

THE OLD ENGLISH *RUNE POEM*,
AN EDITION

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For Siri, Lisa, and Ådel

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PREFACE

The earliest records of any of the Germanic languages are written in the runic fupark, a name taken from the first six letters of this ancient and mysterious alphabet. The origins of the fupark are obscure, but most scholars now believe it to have been developed by a Germanic tribe which was in contact with certain North Italic alphabets sometime in the period c. 250 to 150 B. C. The runes, each of which signifies a sound and a common noun, were in the beginning used primarily for casting lots and for divination, being scratched on sticks and dice, and only secondarily for inscriptional purposes. But during the next five hundred years, as a result of the Germanic migrations, the fupark became the common property of all the Germanic peoples and its inscriptional uses were realized, so that early forms of the Germanic languages are preserved to this day, scratched on various bits of wood, metal, and stone, from Greece to Greenland.

Apart from a few isolated instances, the runes occur but rarely in manuscripts. Most inscriptions are brief, consisting only of a few words or sentences at the most,

but they provide a significant body of evidence in the early cultural and linguistic history of the Germanic peoples. The magnificent Golden Drinking Horn of Gallehus (fifth century) contained, until it was stolen and melted down, one of the earliest examples of Germanic alliterative verse: **MC NIMFAXARTIY**

HARTIOTY HARTI TTPIMR : ek hlewagastiR holtijaR horna tawido:

I, Hlewagast, Holt's son, made the horn. Inscriptions on tombstones and monuments abound in Sweden and Denmark, and coins, swords, and stone cross fragments contain some of the earliest examples of Old English. One of the noblest works of art of early England is the Ruthwell Cross, with its inscriptions from the Dream of the Rood and the triumphant

ARIT PM FT RFI : Krist waes on rodi. As recently as the last three years, hundreds of new runic inscriptions have been dug up from the wharf foundations in Bergen, Norway. Most of these date from Hanseatic times and include scratchings on combs and mirror cases, shipping labels, business letters written on sticks, and some are not without literary interest as one verse epistle which reads:

Unn þu mer,
ann ek þer
Gunnhildr.
Kyss mik
kann ek þik.

(You love me; I love you. Gunnhild. Kiss me: I know you well.) Runic traditions are vigorous in Scandinavia as late as the sixteenth century, but in England, after the introduction of Christianity in the seventh century, the runes

seem to have fallen into disuse.

The Old English Rune Poem, a product of this period of declining vitality of the English runic traditions, has not suffered from the neglect of the scholar. Like all runic documents, the Rune Poem has been devoted close study, and because it contains a wealth of both runic and cultural lore, a large body of scholarship has built up around the poem, nearly all of it dealing with the runes-- their values, names, and meanings. This edition makes use of the annotations of Dickins and Dobbie, but the main purpose here has been to place the poem in the literary traditions of the period, so that the poem can emerge as a poem, and not merely a document of linguistic interest. Therefore, in addition to a summary of the manuscript history and language, annotations and glossary, the present edition offers a study of the genre of the poem, from the point of view of both the vernacular and Latin traditions, a study of the stylistic techniques, and a study of the theme and structure of the poem.

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Introduction

MANUSCRIPT

The unique manuscript of the Rune Poem was extant as MS Cotton Otho B. x. fol. 165 until the fire of 1731, which destroyed it and so many other early English manuscripts. Fortunately, however, George Hickes (1642-1715), pamphleteer, divine, and antiquarian, had printed the poem in the Grammatica Anglo-Saxonica of his ponderous Thesaurus (1705), which contains among other things grammars of Old English and Gothic, Old High German, and Icelandic, specimens of these languages, some runic and numismatic lore, and Humphrey Wanley's catalogue of Old English manuscripts and¹ printed books. All subsequent editions of the Rune Poem have, therefore, been based on Hickes' printing of the poem in the Thesaurus.

The earliest notice of the MS Cotton Otho B. x. occurs in a note of Sir Robert Cotton in the 1621 catalogue of the Cottonian collection (Harley 6018, f. 162^v). The note records the loan to William Camden of "A Saxon book of divers saints lives and the Alphabett of the old Danish letter amonghs Mr. Gocelins." N. R. Ker infers from this that the MS along with the Rune Poem folio belonged at one time to John Joscelyn (1529-1603),¹ Archbishop Parker's Latin secretary and sometime Cambridge Latin and Greek lecturer, who collected a number of important Old English manuscripts,² and Ker suggests

that the Rune Poem MS folio, a single leaf, was bound with the MS of saints' lives "perhaps by Joscelyn."³

In Thomas Smith's Catalogus Librorum Manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Cottonianae (Oxonii MDCXCVI) occurs the first complete description of the contents of the MS, yet Smith fails to mention the Rune Poem, which, according to Wanley's Catalogus, was found on f. 165. In Smith we read the following description of the verso of that folio:

Characteres Alphabeti peregrini, numero tantum decem. Aliqui ex his videntur⁴ esse literis Runicis similes. 165 b.

In Humphrey Wanley's copy of Smith's Catalogus now in the Bodleian Library as Add. MS. 18041 (Gough London 54) there is the annotation in Wanley's hand: "Litterae antiquae Runicae numero plane viginti et nouem cum observatt. Saxoniciis."⁵ And in Wanley's own Catalogus, published in the same volume as Hickee's Thesaurus, folio 165 is described as follows:

XXVIII. fol. 165 Folium quod olim ad alium quendam librum pertinuit, nunc hujus pars, in quo continetur Alphabetum Runicum cum explicatione Poetica, Saxonice, quod non ita pridem descripsi rogatu Cl. D. Hickeesii, qui in Gram. Anglo-Saxonicae, cap. 22 de Dialecto Normannog-Saxonica. P. 135. illud typis evulgavit.

Hempl has proved beyond reasonable doubt that the rune values and several variant names found in Hickee's edition are borrowed from MS Cotton Domitian A. ix. f. 11^V, which fuporc Hickee reproduces on the next page after the Rune Poem (Thesaurus, p. 136).⁷ And C. L. Wrenn has produced further evidence that Hickee added the runic paraphernalia to the facsimile:

Hickes himself was quite candid about his additions when printing the Runic Poem. There is, he says, on p. 165 of the MS. 'Runarum Danicarum, tam simplicium quam duplicium, descriptio quaedam poetica, Anglo-Saxonice explicata.' It is of this 'Descriptio' that he writes as follows:

Plane quasi ab omnibus doctis spectatu dignam, hic cum runis aere incisis, operae et sumptus pretium exhibere iudicamus, Latinis additis ex adverso elementis, ad ostendendam runarum potestatem, una cum iis nominibus quibus appellantur ipsae runae. The italics are my own: but, with the corroborative evidence of Wanley quoted above /the description in his Catalogus 7, I think there can be little doubt that Hickes, as Hempl long ago suggested, added the marginal rune-names and rune-values deliberately for the better carrying out of his purpose, which was, of course, primarily philological.⁸

Wrenn has also pointed out the likelihood that Hickes' transcription was actually made by Wanley,⁹ since in the description of Galba A. ii. (Catalogus, p. 237) Wanley says:

IV Alphabeta Runica diversa, quae cum aliis ex hujusce Bibliothecae Codd. MSS. descripta D. Hickesio imprimenda dedi.

Wrenn comments: "It may be, therefore, that the whole of Hickes' transcriptions of runic fuparks and alphabets rests on those originally made by Wanley."¹⁰ Ker also asserts that the Rune Poem was printed "no doubt from Wanley's transcript."¹¹

The history of the Rune Poem MS may therefore be reconstructed, from the evidence given above, as follows: The medieval scribe transcribed the poem including only the single runes and the verses. A later Old English scribe added the names of the runes as a gloss. The Rune Poem folio became detached from the original manuscript (if it was ever bound),

and was bound with a MS of Aelfric's Lives of the Saints, perhaps by Joscelyn (1529-1603). The MS (now Cotton Otho B. x.) was acquired by Sir Robert Cotton, apparently from Joscelyn, and was lent to William Camden. In 1696 Thomas Smith described Cotton Otho B. x., overlooking the Rune Poem but noting ten runes on the verso of f. 165. Wanley transcribed the poem as well as the futhorcs of Cotton Galba A. ii. and Domitian A. ix., noted Smith's omission in his copy of Catalogus 1696, and described Otho B. x. for his own Catalogus 1705. Hickes published Wanley's transcriptions of the Rune Poem and the futhorcs, adding to the facsimile of the poem (if they were not already present in Wanley's transcription) the Latin values, the variant names, and variant runes from Wanley's transcription of Dom. A. ix. In 1731 MS Otho B. x. was badly damaged by the fire and f. 165 was destroyed.

Since the Rune Poem folio did not originally belong to Otho B. x., the few leaves that survived the fire can be of no value in determining the peculiarities of the hand, nor can we even be sure just how the poem was arranged on the page. But from a comparison of the letter counts of single pages of several representatives MSS and of the Rune Poem it seems likely that the poem was transcribed on both the recto and the verso of f. 165. It is also probable that the MS scribe, quite in keeping with Old English verse transcription, did not divide the poem into stanzas as Hickes has done. And if the runes occurred within the lines, this

situation would account for Smith's overlooking the poem, which followed hard on the heels of a Saxon penitential, and would account for his noting (incorrectly?) only ten miscellaneous runes at the end of the poem, perhaps the nine runes which Hickes includes at the bottom of the facsimile:

Hos characteres *ƿ ʀ ʁ ƿ ʀ ʁ ʁ ʁ* ad alia sestinans
ʀ sic, read festinans 7, studioso lectori interpretanda re-
linguo.

In arranging the text of the poem for this edition, I have taken the liberty of dividing it into stanzas, but the rune names, Latin values, and the variant runes, have been omitted.

NOTES

¹N. R. Ker, A Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon (Oxford, 1957), p. 228.

²On Joscelyn's antiquarian activities, see Eleanor N. Adams, Old English Scholarship in England from 1566 to 1800 (New Haven, 1917), p. 38.








³Ker, p. 230.

⁴Quoted from R. Derolez, Runica Manuscripta (Brugge, 1954), p. 17.

⁵Cited by Ker, p. 230.

⁶H. Wanley, Catalogus, p. 192.

⁷G. Hempf, MP, I (1904), 135-141.

⁸C. L. Wrenn, "Late Old English Rune-Names," Medium Aevum, I (1932), 25. The question of the relationship between the Rune Poem folio and Hickeys' facsimile is complicated by a runic alphabet found in Hickeys' Icelandic grammar later in the Thesaurus. On a page filled with tables of runic alphabets from various sources (including Dom. A. ix., St. John 17, Galba A. ii) is an alphabet "é Cod. MS Bib. Cott. Otho B. 10." (Gram. Is., p. 4, table II, 3), which contradicts the evidence from the facsimile of the Rune Poem: (1) The incorrect values Y and Z are given to  and , but the values are correct in the runic alphabet of Dom. A. ix. (MS source of the Rune Poem's accretions) and the facsimile of the Rune Poem. (2) The two H variants, the N, EO, and ING variants are included (all of which are found in Dom. A. ix. and the facsimile), but the  and  variants are not included (found in Dom. A. ix. and the facsimile). (3) The  rune, having neither name nor value in the facsimile, is given the value Z, whereas it has the value K in the Dom. A. ix. alphabet. (4) The values of daeg and man are reversed (presumably following the evidence of Dom. A. ix. against the evidence of the correct name glosses found with the poem; see line 59n). This reversal was not an idle slip since Hickeys in his charts of the derivations of the runes from Greek and Latin (Gram. Is., p. 4) gives the value M to  and D to . At least one conclusion may be

drawn from all these inconsistencies: The additions Hempl and Wrenn ascribe to Hickes are really those of Wanley, and although Hickes knew that some elements had been added to Wanley's transcription of the Rune Poem, he either did not know, or did not distinguish the MS evidence from the additions in making up his alphabetical charts. These inconsistencies have little bearing on the text of the Rune Poem, but in view of our dependence on Hickes alone for the runes of the lost MSS Galba A. ii. (destroyed by fire in 1865) and Otho B. x., and in view of the contradictions in the descriptions of Otho B. x., the question of the reliability of Hickes' reproductions needs further study.

⁹Wrenn, p. 27.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 27.

¹¹Ker, p. 230.

LANGUAGE AND DATE

An analysis of the language of the poem reveals few forms that can be assigned only to any non-West Saxon dialect, and the relatively few unexpected spellings can in almost every case be seen as the result of the levelling of vowels of unstressed syllables and the smoothing of early West Saxon diphthongs, both of which are to be regarded as late West Saxon changes (see Kemp Malone, "When did Middle English begin?", Curme Volume of Linguistic Studies, Language Monograph, No. 7, 1930, pp. 110-117). In addition, the change m > n in final unstressed syllables is evidence for a late MS date (see Campbell, Par. 378). Deviations from the standard Alfredian texts are discussed in detail below:

A. Vowels in stressed syllables:

1. The tendency throughout the text to confuse the graphs i and y: The byþ-formula which begins nearly every stanza is spelled byþ, except in 45, 48, 49, 52, 58, and 81, where we find bip. In line 6 is is written beside ys 8, and wile for drihtne 3, beside dryhten wyle 61. Other instances of i alternating with y include hihte 45, unstylum 58, and gerȳsena 72. This spelling of i where we should expect y and vice versa can tell us nothing positive about the rounding or unrounding of the front vowels, and the occurrence of alternations in words which occur more than

once further precludes any final decision as to their pronunciation.

2. Syllan 33 for earlier sellan must also be regarded as a LWS change common to the group sel- (Campbell, Par. 325).

3. Byrneb 17 is LWS y for biernan (Campbell, Par. 299a), eWS variant of birnan < *brinnan, class III strong verb. Breneð 43, on the other hand, is a variant of the causative baernan, a weak verb ultimately from *brannjan (Campbell, Par. 193d).

4. Hlehter 38 and wexeð 42, e < ea, are examples of LWS smoothing (Campbell, Par. 312), or Anglian smoothing (Bülbring, Par. 313).

5. Wature 42 and waetere 26 (beside waetre 89) exhibit the parasitic vowel in the dative singular, u (probably representing [ʉ̄]) written for e. Since OE ae and a coalesced in 10E times in a, wature may be further evidence for a late MS date (c. 1100?, cf. Campbell, Par. 329.3).

6. Trywe 48 for triwe is a WS feature (Bülbring, Par. 188). Hwyrft 25 shows a similar WS monophthongization of ie to y (Campbell, Par. 300).

7. Ēst 68 beside Ēast is more than likely a reflection of the LWS monophthongization of diphthongs (Campbell, Par. 329.2).

8. The vowels o/a are commonly in free variation before nasals as in onfeng 44, and anfeng 8, the a/o variation presumably being extended to the noun by analogy from the verb onfōn.

9. Beb 46 beside baep 79 and sēmannum 45 for expected sāemmannum is quite possibly a Kentish characteristic. The raising of ǣ to ē in the Kentish Gospels is a tenth-century change (Campbell, Par. 288).

B. Vowels in unstressed syllables:

1. The unstressed vowels a, u, o, e and i fell together as schwa in late OE, and the large proportion of inconsistent spellings in the Rune Poem testifies to a certain confusion on the part of the scribe as to how this schwa should be represented. Thus we find frōfur 1, 11, 58 for expected frōfor, oftust 17, 41 and gelīcust 30 beside oftast 73, faerylde 49 beside faerelde 86, wynan 37 and māgan 59 for expected wynnum and māgun, stabule 82 for expected stabole, herenys 19 for herenes, underwrebyd 37 for underwreþod, tūdder 52 for tūddor, and nēþun 64 for nēþan.

2. Syncopation in brīdles 66, fōdres 88, waetre 89 (Campbell, Par. 388, 389) and haefb 23, 41 (Campbell, Par. 732). The uncontracted hafab 88, beside the expected haefb 23, 41 may be WS, since the form does occur in prose texts (Campbell, Par. 762), or it may be Anglian, since it is found regularly in Vespasian Psalter (Campbell, Par. 762) and in Anglian poetic texts (Sievers-Brunner, Par. 417c). The syncopated hwyrft 25 for hwyrþp is also probably WS (Campbell, Par. 732). The regular WS hylt 82 beside uncontracted healdeð 48 is given by Sievers (Beitr., X, 474) as evidence for a Southern origin of the poem. Verb

syncopation in Anglian texts is rare, and if the poem were Anglian, line 82b would read stede rihte haldeð. Such a measure cannot be made to conform to any of Sievers' five verse types (or Creed's, cf. PMLA, LXXXI, 23); hence it must be inferred that the line, if Anglian, violates the patterns of OE versification. It is therefore likely that the poem is not of Anglian provenance. In line 48 however, either healdeð or hylt would give a metrical line (Sievers' D^2).

C. Consonants:

1. There is metathesis in LWS /sk/ to /ks/, as in fisce 46 and fix 87 (Campbell, Par. 440).
2. Assimilation of 3 sing. pres. ending of fb > ft as in hwyrft 25 is rare. J. Hedberg (The Syncope of the Old English Present Endings, Lund, 1945) cites no instance of fb > ft occurring in the prose texts, and according to Campbell (Par. 481.5) the change fb > ft which occurs in, for example, LWS beoft, does not occur in the verbs. In the case of hwyrft there are two possible explanations: either (1) hwyrft represents scribal confusion with the noun hwyrft 'a turn, going, course'; or, (2) what is more likely, with the syncopation of feb > fb, the f became devoiced, and the final spirant dissimilated to a stop. It is doubtful that the t of hwyrft represents a spirant (Campbell, Par. 57.7), or that t is here an alternative phonological form -et of the 3 sing. pres. ind. (Campbell, Par. 735b).

On the basis of the evidence above we can say that the scribe confuses the graphs i and y in stressed position and that the schwa of unstressed syllables is represented variously by u, o, a, y, and e. These are common features of LWS, but there are a number of pairs of variant spellings which indicate the absence of a vigorously standard scribal tradition (wature/waetere/waetre, est/East, onfeng/anfeng, beb/baeb, hafab/haefb, healdeð/hvlt, fisces/fix, etc.). In addition to the pairs of variant spellings, there is a curious bunching up of less expected forms between lines 37-46, and these lines will bear closer examination.

While one would not go so far as to say (as has J. Dover Wilson in regard to the compositor of the First Folio) that these lines were copied in a state of eagerness to get on with the job however carelessly, "after an interval for refreshment from 'a stoup of ale,'" nevertheless in line 37 we find two instances of final m > n, a alternating with u in the dative plural, and y for o in the past participle: wyrtrumun underwrebyd wynan on ēble. In addition, within these lines we find the most significant vocalic variant spellings, those reflecting LWS or Anglian smoothing (hlehter 38, wexeð 42) and the quite possibly tenth-century Kentish raising of æ > ē (sēmannum 45 and beb 46). And here also is the form wature 42 with the less expected parasite vowel. In addition to the high frequency of unexpected and possibly

dialectal spellings peculiar to these ten lines, it is here that we find the only gap in the text of the poem. Something has been omitted from the line wlancum ðar wigan sittab 39, although the omission is not noted by Hickes. It is, of course, entirely possible that the omission was made by Wanley in his transcription, but it is just as likely to be the error of a scribe who, rather carelessly repeating dialectal accretions and adding a few of his own, failed to understand some of the runes and their accompanying verses, and who consequently in his confusion omitted two or three words from the MS. It is not therefore coincidental that these spellings and omissions should occur within these two stanzas, (peorb and eolh-secg), the rune-names of which are quite rare in OE and the significations of which would have been preserved only in a strong runic tradition.

Three tentative conclusions may be drawn from the linguistic evidence of the text and from the mixture of forms and the lacuna of lines 37 to 46: (1) The MS of the Rune Poem is tenth or eleventh century, when the vigor of the runic traditions had been all but lost. Such lws spellings as n for final m, the levelling of unstressed vowels, and the smoothing of diphthongs preclude an earlier date for the MS. (2) The MS had a checkered history, and may have been copied by Anglian and Kentish scribes before its final redaction by the West Saxon Cottonian MS scribe. (3) The original dialect of the poem cannot be known with certainty

although, because of the several syncopated verbs, notably hylvt 82, the poem is presumably not of Anglian origin, but rather is Southern. The occurrence of the Ior rune, with its Kentish connections (see line 87n), and the Kentish spellings sēmannum 45 and bep 46 suggest at least the possibility of Kentish origin, though the poem is more than likely of West Saxon provenance.

SOURCES AND GENRE

Understanding the relationships between the pagan and Christian traditions has always been one of the larger concerns of Old English studies. Most of the disputes have been waged around Beowulf, beginning with F. A. Blackburn's essay "The Christian Coloring in the Beowulf"¹ and continuing to the very recent attack on the Christian-patristic point of view in "Beowulf and the Pitfalls of Piety."² It would not be appropriate to discuss here the various approaches to Beowulf that have been made, nor to consider the question of the fusion of pagan and Christian elements in Old English poetry as a whole, but an attempt will be made in this section to show that the assumption of earlier editors and critics that the Old English Rune Poem is derived from a much older pagan Germanic rune poem is merely an assumption, and to demonstrate that there are reasons somewhat more compelling to place the poem within the Latin-Christian poetic traditions of the early Middle Ages. Any search for the source or the genre of the Rune Poem must be directed toward these traditions.

