THE TEXT

INTRODUCTION

NOTE. In citations from Shakespeare's plays and nondramatic poems the numbering has reference to the Globe edition, except in the case of this play, where the reference is to this edition.

I. SOURCES

No event in the history of the world has made a more profound impression upon the popular imagination than the assassination of Julius Cæsar. Apart from its overwhelming interest as a personal catastrophe, it was regarded in the sixteenth century as a happening of the greatest historical moment, fraught with significant public lessons for all time. There is ample evidence that in England from the beginning of Elizabeth's reign it was the subject of much literary and dramatic treatment, and in making the murder of "the mightiest Julius" the climax of a play, Shakespeare was true to that instinct which drew him for material to themes of universal and eternal interest.

THE MAIN STORY

1. *North's Plutarch.* There is no possible doubt that in *Julius Cæsar* Shakespeare derived the great body of his historical material from *The Life of Julius Cæsar*, *The Life of Marcus Brutus*, and *The Life of Marcus Antonius*

in Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch.[1] This work was first printed in 1579 in a massive folio dedicated to Queen Elizabeth. A second edition appeared in 1595, and in all probability this was the edition read by Shakespeare. The title-page is here shown in facsimile. This interesting title-page gives in brief the literary history of North's translation, which was made not directly from the original Greek of Plutarch, but from a French version by Jacques Amyot, bishop of Auxerre.[2] In 1603 appeared a third edition with additional *Lives* and new matter on the title-page.[3] There were subsequent editions in 1612,[4] 1631, 1656, and 1676. The popularity of this work attested by these reprintings was thoroughly deserved, for North's Plutarch is among the richest and freshest monuments of Elizabethan prose literature, and, apart altogether from the use made of it by Shakespeare, is in itself an invaluable repertory of honest, manly, idiomatic English. No abstract of the Plutarchian matter need be given here, as all the more important passages drawn upon for the play are quoted in

[1] Professor W. W. Skeat's *Shakespeare's Plutarch* (The Macmillan Company) gives these *Lives* in convenient form with a text based upon the edition of 1612.

[2] Despite the assertion on North's title-page, Amyot, whose version appeared in 1559, probably translated from a Latin text.

[3] This title-page is given in facsimile as the frontispiece of this volume. The facsimile shows an interesting bit of seventeenth century handwriting containing what some experts have regarded as a genuine Shakespeare autograph. See Justin Winsor's *Notes on Some Writing which may be by Shakespeare in Boston Public Library, 1889.*

[4] There is a famous copy of this edition in the Greenock Library with the initials "W. S." at the top of the title-page and seventeenth century manuscript notes in *The Life of Julius Cæsar*. See Skeat's *Shakespeare's Plutarch*, Introduction, p. xii.

THE LIVES
OF THE NOBLE GRECIANS AND ROMANES, COMPARED
TOGETHER BY THAT GRAVE LEARNED PHILOSOPHER AND HISTORIOGRAPHER, *Plutarke of Chæronea*:

Translated out of Greeke into French by IAMES AMIOT, Abbot of Bellozane, Bishop of Auxerre, one of the Kings priuie counsell, and great Amner of France, and out of French into English, by *Thomas North.*

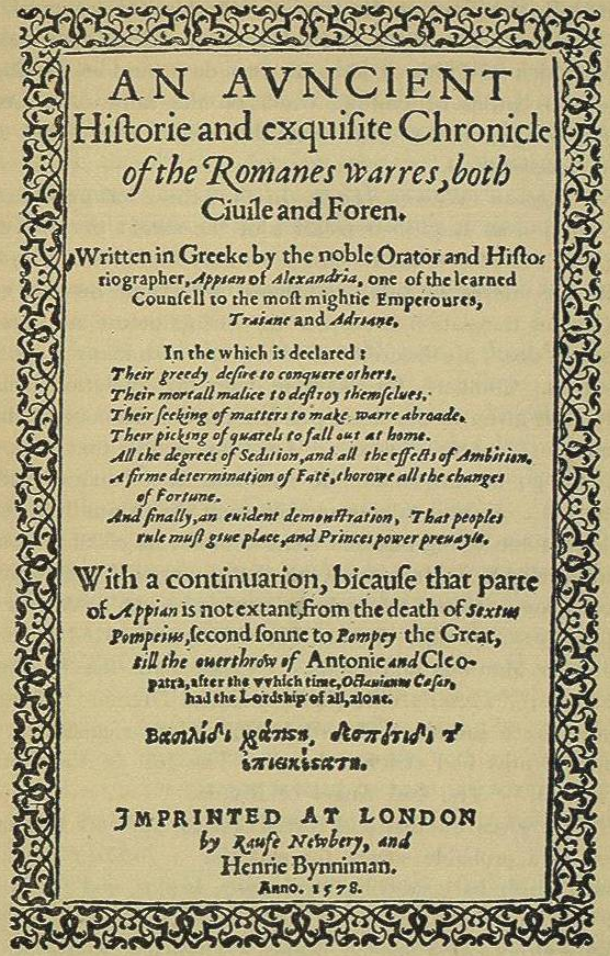
Imprinted at London by Richard Field for Bonham Norton. 1595.

