have made the alteration; though it would seem as if he might have seen that the change just spoilt the poet's dramatic logic. Or it may well be that the Editors, not understanding the two senses of 'wrong,' struck out the words *but with just cause*, and then altered the language at other points in order to salve the metre. Either of these is, I think, much more probable than that Shakespeare himself made the change in order to 'escape laughter.' At all events, Jonson is better authority as to how Shakespeare wrote the passage than the Folio is that Shakespeare made the change." For Ingleby, see note 5, *supra*. In the fourth edition of Charles Wordsworth's *On Shakespeare's Knowledge and Use of the Bible* (London: Eden, Remington, 1892), he argues that Jonson's version of the line is "easily defensible, no less than the foregoing quotations from S. Paul and from our Lord Himself will be readily defended not only by a reverent, but a sound and judicious criticism," i.e., as an oxymoron comparable to 2 Corinthians 6.8, "as deceivers and [yet] true (343).

complementary *Textual Companion* (1987). Again, the Fourth Oxford diverges and maintains the Folio reading.<sup>22</sup>

Those who thought of themselves as Shakespeare's advocates defended the Folio reading and faulted Jonson alone for misquoting or misremembering, perhaps from other factors besides malice. Collier's defense of the text as it stands may explain why his "manuscript corrector," as his colleagues dryly put it regarding the annotations in the Perkins Folio, did not offer a conjecture in subsequent editions: Jonson was in his dotage, and incorrectly inserted (or fabricated) the line for Cimber in order to complete his own anecdote in a way that satisfied him, as older gentlemen have been known to do. Certainly modern readers are privileged to have "the passage as written by Shakespeare, and that it was never, in fact, liable to the criticism of Jonson." Fleay's elaborate theory of alterations and promptbooks above is eviscerated by no less an authority than Frederick Furnivall, and in the same publication (1874). Truly, "if Ben Jonson had really revised Shakespeare's *Jul. Cæs.*, he would certainly have told us that he, the great Ben, had set his friend's ridiculous passages all right. Jonson was not the man to hide his light under a bushel." Samuel Bailey (1866) and George Lillie Craik (1857, 1864) rehearse similar arguments, but allow for the possibility of Shakespearean revision at some point—without any credit to Jonson, of course.<sup>23</sup>

William George Clark and William Aldis Wright, who in various states of collaboration produced the Globe (1864) and First Cambridge (1863-66) editions of the plays, attempted to demolish the Giffordians on the matter once and for all. They observed that the first twelve lines of Caesar's reply seem

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<sup>22</sup> The Oxford editors omit Metellus' line, but emend 1254-5 to read, "Know Caesar doth not wrong but with just cause / Nor without cause will he be satisfied." See Stanley Wells et al., eds., *Complete Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), as well as the revised version (2005), which keeps the reading. For discussion of the crux and then the textual note itself, see *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion*, ed. Wells et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 387 and 389, respectively.

<sup>23</sup> For Collier, see *Works*, 8 vols. (London: Whittaker and Co, 1842-4; 1844): 7: 46n4. His forged comments and conjectures on *Julius Caesar*, many of them quite astute, can be found in *Notes and Emendations to the Text of Shakespeare's Plays, from Early Manuscript Corrections in A Copy of the Folio, 1632, in the Possession of J. Payne Collier Esq., F.S.A., Forming a Supplemental Volume to the Works of Shakespeare by the Same Editor*, 2nd. ed. (London: Whittaker and Co, 1853), 407-16. For Furnivall, see *Shakspeare Society Transactions* (1874): 503. Bailey allows that the weakness of the clause after Caesar's preceding protestations of firmness suggest that it represents revision. But Jonson's addition of "Cæsar, thou dost me wrong," suggests that he misremembered. That "Will he be satisfied" is not a full pentameter line means nothing. Another credible reading could be "Know, Caesar doth not wrong, nor without cause." See *On the Received Text of Shakespeare's Dramatic Writings and Its Improvement*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1866), 2:65-7. Craik: "We must take it as meaning, 'Cæsar never does what is wrong or unjust; nor will he be appeased (when he has determined to punish) without sufficient reason being shown.' At the same time, it must be confessed both that these two propositions, or affirmations, do not hang very well together." He suggests that Shakespeare indeed mended the passage because of Jonson's ridicule. See *The English of Shakespeare*, 221.

