

Student Work

6-1-1953

**Stages of development in the evolution of the Hamlet legend,
1200-1623**

Frank M. Paulsen

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/studentwork>

Recommended Citation

Paulsen, Frank M., "Stages of development in the evolution of the Hamlet legend, 1200-1623" (1953).
Student Work. 3165.

<https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/studentwork/3165>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in Student Work by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UNO. For more information, please contact unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu.



STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE EVOLUTION OF
THE HAMLET LEGEND
1200-1623

by

Frank M. Paulsen

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
in the
GRADUATE SCHOOL
of the
UNIVERSITY OF OMAHA

June 1953

UMI Number: EP74564

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI EP74564

Published by ProQuest LLC (2015). Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.

Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code



ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1316
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
<u>Introduction</u>	1
<u>Chapter</u>	
④ I. THE AMLETH OF SAXO GRAMMATICUS.....	7
II. TRANSLATIONS OF SAXO'S AMLETH.....	45
Matteo Bandello.....	45
Francois de Belleforest.....	47
The Pavier Translation.....	49
III. THE UR-HAMLET AND DER BESTRAFTE BRUDERMORD.	55
IV. THE FIRST QUARTO HAMLET: 1603.....	73
APPENDIX A.....	79
NOTES.....	81
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	89

INTRODUCTION

Probably more time has been misspent in trying to fit together the pieces of the Hamlet puzzle than in all of the investigations into alchemy. From the very beginning of Hamlet criticism there seem to have been two diverse reactions to the play. Carried over to the twentieth century, these schools are represented by T.S. Eliot, who holds that Hamlet is an artistic failure, and J. D. Wilson, who justifies, to his own satisfaction, at any rate, every line of the play. If Eliot sits at a table with the Hamlet puzzle before him, his chin in his hand and his elbow resting on the table, declaring that some of the pieces are missing, Wilson upbraids his negligence in not lifting his elbow, and there beneath it, finding the truant sections. The mere fact that two such estimable contemporary critics hold such incompatible views would tend to shake the confidence of the most intrepid newcomer to the field of Hamlet criticism. Probably no other single work of art has been disposed of so many times as has Hamlet. Certainly the most ambitious attempt at this sort of disposition is to be found in the investigations of the aforementioned J. Dover Wilson, in the third part of his trilogy of criticism of Hamlet¹. Yet, strangely enough, the Hamlet² studies continue to pour forth; studies which assert, or "disassert", that Hamlet was a pacifist, a coward, a psychotic, a

reactionalist, a positivist, a paranoiac, a weakling, a tyrant, a philosopher, an incompetent, a stout man, and a pregnant woman.]

The dialectical approach to character interpretations seems shaky at best, and where Hamlet is concerned, impossible. That a chain is no stronger than its weakest link does not necessarily presuppose that the architectonic effect of character is no stronger than its weakest component part. Yet Hamlet criticism has been dominated by just that sort of primitive reasoning. At the risk of stretching the analogy a bit further, literature can be defined no more easily through isolation than can character; both are too amalgamative in composition. Literature, in the broadest meaning of the term, can be defined as the history of ideas -- ideas concerning every conceivable subject. As society becomes more sophisticated, its literature seems to assume a consequent sophistication, but the ideas it deals with remain pretty much basic. Critics such as Jones and Harris find that Shakespeare in describing Hamlet's madness, procrastination, attitude toward his mother and Ophelia, etc., is in reality dealing with himself, William Shakespeare. Consequently, Shakespeare had an Oedipus complex, and this, combined with the fact that his father died only shortly before Hamlet was written, accounts for his upbraiding his mother through the mouth of Hamlet (hidden guilt complex);² or, Shakespeare was actually identifying Gertrude's

faithlessness with that of his (Shakespeare's) true love, Mary Fitton.³ Jones says that Shakespeare's attitude is that of "a bisexual man suffering from deep inner conflicts." He goes on to say that his way of responding to a faithless friend or mistress "was to compose a tragedy whose theme was the suffering of a tortured man... In so doing he assuaged his own suffering and saved his sanity of mind...."⁴ This general point of view has become so common as almost to represent a school of Hamlet criticism.

A critic's very sanity, to say nothing of reputation, depends upon his ability to establish identification between what the character is, according to the printed word, and what it represents on the scale of emotional values. It is, perhaps, natural for a critic to assume that within a nature as profound as Hamlet's lies the essential nature of its creator. That Miss Julia is Strindberg, and that Per Gynt is Ibsen, has been denied by no critic. The proximity of Ibsen's connection with Per Gynt, and Strindberg's connection with Miss Julia, contrasted with the degree to which Shakespeare is separated from Hamlet, would seem to be an index in the evaluation of the genius of these three artists. Shakespeare's enormous capacity for vicarious experience is doubtless that which made of him a soldier, a doctor, a lawyer, an alchemist, a clergyman and a Hamlet. This is not to say that there is nothing of Shakespeare's biography in Hamlet. It is merely to say

that the maximum correlation between author and character is to be found in Per Gynt and Miss Julia, whereas the minimum correlation between author and character is to be found between Shakespeare and Hamlet. It would indeed be a happy coincidence if Shakespeare found in the ancient legend of Hamlet the factors so aptly descriptive of his own emotional circumstance.

It is certainly as dangerous to overestimate Shakespeare's debt to Saxo as it is to underestimate it-- the fine nuance of character, along with the inimitable verse, within Hamlet are the precious invention of Shakespeare -- but it seems only sensible to try to define it. Shakespeare received the basic story of Hamlet from Saxo by way of Belleforest and/or the creator of the Ur-Hamlet. Shakespeare's authorship of Hamlet is consequently limited to expansion and refinement rather than invention. To what degree the natural process of evolution played a part in this expansion and refinement remains a moot question, inasmuch as there is no extant copy of the Ur-Hamlet. When one sees that Hamlet's attitude toward his mother is an almost exact echo of the attitude of Saxo's Amleth toward his mother -- motivated by almost exactly the same conditions--one wonders how the critics belonging to the school of Harris, Jones, et al, can assign this attitude to Shakespeare's personal psychological aberrations.

While this study hopes to point out (Shakespeare's)

Hamlet's minimum obligations to the sources that preceded it by drawing parallels between Saxo and Shakespeare, it may be also of some value in trying to ascertain in what ways certain elements within Saxo's Amleth were misunderstood, or enlarged upon, by subsequent writers. Dover Wilson makes a strong point of the fact that to fully appreciate Hamlet one must "share the standpoint of the Elizabethan spectator and watch with his eyes."⁵ In the same way that we moderns may miss the essence of Hamlet by not making ourselves contemporary with Shakespeare, it is possible that the Elizabethan adaptors of Hamlet may have missed the essence within the Medieval Amleth by not making themselves contemporary with Saxo. That is to say, in the same way that we moderns may feel the strong dramatic elements within Shakespeare's Hamlet, without fully appreciating the innuendoes of motivation, the Elizabethan adaptors of Amleth may have absorbed much material which they recognized as being dramatic, but which they were unable to define. The element of local color encourages a personal interest on the part of the participant in any piece of art -- it is, on a mundane plane, the "shock of recognition," to borrow a term from Edmund Wilson. This is something that everyone knows. But Dover Wilson's point, while being an excellent one, only half answers the problem for the critic, who, after making himself contemporary with Shakespeare, is still unable to fit the pieces of the Hamlet puzzle together.

Perhaps one of the reasons that Hamlet remains inexplicable to many critics is due to their tendency of withdrawing it from the gigantic vortex of literature and treating it in isolation. The critic of Hamlet can no more start with Shakespeare and work only forward than can the critic of the Rudin character start with Turgenev and work only forward. If the critic does attempt doing this he is avoiding the burden of tradition. With the characteristics of Rudin in mind, it would not be difficult for the critic to construct a chain which would reach forward at least as far as Mann's Hans Castorp, but if he does not work backward as well, through Hamlet, to Jesus Christ, he will never thoroughly understand his character.

At least five intermediary versions of the Amleth-Hamlet story are commonly believed to have appeared between the Amleth of Saxo and Shakespeare's First Folio of 1623: three translations of Saxo, a troublesome German play, Der Bestrafte Brudermord, which conjecturally corresponds to the Ur-Hamlet, and Shakespeare's first Quarto.⁶

CHAPTER I

THE AMLETH OF SAXO GRAMMATICUS

Denmark's contribution to world literature is, even by Danish standards, not monumental. The literature of Denmark, like that of most small countries, is traditionally nationalistic; occasionally, however, a figure arises, who, by transcending the bonds of nationalism, or, perhaps, in spite of the bonds of nationalism, succeeds in making an estimable contribution to world literature. In this century we need only look at Johannes V. Jensen, who succeeded, and Henrik Pontoppidan, who failed. In the preceding century we need only look to Søren Kierkegaard and Hans Christian Andersen, who succeeded, and Adam Oehlenschlaager and N. F. S. Grundtvig, who failed. Of course, students of literature will immediately recognize the names of Pontoppidan, Oehlenschlaager, and Grundtvig, but they will recognize them first as Danes, and then as creative artists. In the case of Jensen, Kierkegaard, and Andersen, the procedure will be reversed. There is, however, a figure, who in all ways precedes, and in many ways anticipates, both the conscientious artist who transcends the nationalistic, and the artist who is limited to the nationalistic. If this dichotomy seems paradoxical, it should be explained that the man under consideration is

both historian and legendist, both Dane and creative artist.

Little is known of Saxo, the man. He was surnamed Longus (that is, descended from a "Lange" family), and because of his elegant prose style, was early given the cognomen "Grammaticus." He was closely allied with Absalon, Archbishop of Lund, and at his request, undertook the writing of a history of Denmark, Gesta Danorum, "The Deeds of the Danes."¹ Gesta Danorum is an exceedingly ambitious work. Within its sixteen volumes it attempts to cover the whole span of Danish history, from the 4th Century legend of Uffe (or Offa, as he became known in England) to Absalon, Saxo's 12th Century contemporary. The first nine books of Gesta Danorum cover the whole period of pre-historic Danish antiquity, and are almost worthless from an historical point of view, but it is within these books that Saxo reaches his acme as a creative artist -- particularly in the legends concerned with the skjoldunger, the legendary Danish kings of the 7th - 11th Centuries. There are many things of literary significance within Saxo's work; his renditions of three great Nordic heroic poems, Bjarkemalet, Ingjaldskvadet, and Hagbard and Signe, are of great value to philologists to the present day. Had it not been for Saxo, Axel Olrik would certainly have been unable to make his momentous reconstruction of Bjarkemalet.²

It is of some moment to realize that Saxo was no unbiased historian. He was a chauvinist who made his eloquent rhetoric serve the Danish political powers. His points of view were stamped by the antique Roman ideas of the claims of the state which must precede those of the individual. His love of old-fashioned hardiness and all masculine virtues and his corresponding distrust of "effeminacy" made him an enemy of the new dancing song (or ballad) which in the course of the 12th Century, penetrated from Europe into the social pleasure grounds of the Danish nobility. His distrust was based primarily on moral grounds, but he was doubtless unable to appreciate the ballad from an aesthetic point of view either -- its simplicity very likely seemed barbaric to him. According to his literary training in Latin rhetoric, Saxo must have felt pledged to more intricate ideals of beauty. Saxo is a not-too-far-distant cousin of the creator of Beowulf.³

But it is, after all, Amleth that is Saxo's popular contribution to world literature; yet it is not Amleth, the Dane. As mentioned previously, Saxo was essentially limited to the nationalistic; however, within the story of Amleth he succeeded in capturing the dramatic elements which invariably lead to the transcending of the purely nationalistic and make a contribution to literature in a less specialized, more catholic way. It is important, nevertheless, to understand that the Amleth that Saxo

was trying to depict was, first and foremost, a national hero, and consequently he must be strong, brave and ingenious. There is good reason why Saxo was so widely read during the German occupation of Denmark in the years 1940-1945, and why Amleth acted as a source of national inspiration. It would seem incredible should England have used Shakespeare's Hamlet for a source of national inspiration during the same period. The implication is, of course, that Shakespeare inherited, extracted or borrowed, those elements which in the first place gave Hamlet its catholicism, and rejected those elements which limited it to nationalistic chauvinism. Saxo's Amleth is not the crude, primitive legend which many critics would like it to be; it is a competent, and all things considered, dramatically sound piece of work. Certainly, this does not make Shakespeare's Hamlet any less a masterpiece.

The actual legend of Amleth begins in about the middle part of Saxo's third book. It is related that Hardvendel and his brother Fenge are appointed by Rørik, the Danish king, to succeed their father as stadtholder in Jutland. Hardvendel, after having ruled for three years, achieves such fame as a pirate, that the Norwegian King, Koll, becomes envious of him and makes up his mind to defeat him. After sailing wide and broad, King Koll finally comes across Hardvendel's ship. Between the two ships lies a little island, and there Hardvendel and Koll lay-to with their ships. Both men set out to investigate

the terrain of the island, and as they are walking about, they happen to meet all alone. Hardvendel speaks the first words, asking Koll how he would like best to carry on the fight, saying that he himself prefers hand-to-hand combat, with as few witnesses as possible. Koll agrees to this arrangement, and then gives a long speech about the evils of vindictiveness. Both parties enter into a sacred agreement that the victor shall look after the loser's burial. Koll ends his speech with these words: "It often happens that one emerges from a fight with his life, but only after having lost his health (fórlighed), and that is a heavier injury than death. When one is dead, everything is forgotten, but a cripple cannot get away from his injured body; (my italics) and while love should make us pity others' misfortune, how much more should it make us pity our own? Everyone should look out for his body's welfare -- he that fails to do so should be considered a suicide." The fight then ensues, and Hardvendel succeeds in killing King Koll. Rórik, the Danish King, then rewards Hardvendel by giving him his daughter, Gerut, in marriage. Out of this union, a son, Amleth, is born.

Fenge, driven to jealousy by his brother's good fortune, seizes upon the first opportunity to kill him, and afterwards excuses himself by saying that he killed his brother in the name of love. He explains that while Gerut has a nature so gentle that she could do no one the

slightest harm, her husband (Hardvendel) had a violent hatred for her, and that the only way of freeing her was by killing her tyrannical husband. Fenge then marries Gerut.

"When Amleth saw what had transpired, he realized that it would not be wise to act sensibly, and thereby awaken the suspicions of his uncle. Therefore he acted peculiarly, as though he were foolish, and had completely lost his intellect. By means of this ingenious invention, he not only hid that which was inside of him, but also saved his life."⁵

Amleth demonstrates his insanity by careless dress, spends his time mostly in the pigsty, and when addressed, always answers ambiguously, which can be interpreted either as insanity or as unusual craftiness. He makes witty observations, which are generally received with laughter by the whole court clique, but which often contain a sting, which awakens a suspicion that his whole manner is assumed. He never lies, but speaks the truth in a veiled manner. In one instance, he scorches some wooden bars and bends them into hooks, and when asked what he is going to do with them, replies that he is sharpening spears with which to revenge his father's death. Fenge finds Amleth dangerous, and tries to devise a plan by which he can ascertain the degree of Amleth's insanity. A plan is then formulated whereby Amleth is taken into the woods and left by the side of

a beautiful woman - the idea being that the sex impulse will make him forget his insanity and tempt him into making love to the woman. But a friend of Amleth manages to warn him of the trap, and Amleth discovers that the woman herself is a childhood friend of his. He begs her not to betray him -- she promises -- and having spent a pleasant time with her in a close thicket, he returns to the courtiers. After having given some crazy replies to their questions as to what passed between him and the woman, he returns home. The woman, true to her promise, says that Amleth would have none of her.

