

**MALDON AND  
BRUNNANBURH: TWO  
OLD ENGLISH  
SONGS OF BATTLE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649023080

Maldon and Brunnanburh: Two Old English Songs of Battle by Charles Langley Crow

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**CHARLES LANGLEY CROW**

**MALDON AND  
BRUNNANBURH: TWO  
OLD ENGLISH  
SONGS OF BATTLE**



# MALDON AND BRUNNANBURH

TWO  
OLD ENGLISH  
SONGS OF BATTLE

EDITED BY

CHARLES LANGLEY CROW, PH.D. (GÖTTINGEN)

PROFESSOR OF TEUTONIC LANGUAGES  
WEATHERFORD COLLEGE, TEXAS



BOSTON, U.S.A., AND LONDON  
GINN & COMPANY, PUBLISHERS  
*The Athenæum Press*  
1897

TO

MY FRIEND AND FORMER TEACHER

**James Albert Harrison**

13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840. 841. 842. 843. 844. 845. 846. 847. 848. 849. 850. 851. 852. 853. 854. 855. 856. 857. 858. 859. 860. 861. 862. 863. 864. 865. 866. 867. 868. 869. 870. 871. 872. 873. 874. 875. 876. 877. 878. 879. 880. 881. 882. 883. 884. 885. 886. 887. 888. 889. 890. 891. 892. 893. 894. 895. 896. 897. 898. 899. 900. 901. 902. 903. 904. 905. 906. 907. 908. 909. 910. 911. 912. 913. 914. 915. 916. 917. 918. 919. 920. 921. 922. 923. 924. 925. 926. 927. 928. 929. 930. 931. 932. 933. 934. 935. 936. 937. 938. 939. 940. 941. 942. 943. 944. 945. 946. 947. 948. 949. 950. 951. 952. 953. 954. 955. 956. 957. 958. 959. 960. 961. 962. 963. 964. 965. 966. 967. 968. 969. 970. 971. 972. 973. 974. 975. 976. 977. 978. 979. 980. 981. 982. 983. 984. 985. 986. 987. 988. 989. 990. 991. 992. 993. 994. 995. 996. 997. 998. 999. 1000.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

---

Of recent editions of one or both of the poems, those by Bright, Sweet, Walker, and Zupitza have been most useful to me. Still I have followed no editor blindly. The chapter on Prosody is based on Sievers' account of Old English versification in Paul and Braune's *Beiträge*. Zernial's *Lied von Byrhtnōð's Fall* has been used freely. Cook's excellent edition of *Judith* is full of suggestions to an editor.

My thanks are due to Professor Bright for courtesies extended me while looking up references in the Johns Hopkins University Library, to Mr. L. M. Harris of the University of Indiana, to Prof. Robert Sharp of Tulane University, and especially to Prof. Jas. A. Harrison of the University of Virginia for valuable suggestions and criticisms.

C. L. CROW.

NORFOLK, 1897.



## INTRODUCTION.

---

### HISTORICAL OUTLINE.

BORN of the "Songs" celebrate battles fought during the period of the Danish Invasions. With varying successes the Danes made raid after raid upon the English. It was not long before they held large possessions in the North, whence, assisted by the Britons and Scots and to some extent by their cousins in France, they carried on piratical warfare against the Saxons. The vigorous policy of Edward reduced them for a short time to submission. The whole of Northumberland, the Scots, and the Britons of Strathelyde "chose him to father and to lord." But in less than a year after Edward's death the North was in revolt. The young king Aethelstan hastened into Northumbria and in a short time gained a complete victory. In order to make the Saxon rule more tolerable to the Danes, he made the Danish nobleman Sithric sub-king of the land, and gave him his sister Editha in marriage. Then turning westwards he broke the league which had been formed between the Britons of Strathelyde and the Scots, and forced them to pay an annual tribute and to march in his armies. After this he defeated the Britons of Cornwall, and compelled them to submit to a like vassalage and to give up part of their territory.

When Sithric died, his sons Anlaf and Godric, basing their claims on the right of their stepmother Editha, claimed the

throne of Northumberland without consulting Aethelstan. They were soon expelled, whereupon Anlaf fled to Ireland and Godric to Scotland. Aethelstan demanded that the Scotch king, Constantine, should give up the exile, his son-in-law. This Constantine refused, but was at length forced to promise. Godric, however, being secretly warned, escaped, and spent the few remaining years of his life as a pirate. Soon after Godric's escape, Aethelstan declared war against Constantine because of his action in regard to his son-in-law, and completely defeated him. Smarting under this, Constantine entered into a conspiracy with Anlaf, who had in the meanwhile put himself at the head of a band of Danish pirates in the Irish Sea. Britons, Danes, all who feared the growing power of Aethelstan hastened to join the conspiracy. Anlaf's force appeared in the Humber and, strengthened as it was, seemed strong enough to overrun Saxon England. Aethelstan met and completely destroyed the collected army at Brunnanburh. Now at last the land seemed rid of the Danes, and, indeed, there was no more trouble during Aethelstan's reign.

Aethelstan's death was followed by a Danish revolt. The ensuing struggle resulted in reducing the kingdom of Aethelstan to the limits of Alfred's time. Again Watling Street separated Wessex from the Danes. But the statesmanship of Dunstan soon regained all that had been lost. Then followed a long peace, broken only by the disturbances of King Eadwig's short reign (955-8). The West Saxon supremacy continued until the succession of Aethelred to the throne. Then Dunstan withdrew to Canterbury, and the artificial kingdom that he had built up fell to pieces. The selfish aims of Wessex angered the other provinces. Northumberland seceded, Mercia was in revolt, the Danes renewed their hostilities. A hostile force landed in Essex, destroyed the English forces at Maldon in spite of their

chivalrous courage, and had to be bought off from further devastating the land. The Danes were also permitted to settle peaceably in the land. From now on, the power of Wessex grew ever smaller, and her enemies became more numerous and daring. Deeper and deeper she sank, until, disgraced by the basest treachery and cowardice, her doom was certain; and in her fall she prepared the way for the Danish supremacy in England and the Norman Invasion.

#### MANUSCRIPTS.

a) The "Battle of Maldon" was preserved in an unique MS., described by Wanley in his *Catalogus* as follows:

MS. Otho A. XII Cod. memb. et antiquus in Quarto, in quo, post illud Asserii Menevensis exemplar, quo usus est Dr. Matthæus Parker Archiep. Cant. statim sequuntur Saxonice I. Exorcismus contra Melancholiam. II. Exorcismus prolixior contra frigora et febres. III. Fragmentum capite et calce mutilum, sex foliis constans, quo Poetice et Stylo Cædmoniano celebratur virtus bellica Beorhtnothi Ealdormanni Offæ et aliorum Anglo-Saxonum, in prælio cum Danis.

Although the beginning and the end of the poem were wanting, it is probable that but few lines were lost. The fragment was printed by Hearne in 1726. Five years later the MS. was destroyed in the great Cottonian fire, so that now we must rely on Hearne's edition.

The poem, as we have it, is prevailingly Late West Saxon. Several words occur, however, which show Mercian peculiarities: *wearð* (*wearð*) 116; *heorra* (*hearra*) 204; *bæron* (*bæron*) 67, and similarly *wægon* 98, also Kentish; *steðe* (*steðe*) 63, and similarly *hremmas* 106, *meðel* 199, *leg* 276, *wrec* 279, also Kentish, and according to Cosijn, p. 11, vari-