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**Towards a  
Digital  
Edition of  
*Waldere's*  
Fragments**

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# Abstract

Данная магистерская диссертация посвящена созданию прототипа цифрового издания «*Anglosaxonica Fragmenta duo membranacea, poetica, de Rege Walthero*». Речь идет о героической поэме на древнеанглийском языке, датируемой XI веком. Помимо подчеркивания важности фрагментов основная цель этой диссертации – показать усовершенствование традиционных издательских практик благодаря цифровому средству. В данной работе рассматриваются характеристики цифрового издательского дела, чтобы доказать его превосходство над традиционными бумажными изданиями. Научная новизна работы заключается в создании первого настоящего цифрового издания фрагментов *Вальдера*. На самом деле, среди различных причин, побудивших меня работать над фрагментами, самым важным был тот факт, что все существующие исследования и издания этого произведения привязаны к бумажному формату. По этой причине я решила создать дипломатическое-интерпретирующее издание, чтобы предоставить пользователю возможность рассмотреть два переписывания текста отредактированного документа: оригинальное и стандартизированное. Первое соблюдает структуру, пунктуацию и написание текста (Pierazzo, 2014), а интерпретационное переписывание является отредактированным текстом оригинального документа, например, с использованием знаков препинания, исправлением слов, написанием заглавных букв и т. д. (Fabbris, 2018). Таким образом, мое издание подчёркивает значительность древнеанглийского источника, а также облегчает его понимание. Кроме того, оно становится мультимедийным ресурсом, поскольку позволяет одновременно исследовать разные аспекты произведения благодаря факсимильным изображениям рукописи и дополнительной информации о произведении. Как объясняется в работе, это возможно благодаря применению стандартов цифровой издательской практики на этапе оцифровки рукописи, что, в свою очередь, связано с использованием специальных компьютерных программ и других инструментов. Все это демонстрируется в визуальном отображении моего прототипа. Практика моей диссертации сочетается с теоретической частью, посвященной анализу произведения.

Моя работа состоит из четырёх глав. В первых двух главах описываются общие аспекты фрагментов, а в других рассматриваются создание цифрового издания и все мои издательские решения.

В первой главе дается определение героической поэзии, то есть жанра, к которому принадлежат «*Anglosaxonica Fragmenta duo membranacea, poetica, de Rege Walthero*». Исследование начинается с рассмотрения истоков первых произведений жанра и продолжается описанием его отличительных черт. Героическая поэзия развилась из стилистически простых песней, описывающих вторжения германских воинов на территории Римской империи IV и VI веков (Francovich Onesti, 2002). В связи с этим, в главе говорится о важности этого периода, который известен как Период Миграции и который определил судьбу германских народов. Именно поэтому певцы и поэты стали рассказывать о тех событиях, иногда соединяя реальность с легендой, чтобы сохранить память о том времени. В результате возникли первые героические рассказы, передававшиеся устно на протяжении веков с целью прославить германских героев, которые доблестно сражались за свой народ (Haymes & Samples, 1996). Герои являются центральными фигурами жанра, отличающимися от всех остальных мужчин своими достоинствами и особой физической силой (Haymes & Samples, 1996). Об этом свидетельствует древнеанглийская рукопись, которая ссылается на историю Вальтера Аквитанского, легендарного вестготского короля VI века. Действительно, во фрагментах он описывается как истинный герой, непобудительный, хитрый и верный. Итак, благодаря героической поэзии герои стали образцом для подражания любого человека, особенно для воинского класса (Haymes & Samples, 1996). Кроме того, в главе также обсуждается переход от устной к письменной передаче жанра. В германском крае до XI века переписывались только священные или юридические тексты, потому что с культурной точки зрения они считались более важными, чем легендарные рассказы (Francovich Onesti, 2002). На самом деле, христианская религия, которая насаждалась и на германских территориях, затруднила распространение героической поэзии. Тем не менее, это не помешало ни её успеху, ни её эволюции, и такие поэмы обогащались стилистически и лексически в течение веков. Обогащение стиля до такой степени способствовало постепенному признанию жанра, что он дошёл и до монастырей, где монахи стали переписывать легендарные рассказы в XII и XIII веках. Это привело к постепенному изменению их содержания, которое в результате религиозного влияния монастырей стало носителем христианского послания (Francovich Onesti, 2002). Фрагменты «*Anglosaxonica Fragmenta duo membranacea, poetica, de Rege Walthero*», к счастью, составляют исключение, поскольку в них упоминаний о религиозном измерении недостаточно, чтобы изменить их содержание. Однако, это свидетельствует о христианском влиянии на жанр, который долгое время считался языческим и нечистым.



Вторая глава посвящена анализу содержания, лингвистических и материальных характеристик фрагментов. В начале говорится о полной легенде Вальтера Аквитанского, содержание которой важно, чтобы понять эпизоды, описанные в древнеанглийских фрагментах. В связи с этим речь идёт о латинской поэме «*Вальтарий*», также называемой «*Вальтарий-силач*», которая является полным произведением, относящимся к легенде и написанным в 930 году монахом Эккехардом I в аббатстве Санкт-Галлена (Schwab, 1999). В ней описываются приключения Вальтария – а не Вальдера, поскольку это латинский источник – с самого детства. Он жил при дворе Атилы вместе с Хильдегитой, Гунтером и Хагеном. Все они были сыновьями князей других территорий в Период Миграции. Атила оставил их в заложниках, покорив франкское королевство отца Хагена, бургундское королевство отца Гунтера и аквитанские королевства Вальдера и Хильдегиты. В *Вальтарии* рассматривается побег влюбленных Хильдегиты и Вальтария из двора Атилы после того, как они украли у него сокровища. В результате Атила поручает Гунтеру и Хагену преследовать беглецов. История заканчивается боем между героем и его преследователями, в котором Вальтарий одерживает победу (D'Angelo, 1998). Однако во фрагменты включены только эпизоды, предшествующие финальному противостоянию. После определения сюжета легенды и фрагментов в главе исследуются исторические, лингвистические и материальные аспекты текста древнеанглийской рукописи. Из тщательного исследования следует, что западно-саксонский диалект является языком фрагментов. Кроме того, сам факт, что на этом диалекте говорили в юго-западной части Англии в период между IX и XI веками, побудил учёных признать это место и этот период соответственно местом происхождения и датировкой произведения (Schwab, 1999). Однако это лишь гипотеза, поскольку поэма о *Вальдере* кутана тайной, особенно из-за фрагментарности, лакун и износа рукописи и ошибок писаря. С уверенностью мы знаем только, что фрагменты обнаружил учёный Дж. Ж. Торкелин в 1860 году в библиотеке Копенгагена, где они хранятся и по сей день (Schwab, 1999). Другие определенности касаются более технических деталей, такие как количество строк каждого фрагмента – около 15 – и размер отдельных листов – около 20 x 15 см (Schwab, 1999). Все эти соображения основаны на наиболее значительных критических изданиях, касающихся фрагментов, классификация которых предлагается в этой главе. Для того чтобы прояснить, как другие авторы анализировали и редактировали текст рукописи, я опиралась на издания Дж. Стивенса (1860), Ф. Нормана (1949), Шваба (1999) и Дж. Хаймса (2009). С помощью их исследований я подчеркнула интересные соображения, которые даже пригодились для создания моего

издания. Настоящая глава завершается замечаниями о важности и популярности легенды об аквитанском герое в Средние века, продемонстрированных её различными континентальными аналогами (Schwab, 1999). Среди них насчитываются *Вальтарий*, *Новалезская Хроника*, *Песнь о Нибелунгах*, *Тидрек-сага*, *фрагменты Граца и Вены* и *Польская Хроника*. В данной работе анализируются их исторические характеристики, форма и содержание, чтобы подчеркнуть варианты трактовки легенды. На самом деле, в них легенда о герое Аквитании одна, а существующие различия обусловлены разными местами, где передавались истории.

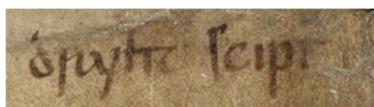
Третья глава посвящена издательскому вопросу, на котором основана данная диссертация. Темы этой части касаются познаний издательского дела и филологического анализа. В главе сравниваются цифровые и традиционные издания, описываются особенности обоих типов изданий и подчеркивается явное превосходство первых над вторыми. В анализе даётся определение традиционного научного издания и исследуются основополагающие элементы, связанные с созданием любого издания, то есть оригинальный документ и редактор (Sahle, 2016). Процесс создания начинается с выбора документа, который в зависимости от редактора и его цели требует различных методов работы, дающих разные результаты (Sahle, 2016). В главе также предлагается краткий исторический обзор, чтобы объяснить, как цифровое средство повлияло на издательские практики, способствуя появлению цифрового научного издательского дела. Это стало возможным благодаря постоянным технологическим нововведениям, которые изменили методы производства изданий (Mancinelli & Pierazzo, 2020). Изменение канала передачи информации и переход от бумажного к цифровому измерению связаны с цифровой парадигмой, которая является сутью процесса создания каждого цифрового научного издания (Sahle, 2016). Четыре основных этапа этого процесса посвящены отбору документа, его оцифровке, кодированию и визуальным отображениям. Особое внимание уделяется кодированию, которое позволяет редактору перевести документ с его оригинальной формы на цифровую (Mancinelli & Pierazzo, 2020, 2016). Для того чтобы объяснить, как это происходит, необходимо рассмотреть инструменты полезные для этого процесса, т. е. программное обеспечение и язык разметки. Существуют различные типы; для своего издания я использовала программное обеспечение *Oxygen* (версия 23.1) и язык разметки XML-TEI. *Oxygen* ([https://www.oxygenxml.com/xml\\_editor.html](https://www.oxygenxml.com/xml_editor.html)) — это программа, предназначенная для создания цифровых изданий. Она используется для кодирования текста документа в цифровом контексте с помощью специальных компьютерных

метаязыков, например XML-TEI – это метаязык, созданный компьютерными экспертами в 1948 году (Mancinelli & Pierazzo, 2020). Через консорциум *Text Encoding Initiative* они создали руководство по кодированию каждого типа документов (<https://tei-c.org/guidelines/>). Как правило, язык разметки основан на кодах, используемых для описания каждой части закодированного текста. На техническом жаргоне говорят в основном об элементах и атрибутах. Элементы, указанные в угловых скобках, используются для разделения секций файла XML-TEI; для того чтобы обеспечить правильное разделение, все элементы должны быть сначала открыты, а затем закрыты. Атрибуты, с другой стороны, указаны в перевернутых кавычках. Они ссылаются на элемент, обогащая его дополнительной информацией. Кроме того, элементы и атрибуты соблюдают определённый порядок. На самом деле, для того чтобы XML-TEI-файл функционировал, его необходимо организовать в иерархическом порядке; поэтому каждый XML-TEI-файл состоит из модулей (Mancinelli & Pierazzo, 2020). Несмотря на множество существующих модулей, основными из них, полезными для обеспечения функционирования обычного XML-файла, являются `<teiHeader>` ‘записывание’ и `<text>` ‘текст’. Согласно руководству *TEI* в первом (в модуле ‘записывание’) содержится информации об издании и рукописи, например, название издания, авторы, год публикации и т. д. Второй (модуль ‘текст’) содержит переписывание текста отредактированного документа. И `<teiHeader>`, и `<text>` даются в элементе `<TEI>`, который не только определяет тип файла, но и отмечает его начало и конец. Итак, в цифровом издании можно найти разные переписывания самого документа, а также факсимильные изображения, аннотации, исторические сведения и информацию о содержании произведения и самого издания. Все это добавлено во время кодирования. Результат кодирования может стать мультимедийным ресурсом после его преобразования через специальное программное обеспечение, которое также позволяет его визуализировать (Sahle, 2016). Таким образом, превосходство цифровой парадигмы над типографской парадигмой бумажных изданий становится очевидным; в моем анализе подчеркиваются ограничения традиционных изданий. Главное из этих ограничений заключается в том, что в бумажном формате можно предложить только статичное отображение отредактированного документа и, к сожалению, это иногда затрудняет доступ и просмотр самых изданий (Sahle, 2016). Наоборот, плюралистическое естество цифрового издания, а также легкость доступа и использования — это лишь некоторые из преимуществ, характеризующих цифровую среду (Mancinelli & Pierazzo, 2020). Все это становится более понятным после визуализации научного цифрового издания, которая дает пользователю

возможность одновременно взаимодействовать с различными частями документа и одним инструментом (Sahle, 2016).

Четвёртая глава связана с более практической частью моей работы и демонстрирует концепции, изложенные в предыдущей главе. Цель главы – дать точный отчёт о моей работе в качестве редактора фрагментов *Вальдера* и о моем предложении по созданию цифрового дипломатического-интерпретирующего издания. «*A digital edition of Waldere's fragments*» – это название моего прототипа и результат моих издательских решений, основанных на руководстве TEI и проанализированные в этой главе. Первые решения касаются секции `<teiHeader>`, в котором я вставляю списки, функция которых – группировать схожую информацию, относящуюся к рукописи или изданию. Именно поэтому в моем кодировании используются так называемые «элементы списка», в частности, список людей `<listPerson>`, описывающий всех персонажей фрагментов, и `<listBibl>`, посвященный всем библиографическим ссылкам, полезным для моей издательской работы. В секции `<teiHeader>` также содержится описание необычных букв, используемых во фрагментах, в качестве элемента `<charDecl>`. В нём даются глифы и символы аббревиатур в оригинальных и стандартизированных формах. Сразу после рассмотрения секции `<teiHeader>` следует анализ модуля факсимиле `<facsimile>`, связанного с изображениями в цифровом издании. Обычно в стандартном XML-TEI-файле это не используется, но я решила добавить этот элемент, чтобы создать как можно более полное издание. Он нужен для вставки факсимиле рукописи в файл XML-TEI путем кодирования их прямоугольных координат, рассчитанных с помощью специального онлайн инструмента: *TEI Zoner* (<http://teicat.huma-num.fr/zoner.php>). Цель этого решения – создать связь между текстом предложенных мною переписываний и текстом изображений рукописи. Кроме того, поскольку цель моего издания – представить произведение в его оригинальной и стандартизированной форме, мои последние издательские решения связаны с текстом фрагментов. Поэтому я стандартизировала все двусмысленные, поврежденные и неправильные формы, которые могут затруднить понимание текста рукописи. Это касается части `<text>`, в которой с помощью определённых атрибутов и элементов я работала с филологической точки зрения над фрагментами. Например, в этой части используются элементы `<orig>` (оригинальная форма) и `<reg>` (стандартизированная форма), которые нужны, чтобы указать предлагаемую мной стандартизацию оригинальной леммы в рукописи. Все эти решения содержатся в элементе `<choice>`, потому что они связаны с моей филологической интерпретацией текста фрагментов.

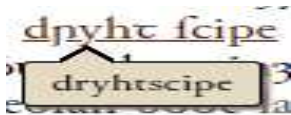
Как объясняется в последней части главы, это воплощено в этапе визуализации, поэтому также описываются программы обеспечения, позволяющие визуализировать редакторские решения, т. е. *Visual Studio Code* (<https://code.visualstudio.com/docs>) и *Edition Visualisation Technology* (<http://evt.labcd.unipi.it/>). Программа *Visual Studio Code* – это издательское программное обеспечение, основанное исключительно на языке разметки XML-TEI, который позволяет полностью визуализировать издание в локальном браузере благодаря использованию работающего сервера. Программа EVT — это программа с открытым доступом, посвященная созданию цифровых изданий на основе текстов, закодированных через язык разметки XML. Учитывая важность программы EVT beta 2 для практики цифрового издательского дела и для моей работы, последняя часть главы посвящена анализу ее основных особенностей, таких как интерфейс и функционирование. Кроме того, рассматривается визуализация моих издательских решений через программу EVT beta 2. В связи с этим я ниже укажу пример кодирования стандартизации слова *dryhtscipe*, содержащегося во фрагменте Ia, в строке 7.



Интересно, что во фрагменте слово разделено на *dryht* и *scipe*, хотя его грамматически правильная форма – *dryhtscipe*. Более того, это двусмысленный случай, потому что каждая форма имеет свое собственное значение. На самом деле, согласно англосаксонскому онлайн-словарю Босворта Толлера (<https://bosworthtoller.com/>), *dryhtscipe* означает «государь», *dryht* – «армия» или «множество людей», а *scipe* – «достоинство». Это усложняет правильную интерпретацию формы, но, к счастью, в контексте ясно, что правильная форма – *dryhtscipe*, поэтому я закодировала её таким образом.

```
<choice><orig>d<g ref="rins"/>yh<g ref="tins"/> <g ref="slong"/>cipe</orig>  
  <reg>dryhtscipe</reg>  
</choice>
```

Соответственно, благодаря элементам *<orig>* и *<reg>* в программе EVT beta 2 можно отображать и оригинальную форму, т. е. разделенную форму, и стандартизированную форму, т. е. объединенную форму.



Анализ визуализации моего издания подчеркивает основные преимущества и недостатки EVT beta 2, среди которых простота использования и доступность программы, а также некоторые проблемы с визуализацией.

В заключении диссертации делаются выводы по проделанной работе. Речь идёт об основных преимуществах и недостатках цифрового измерения. Кроме того, в завершение анализа намечаются перспективы дальнейших исследований для улучшения цифровых изданий. В частности, обсуждаются проблемы, присущие визуализации посредством EVT beta 2 и возникшие также в моей работе. В конце кратко рассматриваются главные отличия цифрового и бумажного формата для того, чтобы читатель признал превосходство цифровых изданий.

В приложении к диссертации содержится полная кодировка фрагментов.

## Introduction

This thesis is dedicated to the creation of a scholarly digital edition of *Anglosaxonica Fragmenta duo membranacea, poetica, de Rege Walthero*, two fragments containing the epic Old English poem of *Waldere*, dating back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, after outlining the key features of the fragments, I will focus on the practice of scholarly digital editing. Specifically, I plan to examine its core elements and its process of creation to both explain how I developed my digital edition and to emphasise the benefits of the digital dimension over paper-based ones. Moreover, I decided to work on this project because of the lack of a proper SDE on these fragments. As a matter of fact, most editions on the manuscript are available only in paper format, with all the limitations this entails. Consequently, this study is divided into two parts. The first one aims to provide a thorough examination of the edited material and on the textual tradition of *Waldere*, while the second focuses on the philological and digital editing techniques I adopted.

Within the first chapter I define Germanic heroic poetry, i.e. the literary genre to which the fragments in question belong. I begin by analysing its origins, starting with the heroic lays, short oral compositions related to the Migration Period, and whose events determined the future of the Germanic people. Considering its importance, poets and singers began to spread those facts, combining reality with legend with the aim to glorify that period. Over the centuries, the first heroic compositions underwent stylistic refinement and eventually took on the shape of poems. With reference to *Waldere's* fragments, in the chapter I examine the main features of the heroic poems, such as the alteration of reality and the figure of the hero, elements that guaranteed the spread of the genre.

In the second chapter I concentrate on the fragments, analysing them from different perspectives. I first describe the content of the legend of Walther of Aquitaine on which the fragments are based, and then focus on the characteristics of the fragments themselves. With the aim to provide an exhaustive analysis of the manuscript, I examine and rely on Stephens (1860), Norman (1949), Schwab (1999) and Himes (2009)' editions of the fragments. Starting from their considerations, I focus on the historical and linguistic aspects of the work, continuing my investigation with a qualitative analysis of the condition of the fragments. Furthermore, analysing their works allows me to investigate the editorial criteria applied by other scholars in view of the creation of my own edition. The final section of the chapter explores the continental counterparts of *Waldere*, as an

effort to shed light on the authentic popularity of the legend of the Aquitanian hero and of its literary genre.

The third chapter marks the transition from theory to practice, as it focuses on the application of the digital medium to traditional editorial practices. For this reason, I start the chapter with an overview of the fundamental elements behind each kind of scholarly edition, namely the source material and the editor. In fact, whether it is a digital edition or not, some steps in the creation process are similar, however, it is the dimension that makes the difference. In this regard, I address the differences between the digital paradigm, i.e. that of digital editions, and the typographical paradigm, typical of paper-based editions. By doing this, I can clarify their essential characteristics, other than highlight the benefits of the digital context.

Within the fourth chapter I will demonstrate all the concepts analysed in the previous chapter. To this extent, with references to my prototype *A digital edition of Waldere's fragments* and its visualisation, the undeniable advantages of scholarly digital editing are revealed. In this respect, I detail all the editorial choices I applied to the fragments, starting with the selection of the document and the type of edition, to arrive to the transcriptions I proposed. The result is the first diplomatic-interpretative SDE of this manuscript, a multimedia resource able to allow the user to interact with different aspects of the edited document, at the same time, and through a single tool. Specifically, I am referring to EVT (Edition Visualisation Technology), created by the scholar Roberto Rosselli Del Turco and a team of experts<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> EVT: <http://evt.labcd.unipi.it/> (Last accessed: 11/06/2024).



# 1. Germanic heroic poetry

This chapter focuses on Germanic heroic poetry, the literary form to which the *Waldere* fragments belong. In this chapter I aim to highlight the evolution of the Germanic heroic genre, starting from its origins. Precisely, in the first section I focus on the earliest compositions, the heroic lays, that with the passing of centuries evolved, resulting in poems. Considering poems derived from lays, they are to be considered quite similar as far as their content is concerned (Francovich Onesti, 2002). The latter revolved around the events of the migration period, which, as we will see later in more detail, coincided with a series of invasions and attacks by Germanic peoples on the Roman Empire and more generally with the migration of Germanic peoples in Southern, Western and Eastern Europe and beyond Europe between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries (Haymes & Samples, 1996). The events started to be recounted with the aim of honouring the warriors who fought bravely during those centuries, precisely because of the significance of that historical period for the Germanic people. In such wise, I emphasise the connection between history and the legends that represents the foundation for heroic lays and poems (Haymes & Samples, 1996), providing examples that support my investigation. To this extent, another central feature I will consider is the educational function of the genre, represented by the figure the hero, who stands as an example to follow, as explained in section 1.3. As my analysis progresses, I want to make clear that, despite their many parallels, lays and poems also have significant distinctions, and among them, their transmission. In truth, if the early heroic compositions were mainly restricted to the oral realm, the situation for the poetry changed gradually. As we will see, the themes of the genre bound it to orality since, at the time, the Christian church held a hegemonic position, and the bloody exploits of heroes were not considered important enough to be transcribed by monks (Francovich Onesti, 2002).

However, as the heroic genre developed, so did its transmission, which ultimately abandoned the oral medium, to embrace the written one, thanks to its dissemination and popularity (Haymes & Samples, 1996). This resulted in the literary form of Germanic heroic poetry, which left its stamp on mediaeval literature.

## 1.1. The origins

The Germanic heroic tradition developed during the early Middle Ages, more precisely between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, that is to say the Migration period (Haymes & Samples, 1996). From that historical moment originated a new form of narrative, within which the tendency to report historical events, such as battles and fights, arose. The peculiarity of these compositions coincided with the fact that singers and poets did not simply report the deeds of the warriors, but they transformed historical facts into legend with a celebrative intent. Evidence of this is proven by the heroic genre in general, whose first forms are known as heroic lays (Francovich Onesti, 2002).

Note that studying this subject is difficult since these narrations remained bounded to the oral dimension for centuries, as the spread of written texts other than institutional ones was complicated. In fact, at the time, the only texts considered important enough to be written down were those with a religious or legal purpose (Francovich-Onesti, 2002). Yet, this does not imply that some heroic compositions had not been written down. Examples of this are the *Hildebrandslied* and *Finnsburg's* fragment that reflect interesting common aspects, useful to define the traits of heroic lays (Francovich-Onesti, 2002). Thus, in the next lines, I intend to focus on them, since they represent the starting point of the development of heroic genre. Moreover, certain considerations valid for lays hold true for poems too, as I will examine in section 1.2.

Thus, even though "*The oral transmission of Germanic heroic legends is entirely lost to us*" as Haymes & Samples (1996:55) state, experts in the field have managed to extrapolate some rather interesting pieces of information from what remains of early heroic compositions. According to scholars, the latter were typically very short in length, lacking in lexical richness, mostly using formulaic language, thus resulting in a simple style. In addition, they were characterised by a strong use of direct discourse (Haymes & Samples, 1996). All of this makes sense, considering they were mainly transmitted orally. In fact, thanks to their brevity and simplicity, they could be easily learnt and later repeated, even without the necessity to be written down. Scholars also supposed singers did not have to memorize word for word, because of the freedom typical of the oral dimension. Therefore, singers while performing had the opportunity to reformulate the content in the case they did not remember the entire story (Haymes & Samples, 1996). However, the content was usually preserved since the narration of the deeds of warriors was associated to popular scenes and motifs. Still, changes occurred, simply because every performance represented a slightly different report of

similar events, rather than just a repetition (Haymes & Samples, 1996). In this manner, the same oral dimension guaranteed its dissemination.

## 1.2. Main features

After giving a general overview of the fundamental traits of the predecessor of heroic poetry, I will examine more closely the traits of the latter. To this extent, I aim to delve deeper into the issue, describing the ways in which the content of heroic compositions combines history and legend. It will be crucial to consider a few examples from the Migration Period in this regard. This is related to the educational intent of this poetry, which sought to preserve the memory of such events (Haymes & Samples, 1996). Furthermore, the purpose of epic poetry was to offer a role model for the warrior class through the figure of the hero (Haymes & Samples, 1996).

All these elements contributed to the appreciation of such poems, which surprisingly reached the monasteries, where the monks themselves started transcribing them (Francovich Onesti, 2002).

### 1.2.1. From history to legend

The true subject of this section is the connection between history and legend; however, to clearly understand how they merged within heroic poems, it is necessary to consider some of the most relevant events of the Migration Period. I want to clarify that within this part I will not report a thorough examination of such events, although there would be many episodes that could be explored in depth. Yet, this would elude the purpose of my current analysis.

The start of the Migration Period is typically thought to correspond with the decline of the Roman Empire, which made it easier for the Germanic peoples to invade those countries and expand their territory. But to be precise, the real beginning of the invasions was the famous Sack of Rome (409 - 410). Yet many other attacks by Germanic peoples had already been conducted towards the Empire, as Himes & Samples (1996:16) claim: “*The Germanic invaders remained a minority of the population*

*as a whole, and although they left a mark in many areas, their success did not really lead to the establishment of Germanic states on the ground formerly occupied by the Roman Empire”.*

Nevertheless, a precise reconstruction of events is quite complicated, since the transmission of historical events took place mainly orally (Haymes & Samples, 1996). Eyewitness testimonies from those who lived at that time served as the foundation for the circulation of those events. In fact, the Germanic singers who narrated the exploits of the Germanic invaders aspired to honour the warriors and their warlike adventures (Haymes & Samples, 1996).

According to scholars, this occurred within precise mechanisms, that had the basic purpose of keeping alive the divulgation of such historical episodes. This was done through processes of simplification of the content, or using recurring motifs from the Germanic tradition, and thanks to the malleability of the oral dimensioning, legend started to meld with history (Haymes & Samples, 1996).

Moreover, with the spread of these reports, respecting a coherent narrative became more and more important than respecting the chronological order of the events. This is attested by some of the remaining heroic compositions of the Germanic tradition, in which specific historical figures are decontextualized. Even though this was a recurrent technique, in the next lines I will focus on Attila, King of the Huns. As a matter of fact, he appears in numerous poems of the genre, even without having a direct bearing with the episode in question. The historical decontextualization of Attila occurs in a very definite way. It was common to present Attila as existing contemporaneously with other important individuals of Germanic culture, although from a chronological point of view they could never have met (Haymes & Samples, 1996).

The most recurrent case is that Attila was a contemporary of Theodoric the Great, king of the Ostrogoths. Because of their roles during the migration period, the two figures were juxtaposed in legends; nevertheless, Theodoric the Great lived in the late 5<sup>th</sup> and early 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, and Attila between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries. For their attacks and exploits during the Migration era, both are renowned. More specifically, it is said that Attila and the Ostrogoths invaded Roman-occupied lands in the first part of the 5<sup>th</sup> century (Haymes & Samples, 1996). The Ostrogothic people were subject to the Huns' control for a brief period following Attila's death (453), followed by the crowning of Theodoric the Great at the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Under his leadership, the Ostrogothic people managed to invade several territories, settling in northern Italy and parts of Spain and Gaul (Haymes & Samples, 1996). Their actions were so significant for the time that they were celebrated in heroic poems, albeit the historical course of events was altered.

The *Waldere* fragments, which show Attila and Theodoric coexisting, further support this. Even though I will address the whole plot of the Legend of Walther in Chapter two, I consider necessary to examine the relation between these two characters in the fragments. In fact, the main characters Waldere, Hagen, Guðhere, and Hiltegunt are shown in the fragments as being held captive at Attila's court and during the same time of the narrative, Theodoric is mentioned too<sup>2</sup>.

The exaltation of reality typical of heroic poetry could occur in other ways, such as within the insertion of fable-like motifs. Indeed, the deeds chronicled in these poems frequently featured the appearance of monsters and dragons alongside figures of deities (Francovich Onesti, 2002). In truth, given their function, monsters and dragons could be understood as a stylistic technique, however, I decided to address them here, since, in my opinion, they have a more direct connection with the legendary aspect. Indeed, they do not respect an actual temporal context, rather, they transcend it, as Francini (2022) argues. Thus, they are not to be considered as mere antagonists of the hero of the poem, rather, they represent an instrument for the poet within which he can express certain messages (Francini, 2022). For instance, in *Beowulf*, monsters are devilish antagonists, identified through clear appellations linked to the infernal dimension, recalling the religious dimension. This was a consequence of the strong Christian influence that had already permeated the culture of the period and, as a result, all the heroic works that were transcribed at that time, including *Beowulf* (Francini, 2022). As far as gods are concerned, I recall the figure of Weland the smith, also known as the smith of the gods. Many works from the Germanic heritage include his legend, such as the *Poetic Edda*<sup>3</sup>, the *Piðrekssaga*<sup>4</sup>, *Beowulf*<sup>5</sup>, and the *Waldere* fragments include his legend, each with a slightly different storyline depending on their different origins<sup>6</sup> (Synge, 1972).

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<sup>2</sup>King Theodoric the Great is referenced in relation to the figures of Widia, King Niðhad and Weland the Smith, whose bond will be studied in the next chapter.

<sup>3</sup> The Poetic Edda is a work of Norse origin, dated between the 13th and 14th centuries. It consists of several anonymous poems centred on Norwegian mythology and on the stories of Scandinavian and Icelandic heroes. For further information, see: *The Poetic Edda* (Bellows, 1923).

<sup>4</sup> This work is called *Piðrekssaga af Bern* in its entirety. There is evidence for three different versions of the saga: the 13th-century Norwegian version, the 16th-century Swedish version, and the 17th-century Icelandic version, the last two of which would seem to derive from the first. The content remains the same for all versions and focuses on the figure of Theodoric af Bern, the legendary figure of the Ostrogothic king used to represent that of the historic Theodoric the Great, focusing on the themes of the Migration period (Haymes & Samples, 1996).

<sup>5</sup> In addition to being the longest heroic poem to reach contemporary times, *Beowulf* is among the most well-known works from the Anglo-Saxon tradition, composed between the 8th and the 11th century. It is centred on the heroic figure of Beowulf, whose deeds take place during the 6th century. This work has a historical base, even if the plot features different legendary creatures. This is evidenced by the references in the poem to historical figures like Hygelac, the king of the Geats, who lived during the 6th century (Bloom, 1995).

<sup>6</sup> For further information on the differences regarding the content of the various Germanic heroic poems reporting the legend of Weyland the smith, see *Weland Smith of the Gods*, by Synge (1972).

In general, the fact that such themes were spread among the Germanic peoples is linked to their significance for them. As such, they survived years of transmission from tribe to tribe, mostly unaltered, though the oral dimension often made alterations inevitable (Francovich Onesti, 2002).

### 1.2.2. The educative role of the hero

The exaltation of the reality typical of the genre, however, occurred not only through the historical decontextualization of figures and events, or with the introduction of monsters and dragons, but also through the role of the main character: the hero. Such a figure is usually represented as a warrior, who during the invasions stood out from everyone else thanks to specific traits (Francovich Onesti, 2002).

Commonly, the hero is attributed extraordinary physical strength, that allows him to defeat all his enemies, but as our analysis proceeds, we will comprehend that this is just the tip of the iceberg. As a matter of fact, a hero may also possess a variety of other attributes, which can be formally separated into two categories: physical and behavioural ones. Notable weapon dexterity, along with fighting skills represent examples of the physical traits necessary to a hero, whereas behavioural attributes<sup>7</sup> are more connected to a good bearing<sup>7</sup> (Haymes & Samples, 1996).

However, in the earliest heroic compositions more importance was given to qualities of a traditional warrior, such as physical strength, honour, and respect for his fellows. This also holds true for Waldere, who in the fragments embodies the heroic ideal and is shown as a skilled warrior, able to engage multiple adversaries at once. Nevertheless, Waldere is more than this, as the investigation on the fragments would reveal later. He is a man of strong morals, and his loyalty and respect stand out in particular. In addition, our hero is presented as a rather cunning and shrewd individual, but willing to sacrifice himself for honour. This last aspect gave the heroic poems tragic overtones, since the hero was destined for success or death, and he knew it (Haymes & Samples, 1996).

All these features served to create the archetype of the hero *par excellence*, that was the result of the transformation of the deeds of warriors into narrative (Haymes & Samples, 1996). In fact, only if

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<sup>7</sup> In this regard, some scholars have also noted an evolution in the figure of the hero, who, if he was initially only considered as a fearless and invincible warrior, gradually embraced the canons of courtly behaviour. However, this becomes visible with the heroic works composed after the 1200, and a clear example is the Nibelungenlied (Springs, 1991).

considered heroic enough, such adventures were narrated and passed on by cantors. Thus, it was common for the hero's traits to be exalted (Haymes & Samples, 1996).

What emerges from all the Germanic poems is that the figure of the hero represented a model to follow for everyone, but especially for the warrior class. As a matter of fact, he embodied the example of the perfect warrior, which, although idealised, was intended to convey the concepts of courage, respect and cunning necessary for the warlike dimension (Francini, 2022).

Nonetheless, the heroic poems had an instructional purpose also through the transmission of historical events meant to be passed down from tribe to tribe. In fact, in medieval times, heroic poems began to be considered almost equal to historical sources for their content, even though they steeped into legendary motifs (Haymes & Samples, 1996).

### 1.2.3. Stylistic techniques

In the previous sections, some of the characteristics of the heroic style have been mentioned; still, others need to be examined. Among these, I want to concentrate on the common metrical form of heroic poems, which corresponds to the Germanic alliterative verse, since from what is left, alliterative verse appears to have been the most used metrical form these works (Haymes & Samples, 1996).

The Germanic long alliterative verse it is composed of two semi-verses, which are divided by a caesura, and contains a total of four accented syllables, usually two per semi-verse (Francovich Onesti, 2002). The caesura was usually not marked in manuscripts, as copyists and scribes used the *scriptio continua*, occupying all available space in the vellum. Normally, however, the caesura corresponded to a pause like that created by a comma. This also occurs in *Waldere's* fragments, of which I report an example of alliterative verse, from Fragment Ia, 10<sup>th</sup> line, underlined in red.

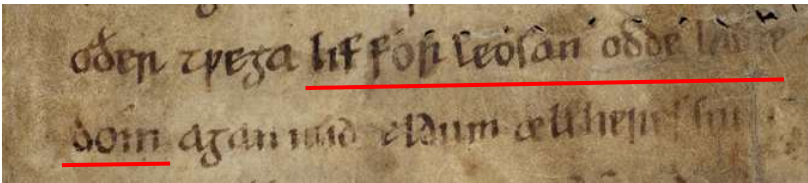


Figure 1: Example of consonant alliteration, Fla, 10<sup>th</sup> line.<sup>8</sup>

Below I included the diplomatic and interpretative transcription, the latter proposed by Schwab (1999) in her edition on the fragments, “*Waldere: Testo E Commento*”.

Table 1

Diplomatic transcription	Interpretative transcription
lif forleosan oððe lanze dom	lif forleosan, oððe langne dóm

For a verse to be considered alliterative, at least two of the four syllables must alliterate. Precisely, in order to bind the two semi-verses, the first and the third stressed syllables usually present alliteration. Alliteration consists in the exact repetition of the same consonantal sound, or in the repetition of vowel sounds across the two semi-verses (vocalic alliteration does not require that the sound is the same, in other words, all vowels alliterate with each other) (Zironi, 2022:249). In the example provided above, the alliterating sound is [l], repeated in *lif forleosan* and *langne*<sup>9</sup>.

Since the previous example represented consonantal alliteration, below I report another excerpt from *Waldere's* fragments that illustrates the vocalic one. Again, I underline the verse in question for the sake of clarity.

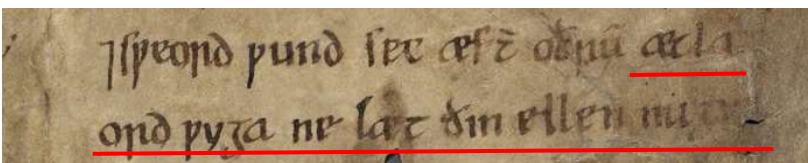


Figure 2: Example of vocalic alliteration, Fla, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> lines.

<sup>8</sup> All the screenshots of *Waldere's* fragments I report in this thesis are available in the digital form at: <http://www5.kb.dk/manus/vmanus/2011/dec/ha/object55523/da> (Last accessed: 13/06/2024).

<sup>9</sup> It is interesting to note that in the verb *forleosan*, meaning *to lose, to let go* (<https://bosworthtoller.com/> - last accessed 28/05/2024), the stressed syllable is the second one and not the first as one might expect. This is due to the fact that in Germanic languages verbal prefixes, as *for-*, were not stressed.



The diplomatic and interpretative transcriptions read as follows, where the interpretative one is again the one proposed by Schwab (1999).

Table 2

Diplomatic transcription	Interpretative transcription
æcla oꝥd pyza ne læc ðin ellen nu zy	Ætlan ordpyza, ne læt ðin ellen nu zyt

As we note, in this case it is the first syllables of the words *æcla*, *oꝥd pyza*, *ellen*, which begin with an accented vowel, that create alliteration.

The Germanic languages themselves, with their propensity to have an accent on the first syllable of most words, further prompted scholars to endorse the notion that alliteration was the most widely utilised metrical form of heroic poetry, since it also made memorization easier (Haymes & Samples, 1996). Furthermore, as claimed by Francovich Onesti (2002), singers and poets employed other linguistic stratagems such as *kenningar* and *heiti*, that enriched the style of poems, also favouring their transmission.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a *kennig* is: “A stock phrase of the kind used in Old Norse and Old English verse as a poetic circumlocution in place of a more familiar noun.”. Examples of *kenningar* are words as *banhus*. This is a compound word containing the terms bone and house and refers to “chest” or “body”<sup>10</sup>. Another one very used one is *saewudu* (sea-wood), expression used for “ship”, since if breaking up the kenning what we have is “wood for the sea”<sup>11</sup>.

The *heiti* represents single-word appellations used to define names, usually of commonly used objects. Their unique quality is their ability to convey multiple meanings with a single word. For example, the Old-English term *lind* (lit. lime tree), which was generally used for “shield”, also indicated the type of material of the shield, in this case lime wood<sup>12</sup>. Thus, as can be seen, a *heiti* contains further specifications inherent to the noun to which it refers, delineating its meaning or function with only one word (Francovich Onesti, 2002). All these are instances of formulaic expressions, that are distinctive of the genre and seem to support the bond between oral dimension and heroic compositions (Francovich Onesti, 2002).