the footnotes to the text. These will show that in most of the leading incidents the great Greek biographer is closely followed, though in many cases these incidents are worked out and developed with rare fertility of invention and art. It is very significant that in the second half of *The Life of Julius Cæsar*, which Shakespeare draws upon very heavily, Plutarch emphasizes those weaknesses of Cæsar which are made so prominent in the play. Besides this, in many places the Plutarchian form and order of thought, and also the very words of North's racy and delectable English are retained, with such an embalming for immortality as Shakespeare alone could give.[1]

In *Julius Cæsar* Shakespeare's indebtedness to North's Plutarch may be summed up as extending to (1) the general story of the play; (2) minor incidents and happenings, as Cæsar's falling-sickness, the omens before his death, and the writings thrown in Brutus's way; (3) touches of detail, as in the description of Cassius's "lean and hungry look" and of Antony's tastes and personal habits; and (4) noteworthy expressions, phrases, and single words, as in III, ii, 240–241, 246–248; IV, iii, 2; IV, iii, 178; V, i, 80–81; V, iii, 109.

On the other hand, Shakespeare's alteration of Plutarchian material is along the lines of (1) idealization, as in the characters of Brutus and Cassius; (2) amplification, as in the use Antony makes of Cæsar's rent and bloody mantle; and (3) simplification and compression of the action for dramatic effect, as in making Cæsar's

[1] See Trench's *Lectures on Plutarch*, Leo's *Four Chapters of North's Plutarch*, and Delius's *Shakespeare's Julius Cæsar und seine Quellen in Plutarch* (*Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, XVII, 67).



AN AVNCIENT
Historie and exquisite Chronicle
of the Romanes warres, both
Ciuile and Foren.

Written in Greeke by the noble Orator and Historiographer, *Appian* of *Alexandria*, one of the learned Counsell to the most mightie Emperoures, *Traiane* and *Adriane*.

In the which is declared:
Their greedy desire to conquere others.
Their mortall malice to destroy themselves.
Their seeking of matters to make warre abroade.
Their picking of quarels to fall out at home.
All the degrees of Sedition, and all the effects of Ambition.
A firme determination of Fate, thorowe all the changes of Fortune.
And finally, an euident demonstration, That peoples rule must giue place, and Princes power preuayle.

With a continuation, bicause that parte of *Appian* is not extant, from the death of *Sextus Pompeius*, second sonne to *Pompey* the Great, till the ouerthrow of Antonie and Cleopatra, after the vvhich time, *Octauianus Cæsar*, had the Lordship of all, alone.

Βασιλίδι χάριν, δεσπότιδι τ' ἐπιεικίσατο.

IMPRINTED AT LONDON
by Rause Newbery, and
Henrie Bynniman.
Anno. 1578.

triumph take place at the time of "the feast of Lupercal," in the treatment of the quarrel between Brutus and Cassius, which in Plutarch lasts for two days, and in making the two battles of Philippi occur on the same day. See note, p. 159, ll. 109–110. See also below, The Scene of the Assassination.

2. *Appian's Roman Wars.* In 1578 there was published in London an English translation of the extant portions of Appian's *History of the Roman Wars both Civil and Foreign*, with the interesting title page shown in facsimile on page xi.

