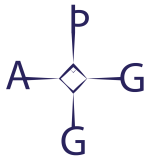

Ghent University

All Þings Germanic Reading Group

The Lay of Hildebrand

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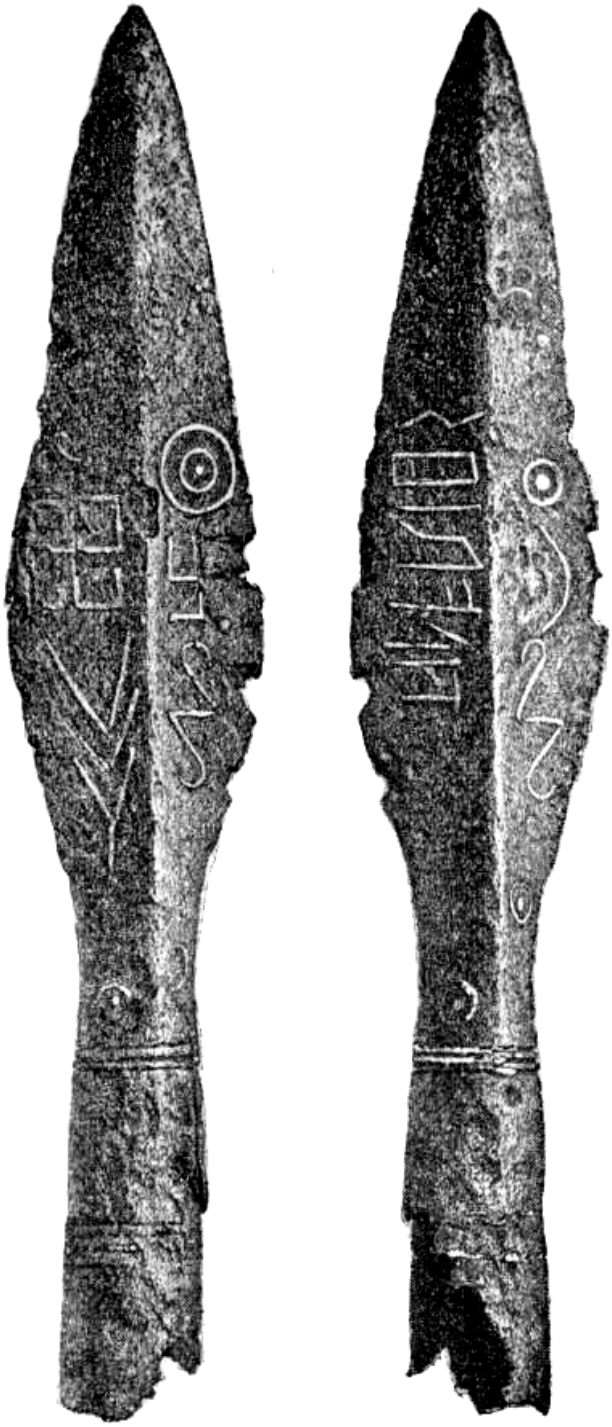
19th April 2023



Contents

This Edition

In the library of the University of Kassel there is a manuscript with the shelfmark 2° Ms. theol. 54. Folios 1r and 76v of this manuscript contain the text of an untitled poem which editors have dubbed the *Lay of Hildebrand* (often known, even in English, in modern German form as the *Hildebrand-* or *Hildebrandslied*). The manuscript is dated to roughly around 830, and was probably produced in Fulda, in the middle of what is now Germany (Düwel and Ruge 2013, 171, with references); the poem is clearly a copy from an earlier manuscript, but its exact date of composition is unknown.

The *Lay of Hildebrand* is widely acknowledged as a treasure of early medieval literature, and its literary qualities and philological interest are manifest despite the rather poor state in which the text is preserved. This edition is intended to present a version of this poem that does justice both to the manuscript data and to the work of philologists and editors on the poem over the years. My primary goal is not to contextualize this work in cultural or literary history, nor analyse the poem as a work of literature – the brief contextualizations presented below are meant as a simple preface or background, not a reflection of critical trends – but to reconsider the textual fundamentals and present these in a straightforward and intelligible manner. I hope this will be useful as a starting point anyone wishing to appreciate the *Lay* as a historical or literary artefact, and will allow readers to readily appreciate which aspects of the received text are reasonable secure, and what the points of difficult really consist of.

This is a critical edition of the poem. When only a single witness exists for a given work, the methods of establishing a 'critical' text are far from straightforward or mechanical. There are two aspects that separate this from a more diplomatic or 'conservative' treatment of the text: presentation and emendation. First, as a very significant editorial intervention (though one now so routine that its significance is often taken for granted), the text has been interpreted palaeographically, metrically, and syntactically, and presented in a way that is intended to be relatively intelligible and intuitive to read. Specifically, I have departed from the manuscript in the following ways:

1. Lineating the lines according to their poetic structure.

2. Introducing capitalization and punctuation.

3. Adding macrons to mark long vowels.

4. Hyphenating compound words.

5. Converting most letter-forms to modern equivalents.

6. Superscripting certain non-metrical elements.

Note that where the manuscript writes *p* or (more often) *ṕ*,[1] – "wynn", a runic letter representing the sound [w] – I retain this, in contrast to most editions. This letter is not difficult to get used to, and is an important part of the manuscript's scribal character.

Second, I have considered points where there is some suggestion from sense, syntax, metre, etc. that the transmitted text may be in error: that a scribe (accidentally or under some mistaken impression) altered the text they were copying in a way that changed the poem away from what the poet had composed. The term 'error' is sometimes seen as overly loaded, but in the cases considered here, it is intended as a simple description of what likely happened. Editorial intervention of this sort is signalled as follows:

1. Accepting editorial emendations to extant elements, marked in italics.

2. Inserting restorations of single words not found in the manuscript, inside square brackets.

3. Marking longer possible lacunae in the text using elipses within square brackets.

For all emendations, I give the manuscript reading in a footnote, along with a citation to where I believe the emendation was first proposed. I follow the text with a short commentary on specific points of greater difficulty. Where an emendation has no comment, it should be taken as mainstream and widely accepted by editors: a part of the 'received text' of the poem. For points that are more disputed or conjenctural, I try to make clear the status of the text in the commentary. There is no such thing as a definitive text of a poem like this, but this does not mean that all possibilities are equally likely. Nor does it mean that the manuscript reading is a safe fallback when the text is in dispute: it is often the case that no single emendation is clearly right, but the transmitted text is clearly wrong. In such cases (except for the possible longer lacunae), I prefer to give a clearly marked emendation (where necessary with a question mark to reinforce uncertainty) in order to prompt consideration of the text.

