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Lesser, Zachary. Hamlet after Q1: An Uncanny History of the Shakespearean Text

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Neill is transparent about editorial changes in orthography and punctuation, providing a list of “significant departures” (xl) at the end of the play. His editorial transparency is an improvement over Mulryne, who hides much of that. In the case of Neill’s edition, I would have preferred to see textual variants on the page where they occur, below the text, but above the annotations/glosses. It’s (mildly) annoying to have to keep flipping to the back of the play to see those textual variants. Of course, for readers who are not interested in textual criticism or editorial changes, it’s just as irritating to see that information when you aren’t interested in it. Hence the dilemma. Both editions provide excellent footnoted glosses and annotations, but Neill’s are more extensive and robust, and therefore immensely helpful.

There are nine critical essays covering a range of topics, but Neill has brilliantly added a heading/tagline at the beginning of each essay that describes its topic. Anyone perusing the essays with a particular idea in mind will find these taglines wonderfully helpful. The edition also includes five greyscale illustrations, but only one (a woodcut of the title page of the 1615 edition showing Hieronimo finding Horatio’s body) is directly related to the play. The others deal with more general themes of fortune, love, and garden motifs. The “Sources and Biography” section offers excerpts from some seminal (i.e., Virgil) and contemporary primary sources. Like the illustrations, these resources will be helpful to some readers, but hardly to all. Still, they are nice to have.

This thoughtful edition is well worth using and highly appropriate for use in any post-secondary educational context.

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Lesser, Zachary.

Hamlet after Q1: An Uncanny History of the Shakespearean Text.

Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015. Pp. 292 + 27 b/w ill. ISBN 978-0-8122-4661-2 (hardcover) US\$59.95.

When, in 1823, a copy of the hitherto unknown 1601 first quarto of *Hamlet* was discovered in the library of Sir William Bunbury, the history of that famous play was forever changed. Q1 was half the length of the better known quarto of

1604, now known as the second quarto. The first quarto varied extensively in its readings. Queen Gertrude (or Gertred, as she was called) explicitly denied any role in the murder of her husband and vowed to assist her son in revenging the deed. Polonius appeared under the name Corambis. Reynaldo was Montanto. Publication of this text in 1825 caused a great stir. Zachary Lesser gives us an absorbing account of what followed, beginning with a search for the supposed *Ur-Hamlet*. If a version did exist of a *Hamlet* before *Hamlet*, what was it like? Did Shakespeare begin as a dramatist by revamping the plays of other playwrights? Lesser's thesis is that, until now, we have not properly understood the ways in which the accidental discovery of Q1 has profoundly affected our conception of *Hamlet*. Its strangeness called into question what was understood in the eighteenth century as textual "authority." Q1 exists as a text in two remarkably different historical moments, its own of 1601 and that of later textual study. Scholars have busied themselves with analyzing Q1's origins, but in doing so they have neglected its history. Quoting Michel Foucault, Lesser undertakes to explore "the accidents, the minute deviations—or conversely, the complete reversals—the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations" that have given birth to "the *Hamlet* and the Shakespeare that we know, or think we know" (14–15). Historicist scholarship has uncovered supposed truths about Shakespeare "that in fact derive from the very process of 'discovering' them" (17).

Lesser's plan is to investigate a series of detailed textual instances in which our preconceptions about *Hamlet* have been reoriented by the uncanny history of Q1. Its discovery led in the Romantic period to new ideas about Shakespeare as author and about the transmission of his texts. When Hamlet asks Ophelia in Q1 about "contrary matters" rather than the famously coarse joke about "country matters" in Q2 and F, do we not encounter a new perspective on the troubled relationship of these two characters? When we realize that Q1 does not mention a "closet" anywhere, what are we to make of the convention of the supposed "closet" scene between Hamlet and his mother? Lesser's contention is that the discovery of Q1 has "affected all aspects of both scholarly and non-scholarly engagement with *Hamlet*, from questions of biography, authorship, and the bibliographic relationships among the texts associated with Shakespeare" to "textual studies and the establishment of the authoritative text" to "theatrical and performance histories" to "editorial glossing and its attempt

to shape reader response” to “the theory of memorial reconstruction” (22), and much more.