As this trick is unsuccessful, Fenge tries another one. He announces that he is going away on a long trip, and then arranges for one of his men to hide himself under the straw, with which Gerut's bedroom floor is covered, and spy upon Amleth and his mother, when they are alone. By this means, Fenge hopes to catch Amleth acting sanely. Amleth, upon entering his mother's room, becomes suspicious, and consequently assumes his insane characteristics; waving his arms, crowing like a hen, and jumping up and down on the floor, he tries to discover if there is anyone hidden beneath the straw. When he feels a lump under his foot, he rams his sword through the spy who lies hidden there. After killing the spy, he chops the body into pieces and throws them to the hogs. "So the wretched body received dirt and filthiness for its bed."⁶ After thus disposing of the

spy, Amleth returns to his mother's bedroom, and as she begins to cry over his craziness, he says to her: "Why, shameful woman, do you try to hide your coarse sin with false tears -- you who like some impudent whore desecrate and sully your bed, when full of unchastity you embrace your husband's murderer, and with the most disgusting caresses fawn upon him who has killed your son's father? It is the way a mare acts toward a stallion who has conquered her previous mate. It is a dumb animal's nature to indiscriminately copulate with one, and then with another. And you show the same nature by carrying on in the same way -- forgetting your first husband. It is not without grounds that I carry on the way I do, acting crazy. I have not doubt but that he who murdered his brother will also act with the same ferocity toward his other kinsmen. It is therefore better that I have the appearance of a madman than that of one who is sane -- by acting completely crazy I save my life. In my own tacit way I still plan to avenge my father, but I am biding my time; I am waiting for a propitious opportunity. Everything has its time and place. One must use great craft in dealing with a false and cruel man. You have no reason to wail over my insanity, but would do better to cry over your own disgrace. You should worry about the condition of your own soul, rather than that of others. And finally, don't forget to hold your own counsel."⁷ With these hard words Amleth succeeds in

turning his mother's heart from evil.

When Fenge returns and is unable to locate his spy, he asks Amleth if he has seen him. Amleth tells him that the man is at the bottom of a pit, and that the hogs have eaten him. Although this sounds like more nonsense, Fenge senses that Amleth is becoming increasingly dangerous, so he devises a plan whereby Amleth will be disposed of in a foreign country. Fenge gets hold of two men who, together with Amleth, are shipped to England where Amleth is to visit the English King, who is Fenge's foster-brother. The two men are given a rune staff which is to be delivered to the King of England, and on which is written that Amleth is to be killed and the two emissaries rewarded. On saying goodbye to his mother, Amleth secures her promise that on one year from the date of his departure she will hang out mourning draperies and that she will hold a wake for him. If he has not returned home before the specified time, he is to be considered dead.

During the voyage to England, Amleth manages to get the rune staff away from his sleeping companions. He alters the text of the message to read that the King should hang the two emissaries and give his daughter in marriage to Amleth.

When Amleth lands in England he drops his pose of insanity. He is well received and banqueted in the king's hall, where he is placed just opposite the King and Queen.

The two emissaries, in the meantime, have no idea that the rune staff has been altered. Amleth sits at the banquet table, toys with his food, but eats nothing. That evening, after the banquet, the two emissaries reproach Amleth for his table manners, but Amleth, who suspects that ^{the}king has hidden a spy in the room, says that the bread tasted of blood, the beer of iron, and that the pork had the odor of dead bodies. The King, he continues, has the eyes of a slave, and the Queen acted in a way which indicated that she could not be of high birth.

The next day, the King immediately sets out to investigate Amleth's statements. The baker admits that the grain which the bread was made from came from a field that was previously a bloody battleground. The brewer explains that at the bottom of the well, from which he obtained the water to make his beer, lay a number of rusty swords. The bailiff confesses that by mistake the pigs ate the rotting body of a dead man. The King then corners his mother and finally worms out of her the fact that her marital conduct was not unspotted. There had been a slave..., etc. Finally, the King comes by the information that his wife's mother has actually been a slave. When Amleth is asked how he has known this fact, he says that she gave herself away by covering her head with her cloak, by wearing her gown tucked up, and by picking her teeth after dinner.

The King, convinced that Amleth is a genius, gives

him his daughter in marriage, and the day after the wedding, the two emissaries are hanged. Amleth acts as though the hanging of the two men has offended him greatly, whereupon the King makes restitution by giving Amleth a quantity of gold. Amleth has the gold melted down and encases it in two hollow staves. A year later, when he obtains leave to return home, he takes with him these two gold-filled staves.

Upon arriving in Denmark, Amleth returns home, puts on his old ragged clothes, and to everyone's surprise, presents himself at the banquet hall on the anniversary of his departure. The walls are hung with draperies, a wake is being held for him, and everyone is drunk. When he is asked where his two companions are, he exhibits the two staves and says, "Here." Then he grasps a beaker of wine and pours for the guests. But as he still behaves like a madman, waving his sword about, one of the attendants nails the blade of his sword to its sheath. Soon everyone becomes so completely drunk that they lie belching on the floor. Amleth quickly pulls down the draperies from the walls, joins them over the drunken people, and then fastens the draperies together with a wooden hook in such a way that it is impossible for anyone to escape. He then sets fire to the house, and as soon as the draperies become well inflamed, dashes into the room where Fenge has been put to bed. He awakens Fenge, telling him that at last he has come to

avenge his father's murder. He grips Fenge's sword, hangs his own nailed one in its place and cuts down the drunken man, who vainly tries to draw Amleth's sword from its sheath. The whole place then burns down, killing everyone. This is the end of the Third Book. Saxo concludes in these words: "A courageous man, worthy of everlasting fame, was Amleth, who ingeniously adopted the appearance of a fool, and with an admirable show of insanity hid his superhuman intelligence, and by this ingenuity not only saved his life, but also found an opportunity to avenge his father. It must remain undecided whether his ingenuity and bravery in avenging his father can best be demonstrated by his courage or by his intelligence."⁸

The Fourth Book finds Amleth exactly where he was left at the conclusion of the third. The fire has caused great excitement. In the morning, there is a thronging crowd, and now it is a case of Amleth having to clear himself. He makes a long speech, justifying his killing of Fenge on the grounds that Fenge was a tyrant and a murderer. His speech arouses enthusiasm; some weep, others pity him, but all admire him, and he is chosen King.

After Amleth has arranged matters in Jutland, he makes another expedition to England with three costly ships, magnificent equipment and the best warriors. Upon his arrival in England, Amleth, now "King Amleth,"

is heartily received by his wife and the English King, but when the latter asks about Fenge and Amleth tells him the story, the English King becomes stupefied, because he once made a pact with Fenge whereby he had promised to avenge Fenge in the event of murder. On the one hand, it is his duty to avenge Fenge's death, and consequently kill Amleth; on the other hand, he loves his daughter and is very fond of Amleth. He finally decides, by way of compromise, to get rid of Amleth, yet avoid open conflict with him. His (the English King's) Queen has died in the meantime, and he asks Amleth to go to Scotland with his warriors and ask, on his behalf, for the hand of the Scottish Queen, Hermetrude. All the while, the English King is aware of the fact that Hermetrude is exceedingly enamoured of her virginity and has a habit of killing any emissaries bearing proposals of marriage.

Amleth goes to Scotland with his men. He camps in the neighborhood of Hermetrude's castle, but she has had her spies out, and one of them creeps into Amleth's tent, stealing his shield, and the letter from the English King. From the drawings on the shield Hermetrude realizes that it is none other than the famous king Amleth who has been sent by the king of England. Hermetrude, who, it happens, is averse to being married to an old man, but would be delighted to marry a young man, changes the letter to read that Amleth himself is making the proposal. She then sends the spy back to replace the shield

and the letter. When the spy returns, Amleth, who has in the meantime awakened from his nap, makes a captive of him and then proceeds to the Queen's castle. The Queen, after receiving Amleth and accepting his letter, says that she cannot understand how he, who is so superb and aristocratic a warrior, has been able to marry the daughter of a slave. Amleth allows himself to be convinced that it is far better to be married to a woman of royal descent like Hermetrude. She embraces him, and the wedding is announced.

Thereafter, Amleth and Hermetrude return to England. The English King's daughter (Amleth's first wife) rushes to meet them and warns Amleth against her father. At the same time, she begs him to retain her and their child with him even though he has obtained another wife. The English King, greeting Amleth with great courtesy, invites him to a banquet with the intention of disposing of him. But Amleth, forewarned by his first wife, wears a coat of armour under his clothes, and, when during the banquet, an attempt is made on his life, he is only slightly wounded. Hostilities then break out, and Amleth, having lost the first battle, gathers together all of the dead bodies, props some of them in front of boulders and stakes, placing others on top of horses, thereby giving the appearance of having a strong army. The English, seeing the apparent strength of Amleth's army become frightened, and give up the battle. Amleth then returns

to Denmark with his son, his two wives, and his captured booty.

Amleth is now King of Jutland, where his father before had been only a stadholder. In the meantime, Rørik has died and Amleth's uncle (his mother's brother) has been appointed King at Lejre, near Roskilde. Hostilities break out between uncle and nephew; King Viglet asserts that Jutland, which belonged to him, has been acquired treacherously by Amleth. At first Amleth attempts to satisfy Viglet by sending him goods and gold which he has seized in England, but to no avail. Viglet raises a large army from the population in Zealand and Scania, and passes over to Jutland to end the dispute. Amleth realizes that Viglet has a superior force and that a battle between them will mean his own downfall. He is thus faced with a choice between shame and disgrace or death on the battlefield, and he chooses the latter.

Before setting forth for the decisive battle, Amleth attempts to find an honest man to look after Hermetrude, but she declares that she will follow her master and husband in battle and die with him. Amleth is subsequently killed in the battle, and Hermetrude, far from keeping her vow to die at her husband's side, gives herself to Viglet, the man who has just slain her husband! Saxo comments on this sad state of affairs as follows: "In this way fickle fortune destroys the promises of women; the vicissitudes of time alters them, and casual circumstances weaken their faithfulness,

which always stands on feeble legs. They are as reluctant to keep their promises as they are quick to make them. They allow themselves to be lured and entrapped by their desires and forgetting the past, give themselves with breathless abandon to sudden lust, longing always for something fresh."⁹

This, then, finishes the saga of Amleth, and with the following epitaph, Saxo makes his conclusion: "And so ended Amleth. If fortune had been as faithful to him, as nature was generous, he would have been smiled upon by the gods, and with his great qualities would have exceeded Hercules in his achievements."

From the outset it is plain that Saxo uses the Koll incident to illustrate Hardvandal's valour, and to furnish the final motivation for Fengè's jealousy. Hardvandal's victory over Koll is the incident which leads to his marriage with Gerut, his death, and subsequently, Amleth's feigned madness. In Shakespeare the victory of Hamlet Sr. over Fortinbras, Sr. simply serves to introduce the Fortinbras subplot. That both incidents are cut out of the same cloth, however, is obvious. In Hamlet Horatio says:

....Our last king,
Whose image even but not appear'd to us,
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,
Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride,
Dar'd to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet --
For so this side of our known world esteemed him --
Did slay this Fortinbras; who, by a seal'd compact
Well ratified by law and heraldry,

Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands
 Which he stood seiz'd on, to the conqueror;
 Against the which, a moiety competent
 Was gaged by our king; which had return'd
 To the inheritance of Fortinbras,
 Had he been vanquisher; as, by the same covenant
 And carriage of the (articled) design
 His fell to Hamlet. Now sir, young Fortinbras,
 Of unimproved mettle hot and full,
 Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there
 Shark'd up a list of landless resolute,
 For food and diet, to some enterprise
 That hath a stomach in't; which is no other --
 (As) it doth well appear unto our state --
 But to recover of us, by strong hand
 And terms compulsative, those foresaid lands
 So by his father lost: 10

Common to both incidents are: a sealed pact between
 the two combatants; personal conflict; the death of a
 Norwegian king. Shakespeare invents Fortinbras, files,
 and saves for Hamlet, files, the struggle between death
 and honor.

At the point of Hardvandal's murder the problem
 arises of having to make a fine discrimination between
 Saxo, and Saxo's translators.

Fenge's murder of Hardvandal; as described, is
 direct, open and uncomplicated. Motivated by jealousy
 he takes the first opportunity (actually, the lapse of
 time, perhaps some fifteen to twenty years, between the
 time of Hardvandal's marriage and his murder by Fenge is
 inexplicable) to kill his brother. He then justifies the
 killing to the people's satisfaction and takes his victim's
 widow to wife. It is an old principle within the code of
 Nordic chivalry, which was coming into its own during
 Saxo's time, because of the immense popularity of the

ballads, that the innocent widow and children of a murdered man are the responsibility of the murderer. This point of view can be seen in the ballads themselves. The ballad Torben's Daughter is one among many that illustrate this point:

We were so many children small,
 (On the sea)
 So early did our father fall!
 The day it dawneth and the dew it driveth so free.

On the Sunday evening they scoured both spear and sword,
 On the Monday morning wrathful they rode abroad.

When they rode by the northern shaw
 Sir Torben a-ploughing his field they saw.

'There goest thou, Sir Torben, so fair and so fine!
 Now pay me blood-money for kinsman mine.'

'I will give thee farm and stead,
 I'll give thee my daughter, so fair a maid.'

'We come not hither for house nor land,
 We come for the blood of thy red right hand!'

They hewed Sir Torben to pieces small
 As the leaves that under the linden fall.

They've ridden up to Sir Torben's stead,
 And there stood his daughter, so fair a maid.
 She stood there as slim as a willow-wand
 With a goblet of gold in either hand.

In mirth and sport with wine-cup flowing
 She pledged the slayer, all unknowing.

'How had I guessed thee so mild of mood
 Ne'er would I have spilt thy father's blood.'

'And if my father thou hast slain
 Then must I dree full bitter pain.'

'Have I done ill to thee thereby,
 Thou shalt fare hereafter as well as I.'

He set her up on his steed so true,
 He wrapped her in his cloak of blue.

