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**EDITING *HAMLET*.
AN ANALYSIS OF Q1
AND ITS STATUS**

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“*Cor.* What doe you reade my Lord?

Ham. Wordes, Wordes.”

(*Q1 Hamlet*, lines 1229-30, in *The Three-Text Hamlet*)

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ABSTRACT

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* has been for centuries a challenge for editors and scholars as it is, together with *Romeo and Juliet*, his only play for which there are three early printed texts, Q1, Q2 and F1. Orthodoxy has placed Q1 in an inferior position, being dismissed for centuries as incomplete and pirated. Nevertheless, new approaches to bibliographical studies have concluded that some of Q1's traditional hypotheses are not supported by consistent evidence. Contrarily, there are hints that point to Q1 as a Shakespearean text reflecting the Bard's first conceptions on the play, rather than being a corrupted transcription of the Q2 or F1 sources.

The way in which *Hamlet* has been edited and performed throughout history has been dependent on these different approaches, and what scholars and audiences have identified as "*Hamlet*" has, consequently, shifted. Conflated editions endeavoured to find the purest play, but created a third-party element that, paradoxically, never was in Shakespeare's mind. Combiners, revisionists, and single-text supporters for the three available options have followed each other in the search for setting what *Hamlet* is.

RESUMEN

Hamlet ha supuesto durante siglos un reto para los editores y académicos debido a su particular condición, junto con *Romeo y Julieta*, de contar con tres textos impresos coetáneos a Shakespeare, Q1, Q2 y F1. Tradicionalmente, Q1 ha sido relegado a una posición secundaria, considerándose durante siglos una versión incompleta y ajena a Shakespeare. Sin embargo, una ola de nuevos planteamientos bibliográficos ha concluido que varias de las hipótesis de la ortodoxia acerca de Q1 son, en muchos casos, suposiciones y que, precisamente, hay detalles que apuntan a Q1 como un texto shakespeariano que refleja las primeras impresiones del insigne dramaturgo inglés sobre la historia de *Hamlet*, desechando que se trate de una reconstrucción basada en los manuscritos que originaron Q2 o F1.

El modo en que se ha editado y representado *Hamlet* a lo largo de la historia ha estado influido por estos distintos enfoques y lo que los estudiosos y el público han identificado como *Hamlet* ha ido mutando en consecuencia. Las ediciones que han combinado los diferentes textos en pos del *Hamlet* más puro posible alumbraron, paradójicamente, un nuevo texto que nunca estuvo en la mente de Shakespeare. Combinadores, revisionistas, y defensores de cada uno de los tres textos originales como la mejor opción se han sucedido en la búsqueda de lo que entendemos que *Hamlet* es.

1. INTRODUCTION

Among Shakespeare's plays, *Hamlet* is surely the one that has had a higher attention because of its obvious immense literary and philosophic value. Out of all the attention that it has received, two main issues have deserved a greater concern on the part of scholars traditionally.

On the one hand, the interpretation of the play, mainly because of the extreme complexity of themes and characters in it. And, on the other hand, the textual problems derived from the existence of three different original editions and their combination in later editions up to nowadays. Both issues present an endless and deep difficulty and no conclusive answers can be offered on any of them, having been the cornerstone of thousands of controversies and scholarly debate. One of the most prominent and classical experts on Shakespeare, Harley Granville-Barker¹, claimed in 1930, "I have a dozen times repented the putting my foot into such a critical quagmire" (Granville-Barker 1930:166) referring to the pains an editor must take to decide which variant to choose and which to dismiss in the case of Shakespeare's masterpiece.

Hamlet is one of the two only Shakespearean plays that can be found in three different printed texts and the only one presenting intriguing and important textual differences among them that go beyond mere variants in spelling or alternative line endings. Traditionally, F1 and Q2, the "good" quarto, have been regarded as the reliable sources whereas Q1, the "bad" quarto², has been described as corrupt and invalid version of the play.

This Master Dissertation will focus on analysing Q1's main features and what the main differences with the two canonical versions are, how they affect elements such as plot and structure, interpretation or characters, and what the importance of Q1 is on its own and not just as a mere subsidiary text for completing combined editions.

¹ Harley Granville-Barker (1877-1946) was a key figure with a great influence in 20th century Shakespearean dramaturgy and criticism achieving worldwide recognition with his seminal five series of *Prefaces to Shakespeare*, written from 1927 to 1948 where he analysed the plays under a combined viewpoint of playwright, actor and scholar. (*Encyclopaedia Britannica* 2020)

² This pejorative labelling was first used in 1909 by A.W. Pollard in *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos: A Study in the Bibliography of Shakespeare's Plays, 1594-1685*. Later, George Ian Duthie, in his *The "Bad" Quarto of Hamlet. A Critical Survey*, epitomised the view that dismisses Q1 as a maimed, corrupted, and non-Shakespearean text. Some scholars have argued that the term "bad" quarto was a misguided label. For instance, Brian Vickers affirms in his "Is Q1 a reported text?" that "the work of W.W. Greg succeeded in discrediting the theory of memorial reconstruction and the whole concept of "Bad" Quartos. Setting aside Pollard's unfortunate name for these texts and the outdated notion of "pirates" violating the rights of stationers (...)". (Vickers 2019)

To do so, the paper has been structured into three main blocks. Firstly, an overview on the situation of Shakespeare's texts in general and of *Hamlet* in particular will be outlined to provide a background to the textual problems in Shakespeare and a framework in which to place the particular phenomenon of Q1 with clarity. Secondly, the central section of the paper will be devoted to the discussion of the main characteristics and problems of the 1603 *Hamlet* text, or Q1, making emphasis on the comparison of this first text and the subsequent 1604-5 second quarto, or Q2 and the 1623 text, commonly known as F1. Finally, there is a third section that studies what the current status of Q1 is and how different editors and scholars have regarded Q1 and its importance.

As it regards the methodology, this paper combines an intensive reading of the 1603, 1604-5 and 1623 texts in order to identify, systematise, and interpret the most relevant characteristics and differences among the three original available copies, with an extensive reading of the bibliographical material on the topic to offer a review of the main standing points of scholars throughout history and of their contributions to the analysis. As a result, it is expected that this Master Dissertation will provide an accurate description of the issue and of the critical discussion around it.

All the references to lines from any of the three original printed texts of *Hamlet* (Q1, Q2 or F1) are always from Bertram and Kliman's *The Three-Text Hamlet*³ unless explicitly stated.

2. OBJECTIVES

The main aim of this paper is to tackle some of the important difficulties that spring from a close study of the textual condition of *Hamlet*. In this respect, it is important to begin by being aware that the most popular, widespread, and traditional version of *Hamlet* was never designed or written by Shakespeare as we have read it or watched it, as it is a mixture of different copies. In this sense, identifying the concrete characteristics and elements of each of the copies is crucial, together with considering each of these available early copies as different, autonomous works.

In particular, the paper has been narrowed down to the problems that the Q1 text of *Hamlet* arises, and there will be a special focusing on the implications derived from them in the

³ Bertram, P. and B.W. Kliman. 1991. *The Three-Text Hamlet: Parallel Texts of the First and Second Quartos and First Folio*. New York: AMS Press.

edition of the play. The fact that Q1 was lost until the 19th century and that it presents a very reduced version with a number of textual inconsistencies has led the majority of editors and scholars for a long time to discredit it and to keep its presence apart from traditional editions. In this study, we will try to show the flaws of this traditional viewpoint paying attention to some of the arguments supporting that Q1 is a valuable copy that should be given its place among canonised Q2 and F1 versions.

3. SOME CONSIDERATIONS ON THE EDITORIAL PROBLEM IN SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS AND IN *HAMLET*

3.1. Editorial problems in Shakespeare's plays

Shakespeare's plays have come to us in the form of printed texts. This situation makes things quite complex when trying to state "how close the printed texts bring us to what Shakespeare actually wrote"⁴ (Evans 1971: 226). But an even more confusing problem derives from the fact that there are, in quite a few cases, more than one printed version for a given play. Thus, the two major concerns when studying the editorial problems in Shakespeare's plays are:

- to know what processes the authorial manuscript undertook before being transformed into a printed text.
- to know the processes through which two or more printed versions of the same play took place, and whether one of them is an authorial revision of the other, or if each one is based on different manuscripts or is the result of corruption.

