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SCHOOL OF CRITICAL STUDIES
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The Anglo-Saxon Runic Poem

A Critical Reassessment

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**Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of Master of Philosophy**

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(c) [Aya Van Renterghem] [19/09/2013]

Abstract

In 1703, George Hickes published the *Linguarum veterum septentrionalium thesaurus grammatico-criticus et archæologicus*, which contained the first edition of the Anglo-Saxon runic poem. As a result of the Cottonian fire in 1731, his edition also became the only source for the poem. In this thesis I re-examine the first edition from a runological perspective within the context of its publication in the *Thesaurus*.

Since the early twentieth century, doubts have been raised about the authenticity of the runic poem as printed by Hickes. Scholars noticed similarities with another runic alphabet in the *Thesaurus*, copied from MS Cotton Domitian A. IX, and began questioning if all the information exhibited in the *Thesaurus* edition had in fact been present in the original manuscript, MS Cotton Otho B. X. The aim of this thesis is to reassess the material and investigate some of the assumptions upon which these doubts are based.

I provide the necessary historical contextualisation and a framework for the subsequent investigation through a study of the poem's publication history and the information supplied in catalogue descriptions predating the fire. This is supplemented by an overview of the scholarship on the poem and a detailed explanation of the authenticity debate.

I consider the runic poem in its most basic form, as a runic alphabet, and compare its runes and rune-names with the other Anglo-Saxon runic material collected in the *Thesaurus*. The aim of this comparison is to determine whether the text has been modified or supplemented by any of its editors, if there are in fact correspondences with the runic alphabet from Cotton Domitian A. IX, and if so, whether and how this has had an impact on the perception of the runic poem. I also seek to investigate the existence of a runic standard for manuscript runes by comparing the form of the runes in the various alphabets of the *Thesaurus*, and applying David Parsons' theory of standardisation. Finally, I compare these results with the conclusions of the authenticity debate in order to determine their impact, and establish how both the results and the reasoning behind them can contribute to the discipline of manuscript runology.

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Introduction

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Os byþ ordfruma. ælere spræce. þisdomes þrapu. and þitena frofur.
And eorla gehþam. Eadnys and to hiht.

In chapter 22 of his *Grammatica Anglo-Saxonica & Moeso-Gothica*, George Hickes allots a full page to a text which according to him ‘quamque vix antea & ne vix observatam, nedum publici juris factam, plane quasi ab omnibus doctis spectatu dignam’.¹ The text consists of twenty-nine short stanzas of Old English verse, accompanied by three columns of respectively twenty-nine rune-names, thirty-seven Anglo-Saxon runes, and thirty Latin letters.² He notes the origin of the text at the top of the page: MS Cotton Otho B. X. This text would later become known as the Anglo-Saxon or Old English runic poem. For the purposes of this dissertation, it will be referred to as the runic poem.

The runic poem is not the only one of its kind, and is often studied in conjunction and in comparison with the Norwegian and the Old Icelandic runic poems.³ Occasionally, the *Abececlariū Nordmannicū*, a compilation of runes, rune-names and German words, is also mentioned in this context, though more as a predecessor to these works than as a genuine runic poem.⁴ These texts form part of the *runica manuscripta* tradition, the collective term used for manuscripts which contain runes. In Britain, this tradition came into existence in England after the epigraphical runic alphabet was no longer in use at the end of the ninth century.⁵ The runes used after that date appear only in manuscripts, hence the name, alongside forms of the Latin alphabet. They are generally subdivided into six types: additional letters, abbreviations, reference marks, short notes, alphabets and

¹ G. Hickes, H. Wanley, *Antiquae literaturae Septentrionalis Libri Duo* (Oxford: [Oxford University Press], 1703-05) [which, although previously barely noted at all, much less brought into the public jurisdiction, we deem it, as deserving of examination by all learned men]. Translation by M. Halsall, *The Old English Rune Poem: a critical edition* (London: University of Toronto Press, 1981), p. 24.

² See figure 1 in the Appendix.

³ See A. Bauer, *Runengedichte. Texte, Untersuchungen und Kommentare zur gesamten Überlieferung*, *Studia Mediaevalia Septentrionalia*, 9 (Vienna: Fassbaender, 2003), pp. 113-61 and pp. 163-206 for editions of these poems.

⁴ Bauer, pp. 58-76.

⁵ R. Derolez, *Runica Manuscripta* (Brugge: Tempelhof, 1954), pp. lvi-lvii.

futhorcs,⁶ and runic poems.⁷ In the English tradition they continued to be copied into manuscripts until the thirteenth century.

Due to the Cottonian fire in 1731, which destroyed most of Cotton Otho B. X, Hickes's edition became the only source for the poem. The study of the runic poem becomes thus also a consideration of Early Modern printing and editing, and it is necessary to consider the runic poem as a product of the scholarship of this period before analysing any of its separate aspects. The focus of this dissertation is on the first edition, and the aim is to investigate its authenticity and the influence of the editors on the runic material. Consequently, the background to its publication and runic knowledge of its editors are of great interest. A summary of this information is often present in most editions, but remarkably few scholars have considered the impact of the editors, or the context in which the poem was published. This is the subject of this dissertation.

The runic poem has been discussed in many contexts, but most scholars have focused on the Old English verse or the poem's literary qualities. The runic material itself receives a fairly limited and unimaginative treatment in most discussions: it is noted that the runes are Old English, the rune-names, their meaning and Germanic background are discussed, and infrequently a remark is made upon an uncommon rune-form. Additionally, only few publications concentrate on the poem's first appearance in print, in spite of the fact that it is the only source for the work. Those scholars who have written on the *Thesaurus* edition do so almost exclusively in order to contribute to the authenticity debate started by Hempl in 1903. Hempl noted similarities between the runic poem and a *futhorc* from MS Cotton Domitian A. IX, fo. 11 v, and claimed that Hickes borrowed elements from this manuscript and added them to the poem. He therefore concludes that *Thesaurus* edition is not a reproduction.

Charles Wrenn remarks in his article on Old English rune-names that over time the runic poem became an authoritative source for runes and rune-names and that it is often regarded as exemplary.⁸ This is remarkable, as the runic poem – as studied under modern scholarship – is problematic on many levels: the origin of the runes is disputed, not all

⁶ The term 'futhorc' indicates an Anglo-Saxon runic alphabet in its original sequence, which started with those six letters. The term 'runic alphabet' is used more generally, but in this dissertation indicates most commonly that the runes are alphabetised and follow the sequence of the Latin alphabet.

⁷ Derolez, pp. xxiv-xxvi.

⁸ C.L. Wrenn, 'Late Old English Rune-Names', *Medium Aevum* 1 (1932), p. 26.

values are correct, not every rune is transliterated, and some rune-names and rune-forms are uncommon or wrong. These shortcomings have all been noted by scholars, and potential reasons for them advanced, but an entirely convincing argument has yet to be presented.

René Derolez is the only scholar to have considered the runic poem purely as a *runicum manuscriptum*, but even his analysis is far from extensive. Apart from the *fuporc* in Cotton Domitian A. IX, considered in the authenticity debate as a possible source for the runic poem, the runic material from the poem has neither been compared to any similar *runica manuscripta*, nor investigated in a broader context. In this dissertation I therefore intend to re-examine the runes and rune-names of the runic poem, and to compare them with the other *fuporcs* and runic alphabets present in the *Thesaurus*. This analysis will be conducted against the background of the authenticity debate. This debate, based on Hempl's article, is founded upon a number of assumptions with regards to the nature of the runic poem. I demonstrate, through examination of the poem in its wider context, that not all of these assumptions hold up under scrutiny.

I provide a general background and history of the runic poem, focusing on its first edition, before re-assessing the runic material in its most basic context: that of the *runica manuscripta*. The first chapter discusses the *Thesaurus* itself and the circumstances of the production of the runic poem in the eighteenth century. It provides short biographies of the two authors: George Hickes and Humfrey Wanley, and attempts to discover their knowledge of runes and influence on the poem on the basis of their work and correspondence.

In the second chapter, I supply a manuscript description of Cotton Otho B. X, using catalogues from before 1731 and secondary literature. This chapter discusses the dating, contents, material and number of leaves of the manuscript, taking into account the fact that the runic poem was written on a single folio, later attached to Otho B. X. The provenance receives a more extensive treatment, in which a number of theories are postulated. An additional section on the discrepancies between the two main catalogue descriptions is also included.

The third chapter focuses on the scholarship on the runic poem, and consists of two parts. The first discusses the editions in chronological order. How the poem is treated by its editors, and especially how the editions deviate from how the work was printed in the *Thesaurus*, are of particular interest here. A general description of the contents of these

editions is also provided. Additionally, the first part contains an overview of the critical literature revolving around the aforementioned authenticity debate. In the second part the definition of a runic poem, and the origin of its denomination are investigated, followed by an overview of modern scholarship on the various aspects of the runic poem. Subsequently, a new avenue of enquiry is proposed and arguments are presented for its usefulness.

The fourth and final chapter contains the analysis and comparison of the runic material included in the runic poem with the Anglo-Saxon runic alphabets and *futhorcs* in the *Thesaurus*. The chapter starts by explaining the reasons for limiting the analysis to the *Thesaurus* material, and the parameters used in the comparison. The comparison follows, accompanied by a list of comments on varying rune-forms and incorrect transliterations. From this comparison five sections follow, each of which contain points of interest or a detailed examination of certain elements. In the first section, the correspondences between the various alphabets and *futhorcs* are identified, and the value of the comparison for the authenticity debate is demonstrated. In the second section the theory of runic standardisation is explained and applied to the runic material. The effect of these findings on Hempl's theory specifically – and manuscript runology in general – is explained. The two subsequent sections provide some information on the transliteration mistakes and variations in form noted in the various alphabets and *futhorcs*. This is followed by a section examining the differences between the Otho B. X and Domitian A. IX *futhorcs* and how they were alphabetised by Wanley. The last section focuses on Wanley, considered responsible for providing Hickes with the runic poem, and investigates his runic proficiency by analysing the mistakes made between the copying of the *futhorcs* and their alphabetisations in the *Tabellae*. This section compares a selection of alphabets from Oxford, St John's College MS 17 and the *futhorc* from Cotton Domitian A. IX with their reproductions in the *Tabellae*. The aim is to note any mistakes Wanley made in the copying process, and explore his knowledge of runes and accuracy in handling the material. The rune-names of the runic poem are then compared with those included in the *Thesaurus*. The conclusions drawn from this comparison are again measured against the conclusions of the authenticity debate.

The conclusion itself draws upon the preliminary conclusions reached in the course of the preceding discussions. It aims to answer two main questions which have been posed in the authenticity debate: where the additions to the runic poem originate from, and who

was responsible for them. It concludes by outlining the significance of this research for manuscript runology and suggests possibilities for future research in this area.

1. *Linguarum veterum septentrionalium thesaurus grammatico-criticus et archæologicus*

This chapter contains an overview of the historical background of the *Thesaurus* and a short biography of the author Hickes. It looks at some of the important contributors to this work, and pays special attention to Hickes's assistant and co-author, Humfrey Wanley. Finally, it investigates the correspondence between Hickes and his contributors in order to determine the sources for the runic material in the *Thesaurus*; special attention is paid to the extent of the runological knowledge demonstrated in their writings.

1.1 George Hickes and the origins of the *Thesaurus*

The *Linguarum veterum septentrionalium thesaurus grammatico-criticus et archæologicus* is the result of the combined efforts of late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Germanic philologists, who were primarily, but not solely, based in Britain. Bennett notes that '[f]rom the savants of Europe the work received an enthusiastic reception' after its publication in 1703 (volume 1) and 1705 (volume 2), and, despite not selling as well as Hickes had hoped, made his name and fame.⁹ It is important to remember, however, before examining Hickes's life and influence, that the *Thesaurus* was to a large extent a collaborative work. Although Hickes was its driving and unifying force, he was not solely responsible for its compilation and editing, a fact which complicates its history.

George Hickes (1642-1715)¹⁰ was the Dean of Worcester (1683-1690), and a Germanic scholar and antiquary, who has been described by David Douglas in his study of

⁹ J. A. W. Bennett, 'Hickes's "Thesaurus": A Study in Oxford Book-Production', *English Studies*, n. s., 1 (1948), 28-45 (p. 43)

¹⁰ For a more detailed biography, see *A Chorus of Grammars: The Correspondence of George Hickes and his Collaborators on the Thesaurus Linguarum septentrionalium*, ed. by R. L. Harris (Toronto: Pontifical Institute for Mediaeval Studies, 1992), pp. 3-126; D. C. Douglas, *English Scholars 1660-1730* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1951), pp. 77-97; T. Harmsen, 'Hickes, George (1642-1715)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13203>> [Accessed September 2013]

English scholars and scholarship between 1660-1730 as ‘probably the most remarkable figure among the English historical scholars of his time’.¹¹ He continues ‘certainly no other member of that very distinguished company exercised a learned influence which was more potent or widely spread’.¹² Douglas’s habit of adulating the scholars he discusses notwithstanding, it is incontestable that Hickes became famous for his study of septentrional languages, his high position in the nonjuring church, and refusal to make the oath to King William II and III. He was a man who lived two lives simultaneously: he was a historian and philologist in one, a convinced supporter of the Stuart succession and official of the Church of England in the other. Hickes’s work is proof of his widespread interests, and he wrote on such a variety of topics (though mostly related to religion and philology), that Douglas considers that

[h]e belonged in a sense to an age earlier than that in which he lived, since his mind, encyclopedic in its range, refused to specialize and so entangled his learning with his life, that it is difficult to regard him solely as an historian or philologist, or solely as a divine.¹³

Harris also states in his *Chorus of Grammars* that ‘[h]is several lives were inextricably linked with and dependent upon one another’.¹⁴

Hickes originally came from Yorkshire, and was the son of a landowning farmer and a loyalist mother.¹⁵ After his school career and a short-lived venture into the trade industry, he was sent to Oxford, where he entered St John’s College as a battler in 1659. He stayed in Oxford until 1673, during which time he was a member of Magdalen College, Magdalen Hall, and Lincoln College. Through these moves he became acquainted with some of the great names in Germanic philology of that time. At Lincoln College he met the linguistic scholar Thomas Marshall, and Marshall’s teacher Francis Junius, who introduced him to John Fell, a ‘strong university man and renovator of the university press [...], [who] was responsible for a revival of patristic, historical, and philological learning’.¹⁶ During

¹¹ Douglas, p. 77.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., p. 78.

¹⁴ Harris, p. 3.

¹⁵ Harmsen, para. 1-2 of 31.

¹⁶ Harmsen, para. 3 of 31.

that time the need was felt for a new Old English dictionary and grammar, as Somner's 1659 *Dictionary* was hardly available at that time: Marshall took this task upon himself.¹⁷ His work, and the revival efforts of the Oxford philologists, influenced Hickes greatly and led to the publication of the *Institutiones grammaticae Anglo-Saxonicae et Moeso-Goethicae* (1689), his first work on philology.

After his studies, Hickes spent some time travelling in Europe, and began an initially successful career in the Church of England. In 1683 Hickes was promoted as Dean of Worcester, and two years later the first of a series of unfortunate events occurred which would greatly impact on his life and scholarship.¹⁸ In 1685 Hickes's elder brother John, who was a known non-conformist, took part in the Monmouth rebellion and was – in spite of Hickes's efforts – executed later that year.¹⁹ Three years later, Hickes witnessed the Glorious Revolution (1688-89) in which William of Orange and Mary of England overthrew King James II, to whom Hickes, despite the execution of his brother, was still loyal. Consequently, after the Revolution, Hickes refused to swear an oath of loyalty to the new king and queen, whom he regarded as usurpers.²⁰ This led to his suspension as Dean of Worcester, and in 1690 he was deprived of his position, although he stayed in possession of the deanery until, in 1691, it was granted to William Talbot by King William.

Hickes refused to accept this deprivation and wrote a claim of right, which he displayed at Worcester Cathedral. This resulted in a warrant for high misdemeanour issued by the second Earl of Nottingham, forcing Hickes to go into hiding in London. He was outlawed in August 1691, and remained a fugitive until May 1699. In that year Chancellor John Somers obtained an act of council for Hickes, which obligated the attorney-general to write a *nolle prosequi*, ceasing all proceedings against him.²¹

It was during these restless times that Hickes worked on his two main philological enterprises: the *Institutiones* and the *Thesaurus*. Hickes's contemporary biographer and friend, Hilkiah Bedford, describes the start of his philological career as follows:

¹⁷ Unfortunately, this work was never published.

¹⁸ Harmsen, para. 4, 9 of 31.

¹⁹ Douglas, p. 80. The Monmouth Rebellion or Revolt of the West was a revolt led by the Duke of Monmouth against the Roman Catholic James II/VII in 1685.

²⁰ Douglas, p. 81.

²¹ Harmsen, para. 11, 15 of 31.

[Hickes] was no sooner settled at Worcester but being then about 45 years of age he apply'd himself to the study of the ancient Septentrional Languages, of which by indefatigable pains he made himself a perfect Master in one year, & at the same time compiled his Anglo-Saxon & Moeso-Gothick Grammar.²²

It appears that Hickes's interests in English politics and religion peaked at the same time as his historical and linguistic studies, namely in the years leading up to the 1688-89 revolution. John Fell, whom Hickes met at Oxford, had earlier promoted the publication of the Old English-Latin dictionary, based on Junius's manuscripts, accompanied by Marshall's Saxon grammar. This task, after the death of Marshall, eventually fell to Hickes. The latter succeeded in this undertaking in 1689, and had his Old English Grammar printed, using Junius's type. It was published as *Institutiones grammaticae Anglo-Saxonicae et Moesto-Gothicae*. This work was compiled not only out of philological interest, but also to confirm his religious and political views, a consequence of the rather stormy times. Harmsen comments that

[w]ith the confusion among scholars, clergy, and lawyers attending the unprecedented circumstance after the revolution of both a king *de facto* (William) and a king *de jure* (James II), several ideological theories on the settlement and kingship were expounded.²³

Hickes states himself that he 'undertook the work at first purely out of a zeale to make known the Language, Customes, Lawes, and manners of our ancestres, and to set English antiquities in a good light'.²⁴ However, this work would prove to be the predecessor of a much more ambitious project: the *Linguarum veterum septentrionalium thesaurus grammatico-criticus et archæologicus*.

It seems as if Fell's wish for revival had been granted, for the *Institutiones* was well received. Bennett notes that the work managed to boost Anglo-Saxon studies, which had been the aim of many scholars since Sir Joseph Williamson in 1680 established the first

²² H. Bedford, *Biography of George Hickes*, in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Misc. E. 4, p. 22. Hilckiah Bedford (1663–1724) was a bishop of the nonjuring Church of England, and friend of George Hickes. He is the author of the Hickes's contemporary biography. (C. Ehrenstein, 'Bedford, Hilckiah (1663–1724)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1929>> [Accessed July 2013])

²³ Harmsen, para. 10 of 31.

²⁴ Letter to Parker, 1 June 1704. (Harris, p. 402).

lectureship in the subject at Queen's College Oxford.²⁵ Soon there was a desire for another, more complete study of Old English.²⁶ Hickes readily agreed to undertake this second edition, and owing to the popularity of the *Institutiones* found many eager helpers for this endeavour. Harris describes its inception as follows:

The vast compilation of the *Thesaurus* began rather humbly, in the early days of Hickes's fugitive years or a little before. Its design and contents grew over more than a decade, however, and were ultimately the results of the labours of many. The work could be seen as combining the efforts of England's most talented philologists at the end of the seventeenth century, the unifying collaborative aspects of the endeavour having been in part the subject of several previous studies. Bedford attributes the undertaking of the *Thesaurus* to the popularity of the *Institutiones* and a general demand for a second edition.²⁷

Although the *Institutiones* included Runólfur Jónsson's Old Icelandic grammar and Edward Bernard's *Etymologicon Britannicum*, it dealt primarily with Old English grammar; Hickes, however, decided to work not only on Old English material, but also to expand upon and add to the *Institutiones*.²⁸ This second edition grew into what Harmsen describes as a

full-blown history of the English language and a monumental work of Old English and medieval Germanic culture and history, archaeology, numismatics, philology, and bibliography, for which [Hickes] enlisted the scholarly assistance and expertise of a range of English, Swedish, and Danish scholars. It was to be called *Linguarum veterum septentrionalium thesaurus grammatico-criticus et archaeologicus*.²⁹

Hickes compiled and printed most of the *Thesaurus* while he was a fugitive, which is likely to have influenced his use of sources and limited his ability to study much of the material himself. It is also conceivable that his political ideas prevented some scholars from collaborating with him. As evidenced by some of his correspondence, he could only

²⁵ Bennett, p. 29.

²⁶ Harris, p. 39.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Bennett, p. 29.

²⁹ Harmsen, para. 16 of 31.

very irregularly visit libraries or meet with other scholars to discuss work.³⁰ This forced him to rely on others to gather such material on his behalf, and prevented him from undertaking checks. Additionally, collaboration possibilities with Scandinavian scholars were limited by factors such as geographical separation, political and cultural barriers, and occasionally undiplomatic letters from Edward Thwaites.³¹

Although Hickes's accomplishment in his circumstances is indeed impressive, it is also important to consider the level of help he received and his many collaborators: the most important of which are mentioned here. Edward Thwaites, who has already been mentioned, was heavily involved in the production of the *Thesaurus*. He initially functioned as Hickes's spokesperson in the communication with Scandinavia, but later on became responsible for the funding, editing and printing of the work.³² He also provided Hickes with selections from the *Ormulum*. William Nicolson, the first lecturer in 'Saxon' studies at Queen's and later Archdeacon of Carlisle, sent Hickes reproductions of the Ruthwell Cross inscriptions. Edmund Gibson, then still a Bachelor of Arts who had published an edition of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, supplied a translation of some Old English law texts. William Elstob transcribed and translated the *Sermo Lupi*. Thomas Tanner, who would become Chancellor of Norwich, supplied texts from a Norwich charter and the *Land of Cockayne*. Later on, Hickes also recruited the help of Arthur Charlett, Master of University College Oxford, who was in charge of the Oxford University Press.³³ A letter from Thwaites to Hickes from 4 September 1689 gives an impression of this collaboration during the editing and printing process:

Revd. Sr. I am glad you find noe more errorr's in the three sheets, than those you mention[...] You will find, I take the liberty to alter a word here & there; I am also forced to add, or diminish as occasion urges upon the compositor's account. the beauty of the page will please you. I am forced to lengthen a line sometimes, and add something to fill up the notes, and sometimes I am forced to leave out an example when it may be done without injury. for we doe not put part of the Cases on one

³⁰ See for instance Hickes's letter to Wanley, 17 June 1689 (Harris, p. 213), and his letter to Charlett, 23 February 1696 (Harris, p. 158)

³¹ Edward Thwaites (bap. 1671-1711), was an Anglo-Saxon and Greek scholar, and contributor to the *Thesaurus*. (M. Clunies Ross, A. J. Collins, 'Thwaites, Edward (bap. 1671, d. 1711)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27415>> [Accessed July 2013], para. 1 of 5)

³² Harris, pp. 60-1; Clunies Ross, Collins, para. 2 of 5.

³³ Bennett, pp. 29-30.

page, and part on the other page, as was done in the declinations before. Dr. Mill reads all your grammar before it goes to the press; and sometimes he changes or addes a word as he thinks fitt; he know's your humour, or else he would not presume to doe it. And I am satisfied you will accept of such a labour form a good judgement.³⁴

The correspondence clearly indicates that there existed good communication between Hickes and his colleagues, but also shows that Hickes, due to his circumstances, was unable to attend to matters in person. Hickes consequently felt the need for an assistant and in a letter from 19 January 1695 requests Charlett 'to find out some learned and industrious person in the University, who upon reasonable, and good encouragement from the bookseller would undertake to carry on in English Wheares directions for reading history'.³⁵ Charlett recommended Humfrey Wanley, whose talent for palaeography had come to his attention.³⁶ Hickes replied on 10 June 1695

I never heard, as you suppose of Wanly of Coventry. Pray let me know more of the man, as what age he is of, of what standing in the university, who it is he lives with, and where; and something of his temper, and disposition.³⁷

Hickes, it seems, was pleased with Charlett's reply, and Wanley's first task for him, transcribing the Frankish grammar, is recorded in a letter to Charlett from 21 January 1696.³⁸ Wanley would soon after become Hickes's trusted assistant and main collaborator on the *Thesaurus*.