<sup>10</sup> Bosworth Toller’s Anglo-Saxon Dictionary online: <https://bosworthtoller.com/2973> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

<sup>11</sup> Bosworth Toller’s Anglo-Saxon Dictionary online: <https://bosworthtoller.com/26294> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

<sup>12</sup> Bosworth Toller’s Anglo-Saxon Dictionary online: <https://bosworthtoller.com/21707> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

In general, however, as was the case with the content of Germanic heroic poetry, i.e. the development of the figure of the hero, the stylistic form also underwent changes. In fact, although alliterative verse remained the standard for the Early Middle Ages in these poems, *kenningar*, *heiti*<sup>13</sup>, metaphors and synonyms gradually established themselves, enriching the stylistic aspect (Francovich Onesti, 2002).

### 1.3. From paganism to Christianity

Germanic heroic poetry was a popular genre among the nobility and other upper classes, mostly because of its historical-educational purpose (Haymes & Samples, 1996). Still, it took a while for it to be transposed into written form. As previously mentioned, this related also to the cultural predominance of the Christian church since written texts were mainly composed in monasteries. As a matter of fact, in the religious context fable-like motifs featuring monsters or heathen gods were perceived as symbols of paganism (Francovich Onesti, 2002). Thus, precisely the pagan matrix of these compositions hindered their written establishment for centuries. This is also demonstrated by the fact that what remains of the heroic genre of the time today is very little, leading scholars to assume that not much material was transmitted precisely because of its content (Haymes & Samples, 1996).

However, this traditionally negative connotation of the adjective “pagan” can be re-evaluated within the considerations proposed by Francini (2022) on the matter, within which she claims that “pagan”, referred to the heroic poetry, should be intended as “*culturalmente puro, impermeabile all’influsso classico rappresentato dal cristianesimo*<sup>14</sup>”. This highlights the independence of the genre, of its form, style and content, the same that gradually fascinated the monks of the period. In fact, with the oral spread of heroic poems, Christian monks started to approach to the genre too, to the extent that they became so enthralled with these poems, that they began to transcribe them (Francovich Onesti, 2002). Thus, after the 11<sup>th</sup> century, Germanic heroic poetry finally began to be recognised as a literary form (Haymes & Samples, 1996).

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<sup>13</sup> Kenningars and heit were widely used in the Norse skaldic tradition, whereas for example the High German tradition switched to end-rhyme verses, thus abandoning the common alliterative metrical form (Zironi, 2022).

<sup>14</sup> “*Culturally pure, impermeable to the classical influence represented by Christianity.*” (My translation)

In exchange for this, the content of heroic poetry underwent the influence of the Christian dimension. As far as the transition from oral to written form of the genre is concerned, Francovich Onesti (1001:146) states that: *“Per l’epoca stessa in cui questa poesia è stata affidata ai manoscritti, nella sua fase finale è comunque frutto di una cultura già parzialmente intrisa di latinità e Cristianesimo<sup>15</sup>”*. Indeed, the Christian message gradually seeped into the heroic poetry, which simultaneously dealt with religious issues and the achievements of heroes in battles and the same works of Germanic heroic poetry provides evidence of this Latin-Christian layer (Francovich Onesti, 2002). We see this in Waldere’s fragments as well, in which references to God are included, despite being a few. Precisely, within the first reference – Fib, 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> lines – God is described as favourable to Waldere and his actions in battle. I report the passage from the fragment below, underling it the sentence within which the reference to God is clear.

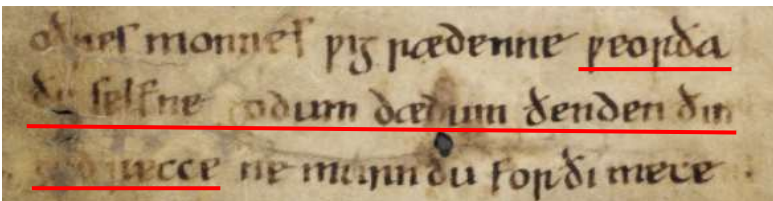


Figure 3: First reference to God, Fib, 5<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> lines.

"God" is hardly visible, however other editors, including Schwab (1999), have reconstructed the following form in Old English.

*ƿeoƿða ðe ſelfne ƿodum dædum ðenden ðin ƿæcce*

The passage can be translated as “Honour yourself with valorous deeds, as long as God is favourable to you.” (My translation).

Within the second one - Flld, 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> lines - the copyist conveys that Waldere hopes for God's help, despite being a fearsome warrior.

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<sup>15</sup> *“For the period in which this poetry was committed to manuscripts, in its final phase it is however the outcome of a culture already partially imbued with Latinity and Christianity.”* (My translation)

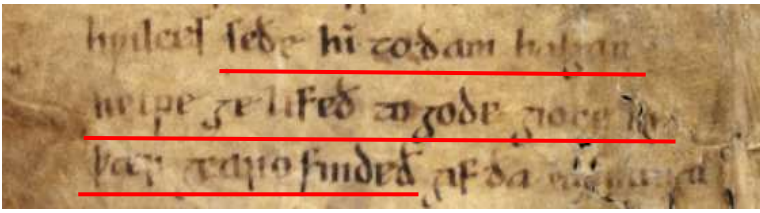


Figure 4: Second reference to God, *Fild*, 11<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> lines.

Again, based on Schwab's edition (1999), the transcription in Old English reads as follows.

*þilceſ ſeðe hī to ðam halzan helpe ze lifeð to zode zioce he þær zeap̄o findeð*

The sentence can be translated as: "He<sup>16</sup> who seeks help from the Holy One and support from God will readily find it." (My translation).

Although they would seem to have little to do with the heroic aspect of such poems, these references become frequent with the establishment of the genre (Francovich Onesti, 2002).

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<sup>16</sup> The 3<sup>rd</sup> personal singular pronoun refers to Waldere.

## 2. *Waldere's* fragments

This chapter introduces both the *Waldere* tradition and the two fragments object of the digital edition proposed with this thesis. In light of this, multiple aspects are considered because a description on different levels is necessarily required for the aim of this work. On that note, the opening of my study is based on the core of the manuscript, represented by its genre and plot, whose examination represents a fundamental tool to understand and clarify the episodes contained in the two fragments. The analysis goes on by considering some general features mainly related to historical and geographical context and even though these considerations are based on hypotheses, I try to legitimate the most plausible ones reporting useful evidence and data. My purpose is to provide a clear account of the manuscript, by pointing out the most significant properties concomitant to different and often underestimated aspects of the work. Nevertheless, some difficulties chiefly associated to the veil of mystery in which *Waldere* is shrouded have emerged. In this regard, attention will be placed also on the fact that many doubts still pervade its historical and authorial facets.

After this, the focus switches to the point strictly linked to the technical attributes. In the section *Fragments* I propose an in-depth glance dedicated to examination of every page, moving on a more specific issue regarding the order of the remnant vellums.

At the end of this introduction the attention is drawn to the previous editions of *Waldere*. Since there are no digital versions of the document to be found at the time of writing, one of my specific goals is to study the paper-based ones. In truth, some steps towards the digitalization of the fragments have been taken, but it is still difficult to talk about a scholarly digital edition of *Waldere*. An example of this has been included in a larger edition of the famous epic work *Beowulf*, within which it is possible to explore other minor epic poems of the Anglo-Saxon tradition. Among these, also a digitised edition of the two fragments appears, reporting the text without any further information on its reconstructions or on the *modus operandi* used<sup>17</sup>. As a matter of fact, the gap between a digital and a digitised edition is enormous, not to mention the undeniable perks of the first one, as I explain in the third chapter<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup>Digitised edition of *Waldere's* fragments: <https://heorot.dk/waldere-i.html> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

<sup>18</sup>To truly comprehend the differences between a digital and a digitised edition, we must take a step back and consider also the very first kind of edition used, namely the printed one. This type of edition aims to reproduce a historic document within a critical examination, resulting into a printed book or text, with several limitations, such as the static nature of its form, that once published cannot be developed. Broadly speaking, a digitised edition represents an upgrade

As for the paper based *Waldere* editions are concerned, I concentrate on different ways and aspects employed to create one. All editorial choices represent a fundamental tool to understand the editor's work and interventions, both concerning a general perspective and, more in detail, the criteria applied to the various editions of the *Waldere*. Scholars who worked on this manuscript operated diversely, giving rise to varied results, such as, contrasting subdivisions of the lines within the same text or even different types of editions. Not only are these considerations useful to understand how the manuscript was edited, but also, they are relevant for the creation of my digital prototype.

Nonetheless, for the purposes of my study is essential to point out that on one hand there are different editions of *Waldere* and that, on the other, there is evidence of miscellaneous versions of the same story too. Thus, representing a key point, this allows the reader to confront various perceptions of the epic legend and how it has been reported in other continental analogues. That is why, in the final part of this chapter other traditions and manuscripts are examined; however, the main focus of this thesis consists in the two *Waldere* Fragments.

In order to better understand the content of the manuscripts and the analogues, I will introduce here the plot of the *Waltharii poesis*<sup>19</sup>, since it represents a longer narrative produced in a similar period with respect to the fragments of *Waldere*. The content of the Fragments will also be discussed in relation to the more complete *Waltharii poesis*. Nevertheless, it acts as a support to better frame the figures and the scenes contained in the vellums under analysis, since it is the work that presents the legend in a fuller manner (Schwab, 1999). So, in the subsequent lines I focus on the plot of *Waltharii poesis*, reporting its key figures and events. Moreover, precisely because the boundary between history and myth is sometimes imperceptible, it is necessary not to confuse the two dimensions and to clarify the individuals mentioned within the story. To do so, I present the main characters of the story firstly in the *Waltharius* and secondly in the *Waldere's* fragments, as

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of the printed one, assuming that they consist in the transposition of the content of a printed edition in the digitised dimension. Enriching the basic features of a printed one, digitised editions are supplied with availability, searchability and reusability, facilitating their use and comprehension. Notwithstanding these supplementary features, digitised edition remains quite static, as the printed ones and this is because their main aim is to represent a text. Digital editions totally differ from the previous ones, mainly thanks to the peculiar groundwork they are based on – fluidity. This was possible thanks to the development in technology that allowed scholars to better work and create such an edition, where various dimensions of a text become intricate, e.g., the linguistic aspect or the historical one and much more. The goal of a digital edition is to provide the users a dynamic examination of a document, a work in progress that can possibly always be enriched. Thus, for now we can identify some of the main differences between a digitised and a digital edition in their structure, in the representation of the text and in their goals. See Sahle, *What is a scholarly digital edition?* <https://books.openedition.org/obp/3397?lang=it> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

<sup>19</sup> *Waltharii poesis* is more commonly known as *Waltharius* and is a work consisting of 1456 hexameters. The text was written in 930 by the monk Ekkehart I from the Abbey of St. Gallen (Schwab, 1999).

presented in Norman (1949)<sup>20</sup>. In the Latin document we read about Herricus, the king of Burgundy, and *Gibicho*, the king of the Franks, and about *Alphere*, *Waltharius'* father and the king of Aquitaine. Both *Herricus* and *Gibicho* had sons, *Hiltegun*t and *Guntharius*, respectively. *Waltharius* will wed *Hiltegun*t, and *Guntharius* will rule the Franks. Another crucial name to keep in mind is *Hagano*, who is linked to the character of *Gibicho*, being his noble follower. However, *Attila*<sup>21</sup>, also referred to as the ruler of the Huns, is the most popular character mentioned in this story.

The story presented in the Latin work is quite long because it starts from the very beginning of *Waltharius'* life. *Waltharius* and *Hiltegun*t are still children, yet princes, when *Attila* decides to invade territories under the control of *Herricus*, *Gibicho* and *Alphere*, with the aid of his powerful army. After ruthlessly subjugating the assaulted countries, *Attila* not only exacted tribute but also made the rulers offer their loved ones as hostages<sup>22</sup>. As the years go by, the three develop a fantastic friendship. *Waltharius* and *Hagano* are bond through their love of fighting, and they practise together frequently, becoming two excellent warriors. Nevertheless, despite the close connection *Waltharius* and *Hagano* had, *Hagano* deserts his friends after King *Gibicho* is killed and leaves. From this point on, the story takes an odd turn.

*Waltharius*, who is still in love with *Hiltegun*t, decides that he wants to flee with her, but the idea is more complicated than it first appears. Thus, one day, the two lovers arrange a plan of action to escape and host a feast in the Hun ruler's honour. They intend to divert the attention of the entire court so they can steal some jewellery and leave the scene, and fortunately they success. *Waltharius* and *Hiltegun*t desire to go back to their homeland, but on the way there they run into unexpected obstacles. The first issues arise when the ferryman spots *Waltharius* and *Hiltegun*t as they cross the Rhine and alerts the new Frankish monarch, *Guntharius*, of their sighting in Worms, Germany. When *Gibicho's* successor learns of this, he immediately sets out on a mission to find the two fugitives and take back *Attila's* treasures. At this point, the lovers' escape becomes even more problematic, because of *Guntharius'* willing to catch them. A total of eleven warriors, including *Hagano*, the Frankish king's close friend, are summoned to the battle to halt *Waltharius*. *Hagano's* nephew is one of the ones who is cut down by *Waltharius'* sword, along with all of *Guntharius'* personal army. As a

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<sup>20</sup> Please note that the characters remain the same ones, but differences emerge on a phonological basis when considering proper names.

<sup>21</sup> The *Attila* persona mentioned in the narrative is a mythical reincarnation of the actual *Attila*, king of the Huns. After his demise, *Attila* rose to prominence as the main character in numerous epic stories due to his historical importance. In particular, he is frequently mentioned in works of the Germanic tradition, such as the *Nibelungenlied*, or in sagas such as *Thidrekssaga*, related to another significant legendary character, namely *Dietrich af Bern*.

<sup>22</sup> When reading the text, it becomes clear that *Waltharius*, *Hiltegun*t, and *Hagano* were never held as actual prisoners, rather as privileged hostages, as they were lavished with attention at *Attila's* court.

result, *Hagano*, who had initially endeavoured to prevent a slaughter at all costs, eventually decides to side against *Waltharius* and is prepared to revenge the murder of his nephew. At the end of the story, *Waltharius* and *Hiltegunt* are attacked once again by *Guntharius* and *Hagano* while they are travelling. *Guntharius* and *Hagano* are ultimately defeated, and *Waltharius'* combat skills are demonstrated once more. *Waltharius* and *Hiltegunt* manage to return to Aquitaine and wed after this final fight (Norman, 1949).

Once the full legend has been framed, it becomes easier to compare it to the plot suggested in the Old English vellums, which is reported in the fragments section. However, I will now briefly explain the plot of the two vellums to start outlining its essential features. To set the stage for the discussion, I intend to raise awareness of the names of the characters, which, despite referring to the same individuals, vary phonologically. Thus, the listed figures will henceforth be referred to as *Waldere*, *Guðhere*, *Hildegýð*, *Hagen*, *Ætla* and *Ælfhere* instead of *Waltharius*, *Guntharius*, *Hiltegunt*, *Hagano*, *Attila* and *Alphere* used in the Latin work. The substance of the fragments includes the episodes of the story, through which special emphasis is placed on the aspect of warfare, with several praises on *Waldere's* bravery, swordsmanship, and warrior prowess. Moreover, the mythological aspect of the epic poetry is recalled with the figure of Weyland the Smith (Himes, 2009). Despite being thus succinctly described, it is clear that the plot of the Old English manuscript is much shorter than that of the entire legend and this is especially clear given how brief the fragments are. Nonetheless, it is precisely this brevity that needs to be handled with utmost concern, as it often leads to difficulties in terms of interpretation.

The fragments composing the manuscript were originally given the title *Anglosaxonica Fragmenta duo membranacea, poetica, de Rege Walthero*, which was chosen by the Royal Library of Copenhagen, the institution that is currently housing the vellums. The folios have continued to be guarded there under the designation “Ny kgl. Saml, 167b kvat.” since 1860, the year of their discovery. Commonly they are dated back to the X-XI centuries, but greater attention is devoted to these aspects later in this same section.

To date, the document consists of two parchment folios with a total amount of four pages, two per each fragment. The total number of lines amounts to sixty-three, distributed over the four pages and written recto verso allotted along the entire available space, margins excluded (Schwab, 1999). Within them is contained an epic poem representing the *Legend of Waldere of Aquitaine*, who embodies the figure of the medieval hero par excellence. The reasons behind the widespread circulation of the *Waldere's* story deal with various perspectives, mainly linked to its genre, namely



heroic poetry, which was of relevance for the literature of the Early Middle Ages. As a matter of fact, when the oral dimension began to leave space to the written one. The extant poetry of the Early Middle Ages is represented by a wider range of genres, such as religious or elegiac poetry for the Anglo-Saxon tradition, but heroic poetry represented the oral cultural embodied by the warrior aristocratic class and was probably widespread in oral form among the Germanic tribes, as explained in Chapter 1. There are two main reasons to explain the great circulation of the heroic poetry in the medieval era. The first one is due to the type of themes dealt with, since this poetry was characterised by the sharing of certain leitmotifs pertaining to the German early Medieval culture. This aspect allowed for the dissemination of legends, albeit with inevitable variations due to the bond with the oral dimension. The second reason lies behind the interweaving of the real and mythological levels. The poets, in fact, with the aim of celebrating real historical figures, composed tales sometimes bordering on reality, enriched by the presence of mythological elements (Francovich Onesti 2002). The *Legend of Waldere* represents a clear example, reporting all the features just mentioned. On one hand the mythological part is integrated in the plot, on the other the legend has been included in other manuscripts beyond the Germanic literature, as we will see in Section 2.3 examining its continental analogues<sup>23</sup>.

## 2.1. The manuscript

At first glance the manuscript's conciseness will undoubtedly deceive readers mainly because it conveys the impression that since it is relatively short, there shouldn't be various anomalies in it. Unfortunately, there are more irregularities than one would anticipate with the sixty-three lines at hand. What makes the inherent complexity of *Waldere's* study explicit is the textual dimension. Many of the scholars who have engaged in a detailed analysis of the document have often left out the problem related to the scribe or to the language used, focusing rather on more technical features. Without detracting the attention from a closer study of the physical aspect, I believe it is

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<sup>23</sup> Several are the medieval documents containing the story analysed and their peculiarity is given by the diverse representation of the hero; among them it is important to mention the *Þiðrekssaga saga af Bern*, the *Chronicon Novaliciense* and the *Nibelungenlied*, other than the *Waltharius*. Moreover, evidence of the legend is provided in other vernacular works across the Germanic Europe (Norman, 1949).

appropriate to dwell on the text itself, considering the writing level by pointing out some features<sup>24</sup>. The facets which I intend to highlight instead concern the role of the copyist and his drafting work, through which it is possible to glimpse and deduce information of extreme interest, including the dating and probable provenance of the manuscript.

The mystery surrounding *Waldere* certainly does not remain aside when attempting to analyse it; on the contrary, it intensifies, fuelling doubts and hypotheses. We are dealing with a text that is complex in many respects, starting with the simple plot and moving on to the interpretation of more specific features such as the form of writing. Among the most archaic elements is certainly the language used, which is enhanced by the presence of the older runic writing system<sup>25</sup>. Furthermore, in the manuscript, among other archaic elements is visible a drawing with presumably ornamental and embellishment purposes, whose interpretation is not so clear unfortunately<sup>26</sup>. Focusing in more detail on the form of writing and observing the script carefully, it emerges that the orthography matches that of a single hand, namely a large bold regular squarish hand (Stephens, 1860). Thus, the form of the text is not the most comprehensible, and the perplexities arisen have triggered different interpretations provided by those who deal and have dealt with the fragments. Despite different hypotheses formulated, a common and shared idea comes up, leading to the fact that the remnant vellum is not the original document (Norman, 1949). The case of *Waldere*, like that of many other Germanic works, has come down to the present day in the form of a copy of the original one. This makes the reconstruction and the study of the document complicated from various perspectives, but nonetheless it must be kept in mind that this is a common situation for both Germanic and non-Germanic manuscripts (Francovich Onesti, 2002). This is strongly linked to another equally relevant and problematic issue, related to the language used. *Waldere* is commonly identified as a document pertaining to the Germanic tradition, assuming it was written in Old English. Nonetheless, this latter attribute embraces a bigger complexity when trying to define it. Thus, I consider necessary to clarify the meaning of the expression Old English, used to describe the language of the manuscript, since the term Old English subsumes different linguistic varieties. Thus, with the aim to illustrate both the language of the copy and the one of the original documents we shall introduce the existence of different dialects spoken in England during the period related to the

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<sup>24</sup> My intentions now are not to provide a linguistic or grammatical analysis, nor even a morphological one since more ground to the entire script is devoted in Chapter 4.

<sup>25</sup> Specifically on page 2, line 4, one appears, the meaning of which corresponds to the term '*land*' or '*country*'.

<sup>26</sup> The usefulness of the ornament lies in the fact that it was used to date the document, as will be seen below, which will be analysed later.

drafting of the fragments. In order to do so, I will focus on the differences between the Old English dialects, while distinguishing the one that more matches the languages of the document, namely the West-Saxon one, spoken in the south of the river Thames<sup>27</sup> (Francovich Onesti, 2002).

In the fragments, evidence of this is provided by *'hyrde'*, *'zēzyrpan'*, *'syllann'* and *'-scype'*, all sharing a common trait, that's to say the grapheme <y>, typical of that alphabet (Norman, 1949). There are also elements belonging to an earlier form of West-Saxon orthography, but still in use, and an example of this is the grapheme, or ligature, <æ> within the words *'bætran'*, *'mæg'*, *'hæfde'* or *'hwæt'*, reported in the second folio. According to academics, the grapheme under discussion only appears to have existed during a very specific period in the development of the English language, namely Old English. To this extent, I consider necessary to open a window onto the linguistic dimension, with reference to the importance of <æ>, not only from a general perspective, but also according to its presence in the folios. The linguistic standard at the time, West-Saxon was the most extensively used dialect and likewise reflected the presence of <æ>, becoming one of its linguistic norms (Hejnà & Walkden, 2022). Since West-Saxon has been recognised and accepted by specialists in the subject matter as the language of the document, it is now evident why the grapheme <æ> is so prevalent in the text. As typical as this was for the West-Saxon dialect, it is equally noteworthy to observe that the use of the ligature is occasionally replaced, in some cases being reduced to a single vowel, by the letter <e>. Indeed, in some cases, as in the first line of the second fragment instead of *'mæce'* as one would expect, the form *'mece'* appears. This form is no longer typical of the West Saxon dialect, but of the Anglian one that had probably spread to neighbouring territories. Alterations of this kind have given rise to the belief that the original manuscript was written in the Anglian dialect. Although we do not have complete information on the manuscript, the most credible idea identifies the language of the copy with the West-Saxon dialect. Regarding the original manuscript, however, certainty is unfortunately even less, if perhaps even non-existent, and only a few examples are insufficient to determine the Anglian dialect as the original language (Norman,

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<sup>27</sup> The language that emerged after Germanic people from northern lands migrated to England at the turn of the fifth and sixth centuries is known as Anglo-Saxon; the migrations were led by the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. Even while the tribes were closely related in many ways, each was associated with a specific dialect, which led to the split of the English language into regional varieties. The regions north of the Thames were distinguished by the Anglian dialect, whereas the southern territories spoke Saxon. Additionally, as the centuries passed, further subdivisions between the varieties just mentioned arose. For instance, the Northumbrian and the Mercian dialects can be distinguished within the Anglian region. The first of these two was prevalent in the area to the north of the river Humber, while the second was common throughout the central region. Nevertheless, written evidence of the different tribes only appears around the 8th century (Francovich Onesti, 2002:91–92). The fact that the tribes belonged to the same place of origin despite being dispersed across many territories was the primary factor in their long-term political harmony. But one of them, notably Wessex region, was able to stand out clearly from the rest (Hejnà & Walkden (2022).

1949). This is confirmed by the text itself, where in addition to the various linguistic forms, there is considerable evidence of errors, variants, and gaps in the spelling mixed with a very low number of contractions and accents and not even points, nor commas (Stephens, 1860).

From this point on I provide the proposals that have been formulated to justify the errors, highlighting that all these hypotheses appear to be quite plausible anyhow. Since several hypotheses have been put forth, I chose to focus on the ones that are the most logical, objective and historically supported as possible. Even if the validity of some of the following concepts has been questioned, I think that reporting them is still relevant to better contextualize the manuscript and the period related to it.

To begin, some of those hypotheses I am referring to at this early level are the ones proposed by the scholar Jonathan Himes. Himes dedicated several studies aimed to examine and reconstruct the history and text of *Waldere*, which culminated in the creation of a famous critical edition known under the name "*The Old English Epic of Waldere*" (2009). In his analysis, on the one hand, he recognizes the scribe's haste as a probable trigger for irregularities mentioned. On the other hand, he justifies the variations by pointing out the scribes' tendency to introduce their own variations into the manuscripts, both linguistically and metrically, often making changes in the copies (Himes, 2009). In addition, he advised a rather interesting reason, although already proposed by other scholars, on the question of the origin of the copyist. It might indeed be plausible to believe that the copyist made so many mistakes because he was not writing in his original language. In detail, Himes identifies Danish as the native language of the scribe, stressing on the place where the manuscript was found, namely Denmark. His hypothesis is also supported by the fact that a rune, known to belong to the Norse tradition, appears in the manuscript, as has already been mentioned (Himes, 2009). Himes' attempt to pinpoint the manuscript's and the copyist's most likely origin is questionable in several ways. To start with, I believe it is more reasonable to suppose that the copyist was an Anglo-Saxon who had lived in constant contact with northern peoples rather than a Dane, considering the histories of the Nordic and English peoples have been entwined for centuries<sup>28</sup>. This view, however, would seem to be easily doubted by the fact that runes were not only used in the Scandinavian peninsula, but were also used in the Anglo-Saxon territory (Francovich-Onesti, 2002). Additionally, English and Norse coexisted in England until the Norman Conquest, probably causing

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<sup>28</sup> In the Old English period (600–1150), other linguistic influences were also noticeable in Britain along with the Norse ones. To this extent the Celtic language family merits particular attention assuming that it was particularly powerful at the period of the consolidation of Old English and had a strong impact on the language's evolution as did Norse, so that the term multilingualism may be used to describe this phenomenon (Hejnà & Walkden, 2022).

changes in their morphology and grammar. Despite this, English was by far the most common language because Norse never had a written form and was only ever used orally until the early 1000s<sup>29</sup> (Hejnà & Walkden, 2022).

Opposing Himes' proposal, I also give other scholars' thoughts in this section to support the English origin of the copyist, rather than a Danish one. In fact, Himes was neither the only one to publish an edition on the work, nor the only one to devote himself to understanding its anomalies. T. D. Kendrick and F. Norman deserve special mention among all the scholars who investigated the problem because their theories aid in understanding the topics we have just covered. To this extent, we now focus on the decorative artwork that is to be found on one of the manuscript pages<sup>30</sup>, that casts serious doubt on the copyist's Danish origin. Kendrick discovered a startling resemblance between the miniature in question and some sketches in the renowned Caedmon Manuscript, whose embellishments were typical of the Scandinavian style. To undermine Himes' hypothesis is the origin of the artist that applied the ornamental designs in the Caedmon Manuscript, not to mention the time of their addition. Precisely, the person in question has been identified as an English artist from Winchester, who worked on the Caedmon manuscript during the Danish king Cnut's reign in England. Thus, considering this information, I deem it fair to assert that the artist of the embellishments on both manuscripts in issue may be the same, proving once again the strong Norse influence on the Old English culture, specifically for the time in question (Schwab, 1999). Clarifying the copyist's origin is extremely relevant to my study, because by thoroughly investigating the problem, additional ambiguities in the manuscript can be solved. In this regard, before proceeding with Norman's hypothesis, I want to point out that among other theories used to explain manuscript faults, we frequently come across allusions to the copyist's inexperience, who seems not to have been the most efficient one. Despite everything, manuscripts were usually copied by erudite and experienced individuals, who took care of the original manuscript and subsequent copies. With respect to the Anglo-Saxon world, at the very dawn of the first transcriptions, the language most used to disseminate literary works from the oral dimension was the Northumbrian dialect (Francovich Onesti, 2002). Moreover, knowing that the work of the copyist was not for everyone, it would seem difficult to believe that the scribe of the *Waldere* was as inexperienced as many scholars would suggest nowadays. Thus, at this point, it is worth considering Norman's study, which rather

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<sup>29</sup> To be precise, as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle attests, the Vikings would have been settled in Britain in the year 876, and from that point on, their presence would have had an explicit influence on many aspects of the society of the time for about another 200 years (Hejnà & Walkden, 2022).

<sup>30</sup> Visible in the margin of the lower leaf lb.

than merely pointing to the copyist as unpractised, is inclined to support his Northumbrian origin, thus recognizing him as an Anglo-Saxon (Norman, 1949). In fact, the birthplace of early English written literature was Northumbria, a region located north of the Humber River. This region served as both the starting point for many copyists and a potent cultural centre beginning in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. However, as time passed, the Wessex region's influence rose and, between the ninth and tenth centuries, it established itself as a major cultural hub. The very inaccuracies in the manuscript seem to support this as well as Norman's theory, which claims that the copyist was Northumbrian in origin and wrote *Waldere's* copy in West-Saxon, a dialect he did not completely comprehend. Considering this information, if we combine this with the tendency of epic poetry to be handed down through oral recitation, Norman's hypothesis is corroborated by that of Stephens, who states that *Waldere* may have been written under dictation. This claim is strictly related to the type of irregularities in the manuscript, which can be associated to an oral dimension. Thus, as Stephens suggested, sound may have played a fundamental role precisely because the errors seem to report the word as it was uttered, rather than as it was written, leading to the assumption that the text was not copied (Stephens, 1860). The certainty of this data is clearly a mirage, both due to the anonymity of the copyist and the very limited data available on the manuscript itself. Hence, among all the ideas proposed, I personally support Norman's hypothesis since this contact between different forms of writing and orality can render and justify the various anomalies in the text. Notwithstanding the fact that there is not enough evidence present to completely prove these statements, it is moreover quite evident that the text was undoubtedly affected by foreign influences (Himes, 2009). Even with the large number of gaps and anomalies the script itself can be useful in attempting to contextualize the historical and geographical contexts. The proposed dates are different from each other, and this is due both to the hypotheses proposed by scholars to who investigated the problem and to the time-period these analyses were carried out. In fact, depending on the edition one is going to refer to, the dating will be slightly different. Broadly speaking, the manuscript is dated to a period between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>31</sup>. The most credible proposal, however, turns out to be that of W. Keller, who through careful palaeographic analysis was able to estimate a period after the year 1000 as the most probable date of writing of the '*Waldere*' (Keller, Norman 1949). Moreover,

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<sup>31</sup> Some academics tend to date the copy to a time between the 8th and 9th centuries due to the presence of archaic components (Stephens, 1860).

this idea was corroborated by the ornamental Scandinavian design in the manuscript, about which we discussed before<sup>32</sup>.

While trying to draw a clearer picture of the work as possible in all its aspects, the result cannot always be fully correct. In fact, such short fragments of which there is as little historical and linguistic evidence can easily create doubts about their interpretation. As George Stephens (1860:21) pointed out: “[...] *Not only is it difficult to give a title to a short ancient fragment, it is often no less hazardous to translate it. We have to interpret a speech but know nothing of the speaker; to give emphasis to events and hints, of which we are in ignorance; to give a meaning to episodes of which we can make nothing. [...]*” – statement with which I could not agree more.

Nevertheless, not all the knowledge about this manuscript is based on conjectures and it is imperative to take into consideration the aspects that leave no room for interpretation. Thus, to briefly sum up some of the key and certain information listed until this point, we must remember that the two fragments constitute a copy rather than an original work. Moreover, another clear aspect concerns the location of the manuscript, which is now stored in Denmark at the Real Library at Copenhagen, as above mentioned. The folios have been there for two centuries so far and were discovered by the chief librarian of the Danish library, E.C. Werlauff, in the year 1860. While engaged in classifying other ancient texts, a fortuitous coincidence brought Werlauff to encounter the manuscript almost unexpectedly. Since then, the ‘*Waldere*’ was given a precise designation, still used today to refer to it. The history prior to this year, however, remains mysterious, and we will probably never know for sure how the manuscript arrived in Denmark. According to G. Stephens, the manuscript arrived in Denmark thanks to the Icelandic scholar Grímur Jónsson Thorkelín around the eighteenth century, during his investigations on the manuscript of Beowulf. Thorkelin’s efforts to research and collect ancient literary work allowed the transfer of *Waldere* from its place of origin to Denmark. This is based on the fact that Thorkelin would have hypothetically transported various works from England to Denmark during the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the work currently under analysis would likewise appear among them (Stephens, 1860).

In this section, the manuscript description run through introductory fundamental points regarding its general aspects; from now on the focus will be placed on more specific features of the two fragments to go deeper into the issue.

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<sup>32</sup> Although the exact date of the settlement of the Viking peoples in the British Isles is uncertain due to the few and almost imperceptible traces left by the first raids, we do know for sure that a British territory was under the Danish jurisdiction by around the ninth century (Holman, 2017).

## 2.2. The fragments

In this section the attention is shifted to the two Old English fragments. It is essential to keep contextualising the document while trying to better frame it and comprehend completely the subject and to do so I do want to clarify some choices of my analysis process, since different features are concerned.

First, I intend to divide the following data into two categories and create two distinct sorts of descriptions of the folios. On the one hand, I will provide palaeographic information about the fragments, concentrating on the size of each sheet, their layout, and any visible abrasions present in the fragments. This qualitative analysis is crucial to comprehend the manuscript's content, assuming that lacunas on the physical dimension also manifest in the plot (Schwab, 1999). On the other hand, I supply my research with a more detailed content description of *Waldere's* vellums, supported by the already mentioned *Waltharii poesis*. With this approach I aim to underline the work's growing complexity, which becomes obvious as its examination progresses. Even if some of the problems of interpretation have already been brought up, we will address other intricate themes contributing to the creation of discussions between scholars. Assuming the importance of the matter, such questions are dealt with in these paragraphs, only after the complete study of both fragments, based on an objective point of view. Due to the evidence of missing pieces, interpretative challenges have developed to this point. These difficulties became more serious when trying to determine the sequence of the fragments and whether they belong to the same group.

### 2.2.1. Fragment I

Fragment I contained in origin four pages of which two are nowadays preserved and readable. To facilitate its classification, the pages have been divided following the alphabetical order, thus every page has been associated to a letter, namely "a", "b", "c", and "d" preceded by the number of the fragment.

Thirty-two lines written recto verso are completely visible in the first vellum, seventeen of which are contained in the first page, namely Ia, while the remaining 15 are in the page Ib. Dimensions differ



for every page, but approximately the measurements run around 200 mm. per full page, while they range between 10 and 20 mm. for scraped vellums. The written part of fragment Ia/b equals to 156 mm. in height and 106 in width, with 18 and 40 mm. respectively for the upper margin and for the lower one. The upper inner margin of fragment Ia is 8 mm., and the outer margin is 6-15 mm., while the inner margin of fragment Ib corresponds to 6-15 mm (Schwab, 1999).

Evidence of the missing parts is provided by a small margin still visible on the right part of the folio, presumably scraped away. These margins are useful for the physical description of the leaves, and even for the reconstruction of the missing parts. Small holes start to show up in these margins, which become essential components as the study of the manuscript continues (Schwab, 1999). Their origin is unknown, but thanks to palaeographic examinations it emerged that these holes have been trimmed later and that the fragments were initially designed as separate and unbound (Norman, 1949). Moreover, together with the perforations, evident abrasions affect the entire manuscript, causing the investigation to become increasingly challenging at times. Their presence is commonly traced back to weathering that affected the entire work, causing the loss of some pages (Himes, 2009).

The second page, denoted as Ic and Id in Fragment I, is what is lacking. Within it, only few letters are still visible, but unfortunately, they are useless in reconstructing the development of the plot. Nevertheless, the few remnant letters contained in Ic/d represent a key feature both for the creation of my prototype, and for the completeness of my study. The suggestions for this raw section proposed by Norman, Stephens and Holthausen are reported below in a table<sup>33</sup>. Their layout reflected that of the other sheets, namely about fifteen lines continuously distributed throughout the page, margins excluded. Below is what remains of sheet Ic, according to the different editors.

Table 3

Line	Norman	Stephens	Holthausen
1		<i>M</i>	
2	pr		
3	h		
4		<i>3n</i>	3e

<sup>33</sup> As far as the remaining letters are concerned, I have based my investigation on Norman's edition on *Waldere* manuscript, so in this case I quote his criteria used for the reconstruction. To this extent, Italics indicate that the reading is questionable. Moreover, in his edition, Norman reports the suggestions proposed by Stephens and Holthausen, respectively distinguished by the letters *St* and *H* in brackets. Whereas the letters simply follow the number of the lines, we are dealing with Norman's reconstructions.

5	hi		
6	br		
7	ha		
8	nu		
9	of		
10	õu		
11		<i>sc</i>	<i>so</i>
12	ba		
13	on		
14	3u		
15		<i>-m</i>	<i>hen</i>

Instead, Sheet Id has the following content.

Table 4

Line	Norman	Stephens	Holthausen
1		<i>n</i>	
2		<i>tum</i>	<i>n</i>
3	<i>n</i>	<i>n; m</i>	
4	L	r	
5	t		
6		<i>ald</i>	<i>osc</i>
7		<i>ac</i>	<i>oc</i>
8	ld		
9		<i>lt</i>	<i>e</i>
10	pe		
11		<i>ord</i>	<i>pad</i>
12	3e		
13	do		
14	or		
15		<i>spal</i>	<i>spil</i>

(Norman, 1949:2)

With such lacunas in the first fragment, a complete reconstruction of the vellums becomes even more difficult, especially because entire lines are missing. Moreover, these lacunas reflect on the textual content of the manuscript. Even though it is not possible to establish the previous subjects of Ia/b, we can base our reconstruction on the *Waltharii poesis*, that fortunately allows us to understand the episodes contained in *Waldere's* manuscript. The first fragment refers to the moment before the fight between Waldere, Guðhere and Hagen, after Waldere had already defeated the eleven men gathered by Guðhere to hunt down him and Hiltegunt. Page Ia begins with a dialogue supposedly held by Hiltegunt, whose purpose is to encourage the hero to combat. This remark was likely given because Waldere appears worn out and unmotivated after the previous attacks held by Guðhere and his warriors. Exhortations represent the leitmotif of the first fragment, which based on four fundamental points<sup>34</sup>. The first one refers to something of extreme importance to any warrior, namely his sword. Waldere's weapon also known as Mimming, is not intended as a mere object, rather it symbolizes the emblem of the sword par excellence, forged by the Weland. On such way, within these very first lines, characteristics of the epic genre emerge, thanks to the Germanic myth related to Weyland the Smith. References and allusions to it occupy a relevant part of *Waldere's* manuscript and to understand them, some clarifications concerning the myth must be provided. First, the story spread among Germanic tribes around the 9<sup>th</sup> century from the North and didn't hesitate to become popular also in English territories. This phenomenon is justified thanks to the thematic treated in the story, namely courage and ardour, fundamental qualities in the Germanic warrior leading class and especially in the heroic genre<sup>35</sup> (Synge, 1972). Evidence of the myth's importance in is witnessed within many Germanic documents and not only written ones; the most popular ones belong to the English tradition and among them *Beowulf*, *Frank's Casket*, and *Waldere's* manuscript<sup>36</sup>. To avoid deviating too far from *Waldere's* manuscript, the storyline concerning Weland is described when studying the content of the second fragment, where references to his figure become more and more apparent. Moving back to the *Waldere's* page under

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<sup>34</sup> In truth, on the first page, it is unclear who the actual speaker is. The substance and the time of the statement are the two factors that, together, imply that Hiltegunt is the one speaking. In fact, this speech with exhortatory intentions delivered to the hero logically precede Waldere's fight against Guðhere and Hagen.