1. The acute here represents the apex mark used in the manuscript, which is probably employed to help distinguish *p* from *ṕ*.

Readers should take the conjectural status of these emendations seriously, and approach the work of scribes and editors alike with both a charitable and critical mind.

Images of the original manuscript follow the critical text. These images are best consulted on the University of Kassel library's own website, where you can zoom in on details at a very high level of resolution. Here are the links to the two sides:

1. https://orka.bibliothek.uni-kassel.de/viewer/image/1296741113093/169/
2. https://orka.bibliothek.uni-kassel.de/viewer/image/1296741113093/156/

I have retained the lineation of Braune (1994), which is widely referenced in the scholarly literature, with the unavoidable exception of lines 15b–17 (see the commentary to line 15). I make no attempt to give any historical, literary, or linguistic interpretations of the poem as a whole. There is much that can be (and has been) said on all these subjects, elsewhere. For general literature, see Düwel and Ruge (2013).

Contexts for Reading

The *Lay of Hildebrand* focuses on one immediate situation: a confrontation (verbal, then physical) between two champions representing two opposing armies. The wider circumstances of the conflict are sketched out and alluded to, especially in lines 18–24, . Thirty years previously (line 50), a king named here Theotrīh (Deotrīh, Deotrīch) was driven out of his kingdom by a man named Ōtacher. Theotrīh fled into exile, and seems to have taken refuge with the lord of the Huns (line 35). After three decades have passed, Theotrīh returns with an army, presumably consisting at least partly of Huns, intending to retake his kingdom from Ōtacher.

The poem's attention is not on the kings, but on their champions. Hiltibrant is an old retainer of Theotrīh who fled with him into exile, leaving behind a then-infant son, Hadubrant. Hadubrant has now grown up, believes his father to have died somewhere over the Mediterranean (the Ƿéntil-sēo or Vandal-sea, named for the Vandals who established a fairly brief-lived kingdom in northern Africa), and is the champion of Ōtacher's forces. The poem tells of their encounter between the armies, their introductions to one another, Hiltibrant's realization that he was confronting his own son, and his failed attempt to avoid a fight. Hadubrant believes the older warrior facing

him is trying to deceive him to get him to let down his guard, and insists on battle. The manuscript breaks off shortly after they begin to fight without describing or clearly foreshadowing the outcome (see the commentary to line 68). Probably Hadubrant is killed by his father.

History and Legend

These events have a loose connection to the real history of the fifth century. Ōtacher is derived ultimately from the historical figure known in English as Odoacer (Greek Ὀδόακρος). He was in reality a high-ranking Roman military official of some kind of non-Roman (and probably Germanic-speaking) background, who in 476 deposed the child-emperor Romulus Augustulus and established himself as king of Italy. This event is, with considerable exaggeration, sometimes held to mark the end of the Western Roman Empire. Odoacer himself ruled as king until 493, when he was defeated by Theoderic, king of the Ostrogoths.

The relevant background of the Ostrogoths goes back to the 370s, when the Huns entered the prairies north of the Black Sea (modern Ukraine) and defeated the kingdom or confederacy led by Ermanaric the Goth. These events led to a major split between the Visigoths, who entered the Roman Empire and eventually established themselves in southern Gaul and Iberia, and the Ostrogoths who remained and were absorbed into a new coalition led by the Huns. When Hunnish power collapsed after the death of Attila, their most renowned leader, in 453, the Ostrogoths began to act more independently, and eventually entered the Eastern Roman Empire. Theoderic – the Theotrīh of the *Lay* – became their king around 475, and invaded Italy in 489. This was done on the understanding that he was retaking lost imperial territories for Emperor Zeno, and would rule as a client of the (Eastern) Roman Empire. After several years of conflict, Theoderic defeated Odoacer and had him murdered at a banquet. He went on to rule from his seat in Ravenna until his death in 526, becoming one of the most influential and powerful political actors in the Mediterranean at the time.

Theoderic's life and career were remembered not only in various historical sources, but also in orally transmitted legends, reflexes of which would eventually be written down in places as far afield as England and Iceland. The current poem is one of the earliest reflections of these legends, which are more amply attested in Middle High German poetry (where he is known as Dietrich von Bern, or Dietrich of Verona), and in works such as *Þiðreks saga* (a Norse prose

narrative clearly derived from German sources).

As legendary cycles are wont to do, these narratives freely altered characters, relationships, motivations, geography, and chronology, usually with the goals of bringing together as many famous figures as possible, telling entertaining stories, and adapting to the ideological and moral sensibilities of the times they were told in. In the *Lay*, this kind of reworking is obvious in a few points. Most obvious is that Theotrīh is seemingly portrayed not as an outsider invader, but as a 'rightful' king retaking his throne. (The poem does not say outright that Theotrīh had been king previously, but it seems strongly implied; in later, Middle High German poetry this is explicit.) This change was made probably to put Theotrīh a more favourable light, by the standards of royal legitimacy of the earlier Middle Ages.

He is also portrayed as having a close personal connection with the Huns, apparently having been sheltered by the 'lord of the Huns' (*Hūneo truhtīn*), presumably Attila the Hun, Etzel in Middle High German. Attila's portrayal ranges from the generally positive (in much Middle High German literature, including famously in the *Nibelungenlied*), to the ambivalent (as in the Latin epic *Waltharius*), to the hostile (as in the Norse *Atlakviða*). Here, the Huns seem to play a positive role, as protectors and allies of Theotrīh, though Hadubrant may intend insult in calling his father a Hun (line 39; but the insult may only be about Hiltibrant's age). Historically, Theoderic was only born around the time of Attila's death, and his reign was marked by the divergence of the Ostrogoths from the Huns. This kind of change is characteristic of oral legends: flattening out chronological discrepancies so that famous and charismatic figures such as Attila and Theoderic can be brought into a single narrative world. This sort of chronological levelling would continue, and in Middle High German poetry Ōtacher, Theoderic's historical opponent, is replaced by Ermenrich – the Gothic king Ermanaric mentioned above, who predated Attila and whose only connection is that he was famous as a (defeated) foe of Huns.