In this translation of Appian the events before and after Cæsar's death are described minutely and with many graphic touches. Compare, for example, with the quotation from Plutarch given in the note, p. 68, l. 33, this account of the same incident in Appian: "The day before that Cæsar should go to the senate, he had him at a banquet with Lepidus . . . and talking merrily what death was best for a man, some saying one and some another, he of all praised sudden death." Here are some of the marginal summaries in Appian: "Cæsar refuseth the name of King," "A crown upon Cæsar's image by one that was apprehended of the tribunes Marullus and Sitius," "Cæsar hath the Falling-Sickness," "Cæsar's Wife (hath) a fearful Dream," "Cæsar contemneth sacrifices of evil Luck," "Cæsar giveth over when Brutus had stricken him," "The fear of the Conspirators," "The bad Angel of Brutus."

What gives interest and distinction to Appian's translation as a probable source for material in *Julius Cæsar* is that in it we have speeches by Antony, Brutus, and Lepidus at the time of the reading of Cæsar's will. In this translation Antony's first speech begins, "They that would have

voices tried upon Cæsar must know afore that if he ruled as an officer lawfully chosen, then all his acts and decrees must stand in force. . . ." On Antony's second speech the comment is, "Thus wrought Antony artificially." His speech to the Senate begins, "Silence being commanded, he said thus, 'Of the citizens offenders (you men of equal honour) in this your consultation I have said nothing. . . .'" The speech of Lepidus to the people has this setting: "When he was come to the place of speech he lamented, weeping, and thus said, 'Here I was yesterday with Cæsar, and now am I here to inquire of Cæsar's death. . . . Cæsar is gone from us, an holy and honourable man in deed.'" The effect of this speech is commented on as follows: "Handling the matter thus craftily, the hired men, knowing that he was ambitious, praised him and exhorted him to take the office of Cæsar's priesthood." A long speech by Brutus follows the reading of Cæsar's will. It begins: "Now, O citizens, we be here with you that yesterday were in the common court not as men fleeing to the temple that have done amiss, nor as to a fort, having committed all we have to you. . . . We have heard what hath been objected against us of our enemies, touching the oath and touching cause of doubt. . . ." The effect of this speech is thus described: "Whiles Brutus thus spake, all the hearers considering with themselves that he spake nothing but right, did like them well, and as men of courage and lovers of the people, had them in great admiration and were turned into their favour."

3. *Earlier Plays.* As already mentioned, England had plays on the subject of Julius Cæsar from the first years of Elizabeth's reign. As not one of these earlier plays is

extant, there can be no certainty as to whether Shakespeare drew upon them for materials or inspiration, but, as Professor Herford says, "he seems to be cognisant of their existence." His opening scene is addressed to a public familiar with the history of Pompey and Pompey's sons. Among these earlier plays was one almost contemporary with the first production of *Gorboduc*, the first English tragedy. It is referred to under the name of *Julyus Sesar* in an entry in Machyn's *Diary* under February 1, 1562. In *Plays confuted in five Actions*, printed probably in 1582, Stephen Gosson mentions the history of *Cæsar and Pompey* as a contemporary play. A Latin play on Cæsar's death was acted at Oxford in 1582, and for it Dr. Richard Eedes (Eades, Edes) of Christ Church wrote the epilogue (*Epilogus Cæsaris Interfecti*). In Henslowe's *Diary* under November 8, 1594, a *Seser and pompie* is mentioned as a new play. Mr. A. W. Verity (*Julius Cæsar*, The Pitt Press edition) makes the interesting suggestion that in III, i, 111–116, there may be an allusion to these earlier plays. Cf. also *Hamlet*, III, ii, 107–111, quoted below.

The Scene of the Assassination

In transferring the assassination of Cæsar from the *Porticus Pompeia* ("Pompey's porch," I, iii, 126) to the Capitol, Shakespeare departed from Plutarch and historical accuracy to follow a popular tradition that had received the signal imprimatur of Chaucer:

> This Iulius to the Capitolie wente
> Upon a day, as he was wont to goon,[1]

[1] go.

> And in the Capitolie anon him hente[1]
> This false Brutus, and his othere foon[2]
> And stikede him with boydekins[3] anoon
> With many a wounde, and thus they lete him lye;
> But never gronte[4] he at no strook but oon,
> Or elles at two, but-if[5] his storie lye.
>
> *The Monkes Tale*, ll. 715–718. (Skeat's *Chaucer*.)

This literary and popular tradition is followed in *Hamlet*, III, ii, 107–111:

> HAMLET. What did you enact?
> POLONIUS. I did enact Julius Cæsar: I was kill'd i' the Capitol: Brutus kill'd me.
> HAMLET. It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there.

