

EPEL-WEARD: THE FIRST SCRIBE OF THE "BEOWULF" MS

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*EPĒL-WEARD:*  
THE FIRST SCRIBE OF THE *BEOWULF* MS<sup>1</sup>

In a recent article in this publication, Inmaculada Senra Silva draws our attention to the often overlooked fact that runes appear in the *Beowulf* manuscript.<sup>2</sup> She concludes that the likeliest reason for the runes' appearing where they do (and not elsewhere) is that the two scribes worked from distinct exemplars which were at the time of the copying just then being joined into the poem as we have it today.<sup>3</sup> I consider the use of the rune in the manuscript from a different perspective, one which Senra Silva alludes to but does not follow through, namely the fact that, "either the poet or one of the scribes...thought that he could highlight [the word *epel*] in the poem by means of using the rune."<sup>4</sup> In this article I respond to her unanswered question of "why only three runes and why the lines in which they appear."<sup>5</sup>

In *Beowulf* the root *epel*, "homeland," either as a word or as the first element of a compound, appears thirteen times. Of these thirteen occurrences, seven were written by the first scribe (i.e., they appear in the first 1939 lines of the poem). In three of these seven occurrences, instead of writing out the word, the first scribe has written the rune ᚷ, the name of which is *epel* (l. 520b, [fol. 143v]; l. 913a [fol. 152v]; l. 1702a [fol. 170r]).<sup>6</sup>

Past editors of the text and scholars examining the manuscript itself have generally not paid much attention to this use of a rune-as-word within the manuscript. Of the twenty editions of *Beowulf* I have examined, only two of the editors have chosen to allow the rune to stand in the text as it appears in the manuscript.<sup>7</sup> Luckily, one of them is Elliot van Kirk Dobbie in his edition of *Beowulf and Judith* for the *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*. His allowing it to remain and be read by modern readers in such a well-known edition however has not lead to further investigation of the significance of the presence of the rune in the manuscript. Most of his predecessors and those who follow him treat the rune-as-word as an unproblematic abbreviation.<sup>8</sup> In one of the newest editions of the poem, Mitchell and Robinson, like so many others, relegate the fact of the rune's presence to an unexplained note in the apparatus ("eðel] ᚷ"), so that a modern reader who does not read the apparatus

<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Antonette diPaolo Healey, Andy Orchard and Theresa Owens Fleming for their invaluable help in preparing this article.

<sup>2</sup> Inmaculada Senra Silva, "The Rune ᚷpel' and Scribal Writing Habits in the *Beowulf* MS," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 99 (1998): 241-7.

<sup>3</sup> Silva 245-6.

<sup>4</sup> Silva 244.

<sup>5</sup> Silva 244.

<sup>6</sup> For convenience, all foliation referred to is that used by Kemp Malone in *The Nowell Codex*, *Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile* vol. 12 (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1963).

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix.

<sup>8</sup> See Appendix.

carefully could easily overlook the fact that the *Beowulf* manuscript contains runes.<sup>9</sup> Even those scholars who are not specifically trying to create a readable edition of the text do not pay much attention to the rune. Zupitza, in his once-essential facsimile and transliteration of *Beowulf*, simply prints “eðel” in italics as if it were simply an expansion of an abbreviation comparable to *þæt* from *þ* or *-um* from *H*.<sup>10</sup> He does not acknowledge in his notes or introduction the fact that this expansion is based on a rune. Kemp Malone, in his more recent facsimile of the entire Nowell Codex, simply provides this note within his otherwise thorough introduction: “the runic letter “epel” occurs thrice (143v18, 152v16, 170r15) for the word that gives it name.”<sup>11</sup> Consistent with this lack of attention to the rune, in Malone’s lengthy and highly detailed introduction to the facsimile of the Thorkelin transcripts, he does not note the fact that Thorkelin A omits the first occurrence of the rune in his transcription. Thorkelin A, clearly not recognizing what the rune is, simply writes a punctus without even leaving space for something to be filled in later.<sup>12</sup>

Based on this absence of discussion previous to Senra Silva’s recent article concerning the use of rune-as-word, one would be led to believe that this phenomenon is an uninteresting, unproblematic, and even common Anglo-Saxon scribal convention. As far as extant manuscript evidence shows, however, this is not the case. Derolez’s study of runes in English manuscripts is perhaps the only work to try to deal with this phenomenon in detail.<sup>13</sup> Even here, occurrences like those in *Beowulf* are treated briefly because there are very few examples to speak of. The first four chapters of Derolez’s book deal with far more frequent occurrences of entire futharks within Anglo-Saxon manuscripts; the use of a rune in place of its

<sup>9</sup> A fact which I discovered while discussing this article with colleagues; although we had read *Beowulf* together from the same edition, none of them had noticed the rune in the apparatus.

