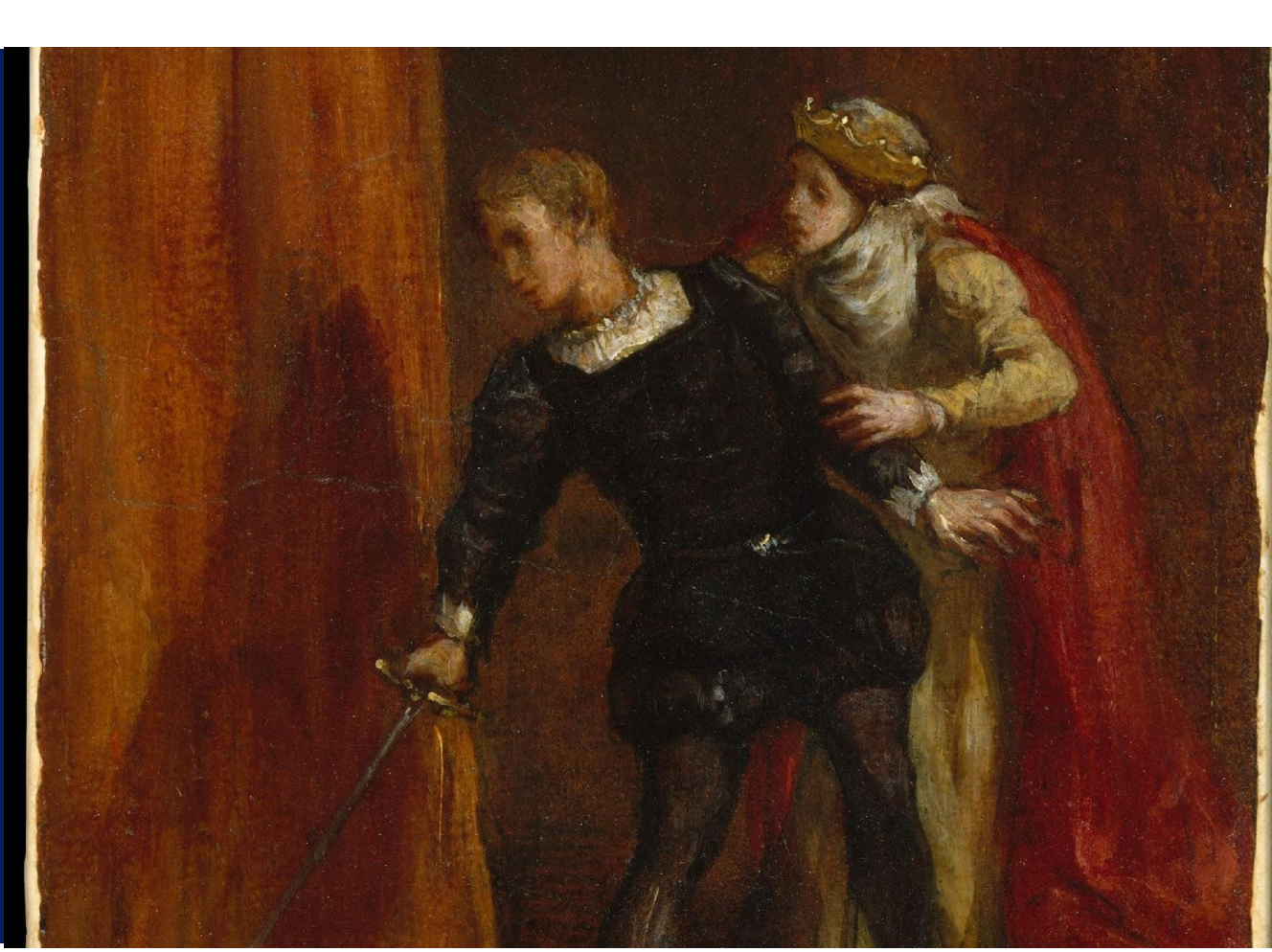




University of Victoria



# VARIATIONS ON A QUEEN

## ENCODING SPEECH PREFIXES IN 1604/1605 HAMLET

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### SPEAKER TAGS IN HAMLET

When transcribing the second quarto of *Hamlet* (1604/5) for LEMDO, I observed a **striking variation in the Queen's speech prefixes**. She is *Quee.*, *Queene*, and *Ger*. While speaker names in early modern drama are inconsistently spelled and abbreviated, variability between role and name is less common. Only Gertrude has **both a name and a role**. Other characters in Q2 have either a name or a role, and in the 1603 Q1, Gertrude is simply "Queen" (see **Charts One and Two** to the right).