The history of the later Western Roman Empire, the Huns, and the Ostrogoths is a vast subject, approachable from many angles. A general and readable overview of the whole period and more is Wickham (2009). A useful guide to Gothic history is Heather (1996), while for a general reconsideration of the interactions of various 'barbarian' groups and Rome, see Meier (2019). For more on the growth of Theoderic's legends, see especially Heinzle (1999) and Lienert (2010), and for sources, Lienert (2008).

Heroic Poetry

The *Lay* is often seen as a quintessential example of 'Germanic' heroic poetry. By 'Germanic' is meant not simply that it is in a Germanic language, but that it shows stylistic and cultural features meant to be characteristic of the speakers of Germanic languages. The poem's metrical form certainly aligns it with the poetic traditions of Old Saxon, Old English, and Old Norse; see §??. There are also specific items of poetic vocabulary that have cognates in one or more related traditions, such as the use of *asckim* and *lintun* to mean not literally 'ash(wood)' and 'linden(wood)' but 'spear' and 'shield' (cf. Old English *æsc*, *lind*). Even whole half-lines occasionally find resonance elsewhere, as is the case with 55b, *ibu dir dīn ellen taoc* 'if your valour is sufficient for you', and *Beowulf* 573, *þonne his ellen dēah* 'when his valour is sufficient'.

Thematically, the poem is a martial one, and features such as the conflict between family and military bonds, the looming sense of inevitable fate, the importance of courage, and the often barbed or loaded verbal exchange before the fight are all widespread – not just in Germanic-language literatures, but in works ranging from Irish saga to the Chinese *Romance of Three Kingdoms*. These are important components in the cultural background of the poem, which reflects the military aristocracy of early medieval Europe, but they should not be mistaken as *distinctively* characteristic of any kind of 'Germanic spirit'.

More interesting, on a cultural level, are things like the symbolic importance of arm-rings as tokens of harmony and connection (lines 33–35), which are much less universal (though again not strictly limited to Germanic-speaking peoples). Overall, the poem can certainly be read usefully as part of a wider poetic history of Germanic alliterative verse – and so compared to things like *Beowulf*, *Waldere*, *The Battle of Maldon*, *Heliand*, *Atlakviða*, *Hlǫðskviða*, etc. – and of a cultural history of Germanic-speaking groups, as long as it is remembered that there are also wider histories and cultural tendencies that inform the poem.

Metre

The *Lay* is in a form of alliterative verse that is clearly related to the metre best represented in the roughly 30 000 lines of surviving Old English poetry. On the Continent, the Old Saxon *Heliand* is also in an obviously cognate metrical form, as are a handful of shorter works (*Genesis*, the *Wessobrunn Prayer*, *Muspilli*, etc.). Further afield, Norse poetry is composed in a range of related

metrical forms, with those in *fornyrðislag* and *málaháttr* being the most similar to West Germanic verse forms.

The basic outlines of the poetic line are simple and relatively uncontroversial. Each line of poetry falls into two half-lines, also called verses, which are separated in most editions by a break of four spaces. The first half-line may be called the on-verse, the second the off-verse The first metrically salient stresses of each half-line must start with the same sound: they must alliterate. This is easily illustrated using the first full line of the poem:

đat sih ur-hēttun ǣnon muotīn

The first two words are lower-stress elements that are ignored for alliteration, with the first properly stressed syllable being *ur-*. This must alliterate with the first stress of the off-verse, the syllable *ǣ-*. By the rules of all Germanic alliterative verse, all vowels alliterate with all other vowels,[2]

In this example, only these two syllables alliterate. In on-verses, it is not uncommon to find a second alliterating stress, as in *Hiltibrant enti Haðubrant*. In the off-verses, such double alliteration is prohibited.[3] Exceptions to the alliterative patterning do occur, and may indicate problems in the text's transmission history. This is particularly obvious in two lines that only superficially show faulty alliteration: line 19, where *th-* and *d-* alliterate with one another, and in line 21, with *p-* and *b-*. In these cases, the same etymological sound is meant, and the poet presumably had a consistent form in all cases (presumably respectively [θ], spelled *th*, and – if the poem really is Upper German in origin – [p]). But some cases are very difficult, such as line 60 (see the commentary to that line).

Alliteration usually only concerns the first consonant of a word, so that *hēremo* and *hrusti* alliterate in line 56. The one exception, also found in cognate metres, is that clusters of *s* plus any of the stop consonants *p*, *t*, or *k* (*c*) count as a unit for alliteration. This is particularly prominent in line 64, where the main alliteration is on *sc-*, and the final *stōnt* counts as a deviation from this (not as an unmetrical double alliteration in the off-verse).

This framework of half-lines and alliterative patterns only scratches the surface of metrical structure. In related works like *Beowulf* on Norse poetry

2. It may be that such words in fact began with a glottal stop, and it is this that alliterates (Minkova 2003, ch. 4).

3. A second stress in the off-verse can seem to participate in alliteration in two ways: as part of a secondary alliterative scheme with the *second* stress of the on-verse (crossed alliteration, found in lines 7, 9, 24, and 40), or anticipating the alliteration of the following line (lines 15, 39, 46, 48, 63, and 67). Both of these are probably best regarded as ornamental alliteration, an artistic option building on the basis of the structural alliteration of the first lifts of half-line.

in the *fornyrðislag* metre, the organization of stressed and unstressed syllables within a half-line is strictly regulated, so that some arrangements of words that are common in prose are not possible or are strictly limited in verse. Limitations can include only using some rhythmic configurations in the on-verse, but prohibiting them in the off-verse, or requiring more complex stress patterns to be used only with double alliteration. A fair number of the half-lines in the *Lay* can be construed using these principles without modification, though there are a significant minority of verses that either would simply not be metrical at all under the Beowulfian norm, or which are used more freely (in the off-verse, or with single alliteration). This is also true of Old Saxon poetry, which suggests that at least some of the differences compared to the well-studied metre of *Beowulf* are due to genuine differences in metrical norms. On the other hand, the surviving manuscript of the *Lay* clearly transmits the poem relatively poorly, and some of the apparent oddities are likely due to errors in copying.

