

Hamlet. Changing of the Guard

Lev I. Verkhovsky

levver@list.ru

ABSTRACT

The interpretation of Shakespeare's tragedy based on the assumption of the authorship of Francis Bacon and the 5th Earl of Rutland is proposed. Anagrams encoding the names of authors are discussed.

Anyone who thinks that the Elizabethans did something by accident, without any special intention, simply does not know that era.

Alfred Leslie Rowse (1903 – 1997), a British historian and author, best known for his work on Elizabethan England.

The famous tragedy of Shakespeare, despite the mountains of books and articles devoted to it, continues to be a mysterious work. As Thomas Eliot said, «*Hamlet* is the Mona Lisa in literature». It is becoming increasingly obvious that in order to truly penetrate into this, and other creations of the great Bard, it is finally necessary to solve the problem of authorship -- to find out who was hiding behind the pseudonym "Shakespeare".

The time of Stratfordians who believe in the authorship of the actor and loan shark from Stratford-upon-Avon William Shaksper (that was his last name), apparently, is coming to an end: there are too many questions that they are not able to answer. Francis Bacon also called for the eradication of "idols of the theater", referring to erroneous opinions established by tradition. And now the struggle between supporters of other possible candidates comes to the fore. The Oxfordians, who consider Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, to be the author, are not going to give up their positions (by the way, the film "Anonymous" directed by R. Emmerich, was based on this version).

We consider another old concept developed in recent decades by two Russian researchers to be the most convincing. First, I.M. Gililov in his acclaimed book [1] convincingly showed the central role of Roger Manners, the fifth Earl of Rutland (1576--1612). Then M.D. Litvinova [2] put forward and justified the view that there were two people behind "Shakespeare" -- Rutland and his tutor Francis Bacon (1561--1626), that is, a poet and a thinker. At the same time, the possibility of some kind of participation of other persons was not excluded.

The creation of *Hamlet* Litvinova presented in general terms as follows: first, Bacon prepared a certain text and at the end of 1601 sent it to Roger Manners Earl Rutland, who was still serving his sentence -- he was in exile for participating in the rebellion raised by the Earl of Essex. A slightly reworked by Roger version was printed in 1603, in the so-called "bad" (short) First quarto. And the following year another edition was published -- the Second uarto, which not only almost doubled in volume, but also gave a new interpretation to the persons and events. It already fully reflected the poetic and thoughtful contribution of Rutland (in particular, after his trip to Denmark, many Danish realities appeared).

We will try to present new arguments in favor of the authorship of Bacon and Rutland, as well as make some guesses. It is possible that the keys to many secrets of the tragedy are hidden in its very first scene. Let's turn to her.

Chapter 1. Not according to the charter

In the era of Queen Elizabeth I, writers loved to play with names and surnames, to use words in two or even several meanings at once, to pun. In addition, they often included hidden information in the initial phrases of the works, for example, the author's surname, encrypted in the form of an anagram. Isn't there something like that here?

The performance begins with the changing of sentries guarding Elsinore Castle. It would seem that it only leads to the topic of the Ghost and there is nothing particularly significant in it. But is it so? Let's take a look at the two very first lines (in the Second quarto) – the beginning of the drama:

Enter Bernardo, and Francisco, two Sentinels.

