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Accidents Happen: Roger Barnes's 1612 Edition of Marlowe's *Edward II*

Roger Barnes's 1612 quarto edition of Christopher Marlowe's Edward II has been dismissed as non-authoritative. Interrogating the notion of authority underlying this dismissal, this article suggests that Barnes's repunctuation subtly responds to the play's thematic concerns within the cultural horizon of the favouritism of Jacobean court culture.

'*Edwardum occidere nolite timere bonum est*'.¹ This unpunctuated Latin sentence — Edward II's death warrant — points out the significant differences that such ostensibly small devices as punctuation marks can make. Its author, the usurping Mortimer Junior, has crafted the sentence to be deliberately ambiguous: lacking a comma, it can mean either 'Fear not to kill the king, 'tis good he die' (23.9) or 'Kill not the king, 'tis good to fear the worst' (12). This ambiguity does not stymie the doomed monarch's two keepers for long, however. 'I know not how to conster it' (24.15), puzzles Gurney, to which Matrevis replies 'it was left unpointed for the nonce' (16). The two then hand Edward over to the assassin Lightborn, who punctuates Mortimer's sentence with a feather bed, a table, and a hot spit. Nothing so dangerous as death is at stake in an examination of the punctuation of the early modern editions of the play itself, but the method by which Matrevis and Gurney 'conster' the deadly sense of the Latin sentence by emending its punctuation in light of the 'nonce', the occasion or, more broadly, the cultural context is precisely the process at work in Roger Barnes's 1612 edition of the play. The play was initially printed in 1594 and was reprinted three times in the sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries: 1598, 1612, and 1622.² The reprintings are based on the 1594 quarto, and modern editors typically dismiss them as lacking independent textual authority. In the textual introduction to his admirable old spelling edition of the play for the Oxford *Complete Works of*

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Christopher Marlowe, for example, Richard Rowland dispenses with the 1612 edition in two sentences: 'A third quarto was published in 1612. It was set from its predecessor [the 1598 quarto] and is of no textual significance'.³ The verdict that modern editorial practice has passed on Roger Barnes's 1612 edition of Marlowe's play, then, is that it possesses no authority and is not worth examining except in the collation of substantive variants for texts based on the earliest, 1594 edition.

Grounds for challenging this verdict and the notion of textual authority on which it is based do exist, however. First, by 1594 Marlowe had been dead for roughly a year — he was stabbed through the eye in an inn in Deptford on 30 May 1593 — and the circumstances surrounding the publication of his literary remains are unclear. Can even the 1594 quarto, then, be said to possess any textual authority if by authority we mean the imprimatur of authorial approval? Second, is authorial approval necessary for an edition of a text to possess authority? Working broadly within D.F. McKenzie's redefinition of bibliography as 'the sociology of texts',⁴ I propose as answer to this second question a qualified 'no'. While it may not substantially alter a modernized text of the play, closer scrutiny of the later quartos can add to our understanding of *Edward II*'s early modern reception. In *Shakespeare and the Rise of the Editor*, Sonia Massai contends that the editing of early modern English plays began not in the eighteenth century but with their first publishers, who often specialized in the printing of plays and frequently sought out 'expert readers' to proof and emend the copy from which they were working: 'Whether carried out by the author or by an annotator, the perfection of the printer's copy was seen as a necessary stage in the process of transmission of both dramatic and non-dramatic texts through the press'.⁵ Consequently, the variants found in later, supposedly non-authoritative printings of early modern plays, often buried in critical apparatuses or effaced by the processes of editorial modernization, cannot automatically be dismissed as textual corruptions. We might consider them as the record of a sensitive reader's response to the text and therefore as traces in the history of the text's reception. Such is the case, I will argue, with the first Jacobean printing of *Edward II*, Barnes's 1612 quarto.

Written records of the responses of early modern audiences and readers to plays and playtexts do not abound, and they often do not tell the modern scholar what she or he would like to know. Simon Forman briefly summarizes the plots of four Shakespeare plays that he attended in 1611, for example, but gives little insight into his reactions to them.⁶ Indirect evidence, such

as the well known example of Bodley's refusal to admit playtexts into his library's collection, indicates that some early modern readers dismissed playtexts as frivolous.⁷ Other readers did not. Certainly Ben Jonson treated his plays as serious reading and expected his readers to do likewise. He scrupulously cites his classical sources in the margins of the 1605 quarto of *Sejanus*, for example, and in the prefatory 'To the Readers' imagines his readers to be literary critics and scholars who might object to the play's lack of a chorus or his failure to specify which edition of Justus Lipsius he has consulted. Among *Sejanus*'s serious readers were members of the king's privy council, who suspected that Jonson's tragedy about the favourite of a corrupt, sexually deviant emperor might be thinly disguised commentary on the politics of James's court and questioned Jonson after the play's debut performance at court during the 1603–4 Christmas season.⁸ This would not be the first time historical drama and contemporary politics had been brought together in this way. Famously, on the eve of the Essex rebellion in 1601, some of Essex's companions commissioned a performance of Shakespeare's *Richard II* at the Globe. Elizabeth herself made the connection between herself and her counterpart in the drama.⁹

From the months immediately following the Essex rebellion issues one of the few surviving records of a reader's response to *Edward II*, Marlowe's play about the deposition of a monarch. A two-page summary of the play by Warwickshire gentleman John Newdigate II (1571–1610), dated by Siobhan Keenan to 14 May 1601, indicates that Newdigate read one of the Elizabethan quartos of *Edward II* carefully and in light of the current political situation.¹⁰ As Keenan observes, Newdigate paid close attention to the relationship between Edward and Mortimer Junior. He copied or paraphrased extended passages from the play's conclusion, in which the conflict between Edward and Mortimer Junior comes to a head.¹¹ Notably, he copied 20.26–9 in which Edward, about to be deposed, laments 'But what are kinges when regiment is gone / But perfecte shadowes in a sune shine day'.¹² Perhaps to balance Edward's meditation on his fall, he also reproduced a version of 25.59–63, Mortimer Junior's musings on his own final catastrophe:

In fortunes wheele there is a pointe to which when
Men aspire they tumble downe yt pointe I touchte
Seing ther was no place to mount vp higher
Why shoulde I greiue at my declining falle.¹³

Significantly, Newdigate neglects scenes involving Gaveston. Keenan concludes that Newdigate ‘focuses more on the downfall of Edward and Mortimer than on the tragedy of Piers Gaveston, perhaps because their stories of misused and usurped power were more topical in the aftermath of the Essex rebellion and/or because he thought their tales offered the more significant moral lessons for contemporary readers’.¹⁴

The horizons of cultural reception had changed by 1612, when Barnes published the first Jacobean quarto of *Edward II*. Arguably, none of the issues James brought with him to England in 1603 was more notorious than his love for male favourites, and the power of James’s male favourites would remain a prominent source of political trouble and cause of caustic commentary throughout the king’s reign. Barry Coward remarks that ‘James made no attempt to counter the image of his court as decadent and corrupt. His displays of public affection for his male favourites and his occasional bouts of drunkenness were noted in the diaries and letters of his important subjects, along with the sexual and corruption scandals that rocked the Jacobean court in the second decade of his English reign’.¹⁵ James’s first favourite, Robert Carr, was implicated in 1615 in the murder of Thomas Overbury, who had protested against his scandalous marriage to the divorcée Frances Howard in 1613.¹⁶ James’s second favourite, George Villiers, accumulated great wealth and power and even greater animosity towards himself and his family through his exercise of what Linda Levy Peck calls a ‘monopoly of patronage’ at James’s court.¹⁷ Both men experienced rapid economic and social elevation, Carr becoming earl of Somerset in 1613 and Villiers duke of Buckingham in 1623.¹⁸ The figures of Edward and his favourites, Gaveston and later the Spencers, often emerge in contemporary commentary on James’s royal favouritism. According to Joseph Cady, ‘the Edward-II-Gaveston story functioned widely in informed European Renaissance culture as a symbol of male homosexual attraction’ and its manifestation in royal favouritism.¹⁹ As Mark Thornton Burnett documents, the story functioned similarly in Jacobean England:

An early Jacobean satire declared that Robert Carr ‘was a great favorite: neither Pierce Gaveston nor the Spencers with Edward 2 nor the Earle of Warwicke with Henry the 6 nor the Duke of Suffolk with Henry the eighth as this man was with James’, and the sentiments were echoed in a letter of 1621 in which Sir John Chamberlain reported Sir Henry Yelverton’s objections to the king’s favorites: ‘[Yelverton] indeavored too cast many aspersions upon the Lord of Buckingham

and his regall authoritie (as he termed yt) and further comparing these times in some sort to those of Edward the second wherin the Spensers did so tirannise and domineer'.²⁰

James's royal favouritism would thus have constituted one of the horizons of reception for Jacobean readers of Marlowe's *Edward II*.

Barnes's 1612 edition of Marlowe's play registers the shift in horizon of cultural reception not in the substantive differences between it and the Elizabethan quartos, which are few, but the differences in the punctuation. The 1594 quarto's notably poor punctuation consists mainly of comma insertions at line endings. The 1598 quarto reproduces the 1594 text's punctuation. The editor of the 1612 quarto, however, aggressively repunctuated sections of the text, thereby foregrounding a particular reading of the play that resonates in complex ways with the Jacobean concern about royal favourites. Along with spelling, punctuation has typically been considered the concern of the compositor or the proofreader; scholars have limited the significance of variations in these 'accidentals' between different early editions of a given play to evidence of a particular compositor's work or a particular press's house style.²¹ Nonetheless, in 'Gon. No More, the text is foolish', Randall McLeod shows that accidentals can have considerably more significance than this, demonstrating the subtle differences in meaning and characterization created by the differences in the 'accidentals' of the two versions of *King Lear*.²² Similarly, in Roger Barnes's 1612 *Edward II*, the punctuation changes suggest a harder, more self-serving Gaveston than emerges from the 1594 and 1598 quartos, thus sharpening the play's tragic lesson about the dangers of royal favourites. Like Newdigate's Elizabethan summary, Barnes's 1612 repunctuation of the 1598 quarto provides evidence of the culturally embedded nature of playtext reading in the period and, in general, of the constantly shifting and culturally relative process of meaning-making to which Marlowe's plays were subject from the earliest days of their entrance into English culture.

Barnes indisputably set his 1612 edition of *Edward II* from William Jones's 1598 copy. The two editions collate identically: A-I⁴, K². The title pages give the same title, the pages begin and end on the same lines, and Barnes has not attempted to correct the numerous mislineations that occur in the 1598 edition. He reproduces erroneous stage directions, such as Berkeley's early entrance in scene 20, and erroneous speech prefixes, such as the confusion of Arundel and Matrevis in scenes 9 and 11. Moreover, Barnes retains the earlier edition's general pattern of punctuating line endings with commas.

