Fortinbras: Warrior, Survivor, Inheritor of Denmark

The actor who plays Fortinbras speaks a total of 23 verse lines in *Hamlet.*[1] Though much spoken about by other characters—and quite questionably —Fortinbras does not come on stage until Act 4, scene 4 (TLN2735), where he speaks some eight lines to order his captain to send greetings to Claudius and ask for "conveyance" for his march on Poland. Still, his maneuvering armies and ambitions hover over the whole play and, in the Q2 version, spur Hamlet to his "How all occasions do inform against me" soliloquy. Moreover, the second and climactic final entrance of Fortinbras at the end of 5.2 (TLN 3852) forms a kind of closural coda to the tragic deaths that have occurred and crowd the stage. Ultimately, the rulership of Denmark will be left in his hands in fulfillment of Hamlet's dying wishes.

Fortinbras provides a third perspective on the implied parallel between Hamlet's difficult and thought-tormented kind of revenge and Laertes' brash and unscrupulous kind. Nevertheless, prior to the 20th century, the character of Fortinbras was cut and/or virtually banished from the stage;[2] Alan Young points out, in fact, that "in the eighteenth century, though mentioned in play texts, Fortinbras did not appear on stage" (274), and he was routinely cut in the 19th century. Bernice W. Kliman tells of George Bernard Shaw's "shock and dismay to discover Fortinbras cut from contemporary stage productions" (Kliman, 1985, 55), and in major twentieth century productions it was not till John Gielgud's *Hamlet* of 1934 that Fortinbras and his soldiers came on stage at the end.[3]

With a few exceptions,[4] a logical corollary to this performance tradition has been the critical neglect of Fortinbras, which, as Rudier Imhof's 1986 *Hamlet Studies* discussion informs us, continued into the 20th century; significantly, J.D. Wilson refers to Fortinbras only on "four occasions, in one or two lines," and in Granville-Barker "there is no mention whatsoever of young Fortinbras" (Imhoff 9). However, in 2000, J. Anthony Burton published "An Unrecognized Theme in Hamlet: Lost Inheritance and Claudius's Marriage to Gertrude" the first of a series of articles, including one on Fortinbras's "His Quarry Cries on Havoc" (reproduced in Hamletworks.org and discussed below; see also n. 7 and 8); in 2007, Magrita de Grazia published *Hamlet without* Hamlet. Both critics place special emphasis on Fortinbras as a character who foregrounds Hamlet's external provocations as a disinherited and landless Prince. Burton's argument provides the legal background to further support what he shows are textual emphases on a disinherited and ungrounded Hamlet. DeGrazia's monograph argues along strikingly similar lines that the entire notion of Hamlet's supremely articulated interiority is based on a suppression of the play's major "premise," i.e., that "at his father's death, just at the point when an only son in a patrilineal system stands to inherit, Hamlet is dispossessed – and, as far as the court is concerned, legitimately" (p. 1). Thus, the entire Fortinbras subplot mirrors that of the main plot of a landless prince; as de Grazia further explains, again closely coinciding at key points with Burton,

> The law principally functioned to obtain, retain, or transfer land," and the early *Hamlet* texts demonstrate the close semantic kinship between *law* and *land*. Fortinbras . . . intends to attack Denmark with an army of resolutes who are *landless* in Q and *lawless* in F. Editors cannot go wrong here, for either form of lack would motivate aggression. (p. 141).

In looking back at Shakespeare's sources, it appears that both Saxo's *Historiæ Danicæ* and Belleforest's *Histoire Tragique* mention the King of Norway.[5] The latter expands upon Norway's martial fame, exploits, and foreign wars, including the single combat by which the Norwegian king lost territories to the Danish king, mentioning also the former's jealousy that Howendille had "surpassed him in feats of arms" [202] as well as Fengon's similar jealousy of his brother Howendille.

Joseph Pequigney points out that the name "Fortinbras" itself is a significant Shakespearean turning point in the character's blueprint, for both "in Saxo and Belleforest the murdered father has a different name from his filial revenger…." In Shakespeare, by contrast,

> the shared name [in the case of Hamlet] serves to draw the father and son emotionally and psychologically closer, and to underscore the deep involvement that each Hamlet feels in the fate of the other. Furthermore, Shakespeare repeated the device with a slain senior Fortinbras and an avenging junior Fortinbras . . . ." (CN 101, 112, 169, Pequigney 2008, personal communication)

But if indeed the echoing of "shared" father/son names for Hamlet and Fortinbras creates the kind of parallels between the two young men that Pequigney claims, then twentieth-century critics including John Dover Wilson, Bernice W. Kliman and, more comprehensively, Burton, have expressed doubts as to whether Fortinbras senior was ever king of Norway. Kliman (in an editorial note on Wilson, 1936, CN77)[6] concedes that Fortinbras's being the son of the old King of Norway is "[N]ow generally accepted," but she reminds us that this is "by no means certain." Burton, with his stress on inheritance law, suggests that old Fortinbras was more likely a second son whose own son never stood to inherit the throne of Norway; moreover, with old Fortinbras having lost his son's inheritance, young Fortinbras at the beginning of the play is a landless nephew of Norway who is obliged to restore his fortune.[7]

Shakespeare's initial portrait of young Fortinbras is implicit from the very opening line of the play, where the questioning of "Who's there?" sets up the atmosphere of nervous watch, as well as the ghost's appearance and Marcellus's questions about the cause of war preparations (TLN 86-94). Fortinbras, too, is an unseen someone "out there" in the night, like the ghost Marcellus and Bernardo fear, like the mute audience of play-goers, and like God up there where there is no shuffling. Fortinbras has left the impress of his own threatened martial stalk on the Danish state in its war preparations, and his presence is linked to the armor-clad martial presence of the ghost—linkages that foreshadow the fortune that Fortinbras claims at the play's ending and his concluding tribute to the fallen prince.

Despite the clear function of Fortinbras as an anchoring, framing device, he seems to have been a work in progress, and there is evidence that some of the characteristics Shakespeare originally planned to devote to Fortinbras he transferred over to the character of Laertes. As Jenkins credibly argues.

> The war with which he threatens Denmark (I.i) is suddenly called off for an expedition against Poland, and the hot-headed youth with his band of desperadoes becomes the leader of a disciplined army (IV.iv) and ultimately a fit ruler of Hamlet's realm (V.ii.355ff). His 'lawless resolutes', however, are not dispensed

> with; they have attached themselves to Laertes (IV.v. 101-11). (Jenkins, 1982, p. 100)

In addition, there is evidence in Q1 that Fortinbras's initial line in 5.2, "{This} <His> quarry cries on hauock (TLN3857), was designed to be spoken by Horatio, and so, possibly, was Fortinbras's apostrophe to "Proud Death" at the end of the play. [8]

The disagreements among commentators on TLN 99 starts with Fortinbras's name itself, which creeps into the text when his uncle is first alluded to as "th'ambitious Norway," whose loss of single combat with King Hamlet sets up his young nephew's ambitions toward Denmark. Critics early on have argued that the name Fortinbras itself derives from its association with "brass," while others have traced the French connection of "strong in arms." Concerning the former derivation, Shakespeare would have been well acquainted with the classical tradition associating brass with boldness or courage. More specifically relevant, there is an old Scandinavian connection with brass. An anonymous commentator in 1773 argues that the Quarto's spelling of "Fortinbrasse" evokes

> the trade which was anciently carried on between the Danes, the Norwegians, and the English, and continued as long as till the Time of Gustavus Vasa, when our Countrymen were still furnished with *Brass* from the Mines of *Dalycarlia*, in return for *Tin* from those of *Truro* in *Cornwall*. In Remembrance of this Fact, the ancient Family which first set this Exchange on Foot, were dignified with the Name of *Fortinbrass*. (CN99, Anon. 1773)[9]

Latham (1872) similarly argues that the name suggests "Ironside, or, in Icelandic, Iarnsîdha, a name actually applied to one of the old Norse Sea-kings" (CN91). Jenkins's commentary note on "impresse of ship-writes" and "foreign mart" (TLN 91-2) jibes with this idea:

> A reflection of Denmark's contemporary war preparations under Christian IV [1577-1648]. A decade earlier Sir Jerome Horsey (*Travels,* Hakluyt Soc., pp. 243-4) had complained to Christian's predecessor of 'the enticing away' of English 'shipwrights to interpretation fashion your navy' and 'the carrying away' from England (cf. *foreign mart*) of 'much ordinance, both brass and iron, pieces and other munition' (CN91, 1982).

Andrews' (1993) choice of the Q1, Q2 spelling, *Fortinbrasse*, according to Dent (1993) seems a fine compromise between the two meanings, for "in addition to the F1's *Fortinbras,* French strong arm or strong in arms, it suggests an additional link with 'brass' (brazen mettle), reinforced by [89] and [113]" (CN99).

The doubleness associated with the name and identity of Fortinbras continues in future lines as well—"young"[10] Fortinbras is both the man of "brass" who is out to improve his economic fortune and one who does so in one of the approved ways chosen by second sons (and their progeny): by his feats of ("strong") arms. The epithets Horatio uses when he first mentions "young Fortinbras" in TLN 113, give us simultaneously a man of "mettle" and the qualification that that mettle is "unimproved," or in Q1 "inapproved."

The one-time use of "unimproved" has divided critics; the earliest, like Bailey (1730) and Warburton, argue that "'unimproved' means not [i]mproved or grown more 'refined,'" i.e., inexperienced, or possessed of "uninstructed courage" (Heath, 1765). Tooke (1798, 1:165-6), however, debunks these earlier readings:

> The expression in Hamlet (Act I. Sce. I.)—'Of *unimproved* mettle hot and full'—ought not to have given Shakespeare's commentators any trouble: for *unimproved* means *unimpeached*; though Warburton thinks it means '*unrefined'*: Edwards '*unproved;*' and Johnson (with the approbation of Malone) '*not regulated nor guided by knowledge or experience:*' and in his Dictionary he explains it to be '*not taught, not meliorated by instruction.*'" (CN113)

Singer (ed. 1856) comments with similar implications about the Q1 use of "inapproved," but puts a positive spin on the adjective: "Thus the first quarto. The folio has 'Of unimproved mettle hot and full.' The reading of the quarto seems preferable, as the idea excited by young Fortinbras is of one animated by courage at full heat, but at present untried, —the ardour of inexperience" (CN113). Gifford (1816) and Caldecot (1819) suggest that "unimproved" means "unimpeached,'" so that courage is equated with Fortinbras's father's martial ambitions (CN113).