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix.

<sup>11</sup> Kemp Malone, ed., *The Nowell Codex* 25.

<sup>12</sup> Kemp Malone, ed., *The Thorkelin Transcripts of Beowulf in Facsimile*, EEMF vol. 1 (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1951) 18. This omission is even more significant when one notes that although Thorkelin A reproduces the rune in his transcription the other two times it occurs, and although Thorkelin himself (Thorkelin B) faithfully copies the rune in his own transcription, Thorkelin does not seem to recognize what it is or the role that it plays in the manuscript and poem. In Thorkelin’s edition and translation he simply leaves the rune out and adjusts his Latin translation to work without the concept of *epel* in these cases; see Appendix.

<sup>13</sup> R. Derolez, *Runica Manuscripta: The English Tradition* (Brugge: De Temple, 1954); R.I. Page also has two chapters on “runica manuscripta,” but he does not add anything significant to Derolez’s work: *An Introduction to English Runes* (London: Methuen, 1973), esp. 69-89.

name is much rarer and less easy to explain. The most famous examples of this convention are well-known and are presented as less problematic: Cynewulf's signatures, the five runes in the *Husband's Message* (ll. 49-53), the use of runes in certain riddles of the Exeter book (*Riddles* 19, 24, 64, 75, and 91), and of course the runes defined in *The Rune Poem*. No editor would simply expand these runes to their names with little note or treat them as simple abbreviations. In these instances, the rune is clearly a part of the text and must be read as such. In Cynewulf, this usage is interesting because we understand why the runes are being employed (namely as an encrypted signature to the poem; there is of course strong disagreement about how the runes are to read as part of the poem). Similarly, even when not perfectly understood, the runes in the *Riddles* seem to be directly connected to the solution of the riddle, and thus must be printed. Conversely, the *Husband's Message* runes are interesting because there is no clear consensus on what function they perform within the poem. Editors print the runes in editions because they are seen as an essential part of these poems. Likewise, the use of  $\text{𐌷}$  in *Beowulf*, insofar as we only have a single manuscript witness to it, must be treated as part of the poem.

The use of single runes replacing their names in English manuscripts is actually very rare. Apart from the Cynewulf poems, the *Riddles*, the *Husbands Message*, and *Beowulf*, Ker lists only four other such occurrences, only one of which occurs in a poetic text.<sup>14</sup> Derolez notes two additional manuscript occurrences to be included in this list.<sup>15</sup> For our purposes, the most important of these six examples are *Waldere* and the "Tollemache" *Orosius*, because they each contain a single instance of  $\text{𐌷}$  standing for the word *epel*. Like so many *Beowulf* scholars, the editors of these texts, and even the editors of the facsimiles, treat the rune as a commonplace abbreviation.<sup>16</sup> The use of the rune in *Waldere* is particularly noteworthy because,

<sup>14</sup> N.R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1957); numbers refer to item numbers within the catalogue);

101. Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek, Ny Kgl. Sam. 167b (4<sup>o</sup>). *Waldere*. s. x/xi (?); "the rune for *eðel* appears on f. 'I'v line 15."

106. Durham, Cathedral A. IV. 19. article c,d. *Continuous Gloss*; s. x<sup>2</sup>; "rune for 'mon' [𐌷] appears in gloss" [above the word *homo*; as does the rune for *dæg* 𐌳 above *diem*; see R.A.B. Mynors, *Durham Cathedral Manuscripts*, 1939, plate 12].

133. BM, Additional 47967. *Orosius*; s. x<sup>1</sup>. "rune for *eðel* on p.103." [see Alistair Campbell, ed. *The Tollemache Orosius*...EEMF vol. III., 1953, page 103.]

292. Bodleian, Auct. D.2.19 (3946). *Continuous gloss to Gospels; Colophons*; s. x. "f. 50<sup>v</sup> at the end of Matthew: 'far 𐌷 pbr þas boc þus þe gleosed e dimittet ei dominus omnia peccata sua si fieri potest apud deum.'"