He had little reason to discard this pattern: throughout the play, lines of verse and syntactically complete units coincide in what is a characteristically Marlovian cumulative style. Occasionally the syntax of these list-like passages fractures near their conclusions, as at line 68 of Gaveston's well-known speech on what will 'best please his maiestye' (69; A3r) in the play's opening scene,²³ but Barnes does not attempt to repunctuate his copy to compensate for this. We can reasonably consider most of Barnes's editorial interventions into his 1598 copy to be efforts to clean up and regularize the text without altering it substantially. Barnes corrects typographical errors: for example, at 1.64 he removes the double 'in' of the copy's 'in in a' (A2v), at 1.105 he changes the obviously incorrect 'men' (A3v) to 'me mute',²⁴ and at 1.118 he adds the necessary 'r' to 'yous' (A3v). He occasionally alters a word to smooth out a line's metre, as at 19.41 (G3v), where he changes the 'open' of his copy's 'O might I neuer open these eyes againe' to 'ope'. He does not hesitate to add words that correct or improve his copy's sense: at 1.143, for instance, he adds 'of' after the 'for' in 'Not Hilar was more mourned for Hercules' (A4r) and adds 'best' after 'may' to 'A prison may beseeme his holinesse' (1.206; A4v). He consistently capitalizes 'King', 'Peers', 'Majesty', 'Nobles', and so on, whereas his copy capitalizes nouns inconsistently. He also makes attempts to regularize the copy's punctuation, especially to indicate more clearly the relationship between phrases and clauses. He eliminates the comma in 'these two Mortimers, / That crosse me thus' (1.76–7; A3r), for example, to render the relative clause restrictive; the terminal comma of 'But this I scorne, that one so basely borne, / Should by his soueraignes fauour grow so pert' (4.401; C3r) is likewise eliminated. Barnes admittedly creates as well as eliminates error. In the play's second line, for example, he has 'freind' rather than 'friend' (A2r). At 1.131 he changes the spelling of 'throwne' (A3v) to 'throne', and 'thy' becomes 'my' in 4.327: 'Ile hang a golden tongue about thy neck' (C2r). Even more destructive of sense is his emendation of 'immortalie' to 'immortalitie' at 11.140 (F1r): 'Remembrance of reuenge immortalie'.

Occasionally Barnes's alterations to his copy's syntax seem equally damaging. When in scene 9 Arundel promises the barons that Edward will return the captured Gaveston if they let him see Edward one last time, Warwick replies:

When can you tell? Arundell no, we wot,
 He that the care of realme remits,
 And driues his nobles to these exigents

For Gaveston, will if he seaze him once,
Violate any promise to possesse him. (59–63; E2r)

Characteristically, Barnes removes the comma terminating line 59. Perhaps having noticed that line 60 is short one metrical foot, he has also added ‘hath’ between ‘that’ and ‘the’, and a hyphen between ‘realme’ and ‘remits’, which leads to the awkward and not wholly clear ‘He that hath the care of Realme-remits, / And driues his Nobles to these exigents’ (E2r). On balance, then, Barnes’s ordinary editorial interventions present a mixture of success and failure, correction and error.

Barnes’s pattern of regular editorial alteration to his copy, with its mixture of correction and error, obviously complicates any attempt to draw intentional significance from the 1612 edition’s deviations from its copy text. Moreover, these deviations cannot with complete certainty be attributed to Barnes himself: compositors and proofreaders may be responsible for many or all of them. Barnes did not himself print the play: according to W.W. Greg, William Jaggard printed it for him.²⁵ Nonetheless, according to Anthony Graham-White in *Punctuation and Its Dramatic Value in Shakespearean Drama*, compositors and proofreaders did not completely disregard the punctuation and spelling of their copy, even if they were as influenced by their own rapidly changing standards as by any notion of fidelity to an authorial original. Graham-White concludes that these print house workers, often dismissed by bibliographers as hacks and scapegoated as sources of textual corruption, paid considerable attention to the accidentals of their texts.²⁶ Likewise, Graham-White writes, ‘When playwrights read proofs, in the few instances we know of [Massinger and Jonson], they too were greatly concerned with punctuation.’²⁷ However much the complex mediations involved in the early modern publication of dramatic texts might wrest agency away from anchorage in a transcendental authorial intentionality, then, they do not necessarily imply a lack of intentionality or meaning. I am thus using ‘Barnes’ as a convenient name for the cumulative effect of the 1612 edition’s deviations from its 1598 copy at a particular cultural moment, a way of focalizing a pattern of meaningful editorial intervention against the background of regular editorial alterations performed by potentially multiple mediating agencies.

Before turning my attention to the way in which Barnes’s editorial interventions subtly alter the play’s presentation of one of its main characters, Gaveston, I want to provide two examples of the difficulty of assigning

intentionality to deviations. To phrase this more optimistically, these are examples of the wonderful semantic productiveness of accidents and error. The first example is small. In scene 6, an enraged Mortimer Junior confronts Edward and informs him that

Thy court is naked, being bereft of those,
That makes a king seeme glorious to the world,
I meane the peeres, whom thou shouldst dearly loue: (171–3; D3r)

Barnes's copy does not capitalize 'peers' in line 173. Barnes does, a choice which may simply result from his attempt to regularize the text's capitalization. The effect of the capitalization, however, carries semantic significance, drawing attention to the equivalence between the 'Peers' whom Edward should love and the 'Piers' whom Edward does love and who 'loues me [Edward] more then all the world' (4.77; B3r): Gaveston. The play is a political as well as personal love triangle. Claude J. Summers writes that 'The radicalism of *Edward the Second* resides in the play's intersection of sex and politics', later characterizing the conflict between the barons and Gaveston as a 'petty competition of egos'.²⁸ Barnes's capitalization of the 'peers' supports Summers's first contention but suggests that the conflict between 'the Peers' and Piers is hardly 'petty'. The peers claim to be acting as and for a collective body against a mirroring force who, because he has the king's support, threatens to 'ouerpeer' (4.18; B2r) or outweigh them.

