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THE NEW  
CAMBRIDGE  
SHAKESPEARE

Edited by Martin Spevack

Revised with a new introduction by Jeremy Lopez

# JULIUS CAESAR

Third edition

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Third Edition

*Edited by*

**MARVIN SPEVACK**

Revised and with a new introduction by

**JEREMY LOPEZ**

*University of Toronto*



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## THE NEW CAMBRIDGE SHAKESPEARE

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

## JULIUS CAESAR

This revised edition preserves the play text as it was edited by Marvin Spevack for the 1988 first edition. Jeremy Lopez's new introduction provides a detailed discussion of *Julius Caesar*'s strange and innovative form by focusing on the interpretive challenges the play has presented to audiences, scholars and theatre companies from Shakespeare's time to our own. The textual commentary has been revised and updated with an eye, and an ear, to the contemporary student reader, and the list of further reading has been updated to reflect the latest developments in Shakespearean criticism. Like the first edition, this edition concludes with an appendix containing relevant excerpts from Shakespeare's main source, Plutarch's histories of the lives of Caesar and Brutus as translated by Sir Thomas North in 1579.

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*The First Quarto of Othello*, edited by Scott McMillin  
*The First Quarto of Romeo and Juliet*, edited by Lukas Erne  
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M. S.

*Münster 1988*

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J. L.  
Toronto 2015



## ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

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

### 1. Shakespeare's Plays

<i>Ado</i>	<i>Much Ado about Nothing</i>
<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>
<i>AWW</i>	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>
<i>AYLI</i>	<i>As You Like It</i>
<i>Cor.</i>	<i>Coriolanus</i>
<i>Cym.</i>	<i>Cymbeline</i>
<i>Err.</i>	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>
<i>Ham.</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>
<i>1H4</i>	<i>The First Part of King Henry the Fourth</i>
<i>2H4</i>	<i>The Second Part of King Henry the Fourth</i>
<i>H5</i>	<i>King Henry the Fifth</i>
<i>1H6</i>	<i>The First Part of King Henry the Sixth</i>
<i>2H6</i>	<i>The Second Part of King Henry the Sixth</i>
<i>3H6</i>	<i>The Third Part of King Henry the Sixth</i>
<i>H8</i>	<i>King Henry the Eighth</i>
<i>JC</i>	<i>Julius Caesar</i>
<i>John</i>	<i>King John</i>
<i>Lear</i>	<i>King Lear</i>
<i>LLL</i>	<i>Love's Labour's Lost</i>
<i>MM</i>	<i>Measure for Measure</i>
<i>MND</i>	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>
<i>MV</i>	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>
<i>Oth.</i>	<i>Othello</i>
<i>Per.</i>	<i>Pericles</i>
<i>R2</i>	<i>King Richard the Second</i>
<i>R3</i>	<i>King Richard the Third</i>
<i>Rom.</i>	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
<i>Shr.</i>	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>
<i>STM</i>	<i>Sir Thomas More</i>
<i>Temp.</i>	<i>The Tempest</i>

TGV	<i>The Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>
Tim.	<i>Timon of Athens</i>
Tit.	<i>Titus Andronicus</i>
TN	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
TNK	<i>The Two Noble Kinsmen</i>
Tro.	<i>Troilus and Cressida</i>
Wiv.	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>
WT	<i>The Winter's Tale</i>