So also in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

> Since Julius Cæsar,
> Who at Philippi the good Brutus ghosted,
> There saw you labouring for him. What was 't
> That mov'd pale Cassius to conspire; and what
> Made the all-honour'd, honest Roman, Brutus,
> With the arm'd rest, courtiers of beauteous freedom,
> To drench the Capitol; but that they would
> Have one man but a man? [II, vi, 12–19.]

We have the same popular tradition in the first scene of the last act of Fletcher's *The Noble Gentleman*. So, too, in the Prologue to Beaumont and Fletcher's, or Fletcher and Massinger's, *The False One*, a tragedy dealing with Cæsar and Cleopatra:

> To tell
> Of Cæsar's amorous heats, and how he fell
> I' the Capitol.

Here the reference is to Shakespeare's play.

[1] seized. [2] foes. [3] daggers. [4] groaned. [5] unless.

"Et tu, Brute"

Dyce and other researchers have made clear that in Shakespeare's day "*Et tu, Brute*" was a familiar phrase which had special reference to a wound from a supposed friend. It probably owed its popularity to having been used in the earlier plays on the subject of Julius Cæsar. In *The True Tragedie of Richard Duke of York* (1595), upon which Shakespeare's *3 Henry VI* is based, occurs the line,

> *Et tu, Brute?* wilt thou stab Cæsar too?

This line is repeated in S. Nicholson's poem, *Acolastus, his Afterwitte* (1600). In Ben Jonson's *Every Man out of His Humour* (1599), Buffone uses "*Et tu, Brute*" in speaking to Macilente (V, iv). In the *Myrroure for Magistrates* (1587) we find,

> And Brutus thou, my sonne, quoth I, whom erst I loved best.

The Latin form of the phrase possibly originated, as Malone suggested, in the Latin play referred to above (Earlier Plays) which was acted at Oxford in 1582. It is easy to see how the Elizabethan tendency to word-quibble and equivoque would help to give currency to the Latin form. Cf. Hamlet's joke on 'brute' quoted above.

Brutus's Speech, III, ii

In view of the close connection between *Julius Cæsar* and *Hamlet* as regards date of composition and the characterization of Brutus and Hamlet, interest attaches to Professor Gollancz's theory (*Julius Cæsar*, Temple Shakespeare) that the original of the famous speech of Brutus to the assembled Romans (III, ii) may be found in Belleforest's *History of Hamlet*, in the oration which Hamlet makes to the Danes after he has slain his uncle. "The situation of Hamlet is almost identical with that of Brutus after he has dealt the blow, and the burden of Hamlet's too lengthy speech finds an echo in Brutus's sententious utterance. The verbose iteration of the Dane has been compressed to suit 'the brief compendious manner of speech of the Lacedæmonians.'" — Gollancz. As the English translation from which Professor Gollancz quotes in support of his theory is dated 1608, and is the earliest known,[1] it cannot have been from this that Shakespeare drew any suggestions or material. The question arises, Did Shakespeare read the speech in the original French? The volume of Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques*, which contained the story of Hamlet, was first published in 1570, and there were many reprintings of it before 1600.

II. DATE OF COMPOSITION

Modern editors fix the date of composition of *Julius Cæsar* within 1601, the later time limit (*terminus ante quem*), and 1598, the earlier time limit (*terminus post quem*). The weight of evidence is in favor of 1600–1601.

[1] Reprinted in Collier's *Shakespeare's Library*. This translation shows in more than one place the influence of Shakespeare's play. For example, Hamlet's exclamation before he kills Polonius, "A rat! a rat!" is in the English version, but there is no suggestion of it in the French original.

External Evidence

1. *Negative.* *Julius Cæsar* is not mentioned by Meres in the *Palladis Tamia*, published in 1598, which gives a list of twelve noteworthy Shakespeare plays in existence at that time. This establishes 1598 as a probable *terminus post quem.*

2. *Positive.* In John Weever's *Mirror of Martyrs or the Life and Death of Sir John Oldcastle Knight, Lord Cobham*, printed in 1601, are the following lines:

> The many-headed multitude were drawne
> By *Brutus* speech that *Cæsar* was ambitious,
> When eloquent *Mark Antonie* had showne
> His vertues, who but *Brutus* then was vicious?
> Man's memorie, with new, forgets the old,
> One tale is good, until another's told.

