

# Texts and Contexts of the Oldest Runic Inscriptions



Tineke Looijenga



THE NORTHERN WORLD    BRILL

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TEXTS & CONTEXTS  
OF THE  
OLDEST RUNIC INSCRIPTIONS

# THE NORTHERN WORLD

North Europe and the Baltic c. 400-1700 AD  
Peoples, Economies and Cultures

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# TEXTS & CONTEXTS OF THE OLDEST RUNIC INSCRIPTIONS

BY

TINEKE LOOIJENGA



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*“For omens and the casting of lots they have the highest regard. Their procedure in casting lots is always the same. They cut of a branch of a nut-bearing tree and slice it into strips; these they mark with different signs and throw them completely at random onto a white cloth. Then the priest of the state, if the consultation is a public one, or the father of the family if it is private, offers a prayer to the gods, and looking up at the sky picks up three strips, one at a time, and reads their meaning from the signs previously scored on them.”*  
C. Tacitus, *GERMANIA X*, (ed. Penguin Classics, transl. H. Mattingly/S.A. Handford, Middlesex, 1948).

*“Runar mont þu finna, ok rapna stafé, mjök stora stafé, mjök stinna stafé, es faþe fimbolpúl, ok gørho ginnregen, ok reist ragna hroþtr . . .”.* Hávamál, Edda, strophe 142 (Die Lieder der Edda, ed. B. Sijmons, Groningen, 1906). Translation: *“Runes you will find, and readable staves, very strong staves, very stout staves, staves that Bolthor stained, made by mighty powers, graven by the prophetic God”.* (The Elder Edda, transl. by Paul B. Taylor & W.H. Auden, London, 1969).

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

acc.	accusative
adj.	adjective
adv.	adverb
Bret.	Bretonic
Celt.	Celtic
CIL	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum
comp.	comparative
conj.	conjunctive
dat.	dative
dem.	demonstrative
Du	Dutch
f.	feminine
Fris.	Frisian
Gall.	Gallic
Gmc	Germanic
Go	Gothic
h.	half
Hitt.	Hittite
IE	Indo-European
imp.	imperative
impers.	impersonal
ind.	indicative
inf.	infinitive
Lat.	Latin
m.	masculine
med.	medium
MHG	Middle High German
ms.	manuscript
mss.	manuscripts
n.	neuter
NIc	New Icelandic
ODan	Old Danish
OE	Old English
OFrank	Old Frankish
OFris	Old Frisian

OHG	Old High German
Old Ind.	Old Indic
ON	Old Norse (Old Icelandic)
opt.	optative
OS	Old Saxon
part.	participle
pers.	personal
PG	Proto-Germanic
pl.	plural
PN	personal name
prep.	preposition
pres.	present
pret.	preterite
pron.	pronoun
sg.	singular
subj.	subjunctive
th.	third
UFO	Unbekannter Fund Ort [unknown findspot]
voc.	vocative

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## CHAPTER ONE

# RUNES, RUNOLOGY AND RUNOLOGISTS

### 1. *Introduction*

This volume gathers nearly all older fuþark<sup>1</sup> inscriptions dating from the period 150–700 AD found in Denmark, Germany, England, the Netherlands, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Hungary, Bosnia, Rumania, Norway and Sweden. The book starts with essays on early runic writing and the historical and archaeological contexts of runic objects, and continues with a catalogue of the runic inscriptions found in the regions mentioned above. The inscriptions of Germany, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Bosnia and Hungary have been listed together as the Continental Corpus.<sup>2</sup> One find from Hungary and two finds from Rumania are listed among the Danish and Gothic Corpus.

The catalogue gives datings, readings and interpretations, plus limited graphic, orthographic and linguistic analyses of the inscriptions from the above mentioned corpora, complete with concise bibliographical references. This approach ensures that the most important data is presented with regard to the objects, contexts, runes and interpretations. In many cases the readings or interpretations (or both) are tentative and more or less speculative. There are several reasons—runes are vague, damaged or abraded, and sometimes illegible. Of course one can conclude that an inscription is ‘uninterpretable’, but I thought it wise to offer a few possibilities on which others can base further research or conjectures.

The overall aim has been to provide the reader with a practical survey of the oldest inscriptions from the aforementioned areas, together with relevant archaeological and cultural-historical data. Within this framework there was no room for extensive linguistic considerations and exhaustive references to other interpretations, although information from various sources has been compiled in the catalogue.

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<sup>1</sup> Fuþark is the name of the runic alphabet, after the first six letters: f u þ a r k.

<sup>2</sup> This corpus is also known as South Germanic, but I prefer the term Continental.

The main issues are the origin and initial spread of runic knowledge, and the aims and use of early runic writing. My point of departure was the comparison of the earliest runic traditions in the countries around the North Sea (England, the Netherlands, and Denmark) and on the Continent, predominantly Germany. I chose not to focus on Scandinavia, as is more usual when studying the early runic traditions. This unorthodox approach stems from the hope that in this way some answers might be found to questions concerning the essence of runic script in the first few centuries AD. When focusing on the function of runic writing, one automatically has to ask why this special script was designed at all, and who first used it. It seems logical to look for the origins of runic script not in Scandinavia, but nearer the Roman *limes*. This point of view has been disputed, but it appeared interesting enough to warrant further investigation. I have therefore looked at the question of the first runographers and their social context. It is vital to take a fresh look at the contents of early runic inscriptions, and in fact a change of perspective has led to unexpected insights.

## 2. *History of runic research*

Runic research began in Sweden and Denmark in the sixteenth century, initially under the influence of the then current Biblical views on history and culture. The first Swedish runologists were J. Buraeus (1568–1652) and the brothers Johan (1488–1544) and Olaus Magnus (1490–1557). A century later we find Olof Rudbeck (1630–1702), who in 1699 agreed with Johan Perinskiöld that runestones dated from the period just before the Flood, and that runes were invented by the Svea-Goths. Runes were thought to have been brought to Scandinavia by Magog, son of Japhet. In 1750 a book by Johan Göransson appeared which included 1173 drawings of runestones and proposed that the runes themselves were brought to the North in 2000 BC by a white man, namely Gomer, brother of Magog. Their example was the Hebrew alphabet, and the Greeks, Etruscans and Romans were held to have borrowed their letters from the sixteen Nordic runes. Thus the runes were not invented by a heathen, but by a pious Christian who was inspired by God. Benzelius suggested in 1724 that runes were derived from an old Ionian, i.e.



Greek, alphabet. Liljegren argued in 1832 that the runes were based on the Latin alphabet, a theory which still has supporters.

The famous early-medieval abbot of Fulda, Hrabanus Maurus (822–842) coined the term ‘Markomannic runes’ (echoed by Wilhelm Grimm in 1821) to refer to runes that were actually Danish. Their argument that German runes were ‘indigenous’ or ‘aryan’ was revived again in the early twentieth century by Wilser.

True scholarly work was actually begun by Ole Worm in 1651, with his book *Runar sea Danica Literatura antiquissima, vulgo Gothica dicta*. He looked at 49 Norse, 5 Gotlandic and 68 Danish inscriptions. Wormius argued that runes had emerged in Asia from the Hebrew alphabet, and Greek and Latin letters had sprung from the same source. He supposed runes to be much older than these latter alphabets. However, as early as the seventeenth century, there were scholars who recognized that most of the runestones dated from the Christian era. One of them was Celsius, who deciphered the staveless runes in 1675.

In seventeenth-century England, runological works by Worm, Resenius and the brothers Magnus became known alongside the Scandinavian Edda. It was a romantic era, in which Stonehenge was thought to have been erected by Vikings or Romans, and the pillars were assumed to be carved with runes. At this time most illegible inscriptions, including those on gravestones, were thought to be runes. A grave marker from 1842 in the Brandon graveyard (Isle of Man) reads “And Thou, dark Runic stone! Who knoweth what thy voiceless silence hides . . . Thy legend undisclosed!”

It was thought that England, Denmark and the Scandinavian peninsula were once one kingdom, peopled by Dacians, Goths, Vandals and Cimbrians. This realm was called The Runick Kingdom, and the inhabitants were Runians (see Fell 1991:201). Fell also refers to the English Romantic poets, who were very fond of the word ‘runic’, using it to express something extraordinarily mysterious. She notes approvingly that Byron used ‘runic’ only once, for something to rhyme with ‘Punic’ and ‘tunic’, in *Don Juan* (Fell 1991:202).

In 1807, Nyrup started the first collection of Danish runestones in what later became the National Museum, in Copenhagen. Between 1866–1901 the Englishman George Stephens wrote his four-volume work *The Old-Northern Runic Monuments of Scandinavia and England* on the runes then known in Scandinavia and in England. The beautiful drawings of runic objects in his books are unsurpassed, but his

interpretations are seen as worthless now, due to his lack of accurate philological knowledge.

In 1874, the Dane Ludvig Wimmer, the first modern runic scholar, published his work *Runeskriftens oprindelse og udvikling i Norden*. He proved that all runic alphabets went back to one basic fupark of 24 signs, which was known and used by all the Germanic tribes. These 24 letters were derived from the Latin capitals. In 1906, the Swede Otto Von Friesen claimed that the runes were derived from the Greek minuscule script of the third century AD. Scholars have argued the Latin or Greek *origo* theory without reaching consensus until the present day.

In 1902, the German Sigmund Feist proposed a Venetian-Germanic origin for runes, influenced by Venetian, Celtic and Latin scripts. Venetian writing is a variety of the Etruscan alphabet, more specifically a North-Italic variety. His theory collapsed due to the incorrect datings he assumed for runic inscriptions. This underlines the importance of archaeology as a supporting science for runology.

The Norwegian linguist and Celticist Carl Marstrand also proposed a derivation of runes from a North-Italic variety of the Etruscan alphabet. Several archaic alphabets still existed at the beginning of the first century AD in north Italy and the Alps, all of which were varieties of the Etruscan alphabet. Graphically, these alphabets come close to the runic fupark.

The end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth saw many fantasists who were inspired by esoteric theories. It was suggested that runes originated from the lunar phases, i.e. from astrological quadrants and that they were based on a system of swastikas. The same idea seems to have been used by the writer of the 'Frisian' Oera Linda Bok (a nineteenth-century hoax), who derived a kind of runic script based on the spokes of a wheel, called 'juul'. The beginning of the twentieth century also saw increasing interest in the alleged magical character of runes, especially by the Norwegian Magnus Olsen. In 1952, the Dane Anders Bæksted relegated the concept of magic in runic inscription to the realm of fantasy. This ushered in a new era of critical research in runological studies, which eventually resulted in a much more methodological approach.

A more archaeological approach had already begun in the 1930s, when two German runologists, Wolfgang Krause and Helmut Arntz, published their runological handbooks in cooperation with the archae-

ologists Herbert Jankuhn and Helmut Zeiss. From that time it became usual practice to combine runology with archaeology. The views of both Krause and Arntz were sometimes strongly influenced by the question of magic, which gave rise to the later facetious motto: *in dubio pro magia* (if in doubt, it's magic).

Krause's pupil and successor, Klaus Düwel, is much more reticent on whether any given runic text is magical in intention. He conducted extensive research into possible magical meanings in runic inscriptions, letter sequences, abecedaria, and classical and medieval alphabet magic, and contributed enormously to a more scholarly approach to runological studies. This is also true of English scholars such as Ray Page, John Hines and Michael Barnes. In Scandinavia runologists also have a scholarly approach in which magic plays only a suppositious role. These developments in runic studies all date from the last third of the twentieth century. Before that, there was no common method; every runologist worked according to his or her own standards, which in most cases were not even made explicit.

However, one cannot deny that some inscriptions may have had magical *purposes*. Clear instances of such magical meanings are rune-inscribed stones which have been placed inside a grave in such a manner that the inscription was invisible to the living, but instead faced the dead person. This custom was observed in Norway and Sweden in graves from the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries AD. Since these runic objects were among the first to become known, it is not surprising that early runology was preoccupied by thoughts of magical intent. Grave finds and depot finds which carry incomprehensible rune-sequences, 'magical words', fuparks and so-called 'ek-formulas' contribute to this theory.

### 3. *The fupark and the rune names*

The fupark: (1) its archaic form and some variants. The standard row had 24 characters, the Anglo-Frisian row obtained two extra: ƿ ƿ̅. The Anglo-Saxon row (2) had 33 characters in the end, although the latter three are only known from manuscripts. (3) The younger fupark, or Danish fupark was developed in the 7th century and counted 16 characters. Later developments, such as the short-twig runes, the 'dotted' runes and the 'staveless' runes, are not included in

this survey, since these runes were used in a period (10th–14th c.) not treated in this book.

(1) The archaic ‘standard’ form and some variants:

ƿ ƚ Ʀ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ  
 f u þ a r k g w h n i j i p z s t b e m l n g d o  
 ƿ ƚ Ʀ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ

(2) The Anglo-Saxon form and one variant, namely ‘s’, known as ‘bookhand s’:

ƿ ƚ Ʀ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ  
 f u þ o r c g w h n i j i p x s t b e m l n g c o e d a æ y e a g s

(3) The younger fuþark, also known as ‘Danish’ fuþark:

ƿ ƚ Ʀ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ ƚ  
 f u þ o r k A / h n i a s t b m l R

Runes have names for mnemonic and/or symbolic purposes. These names were recorded in the *Runica manuscripta*, in the form of alphabets and in small couplets which together form rune poems. The names were thus written down rather late. The oldest manuscript which contains a rune poem is a tenth-century *Codex Leidensis*; a somewhat later ms. contains the Danish rune names (Cod. Cotton. Galba A2). A tenth-century manuscript from St. Gallen contains the names of the 16 runes of the younger fuþark, known as the *Abecedarium Nordmannicum*. Norwegian rune names are recorded in a thirteenth-century rune poem and the Icelandic rune names in a fourteenth-century rune poem. The so-called Salzburg-Wiener-Alcuin manuscript from the tenth century contains an Anglo-Saxon fuþorc with 28 runes, with their names, and an additional eight runes from the older fuþark. Another English manuscript, Cod. Cottonianus Otho B. 10, contained a fuþorc with 33 runes and their names, but unfortunately this has been lost.

There is a gap of several centuries between the beginning of runic writing and the recorded names. Nevertheless, runologists believe that these names go back to the earlier period of runic writing, although the recorded names show a later stage of development in their spelling. It is possible, by applying the rules of historical lin-

guistics, to reconstruct the greater part of the original Germanic rune names of about the second century AD.

The runes from the older fuþark, the reconstructed Gmc names, the names in Old English and the translation:

ƿ	f	*fehu	feoh	cattle
ᵛ	u	*uruz	ūr	ox
ᵔ	þ	*þurisaz	þorn	thurs (giant), thorn
ᚦ	a	*ansuz	ōs ƿ	Ace, god; mouth
ᚷ	r	*raidō	rād	wagon, wheel
ᚨ	k	*kaunan(?)	cēn ƿ	tumour?; torch
ᚨ	g	*gebō	gyfu	gift
ᚦ	w	*wunjō	wyn	lust, pleasure
ᚨ	h	*haglaz	hægl ᚨ	hail, bad happenings
ᚦ	n	*naudiz	nýd	need, fate, destiny
ᚦ	i	*īsaz	īs	ice
ᚦ	j	*jāran	gēr	year, harvest
ᚦ	ī	*īwaz	ēoh, īh	yew
ᚦ	p	*perþō?	peorð	?
ᚦ	z	*algiz	eolhx, eolhxsecg	elk; rush
ᚦ	s	*sōwilō	sigel	sun
ᚦ	t	*tīwaz	tīr	Tyr, the sky god
ᚦ	b	*berkanan	beorc	birch
ᚦ	e	*ehwaz	eh	horse
ᚦ	m	*mannaz	man	man
ᚦ	l	*laguz	lagu	lake, water
ᚦ	(i)ng	*ingwaz	ing	Ing, fertility god
ᚦ	d	*dagaz	dæg	day
ᚦ	o	*ōþalan	ēþel, œþel	heritage, possession

Anglo-Frisian runes:

ƿ	a	āc	oak
ᚦ	æ	æsc	ash
ƿ	o	ōs	mouth

#### 4. *The meaning of the word rune*

A search for the meaning of the word rune begins with the Gothic bible, translated from Greek by the Gothic bishop Wulfila in the

fourth century. Apart from the runic inscriptions themselves, this is our oldest surviving Germanic text. The words *runa*, *garuni* appear about four times in this Gothic bible. Wulfila uses *runa* for instance to translate the Greek *mysterion*, in Luke 8:10 “the mysteries (secrets) of the kingdom of God”. In Luke 7: the counsel of God is translated by *runa gudis*. Matthew 27:1 concerns the decision (*runa*) made by the priests to kill Jesus. Mark 3:6 has the word *garuni*, which means consultation, or speech not intended to be overheard. Fellow meanings of OE *run-* are whisper, mystery, secret, that which is written with the idea of mystery or magic, and last but not least, rune, letter (cf. Fell 1991:195ff.).

Fell concluded that “in the early Anglo-Saxon period runes were so thoroughly absorbed into the Christian culture that they troubled no-one. With the coming of the Vikings, a people for whom runes were still associated with magic, incantation, charm, superstition, pagan belief etc. (if etc. there be) the Anglo-Saxon waters were faintly troubled”. She states that in later medieval and modern use, “there is no continuity at all from Old English. Neither humdrum archaic/dialectal *roun* nor fantastic Modern English *rune* have the slightest connection with the sophisticated Christian wisdom of Anglo-Saxon *run*” (Fell 1991:228f.).

Even Wormius gave another etymology of ‘rune’, namely from *ryn* or *ren*, both with almost the same meaning; *ren* is a cut or channel of water, while *ryn* signifies a furrow in the earth drawn by a plough. The Saxons named their characters runes from *ryn*, a furrow, because they were ploughed out, as it were (Fell 1991:203). This etymology has also been defended by Morris (1985), based on the arguments for and against ‘furrow’ and ‘mystery’, and the connection he proposes with “to cut, to carve” seems plausible.

### 5. *Points of departure*

Runic writing started at a time when a large part of Europe was under Roman imperial rule. Therefore, the impact of Roman culture on Germania and Germanic-Roman relations during the first two centuries of the Christian era were among the first topics to be investigated. A separate chapter has been dedicated to questions concerning the identification of both the early runographers and the location of the original region of runic writing.

The oldest datable runic find (ca. 160 AD, cf. Ilkjær 1996<sup>a</sup>:68,73) is a comb with the legend **harja**, found in the Vimose bog on the Danish island of Funen, although an ambiguous (runic or Roman) inscription on a brooch from Meldorf, North Germany, has a suggested date of around 50 AD (Düwel & Gebühr 1981). From the second century onwards, runic items were recorded reasonably regularly, albeit in small numbers. Objects from the second to fourth centuries have been found in present-day Denmark, Sweden, Norway, North Germany, Poland, Russia and Rumania. From the fifth century onwards, runes appear in the Netherlands, England and South Germany. A substantial number of inscribed objects are weapons, parts and fragments of weapons, and jewellery. The material used was mostly (precious) metal, but objects of wood and bone have also survived.

About two hundred gold bracteates (small gold medallions) inscribed with runes constitute a large category. They were manufactured for the most part in Denmark between the fifth and sixth centuries, and form a substantial and separate group among runic objects from the Migration Period. Bracteates should not be overlooked in any study of early runic texts. The fact that these precious objects were made during quite a short period (only a few generations) may be due to a rise in power of an elite, or to the emergence of power centres, like Gudme on Funen. With this in mind, I intend to look more closely at these historical developments. Legible texts from 48 rune-bracteates from the second half of the fifth century will be included in this study, which was based on descriptions, photos and drawings from the six volumes of the *Ikonographischer Katalog* (ed. Axboe et al. 1984–1989). Bracteates with as yet unintelligible sign-sequences have been omitted, as the transliteration is uncertain. For instance, a rune that apparently has to be transliterated as **l** occurs in at least five different forms: † † † † † †. I refer to the remarkable differences in the number of **l** and **u** runes on bracteates when compared with other objects (see Müller 1986, pp. 452–467, esp. p. 459).

My intention was to detect similarities and differences between the runic traditions of England, the Netherlands, Denmark and the Continent, and to establish whether it is possible to distinguish a common runic tradition, traceable over West and Central Europe and springing from one source. The Continental inscriptions appear to be most suitable for comparison with the North Sea group, especially as regards the combination and relation of objects, runes and

texts, and bearing in mind the cultural/political background of the Early Middle Ages.<sup>3</sup>

These deliberations lead to the question of whether by cataloguing and then comparing texts, objects and their archaeological and historical contexts, we can obtain information about the use, spread and purpose of runic writing in the period under discussion. If the nature and status of runic usage in the Roman Period and the early Middle Ages can be roughly established from the inseparable trio of object, text and (archaeological) context, we may gain some insight into the reasons why people created runic script.

This study is restricted to inscriptions dating from the earliest period of recorded runic writing, from ca. 150 to 700,<sup>4</sup> i.e. from the Roman Imperial Period via the Migration Period (350–500) to the Merovingian Period (500–725). The inscriptions from the older fuþark period are considered to be the most puzzling of all. This is because basic questions on the origin and purpose of the runic alphabet have yet to be answered. Our first question must therefore be, why and by whom were runes introduced into Germanic society? It is impossible to study the oldest inscriptions without considering these questions. The fact that most of the earliest runic objects were found in contexts with clear links to the Roman Empire (with obvious relations to the military and economic elite of Germanic society) has led to the assumption that the art of writing in an otherwise oral society may have been introduced to the North by Germanic people who had Roman connections, such as mercenaries (cf. Rausing 1987; Axboe & Kromann 1992; Rix 1992).

If we continue with the question of the origin of the runic alphabet, we have to ask *which* Mediterranean alphabet could have been the forerunner of the runes and *when* and *where* the adoption took place. There are many views on this, but no consensus has been reached. No all-embracing matrix alphabet has been found as yet. At present one group of runologists considers the Latin alphabet to be the most likely forerunner; another group prefers the theory of

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<sup>3</sup> A wide area of the regions which early-medieval runic writing is recorded (apart from Denmark) was politically and culturally influenced by the Merovingians.

<sup>4</sup> The datings are relative, as they are based on the find-context of the runic objects. Runic writing in a specific area may have begun at least a generation earlier, as runic objects may have circulated for a long time before they were deposited in the ground. Thus the exact beginning and end of a runic period cannot be determined, especially when additional circumstantial evidence is lacking.



an origin based on the Greek or North Italic/Etruscan alphabets. On the strength of the present data, I will suggest *how* a certain collection of graphs came to the north, and *who* took them there. This subject will be treated more elaborately in chapters two and three.

The runic objects discussed have been found in different regions, but they show several similarities and some coherence as regards texts and contexts. Restricting discussion to the Danish, Anglo-Frisian and Continental finds allows us to focus on a group of comparable items, in this case almost all portable, precious objects. It has also been possible to date most of the objects with reasonable accuracy by means of archaeological data. Furthermore, this group allows us to study mutual contacts, the possible status of runic writing and the status of owners, commissioners and makers of runic objects in a gift-exchanging society, such as existed in the period under study.

### 6. *England and the Netherlands*

The upper date of 700 is to some extent an imaginary borderline, drawn because runic writing in the older futhork appears to have ended in Scandinavia and on the Continent by this date, bringing the 'archaic' period to a definite close. In Frisia and England the older futhork-set of 24 characters continued in use from the fifth century on, although additions and alterations were made. In inscriptions from around 500 onwards, certain specific runic variations occur which are common to Anglo-Saxon England and Frisia. Two inscriptions (St. Cuthbert's coffin and the Whitby comb) are dated close to 700, and silver sceattas and gold coins with runes are included as being illustrative of contrast with the earlier 'archaic' period. The only exactly datable runic object, St. Cuthbert's coffin (698), shows a typical runic innovation, the so-called 'bookhand-s'.

The borderline between the older, Anglo-Frisian tradition and the younger, Anglo-Saxon tradition in England can be drawn close to 700 AD. Page (1973, 1985 and 1987<sup>b</sup>) divided runic usage in England into periods before 650 and after. From about 650, runic script followed an insular route in England which was hardly comparable to developments in other regions. Only in the case of Frisia is the year 700 unsuitable as a *terminus ante quem*. Here there is no clear boundary marking an earlier and later period, so the entire small corpus is included.

### 7. *Denmark*

In the case of the older Danish tradition, which was recorded from the second century AD onwards, the end of the seventh century marks the end of the archaic period and the start of a new runic era, in which the 24-letter fuþark was replaced by a 16-letter row. I will discuss a relatively long runic period, from the earliest inscriptions (second century), through the bracteate period (around 500) to the Blekinge (South Sweden) inscriptions, which are supposedly seventh century. This last group, consisting of four monumental stones with relatively long texts, is looked upon as a major example of the transition period between the older and younger fuþark writing systems. Blekinge was part of Denmark in the Early Middle Ages, so the Blekinge inscriptions have been listed under the Danish corpus. The inclusion of the Blekinge group will demonstrate the changes in runic writing in the course of the seventh century and the considerable contrast to the earlier archaic inscriptions. The gap in the Danish tradition (almost no finds, apart from the bracteates, are known from most of the later sixth and the seventh centuries) might be explained by the fact that accident plays a role in finding objects. Bog-offerings ceased around 500, and bog-finds represent an important category of runic objects. Political and economical change may have been involved, but not the Christianization process which brought about the end of runic writing in other areas.

### 8. *The Continent*

Establishing the beginnings of runic writing in a certain area is determined by a combination of object dates, textual language and runic forms. Runic writing on the Continent, mainly in Germany, occurred from the second into the seventh century.<sup>5</sup> Some of the oldest examples are the Thorsberg finds and the spearheads from Dahmsdorf (Brandenburg, Germany), Kowel (Ukraine) and Rozwadów (Poland). The intention may have been the same as regards weapon-deposits like those in the bogs, and the deposits of the above-mentioned spear-

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<sup>5</sup> The Thorsberg runic objects (ca. 200 AD) appear to originate from the region between Lower Elbe and Rhine.

heads. These spearheads are unlikely to have been lost, and their deposition must have been intentional, perhaps symbolizing a claim to the soil or land. They may not be products of a local runic tradition, as they could have been deposited by migrating Germanic tribes.

Some inscriptions may bear witness to the coming of Christianity, as is shown by those from Oberflacht, Kirchheim Teck and perhaps Osthofen and Nordendorf I (South-west Germany). The end of recorded epigraphic runic writing in South Germany is determined by a change in funerary customs: the deceased was no longer given grave goods. We do not know if people continued to inscribe certain small personal objects, such as brooches. Moreover, the Christian culture brought its own Latin alphabet, which soon rose to prominence. In England, people also stopped giving funerary gifts to the dead, but this had no consequences for the recording of runic writing as runes lived on in ecclesiastical monuments and manuscripts. In addition to the continuous use of Anglo-Saxon runes, Scandinavian runes were also introduced into England by the Vikings from the ninth to eleventh centuries.

### 9. *The Scandinavian peninsula*

Inscriptions from Sweden and Norway were not included in the first limited edition of this book. Now an appendix (chapter ten) has been added which offers a concise description of Swedish and Norwegian runic objects, dating approximately from the second century until around 700. A large number of the Swedish and Norwegian inscriptions are on the surface of stones, so in most cases dating the runic texts is difficult; they can only be dated (relatively-) with the help of archaeological, linguistic/runological and sometimes historical arguments. The language of the inscriptions also differs considerably from the North Sea and Continental examples. Consequently, they are only partly suitable for comparison in the context of this study. It may be possible to date some of these texts on historical and onomastic bases; for further discussion see chapter three.

10. *Diagnostic runeforms*

Another aim is to investigate possible ‘diagnostic’ runeforms which display characteristics of a particular region or regions, or of a particular period. Examples are the runes **h**, **s**, **k**, **j** and **e**. It remains to be seen how useful it is to try to establish a runeform chronology and draw conclusions from it, as we do not even know how representative the surviving texts are for runic writing from a particular period. It is accepted that an unknown and probably low percentage of what was produced has survived to the present. (cf. Derolez 1990). Runic material from the early centuries of recorded runic writing is extremely scarce, and its survival may be merely accidental. Any conclusions based on this corpus are necessarily limited, but these few remains are the tools we have to work with. And it is possible that a typological inventory and comparison of runeforms and varieties may yield interesting insights. An investigation by Odenstedt (1990) concerning the origin and development of runes was based on the comparison of runeforms. However, his work is far from complete as regards the runeforms from the North Sea and Continental inscriptions, and in this respect I intend to supplement his work. A survey of deviating or ‘diagnostic’ runes is included in chapter four, 15.

As noted, graphic and linguistic analysis of inscription texts has been made. A thorough knowledge of runic graphology is indispensable in determining which rune was carved, not only in the case of hardly legible runes but also in the case of lookalikes such as **r** and **u**, **l** and **u**, **w** and **þ**, **s** and **j**, **d** and **m**, **g** and **n**, **l** and **k**. *Spiegelrunen* or mirror-runes also belong to the enigmatic category. Mirror-runes are those which are in fact double-sided versions of one rune. Sometimes they consist of one hasta with symmetrical twigs, pockets or loops on either side, in such a way that the rune gives the impression of being mirrored, such as  $\phi$ . Others show the same shape on the upper and lower part:  $\square$  or to the right and left  $\wedge$ . These runes should be read as one rune, not as two. I regard these peculiar rune shapes as ‘ornamental runes’. Not all runes consisting of one hasta with equal twigs on both sides are mirrored runes, i.e:  $\uparrow$   $\Upsilon$   $\downarrow$ . And the graph:  $\uparrow$  may be transliterated either as **ing** or as (mirrored) **w**. The admission that *Spiegelrunen* may play an important role in identifying what was written can lead to surprising results (Pieper 1987; Looijenga 1995<sup>a</sup>).

## 11. *Methods*

Runology is supported by data from palaeography, historical linguistics and archaeology. Supplementary but indispensable information can be found in history and the Germanic mythology and sagas. A problem here is the question of continuity, since sagas and mythological stories were recorded much later than the period during which the archaic runic inscriptions were in use (although from the Fall of Troy to the recording of that event by Homer there was a gap of nearly 500 years).

Older runologists never wasted many words on their methods; they may not even have had a particular method. Some used terms like 'of course', 'with certainty' and 'doubtless' in cases where they did not have the least evidence. The certainty with which some stated that cultic-magic use is prominent in many inscriptions is also unfounded. The ancient runographers are often referred to as *Runenmeister* in scholarly works of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This suggests a highly-skilled individual who would have performed in a cultic or religious setting as a kind of priest. However, there is no evidence of priests propagating runes from the first centuries of recorded runic writing. Wulf (1994:31–44) states that there is no proof of any religious or magical connotation attached to runographers' names in runic inscriptions, and presumes that many are just ordinary personal names. I prefer to discard the designation 'Runenmeister' or 'Runemaster' and replace it with the neutral runographer.

For many scholars runology means only historical linguistics. The importance of the object and its archeological and cultural-historical contexts has been recognized only very recently. The future development of runology can be expected to be linked more and more to science and the above-mentioned disciplines. A useful list of methodological criteria has been composed by Barnes (1994:26f.). For a runologist, practical fieldwork is an absolute prerequisite. I have examined inscriptions personally, together with the objects on which they have been carved, in order to collect all the possible evidence: weathering, runic varieties, general format of the inscription, the particular way the runes were carved on the surface of the object, the occurrence of ornaments, the object and its context. Moreover, one has to study a considerable number of runic artefacts to train one's eyes.

I have made an inventory of the recorded runic material. Since

most objects are kept in museums, information on the archaeological context of the object, e.g. location, dating, and related finds could be obtained fairly easily and quickly. To get a proper understanding of the relevant runic periods and areas I used both general and specific archaeological background information. In several cases I re-examined the objects several months or a year later to check my findings, especially in cases where my readings deviated from those of others.

In some cases only photographs or drawings could be used, for instance when an object was not available for inspection, or lost. In most cases I was not the first person to look at the inscriptions, and I could consult other descriptions and analyses and compare them with mine. Information was sometimes lacking, and in some cases the objects were not accessible. Virgin territory when I inspected them from 1993–99, because they had only recently been discovered or had not earlier been inspected or published, were Neudingen-Baar I, “Kent”,<sup>6</sup> Harford Farm, Pforzen, Schwangau, Bernsterburgen, Wijnaldum B, Leţcani, Bergakker, Breza and Borgharen.

Occasionally my readings differ from those of other runologists. Sometimes this is due to decay and corrosion of the surfaces on which the inscriptions were carved. Apparently corrosion does not stop when an object has been preserved and put in a showcase, because sometimes the runes have faded and one is left to guess, or use old photographs. In some of these ambiguous cases I have chosen to record the results of my personal inspection. My main aim has been to try to decipher what runes were used and how they were carved. In the second place I have tried to establish the meaning of the inscription and to compare my findings with those of other runologists.

In the case of apparently meaningless sequences, such as **aizgzh** on the Thorsberg shield boss (see chapter seven, nr. 43) there are two choices: either one gives up any attempt to interpret, or one tries to find a likely interpretation. The former option is unsatisfactory and the latter is dangerous, because one can easily be tempted into speculation.

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<sup>6</sup> The object is also known as the ‘Bateman brooch’. Page mentions it a few times (Page 1995:172 and 158), and states that it “has an undoubted but uninterpreted runic inscription which could be either Anglo-Saxon or Continental Germanic” (pp. 172f.).

As an example of the difficulties encountered when trying to find an explanation for **aisgzh** the following may be instructive: Krause (1971:168) inserted two vowels to get **ais[i]g[a]z h**, and interpreted this as: ‘der Dahinstürmende—Hagel’. Antonsen (1995:132) proposed a different reading, based on the principle that “we have no basis for assuming that writers in runes ever intentionally left out vowels”.<sup>7</sup> Antonsen interprets the spelling **-sg-** as an alternate rendering of **-sk**, which then gives *aisk-z* ‘seeker’. He considers the **h** an ideographic rune **h** = *\*hagala-* ‘hail’, a metaphor for ‘shower of spears and arrows’.

It is not always possible to determine when and if an ideographic rune (or *Begriffsrunē*) was used, since the runographers’ criteria for using them are unknown to us.<sup>8</sup> There is at least one clear instance of the use of an ideographic rune: the single **j** rune on the Stentofsten stone, representing its name *\*jāra* meaning ‘good year’ = harvest. The peculiar use of this ideograph is further emphasized by the fact that it was carved in an archaic fashion. The **h** in Thorsberg **aisgzh** may or may not be such a *Begriffsrunē*; there is no graphic peculiarity (**h** has no archaic forerunner), but in Antonsen’s interpretation, it could symbolize its name on syntactic grounds. In some other cases, isolated runes may be read as abbreviations, such as the **r** in the Sievern bracteate, which apparently denotes **r**[unoz]. Single runes may have been used both as abbreviations and as representations of the symbolic meaning of the rune’s name, but it is difficult to establish when this is the case.

The material presented in this study is based on around 230 inscribed objects (another 67 inscriptions are presented in the Appendix). They are listed in the catalogue under the headings ‘Early Danish and South-east European Inscriptions’, ‘Bracteates with Runes’, ‘Continental Runic Inscriptions’, ‘Early Runic Inscriptions in England’ and ‘Runic Inscriptions in or from the Netherlands’. I have listed the Danish and South-east European (also known as ‘Gothic’) inscriptions together for convenience, since only three ‘Gothic’ objects have

<sup>7</sup> Perhaps unintentionally, but at least in one instance a runographer did omit a vowel, in Charnay **uþf[i]nþai** ‘may he/she find out, get to know’. But Antonsen (1975:77) reads the sequence as **uþfapai** ‘to (my) husband’, taking the **n** rune as a writing error for **a**.

<sup>8</sup> Düwel (1992<sup>b</sup>:355) proposes two criteria for determining the presence of ideographic runes, also known as *Begriffsrunen*: a syntactic argument and a graphic argument.

been included here (Lețcani, Pietroassa, Szabadbattyán). In any case, it is not possible to establish the pure ‘Gothicity’ of all three texts. Listing the inscriptions among the Continental corpus might have been acceptable, if it were not for the lack of one decisive feature: the double-barred **h**, characteristic of the Continental and Anglo-Frisian inscriptions. Both Lețcani and Pietroassa show the occurrence of a single-barred **h**, which points to the Scandinavian traditions. Since there were close contacts between the Danish and Gothic peoples in the fourth century (Werner 1988), it seemed logical for the purpose of this study to list the Danish and Gothic objects together.

I have subdivided the inscriptions into the following categories: (1) legible and (partly) interpretable; (2) illegible and/or uninterpretable; (3) possibly runic; (4) non-runic, and (5) falsifications. The legible items are described more extensively than the illegible ones. Data concerning findspot, context, type of object, material, dates and depository are provided. Ambiguous or deviating runeforms are discussed. One or more possible readings, e.g. transliteration(s) are also suggested. Linguistic analysis of the text is made, and references to other authors’ readings and interpretations are given. The catalogue entries contain computerized runographic presentations of the inscriptions. Since there is no absolute certainty as to the normal or standard forms of the runes, abnormal only means deviating from other runes we know.

## 12. *Division into Runic Periods*

Generally speaking, it is possible to distinguish at least two distinctive periods in the history of early runic writing. Both these periods span several centuries. The initial use of runes appears to be more or less the same everywhere, which may point to a common source and consensus among the runographers. The later runic traditions in the regions under discussion differ distinctively.

Period I, the ‘archaic’ period, continues to the seventh century in all regions, and coincides with the pre-Christian era or with a transitional phase to Christianity. In historical terms this covers the Merovingian period. The exact beginning of runic writing varies locally. In Norway, Sweden and Denmark, the oldest items date from the second century. In England runic writing starts in the fifth century and the archaic or pre-conversion period goes on to the sev-



enth century. Continental runic writing stretches from the second to the seventh century and then stops. In the Netherlands the runic period runs from the fifth to the ninth century.

In Period II, runic writing appears to have become more widely used. This period began in Scandinavia and England sometime during the seventh century.

In the Netherlands the runic material is very varied. It is difficult to date some of the objects, most of which have been found in the *terp*-area of Groningen and Friesland. They were discovered during the commercial levelling of *terp*-earth in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Coins with runes are relatively common, which suggests a specific runic application, comparable to the English runic coins. Perhaps the existence of runic coins may be labelled specific to the North Sea.<sup>9</sup> In the *terp*-area items showing several runic traditions have come to light. Here particular circumstances and alien influences seem to have had an effect, and runes have been used which differ from those of the older *fupark* and the Anglo-Frisian runes. The causes of this phenomenon are unclear. The undated Westeremden B text is long and cryptic, and shows some Scandinavian runes from the period of the younger *fupark*. This definitely points to a development in the Frisian runic system. The inscription on the Bernsterburen staff also points to a later period, which tallies with the dating of the staff as ca. 800.

The Dutch runic corpus may be defined as follows: an 'archaic' period of inscriptions with runes from the older *fupark*; a period of Anglo-Frisian runes; and a period of inscriptions which show extended use of runes from the older *fupark*, plus Anglo-Frisian runes and Scandinavian younger runes.

The Continental corpus shows the use of runes from the older *fupark* only. On the basis of the texts, the dating of the objects, the relatively short period in which runes were used, and the rune-types, it can be concluded that a coherent whole is represented here. Finds are scattered over a large part of Central and Western Europe. The majority date from 500–700; the largest find-area is South Germany (Alamannia and Bavaria). The finds from Hungary and Switzerland are outliers; those from Belgium and France may also be considered outliers, although the existence of a Merovingian runic tradition

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<sup>9</sup> Numerous *sceattas* are also known from Ribe (Jutland), but without runes.

cannot be discounted. The few remains from the centuries before 500 offer an interesting picture: a line may be drawn between the finds of Meldorf, Thorsberg, Fallward, Sievern, Liebenau, Nebenstedt, Kantens, Hitsum, Undley, Bergakker (all along the borders of the North Sea) on the one hand, and another line across Europe from North Germany to the South-east: Dahmsdorf, Rozwadów, Kowel, Lețcani, Pietroassa (see Map 1).

The runic finds are described according to the following criteria:  
*object*: type of object, material.

*context*: date and find circumstances (grave, bog, peat, hoard, isolated find, settlement etc).

*inscription*: class of runic alphabet; additional runes or runic innovations; any diverging runic forms; legibility; any use of pseudo-runes or script-imitation; ductus, direction of writing.

*text*: contents; length; linguistic analysis; purpose of text (private or public); contents obscure or clear; connection between text and object.

*relation*: to other runic objects and texts; to other find-contexts; to texts other than rune-texts.

Characteristics of the inscriptions and texts of Period I:

- a) use of the older fuþark with local variations; Anglo-Frisian extension of the fuþark with extra characters.
- b) runes and texts which are difficult to read, interpret and understand; cryptic texts.
- c) the occurrence of script-imitation and pseudo-runes.
- d) short texts.
- e) texts consist of names (e.g. the owner's name), makers', givers' or writers' formulae, designation of object or material.
- f) texts have individual, private, intimate and ritual meanings.
- g) the purpose of the texts and runes occasionally appears to be religious or magical.

Note: it is remarkable that memorials, political and administrative texts should be lacking, given that the later medieval Scandinavian runic tradition contains so many of these.

Characteristics of Period II:

- a) more variation in runes, inscriptions and texts, probably due to increased use of runic script.
- b) strong changes in the fuþark, independent regional developments,

- emergence of new runes and runic variants; disappearance of runes from the 24-letter fuþark.
- c) increased legibility and therefore greater likelihood of interpretation.
  - d) longer and more substantial texts.
  - e) monumental and legible texts for public purposes.
  - f) obscure and enigmatic texts for private purposes.
  - g) the emergence of cryptic runes, and runes in manuscripts.
  - h) the occurrence of Christian texts written with runes.

### 13. *On the graphic rendering of runes, findspots, transliterations etc.*

All transliterations of runes, also called readings, are given in **bold** Roman lettering, all linguistic (phonetic and phonemic) transcriptions of runic texts are in *italics*. The interpretation is given between ‘single’ quotation marks. For instance: **runoronu** *rūnōrōnu* ‘rune row’. The location or catalogue entry of this inscription, which is treated in this study, is in small capitals: BJÖRKETORP.

A *transcription* includes punctuation and diacritical marks. All linguistic data and derivations like Go *satjan*, Gmc *\*sitjan* are also given in *italics*. Quotations are between “double” quotation marks. Illegible or damaged runes are represented by ?; runes which were apparently omitted by the runographer and which have been inserted by the runologist, are written between square brackets: [n]. Damaged or partially legible runes are given between round brackets: (m). Runes which have been lost, but which can be reconstructed from the context, are represented thus: [dæ]us or, if they are fairly legible: **wihgu**. Single runes which can be interpreted as an abbreviation of an entire word are represented thus: **r**[unoz]. Bindrunes are written bold and underlined: **ga**, **me**. The so-called ing rune: ◇ or † † is referred to as **ing** or **ng** in identifiable words and in fuþarks (Vadstena and Grumpan, for example).

### 14. *Anomalous runes and doubtful cases*

There is a specific problem in runic studies that needs some attention. Because of the paucity of runic material there is relatively little reliable data on which to build theories and draw conclusions. It is, therefore, wise to remember what may be called Derolez’ warning.

In his 1981 article *The Runic System and its Cultural Context*, pp. 19 and 20, Derolez describes a remarkable phenomenon: “1. The total number of inscriptions down to the year 450 or so amounts to no more than between 10 and 20 in a century, or one in every five to ten years; 2. Those inscriptions are spread over a fairly wide area comprising large parts of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, with a much thinner sprinkling on the Continent; 3. Yet they show a remarkable uniformity and stability. . . .”. So an unknown number of runographers must have been at work in this vast area at any given time during the period under consideration. They must have produced thousands of inscriptions in three centuries. What has survived, then, is no more than a tiny proportion of what was carved. In view of the 200-odd surviving objects (bracteates with runes not included) with inscriptions in the older fuþark from five centuries of recorded runic writing, it is logical to conclude that we have had only a glimpse of runic usage. Hence any conclusions at all about runic writing can only be tentative. Absolute statements about the chronology and spread of rune forms are no more than inspired guesses, since the basis is so small. This also implies that runes of unusual form may be looked upon with suspicion, but on the other hand they may just be remnants of an enormous mass of lost (or as yet undiscovered) runic products.

An instance of hitherto unknown runic practices, which may be regarded as unusual and therefore possibly false, are the Weser inscriptions on bones, found in the estuary of the river Weser (chapter seven, 5). Uncommon runic practices might gain some credibility when set alongside the host of inscriptions lost over the course of time. Deviations need not instantly be dismissed. Besides, investigations into the authenticity of the Weser inscriptions (Pieper 1989) have not proved them false. As regards the Stetten rivet<sup>10</sup> it is not

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<sup>10</sup> The Stetten rivet is a very small piece of weapon equipment, dated to the seventh century. The object seems too small (ø 1.3 cm; height max. 0.7 cm; cf. Pieper 1991<sup>b</sup>:309) for a deliberate inscription; in my opinion neither inscribing nor reading is possible without the use of a microscope. Yet, runic shapes can be distinguished (under the microscope), and Pieper interpreted the signs as: **afmelkud**, partly carved in bindrunes, which he took to represent a female PN Amelgu(n)d, interpreting the **k** in **amelkud** as a product for the OHG soundchange. The **f** may be an abbreviation of **f[ahj]** ‘he/she draws’ or it could be a *Begriffsrune* for **f[ehu]** ‘property, wealth’. After rereading my own notes made during personal inspection of the Stetten inscription, I decided not to include this doubtful item.

so much the authenticity which poses a problem but the exceptionally small size of the object and the still smaller size of the scratches. It has not been included in this study.

With reference to Derolez' dictum, I have included the Weser inscriptions, but only because I wanted to give them the benefit of the doubt. Notwithstanding the profound and impressive research by the German archaeologist Pieper I am not convinced of the authenticity of the inscriptions. The runes are so different from all other known inscriptions in bone that I am reluctant to accept them as genuine. Pieper's thorough examinations of the Weser bones (some with runes, some with drawings) have yielded no traces of falsification as regards the *runic* bones (whereas other bones with drawings appeared to be falsifications), although his research was intended to prove them false. Yet some doubts remain, particularly because of the suspicious history and circumstances of the finds. The texts of the bones consist of words that could easily have been taken from Gallée's *Altsächsische Grammatik*, for instance. Furthermore, the way the runes were carved and the childlike drawings on the bones strengthened my impression that something was wrong. Such irregularities would normally lead to a suspicion of falsification, but in this particular case falsification could not be proved.

The provenance and context are both suspicious; the bones are said to have been dredged up and found scattered along the banks of the river Weser; however the runic inscriptions seem to be closely connected, judging from their exceptional forms. The runes are much too large and too widely carved for runes on bones. They have deviating, unique forms, not at all like known runes on bone objects, which are mostly cut in delicate lines. They are rather reminiscent of wide-cut runes on stone, such as on the Haithabu stones, formerly exhibited at Kiel, nowadays in the Haithabu Museum at Schleswig. Kiel harbour was the place where the finder of the Weser bones worked for some time as a member of the *Kriegsmarine*. Since some of the Weser bones turned out to be falsifications, one must allow for the fact that all of them could have been forged. The finder, Ludwig Ahrens, had a reputation for selling forgeries to the Oldenburg Museum.

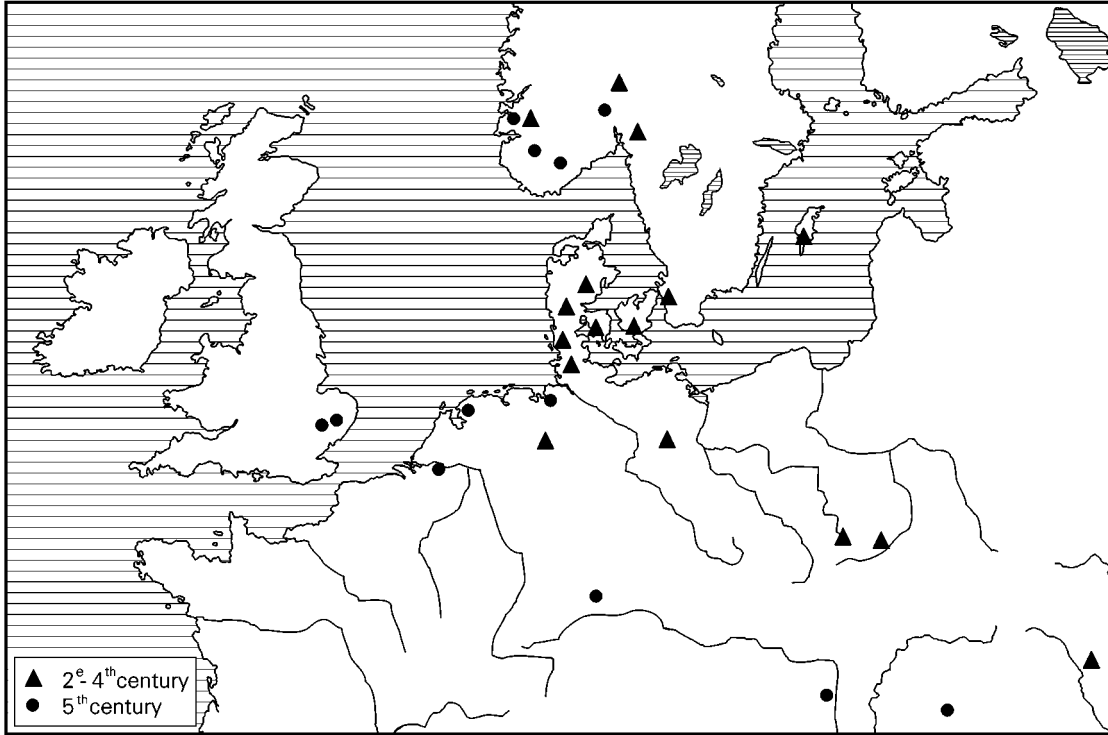
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The object is covered with scratches and damages; the fact that some of these look like runes does not convince me of their runic identity. Altogether there are too many uncertainties to accept this item as a runic object.

Pieper (1989) showed in his investigations (based on material science and criminological methods) that several of the finds were indisputably forged. However, the carvings on four subfossilized bones could not be shown to have been recently carved and therefore false. These were the only bones out of a total of seven bearing runelike inscriptions and pictures. The wear and tear the incisions would be expected to show after about 1500 years was present; moreover, some of the weathering could not have been forged. (See Pieper 1989; and Antonsen 1993).

One of the inscriptions in particular, **uluhari dede** (Uluhari made) the curious name Uluhari (Owl-warrior), encouraged me to look again at the name of the finder: Ludwig Ahrens. The fact that Uluhari gives the impression of being an anagram or shortened form of Ludwig Ahrens (the German pet-name for Ludwig is 'Uli'), aroused suspicion. It appears to be typical of forgers to seek discovery, hence they leave some clues. Another aim is to *épater les bourgeois*, in many cases the members of the scientific world. Perhaps this was also the aim of Mr. Ahrens.

Pieper's investigations initially aimed to prove beyond doubt that the inscriptions are false, but somehow he reached the opposite conclusion. But even if Pieper's results were unexpected, we still have no proof that the inscriptions are authentic. Further research is needed.



Map 1. Spread of second, third, fourth-century runic objects on the Continent, in Scandinavia, and in England. (Except for the bracteates.)



Map 2. The Roman Empire and Germania Libera in the second century AD. (From U. Lund Hansen *Himlingøye, Seeland, Europa*, København 1995.)



## CHAPTER TWO

# HISTORY, ARCHAEOLOGY AND RUNES

### 1. *Introduction*

Runes and rune-bearing objects cannot be studied without giving them their proper place within the society that produced them. Establishing the outlines of this context forms an important part of this study.

Artefacts exhibiting runes are recorded from the second century AD onwards. Around 450 artefacts (including nearly 200 runic bracteates) with runes from the older fuþark, produced from ca. 150–700, have survived. We know of some 25 items from the early third century, found across an astonishingly large area, from Scandinavia and North Germany to Eastern Europe.

The oldest inscriptions are mostly carved on precious and portable objects. Whether these surviving items are representative of all runic scripts from the archaic period is questionable (see chapter one, 14). It is also unclear when, where, and for what reasons the Germanic people developed their own writing system. A combination of philology, archaeology and history may be helpful in detecting the origins of runic writing and in understanding more about the type of society in which runes were used. Objects with runes are usually found as a result of archaeological excavations, so in many cases a context is available.

Runic writing spread to large parts of Europe through migration, acculturation and exogamy. It travelled via members of the social and political upper classes, and also through the craftsmen employed by these elites. The custom of exchanging prestige-goods among the Germanic elites of North, West, Central and East Europe may have favoured the diffusion of runic writing. Indigenous runic traditions emerged in Scandinavia, Germany, Frisia and England, each more or less distinct from the other. The Goths in the Black Sea region also practised runic writing, although very few remains have been found as yet.

A runic tradition can partly be recognized from the type of inscribed

objects<sup>1</sup> and the way in which these objects were deposited, but more particularly from the language of the texts and the use of characteristic rune forms.

On the other hand, the various runic traditions had many features in common, which would imply that use of runes was current among people who had something in common and who lived in comparable milieus. The German archaeologist Roth points out that among certain families it was customary to make runic inscriptions, especially on metal. These families probably formed a small elite, a 'middle-class' or 'upper middle-class', according to Roth (1994:310f.). His findings concerned runic writing in Germany, but the situation may have been similar in other regions where runic writing was practised during roughly the same period. It was this assumption that one or more specific groups were concerned which provided the stimulus to investigate the character of such groups. These groups emerged in a society with small power centres, as members of an elite influencing each other by way of a gift-exchange policy. They could afford to employ craftsmen, such as weapon smiths and jewellers, who may have been among the first to possess knowledge of runes.

Some of the oldest runic inscriptions are the signatures of weapon smiths who, by signing their products, were imitating a Roman practice. In a largely oral culture, such as that of the Germanic peoples, writing was not primarily a means of communication, but rather a status symbol, because the addition of runes to an object increased its value. An attempt to create mystery by inscribing letters on an object may also have played a role.

Later on, runographers can be found among bracteate-designers, although Moltke (1985:80, 114) considered metal-workers to be illiterate, because the bracteates have many faulty and corrupt runes. This does not prove that all smiths were unable to write anything meaningful in runes. Artisans such as smiths, woodworkers and potters qualify as runographers because of the so-called 'makers' formulae which have been found on all sorts of objects. They could easily have passed their knowledge on to others as they travelled in

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<sup>1</sup> In Denmark and Germany runes mainly occur on brooches and weapons or weapon parts; in Frisia mainly on coins, combs, pieces of wood and bone; in Anglo-Saxon England mainly on coins, brooches, weapons or weapon parts, and pots and urns.

the retinue of some highly-placed person or went from market to market in a group of merchants and other craftsmen. This would offer an explanation of how the practice of rune writing spread so quickly over a large area.

During the entire runic period up to the High Middle Ages, runes were used to formulate all sorts of texts, but in the early examples we find an overwhelming number of personal names. There are expressions of ownership, signatures of makers and writers, dedications from one person to another, and also the names of the objects themselves.

Runes were sometimes also used within a ritual context, as appears to be the case with amulets, grave gifts and other objects deposited in bogs or hoards. Whether this required specialized runographers, perhaps priests, is unknown. Any evidence of religion in early runic texts is ambiguous (perhaps apart from certain texts on bracteates, e.g. **uīu** 'I consecrate', sometimes followed by 'the runes'). We can speculate on what was meant by the consecration of runes, but apparently it referred to the use of runes in certain (possibly formulaic) texts, in connection with a hitherto unknown ritual. The Stentofte runestone (see chapter V, nr. 44.), which is assumed to be seventh century, bears a text which clearly refers to an act of offering: 'with nine steeds, with nine he-goats, Haþuwulf gave **j** (Santesson 1989). If **j** represents its rune-name *\*jāra* 'good year, harvest' this may be interpreted as an instance of a symbolic use of runes, pointing to a use of runes in the context of a fertility ritual. The symbolic name of the rune **j** 'harvest' seems to be synonymous with the act of offering itself, since the sacrificer is portrayed as a *sacerdos*. The offering of the steeds and he-goats implies the wished-for result of a good harvest.

The practice of offering and depositing war booty in bogs suggests the involvement of some official religious ceremony. War booty and bracteates in particular form a high percentage of ritual deposits, and where the religious character may be inadequately expressed by the texts, it may have been symbolized by or integrated in the act of offering. Even if it is not always possible to reconstruct the nature of the cult, a sacred motive for the writing of runes on certain occasions cannot be excluded. It may well be that the very act of writing had a function as a means of communication with the gods or the supernatural. Since only a few of the hundreds of deposited objects bear runes, these may have had a *pars pro toto* function. Words

like **laukaz** ‘leek’, **alu** ‘ale’, **lapu** ‘invitation’ on bracteates might point to the use of intoxicating herbs and drinks, possibly in connection with a cult.

## 2. *From the pre-Roman Iron Age to the late Germanic Iron Age*

In the pre-Roman Iron Age (500–100 BC), Northern Europe is characterized by unpretentious cremation graves with grave gifts such as simple fibulae and girdle buckles, “remarkable only in their uniformity”, according to Parker Pierson (1989:199ff.). There is evidence of offering practices in which a special, privileged caste may have been involved. Offerings in bogs and lakes continued through the centuries. It was not just weapons, weapon parts and agricultural items such as wooden ploughs which were deposited, but also pots, iron and bronze arm and neckrings, and human beings as well.

Around 200–150 BC, a remarkable development in burial practices took place in the North German Plain, in Denmark and in Southern Scandinavia. In certain cremation graves, situated at some distance from nearby graves, Celtic metalwork appears: brooches and swords, together with wagon fittings, Roman cauldrons and drinking vessels. The area of these rich graves is the same as where later (first century AD) princely graves were found. A ruling class seems to have emerged, distinguished by the possession of large farms and rich grave gifts such as weapons for the men and silver objects for the women, imported earthenware and Celtic items. This process continued throughout the beginning of this era and is especially noticeable in Jutland and on Funen. The first historical contacts with the Romans took place during this period. The journey of the Cimbri and Teutones from Jutland at the end of the second century BC may have taken place for several reasons, such as internal power struggles, overpopulation, climatic changes and long-distance trade; this included the import of prestige goods. Pre-Roman Iron Age Germanic society hardly knew of private property (apart perhaps from cattle); it certainly had no privately owned land, which was held in common (Hedeager 1992<sup>a</sup>:245). The Celtic field-system of agriculture could not expand much and an increase in agricultural production was not possible, which put a strain on society. The first four centuries AD saw a reorganisation of the villages, redistribution of land, improved tools and better production from the fields. Hedeager

conjectures that the early weapon deposits, and perhaps also the bog offerings of people in the north of Jutland, bear witness to internal conflicts. The differentiation process that may have started around 150 BC continued till the development of royal power centres centuries later (Hedeager 1992<sup>a</sup>:244ff.).

The increase in the number of landowners (and private property) opened new tensions and conflicts within the community. The accumulation of property produced a new elite. Social status became important, and was expressed by the possession of prestige goods (Hedeager 1988<sup>a</sup>:137ff.). Literacy may be expected to have developed among highly-placed persons or privileged groups. The fact that the oldest known runic inscriptions were carved on weapons and jewellery, and include a large number of names, can be interpreted as the expression of a ruling class. It can hardly be seen as accidental. In this society runic script may have filled a need for writing of some sort to express ownership or prestige on the one hand, and a cultural identity on the other.

### 3. *The emergence of an elite*

During the first few centuries AD a new funerary custom of inhumation emerged alongside the existing cremation rite. The inhumation graves (especially in North Jutland, Sealand, North Poland and the Upper Elbe region) contain grave gifts such as Roman drinking vessels, and are further characterized by the absence of weapons. These graves, of both men and women, are known as *Fürstengräber*, deviating in their grave gifts from Germanic burials in regions that were at war with the Roman Empire. Hedeager (1988:131) makes a distinction between graves with weapons and graves without weapons. Graves containing weapons are linked to active warriors. Older men were never buried with weapons, but with gold grave goods and sometimes with Roman imports and spurs. Both weapons and spurs have been found in the graves of quite young males, indicating that the right to be a warrior and access to wealth were not personal achievements but inherited.

Agricultural reform, the emergence of a wealthy class, the growth of population and the presence of a large group of young men initiated the rise of professional armies, creating a new class and a new elite based on the bond between the leader and his retinue: the *hirð*

or *comitatus*. Wars were fought for strategic reasons, over trading centres and routes, over raw materials such as iron-ore from Jutland, and over land and the right to raise taxes (Hedeager 1992<sup>a</sup>:247). The reorganisation of power developed into a military system in which raiding and trading alternated throughout the Viking Age up to the High Middle Ages. Power became centralized in places like Stevns on Sealand. A kingdom with a network of vassals emerged. Hedeager (1988:131ff.) remarks that “Roman prestige goods now circulated among the new elite in a regional system of redistribution. Thus Roman prestige goods were part of a process in which power and influence were built up; they were used as a means of sustaining and legitimizing new power structures which cut across earlier local social structures. The old tribal structure based on ties of kinship and clan transformed gradually into permanently class-divided states”.

At the end of the second century AD a sudden crisis brought about important changes. The population of the hitherto mighty and rich western part of Funen, eastern Jutland and the coastal parts of the Baltic states diminished drastically and nearly disappeared. Parker Pearson (1989:212) observes that “all over the Baltic and North-Western Europe settlement retreated away from the coastal areas into separated and nucleated blocks. The centre of prosperity shifted eastward to eastern Funen and Sealand”. It is here the oldest runic objects were found, in bogs and graves.

The disturbances of this period were also felt in the Netherlands, particularly in the coastal regions and the adjacent sandy areas. Van Es (1967:535f.) observed that high levels of coin importation from the Roman empire into Drenthe ended shortly after 200 AD. Coin hoards such as those in Drenthe show three centres of concentration about 200 AD, the other two being in the Lower Elbe region and the area between the Lower Oder and Vistula, from where the Langobards and Goths began their southward migrations at this time. The hoarding indicates a breach in relations caused by some kind of disturbance. The Chauci were pressed westward by the Langobards, who, after an initial move westward, turned south to the Danube region. The whole coastal region was in a state of turmoil around 200 AD, with numerous likely causes: pressure from the north and the east, deterioration in environmental conditions caused by marine flooding, real or imaginary overpopulation, or a combination of these factors, according to Van Es. The Roman emperor

Caracalla (211–217) waged a moderately successful campaign against the Alamanni in 213; this was the first appearance in history of the people who gave the French their name for Germans. In fact, if a date can be fixed for the decline of the Roman empire it would be the reign of Commodus (180–192). Commodus was a greater plague to the Romans than any pestilence or crime. With Marcus Aurelius, the principate as founded by Augustus ended, and the way was paved for the military despotism of the later empire.

The change and disorder arising from wars lasted from ca. 200 to the fifth century. Weapons appeared as burial gifts again and votive offerings of weapons in bogs and lakes also increased. Instances of deposit offerings have been found in the bogs of Thorsberg, Nydam, Illerup and Vimose. The Danish archaeologist Ilkjær (1991:281) mentions invaders in Denmark from the area north of Skåne and from the Baltic. Enemy weapons were deliberately destroyed before being deposited in bogs. This points to religious practice: a firm line must be drawn between the gods and the people. What belonged to the gods, or was offered to them, should never be used again by men, so the objects offered were made unfit for human use. With regard to war booty, according to Ilkjær, until ca. 255 “both attackers and defenders apparently had connections with the Kattegat area. In 250–320 the connection was the Baltic, that is South-east Jutland, the southern shores of Funen and Sealand, South Sweden and Öland, while the areas subject to earlier attacks went free.”

The war booty offered contains an enormous number of Roman weapons. It is not exactly clear whether these entered the Germanic area via trading or looting. They may have been imported from Roman weapon smiths, although this was strictly forbidden by the Roman authorities. Curiously enough, the blades are Roman, but the handles are Germanic. According to the Danish archaeologist Lønstrup (1988:96), “Warriors in Scandinavia (where no locally produced swords are known) and in Germany carried Roman swords. So many swords have been found that it is acceptable to conclude that during the later period of the Roman Empire, most Germanic warriors were equipped with Roman swords”.

The elite graves of the third and early fourth century on Sealand and Funen contained Roman goods, witnesses to an appreciation of the Roman lifestyle, according to Parker Pearson (1989:218–220). Similar lavish burials in the rest of fourth-century Europe are unknown. Jutland, however, showed a decline in population and in wealth

during the fifth century, possibly due to intensive land exploitation and flooding from the North Sea. These events may have been partially responsible for the migration to Britain, but Jutland was not left uninhabited. Bornholm, Öland and Gotland grew in wealth and all the evidence points to a shift of the trade centres to the east.

From the second and third centuries, two periods of raids by pirates are recorded along the North Sea coast of Holland, Belgium and France. The first was launched on Gaul by the Chauci at the end of the reign of Marcus Aurelius. The raids continued during the last quarter of the second and the first half of the third century, and culminated in invasions in the reign of Gallienus and the Gallic emperors. By this stage the invaders were no longer called Chauci but Franks, and according to Van Es (1967:543), they were the same people under a different name.

The Rhine and Maas estuary was an area under constant pressure from tribes living across the Rhine. Van Es (1967:548f.) suggests that Chamavi from the adjacent Veluwe settled in the Betuwe as Roman *foederati* to help protect the border. Later, Constans (337–360) introduced new Franks into this region; they may have been the Salii. The Chamavi may have pushed the Salii southwards towards Toxandria, but Julianus (360–363) and later Valentianus (364–375) apparently supported the Salii against the Chamavi, and the Rhine frontier was restored. From then onwards, the Salian Franks penetrated deeper into Roman territory. The Lower Rhine was maintained as the empire's frontier, for it was essential to safeguard the line of communication between Britannia and the Upper Rhine region. Franks may have been among the troops who were transferred to Britain in 368 and 398 to help protect the population against Saxon raids (Van Es 1967:542f.). The Salii were to play an important part in history, since from their ranks the Merovingian realm would spring, with Clovis as the first real king of a new state (Heidinga/Offenberg 1992:27). Another well-known Merovingian Frank was Childeric, perhaps the last of the *foederati*. He was buried in Doornik (Tournai) in 481 as a Roman commander and *rex* of his people. His grave goods consisted of Roman military insignia, weapons and jewellery, among which were the famous crickets. These would point to easterly pagan influences. Several dozen horses accompanied him on his journey to the next world. The same custom was observed in Wijster (Drente), where the grave of a Germanic-Roman soldier (fifth century) has been found, surrounded by horse graves. Mixed



influences are also found in the Sutton Hoo (seventh century) and Fallward (early fifth century) ship burials of Germanic chiefs. Both contained a mixture of Germanic, Roman and Byzantine grave gifts.

In the central Netherlands in the fifth and sixth centuries, settlements were concentrated in the south of the Veluwe, the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and the eastern part of the Betuwe. The area surrounding Rhenen in particular appears to be “the most suitable site for exercising political and economic powers in about AD 400” (Heidinga 1990:13) At least two hoards, two cemeteries<sup>2</sup> and an unusually large ring-fort have been found here. During this period there was a tribal pact of Chamavi, Bructeri and Chattuarii in the Lower Rhine area between Cologne and the central Netherlands. One of the hoards near Rhenen was discovered in 1938. It contained two gold torques and a fragment of a third, dated to the Migration Period (Heidinga 1990:14ff.). The fragment, which was inlaid with precious stones, can be attributed to a Roman workshop. The torques of the Velp<sup>3</sup> type were made in a Lower Rhine workshop (Heidinga 1990:19). Torques, according to Heidinga (1990:16), circulated within a small circle of chieftains or kings. There is one torque with runes, an unlocated find from the area near Aalen, Baden-Württemberg (see two, 7).

The wealth of the Lower Rhine region had a military-political rather than an economic basis. The area was the original homeland of the Frankish leaders with their *comitatus*, who first served in the Roman army and later amassed enormous fortunes from careers in Gaul (Heidinga 1990:18). For these warlords, distribution of large amounts of gold was essential for the recruitment and preservation of their retainers, for alliances (human and divine) and for the maintenance of their status in general (Heidinga 1990:19).

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<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, one of the two cemeteries and the hill-fort have not received the professional treatment they deserved. The cemetery of the Donderberg contained 800 inhumations and around 300 cremations, and was in use from the fourth century until the first half of the eighth century. The other cemetery (the Laarse Berg) was discovered in 1892, but has never been investigated. Only a few pots and sherds have been preserved.

<sup>3</sup> The Velp hoards in particular were very rich. One included eight torques and three gold rings, the other (at Het Laar) contained gold medallions, numerous gold coins and a torque. The Beilen hoard consisted of six torques, a bracelet and 22 *solidi* (Heidinga 1990:16). A second hoard near Rhenen was discovered in 1988. It consisted of at least 237 coins, including 97 gold tremisses and 140 silver *scattas*. The deposits can be interpreted either as the treasury of a chieftain or as votive offerings.

The Frankish elite may have had landed property, according to Theuws (1990:45), but they also lived on tribute and surplus production levied from the population, without claiming the land itself. Thus the Frankish leaders were not tied to the soil, which may explain the high mobility of the elite in the sixth century. However, during the sixth century, claims to surplus production were transformed into claims to the land itself, and they evolved into a land-based elite. They were able to participate in trade networks, according to Theuws (1990:46), who adds that artisanal centres, already in existence in the fifth and sixth centuries, produced prestigious items which circulated mainly among the upper echelons of society, and which may not have been 'trade objects'. These 'prestige objects' may have formed an integral part of a gift and exchange policy. This is the kind of society in which we can expect the economic, social and cultural settings in which runes belong to arise. These circumstances also created the conditions for runic script to spread and blossom. Surprisingly, runic finds have not been recorded in Frankish power centres. Runes were only used on the periphery of the Frankish realm, so there may have been another prerequisite in these areas. However in the 1990s at least three Frankish runic items were found on former Frankish territory (Chéhéry, Bergakker, Borgharen), so the supposed absence of runic writing in the central Frankish areas might simply be due to a lack of research.

The combination of a new and rising elite and the manufacture of bracteates after the Roman fashion in Scandinavia and elsewhere may be compared to the custom of the Frankish nobility in the fifth and sixth centuries of establishing themselves in regions where some Roman culture and population remained. Early Frankish elite burials have been found in combination with late Roman burials in the vicinity of Roman towns (Theuws 1990:45). The Frankish leaders could only flourish in Romanized surroundings (Van Es 1994:80). The kings Childeric and his son Clovis filled the political vacuum left behind by the fall of the Roman empire. The Franks actually inherited the West Roman empire and went on to imitate the Roman emperors' customs. We can speculate to what extent such imitation was also practised by those who commissioned the bracteates, in the sense that both the Franks and the inhabitants of the Danish Isles were looking for an ideological model on which to build their state. However, Roman imagery was not simply appropriated, but manipulated to create a distinctive Frankish culture. For instance, Frankish

kings like Chilperic had long, braided hair, a symbol of their magic power. The image of the Roman emperor was 'Germanized,' reflected in the long, braided or knotted hairstyle on nearly all bracteates which show a head (esp. A and C types; see chapter six).

The eventual fall of the Roman Empire gradually affected large parts of *Germania Libera* at defined intervals. The influx and influence of Roman prestige goods and the return of soldiers from the Roman army slowed down and eventually stopped. In Germania, the result may have been a temporary power vacuum, with disputes and uncertain social and political relations. This situation marks the Migrations Period, beginning in some parts of *Germania Libera* in the third century and lasting to the sixth century. In this period there were probably several territorial wars between small kingdoms. One example occurred in Denmark, and ended with the establishment of a central power by Harald Bluetooth in the tenth century. In the meantime, sacral deposits eventually disappeared and the number of princely graves decreased as power centres arose elsewhere in North and West Europe. Archaeological data shows there was no increase in land cultivation or in farming generally. It is probable that only one child inherited the ancestral farm and other sons had to look for another way of living. In the army one could earn wealth and honour. Initially this was still based on the old credo of *trading and raiding*. It was not until the Viking age that overseas colonies were founded.

#### 4. *Votive deposits in the Danish bogs*

From 100 BC to 500 AD the practice of offerings continued in all large bogs: Thorsberg, Nydam, Ejsbøl, Porskær, Illerup, Hedelisker in Jutland and Vimose and Kragehul on Funen (Lønstrup 1988:97). It appears that substantial offerings were made, sometimes with long intervals in between. It is remarkable that bog deposits date predominantly from periods with few imports, which means periods of war. This situation is comparable to the Viking age, in which periods of trade alternated with periods of plunder and civil war (Randsborg 1988:12).

According to Ilkjær (1996<sup>a</sup>:66ff.), in the period 200–250 AD, objects offered in the Illerup, Thorsberg and Vimose bogs originated from other regions than the immediately surrounding area. The provenance of the objects was the Kattegat region, whereas a significant

number of offerings from ca. 300 AD comes from the Baltic Sea region (Ilkjær 1996<sup>a</sup>:66). The objects are thought to be spoils of war. The spearheads found in Illerup and Vimose are of Scandinavian origin, while the finds from Thorsberg may have come from a southerly region (Düwel 1992:346ff., with ref.). This is emphasised by the presence of Roman shield bosses, helmets and armour. The origin of the Thorsberg finds has been derived mainly from the fibulae and other shield bosses which were part of the same votive offering. Nine specimens of the shield bosses (23% of the total amount) are of Roman provenance or came from an area under Roman influence. The fibulae are generally found in the northern part of the Elbe region and the Rhine/Weser area. So the army whose equipment was deposited as a votive offering of war-booty originated from the area between the Lower Elbe and the Rhine (cf. Lønstrup 1984:99).

Roman military goods have also been found in the Vimose bog among the deposits of around 160 AD, i.e. from the transitional period between the older and younger Roman Iron Age (Ilkjær 1996<sup>a</sup>:68ff.). This is also the site where the oldest known runic object, the **harja** comb (160 AD), was found. It is said to have come from either Funen, southern Jutland or North Germany (Ilkjær 1996<sup>a</sup>:68, 73).

With regard to the grave goods of around 200 AD, it seems plausible to suppose that these were given by the local inhabitants. These grave gifts are precious brooches, among which are five rosette brooches and one bow fibula, all of them with runes (Stoklund 1995:319). These valuable brooches have been found in women's graves in Skåne, Sealand and Jutland. The three fibulae from Sealand were found in graves along with many imported Roman luxury objects. The names were carved into the silver back of the needle-holder and may all be men's names, perhaps makers' signatures.

In most instances, we can assume that the runes were inscribed at the same time as the object was produced, as is evident from the runic stamp **wagnijo** on one of the Illerup spearheads. In the case of the Thorsberg shield boss there are two possibilities: either the runes were carved by the weapon smith during the manufacturing process, or they were added after the ritual destruction and shortly before the object was deposited in the Thorsberg bog. The latter assumption is based on the impression that the runes seem to cross a scratch or groove caused by the destruction. However, this is so

arbitrary that the possibility of the runes being cut when the shield boss was made cannot be discounted. The rim of the shield boss is twisted due to the deformation, but not in such a way that the runes clearly overlap the rim's edge. I believe the overlap is dubious, since the runes curve around the corner of the edge in a natural way, and it cannot be proved that the runes were made after the damage. On the other hand, the runes are on the *inside* of the shield boss and would thus have been invisible when the boss was still attached to the shield, so we might assume that the inscription was a maker's signature.

However, makers' signatures were mostly placed in view, or are written in clear, ornamental, runes: on weapons (Illerup, Ash Gilton, Chessel Down II, Schretzheim III, Thames Scramasax); on an amulet box (Schretzheim I); on several brooches (such as Udby, Nøvling, Donzdorf); on a wooden box (Garbølle); and on the gold horn from Gallehus. This makes the hidden Thorsberg inscription exceptional. Nevertheless, a new find from Pforzen, in 1996, shows an inscription on the inner side of an ivory ring which was attached around a bronze disc. The inscription, a writer's formula: **aodlip:urait:runa:**, was thus hidden from sight.

Since no further evidence is available for the inscribing of objects just before offering,<sup>4</sup> and as it cannot be determined that the Thorsberg runes do in fact cross a scratch, I assume the inscription was added at the place of production, that is in the region between the Lower Elbe and the Rhine. The Thorsberg runic finds are therefore included in the Continental Corpus (chapter VII).

The motive for depositing appears to have been connected with whether objects were meant to be dug up again or not. In the former case it concerns the hoarding of precious goods, in the latter the deposit may be meant as an offering. In the Viking period people buried gold to take with them to the realm of death, together with horses, dogs, ships, weapons and wagons. Another aim was to present the goods to the gods, in order to propitiate them when arriving in the hereafter. Hoarding treasures is something entirely different, the intention being to return one day to retrieve one's possessions (Hedeager 1991:206f.). Gaimster (1993:5) states that "In early

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<sup>4</sup> For instance, the inscriptions **laguþewa** and **nipijo tawide** on the Illerup shield handles were made when the handles were fastened onto the shield; the runes avoid the ornamental discs and rivets (Stoklund 1995<sup>b</sup>:336).

medieval Europe the hoarding of precious metals was an act of some significance in itself. Apart from burying objects in times of war or political commotion with a view to regain the hoard in better days, personal possessions carried some of the owner's power and fortune and were therefore worthy of being stored for magical reasons or for the afterlife". This indicates that writing names on special objects had a special function, too. The receiver will always remember who gave the inscribed object to him. The object and its inscription emphasize the importance of both giver and receiver, and their special relationship.

It is useful to make a distinction between individual offerings and communal offerings, whose rituals took place in public, whereas individuals probably made deposits in secret and preferably at a rather inaccessible place (Hedeager 1991:209ff.). Offering might be based on the conviction that in case someone owed something to someone else, the following rules of gift-symbolism should apply: if the receiver of a precious object were more powerful than the giver, the receiver had to pay back with favours. If both were of equal standing, the gifts had to be similar. If the receiver was of lower standing, it was his duty to pay back with services (Hedeager 1991:208f.). Offering might be interpreted in a similar way: the offerer, of course of lower standing than the gods, gave gold and beautiful objects to flatter the gods, in order to receive favours. Individual offerings consisted of objects which could be used as payment, here and in the hereafter. Bracteates, however, were never used as currency, but may have been the ultimate diplomatic gifts.

### 5. *Bracteates*

Gold bracteates were manufactured in large quantities, approximately during the second half of the fifth century and the beginning of the sixth, and belong to an archaeological context of offerings, hoards and grave gifts. Specialists in bracteate iconography see them as amulets, although they may also be interpreted as regalia and as political or diplomatic gifts. The notion of a 'magical amulet' originated from the idea that the Roman gold medallions had that particular function. The bracteates also reflect high social status (Gaimster 1993:12). In a gift-exchanging network these might have served as special gifts, although it remains unclear on what sort of occasion.

Also, they may have formed an important part of a religious system, in which the concept of 'sacral kingship' should certainly not be overlooked (Seebold 1992).