Language

The language of the *Lay* presents an extremely confusing and complicated problem to philologists. The phonology shows a mixture of dialect forms that can only be described as bizarre. Some words show distinctively Ingvaeonic sound changes, such as *gūđ* 'battle' in line 5, which shows the loss of the nasal **n* before the fricative **þ* (with compensatory lengthening of the preceding vowel), a change characteristic of Old English, Old Frisian, and Old Saxon (the Ingvaeonic subgroup of West Germanic), but not of other Continental West Germanic varieties. Other words show features, such as *prūt* 'bride', which shows the change of **b* to *p*, normally found only in Upper German dialects. The word *chūd* 'known' (line 12), from West Germanic **kunþ*, may be taken as emblematic of the situation as a whole: the change of **k* to *ch* [kx] is Upper German, while the loss of the historical nasal is Ingvaeonic.[4]

It is very unlikely that the poem as transmitted represents any normal variety of Continental West Germanic. In particular, West Germanic **d* is usually shifted to *t*, but old **t* remains without being shifted to *z*. That is, the text as we have it shows a merger of **d* and **t*: *uuē**t*** 'know' from **wai**t***; *deo**t*** 'people' form **þeu**d***. Such a merger of West Germanic **d* and **t* is striking, and not characteristic of any known dialect. Together with the sporadic mixing of

4. The *d* is ambiguous, as it could either show the German change of **þ* to *d*, or merely be a way of spelling *þ*. This very word is often spelled *cud* in the Munich manuscript of the *Heliand*, though its pronunciation had probably not changed.

forms from the extreme ends of the Continental Germanic dialect spectrum, there are really only two likely possibilities:[5]

1. The text is originally Ingvaeonic, probably Old Saxon, or in a closely related dialect such as Old Low Franconian, but has been coloured with Upper German features in the course of transmission (d'Alquen and Trevers 1984).

2. The text is originally Upper German, perhaps Bavarian, but has been coloured with Saxon features in the course of transmission (Lühr 1982).

Most features related to syntactic structure or metre – aspects of the text perhaps less casually altered in transmission – suggest a High German origin.

Three features stand out in particular. First is the use of reflexive *sih* (line 5). Such reflexives were lost in much of northern West Germanic, and though in many areas they were gradually reintroduced from High German (compare modern Dutch *zich*, where the final fricative form **k* betrays its High German origin), this would be an unusually early example of such a reintroduction if the poem were originally in Old Saxon. Second is the neuter adjectival ending *-at* (line 53), which is found as *-az* in High German. Unshifted *-at* presumably once existed in Ingvaeonic as well, and so its occurrence in the *Lay* could perhaps be an archaism, but there is no trace of it in any Ingvaeonic dialect otherwise, including in the *Heliand* (which provides a very lengthy example of Old Saxon poetry of the ninth century). The third and most important feature is the alliteration of *reccheo* on *r* rather than *w* (line 48). This word was **wrakkjō* in Proto-West-Germanic. Line 48, at least, must have been composed by a poet who had, or at least knew of, a form that had undergone the simplification of initial **wr-* to *r-*. This is characteristic especially of Upper German (Braune 2004, §106), and is very much not an innovation found in Old Saxon or Old Low Franconian: in the *Heliand*, forms of *uurekkio* clearly alliterate on [w] in lines 631 and 671, while in the Old Low Franconian Psalm glosses forms such as *uuraca* 'vengeance' are found. Since *reccheo* is innovation rather than an retention or archaism, it is particularly valuable (it cannot be explained as a feature of a conservative poetic tradition), and supports a High German, and probably an Upper German, origin for the poem.

If the poem were longer, perhaps more diagnostic features, especially ones with metrical verification, would appear and allow a more precise and secure

5. A more exceptional set of circumstances, such as a well-travelled poet intentionally using a bizarre dialect mixture as a kind of experiment or game, can of course never be entirely ruled out, but need not be regarded as very probable.

localization (and dating) of the poem and explanation of its history. As it is, despite the valiant and learned efforts of d'Alquen and Trevers (1984) to defend a Low Franconian original, the hypothesis of an Upper German poem followed by a highly unusual transmission history – in particular picking up a number of Saxonisms, without losing (or later regaining) many of its Upper German features – is probably the most likely scenario. See Lühr (1982) for details on all aspects of the poem's language and orthography.

Text

Ik gi·hōrta ƀat seggen,
ƀat sih ur-hēttun ænon muotīn
—Hiltibra*n*t⋆ enti Haƀubrant— untar heriun tuēm,
sunu-fatarungo. Iro saro rihtun:
garutun se iro gūƀ-hamun, gurtun sih iro suert ana,
helidos, ubar *h*ringa,⋆ dō sie tō dero hiltiu ritun.

Hiltibra*n*t⋆ gi·mah[a]lta. (Heribrantes sunu) Her uuas hērōro man,
fer[a]hes frōtōro. Her fragēn gi·stuont
fōhēm uuortum *hƿ*er⋆ sīn fater ƿāri,
fireo in folche— [.....
.....]⋆ “eddo *hƿ*elīhhes⋆ cnuosles dū sīs.
“Ibu dū mī ęnan sagēs, ik mī de ōdre uuēt,
“chind, in chuninc-rīche: chūd is m*i*⋆ al irmin-deot.”

Hadubra*n*t⋆ gi·mah[a]lta, Hiltibrantes sunu:
15a “Dat sagētun mī [.....]⋆
15b “ūsere liuti, alte anti frōte,
“dea ēr hína ƿārun, dat Hiltibrant
“hætti mīn fater. Ih heittu Hadubrant.
“Forn her ōstar gi·*u*ueit:⋆ flōh her Ōtachres nīd
“hina miti Theotrīhhe, enti sīnero deg[a]no filu.
“Her fur·lāēt in lante luttila sitten:
“prūt in būre, barn unƿahsan,
“arbeo laosa. He*r* rā*ēt*⋆ ōstar hina,

⋆. 3. MS *hiltibraht*.
⋆. 6. MS *ringa*: emended by Lachmann (1835, 134).
⋆. 7. MS *hiltibraht*.
⋆. 9. MS *ƿer*: emended by Lachmann (1835, 135).
⋆. 10–11. No gap in MS: lacuna recognized by Lachmann (1835, 135).
⋆. 11. MS *ƿelihhes*: emended by Lachmann (1835, 135).
⋆. 13. MS *min*: emended by Lachmann (1835, 137–138).
⋆. 14. MS *hadubraht*.
⋆. 15a. No gap in MS: see the textual commentary on the possible lacuna and line numbering.
⋆. 18. MS *gihueit*: emended by Lachmann (1835, 139).
⋆. 22. MS *heraꝺ* (i.e. *heraet*): emended by Wackernagel (1839, 64).

