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The Tangled Thread of Authorship: Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and Jonson's *Sejanus, His Fall*

Lynn S. Meskill

Studies of authorial indebtedness to source texts can shed light on the nature of original authorship. The 1605 Quarto of Jonson's *Sejanus*, which makes visible in marginal glosses its debt to its Roman sources, provides an ideal control for Shakespeare's use of Plutarch in *Julius Caesar*. The striking difference between Jonson's typographic monument to authorship and the invisibility of Shakespeare's debt to Plutarch (effectively occluded in modern editions) seems at the outset to prevent any fruitful comparisons between the two texts. Yet both texts imitate and transform their chosen Greek and Roman sources from the first act to the last. What we find is that Shakespeare's method approaches that of Jonson much more closely than we would expect, given the traditional oppositions between the two authors. Shakespeare diligently patches together scenes, sections and phrases using an astonishing variety of references from the three major *Lives* regarding Julius Caesar. Jonson's play, built out of a tissue of references and citations from Tacitus and other Roman writers, is the visible image of the same silent and invisible practice in which Shakespeare himself was engaged in creating his play.

Reading Shakespeare and several of his contemporaries is pleasure enough, perhaps all the pleasure possible for most.

But if we wish to consummate and refine this pleasure by understanding it, to distil the last drop of it, to press and press the essence of each author, to apply the exact measurement of our own sensations, then we must compare; and we cannot compare without parcelling the threads of authorship and influence. (Eliot 135)

T. S. Eliot's metaphors to describe how the critic can discover the originality of a particular author are homely ones: to find the "essence" of an author one presses and extracts; to distinguish one author from the other, the critic must disentangle different coloured threads. Despite the somewhat disturbing aspects of these metaphors – the extraction of an authorial essence implies the destruction of the fruit, the picking apart of authorial threads implies the unravelling of the textual fabric – Eliot's model for critical appreciation is still valid today. The critical task of "parcelling the threads of authorship" goes on, and to a greater extent than ever. Inspired by Michel Foucault's challenge to the notion of the transcendental author, Jerome McGann and D. F. McKenzie, among others, critiqued the scholarly neglect of non-authorial textual determinants. As a result, over the course of the last twenty years, the study of Renaissance drama has involved a much closer examination of the role of co-authors, translators, theatre companies, actors, printers, copy editors, and booksellers in the production of texts. An authentic, original text produced by a single, isolated author is no longer considered an adequate description of most early modern dramatic texts.

Unlike the study of some material practices which call into question the image of a single, isolated author, studies of an author's sources do not appear to pose the same type of challenge to the principle of authorial unity. Not, at least, in anywhere near so striking a manner as the challenge posed to the integrity of the Shakespearean text by the differences between Folio and Q1 *Hamlet*, or the possible existence of a second hand in the writing of any number of (canonical) plays in the period. The reasons for this are immediately evident. A source text is older, previous. The copy editors, actors, printers, in other words, the collaborators of Renaissance texts are contemporaneous with the author. As living, independent as well as interdependent beings pursuing their own interests and desires they are necessarily outside the control of the author. Their interventions, therefore, seem at first glance to pose a more serious challenge to the principle of authorial unity in that they are unexpected, accidental, or imposed upon the author. Yet a study of an author's use of sources and the nature and extent of authorial indebtedness necessarily calls into question, though in a different way, the nature of original authorship. A study of sources reveals much of an author's working methods, style and originality. By focussing on these plays' respective treatment of sources (i.e. the sites where heterogeneous material gets appropriated and made their own) one can get a better sense of their "essence."

It is for this reason that Jonson's *Sejanus, His Fall* can serve as a useful control for *Julius Caesar*, a play with which it shares a number of elements. *Julius Caesar* and *Sejanus* were performed within a few years of

