The first quarto of Romeo and Juliet / William Shakespeare

ERNE, Lukas Christian (Ed.)

Abstract
Two different versions of Romeo and Juliet were published during Shakespeare's lifetime: the second quarto of 1599, on which modern editions are usually based, and the first quarto of 1597. The latter version was long denigrated as a 'bad' quarto, but recent scholarship sees in it a crucial witness for the theatrical practices of Shakespeare and his company. The shorter of the two versions by about one quarter, the first quarto has high-paced action, fuller stage directions than the second quarto, and fascinating alternatives to the famous speeches in the longer version. The introduction to this edition provides a full discussion of the origins of the first quarto, before analysing its distinguishing features and presenting a concise history of the 1597 version. The text is provided with a full collation and commentary which alert the reader to crucial differences between the first and the second quartos.

Reference

Available at:
http://archive-ouverte.unige.ch/unige:14394

Disclaimer: layout of this document may differ from the published version.
INTRODUCTION

Not too long ago, the 1597 first quarto (Q1) of Romeo and Juliet was simply considered a ‘bad quarto’, and its alleged badness largely disqualified it from critical and editorial circulation. It was referred to and discussed in introductions to editions of Romeo and Juliet, and editors ransacked it for what it could tell us about the play. Those who closely engaged with it realised that it was in some ways a text with remarkable qualities, but as long as labels such as ‘bad quarto’, ‘memorial reconstruction’ or ‘piratical publication’ clung to it, it remained in the margins of Shakespeare scholarship and was rarely mentioned in the criticism.

In more recent times, however, the New Bibliographical paradigm which alleged the text’s badness has come under attack from various quarters, and, as a result, our view of the ‘bad quartos’ is about to change. It is becoming more generally recognised that certain of these texts have important things to tell us about early modern drama. Stephen Orgel has pointed out that there is ‘very little evidence that will reveal to us the nature of a performing text in Shakespeare’s theater; but there is a little. There are the “bad” quartos, whose evidence, in this respect, is not bad, but excellent’. Despite the critical and scholarly turn in Shakespeare studies towards performance since the last decades of the last century, editorial tradition may have prevented us from recognising the true importance of the ‘bad’ quartos insofar as they reflect, however imperfectly, the plays as they were performed. As Orgel adds, ‘If we were less exclusively concerned with establishing texts and more concerned with the nature of plays, these [the ‘bad’ quartos] would be the good quartos.’ Similarly, Gary Taylor has asserted that a ‘bad’ quarto ‘may represent a more finished, dramatic, socialized phase of the text than that preserved in an edition printed from Shakespeare’s foul papers’.

Among the ‘bad’ quartos, Q1 Romeo and Juliet is a particularly important publication, with a carefully printed text, exciting stage directions which may well shed light on the play’s early modern staging, a shorter, tightened text with considerable pace, and an important number of intelligent alternative readings. Indeed, Q1 Romeo and Juliet is in some respects the best witness we have for the dramatic and theatrical practices of Shakespeare and of his company.

Q1 Romeo and Juliet is a crucially important witness precisely because of its difference from the longer, better-known version. A writing process is rarely stable,
and the textual life of a play in the theatre is even less so: early modern playtexts were corrected, revised, abridged, changed. The textual material still extant today is naturally a very imperfect record of the literary and theatrical genesis and transformations of Shakespeare’s plays. A printed text preserves only a part, and often a small part, of the history of a play, and its relationship to the words spoken onstage by Shakespeare and his fellow actors is one we cannot hope to guess, on the basis of the extant printed texts. All these problems and limitations granted, *Romeo and Juliet,* by preserving not only the quarto on which modern editions are usually based but also the first quarto, may allow us to glimpse, in the gap that separates one quarto from the other, some of the transformations a Shakespeare play underwent in the first years of its existence.

