

## THE BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH

Æþelstan cyning, eorla dryhten,  
beorna beahgifa, ond his broþor eac,  
Eadmund æþeling, ealdorlangne tir  
geslogon æt sæcce sweorda ecgum  
5 ymbe Brunanburh. Bordweal clufan,  
heowan heaþolinde hamora lafan,  
afaran Eadwardes, swa him geæþele wæs  
from cneomægum, þæt hi æt campe oft  
wiþ laþra gehwæne land ealgodon,  
10 hord ond hamas. Hettend crungun,  
Sceotta leoda ond scipflotan  
fæge feollan. Feld dænnede  
secgas hwate siðþan sunne up  
on morgentid, mære tungol,  
15 glad ofer grundas, godes condel beorht,  
eces Drihtnes, oð sio æþele gesceaft  
sah to setle. Þær læg secg mænig  
garum ageted, guma norþerna  
ofer scild scoten, swilce Scittisc eac,  
20 werig, wiges sæd. Wesseaxe forð  
ondlongne dæg eorodcistum  
on last legdun laþum þeodum,  
heowan herefleman hindan þearle  
mecum mylenscearpan. Myrce ne wyrndon  
25 heardes hondplegan hæleþa nanum  
þæ mid Anlafe ofer æra gebland  
on lides bosme land gesohtun,  
fæge to gefeohte. Fife lægun  
on þam campstede cyninges giunge,  
30 swordum aswefede, swilce seofene eac  
eorlas Anlafes, unrim heriges,  
flotan ond Sceotta. þær geflemed wearð  
Norðmanna bregu, nede gebeded,  
to lides stefne litle weorode;  
35 cread cnear on flot, cyning ut gewat  
on fealene flod, feorh generede.  
Swilce þær eac se froda mid fleame com

on his cyppe norð, Costontinus,  
har hilderinc, hreman ne þorfte  
40 mæcan gemanan; he wæs his mæga sceard,  
freonda gefylled on folcstede,  
beslagen æt sæcce, ond his sunu forlet  
on wælstowe wundun fergrunden,  
giungne æt guðe. Gelpan ne þorfte  
45 beorn blandenfeax bilgeslehtes,  
eald inwidda, ne Anlaf þy ma;  
mid heora herelafum hlehhan ne þorftun  
þæt heo beaduweorca beteran wurdun  
on campstede cumbolgehnades,  
50 garmittinge, gumena gemotes,  
wæpengewrixles, þæs hi on wælfelda  
wiþ Eadweardes afaran plegodan.  
Gewitan him þa Norþmen nægledcnearrum,  
dreorig daraða laf, on Dinges mere  
55 ofer deop wæter Difelin secan,  
ond eft hira land, æwiscmode.  
Swilce þa gebroþer begen ætsamne,  
cuning ond æpeling, cyppe sohton,  
Wesseaxena land, wiges hremige.  
60 Letan him behindan hræw bryttian  
saluwigpadan, þone sweartan hræfn,  
hyrnednebban, ond þane hasewanpadan,  
earn æftan hwit, æses brucan,  
grædigne guðhafoc, ond þæt græge deor,  
65 wulf on wealde. Ne wearð wæl mare  
on þis eiglande æfer gieta  
folces gefylled beforan þissum  
sweordes ecgum, þæs þe us secgað bec,  
ealde uðwitan, siþþan eastan hider  
70 Engle ond Seaxe up becoman,  
ofer brad brimu Brytene sohtan,  
wlance wigsmiþas, Wealas ofercoman,  
eorlas arhwate eard begeatan.

## Notes to *The Battle of Brunanburh*

This is an entirely new edition of the text of this poem, based upon a collation of all four of the manuscripts (MSS A, B, C and D of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*) in which it appears. It can be shewn that MSS B, C and D all derive from one common ancestor, while A is independent of this ancestor. Ms A, the “Parker MS”, has been chosen as the basis of this edition, as it is the oldest surviving manuscript - this section was written before 964 - and appears to preserve an orthography which has been much less influenced than any of the others by the emerging West Saxon literary standard. No attempt has been made to “normalise” the forms of the ms, as it is not likely that the scribe of the original written text of the poem would have written in the “normal” dialect to which later writers aspired. Only one or two minor forms, such as the occasional use of ‘*eea*’ for ‘*ea*,’ have been changed, and these are such as may be regarded as peculiarities of the scribe of the Parker MS itself.