³⁴ Harris, pp. 230-31. The Dr. Mill referred to is John Mill, who had assisted Hickes with the printing of the *Institutiones* in the late 1680s.

³⁵ Oxford, Bodleian library, MS Ballard 12, fo. 99 r-v. (Harris, p. 153).

³⁶ Bennett, p. 30.

³⁷ Letter from Hickes to Charlett, 10 June 1695. (Harris, p. 155).

³⁸ Oxford, Bodleian library, MS Ballard 12, fo. 114 r-v. (Harris, pp. 156-7).

1.2 Humfrey Wanley

Humfrey Wanley (1672-1726) was born in Coventry, the youngest of five children of Nathaniel Wanley, a vicar, and his wife, Ellen Burton.³⁹ He was educated at Coventry Free School and, on leaving school, was bound apprentice to a linen draper. Wanley, however, did not stay in the business for long, and quickly started combining his duties there with the study of manuscripts and palaeography. At least as early as June 1691 he was transcribing local Warwick records, and later the same year he made a copy of the Old English grammar from Hickes's *Institutiones Grammaticae Anglo-Saxonicae*, as well as its catalogue of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts in the Bodleian Library.⁴⁰ With the help of the bishop of his diocese, William Lloyd, Wanley found his way to Oxford in 1695, where Arthur Charlett took a special interest in him.⁴¹

Hickes and Charlett were not the only ones to acknowledge Wanley's genius, for only six months after his arrival at Oxford he was appointed as assistant at the Bodleian Library. Wanley also seems to have been full of plans for ambitious projects during his Oxford years. From 1695 onwards he urged that all fragments of scripture remaining in Old English be collected. In 1698 he proposed to undertake comprehensive work on English diplomatic documents, and submitted a request to the Bodleian Library to remove all manuscript leaves used as pastedowns in printed books in the library. He intended to arrange them so they could be used to illustrate the development of script. In the summer of 1700 he submitted a proposal to visit the libraries of France, Germany, and Italy to examine manuscripts. Most of these plans, however, were never begun, and not one was completed. For this, and other reasons, Wanley left Oxford in December 1700, and moved to London.⁴² There he met Robert Harley in 1701, who employed him at intervals until

³⁹ P. Heyworth, 'Wanley, Humfrey (1672–1726)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28664>> [Accessed July 2013], para. 1 of 13.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., para. 2 of 13.

⁴² Ibid., para. 5, 7 of 13.

1708, when Wanley officially became librarian to the family.⁴³ He spent the rest of his life cataloguing, acquiring and studying manuscripts for their library.⁴⁴

Although Wanley was in many ways a great paleographer and scholar, his main publication remains the *Antiquae Literaturae Septentrionalis Liber Alter*, volume two of Hickes's *Thesaurus*. Wanley, who had been assistant to Hickes for a number of years by then, presented him in 1699 with a catalogue of manuscripts which would later become his *Catalogus*.⁴⁵ Previous to his first meeting with Hickes, Wanley had copied down the manuscript catalogue of the *Institutiones* and noted its omissions. The principal goal of this new catalogue seemed at first to be the improvement of the *Institutiones* one, but in the years up to 1704, manuscripts from various libraries were added. When the work was finally published in 1705, it had gained impressive proportions.⁴⁶ Wanley's *Catalogus* remained the principal research aid in the field until the publication of Ker's *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* in 1957.⁴⁷

1.3 Runic scholarship

The compilation of the *Thesaurus* is in itself a fascinating subject, but for the purpose of this thesis, the attention paid to runes and the runic alphabet in this work is more important. Hickes's letters demonstrate that he paid special attention to the runic material that appears in the *Thesaurus*. In a letter to Charlett, Hickes states that Christian Worm, grandson of the famous Danish antiquary Ole Worm

offered me the best Catalogue he could get for me of the Runick MSS. which will be a great ornament to a new edition of my grammars, as well as improvement

⁴³ Wanley was librarian to Robert Harley (1661–1724), first Earl of Oxford and Mortimer, and subsequently to his son Edward. During his life Robert Harley acquired one of the largest collections of manuscripts of the English Augustan age. This comprised his papers and a large corpus of medieval and later manuscripts. The Harleian collection is now housed in the British Library. (W. A. Speck, 'Harley, Robert: First Earl of Oxford and Mortimer (1661–1724)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12344>> [Accessed July 2013], para. 39 of 42)

⁴⁴ Douglas, p. 103.

⁴⁵ Harris, p. 85.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 85–95.

⁴⁷ Heyworth, para. 6 of 13.

together with the use of an Islandish vocabulary of his own makeing, which I shall value, as a treasure.⁴⁸

The importance of this offer to Hickes should not be underestimated, as he felt that adding runic alphabets to Runólfur Jónsson's *Rudimenta*, his Old Icelandic grammar, which was included in the *Institutiones*, 'would in effect make it also a Runick Grammar'.⁴⁹ He adds enthusiastically that 'you would have in one volume a chorus of Grammars for the five old Septentrional languages'.⁵⁰

Harris notes that Hickes never received the promised catalogue, most likely as a consequence of Worm's sudden and unexpected departure from England in 1697.⁵¹ Hickes, however, did not give up on his idea of a runic grammar. In May of the same year he wrote to Wanley, requesting the following: 'I would also, if I may not appear too troublesome, and encroaching, beg a copy of all your Runic Alphabets at your Leisure in a single peice of paper, because I would bring my self well acquainted with them all.'⁵² Evidence that Wanley obliged him can be found in the six tables incorporated in the *Tabellae* of the *Grammatica islandica*. Hickes also received runic material from Scandinavia, which appeared in the *Thesaurus* in the section *Historia hialmari Regis biarmlandiae atque thulemarkiae*, as part of the *Dissertatio epistolaris* in the first volume. Hickes attributes this section to Johan Peringskiöld, who also provided him with valuable accounts of Scandinavian manuscripts.⁵³

From Hickes's letters it appears that communication on the subject of runes or runic alphabets was restricted to either Wanley or Worm. Unfortunately, only one letter remains of Hickes's communication with the latter. When Worm left England it was thus only with Wanley that Hickes discussed runes and their origin and functions. Their communication, however, does not reveal much regarding the extent of their knowledge on this subject. Wanley clearly had an interest in alphabets, as demonstrated by his plan for

⁴⁸ Letter, 7 July 1696 (Harris, p. 163).

⁴⁹ Letter, 7 July 1696. (Harris, p. 163).

⁵⁰ Letter, 7 July 1696. (Harris, p. 163).

⁵¹ Harris, p. 163, note 2. Hickes, who had spoken to Worm's landlady, explains to Charlett that the reason for his sudden departure was theft and that 'complaints had been made of him from many persons to the Danish Envoy'. Letter, 16 January 1697 (Harris, p. 180).

⁵² Letter, 20 May 1697 (Harris, p. 184).

⁵³ Bennett, p. 31.

an ‘Alphabetarum’, containing specimens of the alphabets of all languages and all ages, taken wherever possible from manuscripts.⁵⁴ Evidence for this plan can be found in London, British Library, MS Harley 6466, fo. 87 (dated 17 January 1697), and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Bib. C. 3 (SC 33184), which constitute two separate parts of a manuscript presented by Wanley to Elstob⁵⁵ comprising a collection of ancient and modern alphabets in Wanley’s hand, as well as copies of the Lord’s Prayer in forty-nine languages.⁵⁶

It is evident that Wanley spent some time thinking about runes and had formed ideas on the subject. He records some of those in a letter to Hickes on 6 March 1698, stating: ‘I here take the boldness to send you a quarter of an hours thought concerning the Derivation of the Runic Letters; which is absolutely different from the account given of them by Mr Junius & Olaus Wormius’.⁵⁷ In this letter he analyses the origin of the various runic letters, mostly drawing on the Roman, Greek and Gothic alphabets, and points out where runes are similar in form but different in sound(-value). The runes he discusses are from the medieval Scandinavian alphabet. It is interesting to note that Wanley lists the runes alphabetically and not in their more common *fupark/fuporc* sequence. He also adopts this method in the runic plates in the *Thesaurus*. There are two possible reasons for this: either Wanley did not realise the common use of the *fupark/fuporc* sequence and thought the scribes had organised them incorrectly, or he thought it would be easier for his readers to understand the function of runes if they were alphabetised.

The origin of runes seems to have fascinated Wanley, as evidenced in some of the discussions he had with various scholars:

I am sensible of the Remains of the Runic Letters amongst the Saxons; and do believe that some knowledge of them might creep in amongst the British; but since it appears that even the Runic Letters are derived from the Roman, That doe’s not

⁵⁴ *Letters of Humfrey Wanley. Paleographer, Anglo-Saxonist, Librarian: 1672-1726: With an Appendix of Documents*, ed. by P. L. Heyworth (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. xvi.

⁵⁵ William Elstob (1674?–1715) was an Anglo-Saxon scholar and Church of England clergyman, who upon entering Oxford quickly became part of the group of scholars that formed the heart of the emerging discipline of Anglo-Saxon studies, led by George Hickes, Edward Thwaites, and Humfrey Wanley. M. Clunies Ross, ‘Elstob, William (1674?–1715)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8762>> [Accessed July 2013]

⁵⁶ Heyworth (1989), p. xvi.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

hinder the Saxon Welsh & Irish Letters coming from the Roman, as well as the French;⁵⁸

Wanley also wanted to include runes and runic writing in his project ‘Paleographical Survey of English Hands from the Earliest Times’:

It is therefore humbly proposed, that for the Use & Benefit of the present & succeeding Generations, a compleat Volume or Volumes should be Collected from all such Books, Charters, Records, Coins, Seals, Inscriptions upon Stones, upon Bells, upon Glass-windows, &c. and from such other pieces of Antiquity as are now remaining in the Kingdom and Elsewhere; beside's later Writings: And therein might be exhibited

1. The State of the Runic and Roman Hands, as they were at the time when our Saxon Ancestors are supposed to have taken their Letters from them.⁵⁹

However, these excerpts from various letters and proposals provide only a limited insight into Wanley's knowledge of runes. Although they are interesting as a testimony of this interest and growth of his ideas, they do not form a sufficient basis from which his understanding of runes can be estimated. A further look at his work, the *Catalogus*, reveals some of his ideas on the historical background of runes. The following fragments are the most revealing about his knowledge:⁶⁰

Has autem runas à se, ut videtur, retinendas duxerunt *Anglo-Saxones*, ob singularum utriusque potestatem, quod ad edendos quosdam sonos valebant, qui per nullam Romanarum literarum exprimi potuerunt.⁶¹

In iis temporibus sensim exolescere coepit *Runarum* omnium, si Ð & ƿ excipias, in scribendo usus, praesertim apud *Australis Angliae Saxones*, qui *Latinorum* Characterum usum maxime affectabant. Hinc est quod praeter *Saxa* nonnulla & fragmenta Metallorum, nihil fere *Runis* insculptum extat, vel Membranis inscriptum, praeter Incantamenta quaedam quae *Runis Magicis* exaranda erant, aut quae arcanis Characteribus secreta mandabantur, aut denique quae ad exercenda Curiosorum hominum ingenia, data opera, esse *Runis* occultata videntur. Id genus *Runicarum* scripturae specimina, quae & ante & post Conquaestum usque ad Henrici VI tempora exarata sunt, etiamnum extant. At Librorum Chartarumve à recepto

⁵⁸ Letter from Wanley to Edward Lhwyd, 24 December 1702. (Heyworth (1989), pp. 197-200).

⁵⁹ Heyworth (1989), p. 471.

⁶⁰ No page numbers supplied.

⁶¹ [Here however the Anglo-Saxons have led to the retaining of runes, as it appears, for the power of which single thing, which is to be able to produce certain sounds, which they cannot express by any of the Roman letters]

Christianismo per *Anglo-Saxones* nunquam quicquam esse *Runice* scriptum, saltem jamjam scriptum superesse, tam certum est, quam quod certissimum.⁶²

His ideas are interesting, especially as they are formed at the start of the study of runology in Britain. His work and letters, however, disclose little regarding his practical knowledge of runes.

Finally, it is important to note that in the correspondence between Hickes and Wanley, there is no explicit mention of the runic poem. We know that Wanley copied the poem for Hickes, because he notes this in his catalogue entry for Cotton Otho B. X: ‘quod non ita pridem descripsi rogatu cl. D. Hiccesii.’⁶³ Assuming that Hickes ‘single peice of paper’ became the *Tabellae*, it seems extremely likely that he provided Hickes with all of the alphabet material. However, apart from Hickes’s request for alphabets, and Wanley’s letter on the origins of the runic letters, their correspondence on runes is limited. It should be noted, though, that only a portion of the communication between Wanley and Hickes has survived. In a letter from 26 May 1697, for instance, Hickes asks Wanley to burn that part of their correspondence, because it contains private matters, as well as scholarly ideas and practicalities. Hickes writes, after giving Wanley a less than favourable description of the character of Thomas Smith, who was librarian to Sir John Cotton: ‘I would have nothing under my hand, which may seem to diminish the character, the reputation of so great, and worthy a man, nor have any thing of mine seen, that might give him the least offense, whome I honour from my heart’.⁶⁴ Clearly, in this instance, Wanley did not obey Hickes, but it is certainly likely that that some of their correspondence was destroyed or lost over time.

⁶² [In these times all Runes began gradually to become obsolete, except for þ and p, in the practice of engraving, particularly amongst the Southern Anglo-Saxons, who were affected by the use of Latin characters the most. Hence it is why other than some Saxon fragments of Metal, nothing entirely carved of runes stands out, or even inscribed in Skin, other than charms, a certain of which are magical runes written down, or which are mysterious characters intrusted with secrets, or which thereafter keep busy the intellect of the attentive man, to give up work, Runes are perceived to be concealed. This kind of specimen of Runic scripture, which & before & after the Conquest continuously until the time of Henry VI were written down, are no longer extant. But of the Charter Books that were taken back by Christians through the Anglo-Saxons at no time any of those was written in Runes, at least what is left of the script now, so much is certain, as long as that is the most certain.]

⁶³ *Catalogus*, p. 192.

⁶⁴ Harris, pp. 186-87.

Although the first edition is the only remaining source for the runic poem and any research on this subject is necessarily based on the efforts of Hickes, Wanley and the many collaborators to the Thesaurus, it is also useful to examine what remains of the original manuscript. An analysis of MS Cotton Otho B. X can provide details on the dating and history of the runic poem, as well as reveal potential owners and annotators.

2. Cotton Otho B. X

In this chapter I provide a description of the manuscript, London, British Library, Cotton MS Otho B. X, containing the runic poem. The manuscript was almost completely destroyed by the Cottonian fire of 1731, and this description necessarily relies on the various catalogue descriptions and secondary literature.

2.1 Dating

As only a few folios survive of the manuscript, it is difficult to make a definitive judgment with regard to its dating. Neil Ker, palaeographer and author of the *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon*, dates it to the early eleventh century with some parts a little earlier on the basis of what survives.⁶⁵ It is important to note, however, that Wanley writes in his catalogue that fo. 165, which contains the runic poem, belongs to another book: ‘Folium quod olim ad alium quendam librum pertenuit’.⁶⁶ It is therefore uncertain whether this folio can be dated to the same period as what remains of the rest of the manuscript.

Despite the absence of the folio containing the runic poem, it is still possible to advance a proximate dating. Bauer devotes a section in her book to the dating of the Anglo-Saxon runic poem based on its stylistic and linguistic features. From the runic evidence, she estimates that the text cannot be earlier than around 800, since ‘dieselben Runen sind auch in der Handschrift St. Gallen 878 bezeugt’.⁶⁷ As she acknowledges, this does not get us further with the dating of the Old English. Her linguistic analysis of the Old English shows that the poem was written in the West Saxon dialect, which suggests a tenth

⁶⁵ Ker bases this observation on the remaining parts of the manuscript which are now British Library, Cotton Otho B. X. For further information, see N. R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), #177 – 179, and ‘IAMS040-001102864’, *Catalogue of Archives and Manuscripts*, Catalogue of the British Library, online edn, <http://searcharchives.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do?vid=IAMS_VU2> [Accessed September 2013]

⁶⁶ Hickes, Wanley, p. 192.

⁶⁷ Bauer, p. 92.

century dating.⁶⁸ However, she finds orthographic evidence indicating a Late West Saxon influence, as well as a few Kentish elements which are indicative of an earlier dating.⁶⁹ The style of the text does not preclude an early date: in fact the strong schematic structure and use of alliterative lines suggests an earlier rather than a later date.⁷⁰ According to her, from the tenth or eleventh centuries onwards it is likely that the poem would show signs of end-rhyme, which, under influence of Latin religious poetry and French romance literature, became popular during that time.⁷¹ Dobbie considers that the poem is best dated to the eighth or early ninth century, based on the regularity of the metre together with the poem's general adherence to the style and diction of older poetry.⁷² Halsall, however, states that *The Battle of Brunanburh*, composed in the middle of the tenth century, also displays a strongly regular metre. She also convincingly argues that, apart from three Kentish forms, none of the deviations from standard West Saxon necessarily suggests an early dating. She therefore concludes that a tenth-century dating agrees better with the linguistic evidence.

It should be noted that many of these suggestions are based on a number of Old English poetic features which are regarded as representative of a certain period. However, due to the brevity of the poem's stanzas, many of these might simply not be present in this text. A dating based on the linguistic evidence, therefore, is probably more accurate. As both Bauer and Halsall present convincing arguments that the verse is written primarily in Late West Saxon, a late tenth century dating seems the most acceptable option.

2.2 Contents

A description of this manuscript can be found in two catalogues, those of Thomas Smith (1696) and Humfrey Wanley (1705), both of which were printed before the Cottonian fire. Later catalogues copy their description, or note that the manuscript is lost or

⁶⁸ Bauer notes that the West Saxon dialect became the standard writing dialect in the tenth century. (Bauer, p. 92)

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 92-3.

⁷⁰ Bauer does not expand on what exactly she means with 'stark schematische Struktur', but in the context of medieval English poetry it has been determined that the earlier poetry is often more strongly schematically structured.

⁷¹ Bauer, pp. 92-3.

⁷² E. Dobbie, *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), p. xlix-l.

‘desiderantur’, as for instance in Planta’s catalogue.⁷³ The description given here is from Smith’s *Catalogue of the manuscripts of the Cottonian Library 1696*, as it is the earliest. There are some discrepancies with Wanley’s catalogue, which are indicated between square brackets.⁷⁴ The impact of these differences will be discussed later in this chapter.

1. Homilia de creatione, casu Daemonum, & adventu Christi. F. I.
2. In Hexaëmon. 8.
3. Despositio S. Basilii. 17.
4. De S. Mauro Abbate. 27.
5. Passio S. Juliani, & ejus sponsae Basilissae. 32 b.
6. Passio S. Sebastiani martyris. 40. [39 b]
7. Passio S. Agnetis, virginis & martyris. 48.
8. Passio SS. Joannis, & Pauli. 53.
9. Passio S. Eugeniae virginis. 55.
10. De S. Euphrosyna. 61 b.
11. De S. Christophoro martyre. 69.
12. De S. Maria AEgyptiaca. 77. [76 b]
13. De SS. Septem Dormientibus. 96.
14. De inventione S. Crucis. 116 b.
15. Passio Alexandri Papae, Eventii, ac Theodoli. 118. [117 b]
16. Sermones tres ad instituendum populum in religione, in quorum altero introducitur diabolus, ostendens cuidam Anachoretae omnes poenas inferni. 120.
17. In natalem S. Joannis Baptistae. 136. [XVIII, fol. 136. *Conclusio homiliae de S. Ætheldrihtæ, errore Bibliopecti huc translocata, ut infra est videre, etc.*]
18. Ritus ornandi Monachum, cum precibus, Latine. 140 b.
19. Historia Holofernis & Judithae, ubi plura de captivitate Judaeorum; & ad finem, historia Malchi Monachi ex Hieronymo. 143.
20. Historia libri cadentis de coelo coram porta Ephraim apud Hierosolymam, in qua varia sunt praecepta de sanctificando sabbato, &c. & in fine ait, *tertium hoc*

⁷³ J. Planta, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Cottonian Library Deposited in the British Museum* (London: The British Museum, 1802), p. 365.

⁷⁴ I follow Derolez’s example here (Derolez, p. 17). The italics indicate annotations on the copy, which appear to have been made shortly after the fire.

scriptum esse, quod Deus de coelo miserit, neque post hoc aliud expectandum.

152. [151 b]

21. Canones antiqui Synodales, Latine. Illic reperitur confessio fidei Catholicae, quam Papa Damasus misit ad Paulinum, Antiochenum Episcopum. 155.

[ἀκέφαλοι]

22. Poenitentiale Saxonicum. 161. [260 b]

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

24. Liber Geneseos, *h. e.* a 37. Capite ad finem; Saxonice. 166.

25. Despositio S. Swithini, & ejus miracula, de quorum silentio Auctor recentior increpat priora tempora. 182. [181 b]

26. Natale S. Edmundi, Regis & martyris. 186.

27. Natale S. Georgii Martyris. 190.

28. De S. Etheldrytha. 193. [*Notandum vero, quod hujusce sermonis pars posterior, foliis transpositis, habetur hujus in Cod. MS. Fol. 136. quam tanquam hi loci desideratam, restituit quidam neotericus, forte Joannes Joscelinus*].

29. Passio S. Margaretae. 195.

2.3 Material

The manuscript was made of parchment, and its dimensions are approximately 310×245 mm.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ 'IAMS040-001102864', *Catalogue of Archives and Manuscripts*, Catalogue of the British Library, online edn, <http://searcharchives.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do?vid=IAMS_VU2> [Accessed September 2013]

2.4 Number of leaves

Derolez provides a full description of this manuscript in his *Runica Manuscripta*. He notes the following regarding the surviving leaves of the manuscript:

In the copy of Smith's catalogue mentioned *supra* the number of the manuscript is marked with red, which usually means total destruction. W. W. Skeat, however, discovered forty-five damaged leaves in the British Museum (London, British Library, Cotton MS Otho B. X) and Napier one more in the Bodleian Library (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson 15606). All these leaves contained fragments of Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*; the folio with the runes seems to have perished.⁷⁶

The online catalogue of the British Library gives a more detailed list of preserved contents and leaves: Ælfric's *Hexameron*, his homilies and saints' lives (fos. 1-28, 31-50, 52-54, 56-57, 59-60, 65, 67); homilies from the Worcester Cathedral (29-30); Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (55, 58, 62); a leaf of a gospel-book (51); Gregory the Great's *Regula pastoralis* (61, 63-64) and the life of St Machutus (66).⁷⁷ If Smith and Wanley are correct, there would originally have been approximately 195 leaves in total.

2.5 Provenance and history

When discussing the provenance and history of the runic poem, a distinction should be made between the folio containing the runic poem and the rest of the manuscript. As the shelf mark indicates, the manuscript was part of the Cottonian collection. Hence, we know that it was in the possession of Sir Robert Cotton (1570/1-1631) before his collection was moved to the British Museum (now British Library) in 1753.⁷⁸ The folio with the runic poem, however, belonged to another book according to Wanley ('Folium quod olim ad alium quondam librum pertinuit').⁷⁹ Ker concludes that this folio, fo. 165, was probably a

⁷⁶ Derolez, p. 18.

⁷⁷ 'IAMS040-001102864', *Catalogue of Archives and Manuscripts*, Catalogue of the British Library, online edn, <http://searcharchives.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do?vid=IAMS_VU2> [Accessed September 2013]

⁷⁸ C. G. C. Tite, *The Manuscript Library of Sir Robert Cotton*, The Panizzi Lectures 1993, (London: The British Library, 1994), p. 39.