## 2. Other Works Cited and General References

Abbott	E. A. Abbott, <i>A Shakespearian Grammar</i> , 3rd edn, 1870
Anon.	Anonymous
apud	in
Badham	Charles Badham, 'The text of Shakespeare', <i>Cambridge Essays</i> , vol. II, 1856, pp. 261–91
Becket	Andrew Becket, <i>Shakespeare's Himself Again</i> , 2 vols., 1815
Bevington	<i>Works</i> , ed. David Bevington, 1980
Blair	<i>Works</i> , ed. Hugh Blair, 1753
Blake	N. F. Blake, <i>Shakespeare's Language: An Introduction</i> , 1983
Boswell	<i>Plays &amp; Poems</i> , ed. James Boswell, 1821
Bulloch	John Bulloch, <i>Studies on the Text of Shakespeare</i> , 1878
Bullough	Geoffrey Bullough (ed.), <i>Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare</i> , vol. v, 1964
<i>CahiersE</i>	<i>Cahiers Elisabethains</i>
Cam.	<i>Works</i> , ed. William George Clark and William Aldis Wright, 1863–6 (Cambridge Shakespeare)
Capell	<i>Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies</i> , ed. Edward Capell, [1768]
Capell MS.	MS. holograph of Capell's edition, before 1751 (Trinity College Library, Cambridge)
Cartwright	Robert Cartwright, <i>New Readings in Shakspeare</i> , 1866
Charney	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. Maurice Charney, 1969 (Bobbs-Merrill Shakespeare Series)
Collier	<i>Works</i> , ed. John Payne Collier, 1842–4
Collier <sup>2</sup>	<i>Plays</i> , ed. John Payne Collier, 1853
Collier <sup>3</sup>	<i>Comedies, Histories, Tragedies, and Poems</i> , ed. John Payne Collier, 1858
Collier <sup>4</sup>	<i>Plays and Poems</i> , ed. John Payne Collier, 1875–8
Collier MS.	MS. notes by J. P. Collier in a copy of F2 (Perkins Folio in the Huntington Library), before 1852
conj.	conjecture
Craig	<i>Works</i> , ed. W.J. Craig, [1891] (Oxford Shakespeare)
Craik	<i>The English of Shakespeare</i> , ed. George L. Craik, 1857
Daniel	Peter A. Daniel, <i>Notes and Conjectural Emendations of Certain Doubtful Passages in Shakespeare's Plays</i> , 1870
Daniell	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. David Daniell, 1998 (Arden Shakespeare)

Deighton	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. Kenneth Deighton, 1890 (Grey Cover Shakespeare)
Delius	<i>Werke</i> , ed. Nicolaus Delius, 1854–[61]
Dent	R. W. Dent, <i>Shakespeare's Proverbial Language: An Index</i> , 1981 (references are to numbered proverbs)
Dessen and Thomson	Alan C. Dessen and Leslie Thomson, <i>A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama 1580–1642</i> , 1999
Dorsch	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. T. S. Dorsch, 1955 (Arden Shakespeare)
Douai MS.	Douai MS. 7.87, c. 1694 (Douai Public Library)
Dyce	<i>Works</i> , ed. Alexander Dyce, 1857
Evans	<i>The Riverside Shakespeare</i> , ed. G. Blakemore Evans et al., 1974
F	<i>Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies</i> , 1623 (First Folio)
F2	<i>Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies</i> , 1632 (Second Folio)
F3	<i>Mr. William Shakespear's Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies</i> , 1663–4 (Third Folio)
F4	<i>Mr. William Shakespear's Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies</i> , 1685 (Fourth Folio)
Farmer	Richard Farmer, contributor to Steevens (1773 edn) and Steevens <sup>2</sup> (1778 edn)
Folger MS.	Folger Shakespeare Library MS. V.a.85, c. 1665
Furness	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. Horace Howard Furness, Jr, 1913 (New Variorum Shakespeare)
Globe	<i>Works</i> , ed. William George Clark and William Aldis Wright, 1864 (Globe Edition)
Hall	'Mr. Hall' mentioned in Thirlby
Hanmer	<i>Works</i> , ed. Thomas Hanmer, 1743–4
Heraud	John A. Heraud, contributor to Cam. (1863–6 edn)
Herr	J. G. Herr, <i>Scattered Notes on the Text of Shakespeare</i> , 1879
Hudson	<i>Works</i> , ed. Henry N. Hudson, 1851–6
Hudson <sup>2</sup>	<i>Works</i> , ed. Henry N. Hudson, 1880–1 (Harvard Edition)
Humphreys	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. Arthur Humphreys, 1984 (Oxford Shakespeare)
JEGP	<i>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</i>
John Hunter	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. John Hunter, [1869] (Hunter's Annotated Shakespeare)
Mark Hunter	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. Mark Hunter, 1900 (College Classics Series)
Irving	<i>Works</i> , ed. Henry Irving and Frank A. Marshall, 1888–90 (Henry Irving Shakespeare)
J.D.	J.D., 5 N&Q 8 (1877), 262–3
Jennens	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. Charles Jennens, 1774
Jervis	Swynfen Jervis, <i>Proposed Emendations of the Text of Shakspeare's Plays</i> , 1860
Johnson	<i>Plays</i> , ed. Samuel Johnson, 1765
S. F. Johnson	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. S. F. Johnson, 1960 (Pelican Shakespeare)
Thomas Johnson	<i>Plays</i> , ed. Thomas Johnson, 1711
Thomas Johnson <sup>2</sup>	<i>Plays</i> , ed. Thomas Johnson, c. 1720
Keightley	<i>Plays</i> , ed. Thomas Keightley, 1864