each other. The same actors played in both plays, and Shakespeare himself is listed in Jonson's 1616 Folio as having acted in *Sejanus*. There is ample evidence that Jonson had the extremely popular *Julius Caesar* in mind in writing *Sejanus*. Both authors, as I will suggest, were inspired by the complex and multivalent figure of Julius Caesar. Finally, and for my immediate purposes, both plays represent a significant indebtedness to their source texts. We are not confronted in either of these plays with fleeting inter-textual moments of varying degrees and frequencies. We are dealing with two texts that follow, rearrange, transform, imitate and translate (in its multiple meanings) their chosen Greek and Roman sources. What we find is that Shakespeare's method approaches that of Jonson much more closely than we might expect, given the traditional oppositions between the two authors. Shakespeare is not only inspired by Thomas North's *Plutarch*, but he has pieces and fragments of it at his fingertips, patching together scenes, sections and phrases using an astonishing range of references from the three major *Lives* regarding Julius Caesar. Jonson's play, built out of a tissue of references and citations from Tacitus and other Roman writers, is the visible image of the same silent and invisible practice in which Shakespeare himself was engaged in creating his play.

Richard Dutton has described the 1605 Quarto of Jonson's *Sejanus* as providing us with a unique example of the relationship between an author and his literary sources:¹

Ben Jonson's *Sejanus* is of special interest for a study of how an author uses literary sources. It is, in one sense, scarcely original at all, being a meticulously reconstructed history based chiefly on Tacitus but incorporating contributions also from Dio Cassius, Suetonius, Velleius Paterculus, and Plutarch. There are also incidental borrowings from the plays of Seneca, the poems of Virgil and Claudian, and the satires of Juvenal and Persius, so that the whole constitutes what Hazlitt once described as "an admirable piece of ancient mosaic." (181)

Dutton characterizes Jonson's first Roman tragedy as "meticulously reconstructed history" and describes it as "scarcely original" – an "ancient mosaic" (181) rather than an authentic creative work. The author of *Sejanus* is, essentially, an erudite and extremely able *bricoleur*. By contrast, according to most scholars, Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* has one main

¹ My discussion centers on the 1605 Quarto, the first published version of *Sejanus, His Fall*, complete with marginalia and paratextual matter. The play was published in the 1616 Folio (and in succeeding folios) without the original marginal glosses. There are many theories (political, bibliographical, authorial), but no certainties as to why *Sejanus* lost its marginalia in the Folio, while Jonson's masques retained theirs.

source, North's translation of Jacques Amyot's translation of Plutarch, in particular *The Life of Julius Caesar*, *The Life of Marcus Brutus* and *The Life of Marcus Antonius*. Jonson, according to his prefatory remarks and marginal citations (verified by Jonson's editors such as Philip J. Ayers), appears to use in order of frequency of citations: Tacitus, Dio Cassius, Suetonius and Seneca. Jonson mentions many additional books in his glosses, and the printed page becomes completely full in the authorial attempt to project the image of a scrupulously faithful and authoritative reconstruction of a scene of Roman sacrifice (figure 1). In his prefatory remarks "To the Readers" he defends his borrowings from antiquity and the astonishing display of his numerous debts to Latin authors: "I [...] have onely done it to shew my integrity in the *Story*" (sig. 2v). If we consider the state of Shakespeare's desk, we imagine one large folio volume of Plutarch in North's translation from 1579 and perhaps Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in Arthur Golding's translation. By contrast, Jonson's desk appears piled high with books.

Jonson also admits to having patched up the holes left gaping by the removal of sections originally written by a collaborator:

Lastly I would informe you, that this Booke, in all numbers, is not the same with that which was acted on the publike Stage, wherein a second Pen had good share: in place of which I have rather chosen, to put weaker (and no doubt less pleasing) of mine own, than to defraud so happy a *Genius* of his right, by my loathed usurpation. (sig. ¶2v)

It seems clear that for Jonson, the parts by the unnamed collaborator (whose identity has never been established) represent a threat to Jonson's authorship in a way that his ancient sources did not. In fact, the integrity of the author is pointedly reinforced by the citations from ancient authors, whereas the collaborator's foreign body must be cut out from the text under the guise of not "defrauding" or "usurping" him (figure 2).

