

## “Queene Mab whats she?”

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Mercutio’s “Queen Mab” speech in act 1, scene 4 of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* (*RJ*) has long been identified by editors of the play as being problematic, particularly in its repetitions and in the ordering of its lines in what is accepted as the most authoritative early text, the text used as the basis for modern editions. The main purpose of the present article is to examine the speech, essentially from a bibliographical standpoint, in order to arrive at an explanation for the origin of the perceived problems and consequently to suggest a broad resolution of them, and hence to propose a “new” text, a text that, I argue, is likely to be close to that intended by the author, but nonetheless “raw,” retaining a residue of textual difficulties awaiting resolution by an intending editor.

Of editions of *RJ* only two are of any significance for an editor: the first quarto, dated 1597 (Q1), and the second quarto, dated 1599 (Q2); all seventeenth-century editions (including the First Folio (F1) of 1623) derive ultimately from Q2. Until very recently—from the time, a century ago, that A. W. Pollard made the distinction between “bad” and “good” Shakespearian quartos<sup>1</sup>—Q1 has generally been regarded as belonging among the “bad,” Q2 among the “good.” The categorisation is based on the demonstration—or, as sceptics would have it, on the *assumption*—that “bad” editions were unauthorised ones that were generally soon replaced by authorised ones, the nature of the latter “proving” the inferior status of the former. In the case of *RJ* the status of the replacement “good” quarto is “confirmed” by Q2’s title page, which contains the statement “Newly corrected, augmented, and amended.”

The orthodox view of the source of the printed text of the bad version of a play by Shakespeare, or by one of his contemporaries, is that it was a reconstruction, created by one or a mixture of stratagems, especially:

- by memorial reconstruction undertaken by an actor or actors who had taken part in performances of the unabridged text or, more likely, of a text that had been shortened for performance in the provinces by a reduced complement of actors, perhaps during a plague year, when the London theatres were closed;
- by purloining or illicitly transcribing playhouse documents, such as actors’ parts or promptbooks, or even authorial documents;
- by a reconstruction based on notes taken by shorthand during the performance of a particular acting version of the work.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Alfred W. Pollard, “The Good and the Bad Quartos,” chap. 3 in *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos: A Study in the Bibliography of Shakespeare’s Plays 1594–1685* (London: Methuen, 1909).

<sup>2</sup> The “Old” Cambridge editors managed to incorporate most of these elements!—see William George Clark and William Aldis Wright, eds., *The Works of William Shakespeare*, vol. 7 (Cambridge and London: Macmillan, 1865), viii.

A belief among early editors in the unauthorised origin of certain of Shakespeare’s plays was probably encouraged by the reference to “diuerse stolne, and surreptitious copies, maimed, and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of iniurious impostors, that expos’d them” voiced by John Hemmings and Henry Condell, the editors of F1.<sup>3</sup> The supposed details of the origin were elaborated at least as early as 1733, when Lewis Theobald claimed that

Many Pieces were taken down in Short-hand, and imperfectly copied by Ear, from *Representation*: Others were printed from piece-meal Parts surreptitiously obtain’d from the Theatres, uncorrect, and without the Poet’s Knowledge ...<sup>4</sup>

Various complementary or supplementary scenarios have been proposed. For example, Alfred Hart claimed that “each bad quarto is a garbled abridgment of an acting version made officially by the play adapter of the company from Shakespeare’s manuscript.”<sup>5</sup>

Such views have been opposed with a contrary view, until recently less often voiced and more often derided:<sup>6</sup> that, where two editions exist, the later version (our “good”) is the author’s revision of the earlier (our “bad”). Thus, for example, Charles Knight, taking Q2’s “corrected, augmented, and amended” at face value, claimed that

We know of nothing in literary history more curious or more instructive than the example of minute attention, as well as consummate skill, exhibited by Shakspeare in correcting, augmenting and amending the first copy [Q1] of this play.<sup>7</sup>

However, the Theobald view finally achieved canonical status in 1955 thanks to W. W. Greg, who asserted: “It is generally agreed that Q1 is a memorial reconstruction, of which it shows all the usual stigmas.”<sup>8</sup> This judgment has been

<sup>3</sup> John Hemmings and Henry Condell, eds., *Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies* (London: Printed by Isaac Iaggard, and Ed. Blount, 1623), πA3r (“To the great Variety of Readers”).