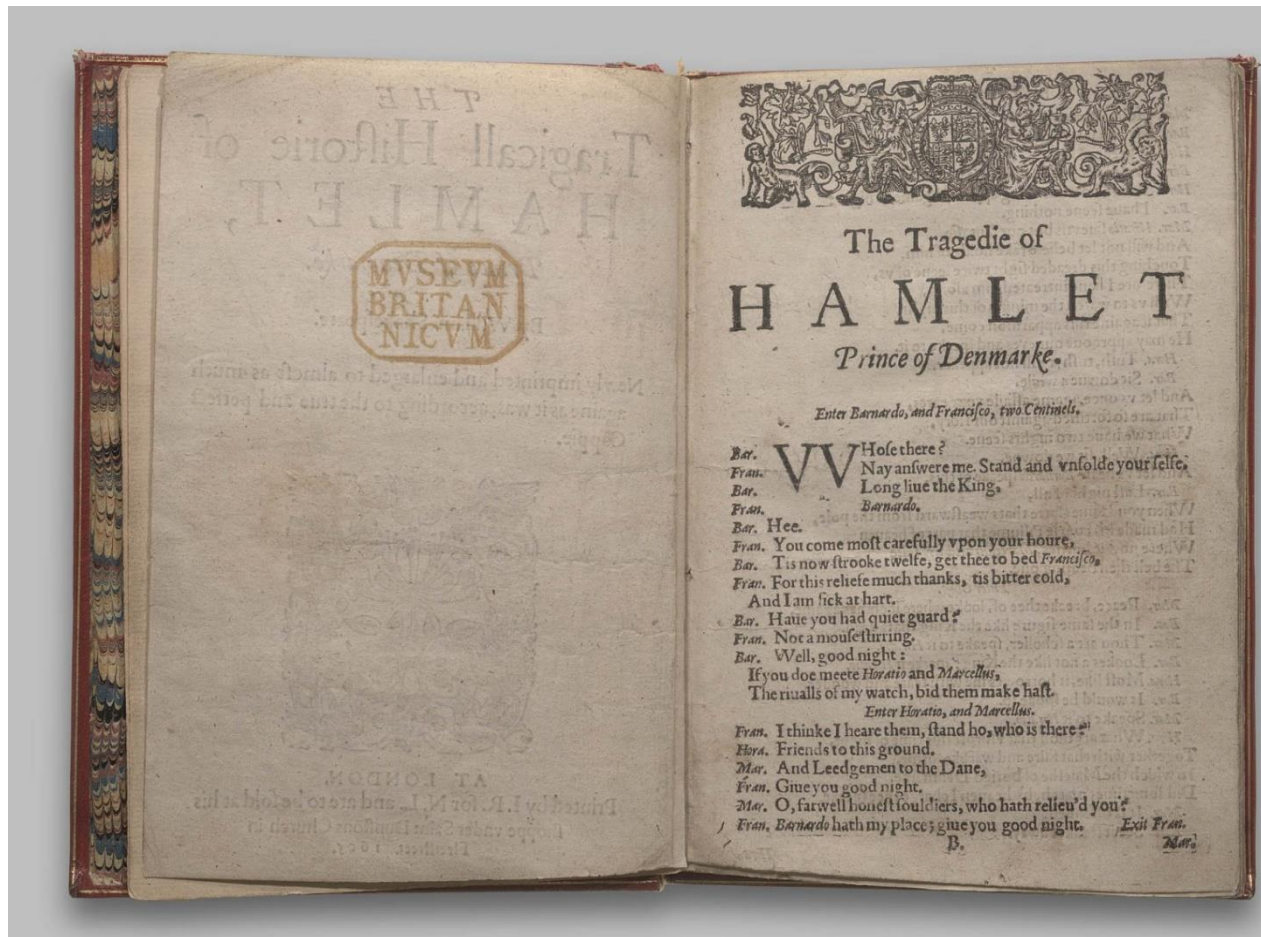
BERNARDO..... Who's there?

FRANCISCO..... Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself.

As you know, the sentry standing at the post (and, as can be seen from the following, it was Francisco) should call out to the person approaching him: "Stop! Who's coming?" and, having received a conditional answer (password), let him come to you. But here, for some reason, the opposite is true: the replacement (Bernardo) is the first to ask "Who is there?", and therefore Francisco is forced to object: "No, you answer it." Did Shakespeare not know the rules of the guard service? Of course, he knew perfectly well, and to make sure of this, it is enough to note that in the "bad" quarto everything was according to the charter: the sentry on duty was the first to call out to the approaching man.