⁷⁹ Wanley, p. 192.

single leaf, possibly from the end of the manuscript.⁸⁰ Ker also notes that it has been bound up with #177, which in his catalogue corresponds with the surviving leaves. This of course complicates any research into the history and ownership of the runic poem.

Apart from the fact that it was part of the Cottonian collection, little is known about the provenance of Otho B. X. It is not possible to ascertain when the manuscript was bought or added to the Cotton collections, because Cotton did not keep an exact record of his acquisitions, and was wont to reassemble the various works he had in his possession. He could therefore have received the different parts of what is now Cotton Otho B. X at different points in time.⁸¹

It is similarly difficult to determine who possessed the manuscript (or its different parts) before Cotton. A few suggestions have been made by different scholars.

In his article ‘Anglo-Saxon Texts in Early Modern Transcripts’, Page suggests that the early Tudor antiquary Robert Talbot (1505/6-1558) may have annotated the runic page of Otho B. X, and added material from Cotton Domitian A. IX, which was in his possession at that time. Talbot annotated fo. 2v of the Domitian A. IX manuscript, and was one of the owners of Oxford, St John’s College MS 17, which also contains runic alphabets. His notebooks, now Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 379, show that he had a general interest in runes, or more precisely, as his biographer Carley states: ‘He examined runic alphabets in several manuscripts, and made an attempt, not altogether successful, to understand the differing forms of runes’.⁸²

It is interesting to consider the implications of Page’s suggestion. Assuming that Talbot was in a position to write on the folio, it is likely that he had either a close relationship with its owner or easy access to it. This could mean that he owned it, just as he owned Domitian A. IX, but it could also simply have been part of one of the manuscripts containing Anglo-Saxon which Talbot had a particular interest in, or he might have consulted it specifically for its runes. Carley notes that Talbot was part of a circle of collectors who frequently exchanged materials with others members of that circle, such as John Leland (1503-52), or

⁸⁰ N. R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), #179.

⁸¹ Tite, p. 45.

⁸² J. P. Carley, ‘Talbot, Robert (1505/6–1558)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26941>> [Accessed September 2013], para. 3 of 5.

Robert Recorde (1512-58), any of whom could have provided him with the manuscript.⁸³ Although this is speculative, it does suggest a new possibility for research into the history of the runic poem: perhaps a closer look at Talbot's notes on runes could provide further insight, but that falls outside the purview of the current thesis.

Ker opens up another avenue of enquiry when he writes 'A single leaf bound up with no. 177, perhaps by Joscelyn' in his catalogue description of the runic poem.⁸⁴ John Joscelyn (1529-1602) was an Old English scholar, and Church of England clergyman, who was appointed a chaplaincy as Bishop Matthew Parker's (1504-75) Latin secretary in 1559. He became influential in the house of the bishop, but is more important for his contribution to medieval studies and in particular the revival of Old English.⁸⁵ Joscelyn was part of the group which Matthew Parker organised for the study of the manuscripts in his possession.⁸⁶ Joscelyn is likely to have been involved in the binding and rebinding of manuscripts, especially as his employer was notorious for reorganising folios to suit his religious purpose.⁸⁷ Even more interesting is Ker's suggestion that Joscelyn owned the codex before Robert Cotton. This he infers from a note by Robert Cotton in what is now London, British Library, MS Harley 6018, fo. 162v, recording a loan to Camden of 'A Saxon book of diuers saints liues and the Alphabett of the old Danish letter amonghs Mr Gocelins'.⁸⁸

Joscelyn also made notes in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 9 and London, British Library, Cotton Nero E.i vol. 1, vol. 2, fo. 1-180, 187, 188, on the Latin lives of Basil, Julian and Basilissa, Sebastian, and Agnes, stating respectively 'Habeo saxonice f.26', 'Habeo saxonice', 'Habeo anglie f.49', 'Habeo anglie f.57'.⁸⁹ When compared to

⁸³ Carley, para. 4 of 5.

⁸⁴ Ker, #179.

⁸⁵ G. H. Martin, 'Joscelyn, John (1529-1603)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15130>> [Accessed September 2013], para. 1-2 of 6.

⁸⁶ *The Recovery of Old English: Anglo-Saxon Studies in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. by T. Graham (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000), p. 83.

⁸⁷ 'In his declining years Parker increasingly retreated into antiquarian studies, in part motivated by the need to find evidence for the existence of Protestantism in the remote British past, and so to answer the question tauntingly put to English reformers by Catholic adversaries: 'where was your church before Luther?'' D. J. Crankshaw, A. Gillespie, 'Parker, Matthew (1504-1575)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21327>> [Accessed April 2013], para. 94 of 122.

⁸⁸ Ker, #177.

⁸⁹ Ibid., #177.

the above table of contents of Cotton Otho B. X, all four saints' lives can be found, but the foliation is different. Ker assumes that there must have been nine more leaves at the beginning of the manuscript than when Wanley catalogued it. This seems not to be the case, for the life of Saint Sebastian can be found on fo. 40 in Smith's catalogue and on 39b of Wanley's. Ker considers the fact that Joscelyn annotated both vol. 1 and 2 of Cotton Nero E. I, of which only one went to Parker, as conclusive evidence that Joscelyn worked with more manuscripts than just those owned by Parker.⁹⁰ Given this, Ker's proposal regarding ownership seems plausible, though there are still a number of unresolved details.

⁹⁰ Ibid., #29.

2.6 Cataloguing discrepancies

In the previous discussion the various uncertainties surrounding the history of the manuscript have become apparent. Discrepancies between the two catalogues in which it is described complicate matters even further. As mentioned earlier, the contents of the Cotton Otho B. X manuscript have been recorded in full by both Thomas Smith and Humfrey Wanley. A quick look at list of contents shows that both records differ only slightly, primarily in foliation. The folio containing the runic poem, however, is more problematic. A comparison of the entries concerning fo. 165 in Smith and Wanley's catalogues shows a major discrepancy:

Characteres Alphabeti peregrini, numero tantum decem. Aliqui ex his videntur esse literis Runicis similes. 165 b.⁹¹ (Smith, p. 71)

XXVII. 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. Hickesii, qui in Gram. Anglo-Saxonicae, cap. 22. de Dialecto Normanno-Saxonica. P. 135, illud typis evulgavit.⁹² (Wanley, p. 192)

Smith's description lacks the 'explicatione Poetica, Saxonice', and notes 'ten characters of a foreign alphabet, similar to runes' instead of a 'runic alphabet'. The latter difference is the most intriguing, especially in combination with a note made by Wanley in his own copy of Smith's catalogue: 'Litterae antiquae Runicae numero plane viginti et novem cum observatt. Saxonice'.⁹³ It would appear that Smith and Wanley are talking about a different page. However, no references to other runes occur in either catalogue, eliminating

⁹¹ [Characters of a foreign alphabet, as many as ten. Some of these appear to be similar to runic letters. 165b.]

⁹² [XXVI. fol. 165. A folio that once belonged to a certain other book, now part of this, wherein is contained a Runic Alphabet with a Verse explanation, Anglo-Saxon, which not very long ago I copied at the request of the most renowned Dr Hickes, who published it in print in his Anglo-Saxon Grammar, in chapter 22, about the Norse-Saxon dialect, p. 135.]

⁹³ Halsall, p. 22. [Ancient Runic letters clearly twenty-nine in number with Saxon comments].

the possibility that Smith's runes appear elsewhere and one of the scholars made a foliation mistake.

This discrepancy has been commented on by remarkably few scholars; the most extended comments being made by Derolez in his *Runica manuscripta*. Derolez hypothesises that because there is no record of the runic poem in Smith's catalogue, it is likely that it was inserted in between the respective viewings of both scholars.⁹⁴ Hickes requested Wanley to collect runic material in 1697, one year after Smith's catalogue was published. This implies that the insertion would have happened during a rather brief period of time. As Wanley spent at least a year writing the index to the *Catalogus*, a minimum of two years between both viewings can be estimated.⁹⁵ There are, however, a few issues worth considering before accepting this hypothesis.

First, it should be noted that Smith records the runic letters on fo. 165 v (or b), while in Wanley's catalogue the poem appears on fo. 165. Derolez does not consider this a problem, since Wanley's description of Cotton Otho B. X also contains a few other foliation slips. He suspects that Wanley made a mistake in assigning the poem to that folio.⁹⁶

Second, the runic poem as it appears in Hickes's *Thesaurus* has nine superfluous runes at the bottom of the page. The difference between nine runes and the ten counted by Smith is small enough to allow the possibility that the runes at the bottom of the page are the ones that Smith noticed. This would imply that, if we assume that Hickes's printed version is accurate, someone added the runic poem on fo. 165 (recto or verso), above the runic letters. This appears somewhat unlikely, because it would mean that someone at the end of the seventeenth century copied the poem from another manuscript into Otho B. X. As the runes appear on the bottom of the first edition, this theory would presuppose that there was space on the manuscript page to add as reasonably-sized a text as the runic poem. This would then also indicate a wasteful scribe. The number of variables, however, seems a little too high to immediately accept this possibility.

The third issue is of a mathematical nature: the runic poem plus the extra runes contains forty-nine runes and not the twenty-nine counted by Wanley. However, even if

⁹⁴ Derolez, p. 18.

⁹⁵ Harris, p. 95.

⁹⁶ Derolez, p. 18.

the extra runes were not considered part of the poem, there would still be forty runes. The only way to achieve the number of runes estimated by Wanley is to solely count the runes that have a poetic description, and thus discount the runic variations and the runes without a line of poetry. These, however, remain part of the poem in the printed edition.

This leads then to the fourth issue. What if the aforementioned possibilities are incorrect and Smith's ten runes have no bearing on the poem? Then the question remains what happened to these runes. Wanley did not note them in Otho B. X, and it seems unlikely that he would have missed them, since he was expressly looking for manuscript runes.

One possible option is that in between Smith and Wanley's viewings, the folio with the ten runic letters was replaced by the runic poem, and the letters from the first folio were added to the second. This option would then exclude Talbot as a possible annotator, for obvious reasons. Another option is that the manuscript was rebound after Smith and that in the process the folio with the ten runes was lost and the folio with the runic poem, containing Wanley's twenty-nine runes, was added. The extra runes would therefore have been added in the printing process. A final possibility is that Wanley did not mention these runes because they were clearly added more recently, and he did not consider modern annotations worth noting. This discussion, however, leads to the debate started by Hempl in 1903 on the authenticity of the runic poem and possible additions or omissions made by Hickes. This topic will be discussed in full in the next chapter which presents an overview of the scholarship on the runic poem.

3. Scholarship on the runic poem

Although the runic poem has attracted some attention over the years, little substantial work has been undertaken on it. Maureen Halsall's *The Old English Rune Poem* from 1981 is the only monograph dedicated to the text. The runic poem has been discussed and included in discussions in a range of different contexts: it has been considered in the context of its first edition, against a background of various types of Old English poetry, and as a runological work. The first part of this chapter reviews the existing scholarly literature on the topic, starting with the first edition, and discussing the most important ensuing editions. This is followed by an overview of the scholarly debate on the authenticity of the poem's first edition. The second part considers the wider background and definition of the runic poem, and discusses the various contexts in which it has appeared. The most prominent scholarship in those various contexts is summarised.

3.1 The first edition

A discussion of the scholarly interest in the Old English runic poem should necessarily begin with the first – possibly facsimile – edition of the poem and the first occasion on which the poem was brought to public attention.

Wanley is the first to make note of the runic poem, which he recorded as following in his *Catalogus*:⁹⁷

XXVII. 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. Hiccesii, qui in Gram. Anglo-Saxonicae, cap. 22. de Dialecto Normanno-Saxonica. P. 135, illud typis evulgavit.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ The *Catalogus* is preserved as the second volume of the *Thesaurus*, when referring to both volumes the title *Antiquae literaturae Septentrionalis Libri Duo* is used.

⁹⁸ *Catalogus*, p. 192. [XXVI. fol. 165. A folio that once belonged to a certain other book, now part of this, wherein is contained a Runic Alphabet with a Verse explanation, Anglo-Saxon, which not very long ago I copied at the request of the most renowned Dr Hicces, who published it in print in his Anglo-Saxon Grammar, in chapter 22, about the Norse-Saxon dialect, p. 135.]

Wanley's description, however, is vague and he does not supply any extra information on the 'certain other book' from which the poem originates.

The chapter to which the poem belongs in the *Thesaurus* concerns 'De dialecto Normanno-Saxonica sive Anglo-Normannica; & de dialecto Semi-Saxonica'.⁹⁹ In this chapter Hickes discusses the origin of the different dialects in Britain and the connection between Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon languages/dialects. He states that he includes the poem as evidence that Anglo-Saxon clerics and nobles attempted to impress King Cnut by studying Danish.¹⁰⁰ From the information he provides, it appears that he was convinced that the runes were Danish, but recognised the language of the verses as Old English:

Hoc ut credam faciunt runarum Danicarum, tam simplicium, quam duplicium descriptio quaedam poetica, Anglo-Saxonice explicata; quae in bibliotheca Cott. Extat, Otho B. 10. p. 165. quamque vix antea & ne vix observatam, nedum publici juris factam, plane quasi ab omnibus doctis spectatu dignam, hic cum runis aere incisis, operae & sumptus pretium exhibere judicamus, Latinis additis ex adverso elementis, ad ostendendam runarum potestatem, una cum iis nominibus quibus appellantur ipse runae.¹⁰¹

Although Hickes was certainly mistaken regarding the language of the runes, it is likely that the presence of the Old English was the reason he included the poem in his Anglo-Saxon – instead of his Icelandic – grammar. His idea that the poem would be written to impress King Cnut is interesting, though difficult to prove. The fact that the runes are Anglo-Saxon does not necessarily render Hickes's suggestion invalid, as it is still possible that it was written to demonstrate some degree of cultural affinity. However, the

⁹⁹ [On the Norse-Saxon dialect or Anglo-Norse; & on the Semi-Saxon dialect]

¹⁰⁰ Hickes, Wanley, p. 134.

¹⁰¹ [I am caused to believe this by a certain verse description of the Danish runes, both single and double, expounding them in Anglo-Saxon, which still exists in the Cottonian library on page 165 of Otho B.X and which, although previously barely noted at all, much less brought into the public jurisdiction, we deem it, as deserving of examination by all learned men, to be worth the trouble and expense of setting forth here in full, along with the runes cut in a copper plate, Latin letters having been added beside them to show the force of runes, together with those names by which the same runes are called.] Translation from M. Halsall. *The Old English Rune Poem: a critical edition* (London: 1981), p. 24.

text of the runic poem is currently dated to the late tenth century (with some scholars arguing for an earlier dating), which does not correspond with Cnut's reign (1016-35).

As the above quotation states, Hickes provides the poem in full, allotting it a whole page in his *Thesaurus*. The layout of the poem and its composition has fuelled considerable debate, and it is therefore necessary to include a description of the method used for printing the poem. Hickes had the poem printed in three columns, using two different techniques. The body of the text, being the third and broadest column, which contains the 29 stanzas of Old English expounding the rune-names, was set in the Junian type which the Oxford University Press lent to this enterprise.¹⁰² For the first column of Latin letters, supplemented by the Old English letters 'þ', 'ƿ', 'ð' and 'æ', and the second column containing the rune-forms themselves, Hickes had a copper plate engraved, running vertically down the inner margin of the page. He had another one engraved for what Page describes as the 'other prefatory and extraneous material', which ran across the foot of the page.¹⁰³ This lower plate incorporated the two additional runes, 'st'/'stan' and 'g'/'gar', which have no verse-lines attached to them, the short rune-combination, and a note to the reader. It reads: 'hos characteres [...] ad alia sestinans'¹⁰⁴ studioso lectori interpretanda relinquo'.¹⁰⁵ The nature of the relationship between these runes and the runic poem has not yet been explained in any satisfactory way. Hickes himself does not offer any discussion of them, leaving them instead for 'studioso lectori' to interpret.¹⁰⁶

3.2 Editions of the runic poem

A number of editions of the runic poem have been published, the most influential of which are treated here in chronological order. As noted earlier, the focus of these editions

¹⁰² Franciscus Junius the Younger (1591–1677) was one of the pioneers of Germanic philology. In order to print the early Germanic languages for his own work he made types, punches and matrices, which he bequeathed to Oxford after his death. (S. Van Romburgh, 'Junius [Du Jon], Franciscus (1591–1677)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15167>> [Accessed September 2013], para. 1 of 5)

¹⁰³ R.I. Page, *Runes and Runic Inscriptions* (Woodbridge: Boydell press, 1995), p. 197.

¹⁰⁴ Hickes probably meant 'festinans' [hastening] here.

¹⁰⁵ [These characters [O L D W N X F O G], hastening to other matters, I leave to the studious readers to interpret]

¹⁰⁶ Hickes, Wanley, p. 135.

is seldom the poem itself, but rather its position in a wider context. Special attention is paid to the treatment of the runic material and the formatting and presentation of the poem in general.

The first edition to appear after the *Thesaurus* can be found in Wilhelm Grimm's *Ueber Deutsche Runen* from 1821.¹⁰⁷ It is accompanied by a short commentary and German translation. Grimm drastically changes the layout of the poem from the way in which Hickes (and/or Wanley) presented it. He numbers the verses, and instead of reproducing the runes provides the rune-names. There is only one column instead of three, and no phonological values are supplied. Grimm only printed the 29 verses, and left out the 'superfluous' runes completely. The runes and their respective rune-names are included in a subsequent section after the appendix, but Grimm split them up in two columns. This might have been done for economy, or could indicate that Grimm was more interested in the text of the poem rather than the runes themselves. His work also includes the Norwegian runic poem, which he treats in an identical way.

Two decades later the runic poem caught the attention of the English scholar and historian John M. Kemble. As Bill Griffiths mentions in the introductory note to his edition of Kemble's *Anglo-Saxon Runes*, Kemble 'draws on the work of Wilhelm Grimm', a fact which is reflected in his treatment of the runic poem.¹⁰⁸ Kemble provided the first English translation of the poem in 1840, and because 'William Grimm's version is inaccurate in one or two points', he claims to have produced his own edition based on Hickes.¹⁰⁹ However, Kemble, like Grimm, does not provide the runes alongside the verse-lines, but replaces them with their respective rune-names. He prints the runes separately, in the *futhorc*-sequence of Hickes's edition.¹¹⁰ In doing so, he opted for an interesting method: whereas Grimm still adhered to the column-like structure of the *Thesaurus*, Kemble arranged the runes into horizontal rows, thus organising them in the more common way of presenting the *futhorc*.¹¹¹ He includes the extra runes without verse-lines attached to them, but does not explain why he provides 34 runes for 29 lines of poetry. He dates the poem to

¹⁰⁷ W. C. Grimm, *Ueber die Deutsche Runen: Mit eilf Rupfertafeln* (Göttingen: Dieterichschen Buchhandeln, 1821)

¹⁰⁸ J. M. Kemble, *Anglo-Saxon Runes*, ed. by B. Griffiths (Norfolk: Anglo-Saxon Books, 2002), p. 3.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 27, figure 11.

¹¹¹ H. Arntz, *Handbüch der Runenkunde* (Halle/Saale: Max Niemeyer, 1935), p. 95.

‘the late period’, but does not specify any further, and notes that the poet has mistaken the name of the ‘s’ rune, ‘sigel’ (‘jewel, sun’), for the Old English word ‘segel’ (‘sail’).

In 1861 the poem was edited again by Max Rieger in his *Alt-Und Angelsächsisches Lesebuch*, with title ‘Poetische Erklärung der Runen’.¹¹² Rieger cites Hickes as the source of the poem without giving any other information. He indicates variations in spelling of the Old English and the etymology of certain words in footnotes. Rieger’s layout was often adopted by later editors: he does not separate the verses, but uses the half-line commonly used in Germanic alliterative poetry. He was the first to incorporate the runes in the poem, adding the runic letter is in front of its respective verse. He also supplied the rune-names in a separate column at the end of right-hand side of the page, a practice which has not been repeated in any of the other editions.

The first French edition of the poem appeared in 1879, entitled *La Chanson des Runes*, by Léon Botkine.¹¹³ In this short work, Botkine gives an introduction on runes, their Germanic background, and their origins. His edition presents the runic poem as a more unified text. He leaves out the runes and integrates the rune-names in the text, although still maintaining the division into stanzas. He also provides a French translation. A similar treatment of the material can be found in two German editions from the 1880s. Richard Wülcker’s *Kleinere Angelsächsische Dichtungen*, and Friedrich Kluge’s *Angelsächsisches Lesebuch* both represent the runic poem as a coherent poem, but neither provides a translation or introduction.¹¹⁴

In 1915, Bruce Dickins published his *Runic and Heroic Poems of the Old Teutonic Peoples*, containing one of the better-known editions of the Anglo-Saxon runic poem.¹¹⁵ Dickins includes the work in a broader study of runic poems and prints it next to editions of the Norwegian and Icelandic runic poems, as well as the *Abecedarium Nordmannicum*. He provides an introduction to the runic alphabet and brief descriptions of the background to the poems. The value of Dickins’s edition lies mostly in his extensive footnotes to the poem. The content of these is varied and includes the following: comparison with the

¹¹² M. Rieger. *Alt- Und Angelsächsisches Lesebuch: nebst Altfriesischen Stücken mit einem Wörterbuche* (Giessen, 1861), pp. 136-39.

¹¹³ L. Botkine. *La Chanson des Runes*. Le Havre: Lepelletier, 1879.

¹¹⁴ R. P. Wülcker. *Kleinere Angelsächsische Dichtungen* (Halle, 1882), pp. 37-40 ; F. Kluge. *Angelsächsisches Lesebuch* (Halle, 1888), pp. 135-37.

¹¹⁵ B. Dickins. *Runic and Heroic Poems of the Old Teutonic People* (Cambridge, 1915), pp. 12-23.

alphabets from the Salzburg Codex 140 (which are mainly Gothic, but connected to Alcuin, who is rumoured to have written down or copied Anglo-Saxon *runica manuscripta*);¹¹⁶ information on the Germanic mythological significance of certain rune-names; similarities between the three runic poems; philological notes on his translation. Though this edition is to be commended for its detail and linguistic information, the runes themselves are absent. Dickins used the same layout as Rieger, but again replaced the runes with their names. He produced a parallel edition, providing a transliteration of the runes, rune-names and the Old English verse on the right-hand side page, and a translation on the left-hand side. He numbered the verses to facilitate footnoting. The additional runes which are appended to the bottom of Hickes's facsimile/edition are not mentioned. It should also be noted that he emends the spelling of the Old English, where he considers it to be necessary, indicated through italicisation.

Helmut Arntz was the first to include the three runic poems as part of a general overview of runic practice. The third chapter of his *Handbuch der Runenkunde* (1935), 'Abweichungen der Runen von der klassischen Vorbildern',¹¹⁷ includes a discussion of the classification of alphabets, rune-names, rune-poems, the order of the *futhorc*, and George Hempl's theory on the order of runic letters.¹¹⁸ Arntz does not explain why he considers the runic poems in particular to be deviations from the classical examples of runes. From the brevity of his discussion of manuscript runes can be inferred that he regarded the older epigraphical runic tradition as the standard by which the appearances of runes should be judged. Arntz refers to Dickins for more information on the poems, and also appears to have copied the latter's editorial decisions regarding spelling of the Old English. Although Arntz is writing a runic handbook, he does not include the runes from the poem in his edition, despite runic letters appearing throughout the rest of the book. This suggests that he did not make use of Hickes's edition directly. The verse-lines start with the rune-name and are divided into half-lines. A German translation is provided.

¹¹⁶ Alcuin or Flaccus Albinus (c.740–804), abbot of St Martin's, Tours, and royal adviser, was a major figure in the revival of learning and letters under the Frankish king and emperor, Charlemagne (r. 768–814). (D. A. Bullough, 'Alcuin (c.740–804)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/298>> [Accessed September 2013], para. 1 of 24)

¹¹⁷ Arntz, pp. 95–131. [deviations of runes from the classical examples].

¹¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 128–31.

Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie includes the runic poem in his volume on the Anglo-Saxon minor poems (1942), and although the book is primarily interested in the literary context, produces a detailed and complete edition with a wealth of historical and linguistic information.¹¹⁹ He unquestioningly accepts Hempl's theory about the origin of the runes (discussed below), but nevertheless pays attention to the layout and manner of printing used in the *Thesaurus* edition. He concludes that the poem had a different layout originally, one that corresponds better to that of the Norwegian and Icelandic runic poems. The layout Dobbie himself uses reflects that conclusion, and is very similar to Rieger's style of editing the poem. The introduction of this edition also comprises a comparison with the Scandinavian runic poems and a discussion of the dating. Endnotes provide information on each rune, the etymology of the rune-name, similarities and differences with the Scandinavian poems and occasionally some historical and mythological background information. The poem is sparsely footnoted, and most of the footnotes suggest variant spellings of the Old English.

The runic poem appears again in Tom Shippey's collection of Old English poems 'which aim primarily neither at narrative nor at self-expression, but deal instead with the central concerns of human life', from 1976, which he calls poems of wisdom and learning.¹²⁰ In this work he disagrees with the common suggestion that the verse had a mnemonic function, and states that it should rather be regarded as gnomic. He states that '[m]ost of the rune-names can in fact be polarised with respect to comfort and discomfort.'¹²¹ Shippey states that he is working in concert with 'Hickes's plan', though he does so inconsistently and provides rather haphazard notes on the parallel translation.¹²² This edition not only lacks a critical apparatus, but also a certain scholarly rigour. The editor dismisses Hickes's edition because of its 'many divagations' and inclusion of 'several marginal scribbles', but does not provide any further explanation on this statement.¹²³

Maureen Halsall's edition of 1981 is the first to make a detailed study of the Anglo-Saxon poem as a whole. The majority of her monograph supplies background to the poem.

¹¹⁹ E. Dobbie. *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems* (New York, 1942), pp. xlvii-1 and pp. 28-30.

¹²⁰ T. A Shippey. *Poems of Wisdom and Learning in Old English* (Cambridge, 1976), p. 1.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

She gives a general introduction on runes and their use, followed by sections on the textual background of the poem, its sources and genre, style and theme, and the literary achievement of the rune poem. Halsall starts her section containing the edition of the poem with a copy of the page from Hicke's *Thesaurus*, and provides a clear statement of the editorial practice used in her own, subsequent edition. The runes are printed in one column, the stanzas are split up and numbered, the rune-name supplied before the verse line (split into half-lines) and there is a parallel translation on the right-hand page. Halsall's edition is to be commended for its detail and completeness. The notes accompanying the runic poem are impressive in their fullness, and in her background study Halsall covers substantial ground. The work does not, however, live up to the critical perspective that is promised by the title. The questions raised by the author are not always satisfactorily answered.

The most recent edition of the runic poem appears in Alessia Bauer's *Runengedichte: Texte, Untersuchungen und Kommentare zur gesamten Überlieferung* from 2003. Notwithstanding the many references and comparative discussions regarding the Norwegian and Old Icelandic runic poems in the aforementioned editions, this work is the first to fully analyse the runic poems as a group, and publish them next to one another. Bauer provides an extensive edition, with a full critical apparatus, and supplies considerable historical background including a discussion of all the major debates surrounding the runic poem. She defines her edition as 'eine diplomatische Wiedergabe des Textes'¹²⁴, stating that it is based on Hicke's print and contrasting it with Halsall's normalised edition. This edition provides the phonological values, the runes and the rune-name in front of the first verse-line, and uses the Germanic half-line. Bauer explains that she separates the stanzas to accentuate the metrical structure. This and her overall spatial structuring of the poem on the page are strongly reminiscent of Halsall's formatting. She provides a German translation, where each stanza is introduced by the relevant phonological value, and a detailed discussion of every stanza follows in her section on form and linguistics. This edition is commendable, because of its detail, linguistic focus, consistency and soundness of reasoning, and Bauer's sharp and critical eye.

From this overview of editions it becomes apparent only few of those have based their work on Hicke's edition, despite its status as sole source for the poem. More often than not the editorial practices and presentation of the runic poem have been copied from

¹²⁴ Bauer, p. 81.

predecessors, noticeable in editions from for instance Arntz, Kluge, and Wülcker. It is also interesting to note that the notes on the different stanzas and rune-names often contain the same information. Hardly any of this information considers the runic poem as a *runicum manuscriptum*, nor has any particular attention been paid to how the alphabet compares to those found in other English *runica manuscripta*. This is remarkable because the most prominent debate regarding the runic poem is centred on its first edition, and the many similarities to the *futhorc* in London, British Library, Cotton MS Domitian A. IX, fo. 5 v.

3.3 Critical reception

One of the major debates concerning the runic poem was instigated at the beginning of the twentieth century by George Hempl. In 1903 Hempl published an article entitled ‘Hickes’s Additions to the Runic Poem’, which sparked a protracted discussion about the form of the runic poem and the verisimilitude of Hickes’s edition. In this article he argues that Hickes’s transcription contains more information than the manuscript would have done, for ‘[i]t is, *a priori*, very unlikely that all this grammatical lore was in the manuscript of the Runic Poem’. He therefore concludes that Hickes must have added material to the text.

The first point Hempl makes is that Hickes arranged the poem, so that every rune begins a new line and stands next to its relevant verse description. This seems to him too dissimilar from Old English practice to be authentic: ‘Our knowledge of other Old-English manuscripts makes us doubt that this was so in the manuscript of the Runic Poem.’¹²⁵ He continues to say that the Old English rune-names were not part of the poem in Otho B. X, stating that the way they appear in Hickes’s edition makes it seem that putting them in was ‘an afterthought’.¹²⁶ Hempl promised to provide further information on the provenance of the rune-names in a later publication, and notes the possibility that a later scribe added them to the manuscript before Hickes’s time. Unfortunately, the publication of this monograph, *The Old English Futhorcs and Alphabets*, was never realised.

¹²⁵ Hempl, p. 135.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

Hempl's second claim is that the phonological values, the variant runes, and the extra runes appearing below the poem were taken from Cotton Domitian A. IX by Hickes.¹²⁷ By means of a detailed analysis of the runic material of Domitian A. IX, he concludes that the variant runes, despite their position on the left-hand side of the second column, are in all cases taken from that manuscript and not from Cotton Otho B. X. He hypothesises that Hickes copied the verses of the runic poem and their adjacent runes in a column, to which he prefixed certain runes from Domitian A. IX, similar to the way in which he prefixed the column of phonological values. He concludes therefore that '[t]he Runic Poem can be appealed to as evidence on runic matters only in regard to the right-hand forms (and perhaps most of the names) of those runes that have corresponding verses in the poem.'¹²⁸

The first response to Hempl's theory came in 1932. Charles Wrenn in his article 'Late Old English Rune-Names', points out that Hickes is generally clear about additions to the poem, quoting the latter's statement that 'Latinis additis ex adverso elementis, ad ostendendam runarum potestatem, una cum iis nominibus quibus appellantur ipsae runae'.¹²⁹ He infers from Hickes's statement that he added the values and names, and suggests that this is probably also true for the alternative forms of runes. It is not entirely clear if by this he refers to the runes on the right or on the left of the rune-column. Wrenn continues to discuss the rune-name **wen**, which Hempl decided was the one rune-name which Hickes copied from Domitian A. IX. He notes that this rune-name only exists in Domitian A. IX and Otho B. X, and upon examining some of the peculiarities of the former, concludes, in agreement with Hempl, that 'Hickes [...] may well have used this codex as one of the principal sources for his added *elementa* and *nomina*'.¹³⁰

Hempl's theory seems thus relatively unchallenged, until René Derolez discussed Otho B. X in his monograph from 1954, and, as Page called it, 'refined the form and corrected the detail of the attack'.¹³¹ Derolez starts by saying that in his opinion the extra nine runes at the bottom of the page, which were printed on the horizontal plate, are in all likelihood a *probatio pennae* and have no connection to the runic poem. He proposes that these runes

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 136.

¹²⁸ Hempl, p. 141.

¹²⁹ Wrenn, pp. 25-6. [Latin elements are added opposite, to demonstrate the power of the runes, together with their names by which these runes are called].

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 29.

¹³¹ R. I. Page, 'Anglo-Saxon Texts in Early Modern Transcripts', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 6.2 (1973), p. 69.

may be the ones to which Smith refers in his catalogue. He subsequently addresses the issue of the rune-names. Derolez postulates his theory based on a linguistic comparison of the rune-names and forms that appear in the poem. He states that he cannot find any noteworthy linguistic discrepancies between both. His conclusion is therefore that ‘the most plausible explanation seems to be the final hypothesis emitted by Hempl: Hickes found a set of rune-names with the Runic poem, but these names were probably not due to the scribe of the poem itself’.¹³² Derolez, however, questions the extent to which Hickes (or someone else) copied from Domitian A. IX. He agrees with Hempl that it is likely that the phonological values of the runes, the variant forms of **w**, **h**, **n**, **ʒ**, **ŋ**, the variant names for **m** (*deg*), **d** (*mann*), **ea** (*tir*), and the variant values for **m** and **d** were borrowed from this manuscript. However, he wonders with good reason why Hickes copied selectively from Domitian A. IX: ‘One might e.g. ask why Hickes added a pointed variant of the *w*-rune, and not the pointed forms for **r**, **j**, **x**, **b** and **æ** as well, which could also be borrowed from Domitian A. IX.’¹³³ This lack of consistency raises questions, but Derolez concedes that no other theory other than the one advanced by Hempl is satisfactory.

Page picks up the thread of the argument again in 1973, explicitly arguing against Hempl’s theory. He agrees that it is likely that the material from column one, the equivalentents and rune-names, and the variants of column two derive from Domitian A. IX. Page notes that at least three individual hands compiled Domitian A. IX’s fo. 11v, which contains the *fuporc*. He recognises the practices of these same three hands in the first edition of the runic poem, and therefore believes Hempl’s observations to be accurate.¹³⁴ However, he contests the idea that Hickes was responsible for making alterations and additions to the runic poem. Hempl assumed that Hickes changed the layout of the poem because of its tight structure, which he considered inconsistent with the practice of other Old English poetry. Page points out, however, that the runic poem is different than most other Old English poetry in that it is stanzaic. He highlights the similarities with the Exeter Book poem *Deor*, which is also stanzaic: each stanza begins a new line, and the initial is a large letter set out in the margin.¹³⁵

¹³² Derolez, p. 24.

¹³³ Derolez, p. 25.

¹³⁴ Page (1973), p. 70.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

He adds that similarities with the runic material from Domitian A. IX also do not necessarily exclude the possibility that this material was present in Otho B. X. He also names further reasons for questioning Hickes's involvement. First, he states that Hempl has no other evidence for Hickes's involvement other than the fact that he had the opportunity and knowledge to add to the material. Second, it was Wanley who provided the runic material, not Hickes. It seems therefore likely to Page that the additional material was already present in the manuscript when Wanley and Hickes recorded it.¹³⁶ After all, as mentioned above, Hickes regarded the runic material from Otho B. X and Domitian A. IX as evidence that the Anglo-Saxons had learned Danish to impress King Cnut. Page states that 'to suggest that he supplied Anglo-Saxon names or values to Otho B. X is virtually to accuse him of tampering with the sources'.¹³⁷ Additionally, he says, copying material from a *futhorc* which you intend to print (on the next page) seems rather futile. For him, the only remaining possibility is that someone else added the material from Domitian A. IX.

Page suggests that whoever annotated the runic poem was in all likelihood a less methodical copyist or scholar than Wanley, judging by the many inconsistencies in the annotations. Wanley, as a collector of alphabets, would, according to Page, have recognised for instance that there were mistakes in Domitian A. IX, and would not have permitted them to appear in the edition. Although Page admits that additions have been made, he does not consider either Hickes or Wanley responsible for them, and concludes that Hickes produced a facsimile edition. As mentioned previously, he suggests the early Tudor antiquary Robert Talbot as a likely candidate for effecting such additions.

Unfortunately, no final conclusions have been reached in this debate. No attempt of a serious nature has been made to contribute to the debate after Page. Most studies have adopted either Page or Hempl's viewpoint, or have worked within the frameworks which they have presented. Halsall simply states that 'some earlier reader, perhaps as far back as Anglo-Saxon times, had access to an Old English *futhorc* with names that was no longer extant by the time Sir Robert Cotton formed his library, and used this lost *futhorc* to gloss the runes and answer the riddles posed by the twenty-nine stanzas of the poem'.¹³⁸ Bauer

¹³⁶ Ibid., pp. 70-71.

¹³⁷ Page (1973), p. 71.

¹³⁸ Halsall, p. 26.

similarly prefers the theory of a second scribe or scholar, quoting agreement with both Derolez and Page.¹³⁹

In this first half of the chapter I focused on the editions of the poem and the authenticity debate. This, however, constitutes only a small part of the secondary literature on the runic poem. In the second half of the chapter the scholarship on the runic poem in a wider context is reviewed in order to present a complete overview of the scholarly interest in this work.

3.4 Definition

In the course of its scholarly history, the runic poem has been considered an example of many types of literature. These can be subdivided into two main categories: *Runica manuscripta* and Old English poetry. Firstly, comparison has been made between the runic poem and the Norwegian, Icelandic and Swedish runic poems, as well as the *Abecedarium Nordmannicum*, and to a lesser extent other runic literature. A short background of these texts and the most common ideas involving them as a group are provided. Secondly, because the runes and their names are described in Old English verse, the work has often been interpreted as an example of Old English gnomic and mnemonic poetry, maxims and riddles. A summary of the most prominent scholarly works in this area is presented here. Finally, attention will be paid to approaches which have thus far not been explored. However, before doing so, the definition of a runic poem is discussed.

Perhaps surprisingly, critical literature on the runic poem provides very little consideration of what actually constitutes a ‘runic poem’, though various doubts and uncertainties are raised. A skim through the various editions and critical literature shows that thus far only three definitions have been produced:

[The runic poems] are made up of short stanzas, each of which deals with one rune[...] [They] have, besides the general structure, a number of details in common, which can only point to a common source, although the character of that source may be disputed. (Derolez (1954), p. xxvi)

¹³⁹ Bauer, pp. 89-92.

The ostensible purpose of the Old English Rune Poem was to give definitions in verse for twenty-nine of the runic symbols known and used by the Anglo-Saxons. (Halsall (1981), p. 3)

Voraussetzung für die Runengedichte ist die Tatsache, daß die Runen außer einem Lautwert einen sinnvollen Namen aufweisen. Es handelt sich um Merkverse zum Erlernen der Runennamen in der besondern Abfolge der Runenreihe, wobei die Runennamen poetisch umschrieben werden. Ihre Verbreitung erstreckt sich über den gesamten germanischen Sprachraum in einer Zeitspanne von etwa 900 Jahren.¹⁴⁰ (Bauer (2003), p. 11)

Halsall of course, focuses only on the Old English runic poem, but her definition can easily be applied to all runic poems. It is worth noting that, except for perhaps Bauer's definition, all of these are rather vague, and focus more on the structure of the poem than its function. They do, however, all agree on the terminology used to describe this text: runic poem.

It appears that the term 'runic poem' has not gone unchallenged. Two of the runologists who have investigated the poem express their doubts as to its poetic nature. Page, for instance, begins his introduction to the Icelandic runic poem with the following words: 'The text commonly called the Icelandic rune-poem is only a poem by courtesy. It consists of a series of stanzas of common pattern. Each is a single sentence, its subject one of the runes of the sixteen-letter futhark.'¹⁴¹ His remark, however brief, allows for much speculation. What does he mean by 'a poem by courtesy'? From his description, and from the above definitions only the phrases 'stanzas of common pattern', 'definitions in verse', or 'poetisch umschrieben' appear to connect the runic poem to poetry. Likewise, Derolez states in his *Runica Manuscripta* that there are six types of runic texts found in manuscripts: additional letters, abbreviations, reference marks, short notes, *futhorcs* and alphabets, and runic poems.¹⁴² When discussing the last category he writes 'finally, there are the so-called runic poems.'¹⁴³ As Page, he does not expand on why they are only 'so-called' or elaborate on his reservations.

¹⁴⁰ [The requirement for rune poems is the fact that the runes apart from a phonetic value also show a meaningful name. It is mnemonic in that it is aimed at learning the rune-names in the specific sequence of rune-row, whereby the rune-names are described poetically. Its distribution extends over the entire Germanic language area during a time period of approximately 900 years.]

¹⁴¹ R. I. Page, *The Icelandic Rune-Poem* (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1999), p. 1.

¹⁴² Derolez, pp. xxiv-xxvi.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. xxvi.

It is therefore interesting to consider the origins of the term ‘runic poem’. The source for this denomination can be found in the first edition after Hickes, dating from the nineteenth century. As a consequence of the Cottonian fire, it is not possible to know what the text was called in MS Cotton Otho B. X. Admittedly, it is extremely unlikely that a name or title was given to it, as thus far no Old English text has been found to have one. There is also no mention of a title in any of the catalogue descriptions from before the fire. The first edition of the text has no title, but the name of the manuscript is noted above the text; Hickes describes it as following:

Hoc ut credam faciunt runarum Danicarum, tam simplicium, quam duplicium descriptio quaedam poetica, Anglo-Saxonice explicata; quae in bibliotheca Cott. Extat, Otho B. 10. p. 165. quamque vix antea & ne vix observatam, nedum publici juris factam, plane quasi ab omnibus doctis spectatu dignam, hic cum runis aere incisis, operae & sumptus pretium exhibere judicamus, Latinis additis ex adverso elementis, ad ostendendam runarum potestatem, una cum iis nominibus quibus appellantur ipse runae.¹⁴⁴

Hickes’s phrasing is worth noting in this paragraph; he uses ‘descriptio quaedam poetica’ instead of ‘carmen’ or ‘poema’, which would have been more likely terms in Latin for ‘poem’. This, together with the vagueness of the phrasing, suggests that Hickes might not have considered the text to be a poem. Yet the first edition of the text, which appeared in Wilhelm Grimm’s *Ueber die Deutsche Runen* (1821), is entitled ‘Angelsächsisches Gedicht Über die Runen Namen’.¹⁴⁵ Grimm remarks the following about the work:

Hickes hat dieses Gedicht [...] zuerst aus einer Handschrift der cotton. Bibliothek (Otto B. 10) bekannt gemacht, jedoch ohne alle Erläuterungen. Es begleitet das eine Runenalphabet (Taf. III. Nr. 1) gleichsam als Commentar, indem es von dem Namen eines jeden Buchstabs eine poetische Umschreibung gibt; [...] Mir scheint der Geist der alten Dichtungen darin zu leben und ich stehe nicht an, es den ältesten, welche die angelsächsische Litteratur aufbewahrt hat, an die Seite zu

¹⁴⁴ Hickes, Wanley, p. 134. [I am caused to believe this by a certain verse description of the Danish runes, both single and double, expounding them in Anglo-Saxon, which still exists in the Cottonian library on page 165 of Otho B.X and which, although previously barely noted at all, much less brought into the public jurisdiction, we deem it, as deserving of examination by all learned men, to be worth the trouble and expense of setting forth here in full, along with the runes cut in a copper plate, Latin letters having been added beside them to show the force of runes, together with those names by which the same runes are called.] Translation from Halsall, p. 24. Underlining is my own.

¹⁴⁵ Grimm, p. 217. My underlining.

stellen, so daß es nicht blos in Beziehung auf die Runen, sondern auch seines unabhängigen Werths wegen der Betrachtung vollkommen werth ist. Kenner der eddischen Lieder werden eine gewisse Verwandtschaft damit finden: jene eigenthümliche Anschauung einzelner Naturzustände, und den reichen, oft großartigen Ausdruck, der sich in mannigsachen Wendungen und immer vor neuem anhebenden Bildern gefällt.¹⁴⁶

The remainder of his comments, or *Anmerkungen*, on the runic poem comprises a discussion of the rune-names and particularities of every stanza, but gives no further insights as to the text's poetic nature. It seems that Grimm settles on the description of a 'Gedicht', 'poem', for the reasons he gives, albeit not explicitly, in the above quotation. The runic letters are accompanied by a poetic description – in which he copies Hickes's phrasing – and he perceives the 'spirit' of old poetry in the verse-lines. Whether these reasons are convincing is arguable, but Grimm's decision has nonetheless shaped all subsequent research into the runic poem. For, in spite of the lack of an explicit argumentation in favour of this, every subsequent edition of the text has unquestioningly and consistently employed the term 'Anglo-Saxon runic poem' or 'rune-poem'.

Many editions of the runic poem often include descriptions and/or comparisons with the other runic poems, but no concrete statements are made about the (poetic) nature of a runic poem. Also, of the three definitions quoted above, only the last provides a clear general definition of a runic poem. Although Bauer's definition is the most detailed and therefore most satisfactory, she does not contextualise the runic poem. She notes its Germanic background, but does not make any comparisons to other texts or genres. This is unusual, as most editions choose to discuss the runic poem within some contextual framework which informs the subsequent discussion. Examples of this are Shippey's edition, which includes the runic poem in a list of Old English wisdom poetry, aiming for a discussion focused on poetic function; Dobbie's edition, which sees it as an Anglo-Saxon minor poem, highlighting the similarities with Old English poetry; and Dickins's work, which prints it together with the Norse runic poems, investigating them as a separate group. Bauer, who is aware of these editions and different contextualisations, appears thus make a marked choice in not including any of those in her definition.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 234-5. My underlining.

3.5 Genre and categorisation

In the following sections the two main categories of texts with which the runic poem has been compared are explained, and the scholarship representing them is summarised. In a final section I suggest another genre of texts of which the runic poem is an example, and propose future avenues of enquiry within this new framework.

3.5.1 *Runica manuscripta*

As mentioned in the introduction, the runic poem is not the only one of its kind. A comparison between the runic poem and these similar texts is a popular theme in its scholarship. The first similar text appears in Old Norse, commonly called the Norwegian runic poem. This poem was first printed by Ole Worm in the *Danica Literatura Antiquissima*.¹⁴⁷ As in the case of the (Anglo-Saxon) runic poem, Worm's edition was based on a manuscript from the Copenhagen University Library, which was destroyed in a fire in 1728. Fortunately, however, the manuscript had been copied later in the seventeenth century by Arni Magnússon and Jón Eggertson, whose transcriptions are far more detailed than Worm's edition.¹⁴⁸ The poem is assumed to have been written in the thirteenth century by a Norwegian author. It is composed in six-syllable couplets, each containing two semi-detached statements.¹⁴⁹

The second comparable text is the Icelandic runic poem. This text is dated to the fifteenth century, and is somewhat more elaborate than the Norwegian runic poem. Like the Anglo-Saxon work it consists of stanzas, sixteen in this case, which are organised in the fupark sequence. Every stanza contains three kennings, the first and second are connected by alliteration and the third has two syllables which alliterate internally. The text has been collated from four manuscripts in the Arnamagnean Library in Copenhagen: AM 687, 4to; AM. 461, 12mo; AM. 749, 4to and AM 413, folio, pp. 130-35.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ O. Worm, *Danica Literatura Antiquissima* (Amsterdam: 1636), p. 105.

¹⁴⁸ Dickins, pp. 6-7.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 7-8.

The *Abececlarium Nordmannicum* is also often mentioned in connection to the runic poem, although it differs quite distinctly from the above works. The *Abececlarium* is found in the Codex Sangallensis 878, fo. 321 and dates from the ninth century. It is the earliest manuscript example of the Scandinavian younger *fupark*, as well as the earliest instance of Germanic verse on the topic of runes and rune-names.¹⁵¹ It consists, however, of a rather haphazard composition of runes, rune-names, and a mixture of Low and High German.¹⁵² It is for this reason that Derolez notes that his definition of a runic poem (see above) only reflects on the Old English, Norwegian and Icelandic texts. He continues to say that the *Abececlarium Nordmannicum* ‘hardly deserves to be called a poem’.¹⁵³ Halsall and Bauer are of the same opinion, with the latter remarking that ‘[i]m Text fehlen bis auf den Stabreim alle Stilfiguren der germanischen Dichtung.’¹⁵⁴ The *Abececlarium*, it seems, is often included because it is perceived as a predecessor to the other runic poems. Dickins, however, includes the *Abececlarium* without much comment, stating that it is ‘the earliest example of the sixteen letter alphabet of the Viking Age.’¹⁵⁵

Bauer also adds the Swedish runic poem to the group of runic poems, explaining that due to its age (it dates from the late sixteenth century) it has often been disregarded by runologists.¹⁵⁶ The Swedish runic poem appears in a letter from Nicolaus Andreae Granus (1569-1631), a Swedish scholar, to a professor of Latin and Greek from Leiden, Bonaventura Vulcanius (1538-1614). It shows a similar layout to the other Scandinavian poems and provides the runes and rune-names of the younger *fupark*, and their individual descriptions.¹⁵⁷

Any discussion of the runic poem as a work of runic literature has been based almost exclusively on the perceived similarities between the Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Icelandic runic poems. These poems are generally considered to be a genre within the broader field of the Germanic poetry, an idea which is affirmed by the research into a

¹⁵¹ Bauer, p. 58.