The first point has been widely studied by classic scholars such as R.B. McKerrow, A.W. Pollard, W.W. Greg, or J.D. Wilson. Their three main conclusions are synthesised in Evan's article, namely, (i) that not all the plays seem to have been printed from a Shakespeare's manuscript (e.g. *2Henry VI*, *3Henry VI*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Antony and Cleopatra* or *Coriolanus*), (ii) that most of the plays which seem to have been printed from a Shakespeare's manuscript are likely to derive from "foul papers", and (iii) that, apart from considering Shakespeare's manuscripts, there is the possibility that the manuscripts in which the printed

⁴ G. Blakemore Evans addresses this question as the key one in his seminal article "Shakespeare's Text: Approaches and Problems".

text was based were not Shakespeare's but of an "intermediary" type, be it scribal copies, theatre prompt copies, memorially reconstructed copies, or combination copies⁵ (Evans 1971:226-230).

As it can be seen, it is almost impossible to set which kind of manuscripts served as a model for any of the printed texts. And, to all this confusion, it must be added the own printing processes of the period, which were not precisely fully accurate in transcribing what was written in the manuscripts⁶.

Regarding the second point, that is, how two or more printed versions of the same play took place, we find different possible explanations for each case. Nevertheless, it is important to say that this problem is restrictive just to a small group of plays. Thus, if we review Shakespeare's canon, we find that out of thirty-eight plays⁷:

- a. There are twenty which have come to us in a unique version, being the majority of them included in F1, as it is the case (in alphabetical order) of *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *As You Like It*, *Coriolanus*, *Cymbeline*, *Henry VI part 1*, *Henry VIII*, *Julius Caesar*, *King John*, *Macbeth*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Tempest*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Timon of Athens*, *Twelfth Night*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. The two remaining plays that we only find in a unique printed source are *Pericles*, *Prince of Tyre* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, each of them published in a Q version.
- b. There are eighteen which can be found in more than one printed version, combining an in-folio version with different types of quartos in the following manner:
 - b.1. Four plays are in F and in "bad" quartos: *Henry V*, *Henry VI part 2*, *Henry VI part 3*⁸ and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.
 - b.2. Ten plays appear in F and in a "good" quarto. They are *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Henry IV part 1*, *Henry IV part 2*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Much Ado About*

⁵ For a definition of these different types of copies, see Ioppolo, G. 2006. *Dramatists and their Manuscripts in the Age of Shakespeare, Jonson, Middleton, and Heywood. Authorship, authority, and the playhouse*. London: Routledge. For a list showing the believed correspondence of Shakespeare's plays to each of the different types of sources, see again, Evans, op.cit., pp. 227-231.

⁶ For a discussion on the Elizabethan-Jacobean printing processes, see H. R. Woudhuysen's "Shakespeare's Writings: from manuscript to print" in Grazia, N. and S. Wells (eds.). 2010. *The New Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

⁷ The bibliography and experts disagree up to what extent the Shakespearean canon should include relatively new and "problematic" plays as it is the case with *Edward III*, which would enlarge the canon up to 39.

⁸ It is in fact an octavo and not a quarto but, for convenience's sake, it is traditionally classified as a Q.

Nothing, Othello, Richard II, The Merchant of Venice, Titus Andronicus and Troilus and Cressida.

b.3. Two plays are in F and in a “mixed” quarto, *King Lear* and *Richard III*.

b.4. And finally, only two plays have been preserved in three different printed versions, in F, in one “good” quarto and in one “bad” quarto. They are *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet*.⁹

From this perspective, there are twenty plays that offer no problem when being edited as it regards choosing between one or another variant in printed versions.

Regarding the rest, it is also relatively clear that in the four cases of plays in the in-folio version and in a “bad” quarto the basis for editions is the authoritative F1 text. But growing pains appear when dealing with the ten plays that have an F version and just a “good” quarto version and with the two plays that have an F version and a “mixed” quarto version. Here, traditionally authors have preferred the “good” quartos as they were considered closer to Shakespeare’s intentions, regarding the F1 versions as somehow contaminated by errors or revisions not directly made by Shakespeare himself. Thus, taking the “good” quartos as a base, they combined both texts, preferring when a double reading appeared the quarto version. Nevertheless, the current tendency is to regard F versions as Shakespeare’s revisions and, thus, to prefer the F text rather than the Q texts in these cases, and not to mix or combine the two different versions¹⁰.

Finally, the most difficult cases are those of the two plays that have three different printed versions, the one in the folio, a “good” quarto, and a “bad” quarto. This is precisely the case of *Hamlet* so it would be better to discuss these special cases in the next section.

⁹ This classification has been adapted from Allen and Muir’s introduction to *Shakespeare’s Plays in Quarto. A Facsimile Edition of Copies Primarily from Henry E. Huntington’s Library*. 1981. Berkeley: University of California Press (pp. xii-xviii) This is a facsimile edition that granted access to these original copies in a period when internet and digital tools were not developed enough. Previously, Charlton Hinman’s facsimile edition for Norton of the First Folio based on the Folios in the Folger Library Collection also meant an important step towards Shakespeare’s early copies availability. Hinman also published some Quartos in facsimile editions for a series in Oxford University Press that was initiated by W.W. Greg in 1939 and that was entitled as the *Shakespeare Quarto Facsimiles*.

¹⁰ A brief review of the “good” quartos supporters and the subsequent “revisionist” tendency is offered in relation to the case of *Hamlet* in G. R. Hibbard (ed.) 1987. *Hamlet*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (pp. 104-132)

3.2. Editorial problems in *Hamlet*

Hamlet can be considered a special case among the rest of Shakespeare's plays regarding textual problems as it has been showed in the previous section. Its main peculiarity, together with *Romeo and Juliet* is that there are three different printed versions, each one having different passages not included in others and including different readings in each of the three versions or different in one version while similar in the other two.

Following a chronological order of edition, the first Shakespeare's *Hamlet* version¹¹ is *The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke by William Shake-speare*. It is interesting to pay attention to the absence in the title of a comma between "Hamlet" and "Prince of Denmarke" as well as the way in which the name of the author is spelt, "Shake-speare". This first text is known by different denominations such as "the 1603 text", "the first quarto" or "Q1", or "the bad quarto". Each one makes reference to a concrete characteristic, be it the date of publication, the printing format, or the quality associated to it. The second Shakespeare's *Hamlet* version is *The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke by William Shakespeare*. This text is also known as "the 1604-5 text", "the second quarto" or "Q2", or "the good quarto". Finally, the third version is *The Tragedie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke*, known as "the 1623 text" or "the first folio" or "F1".

The numerous editorial problems and doubts that have always arisen when trying to edit this play could be reduced to three main aspects, i) is there a clear authorial connection between the three printed copies, being each of them a reflection of different revising steps?, ii) which text do we consider the most authoritative, complete or reliable one, if any? and iii) should we use, together with the most authoritative version, the other two versions' information that does not appear in the principal one?

The first question is the essential one to attach to each of the versions an importance on their own. Even if the first printed text is hugely reduced and contains clear inconsistencies for different possible reasons, such as being a memorial reconstruction, piracy, etc., the key issue is if it reflects Shakespeare's play at a given stage. The same could be applied to the second and third copies. Is Q2, as it was thought for centuries, closer to the authors' intentions due to its publication during Shakespeare's lifetime? Or is F1 the best option because it could include

¹¹ It must be taken into account the so-called *Ur-Hamlet*, although there is not even a single copy of the text, as well as the German version *Der bestra'te Brudermord*. Most editors have them into account when outlining the history of the different *Hamlet* versions. For instance, Hibbard (Hibbard 1998:12-14) and Anne Barton (Barton 1980:9-10) talk about the first, while Dover Wilson (1934:25) talks about the second.

authorial revisions even though it was compiled in 1623 by Heminges and Condell once the Bard had died?

As far as the second question is concerned, it is for obvious reasons that the answer will not include Q1. The most authoritative text is either Q2 or F1 because both are very much longer than Q1, both contain common and peculiar passages which were clearly written by Shakespeare and, finally, both were published later than Q1 and include explicit references about the authority of the texts. We find scholars for and against each option for different reasons, but this discussion does not fall into the scope of this paper.

Regarding the third problem, we find again two different positions. On the one hand, there is the traditional approach developed by “combiners”. These editors take as a basis one of the two authoritative versions, Q2 or F1, and include the other versions’ passages that do not appear in their basic text. Following this procedure, a further version is created which, obviously, departs from the original authorial intentions but which, in turn, offers to the reader all the lines that Shakespeare created for the play in different moments. On the other hand, relatively recent approaches have put forward the argument that Shakespeare revised his plays and, thus, it is highly probable that F1 is Shakespeare’s *second thought* and the most authoritative text. For these scholars, who could be identified as “revisionists”, there is no room for combining different versions because they are simply different stages in the elaboration of a final version.