They rode away o'er the darksome heather,
 Nevermore did she see her father.¹¹

Consequently, according to the medieval code, Fenge would not be censored by the people for marrying Harvendal's widow, he would rather be obliged to do so. It is here that one sees the classic example of the struggle between the code of chivalry and the Christian conscience. As stated earlier, Saxo strenuously objected to the new "femininism," and, later, in Amleth's diatribe against his mother, Saxo clearly indicates which side he is on. On the one hand, Fenge was obliged to care for Gerut and Amleth -- on the other hand, Amleth's conscience, imbued with Christian ideals of morality, is repelled by the bestiality of incest. Saxo's more modern adaptors were unable to comprehend this struggle.

Dr. Latham, in giving his summary of the Amleth legend of Saxo's third book, ostensibly quotes Saxo as follows:

(Fenge) perceiving himself strong enough to execute his enterprise, Horvendill, his brother being at a banquet with his friends, sodainly set upon him, when he slew him as tratorously, as cunningly he purged himself of so detestable a murder to his subjects; for that before he had any violent or bloody hands, or once committed parricide upon his brother, he had incestuously abused his wife. (my italics)¹²

It is impossible that this quotation is from Saxo, inasmuch as the cause and effect are inverted. Latham here has taken the expedient means of quoting from an English translation of Saxo which dates from 1608!

There is in Saxo no hint of adultery on the part of Fenge and Gerut. Incest, yes -- according to Christian morality of the time, it was an incestuous relationship when a man married his brother's wife -- but adultery, no. It is not difficult to see how this confusion of values took place. The translators of Saxo, having lost sight of the conflict between chivalry and Christian morality, simply read the adultery motif into the murder episode. It seems probable that this stage of graduation in the legend was due more to natural evolution than conscientious regard for dramatic power. The attempt to ascertain just when the adultery motif crept into the legend will be saved for another chapter.

Shakespeare's Hamlet, adapted to a more modern audience, could not allow a public murder of Hamlet Sr. and still allow Claudius to remain king. Neither could it justify the marriage of Claudius and Gertrude through the code of chivalry; consequently in Hamlet, adultery motivates the murder, in place of murder motivating incest. But the interesting thing is the fact that the attitudes of Amleth and Hamlet toward their mothers are almost identical. Hamlet's oedipus complex, which modern psychologists so conveniently assign to Shakespeare's psychological aberrations, is apparently as old as the Hamlet legend itself.

Probably the most clear-cut correlation between Amleth and Hamlet is the "antic disposition" motif.

Critics have devoted so many words to the analysis of Hamlet's madness as to have almost made a cliché of it. It is conceded by most critics that Hamlet's madness (feigned or real) is unmotivated, yet these same critics hold that Amleth's madness is motivated. The editors of the Cambridge edition of Shakespeare's works say:

His (Shakespeare's Hamlet's) decision to put an antic disposition on when and as he shall see fit is taken suddenly and he never gives reason for it. This is not the case in Belleforest, where the feigned madness is clearly motivated. There Hamlet, a mere youth, pretends madness as a protection against an uncle who would slay him without hesitation if he could be sure of his sanity.¹³

This, of course, completely evades the issue. It is, in effect, like saying that Hamlet's madness is clearly motivated inasmuch as Claudius would "slay him without hesitation if he could be sure of his sanity," which, obviously, is utter nonsense. On the surface, Amleth's "antic disposition" is as unmotivated as is Hamlet's. The manifestations of Amleth's madness are such that they put Fenge in fear for his very life. Amleth has publicly stated that he is sharpening spears with which to avenge his father's death. The statements that Amleth makes through his feigning would seem to furnish motivation for his destruction, rather than his protection. Fenge is no novice at the game of murder. He killed Amleth's father on pretense so small as to seem ridiculous. Why, then, would the mere fact that he believed Amleth insane deter him from committing another, more advantageous

murder? Accordingly, one cannot simply say that Amleth's feigned madness is clearly motivated, unless one is prepared to show what benefits Amleth would derive from his apparent madness. In both Saxo and Shakespeare the decision to feign insanity is abrupt, and without apparent explanation. But Saxo does say, as quoted previously,

By means of this ingenious invention (the feigned insanity) he (Amleth) not only hid that which was inside him, but also saved his life.

The reason for Saxo's delight in Amleth's ingenious display of madness, and the reason for Fenge's elaborate schemes in attempting to ascertain the validity of his nephew's insanity (that is to say, his reluctance -- even refusal -- to kill an insane Amleth) must somehow derive from the character of insanity itself.

Ancient Teutonic culture is filled with superstitions and beliefs which, with the subsequent sophistication of the race, have dropped out of its cultural pattern. Not least among these is the pattern of beliefs or superstitions which formed to make up the character of the niding -- the madman.

The distinguishing mark of the niding is that one never knows what he will do; in him appears the same unreliability that stamps the demoniac character of the giant. Nothing in him, nothing about him is what it seems, but always something else....The ancient language has a special word for the man who has the germ of death already in him: he is called fey (Anglo Saxon faege, Icelandic, feigr). A fey man does not make a good comrade; there is no luck in him. Such an one is known indeed, by the fact that his counsels turn awry, his wit fails him, he cannot even make use of the wisdom of others.....With the niding,

who lives but a fiction of human life, battle and defense are but a biting and snapping and snarling as of a beast, or rather, as of certain beasts, the niding beasts. The more he toils the greater dishonour he brings upon himself. Not even the last resort open to any living man, of gaining honour in defiance by his death, is here available; there is not sufficient honour in him to make him worthy of vengeance. To slay him is merely putting him out of mischief. (my italics)¹⁴

Thus it is obvious why Saxo delights in the ingeniousness of Amleth's "antic disposition" pose. Amleth has suddenly become untouchable. The implications of this pose are even more significant than they would seem on the surface. In Saxo's first book, the life of a niding, Hading, is described; everything opposes his aim, he can realize none of his objectives. While it would be assuming too much to say that Saxo has placed Amleth's assumed madness in juxtaposition with Hading's cursed life, thus demonstrating how great was Amleth's protection in his guise of madness, it nevertheless strengthens the impression of Amleth's ingenuity in adopting such a pose. But, to further illustrate the great protection Amleth realized from his assumed nidinghood, it is necessary to quote once more, and at greater length from Dr. Grønbech:

In the modern languages, misfortune has something positive about it. Our civilization has imbued calamity with a sort of nobility, or at least clothed it with a sentimental pathos. But in ancient times, unluck, or lucklessness, as the Icelanders call it, was altogether evil, a denudation, and a negative where all ideality sank through without finding foothold. The fearfulness of death consists in its annihilating humanity and setting something else in its place. The niding is not a mere nothing which can pass

through unscathed, as one cleaves a spirit. To the Germanic mind he was abhorrent, the most contemptible of all beings, but he was even more feared than abhorred.

Mighty powers are let loose in him. He could not tame them if he would. But he will not. He who is bereft of honour has no will in the human sense; but then there is another sort of will, or rather an impulse, that holds him and rules him. Our forefathers found the opposite of will not in slackness and lack of will-power, but in something which must rather be called witchcraft, the meaningless, mad wickedness which is accompanied by mysterious powers of mischief. We know from the sagas what an atmosphere of dread invironed these real wizards and witches; and we know that the devilish element in them lay not in such simple arts as that of acting at a distance, sending their will through the air, changing their shape and travelling through time as well as space. Whether their actions and movements are externally more or less akin to those of human beings is really immaterial, because they invariably take place in other dimensions than the human, and are inspired by other and alien motives. The characteristic feature of the wizard is the evil aimlessness that marks his whole mode of action, in contrast to the man who is conscious of his aim in all he does, whether for good or ill. A man's weapons may indeed have the peculiarity that no wound from them can heal; but it is luck which gives the power, and luck may be gained from the blood of the owner, when he is slain in revenge. A wizard, on the other hand, has poison of the soul both in his hand and in his weapons, and his blood is a pestilence that one should beware of touching with one's hands or one's clothes. This is why his eyes are so evil that a glance from them is enough to scorch away the fertility of a region, and it is this perverse nature of his soul which makes his mere presence give rise to optical delusions in all bystanders. He can be exterminated, but poisonous as he is, his destruction must be prepared and carried out with the greatest care, so that one can go home afterwards with the assurance that none of his venom has been left in one's garments, and that he is altogether effaced from off the earth. Men try to burn him to dust, to pile a mound of stones upon him, transfix him with a stake to the ground, or drown him far out from land -- no precautionary measure is too great. (my italics)¹⁵

Accordingly, it is evident why Fenge goes to such fantastic extremes to discover if Amleth is actually mad. (A niding could not experience sexual satisfaction.) It is evident why Amleth is not punished for killing Fenge's emissary, and why Amleth, to further demonstrate his madness (nidinghood) cuts up the body of his victim, boils it, and throws it to the pigs. Finally, it is evident why Fenge sends Amleth to a foreign country to dispose of him.

That Shakespeare inherited this material from Saxo is indisputable. That he realized the implications of it is not probable. In Saxo, as in Shakespeare, Amleth's (Hamlet's) test with the woman (the nunnery scene), the murder of Fenge's emissary (the closet scene), the upbraiding of the mother, and the trip to England are all closely allied with the "antic disposition." In analyzing these scenes independently, one sees that in each case there is a parallel between Saxo and Shakespeare, but that Shakespeare is consistently wanting for substantial motivation. Whereas Amleth is further strengthening the impression he wants to create of nidinghood, Hamlet seems actually to be moved by an inner compulsion which is, on the whole, inexplicable.⁴ /Saxo conceived Amleth as a strong, valiant, national hero who would go to any means to protect himself, and consequently realize his vengeance -- consequently the sound motivation of feigned madness. Shakespeare has either misunderstood

or deliberately perverted this motivation, with the result that Hamlet's antic disposition is a formless thing with no real direction.

If J. Dover Wilson is correct, which doesn't seem unreasonable, in his belief that Hamlet overheard Polonius' statement:

At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him,¹⁶ and if this can be interpreted as meaning that he would have Ophelia offer herself to Hamlet, the parallel between Saxo and Shakespeare is direct. In Saxo, Amleth realizes his sexual, as well as his diplomatic, objective, but the scene moves the action forward in the same way in both pieces. It is a matter of strengthening the belief in Amleth's (Hamlet's) madness.

A more striking manifestation of the "antic disposition" is to be found in the closet scene. According to Karl Werder¹⁷ Hamlet's ill-advised killing of Polonius is the turning point of Shakespeare's play, in that it is responsible for his being sent to England, the death of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Ophelia's madness and Laertes' revenge. Max Huhner,¹⁸ while failing to see that this is the point in the play where Gertrude comes over to her son's side, does recognize that she gives her husband a distorted report of Polonius' death. It is apparent that the killing of the courtier, with the subsequent effect this killing had on the action of the story, lent itself well to dramatic presentation. The

way in which the scene has evolved from Saxo through Shakespeare is rather curious. In Saxo the courtier hides under the straw with which the floor of the room is covered. Amleth stabs him through the straw. In Belleforest, the French translation of Saxo, the straw has become a quilt.¹⁹ In Der Bestrafte Brudermord, the German play based on Saxo, the quilt has become an arras.²⁰ In Pavier, the English translation of Saxo, the arras remain an arras, but a new element is added; Hamlet (sic) cries, "a rat, a rat!"²¹ before stabbing the hidden spy. In Shakespeare the actual killing takes place as follows:

Ham (Drawing): 'How now! A rat? Dead, for a ducat, dead!' ²²

Hamlet is obviously referring here to a rat in its derogatory, symbolical connotation. That he believes the man he has stabbed is the king is obvious as is evidenced by Quarto One:

Ham: 'I a rat, dead for a ducat.
Rash intruding fool, farewell,
I took thee for thy better.' ²³

In Quarto Two, "rash intruding fool, etc.," does not follow immediately upon "dead for a ducat" as it does in Quarto One, but follows seven lines later. Now, unless one is willing to believe that Hamlet was indulging in a rather subtle bit of irony in referring to the "rat" as Polonius's better, one must concede that "rat" is symbolical for "Claudius." It is indeed strange that so many critics have attributed the cry of "a rat, a rat!" to Hamlet. Latham,²⁴ Vining,²⁵ Brandes,²⁶ and Flatter²⁷

all make reference to Hamlet's cry of "a rat, a rat!" This would tend to indicate that these critics conceive of Hamlet as Saxo would like him to be thought of -- that is, as further demonstrating his madness -- while actually, in Shakespeare, the scene is, more than anything else, the basis for a subtle nuance in the characterization of both Hamlet and Gertrude. In relating the death of Polonius to her husband, Gertrude says:

... 'In his lawless fit
Behind the arras hearing something stir,
He whips his rapier out, and cries, 'A rat, a rat!'
And in his brainish apprehension kills
the unseen good old man.'²⁸

Gertrude, by adding an extra rat, removing a question mark, and adding an exclamation point, transformed Hamlet's symbolical expression into a four-legged rodent, running wildly about in the mind of a crazy man. As stated, Hamlet cries, "a rat, a rat!" in Pavier, but, as shall be pointed out in another chapter, there is no agreement as to whether there is any indebtedness between this English prose account of Saxo and Shakespeare's play, and if there is, on which side. If Pavier is indebted to Shakespeare, he has probably been confused in the same way as have Latham, Vining, Brandes, and Flatter, in that no distinction has been made between the actual killing of Polonius and Gertrude's version of the killing in her explanation to Claudius. At any rate, it is evident that Shakespeare, in one respect, is much

closer to Saxo in this scene than he is to the translators of Saxo. There is an associational value between rat and straw that cannot be found between rat and arras.

In both Saxo and Shakespeare the upbraiding of the mother immediately follows the death of the hidden spy. In mood, theme and purpose the two scenes are almost identical. Hamlet's first words to his mother, after having discovered he has killed Polonius, are:

--Leave wringing of your hands. Peace! Sit
you down, 29

which is, in effect, exactly what Amleth says to his mother:

Why, shameful woman, do you try to hide your
coarse sins with false tears....

There is the same utter disgust on the part of both sons. Hamlet cries:

....Nay, but to live
in the rank sweat of an enseamed bed,
Stewed in corruption, honeying and making love
Over the nasty sty, --30

and Amleth cries, no less disgustedly:

...full of unchastity you embrace your husband's
murderer, and with the most disgusting caresses
fawn upon him....

There is the same use of animal imagery. Amleth says:

It is the way a mare acts toward a stallion who has
conquered her previous mate. It is a dumb animal's
nature to indiscriminately copulate with one, then
with another,

which recalls Hamlet's

O God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
would have mourned longer....³¹

And, most important of all, both sons dwell on the fact that they are not really insane. Amleth assures his mother:

It is not without grounds that I carry on the way that I do, acting crazy....by acting completely crazy I save my life.

And Hamlet says:

It is not madness that I have uttered,³²

and again,

...I essentially am not in madness³³
but mad in craft....

The point of difference here is not in method, but in motive. Amleth continuously emphasizes the fact that by acting mad he is saving his life. He doesn't, of course, say how it will save his life; he doesn't have to; it would be all too obvious to his contemporaries.