<sup>15</sup> Derolez 401; specifically, in Psalm 99 of the Junius Psalter, where  $\text{𐌷}$  stands for the word *wynn*, and in MS B of *Solomon and Saturn* (Cambridge MS Corpus Christi College 41) where the name *Salomon* is twice written "Salo 𐌷."

<sup>16</sup> See Henry Sweet, ed., *King Alfred's Orosius*, EETS, orig. series, vol. 79 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959) 168, line 11; Janet Bately, *The Old English Orosius*, EETS supp. series 6 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980) 90, line 20 and *app.crit.*; Arne Zettersten, ed., *Waldere* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979) 17; and F. Norman, ed., *Waldere* (London: Methuen, 1933).

as Norman points out, one can clearly see in the manuscript that the scribe began to write the letter “e” to begin the word *epel*, but then drew the rune over it.<sup>17</sup> This suggests that this particular scribe made a conscious decision to write the rune instead of the word. It should be further noted that the “ $\text{X}$ ”s of the *Waldere* scribe and the *Orosius* scribe are not as carefully drawn as those of the first *Beowulf* scribe.

Before moving to the actual occurrences of the rune within the *Beowulf* manuscript, something should be said of the scribe who made them. Scholarly consensus on what to think of the two scribes – their relation to each other and their relation to the texts – has yet to be reached, and probably never will be. I should like to draw briefly on the opinions of certain scholars whose experience in this field certainly exceed mine. Given the lack of another copy with which to compare our version of *Beowulf*, I believe ultimately Hulbert’s conclusion in response to Rypins is the soundest way to consider the situation; namely, that it is nearly impossible to determine the original state of the poem and therefore drawing meaningful comparisons between the scribes is the work our efforts are best directed toward.<sup>18</sup> This does not prevent us, however, from making some basic statements about the scribal practices of the first scribe that may shed some light on his use of the rune. Rypins and Gerritsen agree on the most general point that, of the two, the first scribe was more reliable.<sup>19</sup>

The first two assertions I would like to draw upon are essentially statements of fact. The first is Malone’s finding that “in general, S[cribe]2 is freer with abbreviations than S1 is. He has...an average of 13 to the page whereas S1 has...an average of between 9 and 10 to the page.”<sup>20</sup> This is significant in that we are studying the use of an unusual abbreviation within a not heavily abbreviated text. Likewise, the fact that the second scribe does not use the rune, even though the word *epel* appears six times in his section, suggests that the first scribe made a conscious decision to employ it at certain times (much like the *Waldere* scribe). This is further backed by Malone’s reasonable claim that the differences in the two parts of the text are “more plausibly explained on a theory that it reflects a difference in the writing habits of S1 and S2 themselves.”<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Norman 39, *app.crit.* for line 31; Zettersten 17, note 31.

<sup>18</sup> James Root Hulbert, “The Accuracy of the B-scribe of *Beowulf*,” *PMLA* 43 (1928): 1196-99.

<sup>19</sup> See Stanley I. Rypins, “Introduction” to *Three Old English Prose Texts in MS. Cotton Vitellius A xv*. EETS orig. series vol. 161 (London: Oxford University Press, 1924) xiii-xv; Johan Gerritsen, “‘Have with You to Lexington,’ The *Beowulf* Manuscript and *Beowulf*,” *In Other Words: Transcultural Studies...*, ed. J. Lachlan Mackenzie and Richard Todd (Providence: Foris Publications, 1989) 16.

<sup>20</sup> Malone, *The Nowell Codex* 26.

<sup>21</sup> Malone, *The Nowell Codex* 26.

The second assertion I would like to repeat is that of Gerritsen, who points out that the first scribe's hand was "set narrower, so that he got more characters into the same space."<sup>22</sup> The first scribe wrote in more compressed letters, but is still relatively restrained in using abbreviations. Upon close examination, the rune .Ƿ. in the manuscript does not save much room, if any, compared with when he writes out the word. A scribe interested in saving space, though not primarily by abbreviating, has chosen to take up space with an unusual abbreviation. These facts suggest that the first scribe was thinking about something more than space on a vellum leaf or the ache in his hand when he decided to draw these runes carefully. Also suggestive is Prokosch's assertion that the first scribe "shows more individuality and conscious correctness in his handling of the language."<sup>23</sup> Finally, Kiernan has argued well for the *Beowulf* scribes' being far more reliable than they have previously been thought. In examining how meticulously both scribes proofread their work and made even minute alterations, he suggests that they were quite attentive, "not only to the mechanical job of copying correctly, but also the more comprehensive aspects of grammar, syntax, sense and even meter and alliteration."<sup>24</sup> The scribes were probably *reading* the text, not just copying it, and therefore most likely enjoying it.