Turning to *Julius Caesar*, it may be safely stated that no reader has described the play as "being a meticulously reconstructed history based chiefly on Plutarch" and "scarcely original." Yet Shakespeare relies on his sources as heavily as Jonson. E. A. J. Honigmann's comments in his essay "Shakespeare's Plutarch" are useful to recall:

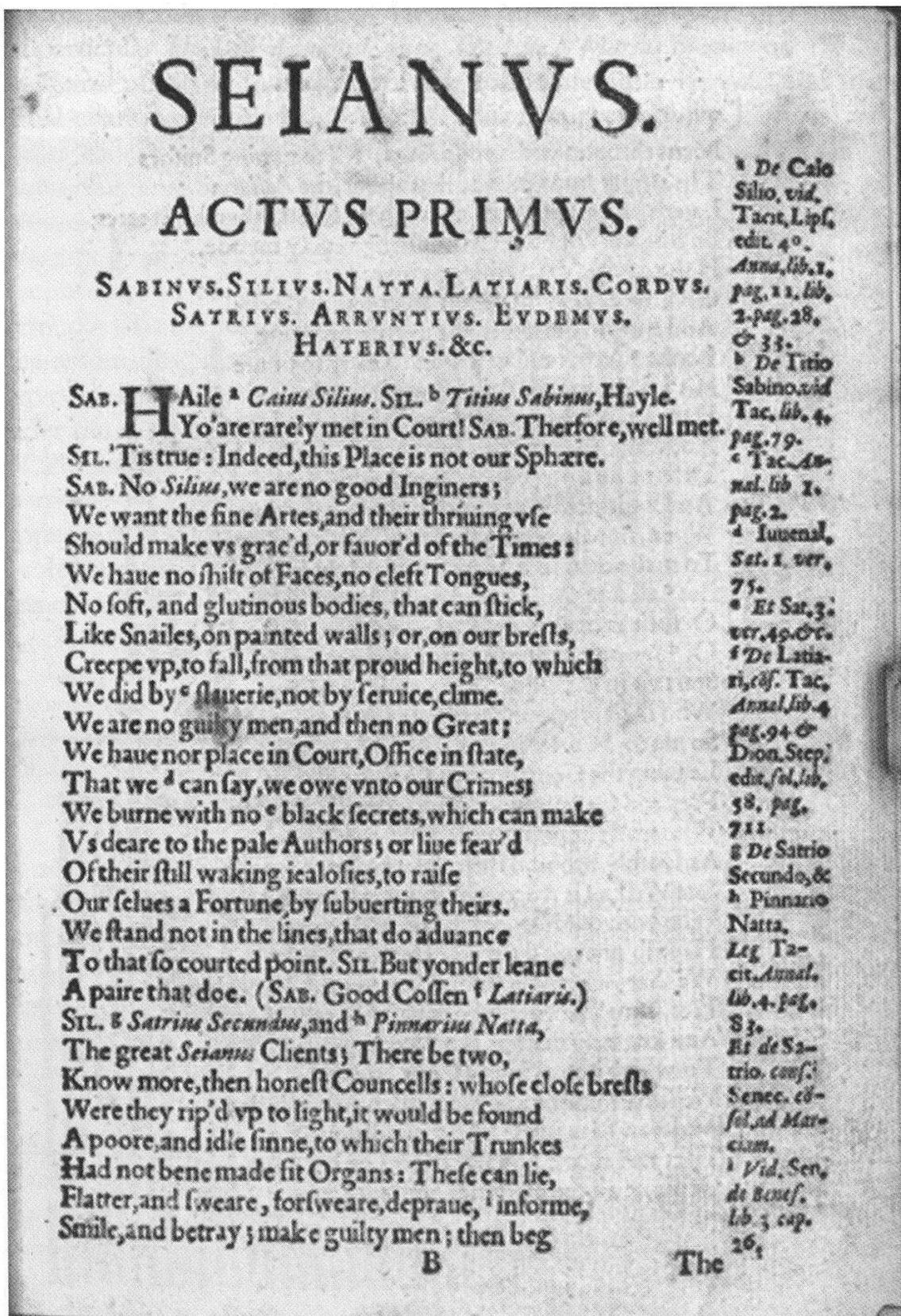


Figure 2: "ACTUS PRIMUS" of Jonson's *Sejanus* (1605). (By permission of the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, the University of Texas at Austin).