<sup>4</sup> [Lewis] Theobald, ed., *The Works of Shakespeare ... Collated with the Oldest Copies, and Corrected; With Notes, Explanatory, and Critical*, 7 vols. (London: Printed for A. Bettesworth and C. Hitch, J. Tonson, F. Clay, W. Feales, and R. Wellington, 1733), 1:xxxvii–xxxviii.

<sup>5</sup> Alfred Hart, *Stolne and Surreptitious Copies: A Comparative Study of Shakespeare’s Bad Quartos* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1942), 437.

<sup>6</sup> Hart, *Stolne and Surreptitious Copies*, describes this view as a “hoary conjecture ... in the highest degree improbable ... absurd nonsense” (442).

<sup>7</sup> Charles Knight, *Studies of Shakspeare: Forming a Companion Volume to Every Edition of the Text* (London: Charles Knight, 1849). The individual studies were then reprinted as the “introductory notices” in Knight’s *The Works of Shakspeare* (edition consulted: Imperial Edition, 2 vols. (London: Virtue, [1876]), 1:79).

<sup>8</sup> W. W. Greg, *The Shakespeare First Folio: Its Bibliographical and Textual History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), 225–35 (225).

accepted by subsequent editors without much questioning, including the editors of the Oxford *Complete Works* of 1986,<sup>9</sup> who claim that

Hoppe<sup>10</sup> convincingly showed that Q1 was set from a manuscript originally compiled by actors, identifying them as probably those who played Romeo and Paris. . . . Some “un-Shakespearian” verse in Q1 was presumably supplied to complete the text where the report was deficient . . . .<sup>11</sup>

In contrast, discussion about the nature of Q2 has been rather more limited. There are palpable bibliographical links between the two quartos, particularly in the first two acts, where, for example, most of the Nurse’s lines are set in italic in both, demonstrating that in part (at least from about 1.2.46 to 1.3.36) Q2 was set from a copy of Q1. This observation has led to the suggestion that Q2 was set *throughout* from an annotated Q1, despite the obvious difficulties, not the least that Q2 is some 700-odd lines longer (3,007 vs. 2,232). The “annotated Q1” theory is in fact the one espoused by the 1955 Cambridge editors: “it was printed entirely from a copy of Q1, corrected and added to by a scribe who had collated it with the MS.”<sup>12</sup> Whatever the details of transmission—via Q1 or not—there has been fairly general agreement that printer’s copy comprised substantially an authorial manuscript, conventionally described as Shakespeare’s “foule papers.” Again Greg’s summation represents the orthodox view: “That behind Q2 were the author’s foul papers is clear.”<sup>13</sup>

In the last couple of decades, however, even the fundamental notion of “bad” vs. “good” has increasingly been questioned, not least by Laurie Maguire,<sup>14</sup> who has systematically considered all forty-one plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries that have at one time or another been adjudged “bad.” Maguire argues that the case in support of reported texts has been based on assumptions about what constitutes badness, that the reasoning is circular—indeed that the evidence adduced to demon-

<sup>9</sup> Stanley Wells et al., eds., *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986).

<sup>10</sup> Harry R. Hoppe, *The Bad Quarto of “Romeo and Juliet”: A Bibliographical and Textual Study* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1948).

<sup>11</sup> Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 288. The various theories propounded at one time or another to identify printer’s copy for Q1 have been rehearsed exhaustively in the recent “New Cambridge” edition of that edition—see Lukas Erne, “Textual Provenance,” in *The First Quarto of Romeo and Juliet*, ed. Lukas Erne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 5–25. To the huge literature on the text of *RJ* in general, accessible via editions and articles, should be added two theses: George Walton Williams, *The Good Quarto of Romeo and Juliet: A Bibliographical Study* (PhD, University of Virginia, 1957) and Mary Lord, *The Relationship between Quarto One and Quarto Two of Romeo and Juliet* (MA, Monash University, 1976).