The bracteates are imitations of imperial coins and medallions of the Constantine dynasty, which ended in 363 AD (Axboe et al. IK 1,1 *Einleitung*, 1985:21). The manufacture of Germanic imitations of medallions started somewhere during the second half of the fourth century. It is difficult to understand, therefore, why the bracteate period has been dated to the fifth or even sixth century. Axboe's explanation is that, when bracteates occur in datable contexts, this is always in the fifth to sixth centuries. Dating is also possible on typological grounds, using the so-called Germanic animal style or Nydam style.<sup>5</sup> The animals of the C-bracteates<sup>6</sup> are closely connected with the early animal style I; the A-bracteates need not be dated significantly earlier than the C-bracteates. Therefore, Axboe presumes that the production of gold bracteates began around 450 and continued until about 530.

This fails to explain the chronological discrepancy of a century or more between the manufacturing of the first Germanic medallion imitations and the mass of bracteate production. Moreover, it is doubtful whether we should rely heavily on find contexts, since the bracteates might have been worn by several generations before being deposited, just as the medallion imitations appear to have been in use long enough to inspire the bracteates' iconography. Bracteates were found on Gotland together with Roman coins dating from the first century AD. Ulla Lund Hansen (1992:183–194) thinks the bracteates were produced during a very short period of perhaps only one or two generations.

In spite of the difficulties, it is possible to establish some sort of chronology, according to Axboe (1994:68–77). M(edallion)-type bracteates are assumed to be the earliest examples, due to their close resemblance to their model, the imperial medallion. The only M-bracteate inscribed with runes is therefore dated to the fourth century, an exception, since all other bracteates are dated to the fifth and sixth centuries. The M-types are followed by A- and C-types. D-bracteates

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<sup>5</sup> For detailed information on dating the bracteates and the animal-style etc. see Birkmann 1995.

<sup>6</sup> The additions A, B, C, D, F to the bracteates refer to their type; more information can be found in the chapter on Bracteates with Runes.

are commonly accepted as the most recent. The development of the inscriptions supposedly moved from Roman capitals to capital imitation, and eventually runic writing evolved, finding its culmination on C-type bracteates. D-type bracteates no longer display runes; the last rune-bearing bracteates are five F-type items.

Some scenes from Nordic mythology may be detected among the pictures and ornaments pressed into the thin gold foil (see numerous publications by Hauck, for instance 1992<sup>a&b</sup>). The concept of an ‘ideal king’ can also be supposed, especially among the types showing human beings, horses/stags and birds (Seebold 1992:299ff.). A quite plausible interpretation of the bracteates as active media in social, political or religious transactions, as a ‘special purpose money’ is forwarded by Gaimster (1993:1). In addition, the iconography has some military features. The image of the Roman emperor might very well suit the concept of medallions and bracteates as military insignia. The urge to ‘Germanize’ the emperor’s countenance reverses the cultural crossover by which Germanic horsemen (*equites singulares*) in the Roman army customarily adopted the name of the current emperor as their own *cognomen* (Bang 1906:10, 19).

There are instances of Roman connections: **walhakurne** on Tjurkö (I)-C means ‘Welsh corn,’<sup>7</sup> referring to Roman or Gallic gold, obtained by melting solidi. Darum (II)-A, Revsgård-A/Allerslev show signs that may be interpreted as Roman numerals. The Haram medallion-imitation bears the text DN CONSTANTIVS PF. Broholm-A/Oure bears a picture of two heads and the corrupt text TANS PF AUG. Part of the legend of Seeland (III)-A can be read as NUMIS. This bracteate also has several signs that may be interpreted as numerals. In my opinion, Fünen (I)-C bears the name of the Roman emperor M. Aurelius Carus (Looijenga 1995<sup>a</sup>). The many C-bracteates depicting horsemen in particular may recall the important role Germanic auxiliaries (*equites, alae*) played in Roman military history from Caesar’s days onwards. Further on we see depictions of helmets, swords and spears. In spite of the rather random way these examples have been selected, I would like to suggest some sort of military or class insignia for the bracteates’ origin (insignia which, eventually, may have been given some other function). The fact that they were found in hoards, among offerings and in graves (includ-

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<sup>7</sup> Some of the biggest gold mines known in this period were in Wales.



ing women's graves) need not contradict such a supposition. These objects, precious in various aspects, were perfectly suitable for use in the hereafter, or as gifts to the gods for whatever reason. Equally, the gods often combined the divine functions of war, death, healing and fertility.

The Roman medallions and Byzantine coins were strictly excluded from trade; outside the Empire they were mainly used as a tribute or as gifts within a political and symbolic context. Hedeager (1991:212) summarizes their function thus: "a new elite was consolidated, and it was this which communicated with gods and ancestors on behalf of the community. Precious gifts were intended to place the gods and ancestors under an obligation to support the existing order in the world, while the wellbeing of private individuals in the other world was ensured by burying one's means of payment".

There seems to be a connection between the residences and offering places of the elite, as at Gudme. An enormous wealth of bracteates has been found there, although curiously with relatively few runes. Interestingly enough, one of these few is bracteate Broholm-A/Oure, with the legend TANS PF AUG (see above); another one, Gudme II-B, shows a Victoria or Fortuna figurine with two other (Roman?) figures and the runic legend **undz**. The rise of the new elite coincided with the bracteate period. According to Fabech (1991:302), "with the breakthrough of the Scandinavian animal style at the beginning of the Migration Period, we find pictorial representations that clearly stand for an ideological/religious symbolic language. For this reason we may assume that the bracteates had a place in some of the religious acts and cultic rituals. It seems possible to connect them with settlements of special character like Gudme, Lundeberg, Odense, Sorte Muld, Vå or Helgö. The fact that these sacral objects (bracteates and *goldgubbar*: gold foil figurines) were found in connection with settlements indicates that religious rites took place in or near buildings at these settlements or power centres. This supports the idea that the aristocracy of the Migration Period had sufficient power and influence to institutionalize sacrificial customs, so they were no longer performed in bogs and lakes, but in settlement contexts".

The question is what kind of aristocracy may have arisen in Denmark at that time. In my opinion this was a group which differed from the initial group(s) in which the first runographers emerged. On the basis of the existing evidence it looks as if these people used runes exclusively on bracteates, since from that same period (the

second half of the fifth to the beginning of the sixth century) no other 'Danish' runic objects are known.

The bracteates are evidence of a lively exchange of objects and ideas between groups in Germania, but also between the Romans and the Germanic peoples. Bracteates can be looked upon as items in the gift-exchange system existing between the elites of Scandinavia, England and the Continent. Early runic writing was not used as a means of communication in the modern sense of the word. Some of the runic legends on bracteates seem to have served specific purposes.

The iconography shows either scenes from mythology or has a political connotation, perhaps denoting ideal leadership, and the runes support this in some symbolic way. The Roman connection is reflected in the use of Roman symbols of power and Roman lettering. According to Axboe (1991:202), this attests to the familiarity of a Germanic elite with aspects of Roman society, and their ability to adapt this knowledge to their own circumstances and for their own purposes. The social and political position of privileged families was legitimised by genealogy, the *stirps regia*. A mythological ancestor (a god, a hero) was at the *apex*.

Roymans (1988:55) states that "gods, myths and rituals are important in the integration of society and the legitimation of values and norms. Religion provides for coherence, stability and continuity". Hedeager (1992<sup>a</sup>:289) asserts that "bracteates formed a political medium, used in contexts where politics were in evidence, such as at the great feasts connected with religious ceremonies and the taking of the oath of loyalty".

In fact, this points to the rise of a leadership based on both religion and secular power in a rather complex society. Although some legislation must have existed, and this may have required the use of a writing system, nothing of the kind has survived, if indeed anything like this was written down. We have to assume that an oral tradition still prevailed and that at this time writing was confined to other, loftier, purposes.

From a total of over 900 bracteates, around 140 are known from outside the area of their production; most have been found in Germany, but finds are scattered as far south as Hungary and as far east as Russia. The largest concentration in the west is in England. However there is a significant change in find contexts. Bracteates in Denmark, South Sweden, around the Oslo fjord and along the North

Sea coast of North Germany and Frisia have all been found in hoards or deposits, whereas in England, Germany and Norway (Oslo fjord excepted), they are stray finds or grave finds, mainly from women's graves (cf. fig. 2 in Gaimster 1993:4, and fig. 3 in Andrén 1991:248). On Gotland and along the west coast of Norway, bracteates were deposited both in graves and in hoards. An explanation may be that in one area the deposit of bracteates was connected with a cult or ritual not practised in other regions, where bracteates were seen merely as women's adornments. This could be the result of a gift-exchanging network, in which bracteates served only as precious gifts.

### 6. *Denmark and the Goths in South-east Europe*

By far the richest inhumations are women's graves on Funen, at Sanderumgård, Årslev and Brangstrup. Their material shows connections with the Black Sea region.<sup>8</sup> The so-called Gothic 'monstrous' brooches and the rosette fibulae from the Danish islands show a mutual relationship. Both Brangstrup and Gudme were centres of wealth with sacral functions. The fourth-century coin hoard from Gudme consists of East Roman coins. Other hoards from the Ringe-area on Funen (Ringe, Brangstrup, Eskilstrup, Bolting, Årslev) are dated from the second part of the fourth century to the end of the fifth, a time which coincides with the bracteate deposits of Gudme II (Henriksen 1992:43). Lundeberg harbour, on the east coast of Funen, was in use from the third century onwards and is seen as an important harbour for South European products.

As regards the relations with the Gothic Černjachov culture north of the Black Sea, Funen is significant because of the finds from Brangstrup, Årslev and the Møllegård funeral site near Gudme. The finds from Rumanian Moldavia and a grave field of the Černjachov culture near Kiev correspond with contemporary finds from Denmark and North Germany, particularly from Funen, Sealand, Bornholm and the estuary of the river Oder. This guide material consists of rosette fibulae, certain iron combs, glassware and gold lunula-shaped

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<sup>8</sup> The double grave of Årslev in particular, with gold lunulae and a crystal ball with a gnostic Greek inscription, show there were connections with South-east Europe.

and square pendants. Some of the rosette fibulae, found in Denmark with a concentration in or round Sealand, bear runic inscriptions. This kind of brooch was either imported into the Černjachov area, or locally manufactured after Scandinavian models. The rosette fibula was a status symbol, found exclusively in rich women's graves, and it may be compared to *Silberblech* fibulae, characteristic of aristocratic women's graves from the later phase of the Černjachov culture at the end of the fourth century

Only a few 'Gothic' runic inscriptions have survived, on objects which were found in modern-day Rumania and Hungary. In the 1960s, the graveyard of Lețcani 30 km west of Iași in Rumanian Moldavia was excavated. In a woman's grave a *Silberblech* fibula was found next to an earthenware spindle whorl with a runic inscription. The finds have been dated to the second half of the fourth century. At that time the area was settled by Goths, whose culture is listed archaeologically as Sîntana de Mure/late Černjachov culture.

I think it unlikely (Looijenga 1996<sup>b</sup>) that the spindle whorl is an import, because it is a simple earthenware object, even though it has a runic inscription. Of course, the runic style might ultimately originate from Denmark. Since there was a lively exchange of objects, such as glassware, iron combs and brooches (cf. Werner 1988), there must also have been an exchange of knowledge and people. The Goths were of Scandinavian descent; some of them (the elite?) may have wanted Scandinavians for husbands and wives (Stoklund 1991:60; Hedeager 1988:213–227 and notes 359–362).

The Szabadbattyán buckle has been dated to the early fifth century. It was found in Hungary and purchased through an exchange of goods from an antiquary;<sup>9</sup> the exact original location of the object is unknown, as is the tribal origin of the owner, cf. Krause (1966:310): "Stammeszugehörigkeit ungewiss". The German archaeologist J. Werner (in a letter of 30.7.1993) suggested that the buckle could be "die Arbeit eines romanischen Goldschmieds (erste Hälfte 5. Jh.), vielleicht für einen germanischen Adligen im mittleren Donauraum, der vielleicht ein Ostgermane gewesen sein könnte". ("The buckle may have been the work of a Roman goldsmith in the first

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<sup>9</sup> The find complex, obtained by the Hungarian Museum, consisted of the following pieces: four fragmented large fibulae, one *Schnallenbügel*, two *Beschlägplatten mit Schnallen*, and also *silberne Gussklumpen und gewickelte Silberplatten*, according to the description in Kiss (1980:105).

half of the fifth century, perhaps made for a Germanic nobleman, who might have been an East German, living somewhere along the Donau in Middle Europe.”) It is not impossible that the buckle belonged to a Goth; it may have been inscribed by a Gothic-speaking person. Specifically, the legend **marings** may relate to the *Merings*, the royal house of Theodoric (454?–526), king of the Ostrogoths, and founder of the Ostrogothic monarchy in Lombardy. Moreover, **marings** reminds one of the runic inscription on the Rök stone (ninth century, Sweden), with the legend **skati marika** ‘the first among the Mærings’, which refers to the same Theodoric. Which Germanic tribe lived in Pannonia in the early fifth century? It cannot have been the Langobards, because they came to Pannonia in the sixth century. According to Kiss (1980:112) the buckle is typologically later than the *Pannonische Hunnenepoche* (433/439–454) and dates from the time the East Goths lived in South-east Pannonia (456–473). However, in the fifth century the Carpathian Basin was a transit area for Germanic tribes, where they settled for a limited period of time only. So much happened in the sphere of trade, plunder, and gift-exchange that an ethnic attribution of the buckle seems almost impossible, unless it can be agreed that the language of the runic text is Gothic, and that the legend refers to Theodoric’s kin.

The Pietroassa neck ring belonged to a hoard found in 1837 near the village of Pietroassa, nowadays called Pietroasele. A description and photographs of some of the artefacts were published in the catalogue *Goldhelm* (1994:230ff.) The finds—gold plates, cups, vases, bowls and jewellery—all have a distinctly ceremonial character. The high quality of the work is in the late Roman tradition and the objects were made in Byzantine workshops. The goods should probably be seen as political gifts to allied barbarian princes, according to the *Goldhelm* catalogue text (1994:230, with references). The hoard has been dated to the first half of the fifth century and so may have belonged to an East Goth. Previously it was thought there was a link with King Athanarich and it was therefore dated to the fourth century. Another theory, also mentioned in the *Goldhelm* text, suggests that the hoard belonged to a Goth named Ganais, a general in the Roman army who was killed by the Huns around 400. Initially the hoard contained two neck rings with runes, but it was hidden by the finder, who intended to sell the objects. The hoard was quickly impounded by the authorities, but by then one neck ring with runes had been lost, and the remaining one had been cut into two parts,

damaging at least one rune. The runes are on the outside of the neck ring, which in itself is unusual.

### 7. *The Continent*

From about 500 AD onwards, the appearance of a massive runic corpus in Central and South Germany showing the double-barred **h** as a diagnostic feature, has long been considered the starting point of the South Germanic or Continental runic tradition. But knowledge of runes may have been present much earlier in the Rhine area (see chapter III: On the Origin of Runes).

We can state that Continental rune-writing is attested from about 200 onwards. The Thorsberg finds may originate from southern regions (see above, II.4). Three third-century rune-inscribed spearheads were discovered in central Europe. One of these was found in a cremation grave near Dahmsdorf, Brandenburg, North-east Germany, reading **ranja** ‘stabber’. A second spearhead was found in a field near Kowel, Volhynia, Ukraina, reading **tilarids** ‘goal-pursuer’ (among other interpretations). A third spearhead is known from a cremation grave in Rozwadów, Poland, reading **???krlus** (no interpretation). Kowel lies near the vast *Pripjat* bog area, near the border with Poland, about halfway *en route* from the Baltic coast to the Black Sea. The spearheads bear so-called “sarmatische Zeichen” and “Heilszeichen” (magic signs), see Hachmann (1993:373ff.), which seem to point to East European, i.e. South Russian (Tamga) influences.

Other early Continental finds include the Liebenau (Niedersachsen) silver disc, which dates from the fourth century, and the locally-produced Sievern bracteate (at the mouth of the Weser), which may be dated to the second half of the fifth century. Typologically related are the Hitsum bracteate from Frisia, and the Undley bracteate from Suffolk. The Fallward (near Sievern) footstool has been dated ca. 425. The Aalen (at the north border of Baden-Württemberg) neck ring dates from the mid-fifth century.

The Fallward find was excavated from an exceptional ship burial which contained Roman military equipment and distinctive wooden grave gifts; the Liebenau find is from an equally exceptional inhumation grave. The Aalen find has no find context. The Sievern bracteate is a hoard find from a former bog, while Undley is a grave find and Hitsum is an unlocated find from a *terp*.

The fifth-century Bergakker scabbard mouthpiece may be better related to other Continental finds instead of to Frisian *terp* finds.

Early sixth-century<sup>10</sup> Continental runic finds seem to radiate from a central region: Baden-Württemberg, to the North, East and West (see Map 8). The emergence of the Continental tradition coincides with the Merovingian period. There are geographical gaps, leaving large findless areas. This could be due to preservation problems, such as sandy soil, or the fact that large areas were uninhabited in the Early Middle Ages. Equally, the funeral custom of cremation among the Germanic tribes of the pre-Migration period meant few runic grave gifts were preserved. Sometimes the dead were not given grave gifts at all (see *Reallexikon: Alemannen*).<sup>11</sup> Cosack (1982:20) conjectures that grave gifts were thrown onto the pyre, but taken back again after the burning, since the deceased was supposed to have been satisfied and not in need of them any more. The objects were often broken or destroyed before they were deposited on the pyre. If people gathered pieces of melted metal afterwards, they were not very thorough, since many *Brandgruben* contained quite a lot of precious metal parts.

The survival of runic objects from the sixth and seventh centuries appears to be largely connected with a change in burial customs. Instead of cremation, the practice of inhumation in row-grave fields arose during the second part of the fifth century. It was introduced into Germany around 500 AD, when the Merovingians won supremacy over the Germanic tribes in Middle and South Germany. From then on, the graves are remarkable for their rich, elaborate grave gifts. The Merovingian period was rich from an archaeological point of view, but even here many objects have disappeared, since grave robbery flourished; sometimes up to 80% of the graves were robbed from the middle of the seventh century onwards.

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<sup>10</sup> Perhaps we should say the end of the fifth century. Roth (1994:311) assumes that the runic inscriptions of the Weingarten finds, for instance, were made around 490, a generation before the deposition of the object in the grave.

<sup>11</sup> The funerary custom of either cremating the body on a pyre and subsequently burying the remains of wood, body and objects in a so-called *Brandgrube*, or of burying the remains in urns, was widely observed among all Germanic tribes. The grave-gift custom, however, was not in evidence on every occasion. It seems the Alamanni and the Franks buried their dead with hardly any grave gifts in the fourth and fifth centuries (*Reallexikon* I:145). Many urnfields from the Migration Period were deficient in grave gifts.

8. *The Breza column (Bosnia) and its fuþark inscription**Find history*

In 1930 remnants of a late antique building were excavated at Breza, a village on the river Stavnja, about 25 kms north of Sarajevo (Bosnia). Among the debris a fragment of a semi-circular half-column (limestone, not marble, as has been wrongly stated elsewhere) was found, which bears a nearly complete fuþark. Another column has a Latin alphabet. A third important find was a delicately ornamented bronze shield boss (probably Germanic, sixth century). The building itself may have been an early Christian church, possibly of an early sixth century date.

According to the early records of the find, published by Čremošnik and Sergejevski in 1930, several pieces of one or more pillars were found in a field. One of these fragments appeared to have a fuþark inscription. The fragment is 56 cm high and 30 cms in cross-section. The runes are of the older fuþark of 24 characters; they run to the right, and the last four runes are missing because an edge of the stone has broken away. The runes are between 0,5 and 2,6 cms high. The **h** is double barred, which indicates a West Germanic origin. I have included object and inscription in the Continental Corpus, chapter VII, nr. 10.

Besides the fuþark, other runelike signs were detected on different stone pieces. Arntz reproduced photos of these signs and of the part of the stone with the fuþark (Arntz & Zeiss 1939, Taf. VII). Krause (1966) also reproduces this photo, which gives the impression of being taken from a cast. It gives no ideas of the object on which the inscription was cut. However, the representation of the runes is realistic, and in this respect the photo gives a reliable impression. Apart from the fuþark and the Latin alphabet, some fragments bore Latin graffiti.

I inspected the fragment with the fuþark on the 11th October 1998, in the Museum at Sarajevo. During the recent war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the siege of Sarajevo, the contents of the showcases and many portable objects had to be evacuated into the museum cellars. Not all the objects have yet been recovered and put back in their original places. Therefore I was unable to inspect the column with the Latin alphabet; nor have I seen the fragments bearing runelike signs (for d and þ?).



*The building*

During 1930 and 1931 an excavation of the field where the columns were found revealed the base of a 27 m long and 19 m wide building. The building was oriented north-south and had an apse and a long nave flanked by two rectangular corridors. The rooms were separated by interior walls. The first impression was that it was a church, as similar plans of basilicas had been found previously in Bosnia (see Sergejevski 1960:564 and 566). But important items such as an altar were lacking. This occurred more often, such as at the church ruin of Suvodol, according to Sergejevski (1943:172). However the furnishings may have been made of wood. Many fragments of limestone and marl pillars and capitals were found scattered around, with not one piece in situ. The first excavators, Dr. Gregor Čremošnik and Demetrius Sergejevski, suggested that the column with the runes on it may have stood in or in front of a church which was destroyed by fire. In a later publication of 1943, Sergejevski stated that the column fragments were found lying across the inner walls, which prompted him to suppose either that there were low walls upon which the columns stood, or that there were walls which were ornamented with half-columns (Sergejevski 1943:172). The fuþark was carved on one of these columns.

Some sources refer to a church built by Goths, while others simply call it an early Christian church, probably destroyed by fire as a result of a Byzantine or Slavic attack (Arntz & Zeiss 1939:144). Arntz quotes a certain Oelmann, who saw the pillars himself in 1935, and who said that they were too small to have belonged to the church structure; the pillars were probably part of a canopy, perhaps situated inside the church.

Basler (1993:28) describes the building in detail. The building was divided into a narthex, a nave and a semi-circular apse, and surrounded by a porticus, which ended in two small chambers or chapels on either side. On the front and on both sides the porticus was decorated with columns, topped with rare square capitals. The apse was decorated on the outside with massive sculptured wild boars' and rams' heads, which had been painted red. On the east side there may have been a kind of triumphal arch, with an entrance on the front as well. Some steps on the inner side of the western wall might point to the presence of an upper chamber, a platform (Basler 1993:28), or a tower (Bojanovski & eli 1969:12, 25) see Fig. 1. The floor was tiled.

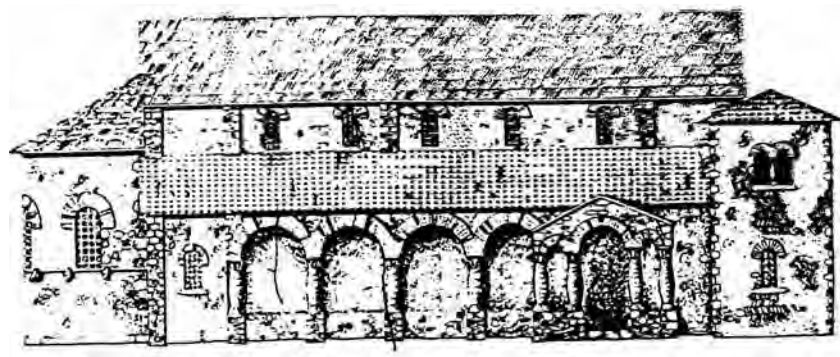
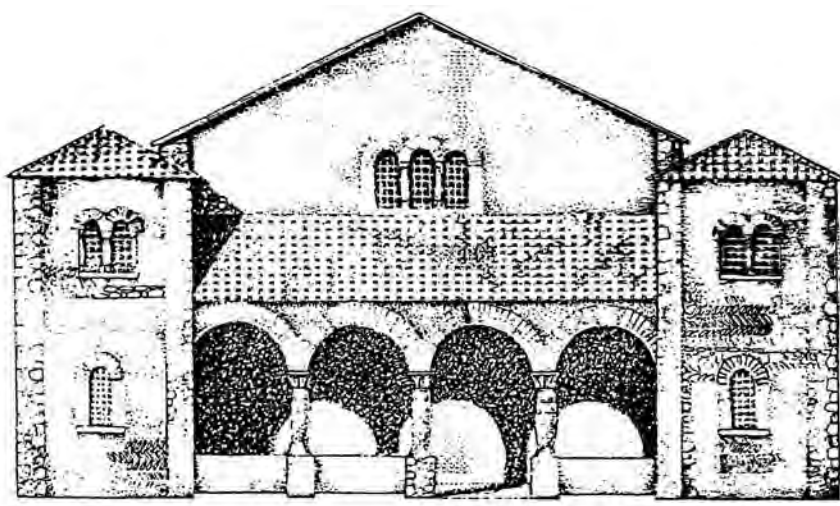


Fig. 1. Reconstruction of the Breza building.

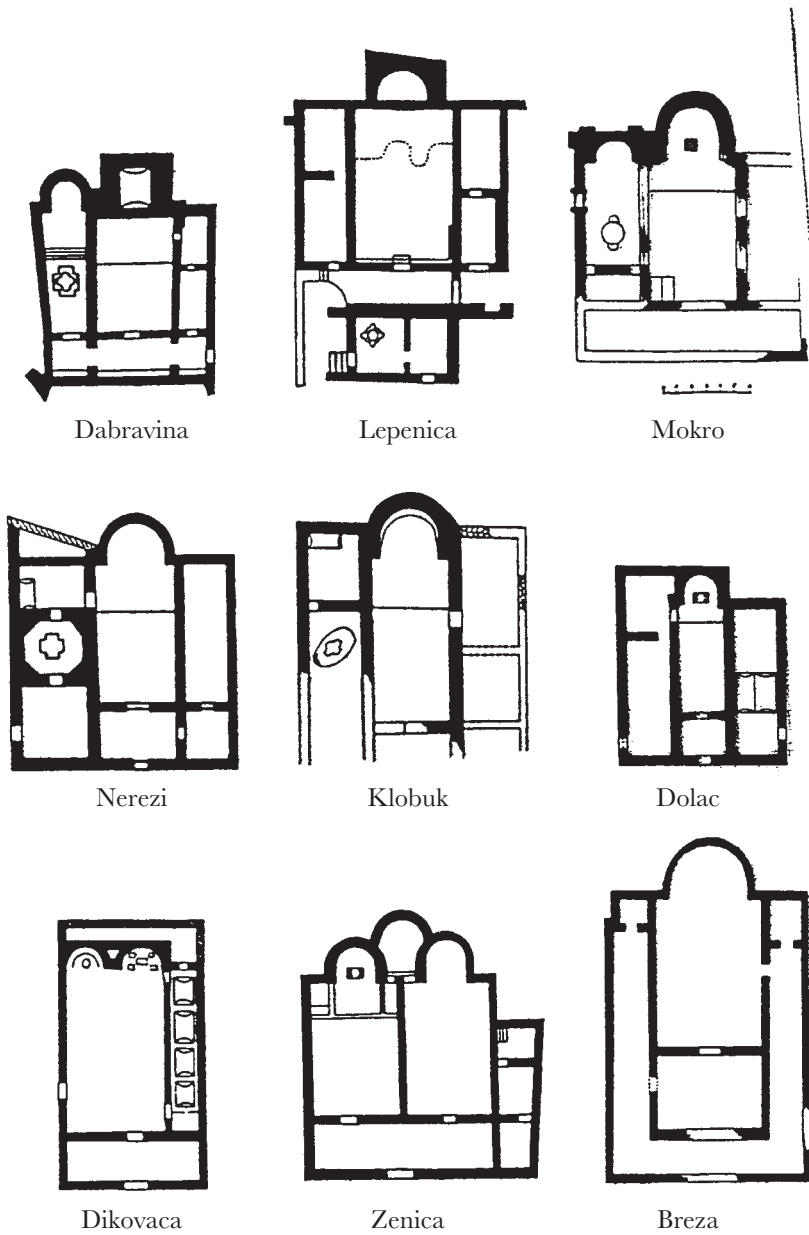


Fig. 2. Plans of Bosnian basilicas.

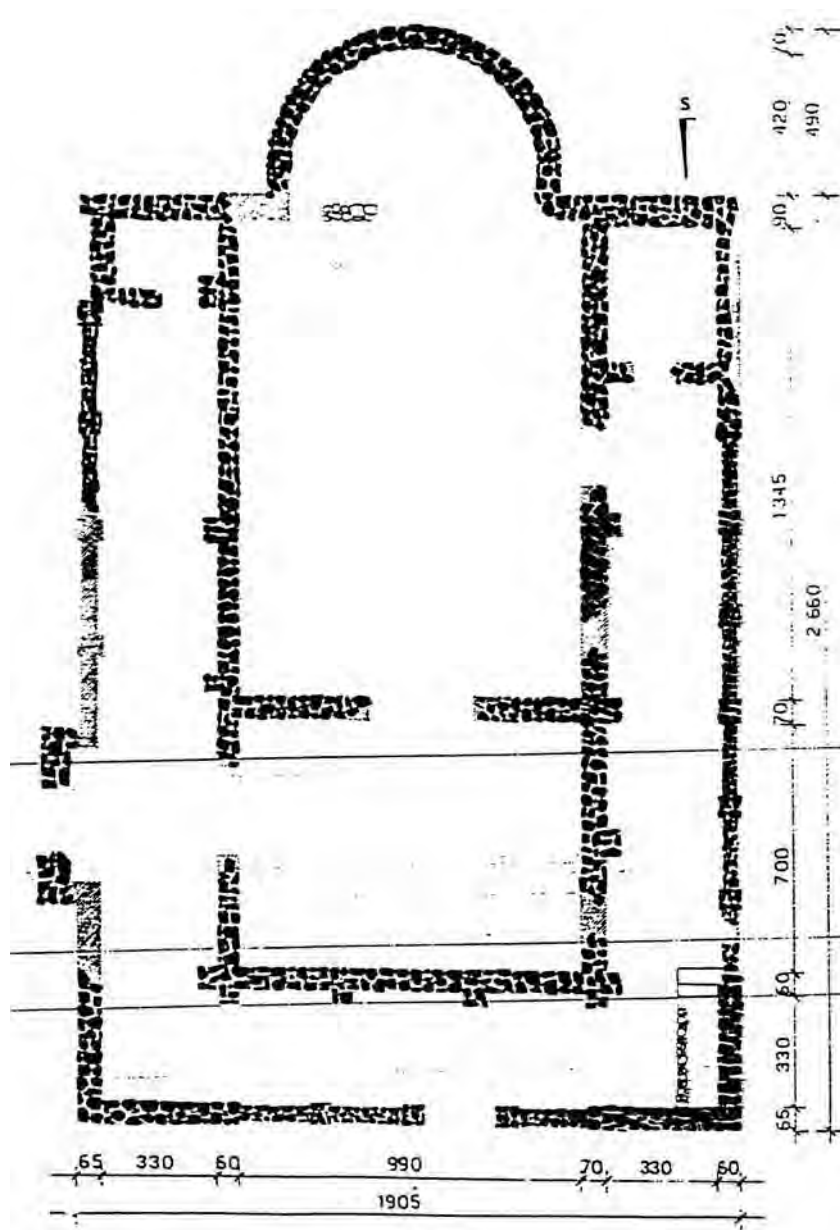


Fig. 3. Plan of the Breza building.

The walls were stone-built in *opus incertum*, and traces of *opus spicatum* (stones laid in a herringbone pattern) could be seen. The building may have had a wooden roof. The layers of ash on the floor suggest that the building was indeed destroyed by fire. Whatever furniture existed was burned. Amid the debris the skeleton of a man was found. With him were the sixth-century shield boss and some antique and seemingly 'barbaric' potsherds. Above the burnt layer some Slavic ceramics were found, which indicates that the walls may have stood for some time before collapsing (Basler 1975:260). Basler also suggests that the building was destroyed during the Gothic wars of about 535.

The relatively small limestone pillars were shaped on a lathe, which can be deduced from the grooves, the rings and the slight convexity (*entasis*), which gives the pillars the appearance of a somewhat stretched barrel. See Photo 17c. Sergejevski observes that in this respect they are reminiscent of the two pillars from Monkwearmouth (North-east England).

The capitals are worked in woodcut-style (*Kerbschnitt*). The builders also used spolia from antique buildings, and in doing so, they preserved some stones bearing important Latin inscriptions (Čremošnik and Sergejevski 1930:2). One example is a large grave cippus (grave-stone) which was found on one side of the apse, face down and bearing a long inscription:

VLPIAE - F  
 ]ROCVL[ AN-XX  
 II VALENS VARRON  
 F-PRINCEPS DESITIATI  
 ET AELIA IVSTA  
 ]CENO[P?  
 (after Čremošnik and Sergejevski 1930:8).

The inscription has been dated to the second century AD. The name DESITIATI would point to a tribe living somewhere along the upper part of the river Bosna, and eastwards to the Drina, according to the above-mentioned authors. Some other fragments of pillars show Latin graffiti, such as ]AULINUS and ]CORDIA.

In 1959–1962 a second excavation was executed by D. Sergejevski. Unfortunately, Sergejevski never published the results of this second excavation, but at the eleventh international Congress of Byzantinists in München in 1958, he discussed some of the abnormalities of the Breza basilica. He mentioned the possible presence of an upper room and the unusual orientation of the building (North-south instead of

East-west). He gave a survey of more than twenty ruins of early Christian basilicas, and Breza does not differ fundamentally from the others (cf. Sergejevski 1960:564f.). He enumerated four points of interest: 1. all the basilicas are built after the same plan; 2. this plan is original, i.e. it does not look like plans of basilicas in other countries; 3. the Bosnian basilicas are too small to contain many people; 4. the buildings did not serve any other purpose than that of a church (Sergejevski 1960:565). All these points are relevant to Breza. See Fig. 3.

According to Basler (1975 and 1993), Sergejevski retracted his earlier statement that the building was a church. Basler suggests that its purpose may have been profane, because of (1) the North-south orientation, (2) the absence of both an altar and a sepulchre, and (3) the presence of a fupark. The fact that runes were carved on one of the pillars would point to a 'barbaric' use of the building. I would like to contradict this; it appears that the co-existence of a Latin alphabet and a fupark in the same building may point to an early Christian consecration ritual.

### *Dating*

The dating of the building has been examined by several authors. The first excavators, Čremošnik and Sergejevski (1930), based their dating on the presence of the fupark. It would have been carved in the soft marly surface by the Ostrogoths, who, they believed, reigned in Dalmatia from 493–555 AD. The typical *Kerbschnitt* style of the capitals also prompted them to assign the building to the Ostrogoths. They even called the style 'Gothic', comparing it to the much later medieval Gothic cathedrals. But in his 1943 publication, page 173, Sergejevski offered the alternative view that the sculptures should be compared to domestic (Illyrian) art, an idea that was taken up by Bojanovski and Čelič (1969:25). The latter authors, like Sergejevski, focused on other aspects as well. They compared the building to Syrian basilicas, which would date the Breza basilica later, to the time of the East Roman emperor Justinianus, and at any rate after the Ostrogoths had left Dalmatia (by 471/2 some had already left for Italy, where their king Theodoric reigned from 493–526. However, the Goths continued to claim Dalmatia and regularly engaged in wars with Justinianus, emperor of Byzantium from 527–565. Dalmatia was reunified with the East Roman empire in 536). If the fupark was not carved by the Goths, it was done by captured Germanic

enemies who were forced to take part in building the church, according to Bojanovski and Čelič (1969:25). They point to two important features: (1) the architectural similarities with churches in Syria and Asia Minor and with indigenous churches in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well, and (2) the hybrid sculptural style, which resulted from a merger of a domestic style with late-antique and early-medieval styles. The *Kerbschnitt* style was indigenous and had been known and used for centuries in Bosnia, according to Bojanovski and Čelič. They compared Breza to other Bosnian basilicas at Klobuk, Dabravina and, to a lesser degree, Duvno, all of which are dated to the second half of the sixth century. See Fig. 2.

Sergejevski (1960:568) takes up the question of when Christianization occurred in the Dalmatian interior. He argued that Christianity was at first practised mainly in cities, and may have arrived at a rather late date in Dalmatia. All the basilicas in rural Bosnia seem to have been built during the same period, starting at the end of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth centuries, possibly during the reign of Justinianus and probably as result of large-scale missionary activities. To date the churches to the later sixth century would pose difficulties, according to Sergejevski, since the many wars involving the Goths, Avars and Slavs would have hindered such a large enterprise. At the time Sergejevski wrote this (1958), 24 early Christian churches had already been excavated in Bosnia.

As this shows, accurate dating of the Bosnian basilicas is difficult. Only stylistic criteria can be used, since there are no documents, no inscriptions, and no coins that may indicate a date. A date for Breza may be suggested by the presence of the sixth-century shield boss. See Fig. 4. The shield boss is slightly dome-shaped, pearly-rimmed halfway round the dome and around the button. It is exquisitely decorated with zig-zag lines in tremolo-stitch technique. It is difficult to find a parallel with these decorations, but its shape may be Langobardic (see for instance Werner 1962:80). This type of shield boss has also been found in the Alamannic regions, dated to the early sixth century (see for instance *Die Alamannen*, 1997:209–218).

### *The identity of the building*

Basler (1975:261) suggested that the Breza building may have been constructed during the Gothic era (ca. 490–535), because the front of the building reminded him of one of the palaces of Theoderic in



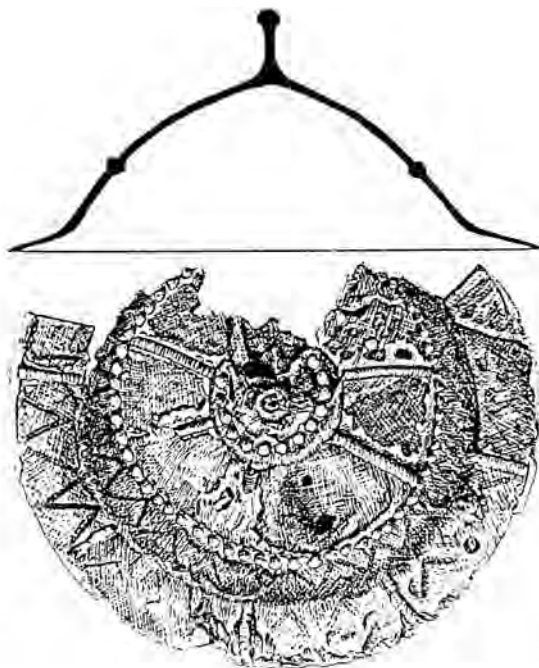


Fig. 4. The sixth-century shield boss.

Ravenna, on the Via Alberoni. The fronton could be a provincial or 'barbaric' imitation of the entry to the Diocletian palace at Split, or rather the middle part of Theoderic's palace, as it is presented on the mosaic in Sant' Apollinare Nuovo at Ravenna (Basler 1975:261f).

Also interesting is his note of two richly decorated capitals, both showing a cross within ranks, and one ornamented with a cross in a mandorla. These crosses point to Christianity.

The similarity to Theoderic's palaces led Basler to consider a public function for the Breza building, perhaps an administrative or juridical purpose. He acknowledged that the most important problem was how far the king's palace at Ravenna could influence building style in a far-off province (1975:263). He suggested that the Breza building was a *curtis* with an *aula*, used by a *comes*. The inscribed fupark on one side of the corridor and the Latin alphabet on the other side would point to certain rights of the indigenous civilians. In that way, Basler states (1993:28f.), visitors to the building could find their way in the written documents. The Ostrogoths could read



the Roman script and the Romans could encipher the script of the Ostrogoths, i.e. the runes.

Would the Ostrogoths have written their documents in runic script? I suggest this is very unlikely. I will propose another solution for the presence of both a Latin and a runic alphabet.

### *A Christian ritual?*

There may be a connection between the alphabets and the so-called *crux decussata*. This is an imaginary diagonal cross, which connects the four corners of a church and refers to the cosmos. In the Middle Ages, the *crux decussata* played a role during inauguration rites and also when designing the lay-out of a church. During the consecration rites of a new church, the bishop wrote on one post of the cross the Greek alphabet and on the other the Latin alphabet (Mekking 1988:28). A consecration ritual for a new church (*ordo quomodo aecclesia debeat dedicari*) is described in the *Egbert Pontifical*, a book of special services for the use of a bishop. The name Egbert refers to the first archbishop of York, England (732–766). The manuscript, with the name *Egbert Pontifical*, is kept in Paris, MS Lat. 10575. In it, the ritual (f. 46v) is described, in which the bishop takes his staff and in the dust and ashes on the floor draws the alphabet in the form of a great St. Andrew's cross from one corner of the church diagonally to the other, and again joining the two remaining corners.

*Deinde incipit pontifex de sinistro ab oriente, scribens per pavementum com cambuta sua. A.B.C.darium. usque in dextro angulo occidentalis. et ad dextro. angulo. orientalis scribat similiter. A.B.C.darium. usque in sinistro angulo basilice occidentalis. deinde ueniens ad altare dicat. Deua in adiutorium meum intende. domine as adiuuandum me festina. cum Gloria absque Alleluia.*

The origins of the *Egbert Pontifical* are unknown. Banting (1989:xxxvi) concludes that “the scribe seems to have drawn on a source from Northern France and Normandy in particular, adding material found in Anglo-Saxon England. (. . .) The Pontifical could have been written in Wessex in the mid-tenth century”. The rituals go back to older sources. In the *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et Liturgie*, H. Leclercq (1907:58) states that the *crux decussata* belongs to Roman liturgy, a *sacramentaire grégorien* which contains virtually the same text as the one quoted above from the *Egbert Pontifical*. This rite is evidently derived from the practice used by the *agrimensores* of Latin

antiquity, according to Mekking as well as Leclercq. Benz (1956:64ff.) discusses two liturgical texts, written down in the ninth century, but actually reflecting older texts. Both texts are *ordines* which contain rules for dedicating a church. One of the texts is called *Ordo Romanus XLI*, which, according to Benz, is in “gallikanischer Herkunft”, i.e. Frankish (Benz 1956:94f.). According to Benz (1956:97), the alphabet ritual appears for the first time in the *OR XLI*. He refers to several authors who suggest different origins for the alphabet ritual, including Roman surveying practices. He later discusses the significance of the X-form as a symbol of the name of Christ, and the alphabet itself as an elaboration of alpha-omega.

The liturgical texts may have come to France and England via pilgrims returning from Rome. Benedictine monks were particularly important in furthering this process, according to Banting (1989:xxvii), who added that “the forms of liturgy used in St Peter’ in the Vatican were a principal object of interest” to the pilgrims. Banting also points to the fact that “the influence of St Peter’s and the church in Rome had, however, been considerable in Britain since the seventh century”. The Benedictine connection may be significant. The order retained some influence in sixth-century Dalmatia as well, as the emperor Justinianus maintained contact with St Benedict (480–547), granting him possessions in Dalmatia, i.e. Leusinium (on the river Trebinica in South Bosnia), Salluntum (in Montenegro near Danilovgrad) and Baloe (see Basler 1993:18).

The occurrence of a runic alphabet and a Roman alphabet side by side in the Breza building presents a unique situation. If the alphabets played a part in a consecration ritual such as that described above, Breza may after all have been a church. For once the function of a complete fupark would be clear, albeit in a Christian context. Moreover, it would give the fupark a special status among at least one Germanic tribe, in that it was known and used in a religious context, and considered equal to the Roman alphabet. This still leaves the problem of the North-south orientation. This is very unusual, but in Rome itself the oldest basilicas seem to have been oriented in all sorts of directions. (Leclercq 1936:2665–2666).

### *Who made the inscription?*

Arntz & Zeiss (1939) date the inscription on the basis of a possible presence of Langobards or Alamanni in the area. Antonsen (1975)

lists Breza as an East Germanic inscription. Opitz (1977) lists Breza among his *Südgermanische Runeninschriften*. To Krause (1966:19f.) it was not clear how Langobards could have been in the region near Breza.

A short history of the Langobards may explain how they came to the Balkans. They migrated in the fourth century from the lower to the upper Elbe. Around 430 they arrived in Bohemia. After Odoaker defeated the Rugii in 488, the Langobards settled in lower Austria, from 489–526. In 526 they invaded upper Pannonia, which had just been deserted by the Ostrogoths. After the murder of Amalasantha, Theoderic's daughter and heiress, in 535, war broke out over the former Gothic possessions in Dalmatia. In 536 the emperor Justinianus (527–565) succeeded in incorporating Dalmatia into the East Roman empire. The Goths, under their new king Vitigis (536–540), waged battle against Justinianus and recaptured Salona. In the meantime the Dalmatian borders were left unwatched, and this allowed the Langobards and Gepides to enter the region. The Langobards occupied the north of Bosnia and the region between the rivers Bosna and Drina, which is exactly the area in which Breza lies.

Vitigis' successor, king Totila (541–552), tried in vain to win back Dalmatia. He offered Justinianus peace in 551, on condition that he could keep his possessions in Italy. Justinianus, in return, sent his commander Narsus to Italy, and the latter decisively defeated the Goths in 555. We can speculate that somehow Justinianus succeeded in building the Breza church in between the turmoils of successive barbaric invasions.

Bad relations between the Langobards and the Gepides led them into war. Helped by the Avars, the Langobards inflicted successive defeats on the Gepides and succeeded in driving them from Pannonia. Audoin's son Alboin led the Langobards to North Italy in 567, leaving the Langobard parts of Dalmatia to the Avars and the Slavs.

It therefore seems that the Langobards lived in the Breza region from around 535 until 567, some thirty years. They are, I think, the most likely people to have cut the fupark in the column.

The Bosnian churches were built before or during the period the Langobards settled in the area, so it may be that some of the Langobards became Christians during their stay in Bosnia.

The building of the church need not coincide with the cutting of the fupark, but the destruction of the building in the sixth century may be taken as *terminus ad quem* (based, for example, on the presence

of the sixth-century shield boss, buried under the layers of ash). The consecration of the church, during which the fuþark and the Latin ABC were cut on two pillars, may be considered as a Christian/Langobardic cooperation, perhaps preceding the baptism of a group of Langobards. The existence of friendly terms between Justinianus and the Langobards may be proved by the fact that the Langobardic king Audoin got parts of South Pannonia and Noricum in 546.

### 9. *England*

By the beginning of the fifth century, the Roman forces had withdrawn from Britain, where the *Pax Romana* had ruled for about 400 years. The Romans left behind a cultivated, literate, and partly Christianized country. Before and during the fifth century Germanic-speaking peoples from abroad settled in Britain. Their *adventus* is ‘sagenumwoben’, a matter of legends; the Britons and their king, Vortigern, are said to have invited them and to have welcomed some of them as heroes. Soon, however, Germanic tribes took over and the country came under ‘barbarian’ sway: the beginning of the Dark Ages.

In the second half of the fifth century several areas in England had crystallized into tribal settlements: the Jutes in Kent and on the Isle of Wight, the Angles in East Anglia and in the Midlands, the Saxons in Wessex, Essex and Sussex. This geographical spread corresponds with Bede’s description (731) in *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* [i, 15]. Whether there were Frisians among the early immigrants cannot be established with certainty; they are difficult to trace archaeologically in England and there seems to be no place-name evidence to support their presence. I do not think the place-name argument is a very strong one, as settlements taken over by the Frisians would have had a name already, and new settlements may have been named after local geographical or geological features. The hypothesis that there were no Frisians among the immigrating Germanic peoples (Bremmer 1990:353ff.), cannot be upheld any longer, as a certain type of fourth-century earthenware, called after the Frisian *terp Tritzum* (situated south of Franeker, Westergoo), has been found in Flanders and Kent (Gerrets 1994:119ff.). Additionally, Procopius states that Britain was inhabited by three races: *Brittones*, *Angiloi* and *Phrissones*, although neither Bede nor the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*

mention Frisians in connection with the Anglo-Saxon settlement.

There may be another explanation for the supposed lack of Frisian place names in England: there is virtually no information about the language and identity of the *Fresones* who came from Frisia in the centuries preceding and during the Migration Period. The depopulation of Frisia had already started in the third century. During the early fifth century, when the Anglo-Saxons supposedly crossed the Frisian coastal region, they found Frisia almost uninhabited. So there may have been no Frisians among the fifth-century immigrants to Britain. They might well have migrated earlier, though there is no certainty as to where they went: perhaps southwards to Belgium (Gerrets 1995) and from there to Kent, according to the Dutch archaeologist E. Taayke (personal communication).

Van Es (1967:540f.) mentions that Britain was subject to pirate raids during the third and fourth centuries. According to Eutropius (third quarter of the fourth century), there were Franks and Saxons among these pirates. Around 290 AD Constantius Chlorus mentioned Frisians among the invaders. During the fourth century the invaders were called Saxons (Van Es 1967:451). At the end of the fourth century Roman troops were transferred to Britain to defend the country against the Saxon raiders. Among these troops were Germanic *laeti* or *foederati*, and it is highly probable that they came from the regions near Tongeren and Doornik, and that they were made up of Franks, according to Van Es. In some early graves in Dorchester, which were probably Saxon, (Hawkes & Dunning 1962) brooches were found which suggested that the deceased women came from the Frisian coast (Van Es 1967:542). However, Hines (1990:22) believes the brooches were early Saxon or Anglian.

Knol (1993:196) observes that in the fifth century, the similarities in material culture along the North Sea are striking. No difference can be detected between goods from North Germany (the German Bight) and East England. There are also great similarities in ring-fibulae and earthenware found in Frisia and East England, dating from the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries (Knol 1993:198). Similar goods are lacking in sixth-century North Germany, and this area appears to have been almost depopulated at this time.

According to Werner (1958:385), developments in the left Rhine area affected the material culture of the North German coastal area in the first half of the fifth century. Werner observes that the preference of Saxon warriors for late-Roman military *Kerbschnitt* belt

equipment in the fourth century equals that of Franks living in the Lower Rhine area of Krefeld-Gellep and Rhenen (near Bergakker). Thirty-five years after Werner's article, the boat grave from Fallward on the North German coast was excavated. The grave contained many objects decorated in *Kerbschnitt* style. Among them was a footstool with runes. The grave was that of a Germanic soldier who had served in the Roman army. The *Kerbschnitt* style is of Mediterranean origin, as is shown by its motifs of meanders and swastikas.

There appears to be a link between the objects in the Fallward boat grave (including the rune-decorated footstool), a Frankish grave near Abbeville, and a grave near Oxford (Hawkes & Dunning 1962: 58ff.). The resemblance lies in the ornamentation of belt-fittings and buckles on the military equipment. There is also a strap-end from Fallward which has a counterpart in a strap-end from an Anglo-Saxon site at North Luffenham (for the latter: Hawkes & Dunning 1962:65ff.). The similarity in the ornamentation of belt buckles found in Fallward, Abbeville (départ. Somme, North France) and Oxford points to contacts between people living in a region that stretches from the North Sea coast of Germany to North Gallia and to Wessex in England.

A group from southern and western Norway landed on the east coast of Britain at the beginning of the last quarter of the fifth century, according to Hines (1990:29), who adds that these immigrants opened the way to widespread Scandinavian influence in the sixth century. The royal house of East Anglia in the sixth century, the Wuffingas, may have been of Swedish origin.

The widespread practice of ship burial led Scull (1992:5) to claim that Scandinavian influence in East Anglia was particularly strong. Since the discovery of the Fallward grave field, which contains many individual ship burials, a similar connection has been established between Scandinavia and North Germany. It is possible to draw a line from Scandinavia *via* North Germany to England, and another line from North Germany *via* North France to England. The Frisian coast lies in between and was certainly part of the equation.

Bede (*Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, ii, 15) records that the Wuffingas took their family name from Wuffa, suggesting that he was regarded as the founder of the royal line. Wuffa began his rule in AD 570. Clarke (1960:138f.) suggests that the Wuffingas were an offshoot of the Scylfings, the royal house of Uppsala. Wuffa appears in the genealogy as the son of Wehha and the father of Tytil and was

thus the grandfather of Redwald († 624/25), the king who was probably buried in the ship grave at Sutton Hoo (cf. Evison 1979:121–138; Werner 1982:207; Carver 1992:348ff.). Newton (1992:72f.) elaborates: “The patronymic Wuffingas seems to be a variant of Wulfingas or Wylfingas. The East-Anglian dynasty sought to ‘signal allegiance’ with one or more of the aristocracies of southern Scandinavia. There may be more than an etymological connection between the Wuffingas of East Anglia and the Wylfingas of Beowulf. Queen Wealhþeow of Beowulf may have been regarded as a Wuffing forebear.<sup>12</sup>

The name Wehha may occur as **wecca** on the bronze pail from Chessel Down (see chapter eight, nr. 6). The existence of runic links across the North Sea is discussed further in chapter four, 4 and 7.

Merovingian influence in England was exercised through royal marriage, religion and law in the late sixth and early seventh centuries. This is illustrated by the fact that Erchinoald, a relative of the Merovingian king Dagobert, was identical with the bishop Eorcenwald of London, who played a significant role in the development of the Anglo-Saxon Charter, according to Wood (1992:24).

The Merovingians exercised supremacy over parts of South England in the early 550s, as is shown by the correspondence between the Merovingian kings and the emperor in Byzantium. Marriages between English kings and Merovingian princesses, such as that of the princess Bertha with Æthelberht of Kent, illustrates the relation between the two countries. Bertha’s father was Charibert, brother of King Chilperic, who ruled from 561–584. She belonged to the group of “secondary Merovingian women who were usually placed in nunneries, or were married to the leaders (duces) of peripheral peoples as Bretons, Frisians, continental Saxons, Thuringians, Alamans and Bavarians. (. . .) Saxon women brought no prestige to Merovingian men, but Merovingian women will have enhanced the status of Anglo-Saxon kings”, according to Wood (1992:235–241).

A sixth-century Merovingian brooch with a runic inscription (in the British Museum, Continental Department) is puzzling. According to the museum records, its provenance is Frankish, but it was probably found in Kent. The runes show no typical Anglo-Frisian features, so it could be a Continental import,<sup>13</sup> possibly from Germany. I have

<sup>12</sup> This assumption might be complicated, since the queen’s name can be translated as ‘servant of a foreigner’ e.g. a Welshman, or a Roman.

<sup>13</sup> It is difficult to establish the inscription’s dialect and provenance; it was declared



therefore placed it in the checklist of Continental Inscriptions under the name “Kent I”. Page (1995:158) calls it “the Bateman brooch”.

The sixth-century Watchfield leather case (found 27 km west of Oxford), containing a balance and weights and with copper-alloy fittings, may be an import from Francia. One of them bears a runic inscription, which may have been added in England. It reads **hæri-boki wusæ**; the **h** is single-barred, which is characteristic of English inscriptions from Period I, so a Continental origin for the runic text seems unlikely. Besides, æ in **hæriboki** shows serifs, typical of some Anglo-Saxon runic inscriptions. The case itself can be regarded as a witness of Merovingian contacts, according to Scull (1993:97–102).

The earliest surviving English law-code, promulgated by Æthelberht of Kent (the Merovingian princess Bertha’s consort) before the establishment of Anglo-Saxon coinage, may be relevant. It records fines and compensations in terms of money: *scillingas* and *sceattas*. It has been suggested that the *scilling* was a weight of gold equivalent to the weight of contemporary Merovingian *tremisses* (Scull 1993:101).

Since the oldest runes in England were written on portable objects, any conclusion must be based on circumstantial evidence and details such as the language and runeforms. If the inscriptions do not show any of the typical Anglo-Frisian features, the origin of early runic objects (from both England and Frisia) is difficult to establish, even on an archaeological and linguistic basis. The chance to establish a provenance occurs when a mixture of Anglian and Saxon styles is present, as is the case with the Spong Hill (Norfolk) urns (Hills 1991:52ff.). We can conclude that pottery and brooches were pro-

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‘Continental’ and has never been included in any Anglo-Saxon runic survey. The British Museum catalogue gives the following description: “No. 235, 93, 6–18, 32. Gilt-silver radiate-headed brooch: semicircular, flanged head-plate with seven applied ovoid knobs, moulded, with stamped decoration; subtrapezoidal foot-plate expanding to rounded end with opposed, profiled, bird head terminals; chip-carved, geometric and linear decoration; collared garnet, garnet disc and niello inlays; runic characters incised on back of foot-plate. Pair with no. 236, 93, 6–18, 33: Gilt-silver radiate-headed brooch, pairing with, but inferior to match, no. 235. Both: sixth century Merovingian. Provenance unrecorded; register records that in Bateman’s MS catalogue, now in Sheffield City Museum, it is called Frankish without locality; sale catalogue information “said to have been found in Kent” has no independent corroboration and may have been the basis of the statement that the runic brooch was found in Kent by Stephens (1894), repeated more questioningly in Stephens (1901): “Most likely, to judge from the type, they [i.e. the pair] may have been found in Kent”. In effect the true provenance remains unknown”.



duced by the Anglo-Saxons in England, and consequently that runes were too. The Loveden Hill urn is a local product. The Welbeck and Undley bracteates may also have been manufactured in England, although Undley could originate from the Continent, i.e. one of the homelands of the Angles or Saxons (Hines & Odenstedt 1987).

The oldest runic inscription, reading **raihan**, found in England was scratched on the surface of a roe deer astragalus, which has been dated to the fourth or fifth century, on the basis of the urn in which it was buried. This knucklebone comes from a cemetery where, according to Page (in Scull 1986:125), clear signs of Scandinavian influence have been detected. A knucklebone is a toy, which may have belonged to a North Germanic immigrant; there is no runological or linguistic reason for assigning an Anglo-Saxon provenance to the object or the inscription, apart from the findspot.

Similar finds from the Migration Period are known. For instance an urn with a knucklebone has been found in Driesum (Friesland). Five urns with knucklebones were found in the cemetery of Hoogebeintum (Friesland); one of the urns is an Anglo-Saxon vessel of the late fourth or early fifth century. Further finds are known from Westerwanna on the North German coast, from Tating(-Esing) on the South-west coast of Schleswig-Holstein, and from Sörup, also in Schleswig-Holstein. Knucklebones have also been found in graves from cemeteries in Poland and in East Germany (Knol 1987). The interesting point is that of all the knucklebones we know, many are decorated with dots and/or circles, but only the **raihan** one has runes. The piece is therefore special, but in what way? The meaning of the inscription is not very helpful: **raihan** means ‘of a roe deer’. We can only speculate about the intention behind this announcement. The **h** is single-barred, the rune transliterated with **ï** is the rare yew rune and here it is part of the diphthong *ai*. This does not give an indication as to its provenance.

The second extension of the runic alphabet in England during the post-conversion period, to 33 characters, may be due to Christian clerics, since the complementary runes occur almost exclusively in ecclesiastical contexts, e.g. in manuscripts and on large-scale stone crosses with Christian texts, such as the Ruthwell Cross and the Bewcastle Cross. The church in England was certainly not opposed to runes. Small reliquaries or portable altars containing the extreme unction were provided with pious inscriptions both in runes and in Roman lettering (Looijenga & Vennemann 2000). Some texts bear

witness to historical, legendary or mythological events (the Franks Casket). Monks from Lindisfarne or Jarrow may have composed the rune-text of the Ruthwell Cross. Runic writing was incorporated in the Latin of the manuscripts; the runes *thorn* þ = *th* and *wynn* ƿ = *w* were added to the Latin script from the seventh century onwards and remained in use until late in the Middle Ages. On the other hand, manuscript features can be found in runic epigraphy, for instance in the serifs that are attached to the ends of sidetwigs (e.g. **hæriboki** in the sixth-century Watchfield inscription).

### 10. *The Netherlands*

The Roman encyclopedist Pliny (AD 23–79) gave a description of a people living in lamentable circumstances on the marshes of the Frisian coast. In his *Naturalis Historiae Liber XVI.1.3–II.5* we find the following:

... in the east, on the shores of the ocean, a number of races are in this necessitous condition [i.e. people living in an area without any trees or shrubs, TL]; but so also are the races of people called the Greater and the Lesser Chauci, whom we have seen in the north. There twice in each period of a day and a night the ocean with its vast tide sweeps in a flood over a measureless expanse, covering up Nature's agelong controversy and the region disputed as belonging whether to the land or to the sea. There this miserable race occupy elevated patches of ground or platforms built up by hand above the level of the highest tide experienced, living in huts erected on the sites so chosen, and resembling sailors in ships when the water covers the surrounding land, but shipwrecked people when the tide has retired, and round their huts they catch the fish escaping with the receding tide. (translation H. Rackham, Vol. IV, pp. 387ff).

The coastal area along the North Sea consisted of marshes and fens, which were subject to daily inundations, and the practice of raising artificial mounds lasted until the 11th century, when dyke-building began. These mounds are called *wierden* (in Groningen) or *terpen* (in Friesland).

The mounds were quarried extensively for soil between the late 1800s and the 1930s. These commercial excavations brought many antiquities to the surface, among which were objects with runes. It may seem logical to consider all runic finds in Frisian soil Frisian,

but this is not the general opinion. Nielsen (1986) wrote: “Rigourously speaking, a runic inscription should be considered Frisian only if it exhibits linguistic developments characteristic of that language, i.e. the language first attested in the Old Frisian manuscripts”. But there is a gap of several centuries between the runic period and the manuscript period, runes being in use from the fifth century till about the ninth; and the manuscript tradition only starting in the twelfth century. When reasoning from a linguistic point of view, we must conclude that only three inscriptions are in Old Frisian: Westeremden A **adujislu me[þ] jisuhidu**, the coin with the legend **skanomodu**, and Hamwic **katæ**, all of which have OFris  $\bar{a}$  < Germanic *au*.

In the course of the past hundred years about 17 objects with runic inscriptions have been found in the Dutch provinces of Groningen and Friesland. In the early Middle Ages these regions were part of a Greater Frisia that once stretched from the Zwin to the estuary of the Weser. Archaeologists hold different views on the location of central Frisia; it may have been the region of the Rhine delta and the central river-area of the Rhine and the Waal, including the important *emporium* of Dorestad (see also Bazelmans 1998). Another view places central Frisia along the seashore of present-day Friesland.

Under the legendary leaders Aldgisl and Redbad, the power of the Frisians extended across Utrecht and Dorestad, threatening Frankish connections with England and Scandinavia. “In about 680 Frisia became part of the monetary continuum with the central part of the Merovingian kingdom” Van Es (1990:167) states. After the death of Redbad in 719, the Franks defeated the Frisians and in 734 the Frisian territory was incorporated in the Frankish kingdom. The Frankish conquest had no adverse effects on Frisian trade. Frisian mintage got under way again in 730 with all kinds of *sceattas* (Van Es 1990:168). Dorestad was in the hands of the Frisians for a short time only, and this period was of minor importance in Dorestad’s trading history, according to Van Es (1990:166ff.).

There were contacts with South-east England, South-west Norway, South-east Norway or South-west Sweden and the Weser area. The written sources can supplement the archaeological data to some extent: from Rimbert’s *Vita Anskarii*, for instance, it is possible to trace relations between Dorestad, Birka, Haithabu and, more indirectly, Hamburg and Bremen. Dorestad’s period of prosperity lasted for a century at the most, from about 725 until about 830. During this

period it was part of the Frankish realm, but the Frisians dominated the river and sea trade routes of North-west Europe to such an extent that it is customary to speak of Frisian trade across the North Sea, which was called the Frisian Sea at the time.

To what extent all the *mercatores* and *negotiatores* from Dorestad were Frisians cannot be established. The term ‘Frisian’ was synonymous with ‘merchant’; the noun indicated a function in society rather than ethnic descent. In modern times the patronymic De Vries is among the most common in the Netherlands and these people are certainly not all Frisians. Two runestones at Sigtuna, U 379 and U 391, refer to ‘Frisians’: **frisa kiltar letu reisa stein þensa eftiR þur[kil], [gild]a sin kuþ hialbi ant hans þurbiurn risti** (U379) and **frisa ki[ltar] . . . þesar eftR alboþ felaha sloþa kristr hia helgi hinlbi ant hans þurbirn risti** (U391). ‘The guild-members of the Frisians had this stone set up in memory of Torkel, their guild-member. God help his soul. Torbjörn carved’ and ‘The guild-members of the Frisians had these runes cut in memory of Albod, Slode’s associate. Holy Christ help his soul. Torbjörn carved’. The language is Swedish and so are the names Torkel, Torbjörn and Slode. Albod may be a Frankish name.

It seems that in the Early Middle Ages, Frisians were not as concerned with their cultural ‘Frisian’ identity as they are today. How Frisian are the Frisian runic inscriptions? How Frisian are the Frisian *sceattas*? I am inclined to say, just as Frisian as the Frisians were in those days: they were *negotiatores*, merchants, travellers, as a professional group entitled to bear the name ‘Frisians’, but originating from various parts of the Low Countries and from the marshes near the Frisian Sea. This custom of giving an ethnic name to different groups of merchants has an equivalent in the ancient amber merchants; the Greek geographers seem to have used the appellation Celto-Scyths for people who traded amber and who may have been neither Celts nor Scyths.

### *Runes and migration*

From the fifth century onwards, a rapid growth in population occurred in Frisia, following the near-devastation of the region during the third and fourth centuries. This growth is witnessed by a substantial import of brooches, probably originating from easterly regions bordering the North Sea. The growth in population continued dur-

ing the sixth and seventh centuries, but there are a few questions with regard to the identity of this new 'Frisian' population; they were obviously not the same as the historical *Fresones* from Roman times. The fact that their language, called Old Frisian or Runic Frisian by modern linguists, is almost indistinguishable from Old English and Old Saxon, may point to a common origin.

I propose the following scenario: the people who settled in the nearly devastated coastal regions of Frisia during the fifth and sixth centuries came from the easterly shores of the North Sea and were probably an offshoot of the host of Angles, Saxons and Jutes who had made their way westward and eventually colonized Britain. The new inhabitants of Frisia could easily have overwhelmed the few remaining *Fresones* and provided them with a new cultural and linguistic identity. Politically, Frisia came under Frankish sway from the eighth century onwards, which is mirrored in the renaming of almost all Frisian place names (including the *terp* names, cf. Blok 1996). It is significant that in Frisia no prehistoric place names have survived, whereas there are many in adjacent Drenthe.

The linguistic and runological innovations may have taken place in Frisia or in the homelands of the Anglo-Saxons on the Continent, before their migration to Britain in the fifth century. When passing through Frisia, travellers and merchants from easterly North Sea shores may have transferred their runic knowledge to the few Frisians who had stayed behind. On the other hand, there may have been a period of Anglo-Frisian unity in which distinctive runeforms were developed. The tribes which departed from South Jutland and North Germany in order to migrate westward are likely to have split up and settled in Frisia, England, and perhaps in Flanders. Among these tribes were people who knew runes; some of them stayed in Frisia, which was almost uninhabited in the fourth and fifth centuries, while some moved on to Britain. This would explain the linguistic and runological similarities between Old English, Old Frisian, and Old Saxon. Since we must assume continued contacts across the Frisian Sea (North Sea), runic developments are very difficult to pinpoint. A concept such as 'Anglo-Frisian unity' probably refers to the multiple contacts which existed during the Early Middle Ages.

*The Bergakker find*

In 1996 runic records underwent a significant change. A silver-gilt scabbard mount with a runic inscription was found in Bergakker, near Tiel in the Betuwe. This former *habitat* of the *Batavi* is situated in the river estuary of the Rhine and the Maas. The mount is ornamented in a way also found in the Lower and Middle Rhine areas, North Gallia and North Germany (cf. Werner 1958:387, 390, 392). Parallels of this type of decoration can be found on late Roman girdle mounts such as the one from Gennep (province of Limburg), dating from the second half of the fourth century AD. Gennep was a fifth-century Germanic immigrant settlement on the river Niers, a side-river of the Maas, south of Nijmegen (Heidinga/Offenberg 1992:52ff. and Bosman/Looijenga 1996:9f.). The Gennep finds are said to have been produced in Lower Germany.

The front side of the mount is decorated with half circles and points, ridges and grooves. Parallels for it are hard to find. In general, late Roman weapons are scarce, and only small parts have been found in fortresses. Weapons have very rarely been found in cemeteries. In fact, this object is the first weapon-part with a runic inscription found in the Netherlands (Bosman & Looijenga 1996). Judging from the nature of the inscription, Bergakker is a clear parallel to any other inscriptions on metal. As regards category, it recalls the Continental and English traditions, both of which include rune-inscribed silver scabbard mounts. The Bergakker object plus its inscription can be regarded as a link in the chain of military high-class objects that connects the Rhineland, North Germany, and England.

In general, according to the type and ornamentation, the Bergakker scabbard mount can be linked with a group of swords from North Gallia up to the lower Rhineland of Germany and the Netherlands. The runes could have been added anywhere, but that is not likely to have happened outside the above-mentioned area. Otherwise, we have to assume that the object was inscribed somewhere else (where and why?), and was subsequently brought back to its area of origin.

The runes are of the older *fupark*-type; one character is anomalous and hitherto unattested. The Bergakker inscription does not show any Frisian runic features. Moreover, the Betuwe did not belong to Frisian territory. The area was controlled by a Romanized population, possibly Franks, which suggests new views on the spread of runic knowledge in the early fifth century. The one Bergakker find

is not enough proof for the existence of a runic tradition in the Rhine and Maas estuaries. But it might be an indication for the existence of a Merovingian runic tradition, when other evidence from Belgium and France is also taken into account.

A Roman altarstone was found at the same site, when a part of the field was excavated in the 1950s. The stone, from the second half of the second or first half of the third century AD, was dedicated to the indigenous (Batavian) goddess *Hurstrga*. The toponym 'Bergakker' suggests that the site is higher than its surroundings. This may have been caused by riverine deposits. The site may have functioned as a ritual centre during the Roman period. A parallel can be found at the temple site of Empel (province of Noord Brabant), which was dedicated to the Batavian god *Hercules Magusanus*. According to Markey (1972:372f.), the semantic features of *hurst* are (1) elevation, and (2) undergrowth, usually on a sandy mound. The goddess Hurstrga may be regarded as a special goddess, who was venerated in a grove on a small hill. Markey (1972:373) suggests that the name *hurst* may be connected with cult-places of fertility goddesses. At Empel a temple was erected in an oak-grove on a *donk*, which is a sandy mound and characteristic of the river landscape of the Betuwe (Derks 1996:115). On such a *donk* the sanctuary of Hurstrga at Bergakker may have been situated. The interesting feature of Empel was the occurrence of oaks, whereas elsewhere the area was dominated by willow vegetation.

A great number of metal objects were found with the runic scabbard mount, among which were many coins, fibulae, all sorts of bronze fragments and two objects that may be characteristic of cult-places, namely a small silver votive plate showing three *matrones* and a silver box for a stamp. The latter objects have often been found in Gallo-Roman sanctuaries (Derks 1996:186). Therefore, the find-complex to which the runic scabbard mount belonged may have been connected with the sanctuary (of Hurstrga or an unknown divine successor). The objects can then be interpreted as votive gifts.

What is really surprising is the apparent knowledge of runic writing in this area. The Betuwe has never before yielded objects with runes, and was certainly not expected to do so. The region was situated south of the *limes* until about 400 AD, when the Romans withdrew. In the turbulence that followed, the region was overrun by several Germanic tribes, such as Chatti, Franks, Saxons and Frisians.

The Bergakker inscription shows a hitherto unattested rune for *e*.

A parallel may be the **e** as used in **leub** on a melted brooch from Engers in the Rhineland (see Continental Corpus, chapter VII, nr. 15). The ductus of the two headstaves of both items looks more or less the same, in the way the staffs slant towards each other: \ /. I assume these forms are a variety on the ‘standard’ **e** rune:  $\uparrow$ .

Varieties in the forms of the runes occur quite frequently, and can be expected to turn up anywhere. Few varieties are known to us, due to the scarcity of material. For instance, the mirrored runes of the Illerup and Spong Hill inscriptions were at first not recognised, because the existence of mirror-runes was not known until 1985 (Pieper 1987). The Chessel Down scabbard mount has an unidentified fourth rune (unless my suggestion of reading it as **l** is accepted, cf. the so-called bracteate **l**  $\uparrow$  in some bracteate legends). Yet another runic variety of **l**  $\downarrow$  occurs in the inscriptions of Charney and Griesheim. The intriguing and baffling problems often connected with the Frisian Corpus apply to all other early runic corpora. So questions such as “were runes ever a serious and useful script” will still for some time provide an interesting subject for conversation among runologists. For the present I will take it for granted that there was an indigenous Frisian runic tradition as well as an English and a Continental one.

Runic knowledge in Frisia and England was present from the fifth century on. At that time, isolated runic objects turn up in isolated places, situated far away from each other: Fallward, Liebenau (Lower Saxony), Aalen (Baden-Württemberg), Bergakker, Kantens (Frisia), Caistor-by-Norwich and Spong Hill (Norfolk). Strangely missing in this chain is North Gallia; perhaps runic finds may be expected to emerge one day in the north of France. When taking the runic bracteates into account, evidence from the same regions is more substantial. The Sievern (Niedersachsen), Hitsum (Frisia) and Undley (Suffolk) bracteates appear to be closely related (Seebold 1996:184, 194). The Hitsum runic text: **fozo groba** even may be Frankish (Seebold 1996:198).

### 11. *The Borgharen find and its Merovingian context*

In September 1999 a bronze belt buckle with a runic inscription was found in a man’s grave near Maastricht, in the Dutch province of Limburg. The grave belonged to a small Merovingian cemetery,



which was clustered around the hypocaustum (heating system) of a bath-building belonging to a former Roman villa. The site lies on the east bank of the river Maas, north of Maastricht between the villages of Borgharen and Itteren. The graves were all dug in a gravel deposit, laid out in rows and oriented NE-SW (head to the SW). The runes read: **bobo** ᚋᚋᚋᚋ. The owner of the belt buckle was buried around 600 AD in an existing cemetery, where members of his family were already committed to the earth before him. Among the grave gifts were a long iron sword (spatha) with an iron buckle, a short iron sword (scramasax), an iron spear, an iron axe, an iron shield boss (umbo), two iron arrowheads, a fire-iron, a huge bottle of green glass, a green glass plate, a small goblet in blue glass, bronze belt buckles and belt fittings plated with tin, bronze strips of a wooden bucket and a bronze coin plated with gold, which probably served as an obolus. The wooden bucket and obolus are regarded as typical Frankish gifts to the deceased.

The Borgharen inscription clearly belongs to the so-called Continental runic tradition, and more exactly, to a Merovingian Frankish branch. This find once again emphasizes the existence of runic knowledge among the Franks living in the down-stream area of the rivers Maas and Rhine. The Borgharen find may be regarded as a stepping stone linking the runic landscapes of the Ardennes (Belgica I) and the Maas/Rhine delta with the Rhineland (Germania I and II) and Alamannia.

The buckle has a triangular fitting with three round rivets. A row of triangular notches runs along the edges. A parallel is known from grave 25, Normée, La Tempête, dep. Marne, France. (Menghin 1983:263.) More or less similar buckles have also been found in Belgium and the Rhineland. Siegmund (1996:698) shows the development of the buckle fashion schematically; the Borgharen type came into use from the third quarter of the sixth century AD onwards.

The coin can be dated between 550 and 585, and thus gives a *terminus post quem* for the male burial. For almost all weapons and glass objects a date between 575 and 625 can be proposed.

According to Gregory of Tours, by 491 the region around Tongres had already been captured by Clovis. This area certainly included Maastricht and part of the Maas delta. From the sixth century onwards, Frankish authority stretched eastwards from Nijmegen across the Rhine. The northern border of the Frankish realm is less easy to establish in this period. Trade became important in the Rhine

and Maas deltas. From around 600 AD, Merovingian moneyers became active in the Maas region. In Verdun, Huy, Namur, Dinant, Liège and Maastricht coins were struck showing the names of the moneyers, among whom were a Bobo and a Boso (Pol 1995). A moneyer named Bobo is also known from Saarbarg (Gilles 1966:513). In the same period the North Eastern region, known as Austrasia, increased in power. Families such as the Arnulfingians and Pippinides became the leaders in this part of the world. Control of the waterways in particular would have been of the utmost importance. Although in Maastricht Christianity probably continued without interruption from the Roman period onwards, graves at the site near Borgharen do not show Christian influence, since their orientation is SW-NE instead of W-E. However, according to Rouche (1996:197) the last heathens were baptised in the region of Liège and Tongres around 720/740 AD, more than 200 years after Clovis' voluntary baptism in Reims.

Because of the location (Maastricht is close to Herstal, one of the centres of Merovingian power), the sumptuous grave gifts, and the name Bobo, we may conclude that the deceased was a Frankish *miles*. Since he was buried in a family cemetery, he had apparently settled in the region. Presumably he understood runes, although very few runic inscriptions are known from the Merovingian regions, if these are confined to Francia proper (formerly Gaul). It is a striking observation that when the Franks extended their power into parts of Alamannia after 500, this date corresponds (coincidentally or not) with the occurrence of the first runic objects in the South and Southwest of present-day Germany.

The Merovingian Franks had won supremacy over the peripheral regions (given Francia as the centre) of Alamannia, Bavaria, Thuringia, England and Frisia; in these regions runes were used. The Merovingians, however, do not seem to have developed an indigenous runic tradition after they settled in the former Gallia. Moreover, runes were defined as 'foreign', although they were not unknown. We can conclude that those in power did not use runes, but the Roman script.

Remarkably enough, runologists never seriously considered the existence of a Frankish (Merovingian) runic tradition, although some runic objects are recorded from Frankish territory (Bergakker, Borgharen, Charnay, Arlon, Chéhéry, and maybe 'Kent' too), some from the periphery of the Frankish realm. Runes were known in sixth-

century Francia, as is shown by the well-known and often quoted line by Venantius Fortunatus, sixth-century bishop of Tours: *barbara fraxineis pingatur rhuna tabellis, quodque papyrus agit virgula plana valet* ‘The foreign rune may be painted on ashen tablets, what is done by papyrus, can also be done by a smooth piece of wood’. The Frankish king Chilperic († 584) proposed the addition of four letters to the Roman alphabet, thus showing his knowledge of runes, since one of the four new letters, described: *uui*, was shaped after the runic **w**.

Although the evidence is quite sparse, it might be possible to understand how and from where runic knowledge spread. A glance at the map shows that contacts went along the seashores, up and down rivers, and across the North Sea. A clear nucleus seems to be absent, unless we prefer to locate this in Denmark/North Germany. But this leaves an unexplained geographic and ideological gap between the literate and the illiterate worlds of the Germanic tribes in the North of Europe. This problem will be explored further in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER THREE

### ON THE ORIGIN OF RUNES

#### 1. *Introduction*

From a Scandinavian, or rather a Danish point of view, it seems the runic script had its origins in a region encompassed by the coasts of the German Bight, South Norway, the area around the Kattegat to the South-west coast of the Baltic Sea, with Denmark as its centre. This is a vast area, in which the majority of objects from the period 160–350 AD have been found. According to Ilkjær (1996<sup>a</sup>:74), the oldest known runic object (160 AD), the **harja** comb, found in the Vimose bog, may have been made in regions south of the Baltic Sea. Another runic item of about the same date, the Øvre Stabu spearhead, was found in South Norway, and may have been a local product. The spearhead with runes from Mos, Gotland, is also of about the same date. The Meldorf brooch, with an inscription which may be runic or Roman, is of local manufacture, which means somewhere near the north coast of Germany. It is dated to around 50 AD. It seems appropriate to suppose runic writing was well under way before the time of the oldest known inscriptions. The aim of this chapter is to show that runes were not necessarily created in this particular area. To investigate the origin of runic writing it would be best to study the origin of runic objects (and runographers), since the place where a particular object is found should not be automatically equated with its place of origin. Both objects and literate people could move and travel. Some clues may be found when answering the questions: *who* were the runographers, and where did *they* come from? Tracing the provenance of the objects and the names with which the objects were inscribed appears to be of crucial importance.