Especially with books known to have been in Shakespeare's hands, the extraordinary reluctance in some quarters to admit that he read more than the minimum can now be stigmatized as an unworthy survival of the "Child of Nature" tradition. Industry and curiosity led him further into his books than his editors were sometimes prepared to follow. (32)

Another reason why Shakespeare's "industry" does not lead to a kind of dramatized history is his source: while Jonson chose Tacitus, Shakespeare chose Plutarch. In his address "To the Reader," North describes Plutarch as a writer of "stories": "an Author [who] hath written the profitablest *storie* of all Authors." North goes on to praise Plutarch for having chosen to tell history as a story:

All other learning is [. . .] fitter for Vniversities than for cities, [. . .] more commendable in the students them selues, than profitable vnto others. Whereas stories are fit for euery place, reache to all persons, serue for all tymes, teache the liuing, reuiewe the dead, so farre excelling all other booke, as it is better to see learning in noble mens liues, than to reade it in Philosophers writings." (North sig. *iii)

The difference in Jonson and Shakespeare's choice of main source, the difference between Tacitus and Plutarch, goes a long way to explaining why *Julius Caesar*, while it draws heavily and in a complex and "industrious" manner on its sources, is not perceived as "historical reconstruction," whereas Jonson's *Sejanus* is.

Not the least of the barriers effectively preventing us from comparing Jonson and Shakespeare's relationship to their sources is their plays' visual effects on the page. Ian Donaldson describes the 1605 Quarto of *Sejanus* as

a book of immense typographical elaboration, painstakingly Romanized in appearance, with speeches set out in the manner of classical inscriptions, learned annotations erected like doric columns alongside the heavily architectural slabs of dramatic text, surmounted by monumental running heads."

(100)

(figure 3). There is no mistaking Jonson's desire for form to imitate function: his text (in word and image) aims to recreate a historically true Rome. At the same time, this typographic setting serves to Romanize and authorize his own inventions and additions to the historical record: soliloquies by Sejanus, commentaries by minor historical figures such as Arruntius, and dialogues and imagined scenes between historical and imagined characters such as Livia and her physician. The display of his sources in the margins and the use of superscriptions which interrupt the