The histories of Old English literature nearly always discuss the Rune Poem in the sections on "survivals

of the Germanic-pagan traditions," and there is justification for this since clearly the runes themselves are a survival of a tradition reaching back as far as the first or second century. But the suggestion that the Old English Rune Poem itself is a survival of an ur-poem can be based on nothing but sheer speculation.

Alois Brandl makes perhaps the earliest suggestion (1901) that the Rune Poem is drawn from a heathen poem:

Während aber dieser Dichter, wie aus seinen Anspielungen auf den Himmelskönig hervorgeht, bereits Christ war, führt uns der Vergleich mit zwei verwandten skandinavischen Runen gedichten bis zu einer heidnischen Urform zurück.³

The one-page introduction of the first critical edition of the poem (1915), that of Bruce Dickins, is based largely on Brandl, and suggests that the poem is early, "pre-Alfredian at least (with traces perhaps of an original from which the Scandinavian poems are derived)."⁴ One of the more judicious statements concerning the origin of the poem is to be found in Dobbie's edition (1942), where the poem is called a "miscellaneous compilation from all kinds of sources, both literary and popular."⁵ But although Dobbie acknowledges the obscurity of the exact nature of these sources and their combinations, and although he suggests the possibility of accretion, nevertheless he asserts, probably rightly, that the poem as we have it "gives the impression of a complete and unified work by a single compiler." Dobbie sees its

unity consisting in the bib-formula, the conformity of the length of stanzas, and the effect of finality in the last stanza.⁶ Kemp Malone in A Literary History of England (1948) has lent his weighty opinion to the discussion, and in a chapter entitled "The Old Tradition: Popular Poetry," he says in regard to the source of the Rune Poem:

It seems altogether likely that the runes from the first were learned by means of a poem in which each rune-name began a section, though in the original poem the sections may have been quite brief--possibly no more than a short verse each. From this original poem the three runic poems were presumably descended.⁷

Thus the notion of an original Germanic rune poem has persisted, but on the basis of no evidence at all, except the two later Norse rune poems.

These two poems, the source of the ur-poem speculation from the beginning, can however offer no evidence for an original: In the first place, the Old Norwegian Rune Poem may have grown out of someone's having heard the Old English poem in the thirteenth century, and the Old Icelandic poem, of the fifteenth century (Bruce Dickins' dates), may have been derived from one or the other. Furthermore, the only similarities between the Norse poems and the English poem are those that are a necessary consequence of the similar rune names and a shared storehouse of kennings.⁸ Secondly, in regard to the stanza form, the second half of the Old Norwegian line is in each case an independent gnome with an end-rime:

Fé vaeldr fraenda rógge;
fóðesk ulfr í skóge.

Úr er af illu jarne;
opt lóypr raeinn á hjarne.⁹

In the Old Icelandic poem each stanza is a series of three kennings which define three aspects of each rune name, and this is punctuated by the Latin equivalent of the name and a synonym for 'king':

Fé er fraenda róg
ok flæðar viti
ok grafseiðs gata.
aurum fylkir.

Úr er skýja grátr
ok skara þverrir
ok hirðis hatr,
umbre vísi.

Thus on the basis of stanza form it may be doubted whether there is any connection between the two Norse poems, much less between either of them and the Old English Rune Poem or a Germanic ur-rune poem. And finally, the structure of the Old English poem, the extension of the Germanic fupark of twenty-four runes to twenty-nine runes, and our poet's sense of order and finality in the twenty-ninth stanza, makes derivation from an earlier Germanic rune poem unlikely. For all the secular lore that the poem does contain, it has closer affinities to the Latin genres of aenigma, gnomic catalogue poem, and abecedarium than to a hypothetical Germanic-pagan rune poem genre.

The riddling quality of the Rune Poem has often been noted, and if the runes were not originally accompanied by

the name glosses, each stanza would be a riddle for someone unfamiliar with the names. The riddle itself is an ancient and respectable genre: We see it in the riddle of Odysseus to Polyphemus, in the riddle of the Sphinx, in the riddle of Samson to the Philistines, and the riddle is found in the early literature of England in both Latin and the vernacular. Aldhelm at the abbey of Malmesbury, under the influence of its Irish founders, composed a series of one hundred Aenigmata modelled after the riddle cycle of Symphosius, perhaps a sixth-century scholar of the Vandal kingdom.¹⁰ Aldhelm's riddles, like the Rune Poem, glorify the creation, and the introductory poem has the line Aldhelmus cecinit millenis versibus odas, in acrostic and telestich.¹¹ As testimony to the relative wealth of the English libraries, Aldhelm's knowledge of Latin authors included his favorites Virgil and Sedulius, Ovid, Horace, Terence, Perseus, Juvenal, Lucan, Juvencus, Paulinus of Nola, Ausonius, Prudentius, Claudian, Prosper, Sidonius Apollinaris, and, of course, the Fathers.¹² And this Aldhelm was the same who, according to William of Malmesbury, used to sit at the bridge and sing Old English lays to lure people into church. Another collection of riddles, written by Tatwine, Archbishop of Centerbury, testifies to the popularity of the genre, and Eusebius (Hwaetberht, abbot of Wearmouth in 716) has a series of riddles of which four are

on the letters alpha, X, U, and I.¹³ Whatever the currency of the riddle may have been in pre-literary Germanic times, the riddles of the Exeter Book, especially the adaptations there of Aldhelm's Creation and Lorica, are evidence of the widespread tendency in the Old English period to fashion compositions in the vernacular after classical modes; and the Rune Poem has some affinities with the riddle in its enigmatic runes, its brevity of stanza, its overall cyclic structure, and, however tenuously, its preoccupation with letters as in the Aldhelm acrostic.

In addition to the riddle, a second medieval kind in which the Rune Poem seems to participate is the catalogue poem. A poet may wish to have a catalogue of heroes or gods fixed for posterity, or a catalogue of cities, or rivers, or trees. The thulas of Widsith are the best-known examples in Old English literature, but the two poems the Fortunes (or Fates) of Men and Gifts of Men are closer stylistically to the Rune Poem.¹⁴ An early example of the gnomic verse catalogue is found in Hesiod's Works and Days, though since it may be doubted that the Old English poets knew Hesiod, there are the Distichs of Cato, which every scholar who passed through the medieval schools knew.¹⁵ Curtius has commented on the popularity of such gnomic catalogues in the Middle Ages:

In the antique poets there were hundreds and thousands of lines which put a psychological experience or a rule of life

in the briefest form. Aristotle discussed such apophthegms in his Rhetoric (II, 21). Quintillian called them "sententiae" (literally: "judgments") because they resembled the decisions of public bodies (VIII, 5, 3). Such lines are "mnemonic verses." They are learned by heart; they are collected; they are arranged in alphabetical order that they may be ready at hand.¹⁶

There is, of course, nothing peculiarly English about sentences or gnomic verses: They are found in all literatures throughout the world. But the fact that Anglo-Saxon scholars did know collections of verses, catalogues, perhaps arranged alphabetically, indicates the possibility that the Rune Poem was composed by someone familiar with the Latin genre. As in the case of the Old English riddles, we find an example of the easy commerce between Latin and the vernacular in the Old English Panther, Whale, and Partridge of the Exeter Book. Whether these poems represent only a fraction of a larger Old English Physiologus is debatable, but the point here is that this bestiary has its analogue in the manuscripts of the Latin Physiologus, particularly the ninth-century Bern MS: 233, and the eleventh century versified Physiologus.¹⁷ Here, as in the case of the thulas and the gnomic verses, we have a series of descriptive verses, organized to form a catalogue, which becomes a source for the Old English physiologus-catalogue genre.

A third medieval genre to which the Rune Poem has

probable connections is the abecedarium, and the abecedarium grows out of a rather simple notion that the letters themselves can be more than merely a way of representing the sounds of a language, that letters may function in more than one way. Both the Germanic runes and the Latin letters, as shall be shown, were thought of as capable of multiple functions.

The runes, on the one hand, were intimately associated with rite and magic. The word rune itself means 'mystery' or 'secret,' and (in spite of their "baptism" in such monuments as the Ruthwell Cross) as proof that the pagan uses of the runes were quite alive in Anglo-Saxon England, we find in Bede the story of Imma.¹⁸ This young follower of the Northumbrian King Ecgfrith was taken prisoner, but his brother, believing him dead, said a mass for him every day, and because of this mass, his fetters continually gave way. Bede tells the story to show the power of the sacrament but also reports that Imma was asked by his captors,

hwaeder he ða alysendlecan rune cuðe,
 ond þa stafas mid him awritene haefde,
 be swylcum men leas spel secgað ond
 spreocað, þaet hine mon forþon gebindan
 ne meahte.

Even as late as the eleventh century, Aelfric equates runes and magic in a homily: ðurh drycraeft oððe ðurh runstafum, 'through magic or through rune-staves.'¹⁹ A curious synthesis of the pagan and Christian occurs in the poetic Solomon

and Saturn débat, where the Latin letters are accompanied by the runes to spell out the opening words of the Pater Noster. The passage advocates the use of the Lord's Prayer as a battle charm, each letter and rune symbolizing an angelic warrior who overcomes the devil. For instance:

. ↑ T . hine teswað and hine on ða 94
 tungan sticað, / wraesteð him ðast
 woddor and him ða wongan brieceð.²⁰

The Greek and Latin alphabets were likewise considered to have various powers, though probably these powers were never as clearly defined as those of the runes. Isidor says in the Etymologiae, known by all scholars in the Middle Ages:

Litterae autem sunt indices rerum, signa verborum, quibus tanta vis est, ut nobis dicta absentium sine voce loquantur.²¹

Concerning the mysticism of the Greek letters he asserts:

Quinque autem esse apud Graecos mysticas litteras. Prima **Υ**, quae humanam vitam significat, de qua nunc diximus. Secunda **Θ**, quae mortem significat. . . . Tertia **Τ**, figuram demonstrans Dominicae crucis.²²

And according to Curtius, the Gallic grammarian of the seventh century, Virgilius Maro, also discusses the mysticism of the alphabet.²³ The best illustrations in Old English of the fondness for playing with letters, of allowing a letter to be understood both literally and symbolically, or literally in more than one way, are the Pater Noster of the Solomon and Saturn, the Cynewulfian runic signatures, and the runes of the Husband's Message. This allowing runes (or letters) to

function in more than one way has an analogue in the Latin acrostic poems, though of course in the case of both the runes and the acrostics, the device illustrates only a turn of mind, a way of conceiving of the powers of letters, an understanding of the multiple functions of letters. Like these uses of the runes, the acrostic device affords an opportunity to display the ingenuity of the poet, but it functions in a more practical way, to facilitate the memorization of the lines.

Turning now to the acrostic and abecedarium genres in Latin, we see that the acrostic poems are characterized by the acrostic of the initial letters of each line, the telestich (final letters), criss-cross, or any number of other combinations. As an illustration of the complexity to which the Carolingian poets aspired, a pupil of Alcuin's, Joseph the Scot, has a poem of thirty-seven lines, each of which lines contains exactly thirty-seven letters.²⁴ The acrostic text, a poem itself whose subject matter is the cross, takes the shape of a temple with peaked roof within which are three crosses. Greatly reduced and schematized the whole text resembles the figure below:

```

x x x x x O x x x x x
x x x x O x O x x x x
x x x O x x x O x x x
x x O x x M x x O x x
x O x x M M M x x O x
x O x x x M x x x O x
x O x x x M x x x O x
x O x I x M x I x O x

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x O I I I M I I I O x
x O x I x M x I x O x
x O x I x M x I x O x
x O x I x M x I x O x
O x x I x M x I x x O

```

The first line of the poem reads Inclyta si cupias sancti
sub culmina templi, and the c of sancti is the first letter
of the acrostic text which begins at the roof peak and con-
tinues down to the left: Crux mihi certa salus Christi
sacrata cruore. The acrostic continues through each of the
three crosses. Another illustration of the device is the
brief Versus Bernowini Episcopi ad Crucem:

Conditor aeterne, quem laudo versibus	istic
Rex requiem Bernwini da, pater atque redemptor	
Virtus virtutum victor victoria	Heisu
Xriste tu iustus iudex miserere mei	reX. ²⁵

The alphabetical poems sometimes tick off the letters with the
initial of each line, or with the initial of each stanza.
Both acrostic and alphabetic devices are mnemonic, but, ob-
viously, the acrostic sets up a secondary text (a word or
even whole sentences) in addition to the primary text of the
poem; the alphabetical, only the alphabet. It would not be
too great a claim to say that the acrostic and alphabetical
device is one of the most prevalent structuring devices of
Christian-Latin poetry, from its beginnings, through the
Carolingian period.

The earliest extant Christian verses in Latin are
those of Commodian, and all of the eighty poems which make
up his Instructiones are in acrostic or alphabetical form.

The poems are didactic, and according to F. J. E. Raby are clearly intended to provide a solid grounding in the faith, by polemics against Jews and heathen gods, by admonitions to pursue the Christian way, and warnings of the terrors of doomsday:

D at tuba caelo signum sublato leone
E t fiunt desubito tenebrae cum caeli fragore.

S ummittit oculos dominus, ut terra tremescat,
A dclamat et iam, ut audiant omnes, in orbem:
E cce diu tacui sufferens tanto tempore vestra
C onclamant pariter plangentes sero gementes,
U lulatur, ploratur, nec spatium datur iniquis.
L actanti quid faciat mater, cum ipsa crematur?
I n flamma ignis dominus iudicabit iniquos.²⁶

After Commodian, the most important hymn writer is Hilary of Poitiers (c. 310-66), two of whose three surviving hymns are alphabetical.²⁷ That Augustine, a century after Commodian, should have chosen the alphabetical structure for his Psalmus contra partem Donati is testimony to its currency. He probably intended the hymn to be sung by his congregations, and remarks, "Tales autem abecedarios appellant."²⁸ The device seems to have been ignored by the greatest of the early Christian hymn writers; apparently the poetry itself made demands which transcended such tricks of rhetoric. Thus Prudentius (c. 348-405), the first great Christian poet,²⁹ and Ambrose (c. 340-397), the father of Christian hymnody,³⁰ produced no alphabetical hymns, nor did the poet of the Vexilla regis and Salve, festa dies, Venantius Fortunatus (540-600).³¹

A minor Latin alphabetical poet of fifth-century

Italy, Sedulius, became "a Christian classic, cited by the grammarians, read as a model of style, and imitated by generations of versifiers."³² Sedulius' fame rested largely on his long and allegorical Carmen Paschale, but he has two hymns, one of which is alphabetical and is particularly relevant to this study because it is quoted by Bede in the De Metri and is found in no fewer than twelve English and continental eighth- to tenth-century MSS.

A solis ortus cardine
 Adusque terrae limitem
 Christum canamus principem,
 Natum Maria virgine.

B eatus auctor saeculi
 Servile corpus induit,
 Ut carne carnem liberans
 Non perderet, quod condidit.

C lausae parentis viscera
 Caelestis intrat gratia,
 Venter puellae balulat
 Secreta, quae non noverat.³³

The acrostic poems of Eugenius of Toledo, archbishop from 646 to 658, also were known by Bede, and according to Raby, "it is supposed that Alcuin took them over to Frankish soil, where the Carolingian poets admired and imitated them."³⁴

It is well known that the English were taught to write by the Irish, whose conversion to Christianity antedates the mission of Augustine in 597 and who were largely responsible for the preeminence of Celtic Christianity in Northumbria. The early dependence on Ireland for the training of English scholars is evidenced not only in the adaptation of the Irish half-uncial rather than the Italian script,

but also in a letter of Aldhelm's to Eahfrith boasting that stylistic conceits can now be acquired in England-- that one need no longer go to Ireland to learn the scholar's craft.³⁵

One can observe, however, that the genre of the alphabetical hymn was strong in Ireland from the very beginning, and in addition to Augustine of Hippo, Sedulius, Hilary, and other continental alphabetical poets, the Irish must have been one source for the genre in England. The very earliest Irish Latin verse is the alphabetical hymn of Sechnall (or Secundius) on St. Patrick.³⁶ At least a half-dozen other alphabetical hymns from the period of the great Celtic monasteries of the sixth and seventh centuries have survived, not the least important of which is the hymn Altus Prosator, possibly written by Columba, founder of the monastery at Iona, which tells the story of the world from creation to doomsday.³⁷

Turning again to England, in the eighth century there is a vigorous production of Latin hymns, and Bede himself says that he is the author of a hymnal of both metrical and rhythmical verse. This has not survived, but we do have his hymn in honor of St. Etheldreda in the Ecclesiastical History (Bk. IV, ch. xx). The hymn is alphabetic from A to Z with the last four couplets spelling in acrostic AMEN. It also employs the "serpentine" or echoing device of repeating the first phrase at the end of each couplet:

A lma deus trinitas, quae saecula cuncta gubernas,
 adnue iam coeptis, alma deus trinitas.
 B ella Maro resonet, nos pacis dona canamus:
 munera nos Christi, bella Maro resonet.
 C armina casta mihi, foedae non raptus Helenae.
 luxus erit lubricis, carmina casta mihi.
 D ona superna loquar, miserae non proelia Troiae,
 terra quibus gaudet: dona superna loquar. . . .

Unfortunately, Alfred's translators did not put the hymn into Old English. After the Viking invasions in the tenth and eleventh centuries there is little Latin poetry of any consequence: Frithegode (fl. 947) and Wulfstan (c. 950) are almost solitary voices.³⁸ But the alphabetical traditions are strong enough that Wulfstan has several hymns which, like Bede's hymn, are both apanaleptic ("serpentine") and alphabetical.

The devices of acrostic and alphabet spring into full flower in the poetry of the Carolingian revival, aided partly by Alcuin, who carries on the traditions of the Irish alphabetical poems of Aldhelm and Bede. Several of his acrostic poems have survived, and in verses on the library at York, Alcuin mentions most of those whom we know to have written in the alphabetic genre: Hilary, Augustine, Aldhelm, Bede, and Sedulius. Others cited are Ambrose, Fortunatus, and Virgilius Maro.³⁹ Suffice it to say here that structuring a poem after the letters of the alphabet was a common practice in the Carolingian age. With respect to a large body of non-classical verse, written for the most part by Frankish and Italian poets, Raby has said, "One striking feature of this collection is the large number of alphabetical poems."⁴⁰

And he continues, "This was an almost universal form, cultivated in Italy and Spain as well as in Ireland and England, and its appearance here cannot be traced to any one particular influence."⁴¹

The one conclusion that this study of the alphabetic genre leads to is that probably any Anglo-Saxon cleric or scholar who could write, or could read Latin, would have been in touch with some of these poems. And it is generally agreed that the bulk of extant Old English literature, including its poetry, was composed by men who could read Latin.

Two Latin poems, however, stand even closer to the Rune Poem in form and intention than all the alphabetic poems mentioned so far. They are both the product of the late Latin rhetorical schools.⁴² They both are exercises in ingenuity and preciousness. They are both alphabetical poems which take as their subject matter the letters of the alphabet.

The first, De Litteris Monosyllabis Graecis ac Latinis, is by Ausonius (mentioned earlier in connection with Aldhelm), Gallic grammarian, rhetorician, and consul. The poem is in the Technopaegnon, a rhetorical exercise of several poems in which each line ends in a monosyllable. In a remark we might speculate the Rune Poem poet to have echoed later, Ausonius says in a letter to his friend, Paulinus of Nola:

You may well exclaim, then: "Heavens, what time and toil!" Of a surety I have spent my pains upon

a useless task: it is small, yet it brings a sense of surfeit; it is disjointed, yet a hopeless tangle; though it is something, it is proved to be worth just nothing. Nevertheless, I have taken pains to give it something of learning and lore; for the rule I was bound to keep debarred the lighter graces of poetry and rhetoric.⁴³

A few verses will suffice to show its form and quality:

Dux elementorum studiis viget in Latiis A
 et suprema notis adscribitur Argolicis Ω .
 Hic quod Aeolidum, quodque € valet hoc Latiare E.
 praesto quod E Latium semper breve Dorica vox € .⁴⁴

Aldhelm of Malmesbury knew both Paulinas of Nola and Ausonius; there can be little doubt that Ausonius is one source of the mannerist extravagances of the Anglo-Saxon Latin poetry and the Carolingian.⁴⁵ That Ausonius' alphabet poem is a source for the genre of the Old English Rune Poem is only a remote possibility. But they are both abecedaria whose subject matter is the letters themselves.