As it can be seen, both possibilities offer a solution for the problems of Q2 and F1, but the solution for Q1 remains quite loose.¹²

4. THE 1603 QUARTO

4.1. Origin and main peculiarities:

The first reference to the existence of a written copy of the Q1, in particular, and of *Hamlet*, in general, is its entry in the Stationers’ Register the 26th July 1602, “...A booke called the Revenge of Hamlett Prince Denmarke as yt was latelie Acted by the Lord Chamberleyne his servantes”¹³ That *booke* was not to be published until 1603, and, when it finally appeared,

¹² The main arguments in favour of the revisionist theory were first pointed out in Urkowitz’s *Shakespeare’s Revision of King Lear* (Urkowitz 1980).

¹³ Quoted by Jenkins, H. (ed.) *Hamlet*. 1982. Methuen: London

it took the form of a quarto. According to Jenkins (1982:14) it had to be published after 19th May 1603 before the reference in the title page to its acting “by his Highnesse seruants in the cittie of London”. It was precisely 19th May 1603 when the former Lord Chamberlain’s Company was taken under the patronage of King James I and, consequently, became “his Highnesse seruants”.

Nevertheless, despite this reference in the Stationers’ Register, more than two centuries had to pass in order to being able to examine it.

The 1603 quarto came to light for the first time in 1823.¹⁴ Before this year, the possibility of the existence of copies of that entry in the register was unsuspected, and from that moment to the present day, only two copies of this quarto are known. They are:

- the so-called Hanmer-Bunbury-Devonshire copy. This imprint belongs to the Huntington Library and, sadly, it lacks the last page (I 4).
- and the British Library copy, in this case containing the missing last page in the other copy, that is, page I 4, but missing the title page.¹⁵

These copies include the earliest Shakespearean printed text of *Hamlet* and it is characterised by four main and significant differences in comparison with the later versions, namely, its reduced extension, the much more detailed stage directions, the changing in the naming of some characters, and the way in which some scenes are organised in the general structure of the play, including changes in the order, omissions and exclusive additions.

Due to these and other reasons, Q1 has been considered a pirated text, memorially reconstructed from the staging of the play. Consequently, under this light, that would be the reason for all the deficiencies and special characteristics of this copy. But this conception has also derived in dismissing the version contained in these copies as corrupt and of no value or importance. However, there is a recent tendency that begun to regard Q1 as an autonomous version, perhaps and embryonic *Hamlet* by a novel and young Shakespeare, or even, the reduced or an adapted version that was commonly staged by the company in given circumstances or contexts. These two opposed views have been for years under discussion, with

¹⁴ This date is given by Jenkins (1982:14). However, Wilson (1934) states that its discovery took place in 1821. Finally, Lesser (2015) dates the first discovery in 1825 and includes the year when the second existing copy turned up, in 1856.

¹⁵ This information about the two only existing copies of Q1 is provided in Allen and Muir’s (1981) appendix II, page 895.

a more traditional perspective defending Q1's corrupted and illegitimate nature¹⁶ and a more modern view, from the 1980s onwards, associated to the post-New Bibliography theories and the works by Kathleen O. Irace, Eric Sams, Steven Urkowitz, or Grace Ioppolo, among others. These last authors believe that Q1 is undoubtedly a Shakespearean text because of its many stylistic and spelling coincidences with the Shakespearean canon and that it should be studied on its own right. Desmet summarises some of their conclusions as follows:

[They] struck a significant blow to the theory of memorial reconstruction by concluding that many so-called 'bad' texts were not the product of memorial reconstruction at all; most significant for my purposes is her observation that many suspect texts are often longer rather than shorter than usual, which calls into question the assumption that short quartos must necessarily be corrupt products of memory. The partial reclamation of Shakespeare's early quartos resulting from these forays into textual analysis was reinforced by growing interest in authorial revision of plays: if an author can be identified, then we have a text. (Desmet 2016:137)

4.2. Length:

The two only ever known and surviving copies are exactly the same with the only difference that, as it has been said, the Huntington Library copy is incomplete because of the loss of the last page. This leaves us with only one complete copy of this version, if we exclude the fact that it lacks the title page, and it is made up of exactly 2154 lines.

By comparison with the two other versions, Q2 and F1, each one containing 3723 and 3907 lines respectively, the 1603 text turns to be rather short and incomplete to the extent that it could be stated that it roughly supposes a half of the extension of the later versions. Together with this evidence, we find that the Q1 text includes quite a lot of "errors", or, at least, what traditionally has been regarded as corruptions or mistakes even though some of them may be more evident than others.

The explanations given for this difference have undergone, again, different stages. Formerly, it was assumed that, as Q1 was the first text to be published, it was also the first one that came into being. This fact would then account for the short nature of the text in relation to the others, being Q1 an earlier version of the play, which Shakespeare later revised, enlarged

¹⁶ Desmet (2016:135) offers a review of this classical standpoint including authors such as G. I. Duthie, W.W. Greg or Randall McLeod.

and rewrote. Nevertheless, the dominant theory that took shape during the 19th and 20th century shifted towards the idea that, although Q1 was the first text to be published, it was indeed a posterior version of the play by Shakespeare. That would, in turn, explain the difference in length in terms of being a pirated and corrupted version of the longer “original”. By 1930, Granville-Barker said that:

[T]he theory most commonly accepted at the moment is, I believe, that Q1 does not represent an earlier version¹⁷ by Shakespeare, nor even an earlier alien play partly amended by him; but that it is a “surreptitious” and “assembled” text, a garbling and debasing of the mature *Hamlet* that we have (Granville-Barker 1930:159)

In 1982, Jenkins maintained the same position in these particular terms:

During the present century it has been conclusively demonstrated (especially by Duthie in *The “Bad” Quarto of Hamlet*, 1941) that (...) Q1 is not a prior but a posterior version, not an original of Shakespeare’s play but a reconstruction of it; and its great difference from the later-published texts is due not to their revision, but to its corruption. (Jenkins 1982:19)

If we take these long-held ideas that regard Q1 as a later version alien to Shakespeare as a basis, there are some possible reasons for such a great difference in length between Q1 and the other versions. Basically that shortening is normal in memorially reconstructed texts, that the report may have been based on an abridged stage version or a provincial tour prospect, that the reporter may have desired a shorter play for unknown reasons or he may have forgotten some parts of the play.¹⁸

On the contrary, if we analyse the text under the new ideas regarding Q1 as an authorial text by Shakespeare that was written in a previous stage to the posterior Q2 and F1 versions, we would take Q1 as an autonomous creative literary work that fulfils the aims for which it was created at a given moment and for a given set of reasons.

In this respect, Philip Edwards points to the connection of most of the peculiarities of Q1, including length and synthesis and arrangement of the plot, to the German play *Der bestrafte Brudermord oder Prinz Hamlet aus Dannemark* as a proof that Q1 version was the established one before 1603:

¹⁷ My underlining

¹⁸ All these reasons taken from Jenkins (1982:21)

Is it possible that these alterations represent a recognised version of Shakespeare's play as it was acted in London before 1603 when the first quarto was published? Some evidence that the shape of the first quarto was the conventional and accepted shape is provided by a curious German manuscript of 1710, now lost, which was printed in 1781: *Der bestrafte Brudermord oder Prinz Hamlet aus Dannemark* (sometimes known as *Fratricide Punished*). This play may well be the descendant of a *Hamlet* taken by a travelling English company to Germany in the early seventeenth century. (Edwards 2003:25)

In any case, we can objectively describe what makes Q1 to be shorter in comparison to the other known versions of *Hamlet*. On the one hand, the scenes and events that do appear in Q1 as well as in the other two versions are much more direct and synthesised in Q1, so, we only get a summarised account of the different issues and concepts developed in the play. On the other hand, there are many scenes and events appearing in Q2 and/or in F1 that do not appear in Q1. In general terms, there is a coincidence in that those scenes from Q2 not present in F1 are equally absent in Q1. These include the dialogue between Hamlet and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in II.ii.1258-1316, the commentary about the “war of the theatres” in II.ii.1348-1408, and the dialogue between Hamlet and Horatio on vengeance in V.ii.3572-3585.

Apart from those, there are other omissions exclusive to Q1. Jenkins (1982:21) identifies the following:

- i. The first part of the King's first speech (I.ii.1-25)
- ii. Well over half of Laertes' speech to Ophelia (I.iii.11-13,17-28,39-44)
- iii. Over twenty lines from the Phryrus speech (II.ii.470-93)
- iv. A dozen lines from Hamlet's eulogy of Horatio (III.ii.63-74)
- v. All but six lines of the long speech of the Player King (III.ii.183-206)
- vi. The King's dialogue with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (III.iii.1-26)
- vii. The King's dialogue with Laertes (IV.vii.1-35)
- viii. The account on the gentleman from Normandy (IV.vii.75-99)
- ix. Hamlet's account of his adventures on board ship (V.ii.1-74)

4.3. Stage directions:

Other important difference, and one of the most acknowledged strong points of Q1, is that it uses a number of stage directions which are exclusive to this text. On top of that, these stage directions are, in general, clearer and more detailed than those appearing in Q2 and F1.