"sīd* De*o*trīhhe* darba gi·stuontu*n**
"fate*r*es* mīnes. Dat uuas sō friuntlaos man.
"Her pas Ōtachre ummet tirri,*
"deg[a]no dechisto, *mi*ti* Deotrīchh*e*.*
"Her pas eo folches at ente, imo ƿuas feh*t*a* ti leop.
"Chūd ƿas her [?*ƿīto*]* chōn*i*ēm* mannum.
"Ni, ƿāniu ih, iū līb habbe [.....]*"

"Ƿ*ēt*-tu,* irmin-got" (quad Hiltibra*nt*)* "obana ab heuane, Verso. *hiltibra[n]t*
"dat dū néo dana halt mit sus [?*nāh*]*-sippan man
"dinc ni·gi·leitōs. [.....]*"
Ƿant her dō ar arme puntane bauga,
cheisuringu gi·tān, sō imo sē der chuning gap,
Hūneo truhtīn. "Dat ih dir it nū bi huldi gibu."

Hadubra*n*t* gi·malta, Hiltibrantes sunu:
"Mit gēru scal man geba in·fāhan
"ort pidar orte. [.....]*
"Dū bist dir, altēr Hūn, ummet spāhēr,
"spenis mih mit dīnēm ƿuortun, ƿili mih dīnu speru ƿerpan.
"Pist alsō gi·alt*ēt** man, sō dū ēƿīn inƿit for·tōs.
"Dat sagētun mī sęo-līdante
"ƿestar ubar Ƿentil-sęo, dat *in*an* ƿīc fur·nam.

⋆. 23 MS *de͡ sid* (i.e. *det sid*): *de͡* deleted by Vollmer (in Roth 1839, x) and Wackernagel (1839, 64), and earlier by Füglistaler in 1820 (Steinmeyer 1884, 159); see the textual commentary.
⋆. 23. MS *detrihhe*: emended by Vollmer and Hofmann (1850).
⋆. 23. MS *gi|stuontum*: emended by Lachmann (1835, 141–142).
⋆. 24. MS *fatereres*: emended by Lachmann (1835, 141–142).
⋆. 25. MS *ummettirri*: word division after Grein (1858, 26).
⋆. 26. MS *unti*: emended by Vollmer and Hofmann (1850, 14).
⋆. 26. MS *deotrichhe darba gistuontun*: deletion by Vollmer and Hofmann (1850, 14).
⋆. 27. MS *feh͡a* (i.e. *feheta*): read after Lühr (1982, 535–536).
⋆. 28. No gap in MS: a missing word postulated by Lachmann (1835, 142–144); see the textual commentary.
⋆. 28. MS *chonnem*: see the textual commentary.
⋆. 29. No gap in MS: see the textual commentary.
⋆. 30. MS *pe͡tu*: damaged, correctly read by Grein (1858, 27–29).
⋆. 30. MS *hiltibraht*.
⋆. 31. No gap in MS: insertion by Grein (1858, 30).
⋆. 32. No gap in MS: see the textual commentary.
⋆. 36. MS *hadubraht*.
⋆. 38. No gap in MS: see the textual commentary.
⋆. 41. MS *gialte͡*.
⋆. 43. MS *man*.

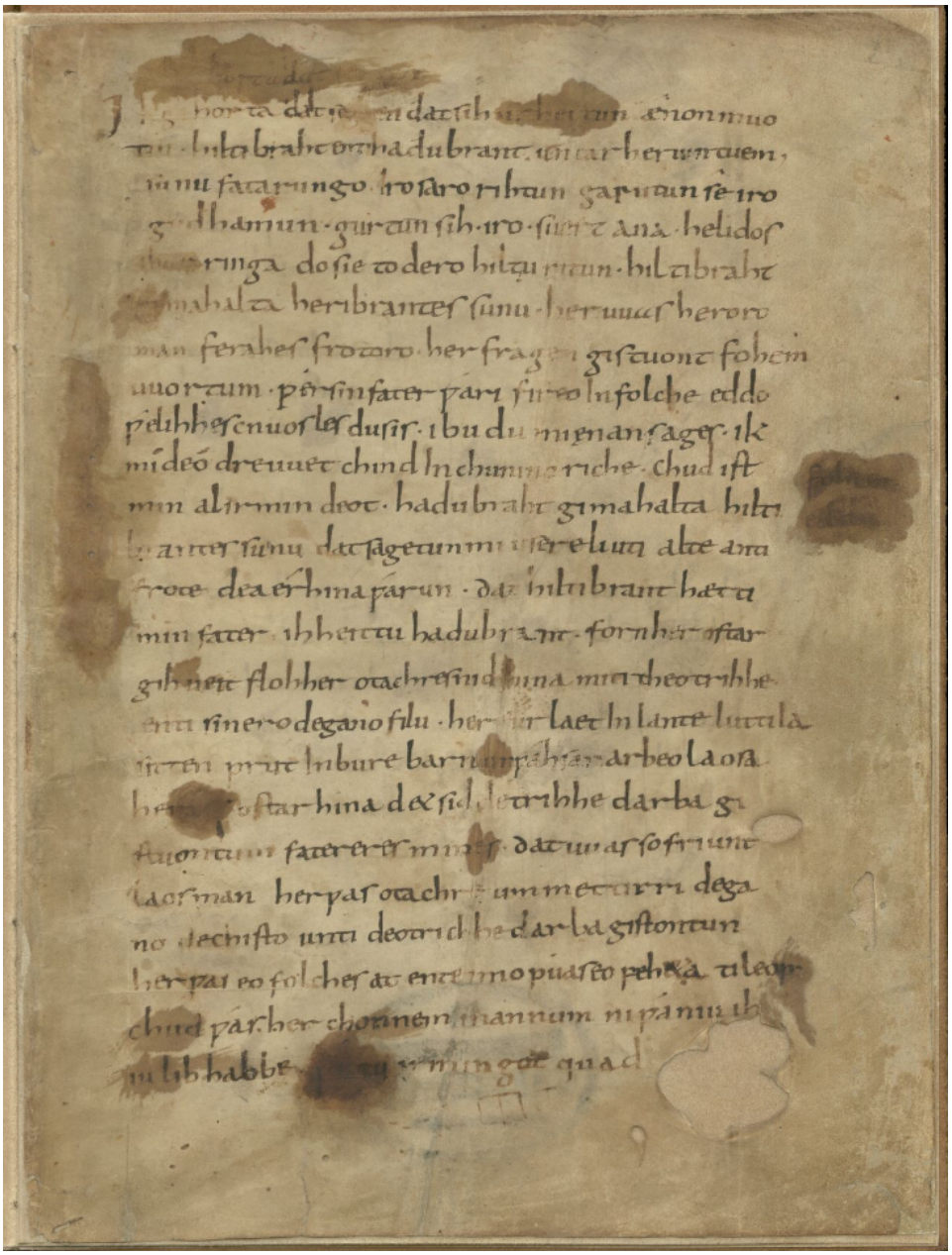
"Tōt is Hiltibrant, Heribrantes suno."