<sup>35</sup> Its popularity is also correlated with content variations, which do not, however, invalidate the content; rather, it is feasible to observe modifications based on the regions in which the myth was spread. This is strictly related to the period in question, assuming that during the circulation of the myth, the oral dimension for the dissemination of texts was still strongly in use. In fact, around the 9th century, writing was still an activity for a few scholars.

<sup>36</sup> The Franks Casket is heirloom of English culture dating back to the 800s. It was made from whale bones and is engraved with scenes from various traditions, including the Germanic one. The latter is depicted in a section of the front panel of the casket in which Weland can be seen engaged in his work. British Museum Press, London (2012)

examination, the expression *Weland geworc* appears, used to refer to Waldere's sword, through which he becomes invincible<sup>37</sup>. The first folio continues in the form of a discourse where the speaker goes on singing Waldere's praises with other exhortations concerning other characteristics of a true hero. The focus switches respectively on his valour and his skills in combat, with clear references to past battles he fought and won. The emphasis intensifies and culminates on Ib, the second page of fragment I, where the last encouragement is reported. In Ib, the speaker specifically uses the analogy of a precious jewel to the mythological sword to support and validate once more why Waldere shouldn't give up. This folio ends with an implicit comparison of the figure of Waldere with that of Guðhere, underling the negative sides of the latter.

Unfortunately, the story contained in the first fragment ends at this point leaving no doubt of its continuation in parts Ic and Id.

### 2.2.2. Fragment II

The second fragment has several traits in common with the first one, mainly related to its physical aspect. In addition to technical similarities, the fragments share characteristics regarding the methodology applied for their study, such as primary considerations on the dimensions and layout, followed by a description of the plot. Among other criteria there is the classification adopted to distinguish each page, which I will discuss before addressing the core of the issue. As for Fragment I, the pages of Fragment II have been arranged alphabetically; thus, folios a, b, c, and d, preceded by the Roman number II.

The second fragment is missing the first sheet consisting of pages IIa and IIb, of which only a few letters remain. Instead, the written part has been placed on pages IIc and IId.

The second vellum measures 135 mm. in breadth and 205 mm. in height and contains a very small written portion that is 5 to 10 mm. wide, corresponding to IIa/b. Pages IIc and IId display the written and fullest part of the fragment, which is 150 mm. high by 110 mm. broad with a 15 mm. upper

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<sup>37</sup> Lit. *Weland's work*. Please note that this part of the manuscript has poor readability, which leads to several editorial issues and consequently to various interpretations. Here, I have decided to report "Weland geworc" form that Himes suggested in his edition for convenience's sake. In truth, this is not the sole reconstruction of the expression, as we shall see in the section devoted to the investigation of various editions of *Waldere*.

margin and a lower margin of 40 mm. Additionally, albeit just by a few millimetres, the dimension of IIc and II'd's margins change.

IIc's inner and outer margins are 8 and 18 millimetres, respectively, while the margins on II'd are 5 mm. on the inside and 23 mm. on the outside (Schwab, 1999).

Even though pages IIa and IIb only consist of a few letters, I report what is left of them here to be as complete as possible while attempting to replicate the analysis process applied for the first folio.

Folio IIa contains more letters, but still less than the missing portions of fragment I, according to the evidence.

Table 5

Line	Norman	Stephens	Holthausen
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			<i>d</i>
12			<i>o</i>
13			<i>i, m, n</i>
14	s		
15	f		

In IIb, graphemes remain on line 7 and line 14.

Table 6

Line	Norman	Stephens	Holthausen
1			

2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			o
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14	d		
15			

(Norman, 1949:2)

Once again, it is unknown why the missing pieces of fragment II were removed; however, IIa and IIb have small holes that are very identical to those on the previous fragment. Palaeographic analyses of the document confirm similarities between the two fragments, mostly due to several holes in FII, that were probably not present when the manuscript was first written (Norman, 1949).

Thus, as has been ascertained, Fragment I and II are comparable, nevertheless what differentiates them is the story contained. The themes included in the second vellum are quite dense and embrace a variety of topics. Some of them were already addressed in the former part of the manuscript and other were not, that is why the Latin *Waltharii Poesis* is again helpful in sharpening the complete scene.

Specifically, Fragment II describes the moments preceding the ultimate showdown between Waldere and Guðhere and this is proven by the tense verbal exchange between the two warriors reported in these lines.

It all begins with a reprise of Guðhere's conceit, a character trait that had already been highlighted in Fragment I. This is highlighted in the very first line of IIc, where Guðhere introduces his sword referring to it as '*better sword*'.

In the following part, in fact, Guðhere and Waldere animatedly discuss their tools of war, starting with weapons and ending with armour. By praising his sword, Guðhere mentions the figures of Dietrich, Widia, and Nithad, who are particularly relevant to the Germanic legendary scenario, echoing the myth of Weyland the Smith<sup>38</sup>. Therefore, the second sheet confirms the frequent allusions to the myth of the blacksmith, and it is significant to understand its background.<sup>39</sup>

Waldere continues the discussion focusing now on his sword, which is again compared to a precious jewel. In the following lines of Ild Waldere's purpose is that to tease his enemy and in doing so he invites Guðhere to remove his powerful armour<sup>40</sup>. Furthermore, the fragment describes the hero's condemnatory remarks directed at all his former friends who are now assaulting him; he is obviously referring to Hagen.

Before the last action, in the final part of the fragment, Waldere concludes his speech with a tremendous provocation to his opponent and lists the traits of a true hero and winner, namely, loyalty and correct behaviour, characteristics that would seem not to belong to Guðhere (Gummere, 1909).

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<sup>38</sup> In the myth, the figures of Dietrich, Widia and Nithad intertwine, resulting in a rather bloody tale. First, Dietrich makes evident the blurred boundary between reality and legend typical of the epic genre, since it is the legendary depiction of the Ostrogoth king Theodoric the Great, who reigned during the Early Middle Ages. The legendary aspect is more represented by Widia and Nithad. Weyland's son, Widia, was conceived by Nithad's daughter Badhuil. In the Germanic legends, Nithad plays the role of a wicked king (Gummere, 1909).

<sup>39</sup> A mystical ring that could make its wearer fly was allegedly stolen from Weyland by King Nithad, who then gave it to his daughter Badhuil, imprisoning Weyland as outcome. Weyland cannot escape his prison, therefore his only options are to work as personal smith for his new owner and plot revenge. However, one day Badhuil takes the broke magic ring to the blacksmith to be fixed. Once Weyland recognises his ring, he imprisons the daughter of King Nithad and forces her to conceive a child with him as retaliation. Weyland and Badhuil had Widia. The latter grew up to be a warrior who served as Dietrich af Bern's assistant throughout his exploits in other Germanic legends (Gummere, 1909).

<sup>40</sup> Waldere's armour.

### 2.2.3. Order and gathering

Knowing the fundamental facts about the entire document allows one to concentrate on a more specialised topic, such as the arrangement of its pages. The multiple attempts to arrive at an agreement among specialists on the sequence of the fragments show again the complexity of *Waldere's* manuscript and as we already know, this is mostly due to the lack of available knowledge about the work. Even though there are only a few pages left of the text, it is difficult to determine with absolute certainty which fragment comes first. The sequence Fragment I - Fragment II is currently the most accepted one reflecting numerous assessments suggested by experts and editors of the manuscript. In contrast, the order of Fragment II and Fragment I has been proposed too, albeit with less support. The arguments in favour of each proposal, relevant to both linguistic and content factors, are provided below.

Starting with the first hypothesis, FI comes before FII, respecting a precise order of pages, namely Ia, Ib, IIc, and IId, with a lack of 30 lines in total (Norman, 1949). The plot and the language are the two key elements on which this assertion is based. First, the occurrences described in the manuscript imply that Hiltegunt's hypothetically enunciated attempts at encouraging Waldere, reported in the first fragment, precede the animated discussion between Guðhere and Waldere before the decisive battle, contained in the second fragment. This order of events makes more sense logically than the alternative, and it is also supported by linguistic factors. To that degree, if Id is followed by IIc, it is conceivable to combine the three final letters of Id with the first two of IIc to produce the word *swylce*. By starting with *swylce bæteran*, the opening line of IIc would respect the hemistich form that is present throughout the manuscript (Schwab, 1999). Despite this, further research revealed that the complete sentence *swylce bæteran, buton dam anum...*<sup>41</sup> of IIc fails to entirely satisfy correct grammatical criteria. As a matter of fact, according to the position occupied by *swylce* in the sentence, this lemma should have an adverbial function, as well as being accented and alliterative, all aspects of which are not fulfilled (Schwab, 1999). Although it does not adhere to all grammatical conventions, this linguistic theory is by no means to be rejected and has even been adopted as an editorial choice for several editions of the document.

It should be noted that a proposal for the reverse order, in which the second fragment comes before the first, has also been made. Unfortunately, there is less evidence to support this claim, mostly for

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<sup>41</sup> Lit. 'I do not know/There is no better sword, except for...' Schwab (1999:147-148).



content-related reasons. On the assumption that the traditional format of a 4-fold gathering was used for this document too, if Fragment II had come before I, there would have been about 240 lines of text missing, spread out over 8 pages. Still, it is difficult to imagine that the missing interposed portion could correspond to eight pages, especially because the episodes reported in the fragments seem to be quite close to each other (Norman, 1949).

### 2.3. Previous Editions of *Waldere*

This section considers earlier editions of *Waldere's* fragments, but before listing and examining them, I consider essential to emphasise their relevance. The investigations on the issue conducted by scholars are of extreme importance if aiming to a complete understanding of the manuscript and represent useful tools for the creation of my digital prototype. In fact, while trying to produce one, I cannot exclude the existence of previous editions of *Waldere* for several reasons. First, their study allows us to comprehend the editing decisions made by each author in their own work. Throughout them, the reader is supported by norms necessary to know the matter completely, to contextualise it, and to identify some fundamentally challenging problems. If we consider all the issues we have run into thus far when attempting to carefully examine the parchment, these qualities become significant. To this extent, a clear example of this is provided the linguistic component of the vellums. Its archaicity mixed with the presence of scraped and missing parts certainly submit obstacles to the whole comprehension. Fortunately, inquiries conducted by specialists like Stephens (1860), Norman (1949), Schwab (1999) and others have utterly dismantled these problems, stimulating the development of scientific editions. Moreover, I consider necessary to point out that numerous studies have been carried out on the subject matter, but only a few of them are to be considered as proper editions that not only represent tools for the analysis of the textual part of the manuscript but are useful to delve into the manuscript context completely. All the qualities I just specified are covered in the editions I've selected to look at below, including *Two leaves of King Waldere's Lay*, proposed by G. Stephens (1860), *Waldere*, by F. Norman (1949), *Waldere: testo e Commento*, edited by U. Schwab (1999) and the one by J.B. Himes, namely *The Old English Epic of Waldere* (2009). All these editors used diverse methods to analyse the fragments but given that the subject of research was the same, their conclusions are not completely at odds with one another. Nevertheless, there

are a few differences that should be noted and in order to highlight them, I included a portion of each editor's transcription. I decided to concentrate on the opening paragraph of each transcription, focusing on the verse arrangement, on contrasting emendation and on other editorial criteria, allowing us to understand the divergent criteria adopted. Before giving the examples, I briefly go over each version, emphasising the type of work we are dealing with and its organisation.

Stephens' edition is a critical one, since it contains an in-depth study of the subject, but presents the text with editorial interventions typical of an interpretative edition<sup>42</sup>. The author suggests a methodical approach to the subject, beginning with an examination of the language used in the epic poetry of that time and then moving on to the core of the issue, namely the Old English fragments and the figure of Waldere, who is historically contextualised and subsequently examined. Thus, the principles applied for the edition are progressively outlined, primarily those pertaining to the textual dimension, its division, and eventual translation.

When concentrating on the transcription of the text, an unusual division of the verses replaces the *scriptio continua* of the parchment, in fact Stephens proposes 119 verses in all, which is more than double the number of lines of the vellums. As a result, Stephens does more than just replace the *scriptio continua* of the parchment; as we shall see below, his verse arrangement is different from all the other transcriptions extant in various editions. The best way to understand the editorial influence Stephens exercised is unquestionably to analyse a section of his transcription, through which his choices become explicit, such as the use of modern punctuation or the emendation of some headwords denoted by square brackets.

\*hyrde hýne georne

huru WELAND[ES] geworc

ne geswiced monna aenigum

4. Ðara ðe MIMMING can

hearne ge-healdan.

Oft æt hilde gedreas,

swat-fag and sweord-wund,

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<sup>42</sup> Diplomatic-interpretative editions are distinguished by a modern transcription, providing an easier text to read. The textual dimension becomes more understandable thanks to specific editorial decisions like the use of interpunction or the regularisation of capital letters. The extension of abbreviated forms is another fundamental characteristic that sets apart this kind of edition. The editor's judgement and the scientific interpretation of the sources all have an impact on these criteria (Fabbris, 2018). The next chapter contains a detailed discussion of the various edition types. For the sake of clarity, I will just focus on the crucial aspects here.

8. sec æfter oðrum.  
 'ÆTLAN ord-wyga!  
 ne pæt ðin ellen nu-gyt  
 ge-dreosan to dæge,
12. dryhtscipe [feallan].  
 Ac is se dag cumen,  
 þæt ðu scealt aninga oðer-twega  
 lif for-leosan
16. oððe lange  
 dóm agan mid eldum,  
 ÆLFHERES sunu!

This subdivision relies on what the scholar calls "stave-rhyme lay", an old-fashioned expression to refer to the commonly known alliteration. Please note that, this specific metrical division is not to be confused with the proper alliterative verse represented by the long Germanic verse. As a matter of fact, Stephens' choice is to split the text into two separate semi-verses, each of which stands alone as a single verse, as if the long alliterative verse was divided into two. The alliteration is visible in his transcription, but technically speaking, this criterion is not very clear, however, my aim now is to emphasise on the singularity of this editorial choice, and not to denigrate it. In truth, considering the doubts this division could arise, I leave the floor the readers' interpretation, supporting them with Stephens's words. In *"Two leaves of King Waldere's Lay"* (1860), we read as follows: *"The Epic is of course in the Old-English stave-rhyme, the stately metre of our oldest verse, of the Eddic Lays, and of the ancient Northern races and Saxon and Germanic peoples. [...] We have no right to do injustice to these glorious memorials of our hero-fathers. But we do so when we clothe their thoughts in the emasculations of modern rhyme and sickly sentiment and all sorts of classic metres."* (Stephens, 1860, 21-22).<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Given this, I think Stephens' use of words to support his objections to the inclusion of the classical verse in his adaptation was improper and, in my opinion, unsuitable. The editor's desire to maintain the epic Germanic poem's structure, for which the classical metre is considered unacceptable, is clear in the expressions used, such as "races" and "emasculations," which I believe hint at the era's influence. To be clear, though, I'm not supporting Stephens in this way—rather, I'm voicing my disapproval of the inaccurate use of these terms.

Nonetheless, the verse arrangement just proposed is peculiar because on one hand he himself encourages the use of the alliteration to remain faithful to the original, and on the other hand the alliterative form represented by the long Germanic verse is not respected.

As we continue our close examination of the edited text, we note that he cannot help but add his own interpretations for some lemmas. In the part I reported, attention is especially required to inspect the second verse *huru WELAND[ES] geworc*, assuming it represents a critical juncture in the vellums, arising problems of reconstruction for all the editions we go are going to inspect. The lemmas *Weland(es)* and *geworc* both referring to Mimming, can be translated as *Mimming, Weland's worc*. This sense of possession would thus specifically call for a genitive, which Stephens suggests by giving the proper name the suffix *-es*. Following this expression, the syllable *ge*, in between *Weland* and *worc* needs to be highlighted, assuming its interpretation is quite problematic. In fact, this syllable is reportedly utilised by Stephens to preserve the recognised noun form *geworc*<sup>44</sup>, but other editors, such as Schwab, analyse it as a genitive ending for the noun *Weland*. Unfortunately, it is not possible to tell whether the proper noun lacked the genitive ending or whether perhaps due to a scribe's error, the genitive form was not recorded. Even so, the editor's aim to preserve both syntactic continuity through the reconstruction of the genitive and grammatical coherence using documented lexical forms is undeniable. Please note that the passage is extremely illegible, which is why each author suggests their own key to reading it while alternating between respect for meaning and grammar.

Another word worth focusing on is *hearne* (v.5). Originally, in the manuscript, it was written incorrectly, probably because of a scribe's error. Instead, the correct form is *heardne*, an adverb meaning *firmly*<sup>45</sup>. In contrast to the various interpretations offered by other editors in earlier versions, Stephens' edition maintains the adverb's incorrectness. These are essentially just a few of the factors that make it possible to completely comprehend why some editorial decisions were taken over others, as we will also see via observation of subsequent editions.

In Stephens' work, other more widespread stylistic elements include the use of Italics for the expansion of contracted letters, such as the consonant <m> in the word in *oðrum* (v. 8) – term that identifies an ordinal number<sup>46</sup>– or the use of brackets to denote scribal errors and his own additions (Stephens, 1860). The twelfth verse reported is a clear example of this, being clearly damaged and

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<sup>44</sup> Bosworth Toller's Anglo-Saxon Dictionary online: <https://bosworthtoller.com/16784> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

<sup>45</sup> Bosworth Toller's Anglo-Saxon Dictionary online: <https://bosworthtoller.com/52051> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

<sup>46</sup> Oðru>oðrum. Bosworth Toller's Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online: <https://bosworthtoller.com/25044> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024)

lacking words. It is precisely at this point that Stephens added the word *fellan*, between square brackets. According to the editor, this addition is necessary to the creation of the alliterations that were supposedly present in the original manuscript. Even so, this reconstruction is not supported in other editions. Additionally, proper names are expressed entirely in block letters, as may be seen in the cases of *WELANDES* (vv.2), *MIMMING* (vv.4), *ÆTLAN* (vv.9), and *ÆLFHERE* (vv.19). Moreover, Stephens chooses not to number the pages even though this feature is not visible in the short section I provide here, and he justifies his decision by citing the difficulty in determining a set order for the folios (Stephens, 1860).

To conclude the considerations on Stephens' work, I would say that he deserves credit for having been the first to publish such a thorough examination of Waldere's fragments; as a result, his edition merits to be seen virtually as a "prototype". It is obvious that some of the manuscript's complexity had not yet been fully explored, as is the case in more recent versions, and this was partially because there were not adequate analytical instruments available.

Another edition worth focusing on is that of Frederick Norman, published in 1949. The edition by Norman indicates a different style of approach and has fewer editorial interventions than the previous one, even though the type of edition is the same. As a matter of fact, his investigation led to the creation of a critical edition, whose major goal is to approximate the original text as closely as possible by the gathering of numerous studies and editions on the fragments, along with other documents in Old English<sup>47</sup>. Thus, also in this case, preliminary considerations with the intention of understanding the manuscript's history and characteristics before the real editing of the text are found. Norman concentrates solely on the poem, highlighting its key elements through a meticulous technical and historical analysis, followed by observations on the folio's plots and, more broadly, on other works of a similar nature. All this material is enhanced by a section wholly devoted to the study of the textual dimension, in which the author reports on the suggestions of other editors, paying particular attention to textual variants and subdivisions.

Below I report the incipit of Norman edition, to highlight and explain the editorial choices mentioned.

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<sup>47</sup> A critical edition is a particularly in-depth editorial product. It strives to offer a text that is as near to the original as is possible. In these editions, the editor typically works on annotations and remarks on differences between various versions of the document under examination. All the relevant information gathered by the editor is added to the final transcription to enhance it. See <https://chaucer.fas.harvard.edu/types-editions#criticaledition> (Last accessed 28/04/2024).

. . . . . hyrde hyne zeorne :  
 ‘Huru þelandes      porc ne zespiced  
 monna æniȝ      đara đe Mimminȝ can  
 hearne zehealdan :      oft æt hilde zedreas  
 5    spatfaȝ      ond<sup>48</sup> speordpund      secȝ æfter oðrum.  
 Ætlan ordpyȝa,      ne læt đin ellen nu ȝyt  
 zeodreosan to dæȝe,      dryhtscipe . . .  
 . . . . .      nu is se dæȝ cumen,  
 þæt đū scealt aninȝa oðer tpeȝa :  
 10    lif forleosan,      oðđe langne dóm  
       aȝan mid eldum,      Ælfheres sunu.

Norman's transcription matches almost completely the text of the manuscript. The text closely resembles the two fragments, as seen by the lack of emendations of any type and the decision to keep the Old English orthography. Still, changes are visible in the lines arrangement that favours the Germanic alliterative verse, replacing the manuscript's *scriptio continua*. In fact, Norman's transcription is based on the Germanic long alliterative verse by making every verse appear divided into two semi-verses. Thus, when compared to Stephens' one, Norman's version appears to be distinct due to fewer emendations and for the different approach undertaken for the verse subdivision. To prove so, I provide an example, again concentrating on the second verse, related to tricky legibility and interpretation. To this extent, Norman (1949) argues that his predecessor, Stephens, had likely been able to reconstruct the term *geworc* precisely because of the evident presence of *ze-*, still visible in the manuscript in the year 1860. Norman chooses to opt for the reconstruction of the genitive *Welandes* in his transcription, not recognising *ze* as the prefix of *worc*. That is why in his transcription we have *Huru þelandes porc ne zespiced* for the second verse. For sure this interpretation aims to underline that Mimming is Weland's work, as well as being more grammatically correct. Despite this, this choice does not support the presence of the lemma *worc*, that as stated before, is not reported in Old English dictionaries as a synonym or other variant of *geworc*. Furthermore, while Norman sticks to the spelling of the original text, he also points out the scribe's mistakes, such as the absence of the letter <d> in *hearne* (v.4). In this transcription the gaps

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<sup>48</sup> The original form also provided by Norman in his diplomatic transcription corresponds to 7. However, as it is not visible in pdf format, I transcribed it in its interpretative form, i.e. *ond*.

are not filled with hypothetical letters or entirely reconstructed headwords, which makes it feasible to distinguish a high level of dependability in the edition currently investigated. Although in addition to the use of punctuation, we also observe more traditional editorial interventions, such as the capitalization of some letters, precisely the first letter of each proper name.

After these considerations, before moving on to the next edition, a more thorough explanation of Norman's research is necessary. Precisely it relates to the troublesome matter of the sequence of the fragment, although I point to the complete discussion of this topic in Paragraph 2.2.3 to avoid repetition. In this context it is remarkable to observe that Norman adopts a new specific lemma to prove the fact that Fragment I is contained in Fragment II. This was generated by joining the last visible syllable on folio Id, namely *swil-*, with the initial syllable on folio Ilc *-ce*. Norman is the first and one of the few to explicitly adopt this integration as a headword, which validates the order of the FI - FII pieces, their membership in the same collection, and the creation of a perfect hemistich. As already stated, several editors choose not to support this, casting doubt on this editorial decision. Ute Schwab's research on the two Waldere fragments also falls into the group of critical editions. Her edition *Waldere. Testo & Commento* begins by outlining the historical context and examining the manuscript's physical attributes, while also leaving the ground to the Latin tradition of the Waltharii poesis to describe the legend in its entirety. Schwab then highlights the text and its transcription, bolstered up by pictures of the parchment and textual revisions of other editors.

From an initial observation, it can be inferred that the fragments are divided into clear sections, and around fifteen lines can be attributed to each page, for a total of 32 lines for the first fragment and 31 for the second, reflecting the order of *Anglosaxonica Fragmenta duo membranacea, poetica, de Rege Walthero*. Again, while dealing with a critical edition, the editor's influence is perceptible in the transcription of the text where regularisations are apparent. Among editorial techniques, the publisher opts for current punctuation and capitalises the first letters of all given proper names. Besides, abbreviations have been expanded, and we also notice that the author reported the graphemes used in the manuscript using the modern Latin alphabet.

- 1 . . . // hyrde hyne georne:
- 2 "huru, Weland(es) worc ne geswiced
- 3 monna ænigum đara đe Mimming can
- 4 hearne gehealdan: oft æt hilde gedreas
- 5 swatfa(g) and sweordwund sec[g] æfter ođrum.

6     Ætlan ordwyga!       ne læt ðin ellen nu gy(t)  
7.8   gedreosan to dæge:     (nu) is se dæg cumen,  
9     þæt ðu scealt aninga     oðer twega:  
10    lif forleosan       oððe lange dóm  
11    agan mid eldum,       Ælfheres sun(u)!

In this instance, the text is modelled on the Germanic long verse, thus respecting the classical composition of two semi-verses to create alliteration, excluding the *scriptio continua* of the manuscript. A closer examination of Schwab's edition reveals that it is one of the more detailed and this is evident when reading her proposed commentary on the text, which yields a wealth of remarkable details and considerations. In fact, Schwab consistently strives to justify all her suggestions in the most accurate and empirical manner possible, especially in light of the editorial decisions that are also apparent in the transcript. Since we are once more concentrating on the transcription of the incipit, it is important to examine Schwab's suggestion for the second line. The scholar reconstructs it as *huru, Weland(es) worc ne geswiced*, highlighting the use of the genitive form in the name *Welandes*. The editor bases her argument on Beowulf, pointing to a specific verse (vv. 454-456) where the expression *Welandes geworc* appears, suggesting that this troublesome and ambiguous point is nothing more than a cast of the epic famous poem Beowulf (Schwab, 1999: 88-90). Nevertheless, this idea is easily refuted by the fact that the form *geworc* appears in Beowulf, whereas Schwab's transcription reads *worc*, which is not linguistically documented. Furthermore, it is important to emphasise Schwab's decisions not to reconstruct some passages while considering other editorial decisions she made. To this extent, her translation of the adverb *hearne* in verse four is definitive evidence of what I just said. Additionally, the fact that the manuscript was probably dictated lends credence to Schwab's claim that this is the phonetical representation of the right form *heardne*. Thus, the correct version would truly be the latter one, where the copyist left off the letter *d* (Schwab, 1999).

After understanding the transcription's critical elements, I intend to draw attention to some other stylistic factors, such as the adding of letters to correct the errors in the original text, as opposed to other editors who just transcribe the graphemes as they are represented in the fragments. This is the case with the word *sec[g]* (v.5), which is reconstructed to mean *warrior* and would not otherwise be an attested lemma *per se*<sup>49</sup>. The use of modern interpunction and the capitalization of some

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<sup>49</sup> Bosworth Toller's Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online: <https://bosworthtoller.com/27300> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).



letters represent common shared standards among editors when reproducing the transcription of a manuscript within this type of edition, as we noticed in Stephens' and Norman's works. The same criteria are applied here by Schwab, but with some nuances. In this case too, modern punctuation is present, but it is clearer, if compared to the one used by the previously analysed transcription. Some examples of this are the very first verse, where Schwab clearly outlines the lack of a semi-verse using several dots and two slashes. This notation renders a substantial irregularity in the text transparent, consequently making it easier to read and understand. In addition, as far as the capitalisation of certain letters is concerned, in Schwab's edition only the initials of names are capitalised, as is the case in Norman's transcription, but not in Stephens'. Therefore, it is obvious that variations in the representation of words, letters, or even simple punctuation indicate diverse interpretive keys of numerous editors, which will affect the textual dimension and subsequently the reader. This is demonstrated further in the part that follows, where we investigate one of the most current editions of *Waldere* and observe how more advanced analysis methods have enabled us to interact with the two fragments' text in new ways; precisely, what I am referring to is *The Old English Epic of Waldere* by J.B. Himes, published in 2009.

Himes' edition mirrors the structure of the works analysed so far in this section, but what distinguishes it from the previous ones is precisely the *modus operandi* used by the editor, which at times suggests a diplomatic-interpretative edition tending towards a critical one. The different editorial decisions made specifically imply that Himes' edition is more akin to a diplomatic-interpretative one, even though some critical edition-specific techniques are employed, such as the comparison of different editions of the work, which served as the foundation for Himes' study. Despite this, the editor's presence is strongly visible in the line's arrangement, in the use of interpunction, in the extension of certain lemmas, and capitalization of some letters, criteria that are only now stated but described below. Thus, as in the previous cases, a specific order before truly examining the textual dimension is respected. Himes seeks to contextualise the manuscript and the Legend of Walther in the very first section from a variety of angles, focussing on a physical and linguistic description of the fragments and offering literary viewpoints on the epic genre and the function of the hero. Then, after these opening remarks, he shifts the focus to the text and its translation. The first portion of Himes' suggested transcript is provided below for ease in examining his methodology.

“. . . hyrde hyne georne.

Huru Weland      geworc ne geswiced  
monna ænigum      ðara ðe Mimming can  
hear[d]ne gehealdan.      Oft æt hilde gedreas  
swatfag ond sweordwund      sec æfter oðrum.

Ætlan ordwyga,      ne læt ðin ellen nu gy[t]  
gedreosan todæge, dryhtscipe.

. . . n[u] is se dæg cumen  
þæt ðu scealt aninga      oðer twega:  
lif forleosan      oððe lang[n]e dóm  
agan mid eldum,      Ælfheres sunu.

At first glance, Himes' transcription is like those already considered, while some divergencies are still present. The major ones I could note while analysing his proposal coincide with a particular disposition of the text itself. In fact, Himes splits it, giving a whole unique interpretation, whereas the earlier editions proposed a text without any subdivision into paragraphs. Considering the rest of the text's organisation, Himes also shows an abandonment of the *scriptio continua* employed in the original manuscript in favour of the more understandable usage of the alliterative Germanic long verse.

Moreover, while still focusing on Himes' disposition of the text and comparing it with the ones previously analysed, both similarities and differences emerge. An example worth to note is represented by the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> lines, where Himes, as Norman does, split the verse into two semi verses, also remarking the probable absence of the initial part of the 8<sup>th</sup> one. In Stephens and Schwab's editions the transcriptions are different. In Stephens' suggestion, the relevant passage is separated into four verses, mostly because of the editor's adoption of particular a subdivision of the text, which we already examined in this section during our analysis of his edition. The contrast between Himes' and Schwab's transcriptions, in my opinion, is more fascinating since it shows that Schwab treats verses 7 and 8 as one, rather than dividing them into two as Himes does. Comparatively speaking to other editions of *Waldere*, Himes' study is grounded on an additional tool namely the UV technology, that allowed the publisher to meticulously research on the original sheets. Thus, because his transcription is based on the deeper level of evidence of the manuscript, Himes can provide a wholly objective rationale for the harsh issues other editors got through. To this

extent, the problems concerning the second verse may be considered solved thanks to Himes' examination through ultraviolet light. It makes it possible to clearly see the syllable *ge* in front of *worc* (Himes, 2009). In this way, not only do we have confirmation of a lexical form attested by overwhelming evidence, but it is also possible to go beyond some of the dubious interpretations mentioned so far. It will then be up to the reader to support the interpretation that seems most plausible to them.

Other noteworthy features in the reported portion of the transcription under investigation relate to the fourth verse, where Himes reconstructs the right form of *hearne* by adding the missing consonant <d> inside square brackets; the same editorial choice has been applied to all the other abbreviated lemmas. In truth, in this edition, not all the forms that the copyist abbreviates or omits are corrected, as other editors do. As far as this editorial choice, Himes justifies himself by arguing that, the presence of some omissions in the text, does not seem to alter the comprehension of the fragments. As a matter of fact, during his analysis of the manuscript, Himes employed sophisticated ultraviolet instrumentation to support his thesis. This allowed the researcher to identify letters in the text that were not visible to the unaided eye while also confirming that these letters were not essential to the overall meaning of the text. Therefore, Himes (2009) makes the case that some abbreviations do not require expansion because they are already understandable. As for other specific choices in editing prompted by academic conventions we find the retention of some original graphemes, specifically <þ, ð, e æ>, unexpectedly opposing the substitution of other Old English letters, such as the "long s", *wen*, and *yogh*, through Latin characters (Himes, 2009). The capitalization of proper name initials and the use of punctuation are other straightforward and less questionable editorial decisions. As a result, the analytical work put forward in Himes' proposal should be seen more as a hybrid between a critical and a diplomatic-interpretative edition. Although the author's level of interpretation is evident and is reflected throughout the transcription, Himes was able to delineate more specific aspects of the manuscript than is typically possible from a diplomatic-interpretive edition. Therefore, in this instance, normalisation and emendation in this edition can be said to not significantly alter the text, but a relevant amount of editorial interpretation is perceptible.

## 2.4. Continental analogues

At this point, the technical analysis of the manuscript is completed, and the information needed to identify its most distinct features—both in terms of structure and content—should be assimilated. The perspective of my research broadens, concentrating on the role of the hero in other writings, so the subject of interest changes, focusing on *Waldere's* continental analogues. Therefore, the prevailing aim now is that to underline the possible comparisons between the *Anglosaxonica Fragmenta duo membranacea, poetica, de Rege Walthero* and other documents involving the figure of Waldere. As a result, from now on, the representations of the protagonist become the core of the following paragraphs.

Additionally, during the investigation proposed other significant aspects related to the popularity of the story, and broadly speaking, of the epic poetry too emerge, and this is proven by the number of parallels we are going to consider. In this regard, in the next sections I consider specific documents such as *Waltharii poesis*, few chronicles namely *Chronicon Novaliciense* and *Chronicon Poloniae*, the *Þiðrekssaga*, the *Nibelungenlied* and on other minor texts, namely the Graz and Vienna fragments, pertaining to the Middle High German tradition. Consequently, thanks to the different interpretations of the legend these parallels provide, I can also emphasise on the cultural resonance of the legend.

The following paragraphs are structured as follows: first, I start by summarising the key aspects of the works mentioned, and after that, our target become the episodes centred on the Aquitanian hero. These analogues offer more nuances and information about the protagonist, which mostly depend on the various historical circumstances, widening our perspective on the epic poem. In addition, I consider appropriate to point out the notions I report in the following lines do not consist of a simple resumé of the episodes revolving around the legend contained in these parallels, since my intention now is to encourage a comprehensive investigation of the Old English fragments, that could not take place without also considering these equivalents.

### 2.4.1. Waltharii Poesis

To start our new analysis, it is appropriate to take into account the already mentioned document *Waltharii poesis*, as it serves as the most salient examples among all the parallels we shall concentrate on. Please note, that in Section 2.1 I present the plot of *Waltharius*, and so, to avoid duplicating content, I do not focus on it in the next lines; thus, the examination I suggest for *Waltharii poesis* slightly differs from those of other continental analogues. Nonetheless, I believe it is necessary to enrich the information previously provided on this poem, trying to contextualize it, in order to facilitate its comprehension.

*Waltharii Poesis* is a Latin work, most likely composed by the monk Ekkehart I between the ninth and tenth centuries adopting a particular writing form, namely the hexameter-based structure<sup>50</sup>. The poem is more frequently referred to as *Waltharius* or *Waltharius Manu Fortis* because the 1456 hexameters that make up its composition concentrate on the actions and life of Waltharius, the latinized version of the name Waldere. Nevertheless, its actual title is *Waltharii Poesis*, primarily because in the poem's final part appears the expression *Waltharii poesis*:

*“Haec quicumque legis, stridenti ignosce cicadae*

*Raucellam nec adhuc vocem perpende, sed aevum*

*Utpote quae nidis nondum petit alta relictis.*

*Haec est Waltharii poesis. Vos salvet Iesus<sup>51</sup>.”*

*“Chiunque tu sia che queste cose leggi, perdona questa stridula cicala, e non guardare a questa vocina ancor rauca, ma all'età immatura di chi, appena uscito dal nido, non osa ancor levarsi ad altezze sublimi. Questo è il canto di Walther. Vi conceda Gesù la salvezza”*

(D'Angelo, 1998:31-32)

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<sup>50</sup> I invite the reader to remember that the Old English fragments continue to be the primary focus of the investigation. Thus, considering the complexity of the *Waltharii poesis*'s subject matter, see the following bibliography for additional information mentioned in D'Angelo (1998): (Fischer 1780), (Schmeller 1838), (San Marte 1853), (Scheffel, Holder 1884), (Althof 1899-1905), (Strecker 1907), (Beck 1908), (Strecker 1939), (Smyser, Magoun 1941), (Strecker 1947), (Strecker 1951), (Genzmer 1953), (Langosch 1973), (Bate 1978), (Vollmann 1991), (Vogt-Spira 1994), (Alfonsi 1994).

<sup>51</sup> Whoever it is that is reading this, forgive this shrill cicada, and do not mind this still hoarse little voice, but the immature age of one who, fresh from the nest, does not dare to reach magnificent heights. This is Walther's song. May Jesus grand your salvation. (My translation from D'Angelo, 1998).

Thus, this passage does not simply provide the official title of the Latin poem, but it also contributes to understand the reason why certain themes are covered within it. Specifically, I am referring to the fact that within these lines the author's age is highlighted, as he describes himself as a young and inexperienced man. As Schwab suggests (1999) this observation results to be extremely important since it can legitimise the predominance of the warlike dimension linked to the epic motifs translated into the Latin work. Additionally, according to the scholar, in the text there are various instances to support this, and Schwab makes the case by pointing out the most remarkable ones, such as the mixed writing approach adopted by the writer that combines realism and imagination. To support this statement, Schwab (1999) considers the various descriptions of the combats, which are so meticulously documented that only a subject enthusiast of the art of war could report in that way, identifying it as another fundamental proof corroborating the author's young age.

These observations are of extreme relevance, since they allow us to look at *Waltharii poesis* as a miscellaneous composition, assuming it is to be considered as a very early attempt – for which there is evidence – to introduce thematic typical of another culture, namely the Germanic one, using the Latin language. Although it slightly deviates from the Germanic epic canons, *Waltharii poesis* captures the transition of the vernacular dimension into a language inextricably related to religion. The latter is present in the work under analysis and is visible within the multiple invocations to God, but nevertheless it covers a minor role (D'Angelo, 1998). From these considerations, a bond between the Germanic and Latin realms is proven and is additionally supported with further evidence provided by Schwab. In her edition *Waldere: Testo e Commento* (1999), she proposes a Germanic influence on *Waltharii poesis* focusing not only on the epic themes, but especially on the characters' proper names. Her anthroponomic investigation reveals a very strong affinity between the names used in the Latin text and the ones commonly found in Germanic languages at that time (Schwab, 1999).

This last observation consists in nothing but the umpteenth proof of the Christian influence on the epic poetry and vice versa, and this becomes even clearer if considering the centuries concerned. In broad terms, both *Waltharii poesis* and *Anglosaxonica Fragmenta duo membranacea, poetica, de Rege Walthero* go back to the 10<sup>th</sup> century, period during which the bond between Christianity and the epic genre was becoming increasingly consolidated. Precisely, even though the religious influence was increasingly spread and its contamination on the epic genre was undeniable, this phenomenon was not unilateral. In actuality, the continuous contacts between the two realms were frequent, and manifested in several ways, from the literature aspect, as just mentioned, to the

linguistic one, with linguistic borrowing<sup>52</sup>. Although it was a developing tendency, it is evident that we cannot prove that this was the case for all epics, particularly when considering the orality of the genre, of which we have no evidence (Francovich Onesti, 2002).