Some of the runic objects found in the Illerup and Vimose bogs originally came from the Baltic area, Norway or South-west Sweden. The runic objects found in the Thorsberg bog originate from an area between the Lower Elbe and the Middle or Lower Rhine (Lønstrup 1988:94). The runic brooches found in Denmark and South Sweden, may have been local products. This, however, does not

guarantee that runic writing *originated* in Norway, Sweden or Denmark. It only *seems* logical to suppose runic writing had its origin somewhere in those regions, based on the observation that most of the oldest known objects have been found there.

In particular, the fact that objects made in North-west Germany and North Poland are among the earliest evidence points in another direction. And the origin of two weapon smiths who signed their work on some of the Illerup finds: **wagnijo** and **nijjo** might be the Rhineland.

## 2. *The quest*

What constitutes a major problem is the enormous distance between the sites where the oldest known objects were found and the places which could provide an eligible matrix alphabet (the Roman empire, or the Mediterranean in general). It would be more natural to try and trace the origin of runic writing near the borders of the Roman empire, especially along the Rhine *limes*. Since there were contacts and relations between the Germanic tribes of *Germania Superior* and tribes living near the northern coasts of the North Sea, these contacts could have taken the route along the Rhine, or along the Elbe to the North. Goods and culture could easily have spread from the Rhine estuary to the coasts of the North Sea, or overland, from the Rhine to the Elbe and further on to the Baltic and the North.

Theoretically, the rune alphabet could have been developed by members of a Romanized tribe living in regions near the Rhine, possibly in the first century AD.<sup>1</sup> Other possible candidates are the Germanic mercenaries serving in the Roman army, who were more or less literate, when returning home after 25 years of service (Rausing 1987, Axboe & Kromann 1992). Merchants may have constituted a third category. These three possibilities will be discussed below.

There were longstanding contacts between the Germanic world

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<sup>1</sup> To establish a rough date for the emergence of the runic alphabet, I am inclined to opt for the first century AD, an inclination prompted by the Meldorf (Schleswig-Holstein) brooch, dated 50 AD. Its legend may be Roman or 'proto-runic'. The main thing is that *script* of some sort was recorded in the first century AD on an object of Germanic manufacture. After this it may have taken quite some time to develop the runic writing system, since the first inscriptions date from the second century AD.

and the Mediterranean. Germanic mercenaries served in Macedonian and Celtic armies; Germanic soldiers served in Caesar's army. The runes resemble archaic alphabets; Greek, Etruscan, archaic Latin and North Italic alphabetic traces can be observed. The archaic Italic alphabets gradually fell into disuse during the last century BC or the first century AD, when the official Roman alphabet became the norm. It may be that Germanic soldiers learned an archaic specimen and introduced this to their homelands.

As the oldest runic evidence has been found far away in the North, the people who developed runic writing might be expected to have come from there, but no trace of any northern mercenaries are found. The North has yielded no military *diplomata*; there are no epigraphic or written sources which point to a Scandinavian origin of Germanic *peregrini* in the Roman army. Nearly all Germanic soldiers were recruited from areas near the *limes*; we find records of *alae* and *cohortes* Ubiorum, Batavorum, Canninefatum, Frisiavonum, Breucorum etc. However, if the indication *Germania Inferior* as the place of origin for many mercenaries is interpreted a bit more freely, and if the enormous number of Roman goods in Denmark and Scania is taken into account (Lund Hansen 1987 and 1995; Ilkjær 1996<sup>b</sup>), it may be concluded that there were indeed lively contacts between North and South (see chapter two). These contacts would have been dominated by merchants, craftsmen and retired veterans.

Not only material goods were exported to the North. Roman influence can be seen in many fields, such as dress, arms and armour and also in the names of the seven days of the week, introduced in Rome during the reign of Augustus and possibly exported to Germania by Germanic mercenaries, according to Rausing (1995:229f.). *Dies Mercuri* is of particular interest, since its translation is Wednesday, the day of Wodan/Odin. Both Mercury and Odin were inventors of the art of writing. Mercury was also the god of trade and merchants, and of the dead. It cannot be accidental that Odin, the god of war and warleaders, and of poetry and dead warriors, was his Germanic counterpart. We find a merger of several elements which were in evidence at the beginning of our era and which mark the relations between the Romans and the Germans: war, trade and literacy.

An unknown number of Germanic people living in *Germania Libera* had Roman civil rights as a result of their having served in the Roman army. The right to obtain Roman citizenship for auxiliary

soldiers was introduced by Claudius<sup>2</sup> (41–54 AD). Before Claudius, citizenship may have been offered to *decuriones* and perhaps also to *centuriones* (Alföldy 1968:107f.). This citizenship was hereditary. Sons of Germanic soldiers had Roman civil rights and were able to make a military career in the Empire; they could even become high-ranking officers (Axboe & Kromann 1992:272). These Germanic soldiers and civilians no doubt enjoyed great respect in their homelands. They were also better-educated than their fellow countrymen; they had seen the world and were acquainted with a highly-developed power structure. Such veterans accelerated the development towards central power in certain Germanic tribes. If bracteates are to be interpreted as class insignia, wearing them may have been instigated and stimulated by the veterans. This group also had the financial means: the gold of *solidi* and *aurei*, and they knew examples of Roman writing on coins, medallions and *diplomata*. And veterans from the first century onwards may well have been at the basis of the weapon-trade from Rome to the North.

From the beginning of the imperial period, the Rhine was the *limes* of the Roman empire (Map 2). The border zone, where Roman and Germanic cultures met and were able to amalgamate, would be an eligible region for Germanic peoples to adopt and adapt an Italic alphabet, in order to develop a suitable writing system for the Germanic languages. Germanic mercenaries also had the opportunity to get acquainted with a writing system, but one might suspect that they would probably have adopted Latin. This also applies to merchants in Germanic and Roman goods. Artisans, such as weapon smiths and jewellers, are likely to have used a stock of signs and marks, perhaps inspired by Roman instances.

Moltke (1985:63f.) supposed runic writing to have been developed far from the *limes*, because he believed relations between the Romans and Germanic tribes were hostile in the border regions. This view is outdated. There are many instances of a good mutual understanding between the Romans and Germanic tribes on the Rhine and in *Germania Inferior*. There were also wars and rebellions, and this may explain why people felt the need to develop a writing system

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<sup>2</sup> The Batavian aristocracy, i.e. the father or grandfather of Julius Civilis, may have received the Roman citizenship already under Augustus, as is suggested by Roymans (1998:12).

which suited their own culture and language. The fact that they did not use the Roman script may be interpreted as a wish to deviate from the Romans, to express a cultural and political/military identity of their own. Anyway, the urge for writing apparently emerged during the period when the Roman and Germanic peoples maintained relations. A Roman practice was imitated by the Germanic people in the epigraphical use of writing signs.

The use of a metal die, as is apparent from the weapon smith's name **wagnijo**, which is stamped in one of the Illerup spearheads, is Roman-inspired. In peacetime, soldiers in the Roman army had to practise all sorts of crafts. There are striking resemblances between the ways in which Roman and Germanic weaponry was inscribed. It was a widely-observed custom among Roman and Germanic soldiers to write one's name on one's own weapon. Since we have three lance heads with the legend **wagnijo**, this is most likely to be the signature of a weapon smith.

The reasons for the development of a specific Germanic alphabet and writing system may find a parallel in much later medieval English epigraphical and manuscript evidence. It appears that runes were a much better medium for rendering the Germanic vernacular than the Roman alphabet (Fell 1994:130f.). This inadequacy of the Roman writing system might have been one of the factors that urged a certain group to develop a script of their own. And this urge led them to design the runic alphabet, which is at least inspired by Roman and Greek letters.

### 3. *Runes and Romans on the Rhine*

I propose to investigate whether runes may have been adapted from Roman script in the Rhine area, since that would fit well from a geographical and cultural point of view. Conditions here were favourable for the adoption of a writing system. Situating the development of a runic writing system in far-away Denmark is literally a far cry. The Germanic North of Europe had a pre-literate culture and apparently no need for a communicative system that required writing of any sort, since in the first few centuries of recorded runic writing nothing has been found that may be labelled a letter, record, charter or similar. The fact that the majority of runic objects were found in regions far away from the Roman empire, but also far



away from the Germanic provinces of that empire is virtually incomprehensible, unless we assume there existed special contacts between Germanic groups living near the *limes* and groups living far to the north of Germania. Through these contacts the custom of writing could be transferred. The nature of these contacts will be treated below, in the West Germanic hypothesis.

An important observation is that the oncoming of the Danish elite in the first centuries AD (see chapter two) seems to be connected with runic history. In Denmark (and probably also in South Norway) a society emerged in which writing (with runes) was probably used for adding value, to objects as well as to one's status. In this way one could aim at uniqueness and the forming of an elite. Writing in the north was a rare feature, which was much less so in the neighbourhood of the *limes*, where the art of writing in Roman lettering was widespread.

An alphabet system is borrowed by individuals “who have learned the language of the literate culture and then the writing system of that culture, and then—and *only* then they can—attempt to adopt and adapt this foreign writing system to the unwritten language”, as is stated by Antonsen (1996:7). I do not expect such an opportunity and such a strategy to have occurred at a great distance from the literate world; instead I suggest adoption took place in a cultural climate such as existed near the Rhine border in the first century AD. Mutual understanding between Romans and Germans flourished from Caesar onwards (alternating with occasional low points), so the development of a Germanic writing system should probably be placed in the first century AD. The runic alphabet shows many similarities with archaic Italic alphabets, including archaic Latin. For some of the similarities and differences, see Map 4 (Table of archaic alphabets).

If runes emerged somewhere along the Rhine, one would expect some of the oldest runic objects to have been found there. However, the earliest known runic evidence from the Lower Rhine, the Rhineland and South Germany, formerly the *Agri Decumates* (named after the 10th legion), dates from the fourth and fifth centuries. But if the place of origin of the Thorsberg objects (ca. 200 AD) is taken into account—the region between Middle or Lower Rhine and Lower Elbe<sup>3</sup>—we may have a link between the *limes* area and the northern parts of Germania.

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<sup>3</sup> Some Germanic tribes who lived in this region were the Chatti, the Langobardi

This is of course not enough evidence to support the assumption that runes were developed by tribes living near the Rhine. If, however, the fact that the two second-century weapon smiths **wagnijo** and **nipijo** (these names occur on objects deposited as war-booty in the Illerup bog, dated ca. 200 AD, see chapter V, nrs. 2 and 4) may have come from the Rhineland is taken into account, the probability increases. Furthermore there is the name **harja** on the oldest known runic object (160 AD); this name may point to the tribe of the *Harü*, who, as a sub-tribe of the *Lugü*, lived on the Continent. Peterson (1994<sup>b</sup>:161) mentions **harja** among a group of names “not met with in later Scandinavian but found in West Germanic, esp. in the Lower Rhine region”.

I suggested above that the manufacturer of the Illerup and Vimose spearheads, **wagnijo**, who signed his work (once stamped, twice carved), came from the Middle Rhine area, to the south of present-day Frankfurt am Main. Here lived the Germanic tribe of the *Vangiones*, to whom the name **wagnijo** clearly refers. The name **nipijo** on a mount for a shield handle, also found in the Illerup bog, points to the same region. This weapon smith may originate from the tribe of the *Nidenses*, who were neighbours to the *Vangiones*<sup>4</sup> (Map 3). They were probably a sub-tribe of the *Suebi*. A man named *Vangio* is known as nephew to the Quaden king Vannius (Much 1959:371); Schönfeld (1965:256f.) also mentions Vannius, as a Quade who was king of the *Suebi*.

The *Suebi* occupied more than half of Germany, and were divided into a number of separate tribes under different names, according to Tacitus (*Germania* xxxviii), who also mentioned that the Marcomanni and the Quadi formed the frontier (*Germania* xxxix) with Rome in that part of Germany which is girdled by the Danube.

The Rhine-*limes* extends over a large area. Perhaps it is possible to indicate one or two regions which combined all the conditions

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and the Cherusci; the latter tribe is well-known from their wars with the Roman army in the first half of the first century AD. The Romans fought under their commander Germanicus; the leader of the Cherusci was Arminius, once an officer in the Roman army (Tacitus, *Annales* II.6–10). Arminius, the victorious warlord and legendary conqueror of Varus' three legions (9 AD, Kalkriese) had a brother in the Roman army, Flavus, who fought on Germanicus' side.

<sup>4</sup> Establishing some of the names on the Danish bog-finds as being derived from tribes' names was prompted by a map of Germania Superior in Weisgerber (1966/67: 200). Here we find the *Nidenses* near the *Vangiones*.



Map 3. Names of tribes, mountains and rivers in the Rhineland in the Roman Imperial Period [from J.L. Weisgerber 'Frühgeschichtlicher Sprachbewegungen in Kölner Raum (mit 8 Karten)', *Rheinische Vierteljahrbblätter* 1966/67].

needed for a cultural climate that eventually led to the emergence of an indigenous Germanic writing system. I opt for the Middle and Lower Rhine area, the dwelling places of among others the Ubii, Chatti and Batavi, with the important towns of Colonia Agrippinensium (Cologne), Ulpia Traiana (Xanten) and Ulpia Noviomagus Batavorum (Nijmegen). The tribes living there generally maintained good relations with Rome. The Ubii and Batavi in particular were held in high esteem in Rome. This is a favourable starting-point for cultural fertilization, since an alphabet is unlikely to be borrowed from enemies under wartime conditions. Wars often occurred in the first half of the first century AD between the Romans and Germans, and also later: for instance the Marcomanni wars (161–175 AD).

The Batavi and Ubii constituted an important part of the Julio-Claudian imperial *corporis custodes*<sup>5</sup> from the time of Augustus (31 BC–14 AD) onwards until the reign of Galba (68–69), according to Bellen (1981:36), so we may presume that the loyalty of the Batavi had been well-known in Rome for some time. According to Tacitus, the Batavi had a special alliance with the Romans (*antiqua societas*). Roymans (1998:6) states that this treaty granted them a degree of self-government and exempted them from paying taxes, but it also obliged them to supply auxiliaries on a large scale. This alliance was linked to the Batavian occupation of the Rhine delta, somewhere between 50 and 12 BC, as a result of Roman frontier politics. The migration of the Batavi (being part of the Chatti) to the Rhine estuary was prompted by the Romans, and not a spontaneous move. This migration may be compared to the Ubian occupation of the left Rhine area, probably in 38 BC. Both the Ubii and the Batavi were the most important confederates of the Romans in the region of the lower Rhine. Their occupation of that area must be seen in the light of the same frontier policy, and similar alliances. And it is linked to the origin of the Germanic imperial bodyguard, as well as the fact that both the Batavi and the Ubii obtained Roman citizenship at an early date, probably in the time of Augustus (Roymans 1998:7).

The Batavi were renowned for their talents as horsemen and for

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<sup>5</sup> The imperial body-guard consisted of between 500–1000 men. It existed already under Caesar and was dissolved by Galba in 69 AD. Their duty was twofold: safeguarding the emperor and acting as crack troops in times of crisis.

their amazing swimming skills, even in full weaponry and on horseback. They were considered friends of the Roman Empire; from Germanicus onwards they served the Roman army with outstanding fidelity (Bang 1906:32ff. with ref.). Tribes like these would be brilliant candidates for the transmission of Roman culture and writing. But the Batavian revolt (AD 70) under Julius Civilis shows that the relationship was not always good. Perhaps the Rhineland of the Ubii is the most suitable place for locating the origin of runes (see below).

During the reign of Caligula or Claudius the members of the imperial bodyguard became united in the *Collegium Germanorum*, and it is generally assumed they were not slaves but free *peregrini* (Bellen 1981:29ff., 36, 67ff.). After their service, which apparently ended at the age of 40, some veterans returned to their homelands. Their *commoda* (= *praemia militiae*) consisted of civilian rights and money (Bellen 1981:78f.).

An archaic Italic alphabet may have been the precursor of the runes. Borrowing this alphabet may have taken place in North Italy or Raetia, where Chauci, Batavi and other Germani served as *Cohortes Germanorum* in Germanicus' army in 15, 16 and 69 AD (Bang 1906:58, with ref.). But, theoretically, Germanic mercenaries could have learned to read and write anywhere during their tour of duty.

Supplementary information concerning certain first-century connections between the Rhineland and the Roman empire became available in the dissertation of Derks (1996). He discusses the indigenous cult of the *matres* in the Rhineland, especially popular among the Ubii. Derks (1996:103f.) points out that there were parallels between the cults of the *matronae* in North Italy and the cult of the *matres* in the Rhineland. Veterans from the Roman army, for the greater part originating from the mountainous parts of Piemonte and Lombardy (North Italy), settled in the region near Cologne in the first century AD. Soon they became integrated into the local population. Ubian and Italic elements were intermingled in the common cult of *matres* and *matronae* (Derks 1996:104). The indigenous *matres* cult of the Rhineland knew no votive inscriptions; the custom of writing dedications was introduced by soldiers of Italic and Germanic origin (Derks 1996:75). Here we may find a clue as to how an archaic North Italic alphabet came to the Rhineland. In the first and second centuries AD, several letters, known from North Italic archaic alphabets, were still in use in the Rhine area. The letters occur as graffiti on pots and potsherds, mostly written by soldiers.

The inscriptions concern mainly makers' and owners' names. Among the writers there may have been fully literate people, but some inscriptions seem to have been made by illiterates, who copied from a model (Bakker & Galsterer-Kröll 1975:11f.).

#### 4. *More Roman connections*

In the meantime, in the Danish areas of eastern Sealand and Funen, wealth and power accumulated and the possession of gold and silver coins increased. Roman luxury goods were imported, probably by sea, via the Lower Rhine, through the Vlie along the North Sea coast, through the Limfjord and so on to the north coast of Sealand (see Lund Hansen 1995:389, 408f. and Map 2). What came to the North was not a matter of chance; the people who commissioned and sent for the luxury goods knew what they wanted. Again, this points to close contacts between the clients in the North and the elites living on the border with the Empire.

During the second century, pirate raids by the Chauci caused growing tensions in the North Sea regions. While one wonders how safe the sea-route really was, it is possible that treaties between the Sealand aristocrats and Chauci (and Fresones?), who controlled the North Sea coast minimized the dangers.

There is a probable relation between political events at the borders of the Roman Empire and several weapon-offerings in South Scandinavia (Ilkjær 1996<sup>b</sup>:339). The first big attack on South Scandinavia coincides with the Marcomanni wars. The offerings in the Vimose bog (Funen), which contained the **harja** comb, were contemporaneous. The attack on Funen came from the South.

Further offerings in Vimose and Illerup from around 200 AD coincide with Germanic attacks on the Roman *limes*. The attackers on Funen and Jutland came from the North, from across the Kattegat (see below). All over Scandinavia, many graves are found which contain a similar inventory of weapons. These graves are contemporaneous with the fall of the *limes* in the third century. This was no coincidence, according to Ilkjær (1996<sup>b</sup>:339). The initial period of manufacturing weapons on a large scale was around 200 AD, coinciding with the organisation of armies consisting of hundreds of warriors. We can suppose the existence of a powerful and structured organisation at the time. The aim was not merely raiding for loot,

and there must have been a real struggle for power (Ilkjær 1996<sup>b</sup>:337ff.). The wars, predominantly on Jutland, were fought between Scandinavians. All the swords were Roman imports according to Ilkjær, and may be interpreted as evidence for the existence of connections between Scandinavia and the Rhineland. Among the goods in the Illerup bog was an enormous amount of Roman equipment, which, of course, could not have originated from Scandinavia.

All runic finds from the Danish bogs and graves, approximately dating from the period 160–450, have been found in a context that clearly shows Roman connections. The bog-deposits contain Roman goods, as do the graves. Runic finds emerged either from a military context or a luxurious, aristocratic context. In both cases the objects were prestige goods. The runes on the bog finds were carved on objects that may be linked to the top of the military hierarchy (Ilkjær 1996<sup>a</sup>:70). It appears that Germanic weapons were inscribed in a similar way to Roman weapons (Rix 1992:430–432).

At the time of the Marcomanni wars (161–175) contacts were established between the area of the Lower Elbe and the area of the Marcomanni. An elite from the Lower Elbe region migrated southwards and settled in the Marcomanni region (Lund Hansen 1995:390). The Danish elite from that same period must be seen in relation to highly Romanized Germanic vassal kings who lived near the *limes* of Upper Germany/Raetia (Lund Hansen 1995:390), the region of the Marcomanni, Quadi and Iuthungi. The presence of *Ringknauf* swords in a warrior grave on Jutland and in deposits of the Vimose bog indicates that there were contacts with Central Europe. These second-century swords are typical provincial Roman products, and the owners, such as the man from the Jutish grave of Brokær, must have taken part in the Marcomanni wars. The swords in the Vimose bog belonged to attackers from the South. The sites where these swords were found show that the route was from the Danube northwards along the Elbe (thus crossing the region of *Harü* and *Lugi*). At the same time, Himlingøje (Sealand) emerged as a power centre. Here silver bocal with depictions of warriors holding *Ringknauf* swords point to the connection with the Marcomanni region (Lund Hansen 1995:386ff.).

Ilkjær (1996<sup>b</sup>:457) mentions the princely grave from Gommern (Altmark, near Magdeburg, the region of the *-leben* place names), which, although about a century younger, can be seen as a parallel to the rich Illerup deposits. Parallels can also be detected between



deposits in the Vimose and Illerup bogs concerning the collections of silver shield buckle fragments, the pressed foil ornamentation, face masks, weapons and military equipment. These objects mark the high military rank of the owners. Outstanding silver shield accessories emphasize the extraordinary rank of the Germanic elite. The same custom can also be observed in late antique Gallia, in the warrior grave of Vermand, who, judging by his shield accessories, was a Germanic *princeps* in Roman service (Ilkjær 1996<sup>b</sup>:475).

Among the Illerup material of bronze and iron shield buckles, Ilkjær notices parallels with finds from Vimose and grave goods from Norwegian graves (Ilkjær 1996<sup>b</sup>:475). These belonged to warriors of a lower standing.

An analysis of the pressed foil ornaments on the silver shields proves the close connection, indicating that the shields were produced in the same workshop made by *Nipijo*, according to Ilkjær. Shield accessories like these can only be found in extremely rich graves, such as those from Gommern (Germany), Musov (Czechia), Avaldsnes (Norway) and Lilla Harg (Sweden). Therefore, the *Prachtschilde* from Illerup represent the very top of the elite (Ilkjær 1996<sup>b</sup>:476). He assumes this elite conducted the trade in Roman military goods. Without these Roman goods, the extensive wars which preceded the huge offerings in the bogs would not have been possible. The elite who organised these wars distinguished themselves by ‘barbarizing’ the Roman equipment, and by having it redecorated in Germanic workshops in a Germanic way (Ilkjær 1996<sup>b</sup>:478). Thus, although the goods make a thoroughly Roman impression, the ornamentation is indigenous, producing a splendid combination of Roman and Germanic culture.

Because of his shield with silver-gilt pressed foil and precious stones, *Lagubewa* (see Chapter 5, checklist, nr. 3.) was one of the leading princes, according to Ilkjær (1996<sup>b</sup>:485). A horse’s rich garment probably belonged to him as well. *Wagnijo* and *Nipijo* were war-leaders, too, concludes Ilkjær.

The runes on several bog finds are not only found on the most precious objects, but also on humbler things such as the wooden handle for a fire iron (Illerup V) and the comb (Vimose V). The inscriptions on the lance heads can be connected directly to the elite, since they controlled the production of these weapons (Ilkjær 1996<sup>b</sup>:481). From analyses of the pressed foil and pearl-wire ornamentations, which are



without exception highly artistic and uniform, it was concluded that there must have been extensive communication with jewellers in Central Europe. The quality of the Thorsberg finds, for instance, points to strong Roman influence. This influence is also shown by the use of mercury and certain precious stones (Ilkjær 1996<sup>b</sup>:481f.).

To summarize: in the second century Germanic groups from the Lower Elbe region moved south, attracted by the Marcomanni wars in the region north of the Danube. The Langobardi and the Goths migrated southward from regions near the Lower Elbe, the Lower Oder and Weichsel respectively (Van Es 1967:537). At the same time an attack was launched upon Denmark from southerly, continental, regions. Booty from these wars was deposited in the Vimose and Thorsberg bogs. Apparently these southern attackers had contacts with tribes from Sealand (Lund Hansen 1995:406), which may have had something to do with a conflict between Sealand and Funen. The alliance between Sealand and continental Germanic tribes may also explain the route of import goods: via the Rhine estuary and the North Sea, since the route overland and via the Baltic would not have been safe.

In this way the route (of the propagation) of the runes can also be explored (see map 1). We must assume the existence of alliances between several Scandinavian elites and continental Germanic ones, living along the Rhine (and Danube) *limes*, and those of the region between the lower Elbe and the Rhine, and south of the Baltic. The spread of certain crafts and knowledge may have been dominated by individuals. Ilkjær locates Wagnijo and Nipijo's workshop and Lagupewa somewhere in the south of Norway. They belonged to a political alliance of peoples from several regions along the Norwegian coast and inland valleys, according to Ilkjær (personal communication). This does not exclude the fact that they may have come from the Continent. Their coming to the North may have been the result of the weapon trade between the Rhineland and Scandinavia. They belonged to the top of the military elite, as was stated by Ilkjær, and it was this elite that controlled the import and production of weapons.

A chronology of the origin of runic objects (from major find-complexes) may illustrate these contacts:

1. Vimose, Funen, ca. 160 AD, from the South.
2. Thorsberg, Schleswig-Holstein ca. 200, from the South.

3. Illerup, Jutland, ca. 200–250, from the North (but made by southern weapon smiths).
4. Sealand, Jutland, Skåne, gravefinds, 200–275, luxury goods, indigenous. The other grave goods, though, were Roman, indicating the high status of the deceased, and their contacts with the South.

The runic brooches are indigenous, so we may assume the inscriptions were made on the spot. Even here the contacts with continental Germanic tribes may also have played a part, because the majority of the names on the brooches appear to be West Germanic: **hariso**, **lamo**, **alugod**, maybe also **widuhudaz** (Makaev 1996:63).

The Danish armies and the enemy from across the sea, from Sweden and Norway and from North-west Germany, fought each other with the same Roman weapons.<sup>6</sup> This may well have been stimulated by Roman diplomacy. It is a well-known fact that the Romans donated subsidies and privileges to barbarian leaders, the *foederati*, with the purpose of keeping them in power and under control. In exchange for money and goods, the allied Germanic leader had to create a buffer zone in order to keep other barbarians away from the borders of the Empire. Wars were preferably fought far away from Rome, far away from the *limes*, and without Roman troops (Braund 1989:14–26).

It appears that the knowledge of the production of strong iron weapons was not very widespread among the Germanic tribes (Much 1959:84ff.). This probably prompted the import of Roman swords. Lønstrup (1988:95ff.) states that over 100 Roman swords have been found in the Illerup bog. The swords may have been bought, captured or obtained as gifts. This last possibility only applies to Germanic *foederati* near the *limes*, because they were involved in the defence of the Empire. The hundreds of brand-new swords which have been

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<sup>6</sup> Extensive export of weapons to the northern barbarians may have been the result of a Roman divide-and-rule policy, in order to let the Germanic tribes fight among themselves to satisfy their land hunger. The wealth of some leaders may have been based on relations with highly-placed persons in Rome. The gift-exchange system of precious objects also belongs to this atmosphere. Roman soldiers were not allowed to own their weapons—they were state-property. Contrary to this, Germanic mercenaries did own their weapons. Yet, very few weapons have been found in graves; apparently a weapon was an heirloom that stayed on was retained in a family for generations. Captured weapons were dedicated to the gods and deposited in bogs.

found in Scandinavia and Germany, and partly also in Poland, must have been obtained as merchandise (Lønstrup 1988:96).

According to Ilkjær, the lance heads of the Illerup bog were of Scandinavian origin, made in Norway, since an analysis of the iron points to iron ore from North Trøndelag. Nevertheless, Roman know-how may have been desired, if Germanic weapon smiths from among the *foederati* of the Rhine area could have provided it. The obvious connection, then, is that **wagnijo** and **nipijo** learned their craft as weapon smiths either in their homelands, or as mercenaries in the Roman army, where they also learned to sign their work. Where did they learn to do this in runes? In Norway? Unlikely. They probably learned this together with their craft. A runographic analysis shows a close resemblance between the runic graphs on the lance heads (**wagnijo**) and the graphs on the shield handles (**nipijo** and **lagupewa**), which points to a mutual background for the runographers. Nipijo, as mentioned above, had a workshop where many of the Roman-inspired items found in the Illerup bog were manufactured (Ilkjær 1996<sup>b</sup>:440f.).

According to Ilkjær the lance heads of the *Vennolum*-type,<sup>7</sup> to which the runic lance heads belong, were widespread in Scandinavia. The runic spearhead from Øvre Stabu, Norway (second half of the second century), also belongs to the Vennolum type. Ilkjær states that only a few lance heads from the Continent show some similarity, and that only one item from Poland is of the Vennolum type. Now we must assume that the weapons are of a northern brand, but the inscriptions and the technology were introduced as an innovation from the South. In view of the contacts as described above, I think this is within the range of possibilities.

##### 5. *The first runewriters*

Determining who could read and write runes in an almost illiterate society is the subject of frequent debate. If we abandon the idea of a purely symbolic, magical, or religious purpose for adding runes to objects, the answer is that at least the former mercenaries, in particular the officers, had learned to read and write. On the other hand there must have been literate people, more specifically craftsmen,

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<sup>7</sup> Vennolum is a place in Norway, the find place of the eponymous lance head.

among the *foederati*. The literate officers and soldiers must have constituted a small group. This would tie in very well with the observation that runic objects are sparse and emerge from widely-separated places. Runic writing may have started as a soldiers' and/or craftsmen's skill, which might explain one of the curious (secondary?) meanings of the word 'rune': *secret, something hidden from outsiders*.<sup>8</sup> The runic legends give very simple information (mostly personal and tribal names), but it may be that the *art* of writing was in a way 'secretive', the prerogative of a specific group only. Remarkably though, the runic legends very often have a formulaic character, a standard set of expressions. Thus the texts make a static impression. Such an observation contributes to the idea that runic writing was not used in the first place to simply communicate, but that there were other purposes (see chapter four: 1, 2, 3).

The application of writing, especially on precious objects, points to special artisans. Signing one's name marks the pride of the author, who masters an extraordinary skill. He stands out in society because of his knowledge, and therefore gains a special status. Naturally, he would be very reluctant to pass this knowledge on to others, which would make it more common. Perhaps this also (partly) explains the extreme rarity of objects exhibiting runic writing dating from the early ages.

### 6. *The West Germanic hypothesis*

I would like to quote the Russian linguist Makaev on a definition of the Germanic dialects that were in evidence at the time of the earliest runic inscriptions. Makaev (1965:31) states that "in the first few centuries BCE [before the Christian era] and the first few centuries CE [Christian era], Scandinavian had not yet formed as an independent dialect group. Consequently, East Germanic did not split from Scandinavian, which did not yet exist, but from Common Germanic, or to be more exact, it belonged to the Late Germanic

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<sup>8</sup> Richard Morris (1985) presents a different etymology for Gmc *rūn*-*rune*, namely 'furrow', or 'cut'. This would point to the technique of cutting or carving runes into wood or metal. This is certainly an acceptable explanation, but it does not erase the other meaning of 'mystery, secret'. As Christine Fell (1991:203f.) rightly points out, the meaning of 'rune' depends on the context in which we find it.

stage in the development of the Common Germanic language. After the splitting off of the Goths and the development of a separate Gothic language (and other East Germanic languages), the Germanic linguistic community was represented by two groups: East Germanic and West Germanic-Scandinavian. It was on the basis of the linguistic features of West Germanic-Scandinavian that the state of the languages reflected in the older runic inscriptions began to develop (. . .)”. Makaev suggests that the linguistic problem should be treated in the light of the origin of runic writing. He proposes the theory (1965:34) that “runic writing was created by one of the South Germanic tribes around the first to second centuries CE based on one of the still-unknown varieties of the North Italic alphabets (. . .)”. In the light of the above-quoted statement, we may wonder what language those South Germanic tribes would have spoken. Makaev does not mention the existence of a South Germanic dialect. He actually only recognizes East Germanic and West Germanic (1965:40f.). The question of the existence of North Germanic remains undiscussed; Makaev only mentions ‘Scandinavian’. And to consider the language of the oldest inscriptions found in Scandinavia as ‘Scandinavian’ is ‘an anachronism’. The linguistic features of the oldest inscriptions would reflect the linguistic state of the western area of the Germanic community (Makaev 1965:45). That would be so, because the spread of runic writing went by the western route (down the Rhine and through North-west Germany into Denmark, etc.). This still does not answer the question of what dialect was spoken by those South Germanic tribes, and in fact Makaev does not answer his self-raised question. Instead, he introduces a unique literary *koiné*: the few Gothic inscriptions are exceptions which reflect East Germanic. Thus, only one conclusion can be extracted from Makaev’s argument, that the earliest runic inscriptions reflect a West Germanic dialect. The confusing term ‘North West Germanic’, which is used for a title to a symposium and its Proceedings (*Nordwestgermanisch*, 1995), points to a probable stage of West Germanic before the North Germanic dialect split, as may be deduced from the comments by the editors, Marold and Zimmermann (1995:VI).

The problem of weak *n*-stems is best illustrated on the oldest evidence: the masculine names on the Illerup objects: **wagnijo**, **nipijo**, **swarta**, and the Vimose comb **harja**; and **talijo** on the Vimose plane. Taking that these words all present names with nominative singular endings, we observe that the ending **-o** exists next to **-a**,

and that this does not result from the distinction masculine—feminine. Both **-a** and **-o** endings occur in masculine and feminine nouns in the nominative singular. The problem of the **-a** and **-o** endings of the nominative forms of apparently masculine names in runic inscriptions found in Denmark, has long been the subject of discussion. Syrett (1994:151f.) concludes that the early evidence, i.e. up to ca. 400, “clearly indicates that **-o** and **-a** could be used side by side to represent the masculine *n*- stem nom. sg., but in the later period, as exemplified (. . .) by the bracteates, **-a** predominates”. And Syrett (1994:140f.) continues: “A fairly standard attitude tends to view the forms in **-a** as the consistently regular masculine nom.sg. *n*-stem ending for *urnordisch* and attempts to explain away the instances of **-o**. There are two main thrusts to such arguments. The first is that the forms in **-o** may be indicative of other language groups (and so are not really *urnordisch* at all, except by infection on a small scale), the other that they might be feminine forms as opposed to the masculines in **-a**. Unfortunately, neither of these is particularly appealing.”

As a solution to this problem, Syrett suggests the nouns with endings in **-a** should be regarded as West Germanic strong nouns with loss of final *\*-z*. This might coincide with historical and archaeological evidence (see below). However, **-o** and **-a** may represent two formally distinct masculine *n*-stem nom.sg. endings (Syrett 1994:146), and “the idea of a diachronic progression from **-o** to **-a** is central to the West Germanic theory.” Syrett (1994:151f.) argues: “. . . it seems likely that some instances of **-o** represent a genuine masculine *n*-stem nom.sg. ending (. . .)”. So we have two explanations for the masc. nom.sg. ending **-a**: either it represents a strong noun with loss of final *\*-z*, or a weak *n*-stem noun.

The fact that the names **wagnijo** and **nipijo, harja** (cf. Peterson 1994<sup>b</sup>:161), **swarta**,<sup>9</sup> **hariso, alugod, lepro, lamo** (cf. Syrett 1994:141ff.), and also **lagupewa** seem to be West Germanic, is another indication of a West Germanic origin of runic writing. These names already occur in inscriptions of ca. 200 AD and somewhat later; the objects are found in bogs and graves in Jutland, on Funen and Sealand.

But where did the objects come from? Stoklund (1994<sup>a</sup>:106) points

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<sup>9</sup> Syrett (1994:141) proposes to view **swarta** and similar instances, such as **lagupewa**, as West Germanic strong nouns with loss of final *\*-z*.

to the remarkable fact that all the inscriptions which show West Germanic forms or have West Germanic parallels are on weapons that originate from the area around the Kattegat, Scandinavia or North Germany and were deposited in the Illerup and Vimose bogs. Few would claim that a West Germanic speaking people lived in those areas around 200 AD. But individuals such as weapon smiths and other craftsmen, originating from a West Germanic speaking area, may very well have been present there. The names ending in *-ijo* particularly seem to point to the region of the Ubii in the Rhineland, since this was a productive suffix in Ubian names (Weisgerber 1968:134f.).

Masculine names ending in *-io*, *n-* and *jan-* stems were especially frequent among the *Ubii*, who were neighbours to the *Vangiones*. The names ending in *-io* reflect a Germanic morphological representation of the Latin ending *-ius*. The suffix *-inius* was reflected by Germanic *-inio-* (Weisgerber 1968:135, 392ff. and Weisgerber 1966/67:207). Weisgerber mentions the fact that within the *n-* stems of all IE languages we also find the *on-* type, which occurs in specific cases such as *ion-*, a type often found in personal (Germanic) names (Weisgerber 1968:392ff.). “Das Naheliegen von *-inius* bestätigt auch für das Ubiergebiet die Geläufigkeit der germanischen Personennamenbildung gemäß der *n-* Flexion. Mit dieser ist im ganzen germanisch-römischen Grenzraum zu rechnen. Die angeführte Reihe *Primio* usw. ist herausgehoben aus einer Fülle von Parallelbeispielen: *Acceptio*, *Aprilio*, *Augustio*, *Faustio*, *Firmio*, *Florio*, *Hilario*, *Longio*, *Paternio* usw.” (The [Latin] ending *-inius* [= Gmc *-inio*] shows that in the area of the Ubii as well, Gmc. masc. pers. names were declined as *-n* stems. This is found in the whole Gmc.-Rom. border area. One finds quite a few instances, such as *Primio*, *Aprilio*, etc). In this way the question of the problematic ending **-ijo** in masculine PNs may in fact be solved.<sup>10</sup>

An examination of the recorded names of Germanic soldiers in the Roman army shows that the endings *-a* and *-o* are quite frequent. It may very well be that names featuring these endings were

<sup>10</sup> Cf. also the cognomen *Sinnio*, a Germanic member of the *corpore custos Drusianus* (Bellen 1981:73ff., note 105; and Weisgerber 1968:135, and 393f.). It may be that *Sinnio* shows West Gmc consonant-gemination, but on the other hand it might just reflect the name of the Roman gens *Sinnius*.

introduced to the North by veterans and craftsmen such as weapon smiths.

If the fact that the name may indeed be West Germanic is accepted, the awkward ending **-a** in **lagupewa** (cf. Syrett 1994:44f.) can be solved. Syrett states that even weak masc. forms such as **swarta** may be taken as West Germanic strong nouns, the “precursor of ON *Svartr*” (Syrett 1994:45). There is no need to postulate the presence of a runic *koiné*, as is suggested by, for example, Makaev (1996:63). He stated: “Therefore the runic material, [. . .] provides important and elegant, albeit indirect, support for our hypothesis on the West Germanic-Scandinavian dialectal base of the runic *koiné*”. We can simply replace the term ‘runic *koiné*’ by ‘West Germanic origin of runic writing’.

Just as in **wagnijo** and **holtijaz**, the elements **ijo** and **ija** may be interpreted as an indication of someone’s descent; **harja** can be interpreted as referring to someone belonging to the tribe of the *Harii*. As has been argued above, **wagnijo** and **nipijo** may have originated from the Rhineland tribes of the *Vangiones* and *Nidenses*. The owner of the Vimose comb may have been a member of the tribe of the *Harii*, a sub-tribe of the *Lugii*. His descent is supported by a runic inscription on the Skåäng stone in Sweden, reading **hari-jaz leugaz**, evidently pointing to both *Harii* and *Lugii*. The reading **harijaz** is based on the assumption that the seventh rune is the **z**, corresponding with the ‘Charnay’ rune 𐌵 representing **z**. Its ornamental form has not as yet been recognised as the rune for **z** in this Swedish rune text.<sup>11</sup> The name **harja** reflects a West Germanic dialect, with loss of final *\*-z* in the nominative.

Apparently Krause (1971:163) and Antonsen (1975:66) were not aware of the possibility of finding a tribal name here. The name *Lugii* appears to be related to Go. *\*Lugjōs* (Much 1959:378) and Go. *liugan* ‘to marry’, actually ‘to swear an oath’. The root *\*leugh-*, *\*lugh-* ‘oath’ is only attested in Celtic and Germanic (Schwarz 1967:30). The *Lugii*, according to Much (1959:378), were a group of tribes, probably unified by an oath.

<sup>11</sup> The rune has been transliterated as the later Scandinavian **h** or **A**, and even a ‘repaired’ **n** rune has been suggested (see Krause 1996:191, with ref.).



The *Harii* lived in North Poland, not far from the Baltic. The comb may well have been made in that area, because of its find context, which, according to Ilkjær (1996<sup>a</sup>:68), consisted of a combination of buckles with a forked thorn, and combs consisting of two layers, such as is the case with the **harja** comb (cf. the map in Ilkjær 1993:377 and the text on pp. 376–378), and certain Polish fire equipment, “indslag af pyrit og evt. polske ildstål” (a spark obtained by using pyrite and/or a Polish fire-iron).

### 7. Conclusions

The Skåäng inscription supports the interpretations of **wagnijo**, **nipijo** and **harja** as being appellativa referring to certain tribes, and not just personal names. According to Bang (1906:48f., note 419), Germanic PNs are often derived from tribal names. Other instances are the Hitsum (Friesland) bracteate (approximately around 500 AD), with the legend **fozo**, a PN which may have been derived from the tribal name of the *Fōsi* (chapter 5, nr. 19; IK, nr. 76), and the Szabadbattyán brooch, with the legend **marings** (chapter 5, nr. 39).

As for tribal names (attested in the Roman period) on Scandinavian stones, we have the forms **haukopuz** (Vånga), **hakupo** (Noleby). It may be useful once again to investigate the possibility of whether the *Chauci* are referred to here. **swabaharjaz** (Rö) may refer to the Suebi, living on the right bank of the Rhine, **iupingaz** (Reistad) to the Iuthungi (South Germany, north of the Danube), **saligastiz** (Berga) perhaps to the Salii (near the Lower Rhine). Perhaps **skipaleubaz** (Skärkind) belongs in this list. The name may refer to a Rhenish merchant in skins because of the element *ski(n)pa-* ‘skin’, and because of the name-element **leub**, which occurs especially in the Ubian region (Weisgerber 1986).

I cannot yet estimate the implications of the fact that the frequent occurrence of runic **leub** (and **leubo**, **leuba**, **leubwini**, **lbi**, **leob**, **liub**) in sixth-century Germany may be connected with the many *Leubos* in the area of the Ubii in the Roman period (Weisgerber 1968:150f., 167, 374f.). The name is also found among the Tungri and along the Lower Rhine. Another example is **liubu** (OPEDAL), but this may not be a PN, but an adjective or a verb form.

Birkhan (1970:170, note 243) suggests the patronymic **wagigaz**

on the Rosseland stone may contain the PN *Vangio*.<sup>12</sup> If these assumptions are correct, the inscriptions on the above-mentioned stones may be dated rather early, on historical grounds, to between 200 and 500 AD.

If **wagnijo** is to be pronounced exactly as *Vangio*, one has to accept the fact that the sequences of *-gn-* and *-ng-* both represent the sound [ŋ]. To Roman ears the Germanic cluster *gn* may have sounded like *ng*. At any rate, the spelling of the tribal name *Vangiones* is in accordance with Latin practice. The same applies to the Roman spelling of the folk name *Nidenses*. Since the Romans did not know the graph *p*, they would probably write a *d* between vowels. Therefore, *Nip-* may be rendered *Nid-* in Roman orthography.

At some time in runic history there existed a rune ᚠ to represent the sound [ŋ], but it is not used to represent the sequence **gn** in **wagnijo**. Moreover, the carver applied ᚠ to render **w**: so perhaps the **ing** rune was not yet present in the runic alphabet of around 200 AD.

In view of:

- (1) the abundant presence of West Germanic (tribal) name forms in the oldest runic inscriptions, and:
- (2) the provenance of some of these objects, in combination with:
- (3) the origin of the weapon smiths **wagnijo** and **nipijo**, we can conclude that runic knowledge was first known among West Germanic speaking tribes on the Continent.
- (4) The presence of certain prestige goods in the Danish bogs and graves is indicative of a network of contacts between elites from Scandinavia and the Continent, and especially with provincial Roman regions. The use of runes can be closely linked to these relations.

During the second century runic writing must have spread to the North. This is demonstrated for instance by the presence of runes on brooches, found in Sealand, Jutland and Skåne, which were local

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<sup>12</sup> The runes **fir?a** on Illerup VI may refer to the tribe of the *Firaesi* (Schönfeld 1965:88). It is also possible to speculate on whether the name **harkilaz** of the Nydam sheath plate contains a scribal error; perhaps it should represent **haukilaz**, provided the third rune should be read as **u**, not **r** (its shape, however, is that of an 'open' **r** rune: ᚱ). If so, it could be interpreted as a reference to the *Chauci*. Besides, ON *hark-* 'tumult' is difficult to accept as a name-element.

products. The inscribed Vennolum-type lance heads, including the lance heads from Øvre Stabu and Gotland, point to the presence of runic knowledge in Norway and Sweden, presumably introduced there by merchants and Rhenish smiths. The weapon trade between the Rhineland and the North may serve as additional evidence of close connections.

I suggest the runic script was first developed in Romanized regions along the Rhine, probably in the region of the *Ubi*. The time of its creation may have been the first century AD; the matrix alphabet may have been a North Italic variety of the alphabet, which still contained some archaic features.

### 8. *Some thoughts on the development of the runic writing system*

It has been argued (Williams 1996:216f.) that the runic alphabet must have developed its odd sequence of the fupark in isolation, undisturbed by any other alphabet-using society. While this may be so, the runic alphabet may not have had this odd sequence from the very beginning. The fupark order may have been developed far away from the literate world, but the runes themselves must have been adopted in the neighbourhood of a literate culture. The fupark sequence has nothing to do with the ABC; therefore we may assume that it was developed at a later stage than the adoption of the characters (see Seebold 1986 for an elaborate proposition as to the origins of the curious fupark-order). But even for writing minor texts such as *A. fecit*, the writer had to become acquainted with the link between the phonological and orthographic system.

Rausing (1992) and Quak (1996) suppose the runes developed from a provincial Italic variety of the Latin alphabet. Bakker & Galsterer-Kröll (1975) state that writing in both directions can still be observed in the first century AD, while archaic characters such as those found in the North Italic alphabets also occur in the Rhine provinces. Several tribes along the Rhine in *Germania Superior* and *Inferior* were in a position to learn an archaic Italic alphabet (see also above, 3).

Quak (1996:175) suggests that not all the runes (as we know them from fupark-inscriptions recorded in later times) were initially present. He takes a Latin alphabet of 21 characters as a starting point. For 19 runes the derivation is clear, according to Quak (1996:176f.) and Williams (1996:211ff.).

As a starting point I take from the Roman alphabet (which evolved from ancient Mediterranean alphabets and which had officially replaced the local Italic varieties) the following set:

AB CDE F GHI LM NOR ST V X  
 Ꝛ ꝛ Ꝝ ꝝ Ꝟ ꝟ Ꝡ ꝡ Ꝣ ꝣ Ꝥ ꝥ Ꝧ ꝧ Ꝩ ꝩ Ꝫ ꝫ Ꝭ ꝭ Ꝯ ꝯ ꝰ ꝱ ꝲ ꝳ ꝴ ꝵ ꝶ ꝷ ꝸ Ꝺ

That is 18 characters, all of which have graphic and phonologic counterparts in the runes. This leaves 6 runes for which a derivation has yet to be found. Problematic runes are those representing **d**, **p**, **w**, **i**, **z** and **ing** [ŋ]. It appears that some runes have a joint origin.

1. The runes Ꝥ **d** and Ꝣ **p** have a joint origin: the Roman D. In single form this letter yields Ꝣ, in doubled, or mirrored form one gets Ꝥ.
2. The ancient runographers knew how to spell, and had graphic insight, which is illustrated by the creation of the rune Ꝣ **p** ꝛ, quite a creative variation of the rune Ꝣ **b** ꝛ.
3. The rune Ꝣ **w** ꝛ is another variation on Ꝣ **b**. The designer of these graphs was apparently aware of the link between phonology and orthography, since *b*, *p*, and bilabial *w* are homorganic consonants.
4. The [ŋ] rune ꝱ may be a variant of ꝰ. The rune's square form ꝱ or ꝲ without a hasta only occurs in the fuþark inscriptions of Kylver and Vadstena (both Sweden); in the Opedal (Norway) inscription its presence is uncertain. In semantically intelligible texts, it always appears with a headstaff, representing a bindrune, combining | and ꝱ = ꝰ<sup>13</sup> (ing). Instances of texts containing the sequence **ing** are: **kingia** (Aquincum), **marings** (Szabadbattyán), **inguz** (Wijnaldum A), **witring** (Slemminge) and **ingo** (Køng). The one exception (just **ng**) is **rango** (Leţcani).<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> See also: Arntz/Zeiss 1939:357f., and Antonsen 1975:12. Westergaard 1981:136–188 regards it as a single rune; for a discussion of his material see Odenstedt 1990:104f.

<sup>14</sup> I have not much to add to Odenstedt's chapter on the (**i**)ng rune, except for

5. The yew rune **ï** may be a combination of i and j: | +  $\mathfrak{S}$  =  $\mathfrak{J}$  (see also chapter four, 16).

Possibly  $\mathfrak{J}$  was created at a later stage. I believe both **ing** and the yew rune are basically bindrunes. Later they were interpreted as separate phonemes, hence their inclusion in fuþarks.

6. The letter G is clearly the base for **j**  $\mathfrak{e}$ . G must have been present in the matrix alphabet. In Rome a sign for the sound g was introduced in the mid-third century BC.

7. The rune **g** is represented by  $\mathfrak{X}$ . The pronunciation of the Roman X may have resembled the pronunciation of Germanic g.

8. The form of the **z** rune  $\mathfrak{Y}$  is found in the Etruscan and some North Italic alphabets, where it also denotes the sound z (see map 4).

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the fourth-century inscription of Leţcani. During my examination of the inscription I could definitely establish that the inscription does contain a rune  $\mathfrak{F}$  (for a lengthy discussion about this rune, see also Barnes 1984:66ff.).

	Latino antico	neo- etrusco	etrusco	osco umbro sabellico	etrusco code	egeo retico salsi	diversi	Golasecca 2	Golasecca 3	Tirino
a	AAA	Α	Α	AAAN	Α Δ Α Δ	Α Δ Δ		Α Α Α Δ Δ Δ	Α Α Α Α Α	Α Α Α Α Α Α Α Α
c	< C	)	)	>	( > )	)			<	> <
ch		∨			Υ			∨ ∨	∨	∨
e	EEH	Ε	Ε	EE↑	Ε Ε Ε Ε	Ε Ε	≡	Ε Ε Ε Ε Α ↑	Ε Ε Ε Ε Ε	Ε Ε Ε Ε Ε Α Ε
f	FFI'	Ϝ	Ϝ	Ϝ	Ϝ Ϝ Ϝ Ϝ ↑	Ϝ		∨ ∨ ↑		∨ ↑ ↑
h	H	Ε	Ε	⊙ ⊙	Η Η Η Η	Η Η Η		Η Η		H
i	I	I	I	II	I	II		I	I	I
k	KK			K K		K K		K K K K	K	K K K K K
l	LL	J	J	JL	J J J	JL	Λ	Λ Λ Λ Λ	Λ Λ Λ Λ	Λ Λ Λ Λ
m	MW	M	M	MH	M M M	M M M		M M M	M	M M M M M
n	NN	N	N	NH	N N N	N N N		N	N	N N N N N N
o	OOO			∨		∨		∨ ∨ ∨	∨ ∨	∨ ∨ ∨ ∨ ∨ ∨
p	PF	1	1	1Π	P J J J J	1		1 1 1	1 1	1 1
ph		⊙	⊙	⊙ ⊙	⊙ ⊙ ⊙	⊙				
r	RPR	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙ ⊙ ⊙	⊙		⊙	⊙ ⊙ ⊙	⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙
s	S	Z	Z	ZZ	S S S S	S S S		S S S S	Z S S S S	S S S S S S S S
s'		M	M	M	M M M	M M M		X	M M M M	M M M M M M
t	T	†	†	†	T X	† X		X X Y M Y A	† X Y †	Y X X † ↑
th		⊙	⊙	⊙ ⊙	⊙ ⊙ ⊙	⊙ ⊙ ⊙		⊙	⊙ ⊙	⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙
u	∨	∨	∨	∨	∨ ∨	∨		∨ ∨	∨ ∨	∨ ∨ ∨ ∨
v	†	†	†	†	∨ ∨ ∨	† † †		∨ ∨	∨ ∨	∨ ∨
z	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡ ‡ ‡	‡ ‡ ‡	‡	‡ ‡ ‡	‡ ‡	‡ ‡

Map 4. Table of archaic alphabets.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SUMMARY AND SOME CONCLUSIONS

#### 1. *Classification of contents*

In this study I have discussed some 230<sup>1</sup> items with runic inscriptions dating from 160 to ca. 700 AD, found in Denmark, England, the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, France, Hungary, Rumania, Switzerland and Bosnia. In the Appendix another 67 inscriptions from the archaic period in Sweden (19) and Norway (48) have been described. Apart from the Bracteates (chapter six), I have divided each corpus into a legible and (partly) interpretable part and an illegible, or uninterpretable part. For 50 inscriptions new or additional readings and/or interpretations out of a total of about 200 legible inscriptions are provided.

A survey of deviating and so-called diagnostic runeforms has been included in this chapter, together with two separate studies on the **j** rune and the yew rune. The inscriptions from Sweden and Norway have not been included in the general comparison between the corpora. They have been added as an Appendix for the sake of completion. The main focus of this work is on the Continental, Danish and Anglo-Frisian inscriptions.

Continental: 74 items, 55 legible and 19 illegible/uninterpretable.  
Danish and South-east European: 46 items, 35 legible and 11 illegible/uninterpretable.

Bracteates: 48, totally or partly legible.

England: 32 items, 20 legible, 12 illegible/uninterpretable.

The Netherlands: 23 items, 20 legible and (partly)interpretable, 3 legible, but not quite interpretable.

Besides 47 gold bracteates and 1 silver one, and some 40 gold coins and several silver ones, there were over 100 objects made of metal,

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<sup>1</sup> If all runic bracteates were included, the total number of runic items from the period under study would be about 450.

largely silver or silver-gilt. Other objects were made of gold, bronze, iron, copper-alloy and gilded bronze. In addition there were objects made of wood, bone, antler, ivory, amber, jet, and stone. In some cases the material tallies with its provenance; such as jet from Whitby; bone, whale-bone, antler and yew-wooden objects from the Frisian *terp*-area; earthenware with runic stamps in England; stones in Blekinge and England.

The Danish corpus and the Bracteates corpus contain quite a lot of words and expressions which might have a magical, mythological and/or ritual connotation. This is not surprising, since the find context is often an offering or ritual deposit. The Danish corpus shows many names with a tribal connection. Verb forms derived from the infinitive Gmc *\*taujan*, (to do, make) occur in the Danish, Dutch and Continental corpora. Verbs derived from Gmc *\*faihan* (to draw, to paint) and Gmc *\*talgan* (to carve, to cut) occur in the Danish and the Bracteates corpora. Runes were drawn, painted, carved and cut. In the inscriptions from the Dutch *terp*-area we find verb forms expressing either writing or making (runes or object); the forms used are **ded** and **deda**. In the Continental Corpus also **wo(r)gt** ‘worked, made’ (Arlon, nr. 3) is found next to **writ**, **urait**, **wraet**, **dedun**, referring to the carving of runes. A form of the verb Gmc *\*wurkjan* occurs in a bracteate legend, **wurte** (Tjurkö-I, nr. 44).

The Danish and Continental corpora contain quite a lot of makers’ and writers’ formulae. The English and Dutch corpora contain quite a lot of designations of objects. The Continental corpus contains fairly numerous personal names, dedications and well-wishes, plus five designations of objects.

As concerns reading of runes, **rada** (read, guess) and **uþfnþai** (find out) are worth mentioning here (both Continental, resp. Soest, nr. 40, and Charnay, nr. 11). Britsum (the Netherlands, nr. 14) contains **bæræd** which may refer to carving (preparing) or reading of runes.

## 2. Runic writing and runewriters

Over the centuries, runic writing appears to have gradually evolved from short inscriptions (one or a few words) to longer texts. Initially, the changes were minimal. This might be due at least in part to the



size of the objects. On a small scale some graphic variation can already be observed in the earliest known inscriptions. Actually, it is more striking that runic script and the texts should have remained so uniform over a vast area for such a long time. In my opinion this can only be explained by assuming that runes were known and used in an ornamental fashion by a specific, small social group, which had contacts over a large area. They may have used runes only for special occasions. Such a group does not necessarily have to be close-knit, but it should have a specific coherence. Merchants may be considered, but since no texts are known which are typically 'business' texts, other groups seem more likely. The groups that started, or invented runic writing may have consisted of artisans and veterans, as suggested earlier in this work. It must have been a particular group, because of the uniformity of writing, and the use of formulaic types of texts. I assume most runographers were to be found among craftsmen, either signing their own work, or working to clients' orders. These clients formed another potential group of people with runic knowledge. Since the objects were mostly precious or special in some way, the people who commissioned them must have belonged to the upper classes of society. It may be possible that some members of this elite could read and write themselves, but it stands to reason that they ordered a specific text to be carved by the artisans or craftsmen. The texts point to the use of a standard stock of words and patterns, reminiscent of the way stories and poems were recited in an oral society; poets and narrators could draw on a large stock of sets containing standard words and expressions. These sets are used as stylistic features in a repetitive system, often with slight (sometimes greater) variations. Such a system could have supplied the pool of formulae the runographers worked with. Early runic society followed an oral pre-literate society. Some runic texts, such as the one on the Pforzen belt buckle, seem to refer to a well-known story: "Aigil and Ailrun (. . .) condemned/fought I". The single 'I' is clearly an abbreviation, but as yet the meaning is unknown.

### 3. *Some backgrounds of early runic writing*

Find contexts of objects with inscriptions from the first few centuries of recorded runic writing are:

- a) former bogs or lakes. These objects were deposited on purpose.
- b) graves. These objects were also deposited on purpose.
- c) hoards. These objects were deposited either for religious purposes, or to be hidden and later reclaimed. In these cases, too, the deposition was deliberate.
- d) casual, without a context.

We have here four categories of find circumstances or contexts of runic objects. We do not know whether we have thus categorised all possibilities where we might expect to find runic objects. Runic finds are generally chance hits, mostly found by modern archaeologists. However, the objects were certainly not intended to be excavated by later generations in the nineteenth or twentieth century. The objects found in bogs and graves were absolutely not meant to be ever reclaimed again. It remains an open question whether we have now a reliable picture of the aim and use of runic script in the past. Objects with painted runes, for instance, have not yet been found.

Judging from the oldest inscriptions, we must conclude that nothing points to extensive use of runic writing, ie. for letters, charters or records. At least one category is hardly represented: objects from settlements, on which one might expect to find more colloquial texts.<sup>2</sup> This category may have contained a type of information that has not survived and is therefore unknown. However, Bæksted (1952:134) pointed out that lost inscriptions cannot be expected to have had contents that were completely different from those that have been preserved. Yet I would plead some caution with regard to this statement. The number of finds has been accumulating since the use of metal detectors, and I think we may expect some unusual and surprising finds in the future.

At the present time there is little evidence pointing to a communicative function of writing in the Iron Age and in Early Medieval Germanic society. The opportunity to express oneself by inscribing an object was limited. The size of the objects restricted the runographer to the use of short texts. However, short texts also occur on big runestones. Among these are many names, of owners, makers, writers, those commissioning, givers and receivers. Sometimes the writer or maker stresses his or her activity, often by using phrases

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<sup>2</sup> Hundreds of objects with colloquial texts are known from the 14th century: found in Bryggen (Bergen) Norway.

like: *Boso wrote the runes; Feha writes; Lamo carved; I, Fakaz painted; Aib made the comb for Habuke*. It is unclear whether someone who wrote: **hagiradaz tawide** ‘H. made’ meant that he carved the runes or that he made the object (or did both these things).

Another important category is formed by the substantives that name the object itself, such as **kobu, kabu** ‘comb’ (Oostum, Toornwerd), **katæ** ‘knucklebone’ (Hamwic) and **sigila** ‘brooch’ (München-Aubing and Harford Farm). A related category names the material the object was made of: **walhakurne** ‘foreign, Welsh gold’ (bracteate Tjurkö I), **raihan** ‘of a roe’, **hronæs ban** ‘whale-bone’ (Franks’ Casket) and **hurn hiartaR** ‘deer’s antler’ (Dublin).

In a few cases more information is given, e.g. about the origin of the object: **wagagastiz sikijaz** ‘flameguest, coming from a bog’ depicting the axe made of melted bog-iron<sup>3</sup> (Nydam I). The purpose of the writer or commissioner is expressed in: **upf[i]ndai iddan liano** ‘may Liano get to know Idda’ (Charnay). Texts such as **ek unwodz** ‘I, not raging’ and **ek ungangiz** ‘I, not under a spell’ (Danish resp. Norwegian corpus; see also Odenstedt 1990:173) and **ek u[n]mædit oka** ‘I, Oka, not made mad’ (Rasquert, Dutch corpus) appear to render someone’s epithet. The custom of using an epithet may be connected with Roman onomastic principles. Germanic soldiers in the Roman army usually had only one name. When becoming civilians, they often took on a patronymic and/or a cognomen (Bang 1906:17ff.). They liked the use of nicknames, such as *Rufus*, *Flavus* (Red-head and Blonde-head), according to Bang (1906:20). The names **swarta** ‘Blacky’ and **lagupewa** ‘Sea servant = Sailor’ (Illerup I and III) probably fall into the same category.

Objects with runes have survived in surprisingly small numbers, but they were probably not made in huge quantities. This may be illustrated by the Illerup bog finds. Only nine items out of hundreds of deposited objects bear runes. Apparently, inscribing objects did not occur very often or on a large scale. This in itself points to one of the specific functions of runic inscriptions: they gave extra value to the object, by adding to its uniqueness. This impression is strengthened in those cases in which the inscriptions seem to contain no

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<sup>3</sup> Ore for the production of bog iron was found in huge quantities in Iron Age Jutland. The ore was melted in field furnaces and the fluid iron could be moulded, into an axe, for instance.

legible or comprehensible text. The addition of letters to an object, albeit script-imitation, may have been an aim in itself.

The custom of writing names, dedications and makers'/writers' formulae has a twofold aim: it increases the value of already prestigious objects, and it makes the object special for both the giver and the receiver. The receiver will always be reminded of the person who gave the object to him and he will thus be aware of the special relationship between them. An inscribed object has a distinct function in the gift and exchange policy and the client system of leader and comitatus. This practice corresponds with the use of writing in ancient civilizations, as in the Etruscan and the early Italic cultures of the middle of the first millennium BC. There the art of writing in its initial phase appears to be closely related to the possession of precious objects and prestige goods. It is remarkable that centuries later this phenomenon should have occurred in the Germanic world, too.

The possession of runic objects and their commissioning appears to have been reserved to an elite. The oldest known objects are related to a high military elite who controlled the weapon trade and weapon production. The runic texts themselves, though, reveal next to nothing about status or professions (unless the expression **ek erilaz** points to some rank or status). The bracteates, as high-value commodities, would serve quite well in the exchange network of an elite.

In a predominantly illiterate society, the art of writing is of little use. Hence writing, as is shown by the oldest runic monuments, remained restricted to short texts, mostly names, during the first five centuries. If only a few people were literate, elaborate, informative texts would be rather useless, which largely explains the curious fact that mostly names, dedications and formulaic expressions have been found.

One cannot claim that runic writing was in everyday use from the beginning, since such a statement lacks evidence. The assertion that runes were used on wood by preference, because the properties of wood determined the angular forms of the runes, is also an empty argument, since all archaic alphabets show angular-formed characters. For example, this is a characteristic feature of ancient Greek, Etruscan, ancient Latin, Raetian and Venetian writing; they were certainly not restricted to wood, but, as in the case with runes, were written on all sorts of material.

During the whole runic era, runographers were limited in express-

ing themselves due to the technique of painstakingly carving or cutting runes one by one, apparently first in metal, bone, wood and antler, and later mostly in stone. Everybody possessed a knife, hence cutting runes in wood and soft metal, such as silver and gold, was no problem. As far as is known, no Italic variety for a quicker, easier way of writing, e.g. on birch bark, was developed.<sup>4</sup> Since runes display varieties such as being carved upside-down, reversed and mirrored, i.e. doubled, one must conclude that this resulted from the choice of writing in all directions: from left to right and from right to left, also from top to bottom and from bottom to top, and boustrophedon: there and back, 'as the ox ploughs'.

A problem that still remains unsolved concerns the curious order of the runic alphabet. Since the oldest fupark inscriptions we know date from the fifth century, this order may have emerged later than right from the beginning (and for unknown reasons).

However, within these boundaries of epigraphic use, runographers were apparently inclined to adapt their script to their needs. Curiously enough, in one part of the runic world this attitude is shown by increasing the number of runic characters, whereas in another part the writers decreased the number of runes. Both complicated and less complicated forms were designed. This probably had to do with an effort to ensure the proper rendering of the sounds of the language and it had to do with the target group in mind. It may be that the very purpose of writing underwent changes, presumably caused by influences from the Latin-writing world, and by political and religious developments. Literacy among larger groups of people spread slowly. From the seventh and eighth centuries onwards the number of more or less rune-literate people increased, in England as well as in Scandinavia.

During the first few centuries of runic writing, the practice was approximately the same in all rune-using societies. The propagation of runic script was linked with the migrations of Germanic tribes in the third, fourth and fifth centuries. Some runic traditions remained conservative, as can be seen in the Continental Corpus; sometimes there were rather spectacular developments, such as in England and Scandinavia, both from about the seventh century onwards, although

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<sup>4</sup> Some of the Viking-age runic inscriptions from Staraja Ladoga, near St. Petersburg, Russia, are written on birch bark.

of a quite different character. Suddenly, texts with literary qualities appear. In England, texts get a Christian purport; in Scandinavia the Blekinge stones show elaborate texts containing heavy curses and warnings. Memorial texts also appear. This type of text is found very rarely in the archaic period. In the course of time, runes, just like any other alphabet, appear to be used for writing all sort of texts.

As has been said, the paucity of runic finds may (partly) be explained by the fact that many of the inscribed objects were burnt with their owners on cremation piles, or, if gathered afterwards, were melted and re-used. Besides, runes on perishable material like wood and bones would have disappeared. After all, the oldest runic inscriptions which have survived have mostly been found on metal objects. On the whole, objects of other material than metal have seldom been preserved, since these tend to decay. "Anyway, we have to be aware of the possibility that the arbitrary chances of survival have led us to study a rather trivial group of texts that existed as spin-offs of a much more formal and purposeful tradition, for which the evidence does not survive", as Page (1996:145) reminds us.

Apart from the fact that finding runic objects is subject to chance, the scarcity of finds from the early period is largely due to deposition customs. Very few graves from that period have been excavated. The Germanic peoples observed cremation as the major burial rite, and therefore burial gifts did not remain intact. The later Merovingian custom of inhumation created better circumstances under which inscribed objects could survive (unless the grave was robbed, which was quite common). It is striking that from 500 AD onwards, i.e. from the beginning of Merovingian rule in Germany, a relatively large number of runic artefacts deposited in graves have survived.

A barrier which may have caused runic writing to be practised on a larger scale at a rather late date in South Germany is the *limes* that separated the *Agri Decumates* from northern parts of Germany. The south was Romanized to a large extent. After the *limes* broke down in the third century, the Alamanni (coming from the north) settled there, but no runic finds from that period are recorded in the southern area. Subsequently, from that time onwards more Germanic peoples moved as a result of the Migrations. Some of these peoples (Franks?) must have had runic knowledge. These two complementary explanations (changing of burial customs and the appearance of other tribes) could account for the sudden and relatively massive appearance of runes in Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria

at around 500. The idea that the Franks knew how to write with runes is based on a number of runic finds and the fact that at least two famous Franks are known to have been able to write and read runes: the bishop of Tours, Venantius Fortunatus, and King Chilperic, both sixth century. Anyway, it is remarkable that the appearance of runic script coincided with the establishment of Merovingian rule.

Although there is very little material to go by, I am convinced that runes were designed to write meaningful texts, albeit that modern people may not always understand their meaning. I have arrived at this conclusion because of the bracteate-legends. Many of these are notorious for their difficult or incomprehensible runic sequences, but since there are also quite a lot of bracteates that bear fully legible and understandable texts, I suppose that *this* was basically the general intention of the runewriters, the only problem being the fact that they did not always succeed. This may be due to the circumstance that some, or many of them, were illiterate to some degree. The less literate they were, the more their inscriptions will look like script-imitation.

#### 4. *Runes and rituals*

The objects that were offered and buried may have been inscribed to serve some ritual function, but this is difficult to prove, since we do not have any unambiguous texts that would confirm such a function. It is impossible to identify beyond any doubt texts that are undisputedly religious, or that refer to the supernatural. Some scholars believe that at least some of the runic texts are magical, simply because in their opinion runes were basically a magical script. Runes may have been used in texts that had magical purposes, such as is perhaps shown by seemingly meaningless sequences like **aaaaaa-aazzznnn?bmuttt** on the Lindholm bone piece. Magic? But of what nature? Sometimes it is possible to see the light through a blur of runic signs, as is the case in **bwseeekkkaaa** on the Chessel Down bronze pail. Remembering the **þþmkkkkistil** = *pistil, mistil, kistil* formula (thistle, mistletoe, chest), known from for instance the Danish Gørlev stone (see Moltke 1985), we may solve the Chessel Down mystery by applying the same principle, and thus read: *bekka, wekka, sekka*, all recorded names (see chapter eight, nr. 6).

An instance of an offering may be the text of the Vimose sword

chape, if I have interpreted this correctly as ‘may the lake have – Aala sword’ **mari ha aala makija**, referring to the object’s destination: to be deposited as war-booty. Texts such as ‘I consecrate the runes’ **uüu r[u]n[o]z** (Nebenstedt bracteate) and **wihgu** (‘I consecrate’) on the Nydam axe handle suggest some sacred act, but it is unclear what sort of act is alluded to.

One category of objects that may have had a ritual or religious function were the bracteates. They are considered amulets, since their models, Roman medallions and coins, had that function. That they were something special is expressed by the context in which they were found: in bogs, peat-layers, hoards, post-holes and graves. On the basis of (a) the material they were made of, gold, (b) their Roman connection and (c) their inscriptions that often contain either Roman lettering or runes, or a combination of both, one is inclined to regard them as symbols of wealth and power. A possible relation to either Germanic mythology or symbolic leadership may be deduced from their iconography.

As regards a possible ritual function, one may think of the coming of age of both boys and girls, or of initiation ceremonies of a cultic association, such as a warrior league. This would especially concern bracteates with the texts **frohila** and **niujila, niuwila**, resp. ‘Young Lord’ and ‘Little Newcomer’. The very act of inscribing an object might imply that some magic was aimed at, in the sense that adding lettering to an object would increase its intrinsic power. This mainly concerns amulets, but it is also implied by some texts on weapons found in bogs, such as on the Nydam axe: ‘**alu**, I, Oathsayer, consecrate/fight’; and the Kragehul spear shaft: ‘I, Eiril of Asugisalaz, I am called Muha **gagagaginuga**’. These texts do not create the impression of being just everyday messages, but seem instead to have some supernatural connotation. Some bracteates seem to bear the right sort of words for magic, such as charms or spells, **luwatuwa, salusalu, tanulu, hagela ala asulo, gibu auja, gagaga, gægogæ** (see also Page 1995:154). Apart from the fact that it is awkward to establish with any certainty the magic load in runic legends, it seems to me that if any rune-magic were involved, it would be found especially in the early inscriptions. In the later Middle Ages several ‘magical’ texts do occur, but in a context of Christianity, charms and spells, and alphabet-magic.

As regards burial gifts, it is not easy to distinguish between a dedication made for a burial and a similar sort of inscription made



for a living person. Perhaps objects with inscriptions that still look 'fresh', were made for depositing or for the afterlife of a deceased person, such as seems to be the case with the Beuchte and Bulach brooches (Continental corpus, chapter seven, nrs. 6 and 10), the Chessel Down scabbard mount (Early English corpus, chapter eight, nr. 2) and the Lețcani spindle whorl (Danish and Gothic corpus, chapter five, nr. 38). However, many of the objects that were found in hoards, sacred deposits and graves show traces of wear. Bracteates and grave finds mostly show abraded legends; these objects had been used for rather a long time before they were deposited or buried with their owners and thus seem to have no relation with the burial as such. Grave rituals mirror a social structure, but also a wished-for imaginary reality. The grave inventory may be regarded as a metaphor to express certain changes in society.

### 5. *Comparing the corpora*<sup>5</sup>

The English runologist Page (1995:304f.) gloomily observes: "From all this it is clear that runic inscriptions can comprise (a) texts meaningless to us, (b) unpronounceable sequences, or those unlikely to be plain language, (c) texts containing errors, (d) texts with apparent errors, (e) groups of pseudo-runes, characters that appear to be runes but aren't. There are also, rarely, texts that are comprehensible".

Does this sad depiction of the runic state of affairs hold good for all Dark Age runic legends from Denmark, the Continent, Frisia and England? Apart from the fact that Page is absolutely right in his observation concerning the early English runes, I intend to show that the study of runes is not so hopeless as might be concluded from the above statement, that there is a lot that is comprehensible and, moreover, that it is possible to draw general and more specific conclusions from "this incoherent mass of material".

Compared with the early English and Frisian traditions, the Continental tradition appears to have been much more productive and much more substantial. The early period was also quite productive in Denmark, if only as regards the many runic bracteates. Period II

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<sup>5</sup> Note that more data concerning comparison between several corpora are given at the end of each separate Checklist in the Catalogue, under the heading: Conclusions.

is the heyday of the English tradition; in Denmark Period II starts with a transitional stage. Substantial changes take place. Long, elaborate, texts appear in both England and Denmark. Stone, which had already been in use in Norway and Sweden for some time, was introduced as inscription-bearing material both in England and Denmark.

A runic revival took place in England, curiously enough within an ecclesiastical context (arguments for a runic reform are to be found in 'Recasting the Runes' by David Parsons 1999). Clerics introduced a profound change in runic writing, which touches upon the purport and contents of the texts. The fact that runic writing 'emerged from the closet' i.e. the intimacy of personal statements, may have something to do with a different view on writing, which arose in monastic circles in the seventh century. Books became important. What was committed to parchment was transferred from the memory of an individual to the realm of the written word, thus escaping transitoriness. What was written down could be read by other people, it became public, it could be passed on, copied, translated, propagated; in a sense the text was saved. Books were meant to support the memory and to stimulate associations. Anglo-Saxon runic writing became part of this intellectual development and runic texts acquired a different character. Parchment and styli served as writing equipment for runes. Large stone monuments with runic texts were erected. Even the runic alphabet underwent adaptations and extensions. The phenomenon of manuscript runes is specifically Anglo-Saxon, in contrast with the purely epigraphical traditions elsewhere.

In Denmark there was also a new impulse, which resulted in an adaptation of the *fupark* to a simpler, easier and eventually more popular usage. The causes and results of these changes were not the same in the two regions. In Denmark runic writing appears to have become 'democratic', but not so in England, where monastic use predominated. One may conclude, though, that in both regions there was an increase in the number of people who could read and write runes.

In seventh-century England and Frisia it is the coins with runic legends in particular which appear to bridge the gap between a diffuse use of runes with or without specific purposes and a manifestation of public use in daily life and commerce. The English use of runic coins, according to Page (1996:142), was a real contrast with the Frisian way of handling the material. This may be so, but one

has to keep in mind that an extensive use of runes is in contrast with the early English material as well! The numerous 'Frisian' *sceattas* seem to point to a widespread use of runic coins. However, it is not yet clear if there was a numismatic context for the four gold solidi in the Frisian *terp*-area. Perhaps investigations concerning the leading political role Westergo seems to have played, may throw some light on this matter. Heidinga (1997:20f.) states that the original power of Frisia lay possibly in Westergo and Oostergo, "where large quantities of gold were in circulation in the late sixth and early seventh centuries". This is the date of the four gold runic coins that may be either Frisian or Anglo-Saxon. These coins were intended for North Sea relations, according to Heidinga, and they appear to have inspired English coinage. Hines (1996:49) scrutinized the problem of coins and runes in England and Frisia, and he observes that the Frisian runic coinage "supports, at least as a hypothesis, the view that this was a distinct coinage produced for use in a different exchange network (a cross-North Sea network) from the more numerous, integrated, tremissis-dominated coinages of Merovingian Francia and other southern lands." "The idea of a competitive division between spheres of influence, allegiance and culture in north western Germanic Europe in the Early Middle Ages is one that has gradually been gaining support." (p. 57). Hines adds, on page 54, that "it is clear that the Frisian runic coins preceded the English ones and could circulate in England." However, "we ought perhaps to think of mutual influence in contiguous areas, with the sharing of innovations and general convergence."

Page opines that the use of runic script on coins was more common in England, especially in south and east England (Page 1996:138f.). One might even plead for a Merovingian influence, both on English and Frisian coinage. But the question of which of the two first started the introduction of runes on the coins is difficult to answer. All four solidi were struck, not cast, which may point to their being used as money. Hines (1996:58) points to the fact that the "Frisian and English gold coins, runic and non-runic, appear in a period of social history not long after the emergence of consolidated polities in the form of kingdoms with secure, aristocratic, social hierarchies. The coins are valuable objects that must represent the exchange requirements of a powerful and substantial social elite."

We can thus distinguish two possible reasons for the emergence of runic gold coins: the need for an exchange network of precious

goods felt by the North-west Germanic elite (be it Frisian or Anglo-Saxon), and the need for a social and cultural distinction from the strong and dominating Merovingian Franks.

### 6. *The Frisian corpus*

In a 1990 article (Looijenga 1990:231), I said, regarding the runes on the Frisian Bernsterburen staff: “as so often with Frisian runic inscriptions . . . the runes on the Bernsterburen staff may be derived from several fuparks”. This has led Page (1996:147) to exclaim “we must wonder whether there *was* a Frisian runic tradition, or only a confused scatter of different, mixed and hazy traditions.” It is useful to look at some more features Page mentions in his bewilderment with regard to the Frisian runes: (a) there is only a small number of inscriptions, (b) they show a remarkable range of unusual forms, which makes him wonder if runes were ever a serious and useful script at all in Frisia. As to (a), I would think that the small numbers of surviving inscriptions impede runic studies everywhere. As to (b), some runic forms on objects from the *terp* area are indeed anomalous. These may look mixed and hazy, but they may just as well be relics of a rich and old tradition.