Accordingly, this edition, even though it is an edition of *The First Quarto of Romeo and Juliet,* does not advocate study of the first quarto for its own sake. Q1 and Q2 throw interesting light on each other, and it is at their peril that students study Q1 without awareness of Q2—or Q2 without awareness of Q1. Therefore, throughout introduction, collation, and commentary, I propose to study the first quarto by constantly keeping an eye, as it were, on the second quarto. By providing separate critical editions of the first two early quartos, the New Cambridge Shakespeare series invites comparative study of the different versions of *Romeo and Juliet.*

What, broadly, is the difference between the first and the second quartos of *Romeo and Juliet?* The difference in length is conspicuous: with some 700 lines more than Q1, Q2 is almost one third longer than Q1. The two versions have the same characters and dramatise the same events in the same order. Contrast the case of *Hamlet* and *King Henry V:* Q1 *Hamlet* contains a scene unique to it which summarises material present in other scenes in Q2 and the Folio; Q1 *King Henry V* omits a number of notable characters present in the Folio; *Romeo and Juliet* presents a different case. The Chorus at the end of Act 1 (1.5.144–57) is not in Q1, and a short sequence with the Capulet Serving-men (1.5.1–14) is similarly absent from the shorter text, but, apart from these two, all other dramatic movements in Q2 have their equivalents in Q1. Some of these movements are considerably shorter, though, and a number of Q2 speeches disappear entirely from Q1. Q1 also does not include at all or condenses a great many short or very short speeches present in Q2. Each Q1 scene is shorter than its equivalent in the longer text, Scene 1 being less than half and Scene 2 being more than 90 per cent of Q2, with the relative length of the other scenes being somewhere in between. In fact, the only part of Q1 that is longer than Q2 is the stage directions, which tend to be more detailed and more numerous in the shorter text.

Length constitutes an important but by no means the only difference between the two versions. Q1’s language often departs from Q2’s, the difference being at times a matter of isolated words but at others substantial. In general, the relationship between the two texts is relatively close in the first seven scenes (1.1 to 2.4) but becomes less so in the remainder of the play. Here is a representative example of parallel passages from early on in the play, excerpted from Benvolio’s conversation with Romeo in the first scene:

**Q1**

Love is a smoke made with the fume of sighs,  
Being purged, a fire sparkling in lovers’ eyes,  
Being vexed, a sea nourished with loving tears.  
What is it else? A madness most discreet,  
A choking gall, and a preserving sweet.

**(Q1, 1.1.181–85)**

**Q2**

Love is a smoke raised with the fume of sighs,  
Being purged, a fire sparkling in lovers’ eyes,  
Being vexed, a sea raging with a lover’s tears.  
What is it else? A madness most discreet,  
A choking gall, and a preserving sweet.

**(Q2, 1.1.181–85)**

In the first line, Q1 substitutes ‘raised’ for Q2’s ‘made’, and in third line, the second quarto has ‘nourished’ and ‘loving tears’ where Q1 reads ‘raging’ and ‘a lover’s tears’. Otherwise, the two passages are substantively identical.

Here, by contrast, are parallel passages, also from Romeo’s part, more typical of the latter part of the play:

**Q1**

I do remember an apothecary,  
And hereabouts a dwells, which late I noted  
In tattered weeds, with overwhelming brows,  
Gullying of simples; meagre were his looks,  
Sharp misery had worn him to the bones;  
And in his needy shop a tortoise hung,  
An alligator stuffed, and other skins  
Of ill-shaped fishes, and about his shelves  
A beggarly account of empty boxes.

**(Q1, 1.1.181–85)**

**Q2**

As I do remember,  
Here dwells a 'pothecary whom oft I noted  
As I passed by, whose needy shop is stuffed  
With beggarly accounts of empty boxes;  
And in the same an alligator hangs,

**(Q2, 1.1.181–85)**

5 See the section on ‘The mobile text’ in Levenson, pp. 103–25.

Despite its comparative brevity, the passage in Q1 is a recognisable version of that in Q2: ‘I do remember’, ‘dwells’, ‘I noted’, ‘needy shop’, ‘stuffed’, ‘beggarly account[s] of empty boxes’, ‘an alligator’, and forms of the verb ‘to hang’ are present in both passages. Nevertheless, the wording of the two passages is altogether different. In Q2, the alligator is stuffed and a tortoise hangs in the shop, but in Q1 it is the shop that is stuffed and the alligator hangs, whereas the tortoise has disappeared altogether. The differences are thus far more substantial than in the first parallel passages I quoted. The relationship can be looser still, as exemplified by Capulet’s lament over Juliet’s seemingly dead body in Scene 17 (4.5):
The First Quarto of Romeo and Juliet

Despised, despaired, hated, martyred, killed!
Uncomfortable time, why can’t thou now
To murder, murder our solemnity?
O child, O child! my soul, and not my child!
Dead art thou. Alack, my child is dead,
And with my child my joys are buried.
(Q2, 4.5.59–64)

Cruel, unjust, impartial destinies,
Why to this day have you preserved my life?
To see my hope, my stay, my joy, my life,
Deprived of sense, of life, of all by death?
Cruel, unjust, impartial destinies!
(Q1, 17.85–9)

The syntax and the rhetoric of the two passages are in some ways similar, but their wording is not. The two speeches may occur at the same point in the play, but they are linguistically independent of each other.