Despite everything, the Latin document establishes a hybrid environment, linking on one hand Germanic and Latin traditions and on the other, epic and Christianity, with a focus on the former ones. (D'Angelo, 1998). This is demonstrated not only in the recounting of the events, but also in Waltharius' portrayal, which has a significant influence on how the reader comprehends his persona. In fact, even though some references concerning the Christian dimension and its significance for the main hero are reported, this aspect does not seem to affect him completely. As a result, the heroic figure presented in this first continental analogue is that of an accomplished fighter, who is crafty and capable of inspiring both awe and admiration in everyone who crosses his path. As a matter of fact, in both instances, the epic warrior, valued for both his persona and his deeds appears, and this is even more evident in the *Waltharii poesis*, since its length and detailed depiction of the plot allow the readers' complete comprehension of the legend. However, we are aware that also within the episodes contained in the Old English fragments examined so far, the figure of a powerful man emerges, even though few folios remain.

Moreover, other correlations are revealed when juxtaposing the Old English and Latin texts. As previously stated, Waltharius and Waldere adhere to the epic-legendary canon, but they also have other affiliations that, in any case, do not significantly stray from the chivalrous undertones that permeate the genre. The bond with the beloved woman, Hiltegunt in the *Waltharii poesis* and Hildegyð in the *Waldere's* fragments, is an effective demonstration of this.

In light of additional thoughts regarding the comparison of these two works, I believe it is appropriate to focus on certain details that, although may appear minimal, are actually rather valuable. In this regard I am referring, for instance, to the presence of the same characters surrounding the hero, even though some phonological differences due to the language used create distinctions; among them *Ætla*, *Ælfheres*, *Hagen*, *Guðhere*, in *Waldere's* text – respectively *Attila*, *Alphere* and *Hagano*, *Guntharius* in the *Waltharii poesis* – that, as we shall see in the next pages, are not mentioned in all of the remaining analogues.

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<sup>52</sup> As Frankovich Onesti (2002) argues it is important to remember that while there were borrowings from Latin in the Germanic languages, this exchange phenomenon was not unilateral, and this is proven by the influence of the Germanic being greater, and interestingly, the latter affected the Neo-Latin language development in several ways in the early Middle Ages.

All of this, then, enables us to see why, in discussing the Old English folios, the *Waltharii poesis* is the only one document that can provide us the most comprehensive picture of the legend.

#### 2.4.2. Chronicon Novaliciense

The concepts of both form and content learned from studying *Waltharii poesis* should not be abandoned at this point, given the next continental version concerning the legend we are going to analyse. Specifically, as we shall see in this section, I consider *Chronicon Novaliciense*, a document that alludes to *Waltharii poesis*' plot itself, as well as the resurgence of the religious theme. To that extent, in this part of the examination, a link between Christianity and heroic worlds is established again, and in an even stronger manner. But first, some background on the work is required to place it in the right historical and geographical perspective before delving into the thirty parchment folios composing the *Chronicon's* text.

To begin, its main purpose coincides with the reporting of the origin and the development of a Benedictine abbey, located on the slopes of Moncenisio, specifically in the Cenischia valley, nowadays in Susa valley, Piedmont, Italy. Originally, the abbey was born as a very small monastery, in the year 726, whose flowering was encouraged by its founder Abbone, that bequeathed to the abbey a wealth of assets, including lands, churches, and servants. As far for its composition, *Chronicon Novaliciense* was written in Latin, after the year of its foundation, presumably around the first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. However, it is from the year of its foundation that its history is described until the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, probably by a monk living on the same abbey, even though the author remains anonymous (Alessio & Nono, 1982).

If we briefly concentrate on the historic period to which the *Chronicon* refers to, the reasons why we also need this work when taking into consideration the *Waldere's* continental analogues emerge. The period interested coincides with the one of the Carolingian Empire, to which are made clear references in the *Chronicon* itself. In this section I do not analyse in detail the period mentioned, since it is beyond the scope of this thesis, and what is important now is the bond between history and legend shown also in the Latin poem. Alessio & Nono (1982) make this explicit in their research on *Chronicon Novaliciense*, since they identify the historical dimension and its intertwining with the legendary narrative. In this way we are introduced, without any doubt, to the legend on Walther of



Aquitaine in the *Chronicon*, that becomes from now on our subject of interest. Probably due to the undeniable warlike aspect linked to the powerful Carolingian Empire and to the consequently increasing popularity of the heroic *chansons de geste* genre at that time, a figure like that of Walther of Aquitaine could not be left aside. In fact, as I stress below, his persona represented a perfect instance for the purposes of the *Chronicon*, that even though aimed to promote spirituality and religion's fundamentals, did not left aside the legendary dimension, also altering some commonly and culturally known circumstances for clerical purposes (Alessio & Nono, 1982).

We have evidence of this in six chapters of *Chronicon Novaliciense*, where, from chapter 7 to 12, episodes revolving around the past and present life of Vualtarius are described<sup>53</sup>.

The chronicler starts the section dedicated to the hero by remembering his previous deeds, briefly mentioning his value, his fights, and victories, without providing many details. Overall, Vualtarius is portrayed as a man seeking redemption after all the battles he endures. As a result, he devotes his last years looking for a suitable place where he might atone for his sins and the choice falls on a monastery. In order to pick the most suitable one, he equipped himself with a stick bearing bells and rings, which he used every time he entered a new monastery to gauge the monks' responses. In fact, as the chronicle states, if the monks got easily distracted by the sound generated by the special stick, that would not have been the appropriate place for the hero. After multiple efforts, Vualtarius eventually reaches Noalesa Abbey, where he decides to remain because of the strong austerity of the place, unaffected by the noise and distraction he provoked. From this point on the author describes his adventures as a monk, and precisely he becomes the gardener monk of the abbey, devoting himself to a religious life until his death (Chron. Noval. II, 7 in Alessio & Nono, 1982:73-77). In this passage the willing of the author in depicting Vualtarius as a religious man, rather than a warrior, is evident, particularly if considering that the focus in chapter VII revolves around Vualtarius searching for God's forgiveness. On the report of the *Chronicon's* text, he embodies the perfect example of a respectful person, that after being a fearsome warrior, committing slaughters and having passed most of his time in combats, is now ready to rest and to devote his soul to God. To this extent, we have a first proof in *Chronicon Novaliciense* of a sort of educative purpose, that becomes the leitmotiv in the part related to the Aquitanian hero. In truth,

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<sup>53</sup> As seen by the preceding document and what we shall see in the ones that follow, the protagonist's name frequently changes. This is a result of the analogues' many places of origin, causing subsequent reinterpretations of various aspects. Linguistic adjustments, like altered proper names, are the most common and noticeable ones; yet, occasionally, more significant changes pertaining to the storyline of each analogue occur.

an evident climax related to the religious theme presented in this part intensifies within this whole part, especially in the conclusion.

The following lines carry on the tale. The chronist goes back in Vualtarius' life and begins to provide a detailed account of his past, right from the very beginning and personally, I believe it is reasonable to assume that this portrayal is once again grounded in the *Chronicon's* educational purpose. In fact, by accurately describing Vualtarius' former background, the author aimed to highlight the importance of the hero's decision to become a monk, that turns out to be a powerful proof of true conversion, to which readers of those times should have aspired to. In addition, reporting the insights of Vualtarius' deeds, the references to the *Waltharii poesis* we mentioned above become clear, since the author reports all this information recalling the plot and the characters of *Waltharii poesis*, precisely in sections 8 and 9 of the *Chronicon* (Bisanti, 2010). Thus, in that section of the document, more space is dedicated to the young hero, mainly depicted as a warrior; however, the parts revolving around battles and bloodbath are concealed by the chronist. Only marginal considerations relating the warlike dimension appear, as if it should not get in touch with the monastical life (Bisanti, 2010). Despite the fact that some more violent details are not included in *Chronicon Novaliciense*, thanks to this passage we can understand the undeniable bond with the previous continental analogue, which becomes even stronger when continuing the examination of other episodes proposed in the work under analysis.

Note that in this part of *Chronicon Novaliciense*, the description of the hero as a young man is not properly concluded, but the focus finally shifts to Vualtarius devoted to the clerical life, representing the core of sections 10 and 11, where relevant events are reported. It is exactly within these chapters that the figure of Vualtarius becomes hybrid, oscillating between a monk and a valiant fighter. In order to understand that we it is necessary to consider the episodes in which Vualtarius acts following his original nature, even though he had apparently abandoned that warrior's attitude.

Therefore, to continue the narrative, as reported in these passages, the adjacent villages used to pay a tribute to the monks of Noalesa Abbey, providing them with necessities. For this to occur, the monks' attendants utilised carts to transport the tribute in from the Noalesa church to the monastery. This is respected until the day when some marauders attack the carts transporting the goods and robbing them (Chron. Noval. II 10, in Alessio & Nono, 1982:101-105). Clearly, something must be done and at this point, Vualtarius is chosen by the abbot Asinario for his wisdom as the most suitable monk to convince the robbers to return the confiscated properties. Thus, Vualtarius reaches the bandits and, adhering to the rules of humility set down by his superiors, makes multiple

attempts to politely convince them to return everything to the monastery. But this is useless, assuming he is so severely battered and humiliated by his foes, that he finds it impossible to do not react. Precisely, he embraces the unwavering personality of a warrior, demonstrating his value by taking back the stolen items, using violence. In truth, the chronicler depicts a brutal battle between Vualtarius and his enemies, during which the former nearly massacres most of them, while the survivors manage to escape. Once returned to the monastery, Vualtarius is punished, since he did not act as a monk should have done (Chron. Noval. II 11, in Alessio & Nono, 1982:105-109).

As a result, the description of these circumstances allows us to understand that Vualtarius' original attitude does not seem to be completely accepted. This episode provides us with significant considerations about the perception of Vualtarius thorough the *Chronicon's* text and about the religious nuance many originally epic poems acquired. To this extent, *Chronicon Novaliciense* represents what stated at the beginning of this section, regarding the numerous reinterpretations of the legend of Walther of Aquitaine contained in the equally various and different continental analogues.

However, the religious influence is particularly noticeable in *Chronicon Novaliciense*, where Vualtarius' figure is employed not only to communicate concepts of atonement and repentance, but also to highlight the moral component typical of Christianity. In fact, considering the last episode reported, the chronicle's account of Vualtarius demonstrating his warrior nature is ultimately rejected and criticised, despite the fact that he just defended himself against his attackers, without any prior claim to violence. To this extent, all of this provides evidence of the importance of religion and of how all its tenets has increased throughout time in literature and culture, even to the point they may alter such a genre as epic, transforming it into a vehicle for the Christian message (Francovich Onesti, 2002).

Notwithstanding, the discussion of these warlike tendencies ends in chapter 12, which recounts the story of Vualtarius' death. Within this part, the chronicler adopts a different viewpoint to refer to the protagonist and concentrates on his function only as a monk, emphasising his positive traits and portraying him as a man completely committed to monastic life. Additionally, the reference to Vualtarius' grave, built by himself, is used once again to represent his dedication and observation of the faith. (Chron. Noval. XII, in Alessio & Nono, 1982:111-112).

At this point, we should be familiar of all the episodes recounted in *Chronicon Novaliciense*, thus we can start an in-depth analysis based on the representation of Vualtarius. To be precise, we are dealing with more portraits of the Aquitanian hero. While reading the document we are provided

with two different perspectives concerning his figure, indeed the first one refers to his youth, while the second one concentrates on his old age. Thus, in this manner two sides of the same coin are proposed: the warlike aspect and the religious one, respectively. The first one is connected to the young age of Vualtarius, while the second one refers to his adult age. It is interesting to note that this dual representation does not only affect the age of the protagonist but is particularly reflected in his character. As a matter of fact, the impression suggested by the chronist is that of an ambivalent figure, showing duality especially in his behaviour, assuming he oscillates in a kind of limbo. As a result, on the one hand we are presented with the warrior hero, and on the other hand with the faithful monk observer of ecclesiastical life. Therefore, I think it is appropriate to consider *Chronicon Novaliciense* as a continental analogue of the *Waldere's* fragments capable to highlight an evolutionary process of the protagonist. Indeed, the hero's figure in the chronicle is never static; rather, the work's substance allows us to temporarily abandon the typical epic scenario by modifying our perception of the hero.

Moreover, I want to stress on the fact that similarities with the hero we encountered in the *Waldere's* fragments are still present, especially if considering that his deeds as a warrior are reported for half of the section regarding him. In particular, the mentions to his past life in Attila's court, the stealing of the treasures and the battle against Guntharius and Hagen, suddenly create a link with the episodes contained in *Anglosaxonica Fragmenta duo membranacea, poetica, de Rege Walthero*.

To conclude, I intend to underline that, even though the protagonist is the same, there are a lot more contrasts than similarities between the two Old English fragments and *Chronicon Novaliciense*, both in terms of the document's form and substance. This is justified by the genre of the chronicle itself, whose main subject of interest consists with the history of the Abbey, as we already know. Therefore, also the purposes of the document are strictly linked to promote faith and its observance, rather than focus on more epic themes such as the stealing of treasures, battles, or bloodsheds as in *Waldere's* fragments.

### 2.4.3. The Nibelungenlied

In this section we leave the Latin tradition behind, in order to concentrate on the Germanic one by the examination of a fundamental witness, namely the *Nibelungenlied*, composed around the year 1200 (Haymes & Samples, 1996).

The popularity of this work is substantially more affirmed than that of the legend of Walther *per se*, and this is demonstrated by the rich manuscript tradition surrounding it. To this extent, while it is possible that further copies of this document once existed but were lost, the manuscripts, A (Munich, Staatsbibliothek, Cgm 34), B (St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 857), and C (Karlsruhe, Landesbibliothek, Cod. Donaueschingen 63), represent the most relevant ones, even though other exist nowadays (Bertagnolli, 2020). Manuscript A is recognised as the first to be composed, followed by manuscript B and manuscript C, in an alphabetical order that is directly related to the order of composition. More specifically, researchers claim that manuscript A was produced in southern mediaeval Germany around the year 1200, and manuscripts B and C were likely added posthumously. Nevertheless, no hierarchy has been established among them (Haymes & Samples, 1996)<sup>54</sup>. As such, the stories contained vary periodically because of the several versions of the *Völsung-Nibelung cycle* that were created over time, influenced by the various historical periods during which they were written (Hymes & Samples, 1996). As far as the content is concerned, a special mention goes to the author's ability to mix history and legends, including characters of both dimensions, reflecting on the main focus of the poem, namely the political and social climate of German civilization in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. As a result, the primary material of the *Nibelungenlied* is the recounting of historical figures' actions, such those of Attila or the Burgundians' family, combined with the mythical Siegfried or Dietrich of Bern's adventures, offering again examples of the link between reality and myth (Hymes & Samples, 1996).

However, among the latter also the figure of the Aquitanian hero is included, even though his presence is marginal (Haymes & Samples, 1996). As a matter of fact, he owes his mention to another character, to which we are already familiar with, but before unveiling this particular figure, I consider important to contextualize the episode of interest, contained in the second section of the *Nibelungenlied*. In broad terms, the events presented in this part revolve around Attila's marriage to a woman named Kriemhild, to which Hagen is invited. In the passage attention is primarily dedicated

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<sup>54</sup> For further information on the topic, see the following bibliography, proposed in Haymes & Samples (1996): (Abeling 1970), (Krogmann, Ulrich 1966), (Überschlag 1980).

to Hagen, but in remembering him, the author makes clear references to one of his comrade-in-arms, that is Walther. Precisely, thanks to Attila's words aimed to glorify Hagen's personality and deeds, hints to Walther were unavoidable. These lines concerning the two heroes are significant to us, assuming references mainly concentrate on their bond built on a strong sense of friendship and shared battle experiences. Moreover, attention is devoted also to the relation between Walther and Guthhere, with a special focus to their fights (Schwab, 1999).

Even though only few lines are dedicated to our hero, they are of extreme relevance to investigate and enrich our perception of him. To this extent, the positive description of Hagen implicitly reflects on the figure of Walther, allowing us to understand the commonly spread positive connotation regarding the knightly realm, presented in the passage and in the whole document. Thus, throughout Attila's speech regarding Hagen, the ideal of the heroic man starts to emerge. As for Walther, his representation as a hero is subtle but clear, since he is represented as Hagen's trusted companion in battles, and in life, underling Walther's traits, such as value and strength. From my own viewpoint, the fact that Walther is the first person that comes to Attila's mind in seeing and glorifying Hagen serves to make clear the admiration for his persona as well. Thus, in general, when it comes to Walther, we may extract a traditional portrayal typical of the epic perception, through which his qualities as an unconquerable warrior and a man of honour are respected.

The way this is accomplished, yet is unusual, specifically because, unlike the texts we have studied up to this point, Walther is only an auxiliary character in the current work. This may seem to obscure his persona, but despite everything we are still capable to glimpse and recognise his attitude.

#### 2.4.4. *Þiðrekssaga*

The *Þiðrekssaga* shares a similar compositional period, certain topics, and a comparable literary style to the continental analogue examined in Paragraph 4.4.3, considering that the heroic-historical past of the Germanic peoples served as the foundation for both the *Nibelungenlied* stories and the *Þiðrekssaga* (Haymes & Samples, 1996).

Within this section I intend to provide firstly general information regarding the *Þiðrekssaga* and only after contextualizing the work, it will be possible to shift to the core of the issue, examining the scenes in which the hero is involved. To this extent, some clarifications regarding the texts I based

my analysis on, need to be made. For my study, I considered the *Þiðrekssaga's* episode reported in H. Bertelsen's edition (1911) and its translation proposed by Piccolini (1999)<sup>55</sup>. However, before delving deeper into its plot, in the next lines we focus on the *Þiðrekssaga* itself.

Several versions of the saga exist, but while approaching it, I could note that among scholars there is a tendency in referring to the one dated back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century and composed at the court of the Norwegian king Håkon, reason why it is also known as the Norwegian *Þiðrekssaga* (Hymes & Samples, 1996). We are going to focus on this text too, that is why for the aims of my study, I intend to clarify some general information regarding it. Precisely, this witness is nowadays preserved at the Royal Library of Stockholm, under the signature Holm perg 4 fol<sup>56</sup>. Additionally, as far as the Norwegian *Þiðrekssaga* is concerned, it is the only one about which some observations regarding its author can be made. As its text shows, it was apparently written by two copyists, even though it displays five different hands within it; thus, it is to be identified as a miscellaneous work (Piccolini, 1999)<sup>57</sup>.

Despite the existence of three versions, the subject of interest is not affected and to understand it, we must consider the complete title of the saga, namely *Þiðrekssaga af Bern*, allowing us to identify as main character of the whole document Theodoric of Bern, the legendary figure of the Ostrogothic king used to represent that of the historic Theodoric the Great. Consequently, this chain of events reports the deeds of Theodoric of Bern, and eventually immersing the reader in the epic world. Alongside the account of his adventures, also stories of other popular individuals extremely close to him are presented and among them our hero makes an appearance (Piccolini, 1999). As saw while focusing on the previous continental analogues mentioned, the names are the elements that more frequently undergo some changes, and this also occurs in the *Þiðrekssaga*. Therefore, before delving into its content, note that in the saga we no longer speak about Waldere, as we did in the two Old

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<sup>55</sup> Bertelsen names the section dedicated to Valtari as *Af Valltara ok Hildigunni*.

Even though I based my analysis on the translated version, it is important to clarify that the main subject of interest coincides with the escape of the main hero and his lover from Attila's court and broadly speaking, the dynamics are very similar to the ones mentioned in Waltharii poesis.

<sup>56</sup> Medieval Nordic Text Archive: <https://clarino.uib.no/menota/catalogue> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

<sup>57</sup> The other two existing variant, the Swedish and the Icelandic ones, are strictly linked to the Norwegian work, considering they descend from it. As a matter of fact, experts collocated the Swedish and the Icelandic copies chronologically in a posthumous period in relation to the Norwegian *Þiðrekssaga*; more specifically, the former dates to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, while the latter approximately goes back to the 17<sup>th</sup>.

As far as the Icelandic and Swedish *Þiðrekssaga* are concerned, unfortunately not enough information surrounding their authors remains, making it difficult to create conjectures. For more information concerning the manuscript tradition of the *Þiðrekssaga*, see Piccolini (1999:7) proposed in his dedicated study to the saga, namely the readings of *Die Handschriftenverhältnisse der Þiðrikssaga*, PBB 48 (1924), pp. 417-447; in H. Hempel, *Kleine Schriften*, hrsg. Von H. Matthias Heinrichs, Heidelberg 1966, pp. 111-113.

English fragments, rather we concentrate on Valtari's adventures. Moreover, other already known figures of the legend are recalled in the saga, whose proper names are modified too, among them Hiltegunt that turns into *Hildigund*, and Hagen, that becomes *Hogni*. Even though in the *Þiðrekssaga* the general subject matter of the legend concerned so far remains the same, these observations merely scratch the surface of the distinctions between the episode recorded in the current analogue and the one told in the *Anglosaxonica Fragmenta duo membranacea, poetica, de Rege Walthero*. To demonstrate what I just stated, in the following lines we are going to delineate the section within which Valtari appears and consequently trying to establish a comparison with the figure depicted so far.

At the very beginning of the saga, we are presented with Attila, king of Susa and Ermanarico, king of Apulia. The two close friends decide to exchange their nephews, respectively Osid and Valtari, so that the former could live at Ermanarico's court, while the latter at Attila's one, both as guests. While spending some years at Attila's court, Valtari develops feelings for Hildigund, a Greek girl who was held as Attila's prisoner, being the daughter of Jarl Ilias of Greece<sup>58</sup>. In this regard, I consider useful to highlight the fact that in this version of the legend, changes with respect to the continental analogue analysed so far, and especially in respect to the Old English fragments are evident from the very beginning. However, we concentrate on this aspect only after finishing the narration of the passage.

The story continued with the narration of the two lovers' adventures, who, forced to live unwillingly at Attila's court, decide to leave the palace together. At this point, Valtari and Hildigund devise a strategy, in which they succeed, that entails robbing parts of Attila's treasures before heading back home. As we can imagine, the action does not remain unpunished, and Attila reacts committing twelve of his soldiers to hunt the fugitives down; among Attila's men Hogni is included. The story goes on with Valtari heroically defeating all his foes, except for Hogni, that survives the fight. Following the annihilation of the majority of Attila's warriors, Valtari needs to rest and camps out with Hildigund. It is at this very moment that Hogni launches a fresh attack on them while Hildigund tries to warn Valtari. This final scene reported in the *Þiðrekssaga* is one of the key moments centred upon Valtari and emphasises on the battle with Hogni, in which Valtari emerges victorious, culminating with the fugitives' return home (Piccolini, 1999).

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<sup>58</sup> Jarl is a Norse and Danish term used to indicate a chief (Oxford Online Dictionary) <https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100018494#:~:text=Scandinavian%20title%2C%20meaning%20roughly%20'chieftain,a%20territory%20in%20his%20stead> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024)



Thus, while the legend's major characteristics have not changed from what has been seen thus far, there have been noticeable modifications as well, even though some of them represent minor details, such as the place of origin of Valtari and Hildigund. Focusing now on more significant distinctions, as well as commonalities, between the actions of Valtari recorded in the *Þiðrekssaga* and in the *Anglosaxonica Fragmenta duo membranacea, poetica, de Rege Walthero*, special consideration concerns the circumstances associated with the battles, as they are presented in both sources. Among the most evident gaps an example is provided by the warrior's foes, assuming that in the last fight described in the saga there is no trace of Guðhere, the hero's arch enemy as recorded in the *Waldere's* fragments.

Furthermore, sticking to the *Þiðrekssaga*, we do not know much about the character of Hogni – that in the two Old English fragments covers a fundamental role – except for the fact that he is one of Attila's soldiers and if delving deeper into the two representations of the fights, even more interesting considerations can be made. Among them, we should focus on the personal perception the hero has about himself, considering that in the saga, after defeating eleven men and before the final combat against Hogni, Valtari does not seem as fatigued as he is presented in the Old English fragments. This is demonstrated by the fact that he recounts some of his previous battles, all of which he won and while remembering them, he highlights his value and inclination for a belligerent attitude. These words are used by Valtari not only to prove his strength, but especially to calm Hildigund down, since she is extremely worried about her beloved. With this in mind, this scene allows us to stress on another significant variation between the comparison of the two documents under analysis, mainly linked to the encouragement speech in *Waldere's* fragments held by Hiltegunt, that strongly contrasts the dynamics of the saga. In fact, if comparing this specific part of the two texts, it seems the roles have been inverted.

However, the traditional representation of a heroic figure is totally respected in both manuscripts. Specifically, if focusing on the *Þiðrekssaga*, Valtari's traits are fully expounded upon. Not only thanks to his self-praising words are we capable of comprehend his strength, but also within the whole text, what appears is a description of a man who is not only expert with the sword, but also in words. So, briefly recapitulating, on one hand his speech, used to describe his past battles, suggests the idea of an invincible warrior, that does not fear any kind of bloodshed. On the other hand, he is also presented as a very clever man, that he can deceive a king as Attila, that in the collective imaginary is to be considered as a smart, valuable, and respectable sovereign (Haymes & Samples, 1996). After these considerations, I think it is reasonable to assert that while the saga's portrayal of the hero does

not really add anything to our overall comprehension of his persona, it is still significant for grasping the impact of the legend in mediaeval thought.

In summary, the saga under examination can be understood as a sign of the heroic Germanic legends' dissemination, which helps us understand why many interpretations of the same well-known epic themes exist. In this regard, one of the most exhaustive statement I encountered during my investigations on the subject and that is capable to fully explain this last thought is to be attributed to Francovich Onesti (2002:145), throughout which the scholar completely goes straight to the point, underlying that: *“L’epica non aveva tematiche e contenuti strettamente nazionali, anzi certi argomenti erano patrimonio comune di tutti i Germani; e sembra che molti dei temi più famosi e ricorrenti – portati da cantori itineranti – siano passati di corte in corte, di tribù in tribù, di popolo in popolo, ogni volta con rifacimenti, adattamenti, e rielaborazioni linguistiche, di modo che le storie d Sigfrido o di Teodorico erano celebrate dalla Germania all’Islanda, e certi nomi leggendarî ricorrono sia in ambiente nordico che in quello anglosassone e altrove.”*<sup>59</sup>

#### 2.4.5. Graz and Vienna fragments

From now on we consider other continental analogues of the *Anglosaxonica Fragmenta duo membranacea, poetica, de Rege Walthero*, namely the Graz and Vienna fragments<sup>60</sup>. Since there is regrettably not much left of these fragments, they still allow us to explore further representations of our hero. Thus, after the considerations on the vaster analogues encountered so far, these paragraphs will be less lengthy, but however of interest to complete the chapter. In point of fact, as Schwab (1999), along with other scholars, states, presumably, the Vienna and Graz fragments were wider in content, but nowadays only 48 stanzas in total are left. Notwithstanding, the fragments are part of the Middle High German tradition, and this implies that at this point of our analysis we remain in the Germanic terrain. In addition, similar features investigated in the *Nibelungenlied* manifest in

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<sup>59</sup> *The epic did not have rigidly national themes and content, rather certain topics were to be considered as the common heritage of all Germans; and it seems that many of the most famous and recurring subjects – carried by itinerant epic poets – passed from court to court, from tribe to tribe, from people to people, each time with modifications, adaptations, and linguistic re-elaborations, so that the stories of Siegfried or Theodoric were celebrated from Germany to Iceland, and certain legendary names appear in the Nordic scenario as well as in the Anglo-Saxon one, and elsewhere.* (Francovich Onesti, 2002:145). (My translation)

<sup>60</sup> For the study of these fragments, I rely on the text edited by Ute Schwab (1999).

these pieces, mainly because they concern the same genre, thus what we can expect from them is the maintenance of ideals common to the courtly taste of the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries (Schwab, 1999). In order to provide a clearer investigation of the pieces as possible, I intend to report both fragment's episodes within which Walther is mentioned, and only after that, the focus shifts on what emerges from these scenes.

Although both fragments are extremely short, between the two, the Graz parchment represents the scancer one. In fact, only nine stanzas compose it, reporting the events of the very beginning of the story, proving with no hesitation the respect of the courtly themes we just mentioned (Schwab, 1999)

The Graz fragment, preserved at the Steiermärkisches Landesarchiv, contains the episode referring to the Hunnic court, which represents a common feature of the poems dated back to the Middle High German world (Schwab, 1999). It all begins with the introduction of Hagen, who goes to the court of the Huns to distribute gifts to the ones that helped him. During his stay, he overhears a conversation between Walther and Hildegund, during which the maiden confesses that she would like to elope with him. The remnant part of the fragment continues with Hagen suggesting Walther to wed her, after learning of this, stating that he was present when the two lovers made their childhood vow to wed, before their permanence at the court of the Huns (Schwab, 1999).

As far for the Vienna parchment, nowadays located in the Oesterreichische Nationalbibliothek, in Vienna, it is larger than the previous one, since 39 stanzas compose it. In this regard, two different folios compose the Vienna fragment, namely fragment A and B, which also present different occurrences related to Walther. Thus, while analysing fragment A we deal with a topic we should know quite well at this point of the analysis, the runaway of Walther and Hildegunda from the court of the Huns, with clear allusions to some difficulties linked to their escape are mentioned, such as the fact that the lovers are chased by the Huns. While reporting their adventures, the author includes their destination, which corresponds to Walther's parents' homeland. This notion symbolises a relevant turning point for this analysis, to which more space is dedicated once the description of the episode is concluded, assuming that in this version of the legend, Walther's parents are king and queen of Spain.

Fragment A continues by describing the parents' subsequent happiness upon hearing from messengers that their son is on his way home. At this point, the story reports Walther's father, Alper, that asks the messengers how his son has been treated at the Huns' court and from the response, the parents are informed of the fact that Walther killed a lot of Huns while escaping, again

underlying the theme of the lovers' getaway. The section closes with the Spanish king and queen reaching their son out of a longing to see him again (Schwab, 1999).

Fragment B, the second folio of the Vienna parchment, thus continues the preceding folio's storyline with the two lovers' arrival at Walther's parents' court. Additionally, this fragment takes a pleasant turn given the joyous occasions that transpire in these few stanzas, such as the announcement of Walther's crowning as the successor to the Spanish throne and the arrangements for Hildegund and Walther's nuptials. In general, in this fragment, the description of Walther's figure remains vague, but in the final section of the folio, we are shown evidence of his kindness as he extends an invitation to some of his old foes, including Gunther, to attend his wedding (Schwab, 1999).

In my view, what stands out the most within the Graz and the Vienna fragments is the author's attempt to highlight Walther's personality. His essence is revealed gradually during the 48 stanzas, yet he does indeed seem to be an honest man with a heart of gold. For example, the Graz fragment suggests his thoughtfulness for his beloved, while the Vienna parchment folios show his magnanimity in inviting Gunther to his wedding. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the Walther shown in the remaining parts of the fragments is an entirely honourable man. I consider plausible to infer that the author intentionally chose to highlight Walther's demeanour, which is completely in line with that of a hero from the epoch and genre. These characteristics are thereby of greater value than fighting and bloodshed, as instead occurs in *Waldere's* vellums, due to fact that the work under consideration tends to represent the canons of the courtly tradition.

Consequently, this courtly image of Walther is rather different from that contained in the two Old English fragments, especially regarding the lack of battle depictions that have up to now been used to emphasise the warrior qualities useful in defying and shaping our view of the hero. Still, as Schwab (1999) clarifies in this regard, certain themes should not be neglected simply because they aren't mentioned in these Middle High German texts and to this extent Walther and Gunther's battle is one such instance of this. She continues arguing that, even though there is no evidence of their fight in the fragments, we should not take for granted its absence. Specifically, this hypothesis suggests the retention of warlike themes in the fragments, whose brevity, however, it is important to bear in mind, assuming they can justify the loss of passages containing more violent episodes.

#### 2.4.6. Wielkoposka Kronika

The following paragraphs apparently oblige us to leave the Germanic world behind to shift our focus both geographically and historically on another parallel, known as the *Wielkoposka Kronika*, which represents a document of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, pertaining to the Polish culture, becoming from now on the main subject of interest (Schwab, 1999). Since this piece was written in Latin, another way to refer to it is *Chronicon Poloniae*, standing for one of the most relevant works produced in the Polish territory at that time, precisely because it traces the development of the Polish society. The document mostly consists of historical events, but it also contains elements of the legendary realm and as a result, immerses us in the same blend of legend and reality. Several sections contained in the chronicle demonstrate this, but the most relevant one for our purposes is given by the story revolving around the abduction of Hildegunda – the form used in this analogue for the hero's lover – that also involves Walterus, which, as we can imagine, corresponds to the equivalent name of Waldere. Thus, the passage contained in the *Wielkoposka Kronika* broadly reports a motif we already know, namely that of the two lovers' getaway, although changes in details and in dynamics are visible.

At this point and with this information in mind, I consider appropriate to start to delineate the occurrences reported in the Polish chronicle<sup>61</sup>. At the very beginning of episode, the author provides us with useful notions relating to the historical context of the episode, which relates to historical events in Poland in the year 1135, the moment the Russians took control of the city of Wiślica, which is situated north of Kraków (Schwab, 1999). Only after this brief information, the story continues with the introduction of the main characters of the narrative Walterus and Hildegunda. As far as the former is concerned, not many details are provided, we can only extrapolate few, but interesting facts about him, namely a particular expression used to refer to him, namely *Walterus robustus* and his place of origin, Tynecz. The *Kronika* offers more insights about the female figure, describing her life and kinship, for instance the fact that she is the daughter of the king of the Franks. Moreover, details about the woman are revealed as the narrative progresses, and special attention is given to her love life and to her amorous relationship with a German prince. The introduction of this new character represents on one hand a strong contrast to the content of the continental analogues

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<sup>61</sup> Please note that to examine the following scenes, I referred to the text included in Schwab's edition, where the passage revolving around Walterus is reported. Schwab refers to Heinzei, Rosine, C. Über die Walthersage, in: Sitzungsberichte der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Phil.-hist. Classe 117. Wien. 1889, containing the edited text of the *Wielkoposka Kronika* by Bielowski.

encountered so far, and on the other hand, an important figure of these lines. According to the chronicle, Hildegunda seems to forget about her fiancée in the exact moment she meets Walterus. Even though this version does not tell us much about him, with the next lines we are able to recognise his chivalrous nature, which he is not hesitant to show off as soon as he has the chance. As the story is told, Walterus' tenacity and dedication really come to light, especially with respect to the fact that he sings for Hildegunda, under her window, for three whole nights in a row, stealing her heart. At this point the chronicle reports the description of the two lovers' decision to flee and the consequential anger of the German prince, who feeling abandoned, tries to stop them in their tracks. While making their getaway attempt extremely hard, the envious prince blocks them, forcing the fugitives to face him and inviting Walterus to fight. Clearly, it is conceivable that the two suitors settle their conflict with a combat to death, in which Walterus prevails, conveying a peaceful conclusion of the story that ends with they return to the Polish Kingdom (Bielowski (1872), in Schwab, 1999).

Following these reflections on the Polish counterpart it is not surprising that Walterus' actions and role don't offer any brand-new insights into him. Especially within the description of the combat he won, his most well-known traits, as well as those shared by the *Waldere's* fragments – and by most of the counterparts examined thus far – are evident; specifically, I allude to his bravery, his slyness, and his indisputable combat prowess. As a result, the hero portrayal in the Polish version still embodies the heroic ideal ascribed to him, generally satisfying the epic genre's established expectations. Nevertheless, it is fundamental to concentrate on certain clear distinctions that still distance the Polish analogue from the main focus for this study, namely the two Old English version of the legend, although both works present many similarities.

Firstly, an obvious aspect that distinguishes the Polish episode from the Old English one concerns the hero's antagonists. In fact, the German prince presented in the Polish version marks a notable divergence from the Hagen and Guthhere figures we encountered in *Waldere's* vellums, assuming he not only represents a completely new character, but his presence also modifies the motives for the lovers' escape and subsequent pursuit. In this sense, Walterus' urge to flee from his opponents with Hilgunda is primarily motivated by feelings of love and desire for the same lady. There is another equally critical issue related to this romantic aspect that creates an interesting division with the *Waldere's* fragments. In this sense, the significance of these feelings is given different weight in the two versions, as demonstrated in the Polish version where they are crucial to the progression of the entire episode. Even though also *Anglosaxonica Fragmenta duo membranacea, poetica, de Rege Walthero's* parchments showcase the love that unites Waldere and

Hiltegunt, it takes up less room inside the work itself, assuming the majority of text is devoted to the importance of the warlike dimension, along with other heroic characteristics we already mentioned. Considering the available data, I believe it is reasonable to argue that the two *Waldere's* fragments capture the epic genre in its entirety, while the *Wielkoposka Kronika*, the whole story is enriched with a more romanticised touch, that inevitably reflects on the hero's deeds.

Nonetheless, we should reflect on the fact that an equilibrium is created between the two analogues, based on certain similarities, capable to balance everything. Among these, we already devoted attention to the escape scenes, shared by both works; however other common traits are visible in the happy endings of the Old English fragments and in that of the *Wielkoposka Kronika*. As a matter of fact, in both documents the hero overcomes his enemies, allowing him and his lover to return safely to their native land. This indicates that while variations are to be expected given the geographic and historic relocation of the legend itself, they are not as major as they may seem. To conclude, with this investigation I intend to highlight the idea that the legend and, consequently its content, in broad terms, remain the same, both in the *Wielkoposka Kronika*, and in the *Waldere's* fragments.

#### 2.4.7. Concluding remarks about the continental analogues

With the help of this study, I identified significant features that are fundamental to understand the representation of the hero's figure. *Waldere's* portrayal as a fierce and unbeatable warrior reflects the core concepts of heroic poetry; precisely, his courage and physical strength distinguish his figure, constituting a clear leitmotif of this legend. As a matter of fact, *Walther's* overall portrayal is closely associated with the heroic genre, whose traits are apparent in all the works under consideration, apart from the episodes described in the *Chronicle of Novalesa*, as its theological and moralising framework makes place for the Christian dimension, reducing the significance of the epic style.

The numerous parallels also serve to further connect the continental counterparts, as they present comparable dynamics, such as *Walther's* early years at *Attila's* court or his flight with the love of his life, or his decisive conflict with *Hagen and Gunther* or with *Hagen* alone. In my opinion, a plausible explanation for the striking repetition of these elements is an intense appreciation for the legend of the Aquitaine hero, who stood for courage and love at the time, upholding some ideals shared during

the Middle Ages. This admiration was likely further stoked by the parallels' proximity. However, precisely this aspect is connected to the first distinctions noticeable between the parallels, since each work's native culture and literary tradition manifest in the languages adopted for the writing of the legend, also affecting the historical and geographical context of the episodes.

Moving on to other significant variations, changes concern the antagonists, who are not always the same as the characters Hagen and Guðhere that we have been accustomed to from the Old English fragments and the *Waltharius*. I refer to the *Chronicon Novaliciense* and the Polish Chronicle as examples when Walther encounters miserable bandits or even a German prince. As a result, the motivations behind Walther's fighting alter occasionally between the parallels. To support this, it is important to bring up the *Chronicle of Novalesa* again, in which the reasons for the conflict differ greatly from the traditional ones of love or escape found in all the other continental counterparts. In fact, the monk Vualtarius there is compelled to fight to reclaim property that certain robbers have taken from the monks in his monastery. To conclude I want to stress on the fact that these differences are negligible in comparison to the enduring elements that were previously discussed and although all these parallels focused on the same legend, the re-elaborations encountered within them should be perceived as enrichments strictly linked to the influence of different countries and cultures, rather than an alteration of the content *per se*.