At the close of the scene with his mother, Hamlet acts in much the same way toward his victim as does Amleth toward his. Hamlet says:

I'll lug the guts into the neighbor room.³⁴

Amleth's obliviousness to his heinous crime shows a similar obliviousness to murder, when he butchers the body of his victim, cooks it, and throws it to the pigs. When questioned about the whereabouts of the corpse, both Hamlet and Amleth answer in cold-blooded ambiguous terms which strengthen the impression of their insanity. Critics have long been puzzled over Hamlet's indifference to his crime -- they evidently haven't taken

his viking ancestry into consideration. Shakespeare has availed himself of the dramatic power of the scene, but he has understood Hamlet's madness in a different way than has Saxo.

The last of the episodes which spring directly from Amleth's feigned nidinghood is the trip to England and the killing of the two emissaries (Rosencrantz and Guildenstern). With Amleth's return to Denmark, Saxo concludes his third book. Dr. Latham has devoted much time to the proposition that the Amleth of Saxo's Third Book and the Amleth of the Fourth Book are entirely different entities. His arguments are not always easy to follow. In attempting to trace the genealogical value of the Amleth of the Fourth Book, he says:

The Amleth of the third book is Uffo (as Crown Prince) who as king becomes Olaus Mansuetus.

But Olaus Mansuetus, is, as name, much the same as Olaus Tranquillus; which is a recognized translation of Olaf Kyrre; which is, combination, for combination, the Anglo-Saxon Anlaf Cwiran, and the Irish Ambhmaibh Cuaran. Just, however, as Olaf thus fuses with the adjunct Cuaran, so does Havelok, which comes from Higelac and Chochilaicus. From Ambhlaibh it is now submitted that Amlethus is an admissible translation.³⁵

In any case, the temperament of both Amleth and Hamlet does seem to change somewhat after the return to Denmark. Dr. Latham may be right in his supposition that in Saxo we are dealing with two different people. In Shakespeare, Hamlet admittedly remains Hamlet. That there is a change in the personality of Hamlet is prob-

ably no mere coincidence. It owes nothing to Saxo, but it may very well owe something to the absence of Saxo.

Many critics have remarked this change in Hamlet after the sea voyage, and Granville-Barker, at least, is willing to credit the change to the sea air, or something of the sort. Richard Flatter comments that,

Most critics have noticed the phenomenon that the Hamlet who returns to Denmark differs from the Hamlet we have known before. 'When he emerges safe from the ambush of his voyage,' Granville Barker says, 'we are to know, by the wistfully humorous detachment of his mood, that the fever in his brain is now burnt out.'³⁶

In the absence of any concrete evidence to the effect that the sea air, or the killing of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern were cathartic enough to purge Hamlet of his melancholy, one can reasonably advance the theory that with the ending of Book Three and Amleth's return to Denmark, the dramatic version of Hamlet broke completely free from its prosaic source.

The two final points of parallelism between Shakespeare and Saxo are those which have been most effected by transition from Saxo's prose to drama. The exchange of rapiers between Amleth and Fenge is effected in such a way as to make the protagonist the complete victor. Not only does Fenge die, but his whole retinue goes up into flames with him. While there is great disparity between the ending of Book Three, and the final tragedy of Hamlet, one cannot help but see the seeds of the duel scene in Hamlet in the closing of Saxo's Third

Book.

Similarly, in the closing lines of Hamlet, Fortinbras says:

Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage
For he was likely, had he been put on,
To have prov'd most royally: and for his passage
The soldiers music and the rights of war
Speak loudly for him. 37

There seems to be in this passage a distinct echo of Saxo's final eulogy of Amleth:

And so ended Amleth. If fortune had been as faithful to him, as nature was generous, he would have been smiled upon by the gods, and with his great qualities would have exceeded Hercules in his achievements. 38

That Shakespeare indiscriminately borrowed material from the sources that preceded him, turning it at will to his own purpose, is certainly no new observation. But that in creating his Hamlet, he borrowed so heavily from these sources that there is no understanding Hamlet without an examination of the medieval Amleth, apparently is a new observation. That most of the inexplicable -- or at least highly disputed -- elements within Hamlet can be explicated by means of fully understanding Saxo, is of such importance that it demands reiteration. This is an avenue of Hamlet criticism that heretofore has evidently been completely neglected. It must again be pointed out that there is here no implication that Shakespeare was cognizant of Saxo's innuendoes of motivation. Admittedly, Amleth and Hamlet act the way they do for entirely different purposes. The inference is

that critics of Shakespeare superimposed his Elizabethan Hamlet upon the medieval Amleth, without bothering to first eradicate those very qualities which made a Danish national hero of the character. Consequently, the inconsistencies in Shakespeare's Hamlet are no longer seen as inconsistencies, when viewed in the light of Saxo's Amleth. Within all Shakespeare's work there is probably no other such unique confusion of character.

Thus, when confronted with Hamlet Sr.'s adamant demand for revenge, and the absolute necessity for Hamlet, file, to realize this revenge, it is evident that in Shakespeare the act of vengeance is on much the same level as it would be today. It is a matter of justice. It derives from Saxo. Whereas it would be of no great significance to Hamlet if he avenged his father or not (that is, outside of the idea of obtaining justice and thereby achieving peace of mind), it is of extreme importance to the very soul of Amleth.

The ghost in Hamlet says:

So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.³⁹

And, a few lines later:

Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.⁴⁰

To which Hamlet answers:

Haste me to know't, that I, with wings as swift
As meditation or the thoughts of love,
May sweep to my revenge.⁴¹

It is obviously justice (retaliation or retribution) that the Ghost asks for, and that Hamlet promises to achieve.

But the desire for revenge transcends the mere obtaining of justice (even justice for so foul a crime) in the way that it affects Hamlet. It is, in fact, difficult for a modern audience to understand.

In Saxo's Amleth, on the other hand, the revenge motif is more comprehensible. Amleth would lose his "honour" if he did not take vengeance for his father's death. Grønbech, in his Culture of The Teutons points out that in Amleth's society vengeance and honour were inseparable.

Honour at once brings up the thought of vengeance. It must be so; he who thinks of honour must say vengeance, not only because the two are always found together in the stories, but more because it is only through vengeance that we can see the depth and breadth of honour. Vengeance contains the illumination and the explanation of life; life as it is seen in the avenger is life at its truest and most beautiful, life in its innermost nature... Honour is identical with humanity. Without honour, one cannot be a living being; losing honour, one loses the vital element that makes man a thinking and feeling creature. The mind is empty, and haunted forever by the all-embracing dread that springs from emptiness.⁴²

In Amleth's society, the loss of honour and its corresponding shame was not a thing to be taken lightly. It had repercussions that extended into, and gnawed at, the entrails of the entire family. In Beowulf, after the cowardice shown by Beowulf's retainers in forsaking their King during his fight with the dragon,

Wiglaf upbraids the recreant gesioas. He pronounces upon them and their kin a sentence of degradation.

'.... Now must (all) sharing of treasure, and

presentation of swords, all patrimonial wealth and estate escheat from your kin; every man of that family may roam destitute of land-right, as soon as ethelings at a distance are informed of your desertion, your ignominious conduct. Death is preferable, for every warrior, rather than a life of infamy.' 43

It is important, then, to understand that to Saxo, vengeance was no mere outcome of a sense of justice. Dr. Grønbech offers further invaluable information as to the Teutonic conception of the nature of vengeance.

What then was vengeance? It was not the outcome of a sense of justice. . . .

If the thirst for vengeance is understood as meaning the wish to see one's desire upon one's enemies, then the word does not accord with the Germanic idea. Vengeance was planned with every care, and carried out in the most cold-blooded fashion; one is tempted to say with a business-like sang-froid. The avenger plants his axe in his opponent's head, wipes off the blood in the grass, covers the body according to custom, and rides on his way. He has no lust for further dealings with the fallen man; mutilation of the dead is, in the history of the Northmen, a thing so unique as to mark the doer of such a deed as an exception, that is to say, as an inferior man.... The act would be that of a hiding.... (my italics) For the punisher, as for the man of vindictive nature, all thoughts circle about that other one, what is to be done with him, whether he can be properly and feelingly struck. The avenger has the centre of his thoughts in himself. All depends on what he does, not on what the other suffers. The avenger procures something; he takes vengeance.

Vengeance, then, consists in taking something from the other party. One procures honour from him. One will have one's honour back.

An injury done occasions a loss to the sufferer. He has been bereft of some part of his honour. But this honour is not a thing he can do without in case of need, not a thing he requires only for luxury, and which the frugal mind can manage without. He cannot even console himself

with the part that remains; for the injury he has suffered may be likened to a wound which will never close up of itself, but bleed unceasingly until his life runs out. He cannot fill the empty space, he will never be himself again. The emptiness may be called shame; it is a suffering, a painful state of sickness.

...honour is a thing indispensable, and vengeance inevitable. As long as men still lived the old life, irrespective of whether the outward forms were pagan or Christian, a man could not, under any circumstances, let his vengeance lie; there was no ignoring the claims of honour, for this was a thing that came from within, manifesting itself as a painful sense of fear. 44

When considering the factors of Hamlet's vengeance, his delay, his attitude toward his mother and Ophelia, his slaying of Polonius, his feigned insanity and his trip to England, with the subsequent killing of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, as compared with Amleth's similar actions, one is actually confronted with an intrinsic difference between primitive epic and modern reconstruction of the conflicts of human life in dramatic form. The realization of this principle is essential for an understanding of the inconsistencies in Hamlet's character.

In concluding this chapter, it should be remarked that Shakespeare's conscientious attempts to give Hamlet a "Danish" setting are, on the whole, rather unsatisfactory. In the first act of the play, for example, at the sound of trumpets and artillery, Horatio asks:

What does this mean, my lord:

and Hamlet answers:

The King doth wake tonight and takes his rouse,
Keeps wassails, and the swagg'ring up-string reels;

And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,
 The kettle drum and trumpet thus bray out
 The triumph of his pledge.

Horatio then asks:

Is it a custom?

Hamlet replies:

Ay, marry, is't,
 But to my mind, though I am native here
 And to the manner born, it is a custom
 More Honour'd in the breach than the observance.⁴⁵

Since the days of the Vikings, the Danes have been known as toppers. Indeed, in Saxo, Amleth returns to Denmark to find the entire court retinue in a drunken stupor. But in Hamlet, Shakespeare has Hamlet explaining the drinking habits of the Danes to another Dane (and evidently Horatio was no stranger to court customs) as though he were speaking to a foreigner.⁴⁶

CHAPTER II

TRANSLATIONS OF SAXO'S AMLETH

Matteo Bandello

As pointed out in the preceding chapter, prior to 1550 there were three available texts (excluding Saxo's manuscript) of Gesta Danorum in existence: the Latin epitome of 1430, the German epitome of 1485, and Christian Pedersen's first edition of 1514.¹ In 1554, Matteo Bandello, then Bishop of Agen, and perhaps the most important of the Italian novellieri, published a set of novella which evidently included a translation of Saxo's Amleth legend.² Bandello appears to have had a larger following than had Boccaccio, whom he admired, and at times imitated. 7

It is important, in a comparative study of this nature, that one attempt to define the stylistic peculiarities of the authors who have had a hand in moulding the piece of art under consideration. If one is to determine how new factors became a part of the piece of art, it is a necessity. Bandello was certainly a man of some scholarly attainment. He produced a version of the Hecuba of Euripides, he made several translations from the Latin, and he compiled an important Latin dictionary -- consequently he can be trusted as a competent translator of the Amleth legend. But it is not as simple as that; Bandello was also

a creative artist. Percy Pinkerton says this of his style:

It has been said that he copied Boccaccio. His reverence for that writer's grace of form was indeed so deep that he took the pains to translate one of the Decamerone tales into Latin, while appropriating from this work many ornate expressions and melodious turns of phrase which had caught his fancy. But if somewhat clumsily he imitated Boccaccio's manner, the method of Bandello was essentially his own. He is far more direct. He relates his facts with greater brevity and speed, with a vigour and breadth of expression more impressive, more convincing in the main than a recital which depends upon the elaborate adjustment of words for its effect. The scholar may dislike his rugged, careless, impetuous Lombard style, but the student of manners, the humanist must admit that as a raconteur Bandello knew his business thoroughly, and that he performed it with quite conspicuous skill.

It is remarkable that, while all, or nearly all, his tales contain the germs of drama, being tragedies and comedies in brief, Bandello should himself have no dramatic sense. With something of the frank unconsciousness of a child he handles his vast materials dexterously, almost jocularly, yet with no clear perception of their deep tragic and spiritual significance. The tale for him is just a tale, to move, to divert one for the moment; a succession of merry, romantic, or grievous events, not the appalling picture of the warfare and the shipwreck of souls. He is at no pains to bring us into touch with his characters, to breathe upon the dry bones and make them live. A poet, a psychologist, even within the narrow space of a novella, would assuredly have done this. Bandello was neither. He could not give the touch that transfigures. He was merely a fluent, adroit tale-teller, with a power of graphic description that, were he among us today, would presently have made him the enfant gate of the Fleet Street press. At this point he certainly touches our century. To use a slang phrase, just for its very expressiveness, he was so tremendously "up to date." Indeed, if journalism be to seize the topic of the hour and give it to the world in a fresh, attractive guise, then we may almost style Bandello a triumphant journalist of the Renaissance, with a keen eye for

gossip of all sorts, and an infallible instinct for the materials from which good "copy" may be spun.³

The difficulty lies in trying to determine just exactly which elements, if any, Bandello added to Saxo's legend. There are, apparently, no commentaries on his treatment of the Amleth-Hamlet legend.⁴ It is evident, on the other hand, that he translated certain passages literally. This can be proved by the fact that these passages remain literal translations in the English translation of Saxo, which is, in reality, a translation of a translation of Bandello. At any rate, with the single exception of Collier, who mentions Bandello only in passing, Hamlet commentators have completely ignored the Bandello translation.⁵

Francois de Belleforest

↳ In 1559, Francois de Belleforest, in collaboration with one P. Boaistuau, published in Paris a volume of "Tragic Histories," translated from the Italian of Bandello. Included among these "tragedies" was the legend of Amleth.⁶ It is usually conceded that if Shakespeare did not directly consult the Belleforest translation of Amleth, he was at least aware of its existence. While it is, perhaps, true that Shakespeare was aware of Belleforest, there is certainly no real evidence to the effect that he consulted him. It should not be forgotten that the Romeo and Juliet legend also appeared in this 1559 edition of the Belleforest translation.

There is absolutely no evidence that Shakespeare used Belleforest in writing Romeo and Juliet, but there is conclusive evidence that he used Arthur Brooke's poem on the subject, The Tragicall Historye of Romeus and Juliet -- and probably that he used it exclusively.⁷ Inasmuch as the Ur-Hamlet is not extant, it is not possible to draw a positive parallel from this evidence; however, it certainly serves to illustrate that Shakespeare was not in the habit of turning to a foreign source for material, when it was available to him in English. [It is, of course, consummately possible, that the creator of the Ur-Hamlet had Belleforest in hand.]