Kittredge	<i>Works</i> , ed. George Lyman Kittredge, 1936; <i>Julius Caesar</i> , 1939
Knight	<i>Comedies, Histories, Tragedies, &amp; Poems</i> , ed. Charles Knight, [1838–43] (Pictorial Edition)
Lettsom	William Nanson Lettsom, 'New readings in Shakespeare', <i>Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine</i> 74 (Aug. 1853), 181–202
Macmillan	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. Michael Macmillan, 1902 (Arden Shakespeare)
Malone	<i>Plays &amp; Poems</i> , ed. Edmond Malone, 1790
Mason	John Monck Mason, <i>Comments on the Last Edition of Shakespeare's Plays</i> , 1785
Mason 1919	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. Lawrence Mason, 1919 (Yale Shakespeare)
Mitford	John Mitford, 'Conjectural emendations on the text of Shakspeare', <i>Gentleman's Magazine</i> n.s. 22 (1844), 451–72
Morley	Henry Morley, contributor to Mark Hunter (1900 edn)
Nicholson	Brinsley M. Nicholson, contributor to William Aldis Wright, MS. Notes (Add. MS. b.58) in Trinity College Library, Cambridge
<i>OCD</i>	<i>The Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> , ed. N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard, 2nd edn, 1970
<i>OED</i>	<i>The Oxford English Dictionary</i> , online edn, June 2015
Onions	C. T. Onions, <i>A Shakespeare Glossary</i> , revised by Robert D. Eagleson, 1986
<i>PBSA</i>	<i>Publications of the Bibliographical Society of America</i>
Plutarch	<i>The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romanes</i> , translated by Sir Thomas North, 1579 (page references are to the extracts given in the Appendix, pp. 160–90 below)
Pope	<i>Works</i> , ed. Alexander Pope, 1723–5
Pope <sup>2</sup>	<i>Works</i> , ed. Alexander Pope, 1728
<i>PQ</i>	<i>Philological Quarterly</i>
Q (1684)	<i>Julius Caesar</i> quarto
Q (1691)	<i>Julius Caesar</i> quarto
QU1, QU2, QU3, QU4	Undated quartos of <i>Julius Caesar</i> issued between the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries
Rann	<i>Dramatic Works</i> , ed. Joseph Rann, 1786–[94]
Reed	<i>Plays</i> , ed. Isaac Reed, 1803
Ritson	Joseph Ritson, contributor to Steevens <sup>3</sup> (1793 edn)
Rowe	<i>Works</i> , ed. Nicholas Rowe, 1709
Sanders	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. Norman Sanders, 1967 (New Penguin Shakespeare)
SD	stage direction
SH	speech heading
<i>S.St.</i>	<i>Shakespeare Studies</i>
<i>S.Sur.</i>	<i>Shakespeare Survey</i>
Singer	Samuel W. Singer, contributor to Cam. (1863–6 edn) and Hudson <sup>2</sup> (1880–1 edn)
Singer	<i>Dramatic Works</i> , ed. Samuel W. Singer, 1826
Singer <sup>2</sup>	<i>Dramatic Works</i> , ed. Samuel W. Singer, 1856
Singer 1858	Samuel W. Singer, 2 <i>N&amp;Q</i> 5 (1858), 289–90
Sisson	<i>Works</i> , ed. Charles Jasper Sisson, [1954]
<i>SQ</i>	<i>Shakespeare Quarterly</i>

