

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-87025-2 - Hamlet without Hamlet
Margreta de Grazia
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

HAMLET WITHOUT HAMLET

“Hamlet” without Hamlet sets out to counter the modern tradition of abstracting the character Hamlet from the play. For over two centuries, Hamlet has been valued as the icon of consciousness, but only by ignoring the hard fact of his dispossession. By admitting that premise, this book brings the play to life around man’s relation to land, from graves to estate to empire. Key preoccupations are thereby released, including the gendered imperatives of genealogy, the rhythms of world history, and man’s elemental affinity to dust. As de Grazia demonstrates from the 400 years of Hamlet’s afterlife, such features have disappeared into the vortex of an interiorized Hamlet, but they remain in the language of the play as well as in the earliest accounts of its production. Once they are reactivated, a very different Hamlet emerges, one whose thoughts and desires are thickly embedded in the worldly, and otherworldly, matters of the play: a Hamlet within *Hamlet*.

MARGRETA DE GRAZIA is Joseph B. Glossberg Term Professor in the Humanities, Department of English, University of Pennsylvania. She is co-editor, with Stanley Wells, of *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare* (2002); co-editor, with Maureen Quilligan and Peter Sallysbrass, of *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture* (1996); and author of *Shakespeare Verbatim: The Reproduction of Authenticity and the 1790 Apparatus* (1991). Her work has appeared in many books and journals including *Shakespeare Survey*, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, *Modern Language Quarterly*, and *Textual Practice*.

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-87025-2 - Hamlet without Hamlet
Margreta de Grazia
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

HAMLET WITHOUT
HAMLET

MARGRETA DE GRAZIA



Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-87025-2 - Hamlet without Hamlet
Margreta de Grazia
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521690362

© Margreta de Grazia 2006

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without
the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2006

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN-13 978-0-521-87025-2 hardback

ISBN-10 0-521-87025-9 hardback

ISBN-13 978-0-521-69036-2 paperback

ISBN-10 0-521-69036-6 paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for
external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee
that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-87025-2 - Hamlet without Hamlet
Margreta de Grazia
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

For Colin Thubron

Contents

<i>List of illustrations</i>	page viii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	x
<i>Note on text used</i>	xii
Introduction	I
1 Modern Hamlet	7
2 “Old mole”: the modern <i>telos</i> and the return to dust	23
3 Empires of world history	45
4 Generation and degeneracy	81
5 Doomsday and domain	129
6 Hamlet’s delay	158
<i>Notes</i>	205
<i>Selected bibliography</i>	244
<i>Index</i>	259

Illustrations

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 1 <i>The Four Great Kingdoms as prophesied by Daniel</i> : Ninus (Babylon), Cyrus (Persia), Alexander (Greece), Julius Caesar (Rome). A series of plates by Marten de Vos engraved by Adriaen Collaert (1600). By permission of the British Museum, London. | page 46 |
| 2 A Catalogue, <i>Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies</i> (London, 1623). | 53 |
| 3 <i>The Four Rules of British History</i> , Frontispiece to Michael Drayton, <i>Poly-Olbion</i> (1612). By permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA. | 58 |
| 4 Heraldry: (a) <i>gore</i> , (b) <i>goutty gules</i> , (c) <i>carbuncles</i> , from John Guillim, <i>A Display of Heraldrie</i> (London, 1611). | 95 |
| 5 <i>Noah derided by Ham</i> , in Gyles Godet, <i>A Briefe Abstract of the Genealogy of All the Kinges of England</i> (1562), fol. 2v. By permission of the British Library, London. | 99 |
| 6 <i>Nude Woman with Gestating Child</i> , in Adrianus Spigelius, <i>De Formato Foetu</i> (1626), fol. 35, Tab. III. By permission of the British Library, London. | 110 |
| 7 Laertes' <i>sententiae</i> , <i>The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet</i> (London, 1603), C2v. | 111 |
| 8 Polonius' <i>sententiae</i> , <i>The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet</i> (1604/5), C3v. | 112 |
| 9 Marginal flowers in Ben Jonson's copy of George Puttenham, <i>The Arte of English Poesie</i> (1589), p. 4. | 117 |

	List of illustrations	ix
10	<i>Genealogical Tree Festooned with Flowers and Arms</i> , in John Leslie, <i>De origine, moribus & rebus gestis Scotorum libri decem</i> (1578). By permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.	120
11	<i>Pedigree Roll of the Heveningham Family</i> (1597), MS Muniment Room 13/7, College of Arms, London. By permission of the College of Arms, London.	121
12	" <i>There's rue for you</i> ": <i>Mrs. Lessingham in the Character of Ophelia</i> (1772). Burney v, no. 250. By permission of the British Museum, London.	122
13	<i>Flora Inseminated by Zephyrus</i> , in Vincenzo Cartari, <i>Imagini de i dei de gli antichi</i> (1571). By permission of the Folger Library, Washington, DC.	123
14	<i>A Young Daughter of the Picts</i> , Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues (1585–8). By permission of the Beinecke Library, New Haven, CT.	124
15	<i>Ophelia</i> , Sir John Everett Millais (1851–2). By permission of the Tate Gallery, London.	128
16	<i>Robert Scarlett</i> (1747, based on painting of 1665), Peterborough Cathedral. By permission of Peterborough Cathedral, Peterborough.	134
17	Marginal pointing finger, in <i>The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet</i> , fols. F2r, F2v.	179
18	<i>Doomsday Devils</i> , in Thomas Fisher, <i>A Series of Ancient Allegorical, Historical, and Legendary Paintings . . . on the Walls of the Chapel of the Trinity, at Stratford upon Avon</i> (1807). By permission of the British Library, London.	190
19	Hamlet's "dying voice," <i>The Tragedie of Hamlet</i> , in <i>Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies</i> (London, 1623).	204