Halliwell-Phillipps was the first to note that here is a very pointed reference to the second scene of the third act of *Julius Cæsar*, as the antithesis brought out is not indicated in any of Shakespeare's historical sources. The fact that Weever states in his Dedication that the *Mirror* "some two years agoe was made fit for the print" has been held by Mr. Percy Simpson[1] to indicate that the play was not brought out later than 1599, a conclusion supported, he thinks, by a passage in Ben Jonson's *Every Man out of His Humour*, produced in that year, where Clove (III, i) says, "Then coming to the pretty animal, as *Reason long since is fled to animals*, you know," which may be a sneering allusion to Antony's "O judgment! thou art fled to brutish beasts" (III, ii, 104). The "*Et tu, Brute*" quotation in the same play has been used to strengthen the argument. But the

[1] In *Notes and Queries*, February, 1899.

lines from the *Mirror of Martyrs* quoted above may easily have been inserted by Weever into his poem in consequence of the popularity of Shakespeare's play. This contemporary popularity is well attested. Leonard Digges,[1] in his verses *Upon Master William Shakespeare* prefixed to the 1640 edition of Shakespeare's Poems, thus compares it with that of Ben Jonson's Roman plays:

> So have I seene, when Cesar would appeare,
> And on the Stage at halfe-sword parley were
> *Brutus* and *Cassius:* oh how the Audience
> Were ravish'd, with what new wonder they went thence,
> When some new day they would not brooke a line
> Of tedious (though well laboured) *Catiline;*
> *Sejanus* too was irkesome, they priz'de more
> Honest *Iago*, or the jealous *Moore.*

"Fustian" Clove's quotation may apply to references to the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls in Shakespeare's earlier plays and other Elizabethan literature; and little can be based upon the "*Et tu, Brute*" quotation, as Ben Jonson may have drawn it from the same source as Shakespeare did.

On the other hand, Henslowe in his *Diary* under May 22, 1602, notes that he advanced five pounds "in earneste of a Boocke called *sesers Falle*," which the dramatists Munday, Drayton, Webster, Middleton "and the Rest" were composing for Lord Nottingham's Company. *Cæsar's Fall* was plainly intended to outshine Shakespeare's popular play, but, as Professor Herford comments, "the lost play . . .

[1] Leonard Digges also wrote verses "To the Memorie of the deceased Authour Maister W. Shakespeare," prefixed to the First Folio.

for the rival company would have been a somewhat tardy counterblast to an old piece of 1599." He adds: "*Julius Cæsar* was certainly not unconcerned in the revival of the fashion for tragedies of revenge with a ghost in them, which suddenly set in with Marston's *Antonio and Mellida* and Chettle's *Hoffman* in 1601."

Dr. Furnivall, a strong advocate for 1601 as the date of composition, has suggested[1] that Essex's ill-judged rebellion against Queen Elizabeth, on Sunday, February 8, 1601, was the reason of Shakespeare's producing his *Julius Cæsar* in that year. "Assuredly," he says, "the citizens of London in that year who heard Shakespeare's play must have felt the force of '*Et tu, Brute*,' and must have seen Brutus's death, with keener and more home-felt influence than we feel and hear the things with now."

Drayton's revised version of his *Mortimeriados* (1596–1597), published in 1603 under the title of *The Barons' Wars*, has a passage which strongly resembles some lines in Antony's last speech (V, v, 73–74), but common property in the idea that a well-balanced mixture of the four elements (earth, air, fire, and water) produces a perfect man invalidates any argument for the date of the play based upon this evidence. See note, p. 167, l. 73.

Internal Evidence

Dr. W. A. Wright[2] has argued against an earlier date than 1600 for the composition of *Julius Caesar* from the use of 'eternal' for 'infernal' in I, i, 160. See note, p. 20, l. 160.

[1] In *The Academy*, September 18, 1875. See also *The Leopold Shakspere*, Introduction.

[2] *Julius Cæsar*, The Clarendon Press, Introduction, p. viii.