Yet Fortinbras's appetite for conquest is keener than that of his father (who, with his wager, seems to have left his son without an inheritance); in Horatio's description, that appetite is made to seem willfully impervious to diplomacy or international law. In TLN 115 we learn that he has "Sharked up a list," either of "lawelesse" (Q2) or of "landlesse" [F] "resolutes." In either case, Fortinbras is an ambitious man who earns Horatio's censure as he describes the young Norwegian's military maneuvers to take advantage of the disordered Danish state. [11] Deighton (1912), in fact, reminds us that such maneuvers of Fortinbras's "strong hand" and their "compulsatory" designs are in contrast with those of his father and Hamlet's, suggesting that by this contrast Horatio is further impugning Fortinbras's motives and character.[12]

A further perspective on Fortinbras is provided by Denmark's new king. In 1.2., Claudius has a great deal to explain about his marriage and his succession of King Hamlet to the throne and much to say of Fortinbras that he has obviously prepared beforehand: he presents young Fortinbras as "holding a weak supposal of our worth" a supposition which is "[c]oleagued with {this} <the> dreame of his aduantage" (TLN 199). Hibbard (ed. 1987) glosses the problematic "colleagued" as

> allied to, united with. The notion seems to be that Fortinbras is impelled by two different considerations, both illusory, yet lending support to one another: on the one hand, his conviction that Claudius is a weak king and Denmark is in disarray; on the other, his belief in his own personal superiority to Claudius —his "dream of his advantage."(CN199)

The new king is ready to denigrate Fortinbras's "dreame" as an impossible fantasy which, in any case, he has already taken steps to deal with. In contemporary performance, Claudius's "so much for him" is often accompanied by the king's tearing up of Fortinbras's letter, though his

line might convey nothing more than “that is the end of the Fortinbras matter.” For Claudius has come on stage with his own letter “writ to Old Norway” (TLN 207) and is ready to dispatch his ambassadors to deliver it. Poisoning the Norwegian well further, Claudius describes the old king as ”impotent,” “bed-rid” and uninformed about his nephew’s “purposes.” As Claudius announces his own diplomatic letter, moreover, he suggests that it is imbued with the power to re-energize the “impotent” Norwegian king so as to suppress the brashly threatening Fortinbras. Both from the point of view of continuity with the action of 1.1 and of the shift in 1.2 to Claudius’s obvious prowess in matters of state, these negative views of young Fortinbras play an important role in establishing the play’s several lines of conflict. Yet audiences do not necessarily form an image of Fortinbras as a reckless military opportunist, since he is someone they have not seen and heard in person but only heard about.[13] Their anticipation is likely to be more keenly directed toward their first view of the title character,[14] and they may or may not have seen through Claudius’s rhetoric as yet.

Whatever else is unsure, it is clear that 1.2 energetically sets up a contrast between Laertes’s relationship to the newly-crowned king and that of Hamlet. That contrast extends both to Laertes’s relationship to his father and Hamlet’s relationships to his stepfather/uncle and implicitly to Fortinbras and his father and uncle (about whom we have heard in the prior scene). Thus, by the second scene of the play, an elaborate triumvirate of dramatic father/son foils has been established. In this connection, Landis discusses the resonances of the name “Polonius” and his mention of Poland at the first point at which King Hamlet’s combat with Fortinbras’s father is mentioned: “Poland, then, is that little plot of ground, where [. . .] thousands go obediently to their graves for no good reason. It is that *locus* that stands for male violence. . . . Just as King Hamlet smote the ‘sledded Polacks,’ as Fortinbras went against Poland, and as Hamlet mistakenly stabbed Polonius . . . so the larger violences of the play are carried forth . . .” (1984, pp. 8-17).[15] Claudius’s question to Laertes as to whether or not he has secured Polonius’s leave to depart for France stresses an expectation of filial obedience. This could be seen as preparing the ground for a contrast in two other high-born young men, i.e., interpreting Fortinbras’s international ambitions[16] as the behavior of a “disobedient” nephew who, like Hamlet, is someone not inclined to parley with his uncle.

Our next report on Fortinbras comes after Hamlet has learned of his uncle’s role in his father’s murder and after he vows to complete his father’s “commandment” of vengeance. In 2.2, we hear that Fortinbras, drawing “levies” and “lists” (troops and supplies) from the Norwegian king’s own subjects, had been pretending to his Uncle Norway to be marching against Poland rather than against Denmark. Thus—at least according to Voltemand’s report—he had “falsely borne in hand” his design for invading Denmark. Voltemand’s report paints a young man of subterfuge, but such an image of Fortinbras is consistent with the impression Claudius obviously desires to create. Even more flattering to Claudius, Voltemand tells the king that Fortinbras “[r]eceives rebuke from Norway” (TLN 1094) and vows never “to give th’assay of Armes” against Denmark (TLN 1096); the obedience Norway finds in his nephew has prompted him to commission Fortinbras’s march against the Poles. We cannot be sure about the spirit of Fortinbras’s capitulation here, but events turn out even better than Claudius had wished, for Norway then “entreats” Denmark for safe passage through Denmark and is now beholden to the Danish king. It becomes even clearer that Claudius knows how to take the matter of Fortinbras’s threat in hand and is a skilled adversary who knows well how to parry a thrust from a young and

vigorous opponent.

Harold Jenkins makes much of the fact that just as Hamlet seeks revenge against Claudius, Laertes also becomes a revenger against Hamlet for Polonius's death, and Jenkins emphasizes the revenge motif as a framework against which to see Fortinbras as well, though he argues that Denmark itself is Fortinbras's object of revenge "[I]f Fortinbras is to recover his father's lands" (Jenkins, ed. 1982, p. 100). However, Jenkins's view is questionable, since Fortinbras drops his military campaign against Denmark before Hamlet kills Polonius and Laertes initially is incensed against the king rather than against Hamlet.[17] Because audiences have been kept distant from Fortinbras by having to rely on reports about him, they cannot know or assess his motivations too keenly. Is he a strong-willed, unscrupulous hothead who is scarcely under his own control (as Horatio may be implying) or a ranking leader of "landless resolutes" seeking territory (another possible implication of Horatio)? Is he doing what "landlesse resolutes" do, since his "father has gambled away his son's entire inheritance," as Burton argues, adding that "[t]he economic basis of Fortinbras's motivation explains why his uncle succeeded in appeasing him with a generous allowance"? (See N. 7.) Or is he a deceitful rebel, underhandedly and dishonorably defiant of his uncle-king, as the Danish ambassadors report him to be? Yet another possible view: is he a wily nephew to a doddering but commanding king whom he knows will not be on the Norwegian throne forever, so that if Denmark as well as Norway is indeed his object, he can bide his time while winning fortune elsewhere, having found an unexpectedly crafty opponent as the new Danish king? Has he actually threatened Norway into paying him to take his followers to Poland, since the King is now paying him directly for his military expedition there? Or is Norway paying him off to keep the young, landless hothead content? The implied story, "translated" by the Danish ambassadors to Norway, is hard to fathom. Performance often plays a decisive role in answering such questions, but this is generally true about characters we see and hear, and Fortinbras's actual entry is not to come till 4.4, just after Claudius has sent Hamlet to England to have his foreign ally take care of the Hamlet problem. Claudius now no longer deems it a good idea to keep his enemies "close." As Rosencrantz and Guildenstern escort Hamlet to leave Denmark for England, Fortinbras enters the liminal space of far-flung outposts from which the energies of the final duel have been gathering: Laertes from France, Hamlet for England, and Fortinbras for Poland—all to return, one way or another, and converge upon the Danish throne-room.

When Fortinbras finally does enter on stage, we see him as a firm military leader of an army that "passes over the stage,"[18] and we hear something of a diplomat as well in his lines:

> *Fortin.* Goe Captaine, from me greet the Danish King
> Tell him, that by his lycence Fortinbrasse
> {Craues} <Claimes> the conueyance of a promisd march
> Ouer his kingdome, you know the randeuous,
> If that his Maiestie would ought with vs,
> We shall expresse our dutie in his eye,
> And let him know so.
> *Cap.* I will doo't my Lord.
> *For*. Goe {softly} <safely> on. <Exit.> (TLN 2735-43)

His first words are a military order to his captain to greet Claudius and remind him of his "lycence" and that his intended march was "promised." Moreover, "conveyance" as Jenkins comments, "denotes a specific military escort during Norway's troops' entrance on Danish soil. The conveyance is not merely the carrying out of the promise but the 'conducting' of the marchers" (CN2737). Does Fortinbras "crave" (Q2) or "claim" (F) this conveyance? There is certainly a politesse in "craves" as opposed to "claims," but Irving, for example comments that "claims" agrees better . . .with the expression in the previous line, *by his license*; Hibbard, too, points out that "the legalistic phrasing of the sentence" works with "claims" (1987, CN 3737); these interpretations suggest a pragmatic strategist. Additionally, Wilson looks forward to the way in which the word "claim" resonates at the ending of the play:

> It might be thought that the change [from "crave" to "claim"] is just one of those little chance substitutions of which the F1 Hamlet is full. But it is something more; for it is linked with two lines which belong to Fortinbras at [5.2.389-90 (3885-6)]: 'I haue some rights, of memory in this *kingdome*, Which now to *clame* my vantage doth invite me.' Once again the repetition of a word by Shakespeare, the word 'kingdom.' has acted like a sort of memory-hook. 'Kingdome' and 'claim' have become associated, and so when 'kingdom' occurs in an earlier speech in another scene by the same character, 'claims' asserts itself and thrusts the more polite 'craves' aside." (1934, rpt. 1963, 1:59)

With either "craves" or "claims," though, Fortinbras's forceful confidence is self-evident. In the next two lines, he also expresses his conformity with his promise to his uncle, as reported by Voltemand back in 2.2, and seems a man of his word. Fortinbras states that if Claudius wishes, "We shall express our duty in his eye" which, as Steevens first indicated (ed. 1793) means, "in his presence" (CN2740).[19] Fortinbras, further, sends his captain forth to inform the king of his willingness to meet in unambiguous terms: "And let him know so" (TLN 2741); but while conceding "duty," Fortinbras uses the royal "we," which also creates a kind of parity with Claudius and anticipates, in the Q2 version, Hamlet's calling him a "tender and delicate prince." This seems to confirm[20]—in Act 4—a status that the texts leave open to question in prior scenes, as discussed above. Most critics think Fortinbras's last line here, "Goe {softly} <safely> on," is addressed to his army. Whether he is telling them to move at a measured pace ("softly") or to be assured of safe conduct ("safely"), his last words indicate concern for his men, further underscoring his leadership.[21]

In this short speech, Shakespeare has accomplished much: Fortinbras in person seems scarcely to be the wild, ungoverned man Horatio has described in 1.1 or indeed the underhanded fellow implied in 2.2.[22] His steady pursuit of his military goals seems patently designed to be contrasted with the wavering of Hamlet, even if we disregard the dialogue between the Captain and Hamlet in Q2, with its inclusion of Hamlet's inconsistent deliberations on Fortinbras's actions and invidious self-comparisons.[23] Of course, Hamlet's comments in Q2 about the futility of thousands dying for honor, for a straw, does distance him from the martial values associated with Fortinbras. Yet Fortinbras is also being set up to be contrasted with Laertes in this scene. Despite his deference here, Fortinbras is nobody's fool, unlike the rash and impetuous Laertes who will rush the king without forethought or even specific knowledge of his father's or his sister's fate and will become yet one more "instrument" of the king.