<sup>12</sup> John Dover Wilson and George Ian Duthie, “The Copy for *Romeo and Juliet*, 1599,” in William Shakespeare, *Romeo & Juliet*, ed. John Dover Wilson and George Ian Duthie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955), 112–18 (114).

<sup>13</sup> Greg, *The Shakespeare First Folio*, 230.

<sup>14</sup> Laurie Maguire, *Shakespearean Suspect Texts: The “Bad” Quartos and their Contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

strate reconstruction could equally be employed to demonstrate authorial revision. Despite the continued adherence to the view that Q1 is a memorial reconstruction (as in the separate Oxford,<sup>15</sup> New Arden,<sup>16</sup> and New Cambridge<sup>17</sup> editions), what seems likely to become the new orthodoxy is that *RJ* Q1 and Q2 are both authentic Shakespearian texts, either with both deriving from a common ancestor or with Q2 being an expansion of Q1.<sup>18</sup>

Whatever the origins of the two quartos, it is accepted that “The Queen Mab speech presents a series of textual difficulties whose editorial treatment is closely involved in the question of the copy for Q2.”<sup>19</sup> This is true: the question of printer’s copy for Q2 is at the heart of any attempt to resolve the textual difficulties and to produce an edited text that may approximate Shakespeare’s intention.



With the foregoing as a background, what follows is an attempt to show that the admittedly unsatisfactory state of the Queen Mab speech in Q2 reflects the confused state of printer’s copy. My argument is founded on what can be deduced from the printed page, those deductions being then used to suggest a resolution to the major textual difficulties presented.

Q2 is gathered in fours, collating A–L<sup>4</sup> M<sup>2</sup>. Ignoring headline and direction line, the type pages are predominantly thirty-six lines long in gatherings A–H,<sup>20</sup> thirty-seven in I–M,<sup>21</sup> possibly suggesting the presence of a second compositor beginning at I1r (mid-III.v). The Queen Mab speech occupies lines 11–36 of C2r and lines 1–4 of C2v. The conundrum is that the lines on C2r are set as prose, those on C2v as verse (see Figure 1). The corresponding speech in Q1 comprises thirty-four lines of verse, C1v–2r (see Figure 2).

That the twenty-six lines of prose on Q2 C2r could be re-arranged as thirty-eight lines of acceptable iambic pentameters was recognised as early as 1728, by

<sup>15</sup> William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, ed. Jill L. Levenson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>16</sup> William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, ed. Brian Gibbons (London: Methuen, 1980).

<sup>17</sup> William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>18</sup> For recent discussions that further the case for rehabilitating Q1 see Jay L. Halio, “Handy-Dandy: Q1/Q2 *Romeo and Juliet*,” in Jay L. Halio, ed., *Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet: Texts, Contexts, and Interpretation* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1995), 123–50; David Farley-Hills, “The Bad Quarto of *Romeo and Juliet*,” *Shakespeare Survey* 49 (1996): 27–44; Jay L. Halio, *Romeo and Juliet: A Guide to the Play* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998); Lynette Hunter, “Adaptation and/or Revision in Early Quartos of *Romeo and Juliet*,” *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 101 (2006): 5–54.

<sup>19</sup> Wells and Taylor, *Textual Companion*, 292.

<sup>20</sup> There are thirty-five lines on B3r B4r D2v F2r F3v G2r G3v, and 37 on A3v B2v D4r E2v G4v.

<sup>21</sup> There are thirty-six lines on I3v I4v K2r L1v L2v M1r, and 38 on I4r L3r.