¹⁵² Halsall, p. 34.

¹⁵³ Derolez, p. xxvi.

¹⁵⁴ Halsall, pp. 34-5; Bauer, p. 58. [In the text all figures of speech own to Germanic poetry are missing, except for the alliteration].

¹⁵⁵ Dickins, appendix.

¹⁵⁶ Bauer, p. 209.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 209.

Germanic runic poem or ‘*ur-poem*’, as an ancestor to the above.¹⁵⁸ The idea of a common Germanic source for all these texts is unsurprising, as Germanic philologists are known to look for ancestors to texts in various Germanic languages. Margaret Clunies Ross, however, in her article ‘The Anglo-Saxon and Norse ‘Rune Poems’: a comparative study’ demonstrates a less theoretical approach to this theory.

Clunies Ross’s article identifies connections between all three poems on a thematic level, stating that the disparities which other scholars have found between the poems have been exaggerated.¹⁵⁹ The first shared characteristic she discovers is the mnemonic function, which has often been attributed to the Anglo-Saxon runic poem, since

rune names and their defining kennings also acted as important mnemonic devices for *rímur* poets, who concealed references to themselves, and sometimes significant others, in their texts by using the device of *fólgin nöfn* or ‘hidden names’.¹⁶⁰

Second, Clunies Ross notes, all poems touch upon subjects that are important in the natural world, or in human social, intellectual and religious life, which also reinforces the view that the poetic context from which the poems originated was primarily gnomic and encyclopaedic. According to her, the supposed difficulties with the Norse poems become less problematic when considered in the broad context of their respective poetic traditions and rhetorical conventions during the medieval period. Her comparison of the three texts reveals how the verse-forms and diction of each poem shows an ‘indigenous development of a probably prototypical short definitional stanza type’, which fortifies the idea of a Germanic *Grundform*.¹⁶¹ In conclusion, she states that neither the Anglo-Saxon nor the two Scandinavian runic poems can be fully understood in cultural isolation, and that only through analysing the particular manifestation of the wisdom poetry tradition does the distinctiveness of each text become apparent.

¹⁵⁸ See for instance K. Schneider, *Die Germanischen Runennamen* (Meisenham am Glan: Anton Hain, 1956).

¹⁵⁹ M. Clunies Ross, ‘The Anglo-Saxon and Norse *Rune Poems*: a comparative study’, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 19 (1990), p. 24.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

Halsall argues against the theory postulated by Clunies Ross and notes that the similarities between these three poems should not be overstated, and may not be substantial enough to allow for a 'genre' of runic poems:

it is difficult to perceive any closer connection among [the Anglo-Saxon and Norse runic poems] than is readily explicable by ordinary rune lore on the one hand [...] and by the shared word-hoard of alliterative formulas on the other, a word-hoard which was the common property of the Germanic –speaking world and which manifests itself in many other poetic contexts outside the rune poems.¹⁶²

She states correctly that one of the main perceived connections between the various runic poems is simply their property of being runic. However, this does not mean that they are comparable to all other runic sources. It would, for instance, be difficult to argue for a connection between the rune-stone U 661, which contains an Old Norse poem in runes, and the Norwegian runic poem.¹⁶³ They share the runic and poetic element, and are even written in the same language, but cannot be discussed in the same terms. The reason for this is that one should remember that when discussing the runic poems one is looking at a 'second age' of runic writing, namely the one of the *runica manuscripta*.¹⁶⁴ During this

¹⁶² Halsall, p. 38.

¹⁶³ Rune-stone U 661 is part of a group of runes-stones called the Ingvar-stones (called thus because of their connections with Ingvar, a Viking involved in an expedition to Särkland in the eleventh century, known from the Old Icelandic saga *Yngvars saga víðförla*), probably dating from around the eleventh century. Its inscription contains Skaldic poetry. S. Jansson, E. Wessén, *Sveriges Runinskrifter*, vol. 8: *Upplands Runinskrifter*, vol. 3 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1949-1951), pp. 127-30; 'U 661 (U 661) – Råby', in *Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages*, <<http://abdn.ac.uk/skaldic/db.php?table=mss&id=15339>> [Accessed August 2013]; 'U 661', in *Samnordisk Runtextdatabas*, <<http://www.nordiska.uu.se/forskn/samnord.htm>> [Accessed August 2013]; B. Sandén, *Antalet kända Runristningar i Upplands-Bro* (Upplands-Bro Kulturhistoriska Forskningsinstitut, 2008)

¹⁶⁴ The idea of a second age of runes, the age of the *runica manuscripta*, is strongest in an Anglo-Saxon context, where the production of epigraphical inscriptions ended in the late ninth century and the first datable *runica manuscripta* are from the tenth century. This creates a neat division in time and a clear second 'age', although there have been suggestions of parallel production (Parsons, 1994). The situation is a little more complex in Scandinavia, where manuscript runes arose approximately at the same time, but the production of epigraphical inscriptions lasted until the fourteenth century. However, a clear difference in subject matter sets the *runica manuscripta* apart. Aside from this, it is obvious that the *runica manuscripta* represent a different perception and employment of runes, and it is likely that, as Page claims, 'Runica Manuscripta developed their own runic traditions, divorced and in some ways different from the epigraphical ones'. Page (1999), p. 62; D. Parsons, 'Anglo-Saxon Runes in Continental Manuscripts' in *Runische Schriftkultur in kontinental-skandinavischer und-*

runica manuscripta age, much of the rune lore which was present when epigraphical runes were produced lost its strength. The rune lore can therefore no longer be called ‘ordinary’, a point which Halsall concedes in another part of her book.¹⁶⁵ Within this framework of a later, manuscript-based, perhaps even antiquarian tradition, however, Halsall makes a valid point.

Bauer, similarly, does not believe in an *Ur*-poem, stating that the runic poems did not develop in a unified way and that the similarities between the poems are more likely connected to the rune-row and the fact that every rune has received a rune-name, than a tradition of runic poems.¹⁶⁶

Connected to this kind of comparative scholarship are also comparisons of rune-names, as found for instance in Wolfgang Keller’s article ‘Zum Altenglischen Runengedicht’ and John Niles’s chapter on runic hermeneutics.¹⁶⁷

Although the majority of discussion centre on the various runic poems, the text is also compared to other runic material. Robert DiNapoli’s article ‘Odd Characters: Runes in Old English Poetry’ is a good example of this.¹⁶⁸ DiNapoli compares the usage of runes in Old English poetry, and attempts to find common ground between the Anglo-Saxon runic poem, the Exeter riddles and Cynewulf’s runic ‘signatures’. In his introduction he states that ‘[t]o consider how runes may have been used by pre-Christian Anglo-Saxons raises the oft-mooted and vexed questions of rune magic and Anglo-Saxon paganism’.¹⁶⁹ He then continues to apply this contrast between Christian and pagan to the runic poem. DiNapoli examines Christian and pagan interpretations of the various stanzas, and comes to an unexpected conclusion. In spite of various scholars claiming one or the other, he states that

angelsächsischer Wechselbeziehung, ed. by K. Düwel. Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde, 10 (Berlin, 1994), p. 198.

¹⁶⁵ Halsall, p. 20.

¹⁶⁶ Bauer, pp. 234-39.

¹⁶⁷ W. Keller, ‘Zum Altenglischen Runengedicht’, *Anglia*, 60 (1936), 141-49; J. D. Niles, *Old English Enigmatic Poems and the Play of the Texts* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), pp. 251-80.

¹⁶⁸ R. DiNapoli, ‘Odd Characters: Runes in Old English Poetry’, in *Verbal Encounters: Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse studies for Roberta Frank*, ed. by A. Haribus, R. Poole (London: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 145-62

¹⁶⁹ DiNapoli, p. 145

he ‘find[s] nothing in *The Rune Poem* to suggest that the poet’s design comprised any deeply coded subtext, either Christian or pagan.’¹⁷⁰

3.5.2 Old English poetry

The Anglo-Saxon runic poem, in particular, gives the impression of being a miscellaneous compilation from all kinds of sources, both literary and popular. A number of the stanzas are remarkably like riddles, and may originally have been written as such, the proper rune being written at the beginning of each stanza as a clue for the solver;¹⁷¹

In the above description of the runic poem, Dobbie indicates one of the problems that arises when attempting to classify the runic poem. The work is varied in nature, which has resulted in comparisons with many types of literature. This observation, however, reflects only on the nature of the Old English verse in the poem, and excludes the runic material. Within Old English literature, the general poetic nature of runic poem has been examined, and it has been compared to Old English wisdom literature, and Old English riddles, as well as analysed in its mnemonic function. Dobbie is the first to include the runic poem in an overview of Anglo-Saxon poetry, describing the text as an ‘Anglo-Saxon minor poem’. His work also includes the text and runes of the Ruthwell cross and the text of the Brussels Cross, and Franks/Auzon Casket, which are also connected to Anglo-Saxon runes. Interestingly, he only offers a few suggestions for comparison with Old English material.

A similar approach can be found in James Hall’s article ‘Perspective and Wordplay in the Old English *Rune Poem*’, which focuses on the poetic aspect of the runic poem, involving only the rune-names. He theorises that the poet ‘manages to suggest multiple aspects of the created world through wordplay and the use of comparison and contrast’.¹⁷² He analyses the poet’s employment and coining of words (such as ‘oferhyrned’ in the second stanza), the use of antithesis between different aspects of the same concept or object, dual sense of words, and the use of multiple and intertwining references. In this way Hall pieces together the poetic technique of the poet, and concludes that

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 151.

¹⁷¹ Dobbie, pp. xlviii-xlix.

¹⁷² J. R. Hall, ‘Perspective and Wordplay in the Old English “Rune Poem”’, *Neophilologus*, 61, 3 (1977), 453-60 (p. 453)

[a] primary concern of the poet was to induce his audience to perceive the complexity of creation and the multiple aspects of realities within it. Many of the runic stanzas resemble riddles. [...] Perhaps the main purpose of the *Rune Poem* was to assist to memory in retaining the names of the various characters of the runic system. Yet the poet, wishing to teach more than simply an alphabet, made his poem memorable in more ways than one.¹⁷³

The second subgroup contains what could be called literature of wisdom and learning, including works of a gnomic and mnemonic nature, and maxims. The focus of these discussions is thus on the function of the Old English verse. This subcategory completely ignores the runic material and is possibly the furthest removed from it. Arguments in favour of the runic poem as gnomic, and thus focusing on the general truths and meaningful message behind the stanzas of the poem, can be found in Carolyne Larrington's *A Store of Common Sense: Gnomic Theme and Style in Old Icelandic and Old English Wisdom Poetry*, and Tom Shippey's *Poems of Wisdom and Learning*.¹⁷⁴

The similarities between the Old English riddles and the runic poem are easily perceived, and have been remarked upon frequently by scholars. Both contain short statements or descriptions of a subject which is not mentioned, or should be guessed. Some riddles also incorporate runes. Paul Acker in his book *Revising Oral Theory: Formulaic Composition in Old English and Old Icelandic Verse* expands on these basic similarities in a chapter on oral-formulaic systems and strategies in Old English.¹⁷⁵ Acker argues that the Old English stanzas of the runic poem show a strong 'mechanical pattern' which can be recognised in the riddles of the Exeter book.¹⁷⁶ He bases his theory on Adeline Bartlett's remark that '[t]he Rune Poem follows the same [parallel] pattern in describing each rune; the parallels are essential and mechanical'.¹⁷⁷ These parallel structures appear not only in the runic riddles, as would be expected, but also in others. Some examples are riddles 19,

¹⁷³ Ibid., p. 458.

¹⁷⁴ C. Larrington, *A Store of Common Sense: Gnomic Theme and Style in Old Icelandic and Old English Wisdom Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 134-39; Shippey, pp. 80-5.

¹⁷⁵ P. Acker, *Revising Oral Theory: Formulaic Composition in Old English and Old Icelandic Verse* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1998), pp. 35-60.

¹⁷⁶ Acker, pp. 35-36.

¹⁷⁷ A. C. Bartlett, *The Larger Rhetorical Patterns in Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1935), pp. 43-4.

65 & 75 (repeating of ‘ic (ge)seah’) which contain runic letters, and 20, 24 (runic), 25 (parallel ‘Ic eom wunderlicu wip’).¹⁷⁸ The similarities between riddle and runic poem are strongest in the Anglo-Saxon context. That, however, does not preclude a broader application of this comparison. Riddles were not unknown in a Scandinavian context, as evidenced in *Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks*, an Old Norse saga which contains riddles, and a number of wisdom contests, often including the god Óðinn.¹⁷⁹

The theory that the poem is mnemonic in nature, and was intended to educate its readers on runes and rune-names, has been defended by most of its editors, including Bauer and Halsall.¹⁸⁰ Contrary to the more abstract literary ideas, it considers the poem as a whole, and seems therefore also the most likely idea. Of the three types of Old English literature, the maxim is probably compared to the runic poem on the least frequent basis. This is possibly due to the fact that maxims are often considered part of gnomic poetry. Cavill, however, argues against this unity, and finds elements of both gnomes and maxims in the poem.¹⁸¹

3.5.3 *Alphabeta runica*

It is remarkable, that in spite of all the scholarship presented above, only few scholars have paid attention to the runic poem in its most basic context: regardless of its function, the runic poem displays first and foremost a runic alphabet and its corresponding rune-names. The primary goal of the Old English verse is to describe the various letters, presumably in a pleasant way that is easy to remember for the reader. Hesitating to focus on the *fuporc* of the runic poem is understandable, as it would seem that omitting the Old English verse diminishes the achievement of the poem. However, as the verse is dependent on the runes and rune-names, it is also important to examine these in a fitting context.

¹⁷⁸ Acker, p. 35.; Riddle numbering from *The Exeter Book*, ed. by G. P. Krapp, E. Van Kirk Dobbie (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1936), pp. 180-209 & 229-43.

¹⁷⁹ C. Tolkien, G. Turville-Petre, *Hervarar Saga ok Heiðreks* (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1956); For further discussion on this topic, see Larrington.

¹⁸⁰ Halsall, p. 45; Bauer, p. 11.

¹⁸¹ P. Cavill, *Maxims in Old English Poetry* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1999), pp. 9-10 and pp. 151-55.

It has been mentioned that Derolez distinguishes the runic poems as a separate category of *runica manuscripta*.¹⁸² Although Derolez's decision to do so is justifiable, given that the runic poems are much more extensive in nature than the other categories, runic poems can also be seen as part of the category '*futhorcs* and alphabets'. There are two main reasons for this: first, both types of *runica manuscripta* contain a 'list' of runic letters and often also rune-names, or as Derolez puts it himself: '[They] provide us with an amount of essential evidence on the runes: they contain all we know about the names of the runes, and some welcome additional evidence on the order and division into three sections.'¹⁸³ Second, one can argue that these texts all exhibit the same or a similar function. They all belong to the *runica manuscripta*-age and are likely *memoranda* of an alphabet which has fallen in disuse.

I therefore propose to examine the runic poem in its function as a *runicum alphabetum*, or a runic alphabet, and to investigate it as part of a textual group which includes runic poems, *futhorcs*, *futharks*, and runic alphabets. The idea of an 'alphabet-based' comparison is not entirely new, as parallels between the runic poems and alphabet poems have been noticed by scholars.¹⁸⁴ *Runica alphabeta*, however, should be perceived as a subgroup of *runica manuscripta*, and comparisons within this group will be of a runological nature. A runological and textual category of this sort is useful, as it could shed a light on for instance the common usage of certain runes, the possibility of standardisation, and possible manuscript relations between the various *runica manuscripta*. All of these are elements of manuscript runology which have thus far received no or very little attention.

As demonstrated in the above discussion, the runic poem has been examined in many contexts and with varying levels of success. Although much of this research is useful, the sheer number of different texts with which the runic poem is compared also creates confusion, and does not always increase our knowledge of the poem. It would therefore be useful to return to the beginning, and investigate the runic poem based on its function, rather than on poetics.

¹⁸² Derolez, pp. xxiv-xxvi.

¹⁸³ Ibid., pp. xxvi-xxvii.

¹⁸⁴ Halsall, pp. 42-5.

For the analysis which follows in the next chapter, this approach is adopted and the runic material of the poem is investigated as a *runicum alphabetum*. It will be examined in comparison to the Anglo-Saxon runic alphabets and *futhorcs* present in the *Thesaurus*. The aim is to measure the implications of this new approach on the authenticity debate and conclude on its usefulness for manuscript runology.

4. The runic poem as a *runicum alphabetum*

It has been remarked that there are a number of reasons to examine runic poems as part of a group of runic alphabets. In case of the Anglo-Saxon runic poem specifically, there is another reason to do so: Wanley, who collected the material for the first edition, regarded the texts as a runic alphabet as well as a runic poem, indicated by the fact that he added the runic letters from Otho B. X in an alphabetised sequence to the *Tabellae*, the collection of runic material in the *Grammaticae Islandicae*.

By investigating the runes of the runic poem in relation to the other Anglo-Saxon runic material collected in the *Thesaurus*, new insights may be gained with regard to the treatment of the runic poem by its first editors. It could also allow for new conclusions on the representativeness of these alphabets/*futhorcs* in a wider context. These conclusions, however, can only be preliminary, because this research will be conducted within the boundaries of the *Thesaurus*. The delimitation is useful for the purposes of this thesis, but due to the restricted number of alphabets/*futhorcs* these results can only be regarded as indicative.

The aim of this chapter is to compare the runes and rune-names in the runic poem to similar material elsewhere in the *Thesaurus*. This material can be found on p. 136 of the *Grammatica Anglo-Saxonica et Moeso-Gothica* and in the *Tabellae*. The comparison will use the runic poem as a starting point, and investigate the differences and correspondences with the other material. Firstly, I compare the material in detail, and demonstrate how the comparison can be applied to Hempl's theories on the runic poem. Secondly, I explain the similarities between the material on the basis of Parson's theory of runic standardisation. This section is followed by two short discussions on the transliteration of the runes and the variations in rune-forms, with special attention to their impact on the results of the comparison. The fourth section notes the differences between the *futhorcs* and their alphabetised versions, and how this could potentially influence our perception of Wanley's runic scholarship. This is followed by a discussion of Wanley's skills as a runologist and the possibility and consequences of mistakes in the transcription and editing of the runic poem as printed in the *Thesaurus*. Finally, I consider the origins of the rune-names and their significance.

There are a number of reasons for restricting the runological comparisons in this thesis to the Anglo-Saxon runic alphabets/*futhorcs* included in the *Thesaurus*: firstly, it

offers the possibility to investigate the accuracy of Hempl's statement that '[i]t is a priori [...] very unlikely that all this grammatical lore was in the manuscript of the Runic Poem' and his suggestion that Domitian A. IX was the most likely source of this 'grammatical lore'.¹⁸⁵ Hempl, however, paid no attention to the collection of runic alphabets included in the *Tabellae*, or considered that some of the runic material in the runic poem was part of a more general *runica manuscripta* tradition. For that reason, it seems useful to expand the comparison, and determine whether Hempl was right in omitting this information.

Secondly, limiting the comparison to the *Thesaurus* may help to determine if additions have been made by Hickes (or Wanley), as Hempl claims. Assuming that Wanley included, as Hickes had requested, all runic alphabets/*futhorcs* he could find in the *Tabellae*, it is likely that he would have borrowed from these alphabets/*futhorcs* for the additions. Taking into account factors such as possible standardisation, and copying mistakes, it is likely that if not all of the runic material from the runic poem appears elsewhere in the *Thesaurus*, the runic poem is at least partly a reproduction.

Finally, although the number of alphabets/*futhorcs* contained in the *Thesaurus* is limited – which also allows for a more detailed comparison – *Thesaurus* comprises the only four English *runica manuscripta* containing complete *futhorcs*: Cotton Domitian A. IX, fo. 11 v, Cotton Otho B. X, fo. 165 (v), Cotton Galba A. II, and Oxford, St John's College MS 17, fo. 5 v.¹⁸⁶ The comparison therefore includes the most optimal sources for any examination of the correspondences between Anglo-Saxon manuscript *futhorcs* in the British Isles.

4.1 The comparison

The comparison starts with the basic premise, put forward by Hempl, that some of the runic material from the runic poem as published was incorporated from another manuscript source. If Hempl is correct in selecting Domitian A. IX as the source, then a comparison between the runes should result in a high number of similarities. If it does not,

¹⁸⁵ Hempl, p. 135.

¹⁸⁶ Derolez, p. 2. The runic material of Cotton Galba A. II only survives in the *Thesaurus*. Hickes does not add any references to foliation.

the results might indicate a better source, or suggest that the current basic premise is incorrect. It is important to point out that the main comparison will not involve the rune-names, in spite of Hempl using some of them as evidence for his hypothesis. The reason for this is simply that Hickes stated in the *Thesaurus* that the rune-names were added.¹⁸⁷ For the same reason, there will be no extensive study of the values in the runic poem. Instead, a brief discussion of the possible sources for these rune-names and their influence on the comparison can be found at the end of this chapter.

The *Tabellae* contain Scandinavian, Anglo-Saxon and mixed Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon alphabets (which also often include invented runes). For the current purpose, the Scandinavian and mixed alphabets have been excluded. The Scandinavian alphabets are not useful for comparison as the runic poem contains Anglo-Saxon runes. The value of the mixed alphabets, the reason for their composition and the knowledge of the scribes who composed them are difficult to estimate. These alphabets have not yet been researched to any extent that warrants their inclusion. A possible argument for the inclusion of all the alphabets could be that Hickes did not see any difference between the various runic alphabets, as evidenced by his statement that the runes of the runic poem were ‘runarum Danicarum’, Danish runes.¹⁸⁸ However, as there are no obvious mistakes made in Hickes’s work indicating such confusion, it is likely that he (and/or Wanley) recognised them as different alphabets, albeit not for what they are. Harris considers that ‘Hickes came to realize that these alphabets had been used to represent both Old English and Old Norse, rather than merely an identifiable monolithic early or pre-Old Norse language.’¹⁸⁹ According to him, however, it would be wrong to expect that ‘the potential phonological implications of this discovery could [...] strike home at the time’, in that way explaining Hickes’s lack of clarity on this subject.¹⁹⁰

It should also be noted no separate column or space has been allotted to the runes which Page calls ‘superfluous’, the extra nine runes at the bottom of the poem. The reason for this is that these rune-forms correspond with those used in the ‘main’ *futhorc* of the

¹⁸⁷ Hickes, Wanley, p. 134. [The Latin (letters) are added out of opposite elements, to show the ability of the runes, together with their names whereby these runes are called]. My underlining.

¹⁸⁸ Hickes, p. 134.

¹⁸⁹ Harris, p. 63.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

runic poem. It is also unclear if these runes have any relevance to the runic poem, though as yet there is inadequate evidence to assume that they were added by someone else.

The following table shows the overlap between the runes of the runic poem, the Domitian A. IX *futhorc*, and the Anglo-Saxon alphabets found in the *Tabellae*: Cotton Domitian A. IX; Oxford, St John's College MS 17 (*olim* C. 27); Cotton Otho B. X; Cotton Galba A. II. The runes of the alphabets and *futhorcs* are compared with the runes appearing in the runic poem not only to see if the same runes appear in both, but also with consideration of the way in which they were drawn/printed and their transliterations. These elements are presented in a table to allow for an easy overview of correspondences and differences, and a short note is attached, explaining discrepancies in a rune-form and transliteration. The table allows for various conclusions, a number of which will be investigated fully in this chapter, while others will be dealt with only briefly.