### 3. Why (digital) scholarly editing

At this point, we can claim to be familiar with the *Anglosaxonica Fragmenta duo membranacea, poetica, de Rege Walthero's* manuscript, knowing its background information, its content, along with its continental parallels. In the previous chapter, while exploring the source, we also came across the editorial component of the main *Waldere*-related editions, discussed in Section 2.3. By analysing them, interesting considerations emerged: on the one hand, more details regarding the Old-English vellums were discussed thanks to Schwab, Norman, Himes, and Stephens's editorial works. On the other hand, this analysis was particularly interesting because we could examine the criteria followed and applied by every single editor and see their outcomes. Within these editions the adoption of different approaches applied is evident, but despite that, they all fall into the category of critical editing, the core of this thesis, other than of this chapter. I consider fundamental to focus on the critical methodology used throughout the examinations of the fragments, since Schwab, Himes, Norman and Stephens did not only study the text and proposed a transcription, but they all investigated on the subject matter, exploring its historical background, content, and analogues<sup>62</sup>. However, critical editing cannot be intended as an in-depth investigation of some ancient material, as most persons think and that is why we need to be aware of the correct meaning of terminology too. In fact, the adjective critical I am using in this context, refers to a specific approach, the scholarly one, that if applied to the editorial field allows us to start considering the scholarly editing practice (Sahle, 2016). So, what is a scholarly edition? To accurately answer this question, I address the issue within the whole chapter, starting from a general perspective and within my thesis, I intend to highlight the importance of the developing discipline, both from a theoretical and methodological point of view. Therefore, as far as the theory is concerned, we need to delve into definitions of the essential concepts of the field, both because of the doubts that penetrate the common idea of what an edition is, and because of doubts are shared among experts. That is why I decided to begin from the non-digital scholarly aspect, despite the digital dimension representing the core of the chapter. I consider this approach more efficient because it is necessary to define what scholarly editing is, before reflecting on how the digital medium applies to it. Therefore, it is central to be aware of the

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<sup>62</sup> In truth, certain editions examined in the preceding chapter are more accurate than others; among them the one Schwab published, for instance, which is the only one that provides an accurate analysis of *Waldere's* fragments, dedicating a part also to the examination of the continental analogues of the Old-English manuscript. Nonetheless, every edition considered belongs to the critical editions group, and the variations among them align with the editing decisions made by each author.

main protagonists that take part in the creative process of editions of this kind, such as the editor and the material used.

Focusing on more practical aspects, we stick to my prototype of a scholarly digital edition in due time in the next chapter. In this sense, my aims are those to respectively provide a more theoretical examination about the choice to embrace the digital dimension, starting from the core elements and arriving to the explanation of my work and results. Therefore, we will consider not only the typical advantages and disadvantages of the development of a scholarly digital edition, but I intend also to concentrate on the ones I personally encountered, and which push me to the attempt at creation of my *Waldere's* fragments edition. However, these considerations take shape with the visual representation of my outcomes.

### 3.1. Scholarly editing: the core elements

This section contains the key features of scholarly editing; thus, we will reflect on the essential elements needed for the process, and on the different types of scholarly editions.

Commonly, when talking about an edition we tend to think about a particular study dedicated to the analysis of an ancient text and then presented in a paper-based form, usually a book, yet this though lacks fundamental notions. According to Mancinelli & Pierazzo (2020) a scholarly edition is "*Un'edizione prodotta da degli studiosi (scholars), con criteri rigorosi, e per così dire scientifici.*<sup>63</sup>". Of particular interest is the expression *criteri rigorosi* (lit. *rigorous criteria*), underlying the necessary methodology for the creation of editions of this type, namely a scientific and critical analysis, as we are going to see below. Among these rigorous criteria required, the one we focus on now is their object of study, which represents the first common trait of scholarly editing. To this extent, Sahle (2016) enriches Mancinelli's and Pierazzo's definition, specifying that: "*A scholarly edition is the critical representation of historic documents.*", highlighting *historic documents* as the point of departure of every scholarly edition.

It is true that scholarly editions are usually based on ancient material, that is why Sahle encourage us to refer to it as *historic document(s)*, especially because historical evidence is typically what

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<sup>63</sup> "An edition produced by scholars, with rigorous, and so to speak, scientific criteria." (My translation)

experts deal with when creating an edition. As a matter of fact, the tendency to consider the starting point of every edition, thus the *historic document* as texts is quite accepted, other than limitative (Sahle, 2016); and even more wrong is the plain and accepted idea to discern the concepts of document and text (Sahle, 2016). Documents can be texts, and texts can be documents. The role of texts and documents, however, varies slightly since the former only takes into account the textual aspect, while the concept of document is not limited to only one dimension. In this sense, Sahle's (2016) observations provide clarification, affirming that a document represents any tangible form of evidence. Considering their importance, and since their roles do not perfectly correspond, we must explore the problematic in more detail.

We can start this clarification by saying that the document represents the very first source of transmission of a given material, thus the antecedent (Sahle, 2016). The words *material*, or *document* used as synonyms provide a more general perception of the concept, allowing us to do not think about the textual dimension as the only one starting point of editions. It is true that most editions, even the one I worked on, are focused on the analysis and reconstruction of ancient texts, but this does not apply to all cases, since some documents may also not contain textual content at all (Sahle, 2016).

Conversely, the *text* is also vital for editorial purposed, since it contains documentary evidence, which is exactly what editors need to produce an edition; nevertheless, differences between the concept of *document* and that of *text* are visible in their roles (Sahle, 2016). Hans (2007) strong supporter of the idea of document claims that it is more appropriate to say that texts derive from documents as their products, underling their indivisible bond<sup>64</sup>. To this extent, according to Hans and Sahle texts derive from documents, thus, in this perspective, texts are the result of critical editing procedures used to investigate on documents. Thus, with these observations we can reconsider the traditional hierarchy that gives texts a higher priority than documents. This structure needs to be reversed, and the order document-text should be used instead (Hans, 2007).

To dispel the uncertainty on the matter, we consider *Waldere's* fragments, since they represent a clear example of what was just stated. First, I want to stress that the Old English fragments analysed constitute a *codex unicus*<sup>65</sup>, a single document, and consequently the only antecedent remained. Applying theory to practice and considering Sahle's and Hans' remarks, we can affirm that *Waldere's*

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<sup>64</sup> In truth, Hans' words are more pragmatic than this, since what emerges while reflecting on his considerations is that we should only talk about documents, rather than try to distinguish texts and documents at all costs.

<sup>65</sup> We deal with a *codex unicus* when one and only one version of a certain manuscript remains (Haugen, 2020).

fragments embodies the concept of *document*, while the posthumous transcriptions coincide with the idea of *text*; since, the transcriptions proposed by Stephens (1860), Norman (1949), Schwab (1999) and Himes (2009) produced new texts.

This explanation hopefully highlighted the significance of using correct terminology, and as far as the notion of *document* is concerned, we are eventually aware of the fact that this word is the most suitable one to define what scholarly editions base themselves on.

So, documents represent the initial piece of the larger scholarly editing mosaic, but how can they be useful in the creation of an edition? And moreover, who would work on such material?

To correctly answer these questions the figure of the editor must be considered. At this point we still did not investigate on the procedures required to work on an edition, but we can imagine the complexity of the issue.

The creation of a scholarly edition is usually held from scholars and experts of the field, to whom we are going to refer as *editors*, and specific knowledge is required, since even the very beginning of this process has not to be left to chance. As a matter of fact, sets of guidelines on how to produce a proper edition were proposed already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the specific aim to facilitate the editor's work (Fischer, 2020). However, the starting point for every single edition is based on the editor's personal investigational phase, during which he, or she, should question him/herself on what to edit and why precisely edit it (Mancinelli & Pierazzo, 2020). We do not tend to think about this sort of questions when consulting a scientific edition, as we assume that an expert is already aware of what to do in such situations. Rather, the selection of the document for the analytical research aimed to produce an edition is highly significant, also considering that it reflects the meticulousness and the thoroughness of the process from the outset. Additionally, the rationale for choosing certain material, rather than other, implies instructions for the edition's development that specify proper objectives, sources, techniques, and deadlines to adhere to (Mancinelli & Pierazzo, 2020).

The abovementioned self-questioning aspect continues throughout the whole project, reflecting on the editorial choices the editor must make, especially when working from a philological perspective on the document itself. For an editor, the awareness of the material he or she is going to use is fundamental, as, due to their nature, a complete comprehension of their content may be challenging. To this extent, it is important to note that further complications concerning the study of ancient materials are caused by signs of deteriorations due to the passing of time, or to the transmission of the document during centuries, which rend the editorial work even harder.

Fortunately, solutions exist and are supplied by the editors, that working as philologists too, for instance throughout annotations, emendations, and corrections, provide solutions to reconstruct and interpretate deteriorated sources. In such manner, we not only have record of the editor's presence reflected in the document, but the authority of the analysis is strengthened.

Nevertheless, these processes might vary depending on the outcomes an editor wants to accomplish, leading to various kinds of editions (Haugen, 2020).

The next section revolves around these outputs, focusing on how the painstaking editing effort might be presented.

### 3.1.1. Types of editions

The different kinds of scholarly editions also have in common the methodology they are based on; to put it another way, they need to undergo specific investigation procedures in order to be designated as such. We discussed Mancinelli, Pierazzo and Sahle's thoughts on the subject in Section 3.1, where we got a glimpse at the type of approach that should be employed in this context. Specifically, we learned about what Sahle (2016) describes as *critical* and what Mancinelli & Pierazzo (2020) define as *rigorous criteria*, observing that these scholars meant to emphasise that a scholarly edition adheres to a scientific method based on definite instructions. Broadly speaking, this should clarify our perception on the work of the editor, permitting us to address to it as a process.

However, depending on the editor's intentions, these methods and instructions slightly differ, leading to the creation of several editions, also contingent upon the editorial focuses. As a matter of fact, according to what the editor wants to highlight, different levels of the document are going to be shown in the completed edition. In this sense, we have to consider both the objectivity and subjectivity of the editor, which inevitably influence the outcome of the edition. For instance, we expect a high degree of editorial interpretation when the editor's interventions on the edited document are evident, resulting in an interpretive edition, on which we focus on later. All the decisions affecting an edition are based on an objective perspective, nevertheless, every editorial decision is, a priori, also affected by the editor's subjectivity. To this extent, I report Pierazzo's thoughts (2014) on the issue, who states "*Many people can read from the same document and understand slightly or radical different things, depending on their culture, their understanding, their*

*disposition, their circumstances, and so on. There are facts in the object (document), but their meaning is not factual, it is interpretative.*” Therefore, this leads to distinct editions, characterised by different purposes and approaches. Despite the large number of editions available, we will focus on those that are both essential to the goals of our study and important for the development of my prototype. More specifically, the critical, interpretative, diplomatic, and diplomatic-interpretative editions will all be covered in the following paragraphs.

Below, we concentrate on their structures and outcomes, but before analysing them one by one, it should be stressed that scholarly editions rely on the study of one or more documents, and it is precisely this fact that allows us to consider all the different kinds we just referred to. According to the number of witnesses the editor decides to focus on, both techniques and results change.

After making this clear, I continue with my study below, considering the case related to the comparison of many witnesses, since this strategy is the most utilised in the creation of a scholarly edition. Please note, that this is not a strict rule, since as mentioned above, editions can be based also on just one witness; yet it is true that scholars and editor favour the former (Fischer, 2020).

This is precisely the case for critical editions, within which the editor by analysing different copies of a certain manuscript, and comparing them, aims to present in the edition a more precise version of that document as possible. Furthermore, in a critical edition, the study of more documents is intended to assist the editor in selecting the most appropriate textual variant to transpose in his or her version of the edited text. To be precise, among experts in the field this is known as *recensio*, that along the *emendatio* of the text, result in a more complete transcription aimed to facilitate the study of the document for the reader<sup>66</sup>. In this way, the possibility of confronting copies of the same document encompasses two key principles if applied correctly, since thanks to the editor’s philological efforts, the transcription proposed will present implementations, inevitably leading to a clearer and more comprehensible text.

The choice of one textual variant over another is by no means arbitrary but is driven by careful scientific analysis. Despite this, however, it is inevitable that the more personal aspects of the editor, such as culture, circumstances, or education, will in any case influence this process (Pierazzo, 2014).

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<sup>66</sup> *Recensio* and *emendatio* are some of the techniques linked to the genealogical method, also known as Lachmannian method, an editorial procedure aimed to reduce the subjectivity of the editor in his/her work. This process aims to reconstruct an authoritative text and is based on the comparison of more witnesses of the same document (*stemma codicum*), within which the editor graphically represents the relationships between the existing copies of the starting document. In such manner, the editor is supposed to find out the most suitable readings (*recensio*), thus proposing an objective and more acceptable version of the text. These corrections (*emendatio*) lead to an edited form of the original document (*constitutio textus*) (Chiesa, 2020).

Despite this limit, critical editing is intended to facilitate the comprehension of the starting source, especially if we consider the editor's purposes to acknowledge the reader on the historic background relevant to the document, along with the explanation of editorial choices adopted and presented in the edition. Contextualizing what is meant to be edited represents a fundamental add value to critical editions, because it helps users and readers to better approach them, also prompting them to consider the editor's work and perhaps even recognise its value<sup>67</sup>.

While working on my prototype, I also adopted a critical point of view, but in a slightly different method. As a matter of fact, as *Waldere's* fragments represent a codex unicus, I could not compare copies of the same manuscript while attempting to transcribe it, rather I compared the transcriptions proposed in other editions and analysed in Section 2.3. of this work. Anyhow, in my prototype, this feature is only connected to the digital level, where my critical intervention is observable. We will discuss this in Chapter four, where I will explain my editorial decisions on the Old English fragments in further detail.

Despite everything, as Haugen (2020) states: "*When a work has been presented in more than one manuscript, which probably is the case in the majority of instances, the type of edition to be chosen is still an open question.*". This underlines that for editors, choosing the kind to create is a very delicate procedure, considering the large number of existing different editions. As an example, critical editions are not the only ones based on the comparison of multiple witnesses of the same document; since among them the interpretative ones are included, and we examine them below.

Interpretative editions represent an interesting category, and as their name suggests they are exposed to a level of subjectivity of the editor, which, in any case, is based on the famous *criteri rigorosi* (Mancinelli & Pierazzo, 2020) we mention in Section 3.1. To some extent, this new approach resembles the one adopted by critical editions for two main reasons. On the one hand, the use of more witnesses guarantees an accurate comparison, while on the other hand, also within interpretative editions the meticulousness of the editor is visible thanks to the application of specific techniques. There are, then, unquestionable parallels between the critical and interpretative formats, but variations are even more evident, particularly in terms of their outcomes.

Let us focus on the interpretative editions, by saying that their transcription is usually characterized by a significant philological investigation. In this case, witnesses are not compared to emend the original document, as happens in critical ones; rather the interpretative approach is meant to

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<sup>67</sup>Harvard's Geoffrey Chaucer Website: <https://chaucer.fas.harvard.edu/types-editions#criticaledition> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

normalise the document when difficulties in it arise, mainly due to scribal errors or to deterioration signs. All of this becomes clear in the transcription advanced in such edition, within which the normalisation process is visible and usually applied to the original punctuation, along with corrections of mistakes and the expansion of abbreviations (Fabbris, 2018). In this case too, the aim of the editor is to disentangle the main problems of the manuscript under consideration, and to offer the reader a more comprehensible version of the manuscript, also including the explanation of his or her editorial choices.

Anyway, whenever an explicit level of interpretation is present, the transcription contained in the edition is to be carefully considered, because the level of subjectivity, despite depending on scientific criteria, is strong (Pierazzo, 2014).

For the sake of completeness, I consider relevant to stress on the fact that while working on my edition of *Waldere's* fragments, I could still use some of the techniques for the normalisation of the text mentioned above. For instance, while I normalised the text, to provide a clearer transcription as possible, changing its original structure, proposing what in my opinion could have been a better subdivision.

Techniques such as emendation and normalisation applied to the original manuscript are not always fundamental to warrant a scholarly edition, simply because in some cases no comparison is expected. Precisely, I am referring to the diplomatic editions, which rely on another specific kind of approach, totally differing from the ones analysed so far.

I intend to start addressing the issue by pointing out that diplomatic editions focus on one and only one manuscript and one of their core characteristics is objectivity. Because this is precisely what the editor intends, we should not be surprised if we come across the same errors—if any—of the original text when reviewing a diplomatic transcription. Put another way, the editor's purpose is to present the reader with the most neutral version of the source material. Undoubtedly, the reasons why an editor choose to focus on just one manuscript can vary, however generally speaking, this willingness to reproduce the original text as it is aims to "*facilitate scholarly study of a work in a manuscript context*<sup>68</sup>". Among their interesting features, there is the presence of extra information inherent to the manuscript, within which the editor intends to put in contact the user and the material analysed (Pierazzo, 2014). The use of facsimiles in diplomatic editions should be mentioned too since it is

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<sup>68</sup> Harvard's Geoffrey Chaucer Website: <https://chaucer.fas.harvard.edu/types-editions#criticaledition> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).



extremely relevant to provide a more comprehensive outcome, which is intended to reflect their objectivity, giving significant importance to the role of photography (Mancinelli & Pierazzo, 2020). Notwithstanding, the strictness of the diplomatic approach can be altered by the presence of the editor within his or her level of interpretation of the source, giving rise to diplomatic-interpretative editions. Even though the diplomatic and the interpretative approaches may appear to be at odds, when combined they offer a unique analytical tool. In this sense, with the application of normalisation procedures common to the interpretative method, the editor effectively conveys the transcription of the original document, as diplomatic editing does, enriching it when necessary, but without changing it as much as happens in interpretative editions. Clearly, this suggests that the editor approach concerns a philological perspective too, requiring the study of more copies of the same source. Additionally, the ease of concurrently studying the same document from two distinct levels, without the requirement to have the diplomatic edition on one side and the interpretative on the other represents an evident benefit of this kind of edition, one of the reasons why I applied this *modus operandi* to my edition of *Waldere's* fragments.

### 3.2. Scholarly Digital Editing

Until this point, we concentrated on the general features of scholarly editing limited to the paper-based dimension, but now we can include the digital medium, thus we start to focus on digital scholarly editing.

In an effort to address this topic as effectively as possible, we will go over the fundamentals of scholarly digital editing in this part, beginning with the digital paradigm, which permeates the entire creation of a digital edition. This enables me to take into account the several stages of this process, such as the modelling, digitising, encoding, and visualisation stages, which I likewise adhered to when developing my prototype.

Note that the purpose of this entire thesis, and of this chapter in particular, is to demonstrate the potential associated with digital editions. It would not be correct to ignore the disadvantages they sometimes entail. That is why after the topic has been exhaustively examined, we can eventually analyse the most relevant benefits and drawbacks of digital scholarly editing both for editors and users, in section 3.3.2.

As a result, I encourage the reader to think critically about the subject as a whole, and in order to do so, a comprehensive look at a scholarly digital edition is required.

### 3.2.1. The digital paradigm

Within the analysis of the types of editions, the introduction of photography was mentioned, representing one of the crucial stages for editorial practices. Actually, numerous were the steps taken towards its development and in this regard Mancinelli & Pierazzo (2020) makes interesting considerations on other implementations influencing the field. According to the scholars, such innovations are to be intended as turning points for editorial procedures, especially because in most cases they affected the medium of transmitting the starting documents, thus implying changes in the outcomes.

To this extent, the introduction of personal computers and the use of Internet, represent a clear example of what I just stated, since these new technologies allowed us to engage with the scholarly editing process in a completely distinct way. Given that philological practices have a long history dating back centuries, there were many different paths that led to the use of digital editions. However, I would like to point out that, although I am not going to go through their complete historical background, I think it is necessary to mention at least the fundamental steps, or better said innovations, that influenced the editorial and philological disciplines (Haverling, 2020).

The overall historical introduction I offer here has its origins in Greece in the third century. Precisely, all the techniques we analysed in Section 3.1. have existed for centuries, originating in the Greek Alexandrian library, where people working on the gathering of its material, started a collection of original manuscripts, rather than copies. Why? Because their aim was to ensure the respectability of the library within a specific selection of documents. Specifically, this selection, other than symbolizing what nowadays we could call “editorial choices”, constituted an initial rudimentary form of examinations of documents, also known as textual criticism.

From its beginnings two millennia passed during which continuous modernisations changed the terms midway, fuelling an evident evolution. The most significant stages in this history were those that had an immediate impact on modifications to the medium used to depict texts; they included

the shift from parchment to books in the third and fourth centuries, as well as the invention of the press in the fifteenth century (Mancinelli & Pierazzo, 2020).

Even though these advancements were enormous, a few centuries later the emergence of digital medium and technologies turned the editorial world upside down, unfurling the wings of editing practices. The advent of digital media exerted strong effects on the structure, functionality, and composition of editions, presenting both advantages and disadvantages (Sahle, 2016). Broadly speaking, the definition of a scholarly digital edition, also known as SDE, is very similar to that of scholarly editions mentioned in section 3.1, but with differences in the process and results. Anyhow, before I go into a further analysis of the issue, I want to emphasise that digital and non-digital editions should not be seen as two different realms, given that they both have the same starting point and similar objectives, what change are certain steps for their creation and their formats (Mancinelli & Pierazzo, 2020).

From now on, I aim to present the basis notions of scholarly digital editing, concentrating first on its core element, namely the digital paradigm, and proceeding with considerations on its methodology. I want to start the discussion with Sahle's (2016) definition of a SDE, stating that: "*Scholarly digital editions are scholarly editions that are guided by a digital paradigm in their theory, method and practice.*". Within this statement, Sahle highlights a clear difference between the non-digital and the digital process of creation of a scholarly edition, mainly linked to the paradigm they are based on. More specifically, Sahle argues that to produce an SDE, one must abandon the paper-based paradigm —also known as the typographic or printed paradigm— whose limits are evident. As a matter of fact, non-scholarly digital editions are strictly linked to just one dimension, namely the printed one, offering the reader a static representation of the starting document. Notwithstanding, printed versions still serve as scientific publications, but when approaching one, we should be aware of their limitations. The digital paradigm offered an opportunity to encompass such problematics, and below we focus on its importance for working on a scholarly digital edition, concentrating on the different phases required for its creation. Before we go any further, let me emphasise on the fact that many of the editorial techniques and decisions we addressed while talking about the creation of a non-digital edition also apply to digital ones. But, upon closer inspection, the strategies used in the digital dimension differentiate themselves, and this is directly related to the shift in both medium and paradigm.

The very first step to take when creating a scholarly edition —non-digital and digital— is to reflect on the starting material, on the reasons behind its edition and on the expected results and the same

holds true for digital ones (Mancinelli & Pierazzo, 2020). However, the process of modelling a SDE is characterised by further reflections regarding the digital medium, since those works on the edition must define the methodology to adhere to, both from a philological and an informatic perspective. Thus, in this sense, we must consider as equivalent the importance of the philological aspect, along with the informatic one, implying a collaborative work between experts of the two different fields. This is visible from the very beginning, within the modelling phase, where digital editorial work becomes increasingly prominent, allowing us to introduce the key elements needed to create a model: algorithms. At this stage, editors are expected to communicate the computer-based programs and to the computer itself sets of instructions, thus a mode —from this the expression “modelling phase” — both for the philological and digital part. This is made possible thanks to a proper use of algorithms, characterised by formalisation and repeatability, which allow the creation of a digital model that computer-assisted programs will follow. Thanks to this, the process continues, leading to the digitisation phase and permitting us to leave behind the paper-based dimension (Mancinelli & Pierazzo, 2020). As a matter of fact, within the use of algorithms and the model they constitute, scholars can transpose the content of the original document into machine-readable form. Nevertheless, at this point, the text has only been transposed, and not yet transcribed with an in-depth philological analysis. Therefore, the result of the digitisation is a *digitised* text, rather than a scholarly digital one. The difference between these two adjectives is huge, that is why we need carefully distinguish them, to both supply and employ accurate terminology, as I have been intending to do since the beginning of this chapter, and because of the shared and strong tendency to misuse them.

In broad term, the digitisation of a text coincides with the transferring of the original paper-based document, a manuscript, or a book, in the digital dimension. In this manner, the editors present us a simple digitised text, imitating the starting document. With the passing of time, the urge of digitising texts has grown exponentially with the introduction of new technologies, allowing us to talk about *digitised editions*, which results are in any case not so far away from the ones offered by a printed one. In digitised editions texts are presented from a single perspective, where the content cannot absolutely be separated from the form (Sahle, 2016). Therefore, the outcome coincides with a static representation of the starting document, offering to the user only the transposition of the content from its analogical format to a digital one. To this extent, a digitised edition reflects the features of the printed paradigm, since both are unable to discern content and form. However, I want to stress on the fact that even though the limits of a printed edition are surely encompassed

by the innovations of a digitised one, among them accessibility to the source or the searchability in the source itself, the benefits offered by a digital edition are superior in all senses (Sahle, 2016).

Notwithstanding the simplicity characterizing a digitised representation of a text, this step is to be considered as mandatory for digital editing, as it guarantees scholars to access and work on the document more easily.

For the sake of completeness, I consider important to underline the two different ways within which the digitisation occurs, again according to the scholar's intentions. As a matter of fact, if the he or she is willing to transcribe the text by himself or herself, thus typing on the computer letter by letter, we are dealing with a manual digitisation, precisely as I did with *Waldere's* fragments. Instead, this process becomes automatic when scholars decide to adopt and use specific programs to digitise the text (Mancinelli & Pierazzo, 2020)<sup>69</sup>. Whatever method is used, what I intend to underline is that the process of digitising a text is based - at least in most cases - on the use of digital facsimiles<sup>70</sup>. The digital facsimile of a text is moreover another case of digitisation of the text, as it reproduces photographically the textual support. This inevitably had an effect on the editing procedures since, as Mancinelli & Pierazzo (2020) argue, it also changed how experts and researchers in the field work and approach editions. In fact, the digital reproduction of these images played a role in the development and continued validation of scholarly digital editions, which, as opposed to simply digitalized one, incorporate the transcription of the edited text alongside the facsimile and enable text-image interaction, on which I focus on in the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter. Therefore, scholarly digital editions are not mere digitisations of texts. They usually present a facsimile of the original text, along with an encoded version of the text, which reflects the editorial choices of the scholar and allows different visualisation outputs for it. Thus, a scholarly digital edition results in a multimedial resource, that totally differs from the print one. In fact, Sahle (2016) explains that scholarly digital editions cannot be defined as such if by printing them we would lose essential information. This is exemplified through the analysis of *The Electronic Beowulf*, one of the most well-known digital editions now available, serve to illustrate these points<sup>71</sup>.

The first screenshot contains a brief introduction to the digital edition, providing details about the poem and the project. Nonetheless, there are additional boxes providing more details on the work—

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<sup>69</sup> The most used procedure to automatically digitise a document is the employment of OCR (Optical Character Recognition) programs, that other than saving the editor's time, are intended to analyse and interpretate the content of a certain document, thus every single letter and signs, and to reproduce its digitised version (Mancinelli & Pierazzo, 2020).

<sup>70</sup> Unless the editor has access to the original source, which is difficult in the case of an ancient manuscript.

<sup>71</sup> *Electronic Beowulf*: <https://ebeowulf.uky.edu/> (Last accessed: 04/04/2024).

such as the "Studying Beowulf" box—on the left side of the screen. Subsequently, there is the 'transcripts & collations' section, which, in conjunction with the manuscript's facsimiles and transcriptions proposed by different editors, concentrates on the content of the manuscript and all the decisions applied to edit it.

Then, the "Search facilities" option, which lets the user interact with the edited text by searching for specific words, or a particular line of text, is another benefit of the digital paradigm. It allows the user to potentially navigate within the text of the edition, as shown in the screenshot "Search facilities".

To conclude, the viewing options allows the user to select how he or she wants the edition to be displayed.

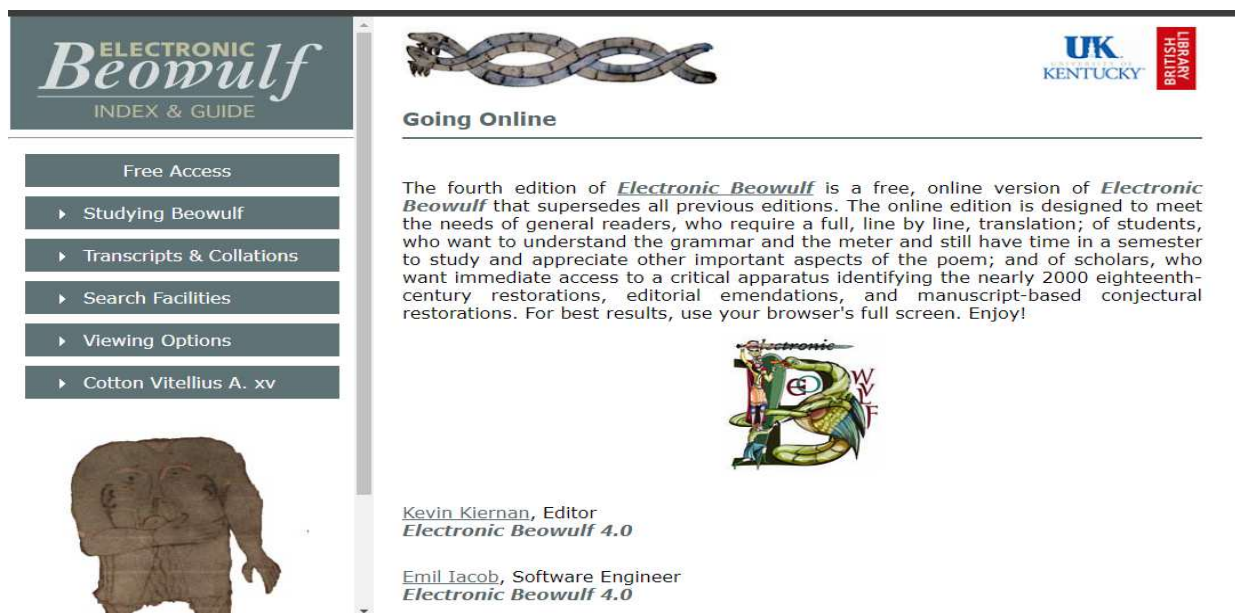


Figure 5: The Electronic Beowulf, main page.

- Free Access
- ▼ Studying Beowulf
  - Options Access Point
    - ▶ Translation
    - ▶ Definition
    - ▶ Grammar
    - ▶ Glossary
    - ▶ Meter
    - ▶ Line numbering
  - Critical Edition
    - ▶ Thorkelin Restorations
    - ▶ Editorial Emendations
    - ▶ Conjectural Restorations
    - ▶ Textual Notes
    - ▶ Backlit & Ultraviolet
    - ▶ Testing Conjectures
    - ▶ The Palimpsest
  - Other Sources of the Text
    - ▶ Thorkelin A
    - ▶ Thorkelin B
    - ▶ Conybeare
    - ▶ Madden
  - Note on the Text
    - ▶ Key for Transcript
    - ▶ Key for Edition
- ▶ Transcripts & Collations
- ▶ Search Facilities

## Studying Beowulf

The Fourth Edition of *Electronic Beowulf* is designed to meet the needs of general readers, who require a full, line by line, translation; of students, who want to understand the grammar and the meter and still have time in a semester to study and appreciate other important aspects of the poem; and of scholars, who want immediate access to a critical apparatus identifying the nearly 2000 eighteenth-century restorations, editorial emendations, and manuscript-based conjectural restorations.



Figure 6: The Electronic Beowulf, “Studying Beowulf” section.

- Free Access
- ▶ Studying Beowulf
- ▼ Transcripts & Collations
  - 18th-Century Transcripts
    - ▶ Wanley
    - ▶ Thorkelin A
    - ▶ Thorkelin B
  - 19th-Century Collations
    - ▶ Conybeare
    - ▶ Madden
- ▶ Search Facilities
- ▶ Viewing Options
- ▶ Cotton Vitellius A. xv



## Thorkelin A

Thorkelin A used large paper and copied continuously, rather than copying the *Beowulf* MS page by page and line by line, as Thorkelin did. 'Top/Bottom' layout permits wide views of Thorkelin A on smaller screens.

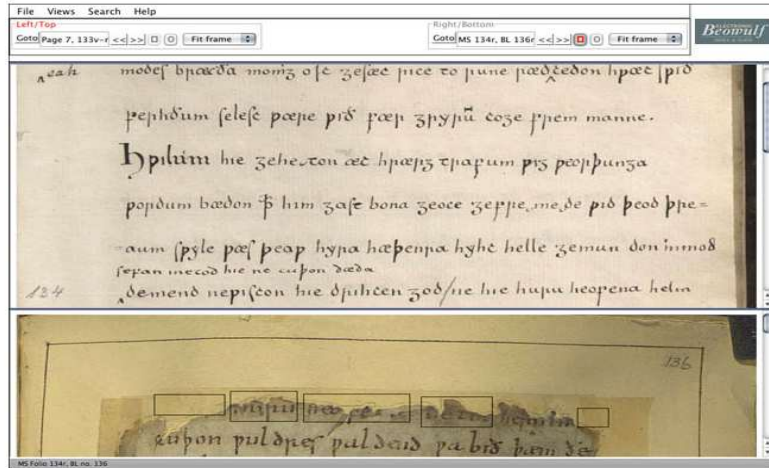


Figure 7: The Electronic Beowulf, “transcripts & Collations” section.

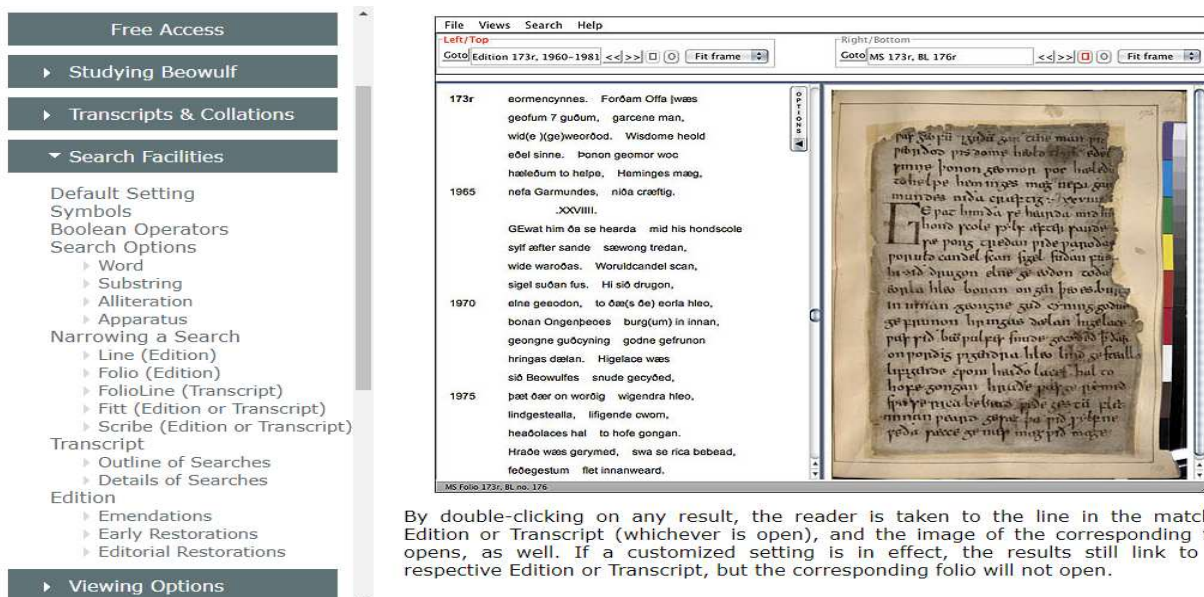


Figure 8: The Electronic Beowulf, “Search Facilities” section.

Therefore, thanks to the new paradigm, digital editions are to be considered as more complete, since they are also enriched by the editor not only with annotations, extra palaeographical information, but also with digital images, (Fischer, 2020). In this regard, the use of digital images—more precisely, facsimiles—serves as a crystal-clear example of the pluralistic essences of SDEs. To this extent, the establishment of photography practice truly affected scholars’ way of thinking, permitting the editor to enrich the edition with an identical image of the original source. It is necessary to point to the extremely excellent quality of these facsimiles, which not only increases the edition's legitimacy, but are also capable of greatly assists readers.

### 3.2.2. XML-TEI markup language

The use of facsimile we just mentioned is strictly related to the digital transcription of the starting source, and makes possible the encoding step. Consequentially, it has been a standard practice for scholarly digital editing to display the facsimile with its diplomatic and/or interpretative transcriptions (Mancinelli & Pierazzo, 2020). During the encoding phase, the editor uses a specific



markup language and enriches the text with metadata, marking it. The encoding reflects the philological choices of the editor.

Considering the existence of different markup languages, the editor will choose the most suitable one for the purposes of the edition. Even though I decided to focus only on XML-TEI, the variety of multiple markup languages is not surprising, given that the very first ones, SGML and TeX, date back to the 1960s, and subsequently developed along with the advent of new technologies (Mancinelli & Pierazzo, 2020). Different encoding languages derived from SGML, among which we find XML (eXtensible Markup Language), that can be considered as its little brother. XML is simpler and easier to use, and precisely these features allowed it to stand out among scholars, which in the 1980s coined specific guidelines for its use. Specifically, in 1986, a group of North American experts decided to establish a set of standard instructions for whoever would have been willing to work with this language. The spread necessity among scholars of a precise set of rules to follow led to the creation of the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI), which enabled us to talk about the XML-TEI markup language. The benefits of this initiative were enormous for several academic fields, but the editorial one saw the most of its effects. Moreover, the developers of these guidelines devoted particular attention to the encoding techniques of ancient documents, thus of manuscripts, that is why below we focus on the use and structure of this markup language (Mancinelli & Pierazzo, 2020).

The TEI guidelines represented another turning point for the editorial world, clearly encouraging experts, but not only, to approach the field more easily. This was possible also thanks to the clearness of the guidelines, reason why in the next lines, I decided to report the most significant considerations advanced by its developers with the aim to highlight the key concepts. Additionally, I will take into account a more practical aspect too, referring to my encoding of *Waldere's* fragments, which is entirely based on the XML-TEI language.

The TEI guidelines are unique considering they aim to stimulate readers on the fundamental elements of the encoding process, rather than just serving as a set of instructions for users. We have clear proofs of this from their very first pages, where we read as follow: "*A markup language must specify how markup is to be distinguished from text, what markup is allowed, what markup is required, and what the markup means.*"<sup>72</sup>. In this way, the invitation for the readers and users to reflect on the role of this markup language are clear, since without a truthful understanding of this tool, we could not benefit from it.

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<sup>72</sup> TEI guidelines: <https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/SG.html>. (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

Therefore, I decided to introduce the topic by saying that, in general, the encoding phase is devoted to the editor's critical analysis and digital transcription of the starting source. This can only occur if the editor complies with the set of predefined standards on which XML is based, that is why we need to focus on its core features. Among them, tags, elements, and attributes, which if correctly and hierarchically organized, allows us to *mark up* a text, producing an XML-TEI document. To be precise, the editors describe the text with annotations, using elements, followed by attributes, which are opened and closed by specific tags. The list of elements and attributes included in the TEI guidelines is quite long, however it provides clear guidance on their usage and assist editors in selecting how, where, and when to employ certain elements and attributes over others.

To fully comprehend their importance, we must concentrate on their functions. On the one hand, elements are indispensable for an XML-TEI file, since they describe every editorial choice applied to the text, such as philological, but also structural and more formal ones. On the other hand, attributes refer to elements, with the aim to provide extra information regarding them. In truth, what the TEI guidelines define as a *well-formed XML document* does not require the presence of attributes, but only hierarchically organized elements<sup>73</sup>. Even though the use of attributes is not mandatory to guarantee a well-formed XML file, in overall their use is to be considered as important as the one of the elements<sup>74</sup>.