Why was the order broken in the next edition? Obviously, in the aim to attract the reader's attention to these remarks, to encourage him to look for hidden meaning in them. Shakespeare often used a similar technique, that is, a deliberate semantic or stylistic failure. Some such places have been known for a long time, each of them requires careful analysis.

What kind of surprise did the author prepare in the opening lines? If we turn to the original quarto of 1604 (there is a facsimile of it on the Internet), and not to the modern, "improved" editions of *Hamlet*, we will see that Bernardo is actually Barnardo, and the names of the character in the replicas are given abbreviated: Fran., Bar., Hora., Mar.



If we write them in full, it is striking that the names of the two sentries contain the name and surname of Francis Bacon. Really:

BA+R+N+ARDO + FRANCIS+CO --> FRANCIS BA+CO+N.

(My classmate, poet and novelist Mikhail Gorevich noticed that from all the remaining letters, the word **ARDOR** is immediately obtained – fervor. Perhaps this, too, was conceived by Shakespeare as an expression of the main idea of *Hamlet* -- the tragedy of hotness.)

It remains to consider the uttered phrases. In the remark "Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself", as it is easy to check, MANNERS RUTLAND is contained in the form of an anagram (of course, the anagram is incomplete). That is, the answer to the question "Who is there?" sounds pointing to the Earl of Rutland! That's what "unfold yourself" meant.

So, the beginning of *Hamlet* is "loaded" with the most important information - the authors of the play are indicated in it in encoded form. The ones Litvinova was talking about.

Chapter 2. Was Horatio joking?

Are there any other oddities in the opening scene? Yes. After Barnardo took up his post, Marcellus and Horatio approached him (they decided to join the sentry in the hope of seeing a Ghost that had supposedly appeared on the previous nights). Here are their lines:

MARCELLUS		Holla, Barnardo.
BARNARDO	22	Say, what is Horatio there?
HORATIO		A piece of him.
BARNARDO		Welcome Horatio, welcome good Marcellus.
HORATIO	25	What, has this thing appear`d again tonight?
.....		

Line 22 is usually said, as if Barnardo doesn't see Horatio. To which Horatio's answer follows: "*A piece of him*". These words of Horatio caused great perplexity, different interpretations of them were offered. The point of view that here is a comic turn won, although Horatio did not seem to have any other attempts to joke, this is not in his nature at all. But the word "piece" has many meanings, and one of the most obvious, but not noticed because of the pressure of tradition... - a play!

It is important that after "what" (*what is Horatio there?*) there is no comma, but it is in a similar phrase just below -- in the question about the Ghost (line 25):

"What, has this thing appear'd again tonight?" So, line 22 actually sounds like this: "Who is Horatio?" (and not "is Horatio here?"). And we get an unexpected answer to it: "His play." Horatio is the author of *Hamlet*!

Many people paid attention to Horatio's special position in the play. So, according to G.N. Shelogurova and I.V. Peshkov, this character plays a role similar to that assigned to the choir in the ancient drama (he symbolized the society in which the action unfolded). The idea that the author is represented in the image of a fellow student of the prince has also been expressed more than once. For example, A.N. Barkov defended it within the framework of the theory that *Hamlet* is constructed as a menippea (when the role of the narrator is given to a negative character who, in order to whitewash himself, distorts genuine events and facts). N. Grantseva noticed that almost every work of Shakespeare has a hero who is both the author and a participant in the depicted events, and that in *Hamlet* it is Horatio.

But if Horatio is the author, then we still need to find out which of the two is Bacon or Rutland? At the end of the play, Horatio confessed that he was more Roman than Danish. And according to his beliefs, he seems to be a stoic, Hamlet told him: "After all, you endured suffering... Not a slave to passions..." On the other hand, the motto of the Bacon family included in their coat of arms -- "Mediocria firma" ("The middle is stable") -- directly goes back to the aphorism of the ancient Roman stoic philosopher Seneca: "The most durable place is the middle." The very name "Horatio" refers to the ancient Roman poet Horace, whose life principle was the "golden mean". At the age of 45, Horace decided to quit poetry classes, and Bacon, too, in the late 90s, intended to do away with fine literature.