She is the Fairies midwife, and she comes in shape no bigger the  
 an A got stone, on the forefinger of an Alderman, drawne with  
 a teeme of little ottamic, ouer mens noses as they lie asleepe : her  
 waggō spokes made of lōg spinners legs: the couer, of the wings  
 of Grashoppers, her traces of the smallest spider web, her collors  
 of the moonshines warry beams her whip of Crickets bone, the  
 lash of Philome, her waggoner , a small grey coated Gnat, not  
 half so big as a round litle worme, prickt from the lazic finger of  
 a man. Her Charriot is an emptie Hasel nut, Made by the loyner  
 squirrel or old Grub, time out amind, the Fairie. Coatchmakers:  
 and in this state she gallops night by night, throug louers brains,  
 and then they dreame of loue. On Courtiers knees, that dreame  
 on Curfies strait ore Lawyers fingers who strait dreame on fees,  
 ore Ladies lips who strait one kisses dream, which oit the angrie  
 Mab with blisters plagues , because their breath with sweete  
 meates tainted are. Sometime she gallops ore a Courtiers nose,  
 and then dreames he of smelling out a sute: and sometime comes  
 she with a tithpigs tale, tickling a Persons nose as a lies asleepe,  
 then he dreams of an other Benefice. Sometime she driueth ore  
 a souldiers neck, and then dreames he of cutting forrain throates,  
 of breaches, ambuscados, spanish blades: Of healths siue fadome  
 deepe , and then anon drums in his eare , at which he starts and  
 wakes, and being thus frighted, sweares a prair or two & sleeps  
 againe: this is that very Mab that plats the manes of horses in the  
 night : and bakes the Ellocks in foule sluttish haire, which  
 once vntangled, much misfortune bodes.

C 2

This

*The most lamentable Tragedie*

This is the hag, when maides lie on their backs,  
 That presses them and learns them first to beare,  
 Making them women of good carriage:  
 This is she.

She is the Fairies Midwife and doth come  
in shape no bigger than an Aggat stone  
On the forefinger of a Burgomaster,  
Drawne with a teeme of little Atomi,  
A thwart mens noses when they lie a sleepe,  
Her waggon spokes are made of spinners webs,  
The couer, of the winges of Grashoppers,  
The traces are the Moone shine watrie beames,  
The collers crickets bones, the lash of filmes,  
Her waggoner is a small gray coated flie,  
Not halfe so big as is a little worme,  
Pickt from the lasre finger of a maide,  
And in this sort she gallops vp and downe  
Through Louers braines, and then they dream of loue.  
O're Courtiers knees: who strait on cursies dreame  
O're Ladies lips who dreame on kisses strait:  
Which oft the angrie Mab with blisters plagues,  
Because their breathes with sweet meats tainted are:  
Sometimes she gallops ore a Lawers lap,

And

*of Romeo and Iuliet.*

And then dreames he of smelling out a fute,  
And sometime comes she with a tithe pigs taile,  
Tickling a Parfons nose that lies a sleepe,  
And then dreames he of another benefice:  
Sometime she gallops ore a fouldiers nose,  
And then dreames he of cutting forraine throats,  
Of breaches ambuscados, countermines,  
Of healthes siue fadome deepe, and then anon  
Drums in his eare: at which he startes and wakes,  
And sweares a Praier or two and sleepe againe.  
This is that Mab that makes maids lie on their backs,  
And proues them women of good cariage. (the night,  
This is the verie Mab that plats the manes of Horses in  
And plats the Elfeidcks in foule fluttish haire,  
Which once vntangled much misfortune breeds.

Pope in his edition<sup>22</sup> (see Figure 3 for an unedited re-arrangement, conventionally spaced and with initial caps supplied). That is, taking into account the four lines on C2v, underlying the Q2 setting of the Queen Mab speech was a manuscript text comprising (whatever their status) forty-two lines of verse.