In my second example, lines 264–70 of scene 4, Mortimer Junior is explaining to his fellow barons why Gaveston must be recalled from exile in Ireland. The 1598 edition reads as follows:

But were he here, detested as he is,
How easily might some base slaue be subornd,
To greete his lordship with a poniard,
And none so much as blame the murtherer,
But rather praise him for that braue attempt,
And in the Chronicle, enrowle his name,
For purging of the realme of such a plague. (C1v)

The 1612 edition removes (or does it miss?) the comma at the end of the first line and emends (or is this just a compositorial slip?) 'murtherer' to 'murther' in the third line of the quoted passage. The shifts in meaning engendered by these changes are significant. In the 1598 edition, the first line's appositional phrase, 'detested as he is', clearly refers to Gaveston, the referent of

the opening pronoun 'he'. By removing the comma, Barnes opens the possibility that the appositional phrase might also or instead refer to 'some base slaue'. Ironically, in scene 6 it turns out that the role of 'base slaue' is played by two nobles, Lancaster and Mortimer Junior himself, both of whom draw their swords on the newly-arrived Gaveston because they resent the scorn Gaveston displays towards them. The detestation works both ways in the relationship between Gaveston and the barons, and its consequences are, historically, civil war. But 'base slaue' arguably also refers to the commoner Lightborn, Edward's assassin, and detestation more accurately than praise characterizes the reward he receives for what Mortimer suborns him to do: he is murdered immediately after he has accomplished his task, and his name is not enrolled in any chronicle but is rather Marlowe's fictional addition to the play. Joan Parks has remarked upon the class exclusivity that marks the play's representation of history: unlike its chronicle sources, the play largely confines historical agency to aristocratic characters. 'There is a nation at stake in his [Marlowe's] play', writes Parks, 'but that nation is composed primarily of a few powerful individuals'.²⁹ Lightborn might be considered the exception, but his ultimate detestation, proleptically anticipated by the reading enabled by the missed or removed comma, only further illustrates Parks's point. The change from 'murtherer' to 'murther' also complicates the passage's sense by shifting attention momentarily from the agent of the 'braue attempt' to the act itself. This conceptual separation adumbrates the play's complicated denouement, in which multiple agents script Edward's death and the question of culpability — praise or blame — remains open to the very end, when Mortimer Junior's efforts to distance himself from the 'braue attempt' fail and the young Edward III confines Isabella to the Tower for her role in the murder. Yet is the variant an editorial emendation or a compositorial slip, the result of an eye-blink that saw only one 'er' where there are two? The question is undecidable, but the meanings that the variant generates are undeniably provocative in the way in which they interrogate the role of class privilege and the assignation of agency in matters such as murder involving a king's favourite, members of the nobility, and even the king himself. The Overbury affair, Buckingham's assassination in 1628, and Charles I's execution are still in the future, but the 'accidents' contained in this passage of Barnes's 1612 edition of Marlowe's play would only gain resonance in these not-too-distant moments of cultural reception.

As cultural historians and literary critics have documented, however, even in 1612 James's favouritism was a cultural issue,³⁰ and not surprisingly

Barnes's most clearly discernible editorial interventions occur in the play's first scene, when the play is establishing Gaveston as a character. One of the most complex examples of the subtle shifts in meaning created by Barnes's editing occurs in the first nine lines of the opening scene. In both the 1598 edition and Barnes's edition, the scene begins with the stage direction 'Enter Gauestone reading on a letter that was brought him from the king'. One of Edward II's first acts upon his father Edward I's death was to recall Gaveston from his exile in France. Having just crossed the Channel and arrived at court, Gaveston here enters reading the document that no doubt served as his passport. Alone on stage, he then begins to read from the letter (and I am quoting here from the 1598 edition of the play):

My father is deceast, come Gaueston,
 And share the kingdome with thy deerest friend.
 Ah words that make me surfet with delight
 What greater blisse can hap to Gaueston,
 Then liue and be the fauorite of a King?
 Sweete prince I come, these these thy amorous lines,
 Might haue enforst me to haue swum from France,
 And like Leander gaspt vpon the sande,
 So thou wouldst smile and take me in thine armes. (1.1–9; A2r)

The play wastes no time introducing Gaveston as a dangerous character, a man fully aware of the depths of the king's affections for him and fully intent on exploiting his status as 'the fauorite of a King' for his own 'greater blisse'. The second line makes clear the magnitude of the danger that Gaveston represents: Edward has invited Gaveston to 'share the kingdome' with him, not only to be his favourite but also to be co-ruler. The first nine lines, then, are explosive, forcefully establishing one of the characters and declaring the themes whose trajectory towards civil war and tragedy the rest of the play will chart. The differences between the 1598 edition and Barnes's in these lines are, therefore, quite significant, and they illustrate Barnes's sensitive understanding of the play and his desire to emphasize its explosiveness. In the first nine lines, Barnes makes a number of changes to his 1598 copy. He supplies the obviously missed comma at the end of line 3, to counter-balance which he, or the compositor, has introduced a typographical error in line 2, spelling friend 'freind'. The significant changes occur in line 6, which Barnes repunctuates as follows: 'Sweete prince I come: These these, thy amorous lines [no terminal punctuation]'. Barnes's changes to line 6 are

in keeping with the changes that he makes throughout the play to render the punctuation more logical and the text more readerly than indicative of performance. The colon separates two independent clauses, and the comma shift on the one hand separates the opening demonstratives of the second clause from the clause's subject and, on the other, restores continuity between the subject and its verb, which occurs at the beginning of the following line, 'Might haue enforst me to haue swum from France'. But Barnes's changes also shift, if only slightly, the overall meaning or effect of this significant passage. The colon placed after 'come' halts readers on that loaded verb rather than allowing them to glide past it. It puts a pointed emphasis to the charged sexual nature of Edward and Gaveston's ostensibly political relationship, forming the climax of a series of sexually freighted words: 'surfeit', 'delight', 'bliss', then 'come'. The inextricability of the political and the sexual is, of course, one of the play's major concerns, not only in the relationship between Edward and Gaveston but also in the relationship that will lead to both their deaths, the adulterous relationship between the baron Mortimer Junior and Edward's wife Isabella.