Chapter 3. Friend or foe?

It is generally believed that Horatio was not only an old acquaintance, but also the closest friend of the prince. This is evident from the words of Hamlet himself addressed to him:

*Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice
And could of men distinguish, her election
Hath seal'd thee for herself;*

However, according to some authors (A.N. Barkov, A. Chernov, B. Akunin), the modest-looking Horatio is an intriguer, a careerist and even a foreign agent, a secret enemy of Hamlet. There are probably some grounds for such conclusions.

We assumed that the prototype of Horatio is Bacon. And who is the prototype of Hamlet? It is logical to assume that he embodies the features of two young aristocrats -- the Earls of Essex and of Rutland. As Boris L. Pasternak said, he was shocked by the coincidence of the structure of thinking in Hamlet's monologues and in Essex's letters. And then the relationship between the prince and his friend to some extent reproduces those that Bacon and the two counts actually had.

There were many things that separated them -- and different social status, and political views. The philosopher put the welfare of the state above all else, for the sake of which personal ambitions should retreat. And at court, several parties were scheming, more concerned with their own interests. At the center of the disagreement was the question of the future of England, which remained vague: the aging queen had no direct heirs. Should they nominate a nobleman from among themselves as a successor or invite a monarch from the outside?

These contradictions began to play an increasingly important role as the conflict between queen Elizabeth and her favorite Earl Essex escalated. The not rich Bacon was in the service of the count, who was his patron. And when Bacon felt that the noble, but irascible Essex could commit a rash act, he wrote to him in the summer of 1600: "...there are things in the world that I love more than you: serving the queen, her peace and contentment, her honor, her favor, the good of my country..."

According to the well-known teaching of the Italian thinker N. Machiavelli of that time, disregard for morality and law is in the very nature of monarchical power; this evil must be reconciled, because an active struggle against the injustice of people with humanistic beliefs will lead to even worse consequences. Being a

supporter of absolutism, Bacon seems to have shared this view. He considered the greatest evil to be the turmoil and therefore did not approve of the ardor of the young aristocrats (the same ardor mentioned above).

Horatio also kept his cool and thought more about the fate of Denmark. Here are the words of the prince about him:

...and blest are those

Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled.

Because of what the paths of Hamlet and his friend diverged. So, Horatio's parallel with Bacon sheds new light on the plot twists and turns.

Conclusion

In February 1601, Bacon's worst fear came true: Earl of Essex raised a rebellion, which was immediately suppressed. Rutland also participated in it, since the brilliant Essex was his idol, an older friend and relative (his wife's stepfather). The court, at which the lawyer Bacon was made one of the main accusers, sentenced Essex and four other conspirators to death, Rutland to exile and a large fine. Bacon also suffered morally: a dark shadow fell on his reputation.

As we can see, these events hit Bacon and Rutland hard, and it is not surprising that they had the most direct impact on their, that is, Shakespeare's, work in subsequent years. Gililov wrote: "In *Hamlet*, the great playwright appears to us tragically reborn in the font of suffering. There is no doubt that this fracture is connected with the Essex crash." Bacon, who had sent his benefactor to the scaffold, was haunted by the desire to justify himself, and Rutland was trying to comprehend the catastrophe that had befallen them. The pessimistic mood of the authors at that time was reflected in the story about the Prince of Denmark, who wanted to eradicate evil in a rotten kingdom. Let us recall his words:

The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,

That ever I was born to set it right!

However, the high mission ended in complete failure: his actions caused chaos, the death of the entire ruling dynasty, as well as innocent, random people; a foreign ruler sat on the throne. In general, Machiavelli was right... As Joseph Brodsky noted in his Nobel Lecture, "In a real tragedy, it is not the hero who dies - - the choir dies," that is, the country collapses. We believe *Hamlet* has become such a tragedy.