The decisions the editor makes while encoding is all visible thanks to a specific use of elements along with attributes, and are all contained in a dedicated module, that is to say a particular section of the XML file. Thus, while working with XML-TEI nothing is left to chance, rather every section of the encoding document embodies a standard structure that the editor must respect. The hierarchy required by a proper XML-TEI file represents one of its key characteristics, allowing the editor to clearly individuate the different parts of the encoded material. Even though an editor can choose how to organize the encoded document, for instance using only certain elements, the use of some of them is mandatory as will become evident in Chapter 4, where I illustrate my XML-TEI file of *Waldere's* fragments and explain the different sections of an XML-TEI text in more detail.

Below I report an excerpt from my encoding of *Waldere's* fragments. This shows how encoding enriches the digitised text with information and allows to produce different outputs. Precisely, I report the case of a lemma pertaining to the very first lines of Fla, within which I can demonstrate

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<sup>73</sup> TEI guidelines: <https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/SG.html#SG13> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

<sup>74</sup> A correct and acceptable XML-TEI file can be based only on elements, but the result will be a basic encoding. Clearly, if the editor aims to provide a more complete one, he or she should use attributes too, in order to enrich the elements and consequently the outcome of the file.

what I just stated. The following analysis focuses on the word *ge swiced*, presented in the manuscript separately, even though its correct writing is *geswiced*. This is the past form of the infinitive *ge-swícan*, meaning to stop, to cease<sup>75</sup>.

As far as my edition is concerned, I decided to normalise the separated lemma using a string of elements and attributes, in order to offer the reader its correct version.

Below, the digital image from the Old English manuscript, followed by my encoding<sup>76</sup>.

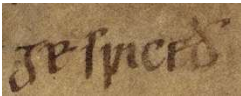


Figure 9: Word *ge swiced*, Fla, 2<sup>nd</sup> line.

Lit. *ge swiceð*

Ex. `<choice>`

```
<orig><g ref="yogh"/>e<g ref="slong"/><g ref="wen"/>ice<g ref="eth"/></orig>
```

```
<reg>geswiceð</reg>
```

```
</choice></l>
```

In the XML-TEI document, this string is contained in the `<body>` element, which in turn is contained in the `textstructure` module, where the text encoded is presented<sup>77</sup>. The `textstructure` represents only an example of all the existing modules of a XML file, and they all depend on what the editor wants to represent in his/her encoding.

Focusing on the example I provided, elements are represented in angle brackets (`<...>`) and we notice that all of the elements presented, thus *choice*, *orig*, *reg*, and *g*, are opened (`<choice>`, `<orig>`, `<reg>` and `<g>`) and successively closed with a slash (`</choice>`, `</orig>`, `</reg>`)

Within this string of elements, I report my editorial decision to regularise the manuscript form *ge swiceð*, contained in the opening and closing tag `<orig>` into *geswiceð*. After presenting the original form I used the element `<reg>`, within which opening and closing tags I inserted the correct form

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<sup>75</sup> Bosworth Toller's Anglo-Saxon Online Dictionary: <https://bosworthtoller.com/49917> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024)

<sup>76</sup> As stated in Chapter 1 the screenshots are taken from the digitised fragments available at: <http://www5.kb.dk/manus/vmanus/2011/dec/ha/object55523/da> (Last accessed: 13/06/2024).

<sup>77</sup> In this example I preferred just to mention the element `body`, rather than report it and its structure with the aim to avoid creating confusion and also because I intended to focus only on the encoding of the word *ge swiceð*.

*geswiceð*. In this regard, my choice to regularise the original lemma is based on philological and linguistic analysis, simply because grammatically speaking *geswiceð* written separately is not an accepted form of the Old English language. The same term used to define the element, namely choice, also represents how this element is to be understood: it reflects not only an editorial choice but will result into two different visualisations of the output, that will allow users to choose between a diplomatic or an interpretative edition of the text.

As far as the <g> element is concerned, it refers to a previous section of the encoding, namely the part dedicated to the declaration of specific characters and signs, that can be normalised into modern ones. To this category pertain also glyphs, which is precisely what the <g> element stands for. Thanks to it, another important feature of the XML-TEI encoding practice emerges, the use of attributes. In the example provided above we notice <g ref="slong"/>. I will explain the use of the @ref attribute in the next chapter.

However, this case allows us to distinguish elements from attributes. The latter are always presented in inverted commas, preceded by the equal sign and are always to be found next to an element, since their main function is that to enrich the encoded text, providing extra information on the element they refer to.

In the encoding of an ancient source, the example I proposed applied quite often, since errors and other forms of deterioration of the document tend to affect its comprehension, making its transcription harsh. Yet, the presence of such problems represents a crucial aspect for editors and for the scholarly digital editing field, since they encourage experts to improve analytical techniques and tools with the aim to spread notions and knowledge, as the TEI guidelines clearly demonstrate. To this degree, I want to emphasise the importance of the editor's task once more, and without which nothing of this could happen. As a matter of fact, their unique perspectives on the edited text influence on the one hand the encoding process, and on the other the outcome, supplying us with different kinds of SDEs. In order to avoid repetitions on the existence of various types of editions, I refer to Section 3.1.2. The reasons behind my decision are linked to the fact that the philological techniques to work on a diplomatic, a critical or an interpretative digital and non-scholarly digital edition, are the same. As an example, both in digital and non-digital editions, if the editor aims to reproduce the text of the original document as it is, the result will be a diplomatic edition. Instead, if the text presented in the digital edition has clearly undergone changes concerning the punctuation, the correction of errors – if any – and other forms of normalisation, thus we are dealing with an interpretative SDE. As a result, relatively identical methods for the philological work are used

for both digital and non-digital editions, although there are certain restrictions for the latter because of the paper-based dimension.

As far as digital editions are concerned, the encompassing of this limitation culminates in the visualisation phase. In this stage, we can expect changes related to both the kind of SDE and to their format that are linked to the editors' objectives. However, despite these factors, all the possible outputs of a SDE originate from the same XML-TEI file, thus from the same encoded text. In this sense, the uniqueness of the XML-TEI file becomes apparent, since the encoded text will always remain the same, allowing us to define the XML file as the matrix of every SDE. This represents one of the most interesting aspects, both for editors and users, assuming it can favour their approach with such editions. On the one hand, editors find it quite easy to be able to make changes to just one file—the XML file—when necessary and to see the outcomes right away. On the other hand, for users, the accessibility to materials that can be always updated by experts is priceless.

In addition, the importance of the XML markup language manifests on the fact that it can contain more than one transcription of the text itself, allowing us to visualize simultaneously various representations, supplied by digital facsimiles and background information of the source, with the aim to contextualize its history and peculiarities.

The potential of scholarly digital editing become clear through the visualisation phase, which crowns the editorial work from both a philological and informatic point of view. Printed edition would not be able to accomplish what was just described, yet scholarly digital ones are not so perfect as they seem.

### 3.2.3. SDEs: advantages and disadvantages

Throughout the considerations made so far, we had a glimpse of a few advantages of scholarly digital editing; however, the list is long, and much more should be noted.

In this section, we are going to focus on more benefits of the practice, hopefully encouraging the reader to truly appreciate it; however, this does not mean that SDEs do not present drawbacks. In the following lines, I intend to clarify both. Moreover, within this deeper analysis, we can consider other relevant concepts related to the digital dimension and that will further underline its potential.

As an example, I will take into account the difference between the digital and digitised realm, and their role and importance for editorial purposes.

I would like to begin this discussion by exploring more in detail a feature of SDEs already mentioned in section 3.2.2, namely their multimediality and remembering that we dealt with it referring to the various possibilities for users to interact with the text, which is possible thanks to “[...] *a deeply marked up textual code* [...]”, as Sahle (2016) defines the core of every scholarly digital edition. The scholar supports their pluralistic nature referring to the encoding phase, within which the editor generates a flexible tool of analysis (Sahle, 2016).

From a pragmatic point of view, the plurality of SDEs also concerns the final presentations of the starting document, since the digital XML file can be visualized in different ways depending on the instruments with which we decide to visualize it. That is why the format (browsers, pcs, tablets, etc.) throughout we approach every scholarly digital edition is mutable, and consequently dynamic as Mancinelli & Pierazzo (2020) underline.

Thus, the pluralism characterising an SDE is evident, but then, why do we still tend to favour non-scholarly digital editions? (Robinson, 2005) The response is as simple as subjective and relates to the perception editors and users have on the complexity of a digital edition. This question leads me to the most relevant aspects affecting the use of SDEs, also permitting me to focus on their benefits and drawbacks. My analysis focuses on the main protagonists of the process, namely users and editors, and on their relations with SDEs. As a matter of fact, positive and negative levels of the digital dimension affect their perceptions, since a SDE may represent a double-edged sword.

I can personally confirm this feeling, as while working on my prototype I had to face problems, both as “editor” while encoding the text, and as “user” too, when Visualising it<sup>78</sup>. However, as we are going to comprehend, in the majority of cases the drawbacks of scholarly digital editing are at the same time inevitable, but also generally solvable. Precisely for this, I consider it inadmissible to avoid approaching such a scientific resource just for fear of not being able to use it, as so many, including many scholars, and editors do (Robinson, 2005). First, the possible fears of digital editions, followed by the preference for non-digital ones, are usually unjustified, as problems one may encounter while approaching a SDE are largely related to his or her abilities and knowledge. As a consequence, this means that a strong level of subjectivity influence editors and users. An excellent example of this is XML-TEI markup language, whose use may give rise to various doubts and hence constitute the first

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<sup>78</sup> Initially in my prototype of *Waldere's* fragments, I faced some problems mainly related to its outcome. These were ultimately caused by encoding flaws, which I resolved as I continued the work.

factor able to ordinarily dissuade someone from approaching such digital tools. Despite being challenging, and requiring specific knowledge, its employment should not be perceived as an insurmountable barrier because, as we know, an ad hoc explanatory guide to prevent this kind of uncertainty exist: the TEI guidelines.

Focusing on the editor's perspective, a concrete obstacle may be the creation of a SDE, since one may argue that the effort necessary to the process is quite time-consuming. Moreover, this can become a problem also for future users, who might have to wait a long time before consulting such an edition. But once more, this is a problem with a solution since, typically, a team of scholars collaborates to create a digital edition in a way that maximises efficiency. When it comes to the creation of a SDE, it is true that time and work are required, whether more people are involved or not, but this is understandable when considering the nature of the project.

To be precise, considering the double facets —philological and editorial— of digital editions, please note that, cooperation between experts of different fields is recommended, though not mandatory. Actually, the benefits deriving from such cooperation also involve an inevitable downside, primarily due to monetary issues. In fact, the participation of specialists from numerous sectors, and for quite a long time has its costs. Due to the great technical amount of knowledge needed, the role of the editor alone is insufficient, mainly because an editor is just an editor. With this statement I do not intend to degrade such the figure at all, rather I would like to underline the fact that we cannot expect the editor to become suddenly a computer expert, only because he or she is working on a digital edition. Developing an effective digital interface that also appeals to the user's aesthetic sense, calls upon technical expertise connected with the application of particular computer-based programs and software, that is why usually both figures of philologists and computer experts are relevant to the process. But despite everything, money should not be seen as entirely essential to the creation of a SDE, but it does play a part. This primarily concerns projects of publishing houses, or institutions, that need to supply users an analysis tool as quickly and accurately as possible.

Notwithstanding, it is not necessary for SDEs to adhere to every one of these canons, and moreover, an editor is free to work on one without feeling obligated to provide the public with an edition featuring the newest interface. Anyone who is prepared to take part in the creation of a scholarly digital edition can do so by familiarising with informatics expertise, even though results may be different. Thus, if we think to a SDE as the outcome of bigger initiatives, economically supported, the multiplicity of knowledge required, which leads to the cooperation of experts from different fields, entailing not indifferent economic funds is accepted, but it is unrealistic to think that

a small editor can handle all these challenges on his/her own. This last thought constitutes the basis for what Pierazzo (2020) defines as free and ethical editing, demonstrating once again that scholarly digital editing is an open resource, approachable by everybody willing to create a digital edition despite his/her finances, and consequentially reflecting the flexibility and operability of the digital dimension.

Regardless of the scale of the project, every digital edition can always be modified and enhanced due to the versatility of the digital paradigm, and of the matrix text encoded within XML (Mancinelli & Pierazzo, 2020). This possibility is certainly a compelling argument in their favour and represents a turning point for editorial work too, since editors working on such project should feel encouraged to make his/her content available to the public even prior to its completion (Mancinelli & Pierazzo, 2020). This is also an important aspect for users too, considering that they will be provided by an always upgraded, corrected and easily accessible material.

Moreover, the fact that SDEs can continuously evolve and improve makes it clear that they are to be regarded as processes, which is why they are also very often referred to as work in progress. The variety of factors influencing the creation of a SDE, including multimedia, flexibility, expert collaboration, align with the true potential of scholarly digital editing, eventually offering us the possibility to deal with a multifaceted yet compact instrument.

However, all of this is due also to the presence of challenging aspects, which keep pushing editors and non-editors too, to delve into the issue, providing solutions and to explore all the resources offered by such the digital dimension.

Taking these things into account has strengthened my belief that scholarly digital editions represent a superior form of editing, since in most cases the principal obstacles one may encounter in this practice have a solution. For this reason, I would refer to them as scarecrows, unfortunately risking of alarming both the user and creators, that is why I consider it generally appropriate to thoroughly document oneself before choosing an edition, rather than another.



## 4. A digital edition of *Waldere's* fragments

### 4.1. Why a diplomatic-interpretative edition of *Waldere's* fragments?

The objective of this chapter is to provide a precise account of my efforts as an editor of *Waldere's* fragments and of my proposal for a digital diplomatic-interpretative edition. I will thus concentrate on the various factors that influenced my whole project, such as the choice of the fragments, along with the edition type. By doing this, I hope to demonstrate how the theoretical concepts discussed in Chapter 3 can be applied to the development of an SDE, thereby putting theory into practice. Even if the outcomes of my editorial decisions will be fully apparent in the last step, which is the visualisation phase, in this first part of the chapter, I concentrate on their application, particularly taking into account why and how I applied certain criteria, rather than others.

When discussing editing decisions, the selection of the content to work on is the primary task to accomplish. The choice of the material is the result of an accurate selection. However, different criteria may affect this initial step, all revolving around the main protagonists of the editorial process: the document under analysis and the editor<sup>79</sup>. To this extent, knowing the document and the outputs expected is fundamental, since it allows the editor to establish how to proceed in the creation of the edition. As far as my prototype is concerned, this held true, as before eventually decide to work on *Waldere's* fragments I had to reflect carefully on its status and content. Yet, since this is a university thesis, the length and the complexity of the document also affected my choice, being aspects that my counsellors advised me to consider<sup>80</sup>.

Furthermore, the most significant consideration that motivated me to create my SDE was the scarcity of any kind of digital edition of *Waldere's* vellums. Even though editions and studies on the subject have been conducted, none of them embrace the digital paradigm. On the one hand the majority of editions of *Waldere's* fragments are bound to the paper-based dimension, and on the other hand, digitised editions exist, but what they offer is nothing more than a static representation of the manuscript. Thus, to encompass these limitations, I introduced the digital medium to the context.

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<sup>79</sup> As an example, the kind of material, its accessibility and availability, the time of work required to create the edition, along with the editor's goals and experience, all representing what I referred to as the "self-questioning phase" in Chapter 3.

<sup>80</sup> Both aspects are linked to time issues, depending on the nature of the project. Thus, I preferred to adhere to the time constraints necessary suggested by mine supervisions by selecting an appropriate document, neither too short, neither too long.

editions of Waldere's fragments exist, but as we know, a digitised text is not necessarily a scholarly digital edition.

Concretely, among the reasons that pushed me to attempt creating a prototype of a SDE there is the multimedia characterizing such dimension, which use offers the possibility to face multiple layers of the same document simultaneously; but according to the type of the edition an editor aims to create, the digital representation can change. In my case I preferred to stick to the diplomatic-interpretative model, with the goal to provide the reader with a tool as complete as possible within my expertise. In this wise, I assign equal weight to the original form of the text and to its normalised version based on my editing choices.

I start by focusing on the diplomatic transcription of the manuscript in the attempt to transmit the value of the source, or better said of the *historical ancient document*, as Sahle (2016) would identify it. As a matter of fact, *Waldere's* fragments have several features worth taking into consideration, both in terms of language and substance, despite being a minor manuscript in comparison to other works of the time. On the one hand, its importance was demonstrated while considering its continental analogues, in Section 2.4., within which we comprehended that Waldere's adventures were a very popular motif in the Middle Ages. On the other hand, these vellums stand for the only work of the Anglo-Saxon tradition reporting this legend. Therefore, I included the original form of the fragments within their diplomatic transcription, considering that I seek to underline its significance and provide readers with a digital format that allows them to engage directly with such ancient knowledge. In addition, the diplomatic analysis presented in my edition is not limited to the transcription of the original text, but it includes facsimiles, providing further evidence. From a broader perspective, in scholarly editions, images are used to facilitate the reader's understanding, since they replicate the original, but their presence is way more useful when enriched by the digital medium, since they offer the users the possibility to directly interact with them in the edition, for instance, by zooming on the facsimile itself, or by clicking on a specific word to better examine it.

With regards to the interpretative aspects, I decided to present Waldere's manuscript within an accurate philological examination, that resulted in the normalised version of the text. Thus, to encourage the reader to approach these fragments, I normalised the original text reporting its interpretative transcription too, in which all my editorial choices take form, as we are going to see in the next sections.

## 4.2. Editorial choices

To properly address the sixty-three lines that compose *Anglosaxonica Fragmenta duo membranacea, poetica de Rege Walthero*, there are a few peculiarities that must be taken into account and examined. To do so, I continue my analysis focusing on the XML file I created for the encoding of the fragments, and especially on the encoding procedures I applied to both the structure of the XML-TEI File, and to the transcription of the fragments contained in it. Therefore, the subsequent editing decisions I present can be divided into two categories: the structural and the philological ones. The former focus on the issue concerning the information I provided on the edition itself and on the manuscript which is contained in the <teiHeader>. The latter directly address the textual peculiarities of the manuscript, encoded in the <text> element.

In the following, I provide examples for each kind of editorial intervention I applied on my digital edition. The kinds of intervention are different, depending on different aspects of the text, such as damages, or apparent errors of the copyist, or ambiguities regarding certain words and the metrical structure. In this way, I could properly work on damaged sections of the folios, along with ambiguities that characterise certain words and the metrical structure. However, considering that certain encoding procedures remain the same for distinct lemmas or passages, I will provide just one example for the relevant instances, in order to avoid repetitions.

### 4.2.1. *Waldere's* XML file

Because my XML-TEI file contains certain elements that are typically absent from a basic XML-TEI file structure and that enabled me to encode the manuscript as effectively as possible, I intend to begin my analysis precisely starting from the structure of my XML-TEI file. To ensure a complete understanding, I start with initial considerations valid for each XML-TEI document, that is why I will report its skeleton.

```
<TEI xmlns="http://www.tei-c.org/ns/1.0">  
  <teiHeader>  
    <fileDesc>  
      <titleStmt>
```

```

    <title>Title</title>
  </titleStmt>
  <publicationStmt>
    <p>Publication Information</p>
  </publicationStmt>
  <sourceDesc>
    <p>Information about the source</p>
  </sourceDesc>
</fileDesc>
</teiHeader>
<text>
  <body>
    <p>Some text here.</p>
  </body>
</text>
</TEI>

```

The possibility to expand it regards the mark-up language's flexibility. The first element we notice is <TEI>, which generally encompasses within it all the information inherent to the XML-TEI file, and to the source document edited. All this information is then subdivided into specific sections since XML-TEI documents to properly work need to be well-formed. Every single XML file, whether it is a basic one, like the one under analysis, or a more complex one, such the one I created, is based on a specific structure, within which elements and attributes are organized hierarchically. Precisely, such structure follows the model of a tree, allowing us to define the so-called different “parts” of the document as children elements, completely contained in one ancestor, also known as root element, which encloses all the children. Furthermore, the opening and closing tags that must be used for each element provided in the XML file are another essential component to ensure the accuracy and completeness of this structure; if not, the structure will not be respected<sup>81</sup>.

Returning to the structure I attached here, then, we find the <teiHeader> element right after the <TEI> one, which cannot be absent from a file of this type, since it defines the edition through information regarding the actual editorial work in the <fileDesc> (file description) element<sup>82</sup>. Its presence is fundamental to clarify the key feature of the edition, such as its title, with the <titleStmt> (title statement)<sup>83</sup>. Followed by the <publicationStmt>, containing information on the subsequent distribution or publication of the XML-TEI file, the <teiHeader> continues with the description of the

---

<sup>81</sup> TEI guidelines: <https://tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/SG.html#SG12> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

<sup>82</sup> TEI guidelines: <https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/ref-teiHeader.html> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

<sup>83</sup> Tei guidelines: <https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/ref-fileDesc.html> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

source material, thanks to the <sourceDesc> element (source description). Within the <sourceDesc>, extra information regarding the source document is added to the XML-TEI file, providing details about the source's historical characteristics, location, content, and page number, for example<sup>84</sup>.

Once this data is supplied, the encoding proceeds with the transcription of the manuscript within the element <text>, incorporating the content of the document<sup>85</sup>. In turn, <text> contains the <body> element, within which the text of that document may be presented following the original layout of the source document, e.g. paragraphs, pages, and enriching it with further subdivisions, for example the metrical structure.

To this essential structure, I decided to add in the <teiHeader> the <listPerson> element (list of persons), and <listBibl> one (citation list), followed by the <charDecl> (character declaration) and <facsimile> (facsimile), that we are going to examine in the next paragraphs.

#### 4.2.2. List of persons

The <listPerson> element contains a list of all the characters named along the sixty-three lines of the manuscript<sup>86</sup>. According to the TEI guidelines, the function of this element goes beyond simply listing figures that are mentioned in a document, since it can be used to provide information about them, allowing the encoder to enrich the edition.

In my case, considering the range of characters that show up and their significance to the Legend of Waldere, I chose to incorporate their presence into the encoding. In this manner, I could provide the reader clear and succinct information by defining the roles of Weyland, Attila, Ælfhere, Waldere, Guðhere, Hagen, Nithað, Widia, and ðeodric.

Below, I report the example related to Attila, since its mention in the fragments is of particular interest, as explained in the next lines.

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<sup>84</sup> TEI guidelines: <https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/ref-sourceDesc.html> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

<sup>85</sup> TEI guidelines: <https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/ref-text.html> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

<sup>86</sup> TEI guidelines: <https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/ref-listPerson.html> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

```
<listPerson type="protagonists">
```

```
<person xml:id="Attila">
```

```
<persName>
```

```
<forename>Attila</forename>
```

```
</persName>
```

```
<sex>M</sex>
```

```
<note>The Attila persona mentioned in the narrative is a mythical reinterpretation of the historical king of the Huns, within the Germanic tradition.
```

According to the complete legend, Attila imprisoned <persName

```
ref="#Waldere">Waldere</persName>, <persName ref="#Gutthere">Guðhere</persName>,
```

```
<persName ref="#Hagen">Hagen</persName> and <persName
```

```
ref="#Hildegyth">Hildegýð</persName> at his court,
```

```
where they lived together for several years.</note>
```

```
</person>
```

```
</listPerson>
```

At the beginning of this encoding, we note that the <listPerson> element is followed by the attribute *type*, with the value *protagonists* that I used to specify the category of persons to which the list refers<sup>87</sup>. I continued my encoding by adding an identifier for the name Attila via @xml:id in the <person> element, because it allows me to refer to Attila both inside the list of persons and throughout the text<sup>88</sup>. Next, the proper name is inserted between the <foreName> elements contained in <persName> (personal name)<sup>89</sup>. Once <persName> and <foreName> (forename) have been opened and closed, other information can be added regarding the character under analysis, such as the gender, or the age. In this case, I simply clarified Attila's gender by using the letter M, thanks to the elements <sex>.

Then, I could include more interesting information about Attila, especially using the <note> element, such the fact that his representation in the fragments should not be confused with the historical one. The Attila in this document is a legendary representation of the historical Attila.

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<sup>87</sup> Tei guidelines: <https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/ref-listPerson.html> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

<sup>88</sup> TEI guidelines: <https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/ref-person.html> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

<sup>89</sup> TEI guidelines: <https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/ND.html#NDPER> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024). See section 13.2.1. *Personal names*.

### 4.2.3. Citation list

The second list that I want to consider refers to the publications and editions that I used for the creation of my project. Indeed, when transcribing the text, I mainly relied on the editions proposed by Schwab and Himes in particular, which greatly aided me in the interpretative and diplomatic coding of the most questionable, damaged, or unintelligible passages of the manuscript. But Schwab and Himes are not the only editors whose work assisted me; for this reason, in the <listBibl> I have included references to all of the editors, along with their analyses of the *Waldere* fragments that considered while working on my prototype.

Below I report an example from my encoding, citing the edition by Ute Schwab.

```
<listBibl>
<biblStruct xml:id="Schwab">
<monogr>
<author>Ute Schwab</author>
<editor>Ute Schwab</editor>
<title>Waldere : testo e commento a cura di Ute Schwab</title>
<textLang>Italian</textLang>
<note>reprint</note>
<imprint>
<pubPlace>Catania</pubPlace>
<publisher>C.U.E.C.M.</publisher>
<date>1999</date>
</imprint>
</monogr>
</biblStruct>
</listBibl>
```

This part of the <listBibl> specifies information inherent to Schwab's edition thanks to the use of other sub-elements contained in <biblStruct> (structured bibliographic citation)<sup>90</sup> such as the type of publication, in this case a monography (<monogr>), the complete name of the author in the element <author>, the title, and the language of writing with <textLang> (text language), and so on<sup>91</sup>.

Another element used to enrich this part is <imprint>, within which the encoder can provide information concerning the publication, i.e., the year, the publisher, as I did<sup>92</sup>.

#### 4.2.4. Character declaration

I continue my analysis with the last extra element I added to the <teiHeader>, namely the <charDecl> (character declaration). It relates to the presence of non-standard characters and glyphs used in a document and coinciding with characters or symbols rarely used<sup>93</sup>. In the case of Waldere's fragments these refer to the insular characters typical of Anglo-Saxon documents. Since the glyphs used in the fragments are numerous, I decided to normalise them, using <chardecl>, whose function is precisely that to provide information on them and on their output of visualisation.

To be precise, the <charDecl> element is part of the <encodingDesc> (encoding description) element simply because, as its name suggests, it describes the encoder's decisions about how to represent characters. So, in such wise, the encoder can communicate how he or she decides to represent such characters in the visualisation of the edition, and different outputs are to be expected.

Thus, I encoded every glyph and symbol of the original document with the aim to offer the reader both its diplomatic and normalised form, taking into account not only the TEI guidelines, but also another important instrument of analysis, the Unicode standards. Similarly to the TEI guidelines, the

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<sup>90</sup> TEI guidelines: <https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/ref-biblStruct.html> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

<sup>91</sup> TEI guidelines: <https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/CO.html#COBICO> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024). See section 3.12.2 *Components of Bibliographic References*.

<sup>92</sup> TEI guidelines: <https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/CO.html#COBICO> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024). See section 3.12.2 *Components of Bibliographic References*.

<sup>93</sup> In actuality, non-standard characters and glyphs should be viewed as two distinct entities; characters reflect a general typographical concept of one and only one letter, or character, whilst glyphs are their specific manifestations; this means that while many glyphs can be used to replicate a single character, the opposite is not true. See <https://fonts.google.com/knowledge/glossary/glyph> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024)



Unicode standards – created in the 1988 – are based on the work and collaboration of experts in the digital field, that aim to provide instructions useful to represent non-standards characters of different languages within mark-up language<sup>94</sup>.

To be precise, Unicode is an online platform containing precise details on non-standard characters, including their language of usage, pronunciation, and other related aspects. Thus, Unicode offers the possibility to report every non-standard character throughout the encoding process, supplying the users with specific alphanumeric codes. To this extent, while consulting this source, the very first lines read as follows: “Unicode provides a unique number for every character, no matter what the platform, no matter what the program, no matter what the language.”<sup>95</sup>.

Once clarified the main instrument useful for this encoding passage, I want to show how XML-TEI and Unicode work together. To this extent, below I report the case of the glyph <p>, which was used within the Anglo-Saxon insular minuscule, and consequently in the fragments<sup>96</sup>.

For the sake of completeness, I also attach a screenshot from a word present in fragment Ia, namely *peland*, referring to the figure of Weyland, the famous mythological smith of the Germanic tradition.



Figure 10: Example of the glyph <p>, Fla, 1<sup>st</sup> line.

```
<charDecl>
  <glyph xml:id="wen">
    <unicodeProp name="Name" value="LATIN LETTER WYNN"/>
    <mapping type="codepoint">U+01BF</mapping>
    <mapping type="diplomatic">p</mapping>
    <mapping type="normalised">w</mapping>
  </glyph>
</charDecl>
```

---

<sup>94</sup> Unicode Website: <https://home.unicode.org/about-unicode/> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

<sup>95</sup> Unicode Website: <https://unicode.org/standard/WhatIsUnicode.html> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024)

<sup>96</sup> p derives from the runic alphabet (Hejna & Walkden, 2022).

The goal of this string of elements and attributes is very straightforward: it communicates the editor software how to represent such a glyph in the final output of the edition in my prototype.

The very first element we see after `<charDecl>`, is the `<glyph>` element, followed by some extra information regarding the proper way to identify it, contained in the attribute `@xml:id` (identifier), whose function is that to name a specific element. Therefore, this `@xml:id` identifies the glyph `<p>` as *wen*. In fact, specifying the `xml:id` of each glyph in the character declaration allows me to refer to them within the `<body>` element without having to report all their values, but above all without having to choose whether to report them in their diplomatic or interpretative form<sup>97</sup>. Then, to fully encode *wen*, there are additional specifications given by the Unicode standards that I felt it was appropriate to clarify. These include the *name* and *value* attributes found in the `<unicodeProp>` (Unicode property) element<sup>98</sup>. The `<mapping>` element, followed by the attribute `@type` specifies not only the unicode standard of *wen* – U+018F – but also informs the program about the diplomatic and normalised representations of the glyph in the edition. As a result, users will see the glyph's original form if they consult the diplomatic edition, and its normalised form when looking at the interpretative edition.

To this extent, the opportunity the digital dimension offers the user to visualise two forms of the same character simultaneously is a true turning point for editorial practices.

#### 4.2.5. Digital facsimiles

Another benefit of digital editions is that they can be enhanced by digital facsimiles of the work under analysis, which typically need special encoding.

While working on my prototype I decided to include digital facsimiles of the manuscript with the aim to offer users and readers of my edition a more complete as possible analytical tool. In fact, the possibility offered by the digital paradigm to insert and then interact with images is one of the main advantages of SDEs but requires extreme accuracy. In my opinion, what makes this passage difficult

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<sup>97</sup> In my encoding of the text, I accomplished this procedure by using the `<g>` element and its *ref* attribute, which points to the *xml:id* of a specific glyph, contained in the character declaration, as we are going to see in every case of the encoding phase, I report below.

<sup>98</sup> TEI guidelines: <https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/ref-unicodeProp.html> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

to read are the many elements and attributes necessary, along with the use of another programme we are going to see within the encoding of the facsimile of Fla.

```
<facsimile xml:id="W_fac_FRAG">
<surface xml:id="W_surf_la" corresp="#W_frag_la">
<graphic url='W_frag_la.jpg' width="3300px" height="4954px"/>
<zone xml:id="W_line_la_01" corresp="#W_lb_la_01" rend="visible" rendition="Line" ulx="537"
uly="472" lrx="2786" lry="670"/>
<zone xml:id="W_line_la_02" corresp="#W_lb_la_02" rend="visible" rendition="Line" ulx="538"
uly="760" lrx="2924" lry="911" />
<zone xml:id="W_line_la_03" corresp="#W_lb_la_03" rend="visible" rendition="Line" ulx="513"
uly="945" lrx="2934" lry="1107"/>
<zone xml:id="W_line_la_04" corresp="#W_lb_la_04" rend="visible" rendition="Line" ulx="533"
uly="1162" lrx="2813" lry="1352"/>
<zone xml:id="W_line_la_05" corresp="#W_lb_la_05" rend="visible" rendition="Line" ulx="537"
uly="1433" lrx="2798" lry="1646"/>
<zone xml:id="W_line_la_06" corresp="#W_lb_la_06" rend="visible" rendition="Line" ulx="523"
uly="1699" lrx="2831" lry="1883"/>
<zone xml:id="W_line_la_07" corresp="#W_lb_la_07" rend="visible" rendition="Line" ulx="527"
uly="1927" lrx="2731" lry="2099"/>
<zone xml:id="W_line_la_08" corresp="#W_lb_la_08" rend="visible" rendition="Line" ulx="527"
uly="2167" lrx="2955" lry="2327"/>
<zone xml:id="W_line_la_09" corresp="#W_lb_la_09" rend="visible" rendition="Line" ulx="523"
uly="2391" lrx="3015" lry="2563"/>
<zone xml:id="W_line_la_10" corresp="#W_lb_la_10" rend="visible" rendition="Line" ulx="523"
uly="2647" lrx="2911" lry="2819"/>
<zone xml:id="W_line_la_11" corresp="#W_lb_la_11" rend="visible" rendition="Line" ulx="523"
uly="2855" lrx="2831" lry="3035"/>
<zone xml:id="W_line_la_12" corresp="#W_lb_la_12" rend="visible" rendition="Line" ulx="545"
uly="3116" lrx="2925" lry="3299"/>
<zone xml:id="W_line_la_13" corresp="#W_lb_la_13" rend="visible" rendition="Line" ulx="531"
uly="3351" lrx="2911" lry="3519"/>
<zone xml:id="W_line_la_14" corresp="#W_lb_la_14" rend="visible" rendition="Line" ulx="515"
uly="3571" lrx="3015" lry="3727"/>
<zone xml:id="W_line_la_15" corresp="#W_lb_la_15" rend="visible" rendition="Line" ulx="519"
uly="3823" lrx="3079" lry="3943"/>
</surface>
</facsimile>
```

The first element used is <facsimile>, that contains all the data needed to encode the image along with a @xml:id clarify the name of the facsimile. The encoding continues with <surface> element, defining the surface of the manuscript along with its @xml:id and @corresp attributes<sup>99</sup>. Specifically,

---

<sup>99</sup> TEI guidelines: <https://tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/ref-facsimile.html> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

in my prototype the @xml:id of <surface> identifies the name of this specific page of the manuscript, while corresp is used to create a correspondence between other elements and the element it refers to – in this case <surface><sup>100</sup>.

Then to properly encode an image, I had to specify its dimensions – usually in pixels – within the <graphic> element and its attributes, @height, and @width. In addition, in <graphic> there is also the url of the image to be encoded, inserted via the url (uniform resource locator) attribute, which specifies the URL from which the image in question can be obtained<sup>101</sup>.

However, since I could not casually derivate these dimensions, I had to rely on another tool: XML-TEI Zoner (<http://teicat.huma-num.fr/zoner.php>), which allows to extract definite sets of information from an image in order to encode it. Below, I report a screenshot of XML-TEI Zoner interface containing all the instructions required and explained.

## TEI Zoner

This tool allows you to generate TEI <zone> elements by drawing points on an image. It is entirely browser-based (nothing is processed on the server), so it should be very fast.

### How to use:

- To set points of your shape, click anywhere on the image.
- To draw your shape, click [Draw Shape] in the bar at the bottom of the screen.
- If you have only drawn two points, you will get a rectangle. Otherwise, the tool will draw a polygon.

First, pick an image:  Nessun file selezionato

### About the Zoner

The tool uses [raphael.js](#), [highlight.js](#) and [jQuery](#), and owes a lot to the fine people of [StackOverflow](#) (in particular [this question](#)).

It was written by [Chris Sparks](#) to act as a teaching resource during for a [DEMM Digital Editing TEI training week](#).

Please send comments or suggestions to [@sparkyc84](#).

The source code of this project is [available to fork on GitHub](#). It is licensed under the MIT License, which means you can use modify and embed it within other projects so long as you retain the copyright notice and license text. I'd be interested to hear about any uses of the tool, and would be happy to incorporate any fixes or enhancements you might suggest.



Figure 11: TEI Zoner interface.

Once the image has been inserted, it will be possible to draw the suggested frames, line by line, and then obtain the Cartesian coordinates to be inserted within the <zone> element, accompanied by the attributes @ulx, @uly, @lrx, @lry<sup>102</sup>. In <zone> other elements are required to provide a

<sup>100</sup> TEI guidelines: <https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/it/html/ref-surface.html> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

<sup>101</sup> TEI Guidelines: <https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/PH.html#PH-transcr> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024). See section 11.2 Combining Transcription with Facsimile.

<sup>102</sup> ulx gives the x coordinate value for the upper left corner of a rectangular space. uly gives the y coordinate value for the upper left corner of a rectangular space. lrx gives the x coordinate value for the lower right corner of a rectangular space. lry gives the y coordinate value for the lower right corner of a rectangular space. <https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/ref-zone.html> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

complete encoding of the image and among them the @xml:id that identify the specific zone encoded, in this case of a specific line of the manuscript and a @corresp attribute. Moreover, the encoder can explain if the element in question is visible or not in the original source, within the attribute @rend and also how it appears in the same source, i.e. as a line, with the @rendition attribute<sup>103</sup>.

In this way, the construction of a direct relationship between the text and the image encoded is guaranteed; nonetheless, the results are readily apparent during the visualisation stage.

#### 4.2.6. Normalisation of words boundaries and errors

From now on I proceed by considering more philological and editorial aspects related to my interpretations and interventions regarding certain parts of Waldere's fragments. My goal is to analyse the most peculiar ones, and thus, I will provide explanations on how I used XML-TEI markup language to transcribe the original text of Waldere's fragments, both in a diplomatic and normalised form. As a matter of fact, within the whole manuscript, certain lemmas, along with other irregularities risk confusing the readers, that is why I decided to regularise them.

I start considering instances where the copyist breaks a word while beginning a new line, occasionally deceiving the reader—who might not even be conversant in the language of writing. Commencing with words that terminate in one line and begin in another, I offer an example below, and visible in the third and fourth lines of Fragment Ia, along with a picture of the manuscript where I underlined the word *ðara*, presented in its separated form.

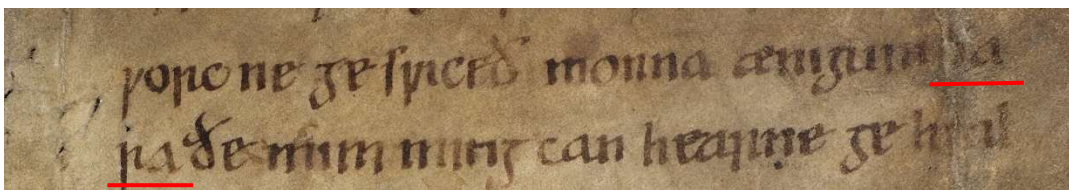


Figure 12: Example of non-respected word boundary, Fla, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> lines.

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<sup>103</sup> TEI guidelines: <https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/REF-ATTS.html#rendition> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

The manuscript would lead one to suppose that *ḍa*, which appears at the end of the third line, and *ra*, which appears at the beginning of the fourth line, could be two distinct words, but it is not like that. As a matter of fact, thanks to a thorough use of the Bosworth Toller Anglo-Saxon Dictionary online (<https://bosworthtoller.com>), I promptly concluded that the form *ḍara* coincides with the third person plural pronoun in its genitive form, and consequently that the two syllables should not be separated from one another in the interpretative part of my edition. Moreover, the overall meaning of the sentence, which literally translates to "*of those who know Mimming*"<sup>104</sup>, helped me in identifying the lemma.