Barnes employs this repunctuation strategy elsewhere in the play, replacing his copy's comma with a colon to add emphasis. Two brief examples from later in the first scene illustrate the way in which this strategy heightens the representation of Gaveston as a dangerous, divisive character. After Edward has created Gaveston 'Lord high Chamberlaine, / Cheefe Secretary to the state and me, / Earle of Cornewall, king and lord of Man' (1.152–4; A4r), his half-brother the earl of Kent, playing the role of good counsellor, interjects that 'Brother the least of these may well suffice / For one of greater birth then Gaueston' (156–7). By piling these titles upon Gaveston, of course, Edward asserts his authority as king in the face of England's hereditary nobility, the barons. 'He that I list to fauour shall be great' (6.260; D4r), Edward states in scene 6 of the play. His act, then, is an expression of political antagonism as well as sexual doting, and his reply to Kent's interjection captures the absoluteness of Edward's belief in his royal authority: 'Cease brother, For I cannot brooke these words' (158; A4r). The 1598 quarto ends the line with a comma, which slides the reader into the next line, 'Thy worth sweet friend is farre aboue my gifts' (159; A4r). By replacing the comma with a colon, Barnes holds the reader's attention for a moment longer on Edward's refusal to brook any challenge to his authority, the intransigence that will lead to the barons' rebellions, Kent's defection in scene 7, and ultimately Edward's deposition and murder. Immediately after Edward has bestowed the titles upon

Gaveston, the man who was responsible for Gaveston's exile during Edward's father's reign, the Bishop of Coventry, enters and is assaulted by Gaveston. Edward assents to the assault despite the fact that, as Kent once again points out, the assault is a politically dangerous act because it transgresses lines of authority that are not wholly within Edward's control and have a claim to placing limits upon Edward's authority: 'Ah brother, lay not violent hands on him, / For heele complaine vnto the sea of Rome' (1.187–8; A4v). Gaveston lusts for simple, bloody revenge: 'Let him complaine vnto the sea of hell' (189; A4v), he declares, for 'Ile be reuengd on him for my exile' (190; A4v). Edward is not so emotionally caught up in the event: 'No', he tells Gaveston, 'spare his life, but seaze upon his goods, / Be thou lord bishop, and receiue his rents' (191–2; A4v). Edward's decision is not motivated by murderous passion but by cold-blooded, if defiant, political calculation: Edward is not yet ready to sanction murder, but he is ready to arrogate to himself the papal power to dispose of bishoprics and their attendant properties. After committing the bishop to prison, Edward commands that his politically inflammatory plan be performed:

But in the meane time Gaueston away,
And take possession of his house & goods,
Come follow me, and thou shalt haue my guard,
To see it done, and bring thee safe againe. (200–3; A4v)

Barnes replaces the comma after 'goods' with a colon, thereby giving as much attention to the first two lines' emphasis on the despoilation of the bishop as an act violating laws of property and lines of authority as to the following two lines' elaboration of Edward's concern for Gaveston's personal, bodily safety.

To return to the line with which I began, the sixth line of the play's opening scene, Barnes complements his use of the colon with a shift in the position of the comma. Again, the 1598 quarto punctuates as follows: 'Sweete prince I come, these these thy amorous lines [terminal comma]'. Barnes repunctuates as follows: 'Sweete prince I come: These these, thy amorous lines [no comma at the end of the line]'. The effect of Barnes's relocation of the commas in this line is subtle and perhaps only momentary, but it is nonetheless significant. The comma together with the colon bracket off the demonstrative pronouns 'These these', separating them sharply from the phrase 'thy amorous lines' that follows. In Barnes's copy, by contrast, 'these these thy amorous lines' runs together, marked out as a unit by commas on

both sides. Barnes's repunctuation momentarily, at least, arrests the readers' attention upon the prop they might imagine Gaveston holding, the pages in his hand, 'These these', the material letter from Edward with which Gaveston entered the scene. As a prop, and perhaps in the readers' visualizations of it, the letter will no doubt have some sort of imposing royal seal on it, the insignia of power. The line as Barnes has punctuated it reminds the reader that the writer of this letter is a king, one who 'might haue enforst me to haue swum from France' (7; A2r) without resorting to 'amorous lines'. The rest is brief, of course, only a pause before we pass from the materiality of the document, the vehicle of power, to the text of that document, the lines of love that 'Might haue enforst me to haue swum from France / And like Leander gaspt vpon the sande' (7–8). But that pause prevents us from forgetting that, in this play at least and between these two characters especially, the latter are inscribed upon the former: power is the substance or substrate of love in this play. '[F]or but to honour thee, / Is Edward pleazd with kingly regiment' (1.162–3; A4r), Edward tells Gaveston later in the scene, but throughout the play Edward discovers that without kingly regiment he cannot honour, cannot even protect, his beloved favourite. Power is the precondition of love, and Barnes's repunctuation directs our attention to this major theme.