This fact has been used by those supporting the idea of Q1 as posterior elaboration alien to Shakespeare that was memorially reconstructed by some witnesses of the representation of an abridged version of the play which was based, in turn, in the manuscript that was later used for printing F1. This theory is backed, on the one hand, by the very precise references in the stage directions about what is happening onstage. On the other hand, some of these very vivid stage directions are also present in F1, although they are not reproduced with so much detail.

Nevertheless, the quality of these stage directions and their connection to F1 can be contrarily interpreted as an evidence supporting the possibility that Q1 was a Shakespeare's text. Eric Sams reproduces Ernst Honigmann's comparisons of Shakespeare's stage directions in the "*Othello* 1622 stage direction *Enter Brabantio in his night-gowne* which may be compared with *Enter the King in his night-gowne* (2 Henry IV) and *Enter Julius Caesar in his Night-gowne*; *Hamlet* Q1 has *dand* (=damned) and also *Enter the ghost in his night gowne*" (Sams 1998:88) together with many other similarities regarding spelling in Q1 and the rest of Shakespeare's plays.

But let us pay close attention to the concrete specificities of Q1's stage directions, dividing them, as we have already said into two main blocks, those that are exclusive to Q1 and those that, being shared with F1 (and not present in Q2), are specially detailed in Q1:

Q1 exclusive stage directions:

- i. *The Trumpets sound, Enter Corambis* (line 1013, page 104)
- ii. *Exit Rossencrast and Guildenstone / Enter Corambis* (lines 148-9, page 156)
- iii. *he kneeles. enter Hamlet* (line 1470, page 160)
- iv. *Enter the ghost in his night gowne* (line 1551, page 170)
- v. *Enter Ophelia as before* (line 1748, page 202)
- vi. *he trowes up a shouel* (line 1936, page 228)
- vii. *Hamlet leapes in / after Laertes* (lines 2048-9, page 240)
- viii. *They play againe* (line 2152, page 260)
- ix. *Shee drinkes* (line 2162, page 260)

- x. *They catch one anothers Rapiers, and both are wounded*
Laertes falles downe, the Queene falles downe and dies (lines 2169-70, page 262)

Q1 and F1 coincident stage directions (more detailed in Q1):

- i. *Exit Hamlet with the dead body* (line 1601, page 176)
- ii. *Enter Ophelia playing on a Lute, and her haire downe singing*
(lines 1690-1, page 192)
- iii. *A noyse within. enter Laertes* (line 1724, page 198)
- iv. *Enter King and Queene, Laertes and other lords with a Priest after the coffin*
(lines 2027-8, page 236)
- v. *Laertes leapes into the grave* (line 2046, page 238)
- vi. *Heere they play* (line 2146, page 260)
- vii. *The King dies* (line 2186, page 264)
- viii. *Laertes dies* (line 2168, page 264)
- ix. *Ham. dies* (line 2196, page 266)
- x. *Enter Voltemar and the Ambassadors from England enter Fortenbrasse*
with his traine (lines 2197-8, page 266)¹⁹

As we can see, the nature of these stage directions appearing in Q1 are quite descriptive and theatrical. They are incredibly helpful to understand how certain things were actually performed in the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage. What is more, they also let us have a glimpse to what Shakespeare himself considered important enough as to include it in a particular way in his performances.

They are so enlightening and worth keeping that almost all the editors of *Hamlet* have consistently used them in their editions and have praised them as one of the most important contributions of the Q1 text.

4.4. Characters:

Regarding characters, there is a double implication in the Q1 text specific characteristics. Firstly, we can find that there is a different characterisation of two of the

¹⁹ Both lists are my own. Line and page references are from Bertram and Kliman (1991)

dramatis personae in the play depending on the text that we have in each version, Horatio and Hamlet. Secondly, there is a shocking change in the naming of two characters in Q1, Polonius and Reynaldo, who in the 1603 text are called Corambis and Montano.

As for the first consideration, it is obvious that the shorter nature of Q1 implies that some characters are not developed in the same way that in Q2 or F1 as it is the case with the kind of relation between Hamlet and Laertes or the reasons behind Hamlet's decisions in different moments, but, most interestingly, we also find that Q1 also contains different nuances in respect to some key characters in the play. In this sense, Anne Barton pointed out that Q1 *Hamlet*

shows signs of deriving from a version of the play significantly different from that that we know today. (...) Hamlet's madness is much more pronounced, and the Queen's innocence of her husband's murder much more explicitly stated. In these respects, the earlier text corresponds more closely with the original story. The Queen is represented as concerting and actively co-operating with Hamlet against the King's life (Barton 1980:48-9)

What Barton suggests is that Q1 *Hamlet* seems to have been a first Shakespearean version of the play less developed and more dependent on the original sources, to which this 1603 text is highly indebted.²⁰

But, maybe, a more challenging question arises when we pay attention to the fact that certain characters receive different names in Q1 and in the other two printed versions. Far from being a futile detail, this could be considered as one of the most important elements that threatens the theory of Q1 being a later version pirated memorially by somebody alien to Shakespeare.

²⁰ According to Emma M. Jolly (2012:10), it is commonly agreed that Shakespeare used as raw material for his own contribution to the Hamlet story three main sources, namely, Saxo Grammaticus *Historia Danicae* (c. 1200) including a Amlethus story, Francois de Belleforest's embellished French translation included in his *Histoires Tragiques* (1570), and a lost English play of unknown author that was performed in 1594 and which has been named the *Ur-Hamlet*. What we know is that after these three precedents, Shakespeare wrote at one point his own approach to the story and that it was performed before 1602. We also know that these performances were the basis for the 1603 Q1 text and the subsequent extended and refurbished Q2 version of 1605. Finally, the greater dependence of the 1603 text can be seen in the sketchy nature of the characters decisions and in the more simplified Senecan touches that govern this first version, whereas we can find a more balanced, complex and debated treatment of the principal issues in the play, which is more in the line of Shakespeare's maturity.

The general tendency was to think that these names in Q1 were a preservation of the original names in a previous version, the so-called *Ur-Hamlet*, but this thesis cannot be backed by any means.

Granville-Barker put forward a question that seems to have not been answered yet, “Why should a pirate rename Polonius “Corambis”, and Reynaldo “Montano”? I know of no convincing answer.” (Granville-Barker 1930:162)

Nevertheless, Granville-Barker offered an explanation linking this problem of the changed names to two other issues: the change of the scene-sequence of Hamlet’s “to be or not to be” soliloquy and his encounter with Ophelia, and the Shakespearean language used in “twenty-eight lines, peculiar to Q1, which Furnivall declares to be Shakespeare’s own”.²¹ His conclusion is that all this could not be the invention of a pirate, nor it is likely that the pirate used Q2 or F1 and another Shakespearean or anyone’s play. Thus, the only possibility is that there was “a version of the play, written by Shakespeare, substantially mature, but which yet contained the Q1 scene-sequence, a Corambis and Montano and (...) the Shakespearean lines.” (Granville-Barker 1930:163)

On the contrary, other scholars such as Harold Jenkins have offered an explanation that fits the theory of Q1 as not being based on a lost play nor being prior to the other versions, but posterior. In doing so, Jenkins explains that those exclusive lines to Q1 of undoubted Shakespeare’s hand were taken by the reporter from other Shakespeare’s play where he might have also acted as it could be the case of *Twelfth Night*. (Jenkins 1982:29-31). As for the changing of names, he argues the following:

(...) Shakespeare’s company made a tactful change of names in performance, that in itself might have lodged the new names in Shakespeare’s mind, available for further use when they have served their turn. Any such change (...) can only have been temporary; but it could through the reporter have been transmitted to Q1 (...) while leaving no trace in the later quartos or in F. (Jenkins 1980:35)

Likewise, G.R. Hibbard develops a third theory accounting for the difference of these names in each text. His explanation also fits the idea that Q1 is a later version based in Q2. Hibbard says that the original text, which must have served as a basis for both Q2 and F1, had

²¹ Granville-Barker speaks of, at least, three aspects that do not fit the traditionally accepted theory about Q1 status. First, the changing of names; second, Furnivall’s Shakespearean lines (those exclusive to Q1 that the scholarly F.J. Furnivall clearly pointed as Shakespeare’s language and style); and thirdly, the changed scene sequence, which will be discussed in this paper later. For all this, see Granville-Barker (1930:159-67)

the names Polonius and Reynaldo. He goes further justifying the change in an external circumstance. The 1603 version was staged in the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford, as it is stated in the front page, and the names Polonius and Reynaldo could have been offensive there because they were related to the names of the founder and the contemporary president of Oxford at that time respectively. Consequently, the names were changed *ad hoc* for those of Corambis and Montano. (Hibbard 1987:74-5)