Consequently, I opted for the following encoding so that my edition would also include the normalised form.

```
<choice>
  <orig><g ref="eth"/>a<lb facs="#W_line_la_03" n="3" xml:id="W_lb_la_03_orig"/><g
ref="rins"/>a</orig>
  <reg>ḍara<lb facs="#W_line_la_03" n="3" xml:id="W_lb_la_03_reg"/></reg>
</choice>
```

The <choice> element is self-explanatory and as its name implies, its use regards a specific editorial decision applied to the encoding<sup>105</sup>. In this case, <choice> refers to my intention to regularise the separated *ḍa* and *ra*, in *ḍara*. This is made possible thanks to two specific elements: the <orig> (original) element, which provides the reading in its original form, and the <reg> (regularisation) one, that reports a regularised form<sup>106</sup>. Thus, in <orig> we will find *ḍa ra*, while in <reg>, *ḍara*. In addition, the milestone element<sup>107</sup> <lb/> (line beginning), which appears in both <orig> and <reg>, but obviously for distinct purposes, also contributes to the encoding of the diplomatic and interpretative edition. As a matter of fact, the presence of <lb/> in <orig> allowed me to specify that

---

<sup>104</sup> In this translation *ḍara* is the equal "of those". However, the meaning of this sentence, suggested by Himes is the following: "[Indeed] the work [of Weland] fails not any man who can handle Mimming [...]" (Himes, 2009: 79).

<sup>105</sup> TEI guidelines: <https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/ref-choice.html> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

<sup>106</sup> TEI guidelines: <https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/CO.html#COEDREG> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024). See section 3.5.2 *Regularization and Normalization*.

<sup>107</sup> Milestones elements are used to separate parts of the text encoded and different type exist, according to the part the encoder aims to divide. In this context, the function of <lb> is to signal the beginning of a line of the manuscript. Another example is <pb> (page beginning), used to define the beginning of every single page of the document under analysis.

See TEI guidelines: <https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/CO.html#CORSS5> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

in the original version *ða* appears in the third line of the manuscript, and that *ra* in the fourth line, also thanks to the use of the attributes `@fac`, `@n` and `@xml: id`. The attribute *fac* and its value refer to the manuscript page facsimile that is enclosed in the `<facsimile>` element, inserted in the earlier phase of my encoding related to the presence of digital images, to create a link between the text and the image of the fragments. In addition, the *n* attribute specifies the number of the line of the fragment in which the reading appears, while `xml: id` points to the line of the image in question. At the same time, `<lb/>` is also present in `<reg>`, with the same attributes, but with the value of the last `@xml: id` being different, allowing me to encode the normalised reading of *ðara* and to later display it in the visualisation as a single word.

#### 4.2.7. Correction of errors

The element `<choice>` can be used also in cases where the editor deems it necessary to fix faults that exist in the original text. It is obvious that in order to accomplish this, encoding procedure changes. Specifically, we now deal with `<sic>` and `<corr>` instead of `<orig>` and `<reg>`, where `<sic>`—Latin for *thus*—refers to the incorrect form that is present in the document, and `<corr>`—*correction*—replicates the correct form of the same passage or lemma as determined by the encoder<sup>108</sup>. An example from the facsimile and the corrected version from my encoding are shown below.



Figure 13: Example of an error, *F11d*, 14<sup>th</sup> line.

Lit. \*mtoten

The passage we are looking at, fragment *I1d*, has a conspicuous grammatical error amid the fourteenth line involving the Old English verb *motan*, which means 'to be allowed, may'<sup>109</sup>. The

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<sup>108</sup> TEI guidelines: <https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/CO.html#COEDCOR> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

<sup>109</sup> Bosworth Toller's Anglo-Saxon Dictionary online: <https://bosworthtoller.com/23193>. (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

copyist created an erroneous reading by inserting a <t> after this letter. Consequently, I proposed this correction:

```
<choice>
  <sic>m<g ref="tins"/>o<g ref="tins"/>en</sic>
  <corr>moten</corr>
</choice>
```

Here, the <choice> element details my decision to fix the incorrect form, *mtoten*, found in <sic>, with the help of <corr>. This will enable us to view the text in both its original form as presented in the diplomatic part of the edition and its normalised one, in the interpretative part.

#### 4.2.8. Expansion of abbreviations

There are several shortened forms throughout the four folios that make up the manuscript, and that I decided to expand. To demonstrate how I did this, I focus on the abbreviation of the conjunction <þ>, recurring in the whole manuscript and meaning *that*<sup>110</sup>. XML-TEI mark-up language allowed me to expand it within a specific encoding that implies the use of the <abbr> (*abbreviation*) element and of the <expan> (*expansion*) one, both contained in the <choice> element. Thus, this procedure represents the choice of the encoder.

In my case, however, I expanded all the abbreviated forms of the manuscript with the aim to increase the readability of the text.

Below the conjunction <þ>, present in fragment Ia – but not only – is encoded as follows:



Figure 14: Example of the abbreviated conjunction <þ>, recurring in the fragments.

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<sup>110</sup> Bosworth Toller's Anglo-Saxon Dictionary online: <https://bosworthtoller.com/31501>. (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).



```
<choice>
  <abbr><g ref="thorn"/></abbr>
  <expn><g ref="thorn"/><g ref="ae"/><g ref="tins"/></expn>
</choice>
```

Thus, while consulting the interpretative version of the manuscript, the expanded form will be displayed.

#### 4.2.9. Damages and lacunas

In addition to orthographic irregularities, there are other forms of anomalies in the fragments, i.e. damages and lacunas. Even though their origin is not linked to grammatical causes, they contribute making *Waldere's* fragments more difficult to understand<sup>111</sup>.

Therefore, now we concentrate on the deteriorated parts of the manuscript, that require a higher level of interpretation. This evidence is also corroborated by the TEI guidelines, stating that "[...] *the physical damage makes parts of it (the primary source) hard or impossible to read.*" Given the nature of these cases, it is evident that the level of interpretation for normalisation will be higher than in other contexts.

Thus, let us consider the 6<sup>th</sup> line of fragment IIc where a clear reading is not possible.



Figure 15: Example of a damaged part, FIIc, 6<sup>th</sup> line.

Nonetheless, if correctly analysed, what remains of this form, can aid in reconstructing it. As a matter of fact, thanks to the digital facsimile of the original, and especially thanks to its excellent quality, I

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<sup>111</sup> In this case, the presence of damages and lacunas in the manuscript is not attributable to grammatical or linguistic problems or scribal errors; rather, it was caused by wear and tear, and the passing of time, which all have an impact on the type of material used. For a more detailed discussion on the preservation of the *Waldere's* fragments, see the second chapter. Moreover, this should not surprise us, since we are aware of the age of the fragments.

was able to read the initial and the final letters more clearly, namely *ze-* and *-an*. With respect to the central part of the lemma, I had to rely on previous studies on the fragments, particularly on the edition by Schwab, discussed in the second chapter, whose precision allowed me to encode the form and understand its true meaning. According to the analysis proposed by the scholar, the missing central letters are <*zirp*>. Consequently, knowing that the former letters are *ze-*, the central *-zirp-* and the latter *-an*, what we expect is the form *zezirpan*, but this is not the correct form. Schwab claims that for grammatical reasons *zezirpan* can be classified as a scribal error, as the required verbal form for the passage in analysis is the past tense of the same verb, in this case, is *zezirped*. As a matter of fact, the verb *zezirpan* is an infinitive, meaning 'to prepare an object for use' (i.e., 'to decorate'), but Schwab contends that the line makes more sense in the past tense, of the same verb. Thus, Schwab suggests that the correct form, in this case, is *zezirped*.

In order to fully understand Schwab's considerations, I report below the diplomatic and the interpretative transcriptions of vv. 3-6 of fragment IIc, before focusing on the encoding of the lemma.

Table 7

Diplomatic transcription	Interpretative transcription
3. ic paꝥ þ ic ðohce ðeodric pidian selfū	3. ic wat þæt ic ðohte Ðeodric Widian selfum
4. onf on ond <sup>112</sup> eac sinc micel maðma mid	4. onsendon ond eac sinc micel maðma mid
5. ði mece moniꝥ oðref mid him 3olde	5. ði mece monig oðres mid him golde
6. <b>an</b>	6. <b>gegirwed</b> iulean genam þæs ðe hine

Briefly paraphrasing these verses, Guðhere, boasting of possessing the best sword, mentions an episode from the Germanic heroic epic, according to which Ðeodric wished to give his ally Widia a sword, together with many other material goods, adorned with gold (*golde gegirwed*).

Moreover, Schwab argues that the proper version of the line is "*sinc micel maðma mid ði mece, monig oðres golde gegirwed*", as it adheres to both the grammar and the Germanic verse's characteristic alliteration (Schwab, 1999).

Thus, I choose to encode as follows:

---

<sup>112</sup> The original form corresponds to the 7. Again, as it is not visible in pdf format, I transcribed it in its interpretative form, i.e. *ond*.

```

<unclear>
  <choice><orig>an</orig></choice>
  <reg>
    <supplied reason="illegible" resp="#Schwab"><g ref="yogh"/>e<g
ref="yogh"/></supplied></reg></unclear><damage/><reg><supplied reason="illegible"
resp="#Schwab">i<g ref="rins"/><g ref="wen"/></supplied>ed</reg>

```

Considering the various doubts about the interpretation of the reading under analysis, I decided to start with the <unclear> element, which normally specifies the illegibility of a certain point in a document<sup>113</sup>. Subsequently, thanks to the use of <choice> and <orig>, I included the letters *an*, visible in the original manuscript. Nevertheless, considering Schwab's claims, I regularised it to ensure the verse's accuracy. Hence, I added *zezirped* within the <reg> element by using <supplied>, which denotes a portion added by the encoder in the transcription. In addition, to specify the reason of this encoding and the editor responsible for the interpretation of this word that provided clarifications in this instance, I used the attributes @reason (reason) and @resp (responsibility), with the respective values *illegible* and *Schwab*<sup>114</sup>.

This encoding also includes the case of damage to the manuscript, since if we examine the picture carefully, we spot a hole, that I represented within the element <damage/> in the XML string that I suggested<sup>115</sup>. It is interesting to note that this milestone element—which, as we know, typically denotes a division in the text—is employed in this instance to indicate a specific type of interruption in the manuscript, shown by the hole amid the word<sup>116</sup>.

---

<sup>113</sup> TEI guidelines: <https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/ref-unclear.html> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

<sup>114</sup> TEI guidelines: <https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/PH.html#PHDA> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

See section 11.3.1.7 Text Omitted from or Supplied in the Transcription.

<sup>115</sup> TEI guidelines: <https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/ref-damage.html> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

<sup>116</sup> TEI guidelines: <https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/CO.html#CORSS5> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

#### 4.2.10. Words with ambiguous interpretations

When examining *Waldere's* fragments, further uncertainty could emerge due to the handwriting of the copyist, which, in some cases, is characterized by a significant amount of ambiguity. I refer to those words that linguistically form a single lemma, but that in the manuscript are clearly separated by a space. Moreover, some of these – apparently – separated forms also have their own meaning, adding even more ambiguity to the fragments. Evidence of this is provided by the 7<sup>th</sup> line of Fla, where the word <dryhtscipe> appears divided into *dryht* and *scipe*.

Proving what I just stated, I propose below the screenshot taken from the facsimile, followed by my proposed encoding, as I have done so far.

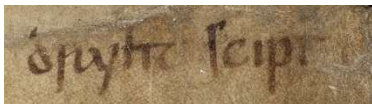


Figure 16: Example of an ambiguous word, Fla, 7<sup>th</sup> line.

Considering how they are presented in the manuscript, during my analysis I thought of them as separated forms, consequently looking for the meaning of *dryht* and that of *scipe*, discovering that *dryht*<sup>117</sup> can indicate 'people, multitude, army' while *scipe*<sup>118</sup> can mean 'dignity' or 'condition'. The existence of both forms in Old English dictionaries, however, is not enough to make them the appropriate forms for the content of the manuscript. In fact, after closer analysis, I ascertained that not only does the united form *dryhtscipe* also exist, with the meaning of 'rulership, lordship', but that it is also the form required to ensure a correct interpretation of the verse in which it appears. Considering the significance of context, I present the complete passage from the manuscript that contains this form, which is helpful in deciphering its actual meaning, along with the normalised transcription.

Table 8

Diplomatic transcription	Interpretative transcription
6. (æcla) <sup>119</sup> ord pyza ne læt ðin ellen nu zy	6. (Ætlan) ordwyga ne læt ðin ellen nu gyt
7. zedneofan co dæze todæge <b>dryht scipe</b>	7. gedreosan co dæzetodæge <b>dryhtscipe</b>

<sup>117</sup> Bosworth Toller Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online: 2014. <https://bosworthtoller.com/8040> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

<sup>118</sup> Bosworth-Toller Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online: <https://bosworthtoller.com/26847> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

<sup>119</sup> I reported this name in brackets, since it appears in the previous line, but the sentence starts with it.

These lines, which translate to "*Attila's champion, let not your mettle yet falter today, your lordship (dryhtscipe)*" refer to the scene in which Hiltegunt tries to persuade Waldere to fight and not to give up (Himes, 2009: 79). Thus, in this sense *dryhtscipe* refers to Waldere's figure, which is referred to as lordship, rulership.

This example demonstrates once more how complex it is to create a digital edition that respects the specificity of encoding and philological practices, since, I would not have been able to suggest the right encoding of the lemma in this instance without taking into account the appropriate context, also risking changing the meaning of the passage.

As a result, I encoded the lemma in this way:

```
<choice><orig>d<g ref="rins"/>yh<g ref="tins"/> <g ref="slong"/>cipe</orig>  
  <reg>dryhtscipe</reg>  
</choice>
```

Firstly, we note the use of the <choice> element, which specifies my decision to modify the original reading, through orig and reg, which contain the original and normalised form respectively.

Luckily, this does not represent a very common occurrence in this manuscript; however, it is important to consider them.

#### 4.2.11. Metrical structure

The next aspect concerning my proposal of encoding and that I want to discuss regards the metrical organisation of the fragments. Specifically, I proposed a subdivision of *Waldere's* sixty-three lines in Germanic alliterative verses as the copyist did not provide a subdivision of metrical lines in the fragments due to the use of the *scriptio continua*<sup>120</sup>.

Below, with the aim to demonstrate my editorial choice, I start considering the original structure of the first five lines of Fla, within the digital facsimile and its diplomatic transcription.

---

<sup>120</sup> It was a common writing style at the time, especially because printing or books would not have been invented for some centuries. Moreover, considering the difficulties linked to the production and availability of parchment and vellums, it was clear that copyists and scribes had to occupy all available space of while writing.

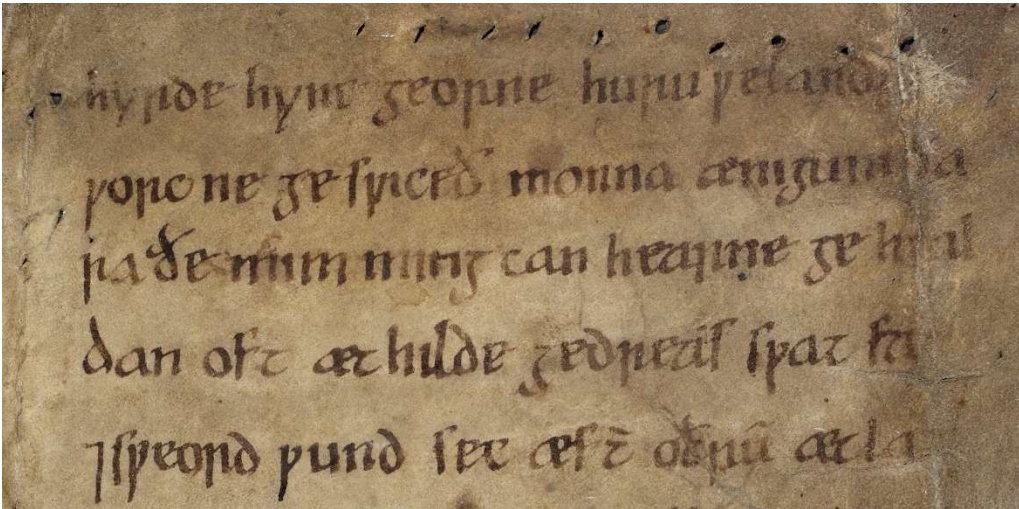


Figure 17: Example of the original metrical structure, Fla, 1<sup>st</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> lines.

So, transcribing the original metrical form, we read:

1. hyrde hyne georne /<sup>121</sup> huru weland
2. worc ne geswiceð / monna ænigum / ða
3. ra ðe mimming can hearne ge heal
4. dan / oft æthilde gedreas swatfa
5. ond sweord wund / sec æft oðrum ætla<sup>122</sup>

The metrical subdivision in Germanic alliterative long verses would be the following:

1. . . . // hyrde hyne georne
2. huru weland      worc ne geswiceð
3. monna ænigum      ðara ðe mimming can
4. hearne ge heal dan      oft æthilde gedreas
5. swatfa ond sweord wund      sec æft oðrum
6. ætla

<sup>121</sup> The original manuscript lacks the caesura due to the usage of the *scriptio continua*. However, with the aim to highlighting it, in the transcription I provided I indicate it with a slash.

<sup>122</sup> Himes's (2009) translation:

1. .... forged it in earnest.
2. Indeed, the work of Weland fails not
3. any man who can handle Mimring,
4. a hard blade to hold. Often at battle it felled
5. soldiers, spattered and sword-wounded, one after another.

The metrical structure is encoded in XML-TEI using the tags <l> (verse line)<sup>123</sup> with the attribute @n (number). Their functions are quite clear: verse line element contains a specific part of the text, a line of verse, specified by the n attribute, that numbers the verse<sup>124</sup>. Regretfully, yet, this editorial intervention is confined to the encoding phase and is only apparent in the XML file but is however worth considering it.

```

<l n="1"><lb facs="#W_line_la_01" n="1" xml:id="W_lb_la_01"/>hy<g ref="rins"/>de hyne <g
ref="yogh"/>eo<g ref="rins"/>ne</l>
<l n="2">hu<g ref="rins"/>u <persName ref="#Weyland"><choice><orig><g
ref="wen"/></orig><reg><hi rend="cap">W</hi></reg></choice>eland</persName> <lb
facs="#W_line_la_02" n="2" xml:id="W_lb_la_02"/><unclear><reg><supplied reason="illegible"
resp="#Himes">ge</supplied></reg></unclear><g ref="wen"/>o<g ref="rins"/>c ne
<choice>
<orig><g ref="yogh"/>e<g ref="slong"/><g ref="wen"/>ice<g ref="eth"/></orig>
<reg>geswiceð</reg>
</choice></l>
<l n="3">monna <g ref="ae"/>ni<g ref="yogh"/>um
<choice>
<orig><g ref="eth"/>a<lb facs="#W_line_la_03" n="3" xml:id="W_lb_la_03_orig"/><g
ref="rins"/>a</orig>
<reg>ðara<lb facs="#W_line_la_03" n="3" xml:id="W_lb_la_03_reg"/></reg>
</choice>
<g ref="eth"/>e <choice><orig>mimmin<g ref="yogh"/></orig><reg><hi
rend="cap">M</hi>imming</reg></choice> can</l>
<l n="4">hea<g ref="rins"/>ne <choice>
<orig><g ref="yogh"/>e heal<lb facs="#W_line_la_04" n="4"
xml:id="W_lb_la_04_orig"/>dan</orig>
<reg>gehealdan<lb facs="#W_line_la_04" n="4" xml:id="W_lb_la_04_reg"/></reg>

```

<sup>123</sup> In my encoding I only proposed a subdivision of metrical lines, but I did not encode the caesura, as my main aim is to provide a diplomatic-interpretative edition of the text.

<sup>124</sup> TEI guidelines: <https://tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/ref-l.html> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

```

</choice>
  of<g ref="tins"/> <g ref="ae"/><g ref="tins"/>hilde <g ref="yogh"/>ed<g ref="rins"/>ea<g
ref="slong"/></l>
  <l n="5"><g ref="slong"/><g ref="wen"/>a<g ref="tins"/>fa<lb facs="#W_line_la_05" n="5"
xml:id="W_lb_la_05"/> <g ref="et"/>
  <choice><orig><g ref="slong"/><g ref="wen"/>eo<g ref="rins"/>d <g ref="wen"/>und</orig>
  <reg>sweordwund</reg></choice> <g ref="slong"/>ec
  <choice>
    <abbr><g ref="ae"/>f<g ref="tins"/></abbr>
    <expan><g ref="ae"/>f<g ref="tins"/>e<g ref="rins"/></expan>
  </choice>
  o<g ref="eth"/><g ref="rins"/><choice><abbr>ū</abbr><expan><g
ref="umacr"/></expan></choice>
</l>

```

Thus, for technical reasons pertaining to the software of visualisation, I used Edition Visualisation Technology beta 2, the subdivision of the verses I suggested will not be visible in the output of my edition. However, the same software guarantees the visualisation of all the other choices I applied to the representation of my edition, on which we focus in the next paragraphs.

### 4.3. Visualising my prototype

The explanations regarding my editing decisions demonstrated the technicality of the mark-up language, which yields exceptional outcomes thanks to its versatility. Thus, once the matrix XML-TEI file is ready, the visualisation phase can begin. To accomplish the process, however, other specific tools are required, and among them, we start considering Edition Visualisation Technology.

Although different versions exist to date, during this chapter I focus on EVT beta 2, precisely because it is the one I decided to use for the visualisation of my prototype digital edition. Nevertheless, during my analysis, I will also make some general remarks on EVT, since, to properly introduce Edition



Visualisation Technology beta 2, we need to consider its development. Then, I move on its structure, considering its interface and main features.

Only after examining how it works, the focus switches to the true visualisation of all the encoded data inherent to the editorial choices I applied and that we discussed in the previous sections.

#### 4.3.1. Introducing EVT beta 2

Created by the Italian academic Roberto Rosselli Del Turco and a team of young researchers, the Edition Visualisation Technology programme, or EVT for short, is a useful and user-friendly visualisation tool for digital editions, strictly linked to the XML-TEI mark-up language. In this regard, one of its best qualities consist in its cooperation with the XML-TEI mark-up language, and with the standards of the TEI guidelines, consequently representing an easily usable and accessible editorial tool.

There are currently three versions in circulation. The first is called Evtbeta1, which was created in 2013 with Rosselli Del Turco's intentions of producing a digital version of the *Vercelli's* book, an extremely relevant work for the Anglo-Saxon literary tradition, to which we recall the *Waldere's* fragments also belongs to.

Rosselli Del Turco with the desire to make this source available to everyone strengthened the relationship between the philological-editorial community and the informatic one<sup>125</sup>. This led to the development of a tool that editors may use to visualise digital editions in a way that is easily navigable: EVT beta 1. However, the needs to improve it arose suddenly, as confirmed in the website of Evtbeta1, which reads as follows: "*The continuous development and need to adapt it (Evtbeta1) to different types of documents and TEI-encoded texts has shifted the development focus towards creation of a more general tool for the web publication of TEI-based documents, able to cater for multiple use cases.*"<sup>126</sup>. Thus, with the continuous development of the digital philology, improvements in technologies become necessary, and that is why EVT beta 1 evolved in EVT beta 2. For instance, XSLT stylesheets typical of the first version are replaced by a set of JavaScript parsers specifically written to retrieve edition content directly from the XML file. Moreover, EVT beta 2

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<sup>125</sup> Vercelli's Book Digitale: [http://vbd.humnet.unipi.it/?page\\_id=99](http://vbd.humnet.unipi.it/?page_id=99) (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

<sup>126</sup> Edition Visualization Technology: <http://evt.labcd.unipi.it/> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

allows to save edition data in a JSON structure, organized in such a way that it can be easily and rapidly accessed when needed<sup>127</sup>.

The benefits of EVTbeta2 are clear right from the installation phase from the official Edition Visualisation Technology website, where clear explanations about how it works and how to use it are provided<sup>128</sup>.

After downloading all the necessary materials contained in a zip folder, the user has to configure the software and this is made possible thanks to the *config.json* file, included in the download. This specific file retrieves the information from the XML-TEI marked up file, and its presence and correct use is fundamental, since it allows the encoder to *communicate* to EVT beta 2 how the edition is supposed to be visualized, by modifying some data in the file. More specifically, the *config.json* file offers the possibility to select the kind of edition the editor wants to present, by changing certain values of the file. As an example, I report the passage of my *config.json* within which I configured my edition as a diplomatic-interpretative one.

```
"defaultEdition": "diplomatic",
"showEditionLevelSelector": true,
"availableEditionLevel": [
  {
    "value": "critical",
    "label": "Critical",
    "title": "Critical edition",
    "visible": false
  },
  {
    "value": "diplomatic",
    "label": "Diplomatic",
    "title": "Diplomatic edition",
    "visible": true
  }
]
```

---

<sup>127</sup> EVT 2.0 User Manual.

<sup>128</sup> Briefly, the installation requires the download of a zip folder, containing all the necessary files to interact with EVT. Moreover, after downloading the required materials from the website, the user can also refer to the user manual, which is stored in one of the EVT folders and goes into detail on how to use the programme correctly. See section 2.1 *Installation and management of the edition data* in EVT 2.0 User Manual.

```
},  
{  
  "value": "interpretative",  
  "label": "Interpretative",  
  "title": "Interpretative edition",  
  "visible": true
```

I want to stress that this is only a very small part of the complete `config.json` file, however, is one of the most important. As we can see, thanks to the attributes *value*, *label*, *title* and *visible* and to their values, I specified that I wanted my edition to appear as a diplomatic-interpretative one.

Moreover, the possibility to configure this file, thus the edition, allows a high level of customization of the edition itself, considering that the encoder, and the editor, not only set the type of edition, but we can also choose the colours of punctuation, words, spellings, withing the element *variantColors* and its attribute *type*. In addition, one can decide to include, or not, and how to include images within the *imageViewerOptions* element, or also we can enable the languages within which the edition is presented in EVT. I want to underline that there I mentioned the most relevant features of the `config.json` file that can be remodelled and precisely the ones I changed according to my needs; however, other options can be modified depending on the encoder and to the editor aims<sup>129</sup>. After the installation and the configuration steps, EVT will enable the edition to be viewed. For my edition of Waldere's fragments, I decided to work with Visual Studio Code, a software editor, which allows to process the encoded XML-TEI file and visualise it in a local browser thanks to additional extensions<sup>130</sup>.

At this point, the EVT interface will open in a web page presenting the edition itself, displaying all the editorial decisions made during the encoding process, concerning the `<teiHeader>` and the text. To demonstrate that, below I attach a screenshot of my prototype.

---

<sup>129</sup> EVT 2.0 User Manual.

<sup>130</sup> Visual Studio Code is an editor like Oxygen; both can handle the XML-TEI format. Yet, Visual Studio Code can be enhanced by extensions, such as "LiveServer", which are required for working with EVT. Thus, the encoder can choose the editor programme to use during the "simple" encoding phase, knowing that eventually Visual Studio Code will also be required. See Visual Studio Code: <https://code.visualstudio.com/docs> (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

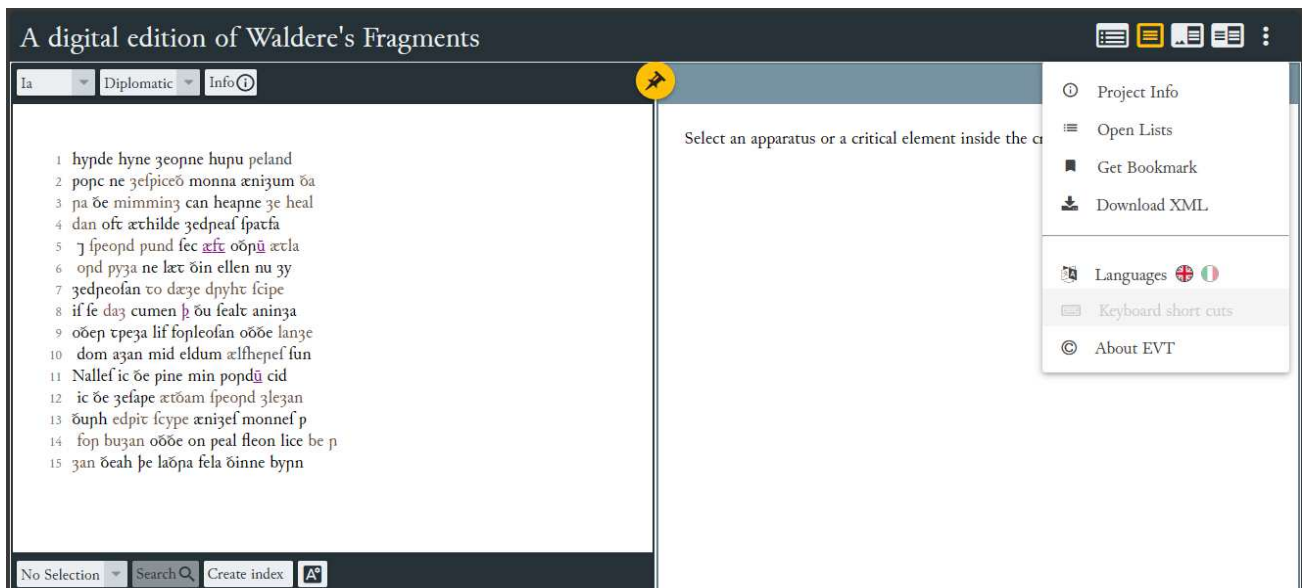


Figure 18: EVT interface.

In this screenshot what is truly of interest for us are the four small boxes that offer different options of visualisation of the edition, made possible thanks to the four small boxes on the right upper corner. For the sake of completeness, below I zoom on the boxes, providing a legend.

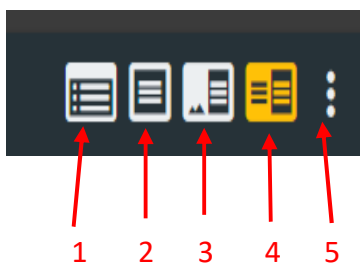


Figure 19: EVT boxes: Toc, front matter and back matter; Reading Text; Image Text; Text Text; Menu.

1. Toc, front matter and back matter.
2. Reading Text.
3. Image Text.
4. Text Text.
5. Menu.

Starting from the very first one, we have “Toc, front matter and back matter” that includes all the information regarding the edition and the document, such as a table of contents of the manuscript, its description, the bibliography I worked with, and references to all the named entities mentioned in the fragments.

The presence of these two last aspects is strictly linked to two specific encoding procedures I applied, and I am referring to the use of the list elements – <listPerson> and <listBibl> – that represent my editorial decision to regroup all the characters mentioned in the fragments and the bibliographical citation I relied on, in two distinct lists. However, their visualisation is reported later, only after comprehending how EVT beta 2 interface works.

The second box, “*Reading text*”, refers to the visualisation of the critical apparatus of the edition. Because *Waldere’s* fragments represent a codex unicus, I could not compare different witnesses of the same manuscript, thus I did not include a critical apparatus. Consequently, when approaching my edition, this part will be empty.

The third box regards another feature already discussed, namely the possibility to include images in the digital edition. In fact, this option permit to visualize the facsimile of the selected page along with its transcription, as we are going to see later on in this chapter.

The fourth and last box, called “*Text Text*” reports the visualisation of the different transcriptions proposed by the editor. In my prototype, this allows us to see at the same time the diplomatic and the interpretative one.

In addition, the three small dots on right represent a menu that offers the users to interact with the edition, for instance downloading the XML file, changing the language or to visualize information about the work. After explaining how EVT beta 2 looks like, I intend to proceed by focusing on the true core of this chapter: the visualisation of my edition.

### 4.3.2. From the encoding to the visualisation

While consulting my prototype within EVT beta 2, the user will be able to see all the encoded data I included in the XML file, starting with the description about the manuscript and the edition I provided in the <teiHeader>, the lists elements, along with the facsimiles and the transcriptions of the text.

In the next paragraphs, I intend to focus on the visualisation of all the editorial choices I applied and that we already discussed above from the encoding perspective in Section 4.2. and in the following subsections. To this extent, with the aim of highlight the tangible results of my work, I follow the same order.

#### 4.3.2.1. The lists

I begin my demonstration with a more general aspect: the representation of the list elements. On the one hand, I included <listPerson>, dedicated to all the persons and entities referred to in the original document, while, on the other, the <listBibl>, containing the bibliography I worked with. Considering they report different information, they will be displayed in two distinct ways, but in the same section, precisely in the *Toc, front matter and back matter* one.

By clicking on it, a tab opens and displays several pieces of information about the edition. Among them, we see the *Named Entities* part, which in turn includes the *Protagonists* one, since in my encoding I specified that all the characters mentioned in the fragments are to be considered as protagonists.

Considering that in while addressing the encoding of this list I reported the case of Attila, below we focus on its visualisation outcome.

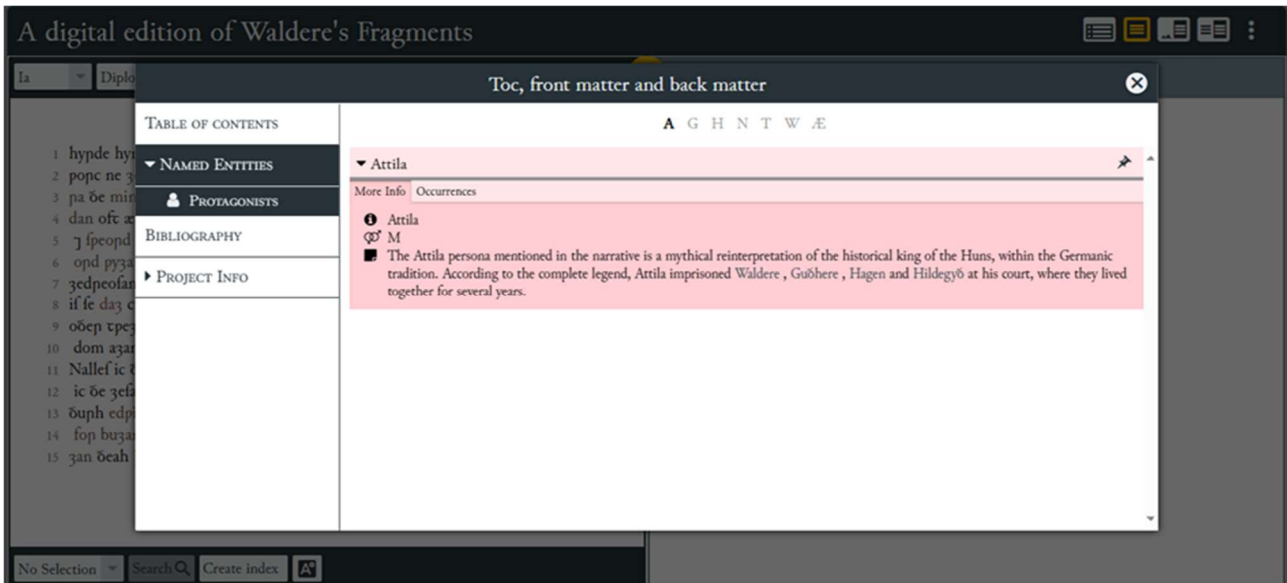


Figure 20: Visualisation of the list of persons in EVT.

In addition, note that EVT beta 2 divide the characters following an alphabetical order. The second encoded list regards the publications and editions I relied on while creating mine and represented by the *Bibliography* section, located right after the *Named Entities* one. The result is a precise list of all the bibliographical references, that as shown below, are sorted by author, year of publication, title, and publishing house, again with the aim to allow the user to delve deeper into the topic.

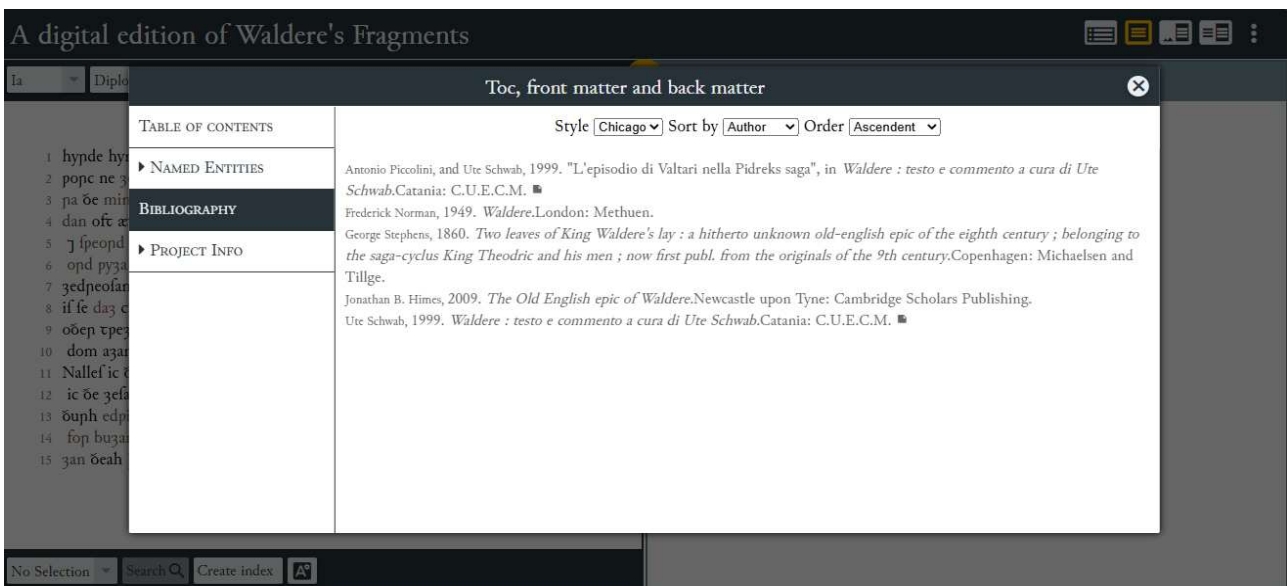


Figure 21: Visualisation of the bibliography in EVT.

As far as this list is concerned, an interesting feature of EVT is the possibility to change its layout, since the user can select how to visualize it thanks to the *style*, *sort by* and *order* buttons.

### 4.3.2.2. Text-Image linking

Here we address one of the most intriguing visualisation features of digital editions: the interaction between images and the transcription of the original document. As examined in Section 4.2.5., an appropriate encoding not only enables the encoder to add high-quality digital facsimiles of the original source into the edition, but it also allows to establish a direct connection between them. Precisely, to accomplish this task the element <zone>, along with the dimensions of the images it provides, are required. The result is the text-image linking as shown below.