One additional Fortinbras sighting leading up to his final entrance occurs in the graveyard scene, wherein Hamlet once again reflects on earthly ambition. The gravedigger's revelations shed further light on the connection between King Hamlet and old Fortinbras, as well as between Hamlet and young Fortinbras when the clown answers Hamlet's question about how long he has been at gravemaking. He replies, "Of <all> the dayes i'th yere I came too't that day | that our last king /Hamlet {ouercame}< o'recame> Fortenbrasse" (TLN3334-5).

Concerning the gravedigger's specific phrases here, Hibbard comments:

> [T]he first takes us back to the beginning of the Hamlet saga and to the opening scene. Also the mention of old Fortinbras reminds us of the existence of young Fortinbras with whom the play will end. The second suggests that the paths of the Grave-digger and the Prince have been converging ever since Hamlet was born, even, perhaps, that the next grave to be dug will be Hamlet's. (1980, CN3334-5)

These allusions to Fortinbras in the scene in the graveyard, the furthest outpost that the imagination can trace, then, are a subtle but forceful link to the sense of predestined fulfillment which ties inevitably to the contest of the duel scene and its deadly outcomes.

Yet we hear nothing further of Fortinbras until after the duel with Laertes has been plotted and fought. The preparatory mention of "Young Fortinbras" comes only as Hamlet—now for the briefest time, *de facto* king of Denmark and trying to provide for the future of his kingdom, inquires, "Why does the drum come hither?" (TLN3840); he learns that Fortinbras has coincidentally arrived in Demark at the same time as "th'ambassadors of Norway," who greet them with a "warlike volley" or with "shot" (in the Folio). As MacDonald comments, "The frame is closing round the picture" (CN3840). Hamlet speaks the final lines he will utter:

> 3841 O I die Horatio,
> 3842 The potent poyson quite ore-crowes my spirit,
> 3843 I cannot liue to heare the newes from England,
> 3844 But I doe prophecie th'ellection lights
> 3845 On Fortinbrasse, he has my dying voyce
> 3846 So tell him, with th'occurrants more and lesse
> 3847 Which haue solicited, the rest is silence. < O, o, o, o. *Dyes.* (TLN 3941-8)

It is the knowledge of the approaching Fortinbras that grants Hamlet some peace and certitude that his "dying voice" will be carried forward through Horatio and thence to his people, and that the kingdom will be in the hands of a good ruler; more importantly—he nominates Fortinbras with confidence that, through Horatio, his "wounded name" will be righted and the full story, with its "occurrants more and lesse," will not be lost. The future, then, shifts to Fortinbras, as the dying Hamlet is keenly aware. Boswell comments that "[n]ot one word of reproach escapes him against the treachery of Laertes, which he would naturally have inveighed against had his own fate been uppermost in his mind; and in his dying address to Horatio, no regret is expressed for the loss of life, but only an anxiety belonging to an honourable and lofty spirit lest he should leave behind him a wounded name. . . . " CN 3907 Boswell (ed. 1821).

In this respect, then, the effect of Fortinbras's entry at the play's end could not be more crucial to its overarching design, though a few commentators see Fortinbras's entry as another opportunistic attack on Denmark and Hamlet's hopes as ill-founded. Clearly this view influenced Kenneth Branagh's 1996 film, with its Norwegian forces surrounding the castle and crashing through its second story windows, their bayonets at the ready.

There is some evidence for such a view. Fortinbras's drum precedes him, and he arrives with "colours." Dessen & Thomson explain that the latter is "usually a flag, ensign, or standard of a regiment or ship called for in approximately 100 directions [i.e., stage directions]" and that "usually in the military context the phrase is *drum and colors* [TLN3853], which can mean not only the instrument and property but also the players bringing them on stage; typically these items indicate readiness for battle and are part of a show of power: [quotes F1 3852-3] . . . ." (CN3853). Kliman adds an editorial comment to this note, suggesting that the stage direction could then be a signal that Fortinbras is not entering in peace but prepared to challenge the king."

In fact, Kliman remarks extensively on the implications of this stage direction [TLN3852-3]:

> In the texts, the other major entrance in this scene, of Fortinbras and the English Ambassadors, is also colorful and noisy, with flags and drums, an ironic contrast to the silence of death hanging on the scene. Fortinbras's entrance can also jolt our preconceptions about the Hamlet/Fortinbras parallels. If we had thought that Fortinbras as avenging son was deflected by his uncle, Norway, from Denmark to an "egg- shell," his aggressive entrance at the end can stagger us with its implications for revenge--Hamlet's as well as his own--accomplished by indirection, culminating in violence. . . . . John Gilbert, the illustrator, in 1864 had depicted just such a Fortinbras, entering ready to attack, not yet noticing the bodies that make his menace pointless. . . . .No moving image production that I have seen has dared such a strong Fortinbras. (Kliman, *Film, Television, and Audio Performance*, pp. 54-55)

Nevertheless, Fortinbras's opening line in this scene, "Where is this sight?" (TLN3854) implies simply that he has heard of the violence and death that have taken place within the Danish court. The question, in its starkness, also echoes the play's opening question "Who's there?" with its metatheatrical and metaphysical reverberations, as well as Hamlet's last query, "Why does the drum come hither"?

As for Horatio's challenge to Fortinbras's question, it is arguably both a response to Fortinbras's drum and colors and an expression of his own raw emotion at having just lost his dear friend:

> Hora. What is it {you} <ye> would see?
> If ought of woe, or wonder, cease your search. (TLN 3855-6)

Jenkins (1982, CN 3856) glosses "wonder" as "calamity, extreme wretchedness."

Concerning {This} <His> quarry cries on hauock" (TLN2857), its variants and syntactic ambiguities generate an extensive history of interpretation and commentary. First of all, is it "His Quarry" or "This Quarry"? and if the former of the two, whose quarry does it refer to—Hamlet's or Claudius's? Or is it Fortinbras's? The phrase "cries on havoc" seems to be made up of what William Empson would call complex words, words that mean both themselves and their opposites. Does this phrase mean "cries on," i.e., "cries out against" or "exclaim against" havoc, as Johnson (1765) saw it, or does "cries" mean "cries out" or "declares or proclaims" havoc?[24] *The Online Etymological Dictionary* explains "havoc" as follows: "Early 15c., from Anglo-French havok in phrase crier havok 'cry havoc' (late 14c.), a signal to soldiers to seize plunder, from Old French havot, 'pillaging, looting,' related to haver 'to seize, grasp,' hef 'hook,' probably from a Germanic source (see **hawk** (n.)), or from Latin habere 'to have, possess.' General sense of 'devastation' first recorded late 15c."

The phrases taken together build up associations not merely of bloody carnage[25] but of pillage urging to be claimed. Along these lines, Herford (ed. 1900) glosses "cries on hauock" as "urges to ruthless slaughter," which is "more in the character of Fortinbras than the possible alternative, 'cries out against the butchery'" (CN3857). Thus, it is possible to read this line as implying that Fortinbras is nothing more than a forceful military opportunist, an interpretation implying that the play's closing is not entirely successful.[26]

Burton devotes an entire essay to the tragic implications of TLN 3857. (See "'His quarry cries On Hauocke! Is it Shakespeare's Own Judgment on the Meaning of *Hamlet?*" in "Essays about *Hamlet*.") He invokes J. V. Cunningham's perception that Horatio's "woe or wonder" was a formulaic phrase equivalent to the Aristotelian tragic effects of "pity and terror" (p. 65). Burton's nuanced argument is that "His quarry cries on havoc" (TLN3857) was actually intended not for Fortinbras but for Horatio, who is the bearer of tragic order in the final scene. The line is the culmination of the extensive hawking imagery that characterizes the ongoing mutually destructive hunter/hunted relations of Hamlet and Claudius throughout the play (Burton, pp. 77-79). "Quarry," for Burton, refers equally to Hamlet and Claudius, respectively as the prey of the other as raptor; "cry on havoc," the argument continues, refers to the military order for unrestrained killing and pillaging, which, under the English laws of war, only kings and princes of the realm are authorized to give, on pain of death. The phrase is thus remarkably apt in that it applies with the same evenhanded ambivalence to both king and prince as the authors of their own destruction. "His quarry cries on havoc" thus prepares for Horatio's immediate confirmation that Hamlet's story follows the same pattern, of "forc'd cause . . . falln on th'inventors' head"; as the pattern already established through many metaphors, in which forces of destruction defeat their employer (Burton 67-9).

But the ensuing lines of Fortinbras which close the play scarcely support such a reading. Fortinbras's eloquent apostrophe to death is a rhetorical high point after the intensifying slaughter—both accidental and long-awaited—that audiences have witnessed, with bodies everywhere on stage. Theobald (1726) sees a disconnect between "[T]his quarry cries on havoc" and the "eternal" in "O Proud Death, What Feast is toward in thine eternal cell" (TLN113-15):

> I can see no Propriety here in this Epithet of *eternal*; nor does it communicate any Image suitable to the Circumstance of the Havock, that *Fortinbras* looks on, and

> would represent in a Light of Horror. He, upon the Sight of so many dead Bodies, exclaims against Death, as an execrable, riotous Destroyer; and as preparing to make a savage and hellish Feast. The *Players Quarto* Edition of 1637 [Q5] seems to give us an Epithet more forcible [i.e., "infernall"] and peculiar to this Scene of Action.[27] (CN3858, 1726, p. 129-30)

Steevens (1778) compares the "feast of death" to which Fortinbras refers with "what *Talbot* say[s] to his son in [*1H6* 4.5.7 (2121)]: 'Now art thou come unto a *feast of death*,'" locating the source for this trope in Plutarch's "life of *Antonius" (CN* ed. 1778). Caldecott (ed. 1819, CN3858), stressing "eternal cell," urges that the epithet calls up the ghost's "*eternal* blazon" [1.5.22 (706)] and also mentions the personification of Death in *King John*: "And now he feasts, mousing the flesh of men"[2.1.354 (667)]." Caldecott also suggests other such allusions in earlier lines of *Hamlet* which have "no doubt some connexion with the usage of all the northern nationals, their Ambarvalia or Arval suppers referred to by Hamlet [1.2.180 (368)]." Kittredge (1939) picks up on this idea in his gloss of "toward," saying it means

> in preparation. Cf. [1.1.77 (0000)]. Scandanavian warriors believed that, if slain in battle, they were translated to Valhalla (*Valhöll*), Odin's palace in the sky, where they were to spend their time in feasting and fighting. Though Shakespeare may have known nothing about this pagan creed, the present passage accords with it and sounds appropriate in the mouth of young Fortinbras. (CN3858).