Staunton	<i>Plays</i> , ed. Howard Staunton, 1858–60
Steevens	<i>Plays</i> , ed. Samuel Johnson and George Steevens, 1773
Steevens <sup>2</sup>	<i>Plays</i> , ed. Samuel Johnson and George Steevens, 1778
Steevens <sup>3</sup>	<i>Plays</i> , ed. Samuel Johnson and George Steevens, 1793
subst.	substantively
Theobald 1730	Lewis Theobald, letter to William Warburton (14 Feb. 1729/30)
Theobald	<i>Works</i> , ed. Lewis Theobald, 1733
Theobald <sup>2</sup>	<i>Works</i> , ed. Lewis Theobald, 1740
Theobald <sup>3</sup>	<i>Works</i> , ed. Lewis Theobald, 1752
Theobald <sup>4</sup>	<i>Works</i> , ed. Lewis Theobald, 1757
Thirlby	Styan Thirlby, MS. notes in eighteenth-century editions of Shakespeare, 1723–51
Tyrwhitt	Thomas Tyrwhitt, contributor to Steevens <sup>2</sup> (1778 edn)
Walker	William Sidney Walker, <i>A Critical Examination of the Text of Shakespeare</i> , ed. W. Nanson Lettsom, 3 vols., 1860
W. S. Walker	William Sidney Walker, <i>Shakespeare's Versification</i> , 1854
Warburton 1734	William Warburton, letter to Lewis Theobald (2 June 1734)
Warburton	<i>Works</i> , ed. William Warburton, 1747
Wells and Taylor	<i>Works</i> , ed. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, 1986 (Oxford Shakespeare)
White	<i>Works</i> , ed. Richard Grant White, 1857–66
White <sup>2</sup>	<i>Comedies, Histories, Tragedies, and Poems</i> , ed. Richard Grant White, 1883 (Riverside Shakespeare)
Wilson	<i>Julius Caesar</i> , ed. John Dover Wilson, 1949 (New Shakespeare)
Wordsworth	<i>Historical Plays</i> , ed. Charles Wordsworth, 1883

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## INTRODUCTION

### Date

On the 21st of September, after dinner, at about two o' clock, I went with my party across the water; in the straw-thatched house we saw the tragedy of the Emperor Julius Caesar, very pleasingly performed, with approximately fifteen characters; at the end of the play they danced together admirably and exceedingly gracefully, according to their custom, two in each group dressed in men's and two in women's apparel.<sup>1</sup>

Thus begins one of the most famous diary entries ever written: it records a day in the life of Thomas Platter, a Swiss tourist visiting London in 1599. A physician and the son of a minor humanist scholar, Platter would probably be unknown to history if literary scholars did not believe, on the basis of this diary entry, that he was a lucky spectator at one of the earliest productions of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. The circumstantial evidence in support of this belief is strong: in 1599, Shakespeare was writing plays for a company called the Lord Chamberlain's Servants, and that company had recently moved into a theatre called the Globe. The Globe did have a thatched roof, and was located in the suburb of Southwark; in order to get to it from the city of London you had to cross the river Thames. But this evidence is *only* circumstantial. Platter does not give the title or the author of the play. He does not name the theatre, nor refer to it as a *new* theatre; the older Rose Theatre, just steps away from the Globe, also had a thatched roof.