**Figure One:**  
Sample speech prefix of *Quee.* in *Hamlet* Q2.

**Figure Two:**  
Sample of speech prefix *Ger.* in *Hamlet* Q2.

Why are these variations present? Do they reflect **intention** (i.e., authorial or scribal), or did they arise from the **process of typographical composition**? Are researchers interested in this feature of playbooks? If yes, how can these variations be **encoded effectively** to facilitate their research questions?

### EARLY MODERN PRINTED BOOKS AND SPEECH PREFIXES

Other characters in Shakespeare plays with interesting variations in prefixes include but are not limited to:

- *Romeo and Juliet*, **Lady Capulet** (Bowers):
  - She is called *Wife.*, *Old La.*, *Capu. Wi.*, *La.* and *Mo.* in Q2
- *All's Well That Ends Well*, **Bertram and the Countess** (Bowers):
  - Bertram is called *Ros.*, *Ber.* and *Ro.*; the Countess is called *Mother.*, *Mo.*, *Coun.*, *Cou.*, *Old. Cou.*, *Ol. Cou.*, *Old. Lady.*, *Lad.*, *La* and *Count* in F
- *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, **Bottom** (Drakakis):
  - He is called *Bot.*, *Bottome.*, *Bottom.*, *Pir.*, *Clow.*, *Clowne.*, *Clo.*, *Clown.*, *Pyra.*, *Pyr* in F
- *Merchant of Venice*, **Shylock** (Drakakis 107):
  - Shylock is called *Shy.*, *Shylocke.*, *Jew.*, *Jew.*, *Shyl.*, *Je.*, *Ie.*, *Iewe.* and *Jewe.* in Q1

A significant article written by R. B. McKerrow in 1935 (Wilder) suggests that the variability of speech prefixes could derive from the **function of each character** in various scenes, or that various scenes were **written at different times** (Bowers 66-67). A quarto with highly variable speech prefixes could derive from **"foul papers" - an autograph manuscript written by Shakespeare**, according to Fredson Bowers. If a quarto originated in foul papers, we might be able to see authorial logic in the differing speech prefixes (Bowers). Lina Perkins Wilder critiques how **modern editors rarely indicate that they have normalised speech prefixes**, either giving a generic statement or none. A statement could indicate where and for whom speech prefixes have been normalised (Wilder).