Jenkins (without attribution) corrects Kittredge's idea: "The metaphor is not, as sometimes supposed, of Valhalla, where souls feast after death, but of Death feasting on the slain" (1982 CN3858). But the association of the Death feasting and of soldiers' souls feasting in an afterlife are not too far a stretch, especially when one considers other intra-textual allusion in *Hamlet* to such feasts. There is, of course, "the funerall bak't meates /Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables" (TLN369-70) and, in 4.3, Hamlet's explanation that Polonius is "at supper":

> Ham. Not where he eates, but where {a} <he> is eaten . . . we fat all creatures els | to fat vs, and wee fat our{selues} <selfe> for maggots, your fat King | and your leane begger is but varia- | ble {seruice, two} <service t to> dishes | but to one table, that's The end. (TLN 2685-90)

Oddly enough, it can be seen as a kind of chiasmus that Hamlet, not a martial prince like Fortinbras, sees Death in what could be military (as well as legal) terms, as a "fell sergeant,"[28] and Fortinbras, the supposedly unimaginative martial man, sees death as a metaphorical, macabre feaster who has assembled his table with the bodies he has so "bloodily… struck."

The English Ambassador's line seeking to find his thanks resonates now as a realistically minor detail. Spencer (ed. 1980) comments on Hamlet's earlier nomination of Fortinbras in comparison to the Prince's thoughts about his false friends:

> Hamlet turns aside from the triviality of the fate of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to his serious concern for the future of the Danish crown. Perhaps some stage business is required: he is handed the crown of Denmark (taken from the dead

> Claudius), and his dying thoughts, self-forgetful and calm, are upon its inheritance by a worthy successor. (CN 3844-5)

But Horatio addresses both the Ambassador and Fortinbras, asking them to "give order that these bodies / High on a stage be placed to the view/ And let me speake, to {yet} <th'yet> vnknowing world/ how these things came about" (TLN 3872-5). As Hamlet has pleaded for, Horatio promises an unvarnished account of the truth, with all of its "carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts" (TLN3876) and "in this vpshot,[of] purposes mistooke, / Falne on th'inuenters heads" (3879-80).

It is Fortinbras, logically and inevitably, who steps forward, using the royal "we" once again as he did in Act 4. Recognizing and ratifying Horatio's imperative ("Give order" [TLN 3872]), Fortinbras replies, "Let vs hast to heare it,/ And call the noblest to the audience" (TLN3883). Surely, this would not be his first priority if his sole intention were to seize the Danish throne for Norway. Then, in the face of the slain "princes," he utters his second thought:

> For me, with sorrowe I embrace my fortune,
> I haue some {rights,} <Rites> of memory in this kingdome,
> Which {now} <are> to clame my vantage doth | inuite me. (TLN 3884-7)

This is a reminder to Horatio and others of "noble audience" rather than a power grab that is the logical end for a foreign power who has staged a surprise attack on the Danish throne. Horatio thus assures Fortinbras that he has more to say on behalf of the fallen Hamlet, who has named him successor and whose "voice will draw on more," urging that it be done "presently" so that no "mischance/On plots and errores happen[s]" (TLN3891] as a result of the disasters of the Danish dynasty.

Of Fortinbras's final tribute to the prince who would have proved "most royal," if he had "been put on," there is much commentary. Hunter stresses the historical precedent of Hamlet's being placed "high to the view," "[A]s may be seen in the monument in Westminister Abbey of Sir Francis Vere, a soldier, who died in 1608. This was no doubt at that time the accustomed mode of burial of a soldier of rank" (1845, Hunter, 2:266). Miles (1870) talks of Fortinbras's final speech succinctly before launching into a beautiful encomium on the play as a whole (see his complete CN 3895-3906, pp. 87-8). "In the sad, soldierly orders and martial praise of Fortinbras, the play finds its perfect consummation." And in the 21st century, Edelman (2000) stresses that "Fortinbras pointedly awards Hamlet a high honour in his rite of war by having 'four captains' [CN3895], not just any soldiers, take up his body."

Not all critics share this view. Wade (1855, p. 35), with a typically Romantic view of a poetic but inert Hamlet, calls attention to what he feels the inappropriateness of Fortinbras's martial tribute and its dubious application to the prince:

> All the then diplomatic world, we may add, seems to have been aware of the character of the dreamy Hamlet. "Let four captains," orders the straightforward man of action, Fortinbras, "Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage"— the stage from whence Horatio is to speak of all that has chanced. . . . [The] undeciding Hamlet could never have been "put on"—had he even lived to be a Danish

> Methuselah. He was. . . in this moving, restless world, most miserably out of his nature's element. Yet, "take him for all in all," in the Prince of Denmark was much of a free, generous and exalted disposition—at the worst, he was a Thinker out of his place. . . .' (CN3895-6)

Several others take a neutral view of the closing speech as one that is demanded by convention, or they conjecture about the manner in which the other bodies on stage would have been removed. Thus, as Knight (ed. [1839]) asserts, "Fortinbras has ordered 'Let four captains Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage.' This was a peculiar honour which he meant for him. We give the concluding stage direction, as we find it in the folio. '*Exeunt, bearing off the bodies*,' is a modern addition" (CN3902). Travers, in 1929, states, "That martial honours were rendered to the hero at the end of the old *Hamlet*, is most likely.--Nor could the sight and the sound of them here be other than welcome to the audience not be laid on a couple of lines of funeral praise, at the close of a long and psychologically complex tragedy, or on this form of homage from a warlike prince at the head of his army . . . ." (CN3896). Kittredge reminds us, "In Elizabethan tragedy, the person of highest rank among the survivors regularly makes the speech which brings the play to a formal close. This necessity, indeed, accounts for the presence of Fortinbras in *Hamlet*. But for him, there would be no one left of sufficient rank to fulfill this office" (1936, CN3895-3907). Spencer (ed. 1980) avers, "The tribute over the dead body of the tragic hero is conventional. It does not necessarily cast a light over the whole of the preceding play. A similar problem faces us in *Julius Caesar*, where Mark Antony praises Brutus as 'the noblest Roman of them all' ((V.5.68-75)), and in *Coriolanus*, where Aufidius praises Coriolanus: 'he shall have a noble memory' ((V.6.155)). But Fortinbras's strong words are consistent with Ophelia's 'Th' expectancy and rose of the fair state' ((III.1.153))." De Grazia argues that Fortinbras "has no need for constitutional backing from Denmark when he has his own ancient claim to the throne," and that Fortinbras "with his final words gives an order" for the peale of ordnance which might be "a salvo to the passing of a prince, perhaps, but also the heralding of a new power on the throne" (79). Furthermore, she states, "It may be generosity for his defeated counterpart that prompts Fortinbras' solicitude. Or it may be his political cunning that would enhance his own glory by remembering his defeated rival as a war hero" (77).

Still, many critics find Fortinbras's closing lines an extraordinarily apt speech and a tribute to a fallen hero who has overcome the limits of his tragic destiny in death. Delius (ed. 1854) is quick to note the metatheatrical reverberations and glosses of "to the stage" as referring to "the dramatic stage, on which the bodies shall be placed" (CN3896). Kliman, in her essay on Horatio, tells us that "Horatio's panegyric and Fortinbras's that follows, impress upon an audience strong images of nobility, sweetness, and potential" ("Horatio, There When Needed" in "Essays on Character"). Magnus affirms that

> Fortinbras perfects his potential "[r]ites of memory"[29] by his own "haste to hear" Horatio's tale of Hamlet's story, implying a future restoration of hearing and (potentially) political order. . . . Fortinbras's commanded "Peale of Ordinance" (TLN3905-6) "speaks loudly" if not eloquently enough for the departed prince, and we pay our own proper homage by listening both to its thundering tribute and to the pregnant silence that follows. ("Mimetic Hearing and Meta-Hearing in

> *Hamlet*," in *Who Hears in Shakespeare: Auditory Worlds on Stage and Screen*" [p. 97] and in "Essays on *Hamlet*").

Along the same lines, perhaps the most eloquent assessment of Fortinbras's final tribute to Hamlet was penned by Neil in 1877 in his CN to 3896 (ed. 1877, Notes), who writes poetically about Fortinbras's and the play's last line--a resonant note on which to end this discussion of Fortinbras in the critics' eye: Concerning "*Exeunt*] *A dead march . . . shot off*]], Neil writes,

> Might we not almost fancy that the following lines were written as an epilogue for *Hamlet*, to the music of this dead march? 'Your monument shall be my gentle verse, Which eyes not yet created shall o'errread; And tongues to be, your being shall rehearse, When all the breathers of this world are dead; You still shall live, such virtue hath my pen, Where breath most breathes, even in the mouths of men'—*Sonnets*, lxxxi.

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1. See Van Dam, pp. 251-52.

2. Lloyd in 1858 (sig. R2r) commented in relation to stage tradition that "The players find nothing attractive in Fortinbras, and are too happy to retrench the character and extirpate all possible allusions to him" (CN 2734).

3. Another striking moment involving an aggressively over-emphasized Fortinbras occurred in Ingmar Bergman's 1988 BAM production, when Fortinbras barged in with his soldiers and promptly shot Horatio dead, Hamlet's cause never to be reported aright.

4. For example, Ulrici (1846, pp. 226-27) defends the final scene and Fortinbras's presence therein, as follows: "Lastly, the concluding scene has been no less unjustly treated. The unexpected and sudden untying of the entangled knot by a series of accidents, and Hamlet's rash and passionate conduct, have, I think, been already shewn to be necessary. But another and a different fault has been found with it. It is objected, that the appearance of Fortinbras, even though preparation may have been made for it as early as in the first act, is irrelevant to the subject-matter, and is an insignificant piece of ornament capriciously stuck on to the story in order to close the scene with striking effect. It argues a slight acquaintance with guileless, maidenly muse of Shakspeare, to ascribe to it the coquettish arts of modern poets. Never was there a poet who strove less after effect, and yet succeeded better in producing it." Macdonald, in 1883 (CN 87), notes that (CN3840) the idea of the watch necessitated by Fortinbras's aggressions creates an opening and a closing frame. [CN 3851-2]

5. See Hardin Assand and F. Nicholas Clary's "The Sources of *Hamlet*" in the "Essays on *Hamlet*" section of Hamletworks.org.

6. This is a note on Wilson's revised earlier view (*TLS* 36 [1936]: 768) in which he came to accept Fortinbras's royalty.

7. Burton's CN on line 106 is an excellent summary of his position:

> Horatio's opening-scene report of the wager between the kings of Norway and Denmark (97-124) reveals that Fortinbras is . . . motivated by the loss of his inheritance. It describes a wager of lands owned by his father personally **Which he stood siez'd on** against other lands to be **return'd To the inheritance of Fortinbras** (91-92) and presumably lost earlier; the father has gambled away his son's entire inheritance. The economic basis of Fortinbras's motivation explains why his uncle succeeded in appeasing him with a generous allowance (1098). It also explains the Folio description of his followers as **Landlesse Resolutes** (115); presumably an army of disinherited gentry and younger sons facing deprivation and in need of an enterprise to sustain them, **That hath a stomacke in't** (117). Discontented in a time of **much wealth and peace** (2743+20) by the lack of opportunities for self-advancement by military service, they have become a danger to the state. The inheritance motif comes full cycle in the last scene, when Fortinbras claims his ancient rights in the Danish lands upon the extinction of the ruling family, **I have some Rites of memory in this Kingdome Which are to claime** (F1 3885-6).