As it is difficult to determine exactly what Bandello added to Saxo's Amleth, it is equally difficult to determine exactly what Belleforest added to Bandello's Amleth. Most commentators berate Belleforest's style, and Pinkerton goes so far as to berate his methods:

If these worthies (Boaistuau and Belleforest) may be said to have popularized Bandello, as translators they certainly proved themselves traitors, altering the stories, substituting climaxes and situations of their own invention, while showing a most sublime disregard for the author's text. In fact their book was not a translation, but a somewhat pretentious paraphrase.⁸

The question of who distorted Saxo most, Bandello or Belleforest, is moot. There seems to be no extant copy of Bandello's original version of Amleth, and the copy of Belleforest's Histories Tragique is very rare and not readily available for examination. There is, however, sufficient commentary on the Belleforest

translation to allow one to draw conclusions as to what transpired between it and its successor, the English translation.

The Pavier Translation

The only known prose translation of Belleforest's Amleth is that entitled The Hystorie of Hamblet. It bears the legend, "Imprinted by Richard Bradocke, for Thomas Pavier, and are to be sold at his shop in Corne-hill, neere to the Royall Exchange," and the date "1608."⁹ If one could take the date 1608 at face value, it would be extremely easy to dispose of this translation as a post-Shakespearian, prose translation of Belleforest's Amleth, and let it go at that. However, critics overwhelmingly hold that an older edition of this same translation influenced Shakespeare's Hamlet. Capell says:

There can be no doubt made, by persons who are acquainted with these things, that the translation is not much younger (sic) than the French original; though the only edition of it that is yet come to knowledge is no earlier than 1608; that Shakespeare took his play from it there can be likewise little doubt.¹⁰

Collier says that by comparing the parallel action between the Pavier translation and Shakespeare's Hamlet it is possible to see "how far Shakespeare followed the Hystorie." Collier also points out that,

The prose narrative of 1608 is a bald, literal, and in many respects uncouth, translation of the "Histoires Tragiques" of Belleforest, who was himself by no means an elegant writer for the

time in which he lived: he began publishing his series of translations from Bandello in 1559, and his story of "Amleth" was of course copied from Bandello. Belleforest gives it the following title: -- "Avec quelle ruse Amleth, qui depuis fut Roy de Dannemarch, Vengea la mort de son pere Horvvendile, occis par Fengon, son frere, et autre occurrence de son histoire." The English translator, especially in the descriptive portion of his work, has multiplied all the faults of Belleforest, including his lengthened and involved periods, and his frequent confusion of persons. It may be suspected that one or two of the longer speeches, and particularly the Oration of Hamlet, occupying nearly the whole of Chapter VI, was by another and a better hand, who had a more complete knowledge of the French, and a happier use of his own language.¹¹

Thus one is led to believe that the uncouth, uninspired translator of The Hystorie of Hamblet laid the basis for Shakespeare's Hamlet. This would seem to be, all things considered, unsound reasoning. Collier says that the Pavier translation is a "bald, literal, and in many respects uncouth, translation..." yet this same translation contains many incidents in common with Shakespeare, that are not in Belleforest. What is one to believe then? That an uninspired translator notably improved on his source; or that a dramatic genius notably improved on his source, and subsequently influenced the uninspired translator?

As pointed out in the foregoing chapter, in Saxo the spy (in the closet scene) hides under a blanket of straw (Latin, stramentum; Danish, straa). In Belleforest the spy hides under a quilt (French, lodier). In Pavier:
 ...the counsellor entered secretly into the queen's chamber, and there hid himself behind

the arras...(my italics)¹²

In Shakespeare, Polonius hides behind the "arras."

Similarly, in Belleforest, there is no mention of a "rat," when the actual killing of the spy takes place.¹³

In Pavier:

...Whereby (Hamlet) feeling something stirring under them (the arras), he cried, A rat, a rat!...¹⁴

In Shakespeare, Hamlet does not cry "A rat, a rat!" but it is not difficult to see how the translator of the Hystorie could have been mistaken. It is, indeed, this very mistake which strengthens the theory that the Pavier translator was influenced by Shakespeare. Capell, Collier, and White, in commenting on the influence of the Pavier translation on Shakespeare, all cite the parallel between Hamlet's cry of "a rat, a rat!," and Hamlet's cry of "a rat, a rat!"¹⁵ Without subjecting this incident of the play to careful scrutiny, these commentators, instinctively, as it were, credit Hamlet with the rat exclamation -- the translator of the Hystorie, under Shakespeare's influence, could well have made the same mistake.¹⁶

Perhaps it is not without significance that the adultery motif is absent from Saxo and merely alluded to in Belleforest. In Shakespeare, it is made use of in an inexplicit suggestive way, rather than as a highly dramatic means of motivation. Many critics, in fact, have denied the occurrence of adultery on the part of Gertrude and

Claudius. At any rate, in Shakespeare, Hamlet does not make a point of accusing his mother of adultery; one rather imagines his face, distorted with horror at the mere suggestion of the act. The only direct allusion to adultery is made by the ghost:

Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,
O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power
So to seduce; won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming virtuous queen;
O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there!¹⁷

This statement by the ghost is so highly controversial that it is impossible to ascertain, with any degree of certainty, just how the accusations should be interpreted. In the Pavier translation, on the other hand, there can be no doubt as to the author's intentions; the adulterous relationship is indisputably emphasized.

...Fengon, boldned and encouraged by such impunitie, durst venture to couple himselfe in marriage with her whom hee used as his concubine during good Horvendiles life, in that sort spotting his name with a double vice, and charging his conscience with abominable guilt, and two-fold impietie, as incestuous adulterie and parricide murther; and that the unfortunate and wicked woman, that had received the honour to bee the wife of one of the valiantest and wisest princes in the north, imbased her selfe in such vile sort, as to falsifie her faith unto him, and which is worse, to merrie him, that had bin the tyranous murtherer of her lawfull husband; which made divers men thinke that she had beene the causer of the murther, thereby to live in her adultery without controle. But where shall a man finde a more wicked and bold woman, than a great parsonage once having loosed the bands of honor and honestie? This princesse, who at the first, for her rare vertues and courtesesses was honored of al men and beloved of her husband, as soone as she once gave eare to the tyrant Fengon, forgot both the ranke she helde among the greatest names, and the dutie of an honest wife on her behalfe.¹⁸

While there is not evidence concrete enough to warrant a

positive statement in the matter, it would, nonetheless, seem that the Pavier translation represents a more advanced stage in the development of the adultery motif, than does Shakespeare.

It is submitted, then, that the Pavier translation should not be considered a source for Shakespeare's Hamlet. Capell's statement that "there can be no doubt made by persons who are acquainted with these things, that the translation is not much younger than the French original" is certainly more pretentious than authoritative, regardless of how generous one wishes to be.

Considering the fact that the Amleth of Saxo and the Hamblet of Pavier are removed from each other by four languages, and some four hundred years, it is rather astounding to find that the speeches of Amleth are almost exactly echoed by Hamblet. Inasmuch as the speeches are extremely dramatic (Supra, pp. 13-14) it is not surprising to see at least one of them turn up in Shakespeare's Hamlet (Supra, p. 34). Regardless of which source he turned to, Shakespeare would be sure to run across Amleth's words with only negligible variations from those Saxo first used. It is not unreasonable to assume, inasmuch as Saxo, Bandello, Belleforest, Pavier, and Shakespeare have Amleth-Hamlet use the same general type of imagery and tone in his speech to his mother after killing the spy, that the creator of the pre-Shakespearian Ur-Hamlet did

likewise. In fact, as the evidence stands, it would seem unthinkable that he did not. One would expect, then, to find the same type of images in Der Bestrafte Brudermord, the German play which is commonly believed to be a translation of the Ur-Hamlet. Frustratingly enough, this is not the case, as shall be pointed out in the following chapter.

CHAPTER III

THE UR-HAMLET AND DER BESTRAFTE BRUDERMORD

As is commonly known, 16th Century English literature contains frequent allusions to a "Hamlet" play, which presumably antedates Shakespeare's Hamlet. This play, commonly referred to as the Ur-Hamlet, no copy of which is extant, is usually thought to be the fundamental basis for Shakespeare's Hamlet. For many years, critics have been trying to reconstruct the Ur-Hamlet by means of working through Shakespeare's Hamlet, Kyd's Spanish Tragedy,¹ and the German play, Der Bestrafte Brudermord. The reason the investigators take this approach is: if Shakespeare used the Ur-Hamlet as the framework for his play on the same subject, his Hamlet must, necessarily, contain remnants of the Ur-Hamlet; because of the theatrical techniques used by Kyd in the Spanish Tragedy, it is assumed that he, in the absence of any other contender, must have written the Ur-Hamlet; because of certain similarities between Kyd, Shakespeare's Hamlet, and the German play, Der Bestrafte Brudermord, it is assumed by many that this German play is a translation of Kyd's (?) Ur-Hamlet. That there was a pre-Shakespearean "Hamlet" seems certain, but that Der Bestrafte Brudermord is a German translation of it, is purely conjectural.

The Spanish Tragedy, in common with Hamlet, has, in addition to the usual elements of Senecan tragedy, the ghost of a murdered man demanding revenge; a madman; hesitancy on the part of the protagonist in seeking his revenge; a play within the play (complete with dumb-show); a denouement in which the protagonist dies upon realizing his revenge. These elements the two plays have in common; they are, however, employed in entirely different ways, for different purposes. But it is primarily on this evidence that the assumption of Kyd's authorship of the Ur-Hamlet is made. Dr. Stoll holds that Kyd first wrote his Hamlet (Ur-Hamlet), and owing to the enormous success of it, wrote another play (The Spanish Tragedy) similar in technique, "with the expectation of a like success."² The extensive scholarship that has resulted in the identification of Kyd with the Ur-Hamlet is of a quality which precludes serious dispute... Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of the theory which holds that Der Bestrafte Brudermord is a German translation of this same Ur-Hamlet.

The big difficulty in working with Der Bestrafte Brudermord lies in the fact that the earliest known copy of it bears the late date of 1710.³ Dr. Latham, who holds that the play is a translation of the pre-Shakespearian Hamlet, brushes aside the 1710 date, claiming it is simply a reprint of a much older edition. He further claims that the play was acted in 1626 at Dresden.⁴ It

seems, however, that the play acted in 1626 at Dresden was entitled Tragoedia von Hamlet,⁵ and, inasmuch as no one has proved that it and Der Bestrafte Brudermord are one and the same, it certainly cannot be taken for granted that they are identical pieces just because "Hamlet" is common to them both. The play performed in Dresden in 1626 might well be a translation of Shakespeare's Hamlet, as it appeared in the first folio of 1623. It would seem dangerous to assume too much in consideration of the limited amount of research that has been done in this field of investigation.

On the surface it would certainly seem improbable that Shakespeare's Hamlet in any way influenced Der Bestrafte Brudermord. Shakespeare's most effective scenes are either absent from, or else merely hinted at, in the German play. And as Dr. Latham points out, in the German play, there are no instances of realistic imagery, no subtle touches of irony, and no soliloquies.⁶ If Der Bestrafte Brudermord represents Shakespeare's Hamlet in translation (even if it be a translation of the miserably corrupt First Quarto), it represents it through the hand of a translator so insensitive, so uncouth, as to defy belief in his literacy. As shall be further illustrated, there is such great disparity between the two pieces as to make it reasonable to deny, on circumstantial evidence, that Der Bestrafte Brudermord is a translation of Shakespeare's Hamlet.

If, then, the play does not derive from Shakespeare, it must either derive from the Ur-Hamlet, or else be an independent German version of the Amleth Legend, derived from one of the prose sources described in the preceding chapters.

Inasmuch as such critics as Cohn, Bernhardt, Dyce, Clark, Wright, and Latham subscribe to the theory that Der Bestrafte Brudermord is either a translation of the per-Shakespearian Ur-Hamlet, or an adaptation of an early Shakespearian Hamlet, the theory must be treated with respect.⁷ It would seem extremely dangerous, however, to resort to Der Bestrafte Brudermord, as such modern (and incompatible) critics as Flatter and Wilson do, to interpret passages within Shakespeare's Hamlet. Flatter continually relies upon Der Bestrafte Brudermord in interpreting Shakespeare's Hamlet; not least in assuring his readers that Ophelia's death was suicide:

Evidence that Ophelia's death was meant to be regarded as suicide can be found in Der Bestrafte Brudermord. In this early German version of Hamlet, based probably on an adaptation, taken to the Continent by English travelling actors (in 1626 a company of English players performed a Hamlet tragedy at Dresden), Ophelia, we are expressly told, commits suicide: she throws herself down from a mountain top.⁸

Wilson continually relies upon the same technique in his interpretation of Hamlet, not least in his explication of why Gertrude cannot see the ghost in the closet scene:

Gertrude's insensibility (to the ghost) is proved, I think, by the version of the bedroom scene in Der Bestrafte Brudermord....

'See,' says Hamlet of Der Bestrafte Brudermord, 'he beckons as if he would speak to you.'....

Hamlet's words indicate some strange agitation in the Ghost's face and actions, an agitation that wrings the son's heart with pity and forces tears to his eyes. What is it? The evidence of the Brudermord seems to leave no doubt of the answer.⁹

It is admittedly maddening for a critic to have before him a text, which could, on the surface, so plausibly represent a form of the Ur-Hamlet, and yet not use it to explicate difficult passages within Shakespeare's Hamlet. It would, nevertheless, seem perilous for the critic to use such unsteady ground as Der Bestrafte Brudermord for the foundation of his arguments. There has been a tendency to approach the correlation between the Ur-Hamlet, and Der Bestrafte Brudermord from a positive point of view. Apparently there has been no attempt to approach this correlation from a negative, or even objective, point of view. To disprove Der Bestrafte Brudermord as a translation of the Ur-Hamlet, would be disadvantageous to the interpretive critic of Hamlet, regardless of his point of view.

Dr. Latham, apparently the last of the critics to have made an ambitious attempt to analyze Der Bestrafte Brudermord, arrives at the conclusion that this German play dates, in its original form, from 1589, and that it represents the Ur-Hamlet which preceded Shakespeare's Hamlet of the First Quarto.¹⁰ His main argument revolves around a remark Hamlet makes to his uncle in Der Bestrafte

Brudermord. After the King has found out about the killing of the spy (in Der Bestrafte Brudermord) he tells Hamlet that he is going to send him to England, to which Hamlet replies:

Ay, ay, King, send me off to Portugal, that
I may never come back again, that is the best
plan.

Latham holds that Hamlet is here referring to the disastrous Portugal expedition of 1589, under the command of Sir Francis Drake and Sir John Norris, in which eleven thousand Englishmen were killed. Latham then infers that this fixes the date of the play at 1589, and he implies that it makes the play a German translation of an English play inasmuch as the expedition to Portugal set sail from Plymouth, and was of English origin.¹¹ Ingenious as this point of Latham's may be, it loses most of its strength, when viewed in juxtaposition with other statements in the play, completely ignored by Latham, which indicate a much later date of composition:

In the first scene of the German play, two sentinels are discussing the presence of the ghost:

Sec. Sent. But what is it that has particularly frightened thee?