My concluding example of the purposiveness that underlies Barnes's editing occurs later in Gaveston's opening speech. I offer it here because it is a slightly more difficult example than the previous ones and because it directly affects the play's initial characterization of Gaveston. 'My knee shall bowe to none but to the king' (19; A2r), Gaveston proclaims, declaring his refusal as the king's favourite to show any deference whatsoever to England's hereditary nobility. He then puts himself at odds with the rest of the nation by expressing his contempt for England's commoners:

As for the multitude that are but sparkes,
 Rakt vp in embers of their pouertie,
Tanti: Ile fanne first on the winde,
 That glaunceth at my lips and flieth away: (20–3; A2r)

The metaphor in these lines seems a fairly straightforward expression of Gaveston's meanly Malthusian sentiments: the angry commoners are sparks emitted by the dying fire of their poverty. Their anger, however, is harmless and indeed futile. To adapt Shakespeare, they will be consumed by that which their anger has been nourished by: their impoverished material conditions. Gaveston will do 'Tanti' or this much for them: he will fan or blow on

the wind, from which he receives as little harm as from the sparks, in order at once to aggravate the anger of the poor and to hasten their extinction. These are the sentiments of a man who feels complete contempt for and immunity from everyone else in England's political community. The punctuation of these lines in Barnes's 1598 copy is typical. Barnes, however, eliminates the comma at the end of line 20 and in the following line adds a medial comma to separate 'embers' and 'of':

As for the multitude that are but sparkes
 Rakt vp in embers, of their pouertie,
Tanti: Ile fanne first on the winde,
 That glaunceth at my lips and flieth away: (20–3; A2r)

Unlike elsewhere in the play, Barnes's editorial interventions here do not help to clarify the sense of the passage. In fact, they arguably render the passage more opaque. In the 1598 copy, the commoners are clearly enraged by their poverty: no punctuation separates 'embers' from the genitive phrase 'of their pouertie'. By removing the comma at the end of the first line of the passage and separating 'embers' from the genitive phrase 'of their pouertie', however, Barnes removes the metaphor's precision: it is no longer clear that 'of their pouertie' modifies 'embers', and we are left with the fuzzy image of a group of enraged commoners but without a clear specification of why exactly they are enraged. The passage more sharply communicates Gaveston's contempt, however. By removing the comma at the end of the passage's first line, Barnes makes 'Rakt vp in embers' a restrictive rather than unrestrictive modifying phrase. That is, the multitude are not just sparks that also happen to be condemned to futile anger: their anger is essentially futile. By adding a comma to separate 'embers' and 'of their pouertie', Barnes allows that the latter phrase now no longer need be read as modifying embers. In fact, it could be the sole target of the third line's dismissive 'Tanti'. Not 'So much for the angry multitude!' but 'So much for their poverty!': this contempt directs itself savagely and specifically at the very conditions of existence of the vast majority of the political community's population. More intensely, then, than the 1598 copy, Barnes's repunctuated version of these four lines adumbrates an aspect of Gaveston's character on which the rest of the play will elaborate. Immediately after uttering these lines, for example, Gaveston is confronted by three poor men who seek his aid. Initially scornful, he decides that 'it is no paine to speake men faire' (40; A2v) and promises to help them. After they have exited, however, Gaveston remarks that 'These are not men for me' (48;

A2v), and we never hear anything more about them. The men for Gaveston are instead

wanton Poets, pleasant wits,
Musitions, that with touching of a string
May draw the pliant king which way I please. (49–51; A2v)

This, however, is fanning on the wind. In scene 6, during the confrontation that leads up to outright civil war, the first charge Mortimer Junior levels at Edward is that

The idle triumphes, maskes, lasciuious showes
And prodigall giftes bestowed on Gaueston,
Haue drawne thy treasure drie, and made the weake,
The murmuring commons ouerstretched hath. (6.154–7; D2v)

By repunctuating Gaveston's opening expression of contempt for the poverty of the commoners, the 'overstretched' nature of their material existence, Barnes adds credibility to Mortimer Junior's accusations.

Unlike Newdigate, whose interest, influenced by the Essex rebellion, focused on the relationship between Edward and Mortimer, Barnes seems to have lost interest in intervening aggressively regarding his copy text's accidents after Gaveston's early exit from the play. Although the general pattern of repunctuation and emendation continues, from this point on Barnes leaves his copy largely as it is, even in places where there is the potential for the kind of editing in which Barnes engages earlier in the play, such as the speeches in which Edward struggles with handing over his crown. In his editing of Edward's response to Leicester's 'Will you yeeld your crowne?' (20.50; H1v), for example, Barnes makes a few crucial emendations, adding the necessary 'be' to his copy's 'But stay a while, let me King till night' (59; H1v) and altering the 'but' of 'Ile not resigne, but whilst I liue, / Traitours be gon' (86; H2r) to 'not'. He repunctuates occasionally, tightening his copy's syntax by removing the first commas in the lines 'To loose my crowne and kingdome, without cause' (52; H1v), for example, and 'Take here, my crowne, the life of Edward too' (57; H1v). On the whole, however, Barnes does not disrupt in any significant way the general cumulative flow of lines largely devoid of medial punctuation and terminally punctuated with commas.

In one significant instance late in the play, however, Barnes intervenes in a remarkably self-reflexive fashion: the passage in which Mortimer Junior reveals and translates the unpointed Latin sentence with which this paper

began. Mortimer Junior enters alone after the stage has been cleared from the previous scene, in which Kent fails to rescue Edward from his imprisonment. The following passage, the first sixteen lines of scene 23, are from Barnes's 1598 copy:

The King must die or Mortimer goes downe,
 The commons now begin to pitie him,
 Yet he that is the cause of Edwards death,
 Is sure to pay for it when his sonne is of age,
 And therefore will I do it cunningly,
 This letter written by a friend of ours,
 Containes his death, yet bids them saue his life.
Edwardum occidere nolite timere bonum est.
 Feare not to kill the King tis good he die
 But read it thus, and that's another sence:
Edwardum occidere nolite timere bonum est.
 Kill not the King tis good to feare the worst.
 Vnpointed as it is, thus shall it goe,
 That being dead, if it chaunce to be found,
 Matreuis and the rest may beare the blame,
 And we be quit that causde it to be done: (23.1–16; I1v–I2r)