8 See Burton's, "His Quarry Cries on Havoc," in "*Hamlet* Criticism" and as discussed below. Burton does not make definitive claims for this argument but gives several strands of evidence that, taken together, would support such an interpretation.

9. Q1 spells the name "Fortenbrasse," as does Q2 in several places. F1 always spells it "Fortinbras"; Q6 always spells it "Fortinbrass."

10. Both Horatio and Claudius refer to him as "young Fortinbrasse," which draws a parallel with Horatio's mention of "young Hamlet," the first in the play, in 1.1 (TLN169. See also N. 10, for Coleridge's gloss on that first mention of the play's hero.)

11. See also de Grazia's comments above concerning "lawless" vs. "landless" (p. 1).

12. Barton too reminds us (ed. 1980, p.21) that Fortinbras waits until King Hamlet's death before moving against Denmark, hoping "to recover by force the disputed lands his father surrendered to Denmark by agreement, as a result of his defeat" (see CN179).

13. In a voiceover in his 1996 film, Kenneth Branagh does show such an image of Fortinbras (Rufus Sewall) standing against a map, and the power of this visualization makes sets up the background for Branagh's interpolation of Fortinbras's attack on the Danish palace at the film's ending.

14. Coleridge stresses this point, saying that such anticipation is created at the very end of 1.1: "Note the unobtrusive and yet fully adequate mode of introducing the main character, 'young Hamlet,' upon whom is transferred all the interest excited for the acts and concerns of the king his father" (CN1690). "Young Fortinbras" has been also mentioned in connection with the ghost.

15. Landish's comment here pessimistically extends his point about the spiraling masculine violence that it "will be carried forth again and again if one can judge from Hamlet's choice of Fortinbras as his successor and Fortinbras's characteristic staging of Hamlet's funeral as a military salute." See also-Bernice Kliman's "Three Notes on Polonius: Position, Residence and Name" in *Hamlet* Criticism (Hamletworks.org).

16. Marshall (1875, p. 16) comments: "Perhaps the comparative youth of Hamlet, and the fact that the kingdom was at that time threatened by an invasion of the Norwegians under young Fortinbras, were the reasons which induced the royal councillors of Denmark to place the sceptre in the hands of Claudius, who might be supposed better able to cope with so formidable a foe" (CN291).

17. Jenkins's general view of Hamlet urges the parallelism between Hamlet's pursuit of the guilty Claudius and Laertes's pursuit of the guilty Hamlet, and he therefore finds Fortinbras a much less significant dramatic foil to Hamlet than Laertes.

18. The stage direction reads "Enter Fortinbrasse with {his} <an>Army {ouer the stage} [2734]." Dessen & Thomson(1999) comment that "over the stage" is "usually found when a figure enters and/with an army." Restoration objections to the perceived clumsiness of such stage business were doubtless a contributing factor to the ongoing stage tradition of cutting Fortinbras out of productions altogether.

19. Stevens points out that this expression was "also used in the Establishment of the Household of Prince Henry, A.D. 1610."

20. The Captain informs Hamlet merely that Fortinbras is "the nephew of Old Norway," still less than confirmation that Fortinbras is the heir apparent.

21. F. Nicholas Clary sees "softly" as a possible indication of military stealth in maneuvers designed towards a renewed plan to invade Denmark. In a personal communication, he remarks, "As a comment on the character of Fortinbras, might this [i.e., 'Go softly on'] be not so much an indication of 'concern for his men' or a sign of respectful deference as an intimation of stealth and an invasion tactic? After all, the Hamlet in Q2 pursues the comparison between himself and Fortinbras in the Q2-only soliloquy that follows, whereas the Hamlet in F1 is drawn to compare himself with Laertes in the F1-only passage at 5.2.75-80 [TLN 3851-2]. . . .[I]t is only in the conflated editions that Hamlet thinks of himself in comparison terms with both Fortinbras and Laertes; in Q2 it's with Fortinbras and in F1 it's with Laertes. In Q1, Hamlet compares himself with Laertes, but adds: "Though there's a difference in each other's wrong" (Personal Communication, July 20, 2013).

22. For Kliman, one way of reading of Horatio's description in 1.1. infers a much more measured Fortinbras altogether in that initial scene. Kliman's editorial note on TLN 115 suggests that "Horatio's use of *unimproved* has a more positive meaning [than unapproved] and if the choice is landless then Fortinbras need not change from wild to disciplined."

23. Weder astutely comments: "On his way to the ship which is to carry him to England he meets the army of young Fortinbras, and at the sight of that untrammelled freedom of motion Hamlet's soul, tortured by the iron yoke of his task, breaks out into bitter murmuring. . . CN2743+26-2743+60(1907; rpt. 1977, p. 153-4).

24. Still another reading is suggested by Jackson (1819, p. 364): "Fortinbras, ignorant of the true cause that exposes to his view the tragic scene, thinks treason has been practised, and that it is his duty to punish the traitors. In my opinion, we should read: 'This quarry cries,—On hauock!' i.e. This princely blood [i.e., Fortinbras's] cries out for vengeance: as the havock is begun, so must it be continued against the traitors."

25. Burton's essay, 'His quarry cries On Hauocke! Is it Shakespeare's Own Judgment on the Meaning of *Hamlet*"? (in "Essays about *Hamlet*, pp. 63-64) is discussed extensively below; it also carefully explains the paradoxical contradictions implied by the use of the word "quarry," with its bloody connotations, and the fact that the poison which has killed the onstage "quarry" leaves no wounds; "quarry" seems to be at odds with the image of bleeding carcasses, there being only Claudius who is seriously wounded; moreover, Burton argues that Fortinbras, a seasoned warrior, would scarcely be shocked by "such a sight as this." However, note 18 of the essay shows the connection between "quarry" and the overall view of justice in *Hamlet*, as exemplified in an emblem for True Justice—a raptor flying away with a scorpion in its talons in the English emblem book of Thomas Palmer. Burton's article explains that the unexpected poison sting of the scorpion will kill it, to illustrate Palmer's proverbial motto "He that will smite with the sworde, shal be stroken with the scabbarde," all of which perfectly harmonizes within the English literary tradition both the element of poison and the superficially discordant notion of self destruction by raptor-figures.

26. At least two contemporary commentators have taken such a view, Anne Barton and Robert A. Hapgood (Burton p. 72).

27.The variant "infernall" was introduced in Q5 and was retained in several subsequent editions through the 17th and 18th centuries and beyond. (The collation is as follows: eternall] infernall Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9, Q10, TJOH2, WILK1, WILKW2, THEO1, THEO2, THEO4, WARB, JOHN1, JEN, V1773, V1778, V1785, RANN, ELZE1).

28. "Sergeant" might also be thought of as a judicial rather than a military officer, though the stage context of corpses strewn about strongly suggests a military battlefield. Nevertheless, as usual, there is a possible double sense of this word, especially in this final scene. In his last precious moments of life, Hamlet might well have in mind being summoned by some judicial Sergeant to the Court of The Last Judgment. The verbal motif begun by "fell sergeant" could be seen as continuing to build a Last Judment tableau as Horatio invokes an image of "flights of angels" bound heavenward and Fortinbras's "What feast is toward in thine eternal [i.e., infernal] cell" evokes Hell mouth. (See also N. 25, above.)

29. The Q2 spelling is "rights" (suggesting his claims on Denmark), the Folio, "Rites," but Shakespeare's audiences would have heard only the homophone. There is a performative level to Fortinbras's orders which suggests that his commands themselves are part of his own "rites" of memorial tribute.

Selected Commentary on Fortinbras

Thirlby (1723) "v. 353.7 [229]. nb the kingdom elective v.v. 2, 3. [CN 290-4]

Theobald (26 Mar. 1730, [fol. 123r] [Nichols 2:581]): ". . . Horatio here . . . very justly infers, that Hamlet's voice wil be seconded by others, and procure them in favour of Fortinbras's succession." [CN 889-90]

Theobald (ed. 1733): "This Epithet [3858: *eternall cell*], I think, has no great Propriety here. I have chose the Reading of the old *Quarto* Editions, *infernal*. This communicates an Image suitable to the Circumstance of the Havock, which *Fortinbras* looks on and would represent in a light of Horror. Upon the Sight of so many dead Bodies, he exclaims against Death as an execrable, riotous, Destroyer; and as preparing to make a savage, and *hellish* Feast." [CN 3857-8]

Anon. (ms. notes *in* F3, 1734): "*His quarry*]] The edit[ion] reads *This quarry—a quarry* a term of Hawking. The Hawk stoops a *quarry*, or siezes his prey. *Havock*, ruine, slaughter, from whence comes the word *Hawk*. A bird of slaughter." [CN 3857]

Stubbs (1736, pp. 12-13): "The whole Discourse concerning the great Preparations making in Denmark is very Poetical, and necessary also towards the introducing of Fortinbras in this Play, whose Appearance gives Rise to one Scene, which adds a Beauty to the whole; I mean That wherein Hamlet makes those noble reflections upon seeing That Prince's Army." [CN 86]

Stubbs (1736, pp. 35-6): "This is a Conduct in most of our Author's Tragedies, and in many other of our Tragedy Writers, that is quite unnatural and absurd; I mean, introducing an Army on the Stage. [CN 2734]

Anon. (D.,1773, *St. James's Chronicle* no. 1981, 23-26 Oct. 1773, p. 3): "*Fortinbras.* The Qu's spell this Name *Fortinbrasse* and *Fortenbrasse*. Pray why did the new Editors [JOHNSON & STEEVENS] omit to inform their Readers of this curious and interesting Particular? for perhaps the Mode of Orthography recommended by these Quartos, has at last met with an Advocate. Every superficial Commentator, who is versed in History, must have heard of the Trade which was anciently carried on between the Danes, the Norwegians, and the English, and continued as long as till the Time of Gustavus Vasa, when our Countrymen were still furnished with *Brass* from the Mines of *Dalycarlia*, in return for *Tin* from those of *Truro* in *Cornwall*. In Remembrance of this Fact, the ancient Family which first set this Exchange on Foot, were dignified with the Name of *Fortinbrass*. . . . " [CN 99] (See also N. 8, above.)

Steevens (ed. 1773): "The crown of Denmark was elective. [CN291-4]

Capell (1774, 1.1.122): ". . . [T]he name of the challenger, (which is diversly spelt in the old copies, as—"Fortinbrasse, Fortenbrasse," and most frequently "Fortinbras") seems a name of invention, and a compound of—fort en bras." [CN 99] (See also N.8, above.)