APPENDIX I

Let's make one assumption: Ghost of Hamlet's father could be the disguised guard Francisco (Hamlet, after a meeting with his father's Shadow, said that the look of the Ghost was *questionable*). In the opening scene, Francisco leaves his post, and soon a Ghost appears in front of the sentries; all other nocturnal appearances of a representative of the afterlife also occur when Francisco is not on duty.



Hamlet sees his father's Ghost. Painting by Eugene Delacroix

In this case, Francisco's somewhat strange remarks become more understandable: Bernardo, who came to replace him, asked: *Have you had quiet guard?* To which the answer followed: *Not a mouse stirring.* And before that,

Francisco said about the heaviness on the heart (*I sick at heart*), but did not explain the reason. The words about the mouse at one time angered Voltaire, who considered such a "low" detail not in keeping with the spirit of the tragedy. We can say that Voltaire felt a certain stylistic roughness in these words, and Shakespeare often has it as a sign that something important is hidden here.

Our version: in this way, the playwright wanted to make it clear that there was some kind of mystery connected with Francisco. It is likely that some loyal to the king Hamlet people knew about the murder of him, and Francisco was one of them (Marcellus did not accidentally call him an *honest soldier*).

The ghost seems to appear once again during Hamlet's conversation with his mother, and only the prince saw him. We believe that Hamlet had a hallucination — as the queen said, `it's all just an inflamed brain` (*this is very coinage of your brain*).

If our hypothesis is correct, then there is no mysticism in the tragedy – "feudal realism".

APPENDIX II

One of the long-noticed oddities in the famous Shakespearean tragedy is this: when the Ghost revealed to the prince the secret of his father's murder, for some reason he confessed that he was destined to wander at night, and burn in the oven during the day *till the foul crimes done in my days of nature Are burnt and purged away*), and that the torments he experiences there are so terrible that they cannot even be said about them. What kind of crimes are these? After all, from the words of the king's son and others who knew him, there seems to be a positive image of the monarch -- a valiant knight, a caring spouse. And here he speaks of himself as a great sinner.

I will make my guess: the sin for which King Hamlet suffers is somehow connected with his murder of Fortinbras-father, and the subsequent seizure of his

lands. We learn this story from Horatio, who begins it like this: *At least, the whisper goes so ...* That's how it is: it's just a rumor, which means that in fact everything could not be quite like that (or not at all). In Horatio's statement — to all his statements it is necessary to add "as if" -- King Fortinbras of Norway challenged the King of Denmark to a duel; they concluded and executed a contract according to all the rules. This said, that certain lands of the loser are transferred to the possession of the winner, that is, Horatio clarified, who lost his life in a duel, loses part of the property. I will give this place (I.1):

Did slay this Fortinbras, who by a seal'd compact, Well ratified by law and heraldry Did forfeit (with his life) all these his lands Wich he stood seized of, to the conqueror. Against the which a moiety competent Was gaged by our king, which had return'd To the inheritance of Fortinbras, Had he been vanquisher, by the same comart (cou`nant), And carriage of the article design'd His fell to Hamlet.

At one time, our wonderful Shakespeare scholar M.M. Morozov commented on the words *a seal'd compact*: Well rated by law and heraldry as follows: the agreement corresponded to the "Law on Heraldry", i.e. the "heraldic law", in this case, the law on duels; all solemnly arranged duels, "God's courts", jousting tournaments, etc. were in charge of heralds, who were appointed by the department of heraldry, which was a special statement.

I read about it in the WIKI: Since the XV century, knightly duels (they were called Tjosts) were held as sports competitions, according to certain rules; the winner received weapons, armor and a horse of the defeated as a prize. In 1559, in France, King Henry II died as a result of an accident during a duel; due to the risk of injury, despite blunt weapons, such confrontations were sometimes prohibited by the rulers, as well as the Pope; after the end of the XVI century, thioists began to rapidly lose popularity, the last one took place at the wedding of King Charles I in 1625.