Finally, A. S. Shiff offers in his paper “Transition from Corambis to Polonius” (Shiff 2011) a very elaborated theory on the change from Corambis to Polonius that departs from the widespread idea that Polonius was the original name in Shakespeare’s mind and that it was incidentally changed in the occasion of a tour that included the performance in Oxford and Cambridge where Polonius could recall the leading figures of the university. On the contrary, Shiff believes that Corambis was the original name in Shakespeare’s conception as it is a pun name including the concept of “cambre bis” in a Latin expression that refers to the incompetence and foolishness of a person, which is one of the features of Corambis/Polonius. According to Shiff, “since classical times *Cambre bis posita* [or *cocta*] *mors est*—Cabbage twice served (or cooked) is death—was a metaphor for rambling, nonsensical repetitiveness, and a well-known commonplace that was in long use to insult and mock into the eighteenth century” (Shiff 2011:11). The explanation that Shiff provides for the change is the appearance in the English court of a Polish ambassador, Dzialinski, who was mocked by Queen Elizabeth. This incident became extremely popular and it happened after Q1 publication, so Shakespeare would have modified the name in a posterior version (the one that was later printed as Q2) where instead of Corambis we have a Polonius. The pun now would be double. Apart from reflecting the character’s nature in the play, now the audience would automatically associate that Polonius was that Dzialinski, and, being highly popular the first version, they would expect a Corambis where they got a Polonius with the consequent association that Polonius (Dzialinski) was a “cambre bis”. All in all, the important implication of this quite original and detailed analysis for our study is that it develops a very plausible explanation for the change of names which reinforces the idea of an original and authorial Q1 that meant a first version later redesigned by Shakespeare²².

²² For further considerations on the name Corambis, see Edwards (2003:25-6), where, among other aspects, he signals the appearance of the same name in the German version *Der bestrafte Brudermord oder Prinz Hamlet aus Dannemark*.

4.5. Structure:

There are two important differences in the way in which Q1 is structured if we compare it to the posterior printed texts of Q2 and F1. Leaving aside the fact that Q1, as it has been previously noted, is substantially shorter and skips many details which are present in the other two longer versions, we can find certain changes in the Q1 scene-sequence in relation to the similar scene order of both Q2 and F1. The reason for these differences is not clear, but it is possible that the different nature of the scene-sequence in Q1 could reflect an earlier conception of the play. The main divergences regarding the order of the action are:

- i. Hamlet's exchange with Ophelia where he says that he is merry and retorts with jests about a jig maker and a hobbyhorse that is forgotten (III.ii.120-33). This section, instead of preceding the dumb show, is incorporated in Q1 in the later conversation at the entry of Lucianus after III.ii.242.
- ii. Hamlet's lecture to Guildenstern on the recorder (III.ii. 336-63) leads straight on the passage (advanced from IV.ii.11-20) in which he lectures Rosencrantz about a sponge in Q1.
- iii. The "to be or not to be" soliloquy and the nunnery scene are brought forward from III.i.56-163 to the second act in Q1, where the entry of Hamlet immediately after the plan to loose Ophelia to him (II.ii.168) precipitates the encounter itself, while the "fishmonger dialogue" is postponed.²³
- iv. The inclusion of a whole scene between Horatio and the Queen that could be placed between F1's IV.v and IV.vi

Precisely the two last points are the most remarkable ones because of their importance in the overall interpretation of the play and their effect in the ongoing action.

If we pay closer attention to the "to be or not to be" and "nunnery scene" displacement or transposition, we, again, will find multiple interpretations. For instance, Granville-Barker saw here a new flaw to the theories of a derivative Q1 from the other surviving versions. He wondered, "must there not have been some version of the play with this scene-sequence in it?" (Granville-Barker 1930:162). He answers this question by examining the possible improvement that it meant the Q2 version as a later step preceded by a previous version used in the Q1 printing. His hypothesis is that the Q1 editor had two different sources for his final copy, the

²³ All these aspects pointed out by Jenkins (Jenkins 1982:31)

very text in which Q2 was based and another text consisting of a previous version (Granville-Barker 1930:166).

On the other hand, Jenkins concluded the opposite. He explicitly says that “those who have believed that Q1 represents an earlier version of the play have assumed its order the original; but the truth is the reverse” (Jenkins 1982:32). He names other modern scholars that also accept the Q1 scene-sequence as erroneous, such as Chambers, Duthie or Greg.

Nevertheless, it must be taken into account that he bases his hypothesis entirely on the better accommodation of Q2 to the interpretation of certain elements in the play such as the entering of Hamlet reading a book, or his madness and the necessity of showing it in the “fishmonger passage” as it is ordered in Q2 and F1.

In any case, although the ordering of these passages has been discussed by many authors, any account on this issue must fall in the particular interpretation of the events taking place in the action of each version.

Finally, the “Horatio-Queen scene” is one of the most striking differences in Q1. It consists in the existence of a whole scene between Horatio and the Queen where he gives an account on the journey adventures of Hamlet. It takes from line 1808 to line 1844 in Q1 and it could be inserted between F1’s IV.v and IV.vi.

Although it is an entirely new scene, it deals with issues that are spread in other parts in the other two versions. Q1 covers in this scene three different aspects: Horatio having a tête-à-tête with the Queen, Horatio telling the Queen that he has received Hamlet’s letter, and Horatio giving an account of Hamlet’s changing of the commissions. It is again Jenkins who first pointed out that the scene could consequently be considered an amalgamate of three episodes in the other versions (Jenkins 1982:33). Following him, Horatio’s tête-à-tête with the Queen would be a recollection of F1’s beginning of IV.v, while Horatio’s telling the Queen about having received Hamlet’s letter replaces IV.vi, where we actually see him receiving it, and Horatio’s account of Hamlet’s change of commissions comes from V.ii, where Hamlet himself narrates it.

On the other hand, what makes it completely different is the fact that in the dialogue the Queen is explicitly shown on behalf of her son. This makes the character of the Queen to be much more clearly positive in Q1 and even being involved in Hamlet’s plans. She says when informed of the King’s plot against Hamlet:

Then I preceiue there's treason in his looks
That seem'd to sugar o're his villanie:
But I will soothe and please him for a time,
For murderous mindes are always jealous,²⁴
(lines 1818-21, page 208)

And later when she is informed of Hamlet's arrival to Denmark:

O faile not, good *Horatio*, and withal, commend me
A mothers care to him, bid him a while
Be wary of his presence, lest that he
Faile in that he goes about.²⁵
(lines 1826-9, page 208)

These statements on the part of Hamlet's mother, together with the one she made in the Q1 "closet scene", which is equally exclusive to the 1603 text, when Hamlet asks her for help, have interesting implications:

Ham. (...) And mother, but assist me in reuenge,
And in his death your infamy shall die.

Queene Hamlet, I vow by that maiesty,
That knowes our thoughts, and lookes into our hearts
I will conceale, consent, and doe my best,
What stratagem soe're thou shalt deuise.²⁶
(lines 1592-7, pages 174, 176)

The attitude of the Queen in Q1 is closer to pre-versions of *Hamlet*, such as Belleforest's and, thus, to the possibility of the *Ur-Hamlet*. But, again, scholars tend to accept these changes as coming from other contemporary plays, such as Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* and, therefore, dismiss that these differences could come from an earlier version of the play.²⁷ Others prefer the hypothesis that explains these dissimilarities as lack of memory on the part of the pirate balanced by the inclusion of bits from other very famous plays of the period, as it is the case of Cedric Watts. (Watts 1988:20)

²⁴ My underlining.

²⁵ My underlining. The Queen says, "in that he goes about", that is, his revenge.

²⁶ My underlining.

²⁷ For example, Hibbard (Hibbard 1998:73-4)

5. Q1 PRESENCE IN MODERN EDITIONS

5.1. *Hamlet* publications from 1603 to 1703:

It is clear that the editors' opinions about the role and status of Q1 go in hand with the kind of editions they produce. Before looking in some detail to the relatively new practice on the part of some editors of publishing Q1 only *Hamlets*, it would be interesting to offer a brief overview of the main tendencies that have taken place in the edition of this play throughout history.