The other alphabet poem is somewhat closer to the time and the place of the Rune Poem: it is the Versus Cuiusdam Scoti de Alphabeto, found in several continental manuscripts and in the eleventh-century Cambridge University Library MS G. g. V. 35:

- A Principium vocis ueterumque inventio mira
 Nomen habens domini sum felix uoce pelasga;
 Exsecrantis item dira interiectio dicor.
- B Principium libri, mutis caput, alter et ordo,
 Tertia felicis uere sum syllaba semper;
 Si me graece legas, uiridi tum nascor in horto.
- C Principium caeli, primis et luna figuris;
 Et me clerus amat, legeris si graece, latinus;
 Littera sum terrae pedibus perscripta quaternis.
- D Ablati casus nox sum et pars septima linguae,
 Omnipotentis habens nomen, cum 'us' bannita iuncta;⁴⁶
 Sum medium mille et ueterum mala nota decorum. . . .

The poem is a series of enigmas on the letters from A to Z, generally describing the articulation of the letters and sometimes their use and form. Thus, C is luna figuris; R, Est nomen durum; X, Per me saepe patet numerus de lege Sacratus. Whether these verses were well known in England, or whether they have influenced the four letter-riddles of Eusebius (Hwaetberht) cannot be proved. But the Versus has affinities with the Rune Poem which may not be fortuitous: It is a series of verses on the letters themselves; there is a stanza descriptive in kind for each letter; the stanzas of the Versus are three lines, of the Rune Poem nearly all are three or four lines long; they are both riddling.

The Rune Poem may be said, therefore, to participate in at least three genres, the riddle, the gnomic catalogue, and the abecedarium. Of the first two of these there are clear examples in both Latin and Old English, and in some cases, we can say with assurance that an Old English example is modelled on the Latin genre or even that a particular Latin riddle, the Lorica for instance, is a source for the Old English riddle. We cannot point to any Latin abecedarium and say that this is the source for the Old English Rune Poem, but for a poet familiar with Sedulius, the Irish hymns, and Bede, the alphabetical tradition would have been difficult to ignore. And the Versus Cuiusdam Scoti might have provided the necessary link between the alphabetical hymns and a poem on the letters of the alphabet, or the futhorc.

As was said at the beginning of this investigation, the precise relationship between the Christian literary traditions and the pagan literary traditions is still a matter for conjecture. Perhaps there is a tendency to place almost all Old English literature within the Christian traditions solely on the negative evidence of the dearth of surviving pagan Germanic literature. But when we have a poem such as the Rune Poem which has affinities with Latin genres, which is clearly Christian in its treatment of its clearly pagan runes, and which has several points of contact with monkish antiquarianisms, with the kind of rhetorical mannerisms we know to have been cultivated assiduously in Anglo-Saxon England from the seventh to the eleventh century--then we may see the poem for what it really is: a product of Christian Latin traditions. Like Beowulf, or the Seafarer, or the Dream of the Rood, the poem, however minor, is another attempt to bring together the best of both cultures, to Christianize the heathen fanes, to translate the runes into that kind of world, created and governed by a benevolent God, in which men can live in charity and peace.

NOTES

- ¹PMLA, XII (1897), 205-225.
- ²John Halverson, University of Toronto Quarterly, XXXV (1966), 260-278.
- ³Grundriss der germanischen Philologie (2nd ed.), ed. Herman Paul (Strassburg, 1901-1909), II, 1, 964.
- ⁴Runic and Heroic Poems (Cambridge, 1915), p. 6.
- ⁵The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems (New York, 1942), p. xlviii.
- ⁶Ibid., p. xlix.
- ⁷p. 34.
- ⁸Cf. OE Rune Poem, kaldastr korna 7; OE Seafarer, corna caldast 32; OE Rune Poem, hwitust corna 25).
- ⁹Norse rune poems quoted from Dickins, Runic and Heroic Poems.
- ¹⁰F. J. E. Raby, A History of Secular Latin Poetry in the Middle Ages, vol. I (hereafter cited as SLP) (Oxford, 1957), p. 116.
- ¹¹SLP, p. 171.
- ¹²M. Laistner, Thought and Letters in Western Europe, A. D. 500 to 900 (London, 1931), pp. 120-1; F. J. E. Raby, A History of Christian-Latin Poetry from the beginnings to the close of the Middle Ages (hereafter cited as CLP) (Oxford, 1927), p. 143.
- ¹³Erika von Erhardt-Siebold, Die lateinischen Rätsel der Angelsachsen (Heidelberg, 1925), pp. 251-256.
- ¹⁴Cf. their sum sceal-, sum bið-formulas to the ƿ byþ-formula of the Rune Poem.
- ¹⁵SLP, p. 44.

¹⁶Ernst Robert Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages (New York, 1953), p. 58. An example of such an alphabetical gnomic catalogue, the Sententiæ of Publius Syrus, is found in J. Wight Duff and Arnold M. Duff, Minor Latin Poets, Loeb Classical Library (London, 1934), pp. 14-111.

¹⁷ASPR, III, 1.

¹⁸Ecclesiastical History, Book IV, ch. 22. Pagan uses of the runes include casting of lots (Tacitus, Germania, X), spells (Sigrdrífumál in the Poetic Edda), and inscriptions (see Sven B. Jansson, The Runes of Sweden, London, 1962).

¹⁹Quoted by R. W. V. Elliott, Runes (Manchester, 1959), p. 69.

²⁰ASPR, VI, 35.

²¹PL, 82, col. 74.

²²PL, 82, col. 76.

²³Curtius, p. 313.

²⁴Poetae Latini Aevi Carolini, ed. Ernest Duemmler (Hanover and Berlin, 1881), vol. I, p. 159.

²⁵Ibid., p. 423.

²⁶CLP, p. 13.

²⁷Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi, vol 50, pp. 4ff.

²⁸PL, 43, col. 23.

²⁹CLP, p. 44.

³⁰CLP, p. 43.

³¹CLP, p. 86.

³²CLP, p. 110.

³³Analecta Hymnica, vol. 51, p. 340.

³⁴SLP, p. 151.

³⁵Laistner, p. 119.

³⁶Analecta Hymnica, vol. 51, p. 340.

³⁷CLP, p. 134.

³⁸CLP, p. 153.

³⁹Poetae Latini Aevi Carolini, vol. I, pp. 224-7.

⁴⁰SLP, p. 209.

⁴¹SLP, p. 209.

⁴²SLP, p. 55.

⁴³Ausonius (Loeb Classical Library), ed. H. G. E. White (London, 1919), vol. I, p. 289.

⁴⁴Ausonius, pp. 303-4.

⁴⁵Cf. Curtius, "Mannerism," pp. 273-291.

⁴⁶A. Baehrens, Poetae Latini Minores (Leipzig, 1888), vol. 5, pp. 375-378.

TECHNIQUES AND THEMES

The Old English Rune Poem has never suffered from scholarly neglect. But the attention it has been paid is of two kinds only: one, that of the curious delver after runologic lore; and the other, that of the editor, who must necessarily erect a vast critical apparatus, which being so far out of proportion to the size of the poem only serves to obscure it. The poem hangs lost amid a maze of girders.

Bruce Dickins in his Runic and Heroic Poems makes no comment on the style except to say that "the versification is quite correct."¹ In Charles W. Kennedy's critical survey, The Earliest English Poetry, the Rune Poem is mentioned only in connection with the futhorc: the poem "is hardly a literary composition, but represents a kind of alphabetic descriptive verse intended to facilitate memorization of the meaning of the several runes."² Stanley B. Greenfield, in his excellent Critical History of Old English Literature, only notes that "as poetry the verse needs little comment, though one may observe the christian emphasis in stanza 1, the use of formulas, the humor in the stanza on riding, and a pervasive riddling quality."³

Now there can be, as Dickins has said, no doubt that the verse is correct; but it is precisely the

assimilation of a large number of traditional devices in a relatively short poem that calls for comment. The poem is correct, and it is neat. That this fact has some bearing on the meaning of the poem should become clear as we investigate the various technical and thematic aspects of the poem in the course of this chapter. The poem as we have it must have been composed by a scop who was fully aware of the potentialities of the oral and literary traditions and who moved easily within the restrictions of his form.

Kennedy's statement that the poem is primarily mnemonic has been repeated by Kemp Malone, who, however, sees the poem as having descended from a much briefer original ABC poem,⁴ but any mnemonic poem must have a kind of brevity or catchiness, as the Norse rune poems do, which facilitates memorization of the names. The stanza lengths in the Old English poem obviate such a mnemonic use: it would surely have been a greater task to memorize the stanzas than twenty-nine rune names; the order of the stanzas is entirely dependent upon the traditional order of the runes, which would therefore have to be learned first; and furthermore with the possible exception of two or three, the rune names were everyday nouns and therefore the stanzas do not give the apprentice runemaster any new information.

Greenfield's brief comments are a step at least in the direction of a critical interpretation, yet here only a few isolated devices are noted. The Christian emphasis

in stanza one is merely observed; Greenfield makes no attempt at seeing this fact through or at making any analysis of the poem as a whole, although each of his observations is, no doubt, accurate.

Such commentary on the Rune Poem is typical: the problem of reading it as a coherent and unified poem has been universally side-stepped or at least ignored, and that, because of its apparent sententiousness. What has probably discouraged critical consideration of the poetry as much as anything is that the poet seems indeed to have a firm grasp on the obvious. Everybody knows that wealth is a comfort for every man and that one must bestow it freely on others if one wants to obtain dom from the Lord. The sentence is as familiar to the Old English Christian audience as the commandment to love one's neighbor or the gnomic-like "where your treasure is, there is your heart also." But underlying the sententiousness of the lines there is the implication of the kind of generosity the heroic poets Widsith and Deor have sung about--of the necessity for bestowing gifts, rings and treasure, in the meadhall--so that the seeming sententiousness of the first stanza is alleviated by its working in both directions, Christian and heroic. Or to put it another way, the stanza seems to embrace both points of view, thus moving to a level somewhat more complex than the merely gnomic. Likewise, dom means 'favorable judgment' and by extension 'earthly glory,'

but it also works in another direction, to domesdaeg, to all that is unknown and terrible in death. Now as anyone familiar with runes knows, runes as well as words are capable of evoking powerful associations. And as Professor Randolph Quirk has shown recently, Old English words linked by meter may "interanimate" each other"⁵--words such as dom and deap, or eorl and aebeling:

The name Grendel, for instance, is alliteratively linked in more than half its two score occurrences with words congruently indicative of fierceness, especially gud and gryre: and it is surely unnecessary to point out that there is no question of the poet's being obliged to make such selections by reason of a scarcity of words which will alliterate. Frequently, the lexical connexion is in unison with the grammatical one; for instance: 'he hraðe wolde Grendle forgyldan gud-raesa fela' (Beowulf 1576 f.; and similarly 483, 591, and elsewhere). But we find notable instances in which the lexical connexion is maintained without a grammatical one, an effect which can be achieved not only because the particular type of lexical connexion is already established in the poem, but also because the whole metrical tradition has, as we have seen, established an expectation of lexical connexion.⁶

The interanimation of deap and dom is documented by Professor Quirk:

and themes that the poem can be seen as much more than doggerel.

Oral and literary traditions

A great deal of effort has gone into attempting to discover whether an Old English poem is the product of a live performance by a scop, transcribed in the hall, or whether it is from its beginning a product of the pen of the poet, alone in his closet. Professor Magoun's application to Old English verse of Parry and Lord's researches in oral literature has demonstrated the close connection between formulaic poetry and oral poetry,⁸ but as Professor Larry D. Benson has pointed out recently, the use of formulas in an Old English poem does not imply necessarily either oral composition or lettered, and furthermore a high percentage of formulas has been found in poems which are clearly the product of the pen (i.e. Exeter Book Riddle 35, Phoenix, Meters of Boethius).⁹

It is entirely possible that the Rune Poem was sung, that either the scop performed alone, reciting the rune names as well as the stanzas, thus delighting an audience already familiar with Latin alphabetical hymns and acrostic poems, or that its sententiae were a kind of "philological parlour game," the evidence for which in Hellenic times Ernst Robert Curtius¹⁰ quotes Athenaeus (220 A. D.) in the Deipnosophistai ("Scholars at a Banquet") X, 457:

Clearchus of Soloi, a man of the school of Aristotle, also tells us how the ancients went about this. One recited a verse, and another had to go on with the next. One quoted a sentence, and a sentence from some other poet expressing the same idea had to be produced. Verses of such and such a number of syllables were demanded, or the leaders of the Greeks and of the Trojans had to be enumerated, or cities in Asia and Europe beginning with the same letter to be named in turn. They had to remember lines of Homer which begin and end with the same letter, or the first and last syllable taken together must yield a name or an implement or a food. The winner gained a garland, but anyone who blundered had brine poured into his drink and had to drain the whole cup at a draught.

Perhaps in the meadhall it was the custom to recite the poem, each person taking a stanza and therefore being required to know the rune names and their order as well as the sententiae. Anyone who forgot a rune name or recited out of the traditional order would pay the penalty. Or perhaps the stanzas were uttered as a riddle: ic byþ frofur fira gehwylcum . . . saga hwaet ic hatte; and of course the audience would guess the rune. Any of the riddles in the Exeter Book and more especially the indecent ones, could be adaptable to such entertainment, and perhaps it was at just such a philological game that Caedmon saw the harp approach:

Onð he for þon oft in gebeorscipe, þonne
 þær waes blisse intinga gedemed, þæt heo
 ealle sceolden þurh endebyrdnesse be hearpan
 singan, þonne he geseah þa hearpan him neal-
 ecan, þonne aras he for scome from þæm
 symble, onð ham eode to his huse.¹¹

On the other hand, because of its structural similarity

to the Latin alphabetical poems, because of the pleasure the Anglo-Saxons took in reading runes (cf. the Cynewulfian runic signatures, the runic riddles, and our F byþ frofur . . .) and because of the poet's obvious interest in the letter as well as the spoken word, the poem would seem to belong to a literary tradition.

But oral or lettered, like Beowulf (which was probably transmitted orally or at least sung) or the Meters of Boethius (which is clearly a literary production, a translation), the Rune Poem derives its poetics from Germanic oral traditions, and hence the poem can be discussed as if it were an oral composition.

Meter

Whether or not the harp was used in the recitation of Beowulf or any other extant Old English poem can never be finally proved. But John C. Pope in The Rhythm of Beowulf¹² and recently Robert P. Creed¹³ have devised a method of scanning Old English poetry which provides, in addition, a means of comparing the techniques of, say, Beowulf and the Rune Poem.

According to Creed's adaptation and simplification of Pope's thesis, the first hypothesis is that the measure (quarter-line) rather than the verse (half-line) is the primary prosodic unit, and he sets forth six patterns of stress with but three significant degrees of stress (/ primary, \ secondary, and x minimum):

α	=	/	x	frugnon	<u>Beowulf</u>	2
β	=	/	x \	frofre gebad	<u>Beowulf</u>	6
δ	=	/	\ x	Scield Sceafig	<u>Beowulf</u>	4
δ	=	/ or /	(x)	pa(h) (x)	<u>Beowulf</u>	8
ε	=	x or (/)	x	(/) hwaet we	<u>Beowulf</u>	1
α'	=	/	\	gear-dagum	<u>Beowulf</u>	1
α^-	=	\	x	paet hine on	<u>Beowulf</u>	22

A second hypothesis is that the measure (of which there are two in every verse, four in every line) is a unit of time and that OE rhythm is isochronous, in spite of the number of syllables that may inhabit any given measure. Creed states further a series of rules for determining measure boundaries and primary stresses:¹⁴

- I. Alliteration is the best guide to the first (and sometimes the second) primary stress in each verse.

That is, the alliterating sound must be identified in the second half-line and if the first half-line begins with that sound, the first syllable takes the primary stress (unless of course the first syllable is a non-significant alliteration such as preposition, demonstrative, conjunction). If the first syllable does not alliterate as in Hwaet! we Gar-Dena, Beowulf 1, Rule IV below should be observed. And if such is the case, the second primary stress will fall on the first alliterating syllable wherever it comes in the half-line.

- II. A primary stress always begins a measure. (There can thus be only one primary stress in each measure), except in those cases in which four or more non-alliterating

light-stressed syllables make up the measure. In these measures, and in these measures only, the first primary stress is replaced by a secondary stress (α^- , $\backslash x$).

- III. Two immediately adjacent primary stresses can occur only at the beginning of a verse.
- IV. A stroke of the harp (or, in practice, a timed pause) must substitute for the missing first primary stress in a verse which otherwise contains only a single primary stress.
- V. Whenever a short syllable bearing primary or secondary stress is followed by another syllable with which it is closely associated (in close juncture) the two syllables together receive resolved stress. No x should be placed over the second of these syllables. Instead, the two should be joined with a curved horizontal bracket and together given the same stress sign, / or \backslash . On the other hand, when an etymologically short syllable bearing primary or secondary stress is closed, that is, when it ends with a consonant no resolution is possible.

In order to handle measures of five or more syllables when resolution is not possible, Creed devises the theory of rhythmemes, where two or three syllables are linked under one stress. Thus Beowulf 310a would be scanned

$$\frac{/}{\text{receda}} \quad \frac{x}{\text{under}} \quad | \quad \frac{/}{\text{roderum}} \quad x$$

(or cf. above Beowulf 6, 1). Creed's further discussion of the theoretical problems concerning the resolution of polysyllables into one stress need not be discussed here since he has given the reader, in these rules, all the equipment necessary to read the poetry rhythmically. His own scan- sion of the first three lines of Beowulf is here reproduced:

Hwaet, we	Gar-Dena	(/)	on	gear-dagum,
peod- (x)	cyninga	prymm	ge-	frugnon,
(/) hu pa	aeðelingas	ellen	fremedon.	

If this theory of scansion is correct, a number of stylistic devices in the Rune Poem become apparent.¹⁵

The pause in the third measure, non-alliterative, of a line (an ϵ measure, in which the primary stress is taken by the harp stroke, following Rule IV) serves to bunch up the heavy syllables in the fourth measure (we always find a final α' , β , or δ measure in such cases). So that rather than the regular $\alpha | \alpha$ sequence (/ x | / x) we have (rest) x | / \ with a possible unstressed syllable occurring just before or after the secondary stress. These lines are nearly always run-on, and the syntax and the sense demand that the reader be thrust into the next line. The effect of the enjambment is complemented by this crowding of stressed syllables into the end of the line, so that the syntax, the meaning, and the thrusting rhythm all seem to complement each other:

$\left \begin{array}{c} / \quad x \\ \text{meare} \end{array} \right \begin{array}{c} / \quad x \\ \text{maegenheardum} \end{array} \left \begin{array}{c} (/) \quad x \\ \text{ðam} \quad \text{ðe} \end{array} \right \begin{array}{c} / \quad x \\ \text{sitteþ} \quad \text{onufan} \end{array} \left \right.$	14
$\left \begin{array}{c} / \quad x \\ \text{ar} \quad \text{and} \end{array} \right \begin{array}{c} / \quad x \\ \text{aetwist} \end{array} \left \begin{array}{c} (/) \quad x \\ \text{and} \end{array} \right \begin{array}{c} / \quad x \\ \text{wraecna} \quad \text{gehwa} \end{array} \left \right.$	20
$\left \begin{array}{c} / \quad x \\ \text{sares} \quad \text{and} \end{array} \right \begin{array}{c} / \quad x \\ \text{sorge} \end{array} \left \begin{array}{c} (/) \quad x \\ \text{and} \quad \text{him} \end{array} \right \begin{array}{c} / \quad x \\ \text{sylfa} \quad \text{haefþ} \end{array} \left \right.$	22
$\left \begin{array}{c} / \quad x \\ \text{blaed} \quad \text{and} \end{array} \right \begin{array}{c} / \quad x \\ \text{blysse} \end{array} \left \begin{array}{c} (/) \quad x \\ \text{and} \quad \text{eac} \end{array} \right \begin{array}{c} / \quad x \\ \text{byrga} \quad \text{geniht} \end{array} \left \right.$	

(Compare also lines 25, 27, 32, 51, 56, 67, 72, 84, 87, and 88.) In the lines quoted above, this reading marks off the natural syntactic groupings that a sensitive reader would expect: the combination of "stress-thrust" and enjambment produces a linking of words into rhetorical units which transcend the narrower units of the verse or the alliteration (ðe can weana lyt sares and sorge; and him sylfa haefþ blaed and blysse). The contrasting sense of the phrases sares and sorge and blaed and blysse is further emphasized by the thrusts to sares and to blaed; the rapid pronunciation of the second half-line acts as an up-beat to sares and similarly to blaed.