In the table the various runes of the runic poem are numbered, while the alphabets and *futhorcs* are given letters. An extra column is added with the transliteration of the runes. The transliterations in brackets indicate modern-day transliterations that differ from that which Hickes or Wanley provide. Column A contains the alphabet of Cotton Otho B. X (2, *Tabella* II), B contains the *futhorc* of Domitian A. IX (*Grammatica Anglo-Saxonica*, p. 136), C the alphabet from Cotton Domitian A. IX (3, *Tabella* II), D an alphabet from St John's College MS 17 (8, *Tabella* II), E an alphabet from St John's College MS 17 (9, *Tabella* II), F an alphabet from St John's College MS 17 (10, *Tabella* II), G a *futhorc* from Cotton Galba A. II (2, *Tabella* VI), H a *futhorc* from Cotton Galba A. II (4, *Tabella* VI), and I an alphabet from Cotton Galba A. II (5, *Tabella* VI). The order in which Hickes placed the alphabets has been adopted in the table, except for the *futhorcs* and their alphabetised versions, which have been positioned next to each other for ease of comparison. All the alphabets in *Tabella* II have been numbered by Hickes, and these are the numbers which are referred to here. The *futhorcs*/alphabets taken from *Tabella* IV are not numbered by Hickes, but have been given a number based on their position as the second, fourth and fifth *futhorcs*/alphabets in the Cotton Galba A. II section. A copy of this material can be found in the appendix (figures 2-4) to this thesis.

The letter 'C' is used to indicate correspondence, by which is meant that the runes correspond both in form and in transliteration. The letter 'T' indicates correspondence in form, but not in transliteration. The letter 'F' means that the rune corresponds, but the

rune-form differs slightly. A minus symbol has been used to indicate that the specific rune-form is not present in an alphabet.














Finally, a few short notes on the transliteration criteria used in this thesis are necessary. It is indicated in the table where the transliteration mistakes have been made and specified in the comments what the correct transliteration should have been. As this table is used to compare the other alphabets/*futhorcs* with the runic poem, the values of the runic poem are used. This is because of the focus of this thesis, as well as the fact that the runic poem displays in general correct transliteration. Where the transliterations provided in the runic poem differ from modern convention, the modern form has been added between brackets.

Legend:

1. C = corresponds completely
2. T = Transliteration does not correspond
3. F = rune corresponds, but form is not exactly the same
4. - = rune-form not present
5. * = different rune used

- A. Alphabet Cotton Otho B. X (2, *Tabella* II)
- B. *Futhorc* of Domitian A. IX (*Grammatica Anglo-Saxonica*, p. 136)
- C. Alphabet from Cotton Domitian A. IX (3, *Tabella* II)
- D. Alphabet from St John's College MS 17 (8, *Tabella* II)
- E. Alphabet from St John's College MS 17 (9, *Tabella* II)
- F. Alphabet from St John's College MS 17 (10, *Tabella* II)
- G. *Futhorc* from Cotton Galba A. II (2, *Tabella* VI)
- H. *Futhorc* from Cotton Galba A. II (4, *Tabella* VI)
- I. Alphabet from Cotton Galba A. II (5, *Tabella* VI)

Table 4-1

27		Ing 1 (ng)	C	C	C	-	T	-	-	C	T
28		Ing 2 (ng)	C	-	-	C	-	C	C	-	-
29		oe	C	C	F	F	-	F	C	-	F
30		d	T	C	T	C	T	C	C	T	C
31		a	C	F	-	C	C	C	C	F	C
32		ae	C	C	C	F	F, T	C	C	F	C
33		y	T	C	C	F	-	-	F	F	F
34		io	C	C	C	T	T	-	C	T	T
35		Ear (ea)	C	C	C	T	F, T	C	C	T	-
36		Q	C	C	C	-	-	F	-	-	-
37		?	T	T	T	T	F, T	F, T	C	F	T
38		(E)St z (stan)	-	C	C	-	T	-	F	F	-
39		G (gar)	-	C	C	C	-	F	C	-	F

10 A	The second cross-stroke of the alphabet-rune finishes at the foot of the second vertical stroke, while the <i>fuporc</i> -rune shows a second cross-stroke which ends half-way the second vertical stroke.
20 A	The rune-form has been transliterated as ‘y’ instead of ‘x’.
25 A	The rune-form has been transliterated as ‘d’ instead of ‘m’.
30 A	The rune-form has been transliterated as ‘m’ instead of ‘d’.
33 A	The rune-form has been transliterated as ‘z’ instead of ‘y’.
37 A	The rune-form has been transliterated as a small letter ‘z’ in the alphabet. Hickes did not transliterate this letter in the runic poem.
3 B	The rune-form in 3 B is less angular.

7 B	The legs of the rune are even in length in 7 B, whereas in the runic poem the second leg is clearly longer and ends lower.
14 B	The cross-stroke is higher up, more central to the stem.
16 B	16 B is more angular.
19 B	Derolez notes that this rune misses the ‘upper lateral stroke’ in the runic poem, and therefore looks more like an ‘h’. ¹⁹¹ 19 B is the correct rune. This is also the case in 19 C, D, E, F, and H.
20 B	20 B is more angular.
23 B	23 B is more angular. The distance between the two half-circles of the ‘b’ is greater.
31B	The two cross-strokes are closer together.
37 B	This rune has been transliterated as ‘k’ here.
7 C	Both legs are even. The second stroke does not extend below the first.
14 C	Cross-stroke is more central.
16 C	16 C is more angular.
20 C	20 C is more angular.
23 C	23 C is more angular.
25 C	The rune-form has been transliterated as ‘d’ instead of ‘m’.
29 C	29 C is more angular.
30 C	The rune-form has been transliterated as ‘m’ instead of ‘d’.
37 C	The rune-form has been transliterated as ‘k’.
10 D	The second cross-stroke finishes on the foot of the second stem.
14 D	The bottom part of the stem, underneath the cross-stroke, is slanted towards the right.
16 D	The rune-form has been transliterated as ‘g’ instead of ‘y’/’gae’.
20 D	20 d is more angular. No transliteration is provided for this rune.
23 D	23 d is more angular.
29 D	29 d is more angular.
32 D	The rune is written diagonally instead of straight.
33 D	The y-rune has a similar shape, but is disjointed.

¹⁹¹ Derolez, p. 22.

34 D	The rune-form has been transliterated as ‘g’ instead of ‘io’.
35 D	The rune-form has been transliterated as ‘x’ instead of ‘ear.’
37 D	The rune-form has been transliterated as ‘k’.
2 E	The rune-form has been transliterated as ‘c’ instead of ‘u’.
16 E	16 e is more angular. The rune-form has been transliterated as ‘gg’ instead of ‘gae’/’y’.
17 E	The rune-form has been transliterated as ‘x’ instead of ‘eo’.
20 E	The rune-form has been transliterated as ‘iv’ instead of ‘x’.
23 E	23 E is more angular.
25 E	The scribe has left out the bottom halves of both stems.
27 E	The rune-form has been transliterated as ‘inc’ instead of ‘ing’.
30 E	The rune-form has been transliterated as ‘dd’ instead of ‘d’. ¹⁹²
32 E	The rune is written diagonally. The rune-form has been transliterated as ‘et’ instead of ‘ae’.
34 E	The rune-form has been transliterated as ‘oe’ instead of ‘io’.
35 E	35 E is more rounded. The rune-form has been transliterated as ‘ea’ instead of ‘ear’. Even though this differs from Hickes, the rune is also commonly transliterated as ‘ea’ and this should therefore not be regarded as a mistake.
37 E	An extra stroke to the left is added to the top of the stem. The form is more angular. The rune-form has been transliterated as ‘k’.
38 E	The rune-form has been transliterated as ‘sunt’ instead of ‘stan’/’st’/’z’.
4 F	The second cross-stroke ends on the same level as the stem, whereas the cross-stroke from the runic poem rune ends a little below halfway the stem
16 F	The rune-form has been transliterated as ‘g’ instead of ‘gae’/’y’.
20 F	20 F is more angular.
24 F	The rune-form has been transliterated as ‘m’ instead of ‘e’.
29 F	29 F is more angular.

¹⁹² Occasionally, the transliterated letter has been doubled (also in 30H and 25H). It is uncertain if these double letters denote genuine mistakes or misunderstanding. As the value is essentially correct, I consider these runes acceptably transliterated, and will not discount them in any of the following analyses.

36 F	The scribe added two extra strokes on both sides and halfway the stem, pointing downwards diagonally.
37 F	The scribe added an extra horizontal stroke on the bottom of the stem. The rune-form has been transliterated as 'k'.
39 F	The body of the rune is round instead of square.
7 G	The first leg is longer than the second.
17 G	This rune-form is longer and a short stroke has been added on the bottom half, pointing in the same direction as the bottom stroke.
23 G	23 G is more angular.
25 G	The stem does not reach lower than the end of the cross-strokes.
33 G	The rune-form has a little dot in the middle.
38 G	The cross-strokes are longer and join in the middle of the opposite leg.
2 H	The rune-form lacks the connecting top stroke, and is more similar to an upside down 'v'.
14 H	The cross-stroke is in the middle of the stem.
16 H	16 H is more angular. The rune-form has been transliterated as 'gg' instead of 'gae'/'y'.
17 H	The rune-form has been transliterated as 'x' instead of 'eo'.
20 H	The rune-form has been transliterated as 'iu' instead of 'x'.
23 H	The rune-form is more angular.
25 H	The rune-form has been transliterated as 'mm' instead of 'm'. The first 'm' is written quite close to the previous letter, 'e', only separated by a full stop. As the letters are so far apart, it is possible that this has been a scribal mistake, and that only one 'm' was meant.
30 H	The rune-form has been transliterated as 'dd' instead of 'd'.
31 H	The bottom cross-stroke is hooked and does not point down diagonally.
32 H	The cross-strokes are straight and not slanted downwards to the right.
33 H	The rune-form lacks the top diagonal stroke.
34 H	The rune-form has been transliterated as 'eo' instead of 'io'.
35 H	The rune-form has been transliterated as 'ca' instead of 'ear'.
37 H	An additional horizontal stroke pointing leftwards has been added at the top of the stem.
38 H	The cross-strokes are longer and join in the middle of the opposite leg.

5 I	The rune-form is more angular.
14 I	The cross-stroke is in the middle of the stem.
16 I	The rune-form is more angular, and has been transliterated as ‘g’ instead of ‘gae’/’y’
17 I	This rune appears again in a slightly altered form, identical to 17 G. However, here the rune has been transliterated as ‘e’ instead of ‘eo’.
23 I	The rune-form is more angular.
27 I	The rune-form has been transliterated as ‘i’ instead of ‘ing’.
29 I	The rune-form is more angular.
33 I	An extra dot has been added in the middle of the rune.
34 I	The rune-form has been transliterated as ‘i’ instead of ‘io’.
37 I	The rune-form has been transliterated as ‘k’.
39 I	The serifs at the end of the stems point inwards instead of outwards.

Table 4-2

A few general observations ought to be made before drawing any conclusions from this comparison. Firstly, although most differences and mistakes have been commented on, not all of these are relevant or important for this thesis. Some have been included merely for the sake of completeness, and will therefore not be discussed at any length. Secondly, it is important to note that runes compared here are printed and that therefore observations are probably less detailed than in the case of a manuscript comparison. Barnes states in his article ‘Standardised *fuparks*: A useful tool or a delusion?’ that

[p]rinted runes, presumably because of the nature of printing, seem always to be characterised by regularity of form; and being, as it were, common denominators, they are based not on particular graphs in particular inscriptions but chiefly on the conceptions of the features that distinguish the characters to be included. Sometimes, of course, a standardised printed rune will coincide almost exactly with one in an inscription, but that is chance, not intention.¹⁹³

Barnes’ discussion is aimed at the standardisation of (Scandinavian) epigraphical runes, but his remark can also be applied to (Anglo-Saxon) manuscript runes. It is difficult

¹⁹³ M. P. Barnes, ‘Standardised *Fuparks*: A Useful Tool or a Delusion?’ in *Runes and their Secrets: Studies in Runology*, ed. by M. Stoklund, M. L. Nielsen, B. Holmberg, G. Fellows-Jensen (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2006), p. 17.

to mimic the exact form of hand-written letters, though as Hickes's runes were hand-cut one can hope for a higher degree of accuracy. The proverbial silver lining is, however, that if any form-variations are visible in print, they will likely have been obvious features in the manuscript. This implies that Wanley (and/or Hickes) has noticed them, which makes them relevant for this comparison. On the whole, five main points of interest result from this comparison: these will be discussed in separate sections.

4.1.1 Correspondences

The first and perhaps also the most important point of interest concerns the correspondences between the various runic alphabets, as this influences all further examination. In the following table the number of runes that correspond to those of the runic poem are given. It is important to remember that in this table the focus is entirely on the runes. The numbers presented in this table are sums of the runes that correspond completely with those of the runic poem ('C'), those that correspond in form but not in transliteration ('T'), and rune-forms with minimal variation (a selection of 'F'). The total amount are the number of runes in the alphabet/*futhorc*, including the identical runes which have been printed or written twice but are transliterated differently.

Manuscript name	Runes that correspond with the runic poem (total 39 runes)	Total amount of runes present in the alphabet/<i>futhorc</i>
Alphabet Cotton Otho B. X (2, <i>Tabella</i> II)	36	36
<i>Futhorc</i> Domitian A. IX (<i>Grammatica Anglo-Saxonica</i> , p. 136)	32	35
Alphabet Cotton Domitian A. IX (3, <i>Tabella</i> II)	31	34
Alphabet from St John's College MS 17 (8, <i>Tabella</i> II)	27	37
Alphabet from St John's College MS 17 (9, <i>Tabella</i> II)	23	34
Alphabet from St John's College MS 17 (10, <i>Tabella</i> II)	26	42
<i>Futhorc</i> Galba A. II (2, <i>Tabella</i> VI)	32	36
<i>Futhorc</i> Cotton Galba A. II (4, <i>Tabella</i> VI)	29	40
Alphabet Cotton Galba A. II (5, <i>Tabella</i> VI)	27	40

Table 4-3

A top three of corresponding alphabets/ *futhorcs* can easily be compiled from these numbers: in first place, unsurprisingly, is the alphabet of Otho B.X, though oddly enough it does not correspond entirely. The *futhorc* from Domitian A. IX follows in second place, in accordance with Hempl's hypothesis. The same number of parallels, however, can also be found in the second alphabet from Galba A. II. In third place, closely following the Domitian A. IX *futhorc* and alphabet two of Galba A.II, is the alphabet of Domitian A. IX, which again does not correspond exactly with its *futhorc*. Although these are undoubtedly closest to the runic poem, it should be remarked that the other alphabets also show a large

number of similarities. The lowest number of correspondences is with St John's College, nr. 9, which still possesses a little less than half of the runes which also appear in the runic poem. These numbers, however, only serve to give a general idea of correspondence; they cannot provide a proper argument or counter-argument for Hempl's theory.

The value of the rune-comparison in the first table with regards to the authority debate can be demonstrated by examining Hempl's statement that 'not only did Hicke transfer the phonological values from *Cot. Dom.* to the Runic Poem, he also got from the same source the variant runes that he gives in his transcript of the Runic Poem', an observation which was also confirmed by Wrenn.¹⁹⁴ He names the first *w*-rune, the first and second *h*-runes, the first *n*-rune, the first *eo*-rune, the first *ng*-rune, and the runes that have no corresponding verses, i.e. **q**, **k** (though unidentified in the *Thesaurus*), **st**/*stan* and **g**/*gar*. In order to see if these correspondences are as striking as he claims, one can compare the occurrence of these runes in all Anglo-Saxon runic alphabets in the *Thesaurus*.

¹⁹⁴ Hempl, p. 139; Wrenn, p. 26.

		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
8	W1	-	C	C	C	C	-	C	-	C
10	H1	F	C	C	T	C	C	C	C	C
11	H2	C	C	C	-	-	-	-	-	-
13	N1	C	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
17	Eo1	C	C	C	-	T	-	F	T	F, T
27	Ing 1 (ng)	C	C	C	-	T	-	-	C	T
36	Q	C	C	C	-	-	F	-	-	-
37	?	T	T	T	T	F, T	F, T	C	F	T
38	(E)St z (stan)	-	C	C	-	T	-	F	F	-
39	G (gar)	-	C	C	C	-	F	C	-	F

Table 4-4

The first and most important thing to note here is that the runes mentioned by Hempl seem to appear in various alphabets in the *Thesaurus*, leaving us to question why exactly he considered them copied from Domitian A. IX. Additionally, as remarked by Page in his article ‘Anglo-Saxon Texts in Early Modern Transcripts’, the first ‘n-rune in Domitian A. IX lacks the extra, returning cross-stave at the top, rendering this similarity void.¹⁹⁵ The table shows that this additional cross-stroke, which distinguishes the first *n*-rune, appears again in the Otho B. X alphabet, leaving no doubt that Wanley noticed the feature and considered it part of the rune. Page also claims that the variant *w*-rune differs from the original Otho B. X *w* by having a pointed bow instead of a rounded one.¹⁹⁶ However, apart from the serif at the top of the stem in the Domitian A. IX *fuporc*, all three *w*-runes appear very similar, as both the *fuporc* and the alphabetised version of Otho B. X

¹⁹⁵ Page (1973), p. 72.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., pp. 72-3.

show a pointed bow. Only the second *w*-rune in the runic poem shows rounding. The importance of serifs will be discussed later on.

The many similarities between Domitian A. IX and Otho B. X are obvious from both the first and second table. A closer examination of the runes, however, makes it difficult to comprehend why Hempl considered these particular runes to be closer to Domitian A. IX than to any of the other alphabets that display them. It seems that Hempl considers it more likely that Hickes borrowed all his material from a single source. However, inherent to this way of thinking is a lack of confidence in Hickes's or Wanley's scholarship. Why would either scholar have decided upon one alphabet to copy from and not compared alphabets and borrowed the features of the one (or ones) regarded as most trustworthy? The fact that the Domitian A. IX alphabet was printed next to the runic poem does not necessarily mean that Hickes or Wanley, like Hempl, discarded all the other Anglo-Saxon alphabets in the *Thesaurus*. Additionally, as Page points out, Hickes states only that rune-names and transliterations were added; no mention is made of variant runes.¹⁹⁷

As noted above, a large number of runes appearing in the runic poem also appear in the other alphabets. No one thus far has considered why these runes are so similar across so many alphabets. Derolez notes that Galba A. II and St John's College MS 17 are closely related, and also sees the similarities between Domitian A. IX and Otho B. X, and therefore claims that this material has only restricted value.¹⁹⁸ The latter statement, however, is not necessarily true, nor does it explain why the same runes appear in all four of these manuscripts. In his work *Recasting the Runes: The Reform of the Anglo-Saxon Futhorc* from 1999, Parsons introduced the idea of runic standardisation. Although his theory is more general and has not hitherto been applied to the runic poem, it could provide a useful hypothesis. Moreover, it also allows for conclusions which are relevant in a wider context than the *Thesaurus*, or the restricted framework in which Hempl and many subsequent scholars have studied the runic poem.

¹⁹⁷ Page (1973), p. 72.

¹⁹⁸ Derolez, p. 2.

4.1.2 Standardisation

Standardisation is, although infrequently remarked upon, an important aspect of the study of runology. Michael Barnes in his article ‘Standardised *fuparks*: A useful tool or a delusion?’ describes its modern use in the following way:

Although standardised *fuparks* are widely used, few comment on their *raison d’être*. Perhaps this is because as runologists we have become so accustomed to their appearance in hand-books and elsewhere we accept them as an integral part of the discipline. For non-runologists they clearly have a practical purpose. Just as most learners of a foreign language will want to concentrate on a single norm so those getting to grips with runic script for the first time are likely to find a fixed set of forms more helpful than the diversity and irregularity of the real thing.¹⁹⁹

Although Barnes recognises the usefulness of standardised *fuparks*, he does not recommend their use in scholarly research, as he believes them to be bad representations of the runological reality. He sees this reality as ‘a fair degree of local experimentation, followed by the acceptance of some forms and rejection of others, and the gradual but uneven spread of more popular forms’, and advises against attributing the same level of knowledge and sophistication to different rune carvers.²⁰⁰ Although Barnes is certainly justified in his opinion, the notion of standardisation should not be discarded altogether. His warning that ‘there is no evidence for [the existence of standardised *fuparks*] at any time when runes were in common use’ should not be applied across the board, as his discussion only includes Scandinavian epigraphical material.²⁰¹ With regards to standardisation runologists are often sceptical, but their scepticism seems to be of the same variety as their mistrust of manuscript runes. The efforts of Derolez, Page and Parsons in many of their publications have helped to show that *runica manuscripta* are important to the study of runology, as they represent a different, later kind of runic reality, which should

¹⁹⁹ Barnes, p. 12.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 22.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p. 14.

not be considered less valuable.²⁰² In the same effort, and in the context of the Anglo-Saxon material, Parsons also succeeds in justifying the idea of standardisation.

In his chapter entitled ‘Runic writing in England: a reassessment’, Parsons argues that the use of runes in England underwent a significant change during the seventh century, resulting in a standardised *futhorc*.²⁰³ He explains his theory in the following way:

Firstly, it is clear and demonstrable, I think, that there was a standardisation across England, whereby inherited variety in rune-forms was consistently limited. Secondly, it seems to me probable that this standard was achieved not by a gradual evolution in usage, but by a significant intervention – a reform. Thirdly, I think that the reformed *futhorc* could have spread from early Anglo-Saxon monasteries into secular society. It is possible that there was a conscious monastic reform; choices would have been inherited runes, and other ‘compromise’ forms were perhaps invented. Alternatively, the standard *futhorc* may have entered the monasteries more or less ready-made; it may originally reflect the usage of a particular place or a particular group [...] In either case, however, the role of the Church as the focus for a standard, and the source of its dissemination, may have been crucial.²⁰⁴

Parsons recognises this standardisation both in the epigraphical and manuscript evidence, but admits that it is often harder to evaluate the latter. Apart from a small number of graffiti-like scribbles, none of the *runica manuscripta* material can be attributed to Anglo-Saxon scribes between the seventh and the ninth century, and it is therefore doubtful that any of the material present in manuscripts derives from practical rune-knowledge present in England at that time.²⁰⁵ In spite of evidence of divergences between the epigraphical and manuscript traditions, Parsons does not see a reason to discard the manuscript material: ‘[although] rune-forms recorded in manuscripts can have a range of

²⁰² See for instance R. Derolez, *Runica Manuscripta* (Brugge: Tempelhof, 1954) and ‘Epigraphical versus Manuscript English Runes: One or Two Worlds?’, *Academiae Analecta*, Mededelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, Klasse der Letteren, 45, 1 (1983), 69-93; R. I. Page, ‘Anglo-Saxon Runic Studies: The Way Ahead?’ in *Old English Runes and their Continental Background*, ed. by A. Bammesberger (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1991), 15-39, and *An Introduction to English Runes*, 2nd edn (Woodbridge: Boydell press, 1999); Parsons, D., ‘Anglo-Saxon Runes in Continental Manuscripts’ in *Runische Schriftkultur in kontinental-skandinavischer und- angelsächsischer Wechselbeziehung*, ed. by K. Düwel, Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde, 10 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1994), 195-220, and *Recasting the Runes: The Reform of the Anglo-Saxon Futhorc* (Uppsala: Institutionen för Nordiska Språk, 1999)

²⁰³ Parsons (1999), pp. 101-29.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., pp. 109-10.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., pp. 126-7.

origins, it is as unreasonable – where we know no better – to assume that they are inauthentic nonsense, as it would be simply to conflate them with certainly authentic sources.²⁰⁶ Judging from the most ‘standard’ runes and the added variant runes, he thinks it likely that the English manuscript *futhorcs* represent a mixed group of runes known to various compilers or successions of compilers.²⁰⁷ This group contains what he calls ‘demonstrably genuine and practical runes’, ‘pseudo-runes’, and additional runes, which are secondary creations and possibly regional.²⁰⁸ He therefore suggests that there might have been a particular tradition of runic knowledge that circulated in Anglo-Saxon scriptoria in the tenth and eleventh centuries, a so-called ‘manuscript’ tradition’.