Page’s cautious remarks on the Frisian corpus have inspired me to look more critically at delineations of definite runic traditions based on nationalities and to reckon with mixed traditions and influences that are more dependent on individual contacts and on travelers with runic knowledge. Inscribing objects with runes may have served different purposes. As regards the Continental tradition, it differs from the Frisian, English and Danish traditions in that it contains more dedications, well-wishes and writers’ signatures. On the whole the Continental inscriptions create the impression of being strictly private. They served as communication between people who knew each other intimately. There seem to be no sacral or ritual contexts, such as can be found in the early Danish corpus. The Continental runic legacy shows a clear picture, which is more difficult to detect in the English and Frisian corpora. However, both in the English and Frisian corpora we find plain messages, apparently made by craftsmen: ‘Luda repaired the brooch’ and ‘Aib made the comb for Habuke’.

The Danish linguist Nielsen (1996:127) raised serious objections

to the interpretation of several items as 'Frisian'. Especially in cases where no typical Anglo-Frisian features, such as the  $\bar{a}c$  and  $\bar{o}s$  runes, are present, he questioned the provenance of the inscriptions. The criterion 'findspot' is, according to him, not enough to establish a specific 'Frisian' provenance. He (1996:124) pointed to the fact that Wijnaldum A and Britsum show close connections with the Lindholm amulet and the Kragehul spearshaft, because they all exhibit multiple-line runes. The linguistic criterion of assigning the ending  $-u$  as typical for Runic Frisian has also been discarded (Nielsen 1996:129). He suggested that there are no decisive factors for accepting the existence of a runic Frisian corpus at all. He illustrated this startling observation by pointing out that there is a "hotchpotch of geographical, archaeological, numismatic, runological and linguistic criteria underlying the purported Frisian runic corpus." (Nielsen 1996:128). But this serious criticism also applies to all other early runic corpora, with the exception of the Continental Corpus.

Frisians carved runes on material they found nearby their dwelling-places, using yew wood, antler, bone, whalebone. I'd say that this would point to an indigenous tradition.

Yet these considerations might set us thinking. The survival of runic objects has depended to a large extent on accidental, geological and cultural circumstances. Waterlogged soil in the *terpen*, bogs in Denmark, Merovingian row graves in Germany, graves in England, all offer relatively favourable conditions for the preservation and excavation of runic objects. But the overall picture of the surviving runic objects is distorted and unbalanced. Except perhaps for some of the Frisian ones, no known early runic objects emerged from settlements, apart from some bracteates at Gudme. The *terpen* were settlement sites, because the elevated platforms were the only places fit for habitation in the coastal area. If people made deposits outside their *terp*, these may have disappeared under layers of clay. There were grave fields on *terpen*, such as at Hooebeintum, and the only certain runic *grave* find in the *terp* area is the Hooebeintum comb. For all other objects the find context is uncertain or lost.

One may wonder to what extent the Frisian objects that are assumed a rather mysterious lot ("baffling" is the word Page uses) represent a type of runic practice not known from other sites. This is contrary to the assumption made by Bæksted (1952:134), who thinks that any lost inscriptions would not have had contents different from those that have been preserved. The inscriptions on combs,

the antler, wooden and bone objects perhaps reveal something of an otherwise unknown runic practice. An instance of a practice unknown until 1955 came to light on the hundreds of wooden chips that were excavated in Bergen and Trondheim, showing colloquial texts.

In general it can be said that 'Runic Frisian' cannot be analysed very well with the help of existing grammars and descriptions of Old Frisian, such as have been published by Steller, Markey and Ramat, since they merely describe the 'Manuscript Old Frisian' of much later centuries. Reconstructing Runic Frisian is therefore a laborious task. Old English, which has been recorded from much earlier on, is an indispensable help for the analysis of Runic Frisian, as is Old Saxon and, to a lesser degree, Old High German.

Compared to the Danish and Continental runic objects, most Frisian objects are simple, i.e. not made of precious material, except for the four gold coins. This needs to be considered more closely. Does this mean that the occurrence of objects of wood, bone, antler and whalebone in Frisia is evidence of a general custom of using simple material to write runes on, a custom which apparently has not been recorded from elsewhere? Or is the Frisian tradition simply quite different from anywhere else? The Frisian *terp* area seems, from an archaeological point of view, to have been rather rich. But the rune finds do not bear witness to any sumptuousness, except again for the gold coins (which, by the way, did not emerge from any *terp*). It may be that writing in itself was important.

In Frisia itself only 16 objects from a period of probably three centuries of runic practice have been found. The other five 'Frisian' objects were found outside Frisia (in England and Ostfriesland, Germany), which is remarkable in itself. This may be due to the following facts: (1) the Frisian *terp* area is the smallest runic area of all and (2) Frisian trade covered a large area. This makes it understandable that runic objects became scattered outside their homeland.

There are two finds from outside the *terp* area in the Netherlands, which do not belong to the Frisian runic tradition. One is the early fifth-century Bergakker object. It is rather reminiscent of the Continental (for instance the Arlon silver bulla) and English traditions (Chessel Down), which both contain rune-inscribed silver scabbard mounts.

The other is a bronze sixth-century belt buckle from Borgharen on the Maas north of Maastricht. The object was found in a man's

grave in a Merovingian grave field. Typically and runologically, it can be linked to the Continental corpus.

Until the Bergakker and Borgharen finds, it was considered strange that runic writing in the Netherlands was only recorded from the *terp* region and not from the Frisian/Frankish centre of power, the important trading town of Dorestad and the royal residence at Utrecht in the central river area. The fact that the *terpen* presented so many finds may be due to the water-logged *terp* soil being suitable for preservation of runic objects. Remarkably, though, Frisians living in *Frisia citerior* (roughly Utrecht and the river estuary of the Rhine) from the seventh century onwards, did produce runic sceattas.

### 7. Frisian and Anglo-Saxon runic peculiarities

Whenever a new inscription turns up in England or the Netherlands, the first thing one does is to see whether  $\bar{a}c$  ƿ or  $\bar{o}s$  ƿ occurs in the inscription. Fourteen of the twenty-one Frisian items show runes from the older fuþark plus the two additional runes ƿ, ƿ that are common to the English and Frisian inscriptions. These new rune-forms represent *a* and *o* sounds; the old *a* rune ƿ came to render the sound *æ*. This development is associated with Ingveonic sound changes specifically concerning the Gmc phoneme *a* and the diphthongs beginning with *a*.

The phonemic changes known as monophthongization, fronting and nasalization, may have taken place independently in OFris and OE (Looijenga 1996<sup>b</sup>:109ff.) Monophthongization concerns Gmc *\*ai* > OE  $\bar{a}$ :<sup>6</sup> OFris *æ*,  $\bar{e}$ <sup>7</sup> and sometimes  $\bar{a}$ ; Gmc *\*au* > OE  $\bar{e}a$ , in OFris  $\bar{a}$ . Fronting concerns a shift from *a* > *æ* when not followed by a nasal consonant. Nasalization concerns *a* > *o* before nasal consonant and *a* + *n* >  $\bar{o}$  before voiceless spirant. Monophthongization, fronting and nasalization took place in all Old English dialects and also in Old Frisian (and neighbouring languages). According to Campbell

<sup>6</sup> The OE developments of Gmc *\*ai* and *\*au* took place, according to Luick (§ 291), in the 2rd–4th c. from the second to fourth centuries.

<sup>7</sup> A sound which according to Campbell (1959:52) “might well develop from *æi*. It is accordingly possible that *a* > *æ* before the monophthongization of *ai* to *æ* in OFris.”

(1959:50) “the evidence for the dating of these changes is tenuous, though obviously they all belong to the period between the Germanic invasion of England ca. 450, and the oldest surviving texts ca. 730–50”. The oldest surviving runic text in England can now be dated to the fifth century. This may mean that some changes may already have taken place on the Continent, and been introduced by the Anglo-Saxon migrants. There is no evidence, unless the Undley bracteate can be proved to have been manufactured on the Continent (see Hines & Odenstedt 1987, and Hills 1991<sup>a</sup>). The linguistic developments affected the (Gmc) monophthongs and diphthongs *a*, *ai* and *au* and induced a change in the use of the \**ansuz* rune 𐌺, which, apparently, could not be used for the products of the sound change: the allophones developing into the phonemes *æ* and *o*. It is puzzling that these were not rendered by the \**ehwaz* and \**ōðilan* runes, and that the allophones brought about changes in the graphic system. Parsons (1999:37) concludes that we simply “do not have enough evidence to be able to plot the course of the reorganisation of vowel-runes. Several sequences of linguistic and orthographic change are theoretically possible, encompassing the creation of 𐌺̅ before 𐌺, 𐌺 before 𐌺̅, or both at once.”

The additional Anglo-Frisian runes 𐌺̅ *āc* and 𐌺̅̅ *ōs* were recorded at different dates in England, the earliest, *ōs*, occurs in the fifth century on the Undley bracteate. The double-barred 𐌺̅̅ which occurs on the Continent (sixth century), in Frisia (around 600) and in England, but not in Scandinavia, is attested rather late in England, on St. Cuthbert’s coffin (698). Before this date the single-barred 𐌺̅ was used in England. It occurs rather early, on the Watchfield case-fitting, dated in the first half of the sixth century. In the Netherlands its earliest occurrence is on the Bergakker scabbard mount, dated around 425. Interestingly, Parsons (1999:106f.) observes that Watchfield and the Kentish group of early English runic inscriptions (Sarre, Ash, Dover and Boarley) “would fit with clear historical and archaeological evidence linking sixth-century Kent with the Merovingian Continent.”

Unfortunately, not all English and Frisian runic inscriptions contain the vowels *a* or *o* represented by the new runes (variations on existing ones), in which case we are not only faced with the impossibility of establishing the sound value of the older *fupark* rune 𐌺, but also with the question of the provenance of the object. As to provenance in general, not only the Frisian objects are portable, but



those of other corpora as well. Provenance will always be problematic for any of the early runic objects.

In the Frisian inscriptions  $\bar{a}c$  ǿ is already present before 600. It denotes both long and short *a*. The Frisian  $\bar{a}c$  runes are found on the runic solidi and the Amay comb (sixth century). In England the oldest attestation of  $\bar{a}c$  may be Loveden Hill **hlaw**, dated fifth or sixth century; the second oldest is Caistor-by-Norwich II: **luda** 610–650 (Hines 1991<sup>b</sup>:6–7), followed by the coins: **desaiona** and **pada** 660–670.

The earliest  $\bar{o}s$  rune ǿ has been found in Suffolk, on the Undley bracteate (ca. 475). The second-oldest  $\bar{o}s$  is in the Chessel Down I inscription, found on the Isle of Wight, dated to the sixth century. The  $\bar{o}s$  rune is attested late in OFris, in the eighth century, in Toornwerd, Westeremden B, Rasquert and Arum.

It may be assumed that the runes  $\bar{a}c$ ,  $\bar{o}s$  and  $\bar{a}sc$  emerged as a parallel development. One of the sound changes (monophthongization of Gmc *\*au* and *\*ai*) that made the creation of new runes necessary, also occurred in Runic Frisian, from the earliest known inscriptions onwards. I am inclined to assume that the Anglo-Frisian runic innovations started on the Continent, specifically on the North Sea coast, because that is the region where all three populations lived together briefly in each others' neighbourhood. Parsons (1999:67), however, points out that "While evidence for the completed reorganisation of Anglo-Saxon vowel-runes implies a series of specifically Ingvaenic and Old English sound-changes, the ǿ-rune on its own need indicate no more than the development of *\*ans-* > *\*ās-*. This is a sound-change that took place not only in England and Frisia, but also in Schleswig-Holstein and Scandinavia (Nielsen 1981:145–6, 211–12; 1991:45)."

I think that the Anglo-Frisian innovations in runic writing may have taken place somewhere in the fifth century on the Continent, probably in the homelands of the Angles and Saxons. The runes may have been introduced to Frisia from there. Judging from our material, the new runes are recorded from Frisia and England at various points in time—due to scanty evidence from a disturbed tradition. Another reason may be that the occurrence of phonetic and phonemic developments in the two regions did not coincide. Parsons (1999:101f.) argues "on conventional linguistic grounds that the new rune ǿ should be seen as an Anglo-Saxon and not as an Anglo-Frisian innovation."

The assumption that the Frisian runic objects were not indigenous to Frisia, but were imported from England, is based on linguistic ambiguities (the difference between OE and OFris not being very clear), and on the fact that occasionally the find-contexts of the objects are obscure and the dating is arbitrary. Some significant linguistic features are not only characteristic of Runic-Frisian but of Anglo-Saxon as well. It is possibly best to speak of a mixed tradition in the Low Countries, which, in view of the geographical position, is not surprising. One may conclude that in the nature of its runic inscriptions, Frisia reflected its geographical position as an intermediary between England and Scandinavia.

For a long time runic writing in England and Frisia remained on a modest scale and at a basic level. The contents and syntax of the texts, as well as the nature of the inscriptions, are comparable with the earliest evidence of runic writing anywhere else. The Dutch Corpus contains relatively numerous fully-fledged sentences, as compared with the contemporaneous Continental and English Corpora, which excel in the use of single words and names, word groups, name groups and so on.

Eventually, the English and Frisian languages developed in different ways. No further Anglo-Saxon runic innovations seem to have been shared by the Frisians. Instead the Frisians adopted Scandinavian runes from the younger futhork, possibly through their trade contacts with places like Haithabu and Ribe in Denmark and Birka in Sweden. Instances of mixed Frisian and Scandinavian runes are the inscriptions of Westeremden B and Britsum.

The increase of runic usage coincides with internal and external political developments and international contacts, with the Merovingians and the Frisians, for instance. On the whole it can be said that during the early runic period, accumulated runic usage occurs everywhere in small areas. This can be observed in Germany, in Frisia, in Denmark, in England and must be connected with the presence of a royal court or some privileged families, specifically a wealthy elite that could sustain a group of specialist artisans.

The runic items found in Merovingian regions should be reconsidered in the light of the Bergakker and Borgharen finds, which may indicate that the Franks, too, knew and used runes (see also chapter two, 11). Charnay, a Frankish brooch, can be linked runologically with Griesheim (Germany), and linguistically with Bergakker. Both appear to display linguistic features that point to an East-

Germanic dialect (*upf(i)ndai* in Charnay, and the dative and accusative plural endings *-am* and *-ens* in Bergakker). The Arlon box belongs to a series of similar boxes that were produced in the Middle-Rhine area. The gold disc-brooch from Chéhery, (northern France, near Charleville-Mézières) is difficult to classify because of its problematic legend. It exhibits a combination of Roman lettering and runes. The part DEOS DE points to Christianity. The inscription on the Merovingian 'Kent' brooch may have been made either on the Continent or in England. The Watchfield purse mount also has a Merovingian connotation, but the inscription seems to have been made in England. This illustrates a general problem: inscriptions may be added anywhere; they do not have to have the same origin as the object. Moreover, runographers may have travelled around, thus leaving their dialectal and typological traces in foreign regions.

There remains one curious feature, though, the single-barred  $\text{H}$  which occurs in Bergakker and Wijnaldum B, and Watchfield, all three perhaps with a Merovingian context, whereas other Merovingian, or Frankish runic finds display double-barred  $\text{H}$  (Charnay). The double-barred  $\text{H}$  is typical for Continental inscriptions, whereas single-barred  $\text{H}$  is typical of Scandinavian. The introduction of Anglian and Scandinavian material culture to eastern England in the fifth and sixth centuries was accompanied by the introduction of a runic script which displayed Scandinavian features (Parsons 1999:104). Among these runes was single-barred  $\text{H}$ . Unexplained is the occurrence of single-barred  $\text{H}$  in fifth and sixth century inscriptions found in the Netherlands, unless we assume that Scandinavian influences reached as far as the estuaries of Rhine and Maas. When comparing Bergakker with inscriptions from elsewhere, it is obvious that in all respects it is extraordinary. Parsons (1999:108) thinks, and I agree, that double-barred  $\text{H}$  was introduced into England via Frisia, ultimately coming from southern Germany.

One may consider whether both single and double-barred **h** have existed from the beginning of runic writing and therefore should be labelled Common Runic. Thus the diagnostic nature of the single-barred **h** should be questioned.

### 8. *Runes in Denmark and South-east Europe*

Both in runological and archaeological terms, the runic objects found in Danish regions belong to the oldest recorded runological items; they have been described and commented on by numerous scholars. The oldest known runic inscriptions were not only found in Denmark; one of the oldest items from outside Denmark is the Norwegian Øvre Stabu spearhead of the Vennolum-type (see chapter three and the Appendix, Norway nr. 43), dated to the second half of the second century.

Another spearhead with a runic legend has been found in a grave on the island of Gotland: Mos, which has been dated to around 200 (Appendix, Sweden, nr. 17). The spearheads from Dahmsdorf and Rozwadów, dating from the third century, are discussed in chapter two and below, in the section on Continental runewriting (chapter four, 9). The Thorsberg bog finds have been included in the Continental Corpus, although traditionally they are discussed against a Danish background. Since the provenance of the Thorsberg bog deposits appears to be the region between the lower Elbe and Rhine (see chapter two, 4), it seemed more appropriate to incorporate these items in the Continental Corpus (nrs. 42, 43).

A characteristic of one part of the early 'Danish' runic objects is that they were deposited in lakes and bogs, which eventually turned into the present-day peat layer. The objects can be associated with a warrior class. Another category of runic objects has been found in the graves of rich women. Some precious objects were stray finds, perhaps belonging to former hoards. Since these ways of depositing are typical of the Danish runic objects, I regard it as useful to list them according to their find circumstances: bog/peat finds, grave finds, stray finds, all in alphabetical order. Exceptions in more than one way are the Blekinge stones, which are discussed at the end of chapter five.

From South-east Europe some runic objects from the third, fourth and fifth centuries have been recorded, which can be connected with Gothic tribes who settled in the coastal area of the Black Sea at the beginning of the third century AD. I have listed three possibly 'Gothic' inscriptions as a supplement to chapter five. The fourth may be the third-century spearhead from Kowel, with the legend **tilarids**. Because of the nominative ending **-s** the text is considered Gothic. The spearhead cannot be inspected, since it was lost in the second World War.

For detailed information about the type of spearhead I refer to Hachmann (1993:373ff.), see also Krause (1966:77ff.), who interpreted either “Hinreiter” or “Zielrat”. Antonsen (1975:74) interpreted **tilarids** as “Goal-pursuer”.

The fact that so few runic objects have come to light in South-east Europe may be attributed to several circumstances, such as grave robbery on a large scale and corrosion of the soil. Runic knowledge among the Goths was most likely tied to the Scandinavian tradition, because the Goths originated from there, and because there were continuous contacts between Denmark and the Black Sea region in which the Goths had settled. Besides, the use of the single-barred **h** may point to the Scandinavian runic tradition rather than to the Continental.

### 9. *Continental runewriting*

The Continental inscriptions are also known as the South Germanic Runic Corpus. Perhaps South *and* West Germanic would be a better term, since a great number of the texts are in a West Germanic dialect. The language of most Frisian, Anglo-Saxon and Frankish inscriptions is West Germanic, too. The baffling mixture of terminology is due to a generally applied division into geography (the findplaces of the objects) and the language of the texts. In this study a distinction is made between a North Sea runic tradition, a Scandinavian runic tradition, and a Continental runic tradition, based on the geographical spread of the items, the use of typical runeforms, and, to a lesser degree, the archaeological context.

Epigraphic runic writing on the Continent is recorded from ca. 200. Runic objects found in North Germany belong to the oldest evidence. The two Thorsberg finds (Schleswig-Holstein) date from ca. 200 AD. Nevertheless, the Meldorf fibula might be the oldest runic item (dated to the first half of the first century, found in Schleswig-Holstein). Its legend is disputed; the inscription:  $\mathbb{D}\mathbb{H}$  can be interpreted as Roman: IDIN ‘for Ida’, or as runic, read from right to left: **hiwi** ‘spouse’. This uncertainty is based on the forms of two signs: the sign read as N in IDIN is reverted and may therefore be taken for a runic **h**. The sign in the form of a Roman D may be a rune representing **w** or **p**. Some runologists, such as Stoklund (1994<sup>a</sup>:96), Düwel & Gebühr (1981:166, 169) think that the inscription

was meant as an ornamental filling in of the surface. I believe it to be writing, and probably Roman. In the area around Meldorf near the west coast of Schleswig-Holstein many Roman artifacts have been found, dating from the first half of the first century AD.<sup>8</sup> The brooch itself is of local manufacture, and so is the inscription, made in the so-called tremolo or zig-zag style.<sup>9</sup> The Meldorf find is in the Museum Gottorf, Schleswig.

The third-century Dahmsdorf spearhead, found in Brandenburg, was lost in the second World War. The runic legend is **ranja**, nsm. *n*-stem, interpreted as ‘havoc-causer’ (Krause/Jankuhn 1966:76f.). This is apparently the weapon’s symbolic name. The third-century spearhead from Rozwadów (Poland) has also been lost. Its runic inscription was badly damaged; only **jkrlus** could be read (Krause/Jankuhn 1966:81f.). The third-century runic spearhead from Kowel (Volhynia) is discussed above (chapter four, 8).

Fallward, at the mouth of the Weser north of Bremerhaven, is the name of a grave field. A runic object was dug up from among the remains of an exceptionally rich fifth-century ship burial. Other finds from the Migration Period are the silver disc from Liebenau (fourth century) and the fifth-century bracteates from Sievern and Nebenstedt (chapter six, nrs. 37 and 29), all in Niedersachsen. The only Migration Period item from southern Germany is the silver neckring from Aalen (fifth century), an unlocated find.

The inscriptions on the Weser runic bones have been dated to the Migration Period by Pieper (1989). The dating, however, is doubtful, since the inscriptions (if genuine!) were made on subfossile bones (Pieper 1989; Stoklund 1994:95). I have described them in chapter seven, although I doubt their authenticity (see also chapter one).

The majority of Continental inscriptions date from ca. 500–700, well within the Merovingian period. The use of double-barred **h** ᚨ

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<sup>8</sup> At the beginning of the first century AD, the Roman empire reached its greatest extent. On the continent the troops advanced as far as the mouth of the river Elbe, which is quite near the later village of Meldorf on the North Sea coast. Roman influence may have been fairly widespread. Roman lettering has also been found in Frisia, although the Frisian region was not occupied.

<sup>9</sup> Tremolo is a decorative style. Letters or runes are made by way of zig-zag lines instead of straight lines. This decorative pattern can be found fairly often on all kinds of metal objects; for instance on Øvre Stabu, Næsbjerg, Donzdorf. One may perhaps conclude from this that runes were known among metal smiths, not only as script, but also as ornamental signs.

is characteristic. A runic variety is a **k** rune resembling the younger Scandinavian fuþark **k** ʃ, used to render either *k* or *ch* (with OHG sound shift), for instance in Griesheim *Cholo* and Nordendorf II *elch*. A peculiar variety of the **I** rune ʀ, otherwise only known from bracteate legends, is found in Griesheim and Charnay. Furthermore the star rune ʃ appears in Eichstetten, and an ornamental form of the **z** rune ʒ occurs in Charnay and Balingen. Bindrunes in uncommon combinations occur, in Kirchheim Teck and Neudingen-Baar I for example; ‘rune-crosses’ occur in Soest and Schretzheim III.

The loops of the **b** rune are mostly widely separated, which occurs fairly often in Continental and Frisian inscriptions (cf. also Odenstedt 1990:93–96), but less frequently in early Anglo-Saxon inscriptions. One may wonder whether this way of writing with relatively long headstafís was influenced by Merovingian manuscript-writing in the so-called Rhine-Frankish script type, with angular, high and narrow letter forms. Continental runic writing, especially in South Germany, seems to have been influenced by manuscript-writing, such as may be detected from the stretched-out forms of the runes. This aspect needs more investigation.

Another characteristic feature is that with only one exception the runic items are all precious objects: the wooden stave of Neudingen-Baar is probably part of a weaving loom and therefore the only utensil.

#### 10. *Runes on bracteates*

As a point of departure and checkpoint I used the meticulous drawings of the *Ikonographischer Katalog*, abbreviated IK. This monumental work, also known as *Die Goldbrakteaten der Völkerwanderungszeit*, edited by Morten Axboe et al. (1984–1989) has proved to be a good source for investigations of the bracteate corpus.

The overall impression of bracteate ornamentation is that the makers were suffering from a severe case of *horror vacui*. The whole gold-foil surface is filled in, hence the difficulty of deciding what was meant to be writing and what not. If a stroke, dot or line resembles a writing sign, this is just as likely to be an ornament, or a symbol for something unknown. Furthermore, initials and abbreviations based on letter sequences on Roman coins were used, next to Roman lettering and capital-imitation. There is quite a strong association with

the paraphernalia of Roman emperors, such as the royal diadem with its central imperial jewel, and the Victoria statue. Seebold (1992, 1994<sup>b</sup>, 1995) investigated connections between the symbolism of the bracteates and Roman coins showing the emperor with his diadem (with a *terminus post quem* of 325, cf. Seebold 1992:270). Through an in-depth analysis of the development of Germanic symbolism emerging from the Roman background, Seebold seeks to unravel the meaning of the iconography of the bracteates and the connection with the text, in this case the runes. By relating bracteate types to their places of origin and their texts he is able to distinguish certain groups, such as Undley, Sievern and Hitsum (Seebold 1996:194). They are included in chapter six.

A typological division of bracteate types with respect to the runic legends is still under discussion. The exact relation between picture and text is subject to conjecture. Only in exceptional cases is it possible to connect text and picture, as may for instance be expressed by the figurines with a raised hand, holding up some small round object (a bracteate?) and the accompanying text which contains the word **lapu** ‘invitation’.

Not only the object, the bracteate, is exceptional, but the runeforms also often deviate from runes in ‘normal’ inscriptions on other objects. The anomalous runeforms themselves are worth a separate study. Yet the reason that it is possible to identify a divergent rune, for instance for **l**, is due to its frequent occurrence in a well-known word such as **laukaz**. The variety in forms is at least partly caused by the technique used for inscribing them. The runes were made with a matrix die (showing the motif in the negative), which was placed against the obverse of the gold flan and subsequently struck. Many of the ill-formed, reversed and inverted runes may be the result of this technique.



The act of inscribing runes on bracteates may have served a different purpose to the use of runes in general, as has been suggested by Düwel (1992<sup>a</sup>:40f.), who proposes that the vowel and consonant sequences on bracteates may have had magical purposes, such as communication with the supernatural. He points to the importance of writing in an oral society: “die Macht der Schrift” (Düwel 1992<sup>a</sup>:36).







11. *North Sea coastal links: ornamental runes, rune crosses, multiple-line runes and mirror-runes*<sup>10</sup>

There may be some specific runic links connecting the Danish, Frisian and English traditions, along the coast and across the North Sea. Links can be observed in special runic forms (see also Page 1985). The tiny coastal group of Frisia has always been notorious for its unusual runeforms, especially in the inscriptions from Britsum and Westeremden B. Westeremden B deserves a prize for the most curious collection of exotic runeforms: mirror-runes, Anglo-Frisian runes and runes from the younger fupark. The so-called star rune occurs in Frisian and English inscriptions, where it forms an integral part of syllables beginning with *jī-*, denoting the sequence of palatalised *g + i*. This characteristic, together with the presence of *āc* and *ōs*, confirms that, basically, Westeremden B belongs to the Anglo-Frisian tradition.

Two other *terp* finds, Britsum and Wijnaldum A, show a variation between single and multiple-lined runes, and therefore they are often compared with the Lindholm amulet (Skåne) and the Kragehul spear shaft (Funen).

Another connection along the North Sea coast is the parallel between Fallward and Oostum in the use of ‘ornamental’ runes: the **a** with three sidetwigs of Fallward and the **h**  and **b**  with three bars and three hooks in Oostum. These are varieties that are unique (so far).

The rune cross is actually a bindrune, which appears to be typical of connections between Denmark, England and Germany. The basis is a **g** rune , to which ends sidetwigs are attached. Typical for the connection between England and Denmark are the occurrences of   on the Undley bracteate, and  on the Kragehul spear shaft. Other cross-like bindrunes occur on the Soest (Westfalen) brooch, the Schretzheim ring and the Kirchheim Teck brooch (both Baden-Württemberg). It is questionable whether a fifth-century earthenware pot from Liebenau (photo in Genrich 1981), showing an ornament that resembles a rune-cross, also belongs to this tradition.



<sup>10</sup> Mirror-runes have equal sidetwigs on either side of the headstaff, or, if there are two headstaffs, equal bars run between the tops and the bases. The existence of mirror-runes, or “Spiegelrunen”, has convincingly been demonstrated by Pieper 1987.

It may be the other way round: runic varieties may have been inspired by ornamental forms.

The Gallehus (Jutland) inscription has hatched runes and single runes (see reproductions of eighteenth-century drawings in Moltke 1985:84ff.). Also the Wijaldum A antler piece (no date) contains single and doubled runes. Together with Britsum, it has often been compared with the Lindholm bone piece, the Kragehul spear shaft and the bone piece from Ødemotland (Rogaland, South-west Norway), which all contain single and multiple-lined runes. The Bergakker inscription has single runes<sup>11</sup> and doubled **s** runes. This doubled **s** in Bergakker has a parallel in bracteate Svarteborg-M. Here, the double **s** at the beginning is usually transliterated **ss**, but I think we can be fairly certain that the double form is only ornamental, and should be read as one **s**.

Double-lined runes may have arisen from the technique of inlaying runes with silver thread or niello, such as can be gathered from the now empty impressions of once inlaid runes of the Steindorf, the Wurmlingen and the Schretzheim saxes and the Dahmsdorf, Kowel and Rozwadów spearheads. The outlines are still visible, but the silver inlay is gone. These contours may have been the source of inspiration for the creation of double-lined runes and thus go back to a technique used by (weapon)smiths.

Mirror-runeforms are known: **a**, **æ**, **w**, **þ**, **d**, **e**, **p**, **m**. The double-barred **h** might be considered a mirror-rune, but it is equally possible to regard it as a doubled form. Mirror-runes may be fossils from the boustrophedon way of writing (which does not apply to the **h** rune).

Eye-openers were the famous mirror-runes **w**  and **þ**  on the lance heads and mounts found in Illerup (Jutland) and Vimose (Funen), dated ca. 200 AD.<sup>12</sup> At any rate these inscriptions (**wag-nijo** and **nipijo tawide**) must belong to the same runographers' 'school'. The Spong Hill urns (East Anglia, fifth or sixth century)

<sup>11</sup> The deviating rune representing **e** in Bergakker is neither a doubled rune nor a mirror-rune. It is a runic variety that has become known only recently (Bosman/Looijenga 1996, Looijenga 1999). This peculiar **e** rune may have a parallel with a brooch with the inscription **leub**, found at Engers (Rhineland), dated to the sixth century.

<sup>12</sup> At first the runes were not recognised as mirror-runes, but thought to represent single rune forms.

have stamped mirror-runes:  $\uparrow \uparrow \cap$  **alu** (discovered by Pieper 1987). The Boarley brooch has also a mirror-rune  $\uparrow$ . A fair number of bracteates (from the second half of the fifth to the beginning of the sixth centuries) bear ornamental and mirror-runes (included in this study are Funen (I)-C and Overhornbæk (III)-C).

Westeremden B has mirror-runes for **b**, **d**, and **p**  $\cap$  (also in the Breza fuþark) which may be compared to the bracteate Fünen (I)-C, which has mirror-runes for **a**  $\uparrow$  and **e**  $\cap$ .

The fact that the same form can represent different values, may be based on the observation that all runes with two headstaves have mirrored forms. Their value in an inscription depends on the context of those runes in the rest of the text.

The fact that multiple-lined runes, mirror-runes and ornamental runes occur in Denmark, North Germany, the Netherlands, England and South-west Norway, may point to a North Sea runic tradition (cf. also Barnes 1984:67). If ornamental runeforms and rune crosses are also taken into account, 'West Germanic runic tradition' might be a suitable term to cover all these particular features. This tradition is therefore to be considered as very rich in form variation. One may perhaps conclude that such an elaborate tradition could go back to ancient roots. This may be an interesting consideration in the search for the origin of runic script, and the transport routes runes followed in their early existence.

If mirror-runes are characteristic of the West Germanic runic tradition, one must assume that the 'lantern-shaped' runes  $\uparrow$  in the 'Gothic' inscriptions of Szabadbattyán and Leţcani (see chapter V, nrs. 39 and 38) are not mirror-runes, but instead denote the sequence **(i)ng** in **marings** and **rango**.

## 12. *The influence of Latin*

A direct influence from Latin and Latin script on runic writing in the initial period is hard to establish. Evidence is scarce and sometimes arbitrary. From the fifth century onwards the rune **u** is regularly used instead of **w**, which may be due to Latin influence. Instances are: **uilald** and **uigaz** (bracteates Eskatorp and Väsby, chapter six, nr. 10), **uüu** (bracteate Nebenstedt, nr. 29), **uiniz** (bracteate Sønder Rind, nr. 40), **farauisa** (bracteate Raum Køge, nr. 32), **urait** (Neudingen Baar II, chapter seven, nr. 27) and Pforzen II (chapter

seven, nr. 52). Seebold (1991:462) sees the loss of the **w** rune as a result of the loss of initial *w* before back vowels in Proto-Norse, as is shown by the rune name *\*wunjō > unja*. This is supposed to have happened before the bracteate period, that is before the end of the fifth century. The **w** rune, however, does occur in bracteate legends and it was further retained in Frisia, England and on the Continent.

Among the earliest group of inscriptions (200–650) Latin loanwords seem to appear in Denmark, the Rhine estuary, Germany and England, e.g. **asula** (Vimose bronze buckle), **asulo** (Overhornbæk III-C), **ksamella** (to be read as *scamella* on the Fallward footstool), **kesjam** on the Bergakker scabbard mount, **sigila** (München-Aubing) and **sigilæ** (Harford Farm).

### 13. *Syntaxis and division marks*

In a few cases some interesting observations can be made on the relation of syntaxis (if deliberately meant as such by the old runographers) and division marks.<sup>13</sup> Sometimes verb and object are written together, in: **boso:wraitruna** (Freilaubersheim), **luda:giboætæsīgila** (Harford Farm) and **blipgu[n]þ:uraitruna** (Neudingen Baar II). In Aquincum we find subject and verb written together, separated from the object by division marks **]laig:kingia**. A variation is **da?īna:golda** (Freilaubersheim), **hagiradaz:tawide** (Garbølle) and **feha:writ** (Weingarten I). In **alagu[n]pleuba:dedun** (Schretzheim I) we find two names of the subject written together. In Charnay **upf[i]nþai:iddan:liano** and the newly discovered inscription Pforzen II **aodlip:urait:runa**, we find verb, object and subject separated by division marks. The same division can be noticed in Gallehus **ekhlewegastiz:holtijaz:horna:tawido** and in Bergakker **haleþe-was:ann:kesjam:logens:**

There are instances of subject and verb written together; in Raum Køge **hariuhahaitika** and Nydam **wighusikijaz**. Finally we find texts consisting of several names, separated by division marks, such

<sup>13</sup> Beekes (1991:22) describes the interpunction system in Etruscan inscriptions. Division marks occur often, although not always. They consist of one, two, three or four dots. In some cases three dots mark a sentence or *alinea*, whereas two dots mark one word. Interpunction was first used to mark names.

as **kolo:agilabrup** (Griesheim) and **ida:bigina:hahwar:** (Weimar I) and Neudingen Baar: **ibi:imuba:hamale:blipgu[n]þ**.

In a few cases we have an 'I, so-and-so' formula, written together: **ekhlewagastiz** (Gallehus), **ekunwodz** (Gårdlösa), **eku[n]mædit** (Rasquert). Kragehul and Lindholm have strikingly similar texts **ekerilazasugisalasmuhahaite** and **ekerilazsawilagazhateka**.

#### 14. *On the significance of runeforms*

In my opinion, the compiling and cataloguing of all different runeforms in order to establish a presumed chronology can be deceptive. Any new find may alter a chronology. Notwithstanding this relative value, I have made a list of so-called 'diagnostic' runes for reasons of convenience. There is still some sense in collecting all different forms of individual runes, since it may come in handy as a checklist when new inscriptions are found, if these show forms that at first sight look a bit out of the way. It also appears that in some cases the value of a rune can be identified by comparing its form to other occurrences. Any statements about a typological chronology of runeforms should only be made tentatively, because far-reaching conclusions might easily lead the investigator astray.

Runes on bracteates deserve a special, separate, study, since many runic forms on bracteates appear to be deformed and to have a deviating design. This is probably due to the way they were manufactured, but on the other hand, bracteates may show contemporaneous and regional runic varieties.

#### 15. *Diagnostic runeforms: k, j/g, s, h, l, e*

The forms are listed independent of their direction of writing. No reference has been made to hooked or rounded forms either. Rounded forms occur for instance with **o** runes: in Køng, Udby, Harford Farm, Illerup II and IV, Vimose IV. And also with **j** runes, e.g. in Skodborghus-B, Vadstena-C, Illerup II and IV, Vimose III. A rounded **k** in the form of a C is found in Vimose II.

**k** appears in seven forms: roof  $\wedge$ , hook  $<$ , staff + twig upwards  $\uparrow$ , staff + twig downwards  $\downarrow$ , staff + hook below  $\wedge$ , staff + hook above  $\Upsilon$ , 'reversed **t**'  $\downarrow$ .

- j/g** appears in five forms: bipartite, hooks vertical  $\approx$ , bipartite, hooks horizontal  $\diamond$ , bipartite closed  $\mathfrak{b}$ , three-strokes  $\mathfrak{h}_1$ , star rune  $\mathfrak{f}$ .
- s** appears in four forms: zig-zaglines of three strokes  $\mathfrak{h}_1$ , zig-zag of four strokes  $\mathfrak{z}$ , zig-zag of five strokes or more  $\mathfrak{x}$ , staff + upper twig  $\mathfrak{y}$ .
- h** appears in three forms: one bar  $\mathfrak{H}$ , double bar  $\mathfrak{H}$ , and triple bar  $\mathfrak{H}$ .
- l** appears in six forms: staff + twig downwards from the top  $\mathfrak{l}$ , staff + twig from the middle downwards  $\mathfrak{l}$ , staff + twig upwards  $\mathfrak{l}$  and  $\mathfrak{l}$ , staff + twig downwards  $\mathfrak{l}$ .
- e** appears in three forms: two staves + straight bar  $\mathfrak{e}$ , two staves + hooked bar  $\mathfrak{e}$ , a hooked bar and two slanting staves  $\mathfrak{e}$ .
- k**     $\wedge$  : München-Aubing III, Neudingen-Baar I, Pforzen I, Watchfield, Raum Køge-C, Börringe-C, Dischingen II.
- $\lt$  : Gallehus, Fallward, Vimose II, Gårdlösa, Nydam I, Nydam II, Bergakker, Aquincum, Charnay, Balingen, Freilaubersheim, Loveden Hill, Grumpan-C, Hammenhög-C, Lynges Gyde-C, Maglemose (II)-C, Seeland (I)-C, Tjurkö (I)-C, Vadstena-C, Års (II)-C, Åsum-C, Dänemark (I)?-C, Halskov Overdrev-C, Sønder Rind-B, Sønderby-C, Heilbronn-Böckingen, ‘Kent’.
- $\mathfrak{y}$  : Nordendorf II, Hailfingen II, Griesheim.
- $\mathfrak{k}$  : Toornwerd, Oostum, Hamwic, Whitby I, St. Cuthbert, Westeremden B.
- $\mathfrak{h}$  : Kragehul I, Lindholm, skanomodu, Hantum, Chessel Down I and II, Skrydstrup-B, UFO-B/Schonen (I)-B.
- $\mathfrak{y}$  : Björketorp, Stentofte, Eskatorp, Väsby.
- $\mathfrak{e}$  : Lindkær-C, Overhornbæk (III)-C.
- j/g**     $\approx$  : Dahmsdorf, Thorsberg I, Nøvling, Vimose IV, Vimose III, Vimose II, Vimose V, Vimose I, Illerup II, Illerup IV, Nydam I, Grumpan-C, Stentofte.
- $\diamond$  : Gallehus, Øvre Stabu.
- : Bergakker, Beuchte, Bezenye I, Breza, Darum (V)-C, Skodborghus-B, Vadstena-C.
- $\mathfrak{h}_1$  : Kragehul I, Charnay, Oettingen.
- $\mathfrak{f}$  : Westeremden A, Westeremden B, Trossingen II, Eichstetten, Hohenstedt.

- † in Björketorp, Gummarp and Stentofthen represents **A** whereas **A** in Istaby has been rendered by a three-stroked zigzag form ʄ. Both types are linguistically and graphically related to the older digraph or bipartite form of \*jāra<sup>5</sup>.
- s** ʄ : Gallehus, Lindholm, Björketorp, Fallward, Nydam I, Charnay, Weimar III, Beuchte, Bergakker, Schretzheim I, Watchfield, Steindorf, Pforzen I, Loveden Hill, Westeremden A, Freilaubersheim, Chessel Down I, Whitby II, Overhornbæk (III)-C, Raum Køge-C, Lindkær-C, Halsskov Overdrev-C, Svarteborg-M, Vadstena-C, Stentofthen, Gummarp, Björketorp, Bezenye II.
- ⋈ : Kragehul I, skanomodu, Leţcani, Nydam I, Thorsberg II, Næsbjerg, Schretzheim II, Szabadbáttyan, Trossingen II, München-Aubing I, Ash Gilton, Boarley, Arlon, Næsbjerg, Illerup I, Bezenye II, Weimar II.
- ⋈ : Kragehul I, Møllegårdsmarken, Vimose III, Harford Farm, Vimose IV, Niederstotzingen, Himlingøje II, Schretzheim I and II.
- ʄ : Westeremden B, Britsum?, Chessel Down II, the coin **desaiona**, St. Cuthbert.
- h** ʄ : Nydam I, Garbølle, Leţcani, Vimose IV, Vimose V, Himlingøje I, Himlingøje II, Thorsberg II, Vimose II, Illerup VI, Møllegårdsmarken, Loveden Hill, Caistor-by-Norwich, Watchfield, Wakerley, Cleatham, Pietroassa, Wijnaldum B, Bergakker, Peigen, Stentofthen, Björketorp, Gummarp, Istaby.
- ⋈ : Breza, St. Cuthbert, Whitby II, Weimar I, Weimar II, Weimar III, Weimar IV, Wurmlingen, Kirchheim Teck, Pforzen I, Neudingen-Baar II, Weingarten I, Charnay, Harlingen, Hantum, Westeremden A, Westeremden B, Trossingen II.
- ⋈ : Oostum; other varieties with three sidetwigs or -buckles are: **b** ⋈ Oostum, **a** ʄ Fallward.
- 1** ʄ : ʄ ʄ is the common form; for exceptions see below.
- † ʄ : Gurfiles (?) -C, Hesselagergårds Skov-C, Fünen (I)-C, Maglemose (III)-C, Overhornbæk (III)-C, Raum Trollhättan-A, Skonager (III)-C, Kjellers Mose-C.
- ʄ ʄ : Hammenhög-C, Lyngø Gyde-C, Maglemose (II)-C, Seeland (I)-C, Chessel Down II.
- ʄ : Griesheim, Charnay.

- e    𐌺 : Strårup, Westeremden A, Ferwerd, Hoogebeintum, Illerup II, Illerup III, Thorsberg I, Garbølle, Ash Gilton. Leṭçani has a mixed form.
- 𐌻 : Overhornbæk (III)-C, Lindkær-C, Fünen (I)-C, Gallehus, Kragehul II, Kragehul I, Åsum-C, Allesø-B, Lindholm, Björketorp, Eskatorp-F, Grumpan-C, Halskov Overdrev-C, Hesselagergårds Skov-C, Sønderby-C, Tirup Heide-C, Tjurkö (I)-C, Undley-A, Vadstena-C, Britsum, sceattas, Rasquert, Arum, Westeremden B, Amay, Oostum, Schweindorf, Charnay?, Osthofen, Freilaubersheim, München-Aubing I, Fallward, Schretzheim II, Donzdorf, Weingarten I, Schwangau, Neudingen Baar II, Nordendorf II, Nordendorf I, Schretzheim II, Neudingen Baar I, Niederstotzingen?, Cleatham, Whitby I, West Heslerton, Chessell Down I, Whitby II, Vimose IV, Stentofte, Istaby, Gummarp.
- 𐌼 : Bergakker, Engers.

I also checked the form that may represent either *r* or *u*: 𐌺, found in: Nebenstedt (I)-B, Fünen (I)-C, Grumpan-C, Hitsum, Dahmsdorf, Britsum, Balingen, Charnay, Osthofen, Aquincum, and Eskatorp-F, Väsby-F, altogether in fourteen inscriptions. In all these inscriptions the rune indicates **r**, except perhaps for Balingen, in which inscription the rune value is not clear. Therefore I think that the reading **horaz** instead of **houaz** in the Fünen-I bracteate (Chapter six, nr. 11) should be preferred.

It appears that the **e** with a straight bar and the rounded rune-forms never occur in the Continental Corpus, but only in Denmark and around the North Sea.

#### 16. *The yew rune*

The question of the original sound value of the yew rune: 𐌿 transliterated as **ï** is interesting. The problem has been treated by many scholars, although without reaching consensus. According to Odenstedt (1990) there are no examples of 𐌿 in the oldest Scandinavian and Gothic inscriptions (175–400). After 400 AD, instances are found in several fuþark inscriptions, such as are carved on the Kylver stone and the Breza column, according to Odenstedt. Breza can be dated



to the first half of the sixth century. There are instances of  $\mathfrak{J}$  in fupark inscriptions on some bracteates (Grumpan, Motala, Vadstena).

Bracteates with runic legends are dated generally to the late fifth and the early sixth centuries. Fupark inscriptions do not give indices of pronunciation or sound-value of the letters, so we have to look for legible and interpretable texts.

$\mathfrak{J}$  is commonly taken to represent a vowel, although Moltke (1985:64) postulates that it originally stood for the unvoiced fricative [ç]. Antonsen (1975) prefers the transliteration  $\mathfrak{æ}$ , representing  $e <$  Gmc  $\bar{e}'$ , Krause (1966:5) transliterates  $\mathfrak{i}$ , Arntz & Zeiss  $\mathfrak{é}$ , Page transliterates it  $\mathfrak{3}$  in his 1968 article; to mention just a few instances.<sup>14</sup> Below I give seven occurrences from the period ca. 400–ca. 700. In these texts I transliterate  $\mathfrak{J}$  as  $\mathfrak{i}$ . It appears that in at least six cases the yew rune indicates a vowel, or perhaps a semi-vowel; in the seventh case the value is not clear.

In two instances the yew rune occurs in an inscription that exhibits the sequence  $\mathfrak{ai}$ . One inscription is on an object found in England (1), but which probably originates from Scandinavia; the other inscription is from southern Bavaria (2). Both inscriptions are dated rather early, to the fifth and sixth centuries.

(1) This inscription is on an astragalus from Caistor-by-Norwich, East Anglia, dated ca. 425–475 (Hines 1990:442); the runes read **raihan** ‘roe deer’, OE *rāha*. In OE  $\bar{a} <$  Gmc  $*ai$ . This inscription may well be our oldest instance of the yew rune in an interpretable text. The yew rune appears to be used here instead of the  $\mathfrak{i}$  rune. According to Sanness Johnson (1974:40) the two runes  $\mathfrak{i}$  and  $\mathfrak{i}$  were used as graphic variants (in “historisk runetid”).

(2) The second instance of the sequence  $\mathfrak{ai}$  is on a buckle, found in 1991 near Pforzen in Bavaria, and dated to the second half of the sixth century. The inscription is transliterated **aigil andi ailrun l tahu gasokun**. The spelling **ailrun** is quite uncommon. The  $\mathfrak{J}$  is probably a scribal error (Looijenga 1999b, Pieper 1999).

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<sup>14</sup> It should be pointed out that in-depth studies of the yew rune and its relation to the Germanic vowel system have been published by Leo A. Connolly (1979:3–32), and as a “Controversial rune in the older Futhark” by Harry Andersen (1984:103–110 & 1985:15f.). I shall not pursue this part of the subject here, and refer the reader to their analyses.

(3) Another Anglo-Saxon instance of the yew rune can be found in the inscription **sīpæbæd** on the Loveden Hill urn (Lincolnshire), dated fifth or sixth century. (Hines 1990<sup>b</sup>:443). Note that in this inscription too, the yew rune has been used as a variety for rendering the sound *i*.

(4) An inscription from Germany (Freilaubersheim, Rheinhessen, late sixth century)<sup>15</sup> shows the yew rune again as a variety for rendering the sound *i* in **da?ina**.

(5) Uncertain, but possible, is an instance of  $\text{𐌶}$  on a square fitting with rivets, dated late sixth century, from Heilbronn-Böckingen (Baden-Württemberg). The initial rune has been perforated by the rivets, but I conjecture  $\text{𐌶}$  may have been carved, since some remains of the sidetwigs can be seen. I read **ik arwi** ‘I, Arwi’.

(6) A sixth instance of the yew rune is found on the Charnay fibula (départ. Saône-et-Loire, France), dated to the second third of the sixth century. The brooch is inscribed with a nearly complete fuþark containing a yew rune, and additionally the legend: **upfnþai iddan liano ïia**. The part **ïia** has not been explained. Curiously enough, an inscription from Weingarten (Baden-Württemberg) has the legend **aerguþ:feha:writ ia**, and here too it is not clear what **ia** means.

(7) The legend of bracteate Nebenstedt (I)-B (Niedersachsen, dated to the end of the fifth or beginning of the sixth century) reads: **gġiaugiz uīu rnz**. It contains two instances of the yew rune, both times transliterated **ī**. The reading *gġiaugiz w ī(h)ju rñōz* is interpreted as: ‘Gġiaugiz. I consecrate (the) runes’. In *Gġiaugiz* it may represent something like *-ġj-*. **uīu** may reflect *w ī(h)ju*, 3 sg. pres. ind. of the Gmc infinitive *\*wīlhjan*, which may or may not have been pronounced with a velar fricative in the middle.

Apart from denoting a vowel, the yew rune could also denote a consonant, and (as far as is known) it was used as such exclusively by Anglo-Saxon runographers.

<sup>15</sup> The datings of the objects from the Continental Corpus are based on Roth 1981.

(8) The oldest inscription that shows the yew rune denoting a consonant, (transliterated as **ʒ** [ç] to avoid confusion with **ī** and **h**) is **almeʒttig** ‘almighty’ on the Ruthwell Cross. The inscription is dated to 700–750 AD.

(9) Other instances are **toroʒtredæ** in Great Urswick, North Lancashire, dated 750–850, and

(10) **eateʒnne** ‘Eategn’ in Thornhill (II). It is curious that the yew runes in **almeʒttig** and **eateʒnne** should be rendered by **ʒ**, since the pronunciation probably was that of the semi-vowel *j*, corresponding to palatalised *g* (Page 1968/1995:137 states that the yew rune in **almeʒttig** and **toroʒtredæ** represents a spirant).

(11) The Dover (Kent) rune stone (9th/10th) bears a name **jislheard**, ᚦᚦᚦᚦᚦᚦᚦ, in which the yew rune clearly denotes a vowel.

(12) The Brandon (East Anglia) pin from the ninth century exhibits **g**, **h**, **j**, and **ī** (**ʒ**) in a fuþorc quotation: **fuþorcgwhnijjpxs**. The **g** is rendered by the star rune: ᚦ, the **j** has its so-called ‘epigraphical form’ ᚦ (known from manuscripts only) and the **s** has the so-called ‘bookhand’ ᚦ form. This would point to ecclesiastical influences (cf. Parsons 1994<sup>a</sup>). The ᚦ is in its usual place in the fuþorc. Its sound value cannot be deduced from this inscription.

In two or three of the earliest inscriptions, ᚦ was probably used to render a sound such as long palatal *ji*: *ij* or *ji(i)*, perhaps caused by the fact that it denotes the transitional stage between two syllables. The pronunciation might have been something like *-ij-* or *-ji-*. If so, the yew rune may be a later graphic development that was not yet present in the initial runic alphabet (note that ᚦ does not occur before the fifth century). Both graphically and phonologically, it appears that ᚦ combined the sounds *j* and *i(i)*.

The value [ç] may reflect a secondary development in Anglo-Saxon England.

In Old English, the name of the rune is variously given as *eoh* and *iþ*; one may conclude that ᚦ represented two sounds, one of a vowel and one of a consonant: [e] or [i:] and [ç].<sup>16</sup> On the other

<sup>16</sup> Page (1968/1995:137) suggests that the names *eoh*, *iþ* do “not derive from the

hand, in the Norse rune-poems the name was *ýr* < Gmc *\*ihwaz*, *\*eihwaz*; the initial sound (according to the acrophonic principle of the rune names) was that of a front vowel, which was followed by the voiceless fricative [ç]. On the whole it appears that *e* and *i* could and did interchange.<sup>17</sup>

In my opinion the problem is connected with both the linguistic value and the graphic representation of the yew rune. Analysing the sparsely recorded runic texts containing the yew rune, I am inclined to assume that it may have been developed graphically as a bindrune, consisting of **i** and **j**: | and **ᛞ** = **ᛞ**.<sup>18</sup> It may be that the yew rune was designed to represent a combination of a vowel, *i*, and a semi-vowel *j*. The sequence *-ij-* is known from the oldest runic evidence, e.g. Vimose **talijo** and Illerup **wagnijo** (ca. 200 AD). At a later stage *i* and *j* may have been merged into one rune because it sounded more like a monophthong than a diphthong, given that runographers wrote according to their pronunciation.<sup>19</sup>

#### 17. *The fate of the j rune, Gmc \*jāra, OE gēr, jār*

The later Scandinavian name of the **j** rune was *ār* < *\*jāra* < Gmc *\*jēra*; its name in the OE Rune Poem is *iōr* or *iar*, rendering a sound which in Frisia and England completely coincides with palatalised *g* before front vowels. The Scandinavian rune name *ār* is cognate with *iar*, both being derived from Gmc *\*jēra* (Derolez 1987; Parsons 1994<sup>a</sup>:200ff.). The meaning of *\*jāra* was ‘harvest, (good) year’, OE *gear*, OFris *jēr*, OS *gēr*, *jār*, OHG *jār*, ON *ár*. But the runeforms are

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primary rune-name, but from a renaming brought about by the fact that [either] the letter’s primary function had been superseded so that its form could be re-used with a new value, (...).”

<sup>17</sup> But if the yew rune rendered a sound in between [e] and [i:], which could not be represented by the runes **l** *e*, OE *e(o)h*, Gmc *\*ehwaz*: or **i** *i*, OE *īs*, ON *ís*, Gmc *\*īsa-*, it might have been [æ], as Antonsen argued. It is remarkable, though, how similar the rune names of **e** and **i** are (*\*ehwaz* and *\*ihwaz*, *\*eihwaz*)!

<sup>18</sup> Bindrunes consisting of the **i** rune and some other rune are commonly *per definitionem* excluded, since in that case all runes with one staff might be considered bindrunes. Only in this case, and in the case of the star rune **ᚠ** one must assume that the development of these runes is based on a combination of | and **ᛞ** and | and **ᚨ**. This fits in with both the graphical and the phonological aspects of the matter.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Lagman (1989:28): “Men den naturligaste stavningsregeln var förstås: *Skriv som det låter!*”

rather different; the Scandinavian **j** shows a development that may have been like this:  $\mathfrak{S} > \mathfrak{h}$ ; whereas the Anglo-Frisian **j** is rendered  $\mathfrak{t}$ , i.e. it is clearly a bindrune of  $\mathfrak{X}$  **g** and  $\mathfrak{I}$  **i** (cf. Derolez 1987:62), which is not surprising, since it is often used to represent the syllable *gi-*, with a palatal realisation of *g*. One may argue, however, that after palatalisation took place, neither the Anglo-Saxons nor Frisians felt a special need for a **j** rune, since the standard **g** rune could be used to render the initial palatal sound value. But, of course, they still needed a **g** rune for rendering the voiced stop [g], for instance. The *iar* rune appears to have been given another function: that of an ornamental rune, also known as star rune, especially in the name-element *jīs(l)-*, such as can be found in Dover **jislheard** and Thornhill III **jilsuip**; in Frisia Westeremden A **adujisl** and **jisuhldu** (cf. Parsons 1994<sup>a</sup>:203).

In later centuries  $\mathfrak{t}$  came to represent the sound *a* in Scandinavia, usually transliterated **A** (to distinguish it from the nasal *ā*). **A** is first attested in the inscriptions of the Blekinge stones, dated around the seventh century. There is only one Scandinavian instance of this rune denoting **j**: in Noleby (Västergötland, see Appendix, Sweden, nr. 9). All other recorded Scandinavian (including the Danish) star runes denote **A** or **h**. In Scandinavia the initial ‘j’ before a vowel was omitted, due to sound changes. This seems to have happened some time in the seventh century.

In England another variety existed:  $\mathfrak{d}$ , denoting palatalised *g*, attested especially in manuscript rune rows and once, epigraphically, in the *fuþorc* inscription on the Brandon pin (late eighth or early ninth centuries, cf. Parsons 1991:8). This inscription shows a baffling situation; the star rune  $\mathfrak{t}$  is in the place of **g**, and  $\mathfrak{d}$  in the place of **j**. The name of the latter is *gēr*, *gear* and is derived from *\*jēra*. Besides, the *g* in *gēr* clearly shows its function in OE: that of an initial palatalised *g* (pronounced *j*) before a front vowel, which is not the case with *iar*, the *a* being a back vowel and therefore not causing palatalisation. In England the rune  $\mathfrak{t}$  kept its sound value *j*, therefore the name was analogically extended to *iar*. The name *iar* or *ior* is known from manuscript rune rows, the initial vowel is written in the Latin way: *i*, a solution which would naturally have been chosen by a Latin-educated cleric. It might be that *iar/ior* got a place outside the basic *fuþorc* and was used on special occasions (Parsons 1994<sup>a</sup>:205). If the theory is correct, this might tally with the occurrence of ‘ornamental runes’ in some Frisian inscriptions, such as

triple-barred **h** and triple-barred **b** on the Toornwerd comb and **a** with three sidetwigs on the Fallward footstool.

In Hickeys' edition of the OE rune poem<sup>20</sup> the *iar* rune is in place 28. The meaning of its name is described thus:

*(iar, ior) byþ eafix, and ðeah a bruceþ  
fodres on foldan, hafap fegeme eard,  
watre beworþen, þær he wynnum leofap*

*Iar, ior* is a riverfish, and it always  
takes its food on land; it has a pleasant home  
surrounded by water, where it lives happily

The text of the rune poem can be taken as an educated riddle. "*Iar, ior* is usually interpreted as 'eel' or 'newt'", according to Halsall (1981:157). However, in the poem the 'riverfish' seems to be some amphibious creature. So it was thought to refer to a hippopotamus, 'horse of the river', a 'Nile horse.'

Sorell (1990:111, note 35) mentions the star rune as "a late, non-epigraphic<sup>21</sup> rune, and in a learned context an exotic referent such as 'hippopotamus' would not be out of place." The meaning 'hippopotamus, "Nile horse"', may be right, since the rune name *ior* seems to denote 'horse', cf. the Scandinavian rune name *\*chwarz* > *jór* 'horse'. A horse living in a river, like a 'riverfish' and above all in 'happy surroundings' points to Arabia (*Arabia felix*). Thus the meaning 'Nile horse' cannot be excluded, although it seems farfetched for a rune name. Remarkably, the rune has two names, *iar* and *ior*. In my opinion, the 'riverfish' must be a boat, a sort of barge that takes on goods on land ('food') and which, of course, quite suitably has a 'dwelling place surrounded by water'.

I presume there existed a kind of ship that was called a *ior* or *iar* (see also Schwab 1973:69). It turns out that quite a few ship *kennings* existed in ON that contained the word *jór* 'horse'; actually their number amounts to 49% of the basic words in the ship *kennings* (Simek

<sup>20</sup> Rendered in J.M. Kemble: *Anglo-Saxon Runes*, an essay that was first published in the journal 'Archaeologia' in 1840.

<sup>21</sup> This is obviously a mistake, as the star rune appears fairly often in epigraphic rune inscriptions and not in specifically 'late' cases. Anglo-Frisian instances are Westeremden A & B, Gandersheim, Dover, Brandon. In Scandinavia the rune is a common phenomenon. On the Continent the star rune occurs three times: in Trossingen II, Hohenstedt and Eichstetten; see the Continental Corpus.

1982:246). Simek has listed several *kennings* containing *jór*, as for instance: *jór Glamma*, *jór hlyra*, *jór ifu*, *jór ísheims*, *jór landabands* etc. (Simek 1982:225f.). It is curious that *ior* has an alternative: *iar*. The Anglo-Saxons may have known that their *iar* rune had been given the name *ár* in Scandinavia, a homonym with OE *ār* ‘oar, rudder’.<sup>22</sup> It may therefore have been used as a *pars pro toto* for the whole ship.

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<sup>22</sup> ON *ár*, *ór* f. ‘oar, rudder’ < Gmc. *\*airō* = OE *ár* ‘oar, rudder’. A mix-up is not unlikely, since ON *ár* n. means ‘year, fertility’ < Gmc. *\*jēra* = OE *gear*, OFris *jēr*.

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## CATALOGUE

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## CHAPTER FIVE

# EARLY DANISH AND SOUTH-EAST EUROPEAN RUNIC INSCRIPTIONS FROM CA. 150–650 AD

### 1. *Introduction*

*Der var engang et Europa, hvor tre slags samfund indgik et partnerskab: I syd skabtes et imperium, som forfaldt; i nord forvandlede imperiets gaver simple samfund til kongedømmer; og til slut opstod en sammenhæng mellem magt og jordejer-skab, fra hvilken fremtiden skulle rejse sig (Klavs Randsborg 1988:9).*

Once there was a Europe, where three types of societies entered into a partnership: in the South an Imperium rose and fell; in the North imperial gifts changed a rural society into kingdoms; and at last a combination emerged between power and landed property, from which the future would spring forth.

This chapter deals with the inscriptions from Denmark, Skåne and Blekinge (Sweden), dating from the first centuries of our era. The word ‘Danish’ is merely used here as a geographical term; a coherent Danish state did not yet exist in the early centuries AD.

The oldest known runic inscriptions were not only found in Denmark; one of the oldest items from outside Denmark is the Norwegian Øvre Stabu spearhead of the Vennolum-type (see chapter III and the Appendix, Norway nr. 43), dated to the second half of the second century. Another spearhead with a runic legend has been found in a grave on the island of Gotland: Mos, which has been dated to around 200. The spearhead from Kowel (Volhynia) is discussed below. Other spearheads, Dahmsdorf and Rozwadów, from the third century are discussed in chapter two and in chapter seven (Introduction to the Continental finds). The Meldorf brooch, dated to ca. AD 50, found in Meldorf, Schleswig-Holstein on the North Sea coast, is discussed in the introductory part of chapter seven. The Thorsberg bog finds have also been included in the Continental Corpus. Since the provenance of these bog deposits appears to be the region between the lower Elbe and Rhine (see chapter two, 4), it seemed more appropriate to incorporate these items in the Continental Corpus (see nrs. 42, 43).

From South-east Europe some runic objects from the fourth and fifth centuries have been recorded, which can be connected with Gothic tribes who settled in the coastal area of the Black Sea at the beginning of the third century AD. I have listed three possibly ‘Gothic’ inscriptions as a supplement to this chapter. The fourth may be the third-century spearhead from Kowel, with the legend **tilarids**. Because of the nominative ending **-s** the text is considered Gothic. The spearhead cannot be inspected, since it was lost in the second World War. For detailed information about the type of spearhead I refer to Hachmann (1993:373ff.), see also Krause (1966:77ff.), who interpreted either “Hinreiter” or “Zielrat”. Antonsen (1975:74) interpreted **tilarids** as “Goal-pursuer”.

The fact that so few runic objects have come to light in South-east Europe may be attributed to several circumstances, such as grave robbery on a large scale and corrosion of the soil. Runic knowledge among the Goths was most likely tied to the Scandinavian tradition, because the Goths originated from there, and because there were continuous contacts between Denmark and the Black Sea region in which the Goths had settled. Besides, the use of the single-barred **h** may point to the Scandinavian runic tradition rather than to the Continental. A characteristic of one part of the early ‘Danish’ runic objects is that they were deposited in lakes and bogs, which eventually turned into the present-day peat layer. The objects can be associated with a warrior class. Another category of runic objects has been found in the graves of rich women. Some precious objects were stray finds, perhaps belonging to former hoards. Since these ways of depositing are typical of the Danish runic objects, I regard it as useful to list them according to their find circumstances: bog/peat finds, grave finds, stray finds, all in alphabetical order. Exceptions in more than one way are the Blekinge stones, which are discussed at the end of this chapter.

Both in runological and archaeological terms, the runic objects found in Danish regions belong to the oldest recorded runological items; they have been described and commented on by numerous scholars. Handbooks that still prove their worth are Jacobsen/Moltke 1941/42, Krause/Jankuhn 1966, Moltke 1985. More recently, Birkmann 1995 edited a useful survey with elaborate references. Over the past few years many articles on new finds have been published by Marie Stoklund and a number of other scholars. Descriptions,

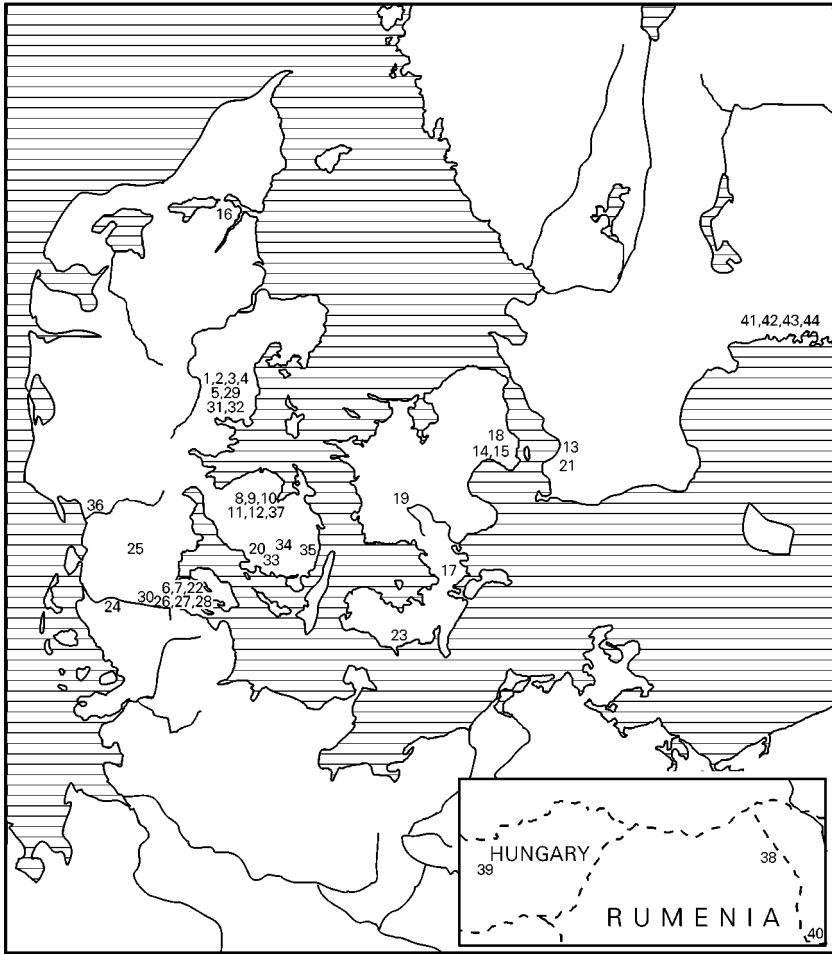
datings and contexts of runic finds in Denmark are compiled by Stoklund in Lund Hansen et al. (eds.) 1995.

The finds from the Illerup bog (Jutland) in particular have profoundly stirred the runological world (Ilkjær 1990, 1991, 1993, 1996<sup>a&b</sup>). The inscriptions exhibit mirrored runes, which initially looked unintelligible. After the find of the Illerup silver shield handles (in 1983) it became clear that one should read **wagnijo** on the iron lance heads (found in 1980), instead of earlier **ojingaz**. The rune that was transliterated **o** was really a mirror rune indicating **w**. The term mirror rune was coined by Peter Pieper (1987). He identified them as such by virtue of the **alu** stamps of Spong Hill, England (chapter eight, nr. 8).

Other peculiarities are runes made in zig-zag style (e.g. Meldorf, Øvre Stabu, Næsbjerg and Donzdorf), which is basically a decorative style for metal objects. In addition there are some rune sequences that might have had a magical purpose, a practice also be found (perhaps especially) in bracteate legends.

All Illerup finds are at the Museum Moesgård, Højbjerg, near Århus. The Vimose, Himlingøye, Værløse, Kragehul, Garbølle, Strårup, Næsbjerg, Køng and Slemminge finds are in the Danish National Museum at Copenhagen. The Gårdlösa brooch and the Istaby stone are at Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm. The Lindholm bone piece is at Historiska Museum Lund, the Nøvling brooch is at the Ålborg Museum, North Jutland. The Lețcani spindle whorl is at the Palatul Cultural, Iași, Rumania. The remains of the Pietroassa gold neckring are at the Rumanian National Historical Museum in Bucarest. The Szabadbattyán buckle is at the Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum in Budapest. The Stentoften stone is in the church of Sölvesborg, Blekinge, South Sweden, and the Björketorp stone is *in situ*, near Ronneby in Blekinge, South Sweden.

There are excellent photographs in Krause/Jankuhn 1966, Moltke 1985, especially Stoklund 1995<sup>b</sup> and Ilkjær's publications on the Illerup finds.



Map 5. Findspots of early runic objects in Denmark (Second to seventh centuries).

## 2. Checklist of Early Danish and South-East European Runic Inscriptions

### *Period I, legible and (partly) interpretable inscriptions*

All Illerup, Vimose and Kragehul finds are bog finds and dated to 150–250. The Nydam bog finds are dated between 250 and 350. The grave finds are dated 200–300.

#### *Bog finds ca. 150–350 AD*

1. ILLERUP I (Jutland). Mount for a shield handle, bronze. The runes read **swart a**. The last rune: **a** is written horizontally, at right angles, to **swart**. The cause was probably lack of space; the runes are cut rather large, and the object is rather narrow.

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**swarta** is probably a PN, nsm. *a*-stem, Gmc *\*swartaz* ‘Black One’. *Blacky* seems to me a suitable name for a weapon smith, but an owner’s name is equally possible. Seebold (1994<sup>a</sup>:70) takes it as an accusative of the strong form of the adj. ‘black’,<sup>1</sup> and he suggests extending the text with a form of the verb ‘to protect’, thus getting ‘(protect the) Black One’. This would be in analogy with ILLERUP III, below, **lagupewa**, which, considering its ending, might be an accusative of a strong masculine noun. However, a nominative (or appellative) is more plausible, see below. Both names, **swarta** and **lagupewa**, show West Gmc forms, with loss of final *\*-z* (see also Syrett 1994:141). The same seems to apply to **harja** as well, see below, nr. 12.

2. ILLERUP II (Jutland). Mount for a shield handle, silver; the runes run from right to left, and read **nipijo tawide**.

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<sup>1</sup> If so, one would expect a form like *\*swartana*, so I don’t consider it likely there is a strong adj. in the accusative here.

At first sight, **nipijo** looks like a female PN, nsf. *jō*-stem, but since weapons are commonly associated with a man's world, *Nipijō* must be a man's name. The text is a maker's formula, because of the combination with **tawide** 'did, made'. As regards the name, there are two possibilities: a) it is a West Gmc man's name, *n*-stem < IE *\*-ōn*, or *\*-ō* (Krause 1971:51; Stoklund 1987:292); b) it is an epithet or nickname of the feminine gender. The first option is preferred, because "it combines masculine reference with masculine gender" (Nielsen 1993:91, with a lengthy discussion on the gender of the suffix **-ijo** in **nipijo** and **wagnijo**). *Nip-* may be connected with ON *nidr*, Go *nipjis* 'relative, member of the clan', or with Gmc *\*nīpa-* "Kampf, Streit" (Seebold 1994<sup>a</sup>:69).

The ending *-ijo* appears to be West Gmc, and to occur especially often in men's names in the region of the *Ubii*, neighbours of the *Nidenses* (see chapter III, On the Origin of Runes). I rather associate the name with the tribe of the *Nidenses*, who lived in Tacitus' time near the rivers Nida and Main (Germany).

**tawide** 3 sg. pret. ind. *tawidē* 'did, made', cf. Go inf. *taujan* 'to do, make'. The verbform **tawide** is also on GARBØLLE; **tawido** is on GALLEHUS.

3. ILLERUP III (Jutland). Mount for a shield handle, silver; the runes run left, **lagupewa**.

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I consider this a male PN, consisting of two name-elements. The first is: *lagu-* 'sea, water' *u*-stem, cf. ON *lōgr* 'liquidity' m., and OE, OS *lagu* 'sea, water', Gmc *\*laguz*. An association with ON *log*, OE *lagu* 'law', an *a*-stem, must be rejected, because of the composition vowel *-u-*. The second element is *-pewa*, which at first sight looks like the accusative of Gmc *\*pegwaz* 'servant', nsm. *wa*-stem. When compared to *owlpupewaz* on the THORSBERG chape, it appears that the nominative marker *-z*, common to North Gmc forms, is missing. Therefore I suggest **lagupewa** to be a West Gmc form. Several proposals are made concerning the missing *-z*; Antonsen (1987:24) interpreted the name as West Gmc, Moltke (1985:101) thought the *-z* had just been forgotten, Nielsen (1993:86, 93) proposed the possibility of a weak form and Seebold considers it as an accusative form. However, an accusative without any other contextual support does



not make sense. A nominative or appellative seems more obvious. A fact is that there was enough room to cut the **z** rune. A West Gmc name form seems obvious, in coherence with *Swarta*, *Nipijo* and *Wagnijo* (see below). **lagupewa** means ‘Sea-servant’, i.e. a sailor. It is most probably the name of the owner of an exceptionally beautiful shield that was found in the Illerup bog and to which the handle belonged. According to Ilkjær (1996<sup>b</sup>:485) he was an important commander-in-chief.

4. ILLERUP IV (Jutland). Two iron lance heads; the runes run left, **wagnijo**.

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The legend is stamped on one and incised on the other lance head. The lance heads are of Illerup Type 15, called ‘Vennolum’ (Ilkjær 1990). Over 300 items of this type were found in the Illerup bog.

**wagnijo** is probably a West Gmc man’s name in the nominative, *n*-stem, cf. **nipijo**. Seebold (1994<sup>a</sup>:68) regards **wagnijo** as a weapon-name, denoting a group of weapons, maybe in a religious sense. *Wagnijo* may be connected with either ON *vagn* ‘waggon’, or the tribal name of the *Vangiones*, cf. the cognomen *Vangio* in CIL VI 31149, c 5, the Suebian chief *Vangio* (Schönfeld 1965:256f.), and the *cohors Vangionum* (Tacitus, *Annales* xii, 27). Since the name is recorded from three lance heads (a third was found in the Vimose bog, see below, nr. 8), I regard it as the name of a weapon smith, who possibly originated from the Rhine region (Germany), the area in which the *Vangiones* and the *Ubii* lived (see map 3). About the problems of the nominative sg. of masculine *a*- and *n*-stems, see Syrett (1994:45 and 137ff.).

5. ILLERUP V (Jutland). Wooden handle for a fire iron; the runes read **gaupz**.

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The **þ**-rune has a big loop from top to bottom, so that it looks like a Roman D. **gaupþz** might denote a PN or epithet, possibly nsm. *a/i*-stem, with the nominative ending *-z* present, but the stem-formant missing, which may indicate syncope or an unknown root-stem. If *gaupþz* is related to Gmc *\*gautaz*, it might be connected with ON *gautr* ‘someone who was dedicated to be offered to a god = Odin’ (one of Odin’s many names was *Gautr*), or one belonging to the tribe of the *Gautar*, OE *Gēatas*. The *Gautar* lived in the region of Östergötland and Västergötland (Sweden). Schönfeld (1965:103) lists *Gapt* PN (king of the Goths), and explains: *Gapt* = *\*Gaft* = *\*Gaut* by interference of Greek writing: *Gavt*. He states that *Gapt* = Go *\*Gauts*, ON *Gautr*, OE *Gēat*. Förstemann lists *Gautr* as the mythical ancestor of the tribe of the Goths. Stoklund (1994<sup>a</sup>:101) and Seebold (1994<sup>a</sup>:71) connect **gaup[a]z** with the ON verb *geyja* (< Gmc *\*gaujan*) ‘to bark, to mock’ and the ON substantive *gaud* f. ‘barking, mocking’.

6. NYDAM I (Jutland). Wooden axe-handle, found in 1993. Date: ca. 300–350 AD. Runes on both sides; on one side, running right, is **wagagastiz**, on the other side, running left, is **alu:??hgusikijaz:ai-palataz**. Stoklund (1994<sup>a</sup>:104 and 1994<sup>b</sup>:4f. with ref.) proposes the following transliteration: **alu:wǫhgu sikijaz:ai-palataz**.

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 ʝ↑↑↑↑↑↑↑↑:ʝ↑↑↑↑↑↑↑↑/XHXH |:||

**wagagastiz** is probably a PN. The first part, *wāga-*, may be connected with ON *vágr*, m. ‘wave’, or, in a poetic sense, ‘flame’. Second element is *-gastiz*, nsm. *i*-stem, ‘guest’. **sikijaz** is nsm. *ja*-stem. ON *sík* (Modern Danish *sig*) means ‘small bog, swamp’. The suffix *-ijaz* indicates descent: ‘coming from a bog’, cf. GALLEHUS **holtijaz** ‘coming from Holt’. Since the axe itself (not preserved) might have been made of bog-iron ore, the depiction **wagagastiz** ‘flameguest’ or ‘fire-guest’ would be appropriate when taken in connection with the meaning **sikiaz**.

**alu** is generally considered a formulaic word with some cultic connotation, or a well-wish (see more about **alu** in chapter six, Bracteates).

**wǫhgu** (if the first rune is **w**; the reading is very problematic) strikes as an intertwined verb form, perhaps rendering either of two

meanings, a) *wīgu* 1 sg. pres. ind. ‘I fight’, cf. Gmc *\*wīgan* ‘to fight’; or b) *wīhju* 1 sg. pres. ind. ‘I hallow, consecrate’, cf. Gmc *\*wīhjan* ‘to hallow’. Both interpretations might agree, for an axe was a weapon and had a sacrificial connotation as well.