An especially engaging instance is to be found in Lesser’s account of Gertrude’s bed as it has been presented in production history. Inevitably the bed has sometimes been associated with the Oedipal interpretation of Hamlet’s delay as caused by his hatred of his uncle-stepfather for having sexually possessed the body of Hamlet’s mother that, according to Freudian theory as elaborated by Ernest Jones, Hamlet unconsciously desired for himself, thus resulting in Hamlet’s presumed inability to punish Claudius for what Hamlet himself guiltily desires. The idea of an emotional need for delay had been given currency earlier, though not in Freudian terms, by Goethe and Coleridge. In production, this idea is featured prominently in Laurence Olivier’s film version of *Hamlet* (1948), in which a sepulchral voice (Olivier) announces, in the film’s opening moment, that “This is the tragedy of a man who could not make up his mind,” while the camera, gazing through a window, pans slowly across Gertrude’s bed. When Hamlet wrestles on the bed with a bosomy Gertrude (Eileen Herlie), the Oedipal point is made unmistakably clear. Conversely, Pascale Aebischer lauded the Royal Shakespeare Company’s 1984 production for its intrepidity in “not featuring a bed in the closet scene” (117). Jay Halio insists that the scene takes place not in the queen’s bedroom but in her dressing chamber. George Hibbard, Stephen Buhler, and Maurice Charney, among others, agree. John Styan and Stanley Wells point out (incorrectly, in fact) that the bed never appeared on stage until John Gielgud’s 1936 production; it was visible, Lesser tells us, in Sarah Bernhardt’s appearance at the Adelphi Theatre in 1899 and at Prague in 1927. Still, David Garrick would have presumably been appalled. Lesser’s point is that the Q1 stage direction, “*Enter the ghost in his night gowne,*” picked up by Henry Irving in his 1874 production at the Lyceum, suggests that the bed was called into existence not by the theories of Freud et al. so much as by a long history of theatrical engagement with the strange new *Hamlet* of Q1. Should the Ghost be outfitted in armour, as in scenes 1, 4, and 5 and in many illustrations (as the Bowdler edition of the 1860), or in a nightgown? Is he a phantom when he appears to Hamlet but not to Gertrude? The subjective reading of this question owes much, this book argues, to Q1’s stage direction.

Whether these exploratory interpretations of *Hamlet* would have occurred even if Q1 had never existed is, I think, a question that needs to be asked. Staging and critical interpretation have incessantly sought new ways of

seeing Hamlet's dilemma. Even so, Lesser's story is an intriguing and highly readable one, and contributes to a lively recent trend of giving Q1 its due as a serious text. Might its version of "To be or not to be" be seen as more coherent than that of Q2 or F? A question to be asked.

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Maryks, Robert Aleksander, ed.

A Companion to Ignatius of Loyola: Life, Writings, Spirituality, Influence.

Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 52. Leiden: Brill, 2014. Pp. xiv, 345 + 13 ill., 1 map. ISBN 978-90-04-25113-7 (hardcover) €154 / US\$199.

This book is a welcome addition to the literature on Ignatius of Loyola (ca.1491–1556) and the Society of Jesus. Its aim is clear: to carry out "a quest for the historical Ignatius" (Maryks, 2), along the way peeling off "layers of theological and rhetorical paint" (3) added by past generations. The resulting collection is an international panorama of current scholarship (all presented in English), reflecting goals typical of our own time: first, to provide a portrait of the saint as a human being, in his liminal experiences of transformation and discovery (especially the 1520s) as well as in the later period of more settled convictions; second, to explore his relationships with the religious Other (Luther, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists); and third, to relate Ignatius to modernity. Several of the articles give informative pointers for future research. The prevailing tone is judicious and measured, whether discussing the "forgotten" early companions or the likelihood that Ignatius fathered a daughter in early life; but this demythologizing is no debunking: as a more human Ignatius emerges, there are flashes of appreciation, empathy, and even occasional warmth towards the subject.

The first cluster of essays is biographical. Here there is repeated stress on Ignatius before his ordination in 1537. As a lay person he developed the *Spiritual Exercises* and gave spiritual direction to other lay people. At this time we find the most meaningful presence of women in his life, when he was testing boundaries and experimenting with identity (Rhodes, 19). He viewed the lay state in positive terms and saw its renewal as fundamental to the renewal of the