perfectly competent, and since Gifford, and by analogy, Jonson, both fail to mention them, the episode seems quite suspect.<sup>24</sup> Wright, the sole editor of the First Clarendon Series text (1878), eloquently developed this argument in defense of the Folio reading. Although he had carefully considered the veracity of Tyrwhitt's conjecture as well as Ingleby's advocacy for the Shakespearean authenticity of the lines that Jonson mocks, he ultimately rejected these arguments. The line in the 1623 text cannot be corrupt, because the hypercritical rival's version is less sensible. That the players themselves were responsible for adopting the present reading is also not credible, because surely they would not have omitted Metellus's "Cæsar, thou dost me wrong," which would have added the requisite clarity. (Additionally, we observe, Metellus knows better than to interrupt the dictator, let alone continue to address him in the familiar and then accuse him of fallibility, in public, no less, which would have been both dangerous and rude, a deadly insult.) "On the whole," concluded Wright, "I am disposed to believe that Jonson loved his jest better than his friend, and repeated a distorted version of the passage without troubling himself about its accuracy, because it afforded him an opportunity of giving a hit at Shakespeare."<sup>25</sup> We might well infer that since Wright's

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<sup>24</sup> In the First Cambridge edition of the play (1865), Clark and Wright observe: "surely the first twelve lines of Cæsar's reply, to which Gifford makes no allusion, cannot have been written by any other hand than Shakespeare's. On the whole it seems more probable that Jonson, quoting from memory, quoted wrong, than that the passage was altered in consequence of his censure, which was first made, publicly, in 1625." See *Works*, 9 vols. (Cambridge and London: Macmillan, 1863-6), 7:417.

<sup>25</sup> "Dr. Ingleby, following Tyrwhitt, contends that the passage so restored should form part of Shakespeare's text. I am not convinced that any change is necessary. Cæsar claims infallibility in his judgments, and a firmness of temper in resisting appeals to his vanity. Metellus bending low before him begins a flattering speech. Cæsar, knowing that his object was to obtain a reversal of the decree of banishment which had been pronounced against his brother, abruptly interrupts him. To appeal against the decree implied that the decree was unjust; to demand his brother's recall without assigning a cause was to impute to Cæsar that fickleness of purpose which he disdains in such strong terms. If it had not been for Ben Jonson's story, no one would have suspected any corruption in the passage. The question is whether his authority is sufficient to warrant a change. Gifford thinks that he gave Shakespeare's genuine words, and that what appears in the text is the players' 'botchery.' If the lines stood as Jonson quotes them, we must suppose one of two things: either that, in consequence of the ridicule they excited, Shakespeare himself altered them; or that they were altered by the players who edited the first folio, as Gifford believed. The former supposition is not probable, because if Jonson's remarks are hypercritical and the lines yield a tolerable sense, Shakespeare would have been aware of this as well as any of his commentators, and is not likely to have made a change which is confessedly unnecessary. On the other hand, if the players introduced the alteration, it is not easy to see why they should have left out the words which Jonson puts into the mouth of Metellus, 'Cæsar, thou dost me wrong'; nor why they should have written, 'Know, Cæsar doth not wrong' instead of 'Cæsar did never wrong.' The argument that the passage is obviously corrupt because it ends with an imperfect line is of no weight, because it would apply equally to the proposed restoration, in which another imperfect line is introduced. On the whole, I am disposed to believe that Ben Jonson loved his jest better than his friend, and repeated a distorted version of the passage without troubling himself about its accuracy, because it afforded him an opportunity of giving a hit at Shakespeare. It is worth while to remark that for Metellus to interrupt Cæsar with the petulant exclamation, 'Cæsar, thou dost me wrong,' is out of character with the tone of his speeches before and after, which is that of abject

argument concludes our predecessor's enormous note in the 1913 *Variorum* on the passage, it had solidified into a type of "official position" at that time, and, given his eminence, was not necessarily amenable to challenge.<sup>26</sup> Naturally, this is not how literary history works, nor is it ever quite predictable, especially in the case of Shakespeare studies.