No matter how one conceives of the manuscript history of *Beowulf*, the general consensus today does not find a conflict of interest in Christian monks preserving or even composing a work like *Beowulf*, which celebrates a pre-Christian past.<sup>25</sup> If they were doing such a thing, they clearly must have found the work to have value, and even to be enjoyable. Celebrating a heroic, Germanic, and pagan past seems to have not been a problem for many Anglo-Saxons. Therefore, I contend that the first scribe of *Beowulf*, comfortable with these aspects of his past, conceivably could have added the runes to the manuscript as a sort of archaism, an heirloom which itself is part of the same past that is celebrated in the poem. In doing so he would make the manuscript more alive, more real and exciting for those who would read it.

Let us finally turn to those instances in the text where the first scribe chose to evoke the past by drawing an .Ƿ. in the manuscript. Of the seven occurrences of the word, only five were ever "eligible" for the first scribe's unique treatment of them. In the two final occurrences of the word in his section (lines 1730a and 1774a), the word stands on its own in the dative case: *eþle*. The inability for the rune to express

<sup>22</sup> Gerritsen 16.

<sup>23</sup> Eduard Prokosch, "Two Types of Scribal Errors in the *Beowulf* Manuscript," *Studies in English Philology*, ed. Kemp Malone and Martin B. Rund (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1929) 196-207.

<sup>24</sup> Kevin Kiernan, *Beowulf and The Beowulf Manuscript* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers, 1981) 196.

<sup>25</sup> For a succinct discussion of this topic with references, see Larry D. Benson, "The Pagan Coloring of *Beowulf*," in *Beowulf: Basic Readings*, ed. Peter S. Baker (New York, 1995) 35-50.

this inflection, combined with the scribe's desire for clarity in the text, would have prevented him from drawing it here. But there are two other instances (line 410a and 616b) where the word is the first element of an inflected compound: *epeltyrf* and *epelwearde*, respectively. The use of the rune here would not have caused a syntactical problem, and yet he chooses not to draw it. I believe the reason for this inconsistency is found in the context of the poem, especially when compared to those instances where the rune is drawn.<sup>26</sup> The narrative situation surrounding line 410 is Beowulf's first meeting with Hroðgar, when Beowulf explains why he has come to Heorot:<sup>27</sup>

Me wearð Grendles þing  
on minre epeltyrf undyrne cuð. (ll. 409b-410b)

This un-secret Grendel business became known to me on my *home-soil*.

The other time when the scribe does not employ the rune occurs during the first feast, when Wealhþeow is introduced:

...ond þa freolic wif ful gesealde  
ærest East-Dena epelwearde  
bæd hine bliðne æt þære beorþege  
leodum leofne. (ll. 615a-617a)

...and then the noble woman gave the cup first to the *home-guardian* of the East-Danes, wished him well at the beer-drinking, beloved to the people.

Both of these incidents are part of the regular narrative of the story. They deal with moments set in the same time as the narrative of the poem. There is nothing explicitly ancient or Germanic about these two moments in the tale. On the contrary, the times when the scribe chooses to draw the rune in place of the word are in the context of things Germanic and evoke a past even more ancient than the narrative of the tale. The first time is during Unferð's taunts. At this moment the narrative is being presented in a pluperfect kind of way. A character within this old story is telling an even older story, which seems to have become a legend:

<sup>26</sup> Metrics do not seem to play a role in this question, as the rune is drawn where *epel* is stressed and alliterating (e.g., l. 913, .ſ. Scyldinga. He þær *eallum* wearð; l. 1702, *eald* .ſ. wearð, þæt ðes *eorl* wære) and where it is unstressed and not alliterating (l. 520, ðonon he *gesohte swæsne* .ſ.).

<sup>27</sup> All citations from *Beowulf* are from Elliot van Kirk Dobbie, ed., *Beowulf and Judith* ASPR vol. 4 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953); all translations are my own.