Strikingly, in the 1598 quarto Mortimer Junior's translations of the Latin sentence imitate the Latin original in their lack of punctuation: 'Feare not to kill the King tis good he die' and 'Kill not the King tis good to feare the worst'. Nonetheless, each translation is unambiguous, and their parallel syntax and chiasmic linking make clear their antithetical nature. Punctuation is unnecessary: the translation of Latin into English is in itself, it seems, a process of forced clarification — one phrase or the other — that leads to action or inaction. Significantly, in the following scene, Matrevis arrives at the correct translation of the Latin sentence by reading it like an English sentence or, more specifically, like he might have read the first of Mortimer Junior's translations of that sentence:

Gurney, it was left vnpointed for the nonce,
Edwardum occidere nolite timere,
 That's his meaning. (24.16–18; I3v)

Matrevis reads the Latin sentence linearly, stopping the process of creating meaning when he runs into a syntactically disjunct unit, the unspoken

'bonum' that follows 'timere', just as the reader of 'Feare not to kill the King tis good he die' divides the sentence into two independent clauses when she or he encounters 'tis' after 'King'. To arrive at the second meaning of the Latin sentence requires a second, recursive, and more Latinate reading, and 'the nonce' does not permit such care. More precisely, Matrevis makes both readings and chooses the first, English, reading of the sentence because he knows 'it was left vnpointed for the nonce'. Having recognized the sentence's ambiguity, he knows that there is only one reason for it, concealment, and it is hardly worth concealing an order not to kill the king. Conversely, having participated in foiling Kent's rescue attempt two scenes earlier, he is very aware of Mortimer Junior's need for concealment, of the perils of killing a legitimate monarch pitied by his people. The nonce of English history and English reading practices, then, translates the sentence with deadly clarity.

Through his repunctuation of Mortimer Junior's English translations, however, Barnes intervenes in the reading of this situation. For the most part, Barnes is content to leave the punctuation of the passage the way he finds it in his copy: commas at the ends of lines and little medial punctuation, as the reader has come to expect. This renders Barnes's repunctuation of the translations all the more noticeable: 'Feare not to kil the King, tis good he die;' and 'Kill not the King, tis good to feare the worst' (23.9, 12; 11v). The two additional commas and the semicolon are superfluous from one perspective. The English reader has no difficulty making sense of the two lines because they fully conform to linear English reading expectations in general and the specific reading expectations established earlier in the passage and in the play in general. But by adding punctuation — here and not elsewhere — Barnes draws attention to precisely those conventions that render the translations so readable and the 'correct' translation so obvious. Moreover, by separating the independent clauses of each line, by drawing attention to the fact that each line contains two units of meaning and not one, Barnes creates an awareness that might later perceive the partial, expectation-driven nature of Matrevis's truncated translation. Barnes's intervention in his copy's punctuation here emphasizes the significance of punctuation in the process of reading, of making sense of texts in the context of the nonce. Barnes here highlights precisely the mode of his own engagement with the contextual, contingent, Jacobean significance of Marlowe's Elizabethan play.

Reflecting the shift in the horizons of cultural reception inaugurated by James's ascension to the English throne in 1603, Barnes's active editorial intervention in his 1612 edition of Marlowe's play subtly sharpens the

play as a morality lesson for the culture of favourites at the Jacobean court. His repunctuations of the text generate in a minor way the ‘Marlowe effect’ that Leah Marcus in *Unediting the Renaissance* argues shaped the revisions to Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus* and thus produced its two strikingly different versions, the A text and the B text.³¹ They also demonstrate Sonia Massai’s contention that the variations that occur in the process of textual transmission are not, or not necessarily, merely evidence of textual corruption from an ideal, authorized copy but might be evidence of an active editorial intelligence responding to the text from a culturally contingent but no less valid position than the author’s or our own.³² Accidents happen, and their happenings are significant moments in the history of a text’s reception.

Notes

- 1 Christopher Marlowe, *Edward the Second*, ed. Mathew R. Martin (Peterborough, ON, 2010), 23.8. All subsequent citations of a modern edition of the play are from this edition; throughout the paper citations of early editions of the play are keyed to this edition.
- 2 See W.W. Greg, *A Bibliography of English Printed Drama to the Restoration*, 4 vols (1939; London, 1962), 1.129, for complete information on the successive editions of the play. Scholars have speculated that there was a 1593 edition of the play, but it is not extant, and Fredson Bowers concludes that ‘no such 1593 edition existed’ (‘Was There a Lost 1593 Edition of Marlowe’s *Edward the Second*?’, *Studies in Bibliography* 25 [1972], 144). The 1594 and 1598 editions of the play were published for William Jones by Robert Robinson and Robert Bradocke respectively (Robert Ford Welsh identifies Robinson in ‘The Printer of the 1594 Octavo of Marlowe’s *Edward II*’, *Studies in Bibliography* 17 [1964], 197–8). In 1611 Jones assigns the play to Barnes, for whose 1612 edition William Jaggard may have been the printer; in 1617 Barnes assigns the play to Henry Bell, who has it printed in 1622 (the printer is unidentified); in 1638 Bell assigns the play to J. Haviland and J. Wright. Not much is known about Barnes: according to H.G. Aldis’s *A Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers in England, Scotland and Ireland, and of Foreign Printers of English Books 1557–1640* (1910; Mansfield Centre, CT, 2005), 23, Roger Barnes was in the publishing business for less than a decade, between 1610 and 1617.
- 3 Richard Rowland (ed.), *The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe, Volume III: Edward II* (Oxford, 1994), xxxvii.