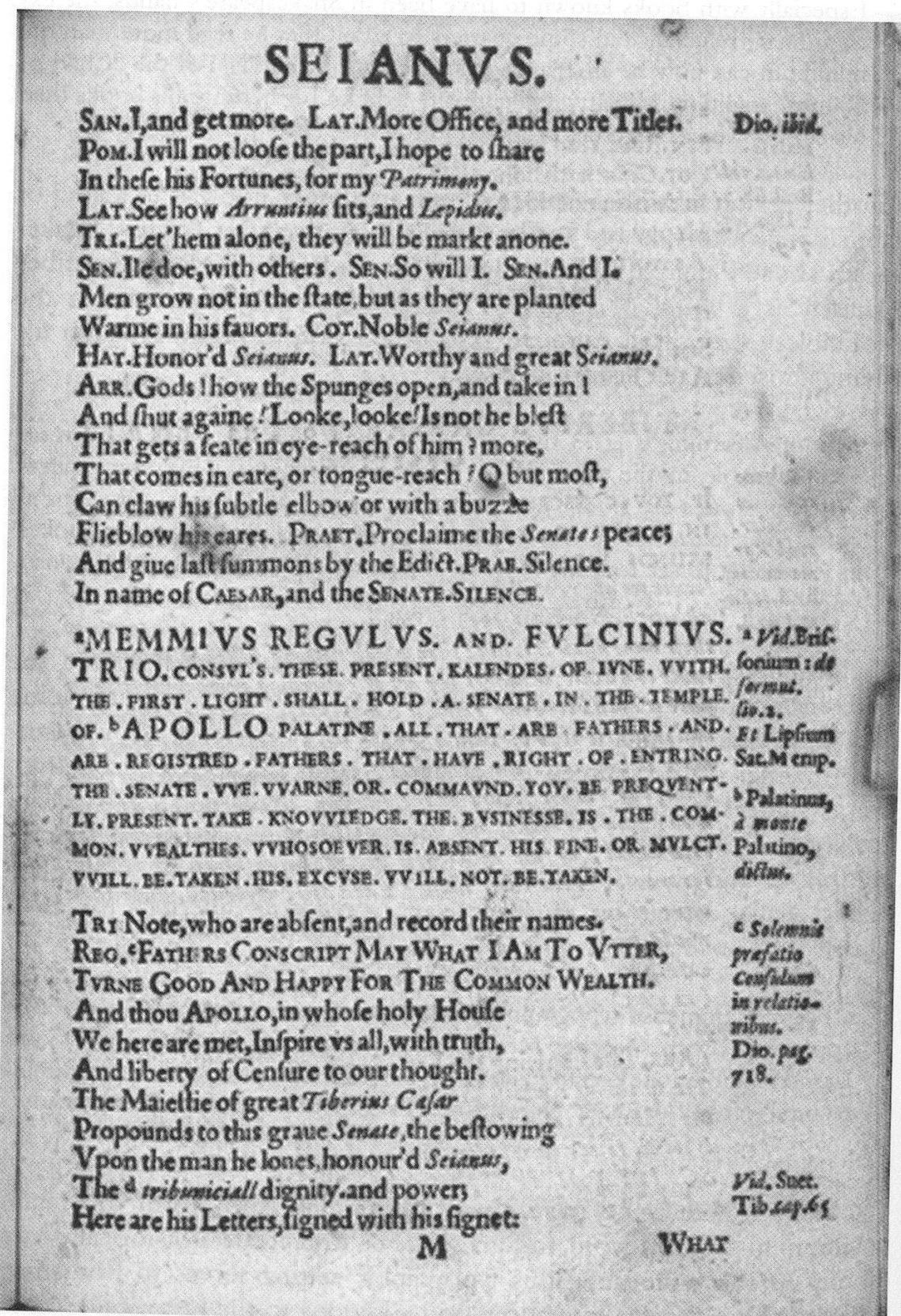


Figure 3: Page of Jonson's *Sejanus* (1605). (By permission of the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, the University of Texas at Austin).

flow of the text and invite the reader to turn to the margins to confront an ancient “Auctour” have been described by Evelyn Tribble – I think rightly – as “iconographic” (134): an iconographic rendering of Rome, but also an iconographic rendering of authorial “scrupulousness.”²

It is no accident that *Sejanus* has enjoyed a kind of critical renaissance in recent scholarship interested in historical bibliography in its widest sense. Annabel Patterson, Evelyn Tribble, and Zachary Lesser and Peter Stallybrass, just to name a few, have all paid particular attention, for the purposes of different arguments, to the 1605 Quarto: the censorship of the play; Jonson’s marginal notes informing the reader of the precise volume and page number of the books in which he found the work of his numerous Roman sources; the inclusion, specially punctuated with inverted commas to isolate them as such, of *sententiae* and maxims (suppressed, like so many other aspects of the Quarto in the Folio); the commendatory and prefatory verses (which Patterson notes are regularly omitted in modern editions designed for students or “banished” by Herford and Simpson to another volume [Patterson 43]); and the preface to the Reader in which Jonson refers constantly to himself in the first person as writer, publisher, and translator. If we look at the 1605 Quarto we find the very visible *imprint* of its author.

By contrast, the imprint of the author is not available to us in Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*. Shakespeare did not furnish the reader of his play with marginalia indicating the sources he used and where he found them. There is no prefatory material, no commendatory poems (if we except those preceding the 1623 Folio as a whole), nothing visually or typographically comparable to the spectacular body of paratextual and marginal matter we find in the 1605 Quarto of *Sejanus*. We arrive, then, at the (slightly paradoxical) conclusion that the text in which the authorial hand is clearly visible, the text in which the author refers to himself and his labour, giving the reader a glimpse into his reading and writing practices, appears less authorial and authoritative than the work in which the authorial hand is invisible. In *Shakespeare’s Literary Authorship*, Patrick Cheney refers to “the mystery of Shakespearean authorship” (11) and Shakespeare’s “absent” authorship (15). Shakespeare’s absent authorship as workmanship appears most absent in contrast to Jonson’s (labouring) “Author,” referred to as the “deserving Author” in a commendatory poem, signed “Cygnus,” to *Sejanus* in the 1605 Quarto and

² Jonson has Sejanus mock the superstitious rituals of a “scrupulous priest,” punctiliously performing the rites of divination, rites which will in turn predict Sejanus’ own downfall. I would argue that this priestly scrupulosity well describes the ritual and superstitious (with relation to his own reader and his own prophetic interests) manipulations of the author.

implicit everywhere in that text (sig. A2). At the same time, Shakespeare's absent authorship, in its very absence, leaves precisely those borrowed threads completely perplexed and forever entangled with and within his own individual creation. The Jonsonian text displaying its sources is perceived as *more* indebted and so less original and imaginative. The ultimate irony, then, is that Shakespeare, in appearing infinitely less derivative, seems more of an author than Jonson, who, because of his constant references to himself as author, places into relief all those elements which are extra-authorial.