Steevens (ed. 1778): "Shakespeare has already employed this allusion to the Choœ, or feasts of the dead, which were anciently celebrated at Athens, and are mentioned by Plutarch in the life of Antonius. Our author likewise makes Talbot say to his son in [1H6 4.5.7 (2121)]: 'Now art thou come unto a feast of death.' [CN 3858]

Anon. (*The Mirror*, no. 100 [22 April 1780]; rpt. 1781, 3:244-5): "The conversation of Hamlet with the Gravdigger seems to me to be perfectly accounted for under this supposition; and, instead of feeling its counteract the tragic effect of the story, I never see him in that scene, without receiving from his transient jests with the clown before him, an idea of the deepest melancholy being rooted at his heart. . . . It is from the same turn of mind, which, from the elevation of its sorrow, looks down on the bustle of ambition, and the pride of fame, that he breaks forth into the reflection in the 4th act, on the expedition of Fortinbras. "It is with regret, as well as deference, that I accuse the judgement of Mr. Garrick, or the taste of his

audience; but I cannot help thinking, that the exclusion of the scene of the Grave-digger, in his alteration of the tragedy of Hamlet, was not only a needless, but an unnatural violence done to the work of his favourite poet." [CN 3308-9]

Blackstone (apud Malone, 1780, 1:350-1) says: "I agree with Mr. Steevens, that the crown of Denmark (as in most of the Gothick kingdoms) was elective, and not hereditary . . . [C]onceiving that by the death of his uncle, he himself had been king for an instant and had therefore a right to recommend. When, in the fourth act, the rabble wished to choose Laertes king, I understand that antiquity was forgot, and custom violated, by electing a new king in the lifetime of the old one, and perhaps also by the calling in a stranger to the royal blood. [CN 291-4]

Ritson (1783, p. 192): "The king tells Hamlet that he is the most immediate to the throne, i.e. heir apparent, or, at least, presumptive heir, which would be absurd, on an idea that the crown was elective. (See also the conversation of Laertes with his sister [483-7].)" [CN 291-4]

Henley (1787): "it appears from what follows, verse 116 [120], that *landless* is the proper word." [CN 115]

Malone (ed. 1790, 9:437): "Fortinbras comes in very naturally at the close of the play, and lays a very just claim to the throne of Denmark, as he has the dying voice of the prince. He in a few words gives a noble character of Hamlet, and serves to carry off the deceased hero from the stage with the honours due to his birth and merit." [CN 3883-5]

Goethe (1796, 5.4.178): "To my mind these external circumstances [affecting characters and their movement] include the troubles in Norway, the war with young Fortinbras, the ambassadorial mission to the old uncle, the settlement of the dispute, young Fortinbras's march into Poland, and his return at the end of the play. Like Horatio's return from Wittenberg, Hamlet's desire to go there, Laertes's visit to France and his subsequent return, the dispatching of Hamlet to England, his capture by pirates, and the death of the two courtiers because of the treacherous letter. All these things are circumstances and events which would give breadth to a romance, but they seriously disturb the unity of a play in which the hero himself has no plan, and are therefore defects." [CN 2986-7]

Tooke (1798): 1:165-6: "To *improve* (i.e. to censure, to impeach, to blame, to reprove) A word perpetually used by the authors about Shakespeare's time, and

especially in religious controversy. . . . The expression in Hamlet (Act I. Sce. I.)—'Of *unimproved* mettle hot and full'—ought not to have given Shakespeare's commentators any trouble: for *unimproved* means *unimpeached*; though Warburton thinks it means '*unrefined'*: Edwards '*unproved;*' and Johnson (with the approbation of Malone) '*not regulated nor guided by knowledge or experience:*' and in his Dictionary he explains it to be '*not taught, not meliorated by instruction*.'" [CN 113]

Todd (1818): "Havock. †interj. [from the noun Havock, meaning waste, wide and general devastation; merciless destruction] A word of encouragement to slaughter, a term formerly meaning that no quarter would be given. 'Why stand these royal fronts amazed thus? Cry havock kings! Até by his side, Cries haock! and lets loose the dogs of war.' Shakespeare." [CN 3857]

Jackson (1819, p. 364): "Fortinbras, ignorant of the true cause that exposes to his view the tragic scene, thinks treason has been practised, and that it is his duty to punish the traitors." [CN 3857]

Singer (ms. notes in Singer, ed. 1826, n. 53): "[H]avock was the cry formerly raised by the victorious in battle when no quarter was to be given." [CN 3857]

Strachey (1848, p. 101-2): "That . . . [Shakespeare] considers Hamlet to have triumphed in death, seems to be plainly marked by the introduction of Fortinbras. Fortinbras is the Hotspur of this play, the representative of practical, as distinguished from speculative, energy; of martial honour and glory, as distinguished from philosophical and political wisdom. The cannon's salute, and the martial music, of the young conqueror's triumphant march as he returns from Poland, are the last sounds that fall, softened by distance, on the ear of the dying Hamlet: and at the soldier's hands he receives a soldier's funeral, and from his lips a soldier's funeral eulogy. . . . Who can doubt that, if Hamlet could have chosen, this would have been the lot that he would most have wished, and esteemed the greatest honour—to be recognized as a practical man, by him who was himself altogether practical, and a man of action." [CN 3851-2]

Delius (ed. 1854): ["Fortinbras bravely defies the unknown outcome of his undertaking."][CN 2743+ 44]

Delius (ed. 1854): ["The victorious homecoming to Norway of Fortinbras, who by chance from Poland arrives in Denmark with the envoy of the English King to the Danish and greets them with a salvo/volley. The Fol has in the Sd *shout within*, what the editor, referring to the *warlike volley* alters into *shot."*] [CN 3840]

Singer (ed. 1856): "Thus the first quarto. The folio has 'Of unimproved mettle hot and full. The reading of the quarto seems preferable, as the idea excited by young Fortinbras is of one animated by courage at full heat, but at present untried, —the ardour of inexperience." [CN 113]

Dyce (ed. 1857): "The folio has '*Take up* the body,' &c.—which Caldecott, Mr. Knight, and Mr. Collier, adopt, though it is such a manifest error, that, even without the authority of any old copy, an editor would be bound to make the word plural. Fortinbras is now speaking of *the bodies* generally,—of Hamlet, the King, the Queen, and Laertes, who are all lying dead, and who, he says, present a spectacle that only becomes the field of battle. It would almost seem that the restorers of 'body' had forgotten what precedes the present speech, viz,— [cites 3872-94]." [CN 3902]

Lloyd (1858, sig. R2r): "The players find nothing attractive in Fortinbras, and are too happy to retrench the character and extirpate all possible allusions to him; but there is a worse evil in this than the curtain falling at last on an unking'd stage, with four princely corpses, and Osric and Horatio only left alive: these foreign incidents give range to the thoughts that relieves them in this the longest of all the plays, that renders the voyage and return of Hamlet less abrupt and remote and exceptional, and the idea which they communicate of the Norwegian prince—the young and tender leader of an adventurous expedition, remains in the mind insensibly from the essential congruity with the theme of the play, so that his appearance and mastery at last is satisfying as the closing in of a grand outlying circuit and the fulfillment of an expectation." [CN 2734]

Lloyd (1858, sig. R4v-R5r): "Some of the peculiarities of the enlarged quarto are brief enough to be absent from the folio merely by accidental omission; but the soliloquy on the expedition of Fortinbras is not one of these; beautiful as it is, I am, however, disposed to think that the excision of it may have been deliberate,—as unnecessary, prolonging the action, and it may be exhibiting the weakness of Hamlet too crudely, for it shows him making the most definite resolution to revenge precisely as he turns his back upon the last opportunity by quitting the country. The passage, however, with some others, is too fine to be suppressed,

though I am inclined to think the poet sacrificed them, and worthily and properly may take their place in brackets." [CN 2743+26-2743+60]

Tschischwitz (ed. 1869, *apud* Furness, ed. 1877): ["The reading of the Ff is certainly the better; had 'lawless' been meant, the more usual word *outlaws* would have been used. No young noble warrior like Fortinbras would have made common cause with *outlaws*, but with the *landless* the case was different; indeed, he himself belonged to that category"] [CN 115].

Tschischwitz (ed. 1869): ["That bodies must name it the words (Such a sight as this becomes the field (the battlefield)), which however one would not have from the single body of Hamlet."] [CN 3902]

Miles (1870, pp. 85-7): "The solution is complete. The wide repose of a perfect catastrophe extends to the remotest fibres of the plot. In the masterly lines assigned to Osric, the simultaneous arrival of Fortinbras and England is announced in one breath. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have fallen: once more the princely Norwegian, who represents the future, marches broadly into view, irradiating all that scene of havoc with the promise of a better day for Denmark. Nothing remains but for Horatio to tell [cites 3874-5 'the yet. . . came about']: to sustain Fortinbras in claiming his vantage, 'And from his mouth whose voice will draw no more!'[3889 . . . ." [CN 3817-47]

Miles (1870, pp. 87-8): "In the sad, soldierly orders and martial praise of Fortinbras the play finds its perfect consummation." [CN 3895-3906]

Hudson (ed. 1872): "*Rights of memory* appears to mean rights founded in prescription or the order of inheritance." [CN 3885]

Gervinus (1877, p. 582): "With one single significant word the poet evidently intimates his deep design at the end, and his reference to that question of the king to Laertes. Over the heaps of dead, Fortinbras exclaims, 'this quarry cries on havock!' a word which in sporting language signifies that game, useless from its amount and quality, which is killed by unpractised sportsmen; as here by the unskilful avenger. thus then this bloody conclusion is not the consequence of an æsthetic fault on the part of the poet, but of a moral fault on that of his Hamlet, a consequence which the sense of the whole play and the design of this character aim at from the first." [CN 3857ff]

Elze (ed. 1882): "North's Plutarch (1595), p. 764: *havoke*. Which may have been Shakespeare's spelling?—The meaning of this sentence is still unexplained,

although the meanings of its single words seem plain enough. *Quarry* (French *corée, currée*, Italian *corata*, Spanish *corada*, from Latin *cor*) properly signifies the heart and other entrails of the game which were the due of either hounds or hawks; in a wider sense it denotes the game killed, especially when heaped together, and, in the present case, it means the pile of the dead. *Havock*, from whatever root it may have been derived, was the 'cry originally used in hunting, but afterward in war as the signal for indiscriminate slaughter', whence it acquired the sense of general and merciless slaughter. *To cry on* is said by Dr. Johnson to be equivalent to exclaiming against somebody or something. The meaning in the text, according to Mr. Hudson ad loc, would therefore be: 'This pile of corpses cries out against indiscrimate slaughter', which seems so overstrained and artificial a thought, that I cannot think it to be what the poet meant to say." [CN 3857]