Pa hine on morgentid  
 on Heaþo-Ræmes holm ætbær,  
 ðonon he gesohte swæsne .ſ.  
 leof his leodum lond Brondinga. (ll. 518b-521b)

Then in the morning the sea bore him [Brecca] to the Heaþo-Ræmes, from where he sought his dear *homeland*, beloved to his people, the land of the Brondings.

In addition to the fact that Unferð's story is set in the past, this is also a moment within the poem where ancient, mysterious pagan tribes are being named. The scribe himself is able to add something further to the words of the poet, by inserting his .ſ. right between the exotic (in a Germanic sense) names of *Heaþo-Ræmes* and *Brondinga*. Anglo-Saxons reading the poem would probably not have any clear idea of who or where these places and people were besides simply being other, different, and in the past. As Nicholas Howe points out, in poems like *Beowulf*, "Germania," the original *epel* for the Anglo-Saxons and the individual place-names therein are "less... a region to be mapped than one to be invoked."<sup>28</sup> If the names *Heaþo-Ræmes* and *Brondinga* are used as evocations, the rune serves as an exclamation point to further the emphasis for the reader.

The next use of the rune occurs in an even more Germanic and ancient section of the poem. The scop sings a song of Beowulf, then Sigemund, and finally Heremod. This is a very Germanic moment and the *Beowulf* poet through the scop is clearly interested in evoking the most ancient past, the age of heroes, both good and bad. At moments like this, a reader is poignantly reminded of the fact that he or she is reading a poem which ideally should be spoken. Our scribe, however, has provided the text with an artistic device unavailable to an oral court poet, one which can help to remind us of how ancient and different the world of this episode within the poem is:

...þæt ðeodnes bearn geþeon scolde,  
 fæderæþelum onfon, folc gehealdan  
 hord ond hleoburh hæleþa rice  
 .ſ. Scyldinga. (ll. 910a-913a)

...that prince's son had to prosper, receive the paternal excellence, keep safe the people, the treasure, the fortress, the kingdom of men, the *homeland* of the Scyldings.

The first scribe's third and final use of the rune .ſ. brought into clear focus for me just how exciting the use of the rune in the *Beowulf* manuscript is; in fact I was a little annoyed when I discovered the aesthetic joy of which so many editors have deprived their readers. The word *runstæf*, "runic-letter," the word an Anglo-Saxon

<sup>28</sup> Nicholas Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) 143.



would use to describe what “ $\text{X}$ ” is, occurs just once in *Beowulf*. In the only extant manuscript of the poem it appears on folio 170r:

Swa wæs on ðæm scennum sciran goldes  
 þurh runstafas rihte gemearcod  
 geseted on gesæd hwam þæt sweord geworht. (ll. 1694a-1695b)

Thus it was on that metal plate of shining gold rightly marked with runestaves, set in lore, by whom that sword was made.

Beowulf has returned victorious from his battle with Grendel’s mother, his last journey in the section of the poem which the first scribe copies. Hroðgar examines the hilt, all that remains of the most ancient heirloom to appear in the poem thus far, and to express how very old and wonderful it is, the poet tells us that there are runes on it. Then Hroðgar speaks and begins his rather lengthy “sermon” to Beowulf. He begins with a maxim-like statement, evoking an “old guardian of the homeland” so ancient that his name is unknown:

þæt, la, mæg secgan se þe soð ond riht  
 fremen on folce, feor eal gemon  
 eald  $\text{X}$ .weard þæt ðes eorl wære  
 geboren betera. (ll. 1700a-1703)

That, aye, he can say, who performs what’s true and right among the people, who remembers all the way back, the old guardian of the *homeland*, [he can say] that this man is well-born.

Here is an evocation of all things glorious and Germanic and ancient, and the scribe is able to make the moment even more dramatic for the *reader* by drawing a rune right at the beginning of the speech. Even more striking than this is that immediately after we have been told that Hroðgar is able to read the runes on the hilt, the *runstafas* of line 1695, the scribe himself draws a rune on the very same manuscript leaf. Cotton Vitellius A.xv., folio 170r is “rightly marked by a rune;” the scribes of the *Beowulf* manuscript read that passage with a rune among the words, and this is, I believe, how we should read it as well.