Another result of Creed's method is that nearly every internal primary rest (necessarily the primary stress of the third measure) serves to introduce either a relative or subordinate clause, prepositional phrase, or a compound element.¹⁶ Thus the rest, or the stroke of the harp, comes to signify that these kinds of qualifying or compounding

grammatical structures will follow. Thus:

(/) $\frac{x}{\delta e \text{ him}} \frac{/}{\text{mid}} \frac{\backslash}{\text{reste}} \frac{x}{\delta} $	9
(/) $\frac{x}{\delta e \text{ byp}} \frac{/}{\text{opra}} \frac{x}{\text{lēas}} \frac{\backslash}{\text{}} $	21
(/) $\frac{x}{\delta on} \frac{/}{\text{God}} \frac{\backslash}{\text{lāetep.}} \frac{x}{\text{}} $	32

We have in each of these verses an additional metrical emphasis of the alliterating word: harp stroke, upbeat, landing on the stressed word. And such a stress is appropriate to the particular emphasis or contrast the poet seems to be after, as we shall later see. Another important traditional use of the internal rest is the paet is formula, found also in Beowulf, Dream of the Rood, and elsewhere:¹⁷

(/) $\frac{x}{\text{paet is}} \frac{/}{\text{mōdig}} \frac{x}{\text{wuht.}} \frac{\backslash}{\text{}} $	6
---	---

In almost every case of the primary harp stroke or rest an expectation is set up for something that will corroborate or perhaps punctuate the preceding verse:

maere morstapa;	feohteþ mid hornum, <u>paet is modig wuht.</u>	5
yr byp aepelinga wyn and wyrpmynd	<u>and eorla gehwaes</u>	84
waetre beworpen	hafab faegerne eard <u>ðær he wvnnun leofab.</u>	88

Or the reader is set up for that which will qualify or even contrast the preceding:

rad byþ on recyde
sefte, and swiphwaet
meare

rinca gehwylcum
ðam ðe sitteþ onufan

13

weorpeþ hi ðeah oft nipa bearnum
to help and to haele gehwaepre, gif hi his hlystab aeror.

If the harp was struck on each primary rest, as Pope and Creed believe, a curious musical phenomenon emerges from a consideration of the relative frequency of such rests. They seem to occur in lines 1-58 at the rate of about one stroke per four half-lines (except in the wynne-stanza discussed above); or to put it another way, in the first 116 half-lines (to line 58) the stroke occurs in 23% of them. But beginning with line 59 and continuing for some thirty half-lines the rate of strokes doubles. Then there are no rests for the next stanza and a half, and the average rate for lines 74 to the end of the poem is back to 26%. Of course, since the rest in Creed's system depends ultimately on the syntax (i.e. relatives and conjunctions are never stressed), what may appear by this scansion as a doubling of musical energy may be a doubling of subordinate and correlative syntactic structures only. But if the poem ever was performed, this middle section would give the scop an opportunity to modify the tone of his delivery, whether purely rhythmic or musical as well, thus effecting the change of mood which the digressions or the shift of speaker brings about in the longer Old English poems.

The Rune Poem contains one of the few instances in Old English verse of the hypermetric line, in the haegl- and nyd- stanzas. Now these lines can be scanned with three primary stresses to the half-time and α measures predominating. This would give the same total of primary stresses (12) in each two-line stanza as are found in the three-line stanzas which precede and follow them. Therefore, it would take about the same length of time to utter the hypermetric stanzas as any of the normal three-line stanzas. But if each half-line is given the normal two primary stresses and the rhythmic beat of the primary stresses remains consistent with the normal stanzas, the result is the crowding of the measures and quickening of pace necessary to get all the words into the measures. And such a quickening of pace is perfectly commensurate with the sense of the verses: Hail is thrown from the lofty height of heaven, billows in a shower of wind, turns into water at the end. The increase in the pace of the words thus is paralleled by the hail-storm, and yet the steady four-stress rhythm is maintained. The nyd-stanza is cast in the same rhythm, and the hypermetrics here enforce what is a clear parallelism of sense: As hail turns afterward into water, so need, constraint, turns into a help or even a salvation, and the parallelism of meter and sense is further enforced by the repetition of weorbeb, 'hail turns,' 'constraint turns.'

The poet has therefore not shifted into the hypermetric line idly, but has utilized the rapidity of the line to enhance the movement of the hail and to show that like hail, constraint will surely pass away.

Of course, the most consistent unifying element in Old English poetry is alliteration, and in the Rune Poem alliteration is quite correct. Only two passages call for special attention. Klaeber has remarked concerning the transverse alliteration in Beowulf that "it was occasionally recognized as a special artistic form,"¹⁸ and it is found in the Rune Poem:

a a b a b

nyd byþ nearu on breostan; weorþeþ hi ðeah oft nipa þearnum 27

heard hrusan faest, hyrde fyres 36

wyrtrumun underwreþyd wynan on eþle. 37

Of the four hypermetric lines (25-28) the two of the haegl-stanza exemplify what might be called double alliteration:

a a b a a c

haegl byþ hwitust corna; hwyrft hit of heofones lyfte; 25

wealcaþ hit windes scura; weorþeþ hit to waetere syððan. 26

Rhetoric and diction

A rhetorical device frequent in this poem and in all Old English poetry is variation, the repetition of the same idea in the form of appositive or modifier. Professor Brodeur has commented on the device in his Art of Beowulf:

Variation . . . the chief characteristic of the poetic mode of expression . . . restrains the pace of Old English poetic narrative, gives to dialogue or monologue its leisurely or stately character, raises into high relief those concepts which the poet wishes to emphasize, and permits him to exhibit the object of his thought in all its aspects. But it could be a dangerous instrument in the hands of an inferior poet: it could impart on the one hand an effect of sheer redundancy, on the other an unpleasing jerkiness of pace; it could stiffen the flow of style, and clog the stream of thought.¹⁹

Perhaps the most traditional use of variation occurs in the ur-stanza, where such a formula as felafræcne deor 5 or maere morstapa 6 is paralleled by Exeter Maxims I, 147 felafræcne deor (wolves) or Beowulf 103 maere mearcstapa (Grendel). The function of such repetitions here is to slow down the pace by repeating in other terms the subject of the clause and hence to set the subject in "high relief," to use Brodeur's analogy, by emphasizing its terror to animals and man and its dominion over the moors. Two other instances of appositive variation are halig heofones cyning 33 and maere Metodes leoht 75 where the effect is to place God clearly at the center of the seasonal cycle, as has been noted, and to reemphasize God's power as the source of light.

Other instances of variation such as the repetition in compound phrases of modifier or abstract nouns tend to cloy the verse,²⁰ although part of the blame for such seeming redundancies must rest on the modern reader, who is simply

unaware of the connotative values of words long since dead. Suffice it to say here that there are two main categories of compounds in the poem, which may be called contrastive and correlative. The contrastive compounds offer less immediate problems of interpretation: sefte, and swiphwaet 14, blac (pale?) and beorhtlic 17, beornum and ðearfum 34, eadgum and earnum 76. But it is more difficult to see the effect gained by the correlatives, such as sares and sorge 23 or blaed and blysse 24, though in this particular instance the two compound phrases do stand in contrastive relationship to each other. In general it can be said that the compounds, most of which occur in the first half-line, tend, like rime, to give a kind of stylistic unity to the various parts of the poem within single stanzas and even between stanzas, as do any repeated elements in any poem.

Nearly all the techniques discussed above--meter, variation, parallelism, alliteration--converge in the last, and longest, stanza of the poem, as if to summarize in a display of technical fireworks what has gone before:

ear byþ egle	eorla gehwylcun	90
ðonn faestlice	flaesc onginneþ	
hraw colian,	hrusan ceosan,	
blac to gebeddā;	bleda gedreosaþ;	
wynna gewitaþ;	wera geswicāþ.	

Here we find transverse alliteration in hraw colian, hrusan ceosan, as well as the repetition of the ge-prefix. Also,

hraw colian, hrusan ceosan is linked to bleda gedreosab, wynna gewitab, wera geswicab, by blac to gebeddan--linked backward by the suffix rime -an to colian and ceosan, and forward by the b-alliteration to bleda. Here too we have the parallel infinitives hraw colian, hrusan ceosan, and the parallel syntax of bleda gedreosab, wynna gewitab, wera geswicab. The poem is finally brought to a close by a device rare in Old English, rime, and here its effect is the kind of tying-up that the final rimes of terza rima or the English sonnet later achieve: we find the suffix rimes -an thrice, -a thrice, and -ab thrice. Such close interplay of parallelisms and alliteration and rime is found finally elsewhere, in Judith:

þe gesceop wind ond lyfte, 347
 roderas ond rume grundas, swylce eac reðe streamas
 ond swegles dreamas, ðurh his sylfes miltse,

and in Beowulf:

cwaedon þaet he waere wyruldcyninga 3180
 manna mildust ond monðwaerust,
 leodum liðost ond lofgeornost.

Thus the poet of the Rune Poem was, if nothing else, a versifier well acquainted with all of the various devices of the traditional poetry, and one might be tempted to see in the poem, particularly in view of its nature as a catalogue, a kind of Old English Skáldskaparmál or Hattatál, a repository of figures and meter. Furthermore, if it is related to late Latin alphabetical traditions, then the poem

may be an Old English mannerist production, with its delight in rune, riddle, and refinement of versification.

Theme and Structure

The only device for unifying the Rune Poem as a whole is the byþ-formula, which begins nearly every stanza. The formula (illustrated by þ byþ frofur) occurs elsewhere in both the Cotton and Exeter gnomic verses much abbreviated (and sometimes with sceal):

Wyrd byþ swiðost. Winter byþ cealdost, (ASPR, vi,
lencten hrimigost (he byð lengest ceald). 55, l. 5)

But, although there is in the Rune Poem some development of the rune described, the resultant stanzas are short (two to five lines) and are superficially as discontinuous as the runes themselves. Each stanza can even stand alone as a sort of vignette, each depicting a separate scene from Anglo-Saxon life, or some plant, or some animal, so that within each stanza we find the same unity as in, say, a stanza from Deor. One might compare Deor's

Deodric ahte	þritig wintra	18
Maeringa burg;	þaet waes monegum cup.	

and, at the first opportunity for a hero-stanza, the Rune Poem's

Ing waes aereſt	mid Eaſt-Denum
geſewen ſecgun	op he ſiððan eſt
ofer waeg gewat,	waen aeſter ran;
ðus heardingas	ðone haele nemdun.

In Deor the relationship between the stanzas is enforced not

only by the similarity of theme²¹ but by the refrain as well.²² In the Rune Poem stanzas are linked by the runes and by certain parallel syntax, but any unity the poem may possess is gained only by overcoming the great disparity that the rune names necessarily exhibit. That is, the poet, setting out to write twenty-nine stanzas on twenty-nine things as diverse as Possessions, Aurochs, Thorn, or Ing, must handle each of these disparates in such a way within each stanza that an overall unity emerges.

As has been observed, the first stanza on feoh sets up a paradigm which underlies the structure of the poem. Possessions are a consolation, yet every man must bestow them generously if he wants to obtain glory or judgment in the presence of the Lord. A Christian paradox is implicit: he who would gain all must first lose all. And from the point of view of Anglo-Saxon heroic values, one must be a bestower of rings--for the strengthening of comitatus. The stanza works in both directions.

An implication of the aurochs and thorn stanzas is that one ought not fool around with that fierce animal on the moors--let him well enough alone--and that likewise a thorn thicket is no place to rest. Rather, as the verbal and rhythmical parallels (mid rested^x--inne restab^x) demonstrate, one would do better to rest within the hall, where the torch flickers blac and beorhtlic. The mouth and journey stanzas, preceded by the fierceness of the wild ox and the

thorn and followed by the joys of the hall may be seen as an axis for this section of the poem, which precedes the hypermetric lines. For it is in the hall that we hear the best talk, that we find wits and wisdom and earls. To such warriors in the hall, journey is easy, and the difficulties of riding over mile paths, of exile perhaps, are contrasted in the next three stanzas to the hall torch, to the honor and praise that is attendant upon gifts, to the necessity of comitatus, of supporting the needy (with the rhythmical emphasis on ðe byb oð ra leas), and to the "joy one has who has enough prosperity in his burh."

The emphasis in this first section of the poem is, therefore, on the necessity for strengthening the comitatus by the giving of possessions to the rich and the poor alike, and on the danger and possible pain one can bring upon himself if he ventures outside the burh, to the moors, among the thorns, or on the meare maegenheardum. In other words, a man has a place in this world and that is with kinfolk or in a community of mutually supporting elements such as the Court of Hroþgar or Eormanric (cf. Widsith 109 ff.) or the abbey of Hild.

The hail stanza shifts into hypermetrics and the poet treats hail, as well as need and ice in the next stanzas, in a way that is quite unusual in Old English poetry. Hail is the whitest of grains as it hurls and billows from

the loft of heaven, and (with a hint of the lif is laene theme to come) afterward it turns into water. Need likewise, as we have observed, can be turned into a help and even a salvation. And so ice, ordinarily a most dreadful of elements, is exceptionally cold and slippery, but glistens glasslike, is gem-like, makes a frosty floor fair to behold. The spring (ger) which follows immediately is the manifestation of the benevolence of God: it is God rather than Wyrd or Freyja who permits (ðon God læteþ 32) that bright fruits be given to earth for the rich and the poor-- the same halig heofones cynig 33 who caused the hail: hwyrft hit of heofones lyfte 25.²³ Although heofones here is formulaic, it is not fortuitous that the word occur in these contexts. For, whatever association hail, need, ice, or ger may have had with the Germanic world of malevolent natural forces, or fertility cults, it is clear from these four stanzas that the poet considered the natural forces of hail and ice fair to behold, that he was optimistic about the outcome of oppressions (as þaes ofereode, bisses swa maeg, Deor 7) and he believed God rather than the Germanic deities to be at the center of the seasonal changes.²⁴ The runes as well as their meanings have been Christianized, like the heathen fanes under Augustine.²⁵

One of the problems which the poet must have faced was what to do with all those runic trees and plants--the yew, elk-sedge, birch, oak, and ash. No doubt the poet

could have composed a stanza of mere biological description for each plant, and let it stand at that; but he didn't. Rather, he has taken pains to relate the plants to some aspect of their usefulness to man. Moreover, the trees seem to take on almost human qualities; it is as though they are related to man by the bond of comitatus. Thus the yew is the guardian of the fire, a joy on the estate. The oak from which the ship is built must keep its pledge: 'garsecg ('ocean") finds whether the oak has a worthy treowe' ('troth,' with a pun on treow, 'tree!'). And so the ash, or spear, dear to men, holds its place in battle 'though many men fight against.' Thus even trees enjoy a place within the community; man depends on the tree to keep its oath, to be true to its nature, stib on stabule 82.

Another theme touched upon in the plant stanzas is that of the proper "dwelling" place. Yew is on the estate, wynan on eble 37. 'Elk-sedge has its dwelling (eard) most often in the fens,' traditional abodes of monsters and exiles, and that this is no place for any man to be is emphasized by the harm that will come to any man who touches it, just as we have noted in the thorn-stanza. For the thorn is 'evil of touch' (anfengys 8), and the elk-sedge 'wounds grimly any man who attempts seizure' (onfeng 44). Mention of dwelling place is extended to the iar-fish stanza, and here the fish 'has a fair dwelling (eard 88) surrounded by water where he delights in joys.'

A third theme found in the tree stanzas is that of bled 'fruit,' 'blossoms,' or 'progeny.' And as we have been assured in connection with spring, God laeteb hrusan syllan beorhte bleda. So although the birch (poplar?) is bleda leas, it nevertheless has suckers, has lovely boughs, is laden with leaves. The word blaed, which occurs twice in the poem, is a poetic word meaning 'fame, prosperity.' And as H. C. Wyld pointed out long ago, there is reason to believe that bled and blaed were associated semantically in the poetry. Bled 'flower' or 'progeny' is derived from blowan 'to blow, as a flower blooms' (cf. ModE fullblown), and blaed 'fame' from blawan 'to blow, as a wind, inspire.' The two verbs were derived ultimately from the same root.²⁶ It is probable that something of the sense of 'prosperity' in the lines blaed and blysse 24 (cf. Dream of the Rood, mid bledum & mid blisse 49) and brucan on bolde bleadum oftast 73 would be echoed along with bled 'fruit' in the penultimate line: bleda gedreosap 93.

The two runes which represent things not on the earth are sigel 'sun' and tir 'some constellation,' yet they are intimately related to the life of the Anglo-Saxon. The sun helps the sailor get his ship back to land, and tir keeps its pledge to man as it fares over the darkness of night. And a further point of similarity is that because they are heavenly bodies, they never fail:

Sigel semannum sybble bip on hihte 45

Tir . . . a bip on faerylde 48
ofer nihta genipu; naefre swiceb.

But only two stanzas later we learn that man, every man, must fail the other, 'because the Lord will by his dom (cf. for drihtne domes 3) commit that wretched flesh to the earth.'

The poet is bound by the order of the fuporc to follow steadfast sigel and tir by beorc and eh, but when he gets to man, the verbal echoes are there: the love of kinsmen, the mirth and laughter of the game of dice where warriors sit in the beer hall, the dom, once as glory, now as judgment, and the juxtaposition of the eternal and the mutable.

After this moment of foreboding, however, we are plunged back into vigorous life--to journey by sea where the ship is tilting, "the sea-horse heeds not its bridle." And this is followed up by Ing, the hero who also "made a journey" (gewat) over the waves. Yet the word gewat 69 works in two directions, 'departed' and 'died,' as if gently reinforcing the foreboding of the death of man.

The poet had said:

Man byþ on myrgbe his magan leof 59

but in the stanza following Ing, and contrasting the journey, the exile, the poet says:

Epel byþ overleof aeghwyclum men 71

if he can there with justice and propriety enjoy, oftenest in the hall, prosperity. And it is to display the bounty

of the homeland, man's proper abode, that the poet has continually fashioned his verses. The aurochs has his place on the moors, the elk-sedge in the fens; the thorn is no place for a thane to rest; the journey is hard, better to stay in the hall with the torch, the wisemen, dicing; or if one must travel, go with kinsmen and bandy words about the horses, trust the oak ship that it will fare over the ganget's bath and, with the help of the sun, will return safely to land.

The poem up to line 89 is, therefore, essentially hopeful. The continual emphasis on comitatus, the goodness of creation, of trees, of the sea, the homeland, lends a pervasive prosperity to each of the stanzas. Aebeling, eorl, rinc, leod, haele, hearding, weleg, wiga--all terms for the wealthy or princely--occur a total of sixteen times, and the specifically poor (earn twice) only in the context of a providential society. Words for prosperity and joy occur in almost every line: wynn itself no less than six times and blaed-bled five times. Such a net work of mutually corresponding verbal echoes of comitatus, flourishing estate, and prosperity is found in little extant Old English poetry: In fact it is almost a cliché of Old English criticism that pervading its poetry is an "elegiac" strain which, as Professor Greenfield has recently shown, has as its chief characteristics rather the loss of status (earn an-haga), deprivation, sadness, and exile, with its concomitant moving

away from homeland, its endurance of hardship, its fruitless searching elsewhere for what has been lost.²⁷ In the Rune Poem we see the world through the eyes of one who enjoys prosperity of fortresses and hence the usual conventions of the elegy are turned upside down. From the very first stanza, where the dispensing of treasure is juxtaposed to dom we are set up for an expectation of the loss of treasure, exile and doom. Yet in stanza after stanza, this expectation remains unfulfilled. When the poet is faced with a rune that could naturally fit into the conventional elegiac mode, he does almost the reverse. Journey, for all the hardship and misery of the Seafarer, the Wanderer, The Fates of Man, is in the Rune Poem a laughing matter (sefte and swibhwaet), and the heroes on horseback brag about their horses. Even the two sea journeys are hardly the woeful affairs met with in the Seafarer and Wanderer. Rather one might compare the treatment here with that of Elene or the return of Beowulf (though expanded somewhat) where heroes make joyful journeys, frightful perhaps, but in the company of a band of heroes, in comitatus (leodum). Faced with a rune nyd 'constraint,' the poet turns the expected conventional motif of the misery of the an-haga into a help and even a salvation. Hail and ice throughout Old English poetry bring only distress and affliction: hreo haeglfare, Wanderer 105, hrim hrusan bond, haegl feol on eorban, corna caldast, Seafarer 32,

winterybe beleac isgebinde, Beowulf 1132. To emphasize the misery of Andreas' exile, the poet gives a winter to Mermedonia, heardum haegelscurum 1257, and Paradise is depicted in both Phoenix and Judgement Day II as devoid of hail and ice, ne forstes fnaest ne fyres blaest ne haegles hryre ne hrimes dryre (Phoenix 15, cf. Judgment Day II, 265). In the Rune Poem, as has been noted, hail and ice are harmless, lovely to behold, in striking contrast to their conventional treatment.

But as the poem progresses in almost artless praise of the beauty of the world and the joys of the hall, turning a number of expectations upside down, such as the journey, constraint, ice and hail, the poet at the same time subtly undercuts his argument with the duplicity of dom, the failure of every man to the other, the departure (funeral?) of Ing, and finally, with the last lines, the grave.

Ear, in the last stanza, 'the earth' and hence 'the grave' collects in one word all the terms for earth throughout the poem (hrusan 33, 36, lande 46, eorpan 62, 77, foldan 88) as well as earð 'dwelling place' and epel 'homeland.' In five lines all the treasures that belong to life are overthrown: that dom which is doom and was only insinuated in the opening lines finally emerges to cover all.

The grave is terrible to every earl
when quickly begins the flesh,
the corpse to cool--the livid one, to choose
the earth for bed-companion

And the poet, reaching back into every stanza of the poem,

draws together the three main strands that have bound them all:

bleda gedreosap; 93
wynna gewitaþ; wera geswicap.