**aipalataz** may be a PN or an epithet, consisting of *aipa-* ‘oath’, cf. Gmc *\*aipaz*, Go *aips*, ON *eiðr*; and *-lātaž*, nsm. *a*-stem, ‘sayer’, cf. Gmc *\*lētan* ‘to let, to allow, to leave behind’, ON *lāta* ‘say, declare’. Weapons were used to take one’s oath, according to the Eddic Havamál. However speculative, the text may mean: ‘Flameguest, coming from a bog, **alu**, I, oathsayer, consecrate/fight’. If the reference to the iron axe, made of smelted bog-iron, is correct, this would place this text among a wide-spread type of runic texts, naming the object or the material (see also below, LEṬCANI, nr. 38).

7. NYDAM II (Jutland). A bronze sheath mount, dated ca. 250–320. It belonged to a rich sword sheath of leather and wood, with a silver-gilt scabbard mount and sword chape.

The runes read from right to left **harkilaz ahti**.

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**harkilaz** is most probably a PN, nsm. *a*-stem *Harkilaz*. The name might initially have been an *n*-stem, if the first part of the name were *Harki-* (maybe connected with ON *harkr* ‘uproar, tumult’), followed by the diminutive suffix *\*-ilan-* such as in **frohila** and **niuwila** on the DARUM (I)-B and (V)-C bracteates (chapter six, nrs. 7 and 8). Since we have a strong form *Harkilaz* here, I suggest a case of analogy with strong masculine *a*-stem names, at that time very popular. The meaning of the name may be something like ‘Little squirt’, a nickname, probably.

**ahti** seems to indicate a 3d sg. pret. ind. of *\*aigan* ‘to have’, but a meaning ‘Harkilaz had (this)’ seems inappropriate. I take it to mean ‘possession’; cf. Seebold (1970:70), who lists *\*aih-ti-z* f. ‘possession’. A problem is that the name is in the nominative, whereas a genitive would be more suitable. An expression of ownership, though, ranges the inscription among a wide-spread type of texts.

8. VIMOSE I (Funen). Iron lance head of the same type as the Illerup ones; the runes also run left, **wagnijo**.

Cf. nr. 4.

9. VIMOSE II (Funen). Sword chape, bronze, the runes read **mariha aala makija**. The part **aala** runs from right to left.



MARIHA 1111J MF<|sF

On one side of the chape is **mariha**; when turning the object halfway round, the inscription continues on the same side with **aala**. The initial **a** is a *Sturzrun*e (upside-down rune) in my opinion. On the other side of the object is **makija**. Antonsen's reading (1975:32) **marida** cannot be right, as there is quite clearly an **h** and no **d**.

In the sequence **mariha** one may distinguish two parts: **mari ha**. The first part might be a shortened name, either for the sword or the owner: *māri* < *\*māri-z*, nsm. *i*-stem, 'famous' cf. **niwajemariz** on the THORSBERG chape (chapter seven, nr. 42). However, I suggest an interpretation of **mari** as 'sea, water', cf. Gmc *\*mariz*, ON *marr* 'lake, sea', OS, OHG *meri*, OE, OFris *mere* 'lake, moor'. This would be fitting, since the object was found in a former lake, and was probably part of a deposit of war booty.

**ha** may be opt. sg. *\*ha(bē)* of the verb *\*habēn* (> ON *hafa* 'to have, to possess').

**aala** is probably a personal name, of the owner, nsm. *n*-stem. A double *aa* in *aala* is not strange, as we have, in VIMOSE III, **aadagasu** (see below).

**makija** asm. *ja*-stem *mākija* 'sword'.

The meaning of the text might be: 'may the lake have—Aala[']s]

sword'. I think that the owner's inscription 'Aala[?s]—sword' was made earlier, and that the part **mariha** 'may the lake have' has been added at the time of depositing the sword in the lake.

10. VIMOSE III (Funen). Buckle, bronze; the runes read  
**aadagasu laasauwija**

Antonsen (1975:75) read **aadagast**. After inspection of the inscription I think there is a **u** at the end, but certainly no **t**. I propose to divide the inscription thus: **aadag asula as auwija**.

**aadag** might be a PN, *A(n)dag(az)* nsm. *a*-stem, stem formant and ending *-z* missing, which appears to be problematic in this early phase of the language (but one may compare the equally endingless **alugod** on VÆRLØSE, below, nr. 18). This is probably the reason why philologists take the first runes as (partly) symbolic runes. For instance, Seebold (1994<sup>a</sup>:64f.) proposed reading: **a a[n]da g** "Ase Hingabe". Krause (1966:57ff. and 1971:174) suggested reading: **a[nsus] a[n]dag a[n]sula a[n]sau wija** "Ase! Den Andag weihe ich, der kleine Ase, dem Asen (Wodan)".

For the attested name *A(n)dag*, see Förstemann (1966:102) and Reichert (1987:49). The first element is *and-*, cf. OS, OHG *ando*, *anto* 'zeal'; or Gmc *\*and(a)-* 'across, opposite'; or Gmc *\*andja-*, Go. *andeis* '(head)-end', 'high purpose' (Kaufmann 1968:34). The second element is *-dag*, Gmc *\*dagaz*, nsm. *a*-stem 'day'.

**asula** is recognized by Seebold (1994:64) as the word referring to the object, a buckle, **asula** = *ansula* 'buckle', cf. Lat. *ansa*, 'ring, handle, haft'.

**as** might refer to the (name of one the) gods.

**auwija** = *auja*, showing in *-uw-* the result of the West Gmc gemination of *-w-* before *-j* (Antonsen 1987:23), cf. also OETTINGEN **auwijabrg**



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The comb is dated by Ilkjær (1993:297–299) to ca. 160 AD, which makes it about the oldest known runic inscription, together with the Norwegian spearhead of ØVRE STABU.

**harja** may be a PN or epithet, nsm. *ja*-stem, Gmc *\*harjaz* ‘warrior’, cf. Go. *harjis*. Seebold (1994<sup>a</sup>:71) suggests a connection with ‘hair’, Proto Norse *\*hāra*. The comb may have been used for combing wool, which was also done by men.

Peterson (1994<sup>b</sup>:161) lists the name **harja** under the heading “Group IV. Names not met with in later Scandinavian but found in West Gmc, esp. in the Lower Rhine region”. She compares **harja** with OFrank *Herio*. Schönfeld lists the *Harü* as a tribal name, belonging to the larger tribes’ alliance of the *Lugü*, as mentioned by Tacitus (Germania XLIII; for references see Much 1959:378, 390).

There is one other inscription that is of great interest in this context, namely the SKÅÄNG stone from Sweden, with runes reading **harijaz leugaz**, mentioning both *Harü* and *Lugü* (see chapter three, 6, 7). I suggest **harja** refers to a member of the tribe of the *Harü*.

#### *Grave finds ca. 200–300 AD*

13. GÅRDLÖSA (Skåne). Stirrup fibula, silver; the runes read **ekunwodz**

The final rune is missing a sidetwig.

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**ek** is a personal pron. 1 sg. ‘I’. **unwodz** may be a PN or epithet. *wōdz* is according to Antonsen (1975:31) a root consonant stem, cf. Go. *wōps*, adj. ‘raging’; *unwōdz* may be interpreted as ‘not raging’.

Antonsen interprets: ‘I, the calm one’. Seebold (1994<sup>a</sup>:63) supposes the inscription might have been made on the occasion of the burial, to prevent the dead woman from “Wiedergängertum” (haunting). Stoklund (1994<sup>a</sup>:99) declares the occurrence of a PN as disputed. But since it follows the personal pronoun *ek* it may very well be a name, most likely a man’s name, because of the ending -z. A parallel is the RASQUERT sword handle (chapter nine, nr. 10), which reads **ek u[n]mædit oka** ‘I, Oka, not (made) mad’.

14. HIMLINGØJE I (Sealand). Rosette fibula, silver, dated second half of the third century (Stoklund 1995<sup>b</sup>:318). The runes read **widuhudaz**

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This may be a male PN, consisting of *widu-*, *u*-stem ‘wood’, and *-hu(n)daz* nsm. *a*-stem ‘hound’. The sign for nasal is missing before homorganic consonant, a common practice in runic writing. *widuhu(n)daz* means ‘woodhound’ = wolf. Makaev (1996:63) points to the fact that names with a second element *-hundaz* are attested in OHG (= West Gmc) sources, but completely unknown in Scandinavia.

15. HIMLINGØJE II (Sealand). Bow fibula, silver; the runes read **hariso**

𐀈𐀉𐀊𐀋𐀌𐀍

This is probably a PN, nsm. *n*-stem, or nsf. *ōn*-stem, *Harisō* (cf. Antonsen 1975:35 and Peterson 1994<sup>b</sup>:157f.). Stoklund (1994:98) points to the fact that it might be a male name, in concordance with **wagnijo** and **nipijo** on the VIMOSE and ILLERUP objects, and the recorded name *Flavius Hariso* in a Venetic funerary inscription (cf. Peterson 1994<sup>b</sup>:157f., who discusses the name at great length and supposes that it might be a continental import). Also Seebold (1994<sup>a</sup>:75) considers the name to be masculine. Considering the fact that Himlingøje was an exceptionally rich gravefield, I wonder whether *hārisō* may be the compound name of a distinguished woman. The name may consist of *hār-*, Gmc *\*haira-*, ‘grey, lofty, distinguished’, and *-isō*, showing the well-known *-s-* suffix in personal names, cf. BEUCHTE (Continental Corpus, nr. 6) *Burisō*, which is considered to be a PN nsf. *ōn*-stem.

On the other hand, there is the Frankish male PN *Hrōdso*, Gmc *\*Hrōpiso* with an *s*-suffix as *Koseform*, which was “besonders beliebt im Westfränkischen”, according to Kaufmann (1965:246). The suffix was not only common in West Franconian, but in all West Gmc languages (cf. also Peterson 1994<sup>b</sup>:158). Thus, names ending in *-iso* (including *Buriso* and *Hariso*) may be West Gmc men’s names.

Finally one may wonder whether this name is connected with the tribal name of the *Harii*, as appears to be the case with **harja** on the VIMOSE comb, nr. 12.



16. NØVLING (Jutland). Rosette fibula, silver; the runes read **bidawarijaztalgidai**

𐀀𐀁𐀂𐀃𐀄𐀅𐀆𐀇𐀈𐀉𐀊𐀋𐀌𐀍𐀎𐀏𐀐𐀑𐀒𐀓𐀔𐀕

**bidawarijaz** is probably a PN, consisting of *bīda-* ‘to long for, to wish’, cf. ON *bīða*, Go *beidan*, and *-warijaz* nsm. *ja*-stem, ‘protector’

**talgidai** is 3 sg. pret. ind. ‘carved’. The ending *-ai* has been interpreted as a misspelling or a reverse spelling for *-ē* (Krause 1971:158, Antonsen 1975:5); this is rejected by Stoklund (1991:96 and 1994<sup>a</sup>:98). The spelling error became possible after the shift Gmc *\*ai* > *ē*.

Seebold (1994<sup>a</sup>:62) regards the ending as an **a** rune followed by an ending sign |. See Syrett (1994:252ff.) for a discussion of the pros and cons of the runographers’ spelling skills.

Since there are no word division signs, one might read **talgida i** ‘carved in’, in which case we have a parallel to the verb form in UDBY (below, nr. 17).

17. UDBY (Sealand). Rosette fibula, silver; the runes read **talgida: lamo**

𐀑𐀒𐀓𐀔𐀕𐀖𐀗𐀘𐀙𐀚𐀛𐀜𐀝

**lamo** is written from right to left, whereas **talgida** has been written from left to right.

**lamo** is a PN, nsm. *n*-stem, ‘Lame One’. *Lamo* is a man’s name, reflecting a West Gmc dialect, like **wagnijo**, **hariso** and **nipijo** do (see also Syrett 1994:141ff.).

**talgida** 3 sg. pret. ind. ‘carved’, cf. ON *telgja* ‘to carve, to cut’ (cf. Stoklund 1991:95ff.). One may compare with **talijo** ‘plane’ in VIMOSE IV, above nr. 12, and **talgida i** in NØVLING, above nr. 16. Grønvik (1994:46f.) postulates that **talgida** cannot be a verb form, because of the ending **-a**. He argues that it must be a substantive, nsm. *n*-stem ‘carver’. This sounds reasonable enough, but since we have **talgida i** in NØVLING (see above), I would prefer to take it as a verb form. The inscription would thus qualify as a common form of a maker’s formula.

18. VÆRLØSE (Sealand). Rosette fibula, silver; the runes read **alugod**



M:TRIF ÆFEXIÆFFÆFTHHTMMXXXXIHXX

The runic text is very elegantly cut in triple strokes alternating with single strokes. **ek** pers. pron. 1 sg. 'I'. **erilaz** is probably an epithet or a title, nsm. *a*-stem. Its etymology is obscure (see Krause 1971:141; Antonsen 1975:36), although Syrett (1994:170, note 12) sees a possibility of connecting the word **erilaz** with the tribe of the *Heruli* and he assumes it to present a more general function or title. Makaev (1996:36ff.) gives an exhaustive treatment of occurrences of **erilaz** and offers many references. He also thinks a connection with the *Heruli* possible (1996:39).<sup>2</sup>

**asugisalas** is a PN, gsm. *a*-stem (see above, nr. 11). It is a compound consisting of *a(n)su-* 'god', and *-g̃isalas* 'sprout, shoot, offspring'.

**muha** may be either a PN, nsm. *n*-stem, or a class-noun, cf. (*ga*)*mūha* 'retainer' (Krause 1971:152).

**haite** is 1 sg. pres. med. (Antonsen 1975:36) 'I am called', cf. ON *heiti*, inf. *heita*, Go *haitan*. Instead of **muha** Antonsen reads: **em uha**; *em* = 1 sg. pres. ind. 'I am' *Uha* = PN nsm. *n*-stem 'the highest'. According to Peterson (1994<sup>b</sup>:144) "there is no proof of the existence of a Proto-Scandinavian man's name *Ūha*".

The sequence 'I erilaz of Asugisalaz, I am called Muha' is followed by some sort of battle-cry: *gagaga gin(n)u ga* 'many times *ga*'. The runes of **gagaga** are displayed as a row of three rune-crosses; the base is the rune **g**, with sidetwigs attached to its extremities, thus forming bindrunes **ga**, cf. the UNDELEY bracteate (chapter six, nr. 46) with nearly the same sequence, reproduced in the same fashion, transliterated **gægogæ**, or **gagoga**.

21. LINDHOLM (Skåne). Bone piece with the possible function of an amulet. It was said to be found in a lump of peat (Jacobsen & Moltke 1941/42:315). The runes run from right to left and read **ekerilazsawilagazhateka:aaaaaaaaazzznnn?bmuttt:alu:**

AlI:↑↑↑↑/M̅B †††Y Y Y 11111111:1^M↑1H Y 1X 11115 Y 111M M M

<sup>2</sup> Bracteates Eskatorp-F and Väsby-F have e[k]erilaz. Etelhem clasp: mkmlrawrta (= ek erla wrta), Bratsberg clasp: ekerilaz, Veblungsnes: ekirilaz, Rosseland: ekwagi-gazerilaz, Järsberg: ekerilaz, By: ekirilaz.

Runes are cut in triple lines, as on KRAGEHUL, above. Both inscriptions start with **ek erilaz**.

**sawilagaz** is a PN or epithet, perhaps nsm. *a*-stem, cf. Go *sauil* ‘sun’ n. *a*-stem, hence the name means ‘Sunny One’ (Antonsen 1975: 37). Krause (1971:155) divides thus: **erilaz sa wilagaz**; taking **sa** to be a demonstrative pronoun with deictic function, followed by a PN **wilagaz** nsm. *a*-stem. He interprets: ‘I, the Runemaster (= **erilaz**) here, am called Cunning’; cf. ON *vél* < \**wīlu-* ‘cunning’ (Krause 1971:108). Peterson (1994<sup>b</sup>:141), too, prefers to read the name as *Wīlagaz*.

**hateka** = *ha(i)t(e)-eka* with enclitic *-eka* ‘I am called’; cf. **haite**, above, nr. 20; the inf. is *heita* ‘to be called’.

The sequence **aaaaaaaa** is interpreted as a magical formula; the eight **a** runes would render eight times the rune’s name \**ansuz*, i.e. eight gods, ON *átta æsir*. Such a charm is known from Icelandic: *rísti eg þér ása átta, nauðir níu* ‘I carve for you eight *æsir*, nine needs’, by which probably eight times **a** and nine times **n** are meant.

The **a** runes are followed by three \**algiz* runes **Y**, perhaps symbolizing something that is expressed by its name ‘elk’. Then follows thrice **n**, perhaps symbolizing its name *nauð* ‘need’, which may have something to do with the so-called ‘needs’ (*nauðir*) that appear in medieval recipes and charms. The Eddic poem *Sigrdrifomál* 7 advises: *á horni skal þér rísta, oc á handar baki, oc merkia á nagli nauð* ‘carve them on the drinking horn, on the back of your hand and mark your nail with Need’.

Three times **t** probably concerns the rune name *Týr*, the “one-handed god”, “and leavings of the wolf, and king of temples”, according to the Old Norse rune-poem. As to **alu**, see chapter six, 2.

22. NYDAM III (Jutland). Arrow, wood; the runes read **lua**

𐌺𐌳

**lua** may be a misspelling for **alu**; here perhaps representing a battle cry with magical impact? In 1994 another arrow was found in Nydam, with two leftrunning runes: **la** (Stoklund 1994<sup>b</sup>:6, and Stoklund 1995<sup>b</sup>:344).

23. SLEMMINGE (Lolland). Hide-scraper, reindeer antler; the runes read **witring** or **witro**



*vargr*. The substantive *hlēwagastiz* may mean: ‘grave guest’, perhaps denoting one living under a mound, such as a dwarf. In folklore, dwarfs were considered legendary smiths and artisans; the horns were, according to the drawings, exceptionally and exotically decorated works of art. **hlaiwa** in the meaning ‘grave(mound)’ is found on the rune stones of Bø and KJØLEVIK (both Rogaland, Norway, Appendix nrs. 5 and 13).

**holtjaz** may be a patronymic, nsm. *a*-stem ‘son of Holt’; or rather a locative, ‘coming from the place Holt’.

**tawido** *tawidō* is 1 sg. pret. ind. ‘did, made’.

**horna** asn. *a*-stem ‘the horn’ (Antonsen 1995:41). Vennemann (1989:355–368) conjectures *horna* to be a rare dual form, acc. ‘the two horns’.

The inscription is an instance of alliterative verse.

25. STRÅRUP (Jutland). Golden diadem or neck ring; the runes read **lepro**

ᚠᚠᚱᚱᚱ

This is probably a PN, nsf. *n*-stem *leprō* ‘Leathery One’. It might be a West Gmc man’s name, nsm. *n*-stem, cf. **wagnijo**, **nipijo**, **hariso**, **lamo**. Another neck ring with a runic inscription is AALEN (Continental Corpus, nr. 1), exhibiting the legend **noru**, also a man’s name.

### 3. Recent finds

In 1996 and 1997, three new finds became known. They were all found during excavations of the Nydam bog, *Engmose* (Jutland).

26. NYDAM IV. The first find is an ash-wood arrow, of ca. 22 cm length. It shows 23 runes (Stoklund 1997:4f.). The runes are very clear, but there is no interpretation. Stoklund’s transliteration is: **adle?lpeaelntzuladlla?n??**

27. NYDAM V. The second find is a silver strap-end, dated to ca. 400 (Stoklund 1998:4). The runes read **rawsijo**. The **s** is in 5 strokes; **o** and **j** are as tall as the other runes. If **rawsijo** is a name, one

may think of a PN derived from a tribal name, in analogy with **wagnijo** and **harja**, for instance.

Perhaps the name can be compared to the name of the Hasding brothers, *Raus* (the other was called *Raptus*). Gothic *raus* means ‘tube, hollow stem’, perhaps a metaphor for ‘spear’, cf. also the LIEBENAU inscription **ra[u]zwi** (chapter seven, nr. 25).

28. NYDAM VI. The third find is a trapezoid jet sword-button, 4,6 × 4,7 × 3,5 cms. A hole was drilled through the middle. The runes run left, and are very abraded. Dated to ca. 400. Stoklund (1998:4f.) reads: (-)-**ala** No interpretation.

#### 4. Illegible and/or uninterpretable inscriptions

29. ILLERUP VI (Jutland). Circular sword chape, bronze, surface eroded and damaged (Stoklund 1987:295); the legend reads **fīr?a**. The **f**-rune is reversed.

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The damaged rune might be an **h**. Schönfeld (1965:88) lists the *Firaesi*, and adds that it is the name of a Scandinavian tribe. In view of the derivations of tribal names that appear in the Danish runic Corpus, this inscription might perhaps point to a member of the otherwise unknown *Firaesi*.

30. FRØSLEV (Jutland). Stray find (?), wooden stick; runes unclear.

31. ILLERUP VII (Jutland). Plane, wood, the runes read **afila???**

𐌹 𐌹 𐌹 𐌹 𐌹

Moltke (1985:89f.) and Stoklund (1987:286) tentatively read *afilaiki* but the reading is far from certain, according to Stoklund.

32. ILLERUP VIII (Jutland). Horn fitting, bronze; there are runes cut on two opposite sides, reading on one side **fu??z** and on the other side: **fra**.

33. KRAGEHUL II (Funen). Knife shaft, bone; runes running left, . . . **uma** | **bera** || . . . ?(a)u.

The runes are cut in double lines. **bera** may be a PN, nsm. *n*-stem ‘Bear’.

34. KØNG (Funen). Bronze figure, stray find (?); the runes, when read from right to left, may be interpreted as **ingo**, or, when taking the initial rune as a mirror rune, one may read **wo** or **po**.

The lantern-shaped rune form occurs also in LETCANI, and is transliterated there as **ng** (below, nr. 38). Furthermore it occurs in WIJNALDUM A, rendering **ing** (chapter nine, nr. 23), and, perhaps, in SLEMMINGE (above, nr. 23).

**ingo** might be (part of) a masc. PN.

35. MØLLEGÅRDSMARKEN (Gudme, Funen). Iron knife, found in a grave, date ca. 300 AD. The runes read **hth shi**(?)**o**.

36. NÆSBJERG (Jutland). Rosette fibula, found in a woman’s grave, silver. The runes are very hard to read. It is conjectured that **waraf-nis** or **warawnis** may be read, but actually only **?ara?nis** can be perceived with any certainty.

Runes are cut in zig-zag technique and run from right to left. Since the upper parts of the runes are abraded, any interpretation seems impossible.



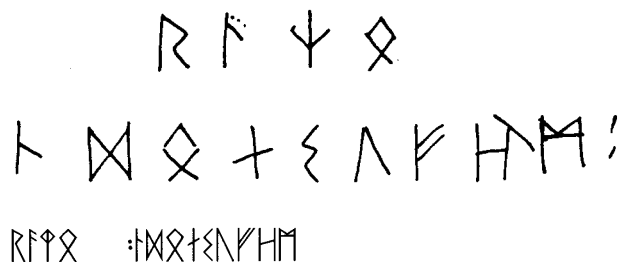
37. VIMOSE VI (Funen). Sheath-mount, rune-imitation? Runes running left. Stoklund supposes that it is either script-imitation or perhaps it reads **lw?k** (1995<sup>b</sup>:333, with a photo).

### 5. Gothic runic finds

38. LETCANI (Moldavia, Rumania). Spindle whorl, earthenware, found in a woman's grave (Looijenga 1996<sup>b</sup>). Dated to the second half of the fourth century. Almost all runes are clearly legible. The runes appear to have been added after the firing. The inscription runs from left to right. The conical form of the object allows us to distinguish two parts: one inscription of four runes on the top half and one consisting of nine runes on the lower half and a division mark.

Krause (1969:156) used an impression and a drawing of the object (made by Mrs. Krause), and proposed the following transliteration: **idonsufthe :rango:** and interpreted this as *Idōns uft hē(r).—Ran(n)ō,* “Idos Gewebe (ist das?) hier.—Rangno”.

After personal examination of the inscription in 1994 I established the reading **rango** (or **rawo**) :**adonsufhe**.




The upper part of the initial rune (of the second part) is damaged. The rune shows a headstaff and one sidetwig to the right †; the other sidetwig of what presumably was an **a** rune has been lost.

The rune † I transliterate as **ng** in **rango**. It may, on the other hand, be taken as a mirror rune representing **w** (cf. the ILLERUP inscriptions nrs. 3 and 4, with a similar rune for **w**). Then the reading **rawo**<sup>3</sup> is possible.

<sup>3</sup> A reading **raþo** (Seebold 1994<sup>a</sup>:76) is unlikely.

The last two runes of the inscription on the lower half had to be crowded close together. An **h** with one bar is followed by an **e** or **m**. The two runes are connected by a slanting stroke, which it is just damage, a scratch.

The ultimate rune has an unorthodox form; it is an **e** rune with a horizontal stroke underneath the hook of the **e**, thus rendering something that resembles an **m**: 

There is definitely no **t** rune in this sequence, as Krause (1969:155) thought and which led him to an interpretation that cannot be supported. Also Seebold's (1994<sup>a</sup>:75f.) reading, based on Krause's drawing, **\*rapo idon sufnu[h]e** is not correct; the last part is certainly not **nu[h]e**; neither is there **n** nor **u**, but, on the contrary, the single-barred **h** is there.

When taking  $\uparrow$  to represent **ng**, we read **rango**, *rangō*, Go nsf. *ōn*-stem. This may be a PN, denoting the female owner of the spindle whorl or a close relative (an interpretation put forward by Krause 1969:157). But, as there may be a second name in the genitive: **adons**, Go gsf. *ōn*-stem, 'Ado's', I wondered whether *rangō* might denote something else, perhaps the object itself, the spindle whorl? That would fit into a well-known type of runic text which explicitly designates the object or the material.<sup>4</sup>

Unfortunately there are no instances of a *rango* in any Germanic language, but as a spindle whorl has the form of a ring, the nearest parallel to look for would be Crimean Gothic *ringo* 'ring', cf. ON *hringr*, OE, OFris, OS and OHG *hring* < Gmc *\*hrenga-z*. The etymology is unclear, according to Kluge/Seebold (1989:601). Pokorny (1959:936) postulates IE *\*krengh-* 'circle, belt'; Old Church Slavonic has *krogъ* < *\*(s)kron(h)-* 'circle' (Trubačev 1987:25–27). Therefore, *rango* and Crimean Gothic *ringo* may reflect the frequent IE Ablaut *e ~ o* (Gmc *e ~ a*, before nasal + consonant *i ~ a*).

In Gothic, one would expect *\*hring-s* (spelled as *\*hriiggs*), but the word is not attested in biblical Gothic. As is seen in Crimean Gothic

<sup>4</sup> For instance: *kobu, kabu* 'comb' on a comb (Oostum and Toornwerd, Groningen), *kabr* 'comb' on a comb (Elisenhof, Schleswig-Holstein). Furthermore there is *hurn hjartaR* 'deer's horn' on a piece of antler, found in Dublin, and *hronæsban* 'whale's bone' on Franks Casket. The Vimose (Funen) plane has *tal[gl]ijo* 'plane'. And there is *knja kingia* 'brooch' on the Aquincum fibula and the recently found footstool of Fallward, near the Weser mouth, with the word *ksamella*, NHG *Schemel* 'footstool'.

*rīngo*, the *h* apparently has been lost in initial position before consonants. Yet the fourth century may be a little early for the loss of initial *h*, although the spelling without *h* might be due to an already weakened articulation.

When reading **rango adon**, this might mean: ‘ring, (i.e. spindle whorl) (possession) of Ado’. However, when taking the lantern-shaped rune for **w**, we get **rawo**. OHG has *rāwa* ‘rest, peace, place to rest’; in other words ‘a grave’. That would be interesting, as the spindle whorl was a grave gift. Thus we obtain a sentence like **rawo adon sufhe**: in which **adon** is a PN, dsf. Go. *ōn*-stem ‘for Ado’. Although the language of the inscription is most likely to be Gothic (cf. also Grønvik 1985:171), it cannot definitely be excluded that people speaking other Germanic dialects were present in South-east Europe in the fourth century. As regards **adon**, an OHG dative sg. weak feminine ending *-on* is attested, but quite seldom (Braune/Eggers 1975:205). Concerning **sufhe** I propose, inspired by Seebold (1994<sup>a</sup>:76), 3 sg. optative *sufhē* of the verb *\*sufa-* ‘to sleep’, cf. Modern Swedish *sova*.<sup>5</sup> When connecting this verb form in the sense of ‘may (she) sleep’ with the reading **rawo** = *rāwo*, dsf. *ō*-stem, ‘for the resting place’ I obtain a semantically acceptable phrase. This includes a runic liberty: one rune is enough for reading it twice. The sequence of the text would then be: **rawo adon[s] sufhe**: ‘for the resting place of Ado, may (she) sleep’, which would be a sort of RIP dedication.

However, one would expect an East Germanic dialect to be spoken in this Gothic area, and my above interpretation of *rāwo* is according to a South Germanic (Pre-OHG) influenced dialect. Gothic has no long *ā*, except *āh* < Gmc *\*aŋh*, e.g. *fāhan*, and in loanwords. If we keep to East Germanic, another solution is wanted. Krause resorted to a somewhat artificial solution—but worth trying. In runic inscriptions it is allowed to transliterate beyond any divisions in the text. In doing this, one may take the initial **r** from **rawo** and consider this rune to belong to the text of the lower part. Krause (1969:157) thus read **her** Go ‘here’. When reconstructing our runic scribe’s cosmetic move,<sup>6</sup> we obtain **awo : adons uf her**.

<sup>5</sup> Seebold proposes to reading **sufnu(h)e**, with **(h)** as *Hiattrenner*, referring to Gmc *\*suf-nō-*, ON *sofna*, an inchoative verb: ‘to go to sleep’, but there is no **-nu-** sequence.

<sup>6</sup> There is a parallel though: the inscription from FALLWARD (Continental Corpus), reading **ksamella lguskabi** = *skamella [a]lguskabi* ‘footstool (depicting) Elkhunter’.

**awo** is Go *awō* ‘grandmother’.

**uf** is Go prep. + dative/acc. ‘under’. The whole sentence is then: ‘grandmother of Ado (is) under here’, i.e. in her grave.

When returning to the first reading **rango : adons uf he**, the same cosmetic move can be carried out, *plus* another runic feature: the same letter need not be written twice. We may then read **rango : adons uf he[r]**, which means ‘Ado’s ring (= spindle whorl) (is) down here’. The purport of the inscription is expressed with reference to the object as a grave gift: *down here*. The object and the inscription may have been made especially for Ado’s afterlife, and subsequently been deposited with her in her grave.

39. SZABADBATTYÁN (Hungary). Dated first half of the fifth century. The inscription is on the back of a silver buckle. The front is decorated after an antique ornamental style (description and photograph in Krause 1966). The inscription may read **marings** = *marings*, nsm. *a*-stem. I agree with Antonsen that the symbol that accompanies the inscription is a malformed swastika and not a **d** rune.



MRPΞ

The † rune is transliterated **ing** in the interpretation **marings**, and has a similar lantern shape as in, for instance, LETČANI, KØNG and WIJNALDUM. Antonsen (1975:74) transliterates **marings** as: “Marings [i.e. descendent of Mar(h)s; or: horseman]”, and he considers the language East Gmc. Krause (1966:311) reads and interprets **marings** as well, and derives from *\*marhings* “Kurzform zu Namen mit *marha-* ‘Pferd’”. Both Antonsen and Krause read **marings** with a short *a*, which may be taken as a Gothic PN, nsm. *a*-stem, ‘Horseman’.

Since runes do not indicate vowel length, one may read *māring*s

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The initial *a* of [*a*]guskapi must be borrowed from the ultimate rune of *skamella*. The requested ‘cosmetic move’ in the Letčani inscription is thus not an isolated feature.

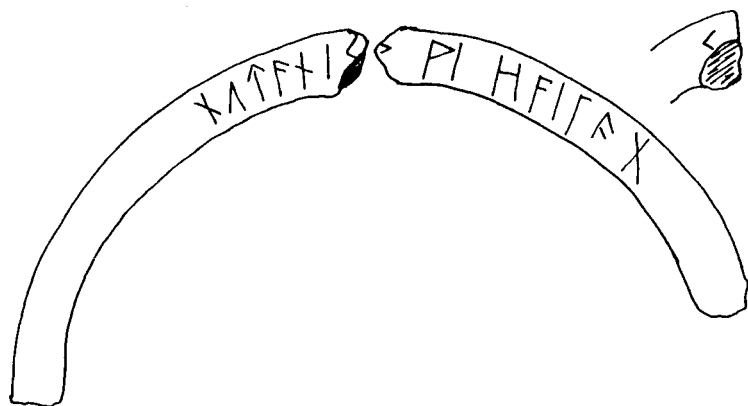
with long  $\bar{a}$ , which would present some Germanic dialect other than Gothic, e.g. Langobardic.

I prefer to interpret the inscription as Gothic, because this is most plausible in view of the combination of find place, decoration and the ending  $-s$ .

In my opinion, **marings** is another instance of a tribal name, namely of an East Gothic tribe. It can be connected with the runic text on the Rök stone: **skati marika** = *skati meringa* ‘the first among the Mærings’, i.e. King Theodoric of the Ostrogoths. The text is part of the so-called “Theodoric-strophe” (Rök stone, Östergötland, Sweden, dated appr. ninth century; for a description and pictures, see Jansson 1987). *Mering* denotes the royal house of Theodoric, and might have been constructed after a personal name with the element *mār*, *mēr*, such as can be found in the names of Theodoric’s father *Theodomērs*, and his brothers *Walamērs* and *Widumērs*, and a suffix *-ing*.

40. PIETROASSA (Rumania). Dated first half of the fifth century, according to the text in the catalogue of the *Goldhelm* exhibition (1994:230). The inscription is on a gold neck ring, which has been cut right through the middle of the inscription, so the rune that was there (here rendered by ?) is badly damaged or has disappeared.

The runes read **gutani?wihailag**.



X N T F H P I H F I G A X

A lot of guesswork about what rune has vanished has been done; see a recent list by Nedoma (1991–93). A new reading and interpretation

has been put forward by Reichert (1991–93). I studied the object myself in April 1994, in the *Schirn Kunsthalle* at Frankfurt am Main, where the object was part of the *Goldhelm* exhibition in the Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte. If only one rune was lost when the neck ring was cut, in my opinion that rune may have been an **s** or **j**. The upper part is still visible to the left of the cut. To the right of the cut it seems as if also a part of a rune can be distinguished, but I think this is damage, a scratch, maybe as a result of the cut. These traces have been interpreted as the remains of an  $\text{X}$  (*\*ōðilaz*) rune, but this cannot be correct (cf. Reichert). As there is obviously the little hook on the left side, one may choose between the runes **s** or **j** (Reichert prefers to read **j**). In both readings, the lower part of the rune, which in either way should have had the form of a hook, is lost. Both **gutanis wi hailag** or **gutani j wihailag** may offer something meaningful. When choosing the latter reading, one must consider the **j** rune as a symbolic rune for *\*jēra* ‘good year, harvest’ (cf. STENTOFTEN, below, nr. 44). This is Reichert’s interpretation (1991–93:239), who comments: “in wulfilanischer Orthographie (. . .): *gutane jer weih hailag*”.

As to the reading of **gutanis**, I suggest taking this as the adj. *gutaneis* ‘Gothic’. The nominative sg. masculine **wi[h]** may be taken as Go. *weih* nsn. ‘sanctuary’. I suggest reading the single **h** twice, in **wi[h]** and in **[h]ailag** ‘holy’. The inscription therefore may be interpreted: ‘Gothic (object). Sacrosanct’.

### 6. Period II, the Blekinge inscriptions

41–44. BJÖRKETORP, GUMMARP, ISTABY, and STENTOFTEN (Blekinge, Sweden). The inscriptions are dated to the seventh century (Birkmann 1995). GUMMARP got lost in the Fire of Copenhagen, 1728.

Most handbooks treat these four inscriptions on stone together, since their texts seem to have had a common source, or at least show striking similarities and relations, both semantically and runologically. Sometimes the Sölvesborg stone is included, too. The stones were all erected in Blekinge on the South-east coast of Sweden, formerly Danish territory. Only the Björketorp monument stone still stands *in situ* (near Björketorp, Leråkra and Listerby); the other stones have been removed to different places.

The **A** in the transcription represents the open vowel (non-nasalized)

*a*, rendered by the former \**jāra* rune ᚦ, which had changed its name into \**āra*, due to the Proto-Norse loss of initial *j*. The transliteration **A** is needed in order to avoid confusion with ᚦ, generally transliterated as **a**.

BJÖRKETORP and GUMMARP both contain **A** runes, independent of the quality of the vowel; they have no \**ansuz* ᚦ runes. STENTOFTEN and ISTABY contain both \**ansuz* and **A**; in ISTABY another rune form indicating ‘a’ has been used by the carver: ᚧ which should be taken as representing an *a*-sound like the one given here as **A** in the other inscriptions. The form of the rune is actually a variety of the \**jāra* rune ᚦ that elsewhere denotes **j**. It is remarkable that the runographer here used this graph to denote about the same sound as the one that has been rendered by ᚦ.

The \**ansuz* rune ᚦ in STENTOFTEN represents nasalized *ã*. The \**ansuz* runes in ISTABY render unstressed *a*; the distinction of **A** and **a** in ISTABY expresses the opposition stressed—unstressed. The **a**-runes in ISTABY denote svarabhakti vowels and two times *a* in unstressed syllables.

In order to make it clear what the mutual similarities in runes and texts look like, to increase interpretability and to provide a comfortable basis for interpretation, I present the texts, which have no division marks, divided into words.

41. BJÖRKETORP. A group of three monoliths. Huge *bauta* stones like these are known in Scandinavia from prehistoric times onwards, and were probably used as grave monuments. It is impossible to say whether this was the case with these three monoliths. Only one stone of the Björketorp monument, the middle one, bears a runic inscription. When walking around the monolith, it appears that the text on the back (side B) immediately joins that part of the text of side A, that starts with **utiAz**. I suggest this is no coincidence. The sequence from top to bottom runs thus:

Side A: **sAz pAt bArutz**

Side B: **uᚦArAbA sbA**

Side A: **utiAz welAdAude**

**hAerAmA lAusz**

**inArunAz ArAgeu**

**fAlAh Ak hA[i]derAg**

**hAidz runoronu**

𐌺𐌹𐌳𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌹  
 𐌺𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌹  
 𐌺𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌹  
 𐌺𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌹  
 𐌺𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌹  
 𐌺𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌹

Moltke (1985:142) read the text starting from the bottom line up, which makes sense, because it turns out that the **g** at the end of **hAiderAg** (second row from below) actually belongs to **[g]inArunAz** at the beginning of the third line from below.

The text is actually a poem in the sense of a spell:

<i>haidz r̄unōrōnū</i>	<i>falah ak haidera</i>
<i>(ra)ginarūnāz</i>	<i>arageu haeramalausz</i>
<i>ūparaba spā</i>	<i>ūthaz wēladaude</i>
	<i>saz þat barutz</i>

a clear rune row I buried here  
 runes from the ruling gods  
 cowardly and restless  
 I foresee  
 A needless death by treachery  
 Far away  
 For him that breaks this

**hAidz**, *haidz*, cf. Gmc *\*haidra-* ‘clear, shining, bright’, ON *heidr*.

**runoronu**, consisting of *rūnō-* ‘rune-’, using *-ō-* for connective vowel (Antonsen 1975:19), and *-rōnū* < *\*rōnōn* or *\*runōn* ‘row, sequence’, asf. *ōn-*stem (Krause 1971:52; Antonsen 1975:87f.).

**fAlAh Ak**, with svarabhakti second **A** in **fAlAh**, *fah ak* is 1 sg. pret. ind. ‘I buried’, cf. ON *fela*, Gmc *\*felhan* ‘to hide, to bury’, here probably meant to render the act of carving runes into the stone surface.

**Ak** pers. pron. 1 sg. ‘I’.

**hA[i]derAginArunAz**, *haidera ginarūnāz*, in which *haidera* (with svarabhakti **e**) means ‘here’, cf. ON *hedra*. *gi(n)na-* is an adj. meaning ‘wide’, cf. the Eddic *gap var ginnunga* (Voluspá 3) ‘wide crevice’; OE *ginn* ‘wide, spacious’, and the ON verb *gina* ‘to yawn’. *rūnāz* apf. *ō-*stem ‘runes’, which can be taken to denote the whole inscription. Together this means: ‘here wide(-cut) runes’. I suggest taking ‘ra’ of



‘haidera’ double, in order to obtain alliteration in ‘raginarunaz’. The meaning may be: ‘the message, determined by divine fate’, cf. *ragina*, cf. Go. *ragin* ‘counsel’, OS *regan-*, *regino-*, OE *regn* ‘determined by fate’, ON *regin* ‘ruling gods’ (Antonsen, 1975:55). See also NOLEBY **ragi-nakudo** and the Eddaic Hávamál 80: *regin-kunnum* dpf. ‘[runes] coming from the gods’.

**ArAgeu**, with svarabhakti second **A**, *argeu*, dsf. *jōn*-stem, < \**argijōn* (Krause 1991:119), ON *argr* < \**argaz* ‘cowardly’, ‘unmanly’, ‘performing sorcery’, ‘showing indecent behaviour’; OHG *ar(a)g*, OE *earg* ‘cowardly’ (Antonsen 1975:86).

**hAerAmAlAusz**, with svarabhakti second **A**, *haerma-* < \**herma-* ‘rest’ (Krause 1971:61); *-lausz* < \**lausaz*, ON *lauss* ‘without’, adj. *a*-stem, see above VIMOSE nr. 10. The meaning may be ‘restless’; Antonsen (1975:86) suggests ‘protectionless’. The spelling *-ae-* in *haeramalausz* denotes the product of breaking of *e* > *ae*; cf. also *haeru-wulafiz* in ISTABY (below, nr. 43).

Side B: **uþArAbA** is usually connected with something unfavourable, something bad. The word probably consists of the negative particle *ū-* and *þarba* = *þarfa*, cf. the ON verb *þurfa* ‘to require, to need’; *þarf* impers. ‘it is necessary’; as a substantive ON *þrf*, cf. Gmc \**þarbō-*, ‘want, need, necessity’. *ūþarba* might mean ‘something unwanted’. The second **A** is a svarabhakti vowel.

**sbA**, cf. ON *spá* f. ‘prophecy’ or 1 sg. pres. ind. ‘I foresee’, ON inf. *spá*. In this case I prefer the latter interpretation, since it can be connected with the ‘I’ mentioned before (who carved the runes). Thus the text gains coherence.

**utiAz**, cf. ON *útar* adv. comp. ‘farther away, to the south’.

**welAdAude**, compound, consisting of: *wēl-*, cf. ON *vél* f. ‘treachery, trick’ (the **A** = *-a-* is the connective vowel in the compound) and: *-dauðē*, dsf. *a*-stem, of \**dauða-* ‘death’. Together this means: ‘a death by treachery’.

**sAz**, ON *sá* dem. pron. nsm. ‘he, who’, *sa -z* < \**-ez* is the relative particle ‘he who, which’ (Antonsen 1975:88).

**pAt**, ON *pat* dem. pron. asn. ‘this’.

**bArutz**, *barut(i)z* 3 sg. pres. ind. with the ending of the 2nd sg.; cf. ON *brýtr* ‘breaks’. The **A** is a svarabhakti vowel.

42. GUMMARP. Lost, but a drawing exists by Skonvig (1627), published in *Danmarks Runeindskrifter* (Jacobsen/Moltke 1941/42).

**(h)ApuwolAfA sAte stAbA pria fff** ‘Hapuwolafa cut three staves fff’.


  
 H†DNPQX†F\*
   
 4 ††M
   
 †††b††R†F †††

According to Jacobsen & Moltke (1941/42:406) the text can be interpreted differently. It appears that *(h)ApuwolAfA* either misses its nominative ending *-z* (but compare **lagupewa**, ILLERUP III, above, nr. 3), or is in the accusative, in which case the inscription would be incomplete, since a subject is lacking. One may interpret the legend thus: ‘(In memory of) Hapuwolafa (somebody) cut three staves fff’. Or, if Hapuwolafa is the subject, the text simply means: ‘H cut three staves fff’.

**sAte** *sattē* 3 sg. pret. ind. of a verb like Go. *satjan* and ON *setja* ‘to set’, Gmc *\*satjan* ‘to set’.

**stAbA** *staba* apm. *a*-stem ‘staves’, i.e. runes.

**pria** apm. *ja*-stem, ‘three’.

**fff** are mostly conjectured to represent three *Begriffsrunen*, indicating the rune name for **f** *\*fehu* ‘livestock, wealth’.

I think Hapuwolafa is not the runographer of this inscription. This does not seem likely, since he certainly was the runecarver of **ISTABY**, below. There, a different set of runes has been used, which usually points to two different runographers.

43. **ISTABY**. In Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm.

Side A: **Afatz hAriwulafa hApuwulafz hAeruwalafiz**

Side B: **warAit runAz pAiAz**


  
 4†††YH4RPN†††
   
 H†DNP†††YH4MRNPN†††Y
   
 ††R4††R†††Y††4Y

The *\*ansuz* † rune is used in all three **wulaf** nameparts, to represent a svarabhakti vowel or an unstressed ending.

It may be that in the name **hAeruwalafiz** the pronunciation of **A** was palatal, considering the development of the breaking of *e* >

*ea* > *ja* > *j* by *u*-mutation; rendering the later attested ON names *Hjorólfr*, and *Hjorulf*.

**Afatz** is misspelled for *aftaz* = *aftar* ‘to the memory of’, ‘for’. According to Antonsen (1975:84) “with neutralization of contrast *z* ≠ *r* after apicals”.

**hAriwulafa** *Hariwulafa* PN asm. *a*-stem. The name consists of *Hari-* ‘warrior’, m., and *-wulafa* asm. *a*-stem, cf. Gmc *\*wulfaz*, ‘wulf’, a name-element all three names in this inscription share.

**hApuwulafz** PN nsm. *a*-stem, subject. The second element *-wulafz* shows syncope of the stemvowel. The first element of the name, *Hapu-* ‘battle’, is a nominative *u*-stem. A parallel case is the OHG *Hildebrantslied*, where three relatives occur, with a common second name-element, preceded by *heri* resp. *hadu*: *Heribrant*, *Hadubrant* and *Hildebrant*.

**hAeruwulafz** is presumably the patronymic with the ending  $\bar{i}z$  < *\*-ijaz*; the first name-element is *haeru-*, cf. ON *hyorr* ‘sword’, Gmc *\*heru-*, Go *hairus*.

**warAit** *wrait* 3 sg. pret. ind. ‘wrote’, inf. Gmc *\*writan* ‘to carve, to write’. The **a** is again a svarabhakti.

**runAz** *rūnāz* apf.  $\bar{o}$ -stem, ‘runes’; similar spelling in BJÖRKETORP, different in STENTOFTEN.

**þAiAz** *þa-iāz* demonstrative pron. apf. ‘these’ (Antonsen 1975:84).

The text as a whole runs thus:

‘Hapuwulf, son of Haeruwulf, wrote these runes to the memory of Hariwulf’.

44. STENTOFTEN. In the church of Sölvesborg. I present the inscription, which contains no division marks, divided here into words.

**niu hAborumz niu hagestumz hApuwolAfz gAf j hAriwolAfz mA??usnuh?e hidez runono felAh ekA hederA [rA]ginoronoz herAmAlAsAz ArAgeu welAdud sA þAt bAriutip**

†INH†BÖRR†M†

†INH†X†M†T†M†

H†þ†N†P†Q†R†S†X†S† †

H†R†P†Q†R†S†M† N†E†N†H†M†

H†M†M†L†R†N†Q†R†M†H†M†Y†H†M†M†R†X†H†Q†R†Q†Q†L†

H†M†R†M††E†L†R†X†M†N†M††M†N†M†E†þ††B†R†I†N††I†P†

The similarity with the Björketorp spell in the second part of the text is immediately obvious. It is in a different spelling, and some parts are missing, but the purport is the same.

As regards reading and interpretation of the first part of the text, I prefer the ingenious solution by Santesson (1989:221–229). The inscription starts with an alliterative text, which sounds like a charm. Santesson's reading and interpretation of this part of the text is entirely based on the phonological differences displayed by the runes for **A** (open *a*) and **a** (nasalised *ã*) in: *niu hAborumz, niu hãgestumz*. She takes *niu* to mean 'nine'. The *-o-* in *hAborumz* is a svarabhakti vowel; the ending *-umz* is dative plural *a*-stem. Santesson postulates Gmc *\*habraz* 'bock', ON *hafri*, Latin *caper*. In **hagestumz** the *\*ansuz* rune **a** represents nasalized *ã* in *hangestumz*, a dative plural '(nine) steeds'<sup>7</sup>

**hAþuwolAfz** *Hapuwolafz*, cf. IStABY: **hAþuwolafz**, nsm. *a*-stem. Of course the Stentofte carver had to use **A** in **-wolAfz**, since an **a** would render a nasalized *ã*, and that would not be adequate here.

**gAf** *gaf* 3 sg. pret. ind., cf. the ON verb *gefa* 'to give'.

The sentence is then: 'Nine he-goats, nine steeds, Hapuwolafz gave'. The sentence is followed by only one rune, the *\*jara* rune in an old-fashioned form: *ᚷ*. Its meaning is 'harvest', 'prosperity'.

It is used here as *pars pro toto* for its intrinsic meaning 'a good year = a fruitful harvest' (cf. SKOdBORGHUS-B, Chapter six, nr. 37). This obviously refers to the offering of two times nine animals to obtain prosperity. The repetitive offering of nine male animals is well-known from medieval Uppsala, described by Adam of Bremen.

The text continues with:

**hAriwolAfz**, PN nsm. *a*-stem; compare IStABY **hAriwulafa**. The vowels **o** and **u** interchange in the 'wolf/wulf'-names in GUMMARP, IStABY and STENTOFTEN. The runographer is mentioned here: *Hariwolafz*.

The part between **hAriwolAfz** and **hidez** is illegible to me (but see Birkmann 1995:125ff.).

**hidez**, compare BjÖRKETORP **hAidz** 'clear, bright'.

**runono**, compare BjÖRKETORP **runoronu**, the carver omitted a

<sup>7</sup> The nominative sg. then would be *\*hangistaz* < Gmc *\*hanhistaz*, with reference to Verner's law, cf. ON *hestr* < *\*hanhistaz*. The use of an **e** rune to denote an *i* sound of *hangistumz* seems to be a peculiarity of the Blekinge inscriptions. The other words that show this are: **hidez** = *h(a)idir* and **arageu** = *aragiu* (Santesson 1989:226).

syllable. The ending of *rūnō[rō]nō* differs from the ending *-ū* in BjÖRKETORP, both derived from Gmc *\*rōnōn*, *\*rūnōn* ‘row, sequence’.

**felAh ekA**, 1 sg. pres. ind., compare BjÖRKETORP **fAlAh Ak**, 1 sg. pret. ind., inf.: Gmc *\*felhan*, ON *fela* ‘to bury, to hide’, e.g. ‘to carve’.

**ekA**, compare BjÖRKETORP **Ak**, 1 sg. enclitic pronoun ‘I’, see also **hateka** in LINDHOLM, above, nr. 21.<sup>8</sup>

**hederA**, compare BjÖRKETORP **hAiderA**, cf. ON *hedra*, ‘here’.

**[rA]ginoronoz** and BjÖRKETORP **[rA]ginArunAz** show variation in *-rōnōz* against *-rūnāz* and *ginA* against *gino*, which may be due to a different pronunciation (on the forms, see Antonsen 1975:19f.). Orthographic differences between STENTOFTEN and BjÖRKETORP can also be observed in some other features: *i ~ ai*, *e ~ ai*, *e ~ a*.

**herAmAlAsAz**, compare BjÖRKETORP **hAerAmAlAusz**, again a difference in pronunciation, ‘restless’, ‘protectionless’.

**ArAgeu**, compare BjÖRKETORP **ArAgeu** ‘cowardly’.

**welAdud**, compare BjÖRKETORP **welAdAude** ‘a death by treachery’.

**sA** nsm. dem. pronoun *sá* ‘he’.

**pAt** compare BjÖRKETORP **pAt** ‘this’.

**bAriutiþ**, ‘breaks, destroys’, compare BjÖRKETORP **bArutz**, which actually is the ending of the 2 sg. pres. ind.; the 3 sg. pres. ind. ending *-iþ* is correctly spelled in STENTOFTEN.

‘Hariwolafz (. . . .) a clear rune row I buried here, wide (divine) runes (or a fate-predicting message); restless and cowardly, a death by treachery, he (who) destroys this’.

## 7. Summary and Conclusions

Period I has 45 objects (including the three new finds), represented as 40 entries. Period II counts 4 items (the Blekinge stones). Although listed as one number in the Catalogue, some entries consist of more than one object, such as the lance heads from Illerup and the arrows from Nydam.

<sup>8</sup> The personal pronoun **ek** < Gmc. *\*ek*, *\*ekan* is attested in, for instance, GÄRDLÖSA (see above, nr. 13) **ek unwodz**.

Material Period I:

**metal:** 26; bronze: 6, silver: 13, gold: 3; iron: 5.

**other than metal:** 16; wood: 10, bone/antler: 4; jet: 1, earthenware: 1.

Material Period II:

**stone:** 4.

### *Period I*

Thirty-six texts are legible and interpretable, 14 are illegible or uninterpretable. Eighteen inscriptions contain only one word, mostly a name. Five inscriptions consist of two words; 9 inscriptions consist of more than two words. I have counted 21 men's names, of which at least half may be West Gmc. In a few cases women's names seem to occur (**lepro**, **witro**) but these names are probably also West Gmc male names. Six times the object itself is referred to. Furthermore there are 12 verb forms/sentences. The texts concern mostly makers' and owners' formulæ and people's tribal descent.

Bog-deposits form the largest find-category of the 'Danish' Corpus. The offering of large weapon deposits appears to have stopped at around 400. The next category of objects with runes that were deposited are the bracteates (late fifth to early sixth centuries, with one exception from the fourth century). Bracteates were deposited in bogs, or buried as hoards, or given as grave goods (outside the Danish area). The war-booty of the earlier deposits was apparently succeeded in a later period by symbolic, possibly cultic objects. One may wonder if these two categories (the war-booty and the bracteates) are in some way connected,<sup>9</sup> in so far as concerns the ideology that may have existed behind the custom of depositing. At any rate both categories belonged to a male warriors' society. The runic grave goods on the other hand can always be associated with women. Most of the texts were obviously made for special occasions.

The Illerup bog (Jutland) provided 9 runic objects; the Vimose bog (Funen) 6 objects; the Nydam bog (Jutland) 7 objects, the

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<sup>9</sup> Bazelman's dissertation (1996) opens up a vista on a possible use of bracteates in a warriors' cult, especially among the young retainers at a royal court. The coming of age, or the introduction of young men into the warriors' society, the *comitatus*, may have been accompanied by some special rites, crowned by an inauguration and the confirmation thereof by way of a bracteate.

Kragehul bog (Funen) 2 objects (the two objects from the Thorsberg bog in Schleswig-Holstein are listed among the Continental Corpus). Garbølle (Sealand) and Lindholm (Skåne) produced 2 more bog finds. From graves 8 objects are recorded. Four objects are stray finds. The total number of bog finds is about 30 objects (including the items from the Thorsberg bog). It is remarkable that bog finds should only occur on former Danish territory (including Schleswig-Holstein and Skåne), although hardly any bog finds are recorded from Sealand. This may be so because bogs were not available everywhere; in other regions people would have offered runic objects, too, but probably in other wet contexts, such as lakes and rivers. These objects are much more difficult to retrieve. Many runic objects were found while digging for peat in the former bogs, as can be observed from the Bracteate Corpus. The bog finds are men's ware: weapons, weapon parts, personal equipment, a comb, an amulet, tools. The grave finds are women's objects. The stray finds are made of gold; they may have been hidden hoards. The clear division of runic objects that were found either in bogs or graves is remarkable. No men's graves are known that contained runic objects and in the bogs no runic women's objects have been found.

The provenance of the objects turns out to be in defiance of the linguistic character of the runic texts, especially in the case of the Vimose, Illerup and Thorsberg finds. The Illerup and Vimose objects were nearly all made in Norway, Sweden or Denmark, but the inscriptions show West Gmc linguistic features. The Thorsberg finds were probably manufactured in a West Gmc area, but the inscriptions show North or North-west Gmc linguistic features. The oldest runic object, the **harja** comb, appears to come from North-west Poland, but the name is probably West Gmc.

The question is whether it is possible to mark clear dialectical boundaries in runic usage and link archaeological and linguistic data (cf. also Stoklund 1994<sup>a</sup>:106f.). In accordance with the provenance of the oldest runic objects, from the Rhine-Weser area to Poland to the Kattegat area and even stretching as far as north of Oslo, runic knowledge was extended over an astonishingly large area around 200 AD. This can only be explained by assuming that individuals, tribes and groups travelled around a lot, and that there were long-distance contacts between the upper echelons of society. The oldest known runic objects can be associated with war and the accumulation of wealth and power. Both had to do with relations between certain

families (belonging to a military elite), and also between the Germanic elite and highly-placed people within the Roman empire.

*Period II, Blekinge, South Sweden*

The four stones carry relatively long or very long texts, which were cut with large runes, clearly legible. It appears that a quite different runic tradition emerged during the period following the dark epoch of archaic inscriptions. An elaborate runic tradition may have existed already during the archaic period, although no inscriptions that are comparable to the Blekinge ones have turned up yet. The formulaic character of the Blekinge inscriptions still witnesses the ongoing tradition of writers' and owners' inscriptions, of naming the object or material and/or its specific function or aim in relation to the runographer or his client.

The Blekinge inscriptions are especially interesting because they were meant to be seen (if not read) by everyone (contrary to the older inscriptions, see chapter four). Furthermore they are of interest because of their conspicuous use of runes by applying the runes' names and meanings. The runographers apparently knew something of a runic system and rules (for instance the *jāra—āra* development, including the consequences for the choice of the right runic graph), such as can be observed from the fact that they obviously memorized rune names and their symbolism (so we may conclude that there existed a system of rune names, rune symbols and a coherent application of both). Furthermore we may observe the occurrence of syncope and breaking (but no *i*-mutation!) in the language. The many svarabhakti vowels may point to the fact that the writer spelled phonetically, according to how the words sounded when spoken out loud.

We may conclude that the Blekinge runographers retained some knowledge of the archaic runic period. And they were quite versed in rendering the phonological distinctions of their texts by applying diverse graphic possibilities of the runes. Actually, they were remarkably skilled runographers. The other interesting fact is that the texts were written on huge stone memorials, a practice that differs from the older runic practice of writing runes on small, precious objects, such as is known from the early Danish, Continental, English and Dutch inscriptions.

The greatest surprise is that in the Blekinge inscriptions we suddenly find *literature* in runes, which leads to the conclusion that at some



time in runic history people started to use runes for other purposes than merely inscribing names on special objects. Just like any other script, runes could be used to write literary and memorial texts. This is all the more interesting, as the Blekinge inscriptions clearly point to the existence of a powerful clan, who openly manifested their convictions by way of these audacious texts on huge stones.

### *Runeforms*

According to the runic stock, the inscriptions belong to the assumed transitory stage from the older 24-letter fuþark to the younger Scandinavian 16-letter fuþork.

**p** disappeared from the runic alphabet at this stage. The sound *p* is represented by **b** in **sba spá**. Thus the Björketorp inscription shows some stage in the process of the reduction of the 24-letter fuþark.

The enigmatic **niuhagestumz** in Stentofthen (Santesson: **niu ha[n]-gestumz** ‘nine steeds’) was formerly interpreted as ‘nine guests’: **niuha gestumz** (Krause 1966:212; Moltke 1985:139f.), showing *i*-mutation in *gest-* < \**gasti*z. In Santesson’s solution there is no trace of *i*-mutation. Syncope, though, does occur in several words.

The Blekinge runecarvers used three different forms of the \**jāra/āra* rune. The ancient **j** rune in Stentofthen symbolizes its name: \**jāra* ‘good year’, and it is realized in an old-fashioned form: <sup>o</sup>, which was probably done in order to avoid confusion with the rune denoting **A** †. Obviously a distinction was made between the mnemonic use of rune names, a tool that enabled carvers to determine which sound a runic character had, and the meaning and use of symbolic runes, used as *pars pro toto* for some special purpose.

It looks as if two separate developments can be detected in the Blekinge inscriptions. The differences are between the Björketorp, Stentofthen and Gummarp group on the one hand, all using † to denote non-nasal, open **A**, and the Istaby inscription, using <sup>h</sup> to denote non-nasal, open, **A**. This was done to underline the contrast to **a** †, which represented unstressed **a**, nasal **a** and svarabhakti **a**.

The graph † denoting **j** occurs in Scandinavia in Noleby **tojeka** only, but it occurs relatively often in England and Frisia. The graph <sup>h</sup> denoting **j** occurs on the Continent, in Charnay, Bezenye and Oettingen (see chapter seven, nrs. 11, 7 and 32). It clearly shows its graphic relation with the (presumed) original rune for **j** <sup>o</sup>.

8. *A new explanation of the Blekinge texts*

There can be no doubt that the men mentioned by their names on the four Blekinge stones were related. The fact that the names show some variety in spelling may be due to several factors, such as dialectal or phonological differences (i.e. a slightly different pronunciation). Stentoften might be older than Björketorp. But in my opinion the interval cannot be very long, maybe one generation, or two, which might be indicated by the three names of son, father and grandfather.

Name forms denoting the same person are *Hapuwolafz* on Istaby and Stentoften, and *Hapuwolafa* on Gummarp. *Hariwulafa* is the same person as *Hariwolafz* on Istaby and Stentoften. Together with *Haeruwulafiz* (Istaby) these persons apparently belong to one family or clan, because of the similarity of the second part of the names and the alliterative first part. Besides, they refer to each other in the texts. None of the above-mentioned names appear in Björketorp. *Hapuwulafz* made an offering in the Stentoften text, he was the runographer of the Istaby text, and he was commemorated on Gummarp. This suggests that he was an important person. *Hariwolafz* was the carver of Stentoften. He used the same formula as is displayed in the Björketorp text, either as a model, or because this kind of text was a formula, and known within the family. If this is so, it may have a bearing on the dating of the texts: Istaby may be oldest, and therefore the runic graph for **A** may precede the other runic graph for **A**, in runes: ᚱ > †. We may distinguish two developments: from ᚱ > † and from ᚱ > ᚱ.

The ‘Wulfs’ may very well be contemporaries. Perhaps we should take into account the existence of simultaneously used different rune stocks, even within the same family.

The demonstrative pronoun ‘this’ in the sentence: “he, who breaks this” has been presumed as referring to the monument itself, but I do not think this likely. The significance of the text is, in my opinion, a warning and a threat: ‘you will die the dishonourable death of a coward, after restless roaming about, far away’ and this would happen in case somebody broke ‘this’, which might refer to a treaty or an agreement, possibly made by three persons, which is symbolised by the three standing stones. It is tempting to suggest that these three persons might be Hapuwolf, Haeruwolf and Hariwolf, and that the three staves **fff** from the Gummarp inscription symbolize their

agreement, concerning livestock (the name of the rune **f** means ‘cattle’) or other (mutual?) precious possessions. Even an offering has been carried out, in order to obtain prosperity (Stentofte). The four runic monuments might have been erected to indicate the borders of their property: nowadays Gammaltorps *socken*, Mjällby *socken* and Listerby *socken* (see Jacobsen & Moltke 1942:399–413).

## CHAPTER SIX

### BRACTEATES WITH RUNES

#### 1. *Introduction*

As a point of departure and checkpoint I used the meticulous drawings of the *Ikonomographischer Katalog*, abbreviated IK. This monumental work, also known as *Die Goldbrakteaten der Völkerwanderungszeit*, edited by Morten Axboe et al. (1984–1989) has proved to be a good source for investigations of the bracteate corpus.

According to Düwel (1992<sup>a</sup>:32), 907 bracteates are known (in 1988), representing 566 dies. The earliest find was in the 17th century. The bracteates were first methodically studied in 1855, by C.J. Thomsen. Mackeprang (1952:25ff.) produced a typology of the bracteates, based on Montelius' initial division and Salin's system of cataloguing according to the ornamentation in the so-called Germanic animal styles, dividing them into A, B, C, D, F-types (for more references and detailed information see Birkmann, 1995). Recent research of the material has yielded a revised sequence of the various types, adding the M(edallion) type and otherwise maintaining the A, B, C, D and F sequence. An update by several authors on bracteate research can be found in Düwel, ed. 1998<sup>b</sup>.

M-type: medallion-imitations;

A-type: man's head in profile;

B-type: man's figure, often together with animals;

C-type: man's head above horselike animal, often together with birds and other animals;

D-type and F-type: no human beings, but animals in the so-called 'Germanic animal style I'.

The C and D-type bracteates dominate the material. Runes are found on A, B, C, and F-types, and on one M-type. The medallion imitations predate the actual bracteates by more than a century. They show Roman capitals, capital imitation, mixed runelike signs and capitals. The one M-bracteate with a runic inscription is Svarte-

borg **sigaduz** (on the reverse capital-imitation). A-type bracteates show capital imitations, runes, and mixed runes/capitals. The largest number (95%) of rune-inscribed bracteates are found among the C-type.

The IK deals with 182 rune-bracteates, representing 105 models. When taken together with bracteates exhibiting capital imitations and runes, the total number of inscription-bearing bracteates is 211, pressed out of 127 stamps. The number of runic inscriptions on bracteates (over a period of less than a century) is nearly the same as the total number of inscriptions in the older futhark on other objects: ca. 240 specimens (over a period of some six centuries. Cf. Düwel 1992<sup>a</sup>:34 and IK 3,1, *Teil G*).

Forty-eight legends from a total of 55 bracteates are discussed below. They have been chosen because of the relative ease with which the runes may be read, transliterated and interpreted, which does not imply that the purport of the texts can be *understood*. For instance, I have included all **alu**, **lapu**, **laukaz** texts, even the abbreviated forms, although nobody *really* knows what these words refer to and why they frequently appear on bracteates. These so-called formulaic words only appear on B (emperor's head) and C-bracteates (man, horselike creature, bird), and possibly refer to the "ideal Germanic king" (Seebold) or "Odin" (Hauck). Elaborate information concerning the formulaic words **alu**, **laukaz**, **auja** and **lapu** is given below. In addition I have included some more or less interpretable texts and the legends containing a futhark, also when abbreviated.

The bracteates listed here have been found all over North-west Europe, including Scandinavia, Denmark, Germany, England and Frisia. I have not grouped the bracteates according to their geographical occurrence or manner of deposition. The 'material' criterium does not apply here, as the bracteates are all made of gold, except for Welbeck Hill (England), which is made of silver.

Since the most extensive work on bracteates has been published in the six volumes of the *Ikonographischer Katalog* (1984–1989), I have adopted the terminology used by its authors. The sequence UFO means *Unbekannter Fund Ort* = 'Unknown Find Place'. Likewise, the names of the find places, for instance *Südfünen*, are retained. All bracteates are more or less named after their findspots. The place name in the IK list is connected with A, B, C, D, F or M, which points to the iconographic type of bracteate. Thus it becomes immediately clear to which group a certain text belongs. The IK-abbreviation

Taf. means *Tafel* 'Plate'. The remarks in the texts about items being 'related' refer to the iconography, and sometimes also to the runic text. Map 6 shows the spread of bracteates including one or several of the words **laþu**, **laukaz**, **alu**. Map 7 shows the find context for gold bracteates.

Of the 55 bracteates, described and listed here as 48 numbers, 26 are from hoards, 20 are stray finds, 5 are from unknown find places, 4 (possibly) from a grave. Of the bracteates containing the word **laukaz**, 5 are from different hoards, 4 are stray finds, 3 are from unknown find places. **alu**: 6 are from hoards, 3 are stray finds, 1 is from an unknown find place.<sup>1</sup> **laþu**: 4 are from a hoard, 1 is a stray find, 1 is from a grave, 1 is from an unknown find place. **auja**: 2 are from a hoard. **fupark**: 5 are from a hoard, 1 is a stray find.

Most runes run from right to left, some occur mirrored, some are reversed or inverted (upside-down). Since the runes were stamped into the gold foil, it may be that mirror-forms (= doubled runes) were the result of a deliberate technique. It may have been a way of avoiding too many reversed and inverted forms.

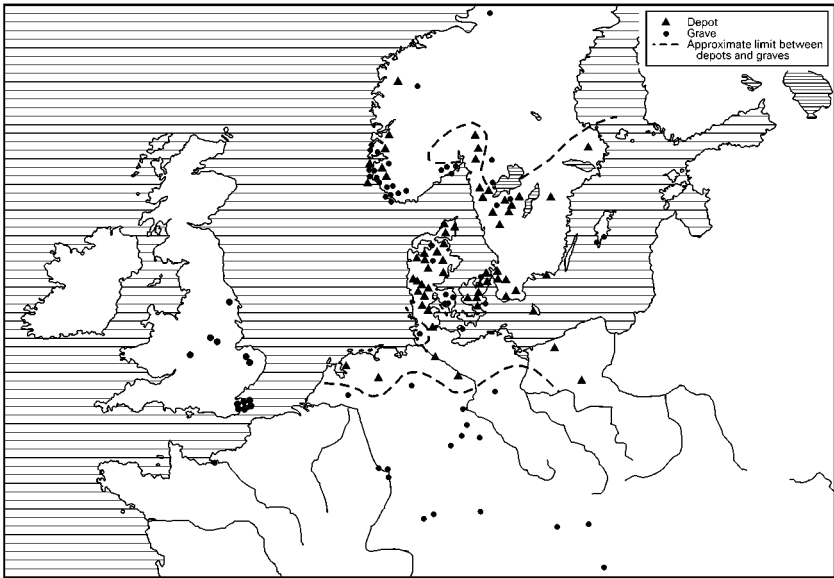
The bracteates discussed here which were found in Denmark are at the National Museum, Copenhagen, apart from Denmark (I)-C, which is lost; the bracteates found in Norway are at Oldsaksamlingen, Oslo; the bracteates found in Sweden and Gotland are at the National Museum, Stockholm, apart from Åsum-C, Kläggerod-C and Tirup-Heide-C, which are at the Historisk Museum, Lund. Regarding bracteates found in Germany: Heide-B is lost, Nebenstedt (I)-B is at the Landesmuseum Hanover, Sievern is at the Bremerhaven museum. The Undley bracteate, found in England, is at the British Museum; the Hitsum bracteate, found in Friesland, is at the Fries Museum, Leeuwarden, The Welbeck Hill (South Humberside) bracteate is in private hands.

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<sup>1</sup> Recently two bracteates with the legend **alu ota** were found in a grave in Hüfingen, Baar-Kreis, Baden-Württemberg, Germany. **ota** occurs only on bracteates. These grave they were found in, has been dated to 550–570. Their provenance may have been Langobardic North Italy, according to Düwel in NoR 12, 1997.



Map 6. Spread of bracteates including one or several of the words *lapu*, *laukaz*, *alu*.



Map 7. The find context for gold bracteates. (Map 6 + 7 are from A. Andrén 'Guld och makt', Samfundsorganisation og Regional Variation, Århus 1991.)

2. *Alu*

The literal meaning of the word **alu** is ‘ale’, but its meaning or function in runic texts and its occurrence, especially on bracteates, is enigmatic. The interpretations run from ‘magic’ via ‘ecstasy’ to ‘intoxicating drink’. A connection of **alu** with IE *\*alu-* ‘bitter’ and the mineral *alum* cannot be excluded, although this has been disputed by Høst Heyerdahl (1981) and Polomé (1996). The mineral was used as a medicine, as a prophylactic and as an amulet in antiquity and in the Middle Ages (cf. Saltveit 1991:139, 141).

Alum or alumen was an essential and scarce mineral. According to Pliny (23–79) alum was a sort of salty earth. White alum was used for dyeing wool and dark, or black, alum was used to purify gold. Osborne (1998:8) mentions that “it was a magical element in Chinese and Arabic alchemy, a reagent in early chemistry, a mordant and tanning agent, a medicine”, and “it possessed the power to turn the basest rock into a substance worth more in the world than gold itself”. Osborne concludes that alum was “a strategic commodity, and a potential source of vast wealth and political influence”. Alum is found in England and Scandinavia, and might have served as precious merchandise. Just as **laukaz** ‘garlic, leek’ was noticeable because of the smell, **alu** may have derived its importance from the taste, according to Saltveit. Since both words also denote an antidote or a medicine, this might be a reason for their occurrence on bracteates = amulets (Saltveit 1991:140).

Polomé (1996:103) returned to his former (and later abandoned) statement that *alu* can be linked to Hittite *\*aluwanza-* ‘affected by sorcery’; stating that “the comparison of Run. *alu* with Hitt. *\*aluwanza-* remains apparently a valid Anatolian-Germanic isogloss in the archaic magico-religious vocabulary”. A connection between ‘affected by sorcery’ and an ecstatic state of mind, presumably caused by drinking ale, does not seem unlikely.

The Elgesem rune stone (Norway) bears only one word: **alu**. The stone was found in 1870 at a site which contained a large boat-shaped stone setting and 18 mounds. The stone was dug up from a mound with the inscription face down (Haavaldsen 1991:8). Later, several graves were discovered in the same area, according to Haavaldsen. Antonsen (1984:334f.) considers it a cult stone, marking the cult place; according to him **alu** not only means ‘ale’ but also depicts the situation of a person in a trance, perhaps as the result of drink-



ing beer. On amulets **alu** may refer to religious activities, initiation rites or a death-cult, or symbolize the transitory state between the worlds of the living and the dead.

As has been suggested, there may be a connection between **alu** and death. Deceased people were often given drinking vessels, such as Roman glassware, in their graves to symbolize their partaking of the eternal feast (Van Es 1994<sup>b</sup>:68). The word **alu** may have been used to replace or symbolize a missing drinking vessel. Ale was used in ritual toasting to confirm a (new) situation, i.e. when a person had died and his heirs had come to drink *erfiol* 'grave-beer'. Markey (1972) associates fire and ritual in a grove or temple with the goddess Freya. Werner (1988) suggests that bracteate-deposits may have been part of a fertility cult. Either way some sacred cult, either a fertility cult or a cult of the dead, or a combination of both, may have been involved. The association with a pre-Christian concept referring to death or the after-death is fairly strong.

Objects with **alu** have been found on the Danish Isles, in Jutland, Gotland, Skåne and South Norway. Objects found outside that particular area are the *Heide*-bracteate, from the west coast of Schleswig-Holstein, and two bracteates from Hüfingen (Black Forest, Germany). Finally **alu** is stamped mirror-wise (with so-called *Spiegelrunen*, first mentioned by Pieper, 1987) in the clay surface of the three Spong Hill urns from East Anglia in England. These are cremation urns, dated to the fifth or sixth century, i.e. they were manufactured in the bracteate period. The occurrence of **alu** in both Schleswig-Holstein and East Anglia need not come as a surprise in the light of the *adventus Saxonum* to Britain in the fifth century.

Sacred and profane uses of ale can be regarded as complementary. The drinking of ale may have played a role during rites, such as the communication with spirits or gods. The word *ealu-scierwen* in the Old English heroic poem *Beowulf*, line 769, is enigmatic. It may mean 'mortal fear', but 'robbing of beer' or 'distribution of beer' are possible translations, too (cf. Lehmann 1992:365ff.). This word refers to the state of mind of the warriors of the hall of Heorot, when they witness *Beowulf*'s struggle with Grendel. There is a serious threat of losing *Beowulf*, their last hope. On the ritual connotation of 'beer', cf. Høst Heyerdahl (1981:35–49), Grønvik (1987:135–143), Düwel in *IK I, Text*, p. 54, and Seebold (1994<sup>a</sup>:63).

In my opinion, the meaning of runic *alu* in a cult context can perhaps be understood in connection with the so-called 'ale-runes':

the Eddic *Öl-rúnar* in *Sigrdrífomál* 7 and 19. I do not think that *Öl-rúnar* should be translated literally as ‘ale-runes’. I think the Eddic verse refers to the actual *writing in runes of the formulaic word alu*. Writing in itself may have been considered a magical act. The combined use of written charm and magical medicine is well-known from the antique and later medieval sources (see Gladigow 1992:12–31).

Bracteates with **alu**, also in abbreviated form, are found in Norway, Skåne, Denmark, Gotland, Schleswig-Holstein. They are: Bjørnerud-A (IK 24), Börringe-C (IK 26), Darum (V)-C (IK 43), Djupbrunn-C (IK 44), Fünen (I)-C (IK 58), Heide-B (IK 74), Hjörlande Mark-C (IK 78), Kjellers Mose-C (IK 289), Kläggerod-C (IK 97), Lellinge-Kohave-B (IK 105), Maglemose (III)-C (IK 300), Ølst-C (IK 135), Skrydstrup-B (IK 166), Ufo-B (IK 149,2), Schonen (I)-B (IK 149,1).

### 3. *Auja*

**auja** n. *ja*-stem, may have a symbolic connotation in the sense of ‘divine protection’ (cf. IK 1, Text, p. 178f.), or generally ‘hail’ or ‘good luck’ (Krause 1966:242; Antonsen 1975:66). Andersen discussed the possible meanings of **auja** (1970:180–205, with many references). The word **auja** eventually disappeared and its meaning can only be guessed at. Part of it, the name-element *au-*, appears to have been retained in place names and personal names as *Ey-*, *Øy-*. Names with the element *aw-* are related, such as in **awimund** (Weimar III) and **awa** (Nordendorf I). The first part of the name **aujab[i]rg** (Oettingen) can also be regarded as related to **auja**. The Vimose buckle has **auwija** instead of **auja**, showing the West Germanic gemination of *w* before *j*, cf. Antonsen (1975:17, § 5.5) and (1987:23), who derives *auwija* < PG *\*aw-ja*. In his *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* Pokorny (1959) gives the following meanings: ‘to like’, possibly meaning ‘to long for’, or ‘to favour, to help’. This would explain the interpretation of **auja** as ‘luck’, ‘fortune’, ‘wealth, possession’. Since it is an amulet, the bracteate would allow for a text **gibu auja** meaning ‘I give luck’ or ‘wealth’, translations which are both equally acceptable (see below, nr. 33).

**auja** occurs on the following bracteates: Raum Køge-C (IK 98), Skodborghus-B (IK 161), both Denmark, all from hoards.

4. *Fuþark*

Bracteates with a complete fuþark, or part of it, are: Grumpan-C, Motala-C (Raum Mariedam), Vadstena-C, Lindkær-C and Overhornbæk III-C, Schonen II-C and Gudme II-C. One has been found in a bog, one is a stray find; the others come from hoards. All bracteates with fuþarks have been found in Sweden and Denmark and they are all C-bracteates.

Other fuþark inscriptions are on the stone slab from Kylver, found in 1903 near a farm called Kylver, on Gotland, Stånga parish. Since it was found in the surroundings of a grave, it is often thought to have belonged to that grave, which is dated to (probably) the fifth century. According to the find history, says Anne Haavaldsen, it is uncertain whether the slab was part of the sarcophagus.