Acknowledgments

If writing were not for me such a hard act of self-absorption, this book would have come out better, and earlier. I hold Hamlet in part responsible. I mean the modern metaphysical Hamlet, the Hamlet this study would do without: the Wittgensteinian fly in the fly-bottle, endlessly spinning its cogitative wheels against the glass.

There are three friends who know the problem: Howard Zeiderman who always stood ready to help with muddles; Peter Stallybrass whose instruction to “Just print it out” still rings in my ears; and Colin Thubron who assured me again and again that there really was nothing left to be understood.

But a number of others also deserve thanks: John Parker who was the manuscript’s first and aptest reader; Maureen Quilligan who has a gift for imbuing the work of others with her own brilliance; and the many who entertained in print or conversation some part of the book: Crystal Bartolovich, Rita Copeland, Joe de Grazia, Andrew Gurr, Juliet Fleming, Jay Grossman, Peter Holland, Rayna Kalas, David Kastan, Suvir Kaul, Sean Keilen, Paulina Kewes, Carla Mazzio, Jeff Masten, Gordon Mcmillan, Stephen Orgel, Patricia Parker, Tyler Smith, Jack Spivack, Gary Tomlinson, David Wallace, and Valerie Wayne.

If it weren’t for her inimitable stylistic sparkle, Emma Smith’s comments would have remained anonymous, as must those of the Cambridge readers, to whom I am also grateful. I wish also to thank Andrew McNellie for early encouragement of the book and Sarah Stanton for wafting it through its final stages. My copy-editor, Caroline Howlett, must also be singled out, for her exacting and gracious attention.

Special thanks are due to Georgiana Zeigler of the Folger Library in Washington, DC; Dan Traister, Michael Ryan, and John Pollack of the Van Pelt Library at the University of Pennsylvania; and Robert Yorke of the College of Arms. Stephanie Elsky, Cathy Nicholson, and Brian Kirk were invaluable in pulling together innumerable loose ends in the preparation of the manuscript.

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-87025-2 - Hamlet without Hamlet
Margreta de Grazia
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Acknowledgments

xi

The John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation gave me the year in which to lay down the foundation for this book, and the Rockefeller Foundation highlighted that year with a residence at the Bellagio Study and Conference Center.

Austin Zeiderman and Page Bertelsen are in a category all their own.

Versions of Chapters 1 and 2 have appeared in *Modern Language Quarterly*, *Textual Practice*, and *Shakespeare Quarterly*, and parts of Chapters 5 and 6 were published in collections published by Oxford University Press and Routledge. I am grateful to the editors of these publications for permission to reprint these materials here.

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-87025-2 - Hamlet without Hamlet
Margreta de Grazia
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Note on text used

Except when otherwise indicated, I have quoted from a modern edition: that is, a composite of the two substantive early texts of *Hamlet* (the 1604/5 Quarto and the 1623 Folio), in modernized spelling and punctuation, within an editorial frame consisting of an introduction, stemma, notes, and appendices. I have chosen Harold Jenkins' compendious Arden *Hamlet* published in 1982.

It might be expected that a book purporting to counter the modern tradition would avoid editorial mediation altogether and return to the two substantive early texts. Quoting from the early Quarto or Folio would have had the distinct advantage of defamiliarizing what is, to be sure, the most familiar play in the language. But what then would prevent us from applying to the unedited text the same old interpretative procedures encouraged by the edited? This project would heighten rather than avoid the familiar by drawing attention to the editorial and critical maneuvers that have made *Hamlet* the supreme modern presence he continues to be. For this purpose, it is not the text stripped-bare that is required, but rather the edition most saturated with the modern critical tradition.

Though quotations are taken from the 1982 Arden, I frequently draw on the facsimile reproductions of the 1604/5 Quarto (Q₂) from the Huntington Library and the 1623 Folio (F) from the Folger Library, as well as the truncated 1603 Quarto (Q₁) from the British Library. I take the liberty of interspersing variants from these early texts whenever they open up possibilities limited or foreclosed by the modern edition. Such eclecticism, I would argue, is warranted by their relationship: although separate, they are by no means discrete, much less mutually exclusive. Furthermore the vagaries of textual production as well as of lexical and grammatical usage allow for considerable convertibility among their particulars.