So, in the Shakespearean era, a joust did not involve a fatal outcome, on the contrary, measures were taken to prevent it. And if King Hamlet intentionally or unintentionally killed an opponent in a duel, it is unlikely that this was allowed by a pre-arranged contract. On the other hand, the action of the play, apparently, unfolds in earlier centuries, when they could agree to fight to death, and also include land in the prize to the winner, etc. (but then there seems to be a contradiction with the indication of heraldic laws).

Next, let's pay attention to the words *by a seal'd compact*. And now let us remember that Claudius, sending the prince to England and preparing a letter, said (IV.3): *Away, for every thing is seal'd and done* (the same word *seal'd*). And what happens to sealed documents, we know from the story of this letter (V.2), which happened on the ship: the prince stole it, opened it, forged it and sealed it again, attaching a seal to the wax — a model of a large Danish seal. When Hamlet was telling this story to Horatio, the friend asked: *How was this seal'd?* (and *seal'd* again).

We believe that Shakespeare's detailed description of the contract with Fortinbras, the roll call with the sealed letter of Claudius hint: the contract was falsified, the murder of Norway and the seizure of his lands were illegal. These criminal actions of King Hamlet gave rise to the desire of Fortinbras's son to take revenge, brought wars and misfortunes on Denmark.

APPENDIX III

As the famous Russian scholar A.A. Anikst wrote, the image of Ophelia is one of the brightest examples of Shakespeare's dramatic skill: she utters only 158 lines of poetic and prose text, and in these one and a half hundred lines the author managed to fit a whole girl's life. However, the image of the girl is still poorly understood — disputes continue about Ophelia's personal qualities and her relationship with Hamlet; the circumstances of her death are also unclear.

It is widely believed that there was a love affair between her and Hamlet, but what is its character? Either Ophelia is an innocent victim, cunningly seduced by Hamlet, or a calculating girl who lured the crown Prince into her nets, or there was nothing carnal between them at all. The directors also interpreted this question differently, for example, Vs. Meyerhold and A. Tarkovsky portrayed Ophelia pregnant.

Philologist and writer Maria Golikova from Yekaterinburg put forward her version (see her LiveJournal, post from 02/27/14). She compared two pieces of the text of the tragedy:

Primo. Hamlet's conversation with Polonius (Act 2, sc. 2), where the prince called Ophelia's father a fishmonger. Then he said that the sun multiplies worms in a dead dog, and asked Polonius if he had a daughter? After receiving confirmation, Hamlet gave him advice: *Let her not walk i' the sun: conception is a blessing: but not as your daughter may conceive... look to 't.*

Secundo. Communication of Ophelia with the queen and the king after her father died of the Hamlet`s hand and she seemed to have lost her mind (Act 4, sc. 5). When talking with Claudius, she sang a song about Valentine's Day, which ends with the words: *Let in the maid, that out a maid, Never departed more.*

And before that, answering the king's question, how is she doing, she replied: *Well, God reward you. They say the owl used to be a baker's daughter...*

According to a medieval legend, the baker's daughter refused to give Christ bread and for this she was turned into an owl. That is, Ophelia is talking about someone's greed.

But after all, "fishmonger" is the nickname of a pimp common in Shakespeare's times, "fish" is clear who, and the sun is a well-known symbol of the monarch. (The image of the king as the sun is played by Hamlet in another place: when Claudius expressed surprise that Hamlet was still gloomy as a cloud, he replied: *no, I am too son of the sun... Act 1, sec. 2.*)

Golikova logically combined these facts and came to the conclusion that this is what happened to Ophelia:

Hamlet was the most suitable match for her, but Polonius "let his daughter "into the sun", "got greedy". As a result, it happened what she sang about — she not only lost her purity, but also, probably, became pregnant by the king. The observant Hamlet guessed this — he advised her to go to a monastery: *Get thee to a nunnery, go: farewell.* (*Nunnery* can mean a cathouse. In the same spirit, his other mocking remarks in conversation with Ophelia in the scene with the mousetrap.)