From much later times, several finds from medieval Bryggen and Trondheim bear fuþarks, but these are probably connected with learning how to write (Fjellhammer Seim 1991:129f.). These younger fuþark inscriptions were mostly written on wooden chips. The meaning or function of a magical connotation of fuþark inscriptions (cf. for instance Krause 1966:10ff.) has been the topic of some hot debate (Düwel 1992<sup>c</sup>:91ff., and also IK 1, Text, p. 194). The abbreviated fuþark can be understood as a *pars pro toto* for the whole sequence of the runic alphabet and may therefore stand for “Ordnung, Vollständigkeit” (Düwel 1992<sup>c</sup>:98). The context, though, of objects with the older fuþark does not seem to point to a specifically magical purpose. Possibly the fuþark on the Breza column, in the company of a Latin alphabet, has a connection with the consecration of a church. So one of the functions may have been that a fuþark played a role in initiation rites. No fuþark inscriptions have been found in Norway or the Netherlands.

*Kylver* (Appendix, Sweden, nr. 7):

A. The sequence runs thus: **(f)uþarkgwhnijpizstbemlngdo**

B. The second inscription is: **sueus**.

|\Nq1R<XPHH|6CJY>TSMPT=WX      \NMR<

*Grumpan* (Bracteates Corpus, nr. 12) has the sequence:

**fuþarkgw . . . . . hnijþ . . . tbemlngod**

ƿX>ƿ1ƿ1

HHHJL

MXƿ1M1B1

*Vadstena* (Bracteates Corpus, nr. 47) has the sequence: **fuparkgw:hni-jibzs:tbemlngo(d)**.

MX◊1M1B1>YB1H1:ƿX>ƿ1ƿ1

From the Continent four fupark-inscribed objects are known:

*Breza* (Continental Corpus, nr. 10), pillar of a ruined sixth-century building near Sarajevo (Bosnia). It has a nearly complete fupark, only the last 4 letters: **b ing d o** are broken away with an edge of the stone. Breza has the sequence: **fuparkgwhnijpzstem(l)**

ƿNƿFR^XPHH1JQYETMM1

*Aquincum* (Continental Corpus, nr. 2), brooch found as part of a hoard under the entrance of the former Roman theatre at Budapest. Only **fuparkgw** is written.

*Beuchte* (Continental Corpus, nr. 6), brooch found in a woman's grave. The context is disturbed, but the runes may have been inscribed a short time before the brooch was deposited, according to Düwel. Only **fuparjz** is written.

*Charnay* (Continental Corpus, nr. 12), brooch found in a row-grave field on a bank of the river Saône, dep. Saône-et-Loire, Burgundy, France, context unknown. It has a nearly complete fupark, of which the final runes, following **b**, are abraded. It has the sequence: **fuparkg-whnijpzstb**

ƿNƿFR^XPHH1JLWXZTB

From England three fuporc inscriptions are known:

*Thames*, a scramasax, ninth century, found in the river at Battersea. **fuporcgwhnijpzstbengdlm œ a æ y ea**

ƿNƿFR^XPHH1JL^YETBMXMMFFN^

*Brandon*, a pin, eighth century, found at a settlement site in Norfolk, East Anglia.

**fuporcgwhnijpzs**

ƿꝛᚢᚱᚱᚱᚦᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ

*Malton Pin*, Pickering, North Yorkshire (English Corpus, nr. 30).

**fuporcglææ**

ƿꝛᚢᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ

### 5. *Laþu*

**laþu** f. *ō*-stem ‘invitation, summons’ (which might refer to the act of making an offering, or the initiation to a cult); IK translates “Zitation”, i.e. the calling of supernatural forces, an invocation, cf. ON. *loð*, OE. *laðu* f. ‘invitation’. The word **laþu** only appears on bracteates, also in a shortened form: Darum (I)-B (IK 42), Skonauger (III)-C (IK 163), Højstrup-C (IK 83), Gurfiles-C (IK 264), Fünen-I-C (IK 58), Schonen (I)-B (IK 149). Welbeck Hill has **laþ**, probably short for **laþ[u]**. **laþodu** on Raum Trollhättan-A reflects a *u*-stem and is masculine (Antonsen 1975:20). Four of the finds are from a hoard, two are stray finds, one is a UFO, one is a grave find.

### 6. *Laukaz*

**laukaz** seems to have magical or ritual connotations, possibly in connection with fertility and growth. A word like this on an amulet might add to the sense of protection against evil or destruction. In several manuscript rune rows the name of the rune **l** appears to refer to *laukaz* (although often the ms. rune names are obscure or distorted). A few manuscripts record for **l** the name *līn* (Heizmann 1992:370ff.). The temptation to associate this with the formulaic text on Fløksand (see Appendix, Norway, nr. 35) **līna laukaz** ‘linen & leek’, referring to the supposed preserving qualities of the combination of linen and garlic, as is suggested in the *Vølsa þátr* is irresistible (see Krause 1966:85f.). **laukaz** is connected with fertility, sexuality, invocations and charms (Heizmann 1992:375 with ref.). Thus, Krause

(1966:246f.), Antonsen (1975:63) and several others have proposed the intrinsic meaning 'prosperity'. Leek or garlic was used as an antidote or medicine (cf. Saltveit 1991:138).

**laukaz** is sometimes accompanied by other words, and appears (also abbreviated) on a significant number of bracteates: Års (II)-C (IK 8), Skrydstrup-B (IK 166), Börringe-C (IK 26), Schonen-(I)-B (IK 149), and also on the Fløksand scraper. Shortened on: Dänemark (I)(?)-C (IK 229), Seeland (I)-C (IK 330), Allesø-B, Bolbro (I)-B and Vedby-B (IK 13, 1, 2 and 3), also on Hesselagergårds Skov-C, Hesselager-C, Südfünen-C (IK nrs. 75,1, 2 and 3), Maglemose (II)-C (IK nr. 301), Lynge Gyde-C (IK nr. 289), and Hammenhög-C (IK nr. 267); maybe on Nebenstedt (I)-B (IK 128). Rynkebygård-C (IK 147: **lzolu**) is uncertain. The contexts are: nine stray finds, five from a hoard, two UFOs.

7. Checklist Runic Bracteates

The bracteates discussed below are in small capitals, whereas bracteates and other runic objects not discussed in this book are in normal lettering.

1. ALLESØ-B, BOLBRO (I)-B and VEDBY-B, Odense Amt, Funen, IK nrs. 13,1, 2 and 3, Taf. 15–16. All stray finds, turned up by ploughs. The three bracteates were found in three separate spots near Odense. Related items are Bifrons, IK nr. 23, NEBENSTEDT (I), below, nr. 29, (II), IK nrs. 128 and 129,1, Darum (IV), IK nr. 129,2 and UFO IK nr. 361. The greater part of the runes run left. There are two groups: on the left side of the bracteate is, reading from the left: **lauz**, followed by a swastika, then: **owa**. On the right side is, running left, **eapl**, preceded by a division sign of two dots. Running right is **tulz**, **l** reversed.



The **l** of **lauz** shows only its upper part, due to lack of space. It can be assumed that **lauz** is short for *laukaz* nsm. *a*-stem, 'leek, chives, garlic'. For the other runic sequences I can offer no interpretation.

2. ÅRS (II)-C, Ålborg Amt, Jutland, IK nr. 8, Taf. 9–10. Hoard find, turned up by a plough. The hoard consisted of seven type-connected bracteates, two B-types, three C-types and three D-types; six ring-shaped gold pieces and one half of a glass bead. A related item is Schleswig, IK nr. 325. The runes are on a base line, running right, **laukaz**.



3. ÅSUM-C, Skåne, IK nr. 11, Taf. 11–12. Stray find, turned up by a plough. A related item is RAUM SØNDERBY, IK nr. 340, here nr. 41. Swastika followed by runes running left between framing lines: **(e)heikakazfahi**.



Krause (1966:268) interprets: **(e)he**, *ehē* ‘for the horse’, dative of *\*eh(w)az*, cf. TIRUP HEIDE, nr. 43. **(e)he** reminds one of **æhæ** on HANTUM (chapter nine, nr. 15). **ik** is 1 sg. personal pron.; the form **ik** may be East or West Gmc. **akaz** is nsm. *a*-stem, ‘driver’, ON *aka* ‘to move, to drive, to lead’. It might be a PN; related names are ODan *Aki*, OE *Aca*, and ON *Aka-pórr*, which is an epithet of the god Thor. **fahi** is 1. sg. pres. ind. ‘I paint, draw’ (the runes), inf. Gmc *\*faihjan*. SØNDERBY (see nr. 41) has **ekfakazf**, interpreted as ‘I, Fakaz, **f[ahi]** = paint’. ON *fákr* means ‘horse’.

4. BJØRNERUD-A, Vestfold, IK nr. 24, Taf. 27–28. Stray find (?). Related items are Maen and Haugen, IK nrs. 120, 1 and 2, Skättekär, IK nr. 160, Tossene, IK nr. 187; Ufo IK nr. 196, Holmetorp, IK nr. 279. Runes run left in a segment near the head: **alu**.

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5. BÖRRINGE-C, Skåne, IK nr. 26, Taf. 29–30. Hoard find of four C-bracteates. A related item is Asmundstorp, IK nr. 18. Runes run left, in two groups. One is below the horse’s legs and the second behind the figurine. The first group reads: **laukaz**. The second reads: **tanulu:al**.

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According to the photograph and drawing in the IK the reading **tanulu** is correct; there is no **\*tantulu**, as proposed by Antonsen (1975:60). IK considers the etymology of *\*tanulu* as uncertain; a nsf. *ō*-stem is suggested and tentatively the meaning ‘protection, thrive’; *-ulu* might be a diminutive suffix. **al** is assumed to be short for **alu**.

6. DÄNEMARK (I)-C, IK nr. 229, Taf. 17–18. Find circumstances unknown. A related item is Beresina-Raum, IK nr. 217. Runes run left between framing lines **lkaz**.

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Short for **l[au]kaz**.



7. DARUM (I)-B, Ribe Amt, Jutland, IK nr. 42, Taf. 45–46. One of three similar bracteates. Hoard find from a bog consisting of eleven A, B, C and D- bracteates, gold sword-sheath equipment, glass beads and a gold pendant. Related items are Madla, IK nr. 117,1 and Djurgårdsäng, IK nr. 234. Runes run left, in two groups in front of and behind the head: **frohila** and **lapu**.

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IK is of the opinion that **frohila** is the name of the runographer, a PN with suffix *\*-ilan-*, cf. ON *\*Fraujila*, Go *Froila*, OHG *Froilo* ‘little young lord’, with *-h-* as hiatus marker. Might **frohila** be a sacral name for Balder? (Müller 1975). I suppose the text refers to an initiation rite of a young warrior, just like the related text on the DARUM (V)-C bracteate (below, nr. 8) and the SKONAGER (III)-C bracteate (below, nr. 38). DARUM and SKONAGER are near Ribe and in both places large bracteate hoards were found. One is tempted to assume the existence of a cult place there.


**lapu** means ‘invitation’ (see above).

8. DARUM (V)-C, Ribe Amt, Jutland, IK nr. 43, Taf. 47–48. Hoard find (see above, nr. 7). Runes run right; in front of the head is **alu**. Behind the horse is **niujil** < Gmc *\*niuja-* ‘new’ + *-ila*, diminutive suffix; Go *niujis*, OHG, OS *niuwī*.

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Compare also with **niuwila** on SKONAGER (III)-C, IK nr. 163, below nr. 38. According to Müller (1975:164f.) the name *niujil(a)* might refer to Balder (see above; **frohila**), or otherwise it may be an initiation name ‘young newcomer’. Yet *niujil(a)* might just be a PN, cf. OHG *Niwilo*. Antonsen (1975:59) reads *niu-jil-(a)*, nsm. *n-*stam ‘little newcomer’. **niujil** reflects an East Gmc dialect, but it is remarkable that in the same region (west coast of Jutland) an East Gmc and a West Gmc dialect (**niuwila**) appear to have been used side by side. Possibly, **niujil** should be transliterated *niuwil*, since a runic **u** also could represent *w*, such as is the case in, for instance, **uīu** *wī(h)ju* in NEBENSTEDT (I)-B, nr. 29.



‘beloved’ (cf. Antonsen 1986:328, Looijenga 1995<sup>a</sup>:96). Instead of **horaz** IK suggests reading **houaz** = *\*houhaz* ‘High One’ (Krause 1966:255, Müller 1975:163ff.). The ambivalent rune form  can represent either **r** or **u**, but has been transliterated **r** in **horaz**, because it occurs at least 14 times denoting **r** in inscriptions that have been investigated for this study (see chapter four, 15).

On the bracteate’s right side, along the edge, running right, is a sequence which should be taken as **alu**, although the last rune has a very short sidetwig. On the left, along the edge, running right, is **lapu**. Further along the edge, running right, is a sequence of runes, partly written in mirrored runes and bindrunes. IK suggests a reading **aaduaaaliuu?** and offers no interpretation.

Most of the runes are mirrored. Trying to find their meaning, I thought of transliterating the mirrored forms not by two, but by one letter. The first mirror-rune then is **a**. The next should not be taken as **d**, but as a mirrored **e**. Then follows a single rune **r**, not **u**; the rune is graphically similar to the third rune in **horaz**. The next rune is a mirrored **a**, followed by a bindrune **al**, then comes two times **i** and one single **u**. The last rune is hidden, but I suggest it to be an ‘s’. My transliteration is then **aeraaliu[s]**.

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The whole legend is then: **horaz lapu aeraaliu[s] alu**.

*hōraz* is the Gmc equivalent of Latin *carus* ‘dear, beloved’, which was a cognomen of the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius Carus<sup>2</sup> († 283), cf. Looijenga 1995<sup>a</sup>. **lapu** I take to mean ‘invitation (to the leader’s cult)’. **aeraalius** I interpret as a misspelling of *Aurelius*. According to Andrén (1991:252) in bracteate-legends the Roman equivalent of **alu** may be *pūs*, which is one of a Roman emperor’s epitheta. It may seem farfetched to interpret a runic inscription thus, and on a Scandinavian bracteate as well, but bracteates are after all inspired by Roman instances. To write the name of a Roman emperor on the bracteate might point to a Germanic ‘cult of an ideal king’,

<sup>2</sup> Germanic soldiers used to Romanize their names (Bang 1906:17ff.). The fact that the cognomen on the bracteate has been translated the other way round, from Roman into Germanic, is not as strange as it might seem because bracteates are, basically, ‘Germanized’ Roman medallions.

modelled on the image of the Roman emperor, such as is proposed by Seebold 1992.

I suggest that some returned veteran, after his twenty years service in the Roman army, introduced to his homeland a cult inspired by the Roman Emperor's cult. After all, why would you have bracteates adorned according to Roman iconography, and not have the accompanying cult as well?

12. GRUMPAN-C, Västergötland, IK nr. 260, Taf. 47–48. Hoard find, consisting of three C-bracteates, two gold spiral rings, eight glass beads and two bronze hooks. Related items are Olovstorp, IK nr. 138, Raum Randers, IK nr. 142, and VADSTENA, IK nr. 377,1, below nr. 47. The inscription has a *fupark* divided into three *attir* (eight runes each) beginning under the horse's right leg; the first *att* runs left, the next one runs right, the last one runs left again. **fuparkgw. . . . . hniji p. . . . tbeblingod. . . . .**

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The **ing** rune looks like the rune for **z**; IK suggests it should be taken as representing **ing** because it is in that rune's place in the *fupark*. Also the rune for **p** is anomalous (graphically not represented here). The runes for **d** and **m** are indistinguishable. The runes for **s** and **z** (or **ng**) are missing. The dots may have the function of dividers between the three *attir* (lit. gender, the 24-letter *fupark* was divided into three parts of eight runes each).

13. GUDME (II)-C, Funen, IK nr. 392, Taf. 134–135. Hoard find from a settlement (Gudme). Three similar C-bracteates with runes, and a finger ring were found in a posthole of a building. In addition there were two B-bracteates, IK nr. 51,3 and IK nr. 391, a C-bracteate, IK nr. 393, three D-bracteates, IK nr. 455, 2, two gold pendants, one gold knob with almandines and a silver coin (*denarius*, Faustina, 125–176). Related items are Obermöllern, IK nr. 132 and Raum Hjørring, IK nr. 180. All three items of IK nr. 392 show runes running right behind the head, **fupar**. This is a so-called *fupark* quotation.

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The whole hoard may be regarded as a building offering.

14. GURFILES (?)-C, Ala, Gotland, IK nr. 264. Taf. 55–56. Stray find, find circumstances unknown. A related item is Visby, IK nr. 385. Runes run left between framing lines, and are rather abraded, **laþaa**.

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IK suggests the form *laþa* to be East Gmc against Proto-Norse *laþu* ‘invitation’. The **þ** resembles **w**, cf. WELBECK HILL (below, nr. 48).

15. HALSKOV OVERDREV-C, Slagelse Amt, Sealand, IK nr. 70, Taf. 85–86. Hoard find from a gravel pit near the coast, found together with three gold spiral rings and several parts of gold rings. A related item is Sjöändan, IK nr. 159. Runes run left along the edge, and are partly abraded. The text probably starts in the top left-hand corner:

???**eturfahidelapo w** (or **þ**, or Roman D) **mhl̥siiaeiaugrs-  
þnbkeiaz???**

Y 1111 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100

The first part can be divided into **???etur fahide laþo**, which may mean: ]*etur* (last part of a PN?) ‘wrote the invitation’.

*fahidē* is 3 sg. pret. ind., the infinitive is Gmc *\*faihtjan* ‘to paint, to draw’ (cf. ÅSUM-C, above, nr. 3).

*laþō* is asf. *ō*-stem, ‘invitation’.

16. HAMMENHÖG-C, Ingelstad, Skåne, IK nr. 267, Taf. 57–58. Stray find from a field. Runes run right between framing lines; the initial line of the inscription resembles runic **s**, but it is part of the frame. The runes read: **lkaz**

l k a z

**lkaz** is assumed to be short for **l[au]kaz**. The **l** has the form of the younger Danish **k**-rune.

17. HEIDE-B, Schleswig-Holstein, IK nr. 74, Taf. 91–92. Turned up by a plough. The bracteate probably originated from a grave mound. A related item is Hamburg, IK nr. 71. Runes run right, **alu**.

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18. HESSELAGERGÅRDS SKOV-C, or Fredskov-C, Hesselager-C and Südfünen-C, Svendborg Amt, Funen. IK nrs. 75,1,2, and 3. Taf. 93–94. Three equal specimens were found in three different find spots, all stray finds. A related item is MAGLEMOSE (III)-C, (below, nr. 27). Five runes run widely separated along the edge: **t e d o k**. A group running right has: **luzþa**. **luz** might be an abbreviation of **l[a]u[ka]z**. For the other runic sequences I have no interpretation.

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19. HITSUM-A, Friesland, IK nr. 76, Taf. 95–96. Related items are SIEVERN, here nr. 37, and UNDLEY, here nr. 45. The HITSUM bracteate is an unlocated find from a *terp*. Runes run left in two groups: **fozo groba**.

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The rune representing **r** has the same form as **r** in Fünen(I)-C, above, nr. 11. (see also chapter four, 15).

*Fōzō* might be a North Gmc female PN, nsf. *ō*-stem, or else it may reflect a connection with the tribal name of the *Fosii*. If the language is West Gmc (in this case a Frankish dialect), the name may be a male PN, *Fozo*, nsm. *n*-stem. The form **groba** (ON *gróf*) reflects a West Gmc dialect, perhaps OS or OFris *n*/asf. *ō*-stem, cf. OHG *gruoba* ‘groove, furrow’. The meaning may be: ‘belonging to a grave’, according to Seebold (1996:196); compare Gmc *\*graban* ‘to dig, make grooves’, pret. *\*grōb-*. Seebold suggests a connection with a funeral rite.

20. HJØRLUNDE MARK-C or SLANGERUP (now: Jørlunde), Frederiksborg Amt, Sealand, IK nr. 78, Taf. 99–100. Hoard find with another three C-bracteates and a gold finger ring. A related item is Bolbro, IK nr. 29. Runes run right: **alu**.

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21. HØJSTRUP STRAND-C, Præstø Amt, Sealand IK nr. 83, Taf. 105–106. Stray find, runes run left between framing lines, **laþu** ‘invitation’.

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22. KJELLERS MOSE-C, Ringkøbing Amt, Jutland, IK nr. 289, Taf. 77–78. Related items are Holmsland, IK nr. 84 and Sejerslev Klitter, IK nr. 155. Hoard find from a bog; runes are partly illegible and run from left to right. IK reads **ll?? iualu**, which might be a combination of **alu** and, when reading from right to left: **ui** = *vī*, cf. ON *vé* ‘sanctuary, temple’, OS *wīh* ‘temple’ and OHG, OS *wīh* ‘holy’.

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If this is so, it would be another instance of a combination of **alu** and a religious concept, such as seems to be the case with the cult stone of ELGESEM (see above, in the introductory part), and with several Norwegian inscriptions on grave stones with an apparently magical connotation. (see Appendix).

23. KLÄGGERÖD-C, Slimminge, Skåne, IK nr. 97, 1 and 2, Taf. 123–124. Hoard find from a field, consisting of four or five identical bracteates; on the same spot six or seven bracteates and a gold pendant were found later. Related items are Kläggeröd-C, IK nrs. 96,1–4. The inscription has an upper line; the sidetwigs of the **a** run very low. Runes run left: **alu**.

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24. LELLINGE KOHAVE-B, Præstø Amt, Sealand, IK nr. 105, Taf. 131–132. Stray find. Related items are Obermöllern, IK nr. 132, Ravlunda, IK nr. 143 and SCHONEN (I)-B, see below, nr. 34. Runes run left along the edge; there are also a triskele and swastika. The runes may read: **salusalu**.

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It appears that the **s**-like sign might be just a word divider, so probably one should read **alu** repeated twice. Also, the etymology and meaning of **salusalu** is obscure. Lundeby (1982) suggests a connection with Nynorsk *soll*, *søl*, an edible type of alga *Rhodymenia palmata* (see below, VADSTENA nr. 47). There might also be a connection with the FLØKSAND scraper, reading: **lina laukaz**. Lundeby & Williams 1992:19–21 point especially to the nourishing qualities of **salu** = *alga* and **lina** ‘linen, flax’ = edible part of flax, i.e. the seeds. This





To the right, runes running right, is: **all** = **alu**. A third part has: **tk/lp?mhi?** with the runes running left.

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IK interprets **ho.z** as an abbreviation of **ho[ua]z**, cf. FÜNEN (I)-C., nr. 11. Both bracteates are very similar indeed, although the legends differ. I opt for the reading **ho[ra]z**, cf. nr. 11.

28. MAGLEMOSE (II)-C, Præstø Amt, Sealand, IK nr. 301, Taf. 87–88. Hoard find from a bog, containing three C-bracteates and four A-bracteates, a silver brooch and beads. Related items are Aversis-C, IK nr. 215, Frederiksstad, IK nr. 244, HAMMENHÖG-C, IK nr. 267, here nr. 16; Kjølbergård, IK nr. 95, LYNGE GYDE-C, IK nr. 298, here nr. 26; SEELAND (I)-C, IK nr. 330, here nr. 36; Snesere Overdrev, IK nr. 175, Raum Tved, IK nr. 357, and Ufo IK nrs. 199 and 364. Runes run left (**k** reversed) between framing lines, reading: **lkaz**

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This is short for **l[au]kaz**. The **l**-rune has the typical bracteate form, cf. LYNGE GYDE, above nr. 26, and HAMMENHÖG, nr. 16.

29. NEBENSTEDT (I)-B, Kreis Lüchow/Dannenberg, Niedersachsen, IK nr. 128, Taf. 165–166. Hoard find from a former bog, containing four B-bracteates, two F-bracteates and four D-bracteates; in addition there were pieces of iron, probably equipment from a horse's harness. Related items are Nebenstedt (II)-B (from the same findspot), and Darum (IV)-B, IK nr. 129,2. Runes run all around the edge: **gliaugizu iurnzl**.

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The rune representing **r** has the same form as **r** in FÜNEN (above, nr. 11), GRUMPAN, (above, nr. 12) and HITSUM (above, nr. 19; see also chapter IV, 11,2).

**gliaugiz** might be a PN or epithet, consisting of *glī-* cf. ON inf. *gljá* 'to glow', and *augiz* adj. nsm. *i*-stem 'eyed'. The legend would mean 'One with a gleaming eye'. Antonsen transliterates *glæaugiz* 'bright-eyed'.

**uïu** = \**wī(h)ju*, 1 sg. pres. ind. ‘I consecrate’.

**rnz** = **r[u]n[o]z** *rūnōz* apf. *ō*-stem ‘the runes’. The **l** at the end was hidden under the hinge, but rediscovered. It might stand for **l[aukaz]**. Together: ‘One with a gleaming eye consecrates the runes, l[aukaz]’. The consecrator may refer to **Odin**, as inventor of the runes, according to the Eddic *Hávamál*.

30. ØLST-C, Randers Amt, Jutland, IK nr. 135, Taf. 173–174. Stray find; a related item is Fjärestad, IK nr. 56, and Barshaldershed, IK nr. 216. Runes run left, one group has **hag** and the other **alu**.

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A combination may be meant of the ‘formulaic’ word **alu** and perhaps a PN *Hag* (cf. OHD *Hago*, cf. ON *hagr* ‘fit, firm’). Antonsen (1975:64) interprets *hagalu* as one word, npn. *a*-stem, ‘hailstones’, cf. **hagela** below, nr. 31.

31. OVERHORNÆK (III)-C, Viborg Amt, Jutland, IK nr. 140, Taf. 179–180. Hoard find from a bog. A related item is LINDKÆR, above, nr. 25. The hoard consisted of an A-bracteate, two C-bracteates and one D-bracteate, a silver-gilt brooch and two beads. Runes run left between framing lines along the entire edge, ending in two birds’ heads: **prkgwhagelaalaasulo?h**

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The text starts with **prkgw**, perhaps a *fupark* quotation. The **k** resembles an upside-down **t**, as in LINDKÆR. There are two bindrunes: **ha** and **la**. In the middle, after **prkgw**, the following meaningful sequence may be read: **hagela ala a[n]su**, with the mirror-rune **l** denoting **a**. I interpret **hagela** as ‘hail’, cf. **hagalu** on ØLST, nr. 30 above. **ala** means ‘all’. **a[n]su** I take as a vocative sg. m. *u*-stem. The sequence can be interpreted as ‘all hail to One of the Æsir’.

**hagal** has a negative connotation; but since the bracteate was an amulet, or a precious and special gift, the meaning of the inscription might be taken as a defence against malignant offences.

Another interpretation of **asulo** is possible, if related to Latin *ansula* ‘ring’, which might refer to the form of the bracteate (see VIMOSE III, Danish Corpus, nr. 10).

32. RAUM KØGE-C OF SEELAND (II)-C, Sealand, IK nr. 98, Taf. 125–126. Two equal items. Probably a hoard find, with another C-bracteate. Runes run left along the edge: **hariuha haitika:farauisa: gibuauja**



The first part, **hariuha**, may be a PN or epithet consisting of *hari* ‘battle’, and *uha* or, less likely, *u(n)ha*, which might be interpreted as *unga*,<sup>3</sup> ‘young’. Thus the whole word would mean “der Kampf-Junge” (Krause 1966:262) or “den hær-unge, hær-sønnen Balder, sønn av hærguden Odin” (Grønvik 1987:88). Antonsen (1975:65f., 36) compares **uha** with KRAGEHUL (chapter V, nr. 20) **uha**, and interprets *hari-ūha*, “the first among warriors”. As for **haitika**, cf. LINDHOLM (chapter V, nr. 21) **hateka** ‘I am called’ with enclitic **-ika** and **-eka**.

**farauisa** could be an epithet, consisting of *fāra-* < Gmc \**fēra-* ‘danger’, ON *fār* n., or of *fara-* ‘to travel’ and **uisa** = *wīsa* nsm. *n*-stem ‘wise’. **uisa** is written with **u** for *w*.

**gibu** is 1 sg. pres. ind. ‘I give’, inf. Go *giban*, ON *gefa*, OHG *geban*.

**auja** may be asn., meaning ‘good luck’ or ‘protection’. Other spellings of **auja** can be found on the VIMOSE buckle **auwija** (chapter V, nr. 10) and the OETTINGEN brooch **aijibrg** (chapter VII, nr. 33). The rune indicating **j** has a deviating form, it has one headstaff and a horizontal stroke through the middle, and thus looks like a rectangular cross (cf. the **j** on the Thames scramasax, see above, p. 198).

**gibu auja** is supposed to mean either ‘I give luck’ or ‘I give protection’. The whole legend is then: ‘I am called Hariuha, I am travel-wise, I give luck or protection’. This can be considered clear evidence for the amulet function of bracteates.

<sup>3</sup> The **h** would in this case have the value [ɣh], which seems unlikely, since another rune in the fuþark is supposed to represent the sound value [ɣ], the  $\diamond$  or  $\uparrow$ . There are two possibilities: that particular rune did not yet exist, or **uha** does not represent \**unga* but *ūha*, such as Antonsen claims and with which I agree.

33. RAUM TROLLHÄTTAN-A, Naglums sn., Västergötland, IK nr. 189, Taf. 243–244. The bracteate was said to be found together with IK nr. 190; they probably belonged to a hoard. Related items are Darum (II)-A, Skonager (I)-A, IK nrs. 41, 1 and 2 and Revsgård-A, IK nr. 145. Runes run right in two groups: **tawol aþodu**.

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Since in runic sequences it is allowed to read regardless of divisions or spaces between text parts, one may take the sequence as *tawō lapōdu*, which can be interpreted as *tawō*, 1 sg. pres. ‘I prepare’, cf. inf. Gmc *\*tawōn*. Compare also the forms **tawido** and **tawide** in resp. GALLEHUS and ILLERUP II (chapter five, nrs. 24 and 2). *lapōdu* may be asm. *u*-stem ‘invitation’. Thus we get: ‘I prepare the invitation’.

34. SCHONEN (I)-B, 1 and 2, and UFO-B; resp. IK nr. 149,1 and IK nr. 149,2, Taf. 191–192. Three identical items from two different find spots. The two SCHONEN (I)-B bracteates originate from a hoard, together with an A and a C-bracteate. Related items are Lellinge, IK nr. 105, Ravlunda, IK nr. 143, Obermöllern, IK nr. 132, and 3 items from Gudme. The runes run right and are on a base line: **lapulaukazgakazalu**.

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One may read this as *lapu laukaz gakaz alu*. Twice **ka** and once **ga** are written in bindrunes, cf. nrs. 46 and 40; **ga** is also in KRAGEHUL (chapter V, nr. 20) and UNDELEY (below, nr. 46).

**gakaz** = *ga(u)kaz*, nsm. *a*-stem; it might denote a bird, although Düwel (1984:332) thinks an interpretation of **gakaz** as *gaukaz* ‘cuckoo’ (cf. Krause 1966:256f.) not very convincing. He considers a PN also unlikely, since an ‘I-formula’ and/or a verb form is lacking. The legend appears to me an enumeration of formulaic words with a positive intent.

35. SCHONEN (II)-C, IK nr. 153, Taf. 197–198. Hoard find with an A and two identical B-bracteates. A related item is Sigerslev, IK nr. 158. Runes run left under an upper framing line **fupu**. Possibly a *fupark* quotation.



36. SEELAND (I)-C, IK nr. 330, Taf. 111–112. Find circumstances unknown. For related items cf. nr. 28. Runes run left between framing lines: **I[au]kaz**.



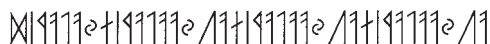
37. SIEVERN-A, Kreis Wesermünde, Niedersachsen, IK nr. 156, Taf. 201–202. Hoard find from a former bog, found while digging for peat. The hoard contained two identical C-bracteates and eight D-bracteates. Related items are HITSUM, nr. 19, and UNDELEY, nr. 46. Runes run left between framing lines along the edge: **rwritu**.

This is probably a misspelling for **rwritu**, which should be taken as consisting of: **r[unoz]**, apf. *ō*-stem ‘runes’, and **writu** 1 sg. pres. ind. ‘I write’. Note that the abbreviation **r** stands for ‘runes’, hence the **r** does not denote its name but has a semantic function, contrary to the symbolic use of **j** in the next item below, nr. 38.



38. SKOVBORGHUS-B, Haderslev Amt, Jutland, IK nr. 161, Taf. 207–208. Hoard find, which was turned up by a plough, together with three D-bracteates and a gold brooch with filigree and precious stones. A second hoard from the same spot has disappeared. A related item is Sædding, IK nr. 148. The runes run left along the edge between framing lines:

**aujaalawinaujaalawinaujaalawinjalawid.**



**auja** n/asn., see above, nr. 32.

**alawin** may be a PN or epithet, consisting of *ala* ‘all’ and *win(i)* ‘friend’, nsm. *i*-stem.

**alawid** might also be a PN; Antonsen (1975:76f.) considers *-wid* as a nsm. or vocative *ja*-stem and compares it with Go. *ga-wadjon* ‘betroth’. He interprets the name as “All-leader”. The endings are lacking in *Alawin* and *Alawid*, just as in **alugod** on the VÆRLØSE

brooch. This may be considered to reflect a West Gmc dialect. Otherwise *Alawin*, *Alugod* and *Alawid* should be taken as appellatives.

The **j** before **alawid** seems to refer to the rune name of **j** \**jāra*, meaning ‘year, harvest’, cf. **j** in STENTOFTEN (chapter five, nr. 44).

39. SKONAGER (III)-C, Ribe Amt, Jutland, IK nr. 163, Taf. 211–212. Hoard find, see above DARUM (V)-C, nr. 8 and DARUM (I)-B, nr. 7. The bracteates were part of a hoard which was found while digging for peat. The total find consists of three C-bracteates with runes, one C-bracteate without inscription, seven D-bracteates, five A-bracteates of which four bear runes: Skonager (II)-A, Darum (III)-A, IK nrs. 162,1 and 2; Darum (II)-A and Skonager (I)-A, IK nrs. 41,1 and 41,2. Two bracteates were melted down, so of the original fifteen items, thirteen are left.

The SKONAGER (III)-C inscription has two groups with runes. Running right, under the horse’s chin, is: **niuwila**. Running left, under the man’s foot, is: **lpl** or **lwl**.

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**niuwila** = \**niwjila*, < Gmc \**newja-*, \**niuja-* ‘new’, plus diminutive suffix *-ila*, cf. **niujil** in DARUM (V)-C, nr. 8, and the OHG name *Niwilo*. Antonsen (1975:76) interprets **niuwila** as derived from PG \**new-ja* + *-il-ōn* ‘little newcomer’ (see above, nrs. 7 and 8), showing gemination of *w* before *j* and therefore classified as West Germanic.

Possibly the texts of DARUM (I)-B: **frohila lapu**, DARUM (V)-C **niujil alu**, SKONAGER (III)-C: **niuwila l[a]pu**, all point to some sort of festivity (cf. Seebold 1996:196), connected with a cult place. The sort of festivity may very well have concerned ‘rites of passage’, initiation rites for young warriors.

40. SKRYDSTRUP-B, Haderslev Amt, Jutland, IK nr. 166, Taf. 215–216. Stray find in a marl pit. The iconography shows a man at full length, surrounded by a deer, a bird, two snakes and another animal, maybe a wolf. There are two groups, runes running right: **laukaz**. Running left: **alu**.

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The man appears to hold his hand in the wolf's wide open mouth, a scene that may refer to the god Týr.

41. SØNDER RIND-B, double bracteate, Viborg Amt, Jutland, IK nr. 341, Taf. 125–126. Hoard find, consisting of two similar double-bracteates. The runes are part of the ornamentation: a stylized image of a man with spear and sword. The runes are near the beast's tail; on a base line is **iwinizik**.

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The initial **i** may as well be part of the frame, hence the runic legend is **winizik**. The text may be divided into **winiz** and **ik**. *winiz* is nsm. *i*-stem; **ik** is 1 sg. personal pron., hence we get: *winiz ik* 'Friend (am) I' (cf. Düwel 1975:158f.). As to the sequence, see ESKATORP, nr. 10, **uuigaz [i]k**.

42. SØNDERBY-C, Femø, Maribo Amt, IK nr. 340, Taf. 123–124. Stray find near the beach in the water. Runes running left in framing lines: **ekfakazf**.

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**f** might be an abbreviation for *\*fāhi* 1 sg. pres. ind. 'paint', inf. Gmc *\*faihan*. The text is almost a parallel to ÅSUM nr. 3, where **fahi** is written in full, and thus we have again an indication that abbreviations were used in runic texts. **IK** interprets: *ek fākaz f(āhi)*. *Fākaz* is a PN, nsm. *a*-stem, 'horse', cf. ON *fākr*. The meaning of the inscription is: 'I, Fakaz, paint (the runes)'. Compare with **akaz** 'driver' and **(e)he** 'horse' in nr. 3. Considering the C-bracteates' iconology, might **akaz** refer to the rider on horseback?

43. SVARTEBORG-M, Bohuslän, IK nr. 181, Taf. 235–236. This fourth-century medallion predates the other bracteates by at least a century. Moreover, it is the only medallion-imitation bearing runes. It was found in a grave mound together with an urn with cremation and this, too, is peculiar, since all other bracteates from that part of Scandinavia were deposited in hoards, or are stray finds. On the front are runes; the back has capital-imitation and runelike signs.

The runic legend runs left: **sigaduz 1**.

1 YAMXIII

The **s** rune is written in double lines, similar to the doubled **s** in BERGAKKER (chapter nine, nr. 17, dated ca. 425).

**sigaduz** may be a hypocoristic PN: \**Sigi-haðuz*, or **sigaduz** may be taken as *sig(a)n(duz)* ‘magician’. Düwel took the double-lined **s** as representing two times **s** (1975:144–157), and interpreted *S(i)sig(a)n(duz)* ‘magician of *sisu*’, which means some sort of magic concerning death rituals, cf. OS *siso* ‘feierliche Klage, Leichenklage’, or ‘magical incantation’ (Syrett 1994:181f.). Parallel to the BERGAKKER inscription, it may be assumed that only one *s* should be read.

44. TIRUP HEIDE-C or SCHONEN (V), Skåne, IK nr. 352, Taf. 133–134. A related item is Broholm, IK nr. 35. Find circumstances unknown. The bracteate is quite worn, but the runes are legible, running right, **ehwu**, nsf. *wō*-stem, ‘mare’.

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45. TJURKÖ (I)-C or MÅLEN, Östra hd., Blekinge, IK nr. 184, Taf. 239–240. Hoard find of several bracteates and solidi of Theodosius II (408–450). Runes run left along the whole edge, between framing lines:

**wurterunozanwalhakurne..heldazkunimudiu . . .**

.../M/MHT/AYWMTMHT.MTR/1H11111YX1/1RMT1/1

The dots are division marks.

**wurte** = \**wurhtē*, 3 sg. pret. ind., inf. Gmc \**wurkjan* ‘to work, to make’; (cf. TUNE: **worahto**, ETELHEM: **wrte**, BY: **worte** (see Appendix) and ARLON **wo(r)gt** (chapter seven, nr. 3).

**runoz** = *rūnōz* apf. *ō*-stem ‘runes’.

**an** prep. ‘on’, cf. ON *á*.

**walhakurne** *walhakurnē*, consisting of *waltha*, cf. OHG *walh*, ON *Valir*, ‘Romans, Celts, strangers’, and *kurnē* dsn. *a*-stem ‘granule’ pointing to the strange (i.e. imported gold) granule = the gold bracteate.

**heldaz** may be a PN, nsm. *a*-stem, cf. Proto-Norse \**heldaz*, ON *hjaldr*, ‘fight(er)’ (De Vries 1962:230).

**kunimu[n]diu** is the name of the receiver: *Kunimu(n)duz*, a com-



pound of *kuni-* ‘tribe, family’, and *mu(n)diu* dsm. *u*-stem, cf. OS, OE, ON *mund*, OHG *munt* ‘hand, protection’, Lat. *manus* ‘hand’. Gmc *\*kunjā-munduz* means ‘protector of the *gens*’, so the name might be a metaphor. There is another possible interpretation of *walhakurnē*. This concerns the meaning of Gmc *\*walha-* ‘deep sleep’, *vale(n)* in Old Swedish and Norwegian dialects (Kluge/Seebold 1989:484). A connection with Swedish *vallmo* ‘poppy’, may be involved, especially considering the bracteates’ associations with medicinal and possibly religious practices. Poppies were cultivated from prehistory onwards. Since other texts on bracteates might point to edible and drinkable goods, such as **laukaz** and **alu**, a translation of *walhakurnē* as ‘poppy-head, i.e. opium’ cannot be discarded, in my view. Due to the intoxicating quality of opium, a ritual function might be involved, as seems to be the case with **alu**. The semantics of someone working runes on an opium seed box is no more difficult to understand than someone writing runes on a gold granule. ‘Heldaz made the runes on the poppyhead/gold granule (= the bracteate) for the protector of the *gens*’.

46. UNDDLEY-A, Suffolk, England, IK nr. 374b, Taf. 151–152. The bracteate is an unstratified and unassociated find made by a farmer on his land (Hines 1987:74; a drawing of the runes exists in Hines 1990<sup>b</sup>:440). The runes run from right to left, reading: **gagoga maga medu**.

The part **gagoga** is written with three rune-crosses, almost similar to **gagaga** in KRAGEHUL (chapter five, nr. 20). The **o** rune in **gagoga** is an Anglo-Frisian rune, never found in Scandinavia. Parsons (1999:67) points to the observation that the ǿ-rune “on its own need indicate no more than the development of *\*ans-* > *\*ãs-*. This is a sound-change that took place not only in England and Frisia, but also in Schleswig-Holstein and Scandinavia (Nielsen 1981:145–6, 211–12; 1991:45)”. The question remains, was the bracteate made on the Continent, or in England? (see Hines & Odenstedt 1987 and Hills 1991<sup>a</sup>). In view of the similarities to other inscriptions from Jutland, Funen and Skåne (Schonen) it is tempting to agree with Hines and Odenstedt that the Undley bracteate was made on the Continent. For a lengthy discussion, see Parsons (1999:62–7).

If the language were pre-Old English, the transliteration might be: **gægogæ mæga medu**. \*ga- became \*gæ- in pre-OE through fronting. The unaccented final vowel in **gægogæ** may be written *e*, as unaccented *a* > *e* (Campbell § 333). The transliteration of the second group is more difficult. We may prefer **maga**, according to the rule of restoration of *ā* before back vowels, cf. Campbell § 157, § 574 (analogous to *daga*). *maga* is gpm. *u*-stem: ‘of the kinsmen’. The Undley inscription may show the very instance of the rune ᚠ representing both sounds *e* en *a* (cf. Odenstedt 1991:53–69).

**medu** is nsf. *ō*-stem ‘reward’, cf. OE *mēd*, *meord* < Gmc \**mezdō* (Campbell § 585, 588). The text would then be: ‘*gægogæ* reward of the kinsmen’.

Yet, what does *gægogæ* mean? The sequence *gægogæ* should be considered as an echo of the obscure **gagaga** in KRAGEHUL.

However, Eichner (1990:317, note 20) draws attention to a remarkable parallel in Beowulf, which he chooses not to relate with the Undley text: “Fern bleibt freilich Beowulf 247 *māga gemēdu* ‘die Zustimmung der Stammesgenossen’ (. . .)”. It would seem to me, though, that there may be something in this. The text in Beowulf concerns the landing of the Wederas on the Danish coast, where they are met by Hrothgar’s thane, who violently shakes his mighty spear shaft in his hand and says, “Never have warriors bearing shields made their approach more openly, and yet you had no knowledge of the warriors’ *password* agreed on by our kinsfolk”. This is the translation by Garmonsway/Simpson (1980:9) of the sentence *nēgē lēafnes-word gūð-fremndra gearwe ne wisson, māga gemēdu*. The translation by Wrenn/Bolton (1973:107) is: “nor did you make certain of having the permission, the *consent* of the warlike kinsmen”; Wrenn/Bolton add: “*Lēafnes-word* is parallel variation to *gemēdu*”, both meaning *password* or *consent*.

I conjecture: if Undley contains a similar text, albeit in a shortened version, would it be possible to take **gægogæ** as the *password*? After all, the inscription is in runes on a bracteate, which can be considered an important object in gift-exchanging networks among the Germanic elite of the Migration Period. If the Undley text is taken as *māga (ge)mēdu*, the meaning would be: *māga* ‘of the kinsmen’; *gemēdu* apn. *ja*-stem ‘consent’; hence: ‘*gægogæ* = the password, the kinsmen’s consent’.

47. VADSTENA-C, Östergötland, IK nr. 377,1 and MOTALA = Raum Mariedam, IK 377,2, Taf. 157–158. These are identical bracteates

from two different find spots. VADSTENA comes from a hoard, the other is an UFO. The Vadstena original was stolen in 1938; IK used a copy for the description. Related items are Norra Torlunda, IK nr. 130, Ravnstorp, IK nr. 313, Silleby Mellangården, IK nr. 334, Viby, IK nr. 381.

The runes on both bracteates run left along the edge, and read, starting from the loop:

**luwatuwa.fuparkgw:hniĵbz:tbemlngo(d).**

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𐌹𐌶𐌰𐌽𐌺𐌴𐌹𐌶𐌰

This is a complete *fupark*, divided into three *attir* and ending in **od**, although the **d** is nearly invisible. Both VADSTENA and GRUMPAN end in **od**, whereas the KYLVER *fupark* ends in **do**. The double occurrence of the rune for **b**—instead of **b** and **p**—is remarkable.

**luwatuwa** is, according to Antonsen, (1975:72) uninterpretable, and Krause (1971:171) remarks: “magische Doppelformel . . . Deutung ist nicht möglich”. Lundeby & Williams (1992:17) read **tuwa-tuwa** and regard this as a parallel to **salusalu** on the LELLINGE bracteate, see above nr. 24. **tuwa** has a connection with either Gmc *\*taujan* ‘to do, make’ or with English *tow*, ON *tó* ‘linen and/or wool’, Dutch *touw*, cf. Gmc *\*tauwa* ‘made of flax’ (De Vries 1971:743). The reference to flax, linen or wool concerns the spinning of these materials, according to both Lundeby and Williams. This would classify these texts, and the **alu** and **laukaz** texts, as a series of names for natural products: *alga*, *linen*, *wool*, *ale*, *leek*, *garlic*.

48. WELBECK HILL-(?), Irby, Lincolnshire, England. IK nr. 388, Taf. 165–166. A silver bracteate, found in a woman’s grave (Hines 1990:445). Date: mid-sixth century, which postdates the other bracteates. In private possession. The bracteate is of local Anglian manufacture, but may be a copy of a Scandinavian one. Apart from the silver bracteate, some bronze objects were found in the grave, and some glass and amber beads, an iron knife, an iron buckle, an iron ring, four iron keys and an ivory ring, according to Hines. The runes run left, and read: **law**, which could be miscopied **lap** for the well-known bracteate-word *lapu* ‘invitation’.

8. *Conclusions*

There are 10 sentences; the verb forms are: **fahi** (I paint), **fahidu** (I painted) **fahide** (he painted), **uüu** (I consecrate), **gibu** (I give), **haitika** (I am called), **tawo** (I prepare), **wurte** (I made), **writu** (I write).

There are 2 makers' signatures and two writers' signatures (taken that **uüu** may be a writer's formula too).

There are 17 PNs or epithets, or titles (**erilaz**), all masculine.

The 'I, so and so' formula occurs 5 times.

The object itself is referred to twice, and perhaps three times, if **a[n]sulo** is taken to mean the bracteate.

There are 5 dedications (not counting the **alu**, **laukaz**, **lapu** and **auja** texts); 2 dedications to a horse, one perhaps to the 'ideal king' cult, one to a grave, one perhaps to a sanctuary.

According to Peterson (1994<sup>b</sup>:161) names or bynames occurring in bracteate legends have counterparts in West Germanic, especially in the Lower Rhine area. They are not met with in later Scandinavia. Among them are: Alawin, Alawid, Frohila, Kunimu(n)duz, Niužil(a), Niuwila, Sigaduz.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONTINENTAL RUNIC INSCRIPTIONS FROM CA. 200–700

#### 1. *Introduction*

The Continental Runic Corpus contains mainly inscriptions from Germany, complemented with inscriptions found in France, Belgium, Bosnia, Hungary and Switzerland.

The Thorsberg (Schleswig-Holstein) objects are also included here, since these objects originate from a region between the Lower Elbe and the Rhine and because the inscriptions were probably made during the production process (see chapter two). The runic items from the Netherlands are treated separately in chapter nine, although, from a geographical point of view, one might want to list them among the Continental Corpus (as Arntz & Zeiss 1939 did). The reason they are not included in the Continental Corpus is their *status aparte*, and their links to the Anglo-Saxon runic tradition. The same goes for the inscriptions from Jutland: although Jutland is part of the European continent, the runic inscriptions are listed among the Danish ones, being part of the Scandinavian, or North Germanic, Corpus.

Geographically, most of the objects were found in Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria, fewer in the Middle-Rhine area and Thuringia and only a few in North Germany.

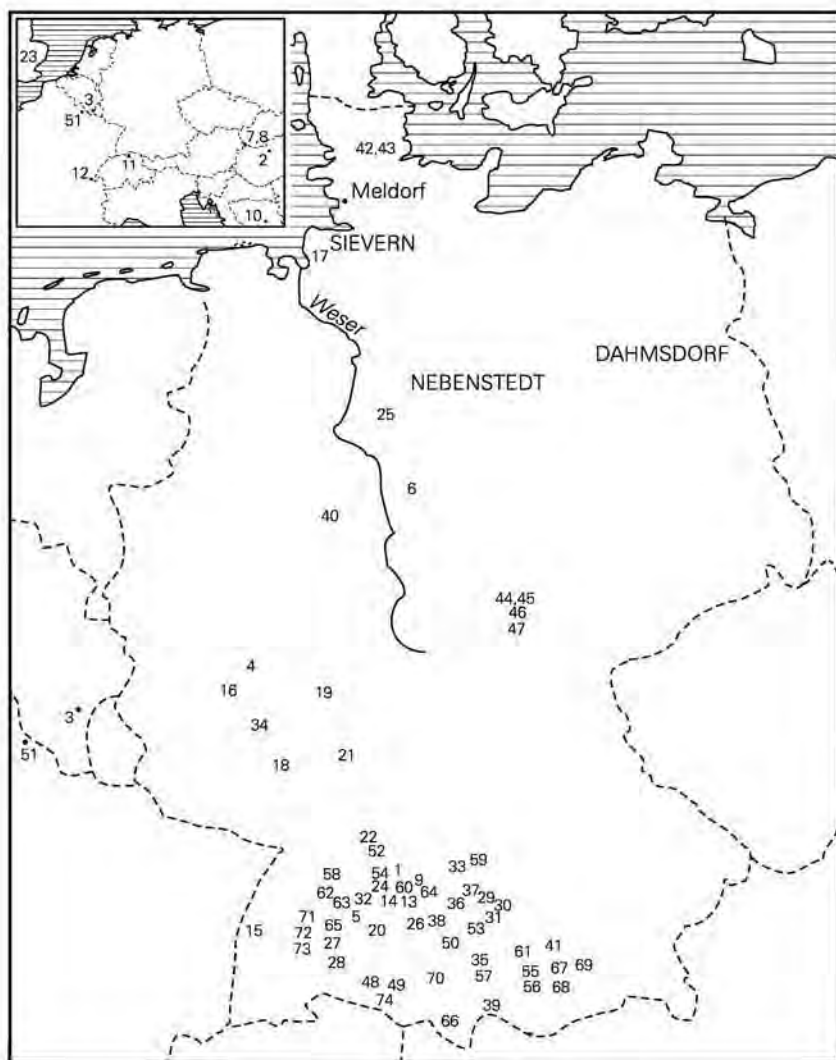
The objects from Bosnia, Hungary, Belgium, Switzerland and France may be referred to as outliers from a runic centre, which seems to have had its nucleus in the South-west of Germany. A smaller runic centre existed in the middle Rhine area, a Frankish region. Runic writing in Germany coincided with Merovingian supremacy (see also chapter two).

The items known as Rubring, Trier, Kärlich, Arguel, Kleines Schulerloch are falsifications. (For Kärlich and Kleines Schulerloch see Düwel in *Hoops Reallexikon*: ‘Fälschungen’). Even without inspecting these items, from the find-histories and photographs it became

clear to me that they were forgeries. The inscriptions on the *Weser Runenknochen* I consider dubious and probably falsifications; see chapter one, 14.

Surveys of the South Germanic or Continental Corpus are published by Düwel 1991 and 1994; Opitz 1977, 1979, 1982, 1986; Krause & Jankuhn 1966, Jänichen 1967, Arntz & Zeiss 1939. Datings are provided by the archaeologists Roth 1981 and 1994, and Steuer 1998. Some items are lost: Dischingen I, Engers, Friedberg, Weimar III.

Excellent photographs exist in Krause/Jankuhn 1966, in Arntz/Zeiss 1939 and in Düwel 1994 and Düwel 1997<sup>a</sup>.



Map 8. Findspots of runic objects in Germany (Second to seventh centuries).

## 2. Checklist of Continental Inscriptions

Legible and (partly) interpretable inscriptions

1. **AALEN** (Baden-Württemberg, Germany). In the Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Frankfurt am Main. A silver neck ring with almandine-inlay, dated 1st half 5th c.; the almandines were added in the 6th c. Said to have been found in 1945 near Aalen. It has four runes: **noru** scratched onto the inner edge opposite the catch.

†ORR

This may be the name of the owner. **noru** < Gmc \**nōruz*, nsm. *u*-stem *Noru*. Torques ornamented like the Aalen one are known from an area that stretches from Scandinavia to Rumania, with a centre around the Main. They are Celtic and classical Roman in origin, and belong to the “elbgermanisch-alamannischen Horizont der ersten Hälfte des 5. Jahrhunderts” (Wamers 1986:20f.). Such neck rings seem to be a sign of the ruling status of a prominent man (Düwel 1991:282).

2. **AQUINCUM** (Budapest, Hungary). In the Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum, Budapest. A possibly Langobardic silver-gilt bow-fibula, one of a pair. Dated 1st h. 6th c. The pair was found in 1940 as part of a hoard near the entrance to the Roman theatre of Aquincum.

The runes read: **fuparkgw ]?laig : kingia**

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The first part is a *fupark*-quotation, followed by an owner-formula. The initial runes immediately follow upon the needle-holder and apparently were part of a longer inscription, which may have contained a name. The needle-holder is a later addition and the inscription may therefore have been made during the production process of the brooch. The rune, which I transliterate as **g**, has been read as **n** by Krause (1964:357), but since both strokes are about equally long, I suppose a **g** should be read and this produces a verb form **aig**, 1 or 3 sg. pres. ind. ‘own’, cf. Go. *aih*, inf. Gmc *\*aigan* ‘to own’.

**kingia** = *kingia* asf. *jō*-stem, (Krause 1964:357f.; Gering 1887:94: *kinga* “Henkelmünze von frauen als schmuck getragen”). The sound value of the rune  $\uparrow$  apparently is **ing** here, but might as well be **ng** (Odenstedt 1990:103ff. with ref.). There is a semantic difference between *kingia* and *kinga* (Düwel 1992<sup>a</sup>:80). ON and NIc *kinga* means ‘brooch’, while NIc *kingja* is a sort of buckle. I suggest the runographer wanted to render *kinga*. ‘...I owns the brooch’ is an owner’s inscription.

3. ARLON (Luxembourg, Belgium), silver bulla. In the Musée Luxembourgeois, Arlon. It is dated 1st th. 7th c. Found in 1936 in a Frankish row-grave field (Roosens & Alenus-Lecerf 1965:119–127).

The runes read: **godun o e s rasuwa(m)ud wo?gt**

X  $\mathfrak{G}$   $\mathfrak{D}$   $\mathfrak{U}$   $\mathfrak{N}$   $\mathfrak{I}$   $\mathfrak{O}$   $\mathfrak{E}$   $\mathfrak{S}$   $\mathfrak{R}$   $\mathfrak{A}$   $\mathfrak{S}$   $\mathfrak{U}$   $\mathfrak{W}$   $\mathfrak{A}$   $\mathfrak{M}$   $\mathfrak{U}$   $\mathfrak{D}$   $\mathfrak{W}$   $\mathfrak{O}$   $\mathfrak{?}$   $\mathfrak{G}$   $\mathfrak{T}$

$\mathfrak{N}$   $\mathfrak{M}$   $\mathfrak{P}$   $\mathfrak{X}$   ~~$\mathfrak{S}$   $\mathfrak{B}$   $\mathfrak{X}$   $\mathfrak{T}$~~

X  $\mathfrak{O}$   $\mathfrak{M}$   $\mathfrak{I}$   $\mathfrak{O}$   $\mathfrak{E}$   $\mathfrak{S}$   $\mathfrak{R}$   $\mathfrak{A}$   $\mathfrak{S}$   $\mathfrak{U}$   $\mathfrak{W}$   $\mathfrak{A}$   $\mathfrak{M}$   $\mathfrak{U}$   $\mathfrak{D}$   $\mathfrak{W}$   $\mathfrak{O}$   $\mathfrak{?}$   $\mathfrak{G}$   $\mathfrak{T}$

The bulla is heavily damaged. The empty places indicate the lost runes which have vanished together with parts of the bulla. Nevertheless the text can be reconstructed reasonably well.

**godun** is a PN, dsf. *n*-stem: ‘for Goda’.

**rasuwa(m)u[n]d** is also a PN, nsm. *Rasuwamund*; the first element is **rasuwa-**, cf. OE *ræswa* ‘leader, ruler’. The second element *-mund*, < Gmc *\*mundō* ‘hand, protection, security’, is originally a feminine *ō*-stem. The (**m**) in **rasuwa(m)u[n]d** has weathered away. The [**n**]

in *-mund* has been omitted before the homorganic *d*, a common practice in runic writing.

Names ending in *-mund* are masculine among the Franks (cf. Gregory of Tours' *Historiae Francorum*). The centre of manufacture of *bullae* was Mainz, but Franconian names would not have been out of the ordinary, since Mainz had a Rhine-Franconian dialect in OHG times.

The third rune in **wo?gt** may be a damaged **r**, in view of what is left of the rune. The ultimate rune might be **t**, although its sidetwigs are missing. **wo(r)gt** may be taken as a verb form: *worgt* = *worhta*, 3 sg. pret. ind. of OHG *wurken* 'to work, to make'. The inscription would thus be a maker's formula. Nedoma (1992:6) offers another proposal: inspired by the recorded name *Votriilo* he suggests reading a PN *wōpro*.

4. BAD EMS (Hessen, Germany), fragment of a silver-gilt bow-fibula. In the Römisches-Germanisches Museum, Köln. It is dated 3rd th. 6th c. Found in 1878, probably Frankish (Werner 1935:329f.). The runes are clearly legible and inscribed in two parts opposite each other on the footplate, which is the only part of the brooch that remains. The runes read: **]madali+ ubada[**

𐌿𐌿𐌿𐌿𐌿𐌿+ 𐌺𐌸𐌿𐌿

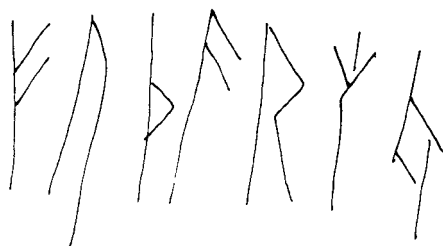
There may have been more runes preceding **]madali** and following **ubada[**. The left half of the **m** is broken away with the rest of the brooch, the **l** is smaller than the preceding **a** and the next **i**. The little cross following **madali** may be a word-divider (Krause 1935:331ff.) or a Christian marker, cf. OSTHOFEN, below, nr. 34.

**madali** is according to Krause (1935:332) a PN, nsm., based on Gmc *\*mapla-* 'redenswerte Sache', with svarabhakti *-a-*: *\*mapala*, *\*maðala*. Cf. also OHG *mahal* 'Gerichtsstätte, Versammlung' (Gottschald 1982:337). The **d** rune in the inscription denotes the voiced allophone of *p*, according to Krause. ARUM (chapter nine, nr. 11) shows a parallel: **edæ** = *ēðæ* = *ēthe* 'oath'.

**madali** could be a man's name, nsm. *ja*-stem *Madali*; or a woman's name derived from *Madala*, nsf. *ō-* or *n*-stem (Kaufmann 1965:97).

In **ubada** the nasal before homorganic **b** may have been omitted; Krause (1935:332f.) reads *umbada*; a merger of *umbi* 'around' and





BNIRLQ    FNDRYP

On the footplate are some ornamental lines.

**buirso** = *buriso*, which may be a female PN, n/dsf. *ō*-stem, or a male PN, nsm. *n*-stem *Buriso*.

**fuparzj** is a fupark-quotation. More instances of fupark-quotations are in chapter six.

7, 8. BEZENYE I, II, also known as PALLERSDORF (Komitat Mosony, Hungary). In the Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum, Budapest. A pair of Langobardic silver bow-fibulae, both with runes. Dated mid 6th c. Found in 1885 in a woman's grave in a row-grave field (Arntz & Zeiss 1939:326; Opitz 1977:11).

The runes read:

7: **godahid unj?**

XOMFHIM    N+I

**godahid** is a PN., a compound of *Goda-* (see above, nr. 3) and *-hi(l)d* < Gmc *\*hildjō*, dsf. *jō*-stem, ending has dropped; 'to Godahi(l)d'. The second word Krause (1966:300) tentatively reads as **unja**; the **a** is uncertain. Krause supposed **unja** to be miswritten for *wunja* n/asf. *jō*-stem, "Wonne" = 'joy'. But initial *w* is retained before vowels in OHG (Braune/Eggers § 106).

8: **?arsiboda segun**

FRĒIBŌMF 𐌺MXX†

**arsiboda** might be preceded by a **k** in the roof form:  $\wedge$  as in PFORZEN (see below) and BREZA (see below), but is incomplete; the stroke may be an ingress sign. Krause read **karsiboda**. **arsiboda** is a PN, gsf.  $\bar{o}$ -stem *Arsiboda*'s. The **b** only shows one loop (Düwel 1994:234).

**segun** = OHG *segun*, nsm. *a*-stem, 'bless', which points to Christian influence (Düwel 1982:40). There is variation in **s**-runes: one has four strokes, one three. The inscription on both brooches may mean: 'Godahi(l)d joy, Arsiboda bless'.

9. BOPFINGEN (Baden-Württemberg, Germany). In the Württembergisches Landesmuseum, Stuttgart. A gold disc-brooch with runes. Dated end 6th c. Found in a woman's grave.

The runes read: **mauo**

𐌺𐌺𐌺𐌺

This may be taken either as *mauō* or *mawō*, in the latter case **u** is used for *w*. In OHG manuscript orthography the use of *u*, *uu* for *w* is common, but apparently the same goes for runic orthography, cf. **urait** for *wrait*, see below, nrs. 28 and 57. The bracteates of NEBENSTEDT and RAUM KØGE (chapter six, nrs. 29, 32), for instance, show also **u** for *w*.

*Mawō* is dsf.  $\bar{o}$ -stem, 'for the girl', cf. OHG *\*mau(w)a*, cf. Go. *mawi* f. 'girl'. A brooch is a typical woman's adornment, often received at a young age. When reading **mauo** it could be an Alamannic or Frankish man's name, *Mauo*, nsm. *n*-stem.

10. BREZA (Bosnia). In the Zemalski Museum, Sarajevo. In 1930 the remains of a late antique building were excavated at Breza, a village on the river Stavnja, about 25 kms north of Sarajevo (Arntz/Zeiss 1939). Among the debris a fragment of a semi-circular half-column (limestone, not marble) was found, which bears a nearly complete fuþark. Another column has a Latin alphabet. The building may have been an early Christian church, and the date may be early sixth century.

The fragment is 56 cm high, 30 cms wide and 20 cms deep. The

runes are of the older futhork. They run right, and the last four runes are missing because an edge of the stone has broken away. The runes are between 0,5 and 2,6 cms high. The **h** is double-barred, which indicates a Continental (not Scandinavian or Gothic) origin for this futhork. I inspected the object and its inscription in October 1998. Until then, no runologist had personally inspected the runes.

The futhork is just below a groove under the upper brim of the column's fragment, on the right hand top corner (Looijenga 1999). When seen from front, the runes run from about the centre of the column to the right. The inscription would have run all the way to the column's end, but there the edge of the stone is broken away, and the four last runes have disappeared with it. The sequence is that of the older futhork until **t**. Then follows **e m l**. Thus, **b i n g d o** are lacking, which agrees precisely with the size of the piece which is broken away.

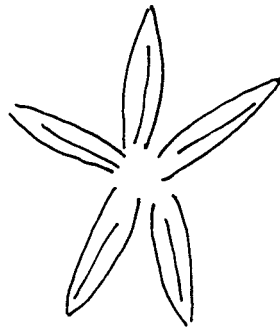
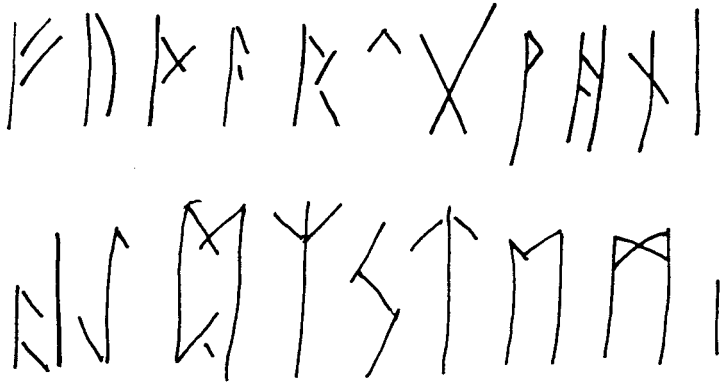
The runes are very neatly, but inconspicuously, carved into the soft marly surface with a sharp instrument. They have not been chiseled, but cut with a knife. It is difficult to see the inscription if one does not know it is there. In that respect the runes resemble runes on small metal or wooden objects;<sup>1</sup> they are quite unlike the runic inscriptions on stones in Scandinavia. For this reason alone, it is unlikely that the runes would have had a public function as reference for the reading of Gothic documents, as is suggested by Basler (1993:28f.). A function in a consecration rite, as I have suggested (see chapter two), could on the other hand be possible. In that case it is not so much the reading of the letters that matters, but the fact that the whole futhork and the whole Latin alphabet, are there.

Since the column with the runes is only 56 cms high, we must presume that the columns were situated on small walls, otherwise it would be impossible even to read the inscriptions.

When scrutinizing the whole surface of the column, there are many scratches, including across the runes. It seems that there were at least two more inscriptions that have been deliberately scraped

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<sup>1</sup> The shaping on a lathe of the columns and the cutting of runes with a knife, or another sharp instrument, points to artisans who were used to working with wood instead of stone. Also the *Kerbschnitt* style is really a woodcutting-style, although it was also used in metal. These features may point to Germanic artisans, rather than ancient artisans.



off. One runs horizontally on the left hand top, at the same height as the fupark and another runs vertically on the left side of the column. This inscription ends in a clear X. Some strokes, perhaps the remains of letters (Roman cursive?) can be seen. A deliberate handmade cut runs from top to bottom, on the left side of the vertical inscription.



The runes are all about 2 cms high. Each rune occupies a space of about one cm. The rune for **k** is very small: 0,5 cm high. The runes **p z s t** are all over 2 cms high; they run up to the rim of the groove. **p** and **z** are the largest; respectively 2,4 and 2,6 cms high. The last rune to be seen is **i**, which misses its sidetwig in the break.

One would expect the rune for **b** to follow upon **t**, but here we must suppose that **b** was one of the four runes which have disappeared in the break. The rune for **k** has the shape of a roof, also found in

PFORZEN, DISCHINGEN (see below) and WATCHFIELD (England, chapter eight), the bracteates RAUM KØGE-C and BÖRRINGE-C (see chapter six); and occurs perhaps in MÜNCHEN-AUBING **nm?u/k** (see below, nr. 68) and NEUDINGEN BAAR **klefilpa** (see below, nr. 27). The runeform for **p** occurs also in WESTEREMDEN B (Netherlands, chapter nine), in the sequence **up**. The runeform for **j** occurs in BERGAKKER (Netherlands, chapter nine), BEUCHTE and BEZENYE I (see above), and three bracteates: DARUM (V)-C, SKODBORGHUS-B, VADSTENA-C (see chapter six).

If the double-barred **h** rune is indeed diagnostic for the Continental runic inscriptions, the conclusion is that this inscription cannot be assigned to the Gothic runic tradition, but should be considered in the light of other Continental inscriptions. Geographically nearest are the runic items of BEZENYE, AQUINCUM and PFORZEN, at least that is where they were found. BREZA, PFORZEN and BEZENYE have some runeforms in common, the roof shaped **k**, the form of the **j**, the double-barred **h**.

A little below the futhark, near the centre of the stone, is a carving of a kind of flower. It has five leaves (see drawing). The flower is 4 cms high; the leaves are all about 2 cms. This picture reminds of the 'stars' with six points, on amulets made of antler's burr (see for instance Plate LVII in Roes 1963:71ff.). In Merovingian times six-pointed stars were drawn by means of compasses (Veeck 1931, pl. 9, 4, 5, 9; and Werner 1935, pl. 36, A 2c.). The technique by which the stone surface was decorated, originated in the silversmiths' art. This conclusion agrees nicely with the observation that the inscription most likely was executed by someone who was used to working with metal or wooden objects.

11. BÜLACH (Kanton Zürich, Switzerland). In the Schweizerisches Landesmuseum, Zürich.

An alamannic silver disc-brooch with almandine-inlay. Dated 3rd th. 6th. c. Found in 1927 in a woman's grave in a row-grave field. The runes are carved in three rows beneath each other and read:







inf. OHG *wīgan* ‘to fight’. When reading **winka**, *win-* cf. OHG *wini* m. ‘friend’. The **k** rune has the form of a ‘roof’  $\wedge$ , which is also found in PFORZEN, MÜNCHEN-AUBING III, BREZA, WATCHFIELD (England), and NEUDINGEN-BAAR.

14. DONZDORF (Baden-Württemberg, Germany). In the Württembergisches Landesmuseum, Stuttgart. A pair of Scandinavian silver bow-fibulae, in all likelihood imported from Jutland. Dated 1st h. 6th c. Found in 1964 in a rich woman’s grave in a row-grave field.

One of the brooches bears runes, reading **eho**

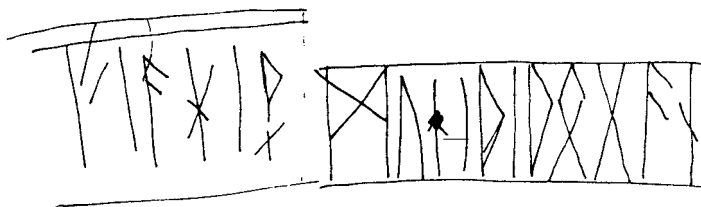
ᚱᚷᚨ

Runes and decoration are carved in zig-zag technique, otherwise known from ØVRE STABU (Norway), MELDORF (Schleswig-Holstein) and NÆSBJERG (Denmark). The **h** rune is single-barred, which may point to a Scandinavian runographer. According to Düwel (1994<sup>b</sup>:237, 265) this is an instance of the very rare makers’ inscriptions in the German corpus (the others are, according to Düwel, WURLINGEN and SCHRETZHEIM III). Also ARLON has a maker’s inscription (see above, nr. 3).

The **eho** inscription is part of the overall ornamentation on the back of the brooch. **eho** may be a Scandinavian female PN, nsf. *ō*-stem *Ehō*. Otherwise it could be a male PN, nsm. *n*-stem *Eho*, in that case a West Gmc man’s name (cf. the names ending in *-o* in the Danish Corpus, chapter five, nrs. 2, 4, 8, 11, 15, 17, 23, 25, 27, 34). The **h** may represent [x] or [ç].

Germanic PNs with an element ‘horse’ are quite rare, according to Stanley (1990:61), but there are the mythological brothers *Hengest* and *Horsa*: ‘Stallion’ and ‘Horse’, and the moneyer’s name on hundreds of *sceattas*: **epa** or **æpa**, which is a PN, nsm. *n*-stem, *Epa*, *Æpa*, based on Celtic *Epo* ‘horse’ (Kaufmann 1965:14). Wulf (1994:32) is of the opinion that horse designations as element in PNs are quite common (and not only in Germanic). Also **æhæ** in HANTUM (chapter nine, nr. 15), **(e)he** in ÅSUM (chapter six, nr. 3) and **ehwu** in TIRUP HEIDE (chapter six, nr. 43) belong to this name category (given that they are names). For more information and other interpretations, see Jänichen (1967:234), Düwel & Roth (1977:410), and Peterson (1994<sup>b</sup>:144f.).

15. EICHSTETTEN (Baden-Württemberg, Germany). In the Museum für Ur- und Frühgeschichte ‘Colombischlössle’, Freiburg. A silver mouth piece for a spatha. Dated mid 6th c. Found in 1980 in a man’s grave. The runes read: **fiaginþ muni wiwogan**



fiaginþ muni wiwogan

The **w** runes have exceedingly large loops, as on the MELDORF brooch, several bracteates and the SCHWEINDORF solidus (chapter nine, nr. 7).

The **g** in **wiwogan** is rendered X; the **g** in **fiaginþ** is the so-called star rune †, otherwise known from Anglo-Saxon rune rows in manuscripts and the Gandersheim Casket (Schwab 1973, Looijenga & Vennemann 2000).<sup>2</sup>

In **fiaginþ** the last two runes are written as a bindrune. The feature bindrune is also well-known from Anglo-Saxon inscriptions on the Continent, e.g. from the pilgrims’ names at Monte St. Angelo in Italy (Derolez 1983).

**fiaginþ** I take to be a PN, nsf. *jō*-stem *Fiaginth*, cf. *Fiaspurc* (Förstemann 1990:504); *-inth* may be an alternative for *-guth*, OHG *-gund* nsf. *jō*-stem ‘battle’, a frequent suffix in women’s names, cf. SCHRETZHEIM I (below, nr. 35). Note that also *-birg* and *-burg* display the divergence *i*—*u*. They also occur as second name-elements.

**wiwogan** I take to be a PN, asm. *n*-stem. Other names with initial *wī-* in runic inscriptions are: **wiwaz** (TUNE) ‘the darting-one’ (Antonsen 1975:44f.) and **wiwila** (VEBLUNGSNES), **uuigaz** on ESKATORP and VÄSBY (chapter six, nr. 10), **wimœd** on WESTEREMDEN B (chapter nine, nr. 13). The element **wi-** might be connected with OHG *wīgan* ‘to fight’, especially because of the *-g-* in *wiwogan*, taken that

<sup>2</sup> The star rune is epigraphically attested in England: DOVER **jīslheard** and THORNHILL III **jīlsuiþ**, and in the Netherlands in WESTEREMDEN A: **adujīslu jīsuldu**. The rune appears in these five cases in the same sequence *jī-/gī-* (see also Parsons 1994:201–204).

the name is related to OHG *wīgant* ‘warrior’. A connection with *wīhen* ‘to consecrate’ is also a probability. Wulf (1994:36ff.), however, is of the opinion that in cases like these a connection with ‘to fight’ is the more likely, since meanings such as ‘consecrater, consecrating’ are doubtful (perhaps except for bracteate inscriptions).

*Wīwo-* may be a variation on OHG names like *Wīwa*, *Wīwila*. Förstemann (1990:1626) mentions VIV as an enigmatic root; Peterson (1994<sup>b</sup>:147–149, with ref.) says about *Wīwaz* etc.: “an extremely tricky group of names”.

**muni** is 3 sg. opt. ‘may F. Remember’, cf. Go. *ga-munan* ‘to remember’. As a whole, the text can be taken as: ‘may Fiaginth remember Wiwoga’.

The graphic representation of the **w** rune and the use of the star rune may point to an Anglo-Frisian (-influenced) runographer. (For another reading and interpretation see Opitz, 1982).

16. **ENGERS** (Rheinland-Pfalz, Germany), silver-gilt bow-fibula. Found in a woman’s grave in a Frankish row-grave field near Kaltenengers in 1885. Dated 3rd th. 6th c. Melted down. The runes read: **leub**



(Drawing taken from R. Henning *Die deutschen Runendenkmäler*, Strassburg 1889, fig. 19).

Two interpretations are possible: 1. It is a noun, nsn. *a*-stem ‘love’. 2. It is an adjective, nsm./f./n. *a*-/*ō*-stem ‘dear, beloved’ (see also NIEDERSTOTZINGEN, below, nr. 29). According to the drawing in Henning (1889:156) the form of the **e** rune resembles the peculiar form of **e** in BERGAKKER (chapter nine, nr. 17). The name-element *Leub-* is typical for the Rhine region (Weisgerber 1966/67:220).

17. **FALLWARD** (Niedersachsen, Germany). In the Museum Bederkesa. A wooden footstool, richly decorated in *Kerbschnitt* after Mediterranean fashion. Dated ca. 425. It was found in 1994 during excavations of a grave field in the Fallward *Warft*, near Wremen, 4 km. south of the well-known Feddersen Wierde (Düwel 1994<sup>a</sup>:14ff.).

The stool has on the bottom a sketch of a dog chasing a deer or elk, and on the front a runic inscription: **ksamella lguskapi**. The runes run left.

𐌰𐌿𐌶𐌰 𐌰𐌿𐌶𐌰 𐌰𐌿𐌶𐌰 𐌰𐌿𐌶𐌰 𐌰𐌿𐌶𐌰

The first **a** in **ksamella** has three sidetwigs, which reminds one of the so-called ornamental forms of the OOSTUM inscription (chapter nine, nr. 3), showing a **b** with three loops 𐌵 and an **h** with three bars 𐌺. The **s** runes are in three strokes. The **k** rune has been rendered as a little hook, such as in BALINGEN, CHARNAY, AQUINCUM and KENT I.

**ksamella** is a misspelling for *skamella*, cf. Latin *scamellus*, German *Schemel* 'footstool'.

**lguskapi** can be read either *l(a)guskapi* (cf. ILLERUP **laguþewa**), or *(a)lguskapi*, borrowing its initial **a** from the preceding ultimate rune of *skamella*. It happens more often that one rune should be read twice.

Presumably, *Alguskapi* is a name. The second element *-skapi* may be 2 sg. imp. of *\*skapjan* 'to hurt, to damage' (Antonsen 1975:54), cf. **hahaskapi** on the STRØM whetstone, see Appendix, Norway, nr. 44. (Krause 1966:112 transliterates and interprets *hāhā skapi*, as a 3 sg. opt. 'damage the growth').

Other possibilities are a nomen actionis 'hurt', or a nomen agentis 'hurter', either male or female, *i*-stem (compare the Dutch name *Tesselschade*, daughter of a ship-owner who lost part of his fleet in a terrible storm near the island of Texel). *Skadi* is also known as the name of the giantess whom *Njordr*, god of the sea, married.

**algu-** means 'elk', ON *elgr*. If there is a connection between the drawing and the inscription, *Alguskapi* may be the buried man's name 'Elkhurter = Elkhunter'. If a nomen agentis, the language may be West Gmc, masculine nom. with loss of the nominative marker *-z* < *\*skapiz*.