Apart from the key source editions of *Hamlet* that we have been analysing along this paper, Q1, Q2 and F1, there were several reprints of the second quarto and of the first folio during the first century of the appearance of the play. They were the following²⁸:

- i. Q2 (1604-5) reprints:
 - i.i. Q3 (1611)
 - i.ii. Q4 (1625)
 - i.iii. Q5 (1637)
 - i.iv. Q6 (1676)
 - i.v. Q7 (1676)
 - i.vi. Q8 (1683)
 - i.vii. Q9 (1695)
 - i.viii. Q10 (1703)
 - i.ix. Q11 (1703)
- ii. F1 (1623) reprints:
 - ii.i. F2 (1632)
 - ii.ii. F3 (1664)
 - ii.iii. F4 (1685)

In these early stages, the common practice was to base the new printings in the most convenient immediately previous one (Giddens 2017:473). All these publications have in common that they use the version of the play in Q2 with minor changes that are incidentally

²⁸ Taken from Shiff (2011:20-24) who, in turn, has drawn it from: Henrietta C. Bartlett and Alfred W. Pollard, *A Census of Shakespeare's Plays in Quarto 1594-1709, revised and extended by Henrietta C. Bartlett* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939)

introduced, whereas Q1 was never reprinted. This means that the only version known by the subsequent audiences was the one contained in Q2. We can also observe that the play became tremendously popular as it reaches nine quarto reprints (from Q3 to Q11) and three folio reprints (from F2 to F4) in one hundred years, including the period between 1642 and 1660 in which theatres were closed because of the Interregnum. Finally, it is important to highlight that these publications were virtually a copy of the source printed text, so we would not consider them to be editions in the modern sense of the world nor they were adapted, modified, combined, shortened or extended under ideological or textual criteria. In fact, in the case of the quartos, they were printed on the occasion of the performances of the play and intended to be sold and used as souvenirs of the different stage productions. (Shiff 2011:21-22)

5.2. Combiners and revisionists:

With the turning of the century, in 1709, Nicholas Rowe, considered the first modern editor of Shakespeare, edited Shakespeare's plays, including *Hamlet*. He was the first one that tried to analyse the best possible option and took decisions based on his own interpretations and on providing to the play an overall coherence. From this editor onwards, editions of *Hamlet*, and of the rest of Shakespeare's plays, started to be a combination of all the key original texts that were available at that moment, including the exclusive passages of each source²⁹. Alexander Pope would be the first one that systematised this combining technique in 1725 and Louis Theobald would develop this practice to the limit in 1733. However, it was not until 1768 that Edward Capell's edition of the complete Shakespeare's works was for the first time arranged preferring the earlier copies to the later ones. Giddens states that "it was importantly the first to base textual decisions on the earliest copies". (Giddens 2017:473)

When in 1823 the first Q1 text was found, it also entered the combined editions. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the different readings and orderings characteristic of Q1 were not included and the general tendency was to limit the inclusion of elements from Q1 to the exclusive passages or details that had not any kind of parallel in the other two sources, such as in the case of stage directions.

²⁹ Sources did not include the Q1 text that was forgotten and not to be rediscovered until 1823, as it has been pinpointed in section 4.1 of this paper.

The combining practice would remain unquestioned throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the most of the twentieth century. Thus, editions up to 1986 were a combination of Q2 and F1 with the addition of all the exclusive elements of Q1. A good example of this very traditional approach is the Penguin *Hamlet*³⁰. The Penguin edition has been highly popular throughout decades and it is one of the major editions that is still being published following this classic way of editing Shakespeare. It includes a combination of Q2 and F1. It also integrates within the text of the play, and not as notes or in appendix, lines and readings from Q1 when it considers Q2 and F1 readings erroneous. Regarding the status of Q1, the editor accepts the possibility of a Shakespearean earlier version as the basis for it.

In parallel, in the twentieth century, the “New Bibliography” movement set a highly demanding standard for selecting the best possible text and variant that supposed a sophistication and overwhelming number of studies, critical apparatus and analysis on Shakespeare’s editing. Giddens describes it with the following words:

[A] rigorous turn to Shakespeare’s originals became known as the “New Bibliography”, a methodology led by R.B. McKerrow, W.W. Greg, A. W. Pollard, and others who sought to recover Shakespeare by examining early texts and the possible reasons behind alteration or corruption. The new bibliographers invented many of the analytical techniques used today (...) Some of their beliefs were misguided, but their investigations of the early texts significantly changed the nature of Shakespearean editing. (Giddens 2017:473-4)

Some scholars have argued that editing *Hamlet* with a mixture of texts produces a new text which is longer, artificial and that was not Shakespeare’s. As Terry Bourus has put it:

Q1 is the rarest of these three important early editions of Shakespeare’s most famous play; it survives in only two known copies. It has had less influence on critical and theatre history than the other two early versions. In fact, the other two early versions have themselves been eclipsed by a fourth version, created by eighteenth-century editors, which combined material from both Q2 and F. That ‘conflated’ editorial version is the text that almost all readers and performers think about when they think about *Hamlet*. (Bourus 2019:1)

³⁰ The Penguin book maintains T.J.B. Spencer edition of the text that was included in The New Penguin Shakespeare series, which was originally coordinated by Stanley Wells, although the introduction is currently presented by Alan Sinfield.

This is, to some extent, a consequence of the impossibility of setting an ideal and fixed text out of all the possible sources as the new bibliographers tried to do. In fact, the New Bibliography movement proved that impossibility and opened the door to a last stage that has been labelled as “unediting”. Following Giddens, “the immaculate Shakespeare sought by the new bibliographers is irrecoverable. (...) Such disappointment gives rise to the advocates of the “unediting” of Shakespeare, a term used (...) to describe a return to unmediated originals.” (Giddens 2017:474).

As Giddens pinpoints, unediting produced two complementary phenomena. On the one hand, there was a development of multi-text editing and synoptic editions, which evidenced the existence of more than one possible answer to the question of what we understand that a Shakespeare play is when there are multiple texts³¹. On the other hand, thanks to the use and development of digital media we can also “unedit” *Hamlet* by having available an instant and direct access to hundreds of copies of the original texts in different formats, such as photographs, texts, hypertexts that link a specific version to the others, providing the reader with a new holistic experience.

Under the inspiration of these postulates, it is in 1986 when the main ideas of this revisionist approach take shape in the edition of Shakespeare’s plays by Oxford University Press, which, for the first time, does not mix different texts but edits separately each version or, at least, the version that the editor thinks to be the most authoritative one, in this case, F1³².

This idea of paying a close attention to each text gained the support of a number of editors and scholars and other prestigious universities and institutions have edited Shakespeare’s plays either in one version or in the other with a great preference for Q2 or F1. That is the case, for example, of Oxford University Press³³, Cambridge University Press or

³¹ Examples are Wells and Taylor’s editions of Q1 and F1 *King Lear* in *Oxford Shakespeare*, Bertram and Kliman’s *The Three Text Hamlet*, or Thompson and Taylor’s *Hamlet* Arden edition. All of them show that these plays cannot be conceptualised under a single text but that we need to access each of the existing original texts on their own because each of them contains a *Hamlet* or a *King Lear*.

³² Revisionists believe that combined editions do not respect authorial design because they produce an artificial version that never was in the mind of Shakespeare. Oppositely, they think that each text corresponds to a different creative stages or revisions on the part of the author and they must be read and analysed autonomously. Under this conception, we may say that we have three *Hamlets* that stand on their own with their specific characteristics, internal coherence, and interpretation. Stephen Urkowitz was the first one in applying this technique to *King Lear* in 1980 (Urkowitz 1980) which derived in the first independent editions of the Q1 text of *King Lear* by Jay L. Halio in The New Cambridge Shakespeare series, inaugurating a subsection within the series under the heading “The Early Quartos” in 1996.

³³ Stanley Wells’ series of The Oxford Shakespeare included editions which were based on a single source, even if they offered exclusive passages from the other copies in appendix. That was the case for the *Hamlet* edition in

Arden Shakespeare, whose third series included for the first time *Hamlet* divided into two volumes, the first one with the Q2 text and a supplementary second volume containing separately the Q1 text and the F1 text³⁴.

As we can see, the role of Q1 in both combined or revisionist editions is a quite reduced one because both approaches tend to regard Q1 as an inferior version and, most importantly, because they regard it as derivative from any of the other two versions.

Nevertheless, conflated editions include the exclusive Horatio-Queen scene and stage directions from Q1, together with some Q1 readings for passages that neither Q2 nor F1 made sense at all. For obvious reasons, this practice has been completely eliminated from revisionist editions, although they still keep the essential and enlightening stage directions in brackets.

5.3. Q1 only editions:

But, despite the two approaches of combiners and revisionists and the publishing of individual texts pushed forward by the latter, there is still another issue that must be addressed, is Q1 an authoritative text on its own that deserves being published and edited as a complete play and to be studied, performed or interpreted in isolation?