Yet, the differences due to sources and formats should not prevent us from observing certain comparable habits of reading and writing between Shakespeare and Jonson. Honigmann describes Shakespeare's "writing-habits" in *Julius Caesar* in a manner compatible with our traditional image of Jonson:

In the composition of *Julius Caesar* he demonstrated his exceptional genius for sifting sources, poring over and rearranging three major lives, drawing on others occasionally, and perhaps on Appian's *Civil Wars*, a feat impossible without infinite patience and skill and a tireless memory. The same man, it should never be forgotten, must have set to work on the other plays with much the same writing-habits. (32)

There is, in this description of Shakespeare, some of the bookishness and labour that is often used to describe Jonson's method. According to Martin Spevack, in the introduction to his edition of *Julius Caesar*, there exists "more than a hundred years of almost microscopic comparison" of North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives* and Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (8). Yet, Shakespeare's line-by-line and scene-by-scene indebtedness and rearrangement of various lives of Plutarch and others remain occluded in recent editions of the play. And the way a text looks on the page affects the way we interpret it. If we possessed an edition of *Julius Caesar* that referred to the relevant passages from Plutarch, using superscriptions and side notes in the manner of Jonson, the labour that went into the composition of *Julius Caesar* would be clearly visible to the reader. What we have instead are editions of the play with Plutarch (in large, undigested chunks) "banished," to use Patterson's term (43), to the Appendices or, and, more strangely, North's *Plutarch*, renamed *Shakespeare's Plutarch*, with footnotes referring to fragments from Shakespearean plays, which use in some way a particular passage of Plutarch. Our attempts to return, in modern, readable and easily searchable editions, to North's *Plutarch*, North's preface and North's translation of Amyot's preface to the reader as Shakespeare might have seen them are baffled

by such editorial anachronisms conceived and promulgated with the best editorial intentions.

Jonson and Shakespeare share more than has usually been reckoned by critics who have been deprived of the scholarly editions that would have made the latter's borrowings and methods more clearly apparent. The two authors share a meticulous attention to their sources. Jonson used certain authors to create a basic outline and chronology, others for lively anecdotes concerning the historical characters, others for Roman atmosphere and cultural facts, and still others for filling in descriptive scenes. For example, Act 5 opens with Sejanus soliloquizing for twenty-three lines. This soliloquy is ostensibly Jonson's invention. As Ayers remarks, Jonson's only marginal notes are to Tacitus and Dio who testify to Sejanus' historical arrogance and hence his description of himself in line 4 as "Great, and high" (208). Yet, the lack of other marginal citations is deceptive. In lines 7-9 Jonson lifts a passage from Seneca's *Thyestes*, and Ayers notes that lines 17-21 are taken from Book 3 of Lucan's *Civil Wars* (209). Neither author is acknowledged in the margin. Jonson, in effect, inserts the words of Atreus from *Thyestes* and those of Julius Caesar from the *Pharsalia* into the mouth of Sejanus. Atreus has reached the height of power in the speech used by Jonson: "Now I hold the kingdom's glories, now my father's throne" (Seneca l. 887). The classical model is a monster willing to stop at nothing in order to reach the height of power; in the continuation of the speech Jonson gives to Sejanus, Atreus makes the decision to pile murder on murder, even to committing the act against all nature and serving the father a dish of his sons: "I shall go on, and fill the father with the death of his sons. Lest shame should present any obstacle, daylight has withdrawn: go on while heaven is empty" (Seneca ll. 890-892). Sejanus' "arrogance," attested to by Tacitus (116), is taken to a mythical level in his conflation with Atreus in Act 5 of *Sejanus*.