Chart One: Number of Each Prefix in Hamlet Q2

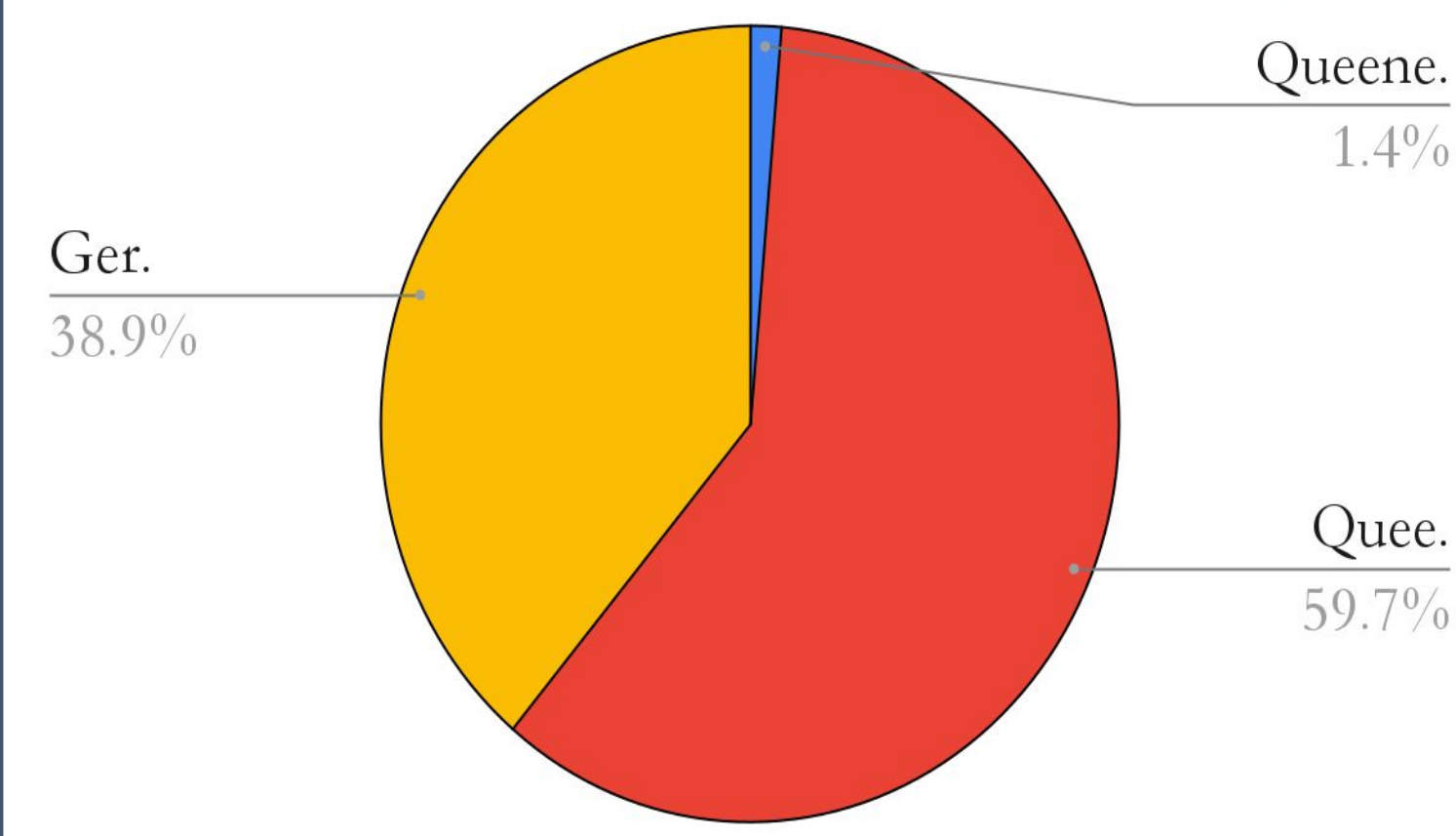
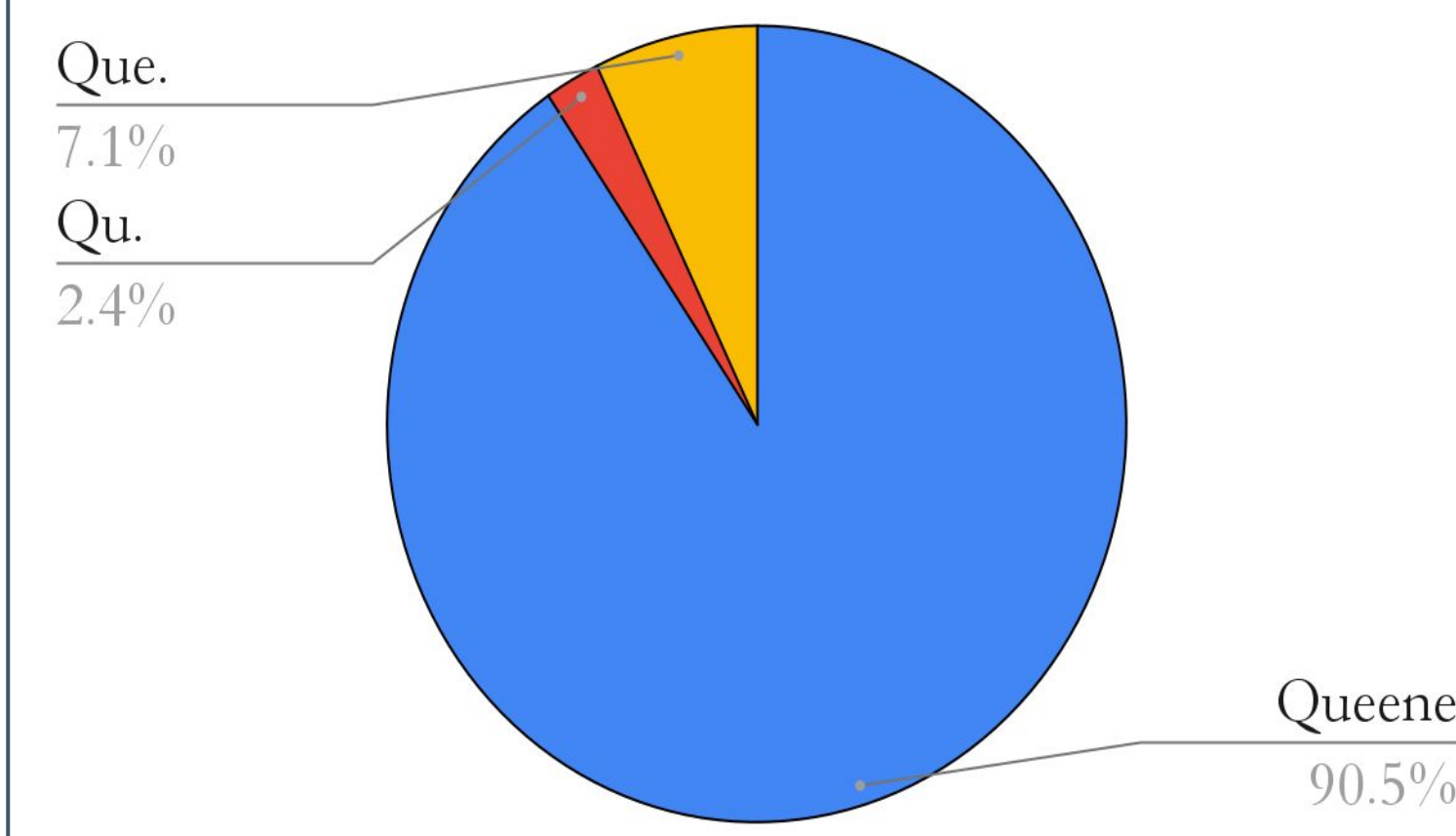