All of the above examples are in verse, but parts of Q1 and Q2 are in prose and, at times, one text prints a passage in prose while the other text has as verse. Juliet’s mother has several prose speeches in Scene 3 of Q1 which are printed as verse in Q2. The same applies to the Nurse in Scene 4 (1.5). Conversely, Q1 prints the Queen Mab speech (Sc. 4; 1.4) as verse, whereas Q2 has prose. When it comes to the texts’ dramatic verse, Q1 and Q2, like Shakespearean drama in general, are predominantly in iambic pentameters but with a share of short and long lines. It is noticeable, however, that Q1’s lines, on the whole, are metrically more irregular than Q2’s. The parts of Capulet and the Nurse in scene 14 (3.5) might serve as good examples to show the occasional irregularity of the verse in Q1 in comparison with Q2.

This preliminary survey of differences between Q1 and Q2 of Romeo and Juliet has so far concentrated on length and language, but other elements could be added to this. The two versions usually assign the same speeches to the same characters, but on a few occasions they do not. For instance, in the first scene, two Q1 lines given to Montague’s Wife are spoken by her husband in Q2, while in Scene 5 (2.1), Mercutio is given a short passage attributed to Benvolio in the longer text. Characters usually enter and exit in the same order and at roughly the same point in the two texts, but here, too, there are exceptions. In the final scene, for example, both Balthasar and Friar Laurence are arrested and brought onstage by the watch, while Q1’s Balthasar precedes the Friar, in Q2 Balthasar follows after him.

In comparing Q1 to Q2, I have consciously chosen to present a value-neutral comparison, a comparison that refrains from judging the relative merit and explaining the likely reasons for the differences between the two texts. I have done so because responses to the first quarto have too often been marred or at least inflected by a ‘parti pris’ regarding their relative value. If we are predisposed to think of Q2 as a ‘good’ and of Q1 as a ‘bad’ text, i.e. a text that has – say – been cobbled together by dishonest pirates, then we will be tempted, when the two versions differ, to prefer the presumed ‘good’ to the ‘bad’. The opposite of this prejudiced assumption about Q1 has also happened in the reception history of the texts of Romeo and Juliet: in the early twentieth century, Theodor Eichhoff edited the first quarto and went on to write a comparative study of Q1 and Q2 in which he argued for the superiority of the first quarto over the second. Once Eichhoff had convinced himself of the texts’ relative merit, he was able to find reasons in virtually every parallel passage why the first quarto is much to be preferred to the second. Eichhoff is an extreme case, but it seems clear that an analysis of the first quarto and its relationship to the second can gain from establishing first what there is in the two texts and what the differences are between them. Naturally enough, this assessment leads to the question of why the first quarto came to take on the form it has, and why it differs from the second quarto in the way it does, and it is these complex questions that I now address.

Textual provenance

A CENTURY OF ‘BAD QUARTOS’

