

The Rune Poem

Ed. Elliot van Kirk Dobbie, *ASPR* 6 (1942), pp. 28-30.

Originally found in Cotton Otho B.x, ff. 165r–165v. The manuscript was destroyed by fire in 1731, but the text of the poem was printed by George Hickes in 1705. Phonetic values of the runes and “extra” runes not present in Otho B.x were taken by Hickes from Cotton Domitian A.ix, f. 10r. The names of the runes may come from a third source. Dobbie concludes, “It is in fact probable that only the runic letters themselves were present at the beginning of each stanza in the original manuscript” (xlvii). There are also Icelandic and Norwegian rune poems.

ƿ

(**ƿeoh**) byþ frofur fira gehwylcum.

Sceal ðeah manna gehwylc miclun hyt dælan

gif he wile for drihtne domes hleotan.

ᚠ

(**ᚠur**) byþ anmod and oferhryned,

felaƿrecne deor, ƿeohteþ mid hornum,

5

mære morstapa; þæt is modig wuht.

ᚢ

(**ᚢorn**) byþ ðearle scearp; ðegna gehwylcum

anfeng ys yfyl, ungemetun reþe

manna gehwylcun ðe him mid resteð.

ᚷ

(**ᚷs**) byþ ordfruma ælcra spræce,

10

wisdomes wraþu and witenas frofur,

and eorla gehwam eadnys and tohiht.

ᚱ

(**ᚱad**) byþ on recyde rinca gehwylcum

sefte, and swiþhwæt ðam ðe sitteþ on ufan

meare mægenheardum ofer milpaþas.

15

ᚦ

(**ᚦen**) byþ cwicera gehwam cuþ on fyre,

blac and beorhtlic, byrneþ oftust

ðær hi æþelingas inne restaþ.

ᚨ

(**ᚨyfu**) gumena byþ gleng and herenys,

wraþu and wyrþscype, and wræcna gehwam

20

ar and ætwist ðe byþ oþra leas.

ᚥ

(**ᚥen**)ne bruceþ ðe can weana lyt,

sares and sorge, and him sylfa hæfþ

blæd and blysse and eac byrga geniht.

ᚨ

(**ᚨægl**) byþ hwitust corna; hwyrft hit of heofones lyfte,

25

wealcaþ hit windes scuras, weorþeþ hit to wætere syððan.

ƿ	(<u>nyd</u>) byþ nearu on breostan, weorþeþ hi ðeah oft niþa bearnum to helpe and to hæle gehwæþre, gif hi his hlystaþ æror.	
l	(<u>is</u>) byþ oferceald, ungemetum slidor, glisnaþ glæshluttur, gimumm gelicust, flor forste geworuht, fæger anysne.	30
*	(<u>ger</u>) byþ gumena hiht, ðon god læteþ, halig heofones cyning, hrusan syllan beorhte bleða beornum and ðearfum.	
ƿ	(<u>eo</u> h) byþ utan unsmeþe treow, heard, hrusan fæst, hyrde fyres, wyrtrumun underwreþyd, wyn on eþle.	35
ƿ	(<u>peorð</u>) byþ symble plega and hlehter wlancum ðar wigan sittað on beorsele bliþe ætsomne.	40
ƿ	(<u>eo</u> lhx) secg eard hæfþ oftust on fenne, wexeð on wature, wundað grimme, blode breneð beorna gehwylcne ðe him ænigne onfeng gedeð.	
h	(<u>sigel</u>) semannum symble biþ on hihte, ðonn hi hine feriaþ ofer fisses beþ, oþ hi brimhengest bringeþ to lande.	45
↑	(<u>Tir</u>) biþ tacna sum, healdeð trywa wel wiþ æþelingas, a biþ on færylde, ofer nihta genipu næfre swiceþ.	50
ƿ	(<u>beorc</u>) byþ bleða leas, bereþ efne swa ðeah tanæs butan tudder, biþ on telgum wlitig, heah on helme hrysted fægere, geloden leafum, lyfte getenge.	
M	(<u>eh</u>) byþ for eorlum æþelinga wyn, hors hofum wlanc, ðær him hæleþ ymbe welege on wicgum, wrixlaþ spræce, and biþ unstyllum æfre frofur.	55



(man) byþ on myrgþe his magan leof;
sceal þeah anra gehwylc oðrum swican,
for ðam dryhten wyle dome sine
þæt earme flæsc eorþan betæcan.

60



(lagu) byþ leodum langsum geþuht,
gif hi sculun neþan on nacan tealtum,
and hi sæyþa swyþe bregap,
and se brimhengest bridles ne gymeð.

65



(Ing) wæs ærest mid Eastdenum
gesewen secgun, oþ he siððan eft
ofer wæg gewat, wæn æfter ran;
ðus heardingas ðone hæle nemdun.

70



(epel) byþ oferleof æghwylcum men,
gif he mot ðær rihtes and gerysena on
brucan on bolde bleadum oftast.



(dæg) byþ drihtnes sond, deore mannum,
mære metodes leoht, myrgþ and tohiht
eadgum and earmum, eallum brice.

75



(ac) byþ on eorþan elda bearnum
flæsces fodor, fereþ gelome
ofer ganotes bæþ; garsecg fandaþ
hwæper ac hæbbe æþele treowe.

80



(æsc) biþ oferheah, eldum dyre,
stiþ on stapule, stede rihte hylt,
ðeah him feohtan on firas monige.



(yr) byþ æþelinga and eorla gehwæs
wyn and wyrþmynd, byþ on wicge fæger,
fæstlic on færelde, fyrdgeatewa sum.

85



(ior) byþ eafix, and ðeah a bruceþ
fodres on foldan, hafaþ fægerne eard,
wætre beworpen, ðær he wynnum leofaþ.



(ear) byþ egle eorla gehwylcun,
ðonn fæstlice flæsc onginneþ,
hraw colian, hrusan ceosan
blac to gebeddan; bleða gedreosaþ,
wynna gewitaþ, wera geswicaþ.