The advent of analytical bibliography in the twentieth century, as well as Furness's implicit prompt, may have caused the issue to be demoted from a crux to a lesser issue in some quarters. W. W. Greg mentions the matter only cursorily, Fredson Bowers and Brents Stirling not at all. The most comprehensive stage history of *Julius Caesar* and at least one essential modern edition also ignore the matter entirely.<sup>27</sup> Yet not everyone has been willing to omit it from the lore of the play. Maurice Ridley, T. W. Baldwin, and Dover Wilson give it credence. Two of the three most recent single-text editions repeat Tyrwhitt's conjecture in their notes (without mentioning his name), another addresses the incident and hypothesizes anew, and again, the Second Oxford editors, like Hudson, emend the lines in part to reflect Jonson's anecdote.<sup>28</sup>

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flattery." See *Shakespeare, Select Plays, "Julius Caesar,"* ed. W. A. Wright (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1878), 152-53.

<sup>26</sup> Furness, after citing Wright in full, and then adding Drummond's appraisal of Jonson as "a great lover and praiser of himself; a contemner and scorner of others, concludes magisterially: "Even had the line been as Jonson quotes it his words would have been none the less malicious" (140).

<sup>27</sup> Greg implies that the matter is beneath contempt, mentioning it only cursorily and obliquely "A late literary alteration may have been made at III.i.47, but the matter is too speculative to base much on it." In a footnote, he directs the reader to Dover Wilson's 1949 article. See *The Shakespeare First Folio*, 289. For Bowers and Stirling, see note 1, *supra*. See also John Ripley, "*Julius Caesar*" on Stage in England and America, 1599-1973 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Marvin Spevack, ed., *Julius Caesar*, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>28</sup> Ridley: "The line in the original form seems to me so completely Shakespearean in its anacoluthic expressiveness, and also so typical of the Shakespearean Caesar, that I believe it should be restored to the text." See *Julius Caesar*, New Temple Shakespeare (London: Dent, 1935), pg; Baldwin: "It is a fairly certain inference under the customs of the time that Jonson had made his criticism known, probably at the 'reading' of the play, and that the offending passage was revised." See *William Shakspeare's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke*, 2 vols. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1944), 1:15. For those who mention the conjecture that Tyrwhitt first made in the 1778 *Variorum*, see the Second Arden edition of T. S. Dorsch (London: Routledge, 1955), 65; and Humphreys (5), who adds, at the locus: "The apparent solecism is not actually—as Jonson held—'ridiculous'; it may be taken to mean 'Caesar never acted hurtfully but for good reason.' But assuming that Jonson was not making it up, alteration (by Shakespeare or the book-keeper) might well seem desirable to avert derision, though if 'Caesar, thou doest me wrong' were (as Jonson alleged) in the original text its disappearance is odd, since there is nothing wrong with it. It might have been cut accidentally, or, though purporting to quote accurately, Jonson might sense that a plausible cue was needed and so invent [sic] one. Since he was retailing [sic] the joke in the 1620s the original version (if any) must have been current for some time in the theatre, but when, and by whom, revision (if any) was effected cannot be ascertained" (82). Daniell, editor of the Third Arden (1998) explains that Jonson's references "have suggested to later editors that lines were originally in the play that allowed Jonson's gibe, and later cut. That may well be so. The line [Jonson remembers] would easily fit if

We think that two speculations from the middle of the last century, representative of the “old philology,” are worth mentioning, because they bear directly on Caesar’s words in either form, the Drummond anecdote or the First Folio. In T. S. Dorsch’s Second Arden edition (1955), he credits a John Crow with finding a parallel passage from a poem in Nicholas Breton’s *A Floorish upon Fancie* (1577), a popular miscellany that Shakespeare might well have known. No one should criticize the lady Fancie, says the narrator: “therefore sure the man, that rayleth on hir so, / Hath done hir wronge, without iust cause, to stand so much her so.”<sup>29</sup> And, even more intriguingly, Mary Clementine Proestler observed in her long-ago M.A. thesis that both Suetonius (*Lives*) and Cicero (*De officiis*) report that Caesar was known to quote a pair of lines from Euripides’s *Phoenissae* that resemble the disputed passage: “For if thou must do wrong by breach, / Of laws, of right and equitie, / Tis best thereby a Crowne to reach, / In all things els keepe pietie.”<sup>30</sup> This raises many interesting questions about Shakespeare’s reading and what could have motivated him, which we now call intertextuality.

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after 3.1.46, Metellus said something like ‘Caesar, thou dost me wrong,’ as a powerful short line, to which Caesar replied ‘Caesar did never wrong but with just cause, / Nor without cause will he be satisfied.’ . . . As part of mounting arrogance, it fits Caesar very well.” See *Julius Caesar*, 136-37. For the Oxford editors, see note 22 supra.