Of course there is no certainty that Shakespeare wished to use the word 'infernal,' and, besides, if any substitution was made, it may have been at a later date. But adumbrations of *Hamlet* everywhere in *Julius Cæsar*, the frequent references to Cæsar in *Hamlet*, the kinship in character of Brutus and Hamlet (see note, p. 46, l. 65), the treatment of the supernatural, and the development of the revenge motive give strong cumulative evidence that the composition of *Julius Cæsar* is in time very near to that of *Hamlet*, the first Shakespearian draft of which is now generally conceded to date from the first months of 1602. The diction of *Julius Cæsar*, the quality of the blank verse, the style generally (see below, Versification and Diction), all point to 1601 as the probable date of composition. It has been said that a true taste for Shakespeare is like the creation of a special sense; and this saying is nowhere better approved than in reference to his subtile variations of language and style. He began with what may be described as a preponderance of the poetic element over the dramatic. As we trace his course onward, we may discover a gradual rising of the latter element into greater strength and prominence, until at last it had the former in complete subjection. Now, where positive external evidence is wanting, it is mainly from the relative strength of these elements that the probable date of the writing may be argued. In *Julius Cæsar* the diction is more gliding and continuous, and the imagery more round and amplified, than in the earlier dramas or in those known to belong to Shakespeare's latest period.

These distinctive notes are of a nature more easily to be felt than described, and to make them felt examples will best

serve. Take then a passage from the soliloquy of Brutus just after he has pledged himself to the conspiracy:

> '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,
> Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees
> By which he did ascend. [II, i, 21–27.]

Here we have a full, rounded period in which all the elements seem to have been adjusted, and the whole expression set in order, before any part of it was written down. The beginning foresees the end, the end remembers the beginning, and the thought and image are evolved together in an even, continuous flow. The thing is indeed perfect in its way, still it is not in Shakespeare's latest and highest style. Now take a passage from *The Winter's Tale:*

> When you speak, sweet,
> I'ld have you do it ever: when you sing,
> I'ld have you buy and sell so, so give alms,
> Pray so; and, for the ordering your affairs,
> To sing them too: when you do dance, I wish you
> A wave o' the sea, that you might ever do
> Nothing but that; move still, still so,
> And own no other function. [IV, iv, 136–143.]

Here the workmanship seems to make and shape itself as it goes along, thought kindling thought, and image prompting image, and each part neither concerning itself with what has gone before, nor with what is coming after. The very sweetness has a certain piercing quality, and we taste it from clause to clause, almost from word to word, as so many keen darts

of poetic rapture shot forth in rapid succession. Yet the passage, notwithstanding its swift changes of imagery and motion, is perfect in unity and continuity.

III. EARLY EDITIONS

Folios

On November 8, 1623, Edward Blount and Isaac Jaggard obtained formal license to print "Mr. William Shakespeere's Comedyes, Histories, and Tragedyes, soe many of the said copies as are not formerly entered to other men." This is the description-entry in *The Stationers' Registers* of what is now known as the First Folio (1623), designated in the textual notes of this edition F_1. *Julius Cæsar* is one of the plays "not formerly entered,"[1] and it was first printed, so far as is known, in this famous volume. It is more correctly printed than perhaps any other play in the First Folio and, as the editors of the Cambridge Shakespeare suggest, "may perhaps have been (as the preface falsely implied that all were[2]) printed from the original manuscript of the author."[3] It stands between *Timon of Athens* and *Macbeth*, two very badly printed plays. The running title is *The Tragedie of*

[1] This is strong evidence that the play had not been printed at an earlier date.

[2] ". . . Absolute in their numbers, as he conceiued them. . . . His mind and heart went together: And what he thought, he vttered with that easinesse, that wee haue scarse receiued from him a blot in his papers" (Heminge and Condell's Address "To the great Variety of Readers," First Folio).

[3] Mr. F. G. Fleay in his Shakespeare Manual (1876) argues that "this play as we have it is an abridgement of Shakespeare's play made by Ben Jonson."

Julius Cæsar, but in the "Catalogve of the seuerall Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies contained in this Volume," the title is given as *The Life and Death of Julius Cæsar*.

The Second Folio, F_2 (1632), the Third Folio, F_3 (1663, 1664), and the Fourth Folio, F_4 (1685), show few variants in the text of *Julius Cæsar* and none of importance.

The Quarto of 1691

In 1691 *Julius Cæsar* appeared in quarto form. This Quarto contained one famous text variant, 'hath' for 'path' in II, i, 83. Though the Folio text here offers difficulties, and modern editors have suggested many emendations, no one has been inclined to accept the commonplace reading of the Quarto.

Rowe's Editions

In the Folios and in the Quarto of 1691 the play is divided into acts, but not into scenes, though the first act is headed *Actus Primus, Scæna Prima*. The first systematic division into scenes was made by Nicholas Rowe, poet laureate to George I, in the edition which he issued in six octavo volumes in 1709. In this edition Rowe, an experienced playwright, marked the entrances and exits of the characters and introduced many stage directions and the list of dramatis personæ which has been the basis for all later lists. A second edition in eight volumes was published in 1714. Rowe followed very closely the text of the Fourth Folio, but modernized spelling, punctuation, and occasionally grammar. These are the first critical editions of Shakespeare's plays.