The overwhelming majority of scholars have agreed in the past in a negative answer. For them, Q1 text does not derive directly from Shakespeare nor its differences with the other texts are Shakespearean. However, there is not conclusive evidence that corroborates this statement, and, at the same time, there are some elements in Q1 that cannot be explained without thinking of a previous different authorial source.

Granville-Barker was among the first who claimed for Q1 an autonomy, diverging from the idea of this version as derivative from Q2 or F1. Besides pointing out some particular problems to fit that theory, he noticed that “Q1 gives us a play just as elaborate in plan as the genuine and matured *Hamlet*” (Granville-Barker 1930:161). In effect, Q1 is more reduced in extension, more schematic, with less brilliant or poetic style, but it still contains Shakespeare’s

the series by G.R. Hibbard, who took in this case as a referent F1. The edition which “broke new ground here in printing both Q1 and F1 *King Lear*” was Wells and Taylor’s in 2000 (Giddens 2017:476).

³⁴ Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor’s edition for Arden Shakespeare underscores the importance of Q2, using it as the main text to which they devote the first of the two volumes of this third series. Nevertheless, they are conscious of the equally important and independent reading of Q1 and F1 and that is why they include both in the second volume. In any case, they are respectful with each version integrity and think of each as different texts that should not be combined.

language and the dramatic sequence is fully coherent³⁵. These, and many other hints, such as the publication date or Shakespeare's special concern with this play, makes plausible the idea of a Shakespeare's first *Hamlet*, Q1, that later on was revised and enlarged, deepening the matter, Q2, and that, finally, was again revised and cut to make the text shorter and more theatrical and to polish some aspects of plot or character, F1.

Later, coinciding with the 80s decade of the previous century, Eric Sams begun a passionate campaign that challenged many of the traditional views held by prestigious scholars which were based on rather complicated and hypothetical premises. In a 1983 article for the *Times Literary Supplement*, he dismissed as "high flights of imagination" (Sams 1983) many of the for decades respected hypotheses about Q1³⁶. He became one of the champions of revisionism and a firm defender of Q1 value as a Shakespearean text. Consequently, he claimed that Q1 was precisely the evidence of Hamlet being an original idea from Shakespeare and not a copy from any other obscure playwright. This led to bitter controversies as they have been compiled in a Ron Rosenbaum's monography on these discussions. The general principle that governs Sams's approach to Shakespearean textual problems is summarised by Rosenbaum with the reproduction of his own words in an interview:

Sams's (...) most distinctive features reflect and express his fierce views on the state of Shakespearean scholarship and *Hamlet* editors in particular. "What I noticed immediately when I took it up was that people was just making things up! Absolutely nonstop! Beginning with Harold Jenkins! And what you use in bibliography as in science is the notion that you mustn't make things up. Ockham's razor³⁷." (Rosenbaum 2008:69-70)³⁸

³⁵ For the strong points of the Q1 *Hamlet* version for performance, see Jesús Tronch's article "Dramaturgy of the Acting Version of the First Quarto of *Hamlet*". Tronch highlights the higher dramatic agility, expediency, and the more logical arrangement of scenes in Q1 in contrast with Q2 and F1 (1996:220). He also reproduces Irace's idea that Q1 shorter version fits better into modern adaptations of the play carried out in the cinema or in present-day theatrical performances (1996:222). All in all, he concludes that "it is probable that the first published *Hamlet* is a bad quarto, but looking at its dramaturgy and misquoting Polonius (...) "Though this be *badnesse*, yet there is method in't", dramatic method in the First Quarto." (1996:231)

³⁶ Eric Sams. 1983. "Viewpoint: Shakespeare's text and common sense". In *Times Literary Supplement*. 1983. London: TLS. In this article, he demolishes the theories of an *Ur-Hamlet*, of a non-Shakespearean Q1, and of Q1 being a memorial reconstruction as they were commonly accepted in scholarly editions such as the Arden series at that time. He concludes that "in the 1982 Arden edition this polished parade is dismissed uninspected in a footnote with the curt comment "no grounds whatever". But in reality, it is the non-Shakespearean *Hamlet* that has no grounds whatever."

³⁷ Sams uses the concept of Ockham's razor for illustrating that we must always choose the most evident and simple possible explanation to solve a problem, instead of dividing and complicating things. "Entities should not be multiplied without necessity".

³⁸ My underlining.

Sams's ideas, which were spread in his prolific writings³⁹, were a trigger for further discussion and an inspiration for a new generation of scholars.

To these new views on the role of Q1, Lukas Erne added in 2003 a new perspective. In *Shakespeare as a Literary Author*, he suggests that Shakespeare was not merely a theatre author only concerned with the performances of his plays. Lukas argues that, at the same time, Shakespeare was fully conscious of his works as literary pieces to be read. In his opinion, this could be an explanation for the different revisions in *Hamlet* as well as in other plays. Thus, shorter versions in the early quartos would respond to the versions to be staged, being lighter, swifter and more direct so they could accommodate to the theatrical reality. On the other hand, the versions that we can read in Q2, and later in F1, would be embellished and more elaborated variants addressed to cultivated readers and, consequently, they include philosophical issues, longer soliloquies and dialogues and a finer poetic language.

Following some of these ideas, several authors have recently claimed a Shakespearean, original status for Q1. This new tendency took shape in 1992, when two pioneering books coincided in time. On the one hand, Thomas Clayton's *The 'Hamlet' First Published (Q1, 1603): Origin, Form, Intertextualities* supposed a vindication of Q1 as a text worth of study and included a collection of papers by great Shakespearean scholars, such as G.R. Hibbard, Kathleen O. Irace, Giorgio Melchiori or Steven Urkowitz among others⁴⁰. Even if they provided different viewpoints on diverse aspects of the Q1 text, all of them converged in focusing their attention on this previously neglected version. Clayton's book provided a solid ground for claiming Q1 as a valid and valuable Shakespearean piece in its own, emerging as a theoretical backbone that would be eventually fleshed out in the following decades. On the other hand, the first modern autonomous edition of Q1 was also published by Graham Holderness and Bryan Loughrey, *The Tragical Historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke*. The appearance of this volume was a sort of revolution in the consideration of Q1 as a positive and quality text that must not be compared with or used for the other versions. In the general introduction, their editors claim that they are putting "into circulation single annotated editions of early modern

³⁹ Most of his articles, conferences and works are gathered in the webpage www.ericams.org. It includes influential articles, such as "Taboo or Not Taboo? The Text, Date and Authorship of Hamlet, 1589-1623". In *Hamlet Studies*. Vol 8. Numbers 1-2. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, or "My Name's Hamlet, Revenge!". In *Times Literary Supplement*. 1995. London: TLS.

⁴⁰ The volume consisted of a collection of twelve essays on topics such as the first modern staging of *Hamlet*'s Q1, Q1 in recent performance, the origins, and agents of Q1, or the options of Q1 for being a first version.

play-texts whose literary and theatrical histories have been overshadowed by editorial practices⁴¹ dominant since the eighteenth century”. (Holderness 1992:1)

Holderness and Loughrey were especially emphatic on the defence of Q1 when they stated that they “reject the claim that it is possible to construct a rehabilitated text reflecting a form approximating Shakespeare’s artistic vision” (1992:8) and when they “refuse to allow speculative judgements concerning the exact contributions of the various individuals involved in the production of a given text” (1992:9). Their conclusion is that “the worst form of emendation is conflation” and they use the example of *King Lear* and the pioneering Folio and “bad” quarto independent editions of Wells and Taylor to affirm that “*whenever* distinct textualisations are conflated, the result is a hybrid without independent value”. (1992:9).

The importance of Holderness and Loughrey’s edition can be illustrated with the reference that Sams makes about their book in *The Real Shakespeare. Retrieving the Early Years, 1564-1594*, where he celebrates the publication of this Q1 edition as an event that thrusts ahead the real status of Q1. Similarly, Maria-Novella Mercuri has summarised their contribution with the following words:

[T]hey point out that ‘the imputed characteristics of the ‘bad’ text depend on its relation to the ‘good’ texts’ but disappear when Q1 is ‘addressed as an appropriate object of investigation.’ And if it is studied as a play in its own right rather than as a caricature of Q2, its characteristic dramatic shape, offering ‘a tighter dramatic narrative and a faster theatrical denouement’ appears evident. (Mercuri 2013:4)

Only six years later, in 1998, Kathleen O. Irace published the most acknowledged and popular edition of Q1 under the title *The First Quarto of Hamlet* and as part of The Early Quartos collection of Cambridge Shakespeare⁴². She considers Q1 a sufficiently coherent text to regard it as another option for approaching *Hamlet*. Nevertheless, Irace agrees with authors, such as B.A.P. Van Dam⁴³, that had envisaged Q1 as a text deriving from reporting and adapting the manuscript that was used for the F1 copy. In Irace’s words, “an actor reconstructing *Hamlet*

⁴¹ My underlining.