- 4 D.F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge, 1999), 13. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511483226>.
- 5 Sonia Massai, *Shakespeare and the Rise of the Editor* (Cambridge, 2007), 10.
- 6 Forman's summaries are included in A.L. Rowse, *The Case Books of Simon Forman: Sex and Society in Shakespeare's Age* (London, 1976), 308–11.
- 7 Anthony James West, 'The Life of the First Folio in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', Andrew Murphy (ed.), *A Concise Companion to Shakespeare and the Text*, (Oxford, 2011), 76. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002%2F9780470757895>.
- 8 See David Riggs, *Ben Jonson: A Life* (Cambridge, MA, 1989), 105–6.
- 9 See Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespeare Company, 1594–1642* (Cambridge, 2004), 178–80. Siobhan Keenan presents the same information in her article, which I discuss below.
- 10 Siobhan Keenan, 'Reading Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II*: The Example of John Newdigate in 1601', *Notes and Queries* 53.4 (2006), 452. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093%2Fnotesj%2Fgj1154>.
- 11 Keenan, 'Reading Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II*', 457.
- 12 Qtd. in *ibid*, 457.
- 13 Qtd. in *ibid*, 457.
- 14 *Ibid*, 457.
- 15 Barry Coward, *The Stuart Age: England 1603–1714*, 3rd edn (Harlow, Essex, 2003), 122.
- 16 *Ibid*, 147.
- 17 Linda Levy Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption in Early Stuart England* (London, 1993), 4. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4324%2F9780203168240>.
- 18 Coward, *The Stuart Age*, 514, 147.
- 19 Joseph Cady, 'The "Masculine Love" of the "Princes of Sodom" "Practising the Art of Ganymede" at Henri III's Court: The Homosexuality of Henri III and His *Mignons* Pierre de L'Estoile's *Mémoires-Journaux*', Jacqueline Murray and Konrad Eisenbichler (eds), *Desire and Discipline: Sex and Sexuality in the Premodern West* (Toronto, 1996), 141.
- 20 Mark Thornton Burnett, 'Edward II and Elizabethan Politics', Paul Whitfield White (ed.), *Marlowe, History, and Sexuality: New Critical Essays on Christopher Marlowe* (New York, 1998), 99.
- 21 In 'The Rationale of Copy-Text', a foundational text in modern editorial theory, W.W. Greg asserts that 'we need to draw a distinction between the significant, or as I shall call them 'substantive', readings of the text, those that affect the author's meaning or the essence of his expression, and others, such in general as spelling, punctuation, word-division, and the like, affecting mainly its formal presentation,

which may be regarded as the accidents, or as I shall call them ‘accidentals’, of the text’ (‘The Rationale of Copy-Text’, Erick Kelemen (ed.), *Textual Editing and Criticism: An Introduction* [New York, 2009], 137). My position in this paper is not necessarily that accidentals are as authorial or even as intentional as substantives but that the distinction is not as firm as Greg posits: accidentals, like substantives, are meaningful.

- 22 Randall McLeod, ‘Gon. No More, the text is foolish’, Erick Kelemen (ed.), *Textual Editing and Criticism: An Introduction* (New York, 2009), 287–332. McLeod’s ‘differential reading’ (308) of *Gonorill* and *Gonerill* provides a model for my own reading of the differences between the 1598 and 1612 editions’ characterization of *Gaveston*.
- 23 Christopher Marlowe, *The troublesome raigne and lamentable death of Edward the second, King of England: with the tragicall fall of proud Mortimer: And also the life and death of Peirs Gaveston, the great Earle of Cornwall, and mighty favorite of king Edward the second, as it was publiquely acted by the right honourable the Earle of Pembroke his servants. Written by Chri. Marlow Gent* (London, 1598; STC 17438). Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from an early modern edition of the play are from this edition.
- 24 Christopher Marlowe, *The troublesome raigne and lamentable death of Edward the second, King of England: with the tragicall fall of proud Mortimer. And also the life and death of Peirs Gaveston, the great Earle of Cornwall, and mighty favorite of king Edward the second, as it was publiquely acted by the right honourable the Earle of Pembroke his servants. Written by Christopher Marlow Gent.* (London, 1612; STC 17439.5), A3v.
- 25 See Greg, *Bibliography of English Printed Drama*, 1.129.
- 26 Anthony Graham-White, *Punctuation and Its Dramatic Value in Shakespearean Drama* (Newark, 1995), 56–65.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 64.
- 28 Claude J. Summers, ‘Sex, Politics, and Self-Realization in *Edward II*’, Kenneth Friedenreich, Roma Gill, and Constance Brown Kuriyama (eds), *A Poet and Filthy Play-Maker: New Essays on Christopher Marlowe* (New York, 1988), 222, 224.
- 29 Joan Parks, ‘History, Tragedy, and Truth in Christopher Marlowe’s *Edward II*’, *Studies in English Literature* 39.2 (1999), 282. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307%2F1556166>.
- 30 Mark Thornton Burnett provides a detailed summary of the culture of favouritism surrounding James from his Scottish reign through to his accession to the English throne in ‘*Edward II* and Elizabethan Politics’, Paul Whitfield White (ed.), *Marlowe, History, and Sexuality: New Critical Essays on Christopher Marlowe* (New York, 1998), 99–102. See also Lawrence Normand, “‘What passions call you these?’: *Edward II* and

- James VI, Darryl Grantly and Peter Roberts (eds), *Christopher Marlowe and English Renaissance Culture* (Aldershot, 1996), 172–97; Curtis Perry, ‘The Politics of Access and Representations of the Sodomite King in Early Modern England’, *Renaissance Quarterly* 53.4 (2000), 1054–83. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307%2F2901456>;
- Linda Levy Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption in Early Stuart England* (New York, 1993). DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4324%2F9780203168240>.
- 31 Leah Marcus, *Unediting the Renaissance: Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton* (New York, 1996), 42. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4324%2F9780203424445>.
- 32 Massai, *Shakespeare and the Rise of the Editor*, 30–1.