Various explanations have been propounded for the bulk of the speech being set as prose and for the change to verse with the turning of the leaf. For example, since he had espoused the annotated-Q1 theory, Wilson was led to conclude:

As for the prose lining, that may well be accredited to the Q2 compositor ... faced with the pages of Q1 thus corrected and baffled by the problem of lineation, a compositor would naturally decide that the easiest and quickest solution was to set up the bulk of it as prose.<sup>23</sup>

And Thomas, who had espoused the view, apparently peculiar to himself, that the Q2 text was reported, concluded that the scribe

was familiar with the play, and he had available to him Shakespeare's foul papers. In the course of putting these papers into order for the printer [he] discovered that the Queen Mab speech was missing. ... [He] added the speech to the manuscript either by writing it out himself from memory or getting one of the actors to dictate it to him or write it out for him. What resulted was verse put down as prose, with all the marks of auditory and memorial corruption already discussed.<sup>24</sup>

Both views are untenable. Looking at Q2 C2r from the vantage of the printing process, at least two explanations for the switch from prose to verse may be advanced. It is conceivable that the need to set verse as prose at this point was required in order to compensate for an error in casting off copy for setting by formes. But setting by formes as the sole source of the anomaly can be discounted on the grounds (a) that in a text predominantly in verse imposed in quarto for gathering in fours<sup>25</sup> the computation could hardly have been out by so many lines, and (b) the process of compression excludes the first ten lines of C2r, implying that the problem was confined to the particular speech and did not extend to the page.

In fact, the peculiarity is readily to be accounted for on bibliographical grounds: whether or not Q2 was *set* by formes the outer forme of sheet C (comprising C1r 2v 3r 4v) was *printed* before the inner forme (comprising C1v 2r 3v 4r). The only

<sup>22</sup> *The Works of Mr. William Shakespear; Publish'd by Mr. Pope and Dr. Sewell*, vol. 8 (London: Printed for J. Tonson, 1728). I have not seen the Pope quarto edition of 1725.

<sup>23</sup> J. Dover Wilson, "The New Way with Shakespeare's Texts II. Recent Work on the Text of *Romeo and Juliet*," *Shakespeare Survey* 8 (1955): 81–99 (95).

<sup>24</sup> Sidney Thomas, "The Queen Mab Speech in 'Romeo and Juliet,'" *Shakespeare Survey* 25 (1972): 73–80 (79).

<sup>25</sup> Compared with a folio in sixes in double columns (as in F1), setting a verse text by formes in a quarto in fours must be considered decidedly uncommon, since setting such a text seriatim would not require a particularly extensive supply of type.

**Figure 3. The unedited text of Q2 arranged as verse**

She is the Fairies midwife, and she comes  
In shape no bigger thē an Agot stone,  
On the forefinger of an Alderman,  
Drawne with a teeme of little ottamie,  
Ouer mens noses as they lie asleep:  
Her waggōfpokes made of lōg fspinners legs:  
The couer, of the wings of Grafhoppers,  
Her traces of the smallest spider web  
Her collors of the moonshines watry beams  
Her whip of Crickets bone, the lash of Philome,  
Her waggoner, a small grey coated Gnat,  
Not half so big as a round little worme,  
Prickt from the lazie finger of a man.  
Her Charriot is an emptie Hafel nut,  
Made by the Ioyner squirrel or old Grub,  
Time out amind, the Fairie, Coatchmakers:  
And in this state shee gallops night by night,  
Through louers brains, and then they dreame of loue.  
On Courtiers knees, that dreame on Curfies strait  
Ore Lawyers fingers who strait dreame on fees,  
Ore Ladies lips who strait one kisses dream,  
Which oft the angrie Mab with blifters plagues ,  
Because their breath with sweete meates tainted are.  
Sometime she gallops ore a Courtiers nose,  
And then dreames he of smelling out a fute:  
And sometimes comes she with a tithpigs tale,  
Tickling a Persons nose as a lies asleepe,  
Then he dreams of an other Benefice.  
Sometimes she driueth ore a souldiers neck,  
And then dreames he of cutting forrain throates.  
Of breaches, ambuscados, spanish blades:  
Of healths five fadome deepe, and then anon  
Drums in his eare , at which he starts and wakes,  
And being thus frighted, sweares a praier or two  
& sleeps againe: this is that very Mab  
That plats the manes of horses in the night :  
And bakes the Elklodes in foule fluttish haire,  
Which once vntangled, much misfortune bodes.  
This is the hag, when maides lie on their backs,  
That presses them and learns them first to beare,  
Making them women of good carriage:  
This is she.