This tradition would have kept alive a limited knowledge of runes after the ninth century and the decline of the script’s practical use. Based on the fact that most Anglo-Saxon *runica manuscripta* are West Saxon productions, it might even be possible that this tradition, after its establishment, was taken to areas of the country where epigraphical runes had never been fashionable.²⁰⁹ Additionally, these manuscripts date from the tenth and eleventh centuries, and are thus separated both in place and time from the main run of epigraphical runes.²¹⁰ From a consideration of these facts and a reassessment of the manuscript material, Parsons draws the following conclusion:

From these observations it is apparent that a stable twenty-eight-rune *futhorc* is basic to the tradition. Moreover, the distribution pattern of the additional runes suggests that the ‘*futhorc*’ did not gradually grow in size during the runic period, encompassing successive innovations, but rather that there was an optional practice of recording at the end of it any further runes that were known.²¹¹

He theorises that these twenty-eight runes make up the standard, reformed *futhorc* from the late seventh century, which can be seen in the epigraphical material and which, in essence, is still present in the manuscript material. He consequently concludes that ‘it is essentially

²⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 127.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., pp. 127-8.

²⁰⁹ The majority of epigraphical runes in Britain have been found along the East coast and in the North of England. (Page (1999), pp. 24-6)

²¹⁰ Parsons (1999), p. 128.

²¹¹ Ibid., p. 129.

the same twenty-eight-rune *futhorc* from which all the surviving Christian-period Anglo-Saxon runic inscriptions descend.’²¹²

It is interesting to consider Parsons’s theory on standardisation and his conclusion in the context of the *Thesaurus* and the runic poem. Is it possible to discern a ‘stable twenty-eight-rune’ *futhorc* in the material collected in the *Thesaurus*? And if so, how much of that material appears in the runic poem? Although it would be difficult to reconstruct a ‘genuine’ Anglo-Saxon runic standard *futhorc* from this corpus of material, it is fairly straightforward to determine which runes appear most frequently in the alphabets and *futhorcs* of the *Thesaurus*. By applying Parsons’s theory, it may also be possible to gain further information on the so-called variant runes of the runic poem. These runes are distinguished on the basis of script – in as far as it is possible to tell from a printed edition –, and their ‘secondary’ position in the runic poem, for they are, according to Wrenn, ‘runes which [Hickes] sometimes gives besides those which conform to the norm’.²¹³ By determining the most common Anglo-Saxon runes in the *Thesaurus*, it may be possible to test Wrenn’s rather un-nuanced statement, and decide whether there is a ‘norm’.

The following table displays the runes which appear in the majority of Anglo-Saxon runic material of the *Thesaurus*, and in which alphabets/*futhorcs*. The alphabetised versions of Otho B. X and Domitian A. IX have been included because, as noted earlier, they differ slightly from the original *futhorcs*. Their similarities, however, have been taken into account in the calculations. The focus is here again on the runes, so even wrongly transliterated runes have been included. Some form-variations have been omitted, as the difference was too great to consider these forms part of a tradition. The criteria used to distinguish between these forms are explained below in the section on form variations. The runes are presented in the sequence used in the runic poem. The rune-forms have been taken from the poem and the Domitian A. IX *futhorc*.















						
						

Table 4-5

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Wrenn, p. 26.

𐌚	𐌰	𐌲	𐌼	𐌾	𐌿	𐌽
𐌷	𐌱	𐌳	𐌽	𐌿	𐌻	𐌾

A basic comparison reveals that twenty-eight runes occur in more than 70% of the Anglo-Saxon rune material. Of those, twenty-seven appear in the runic poem, making it a fairly exemplary *futhorc* within the context of the *Thesaurus*. However, considering that the *Thesaurus* includes the four most important English *futhorcs*, this conclusion is likely to be relevant in a wider context as well. Interestingly, Wrenn's theory of a 'norm' appears to be essentially accurate, as only one 'standard' rune, the second *n*-rune, is found in second place. The comparison has also revealed that of the ten runes named by Hempl as certainly copied from Domitian A. IX, four, namely **w**, **h**, **ng** and **k**, are found in the majority of the *Thesaurus* alphabets and *futhorcs*, and can consequently be considered 'standard' runes. Though not immediately disproving his theory, it does cast a certain amount of doubt over its probability.

Of course, the notion of a runic standard alters to an extent the way in which the above correspondences between the runic alphabets and *futhorcs* should be seen. If there is a general body of runes, it is less surprising that many runes appear in various alphabets/*futhorcs*. Nonetheless, the general conclusions drawn from the correspondence table appear still to be accurate. Additionally, on a runological level, taking into account a 'standard' *futhorc* may also act as a guide to judge the general correctness of the alphabets/*futhorcs* and their value as representations of the *runica manuscripta* tradition.

4.1.3 Transliteration

A frequent mistake noted in the main table is incorrect transliteration, where a rune is given the incorrect Latin equivalent. Mistakes in transliteration are interesting for they can reveal the runic knowledge of the scribe to a certain degree. Matching runes to their Latin counterparts is almost exclusively a manuscript practice, and, as noted by Parsons, it is doubtful that many scribes at that time were exposed to practical rune-carving.²¹⁴ It is therefore worth observing the extent to which they were aware of the ‘meaning’ of runes. After all, it is not inconceivable that they copied the runes, but produced the transliterations themselves. For instance, when a manuscript *fuporc* contains all the ‘correct’ runes, but is very badly transliterated, it is likely that the scribe copied the *fuporc* either from another manuscript or an inscription which did not provide transliterations. He could then have added them himself, or another scribe or scholar might have attempted transliterating at a later time.

The important thing, therefore, to remember about runic transliterations is that, however much they might be indicative of the scribe or scholar’s knowledge, they do not necessarily have an impact on the quality or accuracy of the runes. Further study on this topic, however, may provide new insights in the most common mistakes made by scribes, and possible causes for them (for instance: was in 24 F the *e*-rune transliterated as an ‘m’ because of its similarity to the Latin letter ‘m’?).

In the case of the runic poem, we know that the values or transliterations were added either by a second scribe, a later scholar, or Hicke or Wanley. As indicated by Hempl and Wrenn, the values are almost identical to those of the Domitian A. IX *fuporc*, making this manuscript a plausible source. Curiously, however, the runic poem does not have a transliteration for the *k*-rune, which does appear in Domitian A. IX. It is thus possible that whoever added the values accidentally omitted the bottom rune, or that his source was not Domitian A. IX, but another manuscript which lacked the *k*-rune or its transliteration.

²¹⁴ Parsons (1999), pp. 126-7.

4.1.4 Form variations

As mentioned previously, standardisation in general does not prevent local or individual variation. This can easily be observed in the selected corpus of material. The variants which appear can generally be subdivided into two main categories: stylistic differences and differences which affect the rune-form. The first category is the most prominent and exists mainly of variance in angularity, i.e. the difference between rounded and angular runes, common for instance with the runes **x**, **b**, **gae** and **oe**. Another feature that belongs in this category is the presence of serifs. In the runic poem a difference can be noticed between serified runes and ‘other’ runes. The former are of a firmer quality and contain little embellishments which give a neat and finished impression. The difference between both is even more obvious when comparing the runic poem with the Domitian A. IX *fuporc*, which shows a more sober style of rune-writing.

The same sober style can be noted in the runic material from the *Tabellae*, though the reason for the lack of serifs there might simply be because of the size of the runes. As they are printed very small, it might have been difficult to add much detail. It is doubtful, however, that these style differences would have an impact on the perception of the runes, or make them manifestly different from each other. It is possible that the sharp quality of written runes is based on a misguided idea that carved runes are angular because of the medium in which they were carved, in most cases stone or wood.

The second subcategory exists of embellishments or changes made by the various scribes in the form of extra strokes or slightly differing forms. It is, however, unclear if these variations indicate that they copied from faulty exemplars, or were uncertain of the form of the runes. They might have added the embellishments for an aesthetic purpose, used local forms of runes, or simply made copying mistakes. The reality is probably a combination of some or all of these possibilities. Occasionally, through comparison, it is possible to deduce the reason for some variations. For instance in 2H, where the top stroke has been left out resulting in a rune-form that mimics the form of the Latin letter ‘u’ or ‘v’, it is likely in this case that the scribe was unsure about the form. The first option is probably true for the ‘y’ rune, which appears dotted and in 33H also wants a top stroke. The third, single-barred rune ‘h’-rune is likely to be a miscopying, as the rune does not appear anywhere else. A combination of factors might resulted in the crossed form of the *st/stan*-rune and a *k*-rune which appears with extra cross-strokes in varying places.

As I have shown, it is often difficult to decide if the scribe was mistaken, distracted, or misguided in his attempt to copy or write runes, or whether a variant form means that the scribe had a different idea about the shape of the rune, or simply made a copying error. Furthermore, there is also the possibility of local variation, a feature of manuscript runes which has not yet been researched to any extent. For the purpose of the current analysis, runes that correspond in general shape have been considered similar when discussing correspondences in the first section above; runes that belong to the second category have been disregarded in the section on standardisation, as it required a higher degree of precision.

4.1.5 Alphabets versus *futhorcs*

It has previously been observed that there were some differences between the Otho. B. X *futhorc* and its alphabet. A study of another set of *futhorc* and alphabet in the *Thesaurus*, those from Domitian A. IX, also reveals incongruities. Owing to the correspondence between Hickes and Wanley, we can assume that Wanley was responsible for compiling the alphabets. We also know that he was aware of both *futhorcs*, as he described them in his *Catalogus*, and admits to copying Otho B. X. A closer look at their differences may therefore be telling with regard to his treatment of the material and tendency to make or correct mistakes.

In Otho B. X, it can be noted, first of all, that the alphabet contains thirty-six runes, whereas the *futhorc* has thirty-nine. The alphabet is missing the *st/stan*-rune, the *g/gar*-rune and the variant *w*-rune. It is possible that Wanley did not believe the first two to be part of the runic poem, as they appear further down, and as Page notes, were probably printed with a different plate than the other runes.²¹⁵ However, as Wanley included other variant runes, it is unclear why he left out the *w*-rune. It is possible that he did not consider the difference between the two *w*-runes, which is only one of style, marked enough to include both in the alphabet.

Perhaps even more interesting are the many transliteration differences. The *x*-rune in the *futhorc* is transliterated as ‘y’ in the alphabet, and the rune used for ‘y’ in the *futhorc* is transliterated as ‘z’ in the alphabet. A rune shaped as a rounded version of a *ea*-rune has

²¹⁵ Page (1973), p. 69.

been allocated to the letter ‘y’. The rune at the bottom of the runic poem (below the *q*-rune) has not been transliterated at all. In the alphabet, however, the rune is paired with the transliteration ‘z’. This seems rather strange, as the rune has been correctly transliterated as ‘k’ in many of the other alphabets in the *Tabellae*. A possible reason for this decision might be that the rune is a partly similar to a y-rune’, which in the alphabet has been wrongly transliterated as a ‘z’.

The final transliteration differences are significant. The *d* and the *m*-runes have changed places, which mirrors the confusion between both runes in the runic poem. The *futhorc* shows annotations above the values ‘d’ and ‘m’ in the first column: above the Latin letter ‘m’ the rune-name *deg* is written, and above the Latin letter ‘d’ the rune-name *mann*. These rune-names correspond, though differently spelled, with the opposite runes in the second column. Whoever made these annotations thought either that these runes were interchangeable, or that there had been a mistake, which he subsequently rectified. It is remarkable, however, that the alphabet follows the corrections, even though the *futhorc* displayed the correct correlations.

From these differences follows the logical conclusion that Wanley not only alphabetised the *futhorcs*, but also altered or corrected them. If Wanley was as knowledgeable about alphabets as he is generally considered to be, it is difficult to imagine why he made such mistakes.²¹⁶ One possible theory is that the alphabet shows the runes as Wanley found them in the original manuscript. Wanley might have recognised the errors and altered them in the version printed on p. 135 of the *Thesaurus*. He would then have added or preserved the annotations for reasons of accuracy. This would then imply that the poem as it is presented in the *Thesaurus* is not a reproduction, and opens up the possibility of other alterations to the text or runes.

There are fewer discrepancies between the Domitian A. IX *futhorc* and alphabet as it appears in the *Thesaurus*, but unlike Otho B. X, they may be checked against the original manuscript. As a result, it is possible to have a clearer idea of their origin. The Domitian A. IX *futhorc* contains thirty-five runes, while the alphabet only counts thirty-four. The extra rune is a second *r*-rune, which does not show in the alphabet. Wanley appears to have changed the forms of two runes slightly: he normalised the form of the *b*-rune by

²¹⁶ Ibid., p. 73.

shortening the middle part of the stem, and turned the three arms of the *calc*-rune into a loop. Interestingly, he again changed the places of the *m* and *d*-runes. The situation here, however, is slightly more confusing, as the manuscript shows that runes are accompanied by their correct values, but the wrong rune-names are written above them. It also suggests that this is the work of the scribes, and not of Wanley.²¹⁷ The theory postulated earlier seems thus unlikely. It appears that Wanley was unsure about the *m* and *d*-runes and decided, wrongly, to follow the annotator's suggestions. This, of course, casts doubt on the extent of his knowledge of runes.

4.2 Wanley as a runologist

Unfortunately, the accuracy of Wanley's work and the possibility of his interference with regards to Otho B. X will remain conjecture. It is possible that his changes in the alphabets were done on purpose, but they could also have been simple mistakes. As noted in the first chapter, it is difficult to estimate how much exactly Wanley knew about runes. He shows interest in them, but his writings only show his ideas on their origin and use, and leave us to guess at his more pragmatic knowledge of them. His skills as a paleographer, on the other hand, are easier to establish. A good way of discovering how well Wanley actually knew the alphabets he was collecting for Hickes and with how much care he treated them would be to test the accuracy with which he copied the runic alphabets. Page undertook this research with Domitian A. IX and published his results in his article from 1973. As no fault can be found with his description, it has been quoted in full here:

We can get some idea of Wanley's accuracy at this stage of his career by comparing the runic page of Domitian A IX with the *Thesaurus* reproduction on p. 136 (Plate II). The *Thesaurus* copy is good, but by no means an exact replica. Wanley altered the layout of the letters, putting 'io', 'qu' and 'k' on the second line instead of at the beginning of the third. He missed details of pointing. He reversed the positions of names and values of at least five characters, 'io', 'q', 'k', 'st' and 'g' so that the values come below the symbols, rune-names above, consistent with preceding practice. He made minor copying errors in the names: *hegel* for *Hegel*, *eac* for an indeterminate *?inc*, *lagir* for *lagu*: and he left out the underpointed name

²¹⁷ I have used the copy of fo. 11 v of the Domitian A. IX manuscript provided by Derolez in his *Runica Manuscripta* (Plate I) for this comparison.

calc. He put the unusual variant ‘h’ form on instead of above the general rune line, and omitted a rare, also superscript, *epel*-rune. The most important of his deviations affects the last character of line I. Domitian A IX has the rather uncommon *sigel*-rune [...] with its value, insular s, below it and above, the more common rune form with some letters which Derolez tentatively reads *sig*, but which are quite indistinct. [...] Surprisingly, the *Thesaurus* puts instead the common runic ‘r’, and gives its value by insular r which, of course, bears close resemblance to s. [...] In the main the *Thesaurus* plate reproduces well both the runic and Roman material of the manuscript, with a fair approximation to the letter forms of the original.²¹⁸

However, as one *fuporc* is hardly representative of his overall copying skills, it seems useful to extend this test to some of the other alphabets included in the *Thesaurus*. Unfortunately, not all manuscripts have survived, but of those that have the Anglo-Saxon runic alphabets are compared to their printed equivalents in the following section. The two Anglo-Saxon *fuporcs* and one alphabet from Oxford, St John’s College MS 17 serve this purpose.²¹⁹ More generally, an absence of serifs can be noted, but, as observed previously, this might be due to the size of the alphabets in the *Tabellae*.

The first Anglo-Saxon alphabet from St John’s College MS 17 noted in the *Thesaurus* (8, *Tabella* II) is the last on the right in fo. 5 v of the manuscript. It is also the only list of already alphabetised Anglo-Saxon runes in the manuscript, and therefore, it would seem, the easiest to copy for Wanley’s purpose. However, no values are provided for this alphabet, obliging Wanley to add those himself, which he does remarkably well. The scribe made a number of mistakes in the sequence of the runes: he entered an angular *ea*-rune and an unknown rune between the *e*-rune and the *f*-rune, inserted the *ng*-rune and *io*-rune as representations of ‘i’ after two *h*-runes, added the *oe*-rune before the *k*-rune, put in the *ea*-rune before the *y*-rune and records the *w*, *þ* and *æ*-runes at the bottom. Wanley noticed the majority of these errors and reorganised the alphabet for the *Tabellae*. He does, however, make a number of mistakes himself. Wanley moved a number of runes which did not immediately fit in the alphabet to the bottom of the sequence, but did not transliterate all of them. He wrongly associates the *io*-rune with the ‘h’, draws the *n*-rune with a curved bottom stem, omits the *p*-rune, and draws the crossed *st/stan*-rune, which he correlates with

²¹⁸ Page (1973), p. 73.

²¹⁹ For this comparison, I have used the digital manuscript edition provided by St John’s College, Oxford. ‘MS Oxford St John’s College 17’, *Oxford Digital Library*. Accessed September 2013. Web. <<http://www.sjc.ox.ac.uk/444/Manuscripts.html>>. A copy of the manuscript page is provided in figure 5 of the appendix.

‘s’, horizontally instead of vertically. Remarkably, he does accord the correct values to **k**, **m** and **d**, something with which he makes errors in the Otho B. X and Domitian A. IX alphabets.

The second alphabet from St John’s College MS 17 is number 9 in *Tabella* II, and starts at the bottom of the middle alphabet, continuing in the column on its right-hand side. Unfortunately, Wanley did not notice the beginning of the alphabet in the middle column and omits the **f**, **u**, **p**, **o**, and **r**. The *c*-rune at the top of the next column is badly drawn, and Wanley tried to correct it. The result of this, however, is a correct *u*-rune, but an incorrect *c*-rune. He also adds a cross-stroke to a badly drawn *æ*-rune, with the very odd outcome of a double *t*-rune. He omits the middle stroke in the second, rather unusual *e*-rune. Wanley did not notice that the extra curved stroke he drew on the rune, wrongly transliterated as ‘a’, was in fact a Latin letter, possibly ‘s’, written in a different ink and therefore not part of the rune. Other smaller mistakes, form-wise, are a more angular *b*-rune, and an unfinished *y*-rune. He generally follows the transliterations provided with the *fuporc*, but transcribes **æ** as ‘et’ and thus collects the two *æ*-runes at the end of his alphabet.

The last alphabet under investigation is the third alphabet on the right in St John’s College MS 17 and number 10 in *Tabella* II. Again, in this alphabet a number of mistakes can be noted. Six of those are connected to form: the *p*-rune has a little serif at the top which does not appear on the manuscript rune; the stem of the *o*-rune is distinctly shorter; the legs of the *g/gar*-rune are more rounded; the two legs of a ‘y’-shaped **e** are closer together; the serif on the bottom of the stem of the **k** has been exaggerated, the other two serifs are omitted; the strangely shaped **q**-rune has been drawn neater: the vertical stem does not cross the horizontal one. Wanley also only presents two rune-forms of the **p**, leaving out the third, and only correct, rune-form. He transliterates both the *a*-rune and the *æ*-rune as ‘a’.

It appears that Page’s conclusion also applies to this comparison: in general the copies are good, but certainly not flawless. Wanley certainly did not feel secure as a runologist and many of these mistakes originate from a lack of knowledge. He confuses various runes or allocates them incorrect transliterations. Page remarks that it is also possible that Wanley was not responsible for these mistakes, but that an inconsistent

engraver of the copper plates is to blame. He does admit, however, that it seems unlikely that Wanley would have let imperfect copies pass.²²⁰

Regardless of who was responsible for the mistakes, we can conclude on a certain margin of error to the copies of runes in the *Thesaurus*. A comparison with manuscript 17 of St John's College and Domitian A. IX, for instance, tells us that the above judgement of 14D, 23E, 4F, 37F, 39F is not correct, as these runes are drawn correctly in the manuscripts. Although this does not affect the conclusions of this thesis to any great extent, it is important to take into account this degree of error when analysing the runes in the *Thesaurus*. Contrarily, however, the high level of accuracy in terms of transliteration in the runic poem might also suggest that Wanley did not add the values, as the degree of error is much smaller here.

4.3 Rune-names

I conclude this investigation of the significance of the runic poem as a runic alphabet and its authenticity with a brief discussion of the rune-names. As noted previously, Hickes mentions that these have been added to the runic poem. Of course, that is therefore not necessarily the end of the matter. Many scholars have wondered where these rune-names came from and who added them. Hempl assumes that Hickes was responsible for them and notes that 'the way that Hickes writes the names makes it appear that putting them in was an afterthought with him.'²²¹ He also claims that he discovered Hickes's source for the rune-names and would reveal them in a later publication, which unfortunately was never realised. In his article he admits that it is also possible that the rune-names were present in the manuscript, but only if added by a second scribe in between the first scribe and Hickes. Whether this means that he had identified the source from which the second scribe had copied is unclear. Hempl does observe that it is unlikely that the rune-names – aside from *wen* – have been copied from Domitian A. IX. The rune-name *wen* is not found anywhere else, and, as Hempl puts it, 'has therefore no more

²²⁰ Page (1973), p. 74.

²²¹ Hempl, p. 135.

authority that its occurrence in *Cot. Domit.* gives it.²²² Elsewhere in his article, Hempl seems to imply that the rune-names found in the first column, containing the transliterations, might also be copied from Domitian A. IX.²²³

Wrenn also considers that Hickes was responsible for the adding of the rune-names, interpreting Hickes's 'Latinis additis ex adverso elementis, ad ostendendam runarum potestatem, una cum iis nominibus quibus appellantur ipsae runae' as proof of his involvement.²²⁴ He thinks that because Hickes adopted various elements of Domitian A. IX, it would not be surprising if he adopted a single rune-name from that alphabet as well.²²⁵

Derolez disagrees with Hempl and Wrenn, stating that it is more probable that Hickes borrowed all rune-names from the same list, and that it is therefore unlikely that only *wen* was copied from Domitian A. IX: 'for if Hickes actually found the form *wen* in Domitian A 9, we may ask: did the list which provided the other names not also present a name for the w-rune, and if so, why did Hickes not borrow that name?'²²⁶ Derolez, however, is obliged admit that he has not been able to identify the source for the rune-names.

The last to comment extensively on this issue is Page, who, instead, considers the option of another (modern) scholar adding the rune-names. This scholar perhaps also copied the variant runes from Domitian A. IX and added them to the runic poem.²²⁷ He agrees with Hempl that 'the material from column 1, equivalents and rune-names, and the variants of column 2 derive from Domitian A IX.'²²⁸

As with the alphabets/*futhorcs* previously, the various Anglo-Saxon rune-names are compared here, in order to establish if their source is present in the *Thesaurus*. This comparison was made briefly by Derolez, who concluded that none of them could have been the source for rune-names in the runic poem.²²⁹ He also included one of the *futhorcs*

²²² Ibid., p. 140.

²²³ Ibid., p. 139.

²²⁴ Wrenn, p. 26.

²²⁵ Ibid., p. 29.

²²⁶ Derolez, p. 24.

²²⁷ Page (1973), p. 70.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Derolez, p. 24.

from St John's College MS 17, fo. 5 v, which also contains rune-names. Although the rune-names do not appear in the *Thesaurus*, Wanley was aware of their existence, as the *fuporc* appears, alphabetised, as the tenth alphabet in *Tabella* II. Derolez's comparison is repeated here, and presented in a slightly more accessible way. The variant rune-names are indicated in bold.