IV. THE TITLE

It has been justly observed that Shakespeare shows much judgment in the naming of his plays. From this observation several critics have excepted *Julius Cæsar*, pronouncing the title a misnomer, on the ground that Brutus, and not Cæsar, is the hero of it. It is indeed true that Brutus is the hero, but the play is rightly named, for Cæsar is not only the subject but also the governing power of it throughout. He is the center and springhead of the entire action, giving law and shape to everything that is said and done. This is manifestly true in what occurs before his death; and it is true in a still deeper sense afterwards, since his genius then becomes the Nemesis or retributive Providence.

V. DRAMATIC CONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Julius Cæsar is a tragedy of a normal Shakespearian type, in which is represented a conflict between an individual, or group of individuals, and certain forces which environ, antagonize, and overwhelm. The unity of action and of interest is the personality of Julius Cæsar. In dramatic technique the play is simple and effective. Out of masses of detail and historical incident the dramatist has shaped a symmetrical and well-defined plot marked by (1) the exposition, or introduction, (2) the complication, or rising action, (3) the climax, or turning point, (4) the resolution, or falling action, and (5) the catastrophe, or conclusion. It is almost a commonplace of criticism that the opening scene of a Shakespeare play strikes the keynote of the action. It certainly does in a remarkable way in *Julius Cæsar*,

introducing, on the one side, a group of excited citizens friendly to Cæsar, and, on the other, two tribunes hostile to him. It foreshadows the character-contrasts in the play and the conflict between the state and the individual. The exposition continues through the second scene, in which are introduced the leading characters in significant action and interaction. At the close of this scene Cassius lays his plans to win Brutus over to the conspiracy, and the complication, or rising action, of the drama begins. Through the last scene of the first act and the four scenes of the second act the growth of the complication is continued, with brief intervals of suspense, until, in the first scene of the third act, the climax is reached in the assassination of Cæsar and the wild enthusiasm of the conspirators. With the entry of Antony's servant begins the resolution, or falling action (see note, p. 89, l. 123), and from now, through intervals of long suspense and many vicissitudes,[1] the fortunes of the chief conspirators fall inevitably to the catastrophe.

Analysis by Act and Scene[2]

I. The Exposition, or Introduction (Tying of the Knot)

Act I, Scene i. The popularity of Cæsar with the Roman mob and the jealousy of the official classes — the two motive forces of the

[1] For an interesting defense of the so-called 'dragging' tendency and episodical character of the third scene of the fourth act, see Professor A. C. Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy*, pp. 55–61.

[2] "It must be understood that a play can be analyzed into very different schemes of plot. It must not be thought that one of these schemes is right and the rest wrong; but the schemes will be better or worse in proportion as — while of course representing correctly the facts of the play — they bring out more or less of what ministers to our sense of design." — Moulton.

play — are revealed. The fickleness of the mob is shown in a spirit of comedy; the antagonism of Marullus and Flavius strikes the note of tragedy.

Act I, Scene ii, 1–304. The supreme characters are introduced, and in their opening speeches each reveals his temperament and foreshadows the part which he will play. The exposition of the situation is now complete.

II. The Complication, Rising Action, or Growth (Tying of the Knot)

Act I, Scene ii, 305–319. In soliloquy Cassius unfolds his scheme for entangling Brutus in the conspiracy, and the dramatic complication begins.

Act I, Scene iii. Casca, excited by the fiery portents that bode disaster to the state, is persuaded by Cassius to join "an enterprise of honourable-dangerous consequence" (lines 123–124). The conspirators are assigned to their various posts, and Cassius engages to secure Brutus before morning.

Act II, Scene i. The humane character of Brutus, as master, husband, and citizen, is elaborated, and his attitude to Cæsar and the conspiracy of assassination clearly shown. He joins the conspirators — apparently their leader, in reality their tool. In lines 162–183 he pleads that the life of Antony be spared, and thus unconsciously prepares for his own ruin.