possible conclusion for the switch from prose to verse is that the Queen Mab speech was intended to be set entirely as verse but that the compositor, faced with uncertain copy, initially omitted some twelve or thirteen lines, meaning that those lines had belatedly to be incorporated within the last twenty-six lines of C2r (depending on the length of the page as first set, (a) lines 11–36 or (b) 11–35 plus an available blank line). In itself this observation is not novel: Greg wrote that

It is fairly obvious that when the page was first set up a dozen lines must have been omitted, possibly because they were written in the margin or on a separate slip, and that when the error was discovered an attempt was made to crowd them in after the pages [of the inner forme] had been imposed.<sup>26</sup>

What *is* novel is the proposed identification of the omitted lines.

On the basis of the logical arrangement of the forty-two-line speech, Greg nominated as the omitted lines “Her waggonspokes ... of a man.” [eight lines] and “Sometimes she gallops ... benefice:” [five lines], a total of thirteen.<sup>27</sup> Suffice it to say that the Queen Mab speech was first set as twenty-nine or thirty verse lines (twenty-five or twenty-six on C2r plus four on C2v) and that twelve or thirteen lines (thirty-eight minus twenty-five or twenty-six) were for some reason omitted in the process. Since the white-paper forme (the outer forme) had already been worked off (and, as evidenced by the published state, the printer was not prepared to destroy the run of unperfected sheets), the twelve or thirteen lines of verse had to be somehow incorporated into the twenty-six lines available on C2r. The feat was achieved by setting the omitted lines as prose and by re-arranging as prose the twenty-five or twenty-six lines already set as verse, resulting in a continuous text of twenty-six lines of prose.



The identification of the lines originally omitted in setting depends initially on what can be assumed about the likely attitude of a compositor faced with re-arranging as prose twenty-five or twenty-six lines of verse (already set) and incorporating within them an additional twelve or thirteen verse lines, also to be set as prose. In the knowledge that the text had to be severely compressed, the compositor was likely:

- in the newly set text (i.e. the omitted lines), to have used *consistently* the thinnest of spaces between words, modified only when justifying the lines, and to have employed the *ē* [= “en”] and *ō* [= “on”] contractions,

*rather than*

<sup>26</sup> Greg, *The Shakespeare First Folio*, 233.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* Greg was seeking only twelve lines, not realising that C2r as originally set could have been thirty-five lines long; hence he was led to posit as “conceivable that one line originally set was in the end discarded.”

- in the text already set, to have reduced the spacing between words,<sup>28</sup> and to have reset the few words where his fount of type offered a contraction for a vowel followed by a nasal.

This is not to say that the compositor would not sometimes have adjusted the spacing in text that had already been set—indeed, it would have been necessary to do so in order to justify the prose lines that he was creating; my claim is rather that the adjustments here would have been governed by the needs of justification, not by the needs of compression. On the other hand, he did intervene to reduce (with two exceptions: “Made” and “Of”) capitals that had begun the verse lines.<sup>29</sup> The ampersand (“& sleeps”) in line 33 is anomalous—one might speculate that the compositor substituted it for “And” in reducing a capital and justifying the line.

Given that the evidence of the printed page is sufficient to *identify* the lines in question, a precise explanation for their omission, or for the form that they took in the printer’s copy, is, I venture, unnecessary.

On the basis of spacing and contractions, and taking account of the grammatical/sense unit, I conclude therefore that the eight-plus prose lines comprising the sentence “She is the Fairies midwife ... prickt from the lazie finger of a man.” constitute the text initially omitted. That these eight-plus lines of prose are capable of being re-arranged as thirteen lines of iambic pentameters—the number that the argument predicted—is, I suggest, not a coincidence.



What is the status of those thirteen lines omitted in the original setting?