	<i>Futhorc</i> Cotton Otho B. X (<i>Grammatica Anglo-Saxonica</i> , p. 135)	<i>Futhorc</i> Domitian A. IX (<i>Grammatica Anglo-Saxonica</i> , p. 136)	<i>Futhorc</i> Cotton Galba A. II (2, <i>Tabella</i> VI)	<i>Futhorc</i> Oxford, St John's College MS 15, fo. 5 v
Values	Rune-names			
F	Feoh	Feoh	Feoh	Feh
U	Ur	Ur	Ur	Ur
þ	Ðorn	Ðorn	Ðorn	Ðorn
O	Os	Os	Os	Os
R	Rað	Rað	Rað	Rað
C	Cen	Cen	Cen	Cen/Coen
G	Gyfu	Gifu	Gyfu	Geofu
W	ƿen	ƿen	ƿyn	
H	Hægl	Hegel	Hegil	Hægel/Hægil
N	Nyð	Neað	Neð	Neð
I	Is	Eac	Is	Is
Gae	Ger	Geor/gear	Gyr	
Eo	Eoh		Ech	
P	Peorð	Peorð	Peoih	Peorð
X	Eolhx		Eolhx	Ilx
S	Sigel	Sigel	Sigel	Sigel
T	Tir	Tir	Tir	Tyr
B	Beorc	Berc	Beorc	Beorc
E	Eh	Epel	Eoh	Mech
M	Man/ Deg	Deg	Man	Dæg
L	Lagu	Lagir	Lagu	Lagu/ Logu
Ng	Ing	Inc	Ing	Ing
Oe	Epel	Pro	eðel	Oepel
D	Dæg	Mann	Dæg	Dæg
A	Ac	Ac	Ac	Ac
Æ	Æsc	Æsc	Æsc	Æsc
Y	Yr	Yr	Yr	Yr
Io	Io/iar	Ior	Ior	

Ear	Ear/Tir	Tir	Ear	Ear
Q	Cpeorð	Cpeorð	Querð	Quar
St Z	Stan	Stan	Stan	
G	Gar	Gar	Gar	
-		Calc		
K		Iolx	Calc	Kalc

Table 4-6

It appears from this table that Derolez is probably correct in declaring that the source for the rune-names is not present in the *Thesaurus*. Even a combination of the above four lists of rune-names could not have resulted in the list of the runic poem. It therefore seems unlikely that Hickes or Wanley were responsible for adding them, unless they used another, unpublished, example. This strengthens Page's argument that they were supplied by another scribe before Hickes's day.

That the rune-names from the first column and *wen* were copied from Domitian A. IX, as most scholars believe, is less certain. Admittedly, Derolez's argument against this theory is not entirely convincing. He suggests that whoever added the rune-names would not have employed more than one alphabet/*futhorc* as a source. He does not consider that this alphabet/*futhorc* could have lacked a *w*-rune and/or its rune-name, and simple lack of information could have compelled the scribe to fill the gap, or a (presumably more modern) scholar to look elsewhere for that particular rune-name.

A more convincing argument is that the nature of the copying appears haphazard. There are, as can be seen in the above table, a great number of differences between the rune-names in Otho B. X and Domitian A. IX, but the scribe only notes 'deg', 'Mann', 'Tir' and 'Cpeorð'. If he intended to correct the runic poem using Domitian A. IX, why did he not comment on the fact that the rune-name *epel* appears with the *e*-rune in Domitian A. IX, but with the *œ* in Otho B. X, and why did he not write the *eac* above the *i*-rune?

Page argues that there is a similar confusion between the *m* and the *d*-rune in both Domitian A. IX and Otho B. X, and that 'such composite entries can only have arisen in Domitian A IX itself, and the fact that the *Thesaurus* page repeats them is ample proof of provenance'.²³⁰ However, the runic letters look very alike and have caused mistakes in

²³⁰ Page (1973), p. 70.

other alphabets as well: for instance, in the alphabet from Galba A. II (5, *Tabella* VI) both **d** and **m** have been presented as variant forms of ‘m’, and in the *fuporc* from St John’s College MS 15, fo. 5 v, the rune-name *dæg* has been given to the *m*-rune. The addition of *Tir* seems indeed to be too much of a coincidence, as Domitian A. IX has the same rune-name for the *ea*-rune. However, it seems odd that the annotator singled out this specific rune-name, and did not comment on any of the other irregularities. The correspondences in spelling with regards to ‘deg’, ‘wen’ and ‘Cpeorð’ are striking, but it is not impossible that those forms appeared elsewhere. It should be remembered that we are working with a limited amount of information.

It seems that there are three possible solutions to this problem. The first is that we are witnessing the work of three hands: one who supplied the runes and Old English verse, a second who added the rune-names, and a third, rather inconsistent, annotator, who perhaps based his annotations on Domitian A. IX. The second is that a second scribe, who was working from a different list of rune-names, added the rune-names and annotations. Inherent to this solution is that some of the parallels between Domitian A. IX and Otho B. X are coincidence and the correspondences in spelling are the result of a local standardisation of which these manuscripts are possibly the only evidence. The third solution is that one person supplied rune-names and made the annotations, however, as his list rune-names was lacking, he borrowed from Domitian A. IX to compensate. This then also resulted in the annotations.

It is unlikely that Hickes or Wanley were involved in any of these scenarios for a number of reasons. In the first case, if they supplied the rune-names, Wanley would have found them in an alphabet/ *fuporc* to which no reference is made in the *Thesaurus*. Wanley’s motives for hiding this material are difficult to imagine. It is also unlikely that either of them fulfilled the role of annotator, because that would be, as Page declares, ‘tampering with the sources’.²³¹ The above assessment of Wanley’s skills as a runologist indicates that he was insecure, but his mistakes seem to have their origins in a lack of knowledge and his modifications came from a desire to organise the alphabets. It is undeniable that Wanley is not entirely consistent in his alphabetisations, but his *Catalogus* does not reveal an inconsistent scholar. Furthermore, as Page notes in his description of Wanley’s treatment of Domitian A. IX, he only makes minor copying mistakes with the

²³¹ Ibid., p. 71.

rune-names. Though Wanley may have made errors when copying the poem, it seems unlikely that any additions stem from him.

In conclusion it should be said that arguments and counter-arguments can be given for all three of these options. Considering the various conclusions drawn earlier in this chapter, the first solution seems most likely. However, due to the current state of research and our knowledge of *runica manuscripta*, it is difficult indeed to make a definitive judgement.

Conclusion

From the numerous observations made in the previous discussions, two main conclusions can be drawn with regards to the authenticity debate: the first in reply to the doubts cast by Hempl over the originality of the material, the second with regard to the person(s) responsible for the additions and annotations. A few final remarks can also be made on the impact of this research on manuscript runology more generally and the possibilities for future research.

For the first conclusion, the analysis of the runic material has shown that it is unlikely that the ten runes indicated by Hempl were copied from Domitian A. IX. Aside from appearing in the runic poem, the first *w*-rune appears in six of the alphabets/*fuporcs*, the first *h*-rune in all nine of them, and the first *n*-rune appears only in the runic poem; the first *eo*-rune can be observed in seven, the first *ng*-rune in six, the *q*-rune in four, the untransliterated *k*-rune in all nine, *st/stan* in five, and *g/gar* in six. By applying the theory of standardisation to the material, it appears that the **w**, **n**, **ing** and **k** are also fairly standard manuscript runes. Therefore, the only possible candidate for Hempl's idea is the second *h*-rune, which appears solely in the runic poem, its alphabet and Domitian A. IX (both alphabet and *fuporc*). Of course, the fact that these runes appear elsewhere does not necessarily prevent them from being copied from Domitian A. IX. Hempl, however, does not provide any arguments for his claim, and considering the frequency with which these runes appear it seems more likely that they were part of the group of runic letters known to the scribe.

Where the addition of the values and rune-names is concerned, the conclusion is somewhat different. I agree with Hempl that the values of the runic poem and those of the Domitian A. IX *fuporc* are remarkably similar. There are only a few exceptions, which could simply be caused by a moment of distraction on the part of the person who provided them or the engraver. The rune-names, however, are markedly different from Domitian A. IX, and do not find their origins in any of the material collected in the *Thesaurus*. The annotated material, however, does correspond with Domitian A. IX, although, as said, this could also be coincidence. It seems therefore that no firm conclusion can be drawn. From the analysis it appears that the runes and rune-names do not correspond, but the values and annotations do. Additionally, Derolez's linguistic analysis revealed that the Old English of the rune-names is similar to the Old English of their verse definitions. Therefore, taking

into account Hickes's statement that the values and rune-names were supplied, the following scenario becomes likely: firstly, the runes and Old English verse were written by the original composer of the poem; secondly, the rune-names were added by a contemporary scribe or a scribe with a good exemplar; and thirdly, the values and annotations were inserted by a third, possibly later and rather inconsistent, annotator who was using the Domitian A. IX *fuporc* as an example. One or both of the latter two contributors may also have added the variant runes.

This brings us to the second conclusion, regarding the person(s) responsible for adding the values and annotations. Hempl assumed that Hickes's editing had altered the poem, a suggestion which was discarded by Page, who claimed that Wanley was responsible for the runic material. Additionally, as Page points out, it would have defeated Hickes's purpose to copy material from a *fuporc* he intended to print on the following page. From the correspondence between Hickes and Wanley it would seem that Page's claim is correct. Wanley admits to copying the runic poem, and it can be assumed that he provided the Domitian A. IX *fuporc* as well as the *Tabellae*, and perhaps also oversaw the printing of this material. It is, however, fairly certain that neither Hickes nor Wanley were involved in the additions to the runic poem and that the edition provided in the *Thesaurus* is in all likelihood a reasonably accurate facsimile.

The analysis of Wanley's copying skills in both alphabets and *fuporcs* and an overview of his writing on runes have demonstrated that he was more confident as a theoretical runologist than as a practical one. Regardless of the many mistakes he made in his attempts to copy and organise the runes, his work only shows minor inconsistencies. The margin of error observed in his copying could possibly correspond with the number of flaws in the transliterations. However, as previously determined, the values and annotations were probably added by the same person, and the inconsistency of the annotations does not agree with Wanley's general scholarly standard. His tendency to reorganise the alphabetisations so that the runes correspond neatly with the Latin letters would definitely be in line with Hempl's suggestion that the runes copied from Domitian A. IX were put in front of the 'original' runes and then reorganised into one column. It does not, however, explain why he would have allowed the rune-name *cpeorð* to appear in the first column, and why he allowed **ear** and **io** to have two rune-names.

The fact that the runic poem shows all these inconsistencies is therefore probably evidence that it was Wanley's intention to print it as it was presented in the manuscript.

However, because of his tendency to make mistakes, it can be assumed that the printed poem is not a perfect replica of the manuscript copy. It should be noted, though, that since it is impossible to compare the *Thesaurus* edition to the manuscript, or to ascertain whether the manuscript itself contained mistakes, it would be wrong to perceive Wanley's copy as inherently flawed or less valuable. Additionally, as demonstrated, it is also a useful source of information on the treatment of runes by Early Modern philologists.

It becomes thus clear that an examination of the runic poem solely as a *runicum alphabetum* does not diminish its achievement, but presents another opportunity to extrapolate information from this remarkable source. Close comparison of the runic material not only allows us to contribute to the authenticity debate, but also permits more general conclusions on manuscript runology. In the comparison-table a great number of similarities were noted between the alphabets, which led to the application of Parsons's theory on standardisation. The results of this exercise were encouraging and due to the presence of the most important English *futhorcs*, also highly representative for English manuscript runes in general.

It seems that a wider comparison of all alphabets and *futhorcs* could greatly benefit the study of manuscript runology, as it allows for a better understanding of the runic knowledge of the scribes and their perception of the runic alphabet. Further examination may also reveal a development of this knowledge between the tenth and thirteenth centuries. A similar study could also be conducted to determine the existence of a standard for the Anglo-Saxon rune-names and the medieval awareness of their function. This array of future avenues of enquiry could also be expanded even further by including the continental and/or Scandinavian material. A limited study of the runic material in the *Thesaurus* in this way demonstrates that the field of *runica manuscripta* is a fascinating part of runology, which is both understudied and frequently undervalued; further exploration may prove illuminating.

Appendix

Figure 1: The Anglo-Saxon runic poem (*Thesaurus*, 'Grammatica Anglo-Saxonica et Moeso-Gothica', p.135)

































MOESO-GOTHICA.		135
<i>E Codice MS. Bibliothecae Cottonianae, cujus nota, Ordo. B. 10.</i>		
f		býþ fpoþur. fpa gehþýlcum. fceal ðeah manna gehþýlc. miclun hýt ðælan. gýf he fyle. fop ðrihtne ðomef bleotan :
u		býþ anmob. 7 ofep hýpneb. fela fpeene. ðeop feohteþ. mid hopnum. mæpe mop ftaþa. f if mobiz fuht :
ð		býþ ðeaple fceap. ðegna gehþýlcum. anþen-gýf ýrýl. ungemetun feþe. manna gehþýlcun. ðe him mid ferteþ :
o		býþ opþfnuma. ælcne fppæce. fifðomef ppaþu. and fitena fpoþur. and eopla gehþam. eabnýf and to hih :
n		býþ onþeýðe. pinca gehþýlcum. fette and fpiþpæt. ðam ðe fetteþ onufan. meape mægen heapþum. ofep nul ppaþ :
c		býþ epicepa gehþam cuþ on fýpe blac and beophthic býpneþ oftuft ðær hi æþelingar inne fetteþ :
s		gumena býþ gleng and hepenýf. ppaþu 7 pýþfrcýpe 7 ppaena gehþam ap and ætþiut ðe býþ ofþa leaþ :
uw		ne bpuceþ ðe can peana lýt fapef and fopge and him fýlfa hæþþ blæþ 7 býfpe and eac býnga geniht :
h		býþ hþituf copna. hþýpæt hit of heofonef lýfte. pealcaþ hit pinþe fcuþa. peopþeþ hit to pætepe fýððan :
n		býþ neapn on bpeoftan peopþeþ hi ðeah of nifa beapnum to helpe and to hæle ge hþæþne gýf hi hýf hlýftaþ æþon :
i		býþ ofep cealbunge metum flidop glirnaþ glær hluttur gumnum geliurt. flon fopfte ge populit fægen anýne :
se		býþ gumena hih ðon god læteþ halig heofonef cýning hþuran fýllan beophthe bleða beopnum and ðeapfum :
eo		býþ utan unfmeþe tpeop. heapþ hþuran fæft hýpþe fýpþe. pýpþumun unbepþneþþo pýnan on eþle :
p		býþ fýmble plega. and blehteþ plancum ðar pigan fittaþ on beop fele bliþe æt fomne :
x		feccapþ hæþþ oftuft on fenne. peþeð on patupe. punþaþ grimme. bloþe bþeneð beopna gehþýlcne ðe him ænigne onfeng geþeð :
f		re mannum fýmble biþ on hihþe ðonn hi hine fepiaþ ofep fæfþe þeþ of hibþim hengert bþingeþ to lande :
t		biþ tacna fum healdeð tþyþa pel. piþ æþelingar a biþ onfæpýlþe. ofep nihta genipu. næfpe fþiceþ :
b		býþ bleða leaþ. beþeþ efne fpa ðeah tanaþ butan tubþeþ. biþ on telgum plitig. þeah on helme hþýpþeþ fægeþe. geloben leaþum lýfte getenge :
e		býþ fop eoplum æþelinga pýn. hopþ hopum planc. ðær him hæleþe ýmb. felege on picgum pþixlaþ fppæce. 7 biþ unfýllum æfne fpoþur :
m		býþ on mýpþe hýf magan leof. fceal þeah anpa gehþýlc obnum fþican. fop ðam ðrihten pýle ðome fine f eapme flæfþe eopþan beþæcan :
l		býþ leobum langfum gehþeþ gýf hi fculun neþun on nacan tealtum. 7 hi fæ ýþa fþýþe bþegaþ. and fe bþim hengert bþibleþ ne gým :
ms		pæf æþeþ mid eaft ðenum. ge feþen fecgun. of he fýððan eft. ofep pæg gepit pæn æfþeþ pan. ður heapþingar ðone hæle nembun :
ae		býþ ofep leof. æghþýlcum men. gýf he mot ðær. pihter and gepýfena on bþucan on bloþe bleaþum oftaft :
ð		býþ ðrihtneþ fonþ. beope mannum. mæpe metodeþ leoht. mýpþþ and to hih eabþum and eapnum. callum þpice :
a		býþ on eopþan. elþa beapnum. flæfþeþ fobop feþeþ gelome ofep ganoteþ bþþ gapprecg fandaþ. hþæþeþ ac hæbbe æþele tpeope :
ae		biþ ofep heah. elþum býpe. ftiþ on ftaþule. fteþe pihte hýlt. ðeah him feohtan on fpaþ monige :
y		býþ æþelinga 7 eopla gehþeþ. pýn and pýþþmýnþ. býþ on picge fægen. fæftlic on fæþelþe. fþyþ geaceþa fum :
lo		býþ ea fixa. and ðeah abpuceþ. fobþeþ onfalban. haþaþ fægeþne eapþ. pæþne beopþen. ðær he pýnnum leofaþ :
eo		býþ egie eopla gehþýlcun. ðonn fæftlice flæfþe onginneþ. hþapcolian hþuran ceoran blac to geþeþþan bleða geþeopþaþ. pýnna gepitaþ peþa gefþicaþ :
q		
th		
		<i>Hós Characteres HTHPTVTHX ad alia festinans Studiofo lectori interpretanda relinquo.</i> L. 1. 2. Erat

Figure 2: *Futhorc* from Cotton Domitian A. IX, fo. 11 v (*Thesaurus, 'Grammatica Anglo-Saxonica et Moeso-Gothica', p.136*)

136 GRAMMATICA ANGLO-SAXONICA, &
 II. Extat & altera literarum *Dano-runicarum* descriptio, cum explicatione *Anglo-Saxonica* in eadem bibliotheca, (*Domitianus A. 9.*) quam in tabella lectori studioso hic infra offero:

feoh. up. ðorn. of. pad. cen. gifu. pen. hegg-l. nead. eac. geor. sigel. proppð.
 F. N. þ. F. R. h. X. P. N. þ. t. l. þ. S. C. Y. R.
 F. u. ð. o. n. c. g. u. h. n. i. ge. eo. p. x. r.
 tip. bere. efel. deg. lagr. me. mann pro. ac. æsc. yr. tip. ^{orent} ^{cup} 10p. cþopð. 10lx.
 T. B. M. M. T. X. H. R. F. F. M. T. * W. H.
 t. b. e. m. l. ing. ð. oe. a. æ. γ. ear. to. q. k.

fran. gap. calc.

 Mich. Burghers sculp.

Sequentia, manu recentiori

f. feoh. i. pecunia.	g. gifu. i. grahà.	h. hegel. i. grando.
e. ethel. i. patria.	d. deg. i. dies.	th. thorn. i. spina.
m. man. vel manna. homo.	u. dr. i. reverentia.	æ. æsc. i. fraxinus.
ea. gea. vel ear. i. aſus.	st. vel z. stan. i. lapis.	r. rad. i. consilium.
b. bere. i. cortex.	i. sigel. i. velum.	u. ur. i. noſter.

Ex his, tanquam ex idoneis testibus, valde probabile est *Anglo-Saxones* discendis *runis* operam dedisse. Neque mirum est victos victorum, servos dominorum linguam didicisse, in qua, cum aliquid rogarent, ab iis se gratiores audiendos esse, & quæ peterent, facilius impetraturos scirent.

III. Præterea cum in potestate *Danorum* tandem *Saxones* australes essent, non mirum est eorum sermonem sub *Danico* imperio languentem fatisci cæpisse, & cum *Saxonicis* rebus in deterius partem abiisse. *Saxones* frugerunt *Dani*, fregitque paulatim *Anglo-Saxonica* loquela *Danica*, & quasi statum illius mutando in alteram pene mutavit. Quemadmodum autem *status* mutatus, quam diminutionem capitis veteres *Romani* vocabant, triplex fuit; maxima, minor & minima: sic à *Danù* in *Anglia* prævalentibus, & deinceps usque ad finem seculi secundi decimi, puriori australium *Saxonum* sermoni quasi triplex accidit *mutatio status*; minima quoad scripturam, quoad voces & phrasas major, & maxima quoad syntaxin; quo jus omne suum, sub *Normannis* dominis, cum *Saxonica* civitate & libertatibus, adeo perdidit, ut nomen suum retinere non permisum esset.

Secundum hanc igitur triplicem *status* mutationem, australem *Saxonum* linguam in *Semi-Saxonica* labascentem tripliciter considerandam esse judicamus. primò quoad scripturam, vel scribendi rationem mutatam. secundò quoad voces phrasasque, quæ jam tum peregrinæ introire cœperunt. denique quoad syntaxin, quæ cum tempore primum sub *Danù*, dein sub *Normannis* dominis, non solum in concordantiæ regulis, sed in omnium orationis constructione, quas antea erat religio temerare, maxime violata est.

IV. Primum igitur, in quo *Anglo-Saxonica* australis, quasi suæ dignitatis immemor, in *Semi-Saxonica* degenerasse cernitur, est veteris scribendi moris in novum conversio, nonnullas permutando literas, ex quibus voces solebant formari. Sic *g* in *i* vel *y* vertitur in principio, medio, & fine dictionum. In principio: ut *unge* pro *geonge*, chron. *Sax. Gib.* p. 168, 1. *and* *elley* *amýpþon* *manige* *unge* *men*. Sic p. 37. 11, 13. *iatepeapb* his legitur pro *gætepeapb*. Sic quoque *iaf* legitur pro *gaf*, 231. 2, 10. *iet* pro *gýt*, 232. 42. *iaf* pro *gaf*, *nuen* & *iauen* pro *gýfen*, 242. 37, 38, 46. *he* *puop* *on* *halgþoom*. *ý* *gýrley* *þanb*. *þ* *he* *alle* *hýr* *cærteley* *sculde* *nuen* *up*. *þome* *he* *iaf* *up*. *ý* *þome* *ne* *iaf* *he* *noht*. *ý* *þnohten* *hipe* *into* *Oxenþopb*. *ý* *nua* *hipe* *þe* *bupch*. Sic quoque *ieþen* pro *geoben*, *iverunt*. 22, 4, 46. In medio: ut *cæie* pro *cæge*, *clæve*, 38, 29. *æipþe* pro *ægþne*, *utræque*, 153, 25. *peinar* pro *pegnar*, *pluvias*, 219, 30. Quibus adde *bæiey* pro *bægey*, *bebýneþ* pro *bebýngeþ* vel *bebýnþgeþ*, *sepultus*, *þpeibe* pro *þpegeþ*, *accusabat*, & id genus multa. In fine: ut *bæi*, *dies*, pro *bæg*; *ælmiht*, *omnipotens*, pro *ælmihtig*; *tpenti*, *viginti*, pro *tpentig*; *hæui* pro *heþig*, *gravius*; *maí* pro *mæg*, *possum*; *laí* pro *læg*, *facebam*; *æni* pro *ænig*, *ullus*; *býpi* pro *býpig*, *urbis*; & istius modi innumera alia: ut *ðeiner* pro *ðegner*; *ýrleþed* pro *geýrleþed*; *ipitneýre* pro *geþitneýre*; *ibidden* pro *geþebþan*; quæ omnia leguntur in charta quadam *Edwardi* confessoris dicti, quæ in *Latinis* (*þ* & *þ* exceptis) literis transcripta extat, inter alias haud paucas in archivis ecclesiæ cathedralis *Wellesis*.

E Duuard King gret Harold Erl and Tavid minne schyre-refen and alle mine þeines inge Samirfæten frendliche. And ich keþe eu þat Alfred haver isfeld Gife bissop his land at Hlytton Scleas and clane toforen me silven æt *Peddæredan* on mine ipitneſſe and Eadithe mine ibidden, and on Haroldes ærles.

V. Sic

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