Chart Two: Number of Each Prefix in Hamlet Q1



### POTENTIAL RESEARCH USING SPEECH PREFIXES

Variations in speech prefixes has helped in facilitating the following research:

- Textual critics can evaluate the variable speech prefixes to determine if they are **substantive or accidental** (Wilder).
- Literary critics can analyse whether certain variations have **cultural value** (ex. Jew/Shylock may be a fluctuation between a stereotype and character) or **psycho-social value** (ex. "Bottom's appealing 'character' ... is both threatened and constituted by its embeddedness in social and dramatic relationships" [Drakakis 106-112]).
- Bibliographer can determine the **"origin" of a text** – or speculate on the agents (author, playhouse, scribe, compositor) that left this variability behind (Drakakis 106-107).

### APPLICATIONS IN XML

Marking up a file using XML is valuable because metadata can be added to parts of the text to **enrich the research process**. The act of marking up a text makes the text computer readable and human readable. Scholars can **manipulate a computer-readable text** to better answer their research questions.

```
<lb/>
<sp>
<speaker>Quee.</speaker>
<ab>I doubt it is no other but the maine

      <lb/>His fathers death, and our hastie marriage.</ab>
</sp>
```

**Figure Three:**  
Sample XML from Q2 *Hamlet*.

Speeches and speech prefixes are marked up with the elements `<sp>` and `<speaker>` respectively in LEMDO.

### WORKS CITED

Bowers, Fredson. "Foul Papers, Compositor B, and the Speech-Prefixes of 'All's Well That Ends Well.'" *Studies in Bibliography*, vol. 32, 1979, pp. 60–81.

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"Hamlet and His Mother" by Eugène Delacroix is marked with CC0 1.0. To view the terms, visit <https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/?ref=openverse>. (image to the left of title)

"Screenshot of Ger Speech Prefix in Hamlet Q2." *British Library*, <https://www.bl.uk/treasures/SigDiscovery/ui/record.aspx?Source=text&LHCopy=1&LHPage=58&RHCopy=1&RHPage=59>. Accessed 23 Aug. 2022. (Fig. 1)

"Screenshot of Quee Speech Prefix in Hamlet Q2." *British Library*, <https://www.bl.uk/treasures/SigDiscovery/ui/record.aspx?Source=text&LHCopy=1&LHPage=30&RHCopy=1&RHPage=31>. Accessed 23 Aug. 2022. (Fig. 2)

"Screenshot of Sample XML Speaker Tag." Accessed 23 Aug. 2022. (Fig. 3)

Stern, Tiffany. "Letters, Verses and Double Speech-prefixes in 'The Merchant of Venice.'" *Notes and Queries*, vol. 46, no. 2, June 1999, pp. 231–233. <https://doi.org/10.1093/nq/46.2.231>.

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### ASSESSING LEMDO'S PRACTICE

- LEMDO's goal is to **encode old-spelling texts truthfully**.
  - LEMDO removed pre-existing `@norm` attributes in the previous ISE Markup Language on `<speaker>` because those attributes reflected premature critical decisions that ought to be left to modern editors and editions.
- Currently, there is **no efficient way to filter speech prefixes** by character. If there were, users could create a character scroll to view character's speeches. Additionally, there is **no reference to the old-spelling speech prefixes from modernised editions**, something Wilder suggests.
  - A feature should be added to acknowledge old-spelling prefixes, and one to help filter speech prefixes.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEMDO

I recommend that LEMDO implements one of the following practices to capture the unique variations in speech prefixes that may prove useful to researchers:

- Create an interface like the **Outline** function in Oxygen (application to edit XML) to filter the text data by element – in this case, `<speaker>` elements to find speech prefixes.
  - Enables searches for other elements.
  - Requires some knowledge of XML.
- Since all speeches have a unique `xml:id`, use **@corresp attributes or <pointer> elements** to link modernised versions of the play to old-spelling so that users can see the original speech prefixes.
  - Allows for linking between a modernised text and the old-spelling text on which it is based.
  - Assumes that the modernised text did not conflate copytexts (e.g., quarto and folio).
- Bring back the **@norm or @who attributes** to filter speeches by speaker, including a disclaimer explaining the old-spelling texts imports a decision made by modern editors.
  - Allows for generation of cue scripts.
  - Goes against LEMDO's policy of truthful encoding in this feature.

LINKED EARLY MODERN DRAMA ONLINE

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