As far as I have determined, those editors who have considered that behind Q2 were Shakespeare’s foul papers have also accepted that the lines that they identify as having been initially omitted, whichever lines they were, constitute part of the author’s intended final text. However, they have been in general agreement in questioning the compositor’s decisions about where those lines were to be inserted. That is, they recognise that certain textual problems arise as a result of the placement of the insertion(s) and see their task as to re-order the lines so as to provide a coherent sequence.

There can be no question but that the thirteen lines that I have identified as initially omitted were intended to form part of the speech: simple logic requires their presence. The focus is now upon the remaining twenty-nine lines: was everything in the manuscript, no matter how organised, to be set? or (a) were an undetermined number of the lines that were originally set actually marked for deletion in the manuscript, and (b) were the intended opening lines, such was the presumed state of the manuscript, wrongly omitted? In other words, might the perceived mislineation

<sup>28</sup> The lack of a space after commas is a feature of the entire Q2 and so is not significant here.

<sup>29</sup> There can, I think, be no suggestion that the original twenty-five or twenty-six verse lines were distributed and set afresh.

be resolved not by re-arrangement but by the removal of a number of lines? and therefore might the textual problems be, if not eliminated, at least reduced? If the foregoing invitation is accepted, what could the lines be? (Their number cannot be anticipated: it does not need to be thirteen.)

All editors, having accepted the forty-two-line Queen Mab speech *in toto*, are faced with various difficulties, notably what to do about the repetitions and the lines apparently printed out of order, but also how to resolve the other differences between the Q2 and Q1 texts.

The extent of the difficulties that editors are faced with may be illustrated by the notes in the Oxford collected edition.<sup>30</sup> For example: at 1.4.68 Q1's "maid" seems to be intended rather than Q2's "man"; at 1.4.63–65, quoting Duthie, "It is difficult to visualize [Q2's] moonbeams as collars round the necks of tiny coach-horses ..."; at 1.4.78 conjecturing "lip" in place of Q2's "nose" and Q1's "lap" on the basis that "'Lap' is unlikely to be right, as it destroys the connection between the part of the body and the dream sensation ('smelling') ... ." And so on. But there is no need on my part to attempt to resolve these difficulties—"The literary side of editing a bibliographer must leave to his betters."<sup>31</sup>

At this point Q1 needs to be assessed, in the event that, independently of literary judgments, it will provide evidence about the form of the Queen Mab speech intended by the manuscript serving as printer's copy for Q2.

Editors who have accepted that Q1 is a reconstruction at least allow that, whatever the precise origin of that reconstruction, on the whole its text is likely to represent what was spoken on stage and therefore may incorporate authorial readings of later date than those in the foul papers. On this basis editors have freely accepted into an edited text of *RJ* readings from Q1 where Q2 has appeared in need of emendation. On the same basis I suggest that the content of the Queen Mab speech in Q1 has authorial warrant (however derived) and therefore offers a guide to the intended text—that is, that lines in Q2 without an equivalent in Q1 constitute lines that Shakespeare had intended should be deleted but that, as a result of uncertainties in the printer's copy, were initially set. Thus difficulties arising both from repetition and from mislineation could be overcome by simply omitting in each instance, as having initially been set by mistake, one from each of the pairs of lines involved.

Unlike the identification of the lines omitted from the original setting, the argument in favour of superseded lines, though attractive, is incapable of demonstration; I suggest, however, that it is a theory much less fanciful than many others that have been advanced to account for the peculiarities of Q2 Queen Mab.



<sup>30</sup> Wells and Taylor, *Textual Companion*, 292–93.

<sup>31</sup> Alfred W. Pollard, *Shakespeare's Fight with the Pirates and the Problems of the Transmission of his Text*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920), 95.