Elze (ed. 1882): "The agreement between [Q1] and [F1] decides. Although in §240 Horatio expresses a wish 'that these bodies High on a stage be placed to the view' [3872-3], yet Fortinbrasse is here speaking of Hamlet's body exclusively, Hamlet being the only one to whom he accords military honours." [CN 3902]

MacDonald (ed. 1885) on "give order": "—addressed to Fortinbras, I should say. The state is disrupt, the household in disorder; there is no head; Horatio turns therefore to Fortinbras, who, besides having a claim to the crown, and being favoured by Hamlet, alone has power at the moment—for his army is with him." [CN 3872]

MacDonald (ed. 1885): "*rites of warre*]] —military mourning or funeral rites." [CN 3900]

White (1896, pp. 333-5): "Of this word ["eternal"], the Lexicon, following Walker, gives in three important passages the explanation that it is 'used to express extreme abhorrence.' The passages are:—'There was a Brutus once that would have brook'd The eternal devil to keep his state in Rome, etc.' [*JC.*1.2.160 (260)] 'Some eternal villain, Some busy and insinuating rogue.' [*Oth.* 4.2.130 (2842)] 'O proud death, What feast is toward in thine eternal cell, That thou so many princes at a shot So bloodily hast struck!' "[CN 3858)]

Verity (ed. 1904): "Shakespeare's side-scenes are a specially instructive feature of his dramatic method. The present is essentially a scene of character-contrast: Fortinbras, the resolute man of action, set over against Hamlet, the hesitating dreamer: and the contrast is made more striking by Hamlet's own appreciation of

it, and by the difference of their respective motives of action. Note too the contrast in position, Fortinbras being 'free from the entanglements which have ruined Hamlet's career.' The whole contrast is the *raison d'etre* of the scene. But except in so far as the elucidation of character (here Hamlet's) contributes to the movement of a piece, this scene does not advance the action: hence its practical excision from the Folio, where only lines 1-8 are given. Indeed, in the modern acting-versions of *Hamlet* with which I am acquainted the whole of the Fortinbras element is 'cut.'" [CN2734]

Travers (ed. 1929) says the king's promise may be equivalent to Hamlet's *dying voice* for Fortinbras, 3845. [CN 291]

Travers (ed. 1929): "Proud, laying the highest low and making them thy spoils. Cp. *King John*, IV, iii, 35, where Pembroke, seeing the body of Arthur, exclaims:'0 death, made proud with pure and princely beauty." [CN 3857]

Wilson (1934, rpt. 1963, 1:59): "Fortinbrasspeaks politely; after all that has happened at the beginning of the play, he is a suspect character in Denmark; he 'craves' therefore. F1, however, makes him talk in a more peremptory vein [[quotes F1 version with "Claimes"]]. It might be thought that the change is just one of those little chance substitutions of which the F1 Hamlet is full. But it is something more; for it is linked with two lines which belong to Fortinbras at [5.2.389-90 (3885-6)]: 'I haue some rights, of memory in this *kingdome*, Which now to *clame* my vantage doth mute me.' Once again the repetition of a word by Shakespeare, the word 'kingdom.' has acted like a sort of memory-hook. 'Kingdome' and 'claim' have become associated, and so when 'kingdom' occurs in an earlier speech in another scene by the same character, 'claims' asserts itself and thrusts the more polite 'craves' aside." [CN2737]

Harrison (ed. 1937): "On the stage presumably the King, the Queen and Laertes die within the inner stage, and their bodies are hidden by the curtain, thereby leaving only Hamlet's body to be carried away ceremoniously." [CN 3902]

Kittredge (ed. 1939): "The omission of these lines in the Folio is a mere 'cut' to shorten the play when acted. It would not do to delete Fortinbras altogether at this point, for something was needed to account for his indispensable presence at the end of the play."

Barton (ed. 1980, p.21) finds it significant that Fortinbras waits until King Hamlet's death before moving against Denmark, hoping "to recover by force the

disputed lands his father surrendered to Denmark by agreement, as a result of his defeat." [CN 197-8]

Frye (1980, p. 90): "The final result of all the to-do the Ghost of Hamlet senior starts is that the successor of Claudius on the throne of Denmark is the son of the man he had killed long before the play began." [CN 3844-5]

Spencer (ed. 1980) [on "most immediate"]: "closest in succession. Hamlet's position as heir under a quasi-elective system is strong. . . . Shakespeare shows Claudius not as a usurper, but as duly elected. Later, facing death, Hamlet himself supports the election of Fortinbras, and Horatio thinks that this recommendation will win Fortinbras more votes (5.2.349-50 and 382-6)." [CN 291]

Spencer (ed. 1980) "Shakespeare does not intend us to regard Fortinbras as a tyrant, or his assumption of power as arbitrary. The praise bestowed on him by Hamlet ((*a delicate and tender prince*, IV.4.48)) is important, confirming the good impression of Fortinbras given throughout the play ((II.2.68-80 and IV.4.1-8)). In many respects Fortrinbras seems to embody Hamlet's ideal of kingship." [CN 3844-5]

Spencer (ed. 1980): "This does not mean that there is any connexion between *the news from England* and *the election* (to the Danish throne). Rather, Hamlet turns aside from the triviality of the fate of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to his serious concern for the future of the Danish crown. Perhaps some stage business is required: he is handed the crown of Denmark (taken from the dead Claudius), and his dying thoughts, self-forgetful and calm, are upon its inheritance by a worthy successor." [CN 3851-2]

Spencer (ed. 1980): "*his train of drum*]] As there are now four dead bodies on the stage, requiring at least eight men for their simultaneous removal, Shakespeare has good reason to bring on a stage-army. It provides a splendid military finale." [CN 3852-3]

Spencer (ed. 1980): "Fortinbras's claims to the Danish throne have not hitherto been mentioned, nor are we told what they are. But we remember that old Fortinbras fofeited his personal lands to old Hamlet ((I.1.80-104 and I.2.17-25)) and so his son might regard himself as the residual heir to the throne after the expiring of the Hamlet lineage. It is notable that Fortinbras speaks only of *rights of memory* in Denmark. He is not like Malcolm in *Macbeth* or Richmond in *Richard*

III, the rightful heir to the throne who ousts a regicide and usurper and so can cleanse the kingdom of corruption. A peaceful transfer of the throne to a strong, worthy, and rightful claimant, and so an avoidance of political disorder, is what the ending of this tragedy requires (and perhaps supplies)).” [CN 3885]

Spencer (ed. 1980): “The tribute over the dead body of the tragic hero is conventional. It does not necessarily cast a light over the whole of the preceding play. A similar problem faces us in *Julius Caesar*, where Mark Antony praises Brutus as ‘the noblest Romanof them all’ ((V.5.68-75)), and in *Coriolanus*, where Aufidius praises coriolanus: ‘he shall have a noble memory’ ((V.6.155)). But Fortinbras’s strong words are consistent with Ophelia’s *Th expectancy and rose of the fair state* ((III.1.153)).” [CN 3897-8]

Jenkins (ed. 1982, pp. 133-4) “The traditional nature of the maxims bestowed on a son being launched into the world shows Polonius in his generic paternal role.” Polonius and Laertes, then, are parallel to old King Hamlet and Hamlet and to Old Fortinbras and young Fortinbras.” [CN 523-46]

Jenkins (ed. 1982): “In marked contrast with [1.1.95 (112-117)]: *delicate*, sensitive, of gentle nurture; *tender*, youthful and uncoarsened.” [CN 2743+42]

Jenkins (ed. 1982): “For the suggestion that this rebellion of Laertes replaces the one originally envisaged for Fortinbras (112 ff.), cf. Intro., pp. 100, 142, and see *Rice U. Studs*., lx, 100-3.” [CN 2841]

Jenkins (ed. 1982): “The importance naturally attaching to a monarch’s own view of his successor is reflected here, as in the concern for Elizabeth’s deathbed nomination of James.” [CN 3845]

Klein (ed. 1984) [on “Led by a delicate and tender Prince”]:“Neither an unconscious self-projection (which anyway would only be thinkable in a Romantic conception of Hamlet) nor any idealisation remote from reality—that is precluded by the distance and irony of what follows.” **[**CN 2743+42]

Landis (1984, pp. 8-17) comments on the usefulness for Sh. in naming the counsellor *Polonius* and featuring Poland at various points in the play: “Poland, then, is that little plot of ground, where [. . .] thousands go obediently to their graves for no good reason. It is that *locus* that stands for male violence which, if it cannot go against its original antagonist [. . .] must supply a substitute. [. . .] Just as King Hamlet smote the ‘sledded Polacks,’ as Fortinbras went against Poland,

and as Hamlet mistakenly stabbed Polonius—the Polish one—so the larger violences of the play are carried forth, and will be carried forth again and again if one can judge from Hamlet's choice of Fortinbras as his successor and Fortinbras's characteristic staging of Hamlet's funeral as a military salute." [CN 291]

Hawkes (1985, p. 316), according to Kliman, "finds a plethora of dead fathers and bereft sons," and "sees "an 'avuncular' function covertly at work in *Hamlet* [Norway with Fortinbras, Claudius with Hamlet, Claudius with Laertes] activated by the common theme of the death of all those fathers." [B.W. Kliman, "Essay on the Character of Hamlet": CN 1985]

Tennenhouse (1986, p. 87, apud Griffiths). "Tennenhouse asserts: 'Hamlet marks the moment when the Elizabethan strategies for authorizing monarchy became problematic. . . . Shakespeare appears to question their adequacy [i.e. Elizabethan strategies] in representing the transfer of power from one monarch to another. History plays could not be written after Hamlet, I will argue, because this whole matter of transferring power from one monarch to another had to be rethought in view of the aging body of the queen, Elizabeth.'" [Qtd. in Kliman, "The Play as a Whole" in "Essays on *Hamlet*"]

Mercer (1987, p. 130): "This vocabulary seems to belong not to Horatio's own idiom but to the thing he talk about, as if, for this moment, the blunt force and energy of Fortinbras and his band of desperadoes pushes aside the pedantic legal diction and the strings of relative connectives to plant these rough words in Horatio's mouth. Diction, in short, is determined not by the speaker but by the subject; it is a matter not of style but of register." [CN 112-17]

Hibbard (ed. 1987, Appendix): "An anonymous contributor to the Gentleman's Magazine 60, 403 suggested that these lines belong to the Captain, who is knowledgeable about the war, not to Hamlet, who asks for information about it. The point seems a fair one. Moreover, there is mislineation at [3.4.52 (2435-6)] in Q2, showing that Shakespeare was not very careful about his speech headings. It therefore seems reasonable to assign the lines to the Captain." [CN 2743+18-2743+19]

Hibbard (ed. 1987, Appendix): "The omission of this long passage from F and from the text that lies behind Q1, where there is no trace of it, cannot be accidental . . .. In spite of all that has happened since the end of 2.2, he is still very much where he was then. His soliloquy is a confession of failure, summarizing what we have seen . . . ." [CN 2743+1-2743+60]