Jonson's use of Lucan has an even more astonishing effect. Sejanus governed Rome with Tiberius in Capri and was, in effect, Caesar. Yet, in Jonson's version he wonders: "Is there not something more than to be Caesar? / Must we rest there?" (Ayers 5.13-14) The achievement of his ambition brings with it the dissatisfaction of simply standing still. He wishes for obstacles to fight against:

Caligula,

Would thou stoodst stiff, and many, in our way!
Winds lose their strength when they do empty fly,
Unmet of woods or buildings; great fires die
That want their matter to withstand them. (Ayers 5.15-19)

The image of wind or fire that loses strength if unopposed is used by Julius Caesar in Book III of Lucan's *Civil Wars*. Caesar is shown to be bloodthirsty, vengeful and ready utterly to destroy the Greeks in his path:

Rejoice, my soldiers! By favour of destiny war is offered you in the course of your march. As a gale, unless it meets with thick-timbered forests, loses strength and is scattered through empty space, and as a great fire sinks when there is nothing in its way – so the absence of a foe is destructive to me" (3.360-65).

These uncited borrowings, recognizable to certain readers without the aid of notes, form a rich and allusive subtext for the play and allow the poet to deepen his characterization of Sejanus. At the same time, these surreptitiously lifted texts acquire a different status from those cited, openly and publicly. They become Jonson's own. By paying his debts to Tacitus and Dio so ostensibly, he can steal away with a bit of Seneca or Lucan unnoticed, or noticed only by those who would compliment him and themselves on their erudition and wit, one of the ironies being, of course, that Sejanus, who is only a Caesar in Tiberius' absence, is effectively Caesar in speaking as Julius Caesar.

While Jonson used his classical sources to ensure the historical verisimilitude of his Roman play, he used them as well to create character and emotion. In the case of *Julius Caesar*, we can also see how the emotional register is achieved if we study Shakespeare's meticulousness and industry in his reading of Plutarch. As T. J. B. Spencer points out, "in Shakespeare's time the *Lives* were confined to large and cumbrous folios. There were no convenient selections [...] no handy editions of the complete work, such as [...] pocket editions" (13). *The Life of Antonius* appears toward the end of the volume, an unwieldy distance from *The Life of Caesar* or that of *Brutus*. Yet, it is clear that Shakespeare was constantly going back and forth between different *Lives*, like Jonson between various authors, in order to get confirmation of a certain detail or another version of the same detail. I will discuss four lines from *Julius Caesar* to illustrate the fairly arduous and painstaking process of selection that may have gone into the creation of a particular moment.³

In his funeral oration, Antony makes a pointed reference to the "mantle" Caesar wore the day he was assassinated. He displays the mantle, gaping with the holes made by the daggers of Caesar's murderers, and says:

³ In the following discussion, all act, scene and lines numbers will refer to the *Riverside* edition (Shakespeare).

You all do know this mantle: I remember
 The first time ever Caesar put it on;
 'Twas on a summer evening, in his tent,
 That day he overcame the Nervii. (3.2.170-73)

Spencer places these four lines from *Julius Caesar* in his *Shakespeare's Plutarch* with the *Life of Julius Caesar*, in the section describing Caesar's watershed victory over the Nervii, a "barbarous people [. . .] from over the Rhine" (Spencer 43). By putting this part of Antony's speech as a footnote in this particular section of *The Life of Julius Caesar*, Spencer, as editor, implies that it finds its source in the reference to the "Nervii." Yet this section of Plutarch gives no clues as to the origins of the other parts of the four lines in the passage. There is, for instance, no clear reference as to the time of year, nor any mention of Caesar putting on a mantle after defeating the Nervii. There is, however, a reference to Caesar's bloody "gown" in *The Life of Brutus* at the moment of Antony's oration, and a reference to Caesar's bloody "garments" at the same moment in *The Life of Antonius*. It would appear that Shakespeare conceived the idea of taking the bloody "gown" in the *Brutus* and imagined it to be the same as a gown he donned in recognition of his wars and victories. Theobald was fairly nonplussed by the way Shakespeare associated the robe in which Caesar died with his victory over the Nervii:

The circumstances with regard to Caesar's mantle seems to me an invention of the poet; and perhaps, not with the greatest propriety. The Nervii were conquered in the second year of his Gaulish expedition, seventeen [. . .] years before his assassination; and it is hardly to be thought that Caesar preserved any one robe [. . .] so long. (Furness 177)