Scholarly thinking about the provenance of Q1 Romeo and Juliet is intimately related to the ‘bad quartos’ more generally, so I first wish to survey past thinking about this group of texts. It will be well to start by considering two publications that appeared at the end of the first decade of the twentieth century. In Shakespeare Folios and Quarto, Alfred W. Pollard invented the textual category which he labelled ‘bad quartos’. This invention followed from his revisionary reading of Heminge and Condell’s address in the First Folio ‘To the Great Variety of Readers’. While earlier commentators had believed that their reference to ‘diverse stolne, and surreptitious copies’, with which the readers had previously been ‘abus’d’, had been to the quarto editions in general, Pollard insisted that only the ‘bad quartos’ were meant. Since several ‘good’ quartos had been used as copy when the First Folio was printed, Heminge and Condell, so Pollard argued, could hardly have claimed to have drawn all the ‘surreptitious’ and ‘maimed’ quartos. In the mid-twentieth century, Pollard insisted that only the ‘bad quartos’ were meant. Since several ‘good’ quartos had been used as copy when the First Folio was printed, Heminge and Condell, so Pollard argued, could hardly have claimed to have drawn all the ‘surreptitious’ and ‘maimed’ quartos. The texts he identified as ‘bad quartos’ were Q1 Romeo and Juliet (1597), Q1 King Henry V (1600), Q1 The Merry Wives of Windsor (1602), Q1 Hamlet (1603), and Q1 Pericles (1609). In the following year, W. W. Greg refined that part of the narrative to which Pollard had paid little attention: the agency behind the manuscript copy of the ‘bad quarto’ that allows us to account for the text’s relationship to the ‘good’ Folio text. Noting ‘the very unusual accuracy with which the part of mine Host is reported’ in the ‘bad’ quarto of The Merry Wives

7 See Wright, pp. 116–48.

of Windsor and 'the comparative excellence of the reporting of those scenes in which the Host is on the stage', Greg concluded that 'the pirate who procured the copy . . . was none other than the actor of the Host's part'.

Even though Greg cannot be credited with having invented the concept of 'memorial reconstruction' (see below), he seems to have provided both the label and the first detailed investigation of it.

The twin theories of 'bad quartos' and 'memorial reconstruction' thus having been put forward in the space of two years by two of the leading scholars of their time, much of the scholarship in the following decades went into consolidating Pollard and Greg's publications of 1909 and 1910 and applying them to other plays. In 1915, H. D. Gray suggested that Q1 Hamlet was also a memorial reconstruction, undertaken by the actor who played the role of Marcellus. Once 'memorial reconstruction' had been applied not only to Q1 Merry Wives but to all of Pollard's Shakespearean 'bad quartos', the theory spread beyond the bounds of the Shakespeare canon.

Comparing the quarto edition of Orlando Furioso with Edward Alleyn's extant part of the title character, Greg concluded in 1923 that the quarto is 'a version severely abridged . . . for performance by a reduced cast' and that the text 'is based almost throughout on reconstruction from memory'. By 1930, E. K. Chambers fixed the canon of Shakespeare's 'bad quartos' by endorsing the cases advanced for Q1 Contention, Richard Duke of York, Romeo and Juliet, King Henry V, The Merry Wives of Windsor, and Hamlet, while rejecting The Taming of a Shrew.

After Chambers's influential pronouncement, the 'bad quarto' and 'memorial reconstruction' theories remained largely unchallenged in their broad outlines for roughly half a century. Summing up in a few sentences a critical territory on which much ink was spilt inevitably results in simplifications. It is certainly true that there was considerable argument as to what exactly was memorially reconstructed, by much ink was spilt inevitably results in simplifications. It is certainly true that there was considerable argument as to what exactly was memorially reconstructed, by much ink was spilt inevitably results in simplifications.

Theories about the first quarto of Romeo and Juliet started long before the 'bad quartos' came into being as a textual category. Eighteenth-century editors usually considered Q1 as a first draft and Q2, in keeping with its title page ('Newly corrected, augmented, and amended'), an improved and completed text on which they based their editions. Yet there were exceptions: Pope drew eclectically from Q1 and Q2, choosing whichever version he preferred, at times combining the two in the same passage or even line. Warburton, even though he did not base his text on Q1, preferred it to the later version, because the 'trifling and bombast passages are in [the longer text] far more numerous'. He considered the additions in Q2 to Q1 to be a result of the practice lamented by Hamlet, with actors speaking more than has been set down for them: 'as a proof', Warburton writes, that Shakespeare could not escape this practice, 'in the old editions of Romeo and Juliet there is no hint of a great number of the mean conceits and ribaldries now to be found there'.

Prior to the 1840s, E. K. Chambers fixed the canon of Shakespeare's 'bad quartos' by endorsing the cases advanced for Q1 Contention, Richard Duke of York, Romeo and Juliet, King Henry V, The Merry Wives of Windsor, and Hamlet, while rejecting The Taming of a Shrew.