Hibbard (ed. 1987): " . . . [W]hether the words spring from the poet's recalling his earlier tragedy or not, they lead into one of the most remarkable moments in the entire play, a powerful union of common experience and high art. The common experience is there in the common phrases: 'Of all the days i'th'year', 'It was the very day', and 'man and boy, thirty years'. It is thus that we all remember things that happened in the past. But what do these expressions authenticate. The first takes us back to the beginning of the Hamlet saga and to the opening scene. Also the mention of old Fortinbras reminds us of the existence of young Fortinbras with whom the play will end. The second suggests that the paths of the Grave-digger and the Prince have been converging ever since Hamlet was born, even, perhaps, that the next grave to be dug will be Hamlet's. And what of 'man and boy, thirty years'? Like the other two expressions, it authenticates matter of the first importance: the detailed knowledge of dead bodies, including Yorick's, which the Clown now displays, and thus provides the opening for a superb flash-back to Hamlet's boyhood. The poet's concern is not with arithmetic and Hamlet's age, but with much larger matters." [CN 3334-5]

Andrews (ed. 1989): "Fortinbrasse's words remind us that the wheel has now come full circle: like Hamlet, and like Laertes, Fortinbrasse has had a father's honor to reinstate, and he now claims not only the Norwegian territory the elder Fortinbrasse had lost to the elder Hamlet, but the elder Hamlet's kingdom in its entirety." [CN 3885]

Andrews (ed. 1993) [re "in his eye"]: "To his face, in his presence. Fortinbrasse's phrasing hints at effontery. See [4.7.44-45 (3054-55)], where a jaunty Hamlet uses similar language, and compare [2.2.424-25, 573 (1469-70, 1613)]." [CN 2740]

Kliman (1999): "As Wilson, 1936, points out (CN 96), there is no evidence that Fortinbras's father was king when he challenged King Hamlet." [CN 209]

Edelman (2000): "Fortinbras pointedly awards Hamlet a high honour in his rite of war by having 'four captains [3895], not just any soldiers, take up his body. This is confirmed by reference to [*Cor.* 5.6.149 (0000)] where Aufidius needs only three captains [in addition to himself] for the body of his great foe [quotes]." [CN 3895]

Thompson & Taylor (ed. 2006) [on "sleaded pollax"]: "a notoriously difficult phrase which is almost identical in all three early texts (see t.n.). Most recent editors emend 'pollax' to 'Polacks', i.e. Poles, and interpret 'sledded/sleaded' as 'using sleds or sledges', since this makes sense of the reference to ice. The word Polack occurs again at [1088] and [1100], [2743+16] and [3871]; it is not

derogatory (as it has become in modern North American usage). In favour of ’pole-axe’ (the weapon), however, in Christopher Marlowe and Thomas Nashe’s Dido, Queen of Carthage (c. 1585, printed in 1594), Aeneas describes the destruction of Troy: ’Old men with swords thrust through their aged sides, / Kneeling for mercie to a Greekish lad / Who with steele Pol-axes dasht out their braines’ (Dido, 2.1.198-9). The ’Greekish lad’ is Pyrrhus and Shakespeare drew on this scene for the Player’s speech in 2.2 [1494 ff.]. But it is not clear what ’sleaded’ would mean: perhaps ’leaded’ or ’studded’ (as in modern ’sledgehammer’?: OED cites a 1495 reference to ’Sledge hamers of yron’).” [CN 79]

Burton (2000 SNL): “Horatio’s description of the wager frames the issue of lost inheritance as a motive for action with respect to young Fortinbras, setting the stage for indications that lost inheritance constitutes a similar motive for action with respect to Hamlet and Laertes.” [CN 99-112]

Burton (2000): “Horatio’s opening-scene report of the wager between the kings of Norway and Denmark (97-124) reveals that Fortinbras is . . . motivated by the loss of his inheritance. It describes a wager of lands owned by his father personally **Which he stood siez’d on** against other lands to be **return’d To the inheritance of Fortinbras** (91-92) and presumably lost earlier; the father has gambled away his son’s entire inheritance. The economic basis of Fortinbras’s motivation explains why his uncle succeeded in appeasing him with a generous allowance (1098). It also explains the Folio description of his followers as **Landlesse Resolutes** (115); presumably an army of disinherited gentry and **young**er sons facing deprivation and in need of an enterprise to sustain them, **That hath a stomacke in’t** (117). Discontented in a time of **much wealth and peace** (2743+20) by the lack of opportunities for self-advancement by military service, they have become a danger to the state. The inheritance motif comes full cycle in the last scene, when Fortinbras claims his ancient rights in the Danish lands upon the extinction of the ruling family, **I have some Rites of memory in this Kingdome Which are to claime** (F1 3885-6).” [CN 106]

Kliman (2001): “There is no need to identify the King of Norway with Fortinbras senior, who is not identified as a king. The battles these passages describe are multiple, over periods of time.” [CN 77]

Thompson & Taylor (ed. 2006): “In Norway as in Denmark, the brother of the dead king (*Fortinbras of Norway*, [99]) has apparently succeeded to the throne rather than the son.” [CN 207]

Thompson & Taylor (ed. 2006): "Fortinbras is claiming the permission requested and presumably granted at 2.2.76-82 [1101-5] to march his army through Denmark on their (circuitous) route to Poland. Emrys Jones (Scenic, 80) compares his brief entry in this scene with the 'quietly emphatic' first appearance of Octavius Caesar in 4.1 of JC." [CN 2738]

Thompson & Taylor (ed. 2006) [glossing "softly"]: "quietly, carefully. The word seems to imply a respectful attitude towards Denmark, whereas F's 'safely' implies that the army's march will not be challenged." [CN 2743]

Thompson & Taylor (ed. 2006): "These seem inappropriate adjectives to apply to **Fortinbras**, who is described by Horatio as being 'Of unimproved mettle, hot and full,' at 1.1.95 [113] and whose actions in Act 5 reveal him to be politically astute; perhaps, however, the implication is that he is highly sensitive to questions of honour. Polonius has punned on *tender* at 1.3.102-8 [569] and Shakespeare plays on 'tender heir' and 'tender chorl' in *Son* 1." [CN 2743+42]

De Grazia (2007, p. 77): "It may be generosity for his defeated counterpart that prompts Fortinbras' solicitude. Or it may be his political cunning that would enhance his own glory by remembering his defeated rival as a war hero. Either way, it is a pointedly ironic way to commemorate a man who draws his sword only to enjoin an oath, falls short of using it on himself or his enemy, returns naked or unarmed to avenge himself, and needs an advantage in a court fencing match" (77).

De Grazia (2007, p. 79) Fortinbras "has no need for constitutional backing from Denmark when he has his own ancient claim to the throne." The peale of ordance he commands could be "A salvo to the passing of a prince, perhaps, but also the heralding of a new power on the throne."

De Grazia (2007, p. 141): The law principally functioned to obtain, retain, or transfer land," and the early Hamlet texts demonstrate the close semantic kinship between law and land. Fortinbras . . . intends to attack Denmark with an army of resolutes who are landless in Q and lawless in F. Editors cannot go wrong here, for either form of lack would motivate aggression.

Wilson (2007, p. 237) asserts that the line "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark" "would have had, if indeed Hamlet were the Christmas play for 1603, a chilling effect on the Danish relatives of the queen who were present. He likens the rule of the Stuarts to a rule by Fortinbras had he won the single combat against

King Hamlet. "In fact, images of disease in Hamlet may reflect the plague which ‘accompanied James to the throne and augured ill for his reign’" [quoted from Mallin, Eric. p. 107 in "Succession, Revenge, and History: The Political Hamlet." In Inscribing the Time: Shakepeare and the End of Elizabethan England. Berkeley: U of California P, 1995.] [CN 678].

Pequigney (2008, personal communication): “The first mention of the name. It is spoken three times in the opening scene, always by Horatio, referring twice to the apparitional King [101, 112], and the third time to the Prince [169]. *Hamlet* derives from the name *Amleth,* used in the two earliest narratives of the legend, that of Saxo Grammaticus in his *Historiae Danicae,* written at the end of the twelfth century, and that in the fifth series of Francois de Belleforest’s *Histoires Tragiques,* published in 1570. Steevens (ed. 1793, 15:B2v) notices that the h at the end of *Amleth* was transferred to the beginning of the name to form *Hamlet.* Upton (1746, p. 286) affirms that Shakespeare, as here, regularly alters proper names according to English pronunciation. This is surely the reason for the alteration. It was not made, however, by Shakespeare but rather by the anonymous author of the Ur Hamlet, who would have modified the spelling between the appearance of his narrative source in 1570 and his dramatization of the story in the 1580s or early 90s. An older, Anglicized, non-theatrical form of the name was Hamnet. Shakespeare gave it to his only boy (1585-1596), thus honoring a Stratford friend, Hamnet Sadler, the child’s godfather. Wherever his first name may have come from, Sadler, who had married his wife Judith by 1580, would have been baptized many years before the source play was written. Now in Saxo and Belleforest the murdered father has a different name from his filial revenger. Who then named the father after the son? It had to be either the Ur-Hamlet playwright or Shakespeare. Though there is no way of knowing who, the deft effect of the move suggests Shakespeare. The shared name serves to draw the father and son emotionally and psychologically closer, and to underscore the deep involvement that each Hamlet feels in the fate of the other. Furthermore, Shakespeare repeated the device with a slain senior Fortinbras and an avenging junior Fortinbras, both also royal, both also ahistorical, and both definitely his invention.” [CN 101]

Kraft (2009, private communication: “Modern editors rightly prefer F1’s *on.* [instead of **drawe no more**]. Horatio is referring to Hamlet’s power to command attention through his magnetic verbal skills. Heminge and Condell in their preface ’To the great Variety of Readers’ write of Shakespeare’s power to ’draw, and hold you’ (A3). Helena to Demetrius in *MND* (2.1.195) may also be germane: ‘You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant.’” [CN 3889]

Clary: "As a comment on the character of Fortinbras, might this [i.e., "go softly on" TLN 2743] be not so much an indication of 'concern for his men' or a sign of respectful deference as an intimation of stealth and an invasion tactic?" After all, the Hamlet in Q2 pursues the comparison between himself and Fortinbras in the Q2-only soliloquy that follows, whereas the Hamlet in F1 is drawn to compare himself with Laertes in the F1-only passage at 5.2.75-80 [TLN 3851-2]. . . .[I]t is only in the conflated editions that Hamlet thinks of himself in comparison terms with both Fortinbras and Laertes; in Q2 it's with Fortinbras and in F1 it's with Laertes. In Q1, Hamlet compares himself with Laertes, but adds: "Though there's a difference in each other's wrong" (Personal Communication concerning TLN 2743 July 20, 2013). [Magnus, "Fortinbras: Warrior, Survivor, Inheritor of Denmark," N. 19, Essays on *Hamlet*]

Laury Magnus