First Sent. I'll tell thee. I've seen a ghost in the front of the castle, and he wanted twice to pitch me down from the bastion.

Sec. Sent. Then relieve guard, you fool! A dead dog doesn't bite. I'll see whether a ghost that has neither flesh nor blood can hurt me.¹²

The second sentinel treats the mere idea of a ghost with

a sophisticated disdain which is anything but compatible with the Elizabethan idea of ghost-lore. In Shakespeare's Hamlet, Horatio, a far more sophisticated individual than the sentinel in Brudermord, is mildly skeptical of the ghost, but one cannot imagine him saying of the ghost, "A dead dog doesn't bite!" The sentinel of Brudermord sounds more like a man brought up in a generation schooled in the absurdity of ghosts, rather than one brought up in a generation schooled in the horrible reality of the supernatural.

Another passage within Der Bestrafte Brudermord, perhaps more important than the preceding, should also be viewed in juxtaposition with Latham's point concerning the expedition to Portugal. In the German play, Hamlet says to Carl, the principal actor (of the play within the play):

Ham. Were you not, a few years ago, at the University of Wittenberg? I think I saw you act there.

Carl. Yes, your highness. We are the same actors.

Ham. Have you still got all of the same company?

Carl. We are not quite so strong, because some students took situations in Hamburg. Still, we are strong enough for many merry comedies, and tragedies.

Ham. Could you give us a play to-night?

Carl. Yes, your highness: we are strong enough and in practice enough.

Ham. Have you still all three women with you? (my italics) They acted very well.

Carl. No, only two. One remained with her husband

(my italics) at the court of Saxony.¹³

Of course, there were no women actors in Elizabethan England. In fact, as late as 1629, during the reign of Charles I "women who dared to anticipate the post-restoration days (of women actors) were booed, hissed, and apple-pelted off (of the stage)."¹⁴ It would seem almost impossible that this reference by Hamlet to the women actors could have appeared in the Ur-Hamlet.

If Der Bestrafte Brudermord represents a stage in the evolution of the Amleth-Hamlet legend, falling between Belleforest and Shakespeare, and if Shakespeare used the original English version, of which Burdermord is a supposed translation, in writing his Hamlet, one would naturally expect to find a direct correlation in images (particularly in the closet scene) between Belleforest and Der Bestrafte Brudermord and Hamlet. This reasoning is only logical, inasmuch as there is a direct correlation between Belleforest and Shakespeare. As mentioned in the preceding chapter, however, there is no such unity in the progression of the images.

The closet scene in Der Bestrafte Burdermord is so brief, and so little emphasized, that it is scarcely of any importance to the play:

Ham. Lady mother, did you really know your first husband?

Queen. Ah! remind me not of my former grief. I cannot restrain my tears when I think of him.

Ham. Do you weep? Ah, leave off; they are mere crocodile's tears. But see, there in that gallery hangs the counterfeit (Conterfait) of your first husband, and there hangs the counterfeit of your present. What think you now? Which of them is the comeliest? Is not the first a majestic lord?

Queen. He is indeed that.

Ham. How could you, then, so soon forget him? Fie, for shame! Almost on the same day you had the burial and the nuptials. But hush! are all the doors shut fast?

Queen. Why do you ask it? (Corambus coughs behind the tapestry.)

Ham. Who is that listening to us? (Stabs him.)

Cor. Woe is me, O Prince! What are you doing? I die!

Queen. O Heaven, my son! what are you doing? It is Corambus, the chamberlain.

Ham. Ah, noble shade of my father, stay! Alas! alas! What wouldst thou? Dost thou demand vengeance? I will fill it at the right time.

Queen. What are you about? and to whom are you talking?

Ham. See you not the ghost of your departed husband? See he beckons as if he would speak to you.

Queen. How? I see nothing at all.

Ham. I can readily believe that you see nothing, for you are no longer worthy to look on his form. Fie, for shame! Not another word will I speak to you.¹⁵

The elements which this scene has in common with its parallel in Hamlet are obvious -- perhaps too obvious. Both Hamlets use the same terms in referring to the portraits of the dead and living kings: counterfeit -- in German, Conterfait; the hidden spy is killed; the

ghost passes through the room; the Queen cannot see the ghost. These, admittedly, are elements of action common to both plays. What has happened, however, to the underlying attitude of Hamlet which manifests itself so dramatically in all other versions of the legend? In the scene set forth above, there is no real disgust on the part of Hamlet (unless one wishes to be charitable enough to call "Fie for shame!" disgust.); there are no sensual images relating to the physical aspects of the sexual act; there are no animal images; Hamlet does not once refer to his assumed madness.

As pointed out earlier, there is a direct parallel between the way in which the Shakespearian and Saxoian Hamlets act toward the body of their victim. Amleth chops up the corpse; Hamlet "lugs the guts into the neighbor room." Later, when Hamlet is questioned by Claudius as to the whereabouts of his victim's body, he answers:

Ham. At supper.

King. At supper! Where?

Ham. Not where he eats, but where he is eaten.
A certain convocation of politic worms are
e'en at him...16

In Saxo, Fenge asks Amleth if he has seen the emissary, and Amleth informs him that he is at the bottom of a pit, being eaten by the hogs. In Der Bestrafte Brudermord, Hamlet has suddenly become humanized. The King asks Hamlet where the corpse is. Hamlet answers:

He is still lying in the place where he was stabbed. The King then reprimands Hamlet for his actions, and Hamlet answers:

I am sorry for it, uncle and father. I wanted to say something in private to the Queen, but this spy lay in wait for us. I did not know, however, that it was this old fool. But what does your majesty intend as the best thing to be done with me?17

Yet another parallel exists between Saxo and Shakespeare in the disposition of the two emissaries (Rosencrantz and Guildenstern). In Saxo, the emissaries carry with them a rune staff on which Fenge has spelled out Amleth's death. Amleth alters the message to read that the two emissaries shall be put to death. In Shakespeare, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern carry a letter to the King of England in which Claudius instructs the King to put Hamlet to death. Hamlet alters the letter to read that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern shall be put to death. There is here an exact duplication of the element of "poetic justice." The scene wherein Hamlet is supposedly sent to England in Der Bestrafte Brudermord, is short enough to quote in its entirety:

Ham. This is a pleasant spot, here on this island. Let us stay here a while, and dine. There's a pleasant wood, and there a cool stream of water. So fetch me the best from the ship; here we'll make right merry.

First Band. Gracious sir, this is no time for eating, for from this island you will never depart; for here is the spot which is chosen for your churchyard.

Ham. What sayest thou, thou scoundrel, thou slave (Esclav)? Knowest thou whom I am? Wouldst thou jest so with a royal prince? However, for this time, I forgive you.

Sec. Band. No, it is no jest, but downright earnest. Just prepare yourself for death.

Ham. Why so? What injury have I ever done you? For my part I can think of none. Therefore, speak out: why do you entertain such bad thoughts?

First Band: It is our orders from the King; as soon as we get your highness on this island we are to kill you.

Ham. Dear friends, spare my life! Say that you have done your work, and so long as I live I will never return to the King. Think well what good you gain by having your hands covered with the blood of an innocent prince! Will you stain your consciences with my sins? Alas! that most unfortunately I am unarmed. If I only had something in my hands! (Snatches at a dagger)

Sec. Band. I say, comrade, take care of thy weapon.

First Band. I'll take care -- Now, Prince, get ready. We haven't much time.

Ham. Since it cannot be otherwise and I must die at your hands at the bidding of the tyrannical King, I will submit without resistance, although I'm innocent. And you, bribed to the deed through poverty, I willingly forgive. My blood, however, must be answered for by the murderer of his brother and of my father at the great Day of Judgement.

First Band. What has that Day to do with us? We must do this day what we were told.

Sec. Band. That's true, brother. -- Hurry up! there's no help for it -- Let us fire, -- I on one side and thou on the other.

Ham. Hear me -- one word more. Since the very worst of malefactors is not denied a time for repentance, I, an innocent prince, beg you to let me raise to my Maker a fervent prayer; after that I am ready to die. But I will give you a signal; I will turn my hands toward heaven, and the moment I stretch out my arms, fire! Aim both

pistols at my sides, and when I say 'Shoot!' give me as much as I need, and be sure to hit me so that I shall not be long in torture.

Sec.Band. Well, we can easily grant him this favor. -- Therefore, go ahead.

Ham. (spreading out his hands). Shoot! (throwing himself forward on his face between the two, who shoot each other.) O just Heaven! thanks be to thee for this angelic idea! I will praise forever the guardian angel who through my own idea has saved my life. But these villains, -- as was their work, so is their pay. The dogs are still stirring; they have shot (harquebusirt) each other. But out of revenge (Revenge) I'll give them a death-blow to make sure, else one of the rogues might escape. (Stabs them with their own swords.) I'll search them, and see whether they have by chance any warrant of arrest about them. This one has nothing. Here on this murderer I find a letter; I will read it. This letter is written to an arch-murderer in England; should this attempt fail, they had only to hand me over to him, and he would soon enough blow out the light of my life. But the gods stand by the righteous. Now will I return to my father, to his horror. But I will not trust any longer to water; who knows but what the ship's captain is a villain too? I will go to the first town and take the post. The sailors I will order back to Denmark. These rascals I will throw into the water.¹⁸

The element of "poetic justice" remains in this scene, but the alteration of the message to the English King is completely wanting.

As the evidence stands, it would appear that if Der Bestrafte Brudermord is a translation of the Ur-Hamlet, Kyd (?) has neglected using much of the material available to him in Saxo (or the translations of Saxo). It follows, then, that Shakespeare cannot have used the Ur-Hamlet as the sole source of his own Hamlet, but must, necessarily, have consulted Saxo (or a translation of Saxo). Further-

more, if Der Bestrafte Brudermord is a translation of an Elizabethan play, it must have been tampered with at a date not too far removed from that which appears on its earliest extant copy: 1710. One must make these allowances in order to explain how Shakespeare was able to utilize material that is in Saxo, and yet is not in Der Bestrafte Brudermord; and how elements, completely incompatible with the 16th Century, can appear in a play written (as Latham would have it) in 1589.

This evidence does not preclude the possibility of the play being a translation of the Ur-Hamlet. It would seem to suggest, however, that the text of the play is in a state of such utter confusion (or corruption) as virtually to disallow its effectiveness as a means of interpreting Shakespeare's Hamlet. Perhaps the confused state of the play is due to the fact that its translator was totally incompetent; perhaps material was added and extracted from it at a later date; perhaps it is a version of the Amleth Legend which antedates the Elizabethan Ur-Hamlet; or perhaps it is a combination of the former two, or the latter two. At any rate, the critic who uses Der Bestrafte Brudermord by way of defining Hamlet's character, is certainly treading on unsure ground.

Those who would definitely associate the text of Der Bestrafte Brudermord with Shakespeare rely heavily upon the association of a single name which appears both in the German play and in Shakespeare's Hamlet of the

First Quarto. Dover Wilson says:

Four Hamlet texts, belonging actually or by derivation to the period of Shakespeare's lifetime, have come down to us; but two are clearly of much greater authority than the others. Concerning the most de-based of all, the German version, Der Bestrafte Brudermord, little need here be said. The earliest copy known is a manuscript dated 1710; but the fact that its Polonius is called Corambus, of which the 'Corambis' in the First Quarto is a patent corruption, together with other clues, makes it certain that it is a degenerate scion of the main English stock and at least possible that its derivation belongs to a date before that at which Shakespeare's Hamlet took final shape.¹⁹

Wilson, who holds that the First Quarto is a ridiculous piracy, perpetrated by a "wild ass,"²⁰ concludes that Der Bestrafte Brudermord "can throw light upon Shakespeare's meaning."²¹ This is principally brought about because the German play and The First Quarto Hamlet contain the name "Corambis (us)," in common.

Some interesting facts may be ascertained by collating the Dramatis Personae of Der Bestrafte Brudermord with the First Quarto Hamlet, using the familiar First Folio Hamlet as a touchstone.

<u>Hamlet</u> <u>First Folio</u>	<u>Der Bestrafte</u> <u>Brudermord</u>	<u>Hamlet</u> <u>First Quarto</u>
GERTRUDE	SIGRIE	GERTRED
OPHELIA	OPHELIA	OFELIA
CLAUDIUS	ERICO	KING
HAMLET	HAMLET	HAMLET
HORATIO	HORATIO	HORATIO
POLONIUS	CORAMBUS	CORAMBIS

<u>Hamlet</u> <u>First Folio</u>	<u>Der Bestrafte</u> <u>Brudermord</u>	<u>Hamlet</u> <u>First Quarto</u>
LAERTES	LEONHARDUS	LEARTES
VOLTIMAND	wanting	VOLTEMAR
CORNELIUS	wanting	CORNELIUS
ROSENCRANTZ	A talking Bandit	ROSSENCRAFT
GUILDENSTERN	A talking Bandit	GILDERSTONE
OSRIC	PHANTASMO	A Braggart Gentleman
A Gentleman	wanting	A Braggart Gentleman
MARCELLUS	FRANCISCO	MARCELLUS
BERNARDO	FRANCISCO	BERNARDO
FRANCISCO	Two sentinels	A Sentinel
REYNALDO	wanting	MONTANO
A Priest	wanting	Wanting
Players	CARL	Players
Two Clowns	JENS	Two Clowns
FORTINBRAS	wanting	FORTEMBRASSE
A Norwegian Captain	wanting	A Captain
English Ambassadors	wanting	English Ambassadors
GHOST	GHOST	GHOST

It is a fact that the Polonius of the First Folio is Corambus in the First Quarto and in Der Bestrafte Brudermord; and on the surface, this evidence does tend to indicate that the Polonius figure in the Ur-Hamlet was also named "Corambus." In all prose versions of the Amleth legend, there are only three names that are of any significance, insofar as the dramatic versions of the

legend are concerned; these are: Amleth-Hamlet, Fenge-Claudius, and Gerute-Gertrude. It should be immediately remarked that Hamlet and Gertrude (with minor variations in the spelling) are names common to every version of the legend, prosaic and dramatic, with the exception of the Queen in Der Bestrafte Brudermord. The transition of name from Fenge to Claudius is enigmatical, but there is no reason to believe that Shakespeare made the transition, unless one points out that Der Bestrafte Brudermord is a translation of the Ur-Hamlet, and in the former, Hamlet's uncle is named Erico; consequently, he must have been named Erico in the latter. What, however, can be done to explain the name "Sigrie" in Der Bestrafte Brudermord? Nothing! If the Gertrude figure was named "Sigrie" in the Ur-Hamlet, Shakespeare could not in this instance have used the Ur-Hamlet, but must have used Saxo (or a translation of Saxo). This would be to say, in effect, that in naming the Royal Chamberlain, Shakespeare used the name he found in the Ur-Hamlet, but in naming Hamlet's mother, he did not use the name which appeared in the Ur-Hamlet, but instead, turned to Saxo (or a translation of Saxo). This is, of course, a preposterous situation.