While some aspects of Collier's theory are by now generally discredited, it deserves to be pointed out that his thinking is in other respects remarkably astute. He is the first to argue that Q1 basically derives from Q2, he notices the text's uneven quality which makes any monocausal explanation of its genesis problematic, and he also anticipates some modern thinking in arguing that Q1's differences to Q2 can be explained by the theory that Q1 partly reflects 'the play as it was acted'.

For the remainder of the nineteenth century, the traditional 'early draft' theory and Collier's new theory co-existed, some scholars preferring the former (e.g. Knight, Dyce, Staunton, Ulrici, and Hudson) and others the latter (White, Mommsen, Furness, Daniel, and the Cambridge editors). Minor variations of Collier's theory included first and still tentative considerations that the genesis of Q1 might be partly memorial, thus anticipating the 'memorial reconstruction' explanation prevalent in the following century. Writing about Q1 Hamlet and Romeo and Juliet, Tycho Mommsen, in 1857, held that both texts 'abound with every kind of shallow repetition - now of set phrases, oaths, expletives, then (which is strongly indicative of interpolation) of certain lines and passages of peculiar energy, such as would impress themselves more literally upon the memory of the hearer' (my emphasis).

15 By 1938, Leo Kirsbaum could publish 'A census of bad quartos' (RES 14, pp. 20-43) with no fewer than twenty 'bad quartos', including Q1 Romeo and Juliet. Ironically, at the same time as the theory Greg had initiated was spreading, Greg had started doubting his original argument about the Host and Merry Wives. See Warburton, 'Century', 316.
18 See, for instance, Capell vol. 1, pp. 2–3.
21 Tycho Mommsen, 'Hamlet, 1603; and Romeo and Juliet, 1597', Athenaeum 29 (1857), 18-.
Four years later, White similarly considered 'the unmitigated failure in the memory' as a possible explanation for parts of Q1. 22 Finally, a few years later still, the Cambridge editors argued for stenographic origins of Q1 but recognised that 'the text of (Q1) is more accurate on the whole than might have been expected from such an origin' and added that 'possibly some of the players may have helped [the short-hand writer] either from memory, or by lending their parts in MS' (my emphasis). 23

The idea that memorial agency had something to do with the genesis of Q1 thus existed prior to the watershed publications by Pollard and Greg in 1909 and 1910, but it was thereafter that the memorial reconstruction theory fully established itself. In 1919, Pollard and J. Dover Wilson co-authored an article about the provenance of Q1 Romeo and Juliet which built on Pollard and Greg's publications but was considerably complicated by their belief in the existence of an earlier, non-Shakespearean play, Q1, they thought, 'represents an abridged version of Shakespeare's first revision of an older [non-Shakespearean] play eked out by what a pirate could remember of the later version'. 24 When Chambers reviewed their convoluted narrative in 1930, he soberly concluded: 'I do not find this theory satisfactory.' 25 Nevertheless, Chambers had no doubt that Q1 was 'one of the bad Quartos', held that it is 'certainly a reported text', and repeatedly referred to 'the reporter'. 26 The fullest investigation of the provenance of Q1 Romeo and Juliet, which was to establish the dominant view for decades to come, was H. R. Hoppe's book-length The Bad Quarto of Romeo and Juliet in which he proposed 'to demonstrate that Q1 of Romeo and Juliet is a memorial reconstruction of a version that Q2 represents in substantially correct form'. 27 This theory was endorsed by Greg in The Shakespeare First Folio and, among recent editors, Brian Gibbons, G. Blakemore Evans, and the editors of the Oxford Shakespeare. 28 The merits of and problems with the 'memorial reconstruction' narrative are explored below, but it seems fair to say that it had a crippling effect on scholarly engagement with Q1. This is exemplified by the following quotations from a 1955 survey of 'Recent Work on the Text of Romeo and Juliet' by Wilson: 'it is a pirated edition and ... exhibits all the stigmata we have learnt to associate with such texts ... And that is practically all an editor needs to know about this text.' 29

22 This is quoted in Furness, p. 420.
23 Ibid., pp. 422–3. George Ian Duthie's Elizabethan Shorthand and the First Quarto of 'King Lear' (Oxford, 1949) effectively demonstrated that no system of stenography known by 1597 would have allowed the transcription of anything as complex as a play.
25 Chambers, William Shakespeare, vol. 1, p. 343. One source of error in Wilson and Pollard's theory is that they took the occasional similarities or even identity between Q1 and Q2 in spelling, capitalisation, and punctuation to be evidence for derivation from the same manuscript. Later scholars established, however, that these closely parallel passages result from Q2 having been partly set up from Q1.
27 Hoppe, p. 28.
The First Quarto of Romeo and Juliet

TO
Which you mistaking offer up to joy.
My husband lives that Tybalt would have slain,
And Tybalt's dead that would have slain my husband:
All this is comfort . . .