The footstool was a part of the rare and precious grave gifts in a rich ship burial. Among these was a wooden chair, also richly decorated in *Kerbschnitt* with meanders and swastikas, after Mediterranean fashion. The deceased was buried with his Roman military equipment. He himself, clearly a veteran from the Roman army, might have made the inscription, since 'scamella' is Latin. The elk was not yet extinct in North Germany in the early Middle Ages and there

existed a special breed of dogs for chasing elks. The text can be interpreted as: ‘footstool of Alguskapi’.

18. FREILAUBERSHEIM (Rheinhausen, Germany). In the Landesmuseum, Mainz. A silver-gilt bow-fibula, one of a pair, probably Frankish. Found in 1872/73 in a woman’s grave in a row-grave field. Date 3rd th. 6th c. The runes are carved in two rows: above and below the needle. They read:

**boso:wraetruna**  
**þkda?ina: golda**

ᚸᚩᚨᚱ:ᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ ᚰᚦᚱ ᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ

**boso** is an Alamannic or Frankish PN, nsm. *n*-stem *Boso* (cf. the Frankish duke Boso in Gregory of Tours’ *Historiae Francorum*).

**wraet** is 3 sg. pret. ind. ‘he wrote’, inf. Gmc *\*writan* ‘to write’, with the spelling *ae* for older *ai*, cf. NEUDINGEN-BAAR II, SCHWANGAU and WEINGARTEN I.

**runa** is apf. *ō*-stem, *runā* ‘the runes’. The lower row starts with some heavily abraded runes; the first is most probably a *thorn*, but the loop is nearly at the bottom of the headstaff, and another loop higher up the headstaff can be vaguely perceived. Probably by mistake a **b** was carved first, perhaps due to a confusion with the **b** of **boso** right above, and then changed into a *thorn*. It is followed by a large hook: < **k**, in order to get **þk**, cf. OS *þ(i)k* ‘you’, pron., acc. of the 2nd. person.

**da?ina** is a PN, nsf. *ō*-stem, *Da?ina*. The third rune is illegible now, but earlier read as **þ**.

**golda** is 3 sg. pret. ind.: ‘(she) greeted’, inf. Gmc *\*gōljan*, Go *gōljan*, ‘to greet’. ‘Boso wrote (the) runes; Daþina greeted you’.

(See also Krause 1966:47; Ebel 1963:14, 107f.; Antonsen 1975:58).

19. FRIEDBERG (Hessen, Germany), silver disc-brooch with almandine-inlay, one of a pair. Dated 3rd th. 6th c. (Arntz & Zeiss 1939:232 ff.). Found in 1885 in a woman’s grave; lost in World War II. The runes read: **puruphild**

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This may be a PN, with a svarabhakti first *-u-*; nsf. *jō*-stem *Thruphild*, cf. the attested OHG name *Drūdhilt*. OHG *thrūt*, *drūd* ‘force, fierce’; ON *þrúðr* f. ‘force, woman, daughter of Thor’. *hild* < Gmc *\*hildjō*, OHG *hiltia* ‘battle’, nsf. *jō*-stem, a well-known name-element in female names.

A svarabhakti vowel, such as the first *-u-* here, is otherwise rare in the Continental Corpus.

I think *Thruphild* was a suitable name for a Valkyrie-like woman (the skeleton was that of an extremely strongly-built female).

The rune **r** has a special form, similar to WEINGARTEN I, NORDENDORF II, WURLINGEN, NIEDERSTOTZINGEN, GRIESHEIM, BÜLACH and SOEST. See p. 271.

20. GAMMERTINGEN (Baden-Württemberg, Germany), ivory box. In the Fürstlich Hohenzollernsche Hofkammer, Sigmaringen. Dated 1st h. 6th c. Found in 1901/2 in a very rich child’s grave, situated near a princely grave (Stein 1991). Carved twice is: **ado**

𐌱𐌳𐌶

This may be a PN, nsm. *n*-stem, *Ado*, which is a shortened version of a name like *Adalbertus* (Kaufmann 1965:17, 86, 90).

21. GRIESHEIM (Hessen, Germany), silver bow-fibula, one of a pair. In the Landesamt für Denkmalpflege, Darmstadt. Dated 3rd th. 6th c. Found in 1975 in a woman’s grave in a row-grave field.

The runes read: **kolo:agilaþrup**

𐌿𐌺𐌻𐌶:𐌱𐌳𐌶𐌹𐌺𐌹𐌱𐌹𐌸𐌹


**kolo** is a PN, nsm. *n*-stem, *Kolo*, perhaps connected with ON *kollir* ‘helmet’ (Gottschald 1982:297).

**agilaþrup** is also a PN, n/asf. *jō*-stem *Agilaþrup*. *Agila-* may be connected with Go. *agis*, OHG *egī* f. ‘scare, fear’ (Kaufmann 1965: 88, 89), or with Gmc *\*agjō-* ‘sword, edge’, as in **agilamudon** on the ROSSELAND stone, Norway, and in the name of a Langobardic king *Agilimund* (cf. Antonsen 1975:51). A Bavarian family of dukes bore the name *Agilolfing*. About the second name-element *-þrup*, cf. FRIEDBERG.

The **k** rune 𐌿 of **kolo** has the form of the **k** from the younger



Danish fuþark. The runeform is also attested in NORDENDORF II and in HAILFINGEN. I wonder whether this divergent rune might denote *ch*, product of the OHG soundshift of *k*. In that case we may read *Cholo*. The soundshift *k*- > *kχ*- (*ch*-) occurred only in Alamanic and Bavarian. If this inscription should be labelled Frankish, we should stick to the reading **kolo**. See also NORDENDORF II, nr. 31.

Another curiosity is the **1** rune in **kolo**: , which has the form of the Anglo-Saxon *cēn* rune. This peculiar **1** rune is otherwise only attested in CHARNAY (once, in **liano**). In **agilaprup**, the sidetwig of the **1** is somewhat higher up the headstaff. Until the Griesheim inscription turned up, a reading **liano** or **kiano** in CHARNAY was arbitrary. Its occurrence in *Agilaprup*, where it can only denote **1** and certainly no **k**, was particularly decisive. The form of the rune might be influenced by the Roman *l*. People who could write probably wrote both in Roman and runic lettering, so mutual influences were possible.

*Kolo* or *Cholo* is a Frankish or Alamannic man's name, because of the ending *-o*, cf. *Boso*, FREILAUERSHEIM, and *Bobo* in BORGHAREN (Limburg, the Netherlands). The **r**-rune is similar to the **r** in WEINGARTEN I; other parallels are: NORDENDORF II, WURLINGEN, NIEDERSTOTZINGEN, FRIEDBERG, BÜLACH and SOEST. See p. 271.

22. HEILBRONN-BÖCKINGEN (Baden-Württemberg, Germany). In the Museum Heilbronn. Silver belt-trimmings with a square fitting with rivets. Dated 3rd th. 6th c. Found in 1954 in a man's grave.

On the square fitting are runes, partly damaged by the perforations made for the rivets. The runes run from right to left, reading **?karwi**.



In my opinion the initial rune actually is a yew rune, which has retained one sidetwig; the other got lost in the perforation. Krause (1966:295ff.) and Düwel (1994<sup>b</sup>:264f.) read **1**. The second rune is a small hook, carved rather low, and is partly damaged by the same perforation that took the lower part of the preceding yew rune away.

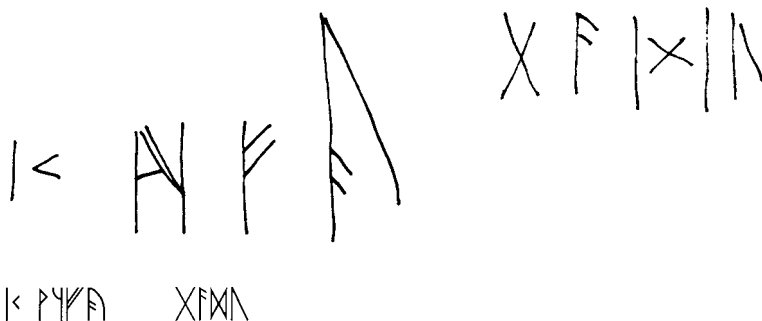
I read **ik**, which might be taken for *ik*, 1 sg. pers. pron. 'I'. Obviously the yew rune could be and was used to denote long and short *i*, *ī*, cf. **uiu** *wūu* in the NEBENSTEDT bracteate, and **sipæbæd** in LOVEDEN HILL (chapter eight, nr. 7).

**arwi** may be a PN, nsm., derived from *\*arwa*, *wa*-stem, cf. OS

*aru*, OE *earu* < Gmc *\*arwaz* ‘ready for harvesting, mature, ripe’. Otherwise one may consider a connection with OHG *arbi* ‘inheritance’ (Gottschald 1982:173), cf. the name of the Langobardic bishop *Arbeo*.

23. ‘KENT’, or ‘the BATEMAN brooch’ (England). In the British Museum, London. One of a pair of silver-gilt radiate-headed brooches, dated 6th c., said to be Merovingian and to originate from the Continent. Provenance unknown; bought at a sale (for more information, see chapter two). The runes are carved rather clumsily, and the layout of the inscription is in a slipshod style.

Tentatively I propose a reading **ik w?f?? gadu**. Whether there is a final rune after **gadu** is uncertain, since it could be part of some ornamental lines.



The **k** rune has the form of a little hook ‘, cf. HEILBRONN and BALINGEN. The inscription starts with **ik** (OS, OHG) or **ic** (OE), 1 sg. pers. pron. ‘I’.

The signs that follow are less easy to decipher. The second rune looks like a reversed younger **k** rune: ‘. Since this letter is in between two consonants, it might denote a vowel. The rune is a parallel to ‘ and ‘ in BRITSUM (chapter nine, nr. 14), there transliterated **æ**. The last two runes are written as a bindrune of, perhaps, **a** plus **u**, or **a** plus **r**. Bindrunes are not unusual in Continental inscriptions, and occur in uncommon combinations. One can only speculate about an interpretation.

**gadu** may be nsf. or dsf. *ō*-stem ‘companion’, here ‘wife’, or: ‘to my wife’, cf. OE *gada* m. ‘companion’; Dutch *gade* ‘husband’, ‘wife’; MHG *gate* ‘Genosse, Gatte’ (Holthausen 1963:121).

24. KIRCHHEIM TECK I (Baden-Württemberg, Germany). In the Württembergisches Landesmuseum, Stuttgart. A silver-gilt bow-fibula. Found in a woman's grave in 1972. Date mid 6th c.

The runic inscription is very abraded, since the brooch was used for a long time before it was deposited with its owner in the grave. Part of the runic inscription can still be read: **badagihialali dmiu**



The swastika can be taken as a rune cross  $X = \mathbf{g}$  with four sidetwigs attached to the extremities of the cross, thus forming four times the rune for **i**. I take the cross to represent a bindrune: **gi**. The cross is carved on top of the double-barred **h** rune in **hiali**. Hence I take the sequence **gi** as preceding **hiali**. (Opitz (1979:366) prefers to interpret the X as a Christian cross, referring to Greek  $\chi$ [PICTOC] = Christus.)

**bada** is a PN, nsf.  $\bar{o}$ -stem, *Bada*.

**gihiali** = *gihaili*, 2 sg. pres. imp., taken that the sequence **ia** is reversed.  $\mathfrak{f}$  is a bindrune of **a + l**. This may mean: 'you must make well', inf. OHG *heilen*, *gi-heilen* 'to heal, to save, to rescue'. If the legend and the cross as a whole are taken as Christian (there was a *Goldblattkreuz* in the same grave) one may interpret the text as follows: **bada** means 'consolation'; **haili** means 'salvation', cf. OHG *heilī* f. 'hail, bliss, salvation'. **dmiu** may mean **d[o]mi[n]u[s]** 'Lord'.

The legend may read: '(my) hail (and) salvation (is the) Lord'. In OS, *gibada* is recorded twice in the *Heliand*: 3161 and 5828, meaning: 'comfort, reassurance' or even: 'new life in *Christo*' (Opitz 1978:21).

25. LIEBENAU (Niedersachsen, Germany). In the Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover. A silver disc, possibly part of a sword belt. Dated 4th c. Found in 1957 in a rich man's grave. The runes

are on the front, and very difficult to identify. The surface has been damaged and the runes are of unequal size.

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Düwel (1972:134–141) read and interpreted **ra[u]zwi** < Gmc *\*rauzwīh* ‘der Rohr (= Speer)-Geweihthe’; cf. Gmc *\*rauzal/rausa* ‘tube, hollow stem’.

*rauz-* may mean ‘spear’ or ‘sword’, cf. ON *reyr* ‘reed’, in metaphorical sense ‘spear, sword’. The second part *-wī* may either be connected with OHG *wīhen*, OS *wīhian* ‘to consecrate’ (cf. above, EICHSTETTEN, nr. 15), or *-wī* may be derived from *\*wīgan* ‘to fight’.

If it is a PN, it is perhaps short for *Rauzwī(gaz)*, nsm. *a*-stem, which may mean either ‘The one who is consecrated to the spear’ or ‘Spear- c.q. Swordfighter’. A name connected with some warriors’ cult? *Raus* is also known as the name of one of the Hasding brothers (see also NYDAM V, found in 1997, with the legend **rawsijo**, chapter five, nr. 27).

26. MÜNCHEN-AUBING I (Bavaria, Germany). In the Prähistorische Staatssammlung, München. A pair of Frankish silver-gilt *Fünfknopffibeln*. Dated mid 6th c. Found in 1939 in a woman’s grave in a row-grave field.

Both brooches have runes; the inscription of nr. I contains two groups: **segalo sigila**. For the inscription on the other brooch see below, MÜNCHEN-AUBING II, nr. 67.

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**segalo** may be a PN, nsm. *n*-stem, *Segalo*.

**sigila** may be interpreted in several ways; either it could be a male PN, nsm. *a*-stem *Sigila* (attested in Gregory of Tours’ *Historiae Francorum*), or it is a female PN nsf. *ō*-stem. The names contain a well-known name element: OHG *sigu* ‘victory’ followed by an *l*-suffix, common for names.

Another interpretation of **sigila** is to take it as a word denoting the object itself: nsf./n. ‘brooch’, cf. OE *sigle*, *sigel* ‘brooch’. The inscription of HARFORD FARM (chapter eight, nr. 4) reads: **luda gibœtæ sigilæ** ‘Luda repaired the brooch’. Both *segalo* and *sigila* are related to Latin *sigillum*, since the Latin ending *-um* can be rendered

by both *-a* and *-o* in OHG. But Latin *-i-* in the initial syllable remains *-i-* in OHG. Therefore *sigila* is most likely to render Latin *sigillum*.

The text may run thus: ‘Segalo—brooch’. Probably the woman was given the fibulae as a gift from her husband or her father, who was named Segalo. It would be the fourth object of the Continental Corpus (with AQUINCUM, FALLWARD and THORSBERG II) which is named in the text.

27. NEUDINGEN-BAAR I (Baden-Württemberg, Germany). In the Landesamt für Denkmalpflege, Freiburg. A gilded bronze bow-fibula, possibly Frankish, dated late 6th c. Found in 1988 in a woman’s grave. The inscription is carved in three rows beneath each other and is partly abraded, due to weathering and oxidization of the surface. The tinned surface of the back has nearly corroded away, but the runes left their impressions in the bronze layer underneath.

Part of the runes can be read, row 1: **?ud??**. Row 2: **midu** Row 3: **klefilpa**

𐌺𐌺𐌹𐌺 | 𐌿𐌺𐌹𐌺 | 𐌺𐌺𐌹𐌺𐌹𐌺

The runes of the first row cannot all be reconstructed. The first sign may be an ingress sign. The second row is clear: **midu**, pre-OHG *\*mīda*, *\*mēda*, OHG *miata* < Gmc *\*mezdō* ‘reward’ nsf. *ō*-stem. This ‘reward’ may denote the brooch itself, cf. the legend of the UNDELY bracteate (chapter six, nr. 46), which has **medu** ‘reward = the bracteate’.

Another interpretation of the second row of the text may be that it is an adjective, OHG *mitti*, OS *middi*, ‘in the middle’. The initial rune of the third row **Λ** is remarkably big, and it could denote **k** or **u**, but it deviates from the other **u** runes in the inscription. It has the form of a rather large roof, similar to MÜNCHEN-AUBING III, see below, nr. 68. The last two runes are written as a bindrune **pa**. The sequence is read as **klefilp** by Düwel (1990:8), who suggested a connection with the OHG verb *klīban* ‘to attach, to fasten’. *klēf* may be 1 or 3 sg. pret. ind. of *klīban*. When taking the **f** double, we may read **klef** and **[f]ilpa**; the latter: *(f)ilpa*, < Gmc *\*filta-*, NHG *Filz* ‘woolen garment, cloak’ (cf. Kluge/Seebold 1989:214: *Filz* < Gmc *\*filta-*). The brooch is exceptionally large, so it could be used to fasten a cloak. The inscription may say something like: ‘the reward = the brooch fastened the cloak’.



The whole inscription appears to have been made by an unpractised runecarver; some signs barely escape the impression of being pseudo runes or script imitation. One can recognize the sequence **liub**, which might be an adj. nsm./f./n. *a-/ō*-stem, ‘dear, beloved’; or a substantive, nsn. *a*-stem ‘love’, cf. **ENGERS**, nr. 16, **leub**, and **leob** in **WEIMAR I**, nr. 44. If so, the spelling of the diphthong is interesting, because it shows the development from Gmc \**eu* > *iu* in Alamannic and Bavarian before labial; in Franconian the development would be either *eu* or *eo* (Braune/Eggers § 47, Anm. 1, the evidence is found in names from eighth-century charters).

The third ‘word’ **?ud?d** in the inscription might be guessed from right to left as *d(e)du(n)*, which would point to a maker’s formula. Trying to make sense of the rest inevitably leads to speculation. (see also Düwel 1992<sup>a</sup>:55.)

30. **NORDENDORF I** (Bavaria, Germany). In the Römisches Museum, Augsburg. A silver-gilt bow-fibula, dated mid 6th c. Found in 1843.

The runic inscription consists of two parts, carved on the back of the headplate. One part is written in three rows of runes beneath each other; when the object is turned 180°, another row near the edge of the headplate can be perceived. These runes are much more abraded than those of the other part, which is probably due to the fact that the edge of the brooch was more exposed and vulnerable to attrition. There is a scratch that looks like **1** attached to the top of the **o** rune of **ponar**.

The first part reads: **logapore wodan wiguponar??**

The second part has: **awa (l)eubwini??**

ᚱᚰᚰᚱᚱᚰᚱᚱ  
 ᚱᚰᚰᚱᚱ  
 ᚱᚰᚰᚱᚱᚰᚱᚱ  
 ᚱᚱᚱ ᚱᚱᚰᚱᚱᚱ

First row: **logapore**, npm. *ja*-stem *logapore* ‘intriguers’ or ‘magicians’ (Düwel 1983:128 and 1991:278). This interpretation is based on a word found in OE glosses: *logber*, *logeber*, used to translate the Greek *cacomicanos* ‘mischief plotting’, and the Latin *marsius* ‘snake-charmer’ (Schwab 1981:42ff., with ref.).

Second row: **wodan**, GN nsm. *a*-stem *Wōdan*.

Third row: **wiguponar**, GN nsm. *a*-stem, *Wīguponar*. The part *wīgu-* is commonly associated with OHG *wīhen* ‘to hallow’, which may have something to do with one of the god’s roles: to hallow runes or marriages, such as can be found in the inscription of the stone of Glavendrup, in Denmark: **þur uiki** ‘may Thor hallow’. Deriving *wīgu-* from OHG *wīgan* ‘to fight’, produces another epithet: *fighting-Donar*.

When turning the brooch 180°, a second inscription can be read, although the runes are nearly invisible. It starts with **awa**, which obviously is a PN nsf. *ō*-stem *Awa* (Kaufmann 1965:90), which may be connected with **auja** (see below, nr. 33 OETTINGEN **aujabrg**).

As a result of the brooch having been broken and later glued back together, the initial rune of the next part is damaged: the assumed **l** of **(l)eubwini** is invisible now. The word ends in a confusion of signs, probably because **(l)eubwini** coincides with the end of **wiguponar**. Between both words are several lines, and whether or not the yew rune seen by others is among those lines, I am not sure.

*Leubwini* is a PN or epithet, nsm. *i*-stem ‘dear friend’. The whole text is interpreted by Düwel (1982) as a rejection formula concerning the pagan gods Wodan and Wiguponar: ‘intriguers are Wodan and Wiguponar’, signed by two people: Awa and Leubwini. Such a declaration seems a strange text for a brooch, especially since the text was invisible.

Polomé (1989:140ff.) rejects Düwel’s hypothesis, a) on linguistic grounds: the ending *-e* of *logapore* is anomalous; b) on stylistic grounds: a triad of names would conform better; and c) on historic grounds: the early 7th c. (actually mid 6th c. TL) may be too early for a Christian runic inscription; and d) on mythological grounds: magic and deceit may characterize Wodan, but that cannot be said of Donar! (But see Düwel 1992<sup>b</sup>:358ff.).

I would not exclude the possibility that the text mentions a *Göttertrias*, including the mysterious *Logapore* next to Wodan and Donar. Schwab (1981:45) interprets *logapore* as a dative singular of a personal name, the name of the receiver of the brooch. I regard her remark about *marsius* very interesting: “in the OE glosses to Aldhelm’s *De Laudibus Virginitatis* the plural *marsi* is interpreted by *incantatores* and is glossed *þyr̥sa(s)* ‘demons, sorcerers’ and *wyrmgalera(s)* ‘snakecharmers’”. There is one Germanic god who is associated with snakes, and who is of a demonic nature: *Loki* (cf. De Vries 1957:262f. and Dumézil 1973:63).



Schwab (1981:43) and Düwel (1982:80ff.) provide several interpretations of and references to *logapore*. Schwab suggests that in the gloss *marsius = logeper* in Cotton MS Cleopatra A III in the immediate vicinity of the entry *mars = tiw*, there might be a possible confusion of the scribe. In other words, *mars(ius) = logeper = tiw*, so the mysterious first name on the brooch may refer to Týr?<sup>3</sup>

31. NORDENDORF II (Bavaria, Germany). In the Römisches Museum, Augsburg. A silver-gilt bow-fibula, dated mid 6th c. Found in 1844.

The runes read **birlnioelk**

BIRNIOELK

The runes are clearly legible. The last rune may appear to be enigmatic, but it is similar to the **k** rune of GRIESHEIM in **kolo**. I propose dividing the sequence **birlnioelk** in **birl[i]n io elk**.

**birlin** may be a male PN, nsm. *n*-stem, a diminutive based on OHG *bero* ‘bear’ (cf. Gottschald 1982:100, 101).

This is followed by **io** *jo(h)* ‘and’.

**elk** should be read *elch* < Gmc *\*elha-* ‘elk’. Presumably, the rune  $\Upsilon$  had the value [χ], being a result of the OHG sound shift of *k* > *ch*.

Bear and elk seem to have had a mythological connotation (cf. Birkhan 1970:431ff. and 448ff.).

32. OBERFLACHT (Baden-Württemberg, Germany). Found in the 19th century by Freiherr von Ow-Wachendorf on his property, and kept in the family’s archaeological collection at Wachendorf (Black Forest). It is a silver *Sieblöffel*, dated 3rd th. 6th c. (Düwel 1994<sup>b</sup>:244). There is no find-report. A *Sieblöffel* is a Christian liturgical object. Runes on the back of the handle cover about the whole length, in unusual, relatively wide and large forms. The runeforms are unique, bearing no resemblance to other runic graphs. They read: **gba:dulpaſd**

X B A M N I E F L W

<sup>3</sup> One may think of the runic text of the RIBE cranium (early 8th c.), which contains thean invocation of three gods: *UlfR auk Óðinn auk HótiuR* (cf. Stoklund 1996). The last name might point to Týr, OHG *zīu*, OE *Tiw*.

XB1:MNIDFYW

The **g** is a clear cross; the first **a** is reversed. The **b** rune is quite gross. The sidetwig of the **l** is almost lost in a crack. The sidetwigs of both **a** and **f** in **afd** are extremely long and set far apart.

**dulp** is a well-known word, nsf. *i*-stem/rootnoun, ‘religious feast’, cf. OHG *tuld*, MHG *dult*, Go. *dulps*.

The first part may be **g[e]ba** ‘gift’ nsf. *ō*-stem.

The sequence **afd** might be interpreted as *aft*, adv. ‘after, later’ (see BÜLACH, nr. 11), taken that the rune **d** is chosen because of the initial sound of its name, which had become *tag* (with OHG sound shift), instead of older *dag* < \**dagaz*. Would the text mean as much as: ‘gift—feast—after’ indicating *this is a gift on the occasion of the feast?* (Other interpretations: Klingenberg 1974:81–94, and Opitz 1977:35).

33. OETTINGEN (Bavaria, Germany). In the Bayerisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Schwaben, Augsburg. A silver disc-brooch, one of a pair, dated 2nd h. 6th c. Found in 1975 in a woman’s grave. The runes read: **auijabrg** or **auisabrg**

INIFBRX

The first rune is a damaged **a** with only the two sidetwigs visible; part of the headstaff is missing. The fourth rune may represent **s** or **j**. Compared with the form of the **j** rune in CHARNAY and with other **s** runes of the Continental inscriptions, the transcription **j** is most plausible. One may consider the two halves of the archaic rune form for **j**  $\beta$  to have been drawn as one rune. **auijab[i]rg** is a PN, nsf. *Auijab(i)rg*, consisting of *Awija-* or *Auija-* and *-birg*. For the first part of the name cf. *Awa*, NORDENDORF I, nr. 30. The second part *-birg* is nsf. *jō*-stem, ‘protection, guard’.

If **auija** should be equated with **auja** on bracteates, it may mean ‘hail, good luck’: cf. **gibu auja** on RAUM KØGE (chapter six, nr. 32). The sequence **auwija** is recorded on the VIMOSE buckle (chapter five, nr. 10). See also Betz (1979:241–245; Düwel (1991:280).

34. OSTHOFEN (Rheinessen, Germany). In the Landesmuseum, Mainz. A gilt bronze disc-brooch, 2nd h. 7th c. Found in 1854 in an ancient Frankish cemetery near Osthofen. The runes are cut between con-

centric lines. The brooch is broken, a large part is lost and the surface of what is left is badly eroded, so an indefinite number of runes are now illegible. One may perceive only: **go furadi di le+**

XX      ƿNƿMl Ml M

The last rune has a little cross fastened to it. The first word may be emended to **got** or **god** ‘God’, or to a fem. PN like *Goda*, cf. *ARLON*, above, nr. 3.

**fura** is a preposition, ‘before’.

**di** = *dih*, 2 sg. pers. pron. acc. ‘you’; or *dir*, 2 sg. pers. pron. dative.

This is followed by **di** and **le**, which might, with some imagination, be emended to *di(ofi)le* ‘devil’ (cf. Opitz 1979:36), or to *Teofilus*, a personal name.

35. *PFORZEN I* (Bavaria, Germany). In the Bayerisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Schwaben, Augsburg. A silver belt buckle with runes on the front, which is rare (also: *LIEBENAU*, above, nr. 25, and *BORGHAREN*, the Netherlands, nr. 18). Dated mid 6th c. Found in 1991 in a man’s grave. The runes are neatly and distinctly carved in two rows below each other, ending in ornamental lines.

They read: **.aigil.andi.ailrun l.tahu:gasokun**

·f|x|f·f|xl· f|f|r|n|†  
f·†|f|H|N·X|f|g|A|N|†

I take the dots between the words as word-dividers.

**aigil** is a PN, nsm. *a*-stem *Aigil*, connected either with Gmc *\*agiō* ‘sword, edge’ (cf. De Vries 1962:94f., who derives ON *Egill* and OHG *Agilo* from Gmc *\*agilaz*), or with Go. *agis* ‘scare, fear’. See also *Agila* in *GRIESHEIM*. The spelling of **aigil** is interesting; in later OHG *ai* > *ei*, which would render *\*Egил*. In OHG, *ai* > *ei*, and in OS *ai* > *ē*; in ON *ai* > *ē*, in OE *ai* > *ā* > *æ* (through fronting), cf. **ægili** on *Franks Casket* (8th c., probably Northumbrian).

**andi** is a conj. ‘and’.

**ailrun** PN nsf. *ō*-stem *Ailrūn*. The names *Aigil* and *Ailrūn* (written as: **ailrun**) remind of the much later recorded ON *Volundr*, OHG *Wieland*, story (see also chapter four, 2). The historical *Egill*’s fore-runner may have been spelled as *\*Aigil*.

In both **aigil** and **ailrun** the first part is written with a diphthong, although the use of the yew rune in **ailrun** is confusing. I assume that, on the analogy of **aigil**, the carver wanted to carve **ailrun**, probably instead of **\*alrun**.

Remarkably, both spellings, **ai** and **aĭ**, occur in the first syllables of the names, and both syllables are stressed, according to alliterative verse. The other **as** in the text are in **andi** and **gasokun**, and these **as** occur in unstressed position. The runographer may have wanted to express this controversy graphically. But why is there a difference in orthography: **ai** versus **aĭ** with a yew rune?

I wondered whether this may be due to a scribal error. By looking at how the runes are carved, we realize that the **a** in **ailrun** has very long sidetwigs and the lower twig even crosses the bottom line. It looks as if this twig has been lengthened, i.e. carved in two strokes. It has a twist halfway. I considered the possibility that this may have been the result of a graphic mistake. Instead of carving an **i**, the runographer made an **l** too many or too soon, and therefore changed it into a yew rune. The mistake may have occurred because an **l** was to follow. Since a yew rune could be used instead of an **i** rune, as we have seen in the **raihan** inscription (Caistor-by-Norwich, England, chapter eight, nr. 12), and in Freilaubersheim, nr. 18: **dapina**, the carver tried to repair his mistake by changing  $\uparrow$  into  $\downarrow$ , by carving an extra sidetwig. This sidetwig coincides with the end of the lower twig of the preceding **a** rune (giving the impression as if the lower twig was lengthened). Therefore, I think the sequence **aĭ** is a scribal error (Looijenga 1999; also Pieper 1999).

The second line starts with **l**. The text proceeds with **tahu**. I connect this word with Go *\*tāhus* < Gmc *\*tanhuz*; OHG *zāh*, adj. *u*-stem ‘tough’ (Köbler 1989:520).

The third word is **gasokun**, 3 plur. pret. ind. of a verb like Go *ga-sakan* ‘to quarrel, to dispute’, or OHG *ga-sahhan* ‘to condemn, to fight’. Clearly both persons, *Aigil* and *Ailrūn*, quarrelled about (or ‘condemned’ or ‘sought’) something, which might be hiding behind the single **l**.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Düwel (1994<sup>b</sup>:290f.) proposes to regard the side twigsuggests considering the sidetwig of the **l** rune as connected with the left side twig of the following **t**—although the twigs do not meet—and thus take this as a bindrune **el**. Thus he obtains: **elahu** ‘elk’. However, this is problematic, as there is even a dot between **l** and **t**, which, because of the presence of other dots in the inscription, must be regarded as a word divider.

I suggest that the text on the Pforzen buckle is a quotation from a lost version of the Wieland story. Assuming that the verse alliterated, the enigmatic **I** may have been preceded by an *a*, in [a]**I**: *Aigil andi Ailrūn (a)l tahu gasokun. al* adj. ‘all, everything’. The text may be taken as: ‘A. and A. vigorously fought/condemned all’.

36. SCHRETZHEIM I (Bayrisch Schwaben, Germany). In the Stadt- und Hochstiftmuseum, Dillingen a.d. Donau. A silver *bullā* (i.e. an amulet box.) Dated ca. 600. Found in 1892 in a rich woman’s grave in a row-grave field. The runes are on the bottom and on the lid. On the bottom a maker’s or writer’s formula, **alagupleuba: dedun**. On the lid is **arogisd**

𐌱𐌴𐌶𐌰𐌽𐌰𐌿𐌺𐌰𐌹𐌻𐌰𐌽𐌰𐌹𐌺𐌰𐌹𐌽𐌰𐌹𐌺𐌰𐌹𐌽𐌰𐌹𐌺𐌰  
𐌱𐌴𐌶𐌰𐌽𐌰𐌹𐌺𐌰𐌹𐌽𐌰𐌹𐌺𐌰

The **s** is very small; its upper part may have weathered away.

The first part contains two female names.

**alagup** is a PN, nsf. *jō*-stem *Alagu(n)th*, consisting of *ala-* ‘all’ and *-gu(n)th* ‘battle’.

**leuba** is also a PN, nsf. *n*-stem *Leuba*. After the division marks follows **dedun** = *dedun* 3 pl. pret. ind. ‘they did, made’, cf. OHG *tuon* ‘to do, make’. I take it that the women made the runes, rather than the box.

**arogis** may be interpreted as *Arogīs(l)*, a PN, nsm. *a*-stem, consisting of *Aro-* ‘eagle’, and the well-known name-element *-gīs(l)*. One might take the rune **d** to render *t* (cf. Seebold (1990:160 and Braune/Eggers § 163) because of the OHG sound shift  $d > t$ ). The rune name *dag* was pronounced in OHG as *tag* (see above, OBERFLACHT, nr. 32), but was still written **𐌳**. Some manuscript rune rows show the replacement of the rune name *dag* by OHG *tac*, e.g. in the Leiden ms. Voss. Lat. F.125, St. Gallen ms. 270, Kassel ms. Theol. F.65, as well as in the signature of the scribe *Ratgar* in St. Gallen ms. 127 (Derolez 1954:194, 217, 271, 441; and Derolez 1983:90). Cf. also **isd** = *ist* in WEIMAR III, below, nr. 47.

Hence we may read here *Arogist* or possibly *Arogast*, if the runographer omitted the sidetwigs of an intended **a**. *Arogast*, then, is a PN, nsm. *i*-stem, *-gast* < Gmc *\*gastiz*. Also, the *ds* in *dedun* may have been pronounced as *ts*.

In 1995, a silver disc brooch was found in a grave at Kirchheim-Teck (below, nr. 54), with runes reading **arugis**. This may be taken as a form of *Arogisl*, with **o** written as **u**.

37. SCHRETZHEIM II (Bayrisch Schwaben, Germany). Kept in the same museum as Schretzheim I and III. A silver disc-brooch with almandines, dated 2nd h. 6th c. Found in 1946 in a woman's grave in a row-grave field. The inscription is damaged, some runes are lost. The **s** is in five strokes. The remaining runes read: **sipwagadin leubo**



ΣΙΡΡΡΧΡΑΓΑΔΙΝ ΛΕΥΒΟ

The first word may be read *si(n)þwagadin*, consisting of *si(n)þ-* (nasal omitted before homorganic *þ*) f. ‘companion’ and *wag(j)a(n)d-in* nsf. *jō*-stem, a compound of a pres. part.: ‘travelling’, and the fem. ending *-in* < *\*-injō* (Braune/Eggers § 211). LOVEDEN HILL (chapter eight, nr. 7) has *Sipæbæd* ‘companion in battle’. *Sipwagadin* might thus mean: ‘female travel companion’. (According to Opitz (1977:38f.) *wagjandin* is dsm. *n*-stem, meaning ‘to the (male) traveller’ and pointing to Wodan, “the *viator indefessus*”.)

**leubo** may be a PN, nsm. *n*-stem ‘Leubo’, or an adj. nsm./f/n. *a-/ō*-stem ‘love’ (Braune/Eggers § 267). The text may mean ‘Leubo (love) to my travel companion’ = spouse?

38. SCHRETZHEIM III (Bayrisch Schwaben, Germany). In the same museum as the other Schretzheim finds. An iron ring sword, dated 2nd h. 6th c. Found in 1894 in a man's grave in a row-grave field. The runes are made by way of silver thread inlay; this would point to the smith as the maker (the same practice as in WURLINGEN, see below, nr. 51).

The inscription is actually a rune-cross, which is the rune **g** X with four runes attached to its extremities. Those four runes are **a b a r** (Klingenberg & Koch 1974). Together with **g**, one may read: **gabar**



Other rune-crosses occur in SOEST, KIRCHHEIM, UNDLEY (England), KRAGEHUL (Denmark).

**gabar** is perhaps a hypocoristic PN, nsm. *Gabar* < \**Gabahari*, consisting of *gaba-* f. ‘gift’ and *hari* or *heri* m. ‘warrior’ *ja*-stem, Gmc \**harjaz*. In Saxo Grammaticus we find a personage with the name *Gevarus*, which, according to Simek (1984:127), may be derived from an earlier Saxon PN *Geb(a)heri*.

A ring sword was a typical prestige sword, used among the Merovingian elite and granted to a faithful warrior by his leader or king.

39. SCHWANGAU (Bavaria, Germany). In the Prähistorische Staatssammlung, München. A silver-gilt brooch, a *Scheibenfibel* or *S-fibel*, dated around 600. Found in 1981 in an Alamannic woman’s grave. The runes have a vertical long-stretched form, and are carefully and clearly carved. They read: **aebi**



The **b** has its loops set far apart, which is a common feature in the Continental inscriptions.

**aebi** is a PN nsm. *i-* or *ja*-stem *Aebi*. In OHG, the spelling *ai* is older than *ae* (cf. PFORZEN, FREILAUERSHEIM, WEINGARTEN I) and becomes *ei* in later OHG.

40. SOEST (Westfalen, Germany). In the Soester Burgmuseum. A gold disc-brooch with almandines, dated 3rd th. 6th c. Found in 1930 in a rich woman’s grave in a row-grave field. The runes read: **rada:dapa  
gatano**



RFMF:MFD

**gatano** is written as a rune-cross. The rune **g** X occurs with four runes at its extremities: **a t a n** (cf. SCHRETZHEIM III, nr. 38 and KIRCHHEIM nr. 24). An **o** is written separately. The first inscription is separated by a division mark.

**dapa** is a PN, nsf. *ō*-stem *Datha*.

**rada** might be a PN as well, nsf. *ō*-stem *Rada*, but since the middle dental is written **d** and not **p** as in *Dapa*, I suggest **rada** to be a verb form, actually *rādē(e)* (with ending  $-\bar{e} < -ai$ ), cf. OHG *rātan*, OS *rādan* ‘to guess, to read’. **rada** is then 3 sg. pres. opt. ‘may Datha guess (read)’. The final **a** in **rada** may be intended as analogy to the first **a** (vowel harmony) or to rhyme with *Datha*.

**gatano** may be a PN, nsm. *n*-stem. Obviously, *Datha* should guess the name that was hidden in the rune-cross. A parallel case may be the Charnay-inscription, in which Liano had to find out (the name of) *Idda*.

41. STEINDORF (Bavaria, Germany). In the *Prähistorische Staatssammlung*, München. An iron sax, dated 2nd h. 6th c. (Düwel 1994<sup>b</sup>:271). Found in 1929 in a man’s grave as the only grave gift. The sax is badly corroded; parts of the runes and of the ornamentation are gone. The runes were carved in double lines and probably nielloed with silver inlay. The opening sign is a kind of triangle. The initial rune **h** and the following **u** form a bindrune; the third rune could be **i**, the fourth an **s**. Two strokes follow. One is **i**, the next has been damaged by corrosion and cannot be reconstructed. The last runes can be deciphered as **a**, **l** and **d**. Tentatively I read: **huisi?ald**

This may denote *Huisiwald*, a name that reminds one of a Bavarian



noble family: the *Huosi*, who are mentioned in the *Lex Baiuvariorum*. The second part of the name may be *-wald*, inf. *waldan* ‘to rule’. Düwel (1994<sup>b</sup>:271, with ref.) has another interpretation.

42. THORSBERG I (Schleswig-Holstein, Germany). In the Museum Gottorf at Schleswig. A bronze sword chape, dated to ca. 200 AD. This object and the Thorsberg shield boss belong to a votive deposit of war booty. The provenance of the objects is somewhere between the Lower Elbe and the Rhine. There are runes on both sides of the sword chape; one side has: **owlpupewaz**; the other side has: **niwajemariz**. There is a bindrune of **e** plus **m**.

ᚨᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ ᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ

**owlpupewaz** is probably a PN, nsm. *a*-stem *Wolpupewaz*, with inverted order **ow** for **wo**; cf. FALLWARD, nr. 17, **ksamella** for *skamella*.

*Wolpu-* cf. Go *wulpus* ‘exuberance, sumptuousness’. This is followed by *-bewaz* ‘servant’, nsm. *a*-stem.

**niwajemariz** may be taken as an epithet or cognomen *ni-waje-māriz*, nsm. *i*-stem, “of immaculate repute” (Antonsen, 1975:30) or, literally, “nicht-schlechtberühmt” (Krause 1971:167; Seebold 1994<sup>a</sup>:73). The use of a negative to express the opposite, occurs more often, for instance **ek unwodz** ‘I, the not-raging one’, on GÄRDLÖSA (chapter five, nr. 13).

A root vowel *-o-* instead of the expected *-u-* in *wolpu-* < \**wulþ-u* is an arbitrary spelling—alternation *u/o* (cf. Antonsen 1975:13). The language would be Proto-Norse or North-west Germanic, according to Stoklund (1994<sup>a</sup>:106f).

43. THORSBERG II (Schleswig-Holstein, Germany). In the same museum as the above, nr. 42. A bronze shield boss. The inscription is on the inner side of the shield boss. The runes run left, and read: **aisgzh**

ᚨᚱᚱᚱᚱ

**aisgz** may be emended to **ais[i]g[a/i]z**, and interpreted as a PN: *Aisigaz* or *Aisigiz*, nsm. *a-* or *i-* stem. Krause (1971:72) read *ais(i)g(a)z* “der Dahinstürmende”. If so, the stem vowel may be missing, though the nominative ending *-z* is present; cf. **gaupz** (ILLERUP V, chapter five, nr. 5). Another possibility may be to take the sequence as

a compound, of *ais(i)-* ‘come storming in’, cf. ON *eisa* ‘to rush forward’; and **g[aisa]z** = Gmc *\*g(aiza)z* ‘spear’, nsm. *a*-stem, cf. ON *geirr*. The meaning might be ‘come, storm in, spear’ (as a defiant device of the shield).

For **h** at least two possibilities may exist; it is either an ideographic rune **h** representing its name *\*hagala-* ‘hail’, or an abbreviation. Antonsen (1975:30 and 1995:131f.) takes **aimgz** to be representing *aisk-z* ‘seeker’, and **h** for *\*hagala-* ‘hail’, thus he gets: ‘seeker of hail’, an “eminently suitable designation for a shield when we realize that ‘hail’ is a metaphor for ‘shower of spears and arrows’” (Antonsen 1995:132). This is certainly true, but during my research I became more and more convinced that the ancient runographers were particularly precise in their orthography, and I cannot imagine why they would choose a **g** to render *k*. I take it that the object, the shield, with a shield boss made of *ais*, Lat. *aes* ‘bronze’, is addressed somehow, or that it is the signature of the maker, the weapon smith.

44, 45. WEIMAR I, II (Thüringen, Germany). In the Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte Charlottenburg, Berlin. A pair of silver-gilt bow-fibulae, dated 1st h. 6th c. Found in a woman’s grave. The grave field was excavated between 1895–1902 (Arntz & Zeiss 1939:360ff.). The runes were meticulously cut by a skilled carver.

#### 44. Brooch I. **haribrig liub leob**

HRIBRIX INB IMOB

**haribrig** is on the footplate. It is a PN, nsf. *jō*-stem *Haribrig*, consisting of *hari-* ‘army’, and *-brig* = *-birg*, ‘protection’, cf. OETTINGEN, above, nr. 32. The brooch has three knobs left of a total of seven. On one of the knobs is **liub**; if it is a substantive, it is an *a*-stem ‘love’, if an adjective, it is a nsm./f./n. *a-* or *ō-*stem ‘dear, beloved’ (cf. **liub** in NIEDERSTOTZINGEN, nr. 29).

According to Arntz & Zeiss 1939:364ff. and Opitz 1977:46, another knob has runes reading **leob**. This inscription is very difficult to perceive now. **leob** may be a PN, nsm. *a*-stem (compare with **leubo** in SCHRETZHEIM II, nr. 37, and **leub** in ENGERS, nr. 16).

45. Brooch II. The runes read: **sigibl/ad hiba bubo**

ſƷ|x|b|f|D      H|I|b|f      B|N|B|O

**sigibl/ad** is on the footplate. The runes are vague and abraded. The penultimate rune may be either **a** or **I** in *Sigib(a)l)d*, a PN nsm. *a*-stem, consisting of *sigi-* ‘victory’, and *-bald* ‘bold, quick’, adj. *a*-stem. The last rune, **d**, is carved on the concave side of the bottom of the footplate and only half of the rune can be perceived: ʰ. The brooch has five knobs left of the original seven. One of the knobs bears neatly carved runes, reading **hiba**, which may be a female PN. Kaufmann (1965:12, 14, 141) lists *Hibo*, short for *Hildibert*, a male PN. I wonder whether **hiba** might be an alternative spelling for *hīwa* ‘spouse’.

Another knob has **bubo**, an abbreviated man’s name, see for instance Kaufmann (1965:132), and compare with **bobbo** on the brooch from BORGHAREN (the Netherlands, chapter nine, nr. 18).

46, 47. WEIMAR III, IV (Thüringen, Germany). In the same museum as the above. Nr. III is a bronze belt buckle, dated 1st h. 6th c. Found in a woman’s grave, during the same excavation period as Weimar I and II.

46. Runes on the middle bar of the buckle read: **ida:bigina:hah-war:**

|M|f:|I|x|I|f|f:|H|f|H|f|R:

**ida** is a PN, nsf. *ō*-stem or nsm. *n*-stem ‘Id(d)a’, cf. CHARNAY, above, nr. 12. **bigina** is also a PN, n/asf. *jō/-ō*-stem, *Bi(r)gina*, consisting of *bi(r)g-* ‘protection’ (cf. OETTINGEN and WEIMAR I), and the female suffix *\*-injō-* or *-in* (Braune/Eggers § 211 Anm. 3a, 3b).

**hahwar** is also a PN, *Hahwar*, nsm. *i*-stem, consisting of *hah-* ‘hedge, fence’, and *-war(i)*, cf. OHG *warī*, *weri* ‘defence’, OHG *werian* ‘to resist, to defend’.

On the other side of the bar is: **:awimund:isd:??eo??** From right to left is: **iduni**

:f|f|f|f|f    f|W:|I|x|I|f:      M|O      I|V|M|I

**awimund** is a dithematic PN, nsm. *a*-stem *Awimund*, consisting of *awi-* (cf. **awa** NORDENDORF I, **aiuja** OETTINGEN), and *-mund* (cf. *Rasuwamu(n)d*, ARLON, above, nr. 3). According to Seebold (1990:160), **isd** should be read *ist* ‘is’, 3 sg. pres. ind., inf. OHG *wesan*, cf. also Braune/Eggers § 163. Unfortunately the rest of the inscription is heavily corroded and cannot be deciphered; certainly there is no **leob** as Arntz/Zeiss read, because the traces of at least five or six runes can be seen. Also on one of the edges of the buckle some runes can be noticed, but these are rather abraded. I could only perceive **iduni**, written from left to right. The **u** rune is upside down. *Iduni* might be a female PN.

47. In the same grave an amber bead was found, also dated 1st h. 6th c. The object is now lost. The runes on the photograph in Arntz & Zeiss I read as **:piuw:ida:??a:hahwar**

∃:ÞINÞ:IMF M F:HFHPFR

**piuw** nsf. *jō*-stem ‘maid, servant’. Krause (1966:290) read **piup** and interpreted: “Freundliches, Gutes”. **ida** is a PN *I(d)da*, and **hahwar** is also a PN *Hahwar*, see above 46.

48. WEINGARTEN I (Baden-Württemberg, Germany). In the Alamannen-Museum “Das Kornhaus”, Weingarten. A silver-gilt S-fibula. Dated mid 6th c. Found in 1955 in a girl’s grave (see Roth 1998, with drawings).

ƒ M ƒ X N ƒ : ƒ

ƒ M H ƒ : ƒ ƒ | ↑ : ƒ ƒ

The runes read: **aerguþ: feha:writ: ia**

ƒMRXND: | ƒMHF:PRIT ƒ

**aergu[n]þ** is a PN, nsf. *jō*-stem *Aergu(n)þ*. Krause (1966:306), following Arntz and Jänichen (1957:126), suggested reading **alirguþ**, but that

cannot be right. The second rune is certainly **e**; the twigs of the hook slightly cross each other. The same graph can be noted in SCHWANGAU, **aebi** nr. 40. Note that we find in **aergup** also the spelling *ae* for older *ai*, as in **aebi** and in **wraet** on FREILAUBERSHEIM, nr. 18.

OHG *ai* > *ae* > *ē* before *r*, cf. OHG, OS *ēra-* in the recorded name *Ēragunth*, which is synonymous with older *Aergunth*. The first element is *aer-* < Gmc *\*aiǝō* ‘honour, mercy, gift, regard, respect, esteem’; the second element is *-gu(n)þ* ‘battle, fight’, cf. NEUDINGEN-BAAR II and EICHSTETTEN. After the division dots some lines can be distinguished, but I do not take them to be writing.

**feha** is a PN, nsf. *ō-* or *n-* stem *Feha*, possibly, with grammatical change, connected with OHG *faginōn* ‘to enjoy oneself’.

**writ** may be 3 sg. pres. ind. (without the ending *-it* in *writit*), or it is a pret. ind. but then one would expect *wraet* (in accordance with the spelling **aergup**). I suppose the pres. ind. is meant, ‘F. writes’, inf. Gmc *\*writan*.

For **ia** I have no interpretation. Curiously, CHARNAY (above, nr. 12) also has a sequence **īia**.

49. WEINGARTEN-II (Baden-Württemberg, Germany). In the same museum as the above. A silver-gilt S-fibula. Dated mid 6th c. Found in 1955 in a woman’s grave (Roth 1999). The runes read: **dado**

𐌳𐌳𐌳𐌳

This is an abbreviated PN, nsm. *n*-stem *Dado*.

50. WURLINGEN (Baden-Württemberg, Germany). In the Württembergisches Landesmuseum, Stuttgart. An iron spearhead, dated around 600 or a little later. Ornaments and runes were inlaid with silver. The runic part is preceded by a sign with unknown meaning:  $\lambda$ . It recalls Hachmann’s “Sarmatische Heilszeichen” (Hachmann 1993), or of one of the Anglo-Saxon **beonna** coins, which display a sign  $\Upsilon$ , meaning ‘rex’. The initial sign of the Wurlingen inscription is followed by a word-divider, and the runes **:dorih**, which may be (part of) a PN nsm. *a*-stem *Dorih*, possibly second part of a PN like *Theodorich*.

$\lambda$  𐌳𐌳𐌳𐌳

3. *Recent finds*

51. CHÉHÉRY (Ardennes, France). A disc-brooch (in the hands of a private owner). The brooch has been described and drawn by Fischer (1999:12f.). The brooch was found in a woman's grave, dated to the early 6th c. The legend is partly in Latin and in Roman lettering: DEO S(ancto) DE(dicatus) E(st). In runes one may read, from right to left, **ditan**. This may be a woman's name in the dative, according to Fischer (Fischer 2003: 241–266).

Düwel presented another reading: DEOS DE **htid:E sumingik** (Düwel 1994<sup>b</sup>:235f.).

52. GOMADINGEN (Kreis Reutlingen, Baden-Württemberg, Germany). A silver disc brooch with almandines. Dated 2nd th. 6th c. There is a cross, perhaps indicating a **g** rune, and following the needle-holder are five runes, reading **iglug** or **iglun** (Düwel 1996:13). This may be a woman's name.

53. IGLING-UNTERIGLING (Bavaria, Germany). A bow fibula (Düwel 1998<sup>a</sup>:17) dated 6th c. The runes read from left to right **aun(rgd)d**. No interpretation.

54. KIRCHHEIM-TECK II (Baden-Württemberg, Germany). A silver disc brooch with almandines. Found in a woman's grave in 1970, dated to the 2nd h. 6th c. Runes run right and read: **arugis**, which reminds one of **arogis** on SCHRETZHEIM I, nr. 36. It is a man's name, consisting of *aro-* 'eagle' and the well-known name element *-gīs(l)*, cf. also **gisali** on the new-find from PFORZEN II (nr. 58). See Düwel (1996:13).

55. LAUCHHEIM I (Ost-Alb-Kreis, Baden-Württemberg, Germany). A silver bow-fibula of the so-called 'nordic' type, found in 1996 in a woman's grave, dated to the 2nd h. 6th c. On the headplate are runes, running from left to right:

**ao****nofada**

ᚱᚾᚠᚠᚠᚠᚠᚠ

According to Düwel (1997<sup>b</sup>:19) this may be a woman's name. On the spelling *ao* in **ao****nofada** instead of *au*, see below.

56. LAUCHHEIM II (Baden-Württemberg, Germany). A comb, with runes reading from left to right **gdag**. There is no interpretation (Düwel 1998<sup>a</sup>:16).

57. PFORZEN II (Ost-Allgäu, Bavaria, Germany). An ivory ring from a bronze ornamental disc. Found in 1996 in a woman's grave, dated to around 600. Part of the runes are on the outer side of the ring (cf. the runes on PFORZEN I, which are on the front). The inscription is quite abraded; according to Düwel (1997<sup>b</sup>:19) only **gisali** could be read. On the inside of the ring, and thus hidden from sight, is another inscription: **Jne:aodlip:urait:runa:** 'Aodlith wrote (the) runes'. This set-up reminds of the SCHRETZHEIM I inscription, which has on the bottom (out of sight) the maker's or writer's inscription, with the names of two women, who 'made': **alagupleuba: dedun**, and on the lid (in sight) the man's name: **arogisd**.

X|H|f|f|

Y|M|:f|X|W|f|D|:N|R|f|T|:R|N|f|f|:

**gisali** is a man's name, cf. ON *Gīslī*. The part *Gīs(l)-* is well-known; the suffix *-(l)i* is common for names, cf. *Madali* in BAD EMS, nr. 4.

The initial rune **n** of the second inscription is partly damaged. The 'formulaic' part **urait:runa** 'wrote the runes' is already known of NEUDINGEN-BAAR II, nr. 28.

**aodlip** is a female PN, *Aodlinth*, with the spelling *ao* for *au*, which at first sight appears as a scribal error, since, according to Braune/Eggers, only the spellings *au* and later *ou* are found in the oldest manuscripts. However, since the other new find from LAUCHHEIM also has the same spelling in **aonofada**, this may be a dialectal feature, expressing the change from Gmc *\*au* > *ao* > *ō*, perhaps pointing to the same runographer.

58. PLEIDELSHEIM (Baden-Württemberg, Germany). A bow fibula, found in a woman's grave in an Alamannic-Frankish grave field. Dated end 6th c. It is possible to distinguish four runes, from left to right, reading **inha** (Düwel 1999:15). No interpretation.

59. MERTINGEN (Bavaria, Germany). A bow fibula, found in a woman's grave in a row-grave field. Mertingen is about 8 kms north of Nordendorf, a well-known findplace of two runic brooches (see above, nrs. 30 and 31). This fibula was found as early as 1969, but the runes were not discovered until 1998 (Düwel 2000:14). Dating of the brooch is around 550 or a little earlier. The runic legend is: **ieok aun** or **arn**. An interpretation seems difficult.

4. *Illegible and/or uninterpretable inscriptions*

The finds of Hailfingen, Hohenstadt, Peigen, Tannheim, Trossingen, Bopfingen are in the Württembergisches Landesmuseum, Stuttgart. The Herbrechtingen brooch is in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nürnberg. The Gräfelting and München-Aubing finds are in the Prähistorische Staatssammlung, München. Weingarten III is in the hands of the excavator (Roth 1998).

60. DISCHINGEN II, bow-fibula, mid 6th c. **el/a** ᚱᚱ

61. GRÄFELFING, spatha, 1st h. 7th c. **d/m w** ᚱᚱ

62. HAILFINGEN I, sax, 2nd h. 7th c. (Düwel 1994<sup>b</sup>:234).

63. HAILFINGEN II, S-fibula, mid 6th c. **??daana/l** ᚱᚱᚱᚱ

64. HERBRECHTINGEN, bow-fibula, 3rd th. 6th c. **fpae** ᚱᚱᚱᚱ (Düwel 1994<sup>b</sup>:234).

65. HOHENSTADT, bow-fibula, 3rd th. 6th c. **u g/n n d/m h (ah?) j ugn/a ll**

66. KALTBRUNN, near Konstanz, bronze strap-ends One of them bears runelike signs (Düwel 1998<sup>a</sup>:17).

67. MÜNCHEN-AUBING II, five-knob-fibula, mid 6th c. **bd** ᚱᚱ

68. MÜNCHEN-AUBING III, disc-brooch, date unknown, **nm?u/k** ᚱᚱᚱᚱ





69. PEIGEN, disc-brooch, 2nd h. 6th c. **eh—udo fh h**

**h** (if a rune) single-barred. The inscription looks more as script-imitation.

70. TANNHEIM, hinge, date unknown, **??dui** 

71. TROSSINGEN I, bow-fibula, 3rd th. 6th c. **fl/a** 

72, 73. TROSSINGEN II, two pairs of gilt-silver strap ends, 3rd th. 6th c. (Düwel 1994<sup>b</sup>:264). **maisdi(?)**  and **hj/g** 

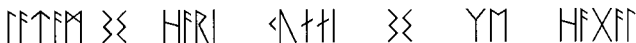
74. WEINGARTEN III, amber bead, mid 6th c. (Düwel 1989<sup>b</sup>:10; Roth 1998). Illegible.


### 5. *The Weser inscriptions (Niedersachsen, Germany)*

These inscriptions were carved on fossilized bones, which were found in 1927/28 along the banks of the mouth of the Weser. The bones are kept in the Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde und Vorgeschichte at Oldenburg. See also chapter one.

Pieper (1989) dated the runic bones to the 5th c., possibly the first half. Antonsen (1993:4f.) dates them no later than 400 AD. Dating the inscriptions is awkward, since they were made on sub-fossile bones.

According to Pieper's transcription, the runic text on bone 4988, which also shows a depiction of a man with a 'feather' or 'horn' on his forehead, carrying an axe and holding a lance toward a horned animal, may be read thus: **latam ing hari kunni ing we hagal**



Pieper took the sign  to represent the so-called **ing**-rune, and transliterated accordingly (see above). Otherwise the sign could be taken as a word-divider. Pieper interprets the text as *latam : inghari kunni : ingwe / hagal* "Lassen wir Inghari. Geschlecht des Ingwe. Verderben" ('Let's leave Inghari. Ingwe's kin. Destruction').

The text on bone 4990 (showing a depiction of a Roman sailing vessel, having its mainsail on the wrong side of the mast) may read: **lokom : her**

Pieper interprets *lokomyher* “Ich schaue hier” (‘I look here’).

A bone artifact, nr. 4991, with a hole in one end, has a geometric drawing and the following text: **ulu hari dede**

This is interpreted by Pieper as *uluhari dede* “Uluhari machte” (‘Uluhari made’).

Antonsen (1993) discusses the items also and presents some new readings and interpretations (Antonsen 1993:12ff). His transliterations are the same as Pieper’s, only the sign  $\text{ǰǰ}$  is taken as a word division sign. *lokomyher* : *her* / *latam* < > *hari* / *kunni* < > *we* / *hagal* / *uluhari dede*. “I see here [a Roman vessel]. Let us, fighting kin, unleash woe-hail [i.e., battle]. Uluhari did (this) [i.e. executed this message]”.

Because of the gemination in **kunni** and the presence of the verb form **dede** the language is West Germanic, according to Antonsen (1993).

As has been argued in chapter one, I still doubt the inscriptions’ authenticity. Especially in the part **uluhari dede**, the curious name Uluhari encouraged me to look again at the name of the finder: Ludwig Ahrens. The fact that Uluhari makes the impression of being an anagram or a shortened form of Ludwig (in Germany the shortened version of this name is ‘Ulli’) Ahrens, aroused suspicion. It appears to be typical of forgerers that they want to be discovered, hence they leave some clues.

## 6. *No runes*

The Bopfingen ring and one of the bow-fibulae from Trossingen. Both display a cross-like sign, probably scratches, deliberate or not.

## 7. *The shift ai > ae; the interchange of u and w, and of b and w*

If the orthography *ai* is older than *ae* (cf. Braune/Eggers § 43,44), we may, in view of the archaeological dating of the objects, date the shift *ai* > *ae* to the first half of the 6th c. NEUDINGEN BAAR II

with **urait** is dated to the 1st half of the 6th c. FREILAUBERSHEIM with **wraet** is dated to the 3rd th. 6th c. WEINGARTEN I with **aerguþ** is dated mid 6th c., SCHWANGAU with **aebi** is dated around 600. Although the archaeological date of Pforzen II is ca. 600, its inscription **urait** would point to an earlier date. Perhaps the runographer used archaic language and spelling; **urait runa** is in runological terms a typical formulaic expression.

The writing of *u* for *w*, such as in **uïu** *wīhju* (bracteate NEBENSTEDT (I)-B), is found on other Continental objects from the first half of the 6th c.: possibly in BOPFINGEN **mauo**; certainly in NEUDINGEN-BAAR II **urait**.

Possible interchanging of **b** and **w** may be found on HEILBRONN-BÖCKINGEN: **arwi** instead of *arbi*, and WEIMAR I: **hiba** instead of *hiwa*, both 6th c.

### 8. *Summary and Conclusions*

The Continental Corpus consists of 74 runic objects. I have listed a total of 55 legible and interpretable items; 19 runic inscriptions are uninterpretable or illegible. All inscriptions are carved on mostly small, personal objects, nearly all of which survived as grave gifts in Merovingian row-grave fields. Most objects can be defined as luxury and prestige goods because of the material (gold, silver, almandine-inlay) and type of object, such as jewellery and ring swords. Nearly all runic objects have been found in rich, very rich, and even princely graves of men, women and children.

The Continental runic inscriptions are found on the following artefacts:

- 47 brooches, all found in or considered to originate from women's graves
- 11 weapons, or weapon parts, all men's belongings
- 3 fittings and belt-buckles, belonging to men's gear
- 4 strap ends, both men and women's gear
- 2 bullae or amulet-caskets, from women's graves
- 2 amber beads, from women's graves
- 1 ivory box, from a child's grave
- 1 neck ring, provenance unknown, probably a man's adornment
- 1 wooden stave, weaving-implement, from a woman's grave

- 1 wooden footstool, from a man's grave
- 1 silver spoon, provenance unknown
- 1 ivory ring from a bronze ornamental disc, from a woman's grave
- 1 comb
- 1 limestone semi-circular half-column

The layout and the contents of the texts show great similarities. There is little variation in the type of texts, which mostly consist of names.

As to the verbs referring to the practice of writing runes, we find **urait**, **wraet**, **writ** 'wrote, writes' and, if the verb 'to do' refers to runic writing, **dedu(n)** 'did, made' can be found twice, in SCHRETZHEIM I and NIEDERSTOTZINGEN.

The verb form **wo(r)gt** 'made' is found once (ARLON) and is apparently a maker's formula.

Furthermore, with regard to verb forms, there is **aig** 'I own', **uf-[i]npai** 'may he/she find out, get to know', **muni** 'may she remember', **golida** 'greeted', **gihaili** 'you must make well', **klef** 'fastened', **gasokun** '(they) condemned, disputed or fought', **rada** 'may guess', **isd** for *ist* 'he/she is'.

I have counted 36 male names, 34 female names; 5 names can be either male or female. There are 17 sentences, containing a subject, a verb form and/or objects. 16 inscriptions consist of one word; 12 inscriptions have two words; 24 consist of more than 2 words with a maximum of 6. There are 2 fuþark-quotations and 2 complete, although damaged, fuþarks.

The use of bindrunes is widespread in the Continental Corpus. In addition the rune-cross, of the rune **g** X with several other runes attached to its extremities, can be regarded as a bindrune.

There are makers', owners' and writers' formulae. Two inscriptions contain riddles: CHARNAY with "may Liano find out Idda", accompanied by a fuþark, and SOEST with "may Daþa guess Gatano" with Gatano written in a rune-cross.

Sometimes the object is designated, in: AQUINCUM, FALLWARD, MÜNCHEN-AUBING I, THORSBERG II, and perhaps NEUDINGEN-BAAR I, taken that **midu** 'reward' means the brooch.

I think the OHG soundshift of *k*- > *kχ*- (*ch*-) can be observed in two inscriptions of the mid and late 6th c.: GRIESHEIM *Kolo* or *Cholo*, and NORDENDORF II with *elk* or *elch*. The sound [χ] is expressed by

the rune ƿ, which may have been a local development. The occurrence of the rune **d** rendering the sound *t*, also a product of the OHG soundchange, can be observed in OBERFLACHT **afd**, WEIMAR III **isd** and, perhaps, in SCHRETZHEIM I **arogisd**.

The typical form of the **r** rune may be regarded a guide fossil, since it occurs only in the middle and southern regions of Germany. Perhaps such a use points to a common background of the runographers. The rune occurs in: GRIESHEIM, NORDENDORF II, NIEDERSTOTZINGEN, BÜLACH, WEINGARTEN, FRIEDBERG, WURLINGEN, SOEST.



Typical of the Continental inscriptions is the use of a term of endearment: ‘love’, written in different spellings, such as: **leub** ENGERS, **liub** NIEDERSTOTZINGEN and WEIMAR I, **leob** WEIMAR I, **lbi** NEUDINGEN-BAAR II. In addition we have two names: *Leuba* in SCHRETZHEIM I, and *Leubo* in SCHRETZHEIM II (no coincidence?).

Because of these variations, some interesting observations can be made. The diphthong Gmc *\*eu* > *iu* occurs in Alamannic and Bavarian before labial, cf. **liub** in NIEDERSTOTZINGEN. In Franconian the development would be either *eu* or *eo* (Braune/Eggers § 47, Anm. 1), cf. **leob** in WEIMAR I, and **leub** in ENGERS.

The overall impression is that runic writing was restricted to a private sphere, in which personal names in particular were of interest, presumably with a somewhat secretive, intimate purpose. The gift-and-exchange of objects with someone’s (pet)name in runes on it may have been a special privilege within certain families. The fact that the inscriptions are invisible to the public eye in nearly all cases (which was certainly intentional) strengthens this impression.

In contrast with runic material from other areas, the Continental tradition presents a limited picture. The fact that we are dealing almost exclusively with grave finds, consisting of mostly precious, small personal belongings, points to the fact that only one application of runic writing has become known to us. Objects and texts are confined to a particular category: of the owners (the deceased) and

their closest relatives or relations. This may explain the abundance of personal names. Texts that relate to more mundane practices would of course show more variety, such as can be found (although sparsely) in the Danish, Dutch and English (North Sea) traditions.

It appears that the Continental runographers were weapon smiths and jewellers, who were commissioned by high-status individuals. The texts belong to the category that is most frequent in runic heritage: owners', makers' and writers' formulae, and dedications. Texts like: "Boso wrote the runes", or "Blithgunth wrote the runes", suggest that the *runographer* signed the inscription (cf. also Page 1995:307). Yet I do not believe that in these exclusively personal, often intimate inscriptions the presence of the name of the artisan would have been appreciated. I am inclined to think that Boso or Blithgunth are the names of the clients, who did not personally write the text, but who ordered the object and the inscription. Female runographers, such as Blithgunth, Alagunth, Leuba, Feha and Aodlinth, would, in that case, not have existed; instead they were the person who commissioned the object. In the early medieval men's world of writing, it appears unlikely to me that female runographers existed among the artists who made the runic objects.

It appears that the words generally were spelled correctly. Perhaps both client and artisan knew how to spell. This suggests an elaborate knowledge and practice of runic writing, although this assumption is not supported by substantial evidence. On the other hand, the formulaic character of the texts suggests the existence of a very limited vocabulary. The limited vocabulary is also partly due to the small proportions of the objects. Whatever the case may be, I don't think that runographers were only versed in runes. I assume they could write in Roman lettering as well. This may mean that they also knew Latin, which for instance is shown by the use of 'u' for 'w.'

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### EARLY RUNIC INSCRIPTIONS IN ENGLAND

#### 1. *Introduction*

The early English and Frisian runic traditions used a fuþork<sup>1</sup> of 26 letters, i.e. the common older fuþark extended with two additional runes: ƿ and ƿ̅. The new graphemes were obviously needed to represent phonemes developed from the allophones of long and short *a*, the results of Ingvaeonic (or North-Sea Germanic) sound changes. This Anglo-Frisian fuþork remained in use in Frisia and England throughout their runic period, in both regions supplemented with several new varieties. From the seventh century onwards, runic writing in England underwent a separate development: the fuþork was extended to over 33 characters. Runic writing in England became closely connected with the Latin scriptoria, demonstrated by ecclesiastical runic monuments and an abundant use of runes in manuscripts.

Two late seventh-century inscriptions from the post-conversion period are included in this chapter: St. Cuthbert's coffin and the Whitby comb. Both items bear texts with a clearly Christian content. St. Cuthbert's coffin is interesting from a runological and historical point of view, because it shows some runic peculiarities and it can be dated accurately. The Whitby comb has a Christian text, partly in Latin. Examples of later Anglo-Saxon rune-writing have also been found in Germany, France and Italy, as a result of travelling Anglo-Saxon clerics and pilgrims.

The first group of inscriptions comprises legible and (partly) interpretable texts; the second group consists of those inscriptions that are hardly legible and therefore hardly interpretable; some are not decipherable at all. Neither the legends on St. Cuthbert's coffin or the Whitby comb present any specific runological difficulties. Here

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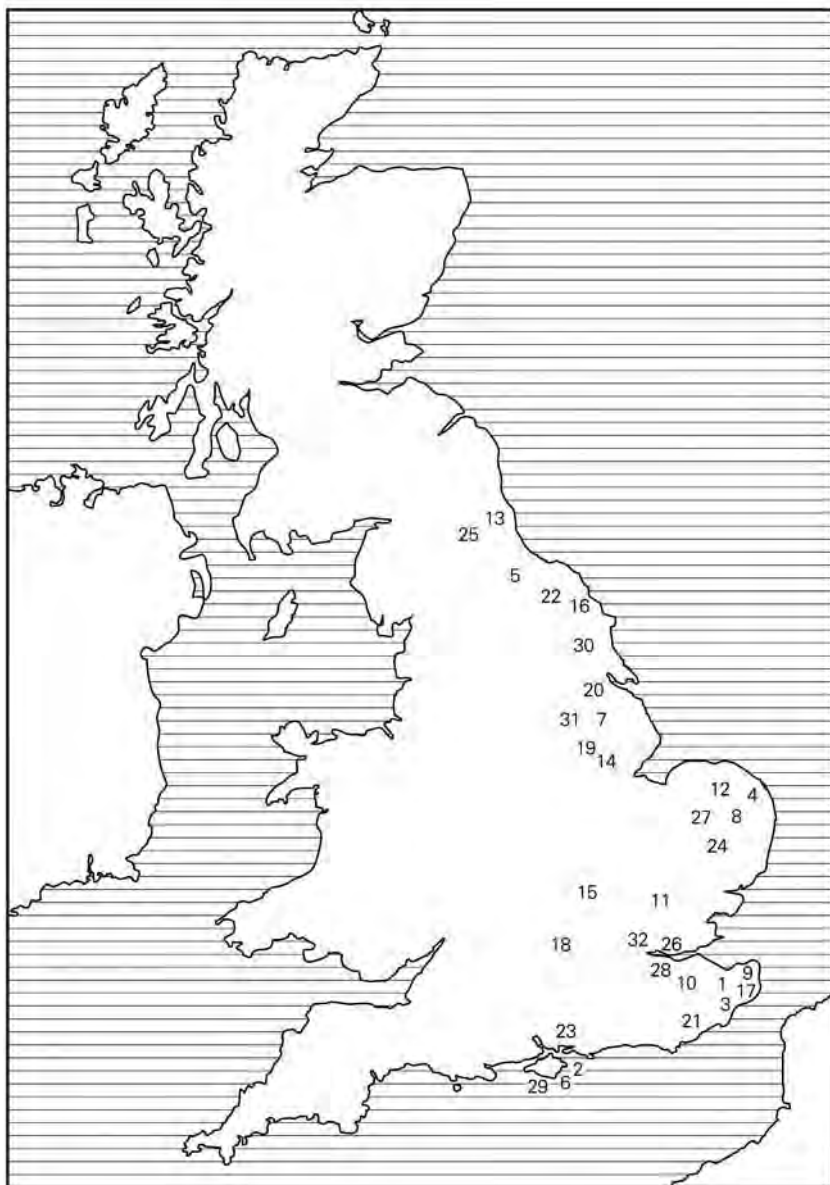
<sup>1</sup> The term fuþork differs from the common name of the runic row, fuþark, in the use of **o** instead of **a**. The name of the \**ansuz* rune (**a**) became in OE *ās*, hence the change. Later also the **k** was changed into **c**, and the name became fuþorc.

the problems are merely caused by damage and wear. The bracteates of Welbeck and Undley are discussed in chapter six (Bracteates).

I have listed the objects according to categories such as sword equipment, brooches, coins. This is because the Early English Corpus, although small, contains so many different objects, unlike the Continental Corpus, which is more uniform. The Frisian objects are also listed according to categories such as combs, coins, objects made of yew-wood. The variety of runic objects is typical for the English, Dutch and the Danish Corpora, which may have something to do with their geographical positions on the North Sea which allowed for trade and travel. It may point to a widely spread use of runes in several contexts.

The abbreviation BM indicates the British Museum. The information on runic coins has been taken from Blackburn (1991). Surveys of English runic inscriptions have been published by Bruggink (1987), Elliott (1959/1989), Parsons (1999), Page (1973/1999 and in an anthology of numerous articles in 1995). A handy checklist of the early inscriptions including excellent drawings and a selected bibliography is presented by Hines (1990<sup>b</sup>). This article also provided the datings given in the catalogue below. Quite a lot of useful information is compiled in *Old English Runes and their Continental Background*, edited by Bammesberger (1991), with photographs.





Map 9. Findspots of runic objects in England (Fifth to seventh centuries).

## 2. Checklist of Early English Runic Inscriptions

*Period I, legible and more or less interpretable inscriptions**Sword Fittings*

1. ASH GILTON (Kent). In the Liverpool City Museum. Pyramidal silver-gilt sword pommel, no find-report. Dated 6th c. The runic inscription is surrounded by ornamental, incised and nielloed lines. The runes are difficult to read since the upper part of the inscription is rather abraded. The first and last parts of the inscription may consist of simply some ornamental lines; the central part may be transliterated: **??emsigimer????** The runes for **e** have a peculiar form, somewhere in between  $\Pi$  and  $\mathfrak{M}$ . The **s** has four strokes.

$\Pi \mathfrak{M} \mathfrak{X} \mathfrak{I} \mathfrak{M} \mathfrak{N} \mathfrak{R}$

Page (1995:301) regards “most of the forms as attempts to give the appearance of an inscription without the reality”. Although script imitations do occur from this period (the legend reminds one especially of HOHENSTADT, chapter seven, nr. 65), in this case I consider it likely that the carver meant to cut runes and that it is possible to decipher (some of) them.

**em** is 1 sg. pres. ind. ‘I am’.

**sigimer** is a PN, nsm. *i*-stem, consisting of two well-known name-elements: OE *sige* ‘victory’, OS *sigi*, and *mēr* < Gmc *\*mēriz*, cf. OE *mare*, Go. *mērs* ‘famous’, cf. THORSBERG **niwajemariz**, and the PN *Segimerus* (Schönfeld 1965:204f.).

Elliott (1989:50) also read **sigimer**. Odenstedt (1981:37–48) read *sigi m(íc) ah* ‘Sigi has me’. According to Odenstedt, the **h** is of the double-barred type. In my opinion only the part **emsigimer** stands out clearly and the possible presence of a double-barred **h** is very doubtful. Parsons (1999:43–5) states that “it is probably fruitless to speculate on the content of the inscription, or to hope to identify characters other than . . . **sigim**. . .”

2. CHESSEL DOWN II (Isle of Wight). In the BM, London. Silver plate attached to a scabbard mouth piece of a ring sword.<sup>2</sup> Dated first half 6th c. It was found in a rich man’s grave.

<sup>2</sup> At the back of the mouth piece a repair strip with runes is attached, hence

The runes are engraved very neatly and read **æko:ƿæri**. The inscription exhibits two different **o**-runes: the Anglo-Frisian  $\bar{o}s$  𐌺 in **æko** and the older *\*ōðilan* 𐌶 in **ƿæri**.



𐌺𐌻𐌶: 𐌶𐌷𐌺

The first rune of the first part may be transliterated **æ**, as fronting of West Gmc *a* in pre-OE probably had taken place before the 6th c. I presume it is a PN; it reminds one of *Akaz*, bracteate ÅSUM-C, (chapter six, nr. 3). If the same name is involved (which may very well be so, cf. De Vries 1962:4, who reconstructs *akr* m. PN on the basis of runic **akaR** and OE *Aca*, and OHG *Aho*), the final *-az* would have become *-a* in West Gmc, cf. **swarta** < *\*swartaz* in ILLERUP I, (Danish Corpus, nr. 1). West Gmc men's names ending in *-a* and *-o* are declined weak, hence **æko** is a nsm. *n*-stem. Anglo-Saxon men's names of the weak declension mostly end in *-a*, though.

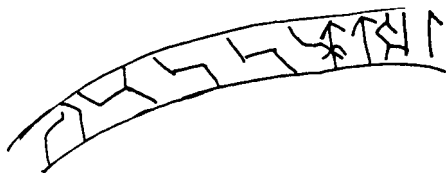
The use of two different **o**-runes:  $\bar{o}s$  𐌺 in **æko** and *\*ōðilan* 𐌶 in **ƿæri** reflect a difference in pronunciation. The value of the initial rune: 𐌶 in the second part of the inscription is obscure. It has the form of the later Anglo-Saxon **s**, also called bookhand-**s**, but this inscription is dated too early to expect influence from bookhand. It probably does not represent **k**, since there is a **k** rune in this inscription in the form 𐌻, similar to the one in CHESSEL DOWN I (below, nr. 6) and in HANTUM (chapter nine, nr. 15). 𐌶 might denote **l**, such as can be found in bracteate legends. Parsons (1999:50) suggests the rune to stand for 𐌶, giving **fœri**, which "might be a regular form of OE *fēre*, 'able, ready'". However, he concludes that this interpretation is uncertain, and that the value of the first rune of the inscription also is not established.

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the strip with the inscription "is a secondary addition to the mount, and perhaps the latest feature on the sword", according to Hawkes & Page (1967:17). They add that "the repairs to the back of the mount, and the cutting of the runes, must have taken place shortly before burial". The presence of an  $\bar{o}s$  rune points to an English provenance for the inscription, although there are strong Scandinavian influences in the ornamentation of the mouth piece (Hawkes & Page 1967:13f).

*Brooches*

3. BOARLEY (Kent). In private hands. Cast copper-alloy disc-brooch. Dated late 6th, early 7th c. Found near Maidstone (Parsons 1992:7–8). The runes are in an arc defined by framing lines. One might read **atsil** or **ætsil**. The **a** or, in view of the dating, **æ**, is a mirror-rune. Parsons (1999:46) however, argues that the inscription was cut from right to left, which causes him to firmly reject the left-to-right reading **sil**. He proposes a reading **li(o)ta**, which might be a female personal name.