In the Amleth legend, the Polonius figure is not named; therefore, it is impossible even to theorize about the name under which he appeared in the Ur-Hamlet. It is indeed curious that the name Corambus is common to both

Der Bestrafte Brudermord and the First Quarto Hamlet.
Corrupt and confused as is the text of Der Bestrafte
Brudermord, it is as reasonable to suppose that the name
"Corambus" derives from the First Quarto, as it is to
suppose that "Corambis" derives from Der Bestrafte
Brudermord (as the equivalent of the Ur-Hamlet).

Taken as whole, this evidence would seem overwhelmingly
to indicate that Shakespeare's primary source for his
Hamlet was Kyd's(?) Ur-Hamlet, but that Der Bestrafte
Brudermord cannot justifiably be considered a 16th Century
translation of the Ur-Hamlet.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST QUARTO HAMLET, 1603

The first edition of Hamlet was entered on the Stationers' Register in London in 1602 and was published in 1603, with the title page:

The/Tragicall Historie of/Hamlet/Prince of Denmark by William Shakespeare/ As it hath beene diverse times acted by his Highnesses servants in the Cittie of London: as also in the two V-/niuersities of Cambridge and Oxford, and elsewhere/at London printed for N. L. and John Trundell/1603.¹

This is the earliest known printed edition of Shakespeare's Hamlet, and is commonly known as the First Quarto. Until the year 1823, it was commonly believed that the 1604-5 Quarto, now known as the Second Quarto, was the earliest printing of Shakespeare's Hamlet. The text of the Second Quarto is substantially the same as that which appeared in the 1623 collection of Shakespearean plays, known as the First Folio. It is the text of the First Folio that is usually used in the modern editions of Hamlet.

In 1823 Sir Henry Bunbury discovered a previously unknown edition of Shakespeare's Hamlet, the finding of which he describes as follows:

the...copy...was found by me in a closet at Barton, 1823....It probably was picked up by my grandfather, Sir William Bunbury, who was an ardent collector of old dramas. For the satisfaction of bibliographers, I take this opportunity of recording the particulars of the little volume, which contained this Ham-

let of 1603. It was a small quarto, barbarously cropped, and very ill-bound; its contents were as follows -- (titles of twelve of Shakespeare's plays, with dates, are listed)....I exchanged the volume with Messrs. Payne and Foss, ...and they sold it...to the Duke of Devonshire.²

This discovery has been of monumental significance to Shakespearian scholars.

The Hamlet of the First Quarto is of about half the length of the Hamlet of the Second Quarto (and, accordingly, of the First Folio). It is, on the surface, a confused jumble of misplaced scenes, slovenly workmanship, and almost illiterate type-setting, yet, underneath all this, lies indisputable intrinsic evidence of Shakespeare's authorship. The language of the First Quarto and the First Folio is frequently identical, even in the most typically "Shakespearian" passages of the First Folio.

Theories as to how the text of the First Quarto came into existence are legion. Most critics hold, in common, that the First Quarto is a piracy, not sanctioned by Shakespeare, gotten together through means of shorthand notes, and/or memorized passages by an actor, who played one of the minor parts in the play. J. Dover Wilson, himself an enthusiastic exponent of the "piracy" theory, sums up the First Quarto discussion as follows:

There are still as many theories of its (the First Quarto's) origin and composition as there are critics who write about it; but they all, I think, nowadays agree upon one point, namely, that however this strange thing "of

shreds and patches" came into being, its main source was not any manuscript by Shakespeare but a memorial reconstruction of his play by some person or persons, whether actors or note-taking spectators, who were present at performances of it in 1603 or shortly before.³

It is not of much importance insofar as this study is concerned to ascertain whether or not the First Quarto is a piracy of Shakespeare's Hamlet, an actual copy of Shakespeare's first version of Hamlet, or an independent Hamlet by an author other than Shakespeare. These questions have been debated to such lengths, by so many critics, all of whom seem to arrive at different conclusions, that it would seem pretentious to become involved with them here. It is important, however, to point out in what ways the First Quarto represents a stage in the evolution of the Amleth legend, as distinct from, or anticipatory to, Hamlet, the First Folio.

In every respect but one, the Hamlet of the First Folio is simply a refinement, an enlargement, and a polishing of the Hamlet of the First Quarto. The material which Shakespeare inherited remains pretty much the material of Saxo (or the translators of Saxo), with the notable exceptions of Ophelia's funeral scene, not a trace of which is to be found in any other version of Amleth-Hamlet, and the Ghost, which is found only in Der Bestrafte Brudermord. It is in the matter of Gertrude's absolute denial of any knowledge of her husband's murder, her avowal to help her son in his

search for vengeance, and her willingness to scheme against her present husband (Claudius) that the First Quarto represents a new stage of development in the Amleth-Hamlet legend. In the First Quarto, Gertrud says:

But, as I have a soule, I swear by heaven,
I never knew of this most horride murder.

Hamlet then says:

...mother, but assist me in revenge,
And in his death your infamy shall die.

Gertrud answers:

Hamlet, I vow by that majesty,
That knowes our thoughts, and lookes into our hearts
I will conceale, consent, and doe my best
What stratagem see're thou shalt devise.⁴

Hamlet is then sent to England in the company of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Later, Horatio informs Gertrud of Hamlet's return home, and the following dialogue takes place:

Hor. Madame, your sonne is safe arriv'de
in Denmarke,
This letter I even now receiv'd of him,
Whereas he writes now he escap't the danger,
and subtle treason that the king had plotted,
Being crossed by the contention of the windes,
He found the Packet sent to the king of England,
Wherein he saw himselfe betray'd to death,
As at his next conversion with your grace,
He will relate the circumstance at full.

Queene. Then I perceive there's treason in
his lookes
That seem'd to sugar o're his villanie:
But I will soothe and please him for a time,
For murderous mindes are alwayes jealous,
But know not you Horatio where he is?

Hor. Yes Madame, and he hath appoynted me
to meet him on the 'east side of the Cittie
To morrow morning.

Queene. O faile not, good Horatio, and withall,

commend me
 A mothers care to him, bid him a while
 Be wary of his presence, lest that he
 Faile in that he goes about.

Hor. Madame, never make doubt of that:
 I think by this the news be come to court:
 He is arriv'de, observe the king, and you shall
 Quickly finde, Hamlet being here,
 Things fell not to his minde.

Queene. But what became of Gilderstone and
Rossencraft?

Hor. He being set ashore, they went for England,
 And in the Packet there writ down that doome
 To be perform'd on them poynted for him:
 And by great chance he had his fathers Seale,
 So all was done without discoverie.

Queene. Thankes be to heaven for blessing of
 the prince.

Horatio once againe I take my leave,
 With thousand mothers blessings to my sonne.

Hor. Madam adue.⁵

This should be compared with the Gertrude of the First Folio, whose strongest words of denial after Hamlet accuses her of complicity in her husband's murder are:

Be thou assured, if words be made of breath,
 And breath of life, I have no life to breath
 What thou has said to me.⁶

In the First Folio there is no hint of a scene which could possibly correspond with that in the First Quarto, wherein Horatio informs the Queen of Hamlet's return to Denmark, and where the Queen acknowledges that Claudius is a villain. The psychological position of Gertrude in the First Folio represents the final stage of development in the Amleth-Hamlet legend.

The stages of development in the evolution of the Hamlet legend are, then, by no means clear cut, obvious levels of development. It has been pointed out in this study that Saxo's prose account of the legend was translated by Bandello, Belleforest, and the individual who made the English Pavier translation. That the Pavier translation antedates Shakespeare's Hamlet is, as has been shown, highly disputable. Of the two plays that are generally considered as antedating Shakespeare's Hamlet, the Ur-Hamlet, and its supposed German translation, Der Bestrafte Brudermord, one must speak with the utmost caution. There seems to be little doubt but that an Ur-Hamlet existed, and that Kyd was its author, but that Der Bestrafte Brudermord is its German equivalent must be seriously questioned. The discussion concerning the exact status of Shakespeare's First Quarto Hamlet is a never ending one, but that it represents a stage in the development of Hamlet, independent of Hamlet: The First Folio, is certain. The First Folio Hamlet brings the Amleth legend to its last stage of development, but it is written with such consummate artistry that each individual reader, or observer, can add his own interpretation to it; consequently, the Hamlet legend will doubtless continue to evolve as long as the human species does the same.

APPENDIX A

1. Saxo Grammaticus, op.cit., p. 85:

Det haender ofte, at man slipper fra Kampen med Livet, men efter at have sat sin Førlighed til, og det regnes for en tungere Skaebne end Døden; thi naar man er død, er alting glemt, men Krøblingen kan ikke slippe bort fra sit lemlestede Legeme.... thi byder Kjaerlighed os at ynkes over andres Ulykker, hvor meget mere bør man da ikke ynkes over sine egne? Enhver bør sørge for sit Legems Tarv; den, der undlader det, er for Selvmorder at regne.

2. Ibid, p. 87:

Da Amleth sas det, fandt han det ikke raadeligt at baere sig fornuftigt ad for ikke derved at vække Mistanke hos sin Farbroder; han stillede sig derfor an, som om han var taabelig og i højeste Maade havde taget Skade paa Forstanden, og ved dette snilde Paafund skulde han ikke blot, hvad der boede i ham, men redded ogsaa sit Liv.

3. Ibid, p. 93:

...saa Uslingens Krop fik sit Leje i Skarn og Uhumskhed.

4. Ibid, pp. 93-5:

Hvorfor søger du, skammelige Kvinde, at skjule din grove Synd med falske Taarer, du, der som en fræk Skøge skjaender og besudler dit Leje, idet du fuld af Ukyskhed favner din Husbonds Morder og med de vaemmeligste Kjaertegn slesker for den, der har undlivet din Søns Fader? Saaledes tager Hopper imod de Hingste, der har overvundet dem, de før holdt sig til; det er umaelende Dyrs Natur snart i Flaeng at parres med en, snart med en anden, og du viser jo noksom ved at baere dig ad som de, at du har glemt din første Mand. Jeg stiller mig ikke uden Grundman, som om jeg var forrykt, thi jeg tvivler ikke om, at han, der har myrdet sin Broder, ogsaa vil fare frem med samme. Grumhed imod andre Fraender. Derfor er det bedre, at jeg har Udseende af at vaere gal end af at vaere klog; ved at lade, som om jeg er rent forrykt, redder jeg Livet. I mit stille Sind pønser jeg dog stadig paa at haevne min Fader; men jeg passer mit Snit, jeg venter paa gunstig Lejlighed dertil. Hver

Ting maa have sin Tod og sit Sted. Over for en falsk og grum Mand maa man gaa mere snedig til Vaerke. Du har derfor ikke nødig at jamre dig over min Forrykthed, med mere Føje burde du graede over din egen Skjaendsel, snarere sørge over, at din egen Sjael er i Ulave, end over at andres er det. Og glem saa for Resten ikke at holde Tand for Tunge.

5. Ibid, p. 100:

En modig man og vaerdigt til et evigt Eftermaele var Amlet, som snildelig gav sig Udseende af at vaere en Taabe og ved en beundringsvaerdig godt paatagen Galskab holdt sin overmenneskelige Kløgt skjult og ikke blot ved sin Snilhed fik bjaerget Livet, men ogsaa ved dens hjælp fandt Lejlighed til at hævne sin Fader, saa det maa staa uafgjort hen, om han ved saaledes snildt at vaere sig selv og kjaekt at hævne sin Fader lagde mest Mod eller Klogskab for Dagen.

6. Ibid, p. 113:

Saaledes gør Lykkens Ustadighed det af med all Kvindeløfter, Tidernes Omskiftelse gjør dem til intet, og tilfaeldige Omstaendigheder svækker Kvindens troskab, der altid staar paa svage Fødder. Ligesom hurtig til at love, er hun sen til at holde sine Løfter, Hun lader sig lokke og hilde af sine lyster, og glemmende det forbigangne giver hun sig stadig med aandeløs Begjaerlighed til hovedkulds med Griskhed at hige efter noget nyt.

7. Ibid, pp. 113-14:

Saalunde omkom Amlet, som, hvis Lykken havde vaeret ham lige saa huld, som Naturen havde vaeret gavmild imod ham, vilde vaere bleven Guderne lig i straalende Glans og ved sine herlige Egenskaber have overgaaet Herkules i Bedrifter.

NOTES

All quotations from Hamlet (unless further described as Hamlet, The First Quarto) are taken from Hamlet, The First Folio as it appears (emended) in The Complete Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare, The New Cambridge Edition. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1942. Reference to this play appears in the notes as:

Hamlet, Act..., Scene..., lines....

All quotations from Hamlet, The First Quarto, are taken from the facsimile reproduction as it appears in Shakespeare's Hamlet, The First Quarto, 1603. Harvard University Press, 1931. The First Quarto contains no act or scene divisions; the pages are unnumbered. Reference to this play appears in the notes as:

Hamlet, The First Quarto....

All quotations from Der Bestrafte Brudermord are taken from Tragoedia Der Bestrafte Brudermord oder: Prinz Hamlet Aus Daennemark, as translated by H. H. Furness in his A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare, Vol. II. J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, 1877. Reference to this play appears in the notes as:

Der Bestrafte Brudermord, Act..., Scene....

Notes to the Introduction

1. Wilson, J. Dover, What Happens in Hamlet? Macmillan Co., New York, 1936.
2. Jones, Ernest, Hamlet and Oedipus. W. W. Norton Co., New York, 1949. p. 113
3. Harris, Frank, The Man Shakespeare. Methuen & Co. Ltd., London, 1911. p. 26
4. Jones, op. cit., pp. 119-20.
5. Jones, op. cit., p. 43.
6. In 1604-5, The Second Quarto appeared. Of this Second Quarto several reprints were made. The text of the Second Quarto is substantially the same as that of the First Folio insofar as the action of the play is concerned.