(3.2.102-7)

The following passage also requires reference to Q2 to make full sense:

ROMEO I cry you mercy. My business was great, and in such a case as mine a man may strain courtesy.

MERCUTIO O, that's as much to say as such a case as yours will constrain a man to bow in the hams.

ROMEO A most courteous exposition.

(7.42-6)

As in the previous example, the final words follow from a passage present in Q2 but absent from Q1:

ROMEO Pardon, good Mercutio, my business was great, and in such a case as mine a man may strain courtesy.

MERCUTIO That's as much as to say, such a case as yours constrains a man to bow in the hams.

ROMEO Meaning to cur'sy.

MERCUTIO Thou hast most kindly hit it.

ROMEO A most courteous exposition.

(2.4.42-8)

The word 'cur'sy', an early modern variant of and pronounced like 'courtesy', leads to the pun two lines later. The two omitted lines explain the ambiguity of Mercutio's 'bow in the hams': it refers to the action of bowing, as Romeo says, but it also implies that Romeo, having 'hit it' in the sense of having had sex, is sexually so exhausted that he can barely stand up straight. In Q2, one quibble naturally leads to the next in this densely bawdy passage; in Q1, by contrast, Mercutio's pun is a loose end.

Earlier scholars such as Chambers and Hart have extensively investigated those passages which provide evidence for Q1's derivative nature (because they require Q2 to illuminate them), but that this evidence can be considerably strengthened by an analysis of both texts alongside Shakespeare's acknowledged source text does not seem to have been fully considered. The close relationship between Brooke's narrative poem Romeus and Juliet (1562) and Shakespeare's play has, of course, been thoroughly demonstrated. Yet on various occasions, Q2 corresponds closely to Brooke at moments when Q1 does not. It seems more likely that Shakespeare, on these occasions, originally echoed Brooke - as he does elsewhere - but that the echoes subsequently got lost rather than that Shakespeare originally did not follow Brooke (though he clearly did so elsewhere) and only inserted the echoes to the narrative poem when revising the play. Here is a first example. Capulet's outrage at Juliet's opposition to his marriage plans follows Brooke's narrative poem from which I quote (I highlight significant words here and below):

CAPULET God's bread, it makes me mad! Day, night, work, play,
Alone, in company, still my care hath been
To have her matched; and having now provided
A gentleman of noble parentage,
Of fair demeanour, youthful and nobly ligned,
Proportioned as one's thought would wish a man,
And then to have a wretched whining fool,
A puling mammet, in her fortune's tender,
To answer 'I'll not wed, I cannot love;
I am too young, I pray you pardon me.'

(3.5.176-86)

In Q2 and Brooke, Juliet's father insists on the nobility (or 'noblenes') of the parentage of Juliet's suitor, that he had 'provided' for his daughter, and calls his daughter a 'foole' because of her resistance. Q1 corresponds quite closely to the version in Q2, but two of the differences between them - 'found out' instead of 'provided' and 'princely' for 'noble' - effectively eliminate echoes of Brooke:

CAPULET God's blessed mother, wife, it mads me.
Day, night, early, late, at home, abroad,
Alone, in company, waking, or sleeping,
Still my care hath been to see her matched.
And having now found out a gentleman
Of princely parentage, youthful, and nobly trained,
Proportioned as one's heart could wish a man,
And then to have a wretched whining fool,
A puling mammet in her fortune's tender,
To say 'I cannot love, I am too young,
I pray you pardon me.'

(14.138-49)
A passage close to the end of Act 4 is equally telling:

FRIAR LAWRENCE . . .

Dry up your tears, and stick your rosemary
On this fair corpse, and as the custom is,
And in her best array, bear her to church;
For though fond nature bids us all lament,
Yet nature's tears are reason's errament.

CAPULET All things that we ordained festival,

Turn from their office to black funeral:
Our instruments to melancholy bells,
Our wedding cheer to a sad burial feast;
Our solemn hymns to sullen dirges change;
Our bridal flowers serve for a buried corse;
And all things change them to the contrary.