Act II, Scene ii. Cæsar is uneasy at the omens and portents, and gives heed to Calpurnia's entreaties to remain at home, but he yields to the importunity of Decius and starts for the Capitol, thus advancing the plans of the conspirators. The dramatic contrast between Cæsar and Brutus is strengthened by that between Calpurnia in this scene and Portia in the preceding.

Act II, Scene iii. The dramatic interest is intensified by the warning of Artemidorus and the suggestion of a way of escape for the protagonist.

Act II, Scene iv. The interest is further intensified by the way in which readers and spectators are made to share the anxiety of Portia.

III. The Climax, Crisis, or Turning Point (the Knot Tied)

Act III, Scene i, 1–122. The dramatic movement is now rapid, and the tension, indicated by the short whispered sentences of all the speakers except Cæsar, is only increased by his imperial utterances, which show utter unconsciousness of the impending doom. In the assassination all the complicating forces — the self-confidence of Cæsar, the unworldly patriotism of Brutus, the political chicanery of Cassius, the unscrupulousness of Casca, and the fickleness of the mob — bring about an event which changes the lives of all the characters concerned and threatens the stability of the Roman nation. The death of Cæsar is the climax of the physical action of the play; it is at the same time the emotional crisis from which Brutus comes with altered destiny.

IV. The Resolution, Falling Action, or Consequence (the Untying of the Knot)

Act III, Scene i, 123–298. With Brutus's "Soft! who comes here? A friend of Antony's" begins the resolution, or falling action, of the play. "The fortune of the conspirators, hitherto in the ascendant, now declines, while 'Cæsar's spirit' surely and steadily prevails against them." — Verity. Against the advice of Cassius, Brutus gives Antony permission to deliver a public funeral oration. Antony in a soliloquy shows his determination to avenge Cæsar, and the first scene of the falling action closes with the announcement that Octavius is within seven leagues of Rome.

Act III, Scene ii — Scene iii. The orations of Antony, in vivid contrast to the conciliatory but unimpassioned speeches of Brutus, fire the people and liberate fresh forces in the falling action. Brutus and Cassius have to fly the city, riding "like madmen through the gates of Rome." In unreasoning fury the mob tears to pieces an innocent poet who has the same name as a conspirator.

Act IV, Scene i. Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus, having formed a triumvirate of which Antony is the master spirit, agree on a proscription list and join forces against Brutus and Cassius, who "are levying powers."

Act IV, Scene ii. Brutus and Cassius, long parted by pride and obstinacy, meet to discuss a plan of action.

Act IV, Scene iii. This is one of the most famous individual scenes in Shakespeare (see note, page 123). Its intensely human interest is always conceded, but its dramatic propriety, because of what seems a 'dragging' tendency, has been often questioned. The scene opens with Brutus and Cassius bandying recriminations, and the quarrel of the two generals bodes disaster to their cause. As the discussion proceeds, they yield points and become reconciled. Brutus then quietly but with peculiar pathos tells of Portia's death by her own hand. In all the great tragedies, with the notable exception of *Othello*, when the forces of the resolution, or falling action, are gathering towards the dénouement, Shakespeare introduces a scene which appeals to an emotion different from any of those excited elsewhere in the play. "As a rule this new emotion is pathetic; and the pathos is not terrible or lacerating, but, even if painful, is accompanied by the sense of beauty and by an outflow of admiration or affection, which come with an inexpressible sweetness after the tension of the crisis and the first counter-stroke. So it is with the reconciliation of Brutus and Cassius, and the arrival of the news of Portia's death." — Bradley. While the shadow of her tragic passing overhangs the spirits of both, Brutus overhears the shrewd, cautious counsel of Cassius and persuades him to assent to the fatal policy of offering battle at Philippi. That night the ghost of Cæsar appears to Brutus.

Act V, Scene i. The action now falls rapidly to the quick, decisive movement of the dénouement. The antagonists are now face to face. Brutus and Cassius have done what Antony and Octavius hoped that they would do. The opposing generals hold a brief parley in which Brutus intimates that he is willing to effect a reconciliation, but Antony rejects his proposals and bluntly charges him and Cassius with the wilful murder of Cæsar. Cassius reminds Brutus of his warning that Antony should have fallen when Cæsar did. Antony, Octavius, and their army retire, and the scene closes with the noble farewell without hope between Brutus and Cassius.

Act V, Scene ii. The opposing armies meet on the field, and a final flare-up of hope in the breast of Brutus is indicated by his spirited order to Messala to charge. The scene implies that Cassius was defeated by being left without support by Brutus.