It has been assumed that where A agrees with any of BCD, this agreement represents the “true” text of the poem, and it has not normally been thought worthwhile to record the dissenting readings of single mss in such instances. Where there is no agreement, the reading of A has been preferred where it is defensible; otherwise, that ms has been followed which presents the most plausible text. All such cases of disagreement, and all significant variant readings, are given in the textual notes below.

*lines 1-10* dryhten] drihten BCD Brunan-] Brun<sup>ā</sup>/an- A; Brunan- BD; Brunnan- C linde] -linda BC; -linga *corrected to* -linda D lafan] lafum BCD aforan] eforan B; aforan C; eforan *with first o marked for correction* D from] fram BCD crungun] crungon BCD

*lines 11-20* Sceotta leoda] Scotta leode BCD dānnede] dæn<sup>ā</sup>/ede *with mark of insertion* A; dennade BC; dennode D secgas hwate] *sic* A; secga swate BCD condel] candel BCD sio] seo BC; se D mænig] manig B; monig CD guma] guman BCD norþerna] norðerne BC; norþærne D scild] scyld BCD Scittisc] Scyttisc BCD

*lines 21-30* onðlongne] andlangne BCD eorodcistum] eoredcystum BCD legdun] legdon BC; lægdon D -fleman] -flyman BD; -flymon C mylenscearpan] mylenscearpum BC; mycelscearpum D heardes] heeardes A; heardes BCD hond-] hand- BCD þæ] þara ðe BC; þæra þe D æra] ear BCD gesohtun] gesohtan B; gesohton CD lægun] lagon BCD cýninges] cingas B; ciningas C; cýningas D giunge] geonge BC; iunga D

*lines 31-40* heriges] herges BCD Sceotta] Scotta BCD geflemed] geflymed BCD bregu] brego BCD gebeded] gebæded BCD litle] lytle BCD cnear on] cnea ren A; cnear on BCD cyning] cing B; cining C flot ... fealene] *om.* D fealene] fealone BC Costontinus] Constantinus BCD -rinc] -ring A; -rinc BCD mæcan] mecea B; meca C; mecga D

*lines 41-50* beslagen] forslegen B; beslegen C; beslægen D wundun fergrunden] wundum forgrunden BCD giungne] geongne BCD gelpan] gylpan BCD bilgeslehtes] billgeslyhtes B; billgeslihtes CD inwidda] inwitta BC; inwuda D hlehhan] hlihhan BC; hlybban D heo] hie B; hi CD beadu-] beado- BCD wurdun] wurdan B; wurdon CD cumbolgehnades] cumbelgehnades *corrected from* culbod- *above line* A; cumbolgehnastes BCD

*lines 51-60* norþmen] norþmen A; norðmenn BC; norþmen D daraða] daroða B; dareða CD Difelin] Dyflen B; Dyflin C; Dyflig D ond] 7 *superscript* A; *om.* BCD hira] Ira B; Yra CD gebroþer] gebroðor BD; broðor C ætsamne] ætsomne BC; æt runne D Wesseaxena] Westseaxna BD; Wessexena C hremige] hramige *corrected to* hremige *above line* A; hremige BCD hræw] hræw A; hraw B; hra CD bryttian] bryttigean B; brittigan C; bryttinga D

*lines 61-73* saluwig-] salowig- BCD hasewanpadan] hasopadan B; hasupadan C; hasuwadan D þis] þys BC; þisne D eiglande] eglande B; iglande CD æfer] æfre BCD gieta] gyta BC; gita D þissum] þyssum BCD brad] brade BCD Wealas] Weealas A; Wealas BCD begeatan] begeaton BCD