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DAMIAN FLEMING

**Appendix:**

Editions of *Beowulf* and how they treat the rune  $\text{⚔}$

In chronological order by original publication date: (Editions that print the rune within the text of the poem are marked with an asterisk [\*])

Thorkelin, Grim. Johnson. *De Danorum Rebus Gestis Secul. III&IV Poëma Danicum Dialecto Anglosaxonica. Ex Bibliotheca Cottiniana Musaei Britannici*. Copenhagen 1815.

Thorkelin does not seem to realize what role the rune plays in the MS, and omits it, attempting to render sense from the Old English without the rune/word; thus he translates:

Ponon he gesohte	Deinde petiit
swæsne.	Dulcem,
Leof his leodum	Charam suo populo
Lond Brondinga;	Terram Brodingorum (p. 41, for lines 520-1)
Onfon folc gehealdan	Incepit populum custodire
Hord and hleo burh	Divitem et totam urbem
Hæleþa rice	Viris pontentem.
Scyldinga he	Scyldingorum ille
Pær eallum wearþ	Ibi omnibus erat
Mæg Higelaces...;	Satrapa Higelaci... (p. 70, for ll. 911-14a)
Pæt, la, mæg sæcgan	Ecce quid possit dicere,
Se þe soþ ond riht	Qui verum et rectum
Fremed on folce	Promovet in populo.
Feor eal gemon eald.	Annosa omnis audiant ætas!
Weard þæt þes eorl wære	An igitur dux fuit natus
Geboren betera blædis	Cui præstantius munus
Is aræred	Fuit oblatum,
Geond wid wegæs	Trans latum mare.
Wine min Beowulf.	Amice Beowulfe! (p. 128, for ll. 1700-4)

\*Kemble, John M. *The Anglo-Saxon Poems of Beowulf, The Travellers Song, and the Battle of Finnes-Burh*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. London, 1833.

at line 1035 (for 520b) prints “.⚔.\*” with note on page “\*éðel”; at 1819 (for 913a) prints “.⚔. Scyldinga\*” with note on page “\*éðel Scyldinga”; at 3402 (for 1702a) prints “eald .⚔. wear[d]” with no note

Zupitza, Julius. *Beowulf: Reproduced in Facsimile...EETS vol. 245*. New York: Oxford UP, 1959. (first publ. 1880-82).

in the transcription, in all three cases he simply prints “eðel” with no note, as if it were a simple expanded abbreviation.

Grein, C.W.M. *Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Poesie*. Göttingen, 1857.

prints the rune in all three occurrences in the “Text nach der handschrift;” expands the rune silently at 520b and 1702a in “Berichtigter text” (p.168); at 913a prints “eðel” with app. crit. on page with note “Für eðel oder æðel steht, wie öfters, im ms die rune”

Grundtvig, N.F.S., *Beowulfes Beorh eller Bjovulfs-Drapen, det Old-Anglske Heltedigt, paa Grund-Spoget*. Copenhagen, 1861.

at lines 1034 and 1819 (for 520b and 913a, respectively) he prints “éðel” without note; at 3397 (for 1702a) prints “eald éðel-weard with app.crit. on page: “3397 M: .⚔. : éðel”

Holder, Alfred. *Beowulf*. Freiburg, 1882.

reproduces the rune in his MS-modeled rendering of the text; expands to “eðel” without note in the edition of the text.

Heyne, Moritz. *Beowulf*. Padeborn, 1888.

prints “éðel” in the text; in apparatus at the back of the book has note: “im MS durch die Rune E gegeben”

- Wyatt, A.J. *Beowulf*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1908 (first publ. 1894).  
prints “eðel”; in apparatus on page: “MS. ‘swæne .ƿ.’ the OE name of this runic character was eðel; hence the character is used here and in l. 913 for the word eðel” [but he does not mention or note the occurrence at l. 1702; R.W. Chambers revises this text in 1914 and keeps these notes]
- Holthausen, Ferdinand. *Beowulf*. Heidelberg, 1948 (first publ. 1908).  
prints “eðel”; apparatus on page: “eðel] ƿ
- Sedgefield, W.J. *Beowulf*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1935 (first publ. 1910).  
prints “eðel” without note
- Pierquin, Hubert. *Le Poème Anglo-Saxon De Beowulf*. Paris, 1912.  
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prints “eðel” with no note; he does however say in his introduction that “common scribal abbreviations have been silently expanded”
- Swanton, Michael. *Beowulf: Edited with an Introduction, Notes and New Prose Translation*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1978.  
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