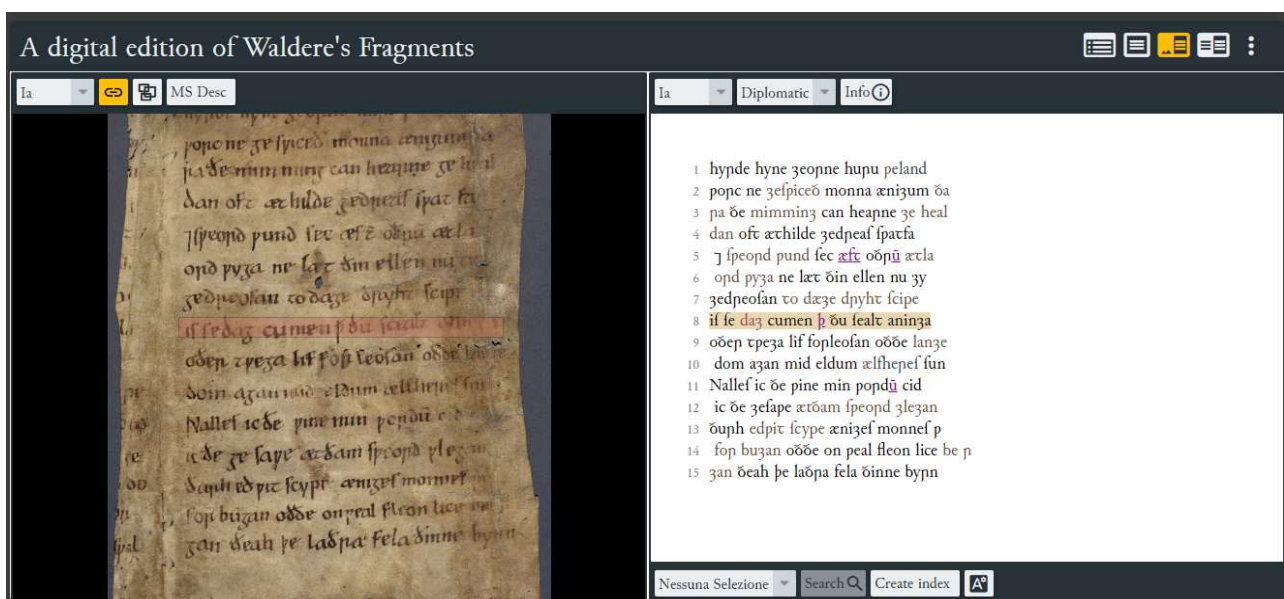


Figure 22: Visualisation of Text-Image linking in EVT.

To activate the link, the user only has to click the box in the upper left corner in EVT.

Note that the transcription presented in the screenshot is the diplomatic one, however, as we know, the user can choose to view the interpretative transcription by clicking on the *Diplomatic* box located in the upper portion of the text.



### 4.3.2.3. Outcomes of normalised words

In this paragraph I consider the visualisation of the diplomatic and interpretative editions of the fragments by focusing on the Text Text section. This section displays both the diplomatic and the interpretative versions, allowing me to explain how I intended to report the irregularities spread in the vellums. Because my editorial choices concern different kind of regularization interventions, below I first rely on the screenshot of the very first fragment presented in EVT, Fla, to explain how word boundaries, errors, the expansion of abbreviations and ambiguous words are displayed. Next, I refer to other screenshots, namely those of FIId and of FIIC, to illustrate the visualisation of errors and deteriorated parts.

Prior to presenting the results, I would like to emphasise two key points that embrace my editorial interventions. The first one goes back to the encoding phase and regards the fact that most of all the editorial choices I applied share the same opening element: <choice>. As a matter of fact, while encoding the original readings in the fragments I frequently used it, since its use, since it is strictly linked to the choices of the encoder on how to represent a word or a passage in a specific way.

The second, and last, case of interest contained in this screenshot, is the original reading of the normalised form *dryhtscipe*, which in the manuscript appears divided, as examined in section 4.2.6.

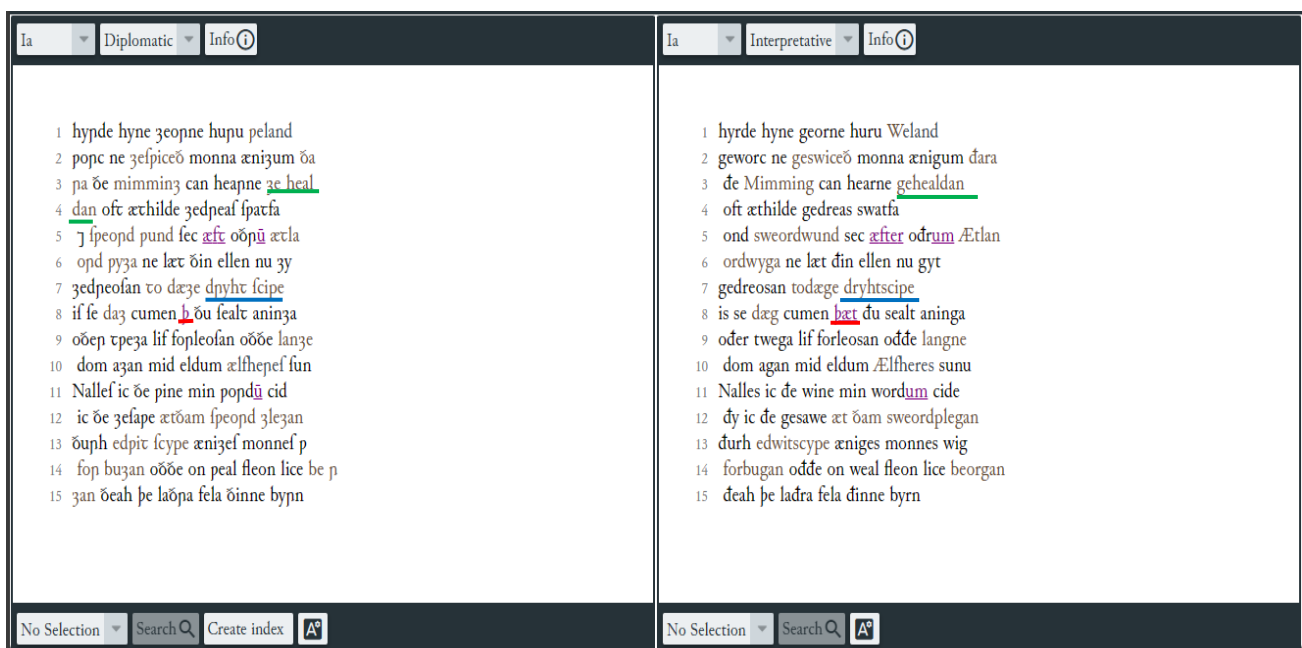


Figure 23: Visualisation of normalised words in EVT – first examples.

Talking about the particularities we dealt with, the very first one we take into account is the normalisation of word boundaries, which are not always respected by the copyist. This is the case of *ða ra*, that in the manuscript – and as we can see from the diplomatic transcription – starts at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> line and ends at the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> line. To this extent, with the aim to guarantee a fluid readability of the fragments, I normalised it providing the reader with the correct representation as displayed in EVT. In the attached screenshot, I underlined the word in green, in both transcriptions. We can observe that the original reading found in the manuscript, namely *ða ra* is preserved in the diplomatic transcription, while we can visualise the unified word in the interpretative edition. The interpretative edition also displays the normalised characters. Conversely, the interpretative transcription presents the unified lemma in its correct version, along with the normalisation of the standard characters, in this case the normalisation of the insular small letter r. Moreover, in the 8<sup>th</sup> line of the screenshot of fragment Ia, we can visualize another editorial choice I applied, and I am referring to the expansion of the abbreviated conjunction *þæt* (lit. that<sup>131</sup>), represented in the manuscript as <þ>. In the same screenshot, I underlined the case in red.

The third and the last case of interest in this screenshot is the original reading of the normalised form *dryhtscipe* (lit. rulership, lordship<sup>132</sup>), which in the manuscript appears divided. Consequently, in the 7<sup>th</sup> line of the diplomatic transcription of the screenshot, I reported *dryht scipe*. The problem consists in the ambiguous interpretation of the original writing, since, both *dryht* and *scipe* have their own meaning, while the correct form is the united one and we can understand it only if considering the context of the verse, as analysed in Section 4.2.10. Thus, while encoding this case, I made clear that in the diplomatic transcription what I wanted to be visualized was *dryht scipe*, while in the interpretative version I normalised it using the form *dryhtscipe*. In the screenshot I used the colour blue to underline these two forms.

Among other problems concerning the textual dimension, we discussed errors and deteriorated and damaged passages of the manuscript, which in an edition of this kind cannot be ignored. To be precise, we took into account the normalisation of the erroneous representation of the lemma *motan* (lit. to be allowed, may<sup>133</sup>), which in the manuscript appears as *mtoten*, as shown in the 14<sup>th</sup> line of the diplomatic transcription FIIId.

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<sup>131</sup> Bosworth Toller's Anglo-Saxon Dictionary online: <https://bosworthtoller.com/31501>. (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

<sup>132</sup> Bosworth Toller's Anglo-Saxon Dictionary online: <https://bosworthtoller.com/8063>. (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

<sup>133</sup> Bosworth Toller's Anglo-Saxon Dictionary online: <https://bosworthtoller.com/23193>. (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).

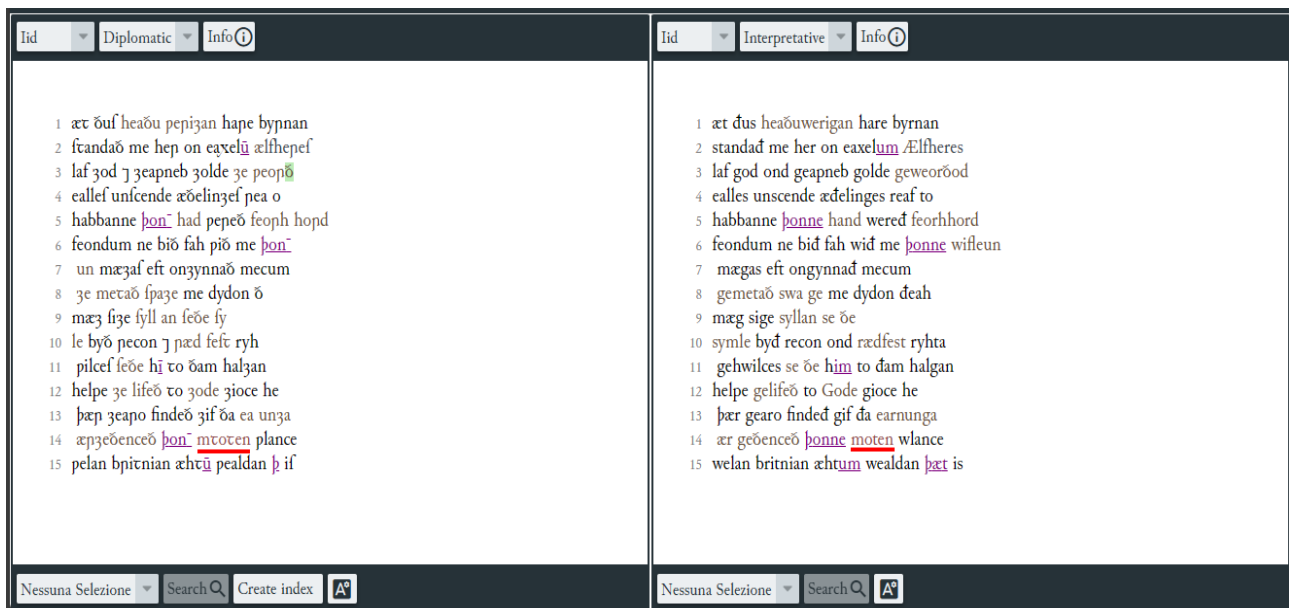


Figure 24: Visualisation of normalised words in EVT – second example.

By observing the EVT interface, we can notice my decision to maintain the incorrect form in the diplomatic transcription and to correct it in the interpretative one, as highlighted in red in this screenshot.

Then, in section 4.2.9., the example I considered was the 6<sup>th</sup> line of fragment IIc, where in the manuscript only a part of the reconstructed word *gegirwed* is present. Since what remains on the original document are the letters -an- I encountered some difficulties in reconstructing its complete form, thus I had to rely on other editions. In this case, as reported in the same section, thanks to the linguistic considerations proposed by Schwab, I decided to normalise the two original letters into the word *gegirwed*, as it is visible in the following screenshot, where both forms are underlined in purple.

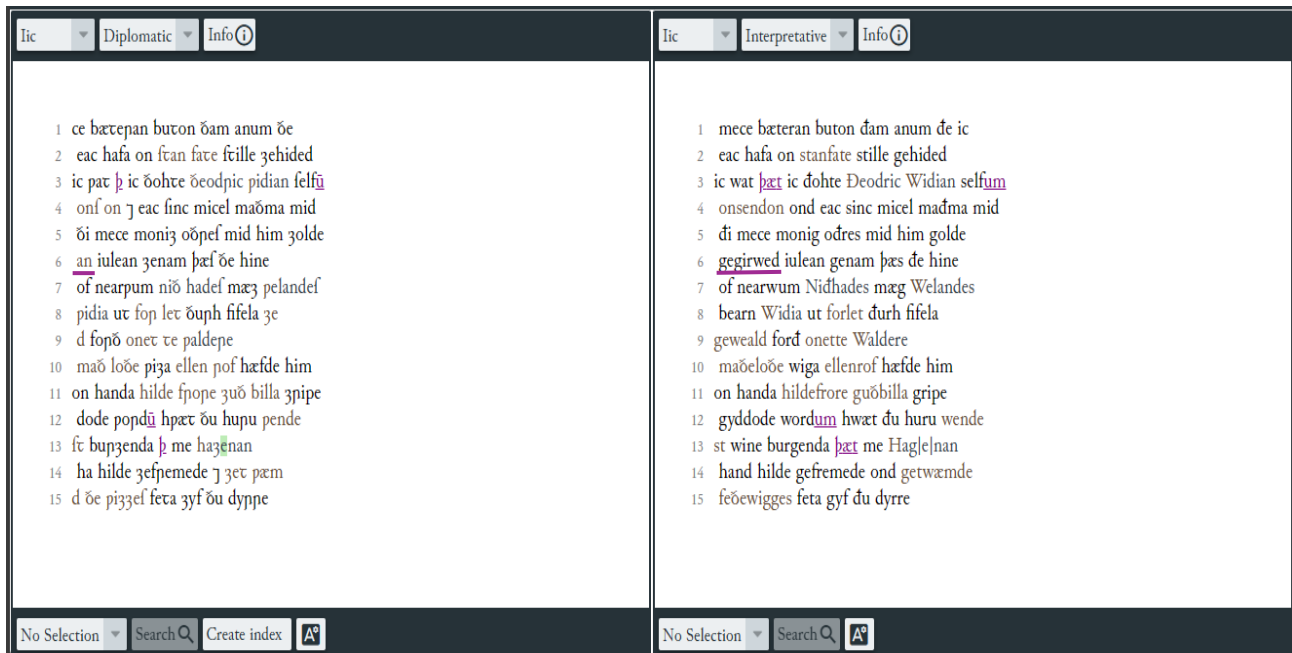


Figure 25: Visualisation of normalised words in EVT, third example.

Moreover, as far as this word is concerned, its readability is affected by a small hole, which is what I encoded within the <damage/> element in the XML file. However, its presence is not apparent in the visualisation, and it is visible only in the encoded file. This is a limit of EVT, but it could be probably circumvented by applying an additional stylesheet. Another example of this is the encoding of the metrical structure I proposed and that we are going to address in the next paragraphs.

#### 4.3.2.4. Problems with the metrical structure

A broader editorial decision I applied concerns the subdivision of the metrical structure of the fragments since – as explained in Section 4.2.11 – the *scriptio continua* of the original document could limit a clear comprehension of the content. In my prototype I decided to also edit the metrical structure of the fragments, since, in my opinion, the use of the *scriptio continua* could affect the comprehension of the content. Clearly, this problem affects the visualisation of the text, since EVT, both in the diplomatic and in the interpretative transcriptions, displays only the division of lines marked with <lb/>, as shown in the screenshot of fragment Ia<sup>134</sup>.

<sup>134</sup> Note that this is visible also in the other screenshots I included.

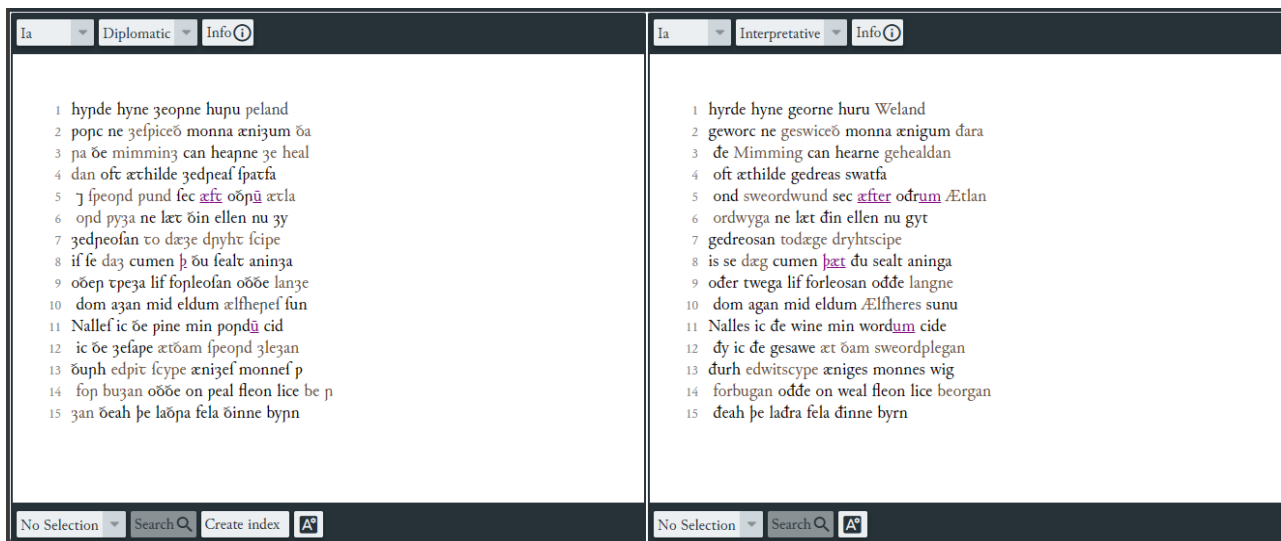


Figure 26: Problems with the visualisation of the normalised metrical structure in EVT.

At the moment, it does not seem possible to solve this problem, but EVT is under constant updating, in fact, the developers are now working on a new version<sup>135</sup>.

Despite this, the work of the encoder in this case is not to be considered nullified since it is apparent in the XML file.

Nevertheless, it is also true that these problems are minor if compared to the benefits of the software. As a matter of fact, EVT beta 2 offers the users a free digital representation, with transcriptions and facsimiles of ancient sources that otherwise, in most cases, would probably be inaccessible. To this extent, digital images and transcriptions are useful, but they only scratch the surface of EVT's benefits. Regarding my prototype, the possibility of EVT beta 2 to display more than just a level of the original material was what ultimately persuaded me to select it, since I could offer the users a diplomatic and an interpretative perspective<sup>136</sup>.

In my experience, the more I learned about this tool, the more I wanted to work with it, as its true potential emerges gradually. Among them, we are aware of the high level of personalization EVT offers within its configuration phase. Indeed, thanks to the config.json file, the encoder can change the output of the edition as he/she prefers, modifying the typology of edition, the layout, the

<sup>135</sup>EVT - Edition Visualization Technology 3 (v. 1.0.0-alpha): <https://iris.unito.it/handle/2318/1896873> (Last accessed: 13/06/2024).

<sup>136</sup>To this extent, I would like to emphasise that while a diplomatic-interpretive edition can accurately convey two distinct levels of a single document, this does not imply that the interpretative and diplomatic components should be viewed as distinct, especially in the context of the digital realm and from the encoding to the visualisation, the interactions between the two dimensions become clearer and clearer.

colours, the languages of use, etc., of the edition. Furthermore, little technical expertise is needed to configure the config.json file or the edition itself, making EVT beta 2 available to all users. Comprehensibly, uncertainties while approaching it might occur, but they should not constitute too big of a problem because EVT provides instructions. They clearly define the download process and subsequent use, making EVT beta 2 a user-friendly instrument. In addition, another aspect that reflects its user-friendliness is the fact that EVT beta 2 is an open access and free resource.

However, EVT beta 2 can also be utilised to produce critical editions. Thus, within this software even more than two layers of the same starting document can be considered at the same time, an aspect that totally distinguish digital editions. Yet, if EVT beta 2 is configured to also display the critical part, the user will visualize the critical apparatus in the edition too, enabling the comparison of multiple witnesses of the same document. Even though this trait is not applicable to *Waldere's* vellums, it is nonetheless important to acknowledge.

As a result, EVT beta 2 provides an excellent analytical tool that, with all its capabilities, enables anyone to interact with a scholarly digital – interpretative, diplomatic, diplomatic-interpretative, or critical – edition. Unfortunately, however, counterbalancing the advantages of the programme are its own limitations, to which solutions do not exist yet. Therefore, while its developer and supporters are working on it, what users, editors, and encoders that work with EVT beta 2 can do in the interim, on the one hand, is take full advantage of the program by making the most of its features, and on the other wait for the next version to be released.

## Conclusion

This project, whose aim was to demonstrate the advantages of the digital medium applied to editing practices, resulted in the first digital edition of *Waldere's* fragments. By critically working on them, I could translate the theory of scholarly digital editing into practice, starting with a philological analysis and concluding with the creation of a diplomatic-interpretative scholarly digital edition. Moreover, as I intended to do from the very beginning, besides proving the superiority of the digital paradigm over the typographic one, I was highlighted the value of such historic document. Thus, according to the steps required in the process of creating a digital edition proposed by Mancinelli & Pierazzo (2020), I started with the analysis of the manuscript. I began by concentrating on the source, and only after delineating the historical and linguistic contexts of the fragments, I examined them in more detail, deriving useful information for the creation of my edition. As a matter of fact, the analysis conducted on the various aspects of the work is directly transposed in the edition itself, since all linguistic, philological, and historical considerations are contained therein. In such wise, the first evidence of the superiority of digital editions over traditional ones emerges, especially regarding their pluralistic nature. This is made possible by the digital paradigm, which allows the editor to include images, multiple types of transcriptions, annotations to the text, and information about the edited document, as well as information about the edition (Sahle, 2016). *A digital edition of Waldere's fragments* demonstrates this, since it includes two different transcriptions, the diplomatic and the interpretative ones, facsimile images of the manuscript, along with other useful information to contextualise it, its content, and the edition itself. In truth, also non-digital scholarly editions may include these features, however, what makes the difference is the representations they convey. As a matter of fact, while the outcome of a digital edition is a multimedia and dynamic source, with paper ones we can expect nothing more than a static representation of the edited document. This last aspect concerns also a possible continuous development of digital editions, since they can be modified and enriched by the editor at any time, thanks to the versatility of the digital paradigm (Mancinelli & Pierazzo, 2020). Among other benefits of digital editions considered I focused on their ease of access and consultation. As a matter of fact, in most cases they represent open access sources with a very user-friendly interface (Mancinelli & Pierazzo, 2020).

Nevertheless, a digital edition is the result of extremely meticulous work, based on a certain amount of technical and computer knowledge, risking becoming an obstacle for less experienced users. The most evident difficulty concerns the encoding phase and its specificity. However, this can be

considered as an apparent problem, since during the creative process of a digital edition, the editor – professional or not – has the possibility to consult specific guidelines. Sticking to my project, I recall the ones provided by the Text Encoding Initiative and available anytime at <https://tei-c.org/guidelines/>.

However, while working on a digital edition, also problems without a solution may arise. To this extent, I consider a limit related to the visualisation of the edition within Edition Visualisation Technology beta 2. As far as my prototype is concerned, the software could not provide a proper visualisation of the normalised metrical structure of the fragments I proposed, even though I encoded it correctly, causing my editorial decision to remain visible only at encoding level as discussed in section 4.2.9. This is a clear drawback of the digital environment, yet it does not totally alter the outcome. However, even though problems exist also in such a developed context, they should not discourage users and editor, precisely because, most likely, they will be solved thanks to continuous technological development. As an example, as far as EVT is concerned, a testing version of EVT 3 already exists and according to its creator, Roberto Rosselli Del Turco, it will fix bugs and iterations of previous versions<sup>137</sup>. Although experts are still working on it, we can expect EVT 3 to solve similar visualisation problems, allowing users, as well as editors, to deal with an even more complete tool of analysis than EVT beta 2 already is. Furthermore, taking into account the visualisation possibilities already offered by EVT beta 2, it is feasible to think that EVT 3 will allow an even more complete visualisation of the edited document. Specifically, we may be able to consult the critical, diplomatic, and interpretative levels at the same time and within the same tool. Thus, as evidenced by the continuous requests for the enhancement of digital editions, that led to the continuous development of specialised software, it is also reasonable to infer that their usage will grow exponentially among experienced and non-experienced users.

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<sup>137</sup> R. Rosselli Del Turco, C. Di Pietro, R. Masotti, Software EVT <<http://pelavicino.labcd.unipi.it/il-progetto/il-software-evt/>>, in E. Salvatori [et al.] (a cura di), Codice Pelavicino. Edizione digitale, 2a ed., 2020 (Last accessed: 28/05/2024).



## Appendix

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<TEI xmlns="http://www.tei-c.org/ns/1.0">
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<author>Delia Cervellin</author>
<respStmt>
<resp>Conversion to TEI-conformant markup</resp>
<resp>Edited and prepared by</resp>
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</respStmt>
</titleStmt>
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</availability>
</publicationStmt>
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<repository>Royal Danish Library</repository>
<idno>NKS 167 b kvart</idno>
<msName>Anglosaxonica Fragmenta duo membranacea, poetica, de Rege Walthero</msName>
</msIdentifier>
<msContents>
<summary>Anglosaxonica Fragmenta duo membranacea poetica, de Rege Walthero is an Anglo-
Saxon manuscript, dating back to the 10th century. The text is presented as a Germanic epic
poem, within which the deeds of the legendary figure of Waldere of Aquitaine are described in
sixty two alliterative verses distributed in four parchment folios.</summary>
<textLang mainLang="ang"/>
</msContents>
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<objectDesc form="fragments">
<supportDesc material="parchment">
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4 folios
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<height>200</height>
<width>120</width>
</dimensions>
</extent>
</supportDesc>
<layoutDesc>
<layout columns="1">
<p>Each fragment contains 15 lines written recto verso.</p>
</layout>
</layoutDesc>
</objectDesc>
<handDesc>
<p>The orthography of the manuscript matches that of a single hand, namely a large bold regular
squarish hand, typical of the West Saxon period.. The text shows also the unexperience of the
scribe, testified by the the presence of several errors and making the script not completely

```

clear.</p>

</handDesc>

<decoDesc>

<p>The 4 fragments composing the Anglosaxonica Fragmenta duo membranacea, poetica, de Rege Walthero respect a simple and basic structure. Only a small decorative artwork is presented in the inferior margin of folio Ib, representing an acanthus leaf frieze, that remembers some embellishments typical of the Scandinavian style. </p>

</decoDesc>

</physDesc>

<history>

<origin>

<p>The manuscript is dated to a period between the 10th and 11th centuries, even though some academics tend to date the copy to a time between the 8th and 9th centuries due to the presence of archaic components. Geographical information regarding the folios are strictly linked to the linguistic aspect, that allows us to identify England as its original area of composition. </p>

</origin>

<provenance>

<p>It is not clear how the manuscript arrived in the Denmark, where is now stored in the Royal Danish Library, but this is probable due to Grímur Jónsson Thorkelín, that during his studies on "Beowulf" around the 8th century, found also these fragments.</p>

</provenance>

</history>

</msDesc>

<!-- List of persons -->

<listPerson type="protagonists">

<person xml:id="Weyland">

<persName>

<forename>Weyland the Smith</forename>

```
</persName>
<sex>M</sex>
<note>Figure of a legendary smith, very popular in the Germanic tradition.</note>
</person>
```

```
<person xml:id="Attila">
<persName>
<forename>Attila</forename>
</persName>
<sex>M</sex>
<note>The Attila persona mentioned in the narrative is a mythical reinterpretation of the historical
king of the Huns, within the Germanic tradition.
According to the complete legend, Attila imprisoned <persName
ref="#Waldere">Waldere</persName>, <persName ref="#Gutthere">Guðhere</persName>,
<persName ref="#Hagen">Hagen</persName> and <persName
ref="#Hildegyth">Hildegýð</persName> at his court,
where they lived together for several years.</note>
</person>
```

```
<person xml:id="Ælfhere">
<persName>
<forename>Ælfhere</forename>
</persName>
<sex>M</sex>
<note><persName ref="#Waldere">Waldere</persName>'s dad</note>
</person>
```

```
<person xml:id="Gutthere">
<persName>
<forename>Guðhere</forename>
</persName>
<sex>M</sex>
```

```
<note>King of the Burgundians and <persName ref="#Waldere">the main hero</persName>'s  
archenemy.</note>  
</person>
```

```
<person xml:id="Theodric">  
<persName>  
<forename>Deodric</forename>  
</persName>  
<sex>M</sex>
```

<note>His figure is the legendary depiction of the Ostrogoth king Theodoric the Great, who reigned between the 5th and the 6th centuries AD.

His role in the Waldere fragments is marginal, but the legendary figure based on this historical character is found in other texts belonging to the Germanic tradition, such as the Nibelungenlied, and he is also the protagonist of a cycle of tales about him, the Dietrich cycle.

```
</note>  
</person>
```

```
<person xml:id="Widia">  
<persName>  
<forename>Widia</forename>  
</persName>  
<sex>M</sex>
```

<note><persName ref="#Weyland">Weyland</persName>'s son and <persName ref="#Theodric">Deodric</persName>'s right-hand man.</note>

```
</person>
```

```
<person xml:id="Nithhad">  
<persName>  
<forename>Niðhad</forename>  
</persName>  
<sex>M</sex>
```

<note>In the myth, he plays the role of a wicked king and his figure interwine with those of

<persName ref="#Weyland">the legendary smith</persName>, <persName ref="#Theodric">Deodric</persName> and <persName ref="#Widia">Widia</persName>.

According to the legend, a mystical ring, that could make its wearer fly was allegedly stolen from <persName ref="#Weyland">Weyland</persName> by Niðhad, who then gave it to his daughter Badhuil, imprisoning <persName ref="#Weyland">the smith</persName> as outcome.

Weyland cannot escape his prison, and he is obliged to work as personal smith for his <persName ref="#Nithhad">new owner</persName>.

One day Badhuil takes the broke magic ring to <persName ref="#Weyland">the blacksmith</persName> to be fixed.

Once <persName ref="#Weyland">he</persName> recognises his ring, he imprisons Badhuil, forcing her to conceive a child with him as retaliation, giving birth to <persName ref="#Widia">Widia</persName>.</note>

</person>

<person xml:id="Waldere">

<persName>

<forename>Waldere</forename>

</persName>

<sex>M</sex>

<note>Main character of the story. His figures is fictional. It is not known for sure which historical figure he represented, but according to Himes (2009), he embodied the canons of all heroes of the migration period.</note>

</person>

<person xml:id="Hagen">

<persName>

<forename>Hagen</forename>

</persName>

<sex>M</sex>

<note>Enemy of the <persName ref="#Waldere">main character</persName> and loyal ally of <persName ref="#Guthhere">the Burgundian king</persName>.</note>

</person>

<person xml:id="Hildegyth">

<persName>

<forename>Hildegyth</forename>

</persName>

<sex>F</sex>

<note>Despite never being addressed directly in the fragments, she is <persName ref="#Waldere">the hero</persName>'s lover in the legend.</note>

</person>

</listPerson>

<listBibl>

<biblStruct xml:id="Schwab">

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<author>Ute Schwab</author>

<title>Waldere : testo e commento a cura di Ute Schwab</title>

<textLang>Italian</textLang>

<note>reprint</note>

<imprint>

<pubPlace>Catania</pubPlace>

<publisher>C.U.E.C.M.</publisher>

<date>1999</date>

</imprint>

</monogr>

</biblStruct>

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<author>Antonio Piccolini</author>

<title>L'episodio di Valtari nella Pidreks saga</title>

<textLang>Italian</textLang>

</analytic>

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<imprint>
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<publisher>Methuen</publisher>
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```
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</imprint>
</monogr>
</biblStruct>
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<monogr>
<author>George Stephens</author>
<title>Two leaves of King Waldere's lay : a hitherto unknown old-english epic of the eighth century
; belonging to the saga-cyclus King Theodric and his men ; now first publ. from the originals of the
9th century</title>
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<imprint>
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<mapping type="normalised">w</mapping>

</glyph>

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  <mapping type="diplomatic">ſ</mapping>
  <mapping type="normalised">s</mapping>
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```

```

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  <mapping type="normalised">im</mapping>
</glyph>
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</char>
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ref="yogh"/>eo<g ref="rins"/>ne</l>
  <l n="2">hu<g ref="rins"/>u <persName ref="#Weyland"><choice><orig><g
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resp="#Himes">ge</supplied></reg></unclear><g ref="wen"/>o<g ref="rins"/>c ne
  <choice>
    <orig><g ref="yogh"/>e<g ref="slong"/><g ref="wen"/>ice<g ref="eth"/></orig>
    <reg>geswiceð</reg>
  </choice></l>
  <l n="3">monna <g ref="ae"/>ni<g ref="yogh"/>um
  <choice>
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 <abbr><g ref="ae"/>f<g ref="tins"/></abbr>  
 <expan><g ref="ae"/>f<g ref="tins"/>e<g ref="rins"/></expan>  
 </choice>  
 o<g ref="eth"/><g ref="rins"/><choice><abbr>ū</abbr><expan><g  
 ref="umacr"/></expan></choice>  
 </l>  
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 <reg><hi rend="cap">Æ</hi>tlan</reg>  
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ne <g ref="ae"/><g ref="tins"/> <g ref="eth"/>in ellen nu <g  
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<reg resp="#Himes">todæge</reg>

</choice>

<choice><orig>d<g ref="rins"/>yh<g ref="tins"/> <g ref="slong"/>cipe</orig>

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</choice>

</l>

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<choice>

<sic>da<g ref="yogh"/></sic>

<corr>dæg</corr>

</choice>

cumen

</l>

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 ref="ae"/></orig><reg><hi rend="cap">Æ</hi></reg></choice>lfhe<g ref="rins"/>e<g  
 ref="slong"/></persName> <g ref="slong"/>un<unclear/><reg><supplied cert="high"  
 resp="#Schwab">u</supplied></reg></l>  
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 ref="rins"/>d<choice><abbr>ū</abbr><expan><g ref="umacr"/></expan></choice>  
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 <reg><g ref="eth"/>y</reg>  
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 <choice>  
 <orig><g ref="ae"/>t<g ref="eth"/>am</orig>  
 <reg>æt ðam</reg>  
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</choice>  
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 <l n="16">lice <choice><orig>be <unclear><reg><supplied reason="illegible"  
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 ##### -->  
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 bill<choice><abbr>u</abbr><expan><g ref="umacr"/></expan></choice> heo<g  
 ref="wen"/>um</l>  
 <l n="2">Ac <g ref="eth"/>u <g ref="slong"/>ymlle fu<g ref="rins"/><g ref="eth"/>o<g  
 ref="rins"/> <lb facs="#W\_line\_lb\_02" n="2" xml:id="W\_lb\_lb\_02"/>feohtan <g  
 ref="slong"/>ohte<g ref="slong"/><g ref="tins"/></l>  
 <l n="3">m<g ref="ae"/>l ofe<g ref="rins"/> mea<g ref="rins"/>ce <g ref="eth"/>y <lb  
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 <choice>  
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 <reg>  
 ic ðe</reg>

</choice>  
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   <orig>on d<g ref="rins"/>ed</orig>  
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 feoh<g ref="tins"/>an <g ref="slong"/>ohte<g ref="slong"/><g ref="tins"/></l>  
 <l n="5"><choice>  
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 <reg>æt ðam</reg>  
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   <reg>ætstealle</reg>  
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 ref="slong"/> monne<g ref="slong"/></l>  
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   <reg>wigrædenne</reg>  
 </choice>  
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 ref="slong"/><g ref="tins"/></l>  
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 <orig><g ref="yogh"/>ifede</orig>  
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 mit  
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 <reg>ðy ðu</reg>  
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 ref="rins"/>e</orig><reg><hi rend="cap">G</hi>uðhere</reg></choice></persName> <g  
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 ref="slong"/>  
 beadu<g ref="wen"/>e on<g ref="yogh"/>an</l>  
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ref="tins"/>e  
 <g ref="ae"/><g ref="rins"/>e<g ref="slong"/><g ref="tins"/> <g ref="slong"/>ecan</l>  
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 xml:id="W\_lb\_lb\_12"/>he  
 <g ref="eth"/>am <g ref="slong"/><g ref="wen"/>u<g ref="rins"/>de <g ref="et"/> <g  
 ref="eth"/>am  
 <choice>  
 <orig><g ref="slong"/>ync fa<g ref="tins"/><g ref="umacr"/></orig>  
 <reg>syncfatum</reg>  
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 </choice>  
 m<g ref="ae"/>ni<g ref="yogh"/>o  
 nu <g ref="slong"/>ceal bea<g ref="yogh"/>a lea<g ref="slong"/></l>  
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 xml:id="W\_lb\_lb\_14\_orig"/>fan</orig>  
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 f<g ref="rins"/><choice><abbr>ō</abbr><expan><g ref="omacr"/></expan></choice>  
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 hlafu<g ref="rins"/>d <g ref="slong"/>ecan</l>  
 <l n="15"><choice><orig>eal <lb facs="#W\_line\_lb\_15" n="15"  
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 o<g ref="eth"/><g ref="eth"/>e he<g ref="rins"/> <g ref="ae"/><g ref="rins"/>  
 <g ref="slong"/><g ref="wen"/>efan</l>  
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<!-- ##### fragment Ilc
##### -->
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    me</supplied></reg>ce b<g ref="ae"/><g ref="tins"/>e<g ref="rins"/>an</l>
<l n="2"><bu<g ref="tins"/>on <g ref="eth"/>am anum <g ref="eth"/>e <unclear/>
    <reg><supplied reason="illegible" resp="#Schwab">ic</supplied></reg><lb
facs="#W_line_Ilc_02" n="2" xml:id="W_lb_Ilc_02"/>
    eac hafa</l>
<l n="3">on <choice>
    <orig><g ref="slong"/><g ref="tins"/>an fa<g ref="tins"/>e</orig>
    <reg>stanfate</reg>
</choice>
    <g ref="slong"/><g ref="tins"/>ille <g ref="yogh"/>ehided</l>
<l n="4"><lb facs="#W_line_Ilc_03" n="3" xml:id="W_lb_Ilc_03"/>ic <g ref="wen"/>a<g
ref="tins"/>
    <choice><abbr><g ref="thorn"/></abbr>
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</choice>
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ref="eth"/></orig><reg><hi rend="cap">Ð</hi></reg></choice>eod<g ref="rins"/>ic</persName>
    <persName ref="#Widia"><choice><orig><g ref="wen"/></orig><reg><hi
rend="cap">W</hi></reg></choice>idian</persName></l>
<l n="5"><g ref="slong"/>elf<choice><abbr>ū</abbr><expan><g
ref="umacr"/></expan></choice> <lb facs="#W_line_Ilc_04" n="4" xml:id="W_lb_Ilc_04"/>
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resp="#Schwab" cert="medium">end</supplied></reg></unclear>
on</orig><reg>onsendon</reg></choice>
    <g ref="et"/> eac <g ref="slong"/>inc micel</l>
<l n="6">ma<g ref="eth"/>ma mid <lb facs="#W_line_Ilc_05" n="5" xml:id="W_lb_Ilc_05"/> <g

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ref="eth"/>i mece  
 moni<g ref="yogh"/> o<g ref="eth"/><g ref="rins"/>e<g ref="slong"/> mid him</l>  
 <l n="7"><g ref="yogh"/>olde <lb facs="#W\_line\_IIc\_06" n="6" xml:id="W\_lb\_IIc\_06"/>  
 <unclear>  
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