Notes to Chapter I

1. It is not easy to formulate a bibliography of Gesta Danorum. Saxo doubtless worked on his history intermittently from 1185 to 1222, and inasmuch as events contemporary with Saxo are mentioned in the preface, it would seem that the last nine books (the historical section) were written first, and the first nine books (the legendary section) were written last. It is evident that even though the primary purpose of Gesta Danorum was to celebrate the accomplishments of Absalom, Saxo took much more pleasure in writing about the skjoldunger -- here he could exercise his creative propensities. Evidently Saxo's work gained a certain popularity with the coming of the Renaissance; a Latin epitome of Gesta Danorum was made in 1430, and a low German epitome appeared in 1485. In 1514, Christian Pedersen, Cannon of Lund, edited and published the first edition. Several reprints of this first edition appeared until Alfred Holder published a standard edition in Strasburg in 1886. The standard edition contains text, bibliography, critical apparatus based on all preceding editions manuscript fragments, and an index. There are five Danish translations of Saxo: Anders Vedel, 1575; John Laverentzen, 1715; Seir Schoubolle, 1752; N. K. F. Grundtvig, 1820 (actually,

Notes to Chapter I (continued)

Grundtvig's work is more of a lusty paraphrase than a literal translation); and Fr. Winkel Horn, 1911 -- all published in Copenhagen. With the exception of the English translation by Oliver Elton, 1905, which contains only the first nine books, there are no other translations outside of the few scraps which have appeared in English, French, and German. Saxo's manuscript of Gesta Danorum disappeared in the 17th Century; however, the Royal Copenhagen Library has in its possession the so-called "Angers fragment" -- four rough-draft pages of Saxo's manuscript, which it acquired in 1878.

2. Olrik, Axel, The Heroic Legends of Denmark. American Scandinavian Foundation, New York, 1919. Contains a translation of Olrik's reconstruction of Bjarkemaalet.
3. Hans Sperber in his article "The Conundrums in Saxo's Hamlet Episode," P.M.L.A., Sept., 1949 infers that Saxo originally wrote Gesta Danorum in Danish. Sperber ingeniously points out that when one translates many of the Latin terms into Danish, they are given an entirely new, dual significance.
4. Supra, Appendix A, note 1. All direct quotations from Saxo are my translations of the Danish text as it appears in Danmarks Kronike, af Saxo Grammaticus. Overset af Fr. Winkel Horn, Chr. Flors Boghandel, Copenhagen, 1911.
5. Appendix A, note 2.
6. Appendix A, note 3.
7. Appendix A, note 4.
8. Appendix A, note 5.
9. Appendix A, note 6.
10. Hamlet, Act I, Scene I, lines 80-104.
11. A Book of Danish Ballads. Translated by E. M. Smith-Dampier. Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1939. pp. 204-5.
12. Latham, R. G., Two Dissertations on the Hamlet of Saxo Grammaticus and of Shakespeare. William Norgate, London, 1872. p. 41.
13. Cambridge Edition of the Complete Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare. Edited by W. A. Neilsen and C. J. Hill. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1942. p. 1045.

Notes to Chapter I (continued)

14. Grønbech, Vilhelm, The Culture of the Teutons. Translated by W. W. Worster. Jespersen og Pios Forlag, Copenhagen, 1931. Vol. I, p. 324.
15. Ibid, pp. 331-3.
16. Wilson, J. Dover, op. cit., pp. 103-6.
17. Werder, Karl, The Heart of Hamlet's Mystery. G. P. Putman's Sons, New York, 1907. pp. 171-2.
18. Huhner, Max, Shakespeare's Hamlet. Farrar Strauss & Co., New York, 1950. pp. 123-4.
19. The Variorum Shakespeare. Edited by H. H. Furness. J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, 1877. Vol. II, p. 89.
20. Der Bestrafte Brudermord, Act III, Scene V. Reprinted in The Variorum Shakespeare, op. cit., Vol. II.
21. The Hystorie of Hamblet, Prince of Denmarke. Reprinted in The Variorum Shakespeare, op. cit., Vol II, p. 97.
22. Hamlet, Act III, Scene IV, lines 24-5.
23. Hamlet: The First Quarto, 1693. (Reproduced in facsimile) Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass., 1931.
24. Latham, op. cit., p. 44.
25. Vining, Edward P., The Mystery of Hamlet. J.P. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, 1881. p. 34.
26. Brandes, Georg, William Shakespeare. Macmillan Co., New York, 1931. p. 343.
27. Flatter, Richard, Hamlet's Father. Yale University Press New Haven, 1949. p. 13.
28. Hamlet, Act IV, Scene I, lines 8-12.
29. Ibid, Act III, Scene IV, line 34.
30. Ibid, Act III, Scene IV, lines 92-95.
31. Ibid, Act I, Scene II, lines 150-1.
32. Ibid, Act III, Scene IV, line 141.
33. Ibid, Act III, Scene IV, lines 187-88.

Notes to Chapter I (continued)

34. Ibid, Act III, Scene IV, line 212.
35. Latham, op. cit., p. 20.
36. Flatter, op. cit., p. 145.
37. Hamlet, Act V, Scene II, lines 407-11.
38. Supra, Appendix A, Note 7.
39. Hamlet, Act I, Scene V, line 7.
40. Ibid, line 25.
41. Ibid, lines 29, 30, 31.
42. Grønbech, op. cit., Vol I, p. 66.
43. The Deeds of Beowulf, translated by John Earle. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1892. p. 94.
44. Grønbech, op. cit., Vol I, p. 69.
45. Hamlet, Act I, Scene IV, lines 7-16.
46. Brandes (op. cit., p. 359) credits Schuck with first pointing out the incongruity of this situation.

Notes to Chapter II

1. Supra, Notes to Chapter I, Note 1.
2. Bandello, Matteo, Novellieri Italiani. Edited by Percy Pinkerton; John C. Nimmo, London, 1895. p. vii.
3. Ibid, pp. xi, xii, xiii.
4. Pinkerton does not once mention Bandello's treatment of the Amleth legend.
5. Infra, p. 47.
6. The following bibliographical material appears on the title page: "Histoires tragiques extraites oeuvres Italiennes de Bandel, & mises en nostre langue, par P. Boaistuau surnomme Launay, etc. (Continuation des

Notes to Chapter II (continued)

histories...mises en langue Francoise par F. de Belleforest.) Paris, 1559.

7. Cambridge Edition...of Shakespeare, p. 975.
8. Bandello, op. cit., p. xiv.
9. The Hystorie of Hamblet, pp. 87-8.
10. Variorum Shakespeare, Vol II, p. 91.
11. Shakespeare's Library. (A collection of the Plays, Romances, Novels, Poems and Histories Employed by Shakespeare in the Composition of his Works) Edited by Hazlitt and Collier. Reeves and Turner, London, 1875. p. 215.
12. The Hystorie of Hamblet, p. 97.
13. Brandes, op. cit., p. 343.
14. The Hystorie of Hamblet, p. 97.
15. Variorum Shakespeare, p. 87-90.
16. Elze has anticipated me in the theory that the Pavier translation is of a later date than the drama; however, he makes the same redundant mistake under consideration when he says: "...Amleth exclaim(s) in the very words of Shakespeare: 'A rat! a rat!' whereof not a trace is to be found in Belleforest." (Variorum Shakespeare, Vol II, p. 89)
17. Hamlet, Act I, Scene V, lines 41-47.
18. Hystorie of Hamblet, pp. 93-4.

Notes to Chapter III

1. Kyd, Thomas (1558-94), The Spanish Tragedy (first printed in 1594), reprinted in The Chief British Dramatists, edited by Matthews and Lieder. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1925.
2. Stoll, Elmer Edgar, Hamlet: An Historical and Comparative Study. Research Publications of the University of Minnesota, Vol. VIII, No. 5, 1919. p. 3.

Notes to Chapter III (continued)

3. Tragoedia Der Bestrafte Brudermord oder: Prinz Hamlet Aus Daennemark. The earliest copy of this play is in manuscript and bears the date "Pretz, den 27 October, 1710." The play is reprinted in English translation in Variorum Shakespeare, Vol. II.
4. Latham, op. cit., p. 148.
5. Stoll, op. cit., p. 4.
6. Latham, op. cit., p. 147.
7. Variorum Shakespeare, Vol II, pp. 114-20.
8. Flatter, op. cit., p. 21.
9. Wilson, J. Dover, op. cit., pp. 253-5.
10. Latham, op. cit., p. 91.
11. Ibid, pp. 100-4.
12. Der Bestrafte Brudermord, Act I, Scene I.
13. Ibid, Act II, Scene IV.
14. The Literature of England. Edited by Woods, Watt, and Anderson. Scott, Foresman and Company, New York 1947. Vol. I, p. 576.
15. Der Bestrafte Brudermord, Act III, Scenes V and VI.
16. Hamlet, Act IV, Scene III, lines 18-22.
17. Der Bestrafte Brudermord, Act III, Scene X.
18. Ibid, Act IV, Scene IV.
19. Hamlet, edited by J. Dover Wilson. University of Cambridge Press, Cambridge, 1947. p. xxv.
20. Wilson, J. Dover, The Manuscript of Shakespeare's Hamlet and the Problems of its Transmission. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1934. Vol. I, p. xiii.
21. Wilson, J. Dover, Hamlet, p. xxv.
22. A much less significant, yet rather curious parallel in names is that of Ophelia in the First Folio and Der Bestrafte Brudermord, which appears as Ofelia in the First Quarto. Thus the play, which is supposedly the oldest of the three, spells Ophelia in the modern mode, as reflected in the First Folio, yet the First

Notes to Chapter III (continued)

Quarto; dating from 1603, uses the older spelling, Ofelia.

Notes to Chapter IV

1. Shakespeare's Hamlet, The First Quarto, 1603. Reproduced in facsimile. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1931. Title page to the facsimile. (The pages of the facsimile text are unnumbered).
2. Ibid, p. 3-4.
3. Wilson, J. Dover, The Manuscript of Shakespeare's Hamlet, pp. 19-20.
4. Hamlet, The First Quarto, op. cit.
5. Loc. cit.
6. Hamlet, Act III, Scene IV, lines 197-99.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS

- Bandello, Matteo, Novellieri Italiani. Edited by Percy Pinkerton. John C. Nimms, London, 1895.
- Belleforest, Francois de, The Hystorie of Hamlet. Thomas Pavier, 1608. Reprinted in The Variorum Shakespeare, Vol. II.
- Beowulf, The Deeds of. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1892.
- Boas, Frederick, Shakespeare and his Predecessors. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1896.
- Bradley, A. C., Shakesperian Tragedy. Macmillan Co., London, 1949.
- Brandes, George, William Shakespeare. Macmillan Co., New York, 1931.
- Collier, J. P. (editor), Shakespeare's Library, Vol. II, Reeves and Turner, London 1875.
- Conklin, Paul S., A History of Hamlet Criticism, 1601-1821. King's Crown Press, New York, 1947.
- Flatter, Richard, Hamlet's Father. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1949.
- Furness, H. N. (editor), The New Variorum Shakespeare, Vols. I and II. J. P. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, 1918.
- Grønbech, Vilhelm, The Culture of the Teutons, Vols. I-III. Jespersen og Pios Forlag, Copenhagen, 1931.
- _____, Vor Folket i Oldtiden, Vols. I-IV. Jespersen og Pios Forlag, Copenhagen, 1909-12.
- Halliwell-Phillips, J. O., Memoranda on the Tragedy of Hamlet. James Evan Adlard, London, 1879.
- _____, The Remarks of M. Karl Simrock on the Plots of Shakespeare's Plays. Shakespeare Society, London, 1850.
- Huhner, Max, Shakespeare's Hamlet. Farrar Straus Co., New York, 1949.
- Jones, Ernest, Hamlet and Oedipus. W. W. Norton and Co., New York, 1949.

BOOKS (continued)

- Jones, Howard Mumford, The King in Hamlet. University of Texas Bulletin No. 1865, Nov., 1918.
- ✓ Knight, Charles (editor), The Works of Shakespeare, Vol. I. P. F. Collier, New York, 1865.
- Knight, G. Wilson, The Wheel of Fire. Oxford University Press, London, 1930.
- ✓ Latham, R. G. Two Dissertations on the Hamlet of Saxo Grammaticus, and of Shakespeare. Williams and Norgate, London, 1872.
- Matthews, Brander (editor), The Chief British Dramatists. Houghton Mifflin Co., Cambridge, 1925.
- Neilson, W. A., and Hill, C. J. (editors), The Complete Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare. The Riverside Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1942.
- Olrik, Axel, The Heroic Legends of Denmark. American-Scandinavian Foundation, New York, 1919.
- ✓ Parrot, Thomas Marc, William Shakespeare. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1934.
- Rubow, Paul V., Saga og Pastiche. Lever og Munksgaard Forlag, Copenhagen, 1923.
- Rudd, Martin B., An Essay Toward a History of Shakespeare in Denmark. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1920.
- Savage, D. S., Hamlet and the Pirates. Eyre And Spottiswoode, London, 1950.
- Saxo Grammaticus, Danmarks Krønike, Chr. Flors. Boghandel, Copenhagen, 1911.
- Schyberg, Fredrick, Dansk Teaterkritik indtil 1914. Gyldendal, Copenhagen, 1937.
- Smith-Dampier, E. M. (editor), A Book of Danish Ballads. Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1939.
- ✓ Stoll, E. E., Hamlet: An Historical and Comparative Study. Research publications of the University of Minnesota, Vol. VIII, No. 5, 1919.
- ✓ Vining, Edward P., The Mystery of Hamlet. J. P. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, 1881.

BOOKS (continued)

- * Werder, Karl, The Heart of Hamlet's Mystery. G. P. Putnam's Sons. New York, 1907.
- Williamson, Claude (editor), Readings on the Character of Hamlet. George Allen, and Unwin, Ltd., London, London, 1950.
- Wilson, J. Dover, The Manuscript of Shakespeare's Hamlet and The Problems of its Transmission. Macmillan Co., New York, 1934.
- * _____, What Happens in Hamlet? Macmillan Co., New York, 1936.
- _____ (editor), Hamlet. The University Press, Cambridge, 1948.
- Woods, G. B., et. al. (editors), The Literature of England, Vol. II. Scott Foresman Co., Chicago, 1948.

PLAYS

- Bestrafte Brudermord, Der, 1710. Reprinted in The Variorum Shakespeare, 1918.
- Kyd, Thomas, The Spanish Tragedy, 1594. Reprinted in The Chief British Dramatists, 1925.
- Shakespeare, William, Hamlet: The First Quarto, 1603. Reprinted in facsimile, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1931.
- _____, Hamlet: The Second Quarto, 1604. Reprinted in facsimile, Ward Ritchie Press, San Marino California, 1938.
- _____, Hamlet: The First Folio, 1623 (emended). Reprinted in The Complete...William Shakespeare, 1942.

ARTICLES

- Grey, H. D., "Hamlet, First Quarto Pirate." Philological Quarterly, October, 1937, Vol. 16, pp. 394-40.
- Krischbaum, L. "Sequence of Scenes in Hamlet." Modern Language Notes, May, 1940, Vol. 55, pp. 382-87.
- Laurence, W. W., "Ophelia's Heritage: the influence of the sources on Shakespeare." Modern Language Review, October, 1947, Vol., 42, pp. 409-16.

ARTICLES (continued)

McCullen, J. T., "Madness and the Isolation of Characters in Elizabethan and Early Stuart Drama." Studies in Philology, April, 1951, Vol. 48. pp. 25-38.

Sperber, H., "Conundrums in Saxo's Amled Episode." Publication of the Modern Language Association, September, 1949, Vol. 64, pp. 865-70.