Horace Howard Furness responds:

Is this not hypercriticism? Plutarch, Appian and Dion Cassius mention that fact of Caesar's rent robe being exhibited by Antony; and acting on this, Shakespeare but gives a more *realistic touch* to the incident by naming the particular mantle. (my emphasis, 178)

It is doubtful that one can describe Shakespeare's poetic choice as a "realistic touch" (if Theobald is right about *anything*, it is that Shakespeare's use of the mantle is not "realistic"). Yet, these editors' argument concerning the "mantle" points to the importance of Shakespeare's choice to link the victory over the Nervii with the robe in Antony's hands during the funeral oration. The same mantle would have served metonymically to embody the juxtaposition of past (glory) and present (abasement). It is thus an object charged with meaning.

Yet, if we look a bit further, we may find that this authorial “touch” may also have had its source in Plutarch. Caesar wears what North calls “his triumphing robe” (Plutarch 974) at the feast of the Lupercalia described by Plutarch in the pages preceding the assassination of Caesar, the same feast with which Shakespeare begins his play. In other words, Shakespeare has not invented a robe for Caesar to put on after the defeat of the Nervii; rather, he filled in a gap opened up by the Plutarchan text. If Caesar was apparelled in “his triumphing robe” at the feast of the Lupercalia in *The Life of Marcus Antonius*, North’s Plutarch inevitably opens up the question as to *which* triumph he received it for. Furthermore, the use of the possessive adjective “his” implies that the Romans knew Caesar’s “triumphing robe” when they saw it, for it is clear that Caesar wears the robe expressly for the Lupercalia where he is visible to all. This knowledge (attested to by North) is inserted into Antony’s speech, quoted above: “You all do know this mantle” (3.2.170). The association with “triumphing” encouraged Shakespeare to find a specific triumph, the Nervii.

Of the four lines from Antony’s speech we have discussed, Shakespeare’s invention was placing the victory over the Nervii in the summer as opposed to the winter of 57 B.C. and Antony’s “I remember.” In parcelling out the threads, we are able to identify Antony’s “I remember” as, in Eliot’s terms, the “essence” (135) of the author, separate from his source. The “I remember,” in other words, is not in Plutarch because Antony was not with Caesar. The time of year and the time of day, “Twas on a summer evening” (3.2.172), are descriptive details which reinforce Antony’s act of remembrance. The mantle becomes whole again. We might think that here, having untangled the threads, we find the core of that part of the text that is least founded, directly or indirectly, upon Plutarch. Yet, even at the moment when he moves away from the assiduous and careful collecting, collating and piecing together of details to form a new narrative based on the hints gathered from Plutarch, Shakespeare is still in Plutarch when he writes “I remember.” The writer remembers because he is a reader of Plutarch. He remembers Caesar as Antony does and as Brutus does through Plutarch. The paradox of the study of sources finds its apogee here. One is most oneself in tandem with one’s source. Herford and Simpson express this paradox writing about Jonson’s *Sejanus*: “Closely as *Sejanus* is modelled upon history, none of Jonson’s dramas is more Jonsonian in conception and execution” (2: 16). In Shakespeare’s “I remember” we see the writer speaking in his “own” voice through Antony while referring us to the source of this remembrance: *his* Plutarch.

Evelyn B. Tribble has illuminated the authorial, authoritative and authorizing work that takes place in the margins of Renaissance texts and has shown us that it is the implicit dialogue between a writer and his or her sources that is represented by the concrete visual and typographical image. She cites Lawrence Lipking who suggests that the *footnote* might no longer be adequate for the needs of a post-structuralist interrogation of the univocality of the text (162). For Lipking, it is the *marginal gloss* that "rises to rough equality with the text" (640), whereas the footnote (or even worse, the endnote or worse, the Appendix) silently implies the mastery and authority of the text. It is clear that Ben Jonson chose to present his play, *Sejanus*, visually and typographically in the company of the authors whom he claims to have used as sources, whereas Shakespeare made no such choice. Yet, I have argued that the visual dialogue between the margins and the text, which represented for Jonson the textual dialogue with his sources, conveys a similarly intimate conversation to the one in which Shakespeare was engaged with *his* source.

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