There is, moreover, no certain evidence that Shakespeare wrote *Julius Caesar* in or around 1599. It is true that some lines in Ben Jonson's *Every Man Out of his Humour* – which can be certainly dated to 1599 – seem to allude parodically to *Julius Caesar*; and it is true that a conversation between Polonius and Hamlet in *Hamlet* (c. 1600) seems to depend for its ironic humour upon a spectator's awareness that the actors playing these characters also played Shakespeare's Caesar and Brutus. But such internal, inferential evidence is hard to rely on. When *Every Man Out*'s Carlo Buffone says 'Et tu, Brute?' to his antagonist Macilente (who is about to seal up the loquacious Buffone's lips with molten wax), he *might* be quoting *Julius Caesar*, but he also might be quoting *The True Tragedy of Richard, Duke of York* (printed in 1595), where Edward IV says it to his traitorous son Clarence. And *True Tragedy*'s Edward was himself translating and adapting the Greek 'You too, child?', given by the Roman historian Suetonius as the last words Caesar spoke. Various versions of this phrase were in circulation during Shakespeare's time, and it is quite possible that playwrights made use of it without thinking of

<sup>1</sup> Translated by Ernest Schanzer, in 'Thomas Platter's observations on the Elizabethan stage', *N&Q* 201 (1956), 466.



themselves as alluding to one another. The case for a connection between *Julius Caesar* and *Every Man Out* does not rest solely upon 'Et tu, Brute': there is also a moment in Jonson's play where a foolish character, trying to sound sophisticated, says 'Reason long since is fled to the animals, you know.' Some critics believe this to be a parody of Antony's plaintive apostrophe at 3.2.96: 'O judgement, thou art fled to brutish beasts.' But this evidence, such as it is, is only as convincing as you allow yourself to find it.

The most precise evidence we have for determining the date of *Julius Caesar* provides us with a range of a little over ten years. The play was probably not written before 1598, because it is not mentioned in Frances Meres's *Palladis Tamia*, where he lists the tragedies for which Shakespeare was known. And it was definitely written before 1612, when it is known to have been performed as part of the festivities in honour of the wedding of James I's daughter Elizabeth.

On balance, I think it is likely that Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* was written and first performed in or around 1599, and also that Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* is the play Thomas Platter saw on 21 September of that year. I will be assuming the truth of both things throughout the remainder of this Introduction. But it is essential to emphasise that these assumptions can only be made inferentially and, indeed, imaginatively. If we make them by way of Platter's diary, we must push past, and to some extent disregard, the details in the foreground of Platter's account in order to discover – and indeed to supply – the important details that remain hidden in the background: not only the playwright's or the theatre's name, but also the entire plot of the play. To do this is, however, to misread Platter's account of his outing to the theatre – an account that is, to some extent, *all* background. For Platter, 'the Emperor Julius Caesar' is just one small, almost incidental detail in a glittering recollection of late-summer leisure in one of the world's great cities. His lunch, his boat ride, the 'party' of friends going to the theatre, the conventional after-play dance – all of these details could have coalesced around any play; there is no sense at all that Platter sought this one out. We might think of *Julius Caesar*, and the actor playing the title character, as the lucky ones, randomly but thankfully memorialised as a representative detail of sixteenth-century cosmopolitan life. To seek the date of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* by reading Thomas Platter's diary, and then to contextualise the play within its historical moment of composition and performance, requires that we shift our perspective – fluidly, critically, and constantly – between background and foreground; this is a skill we must cultivate in reading the play as well.

## Source

In writing *Julius Caesar*, Shakespeare drew primarily upon Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*, which was written in the first century AD and translated into English by Thomas North in 1579. The sections of Plutarch which Shakespeare relies upon most heavily are his life of Julius Caesar and his life of Brutus. Excerpts from both have been provided in the Appendix to this edition so that you can see for yourself where and how Shakespeare followed, and where and how he departed from,