

Sig. K2 of the National Library of Scotland
Copy of George Chapman's *Caesar
and Pompey*, 1631

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The National Library of Scotland holds a copy of George Chapman's *Caesar and Pompey*, 1631 (STC 4993 ; NLS pressmark Bute 84). The final leaf of this copy replaces the original leaf K2 but someone has completed the text line by line in the Italian Hand based on either the original leaf or some other copy of that edition. Mr. T. A. F. Cherry, Assistant Keeper of the Department of Printed Books of the Library, examined the final leaf for me, finding it to be "no doubt one of the original blank leaves". But the handwriting on the final leaf does not seem to be characteristic enough to indicate the date even approximately. The impression I had at my first sight of it on microfilm was that it goes back to the 1630s, although the opinion of Mr. Cherry's colleagues in the Manuscripts Department is that it "is certainly not as early as the 1630s and probably no earlier than the eighteenth century or at the most the late seventeenth century".

There has been much discussion among students of dramatic texts, particularly those of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as to the extent of the compositor's faithfulness to his copy or of his contribution to the standardization of Modern English. On the whole, studies of the printed texts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have suggested that although much remains uncertain of printing house practice, it took a significant part in the standardization of Modern English. Juxtaposition of text in manuscript and the printed text based on the manuscript are more convincing than the mere analysis of the printed text alone. We have at least two studies on the manuscripts actually used by printers of this period : W. W. Greg, "An Elizabethan Printer and His Copy", *The Library*, IV series, vol. IV (1923-24), 102-18 and Marjorie Rushforth, "The John Taylor Manuscripts at Leonard Lichfield's Press", *The Library*, IV series, vol. XI (1930-31), 179-92. Discoveries of manuscripts actually used by printers are extremely rare, and one cannot hope that much work will be done in this field. On the other hand, there is a greater chance of coming across a fragmentary text in manuscript which is based on a printed text, and the juxtaposition of these two different texts would be as interesting and as convincing. It is in this hope that the case of the National Library of Scotland's copy of Chapman's *Caesar and Pompey* is reported here, and

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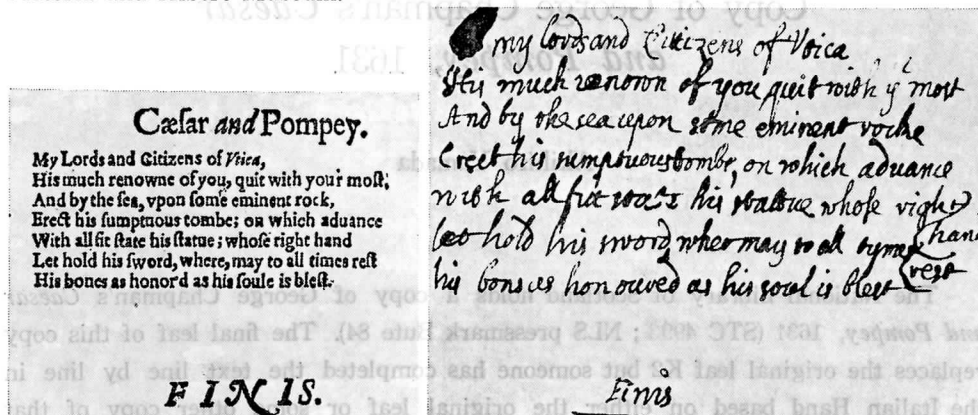


Fig. K2, *Caesar and Pompey* in the Forster Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum (F. 47. E. Box II/2)

Final leaf, *Caesar and Pompey* in the National Library of Scotland (Bute 84)

Variants between the printed text and the manuscript are as follows :

Printed Text	Manuscript
1. 1. My Lords	my lords
1. Citizens	Cittizens
1. <i>Vtica</i> ,	Vtica
2. renowne	renown
2. your most.	y ^r most
3. sea, vpon	sea upon
3. rock,	rocke
4. tombe ;	tombe,
5. With	with
5. fit	fitt
5. statue ;	stattue
5. hand	hand [<i>tucked down</i>]
6. Let	let
6. where,	wher
6. times	tymes
6. rest	rest [<i>tucked down</i>]
7. His bones	his bons
7. honor'd	honoured
7. soule	soul
7. blest.	blest
8. <i>FINIS.</i>	<i>Finis</i>

The spelling preferences of the compositor represented in the text he printed are, as a whole, very modern and anticipate the standardization of Modern English. The writer of the manuscript, on the other hand, appears to have had surprisingly archaic preferences, which are in sharp contrast with his rather fashionable handwriting. (There are known examples of the mixture of the English Secretary Hand and the Italian Hand even in the early eighteenth century.) The form of some words in the manuscript appears to reflect the fact that English spelling of individuals at the time, as opposed to that of the printer, was not standardized. 'Cittizens' (l. 1), for example, is the form which the Oxford English Dictionary records as having been used only in the seventeenth century. The form 'fitt' (l. 5), used as an adjective, and 'stattue' (l. 5) are not recorded, but 'tymes' (l. 6) is used until the eighteenth century. The most archaic forms in the manuscript are 'wher' (l. 6), which ceased to be used in the sixteenth century, and 'bons', which was not used after the end of the fifteenth century.

As remarkable as this freedom of word-form is the scarcity of punctuation marks. Out of the eleven marks in the printed text only three have been retained in the manuscript, one being altered to a lighter mark. Punctuation seems to have been part of the printer's job.

Another peculiarity of this manuscript, which may be of particular interest to students of dramatic texts, is the way in which the writer of it starts his verse lines. He does not always follow the printer's practice of using capitals; four out of the seven lines in the manuscript begin with minuscules as do many extant dramatic texts in verse of this period. It appears that it was left to the printer to start a verse line always with upper-case type.