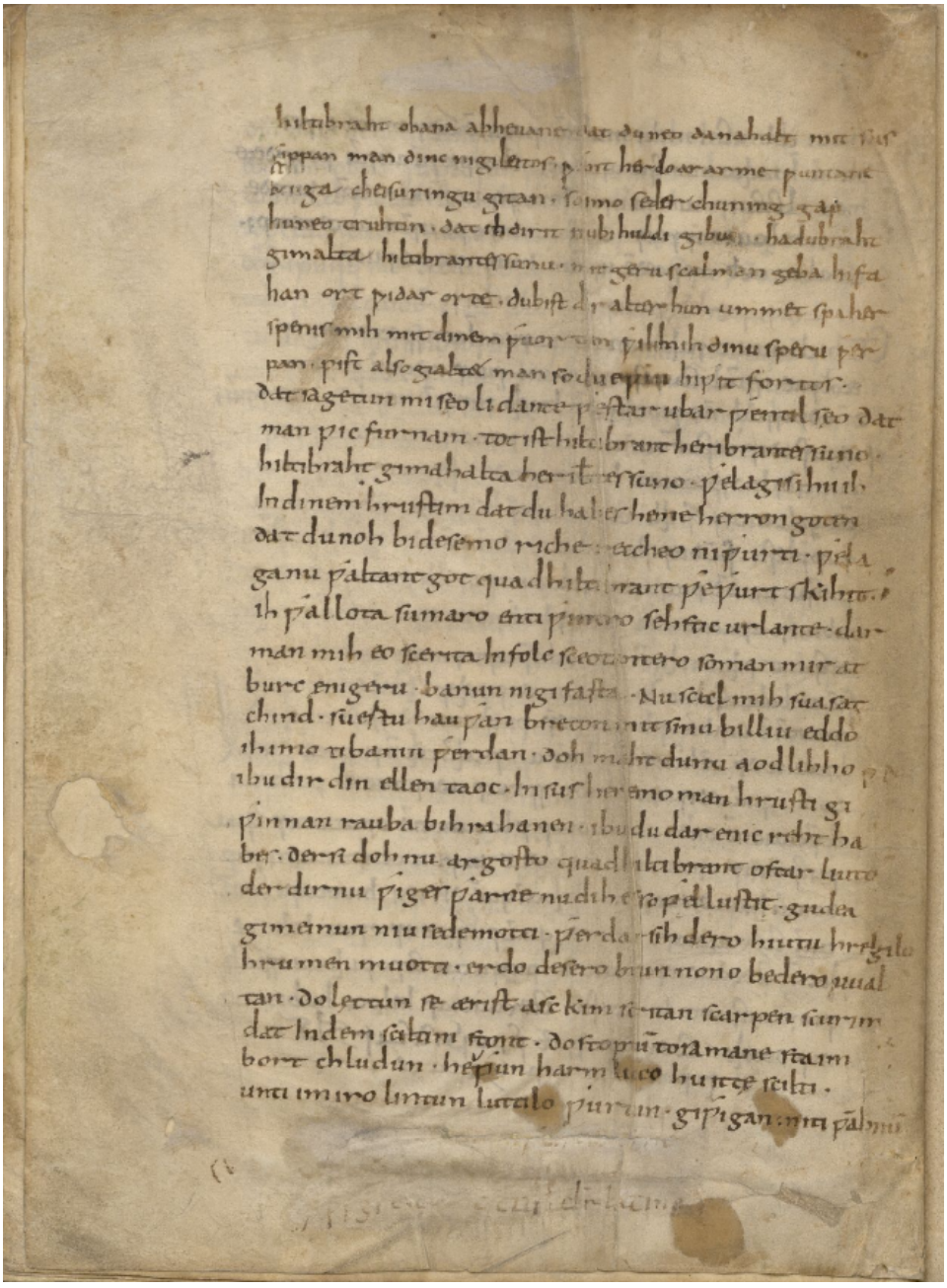
Hiltibrant gi·mah[a]lta, Heri*bran*tes* suno:
"Ƿela gi·sihu ih in dīnēm [?*ƿīg*]*-hrustim,
"dat dū habēs hēme hērron gōten,
"dat dū nōh bi desemo rīche reccheo ni ƿurti.
"Ƿelaga nū, ƿaltant got," (quad Hiltibrant) "ƿē-ƿurt skihit.
"Ih ƿallōta sumaro enti ƿintro sehstic ūr lante,
"dār man mih eo scerita in folc sceotantero:
"sō man mir at burc ęnigeru banun ni gi·fasta.
"Nū scal mih suāsat chind suertu hauƿan,
"bretōn mit sīnu billiu, eddo ih imo ti banin ƿerdan.
"Dōh maht dū nū aodlīhho, ibu dir dīn ellen taoc,
"in sus hēremo man hrusti gi·ƿinnan,
"rauba bi·*r*ahanen,* ibu dū dār ēnic reht habēs."

"Der sī dōh nū argōsto" (quad Hiltibrant) "ōstar-liuto,
"der dir nū ƿīges ƿarne, nū dih es sō ƿēl lustit,
"gūdea gi·meinun. Niuse, dē mōtti,
"*hƿe*dar* sih *hiutu dero** hregilo hru*o*men* muotti,
"erdo desero brunnōno bēdero uualtan."

Dō lętttun sē ārist asckim scrītan,
scarpēn scūrim, dat in dēm sciltim stōnt.
Dō stō*ƿ*un* tō·samane. Staim-bort chludun,
heuƿun harmlīcco huīttę scilti,
unti im iro lintun luttilo ƿurtun,
gi·ƿigan miti ƿābnum...