Blossoms fall;
joys pass away; treaties fail.

The poet has urged again and again the beauty of the world, flowers, joy, kinship, but finally, having made the very best he could of his runes of hail and constraint and all the rest, when faced with the grave, he is powerless to make it any less terrible than it is. The grave and the final verses of the poem sweep away everything that has gone before.

The poet of the Rune Poem, therefore, was well versed in the traditional devices of Old English poetry. He could employ variation, the formulas, the hypermetric line, variations of the harp perhaps, rime, complex alliteration--all quite cleverly. He knows the Old English poetic vocabulary and is aware of the potentialities in words such as dom, treowe, ebel, bled, brimhengest, glistnab glaeshlutter, gewat. And in the poem he has built up a network of correspondences in the use of various terms for nobleman, joy, honor, consolation. But clearly, the most startling fact that emerges from the various themes in the poem is the poet's continual frustration of our expectations. In its self-conscious reversal of the elegiac traditions, when viewed against the background of Beowulf, Ruin, the Wife's

Lament, the gnomic verse, Andreas and a dozen other poems, the poem becomes almost an anti-elegy--that is, until the final stanza, when, in one terrible moment the corpse chooses the earth for a consort and everything is lost. Seen as a catalogue, the Rune Poem is little more than mere doggerel; viewed against the background of a body of poetry with a storehouse of extremely conventional metrics, language, and themes, the poem can emerge as a unified, coherent, and for its length, a forceful poem. In urging the critical method of considering Old English poetry in terms of its thematic conventions Professor Creed has written:

There is no distance between the first occurrence of, for example, the theme of the singer and its second and subsequent occurrences. There is no distance between the many appearances of a given theme within a tradition. That is to say, every time a singer performs the same theme he and his audience hear and appreciate that performance against the music of all other performances of that theme. Whenever the singer pictures someone walking in a hall, let us say, he and his audience superimpose that picture on their trained recollections of every similar picture. Or to vary the metaphor, the audience--singer included--hears each new performance of a theme counterpointed against all the old performances it has heard.²⁰

Thus the final implication of the Rune Poem is like that of "That passed away, and so may this" but with a darkening irony in the Rune Poem that forces up an old theme: Wealth and loved ones are a consolation, in this life, yet lif is

laene and these things will pass away. And the runes, remnants of a past both pagan and heroic, like the animals, heroes, and trees they conjure up, the runes, too, will pass away. As the pagan priest said, in a passage in the Venerable Bede reminiscent of this same mood of the passing of old ways and the transitoriness of life:

The present life of man upon earth, O king, seems to me, in comparison with that time which is unknown to us, like to the swift flight of a sparrow through the house wherein you sit at supper in winter, with your ealdormen and thegns, while the fire blazes in the midst, and the hall is warmed, but the wintry storms of rain or snow are raging abroad. The sparrow, flying in at one door and immediately out at another, whilst he is within, is safe from the wintry tempest; but after a short space of fair weather, he immediately vanishes out of your sight, passing from winter into winter again. So this life of man appears for a little while, but of what is to follow or what went before we know nothing at all.²⁹

NOTES

¹Bruce Dickins, Runic and Heroic Poems of the Old Teutonic Peoples (Cambridge, 1915), p. 6.

²Charles W. Kennedy, The Earliest English Poetry (New York, 1943), p. 13.

³Stanley B. Greenfield, A Critical History of Old English Literature (New York, 1965), p. 193.

⁴Kemp Malone, "The Old English Period (to 1100)" in A Literary History of England (New York, 1948), p. 34.

⁵Randolph Quirk, "Poetic Language and Old English Metre" in Early English and Norse Studies (London, 1963), p. 155.

⁶Ibid., p. 155.

⁷Ibid., p. 156-7.

⁸Francis P. Magoun, "The Oral-Formulaic Character of Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poetry," Speculum, XXVIII(1953), 446-467.

⁹Larry D. Benson, "The Literary Character of Anglo-Saxon Formulaic Poetry," PMLA, LXXXI (1966), 334-341.

¹⁰Ernst Robert Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York and Evanston, 1963), p. 58.

¹¹Samuel Moore and Thomas A. Knott, The Elements of Old English (Ann Arbor, 1962), p. 258.

¹²John Collins Pope, The Rhythm of Beowulf (New Haven, 1942).

¹³Robert P. Creed, "A New Approach to the Rhythm of Beowulf," PMLA, LXXXI (1966), 23-33.

¹⁴Creed, p. 25.

¹⁵See Appendix for the scansion of the Rune Poem according to Creed's method.

16. Relative clauses such as oe him mid resteo 9b include 14b, 21b, 22b, 44a; subordinate clauses as gif he his hylstab aeror include 2a, 18a, 28b, 32b, 39b, 46a, 47a, 56b, 60a, 61a, 64a, 68b, 72a, 80a, 83a, 89b, 91a; prepositional phrases as ofer milpabas 15b include 40a, 46b, 49a, 50a, 64b, 67b, 69a, 81a; and various compound elements connected by and include 4b, 20b, 23b, 24b, 58a, 65a, 66a, 84b, 87b. Such structures (40 in all) account for all the primary rests except nine: paet is 6, non-alliterating verbs 27b, 48b, 52b, 85b, 88b, non-alliterating objects 59b, 62a, 70b.

17 See line 6, note, for other instances.

18 Fr. Klaeber, Beowulf and the Fight at Finnesburg (Boston, 1950), p. lxx.

19 Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur, The Art of Beowulf (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1959), p. 39.

20 E.g. the gyfu-stanza where six abstract nouns in variation refer to the same subject: gleng, herenys, wrabu, wyrbscype, ar, setwist.

21 Norman E. Eliason, "Two Old English Scop Poems," PMLA, LXXXI (1966), 185.

22 Kemp Malone, Deor (London, 1933), p. 17.

23 See R. W. V. Elliott, Runes (Manchester, 1959), pp. 47, 50, 56, 60.

24 Cf. Bertha S. Phillpotts, "Wyrd and Providence in Anglo-Saxon Thought," Essays and Studies, XIII (1927), 7-27; and B. J. Timmer, "Heathen and Christian Elements in Old English Poetry," NeoPhil, XXIX (1944), 180-185; "Wyrd in Anglo-Saxon Prose and Poetry," NeoPhil, XXVI (1941), 24-33, 213-228.

25 The Ruthwell and Bewcastle crosses with their runic inscription from The Dream of the Rood are the most graphic early (first half of the eighth century) illustrations of the Christianizing of the runes.

26 H. C. Wyld, "Diction and Imagery in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," Essays and Studies, XI (1925), 87.

27 Stanley B. Greenfield, "The Formulaic Expression of the Theme of 'Exile' in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," Speculum, XXX (1955), 200-206.

²⁸Robert P. Creed, "On the Possibility of Criticizing Old English Poetry," Texas Studies in Language and Literature, III (1961), 101.

²⁹Bede, Ecclesiastical History of England, trans. A. M. Sellar (London, 1912), Book II, Chapter 13, p. 116.



Text

ƿ byþ frōfur fīra gehwylcum;
sceal ðeah manna gehwyle miclun hyt dāēlan,
gif hē wile for drihtne dōmes hlēotan.

5 Ɔ byþ ānmōd and oferhyrned,
felafrēcne dēor, feohteþ mid hornum,
māere mōrstapa; þaet is mōdig wuht.

ƿ byþ ðearle scearp ðegna gehwylcum,
anfengys yfyl, ungemetun rēpe
manna gehwylcun ðe him mid resteð.

10 ƿ byþ ordfruma āelcre sprāece,
wīsdōmes wraþu and witena frōfur
and eorla gehwām ēadnys and tōhiht.

15 ƕ byþ on recyde rinca gehwylcum
sēfte, and swīþhwaet ðām ðe sitteþ onufan
māere maegenheardum ofer mīlpaþas.

h byþ cwicera gehwām cūþ on fyre;
blāc and beorhtlic byrneþ oftust
ðāer hī aepelingas inne restap.

20 X gumena byþ gleng and herenys,
wraþu and wyrþscoce, and wraecna gehwām

ār and aetwist ðe byþ ȝpra lēas.

P ne brūcep ðe can wēana lýt
 sāres and sorge, and him sylfa haefþ
 blāed and blysse and ēac byrga gehiht.

25 **N** byþ hwītust corna; hwyrft hit of heofones lyfte;
 wealcap hit windes scūra; weorþeþ hit tō waetere syððan.

X byþ nearu on brēostan; weorþeþ hī ðeah oft niþa bearnum
 tō helpe and tō hāele gehwaeþre, gif hī his hlystaþ āeror.

I byþ oferceald, ungemetum slidor;
 30 glisnaþ glaeshlūttur ginnum gelīcust;
 flōr forste geworuht faeġer ansýne.

ϕ byþ gumena hiht ðon God lāetep--
 hālig heofones cyning-- hrūsan syllan
 beorhte blēda beornum and ðearfum.

35 **Z** byþ ūtan unsmēpe trēow,
 heard hrūsan faest, hyrde fýres,
 wyrtrumun underwreþyd wynan on ēþle.

h byþ symble plega and hlehter
 wlancum . . . ðār wigan sittap
 40 on bēorsele, bliþe aetsomme.

Y secg eard haefþ oftust on fenne,
 wexeð on wature, wundap grimme,

blōde breneð beorna gehwylcne
 ðe him ænigne onfeng gedēð.

45 **ȝ** sēmannum symble biþ on hihte
 ðonn hī hine feriaþ ofer fisces bep
 oþ hī brimhengest bringeþ tō lande.

↑ biþ tācna sum, healdeð trȳwa wel
 wiþ aepelingas; ā biþ on faerylde
 50 ofer nihta genipu; nāefre swīceþ.

Ɓ byþ bleða leas, bereþ efne swa oeah
 tānas būtan tūdder; biþ on telgum wlitig,
 hēah on helme hrysted faegere,
 geloden lēafum, lyfte getenge.

55 **M** byþ for eorlum aepelinga wyn;
 hors hōfum wlanc ðāer him haelep ymb
 welege on wicgum wrixlap sprāece
 and biþ unstyllum āefre frōfur.

Ʒ byþ on myrgþe his māgan lēof;
 60 sceal þeah ānra gehwylc oðrum swīcan
 forðām Dryhten wyle dōme sīne
 þaet earme flāesc eorþan betāecan.

↑ byþ lēodum langsum gepūht,
 gif hī sculun nēpun on nacan tealtum,
 65 and hī sǣȳpa swȳþe brēgab,

and se brimhengest brīdles ne gȳmeð.

70 **X** waes æerest mid East-Denum
 gesewen secgun, oþ hē siððan east
 ofer wæg gewāt, wāen aefter ran;
 ðus heardingas ðone haele nemdun.

X byþ oferlōof æghwylcum men,
 gif he mōt ðær rihtes and gerȳsena on
 brūcan on bolde blēadum oftast.

75 **H** byþ Drihtnes sond, dēore mannum,
 mære Metodes lēcht, myrgb and tōhiht
 eadgum and earnum, eallum brīce.

80 **F** byþ on eorþan elda bearnum,
 flāescas fōdor; fēreb gelōme
 ofer ganotes bæp; gārsecg fandap
 hwæper ac hæbbe aeþele trēowe.

F biþ oferhēah, eldum dȳre,
 stīp on stapule; stede rihte hylt
 ðeah him fehtan on fīras monige.

85 **A** byþ aeþelinga and eorla gehwaes
 wyn and wyrþmynd; byþ on wicge faeger,
 faestlic on faerelde fyrdgeatewa sum.

***** byþ eafix ā and ðeah ā brūcep

fōdres on foldan; hafap faeagne eard
 waetre beworpen ðāer he wynnum leofap.

90

W byp egle eorla gehwylcun
 ðonn faestlice flāesc onginneþ
 hrāw cōlian, hrūsan cēosan,
 blāc tō gebeddan; blēda gedrēosaþ,
 wynna gewītaþ, wēra geswīcaþ.

•
o

Translation

Treasure is a comfort for every man
Yet must every one give it generously
If he wants to obtain honor from the lord.

Aurochs is fierce and great-horned,
A terrible beast that fights with its horns, 5
A notorious moor-haunter. That is a proud creature!

Thorn is severely sharp to any warrior,
Its seizure is painful and immeasurably fierce
To any man who rests among them.

Mouth is the source of every language, 10
Wisdom's support and consolation for the wise;
Happiness and hope for every earl.

Journey is easy for warriors in the hall,
And racking for those who sit up high
On the powerful horse, over the mile-roads. 15

Torch is by the living seen ablaze;
Bright and splendid, it burns always
Where noble men rest themselves within.

Gift of men is an honor and praise,
Support and worthiness; and for the miserable 20
Kindness and sustenance when they have nought else.

Joy he has, who knows little of woes,

Of sorrow and grief, who has for himself 25
 Success and bliss, and the sufficiency of castles.

Hail is the whitest of grains as it hurls from the
 loft of the heavens;
 It is rolled by the showers of wind; to water it
 turns at the end.

Need is oppressive to the heart, but she turns,
 for the children of men,
 Into both a help and salvation, if they pay heed
 to it betimes.

Ice is very cold and immeasurably slippery;
 It glistens clear as glass, most like unto gems; 30
 Fashions a frosty floor, fair to behold.

Spring is the hope of men when God,
 The holy King of Heaven, suffers to give to earth
 Bright blossoms for warriors and beggars.

Yew is on the outside a rough-barked tree; 35
 Firm and fast in the earth, the keeper of fire
 Is sustained by roots, is the pride of the realm.

Dicing is ever a sport and laughter,
 High-spirited . . . where warriors sit
 Around the beer-hall, blithely together. 40

Elk-sedge has its place most often in the fen;
 It grows in the water, wounds sharply
 And burns with blood every man
 Who dares to touch it at all.

Sun is ever the hope of sailors 45
 When they sail over the fish's bath
 And the sea-horse brings them back to land.

Tir is some kind of token; well keeps its faith
 With noblemen; remains on its course
 Over the darkness of nights; it fails never. 50

Birch has no fruit, yet it bears nevertheless
 Shoots without fruits, is beautiful with branches
 High in its crown, splendidly adorned
 And laden with leaves, pressing up loftily.

The horse is for earls as a princely pleasure, 55
 A steed splendid of hoofs, where heroes,
 The wealthy on horseback, bandy words
 About him, that is ever a remedy for the restless.

Man who is mirthful is dear to his kinsman.
 Yet must every man fail all others 60
 Because the Lord will by his law
 Commit that wretched flesh to the earth.

Sea is by princes thought long-enduring
 If they must venture on the tilting ship
 And they by sea waves are terribly frightened 65
 And the sea-horse heeds not its bridle.

Ing was at first seen by men
 Among the East Danes, until he later eastward
 Over the wave departed; a wagon ran after.
 Thus, those brave men named that hero. 70

Homeland is cherished by every man
 If he can make use of his right and customs,
 At his dwelling, in constant prosperity.

Day is the Lord's message, dear unto men,
 Great light of God, a joy and a comfort 75
 To the rich and the wretched, beneficial to all.

Oak is on earth for the children of men
 Bodily food. Oak fares constantly
 Over the bath of the gannet, and sea will find out
 Whether oak keeps its oath with earls. 80

Ash is towering, beloved of men,
 Stiff in its station, holds to it steadfastly
 Though many men battle against it.

Bow is for princes and earls alike
 Delight and an honor; it is fair on horse, 85
 Reliable on the journey, a real piece of war-gear!

Iar is always a river fish and yet ever enjoys
Food from the land; he has a fair dwelling
Covered with water where he lives in joy.

The grave is grim to every nobleman 90
When quickly begins the flesh,
The corpse, to cool -- the livid one, to choose
The earth for bed-companion; blossoms fall,
Joys pass away, and treaties are broken.

Annotations

1. **f** rune, feoh (ON. fe, Go. fe, Gothic 8th-cent. spellings are from Vienna Codex 795, Gmc. *fehu) 'goods, cattle, property' with the inscriptional value of the letter f. The rune is also used to represent the letter b (late Latin $\int b _7$), as in Franks Casket afitatores (= habitatores). On the interchange of f and b spelling see Campbell, Par. 57. The rune occurs in other poetic texts as signifying its name in Fates of the Apostles 98, Christ 807, Elene 1269, and possibly in Juliana 708 (see ASPR, III, 287 and Elliott, ES, XXXIV, 49ff., 193ff. for interpretations), and as signifying a sound or letter in the Exeter Riddles, numbers 19 and 64 (ASPR, III, 189, 230). frofur, T. Grienberger (Anglia, XLV, 204) suggests the interpretation 'auxilium' rather than 'solatium, Trost'; Dickins translates as 'comfort.'
2. miclun, a dative plural used adverbially, may be a stage of the change um > on, an (Campbell, Par. 387). Cf. un-gemetun 8; gehwyclun 9, 90; wyrtrumun 37; wynan 37; secgun 68.
4. **h** rune, ur (ONorw. ur 'slag,' OIce. ur 'drizzle,' Go. uraz, Gmc. *uruz 'aurochs') probably retains the older meaning 'wild ox' with the inscriptional value u. Although this gigantic wild ox (bos taurus primigenius) had been extinct in Britain for centuries before the OE period (fossil remains are abundant in England in

the later Plistocene deposits), the aurochs was to be found in the forests of Poland as late as mid-sixteenth century. That they were known in Prussia as well at least as late as the twelfth or thirteenth centuries suggests that the Germanic and Scandinavian tribes about the time of the invasion (450) could have had first-hand knowledge of this enormous animal. Cf. Lydekker, Wild Oxen, Sheep, and Goats of all lands, living and extinct, London (1898), p. 11ff. Caesar gives evidence that the hunting and slaying of the aurochs was a sport among young men, the horns being valued as drinking vessels (Gallic War, VI, 28):

(The Aurochs) are a little below the elephant in size and of the appearance, color, and shape of a bull. Their strength and speed are extraordinary, and they spare neither man nor beast that has the misfortune to come their way. These the natives capture with much pains in pits and kill them. The youths harden themselves to this exercise and particular kind of hunting. He who has killed the greatest number of them brings the horns to display as evidence of his courage and is highly applauded by his countrymen. So savage is the nature of these beasts that no matter how young they are captured, they can never be tamed. The great size, shape, and type of their horns make them quite different from the horns of our oxen. These are much sought after; and it is the custom to bind them with tips of silver and to use them as cups at their most sumptuous feasts. (Burdock's translation)

Although no drinking horn could have attained the fabulous proportions of that one by which Pörr was

hoodwinked (Snorri Edda, Gylfaginning, 46), yet the remains of two large horns uncovered in the Sutton Hoo excavation are 3½ feet long and have a capacity of six quarts (cf. Charles Green, Sutton Hoo (New York, 1963), p. 73).

and for Hickes' 7, so also in 20, 24, 58, 65, 84, where these have been expanded oferhyrned, for Hickes' ofer hyrned, is defined 'having horns above,' B-T, p. 735; so Grienberger and Dobbie. Dickins translates 'with great horns,' seeing ofer as an intensifier as in 29 and 71, oferceald and oferleof. The word is a hapax legomenon.

5. fela frecne for Hickes' fela frecne.
6. maere morstapa, cf. the formula in Beowulf 103, Grendel as maere mearcstapa. morstapa for Hickes' mor stapa. baet for Hickes' þ, and so in line 62.

For other instances of the "baet is" formula in OE poetry see Beowulf 11, 863, 1075, 1812, 2390; Dream of the Rood 74; Panther 74; Deor 19, 23; Daniel 7, 24, 324. The formula seems to have been used as a kind of punctuation mark for a descriptive passage about a good king, sad woman, or a fearsome wight.

7. þ rune, þorn 'thorn,' with the inscriptional value of þ and ð. The Scandinavian rune name þyrs (Gmc. *burisaz) appears in the ONorw. Rune Poem as "Giant causes anguish to women," and in the OIce. Rune Poem

as "Giant=torture of women and cliff-dweller and husband of giantess" (Dickins' translations). Christian scribes probably substituted the paler born for the older pagan byrs 'giant, enchanter' (cf. Beowulf 426), and so in the case of os and tir. The rune was adopted by the scribes of OE MSS to represent that sound for which the Latin alphabet had no symbol and was used through the ME period. A derivative of born ($pe > p^e > \psi^e$) appears ultimately in such archaisms as "Ye Olde Choppe Suey Shoppe" (Pyles, Origins and Development of the English Language, p. 31).

8. anfeng ys yfyl for Hickeys' anfen-gys yfyl. So Dickins and Dobbie after the suggestion of Grein (Germania, X, 428).

Grienberger (Anglia, XLV, 206) reads anfengys yfyl. y for unstressed e, cf. eadnys 12, recyde 13, herenys 19, underwrebyd 37, faerylde 49.