To summarise:

Bibliographical analysis has identified, with what seems to me a good deal of certainty, the thirteen lines that were omitted in the initial setting of the Queen Mab speech in Q2. It should follow, therefore, that the attempt to identify on *literary* grounds twelve or thirteen lines in the speech as those omitted is unnecessary. The status of the remaining twenty-nine or thirty lines making up the total of forty-two printed in Q2 is uncertain. As far as I have determined, it has been customary to accept all forty-two into edited texts, whether printing the first thirty-eight as prose (as in Q2 and editions dependent on it, as well as in Rowe) or as verse (from Pope onwards). However, given the undoubted uncertainty of the manuscript serving as printer's copy for Q2, I suggest that the modern editor should be allowed an even greater freedom to emend than has hitherto been the case. Recent studies have concluded that there is a closer relationship between Q1 and Q2 than has traditionally been recognised, even if there is no consensus on the precise nature of that relationship. If Q1 and Q2 are both accepted as substantially Shakespearian, the text of the Queen Mab speech as it appears in Q1 is significant, in at least showing which lines were probably spoken on stage. My suggested approach is that the Q1 text of the speech be taken as a guide to the content of an edited text. That is, the lines in Q2 that have no corresponding lines in Q1 should be earmarked for deletion, on the basis that they were to have been deleted in the foul papers but that the author's intention was unclear, to the point that the opening thirteen lines, which are essential to the structure of the speech, were omitted and that a number of lines intended for deletion were mistakenly set. Accordingly I propose the following as the "raw" text (typographically modernised) reproduced *in the wording of Q2*, on the assumption that Q2 is likely to represent the base text chosen for any future edition:

She is the Fairies midwife, and she comes  
 In shape no bigger then an Agot stone,  
 On the forefinger of an Alderman,  
 Drawne with a teeme of little ottamie,  
 Ouer mens noses as they lie asleep:  
 Her wagon spokes made of long spinners legs:  
 The couer, of the wings of Grashoppers,  
 Her traces of the smallest spider web  
 Her collors of the moonshines watry beams  
 Her whip of Crickets bone, the lash of Philome,  
 Her waggoner, a small grey coated Gnat,  
 Not half so big as a round litle worme,  
 Prickt from the lazie finger of a man.  
 Sometime she gallops ore a Courtiers nose,  
 And then dreames he of smelling out a sute:  
 And sometimes comes she with a tithpigs tale,  
 Tickling a Persons nose as a lies asleepe,

Then he dreams of an other Benefice.  
 Sometimes she driueth ore a souldiers neck,  
 And then dreames he of cutting forrain throates.  
 Of breaches, ambuscados, spanish blades:  
 Of healths fiue fadome deepe, and then anon  
 Drums in his eare , at which he starts and wakes,  
 And being thus frighted, swears a praier or two  
 And sleeps againe: this is that very Mab  
 That plats the manes of horses in the night:  
 And bakes the Elkllocks in foule sluttish haire,  
 Which once vntangled, much misfortune bodes.  
 This is the hag, when maides lie on their backs,  
 That presses them and learns them first to beare,  
 Making them women of good carriage:  
 This is she.

I describe the text as “raw” because there are significant differences in wording and phrasing that need to be resolved, such as Q1 “Burgomaster” / Q2 “Alderman,” Q1 “Sometime she gallops ore a Lawers lap” / Q2 “Sometime she gallops ore a Courtiers nose.” And so on. My inclination would be to accept the text as just proposed but to emend it in the light of Q1 (e.g. “Elfelocks” for “Elkllocks”) where Q2 seems defective. I would even venture that, despite the fact that *RJ* Q2 is much the longer, it is worth considering a case for taking Q1 as the base text (and even as *RJ*, the “work” to be edited), on the grounds that it may/does represent the final form that the play was to take on stage, having been transformed from author’s rough draft (the manuscript behind Q2) to actable version. Such a course would clearly involve discarding many familiar and attractive received lines (*particularly* in *Queen Mab*), and editors are generally reluctant to omit authorial text, even if the author regarded it as superseded; nonetheless the case could be made.

Further I do not propose to go—to invoke Pollard again, “This is as far as bibliography can take us. The literary critics must be allowed their rights.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Pollard, *Shakespeare’s Fight with the Pirates*, 104.