(4.5.79–90)

The equivalent passage in Brooke has a similar series of antitheses which oppose the joys of the anticipated wedding to the sorrows of the funeral:

Now is the parentes myrth quite changed into mone,
And now to sorrow is returnt the joy of every one.
And now the wedding weedes for mourning weedes they change,
And Hymene into a Dyrge, alas it seemeth strange.
In stead of mariage gloves, now funerall gloves they have,
And whom they should see married, they follow to the grave.
The feast that should have been of pleasure and of joy,
Hath every dish, and cup, full of sorrow and annoye.

(2507–14)

In the following eight lines, Brooke explains the Italian custom of the household tomb in which all members of a family are buried. Then he continues with three lines which are echoed in Friar Lawrence's words quoted above:

An other use there is, that whosoeuer dyes,
Borne to their church with open face, upon the beere he lyes
In womt weede atyre, not warp't in winding sheete.

(2523–5)

Brooke and Shakespeare describe a custom (called 'use' in Brooke), and Shakespeare's 'bear her to church' is verbally close to Brooke's 'Borne to their church'. The passage in Q1 omits not only the echoes in Friar Laurence's speech (instead of 'bear her', Q1 has 'Convey her') but also the series of antitheses in Capulet's following speech which takes up only two lines:

FRIAR LAWRENCE . . .

Come, stick your rosemary in this dead corpse,
And, as the custom of our country is,
In all her best and sumptuous ornaments
Convey her where her ancestors lie tombed.

(17.103–8)

More evidence could be added. Earlier in the same scene, Juliet, in Q2, asks to be alone in order to pray—'I have need of many orisons / To move the heavens' (4.3.3–4) — and, in Brooke, asserts that 'this night, my purpose is to pray' (line 2326). In Q1, by contrast, Juliet says: 'I desire to lie alone. / For I have many things to think upon' (17.6–7). A few lines later, Q2, in a line with no equivalent in Q1, says, 'Spare not for cost' (4.4.6) and in Brooke, Juliet's father promises Paris 'a costly feast' (line 2258). It seems plausible to assume that Shakespeare's original adherence to Brooke in Q2 partly disappeared as the version developed into the text behind Q1.

What further weakens the case for Q1 to Q2 revision is what can be gathered about the manuscript underlying Q2: its false starts and repetitions strongly suggest that this version rather than Q1 constituted Shakespeare's earliest version. For instance, at the end of 2.2, a four-line passage is assigned to Romeo which, in almost identical form, is assigned to Friar Lawrence at the beginning of 2.3. By the time the version behind Q1 came into being, the confusion had been cleared up. A more general reservation about the revision theory is equally powerful. As the Oxford Shakespeare editors — who find the theory 'fundamentally untenable' — point out, the "early versions" in question [including Q1 Romeo and Juliet] differ drastically from the genuine cases of authorial revision elsewhere in the canon, where both texts exist in reliable editions . . . the resulting verbal texture cannot be convincingly assigned to any one period of Shakespeare's career. One way of verifying this last assertion is to consult the 'Metrical Tables' in an appendix to Chambers's William Shakespeare, in particular 'Table III': 'Blank Verse: Length and Syllabic Variation': a certain number of short and long lines are an integral part of Shakespeare's blank verse throughout his career, but the high percentage of such lines in Q1 Romeo and Juliet and related texts clearly fails to correspond to Shakespeare's practice.

MEMORIAL REPORTERS?

More convincing opposition to the theory of memorial reconstruction has arisen from other quarters since the 1990s. Some of these challenges have subjected to close scrutiny the arguments that supported New Bibliographical orthodoxy. Paul Werstine has shown to what extent the spread of 'memorial reconstruction' has depended upon scholarly narratives that took on a life of their own in the course of the

---

34 See Irace, pp. 103–5; chapter 5 on 'Revision' develops a number of obstacles to belief in the theory that the 'bad quartos' were Shakespearean first versions. Irace concludes that 'for the six short quartos, differences between the short and the longer versions point to other agents than Shakespeare's revising hand' (p. 114).
35 Wells et al., Textual Companion, p. 27.
36 See section on 'Stage Directions' below for further evidence of Q1's derivative nature.