10. \mathfrak{N} rune, os (ONorw. oss 'estuary,' OIce. oss 'god,' Go. aza, Gmc. *ansuz 'god') 'mouth' with the inscriptional value o. Gmc. nasalized a became in OE o and with loss of n, o became lengthened; thus the rune name *ansuz > os, and its meaning was presumably changed in Christian times to the Latin homophone os, 'mouth.' The new shape of the rune is generally explained as a ligature of \mathfrak{N} a plus \mathfrak{N} n ($\mathfrak{N} > \mathfrak{N} > \mathfrak{N} > \mathfrak{N} > \mathfrak{N}$), so Hempl, Dickins, Keller, Schneider, and Guinn (p.

33). The old rune \mathfrak{N} for Gmc. a developed by regular phonetic change into ae and was renamed aesc 'ash.' The word os does not appear elsewhere in OE except in the personal names of the Os- variety and in the charm "For a sudden stitch," (ASPR, VI, 122, line 23) Gif hit weare esa gescot oððe hit waere ylfa gescot, etc. (cf. also Beowulf, 112, eotenas ond ylfe and orcneas, swylce gigantas) where in OE times the esa are connected with the realm of pagan divinities. Other glosses of os are 'speech, language,' and Isidore in discussing orthographia makes the point that "Os, si vultum aut ossum significat, per o solam scribendum est, si personam, h praeponenda est." And only a few lines later in the Etymologiae: "Etymologia est origo vocabulorum," which resembles Os byb ordfruma aelcre spraece. There may be a connection between the equation of God, the Word, and Christ (in St. John's Gospel I, 1: "In principio erat verbum") and the older *ansus 'god' becoming os 'mouth-speech-language,' but this is, of course, highly speculative. If the meaning in the Rune Poem is 'mouth' after the Latin os, it is the only rune of the original Gmc. fupark to take its name from a foreign language.

12. tohiht for Hicces' to hiht; otherwise we would expect dat. sing. to hihte.
13. \mathfrak{R} rune, rad (ONorw. raeið, OIce. reið, Go. reda, Gmc.

*raiðo) 'riding' with the inscriptional value r. Elliott points out (p. 57) that R is perhaps associated with the belief that the soul takes a journey after death (cf. The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial, London, 1963; and the opening passages of Beowulf). Concerning this pagan association of the runes, Elliott further asserts: "Thus interpreted the r-rune could conceivably have come to function almost as a journey-charm, whether for the living or for the dead. In the three runic poems the word 'riding' is interpreted quite literally." A number of translations have been suggested for rad: 'music' (Grein-Köhler, p. 540); 'furniture (of a horse),' 'harness (of a horse)' (B-T, p. 781); 'equipment, tackle' (Chadwick, in Dickins, p. 14); 'saddle' (Kemble, Archaeologia, XXVIII, 340). Even as late as 1965 C. L. Wrenn writes "Some Earliest Anglo-Saxon Cult Symbols," Franciplegius, ed. J. B. Bessinger and R. P. Creed, p. 47): "It is now generally agreed that RAD of the Runic Poem expresses the rhythmic music of harp (or possibly flute): and in both such music and the distant roll of a wagon may be heard a fractum murmur," Here, rad is taken as 'journey,' as in Elene 981. on recyde, for Hicces' onrecyde.

15. maegenheardum, for Hicces' maegen heardum.

milpabas, for Hickes' mil pabas. The word is comparatively rare (cf. Exodus 171, Elene 1263) and is perhaps best translated 'road with milestones.'

16. h rune, cen (Gmc. *kenaz) 'torch' with the inscrip-
tional value k. For a discussion of the phonemic
distinctions between h, h, h, see Guinn, p. 44 ff.
Both Scandinavian Rune Poems have kaun 'boil, ulcer'
(Gmc. *kaunaz), but cen (ken, coen in St. John's Col-
lege MS 17) is given as the name in all the OE MSS
futhorcs. The interpretations of cen in each of the
Cynwulfian passages vary, but those given here repre-
sent the views of most editors: Elene 1257 cen drusende
'dying torch'; Fates of the Apostles 103 bonne h ond
A 'when torch and bow'(?); Christ 797 bonne h
cwacað 'then the torch quaketh'; Juliana 704 geomor
hweorfeð / h A ond t 'the race of men (cyn) sadly
departs.'
19. X rune, gyfu (Go. geuua, Gmc. *gefo) 'gift, gener-
osity' with the inscrip-tional value of the velar
voiced spirant as in OE fugol. As Dobbie suggests
(ASPR, VI, 155), gyfu gumena implies a "double ef-
fect on the bestower (gleng, herenys, wyrbscype) and
on the receiver (wrapu, ar, aetwist)."
21. obra refers to ar ond aetwist (cf. Kock, Anglia, XLIII,
307 f.), or possessions in general, of which the
ruined man is deprived.

22. Þ rune, wyn (Go. uwinne, Gmc. *wunjo) 'joy' with the inscriptional value w. Hickes' spelling (Kentish?) wen is clearly taken from Domitian A. ix. (see C. L. Wrenn, "Late Old English Rune-Names," Medium Aevum, I, 29), since all other spellings in the poem are West Saxon wyn (n). The case of wynne has been the subject of some controversy. There is no way of knowing whether the MS read Þ bruceþ or Þ ne bruceþ since runes written for words only rarely occur in oblique forms in the poetic texts and never with case endings. Support for the Þ ne reading may be found in the use of runes in the Durham Ritual gloss where Þes = daeges, Þe = daege (cf. Derolez, pp. 401-2). Whatever the MS reading, Hickes' Þ ne should be taken as gen. sing. since bruceþ governs the genitive (so Dobbie) rather than Dickins' dat. sing. Schneider (p. 60ff.) rejects the meaning 'joy' and reconstructs a masc. ja-stem *wynn meaning 'Sippenangehöriger, Gesippe' on the basis of the apparently masc. se Þ (Christ 804) and certain IE cognates with the meaning 'family, race.' Schneider's argument is too lengthy to be treated here, but his connecting etymologically the word with OIrish fine 'Familie, Stamm' and OIrish vana 'Reibeholtz für die Feuer-bohrung' and ultimately as a sexual metaphor in OIrish vanas 'Lust' and Latin Venus all seems far-fetched, as does his interpretation of the rune's form

as Sippenbanner: \triangleright . Whatever value his etymology may have, it does not alter the fact that wynn translates 'joy, jubilation, exultation' in the Metrical Psalms, and that here it stands with blead and blysse in juxtaposition to weana, sares and sorge.

23. sorge for Hicces' forge.

him sylfa. Sylf (declined strong and weak, Wright, Par. 463) is an adjective in OE which is used to emphasize the pronoun it agrees with. Oftentimes it is preceded by a reflexive dative pronoun, in which case sylf still agrees with its referent, as opposed to agreeing with the preceding dative pronoun used as a reflexive dative object or a dative of interest. Thus sylfa must be construed as a nominative singular masculine of the weak declension: and him sylfa haefb blead and blysse 'and he has, he himself, prosperity and joy.' Compare also Aelfric's Life of St. Swithin, Bishop (ed. G. I. Needham, London, 1966) p. 62 line 32: . . . baet he geopenige him sylf mine byrgene; or Christ 1115: Eall bis magon him sylfe geseon bonne.

24. byrga geniht 'prosperity of cities'; byrga gen. pl. of burg with i-mutation by analogy with n. a. pl. byr (i) E.

25. N rune, haegl (ON. hagall, Go. haal, Gmc. *hagalaz) 'hail' with the inscriptional value h. The rune name is spelled out in place of N in the Exeter Riddle 43,

line 11 (ASPR, III, 204) haegelas. hwyrft, synco-
pated and assimilated from hwyrfeb.

26. scura has been retained, following most editors, as
nom. pl. fem. (cf. Go. skura and ON. skur, both femi-
nine), although the word is regularly masculine in OE.
The poet here makes effective use of rapid repetition
(hwyrft hit, wealcab hit, weorbeb hit) and double al-
literation (aabaac, wealcab hit windes scura; weorbeb
hit to waetere syððan).

27. † rune, nyd (ON. nauðr, Go. noicz, Gmc. *naubiz)
'need, constraint' with the inscriptional value n.
The rune name is spelled out in place of † in the
Exeter Riddle 42, line 8 (ASPR, III, 204) baer sceal
Nyd wesan. For the common use of nyd in gnomic verse
cf. Exeter Maxims I, 38 nyde sceal brage gebunden or
Sol. & Sat. 313 ned bið wyrda heardost. Schneider
rejects the meaning 'need' for the Rune Poem, sug-
gests that because hi 27 and his 28 refer to nyd, the
gender of nyd must be masculine, and proposes the
rune name *naubiz, *nauðis, masc. i-stem, with the
meaning "'Reiber' im Sinne von 'Feuerbohrer' . . .
und woneben ein *naubis, *nauðis fi. der Bedeutung
'Drangsal, Not, Zwang, Schwierigkeit'." (Schneider,
p. 137.) He further emends Hicke's breostan to
breodan < WS bredum and translates the stanza:

Der Feuerbohrer (Reiber) ist nahe an den Brettern. Es dreht er sich doch oft (=gar oft) den Kindern der Menschen

zur Hilfe und zum Heile, zu jedwedem /for gehwaebre? 7 wenn sie(die Menschen) zuvor seiner lauschen. (Schneider, p. 140)

The first objection to Schneider's reading must be that hi cannot be masculine, but rather is feminine, the referent of which is the feminine nyd. Other editors have not seen such difficulties with the gender of nyd, and have taken nearu to mean 'narrow, oppressive' rather than 'nahe, near.' B-T cites no meaning 'near' for nearu. Furthermore, his 28 probably refers to the general statement of line 27. For other examples of the use of the neuter pronoun without regard to gender or number, in contexts where the referent is a statement, fact, or event, see Quirk and Wrenn, Par. 125. Thus on grammatical and lexical grounds alone, Schneider's reading must be rejected, along with his unjustifiable emendation breostan > breodan. Dickins translates the last half-line 'to everyone who heeds it betimes'; Dobbie, 'if they anticipate it.' Thus, a literal translation may be:

Need is a distress to the heart; she often turns, however, for the children of men into both help and prosperity, if they heed it betimes.

breostan, cf. miclun 2n.


28. gehwaebre for Hicckes' ge hwaebre.


29. | rune, is (ON. is, Go. iiz, Gmc. *isa-) 'ice' with the inscriptional value i.

- oferceald, ungemetum for Hicces' ofer cealdunge metum.
30. glaeshluttur for Hicces' glaes hluttur.
31. geworuht for Hicces' ge worulit.
32. ϕ rune, ger (ON. ar, Go. gaar, Gmc. *jera-) 'year, warm part of the year' with the inscriptional value i. Elliott suggests the meaning 'harvest'; Dickins, 'summer'; and gear in Beowulf probably means 'spring': winter ybe beleac / isgebinde, ob ðaet ober com / gear in geardas. Gear, following the stanzas haegl, is, nyd, makes an effective contrast. ðon is usually emended to ðonne, but this is unnecessary. See Klaeber, MLN. XXXI, 429.
35. **Z** rune, coh (Gmc. *eihwaz) 'yew' with several inscriptional values. Dickins (Leeds Studies in English, 1932, p. 16) suggests an original value hw (Go. h) and transliterates 3 (/χ/ in Ruthwell almejttag, /i/ in Dover j3slheard). Whatever the original value of the rune may have been, the vocalic value in OE inscriptions is i. The consonantal value, though rare, is /χ/. As in the case of Ing. where the inscriptional value is that of the second phoneme /η/, so with coh, the rune occasionally took the value of the second phoneme /χ/. For a discussion of the problems surrounding the value of **Z**, see Guinn, pp. 59-78. The rune name was applied by Anglo-Saxons learning the Irish script to Irish Σ , \underline{g} , on the basis of similarity

of form between the Irish Σ and runic Z , and survives in ME as \mathfrak{z} 'yogh.' See Paues, MLR, VI (1911), 441-454.

37. wynan is taken by Grienberger (Anglia, XLV, 211) as adverbial dative. Cf. breostan 27, magan 59.
38. \mathfrak{h} rune (usually \mathfrak{k}), peorb (Go. *pertra) 'dicebox' (?) with the inscriptional value p. Several explanations have been suggested for the meaning of this rune: 'pawn, in chess' (W. Grimm, Ueber deutsche Runen, p. 239f.); 'chessman' (Dickins, p. 17); 'throat, gullet' (Grienberger, Beitr. XXI (1896), 212). Other conjectures are noted by Dobbie, p. 156. The most recent discussion of peorb is in Schneider, pp. 411-435. After quoting Tacitus (Germania, Ch. 24) and several OE passages relating to dicing, Schneider demonstrates the popularity of gaming among other Indo-European peoples, discussing the various vocabularies related to casting the dice (Würfelvokabular). Schneider, furthermore, reconstructs Gmc. *perpro where the *-bro (< IE *-tra) is an instrumental suffix and Gmc. *per < IE *ber 'throw, strew' is cognate with Lith. beriu 'strew,' Let. beru 'strew,' Old and Middle Irish dibircuid 'throw,' and L. fritillus (< *fretillus < *fret¹los < *bhretlolos 'Werferchen') 'dice-box.' Schneider's interpretation fits in well with the stanza, but several objections may be raised: The usual etymology given for the Latin 'dicebox' is

fritillus < fritinnio 'twitter' (onomatopoetic, as tintinnio). The b of Irish dibircuid must be derived from IE g^u, not the IE b of *ber. Furthermore, according to Prokosch (p. 68), reliable etymologies involving IE b > Gmc. p are extremely rare and in none of those he cites is the b initial. Schneider also finds a similarity between the usual shape of the rune  and a dice-box, and, in keeping with his larger thesis of the religious significations of the runes, asserts a symbolic meaning 'allmächtiges Schicksal.' But if peorb does mean 'dice-box' or 'dicing,' the word must have lost its earlier religious significance by the time of the composition of the poem since dicing is plega and hlehter, blibe aetsome.

39. wlancum, a metrically defective half-line for which several additions have been suggested: Etmüller, wlancum willgesiðum; Rieger, wlancum on wingedrinc; Grein and so Kluge and Dickins, wlancum on middum; Grienberger, wlancum werum; Dobbie, wlancum plus and and another adjective, as for example wlancum and wisum. The omission is not noted by Hicke.
40. aetsome for Hicke's aet some.
41.  rune, eolh-secg (ON. yr, Go. ezec, Gmc. *algiz) with the inscriptional value ks or x, probably given to the rune arbitrarily, by scribes under the influence of the Roman alphabet who felt the need for

a convenient rune for Latin x (Guinn, p. 80). The meaning of the rune name has been long disputed, and no suggestion has proved definitive. This rune, representing -z (R) in the Germanic futhorc, had become a fossil by OE times, although its name survived because of its fixed position in the series. The various MSS give for example eolhx (Galba A. ii.), iolx (Dom. A. ix.), ilcs (Salz. 140), and the use of the rune on Cuthbert's Coffin (698 A.D.) indicates its value to be x (INȚ ƿƿȚ = IHSXPS). Latin-OE glosses (Sweet, Oldest English Texts) read papilius : ilugsegg (Epinal), papilus : ilugseg (Erfurt), papili-vus : wiolucscel (Corpus), where papilius is probably 'papyrus.' And the same vocabularies gloss gladiolum : segg (Epinal), segg (Erfurt), and saecg (Corpus). Thus on the basis of the OE glosses eolhsegg would mean some sort of plant growing in the marsh, and this interpretation fits the sense of the poem. Other suggestions are 'seaholly' (Cockayne, Leechdoms III, p. 324), Latin helix 'willow' (W. J. Redbond, MLR, XXXI (1936), 55), 'swan' (Schneider, p. 409). Hickeys' seccard haefb was first emended by Grimm to secgeard haefb and editors since then have regarded secc as the second half of the compound rune-name and have further emended (cc = cg) to secg eard.

43. breneð is taken by Dickins as a form of beerneð, beyrneð 'covers' and cites Wulfstan (Napier's edition, pp. 182-3) Drihtnes rod bið blode beurnen. Grein (p. 70) and Grienberger (Anglia XLV, 212) would take breneð as a causative verb from brun, brynan 'makes brown with blood.' Both Dickins and Dobbie rule out baernan 'to burn' as nonsensical, yet the thermal properties of the blood are asserted several times in Beowulf: waes baet blod to baes hat, / aettren ellorgaest, 1616; ba baet hildebil/ forbarn brogdenmael, swa baet blod gesprang, / hatost heaboswata, 1666. Likewise Andreas, blod yðum weoll / haton healfre, 1240, and 1276. Another possibility is that the eohlx-secg inflicted a poison such as those in the "Nine Herbs Charm" (ASPR, VI, 119), and that it was thought to burn in the blood anyone who touched it. Allowing for the medieval belief in the blood's power to gush hotly and even to melt swords, the translation 'burns with blood' would therefore seem to fit the context wundap grimme better than 'makes brown with blood.'
45. h rune, sigel (ON. sol, Go. sugil, Gmc. *sowulo) 'sun' with the inscriptional value s. At the end of Exeter Riddle number 6 (ASPR, III, 184) stands the rune for sigel, the answer to the riddle. Elliott (p. 56) and Schneider (p. 92ff.) discuss the connections

between the early Germanic sun-worship and rune lore.

45. semannum for Hickes' se mannum.

46. ðonn, cf. line 32n.

hine is taken by Grienberger (Anglia, XLV, 212) and Dobbie (p. 157) as the pronoun, referring to brimhengest in the next line. But the present editor holds with Dickins that hine is a variant of heonan 'hence'; cf. B-T Supplement, p. 534, hiona, heona, heone, hena. feriab is, therefore, intransitive.

47. hi brimhengest for Hickes' hibrim hengest.

48. ↑ rune, tir (ON. tyr, Go. tyz, Gmc. *teiwaz 'the god Tiw,' as OE Tiwesdaeg), 'the god Tir with possible Norse influence' (see Grienberger, Arkiv for Nordisk filologi, XV, 15); or, 'some constellation,' with the inscrip-tional value t. Schneider emends tir to tiw, on the basis of the possible confusion of insular r and w (ᚱᚱ for ᚱᚱ), and asserts the interpretation 'god of war' with the underlying meaning 'spearpoint, weapon,' which the shape of the rune suggests.

Epinal, Erfurt, and Corpus Glossaries give tiig for mars, martis (Sweet, Oldest English Texts, pp. 77-78) so the poem's a bib on faerylde, naefre swiceþ (thus referring rather to a star than the planet Mars) may simply be the poet's confusion. tacen means 'sign of the zodiac' in the computist writings, and the poet's emphasis on its fixedness may indicate that he took

tyr to be the North Star. One treatise explains the North Star and the South Star ('which we never see') as pone norðran we geseoð; pone hatað menn scip steorra (O. Cockayne, Leechdoms, III, London (1866), p. 270). Tir can also be 'glory' or 'honor,' and it may be that the poet understood tacen in the sense of emblem, or symbol: 'Honor is a certain emblem; it well keeps faith among noblemen' (the heroic lof-motif?).

49. on faerylde for Hicces' onfaerylde.

51. **B** rune, beorc (ON. bjarkan, Go. bercna, Gmc. *berkana) 'birch,' with the inscriptional value b. On the symbolism of the birch in European fertility cults, see Elliott, pp. 47, 50. Dobbie, following Dickins, suggests that the birch is not the tree described in the poem (ASPR, VI, 157). Several OE glosses (Epinal-Erfurt, 792; Corpus, 1609) have birch : poplar; and, as Dickins points out, the description in the poem would fit the grey poplar. In view of the glossorial equation poplar : birch, the emphasis in the poem on suckers or root shoots (tanas butan tuddor) common to the poplar, the similarity of the leaf of the birch and some poplars, such as the aspen (Populus tremula) (see L. J. F. Brimble, Trees in Britain, pp. 225, 235)--we might conjecture that 'birch' was used commonly to denote several species of poplar as well as birch

and that the loan word populus did not come into general use until some time after the Conquest.

53. neah for Hickes' beah.

hrysted, with r-metathesis.

55. **M** rune, eh (Go. eyz, Gmc. *ehwaz) 'horse.' Although the rune-name is sometimes given in MSS in its diphthongized form, eoh, the inscriptional value was probably e. In Elene 1261, the rune stands for eoh; in Juliana 706, for the letter e (see ASPR, III, 287). Several scholars have discussed the connection between horse and sun in the Germanic religion-cults (Arntz, p. 221; Schneider, p. 378; Elliott, p. 56).

56. Hickes reads haelebe ymb and following Sievers this has been emended by all editors to haeleb ymbe for metrical reasons. However, according to Creed's metrical system the verse is an $\mathcal{E}-\alpha'$; Hickes's reading haelebe has been emended to the regular plural haelep.


59. **M** rune, man (ON. maðr, Go. manna, Gmc. *mannaz) 'man' with the inscriptional value m. As Elliott points out, the rune-name may have originally referred to Mannus, the progenitor of the human race (cf. Tacitus, Germania, Ch. 2). Hickes' facsimile here shows $\overset{d}{m} \overset{d}{e} \overset{3}{3} \overset{an}{n}$ and for the daeg stanza $\overset{m}{\delta} \overset{mann}{n} \overset{H}{H} \overset{d}{e} \overset{3}{3}$, clear evidence that he merely reproduced the confusions of Cotton












Domitian A. ix, fol. 11^v. See Hempl, MP, I, 135-141.

magan, see line 27n.