*. 45. MS *heribtes*.
*. 46. No gap in MS: emended by Grein (1858, 34).
*. 57. MS *bihrahanen*: emended after Grimm (1819, 168).
*. 61. MS *ƿerdar*: *h* supplied by Lachmann (1835, 153); *r* removed by Vollmer and Hofmann (1850, 8).
*. 61. MS *dero hiutu*: inversion indicated by (later?) marks in the MS; see Lachmann (1835, 153–155).
*. 61. MS *hrumen*: emended by Lachmann (1835, 153–155).
*. 65. MS *stoptū*: emended after Lachmann (1835, 156).





Textual Commentary

1. Ik gi·hōrta đat seggen.

The first of at least five points in the text where the manuscript transmits what seems to be a stray half-line, which works well enough in terms of internal metrical rhythm, but which isn't paired with a second alliterating verse.

The other examples are lines 15, 29, 32, and 38, and in lines 10–11 most editors agree that two half-lines have probably fallen out. In addition, there are a few places where the text doesn't fall into a nice alliterating long-line (*Langzeile*), but where the surviving material is too long to simply be a stray half-line: lines 28, 31, and 46; and in line 60 the alliteration fails. On the four instances of formulaic or metanarrative material that creates apparent stray half-lines (or overfull long-lines), see the commentary to line 7.

How these various lines are treated depends on the context. Where I think a half-line (or more) is very likely missing, I indicate potentially missing half-lines by elipses in brackets. I have not done so for this opening line, however: while there have been proposals for a missing off-verse to follow this half-line, none satisfy the requirements of metrics, linguistics, and style all at once. So despite the lack of parallels for such a thing anywhere else in Germanic poetry, I reluctantly treat this as a genuinely stray half-line – almost an anacrusis to the poem.

7. (Heribrantes sunu).

The patronymic *Heribrantes sunu* is presented as part of the main text of the manuscript, but is probably an insertion. It certainly seems to thoroughly disrupt the metre of the line, and would be easily explained as either an explanatory comment or an automatically applied formula (Lachmann 1835, 135–136). I print this and the three other apparent annotations of a similar sort (lines 30, 49, and 58) both in round brackets and superscripted.

10–11. folche … eddo.

The on-verse of what I give here as line 10 and the off-verse of line 11 follow each other without a gap in the manuscript, but it is very likely that some material has fallen out between them. The two half-lines are unlikely to form a single long-line: they do not alliterate with each other, and the content shifts from an indirect question in 10a to a direct one in 11b, in the middle of a single construction dependent on *fragēn*. On its own, either feature might be suspi-

cious but tolerable: line 60 also fails to alliterate, and while the grammatical person changes, the content of 11b follows on well enough. But the metrical and syntactic disjunctions together suggest that missing material is a simpler explanation. Given that 11b is clearly related to Hildibrant's same question, it is unlikely that very much material has fallen out. I will not speculate as to the exact wording of this particular missing section.

15. [.....].

There is a half-line missing after *Dat sagētun mī*. Compare line 42, where the same verse is followed by *sęō-līdante*. Perhaps something like **seli-rātante* "counsellors in the hall" has dropped out (cf. *Beowulf* 51):

> Dat sagētun mī *seli-rātante,*
> "Hall-counsellors told me that,..."

Most editions do not assume a lost half-line, and both Braune (1994) and Lühr (1982) print *ūsere liuti* as the off-verse of line 15, though this is metrically not very likely. Assuming the lost half-line also allows for a much smoother lineation of the following lines, through *Ih heittu Hadubrant* (see especially the commentary to line 16).

In order to keep the overall line count as close as possible to the widely cited text of Braune (1994), I label two lines here as number 15: 15a and 15b. I treat lines 16 and 17 too differently for these to correspond well to the standard line-numbering, but from line 18 on, my lineation again matches Braune (1994).

16. ēr hína.

More usually taken as a compound word: *ēr-hina* "formerly here". The manuscript reads *deaérhina*, with no word breaks and an acute over *er*, which might seem to support this traditional view. I, however, take this as two words, with the apex either marking length or the word boundary in a long string of vowels. The meaning is still much the same as traditionally assumed, "formerly here", but the stress and alliteration falls on *hina* (see the commentary to line 17). To emphasize the scansion, I have inserted a purely editorial acute on *hina*.

17. hætti mīn fater.

This verse has much the same rhythm as *Beowulf* 343b, *Bēowulf is mīn nama*. For the alliteration of a verb over a noun – unusual in the Beowulfian metrical standard – compare lines 5b, 33a, and 40a (Sievers 1893, 166).

23. sīd.

This word is preceded in the manuscript by *dę̆*, with the *ę̆* standing for its Latin reading *et* "and". Most likely the scribe began to write the name *Dētrīhhe*, broke off to write the word *sīd* which occurs before this, and then picked up again, that time writing out the name fully.[1]

27. feht*a*.

This is written in the manuscript as *fehę̆a*. As discussed in the commentary to line 23, *ę̆* is usually to be read as *et*, which would make for a reading here of *feheta*. As Lühr (1982, 535–536) points out, this would be rather strange, since the second *e* is not expected etymologically. There are cases of anaptyctic or svarabhakti vowels in this poem (and they are common in the language generally) – these are late vowels inserted between certain consonant clusters, such as *degano* for etymological **þegnō* – but the inserted vowel is usually *a*, and the cluster *ht* is not normally broken up this way. Lühr is accordingly probably right to say that the *ę̆* is being used loosely here, not to stand for for *et*, but just for *t* (see her discussion for details and parallels for the use of *ę̆* to stand for sequences deviating slightly from *et*).

28. [*pīto*].

The manuscript as written here is defective: *chud pas her chonnem mannum*. The simplest solution is to suppose a single word missing after *her*, as proposed by Lachmann (1835, 143), and adopted in the *Althochdeutsches Lesebuch* since its fourth edition (Braune 1897). Most editors who assume a lost word merely indicate the gap without attempting to fill in the gap. A word like *pīto* "widely" is suggested by formulaic parallels in Old Saxon (*Heliand* 907, 2071) and Old

1. *Pace* Lühr (1982, 510–511) and others, it is no objection that the resumptive *detrihhe* is written without the abbreviation. If anything, it is noteworthy that it contains the odd spelling of the first syllable as *det*, which is best explained by the exemplar spelling the name here with *ę̆* (used loosely; compare the commentary to line 27). After writing *sīd* and coming back to writing this name, the scribe merely chose to expand the *ę̆* in the normal manner.