⁴² Irace, K.O. (ed.) 1998. *The First Quarto of Hamlet*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. In this edition, Irace published the Q1 text exclusively with the aim of producing an edition that would serve as an autonomous reference for this *Hamlet* version.

⁴³ Van Dam developed a theory consisting in a double nature of Q1 based on a combination of reconstruction and adaptation (Van Dam 1924)

could have adapted it at the same time – or he might have worked with a second agent in creating a version designed for a particular theatrical purpose”. (Irace 1988:7-8)

Irace’s Q1 edition was intended to supply for the first time a holistic approach to this single version of *Hamlet*, including a readable text with the highest standards of edition, scholarly notes and collations, and a thorough introduction where the protagonist was the 1603 text. As the reference in the original book reads:

[T]he first quarto presents its own workable alternatives to the longer texts, reordering and combining key plot elements, and even including a unique scene between Horatio and the Queen. This new critical edition is designed for students, scholars and actors who are intrigued by the first printed text of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*.

Although the first quarto has been reprinted many times, there is no other modernised edition in print. Irace’s introduction outlines views of its origins, its special features, and its surprisingly rich performance history; her textual notes point out differences between the first quarto and the longer second quarto and Folio versions and offer alternatives which actors or directors might choose for specific productions. (Irace 1988: backcover)

As it has been previously pointed out, the other key edition including Q1 as an autonomous text is Arden Shakespeare edition by Anne Thompson and Neil Taylor. Even if they take the safe ground of including in their monumental edition the three existing early texts, the fact that Q1 is there in its own right shows us this new approach that, at last, levels the three sources. Lesser summarises this shift with the following words:

With the massive scholarly apparatus of the Arden Shakespeare, Anne Thompson and Neil Taylor present Q1 as part of a three text edition (...) Thompson and Taylor’s *Hamlet* crystallizes the dominant postmodern approach to the Shakespearean text (...) And, as Jenkins’s New Bibliographic edition, its predecessor in the second series Arden Shakespeare, Thompson and Taylor’s *Hamlet* serves as both a culmination and, I believe, the exhaustion of the dominant approach of its moment. (Lesser 2015: 207)

Together with these major new critical editions, and the wide range of scholarly books and articles focusing on Q1, other media have centred their attention in Q1. In the words of Terry Bourus, “since 1992, Q1’s version of the play has been made available in many different formats and publications” (Bourus 2014:3)

The end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st has witnessed a development of Internet databases and corpora, online editions and reproductions of the original texts, film adaptations, and theatrical representations that have put the focus on Q1, preferring this text because of its more direct, agile and theatrical nature⁴⁴. As we have seen, this view attaching to Q1 a fresher and simpler quality that connects in a more natural way with audiences, has been supported for a long time, from Granville-Barker's general remarks to specific and much more detailed studies, such as Gunnar Sjogren's 1979 seminal article "Producing the First Quarto Hamlet" or Jesús Tonch's 1996 "Dramaturgy of the Acting Version of the First Quarto of *Hamlet*". All of them, in different periods, coincide in that.

Particularly, the existence of internet has made Shakespeare texts to be accessible, comparable, and free⁴⁵. It has meant both a "democratisation" of what Hamlet is for each individual reader and a "popularisation" of this work and others. Now we can choose, and mediating editors or theories are blurring. As Giddens has pointed out, "gone are the days when scholars' and readers' Shakespeare were conflated into one high-quality (and high-profit) endeavour. Shakespeare's texts have come full circle. They started as having little economic value as books, and to that status they have returned" (Giddens 2017:477)

⁴⁴ Among others, some influential and very well-known representations of *Hamlet* based in the Q1 text that were developed in the 80s and 90s of the 20th century were McKinnon's (1983), Walters's (1985), Muller's (1992), or Benison's (1992) productions. All of them are commented by Irace (1998:25-6). Q1 representations have transcended the anglophone world and have been brought on stage in so far away countries such as Korea. A very interesting study of Q1 in Korean stage is Yi-Hsin Hsu's analysis of Lee Hyon-u's 2009 production.

Similarly, some of the most celebrated film adaptations that were partially or totally based in Q1 are Tony Richardson's (1969) or Franco Zeffirelli's (1990). The influence of Q1 over these adaptations have been studied in Terry Bourus's "The First Quarto of Hamlet in Film: The Revenge Tragedies of Tony Richardson and Franco Zeffirelli". This last film has been, in turn, analysed by Kathleen Campbell in the following terms, "Because the Zeffirelli Hamlet parallels the Q1 structure in a number of significant ways, it gives us a glimpse of what the Q1 script might be like in performance. The characters are less complex and ambiguous than Q2/F1, but they are still interesting, and the plot moves more swiftly....Like Q1, the film contains no references to the means of election...Zeffirelli goes even further than Q1 and cuts [Fortinbras] altogether". (Campbell 1991:7-8)

⁴⁵ Some of the most useful online resources include <https://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Library/Texts/Ham/>, www.hamletworks.org, <http://shea.mit.edu/shakespeare/htdocs/main/index.htm>, or www.folger.edu/shakespeare. They offer plenty of options, ranging from photographic copies of the original texts, synoptic editions in text-only format, catalogues of relevant articles and studies, performances, etc. There are also projects and webpages developed by individual scholars. Some of the most remarkable ones are www.brianvickers.uk/ and www.ericams.org.

6. CONCLUSIONS:

Throughout this Master Dissertation we have offered an overview of the status of Shakespearean texts in general, underlining the difficulties of identifying an undoubtedly authorial copy. Within the problems that editors have to face in relation to Shakespearean texts, *Hamlet* is possibly the hardest of all, having inspired different theories and controversies about the remaining early printed copies of the play, Q1, Q2 and F1.

Special attention has been paid to the most relevant features of the Q1 text, together with an account of the discovery and subsequent position and consideration of this mysterious text during the last centuries. Q1 has undergone a process of reinstatement that has culminated in a solid group of scholars, stage directors and editors vindicating the value of Q1 as an authoritative text that follows an efficient, coherent and alternative pattern to the traditional, widespread conflated version of *Hamlet*.

The main conclusions that can be drawn from the analysis of the different facts that have been enumerated and from the revision of multiple viewpoints and conceptions on the matter are the following.

Firstly, Q1 is one of the three substantive early printed copies of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Even if Q1 is a different version that has been suspected to be inferior, corrupted or non-Shakespearean, it cannot be overlooked for a number of reasons, namely, because it is a contemporary text to Shakespeare that claims to have been written by the Bard, and because despite all the oddities and peculiarities that it possesses, it helps us to better understand *Hamlet* in general, and the other two versions in particular, be it through positive or negative deductions.

Secondly, there have been different theories about the origin of Q1 ranging from those that believe it to be based on a lost play, the *Ur-Hamlet*, written by an unknown author different to Shakespeare, to the ones that affirm that it is just a reported copy of the version in Q2 and F1 published later on, including the supporters of Q1 as an original earlier Shakespearean version. It must be accepted that there is not a definitive, unquestioned answer to this problem, so one or the other side cannot be backed on conclusive and empirical evidence.

Thirdly, even if there is not a consensus on the status of Q1, some of its peculiarities cannot be satisfactorily explained as being the result of corruption, reconstruction, or piracy.

Fourthly, the use of the Q1 text in modern editions has been quite minor, but there has always been an acceptance of the stage directions and of some specific readings where it was

clear that both Q2 and F1 were erroneous. Nevertheless, from the 1980s onwards, a new tendency, by which texts begun to be valued on their own, was developed. This meant the flourishing of differentiated critical editions of each early printed text, including Q1 editions, Q1 theatrical productions, and many other studies and tools that were focused on Q1.

As it can be seen, it is truly little that can be safely said about what really happened, but the ideas and theories that rely on interpretation are precisely the most appealing ones. That is why it could be said in a rather paradoxical way that the main conclusion to figure out from this “critical quagmire”⁴⁶, as Granville-Barker labelled it, is that we will hardly ever know the real provenance of Q1. That is, in my opinion, one of those mysteries that, instead of deterring us from approaching textual problems, make us love a literary work and be fascinated by the huge possibilities that are opened within this specialised field.

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⁴⁶ Granville-Barker reflected in his Preface to *Hamlet* in a very expressive way, “I have a dozen times repented the putting my foot into such a critical quagmire” as it has been previously noted in the introduction to this paper. (Granville-Barker 1930:166)

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