61. forðam for Hickes' for ðam.
63. † rune, lagu (ON. logr, Go. laaz, Gmc. *laguz) 'water, sea' with the inscriptional value l. The rune appears with its name-value in Fates of the Apostles 102, Elene 1268, and Christ 806. Its meaning in Juliana 708 is disputed (see ASPR, III, 287).
64. nebun, usually emended to nepan, is retained here as a possible late spelling of the simple infinitive (cf. M. Callaway, Jr., The Infinitive in Anglo-Saxon, p. 2).
65. saeyba for Hickes' sae yba.
66. brimhengest for Hickes' brim hengest.
gyrneð for Hickes' gym, and thus all editors.
67. ✕ rune, Ing (Go. enguz, Gmc. *inguz) 'the god (?) Ing' with the inscriptional value ng. Very little is known about Ing. We learn from the poem that he was thought of as semi-divine, having first been seen by men among the East Danes, that he departed eastward over the sea (to the Baltic peoples?), and that a car followed him. Ing does not occur in OE elsewhere except in the compound Ingwine ('friends of Ing,' Beowulf 1044, 1319) as part of an epithet for Hroþgar, King of the Danes. Apart from these, there are no other references to Ing in the OE tradition. In Old Norse literature Ing does

not occur, but in Ynglinga Saga (ch. 20) the god Frey is also called Yngvi or Inguni, as well as all his descendants, the Swedish kings (H. M. Chadwick, The Origin of the English Nation, pp. 216ff., 270). Danish tradition knows no Ing, but in Beowulf the equation of the Ingwine with the Scyldingas, the Danish kings, would suggest that Ing was the predecessor of both royal lines. Furthermore, the term Inguaeones, used by Tacitus for the tribes of the Southern Baltic, Swedes and Danes, would indicate a common ancestry going back to the eponymous god or king, Ing. H. M. Chadwick has conjectured that Ing was husband to Nerthus ('Mother Earth'), who travelled in a consecrated car (cf. Tacitus, ch. 40).

68. gesewen for Hicces' ge sewen.
est is emended to eft by Grein and Dobbie; for Klaeber's justification of this reading see Archiv, CXLII, 251.
70. Dickins suggests the possibility of heardingas being a personal name related to ON. Haddingjar (Runic and Heroic Poems, p. 20f.). haele may refer to a man or to a god hero; compare the similar use of haeleb in Dream of the Rood 39: Ongyrede hine þa geong haeleð, (þaet waes God aelmihtig).
71.  rune, ebel (Go. utal, Gmc. *obila) 'property, land, homeland' with the inscriptional value oe > e. The rune is found in Beowulf 520, 910, 1702, and Waldhere 31, for ebel.

71. oferleof for Hicckes' ofer leof.
72. rihtes for Hicckes' rihter.
73. bolde for Hicckes' blode.
74.  rune, daeg (Go. daez, Gmc. *dagaz) 'day' with the inscriptional value d. On Hicckes' facsimile of the daeg rune and its value, see line 59n. In the gloss to the Durham Ritual, this rune is used as a grammalogue for daeg some forty-two times, and here we also find the rune in the oblique cases:  es (daeges) and  e (daege); see Derolez, p. 401f. This rune is the last in the sequence of the common Germanic fupark; the last five runes of the poem are Anglo-Saxon extensions of the fupark.
75. tohiht for Hicckes' to hiht.
77.  rune, ac 'oak' and 'acorn' with the inscriptional value a. The new ac rune is usually taken (following Hempl, MLN, XI (1896), 347-52) as a ligature of  and  representing Gmc. *ai with the stages  >  >  (so Dickins, Leeds Studies in English, I, 16; Keller, Anglia, LXII, 24; Schneider, p. 292). Guinn (p. 33) cautions that since none of the intermediate stages is attested, the theory of ligatures cannot be held as proven, and suggests (p. 36) that the ac rune may be explained as a "simple diacritical marking of the regular vocalic rune 'a,!' just as the unlauted form of  came to be written as  (ur > yr). For a

parallel instance of the "wood for ship" metaphor, see G. I. Needham, Aelfric: Lives of Three English Saints, "Life of St. Edmund," line 29 on Nordhymbra lande gelendon mid aescum.

79. ganotes baeb, cf. Death of Edgar 26 (ASPR, VI, 23), Beowulf 1861.
81.  rune, aesc 'ash' with the inscriptional value ae. Originally the fourth rune in the Germanic futhorc, its place in the sequence was taken by the new os rune  and its name changed to a common noun incorporating the new sound value (Gmc. *a > OE ae), aesc. oferheah for Hicces' ofer heah.
83. ðeah . . . monige is taken by Dickins as 'though attacked [] hewn?] by many a man,' though as Dobbie points out in his note (p. 159), we probably have here another double reference (cf. ac stanza) to the ash as tree and as spear. See Grienberger (Anglia, XLV, 218) for this view.
84.  rune, yr (ON. yr, Gmc. *īua) 'bow made of yew' with the inscriptional value y. Several meanings have been proposed for the rune name: 'horn' (F. Holthausen, Anglia, XXXV, 176); 'saddle' or 'saddle-bow' (Grienberger, Anglia, XLV, 219); aexe-yr 'axe-iron' (Dickins, p. 22, citing from Plummer's edition of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 1012E). Holthausen argues that yr (in the Cynewulfian acrostics) cannot

be a Norse loan-word because in Cynewulf's time (eighth century) the word did not exist in ON.; however, most scholars now would place Cynewulf's poetry in the first half of the ninth century and furthermore Gmc. *z had become North Gmc. R and subsequently caused i-mutation long before the ninth century. Apparently, the rune was created from with an iota subscriptum of one kind or another to represent $\underset{\text{v}}{\text{y}}$ (< $\underset{\text{u}}{\text{y}}$ by i-mutation). The rune appears on the Franks Casket (date 700, Guinn, p. 265), the Ruthwell Cross, and the Thames scramasax, as well as occurring in the Vienna Codex 795 (date of its prototype, eighth century, Derolez, p. 62) where it is named yr. Whether yr at the time of its inception was merely a variant of ur with no semantic meaning or whether at that early time it was recognized as homophonous with ON. yr and the Norse meaning 'bow' borrowed, is a moot question. But probably the same situation obtains in the case of yr as with os (cf. line 10n). At least by the time of Cynewulf, the meaning 'bow' must have been current, and this period does coincide with that of the first Norse invasions in England, 793 at Lindisfarne, 794 at Jarrow, and the more frequent successful invasions of 835 and on (see G. Turville-Petre, The Heroic Age of Scandinavia, pp. 60, 71ff.). Elliott has convincingly argued for the rune name 'bow made of yew' in

the Cynewulfian passages (English Studies, XXXIV, 49-57, 193-204), and 'bow' seems to fit the context of the Rune Poem as well. According to May Lansfield Keller (The Anglo-Saxon Weapon Names, p. 49) in the year 784 bows with arrows and quivers were ordered as equipment for the Frankish cavalry, in 813 for every foot soldier, and references to the bow in the English laws of Aethelbirht and Alfred leave little doubt that the English were likewise equipped. Few bows have survived, but those found near Oberflacht and the Nydam moor are commonly seven to eight feet tall, made of yew, and occasionally highly ornamented.

86. fyrðgeatewa for Hicces' fyrð geacewa.

87. * rune, ior, iar 'the sea, some sort of fish,' with the inscriptional value io, ia, i. This rune (quite unrelated to ON. *jár (> ár), Guinn, pp. 103-4) is considered by Guinn (p. 106) to have been developed in Northumbria during the first half of the eighth century, but since its name is a hapax legomenon and since the rune occurs on the Dover Stone and Thornhill III with the value /j/, in the MS fuporcs with the name and value ior/iar, io/ia, its meaning and value are disputed. It may be that because eo and io fell together in Kentish as io, the io rune survived in Kent, the other dialects having little or no use for the rune. Hicces' text reads iar byb ea fixa, and all editors have emended variously, taking iar to be some sort

of river-fish: eafix (Rieger, Dickins, and Dobbie); eafisc (Grimm, Ettmüller, and Kluge); eafixa sum (Grein, Wülker); eafixa (Grienberger). Perhaps eafixa is not a genitive at all but rather Hickes' misreading for eafix ā: 'Iar is ever a river-fish, and yet it always enjoys its food on land.' In the stanza, two environments are described, yet the poet insists that iar is a fish. Elliott (JEGP, LIV, 1-8), however, retains Hickes' reading and translates 'iar is a river of fishes,' which becomes the basis for his interpretation of iar. Recognizing that ear, the last rune in the poem, has two meanings: (1) 'ocean, sea, wave' (2) 'earth, soil, gravel,' Elliott says it is highly probable that "in order to overcome the difficulty of the meaningless ior, the maker of the Runic Poem used it for the first of the two meanings of ear, namely 'ocean, sea, wave,' a step facilitated no doubt and perhaps even prompted by the phonetic closeness of the two names iar (phonologically the earlier form and preserved, if Hickes' transcription is correct, in the poem) and ear" (JEGP, LIV, 4). And he translates the iar stanza: the ocean is "'a river of fishes, and yet it always feeds upon the land; it has a fair dwelling covered with water where it lives happily.' Such a reading makes acceptable sense if we consider the first half to imply the simple contrast

that although the sea is (like a river) full of fish, yet it always eats in upon the shore" (JEGP, LIV, 5). This interpretation does not, however, explain why the poet should have switched the usual order of the last two runes and given the more common meaning of ear to iar. Schneider, through an apparatus of IE cognates, reconstructs Gmc. *euraz > Kentish ior 'schlange, weltsschlange, Midgardschlange,' but although his evidence for such a hypothetical meaning apart from the Rune Poem is weighty, the rune itself and its name do not spring from the Germanic or Anglo-Frisian fupark tradition, but rather from the sort of later runic tinkering which produced yr and ear, as well as iar/ior.

87. a bruceb for Hicces' abruceb. Alliteration requires a stressed vowel.
88. on foldan for Hicces' onfaldan.
90. W rune, ear 'earth, the grave' with the usual inscriptional value ea. The more usual meaning of the common OE noun ear is 'sea, or ear of corn,' but as Elliott has pointed out (p. 54), the meaning 'sea' seems to have been attached to iar and the meaning 'earth, grave' retained for ear. The word is cognate with ON. aurr 'clay, loam.'
92. gehwylcun, cf. line 2n.

The final three lines of the poem involve an interplay of time and transverse alliteration that is rare in OE poetry: The only texts which have this sort of pattern

in the final lines are Judith 348r., Beowulf 3181f.,
and the Rune Poem.

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Appendix

Feoh byþ	frōfur	fīra gēhwylcum;	
(') sceal ðeah	manna gehwylc	miclun hyt	dāelan,
gif hē wile for	drihtne	dōmes	hlēotan.

| Ūr byþ| ānmōd | (') and| oferhyrned, |
 5 | felāfrēne| dēor, (') | fechteþ mid| hornum, |
 | mæere| mōrstapa; | (') þæt is| mōdig wuht. |

Þorn byþ	ðearle scēarp	ðegna gēhwylcum,	
anfeng ys	yfyl, (x)	ungemetun	rēpe
manna gēhwylcum	(') ðe him	mid rēsteð.	

10 | Ōs byþ| ordfruma | ælcra| spræce, |
 | wisdōmes| wrabu (x) (') and| witenas frōfur |
 | (') and| eorla gehwām | eadnys and| tōhīnt. |

| Rād byþ on| recyde | rinca gehwylcum |
 | sēfte, and| swīphwaet | (') ðām ðe| sitteþ onufan |
 15 | mēare| mægenheardum | (') ofer| mīlpapas. |

| Cēn byþ | cwicera gehwām | cūþ on | fyre; |

| blāc and | beorhtlic | býrneþ | oftust |

| (1) ðæer hī | æþelingas | inne | restap. |

| Gyfu (w) gumena byþ | gleng and | herenys, |

20 | wrapu and | wyrþscype, | (1) and | wraecna gehwām |

| ar and | aetwist | (1) ðe byþ | oþra læas. |

| Wynne | bruceþ | (1) ðe can | wæana lýt |

| sares and | sorge, | (1) and him | sylfa hæfþ |

| blæed and | blysse | (1) and eac | byrga geniht. |

| Haegl byþ | hwitust corna; | hwyrft hit of | heofones lyfte; |

| wealcap hit | windes scūra; | weorþeþ hit tō | waetere syððan. |

| Nýd byþ | nearu on bræostan; | weorþeþ hī ðeah oft | nipa bearnum |

tō | helpe and tō | hæle gehwæpre, | (1) gif hī his | hlystap aeor. |

| Is byþ | oferceald, | ungemetum | slidor; | (1)

30 | glisnaþ | glaeshluttur | gimum gelicust; |

| flōr (w) forste geworunt | faeger (w) ansýne. |

Gér byþ	gumena hiht	(1) ðon	God læteþ--
hālig	heofones cyning--	hrusan	syllan
beorhte	blēda	beornum and	ðearfum.

35 |Eoh byþ|utan | unsmēpe|trēow, (x) |
 |heard (x)|hrusan faest, | hýrde|fýres, |
 |wyrtrumun|underwreþyd | wynan on|ēple. |

|Peorð byþ|sýmble | plēga and|hlehter|
 |wlancum|. . . | (1) ðar|wigan sittap|
 40 | (1) on|bēorsele, | bliþe aet|somne. |

Eolhx secg	eard haefþ	oftust on	fenne,
wexeð on	wature,	wundap	grimme,
blōde	breneð (x)	beorna gehwylcne	
(1) ðe him	aenigne	onfeng geðeð. (x)	

45 |Sigel (x)|sēmannum | symble biþ on|hihte|
 |ðam hī hine|feriap | (1) ofer|fisces bep|
 | (1) op hī|brimhengest | bringeþ tō|lande. |

- |Tír bip|tācna sūm,| (') healdeð|trywa wel|
 |(') wip|aēpelingas;| ā bip on|faerylde|
 50 |(') ofer|nihta genipu;| naefre|swicep.|
 |Beorc byþ|blēda lēas,| bērep efne|swā ðeah|
 |tānas būtan|tūdder;| (') bip on|telgum wlitig,|
 |hēah on|helme|hrýsted|faegere,|
 |(') geloden lēafum,| lyfte getenge.|
 55 |Eh byþ for|eorlum| aēpelinga|wyn;| (x)
 |hors^ω|hōfum wlanc| (') ðær him|haelep ymb|
 |wēlege on|wicgum| wrixlap|spræce|
 |(') and bip|unstyllum| aefre|frōfur.|
 |Man byþ on|myrgbe| (') his|māgan lēof;|
 60 |(') sceal beah|ānra gehwylc| ðorum|swican|
 |(') forðam|Dryhten wyle| dōme|sīne|
 |(') paet|earme flæsc| eorpan betāecan.
 |Lāgu byþ|lēodum| langsum gēpūht, (x)|

- | gif hī sculun | nēpun | (') on | nacān tealtum, |
 65 | (') and hī | sācēþa | swýþe | brēgab, |
 | (') and se | brimhengest | bridles ne | gýmeð. |
 | Ing waes | aērest | (') mid | East-Denum |
 | (') gesewen secgun, | (') oþ hē | siððan est |
 | (') ofer | wæg gewāt, | wæn aefter | ran; (') |
 70 | (') ðus | heardingas | (') ðone | haele nemdun. |
 | Eþel byþ | oferlēof | aēghwylcum | men, (') |
 | gif he mōt ðær | rihtes | (') and gerýsena on |
 | brūcan on | bolde | blēadum | oftast. |
 | Dæg byþ | Drihtnes sond, | dēore | mannūm, |
 75 | mære | Méodes lēoht, | myrgþ and | tōhiht |
 | eadgum and | earmum, | eallum | bríce. |
 | Ac byþ on | eorþan | elda | bearnum, |
 | flāesces | fōdor; | fereþ | geþlōme |
 | (') ofer | gānotes bæp, | gārsecg | fandap |

- 80 | (') hwaep̄er | ac̄ haebbe | aepele | treowe. |
 | Aesc̄ bip̄ | oferhēah, | eldum | dýre, |
 | stíp̄ on | stapule; | stede | rinte hylt |
 | (') ðeah̄ him | feohtan | (') on | fīras̄ monige. |
- 85 | Ýr̄ byp̄ | aepelinga | (') and | eorlā gehwaes |
 | wyn̄ and | wyrpmynd; | (') byp̄ on | wicge faēger, |
 | faestlic̄ on | faerelde | fyrd̄geatewā sum. |
 | Iar̄ byp̄ | eafix̄ ā | (') and̄ ðeah̄ | ā brūcep̄ |
 | fōdres̄ on | fōdan; | (') hafap̄ | faēgerne eard |
 | waetrē beworpen | (') ðaer̄ hē | wynnum̄ leofap̄. |
- 90 | Ear̄ byp̄ | egle | eorlā gehwylcun |
 | (') ðonn̄ | faestlicē | flāesc̄ on | ginneþ̄ |
 | hrāw̄ (s) | cōliān, | hrūsan | cēosan, |
 | blāc̄ tō̄ | gepeddān; | blēdā | gedrēosan, |
 | wýnnā | gewitap̄, | wērā | geswicap̄. |

Glossary

GLOSSARY

ā, adv., always; 49, 87a, 87b.

ac, m. a-stem, oak; ac, rune name 77; ns. 80.

aefre, adv., ever, always; 58.

aefter, adv., after; 69.

aeghwilc, adj., every, all, whosoever; dpm. aeghwylcum, 71.

aelc, adj., all; gsf. aelcre, 10.

aenig, adj., any; asm. aenigne, 44.

aerest, adj., first; nsm. 67.

aeror, adv., formerly, before; 28.

aesc, m. i-stem, ash tree; 81.

aetsomme, adv., at once, together; 40.

aetwist, f. i-stem, substance, sustenance, existence; ns. 21.

aebolc, adj., noble, excellent, glorious; nsn. 80.

aebeling, m. a-stem, prince, king, hero, man; np. aebelingas 18; gp. aebelinga 55, 84; ap. aebelingas 49.

and, conj., and; 4, 11, 12a, 12b, 14, 17, 19, 20a, 20b, 21, 23a, 23b, 24a, 24b, 28, 34, 38, 58, 65, 66, 72, 75, 76, 84, 85, 87; abbreviated 7 seven times.

anfeng, m. a-stem, a taking to one's self, touching, seizing; ns. anfengys 8, anfeng 44.

anmōd, adj., fierce; nsm. 4.

an, num. adj. and subst., one; gp. anra gehwylc (each one) 60.

ansyn, f. i-stem, face, form, view; gs. ansyne 31.

ār, f. ō-stem, honor, respect, kindness; ns. 21.

baeb, n. a-stem, bath; as. ganotes baep (sea) 79; as. fisches beþ (sea) 46.

bearn, n. a-stem, child, son; gp. beorna 43, dp. bearnum 27, 77; dp. beornum 34.

beon, anom. v., be; 3 sg. pres. ind. is 6, byþ, 1, 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 21, 25, 27, 29, 32, 35, 38, 51, 55, 59, 63, 71, 74, 77, 84, 85, 87, 90, bip 45, 48, 49, 52, 58, 81; 3 sg. pret. ind. waes 67.

beorc, ō-stem, birch, aspen (?); ns. 51.

beorht, adj., bright, splendid; apf. beorhte 34.

beorhtlic, adj., bright, lucid, splendid; nsm. 17.

bēorsele, m. i-stem, beer hall, banquet hall; ds. bēorsele 40.

beran, sv. IV, carry, extend, endure, produce; 3 sg. pres. bereþ 51.

betaecan, wv. I, deliver, commit, send, betake; inf. 62.

beþ, see baep.

beweorpan, sv. III, surround; p. p. beworpen 89.

blac, adj., bright, shining, livid, pale; nsm. 17, nsn. 93.

blæd, m. i-stem, enjoyment, prosperity, gift, honor; ns. 24; dp. blædam 73.

blēd, f. ō-stem (?), fruit, shoot, branch, flower; np. blēda 93 gp. blēda 51; ap. blēda 34.

blīþe, adj., blithe, happy; npm. blīþe 40.

blōd, n. a-stem, blood; ds. blōde 43.

blyss, f. jō-stem, bliss; as. blysse 24.

bold, n. a-stem, building, house, hall; ds. bolde 73.

brēgan, wv. I, frighten, terrify; 3 pl. pres. brēgāþ 65.

brenan, wv. I, cause to burn; 3 sg. pres. breneð 43.

brēost, n. a-stem, breast; dp. brēostan 27.

brīce, adj., useful; nsm. 76.

brīdels, m. a-stem, bridle; gs. brīdles 66.

brimhengest, m. a-stem, sea horse ("ship"); ns. 66; as.
brimhengest 47.

bringan, sv. III, bring; 3 sg. pres. bringeþ 47.

brūcan, sv. II, use, enjoy; inf. 73; 3 sg. pres. brūceþ 22,

burh, f. cons-stem, fortress, castle, city; gp. byrga 24.

būtan, prep. with acc., without; 52.

byrga, see burh.

byrnan, sv. III, burn; 3 sg. pres. byrneþ 17.