<sup>29</sup> “A Foole, Dame Fancies man, *speakes in defence of his Mistris, Fancy,*” in *A floorish vpon fancie, As gallant a glose vpon so triflinge a text, as euer was written, Compliled by N. B. Gent., To which are annexed, manie pretie pamphlets, for pleasant heads to passe away idle time withal, By the same authour* (London: By [W. How for] Richard Ihones, 1577), sig. Ev. Dorsch does not quote the passage in its entirety, but gives Crow credit for finding it (65).

<sup>30</sup> For Proestler, see “An Approach through Nature and Natural Law to the Moral Principles of Shakespeare’s Plays” (M. A. Thesis, U. of Iowa, 1928). We use two English translations of the loci that were in print in Shakespeare’s lifetime. The first is a parallel text of Cicero’s treatise. (As background, it should be mentioned that Caesar had married his daughter Julia to Pompey in 59 BCE to seal their First Triumvirate, which included Marcus Crassus, and thus became his father-in-law.) “*ipse autem socer in ore semper Græcos uersus Euripidis de Phænissis habebat, quos dicam ut potero, incondite fortasse, sed tamen ut res possit intelligi. Nam si uiolandū est ius, regnandi gratia uiolandum est, alijs in rebus pietatem colas*” [His fader in lawe had alway these verses of the poete Euripides, of the tragedye called Phenisse, which I woll say as I can, perauenture out of ordre, but not withstanding so that the mater may be vnderstande. For if the lawe shulde be broken, it is to be broken for the entent to gouerne & rule, in al other thynges kepe equitie & thy duty to god & mā]. See *The thre bookes of Tylles offyces both in latyne tonge [et] in englysshe, lately translated by Roberte Whytinton poete laureate* (London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1534), T6v-T7. The second is the Philemon Holland translation of Suetonius:

Some are of opinion, that being so long inured & acquainted with soueraigne command, & weighing his owne puissance & the power of his enemies, in ballāce one against the other, took the occasion & opportunitie to usurpe that absolute dominion, which in the uerie prime of his years he aspired unto; and of this mind, it seemeth C{ICERO} was, who in his 3. book of duties [i.e., *De officiis*] writeth, that C{EASAR} had always in his mouth, these verses of E{URPIDES}.

Εἴπερ γὰρ ἀδικεῖν χρή, τυραννίδος περὶ  
Κάλλιστον ἀδικεῖν, τάλλα δ' εὐσεβεῖν χρεών. [*Phoenissae* 524-5]



The prodigious amount of commentary on the passage over three centuries, as well as its variation in emphasis and interpretation, suggest to us that what constitutes a crux is almost entirely dependent upon literary era and milieu. Other motivating factors include an individual editor's judgment and proclivities, and, on occasion, personal relationships or rivalries. It seems especially significant that no full-length article exists that is devoted entirely to the issues regarding the two lines in question, and that nothing substantial has been written since 1949 devoted to the possible Jonsonian presence in various parts of *Julius Caesar*.<sup>31</sup> In the case of this crux, then, perhaps the question of "how an editor or reader resolves or declines to resolve the ambiguity or opacity it presents," as our seminar description reads, may *not* be that significant in interpretation regarding our passage. We therefore suggest that it is necessary to ask "why" as well as "how."

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Which C{ICERO} himself translated thus.

*Nam si violandum est ius, imperij gratia  
Violandum est, alijs rebus pietatem colas.*  
For if thou must do wrong by breach,  
Of laws, of right and equitie,  
Tis best thereby a Crowne to reach,  
In all things els keepe pietie.

See "The Historie of Caius Iulius Cesar Dictator," in *The historie of twelve Caesars, emperours of Rome: written in Latine by C. Suetonius Tranquilius, and newly translated into English, by Philêmon Holland* (London: Printed for Matthew Lownes, 1606), 14. We have modified Holland's Greek text in accordance with modern readings. See Gilbert Murray, ed. *Euripides: Fabulae*, 2nd. ed., 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 3: np.

<sup>31</sup> See MacD P. Jackson, "'But with Just Cause': *Julius Caesar* III.i.47," *Notes and Queries* n.s. 48 (2001): 282-84. The note gives a very brief survey of the history of the controversy and speculates that Metellus's surmised line was omitted by accident.