English (*Maxims I* 197, *Metres of Boethius* 26.11), though *allem* "(to) all" would also be a plausible restoration (c.f. *Heliand* 1202).

29. [.....].

Line 29 is another stray half-line in the manuscript as transmitted. Assuming it really is a gap to be filled – Lachmann (1835, 142, 144) takes the line as we have it to be a prose insertion – it may be plausibly restored as *liuteo pīso* "leader of the people" (Grein 1858, 19, 27):

> Ni, þāniu ih, iū līb habbe *liuteo pīso.*
> "Not, do I expect, does the leader of people still have life."

30. (quad Hiltibra*nt*).

See the commentary to line 7.

31. [*nāh*]-sippan.

This line as written in the manuscript is difficult to parse metrically. The adjective *nāh-sippi* would allow for the scansion of two normal (and normally alliterating) lines, and fits the context very well. This compound is paralleled in Old English, including this prohibition from the *Northumbrian Priests' Law* (Liebermann 1903, 384, 61.1):[2]

> þæt nān man ne pīfige on nēah-sibban m*en*
> "(We prohibit it, so) that no one will take as wife a near-related person"

Though this is not widely taken up in the editions, I think this emendation can be accepted as one of the more likely insertions of apparently lost material.

32. [.....].

32 is, as transmitted, yet another stray half-line. If something has dropped out, it should alliterate on *d*, to go with *dinc*. Grein (1858, 30) suggests a meaning of "I am your father", but doesn't reconstruct a specific half-line with this sense. A restoration might be as simple as:

> Ih bi(u)m dīn fater.
> "I am your father."

2. Manuscript facsimile visible here: https://earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk/laws/manuscripts/d/?tp=s&nb=2156. The quoted passage begins at the end of the fifth line from the bottom.

This is possible if the alliterative system is like that of *Beowulf*, which allows a possessive adjective to alliterate in preference to a noun: compare line 2797, *mīnum lēodum*, alliterating on *m*, where the possessive has no more obvious special rhetorical emphasis in the Beowulfian line than could also be supposed for "your" here.

38. [.....].

In the lines printed here as 38–39, the manuscript transmits just three verses instead of four. They all alliterate vocalically. Probably another half-line has dropped, though it's not immediately clear where. 38a has double alliteration, and so must be an on-verse, but in principle *Dū bist dir, altēr Hūn* could be the following off-verse, in which case the missing half-line would follow *ummet spāhēr*:

"ort pidar orte. Dū bist dir, altēr Hūn,
"ummet spāhēr, [.....],

It is, however, slightly easier to insert a half-line after 38a, where there are various possibilities in keeping with the general, gnomic character of the preceding comment (*scal man*). Grein (1858, 19, 31) suggests, I think very plausibly, something like *sō ist erlo dou* "such is the (proper) custom of heroes". In addition to the passages he cites as parallels, I might also point to line 12 of *The Wanderer*:

þæt biþ in eorle indryhten þēap
"that is a courtly custom in a hero".

The passage would then read:

ort pidar orte: [*sō ist erlo dou.*]
"Dū bist dir, altēr Hūn, ummet spāhēr
"point against point: thus is the custom of heroes. You, old Hun,
are exceedingly cunning"

46. [*pīg*]-hrustim.

As written in the maniscript, this line does not break down into recognizable metrical verses, nor does it obviously alliterate. It could be, as Lachmann (1835, 150) indicates, that this is another stray prose line rather than a part of the poem proper. But the line is readily fixed by the simple emendation of Grein (1858, 34), changing *hrustim* to the compound *pīg-hrustim* "war-gear".

A cognate of this is attested in Old English: *pīg-hyrstum* in line 34 of *The Ruin*.

The resulting on-verse *þéla gi·síhu ih* (with *sihu* resolved) is still metrically somewhat unusual, since type-A half-lines normally have their final trochee realized by a single word. But there are occasional exceptions to this, such as *Heliand* 3832:

> selliat that thār sīn ist
> "give what is yours there"

The rhythm of which is *Sw#w#w#S#w* = *SwSw*. I would scan 46a as *S^{w}#w·S^{w}#w* = *SwSw*.

58. (quad Hiltibrant).

See the commentary to line 7.

30. (quad Hiltibra*n*t).

See the commentary to line 7.

60. gūdea … mōtti.

This line does not alliterate by the normal patterns, but seems unproblematic in terms of rhythm and sense. Either this represents an unusual case of alliteration by the *second* lifts of each half-line (*mei-* and *mō-*), or there is a much subtler (and now irrevocoverable) corruption at work. Perhaps *gūdea* is a substitution for an older *nīdo* or the like? The repetition of *mōtti* here and *muotti* in the following line might also be suspicious, though no really obvious corrections follow from this (and medieval poets didn't necessarily regard verbal repetition as quite the stylistic sin that modern writers feel it to be).

61. *hþe*dar.

The manuscript reads *þerdar*, and the medial *r* is usually retained by editors. The linguistic form was undoubtedly *(h)wedar* (or *hweðar*): there are no other examples of this word with the medial *r*, and this is etymologically unexpected and unexplained.[3] Scribal error is overwhelmingly the most likely explanation here.

3. Lühr (1976, 86) acknowledges how simple *þerdar* would be as a scribal error, but also suggests possible contamination from **h^{w}arjaz* "which". This element did not, however, survive in West Germanic, and is unlikely to have exerted this kind of influence.

62. erdo.

I have not emended *erdo*, since it seems to be a real linguistic variant (if a wholly unexplained and fairly rare one), found as *erđo*, *erdho* in other texts (Lühr 1976, 86). The overwhelmingly more common form is, however, *eddo*, and *erdo* may simply be an error for this.

68. ṕābnum…

This is the last word on the reverse side of the single surviving leaf preserving this poem. Presumably the poem continued, but just how long the full work would have been is now hard to say. The remainder of the narrative presumably told how Hiltibrant killed his son, and no doubt included a lament on his part. It may also have included a death-speech from Hadubrant. All this would probably be in the same tightly constructed style as the surviving portions, though it is possible that the lamentation speeches were somewhat fuller than pre-battle dialogue. It seems reasonable to suppose this would have taken at least another manuscript side, and perhaps as much as two sides, to relate. This would make for perhaps 30 to 70 lost lines, though there is no way to really be sure about this.

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