┌ cēn ┐ m. a-stem, torch; ns. 16.

cēosan, sv. II, choose, elect, select; inf. 92.

cōlian, wv. II, cool; inf. 92.

corn, n. a-stem, grain, seed; gp. corna 25.

cunnan, pret. pres. vb. w. acc., know; 3 sg. pres. can 22.

cūb, adj., known, manifest; nsm. 16.

cwic(o), adj., alive, living, quick; gpm. cwicera 16.

cyning, m. a-stem, king; ns. 33.

┌ daeg ┐, m. a-stem, day; ns. 74.

dæclan, wv. I, divide, separate, bestow, dole; inf. 2.

dēor, n. a-stem, wild animal, beast; ns. 5.

dēore, adj., dear, precious, excellent, noble; ns. 74.

dōm, m. a-stem, judgment, honor, doom; gs. dōmes 3; ds. dōme
61.

dryhten, m. a-stem, lord, Lord God; ns. 61; gs. Dryhtnes 74;
ds. drihtne 3.

dýre, adj., dear, beloved; nsm. 81.

ēac, adv. conj., also; 24.

ēadig, adj., happy, prosperous, rich; dpm. eadgum 76.

ēadnys, f. jō-stem, joy, prosperity; ns. 12.

ēafix, m. a-stem, river-fish; ns. 87.

eall, pro. adj., all; dp. eallum 76.

ƿ ear 7, m. a-stem, earth, grave; ns. 90.

eard, m. u-stem, province, dwelling, home; as. 41, 88.

earm, adj., poor, wretched; asn. earne 62; dpm. earmum 76.

Ēast-Dene, m. i-stem, East Dane; dp. Ēast-Denum 67.

efne, adv., even, just, likewise; efne swa 51.

egle, adj., hateful, loathsome, horrid; nsm. 90.

ƿ eh 7, n. a-stem, horse; ns. 55.

elde, m. i-stem pl., men; gp. elda 77; dp. eldum 81.

ƿ ēoh 7, m. a-stem, yew; ns. 35.

ƿ eolhx 7, m. a-stem, papyrus (?), gladiolum (?), elk-; gs. 41.

eorl, m. a-stem, nobleman, hero, man; gp. eorla 12, 84, 90;
dp. eorlum 55.

eorbe, f. n-stem, earth; ds. eorpan 62, 77.

ēst, adj. used adverbially, eastwards; 68.

ēbel, m. n. a-stem, country, land, one's own property, home;
ns. ƿ epel 7, rune name 71; ds. eple 37.

faeger, adm., fair, beautiful; nsm. 85; dsm. faeger 31; asm.
faegerne 88.

faegere, adv., pleasantly, gently, fairly; 53.

faereld, m. n. a-stem, way, course, passage; ds. faerylde
49, ds. faerelde 86.

faest, adj., fast, firm, stiff; nsn. 36.

faestlic, adj., fast, firm; reliable; nsm. 86.

faestlice, adv., firmly, fast, quickly; 91.

fandian, wv. II, explore, seek, search out; 3 sg. pres.
fandap 79.

felafr̄cne, adj., savage, very wild, terrible; nsn. 5.

fenn, n. ja-stem, fen, marsh; ds. fenne 41.

ƿfeoh7, n. a-stem, wealth, possessions; ns. 1.

feohtan, sv. III, fight, contend; inf. 83; 3 sg. pres.
feohtep 5.

ferian, wv. I, carry, bring, depart; 3 sg. pres. fereþ 78;
3 pl. pres. feriap 46.

fīras, m. ja-stem pl., men; np. 83; gp. fīra 1.

fisc, m. a-stem, fish; gs. fisces 46.

flāesc, n. i-stem, flesh; ns. 91; gs. flāescs 78; as.
flaesc 62.

flōr, m. a-stem, floor; as. flōr 31.

fōdor, n. a-stem, food; ns. 78; gs. fōdres 88.

folde, f. n-stem, earth; ds. foldan 88.

for, prep. w. dat., on account of, because of, according to;
3, 55.

forst, m. a-stem, frost; ds. forste 31.

forðam, adv. conj., for, because; 61.

frofur, f. ō-stem, consolation, comfort; ns. 1, 11, 58.

fȳr, n. a-stem, fire; gs. fȳres 36; ds. fȳre 16.

fyrðgeatwe, f. wō-stem, war-accoutrement, equipment; gp.
fyrðgeatewa 86.

ganot, m. a-stem, gannet, large sea-fowl; gs. ganotes 79.

gārsecg, m. a-stem, ocean, sea (spear-man=Neptune?); ns. 79.

- gebedda, f. n-stem, bed-fellow, consort; ds. gebeddan 93.
- gedōn, anom. v., do; 3 sg. pres. gedēð 44.
- gedrēosan, sv. II, fall, fail; 3 pl. pres. gedrēosap 93.
- gehwā, pron. adj., each (one); gsm. gehwaes 84; dsm. gehwām 12, 16, 20.
- gehwaeber, pron., both; ds. gehwaepre 28.
- gehwylic, pron. adj., each, every (one); nsm. 2, 60; asn. gehwylicne 43; dsm. gehwylicum 1, 7, 13, gehwylicum 9, 90.
- gelēodan, sv. II, grow, spring; p. p. geloden 54.
- gelic, adj., alike, like unto; nsn. comp. gelicust 30.
- gelōme, adv., often, continually; 78.
- geniht, n. i-stem, sufficiency; as. geniht 24.
- genip, n. i-stem, darkness, mist; ap. genipu 50.
- gēr 7, n. a-stem year, spring; ns. 32.
- gerysne, adj., fit, proper, convenient; gpn. gerysena 72.
- geseon, sv. V, see; p. p. gesewen 68.
- geswīcan, sv. I, fail, desert; 3 pl. pres. geswīcap 94.
- getenge, adj., near to, pressing upon; dsm. getenge 54.
- gebyncan, wv. I, seem; p. p. gebūht 63.
- gewītan, sv. I, depart, go away, die; 3 pl. pres. gewītap 94; 3 sg. pret. gewāt 69.
- gewyrcean, wv. I, make, form, build; p. p. geworūht 31.
- gif, conj., if; 3, 28, 64, 72.
- gimm, m. a-stem, gem; dp. gimmum 30.
- glaeshlūttur, adj., clear as glass; nsn. 30.
- gleng, f. o-stem, ornament, honor; ns. 19.
- glisnian, wv. II, glisten; 3 sg. pres. glisnap 30.

God, m. a-stem, God; ns. 32.

grimme, adv., grimly, fiercely, terribly; 42.

guma, m. n-stem, man; gp. gumena 19, 32.

gyfu₇, f. ō-stem, gift, generosity; ns. 19.

gýman, wv. I, care, heed, be intent on; 3 sg. pres gýmeð 66.

habban, wv. III, have, hold; 1 sg. pres. haebbe 80; 3 sg. pres. haefþ 23, 41, hafap 88.

haegl₇, mia-stem, hail; ns. 25.

hæel, n. cons. stem, safety, salvation; ds. hæele 28.

haele (þ), m. cons. stem, man, hero; ds. haeleþ 56, as. haele 70.

hālig, adj., holy; nsm. 33.

hē, hit, pers. pron., he; nsm. 3, 68, 72, 89; gsm. his 28, 59; dsm. him 23 (reflex.), 44, 56, 83; dsm. (instr.) sīne 61; npm. hī 18, 27, 28, 46, 47, 64, 65; dpm. him 9; nsn. hit 25 b; asn. hit 26a, hyt 2.

hēah, adj., lofty, high; nsf. 53.

healdan, sv. VII, guard, preserve, keep, maintain; 3 sg. pres. healdeð 48, hylt 82.

heard, adj., hard, firm, stubborn; nsn. 36.

hearding, m. a-stem, warrior, hero; np. hearingas 70.

helm, m. a-stem, crown, overshadowing foliage of trees; ds. helme 53.

help, f. ō-stem, help, aid, succor; ds. helpe 28.

heofon, m. a-stem; heaven, the heavens; gs. heofones 25, 33.

herenys, f. jō-stem, praise; ns. 19.

hī, see hē.

hiht, m. i-stem, hope, solace; ns. 32; ds. hihte 45.

hine, adv., hence; 46. (From heonan.)

- hlehter, m. a-stem, laughter; ns. 38.
- hleotan, sv. II, obtain, share in; inf. 3.
- hlystan, wv. I, listen, hearken; 3 pl. pres. hlystap 28.
- höf, m. a-stem, hoof; dp. höfum 56.
- horn, m. a-stem, horn; dp. hornum 5.
- hors, n. a-stem, horse; ns. 56.
- hrāw, m. n. a-stem, corpse; ns. 92.
- hrūse, f. n-stem, earth; ds. hrūsan 33, 36; as. hrūsan 92.
- hrystan, wv. I, decorate, adorn, equip; p. p. hrysted 53.
- hwaeper, conj., whether; 80.
- hweorfan, sv. III, turn, go; 3 sg. pres. hwyrft 25.
- hwīt, adj., white; nsm. comp. hwītust 25.
- hyrde, m. ja-stem, shepherd, pastor, guardian, keeper; ns. 36.
- ƿīar 7, a river fish (?), the sea (?); ns. 87.
- ƿīng 7, m. a-stem, the god or king, Ing; ns. 67.
- inne, prep., within; 18.
- ƿīs 7, n. a-stem, ice; ns. 29.
- laetan, sv. VII, let, allow; 3 sg. pres. laetep 32.
- ƿlagu 7, m. u-stem, water, sea; ns. 63.
- land, n. a-stem, earth, land, country; ds. lande 47.
- langsum, adj., long-enduring; nsm. 63.
- lēaf, n. a-stem, leaf; dp. lēafum 54.
- lēas, adj., void of, destitute, without; w. gen. 21, 51.
- lēod, m. a-stem, man, prince; dp. lēodum 63.
- lēof, adj., dear, pleasant; nsm. 59.

- leofian, wv. II, be dear, delight; 3 sg. pres. leofap 89.
- lēoht, n. a-stem, light; ns. 75.
- lyft, m. f. i-stem, air, sky; ds. lyfte 25, 54.
- lyt, n. indecl., little; 22.
- maegenheard, adj., main-hardy, powerful; ds. maegenheardum
15.
- mære, adj., great, famous, notorious; nsm. 6, nsn. 75.
- māga, m. n-stem, son, relative, man; dp. māgan 59.
- man(n) m. cons. stem, man; ns. /man 7, rune name 59;
ds. men 71; gp. manna 2, 9; dp. mannum 74.
- mēarh, m. a-stem, horse; ds. mēare 15.
- Metod, m. a-stem, God; gs. Metodes 75.
- micel, adj., much, great; dp. (adv.) miclun 2.
- mid, prep., together with, among; 5, 9, 67.
- mīlpap, m. a-stem, road with mile stones; ap. mīlpapas 15.
- mōdig, adj., bold, proud, headstrong; nsm. 6.
- monig, adj., many; npm. monige 83.
- mōrstapa, m. n-stem, moor-stepper; ns. 6.
- mōt, pret. pres. (VI), must; 3 sg. pres. mōt 72.
- myrgb, f. ō-stem, mirth; ns. 75; ds. myrgbe 59.
- naca, m. n-stem, ship; ds. nacan 64.
- nāefre, adv., (ne ≠ āefre), never; 50.
- ne, conj., nor; 66.
- nearu, adj., oppressive, strait; nsf. 27.
- nemnan, wv. I, name, call; 3 pl. pret. nemdun 70.
- nēbun, wv. I, venture on; inf. 64.

- niht, f. a-stem., night; gp. nihta 50.
- nipas, m. a-stem pl., men; 9l. nipa 27.
- ┌ nȳd ┐, constraint, need; ns. 27.
- of, prep. w. dat., out of, from; 25.
- ofer, prep. w. acc., over (generally with idea of movement);
15, 46, 50, 69, 79.
- oferceald, adj., excessively cold; nsn. 29.
- oferhēah, adj., excessively high; nsm. 81.
- oferhyrned, adj., great-horned, high-horned; nsm. 4. (From
wv. hyrnan.)
- oferlēof, adj., exceedingly dear; nsm. 71.
- oft, adv., often; 27; comp. oftust 17, 41, oftast 73.
- on, prep., on, in or at a place, among, during, by, with;
w. dat. 13, 16, 27, 37, 40, 41, 42, 45, 49, 52, 53, 57,
59, 64, 73, 77, 82, 83, 85, 86, 88; postpos. w. gen. 72.
- onfeng, see anfeng.
- onginnan, sv. III, begin, undertake; 3 sg. pres. onginneþ
91.
- onufan, prep. w. dat., upon, on; 14.
- ordfruma, m. n-stem, source, origin; ns. 10.
- ┌ ōs ┐, mouth, language; ns. 10.
- ōþ, conj., until; 47, 68.
- ōber, indef. pron., something else; gp. ōþra 21; dp. ōðrum
60.
- ┌ peorð ┐, dice-box (?), chessman (?); ns. 38.
- plega, m. n-stem, play, sport, game; ns. 38.
- ┌ rād ┐, journey; ns. 13.
- recyð, n. a-stem, hall; ds. recyde 13.

restan, wv. I, rest; 3 sg. pres. resteð 9; 3 pl. pres. restap 18.

rēbe, adj., fierce, cruel, savage; nsm. 8.

riht, n. a-stem, right, law, judgment; gs. rihtes 72.

rihte, adv., rightly; 82.

rinc, m. a-stem, man, warrior; gp. rinca 13.

rinnan, sv. III, run, course; 3 sg. pret. ran 69.

sæyb, f. jō-stem, sea wave; gp. sæyþa 65.

sār, n. a-stem, soreness, pain, grief, sorrow; gs. sāres 23.

scearp, adj., sharp; nsm. 7.

sculan, pret. pres. (IV), shall, must; 3 sg. pres. sceal 2, 60; 3 pl. pres. sculun 64.

scūr, f. ō-stem, shower, storm; np. scūra 26.

sē, dem. pron. and def. art, the, that, that one; who; nsm. se 66; asm. ðone 70; ds. ðam 14; nsn. (rel.) asn. (dem.) þæt 62; nsm. rel. indecl. part. ðe 9, 21, 22; indecl. part. w. dat. ðam ðe 14, ðe him 14; þæt always abbreviated þ.

secg, m. n. a-stem, sedge, grasslike plant (genus Carex); ns. 41.

secg, m. a-stem, man (poetic); dp. secgun 68.

sēfte, adj., comfortable, without pain, pleasant; nsf. 14.

sēmann, m. a-stem, seaman; dp. sēmannum 45.

ſ̅sigel 7, n. (?), sun; ns. 45.

sīne, see hē.

sittan, sv. V, sit; 3 sg. pres. sitteþ 14; 3 pl. pres. sittap 39.

siððan, adv., since, afterwards; 68; syððan 26.

slidor, adj., slippery; nsn. 29.

sond, f. i-stem, sending, message; nsf. 74.

sorg, f. \bar{o} -stem, anxiety, grief; gs. sorge 23.

spræc, f. $\bar{j}\bar{o}$ -stem, speech; gs. spræce 10; as. spræce 57.

stabul, m. a-stem, fixed position, station; ds. stabule 82.

stede, m. i-stem, place; ns. 82.

stib, adj., solid, rigid, stiff, nsm. 82.

sum, pron. adj., a certain (one); 48, 86.

swā, adv., so, thus; efne swā ðeah (nevertheless) 51.

swican, sv. I, fail, fail in one's duty to another; inf. w. dat. 60; 3 sg. pres. swicep 50.

swiþhwaet, adj., very quick, active, very bold; nsf. 14.

swyþe, adv., very, much, exceedingly (w. verbs, as intensifiers); 65.

sylf, pron., self; nsm. reflex. w. dat. sylfa 23.

syllan, wv. I, give to, deliver, commit; inf. 33.

symble, adv., always; 38, 45.

syððan, see siððan.

tācn, n. a-stem, token, sign; gp. tācna 48.

tān, m. a-stem, twig, shoot; ap. tānas 52.

tealt, adj., tilting, unsteady; dsm. tealtum 64.

telga, m. n-stem, branch, bough; dp. telgum 52.

ƿtīr 7, m., the god Tiw, constellation; glory (?) ns. 48.

to, prep. w. dat.; to, w. motion or direction, tō lande 47; turn into, become, weorþeþ tō waetere 26; to, for, as, tō helpe 28a, tō hæle 28a, tō gebeddan 93.

tōiht, m. i-stem, hope, consolation, solace; ns. 12, 75.

trēow, n. a-stem, tree, wood; ns. 35.

trēow, f. wō-stem, faith, truth; as. trēowe 80, ap. trywa
48.

tūddor, n. a-stem, progeny, fruit; as. tūdder 52.

ðær, adv., there, where; 18, 56, 72, 89; ðār 39.

ðeah, adv., yet, still, however; 2, 27, 51, þeah 60, 87;
conj., yet, however, when; ðeah 83.

ðearf, f. o-stem, need; dp. ðearfum 34.

ðearle, adv., severely; 7.

ðegn, m. a-stem, thane, servant, retainer; gp. ðegna 7.

ðonn, conj., when; ðon 32, ðonn 46, 91.

∫ðorn₇, m. a-stem, thorn; ns. 7.

ðus, adv., thus, 70.

underwrebban, vv. I, support; p. p. underwrepyd 37.

ungemet, adj., used adverbially, immeasurably, immensely;
dp. ungemetun 8, ungemetum 29.

unsmēbe, adj., rough, unsmooth; nsn. 35.

unstyle, adj., restless, moving; dpm. unstyllum 58.

∫ūr₇, m. a-stem, wild ox; ns. 4

utan, prep., on the outside; 35.

wæg, m. a-stem, wave; as wæg 69.

wæen, m. a-stem, wagon, carriage; ns. 69.

waet (e) re, n. a-stem, water; ds. waetere 26, wature 42,
waetre 89.

wēa, m. n-stem, woe, misery, evil, affliction; gp. wēana 22.

wealcan, sv. VII, roll, toss, 3 pl. pres. wealcap 26.

wel, adv., well, rightly; 48.

weleg, adj., wealthy, rich; npm. welege 57.

weorban, sv. III, become; 3 sg. pres. weorþeþ 26; 3 pl. pres. weorþeþ 27.

wēr, f. ō-stem, treaty; np. wera 94.

wexan, sv. VII, grow, increase, wax; 3 sg. pres. wexeð 42.

wicg, n. ja-stem, horse; ds. wicge 85; dp. wicgum 57.

wiga, m. n-stem, warrior, man; np. wigan 39.

willan, anom. v., wish, want, desire; 3 sg. pres. wile 3; 3 sg. pres. wyle 61.

wind, m. a-stem, wind; gs. windes 26.

wīsdōm, m. a-stem, wisdom; gs. wīsdōmes 11.

wita, m. n-stem, wise man, counsellor; gp. witenā 11.

wib, prep. w. acc., towards, with, near; 49.

wlanc, adj., proud, high-spirited, bold; ns. 56; ds. wlancum 39.

wlitig, adj., beautiful; nsf. 52.

wraecu, f. ō-stem, pain, misery; gp. wraecna 20.

wrabu, f. ō-stem, prop, stay, support; ns. 11, 20.

wrixlan, wv. I, exchange, bandy; 3 pl. pres. wrixlāþ 57.

wuht, n. i-stem, wight, creature; ns. 6.

wundian, wv. II, wound; 3 sg. pres. wundāþ 42.

wyn(n), f. jō-stem, joy, delight; ns. wyn 55, 85; gs. ŵynne,
Rune name 22; gp. wynna 94; dp. wynan 37; dp. wynnum 89.

wyrtrum, m. a-stem, root; dp. wyrtrumun 37.

wyrbmynd, f. ō-stem, dignity, honor; ns. 85.

wyrbscype, m. i-stem, worth, honor; ns. 20.

vyfl, adj., evil; nsm. 8.

ymb, prep. w. dat., about, concerning; 56.

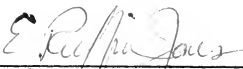
ŵyr, bow made of yew; ns. 84.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Frederick George Jones, Jr., was born on October 5, 1938, in Jacksonville, Florida. He attended Duncan U. Fletcher High School, Jacksonville Beach, and was granted the Bachelor of Arts Degree cum laude from the University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee, in June, 1960. After teaching a year at Fletcher High School and two years at St. John's County Day School, Orange Park, Florida, he entered the Graduate School of the University of Florida. Since 1963, he has taught English at the University of Florida and has worked toward the completion of the doctoral degree. He is married to the former Adel Hansen, and they have two children, Siri and Lisa.

This dissertation was prepared under the direction of the chairman of the candidate's supervisory committee and has been approved by all members of that committee. It was submitted to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate Council, and was approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

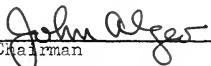
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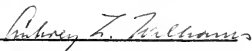
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