Then her father was killed, her brother was far away, and Ophelia was left without protection in a desperate, hopeless situation. She lost control of herself and began to openly express everything that was on her mind. It is not surprising that an "accident" immediately happened to her — Claudius is Claudius.

This is the version of Maria Golikova (similar ideas have been expressed before).

I'll try to develop it a little. It can be assumed that as soon as Claudius became king, he immediately began to think about the heir: Hamlet was too alien to him in spirit, and not his own blood. His beloved wife was not suitable for her age, and his choice fell on Ophelia, since Polonius is always ready to serve, and she was an obedient daughter. (I've always been surprised that Polonius does not seem to be interested in the marriage of his daughter with the prince; now it is clear why.) And she had a completely different relationship with the prince: he treated her like a dear sister.

When Gertrude heard Ophelia's song, she immediately understood everything with a woman's instinct, and at that moment the fate of the girl was decided by her. The queen went away for a while, and when she returned, she announced the accidental death of Ophelia and even told how it happened. But we don't have to believe her words.

APPENDIX IV

A translation by Andrey A. Korchevsky (M.: Text, 2016) of the First (or bad, short) quarto of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1603) is published. This version of the play was discovered only in the early 19th century, and only two copies of the original have survived to this day.

As you know, in 1604 the Second quarto of the tragedy appeared, which became almost twice as large in volume; the text was replenished with sophisticated dialogues, ornate philosophical passages, various poetic beauties. And now you can finally get acquainted with an earlier edition of the play.

The plot in the First quarto develops dynamically (there is a drive), everything is logically linked, the language is clear, the style is transparent, there are many vivid metaphors; we can say that this is the *Hamlet* known to us, but in a compact and somewhat modified form. In general— it is an excellent play, and it is not surprising that it has been staged in many theaters around the world, but never in Russia — due to the lack of a good translation.

And what is the relationship of the first two editions? M.D. Litvinova's article included in the book is largely devoted to this problem. *Hamlet* scholars have not yet solved it, there are two main versions regarding the First Quarto: 1) that this is an initial, preliminary version, which was later expanded and refined; 2) that this is a stripped-down and simplified version of an already existing more perfect text (perhaps "pirated" by ear and intended for some kind of quick productions).

I will also express my guesses. I must admit that when I read *Hamlet*, questions involuntarily arose: when composing this play, did the playwright really think that it was suitable for the theater in size and style? did he even imagine what a theater was? After all, it was a mass media intended for the widest public. The cultural level of the vast majority of viewers simply did not allow them to perceive

(especially by ear) such high matters, so writing like this is a kind of "cast pearls..."

I think that Shakespeare, working on the story about the Danish Prince, solved two different problems. First, write a text suitable for a theatrical production. Secondly, to create a literary work that will live for centuries (it must also be taken into account that at that time plays were considered the lowest genre of literature; for example, Sir Thomas Bodley, the founder of the famous Oxford Library, declared a resolute reluctance to give a place in it to such "garbage" as plays).

The First quarto is the solution of the first problem, the second is the second. In the extended version, there are things that are not intended for the scene in principle — anagrams, the importance of the presence or absence of a comma in some place (which we talked about). All this makes sense only in a literary work that needs not only to be read carefully, but also to solve the riddles embedded in it.

And if so, then it is logical to put the First quarto on stage, and to read — who really wants to understand Shakespeare — the Second (remember that even in our "enlightened" time, directors, putting Hamlet on stage, usually reduce it to about the size of the First quarto). Perhaps this is true for other Shakespearean plays, which also had their "bad" quarto.

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