↑↑⋈

When taking the medial rune for an inexpertly carved **s** in four strokes, one may read **ætsil**. This can be divided into two words: **æt** prep., OE *æt* ‘at, to, with’, and **sil**, short for OE *sigil*, *sigel* f. (later *n.*) ‘sun’, or ‘brooch’, see below: HARFORD FARM, nr. 4. When reading **æt sil** the interpretation may be ‘to/at/with the brooch’. Presumably the carver did not finish the intended text.

4. HARFORD FARM (Caistor-by-Norwich, Norfolk). In the Norwich Castle Museum. Repaired composite brooch with gold and garnets, dated to ca. 650. Found in a grave. According to Hines (1991<sup>b</sup>) the brooch has typical parallels with brooches found in Milton, Oxfordshire and Ixworth, Suffolk. The inscription is preceded by a slanting stroke, which I take to be an ingress-sign, similar to the one in BERNSTERBUREN (chapter nine, nr. 14). The runes are clearly legible: **luda:gibcætæsigilæ**

↑NMF:IXIBX↑F:IXIF

The meaning is quite clear: ‘Luda repaired the brooch’ (see also Parsons 1999:53–4). Considering the date of the repair, around 650, *i*-mutation might have taken place; therefore the transliteration of the \**ōðilan* rune  $\hat{\lambda}$  is **œ**. A word-divider consisting of 6 dots follows

**luda**, thus severing the subject—the name of the repairer—from the rest of the sentence, which consists of the verb and object written together. This practice reminds one of FREILAUBERSHEIM (chapter seven, nr. 18) **boso:wraetruna** ‘Boso wrote (the) runes’.

**luda** is a PN *Lud(d)a* nsm. *n*-stem (Searle 1897); *lud-* cf. OE *lēod*-m. ‘prince, man’ OS *liud*, OFris *liōd*.

**giboetæ** is 3 sg. pret. ind. ‘repaired’, cf. the later OE inf. *gebētan* ‘to repair’. *gi-* instead of earlier *gæ-*, later OE *ge-* (Campbell § 369). The final inflectional ending *-æ* is regular for this form of the verb at this date (Campbell § 750).

**sigilæ** ‘brooch’ asf. *ō*-stem, *sigle* or *sigel*, *n*-stem in later OE. This word may descend from Latin *sigillum* (cf. Hines 1991<sup>a</sup>, 79f.). Another instance of sigila on a brooch appears in a Continental inscription: MÜNCHEN-AUBING I (chapter seven, nr. 26) **segalo sigila**.

Besides the **desaiona** and **pada** tremisses, dated ca. 660–670, this inscription shows one of the earliest instances of the *āc* rune in the English Corpus (apart perhaps from *āc* in *hlāw*, LOVEDEN HILL, below nr. 7, though uncertain). The **s** rune is a rare variety on the vertical zig-zag line; the example in this inscription has five strokes, so far unparalleled in England (Hines 1991<sup>a</sup>:79f.). ASH GILTON and BOARLEY have **s** in four strokes.

5. WEST HESLERTON (North Yorkshire). In the possession of the excavator. Copper-alloy cruciform brooch. Dated first half 6th c. (Hines 1990<sup>b</sup>:446). The brooch was found in a woman’s grave and can be regarded as typical of the general area in which it was found, according to Hines (1990<sup>b</sup>:446). One can read either **neim** (read from right to left) or **mien** (from left to right).



Page (1987:193 & 1995:301) reads **neim**, or, less likely, **neie**. Hines (1990<sup>b</sup>:445f.) presents a drawing from which **neim** or **mien** (from right to left) can be read. I suggest taking **mien** as an (ortho)graphical error for *mene* ‘necklace, collar, ornament, jewel’ (cf. Roberts 1992:198). Holthausen (1963:219) lists OE *mene* m. ‘Halsband, Schmuck’, OS *meni*, OHG *menni*, ON *men*. The meaning ‘ornament, jewel’ on the brooch lists the inscription among a well-known and wide-spread group of runic texts that designate the object itself, i.e. CAISTOR-BY-NORWICH and HARFORD FARM (English Corpus), AQUINCUM

and FALLWARD (Continental Corpus) and the combs from OOSTUM and TOORNWERD (Frisia).

*A bronze pail, pots and urns*

6. CHESSEL DOWN I (Isle of Wight). In the BM, London. A copiously decorated bronze pail. Dated 520–570 (Hines 1990<sup>b</sup>:438). Found in a rich woman's grave. The pail may have been an import from the eastern Mediterranean. The runes are a later addition since they are cut over the original decoration. There is no clue as to when and where the runes were carved. The **s** is in three strokes; the **c** has a similar form as in CHESSEL DOWN II, above, nr. 2, and HANTUM, and the coin with the legend **skanomodu** (chapter nine, nrs. 15 and 5). The runes were cut between framing lines and are partly damaged by corrosion, but the greater part of the legend is clear: **???bwseecccaaa**. Parsons (1999:51) tentatively transliterates . . . **bw(s) . . . ekkkaa**, which he finds not promising. He offers no interpretation.

The layout and the sequence of the runes recalls the medieval Scandinavian runic *pistil*, *mistil*, *kistil* formula (as for instance on the GØRLEV stone, Sjælland, Denmark, showing the sequence: **pmkiiisssttiiiilll**, generally interpreted as *pistil*, *mistil*, *kistil* ‘thistle, mistle(toe), kistle (small chest)’). When operating in the same way, we would get here: **becca**, **wecca**, **secca**, three masculine personal names, all nsm. *n*-stem. Two of the names are known from the Old English travelogue Widsith 115: *Seccan sohte ic ond Beccan*. Both names are here in the acc. sg. *Becca* was, for instance, the name of one of Eormannic's followers, ruler of the Banings. In Widsith, his full name was *Peodberht* (Malone 1962:196). In legend, he was the evil counsellor who advised Eormannic to murder Sunilda. The *Secca* of Widsith is the hypocoristic form of Sigiwald (cf. Malone 1962:131f. and 196f.). *Wecca* is reminiscent of the name of Wehha, the father of Wuffa, king of East Anglia, who began his reign in 570 AD. *Secca* had to flee and live in exile in Italy (Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* iii, 13, 16, 23f.). See also chapter two.

If the Becca and Secca on the pail are the same as the historical Becca and Secca, this might explain the exotic origin of the pail. The date of the inscription could be late 6th c.

7. LOVEDEN HILL (Lincolnshire). In the BM, London. Cremation urn (excellent photo in Bammesberger, ed. 1991). The dating cannot be any more precise than 5th–6th c. (Hines 1990<sup>b</sup>:443). The urn was found in a large urnfield. The runes are carved in a slipshod style; some lines are cut double. The division marks consist of two plain verticals. The middle and last parts of the inscription in particular are difficult to read.<sup>3</sup>



The first part, consisting of seven runes, is relatively easy. The initial rune is an **s**, carved in three strokes; the second rune is the yew rune which obviously denotes a vowel, transliterated **i**. Then follow **pæb**. The sixth rune may be a double-carved **l**, or an **æ** with a double headstaff: **sīpæbl̥d** or **sīpæbæd**. Although an ending is lacking, I conjecture **sīpæbæd** to be a female PN, nsf. *wō*-stem, a compound consisting of **sīpæ-** cf. OE (*ge*)*sīð* ‘companion’ and **bæd** *beadu* f. ‘battle, war’, cf. OS *Badu* in female PNs. But when reading **sīpæbl̥d** *Sīpæb(a)ld* we have a male PN, with a second element **-ald**, OE *beald* ‘bold’, nsm. *a*-stem.

<sup>3</sup> The somewhat jumpy style allows no absolute statements such as “zweifellos vorzuziehende Lesung **w**” (Nedoma 1991–1993:116), or about the impossibility of having a hook-shaped **k** < in the inscription, “because there would be no further evidence of that form in the English Corpus” (Nedoma 1991–1993:117). One cannot base such firm statements on so little surviving material. There is a near parallel in WATCHFIELD (below, nr. 13): the ‘roof-shaped’ **k**  $\wedge$ . Besides, the ‘KENT’ or ‘BATEMAN’ brooch (see Chapter seven, nr. 23) has a **k** in the form <. This brooch is regarded as “either Anglo-Saxon or Continental Germanic” (Page 1995:172f).

After the verticals follow four runes. The first and last runes may both be a *thorn*, or the first is a *thorn* and the last a *wynn*, since this graph has, in comparison with the first rune, its buckle nearly at the top of the headstaff. The two runes in between could be **iu** or **ic**, hence one may read **þiuþ** or **þiuw** or **þicþ**. A reading **þiuw** ‘maid’ has been proposed by Bammesberger (1991<sup>b</sup>:127). **þiuþ** means ‘good’. Odenstedt (1991:57) suggested reading **þicþ** 3 sg. pres. ind. ‘gets, receives’ < \*þigjþ, cf. OE *ðicgan* ‘to take, to get’ (Holthausen 1963:364).

The third part consists of four runes; the first rune may be a single-barred **h**; it looks like Latin N. A similar N-shaped sign, transliterated **h**, can be found on the SANDWICH stone (below, nr. 21). The last two runes are rather obscure; they appear to be partly intermingled. I read them as *āc* followed by a somewhat unclear **w**. Thus I propose to read **hlaw**, asm/n. *wa*-stem ‘grave’.

The whole sentence may be interpreted as **sīþæbæ/ld þicþ hlaw**. This might mean ‘*Sipæbald* or *Sipæbæd*, gets (a) grave’ (after all the text is on a cremation urn). When reading **þiuw** for the second part, we obtain: ‘*Sipæbæd* (the) maid (her) grave’. When reading **þiuþ** we can interpret: ‘grave (of) S. (the) good’, or ‘S., (a) good grave’. Parsons (1999:55) gives a provisional transliteration, for further discussion: **sīþabad:þikw:\*la\***.

8. SPONG HILL (Norfolk). In the Norwich Castle Museum. Three cremation urns, dated 5th c. (cf. Hines 1990<sup>b</sup>:434). The urns are decorated with runic stamps, exhibiting mirror-runes, also known as *Spiegelrunen*.

†↑↑

The runes can be read either way: from right to left and vice versa (Pieper 1987:67–72). They represent the well-known word **alu**, in single runes **ffl**, which is a frequently-used ‘formula-word’ in Scandinavian inscriptions, literally meaning ‘ale’ (see chapter six, 2). The runes are stamped in the weak clay. This manner of decorating pots with stamps is common to Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Frisian ware. There might be a connection with the manufacture of bracteates, which also bear stamped runic legends, such as **alu**. On the whole, **alu** may be taken as a word indicating a connection with some type of cult or ritual, in which the use of ale may have played a central role.



*The early gold and silver coins*

9. KENT II. More than 30 specimens of the Pada coinage, the last of the runic groups of gold-coinage. There are five distinct types, four of which include the name **pada**, PN nsm. *n*-stem.

𐌷𐌰𐌹𐌺

According to Blackburn (1991:145) “Two of the types (. . .) are struck in base gold (. . .) and may be dated ca. 660–70, while the other two (. . .) are known in both base gold (. . .) and fine silver. They thus span the transition from base gold shillings to new silver pennies (*sceattas*) and were probably struck [around] 670–85”.

*Pada* is regarded as the moneyer, and the coinage is thought to be Kentish. The name *Pada* < *Bada* may originally be a Saxon name, OS *Bado*, \**Pado*, *Patto* (Kaufmann 1965:37), showing *Anlautverschärfung* *p* < *b*. *Bada* < Gmc \**badwō*- nsf. *wō*-stem, ‘battle’, cf. above, LOVEDEN HILL. Names ending in *-a* are weak masculine names in OE.

10. KENT III, IV. The earliest silver *sceattas* with the legends **æpa** and **epa** appear in Kent at the end of the 7th c. (the Frisian *sceattas* and those from Ribe, Denmark, are mainly dated 8th and early 9th c.). Cf. MIDLUM (Frisia) chapter nine, nr. 7, with the same legend.

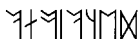
𐌶𐌷𐌰      𐌶𐌷𐌰

To the “primary or intermediate types belongs the early variety with the legend **tæpa** 𐌰𐌹𐌺𐌰, the prototype for the Frisian runic issue”, according to Blackburn (1991:175f.). He adds: “The first East Anglian specimens of **æpa**, **epa** belong to a secondary group dating from ca. 720 or somewhat earlier. (. . .) The sound change reflected in the transition from *Æpa* to *Epa* is as likely to have occurred in the Kentish dialect as in an Anglian one”, according to Blackburn<sup>4</sup> (1991:152). *Tæpa* as well as *Epa*, *Æpa* are probably moneyers’ names, nsm. *n*-stems.

<sup>4</sup> Other personal names on *sceattas* are: **æpiliræd** (19 pieces, early 8th c.), **tilberçt**, the penultimate rune being the yew rune, here indicating a guttural sound (10 pieces, dated early 8th c.), and **wigræd** (Blackburn 1991:155–158).

11. SUFFOLK. Three gold shillings (one from St. Albans, two from Coddtenham in Suffolk); all struck from the same pair of dies. Dated ca. 660.

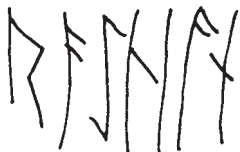
The runes read from right to left: **desaiona**



According to Blackburn (1991:144f.), the coins probably are from the same mint as the coinage of *Pada*, since the earliest *Pada* types take their obverse design from the *desaiona* coins, and these two issues are the only ones dated second half 7th c. employing runic script. I have no explanation for the legend **desaiona**, nor have I found one elsewhere (to quote Page and Blackburn in *Nytt om Runer* 1998:13 “... sequences of runes that make no obvious sense—that now usually transliterated **desaiona** is an example—were often inserted into a Roman inscription. Whether they ever did make sense or not is a question—they may simply have been vernacular attempts to give the effect of legends equivalent to those of Roman prototypes”).

#### *Miscellaneous*

12. CAISTOR-BY-NORWICH (Norfolk). In the Castle Museum, Norwich. An astragalus found in an urn. Dated to ca. 425–475 (Hines 1990<sup>b</sup>:442). The urn included 35 to 38 knucklebones, which were used as gaming pieces; all but one are of sheep. The exception is from a roe deer (Knol 1987:284) and has a runic inscription. The **h** is single-barred. The runic inscription is transliterated **raihan**.<sup>5</sup>



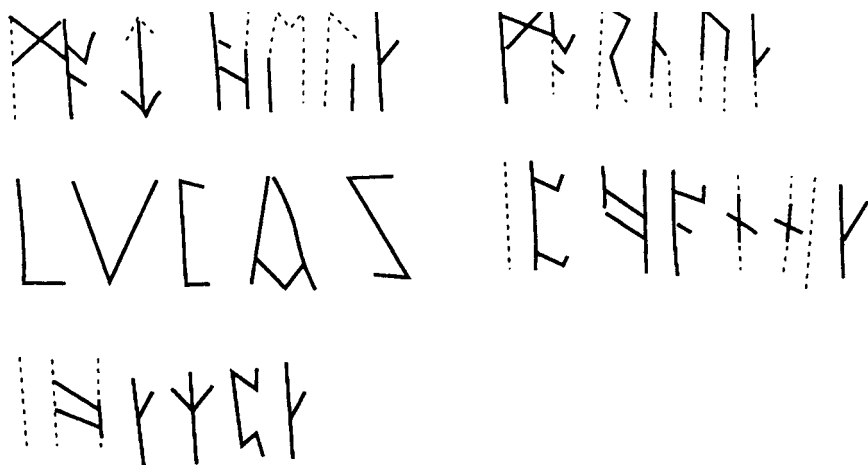
<sup>5</sup> The suggestion that the inscription should be (pre-) OE and transliterated **\*ræihan**, has been rejected, because **a** in **aī** is not fronted, as monophthongization of *ai* > *ā* preceded the fronting of *a* > *e*. The ending is **-an** and not **-æn**, because Gmc *a* was not fronted before nasals. The form *raihan* seems archaic, because intervocalic *-h-* is preserved and monophthongization of *ai* > *ā*, which happened in OE and North-North-Gmc before *r*, *h*, did not take place. It is remarkable that the diphthong *ai* is represented by the digraph **aī**, a combination of **a** and the yew rune **ī**. The same orthography is found in PFORZEN (chapter seven, nr. 34) **aīlrun**, early 6th c.

RFJHFT

The meaning of the text is ‘roe’ or ‘of a roe’. Sanness Johnsen (1974:38–40) takes **raihan** as an oblique form of a masc. noun, *n*-stem; OE *rāha*, *rāh*, *rāhdēor*. The yew rune J is used here only as a variety of the **i** rune. It seems to me that the text belongs to a group of inscriptions in which the naming of the material or the object plays an important role, cf. the combs reading ‘comb’ and the HAMWIC knucklebone (chapter nine, nr. 20) with the reading **katæ** ‘phalanx’, Du. ‘koot’. The Brandon inscription (Norfolk, 8th or 9th c.) on a piece of antler reads: **wohs wildum de(or)an**, OE for: ‘(this) grew on a wild animal’. Another piece of antler, from Dublin, has the (Old Norse) text: **hurn:hiartaR** ‘deer’s horn’. FALLWARD (chapter seven, nr. 15) has **ksamella** ‘footstool’. And there is the Franks Casket (first half 8th c.) with **hronæsban** ‘(made of) whalebone’. It may be that the inscribed knucklebones, antler pieces and horn pieces were used in some kind of game, and that these pieces had a significant role.

13. ST. CUTHBERT (Durham). In the Cathedral Museum, Durham.<sup>6</sup> Wooden coffin, inscribed with runes and Roman letters. The coffin is dated 698, eleven years after St. Cuthbert’s death (cf. Parsons 1999:90f.). The wood of the coffin has suffered much from weathering; the coffin itself is incomplete. According to Page (1988:257–263) one can read some of the many names of apostles and saints written on the coffin, but most of the names are abraded to such a degree that they can no longer be identified. Therefore, only a part of the inscription is presented here; for a detailed account, see Page (1988 and 1995) and Derolez (1983:83–85). The description below is based on Page’s observations.

<sup>6</sup> The coffin can be seen, but its present state does not allow personal inspection.



What is left of the runes can be guessed at: **ih**s **xps** **mat(t)[h]** (**eus**)

**ma** and possibly also **eu** are in bindrunes, the **t** is inverted ↓. The part **[h](eus)** has nearly vanished.

Then follows: **marcus**, LUCAS, quite clear and angular. Then: **iohann(i)s**, the initial rune is **i** (!). Then (R)(A)(P)(H)AEL and (M)A(RI)(A).

The names of the apostles Matthew, Mark and John are in runes, whereas the names of Luke and Mary are written in Roman letters. The Christ monogram is in runes. The **h** of **ih**s is a double-barred **h**, the first instance so far in the English tradition. The **h** in **mat(t)[h](eus)** and H in (RAPH)AEL are nearly invisible.

The **s** runes are in the so-called 'bookhand' fashion  $\Upsilon$ . The names of the apostles are in classic orthography. The spelling of the nomen sacrum is **ih**s **xps** *Ie(so)s Chr(isto)s*, curiously enough written after a Roman model of a partly latinized Greek original; XPS = XPIC-TOC; the Greek P *rho* has been interpreted as the Latin capitalis P and subsequently rendered by the rune for **p**! Another remarkable fact is that the old **z** rune  $\Upsilon$  is used to render **x**. Page (1988:264) concludes that the clerics who wrote the text had no idea of the epigraphic application of the runic alphabet, but that instead they used runes picked out of manuscript rune rows. Why the scribes wrote Roman and runes in one text is unknown; a casual mixture of the two scripts, however, was not uncommon in Anglo-Saxon England. Another instance is the Franks Casket, with a vernacular text mostly in runes, but on one side of the casket a Latin text

appears, partly in runes and Roman lettering: HIC FUGIANT HIERUSALEM **afitatores** ‘here the inhabitants flee from Jerusalem’ (see also Page 1995:311f. on this “sophisticated attitude to language”).

The context, according to Page (1988:263), is both local (East Northumbrian) and learned. The use of runes and Roman capitals together shows that runes had lost all pagan association (if they ever had any), some two generations after king Edwin of Northumbria accepted Christianity in 627.

14. WAKERLEY (Northamptonshire). In the Northampton Central Museum. Copper-alloy square-headed brooch, found at a cemetery site. Dated 525–560 (Hines 1990<sup>b</sup>:440). The runic brooches found in England are mostly indigenous. The Wakerley brooch belongs to a group of Anglo-Saxon square-headed brooches, according to Hines. The second and fourth runes probably denote **u**; they have rather short sidetwigs. The **h** is single-barred. The runes may be read **buhui**

BNHN

I wonder whether **buh-** is cognate with OE *bēag* m., OS *bōg* ‘ring, piece of jewellery etc.’, OE *boga*, OS *bogo*, ON *bogi* ‘bow’, inf. OE *būgan* ‘to bend’. The **h** in medial position might represent a velar or glottal spirant (Campbell § 50, note 3 and § 446). The text of the inscription could present a synonym for ‘brooch’. Again, a designation of the object ‘little clasp, small bend’ may be meant.

15. WATCHFIELD (Oxfordshire). In the Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock. Copper-alloy fittings with a runic inscription. The fittings belonged to a leather purse-mount (decayed), containing a balance and weights. Dated 520–570 (Hines 1990<sup>b</sup>:439). The fittings were found in a man’s grave, in a grave field on the borders of Mercia and Wessex. The grave goods of this 6th-c. grave are best paralleled with Kentish and Frankish graves, according to Hines. Early Anglo-Saxon balance remains are almost exclusively found in Kent and the Upper Thames region. Both areas demonstrate contacts with the Continent, and with Frankish territories in particular, according to Scull (1986:127). The inscription is easy to read: **hariboki:wusa.**

The **a** in **hariboki** has serifs: triangular terminals of the sidetwigs. The use of serifs is a stylistic peculiarity of almost all insular scripts (Bischoff 1990:86). The **s** is in three strokes. The **h** is single-barred, the **o** is rendered by the \**ōðilan* rune; the **k** has the form of a ‘roof’  $\wedge$ , otherwise known from the Continental Corpus and a few bracteates (see chapter four, 15). Parsons (1999:68–70) also transliterates **hariboki:wusa**, two personal names, of which the first may well denote a woman.



HFRIBOKI WUSA

There are no typical Anglo-Frisian runes. It may be too early for *i*-mutation, because of the dating and the fact that **i** is retained in **boki**. Neither is there syncope of the **i** in **hari-**.

**hariboki** is probably a PN, consisting of *hari-* < Gmc \**harja-*, *m. ja*-stem ‘army’ and *-bōki*, *g/dsn. i*-stem ‘beech’ (compare **tunwini** in Thornhill I, Campbell § 601). The compound name *Haribōki* may literally be the name of a soldier: ‘Armybeech’, or ‘Battletree’, no bad *kenning* for a warrior. *Wusa* may be a woman’s name, *g/dsf. ō*-stem. The final vowel denotes unaccented *a* (Campbell § 333 and § 587). The meaning might be ‘for Haribok, from Wusa’.

On the other hand, one may read **pusa** ‘this one’ (because the runic graphs  $\text{þ} = \mathbf{w}$  and  $\text{ð} = \mathbf{th}$  are nearly the same); cf. WESTEREMDEN B **pusa**, the accusative of a demonstrative pronoun, see Seebold (1990:422) and chapter nine, nr. 13. One may interpret the text as follows: ‘Hariboki’s (possession), this one’, an owner’s formula, cf. WESTEREMDEN B ‘Wimcœd has this’.

A third possibility is to suppose that the *wynn*  $\text{þ}$  of **wusa** has been carved incompletely, and actually a **b**  $\text{þ}$  was meant, in *bu(r)sæ* f. ‘purse’ (cf. BEZENYE II (chapter seven, nr. 8), which has a **b** rune with only one pocket  $\text{b}$  in **arsiboda**). Odenstedt (1991:62) suggested reading **pusa** ‘bag’, the *wynn* standing for a *p* instead of *w*. Since the inscription is carved on a purse, a naming of the object: ‘H’s purse’ is not unlikely.

Either way, the inscription can be included in a well-known and





ᛞᛞ      ᛠᛠᛠᛠᛞ

Two clusters of runes are set in framing lines, as if the manufacturer wanted to imitate stamps. One inscription has **ᛞᛞ**, the other can be read from either side: the first three runes are possibly **ᛠᛠᛠ**, after turning the object 180°, one may read **ᛠᛠᛠ**, **ᛠᛠᛠ** or **ᛠᛠᛠ**, since the rune with the form ᛠ may denote **ᛠ**, as it is sometimes found on bracteates. Perhaps the inscription's purpose is purely ornamental (see also nr. 26, below).

18. UPPER THAMES VALLEY. A group of four gold coins, struck from two pairs of dies, found in two separate places in the Upper Thames Valley. Dated to the 620s. Blackburn (1991:144, footnote 32) is not convinced that the coins came from the same mint, since “two finds are inadequate evidence to identify the mint of origin, for the pattern could change significantly as more finds are made”. The runic inscriptions on the reverses have yielded no satisfactory explanation. One group has: **ᛠᛠᛠᛠᛠᛠᛠᛠ** or **ᛠᛠᛠᛠᛠᛠᛠᛠ**. The other has **ᛠᛠᛠᛠᛠᛠᛠᛠ** or **ᛠᛠᛠᛠᛠᛠᛠᛠ**.

ᛠᛠᛠᛠᛠᛠᛠᛠ

19. WILLOUGHBY-ON-THE-WOLDS (Nottinghamshire). Copper-alloy bowl. Dated late 5th or 6th c. Possibly an import from the Rhineland. It displays a single rune **ᛠ** cut in the bottom of the interior. This type of bowl turns up particularly in rich graves. The grave contained some amber beads and a small-long brooch 5th or 6th c. (Hines 1990<sup>b</sup>:451).

20. CLEATHAM (South Humbershire). In the Borough Museum, Scunthorpe. Copper-alloy hanging bowl, found in a woman's grave in a cemetery. The bowl belongs to a tradition apparently derived from the Roman Period and maintained in Celtic areas. As Anglo-Saxon grave goods, these bowls are datable to the late 6th and 7th



centuries, according to Hines (1990<sup>b</sup>:444), who would prefer to assign the burial with the copper bowl to the 7th c.

The runes are faint and surrounded by probably intrusive scratches: **??edih** or **hide??**



MMIH

The **h** is single-barred. No interpretation, though one might consider an object's name, or an owner's mark.

21. SANDWICH/RICHBOROUGH (Kent). In the Royal Museum at Canterbury. According to Evison (1964:242–244) the runic text on this stone might yield **\*ræhæbul** 'stag', showing a single-barred **h**, which resembles a Latin N. Only the middle part of the inscription **?ahabu?i** can be perceived.

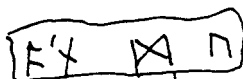
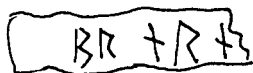
ƿHƿB |

Evison dated it ca. 650. The inscription is in framing lines, and exceedingly worn. Others thought the object to be undatable (cf. Hines 1990<sup>b</sup>:448), but according to new evidence, it can perhaps be dated to the period of the oldest English inscriptions (Parsons 1994<sup>b</sup>:318 with many references).

22. WHITBY II (Yorkshire). In the BM, London. Jet disc, spindle whorl, three runes: **ueu**. No date.

MM

23. SELSEY (West Sussex). In the BM, London. Two bits of gold found on the beach between Selsey and Bognor (Hines 1990<sup>b</sup>:448). Dated late 6th–8th c. One can read **brnrn** on one, **anmu** on the other (Hines); Page (1973:29, 163) reads tentatively **-anmæ-**. No interpretation.



BR + R + ʀ      Fʀ ʀ n

4. *Recent finds*

24. BILLOCKBY (Norfolk). In the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. An Anglo-Saxon runic coin, found with a metal detector in the summer of 1997. It is a tremissis, of base gold, dated to ca. 670, some fifty years before the much larger silver runic coinage in the names of moneyers **epa** and others. This tremissis may belong to the earliest coinage of East Anglia. The runic sequence that can be distinguished is **ltoed**. There is no interpretation (Page and Blackburn 1998:12f.).

25. WHEATLEY HILL (Durham). In the BM. A finger-ring of silver, alloyed with copper, tin and lead, mercury gilded (according to an elaborate description by Page 1997:11f.). Dated late 8th c. Found in 1993, during the digging of a foundation trench. The runes are cut round the hoop of the ring; the letters are elegantly seriffed. Page reads the following: **ringichatt** with a bindrune of **h** and **a** both in Anglo-Saxon forms. This is: *ring ic hatt* which means “ring I am called”. One would expect the spelling ‘hring’ and a final vowel in the verb. Detailed examination showed that the ‘h’ and the vowel ‘æ’ were covered by two circular gem settings. So the original inscription was: *hring ic hatta*.

26. LONDON, ROYAL OPERA HOUSE. A piece of bone, possibly a tibia of a sheep or roe deer, found during excavations on the site of Covent Garden (Page 1997:12f.). The runes run from right to left; the sequence may be runes with verticals interspersed among them, according to Page, which “may be forms of the rune **i** or may have

division or other function”. Page transliterates: |**æ**|**æ**|**w**|**þ**|**rd**. There seems to be no clear meaning to be made out of this sequence. Perhaps the inscription’s purpose was purely ornamental (see also nr. 17, above).

27. DISC FROM THE RIVER YARE, NORWICH. Material unknown. Found at Keswick near Eaton in Norfolk. Sold by the finder; its present whereabouts are unknown (Hines 1997:13ff.). Only a photograph exists for study. The disc is about 29 millimetres in diameter, perforated in the centre for a rivet or pin. There are eight runes, in a ring around the hole in the centre, probably to be read from left to right. Hines suggests a reading: **tlimsudn**. No interpretation, no date, other than “between later seventh to earlier ninth centuries”, according to Hines.

28. LONDON, NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY. Vertebra of a sheep with two inscriptions in Anglo-Saxon runes, one on each of the flat sides of the bone (Page 1999:9ff.) The runes run from left to right, and read: **tatberht dric**

The first inscription presents a recorded Old English personal name, the second might be a name as well. The first rune Page takes as representing its rune-name *dæg*, so that the whole gives *Dægric*, “rare in Old English but with Continental parallels”. The date may be 8th or 9th c., according to the context in which the bone was found.

29. ISLE OF WIGHT. In the BM. Strip of metal found at The Froglands, Isle of Wight (Page 1999:10f.) A flat strip of metal, copper-alloy, 42 mm long; one end of the strip is broken away. On the basis of the decoration it has been dated ca. 800. According to Page, the runes are roughly cut, running from the broken end towards the head. His tentative reading is: **ǰnæt:ǰæræw?uotæ:di**

Although Page gives no interpretation, I think one is possible. The middle part might very well be a verb form. It reminds one of



d-motif can be noticed on a cruciform-brooch from Sleaford, Lincolnshire (Hines 1990<sup>b</sup>:450). A rune-like ‘d’ motif may be just an ornamental sign, contrary to the **a** rune in nr. 17, above.

Barrington (Cambridgeshire). A polished bone with perhaps just scratches. 5th or 6th c. During summer 1997 a parallel turned up in the Betuwe (the Netherlands). This is also a piece of polished bone, with similar scratches. The Barrington bone piece is known as a pin-beater, for use in weaving, according to Hines. He believes the scratches are pseudo-runes, i.e. definitely not real runes, but imitations.

Sarre (Kent). A sword pommel. It has some lines that might be interpreted as runic **t**, but it is probably an ornamental sign. Dated late 5th, early 6th c.

Hunstanton Brooch (Norfolk). A copper-alloy swastika brooch, dated 6th c. The brooch is an Anglian type of the 6th c. according to Hines (1990<sup>b</sup>:450). One of the ‘arms’ of the swastika bears a crosslike sign, which may be runic **g**. The cross has a sidetwig attached to one extremity, so a bindrune **gi** may be read, comparable to other inscriptions like **ga** in KRAGEHUL (Danish Corpus), **gæ** and **go** on the UNDLEY bracteate, **gi** in KIRCHHEIM TECK (Continental Corpus) and an ornament (or a bindrune **ga**?) on an *Ebergefäss* from Liebenau, Niedersachsen, Germany (cf. Looijenga 1995<sup>b</sup>:102–105).

## 6. *Summary and Conclusions*

I have listed 32 inscriptions. Most of these date from a period of about three (5th–7th) centuries. 20 are legible and (partly) interpretable, 12 are legible but uninterpretable, or altogether illegible. 4 objects (not numbered) bear non-runic or ornamental signs. There are 11 or 12 men’s names (not counting the saints on St. Cuthbert’s coffin) and 1 or 2 women’s names. The object itself is named 6 times. There may be 5 verb forms: **gibœtæ** ‘repaired’, **helipæ** ‘help’, **hatt**[æ] ‘I am called’ and perhaps **picþ** ‘gets’ and the garbled **gæræwæuotæ** ‘made ready’. There are at least 5 sentences, in HARFORD FARM, LOVEDEN HILL, the WHITBY comb, WHEATLY HILL and ISLE OF WIGHT. I have counted 5 objects that belonged to a man and 8 objects that

belonged to a woman. Many objects, such as the coins and the urns, could have belonged to either men or women.

Of the 32 items 18 are made of metal (gold, silver, copper-alloy, bronze), 4 are of earthenware, 4 of bone, 1 of wood, 1 of jet and there is 1 of stone. Moreover there are over 40 gold coins and hundreds of silver *sceattas*, listed as 4 items. There are 3–5 pieces of weapon equipment, 5 brooches, 4 bowls or pails, and 4 urns. No antler objects have been recorded.

Out of a total of 32 items, at least 20 show a private context. 13 objects can be associated with graves; the coins are from hoards; some objects are casual finds. The context of at least 7 objects is unknown (at least to me).

Drawing conclusions from such a small amount of material is difficult. The most striking feature is the relatively poor quality and small quantity of the early inscriptions in England, when compared with the wealth of runic texts of the post-conversion period from 700 till the eleventh century. Although the early English tradition is not out of the ordinary, it is remarkably meagre when compared with the Continental and the Danish and Norwegian Corpora (even without counting the bracteates). Curiously enough it is not so meagre when compared with the Swedish Corpus of older fuþark inscriptions (see Appendix), although Scandinavia has the name of being the cradle of the runes.

Approximately the same number of runic objects have survived in England from a period of three centuries as has been found in the Netherlands from a period of four centuries. Two centuries of runic practice in Germany and surrounding countries have produced over three times as many runic survivors. During the sixth and seventh centuries, runic writing seems to have been more widely practised on the Continent, but the difference might be accidental. The remarkable quantity of runic gold and silver coins are characteristic of England and Frisia.

### *The spread of runic writing and certain links*

During the early ages, runic writing in England was confined to the eastern parts south of the Humber, and to Kent and the Isle of Wight. Initially, few runic objects were recorded from East Anglia. But the area provides interesting finds dating from the seventh century on, such as the HARFORD FARM brooch, and later, objects from

settlement sites such as Brandon (ninth century) and several other sites in East Anglia (see recent finds). If the UNDELY bracteate was made in Suffolk, we can add another important runic item.

At first runes were not in evidence in Essex, Wessex and Sussex. This suggests that the Saxons did not write runes. Indeed, it is remarkable that no runic writing is recorded from Saxony, except for the coastal area. In fact, the whole of North Germany is almost runeless. The reason may be that the sandy soil did not allow objects to survive, but the burial custom of cremation in particular would have destroyed all objects. And habitation was sparse. From the fifth and sixth centuries, when the burial custom changed from cremation to inhumation, a sudden increase in runic finds occurs. We can observe certain links between Frankish (Merovingian) areas and the North Sea coastal regions, the Lower Rhine area and South England, which is shown by the exuberant inventory of some warrior graves (see also chapter two). From the same period, runic writing is recorded from all those areas, except from North Gaul.

A linguistic link between England, Germany and Norway is demonstrated by the use of the word **sigila** for 'brooch' (HARFORD FARM in England and MÜNCHEN-AUBING I in South Germany). The Norwegian instance is **siklisnAhli** (**sikli** = 'brooch') on the STRAND brooch (Sør Trøndelag, dated around 700, see Krause 1966:48f.). Another link may be demonstrated by the supposedly syntactical use of division marks, such as in **luda:gibøetæsigidæ** and **boso:wraetruna** (resp. HARFORD FARM and FREILAUBERSHEIM) and **ubazhite:hara-banaz** in JÄRSBERG (Sweden), **liubumez:wage** (OPEDAL, Norway) and **ekwakraz:unnam** (REISTAD, Norway). The combinations particularly concern subjects, verbs and objects, so there may be some diagnostic feature in these otherwise quite rare occurrences of clusters containing division marks.

There are significant similarities between the Anglo-Saxon and Danish inscriptions: most striking are occurrences of mirror runes, stamps and the word **alu**. Another remarkable link between England and Denmark may be the use of the *pistil*, *mistil*, *kistil* formula in *bekka*, *wekka*, *sekka* (CHESSEL DOWN I).

### *The use and background of typical runes*

The English tradition exploits two different **s**-runes, a zig-zag **s** ᚱ and the so-called 'bookhand' **s** ᚦ. The zig-zag form is exhibited in

a three or more partite form in LOVEDEN-HILL, WATCHFIELD, HARFORD FARM and perhaps on the DOVER composite brooch.

Bookhand **s** appears to have been derived from the *insular miniscule*, a long *s* used by Irish scribes. The fact that this **s** occurs with the double-barred **h** on St. Cuthbert's coffin together with the (partly latinized) Greek spelling of the *nomina sacra* XPS and IHS points to a learned interest in strange letter and language combinations. The seriffed runes may also have been the product of ecclesiastical influence. I think it probable that runic bookhand **s** and double-barred **h** were introduced by Irish scribes, possibly in Northumbria initially. The double-barred **h** may have been imported by them from the Continent. The double-barred **h** appears for the first time (as far as is known) on St. Cuthbert's coffin, that is in 698. This rune in its double-barred form is regarded as 'diagnostic', since it appears only on the Continent, in Frisia and in England, but never in Scandinavia. Double-barred **h** appears first in South and Middle Germany in the early sixth century. Around 600 it appears in Frisia, on the **hada** gold solidus (see chapter nine, nr. 6) and about a century later in England.

Bookhand **s** is furthermore found on the Kingmoor amulet ring, in the futhorcs of the Brandon pin and the Thames scramasax (both ninth century). It is also present in some manuscript rune rows from the ninth century. The occurrence of the 'common' **s**-shape on a ring from Bramham Moor (ninth century) is remarkable, since ring and inscription are similar to Kingmoor.

Of course these conclusions are tentative, since we have so little surviving material. I am not inclined to think that runic knowledge and use was very poor in the pre-conversion period. Runographers must have used perishable material. It could be that in the post-conversion period there were more people who knew runes. However, a runic play such as is attested on the Chessel Down pail suggests expanded runic knowledge in Anglo-Saxon England. Also the jeweller's signature on the back of the Harford Farm brooch points to the sort of runic use that is known from all other regions. The garbled inscription on the Isle of Wight metal strip reveals the problems faced when trying to render spoken language into writing. I don't think it made any difference whether this was attempted with runes or with Roman letters.



## CHAPTER NINE

# RUNIC INSCRIPTIONS IN OR FROM THE NETHERLANDS

### 1. *Introduction*

Until 1996 runic evidence from the Netherlands was mainly known only from the *terp*-area on the North Sea coast of the provinces of Groningen and Friesland. The runic Corpus was thus called the Frisian Corpus, because Groningen and Friesland were both part of Frisia in the Middle Ages. But in April 1996 an important runic item was found near Tiel on the east bank of the Waal, in the river estuary of the Rhine and the Maas, in present Gelderland. The site, called Bergakker, lies in the Betuwe, the *Insula Batavorum*. This find, dated to around 425 AD, exhibits runes from the older futhorc plus an anomalous rune. Its inscription has no Anglo-Frisian runic features. Furthermore, in 1999 a new runic find was discovered at Borgharen on the east bank of the Maas, north of Maastricht, province of Limburg. The object is dated to ca. 600 AD; the inscription exhibits runes from the older futhorc, and clearly belongs to the Continental runic tradition such as is found in the Rhineland, Alamannia and Bavaria. Again, there are no Anglo-Frisian runic features. It is interesting that both Bergakker and Borgharen lie in the Rhine and Maas delta. These rivers were important communication links between the hinterland and the North Sea.

As in the Anglo-Saxon Corpus, a division in material and type of object was made to show the variety of objects and material. Except for Amay, Hoogebeintum and Borgharen, which are grave finds, the majority of the objects have been found in a *terp* or *wierde* during commercial digging of the soil at the end of the 19th century and the first third of the 20th. Other objects were casual finds, such as the four gold coins, which have no known find places and therefore have no find-context. Page (1996:139f.) suggests that all four coins could be either English or Frisian. The gold pendant Wijaldum B was found with a metal detector in 1990 and Bergakker was also found with the help of a metal detector in 1996.

The Frisian runic Corpus has been edited by several scholars in different compilations (for a brief survey of editors, see Nielsen 1996). In 1939 Arntz and Zeiss published the first compilation of nine inscriptions. They included the Frisian items in the Continental Corpus. In 1951 Boeles described the then known runic objects in his major study of Frisian archaeology *Friesland tot de elfde eeuw*. W.J. Buma's publications deal with several objects with inscriptions; his inaugural speech (1957) at Groningen university was devoted to the Frisian runic corpus. W. Krogmann discussed the authenticity of some Frisian inscriptions in his 1953 pamphlet *Zur Frage der friesischen Runeninschriften*. Sipma (1960) published a survey of sixteen Frisian runic inscriptions, including some that later on appeared to be falsifications or displayed no runes; these are the so-called 'hilamodu' and 'agu' items, Westeremden C, and Jouswier. Düwel and Tempel (1968/70) were able to extend the number of the Frisian Corpus by their discovery of four inscriptions on combs (Kantens, Hoogebeintum, Oostum and Toornwerd). Moreover, they proved (Düwel/Tempel 1968/70:376ff.) that 'Jouswier' and 'hilamodu' were falsifications. The 'agu' item, a bronze book-mounting, did not have any runes. It only shows some scratches, which according to Buma (1957:29), were runes. The bone plate from Jouswier is kept in the *Oudheidkundige Kamer* at Dokkum. Westeremden C is missing, but there is a publication by Kapteyn (1934). The 'hilamodu' object is missing; the 'agu' item is at the Fries Museum in Leeuwarden. Another elaborate survey and linguistic description of sixteen Frisian inscriptions was published by Miedema (1974). Gijsseling (1980) discussed sixteen Frisian inscriptions, including the Uden stone and the Hitsum bracteate, in his edition on the Middle Dutch texts. Quak (1990) compiled twenty Frisian inscriptions including Eenum and Doijem, (both non-runic). Nielsen scrutinized the complicated linguistics of Runic Frisian in several articles (1984<sup>a&b</sup>, 1991<sup>a</sup>, 1993, 1994 and 1996). Looijenga (1996<sup>c</sup>) discussed twenty Frisian inscriptions (excluding Eenum, Hitsum, Uden and Doijem) on the occasion of the First International Symposium on Frisian Runes at the Fries Museum, Leeuwarden 26th–29th January 1994.

This survey contains twenty-three inscriptions (including the Midlum *sceat* and the new finds from Bergakker and Borgharen). The Hitsum bracteate is non-Frisian, and may be related to the Sievern (North Germany) bracteates. Hitsum is listed among the Bracteates Corpus (chapter six). About the runic text or runes, if any, of the Weste-

remden C inscription (described in a publication only once (Kapteyn 1934) with photos which show no inscriptions) nothing can be said here. The object is in private hands and not accessible for inspection.

Close examination by the present author has demonstrated that the scratches on the Eenum bone-piece of a horse's leg (Buma 1975), found near Eenumhoogte (Groningen), are not runes. The carvings may be slaughter-marks. The marks on the Doijem (Friesland) piece of bone may have been cut recently (Pieper 1991<sup>a</sup>; Looijenga 1991<sup>b</sup>). The Uden (Brabant) stone was also recently provided with 'runes'. The examination of the stone was carried out by the present author in co-operation with the geologist G.J. Boekschoten on 5th November 1996, at the *Streekarchiefdienst Brabant-Noordoost*, Veghel. The incisions ('runes' reading 'wot') on the surface of the stone have not been weathered in the same degree as the rest of the surface, so the scratches must have been made recently. Moreover, the carver used a modern tool. The find history of the stone is spurious; it is said to have been part of the foundation of the local church, but there are no traces of cement. On the contrary, the surface shows a veneer of humus, which cannot possibly have formed around a stone in a foundation. Therefore, both find history and 'runic' inscriptions are false.

Abbreviations: FM = Fries Museum; GM = Groninger Museum; BM = British Museum. When a find place has yielded more runic objects, this is indicated as Wijnaldum A, or B; and Westeremden A, B or C. The indication A, B, C, is the current practice for the Frisian inscriptions.

Excellent photographs of the combs exist in Düwel/Tempel 1969/70, and of nine other items in Arntz/Zeiss 1939.



Map 10. Findspots of runic objects in the Netherlands (Fifth to ninth centuries).

## 2. Checklist of Runic Inscriptions in or from the Netherlands

*Legible and interpretable inscriptions**Combs*

1. AMAY (Liège, Belgium). Comb, bone, bought in 1892 from an antiquary at Liège, Belgium. In the Museum Curtius, Liège. Dated ca. 575–625. Said to have been found in a row-grave field near Amay, which lies on the Maas between Huy and Liège. The grave field was in use from the end of the 6th c. till the beginning of the 7th c. The comb is broken; the runic inscription (or what is left of it) starts from the break and reads **Jeda**



The ultimate rune is *āc*. **eda** might be part of a PN, nsm. *n*-stem, showing monophthongization of Gmc *\*ai* > OFris *ē*: *ēda* < *\*aid-* < *\*haið-* < *\*haiþi-* ‘clear’, cf. OE *hādor*, OS *hēdar*, or *ēda* < *\*haidu-*, cf. Go *haidus* ‘way, manner’ (Kaufmann 1965:200, 201). In OFris, normally Gmc *h* is retained in the *Anlaut*, but in some cases it disappeared, for instance before *a* or *ē* (Steller 1928:33). Another possibility is to regard **Jeda** as a surviving part of the verb *deda* 3 sg. pret. ind. ‘did, made’. In that case it may have been a maker’s inscription, just as in OOSTUM, nr. 3. below.

2. FERWERD (Friesland). Comb case, antler, found in 1916 in the *terp* Burmania I, during commercial digging. In the FM, Leeuwarden. Dated 6th–7th c. This type of comb has counterparts in France and the Moselle valley (Roes 1963:25f.). The runes run from right to left and read: **me ura** or **me uræ**



There are no particular Anglo-Frisian runeforms in this inscription. The ultimate rune may be transcribed either **a** or **æ**, but as there is no *āc* rune in the inscription, the sound value of **ǃ** cannot be determined. The inscription starts with a bindrune which has another ductus than the others.

**me** is OE *me*, OFris *mi* is a pers. pron. 1 sg. dat. ‘to me’.

**ura** may be a male PN, nsm. *n*-stem.

**uræ** may be taken as a woman's name, nsf.  $\bar{o}$ -stem. The text can be interpreted as: '(this comb belongs) to me, Ura, Uræ', an owner's formula.

3. OOSTUM (Groningen). Two halves of a comb, antler, found in 1908 in the *wierde*. In the GM, Groningen. Dated 8th–9th c. This type of comb is widely known, from Dorestad, Birka, Haithabu, Elisenhof. There are runes on both sides. Side A: **aib kabu**; side B: **deda habuku**

ᚱᚲᚱ ᚲᚱᚱ · ᚱᚱᚱᚱ ᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ

Some of the runes have so-called ornamental forms: the **b** in **habuku** has three pockets, the **h** has three bars. These graphic variations are unique so far. A parallel may be the recently-found inscription from FALLWARD (chapter seven, nr. 16), which shows an **a** with three side-strokes.

**aib** is a PN, *i*- or *ja*-stem. The ending is lost, which occurs frequently in Runic West Gmc., certainly at this date.

**ka[m]bu** asm. *a*-stem, Gmc. *\*kambaz* 'comb'. The omission of a nasal (here *m*) before a homorganic consonant is a typical feature of runic writing (although not without exceptions, such as can be seen in, for instance, **awimund**, WEIMAR III, chapter seven, nr. 46). Another instance that shows omission of the nasal is **umædit** = *u(n)mædit* (below, RASQUERT, nr. 10).

The nom. and acc. ending *-u* of a masculine *a*-stem (*kambu*) can only be a reflex of Gmc. *\*-az* (Düwel/Tempel 1968/70; Nielsen 1991<sup>a</sup>:300).

Side B: **deda** is 3 sg. pret. ind. 'did, made' (Nielsen 1991<sup>a</sup>:299; Bammesberger 1991<sup>c</sup>:305ff.), OFris inf. *duā*.

**habuku** < *\*habukaz*, PN nsm. *a*-stem. However, a female PN *Habuke* is equally possible, hence we may have a dsf.  $\bar{o}$ -stem (cf. Nielsen 1984<sup>b</sup>:13f., Düwel/Tempel 1969/70:366); the text is then: 'Aib made the comb for Habuke'. Last but not least *Habuku* may be in the nominative, nsf.  $\bar{o}$ -stem, and is thus subject: 'Habuku made the comb (for) Aib' (cf. Düwel/Tempel, 1970:367). The sequence: **habuku deda** suggests a maker's signature. If so, we may have here a female runographer!

The ending *-u* < Gmc. *\*-ō* is not restricted to Runic Frisian, but occurs also in the North and West Gmc languages, as for instance

in **laþu** ‘invitation’, nsf.  $\bar{o}$ -stem (cf. Nielsen 1984b, 1991<sup>a</sup> and 1994). As regards the name *Habuku* ‘hawk’, cf. **haukoþuz** on the VÅNGA stone (Östergötland), see Appendix, Sweden, nr. 15. This has been interpreted by Krause (1966:148) as an agent noun of the verb *\*haukōn* < *\*habukōn* ‘being like a hawk’.

4. TOORNWERD (Groningen). Comb, antler, found in 1900 in the *wierde*, dated 8th c. In the GM, Groningen. Parallels for this comb have been found in HOOGEBEINTUM and Elisenhof. It bears four runes: **kobu**

ᚕᚾᚋᚋ

**kobu** = *ko(m)bu* nsm. *a*-stem, Gmc *\*kambaz* ‘comb’, cf. above OOSTUM **kabu**. According to Steller (1928:9) Gmc *a* > *o* before nasal in Old East-Frisian and it became *a* or *o* in Old West-Frisian. Toornwerd lies east of Oostum, and the sites are separated by the river Hunze. The Hunze separates Humsterland < *pago Hugumarchi* (AD 786–787) on the west bank, from Hunzego < *Hunusga* (AD 840–849) on the east bank. The former area is named after the FN *Hugen*, who may be the descendants of the antique *Chauci*. Hunzego is named after the river Hunze.

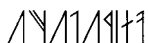
The interchanging of *a* and *o* in words with the same meaning may have led in earlier times, probably the 5th c., to the development of the  $\bar{a}c$  and  $\bar{o}s$  runes (Looijenga 1996<sup>a</sup>:111).

An excavation of the Viking-age settlement near Elisenhof at the mouth of the Eider in Schleswig-Holstein revealed a non-inscribed comb similar to the Toornwerd one. Another comb from Elisenhof, dated end of the 10th c., bears the inscription: **kabr** ‘comb’, which shows the North Gmc development *\*kambaz* > *kambr*.

### Coins

5. FOLKESTONE (Kent, England). A struck gold *tremissis* or *shilling*, found in 1732. Date ca. 650. Unfortunately the object has been lost. A few years ago a similar authentic specimen turned up in the coin collection of the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow. The coin came from the same die as the lost BM one and thus bears the same legend **æniwulufu**.<sup>1</sup> The runes run from right to left.

<sup>1</sup> The text may have some connection with the legendary *Wyfings* of East Anglia,



This may be taken as a PN nsm. *a*-stem. The language may be OFris: *æni* < *āni*- < *\*aun-i*-. The **æ** is in that case not a product of fronting, but of *i*-mutation. One may assume that *i*-mutation had taken place by 650 (Insley 1991:173). The etymology of Gmc *\*aun-* is obscure, according to De Vries (1962).

Nielsen (1993:84) is of the opinion that **aniwulufu** should be read, without a sign of *i*-mutation. He may have come to this conclusion prompted by a wrong dating, 6th c., of the *tremissis*. Blackburn (1991:143f.) now dates the coin mid-7th c.

**wulufu** < *\*wulfaz* has an interconsonantal svarabhakti vowel.

6. HARLINGEN (Friesland). A struck gold solidus, bought in 1846 by the FM, Leeuwarden, from a Harlingen silversmith, who said that he had obtained the solidus from a *terp* digger. Dated 575–625. The runes read **hada**. The **h** is double-barred, both **as** are *āc* runes.



Blackburn (1991:141–143) links the **hada** and **weladu** (below, nr. 8) solidi together because, in his opinion, they are cast pieces, not struck like the **skanomodu** one. But according to A. Pol (curator *Rijksmuseum Het Penningkabinet*, Leiden, personal communication), all three solidi are struck. Whether the three rune solidi are to be regarded as a coherent group and whether they are Frisian or represent different traditions are matters of speculation, according to Page (1994<sup>a</sup>:187). However, the iconography of the three rune solidi agrees to such a degree that they may originate from the same source. Page (1995:160) wonders “whether the cast **hada** and **weladu**

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since their ancestor was called *Aun(n)*, which, according to Ingveonic sound changes, would regularly develop to *ān*, *en*, after *i*-umlaut took place, thus forming the first element of the compound *æniwulufu*. It is interesting that this specific development is considered a typically Old Frisian or Old Saxon feature. The name-element ‘wolf’ appears to have been particularly popular among Germanic leaders; cf. the Alamannian/Bavarian *Agilolfings*, a family of dukes, and the Franconian *Amulfing* family of stewards. As to the pedigree of the *Wuffingas* from South Sweden, it is tempting to think of the *-wulf-* family from Blekinge: Haduwolf, Haeruwulf and Hariwulf, mentioned on the GUMMARP, ISTABY and STENTOFTEN stones (see chapter five, nrs. 42, 43, 44).



specimens should be defined as coins, or rather considered as cast ornaments”. Since it has been established that they were all struck they cannot be considered as cast ornaments, but nevertheless the coins may have served as jewellery or precious gifts (see also chapter four, 5).

**hada** may be a PN, with the element *\*hapu-* ‘battle’, nsm. *n*-stem. Otherwise the base may be Gmc *\*hadaz* ‘restraint, confinement’, according to Beck (1981:75).

A third possibility is to postulate a rare case of monophthongization of Gmc *\*ai* > OFris *ā*: *hāda* < *\*haið-*, cf. Go *haidus* ‘way, manner’ or *\*haiþi-* ‘clear’ (Kaufmann, 1965:17, 200). If this were so, it would be the only instance of monophthongization of Gmc *\*ai* > OFris *ā* in Runic OFris, represented by the *āc* rune. Therefore this rune need not have been imported by the Old Frisians, as is suggested by Nielsen (1994:121) and Seebold (1991:507f.) on the assumption that monophthongization of Gmc *\*ai* only partly took place in OFris and would not be found in Runic OFris.

7. MIDLUM (Friesland). A silver *sceat* of the Frisian, or Continental, type<sup>2</sup> was found at Midlum in 1988 and is now at the FM, Leeuwarden. Date ca. 750. The runic legend is **æpa**



Hundreds of this type of *sceat* are known, which has been defined as “at its best, a careful copy of the English primary C type, with runic ‘Æpa’ or ‘Epa’ in front of the head” (Op den Velde et al. 1984:136). These *sceattas* may not be purely ‘Frisian’ in the sense of ‘originating from the *terp*-area’, as they are rarely found north of the Rhine, but their find distribution suggests an origin along or south of the Lower Rhine (Grierson & Blackburn 1986:508). The runes are copied along with the rest of the iconography.

**æpa** is a PN, nsm. *n*-stem, *Æpa*, based on Celtic *Epo* ‘horse’ (Kaufmann 1965:14). Probably the name of the moneyer. (See also the *sceattas* of the English Corpus, chapter eight, nr. 10). It is remarkable that these Frisian *sceattas* bear the same PN as the Kentish

<sup>2</sup> Over 2000 *sceattas* were found in the Netherlands. In 1988 for instance, about 140 *sceattas* came to light, in what was called ‘The Remmerden hoard’. These all had a runic legend, reading **epa**, **æpa** or **apæ**.

ones. This means that the minter copied not only the ornaments, but also the name of the Anglian or Kentish moneyer.

8. SCHWEINDORF (Ostfriesland, Germany). A struck gold solidus, found in Schweindorf near Aurich in 1948. Now in the Ostfriesisches Landesmuseum, Emden. Dated 575–625. Runes run left: **weladu**

The initial rune has a large loop, from the top of the headstaff to the bottom, so either **w** or **þ** may be read. As **peladu** makes no sense, generally the reading **wela[n]du** is preferred. This is a PN *Wēla(n)du*, cf. OE *Wēland*, ON *Volundr*, NG *Wieland* < \**wēla-handuz*, nsm. *u*-stem, ‘trickster’ (Düwel/Tempel 1968/70; Beck 1981:69ff. with references). The first part of the compound is \**wēl*- ‘trick, ruse’ cf. ON *vél* ‘artifice, craft, device’ followed by the suffix *-and* < Gmc \**handuz*. The name might refer to the well-known legendary smith *Weland*, whose story may also play a role in the PFORZEN inscription (chapter seven, nr. 35).

9. SKANOMODU is the runic text on a struck gold solidus. Date 575–610. Findspot is unknown, the solidus belonged to the coin-collection of the British king George III (also Kurfürst of Hanover and Ost-Friesland). In 1820 the runic solidus came into the possession of the BM, London. The runic legend reads **skanomodu**, which might be taken as a dithematic PN (cf. Bammesberger 1990<sup>a</sup>, with ref.).

The **s** rune is ambiguous; it might have three strokes or four. The stroke on the base may be an error (see Bammesberger 1990:458).

The first element is Gmc \**skaun*- ‘fine, beautiful’; the second element may be derived from Gmc \**mōðaz* nsm. *a*-stem, or \**mōðō* nsf. *ō*-stem (cf. Nielsen 1993:81–88); OFris *mōd* m. ‘mind’. Because of monophthongization of Gmc \**au* > OFris *ā*: \**skaun*- > *skān*- and the ending nsm. *-u* < Gmc \**-az* the text is regarded OFris. If the name were a female PN nsf. *ō*-stem, the name need not be OFris, as *-u* < *-ō* is common to all West Gmc languages and to North Gmc as well.

**skanomodu** was probably the name of the moneyer, and there-

fore a woman's name is not likely. However, if the coin were made to serve as a piece of jewellery, a woman's name is appropriate.

The **a** is represented by the *āc* rune, together with HARLINGEN and SCHWEINDORF the earliest instances of *āc* in the Anglo-Frisian tradition.

*Objects of Yew Wood*

10. ARUM (Friesland). A yew-wood miniature sword, found in 1895. In the FM, Leeuwarden. Dated late 8th c. In the blade some ornaments and runes are carved. The runic text shows Anglo-Frisian *āc* and *ōs* runes, hence the † rune is transliterated **æ**. The runes are clearly legible: **edæ:boda**, and are preceded by an ornamental series of quadrangles.



Medial *e* in **edæ:boda** may be the product of fronting of unaccented *a* after a short syllable (Nielsen 1991<sup>a</sup>:300). In my opinion, this *e* is a *Kompositionsfugenvokal* (if *edæ-boda* is read as one word), such as is found in the earliest English glosses, i.e. *fulæ-trea*, etc. (cf. Nielsen 1984<sup>b</sup>:17; and Kluge 1913:201, Anm. 2: the composition vowel *e* < *a*).

*Eda* means 'oath'. OFris *ēða-* < Gmc *\*aiþa-* reflects OFris *ē* < Gmc *\*ai*; the rune **d** is used to represent voiced *ð* < *þ*. Several interpretations are possible. Nielsen (1984) reads **edæboda** as one word, nsm. *n*-stem 'return-messenger'. I take **edæ:boda** as nsm. *n*-stem: 'oath-messenger', Du. 'eed-bode'. Possibly the little wooden sword served as a summons to gather at a session of the court.

11. BRITSUM (Friesland). A small yew-wood stick, found in 1906. In the FM, Leeuwarden. No date. Most of the runes are carved in three, four, or five lines, which reminds one of the inscriptions on the LINDHOLM amulet, the KRAGEHUL spearshaft (Danish Corpus, chapter five, nrs. 21 and 20), and the ØDEMOTLAND bone piece (Rogaland, Norway), see Appendix nr. 42. On one side is carved LID, from right to left, in what looks like Roman lettering (when taken to be runes, one may presume **liu** is carved). Both the front and the back are incised with runes; a chip of wood has broken away on one end, therefore some runes preceding the left running inscription **𐌺𐌹** may be lost.

ᛞᛚᛞᛚᛞᛚᛞᛚᛞᛚᛞᛚ  
 ᛞᛚᛞᛚᛞᛚᛞᛚᛞᛚ LID

Three runes have the form of the younger *fubark* **k** ᚷ or the so-called English ‘bookhand’ **s**. Both transliterations meet with difficulties; one would get **ᛞkniaberetdud** or **ᛞsniaberetdud** on one side; on the other side, running from right to left: **ᛞn:bkkrkdmī** or **ᛞn:bsrs-dmī**. Neither of these sequences present a meaningful interpretation.

I suggest the rune ᚷ represents a vowel, because it sits between consonants (b, r, ᛞ, n and d). Also Bugge (1908:176–177) took it as representing *i* or *e*. Odenstedt (1989:158) proposed taking it as a variety of the Anglo-Frisian *ās*.

Bugge (1908:177–179) read **ᛞin i a beret dud LID** “Trage immer diese Eibe, darin liegt Tugend. LID”. The second line would run thus:

**ᛞn bered mi** or **ᛞn birid mi**, which Bugge interprets: “N.N. trägt mich”. Odenstedt (1989:158) read **ᛞon i a beret dud //n borod mi liu**, which would mean: “always bear this yewstave against paralysis (or drunkenness), NN perforated me. **liu**”. Obviously Bugge read LID as Roman letters, whereas Odenstedt took the signs for runes.

**borod**, according to Odenstedt (1989:159), can only be the 3rd pers. sg. pres. of a verb like OE *borian* (< *\*borōian*) ‘bore, perforate, make a hole in’. There is, however, no hole in the stick, therefore this reading must be rejected.

A solution may be to take it as representing **æ**, perhaps a variant form of the Danish **† æ**. I suggest transliterating: **ᛞæn i a beret dud ᛞn bæræd mi**

**ᛞæn** is dem. pron. acc. sg. ‘this’.

**i** probably refers to the piece of yew wood: OHG *ēwa*, OE *ēw*, Dutch *ijf*, acc. sg. masculine. This part of the text must be the object.

**beret** is plural imp. ‘bear’ of OFris inf. *bera*.

When interpreting **a** < *\*aiwi* ‘always’, we find an instance of monophthongization of Gmc *\*ai* > OFris *ā*, represented by the *\*ansuz* rune, or the Anglo-Frisian *æsc* rune, which, accordingly, should be transliterated **æ**. If so, it should represent another sound value than *æ* in **ᛞæn**. To avoid confusion, I transliterate it **a**, although this might be misleading, and remembering also that WESTEREMDEN B might

exhibit two separate runeforms, both representing a different *a* sound, in **jibada**.

**dud** has several interpretations, such as a PN, according to Gijsseling (1980:7). Bugge (1908:179) interpreted **dud** as ‘virtue’; **dud** would be a contraction of *dugup*. Arntz (1939:167) proposes a meaning such as ‘Kraft’ or ‘Betäubung’. Buma (1951:316ff.) connected **dud** with OE *duguð* ‘the warriors who sit near the king in the hall’, ‘the tried warriors’ (Beowulf 359), which means the king’s *comitatus*; see also Campbell (§§ 345 and 588,5).

**bæræd** I read as *bæ-ræd* 3 sg. pres. ind. of the inf. *bæ-rædan* ‘to prepare’ (Holthausen 1963:252 lists OFris *bi-ræda*), perhaps in the sense of carving the runes? It could otherwise be 3 sg. pret. ind. of the strong verb Gmc *\*rēdan*, OFris *rædan* ‘to guess’. Compare also with SOEST, Continental Corpus, nr. 40, **rada** ‘to guess, to read’.

**mi** is dat. sg. pers. pron. ‘me’.

LID I take to be in Roman lettering, meaning ship (Holthausen 1963:201), or retinue, according to De Vries (1962:354).

The text may be interpreted as: ‘warriors, bear always this yew (on the) ship (or in the retinue, a metaphor for the warpath?); . . .]n prepares me, or. . .]n guessed = read me’. Possibly this piece of yew is a kind of amulet. Since bows were made of yew, I suggest that this particular piece of yew may have been a part of a bow, perhaps a legendary bow.

12. WESTEREMDEN A (Groningen). A weaving-slay of yew wood, found in 1928. In the GM, Groningen. No date. Because of the warping and desiccation of the wood some of the thinly carved runes have become quite vague.

The runes read: **adujislu:me(b)jisuhidu**

𐌳𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌺𐌺𐌷𐌰𐌾𐌰𐌺𐌰𐌺𐌹𐌻𐌰𐌺𐌰𐌺𐌰

The rune **p**, which, according to Arntz & Zeiss (1939:383) was present in the bindrune-cluster **me(b)**, can no longer be distinguished. Whether there is either an **i** or an **l** in **jisuhi/ldu** is unclear. Still visible are the Anglo-Frisian *āc* and the star rune, which in England is transliterated **j**, and sometimes as **g** in Friesland. This is unnecessarily confusing, since the same phonetic development (palatalisation) is concerned, and it particularly concerns the syllable *gī-*, *gi-*, with a palatal pronunciation (see also below, **jibada**).



place in the second row. From the context it must represent a vowel; probably **æ**, which could have been rendered by the Anglo-Frisian *æsc* ᚦ, but for some reason this rune does not occur in this inscription. I suppose ᚦ might be a younger fuþark variety. **ophæmu** would reflect a fronted *e* in *hæm* < *hām* < Gmc *\*haim-* ‘home’, an intermediary stage towards OFris *ē* in *hēn*, rendering the development of Gmc *\*ai* > OFris *ā* > *e* > *ē*, in which case we would have another instance of monophthongization of Gmc *\*ai* > OFris *ā*. The same rune also occurs in **æh** and in **æmluþ**.

The ninth rune, ᚷ might be taken as a mirror-rune **b** in **jibada** (instead of Seebold’s **givēda**; the star rune ᚦ should be transliterated **j**, see above).

The tenth rune: ᚦ I transliterate as **a**, rendered in a form known from the younger Danish fuþark. Also in **þusa** it is transliterated **a**, although the sidetwig slants to the right ᚦ, whereas it slants to the left ᚦ in **jibada** (the slants are much longer than is represented here; they reach from top to bottom).

The final **a** in **jibada** is rendered by the Anglo-Frisian ᚦ. It might seem strange that we would have two different runeforms both transliterated as **a** in one word: **jibada**. I suggest the runographer wanted to make a distinction between two *a*-like sounds. The ᚦ appears to represent palatal *a*, whereas ᚦ denotes velar *a*. There is no opposition stressed-unstressed, or long-short.

**jibada** = *gibada* ‘fate, luck’, recorded twice in the OS Heliand: 3161 and 5828, meaning ‘comfort, reassurance’ or even ‘new life in *Christo*’ (Opitz 1978:21), cf. BAD EMS (Continental Corpus, chapter seven, nr. 4). The mirror-rune ᚷ, here transliterated **b**, occurs once again in the inscription; from its form it can both represent **b** or **d**; it represents **d** in **wimœd**.

The **a** in **upduna [a]le** is written once but meant to be read twice (this occurs more often, for instance in FALLWARD **skamella [a]lguskapi**, Continental Corpus, nr. 17).

The fifth rune in the third row is transliterated **k**, in **iwi ok**. It may be a variant of the OE *cēn* rune.

As noted above, the inscription contains some mirror-runes, such as **p** ᚱ in **upduna**, the mirrored form of single **p** in **ophæmu**.

I propose reading:

**op hæmu jibada æmluþ : iwi ok up duna [a]le wimœd æh þusa.**

The interpretation of the text is nearly the same as the one proposed

by Seebold: “at the homestead stays good fortune; may it also grow near the yew on the terp; Wimœd owns this”. The stick can be taken as a building offering.

**æmluþ** has been explained by Seebold (1990:421) as 3 sg. pres. ind. ‘stays, remains’, analogous to ON *amla* ‘to strain oneself’.

**iwi** means ‘yew’, cf. Gmc *\*ihwaz*, *\*iwaz*, m.; it might be a locative or instrumental, according to Seebold (1990:415).

**ok** = *āk* ‘also’;

**up** = *op* ‘upon’;

**duna** asf. *n*-stem ‘dune, hill, *terp*’.

**[a]le** is an optative to Gmc *\*ala-* ‘to grow’ (Seebold 1990:415).

**wimœd** is probably a male PN, nsm. *a*-stem. The *æ* is the product of *i*-mutation of *o/ō*, represented by *ŷ*.

**æh** is 3 sg. pres. ind. ‘to have’, cf. OFris *āch* (Markey 1981:157).

**þusa** may be compared to the dem. pron. masc. acc. *þisse* ‘this one’ (Markey 1981:136).

Since the inscription exhibits *i*-mutation, bookhand **s** (otherwise only known from English inscriptions) and runes from the younger *futhorc*, the date must be at the least 9th c.

*Objects made of whalebone/whale ivory.*

14. BERNSTERBUREN (Friesland). A whalebone staff, found ca. 1880. In the FM, Leeuwarden. Dated ca. 800. The staff is broken in seven pieces; two of them are lost. The T-formed handle ends on both sides in a stylized horse’s head. An illustration that shows such a staff can be found, for example, in an English manuscript from the 11th c. (Pierpont Morgan Library, New York), depicting the invasion of England by the Vikings in 865. In addition the sculptured animal head (see photo in Webster & Backhouse 1991:241) from Deerhurst (Gloucester, England), dated to the 9th c. resembles the head of the Bernsterburen staff. The **a** is the Anglo-Frisian *āc*. The **k** is rendered by a rune *ƿ* also known from the younger *futhorc* and the Continental Corpus.

About halfway on the staff are runic inscriptions in three separate locations: **tuda æwudu** (or **æluðu**) **kiusþu tuda**

↑𐌹𐌸𐌰𐌿    𐌹𐌸𐌰𐌿𐌹𐌸𐌰𐌿𐌹𐌸𐌰𐌿    ↑𐌹𐌸𐌰𐌿

The runes of the middle section display no division marks. The first section, with **tuda**, is preceded by a slanting stroke, which I inter-



pret as an inscription-opening sign. I noted a similar stroke on the English inscription of HARFORD FARM (chapter eight, nr. 4).

**tuda** is a PN, nsm. *n*-stem, or PN, *n*/asf *ō*-stem, OS *thioda*, Gmc *\*þeud-* ‘people’.

The first two runes of the second part, reading **æ1** or **æw**, have almost vanished as a result of weathering. The first rune is almost certainly an **æ**; the second is ambiguous, it might be **1** or **w**. Both possibilities will be discussed below.

**æwudu** has a svarabhakti vowel *-u-* in the middle; it may reflect *æwdu*. This may be derived from the past part. of OFris *āwa*, *auwa* ‘to show, reveal, represent’, declined as a strong neuter adj.; or *æwðu* is a feminine abstract noun (Mitchell & Robinson 1986:59), asf. ‘representation, evidence’, or asm/apm. ‘oath helper(s)’, cf. OE *æwoda* ‘witness’ (Knol & Looijenga 1990:236). Another interpretation of *æwudu* may be a PN nsm. < *\*æwudaz*. The second part *-wud-* occurs in many OE names: *Wudumann*, *Widia*, *Wudga*, *Wudia* (Insley, 1991<sup>b</sup>: 320–322); cf. also OHG *Wüdiger*, *Woderich*, *Witiram*, *Widigo* etc. However, the element *wud* etc. in these names is always attested as the first element of a dithematic PN.

When reading **æwudu**, the text might be: ‘Tuda, a witness (witnesses) Tuda’. A white staff was a judge’s attribute; the object in question is a white staff.

When reading **æludu**, this may be a nsm. *a*-stem < *\*aludaz*, or an *n*-stem *\*aluða*, with a weakened pronunciation of the last syllable. The element *alu-* is found more often in PNs, cf. **alugod** (VÆRLØSE, Danish Corpus, chapter five, nr. 18) and **aluko** (FØRDE, Norway, see Appendix, Norway, nr. 39).

The name Alundus has been recorded, hence we may have here **alu[n]du**, PN, nsm. This name occurs in a legend, recorded in Latin in the 13th c. My source is Ter Laan, ‘Middelleeuwse Legendes uit Groningerland’ (1949:71–85). Here we find the tale of a man living in Fivelgo whose name was Alundus, and who was married to a woman named Tetta. These people would have been the parents of the holy Hathebrandus († 30th July 1198). The husband abandoned his wife, because she remained barren. One night, he heard in his sleep a heavenly voice that told him to go back to his wife, since she would bear him a son who would become a holy man. Thus it happened that Alundus (Alundu?) chose to go back to Tetta (Tuda?). The legend is fairly young, younger than the staff. I suggest the legend might be a composition, using an older story to fit the life of St. Hathebrandus.

The part that follows may exhibit a younger fuþark **k** and a short-twig **s**, and would thus render the sequence **klius þu**, 2 sg. pres. imp. ‘you must choose’. The text would then be: Tuda, Aludu you must choose Tuda.

15. HANTUM (Friesland). A small decorated plate made of whale ivory. Found in 1914. In the FM, Leeuwarden. No date. Any function of the object is unknown, but see Roes, Plate XLIII, and the text (Roes 1963:48), which mentions plaques that were used for scraping, scaling fish and cleaning pelts. Several sorts of decoration motifs seem to be practised on the plate. One side, clearly the front side of the object, bears runes. The other side has in Roman letters ABA, and some scratches that may be taken as runes, although there is no clear coherence or sequence. The clear-cut runes on the front side, which cover the object from side to side, read ]?:**aha:k**[ or ]?:**æhæ:k**[

||:ǰǰ:ǰ

*aha*, *æhæ* reminds one of *eh(w)ē* dsm. *a*-stem ‘for the horse’, a legend found on the bracteates of ÅSUM and TIRUP HEIDE (Bracteate Corpus, chapter five, nrs. 3 and 43).

The **h** rune is double-barred. Since the edges of the object have been notched, and the decorations and runes have partly been cut away, the object may have been much larger and so the runic text would have been longer also.

Maybe **aha** or **æhæ** is a PN, nsm. *n*-stem, such as the modern man’s name Egge.

16. RASQUERT (Groningen). A whalebone sword handle, found in 1955. In the Hoogelandster Museum, Warffum. Dated late 8th c. The blade is broken away and missing. The whole object was made of whalebone, therefore it was never meant as a real sword, but as a symbolic sword (Looijenga & Van Es 1991), as is probably also the case with the ARUM wooden sword. Both sides of the handle may have been inscribed. On one side what signs there were are erased. The runes on the other side are rather difficult to read; the whalebone surface has weathered badly. I propose reading **ekumæditoka**

MLNǰǰǰǰITǰǰǰ

The sequence may be divided thus: **ek u[n]mædit oka**.

**ek** is 1 sg. pers. pron. 'I'.

**u[n]mædit** is an adj., part. pret. of \**mædan*, cf. OE *mæded* 'mad'; OE \**mædan* < Gmc \**maidjan-* 'to make mad'. *mædit* shows *i*-mutation preceded by monophthongization; *-t* instead of *-d* may reflect devoicing at the word's end.

**oka** is a PN, nsm. *n*-stem, *Oka*; OE *Oca*, 'mind, intelligence' (Kaufmann 1965:198, 249ff.). Gijsseling (1980:18) read **eku[n]mæditoka** too, but gives a different interpretation: *ek u(n)mædi(d) tok a* 'I, the not mutilated one, took this sword'.

My interpretation: 'I, Oka, not (made) mad/not mutilated', might have been Oka's device. (cf. for instance with GÄRDLÖSA **ek unwodz** of the Danish Corpus, chapter five, nr. 13).

### *Metal Objects (Recent Finds)*

17. BERGAKKER (Gelderland). A silver-gilt scabbard mount, found with a metal detector in 1996. Dated early, ca. 425 AD. In the Museum Het Valkhof (collection Museum Kam), at Nijmegen (Bosman & Looijenga 1996, and Looijenga 1999:141–151). The inscription is discussed at great length by several authors, in Bammesberger ed. 1999.

The ornamentation is provincial Roman in style and might be compared to objects from nearby Gennep (North Limburg), a 5th-c. settlement of Frankish immigrants into a region situated within the *limes*. In general, according to the type and ornamentation, the scabbard mount belongs to a group of swords from North Gallia up to the lower Rhineland of Germany and the Netherlands. The runes could have been added anywhere, but I do not think it likely that this happened outside the above-mentioned area and that the object was subsequently brought back to its area of origin. The Bergakker site was probably a settlement, although at some time it was a sanctuary as well, since a shrine to the goddess *Hurstrga* existed on the same spot. The scabbard mount was part of a large find-complex, so it may have been part of a votive deposit, or it may have belonged to the stock of a local smith. The scabbard mount does not show traces of wear, so it may never have been collected by the person who commissioned it (personal communication from the finder, Mr. D. Jansen, Wychen). Among the many other finds from the same spot are a stylus, a small silver votive sheet showing three women,

probably *Matrones*, and a bronze seal-box, typical of votive deposits. So both possibilities, a votive deposit or a smith's supply, are possible. In the first, preliminary publication (Bosman & Looijenga 1996) the inscription was transliterated as **habebewas:ann:kesjam:logens:**

The inscription displays runes from the older *futhorc* plus an anomalous rune. It is the oldest known runic find from the Netherlands, and it has no typical Anglo-Frisian runic features. There is only one other 5th-c. runic object known from the *terp*-area (the *Kantens comb*, which displays only two runes **li**). The runes are quite easy to read, although the first rune, which I take to represent **h** has no unambiguous middle bar. It is a stroke that does not run from one headstaff to the other, but is carved a bit too short, and crossing the second headstaff, not touching the first staff.

The anomalous rune has the form of a double-lined Roman capital **V** and occurs four times in the inscription. One other character, **s**, appears twice in double lines, and once in single lines. The **s** is in three strokes. The double variant is remarkably small, shorter than the other runes (apart from **k**, which is carved very small, too). There is one bindrune, forming **wa**, an unusual combination.

The runes run from left to right. The words are separated by division marks: three times composed of two dots and one time of four dots. The inscription contains four words. The last word is followed by a zig-zag line, filling up space. A similar technique can be found for instance on the *PFORZEN* silver belt buckle (Continental Corpus, chapter seven, nr. 35).

The first rune is a single-barred **h**. The second rune is **a**, the *\*ansuz* rune. The third rune has only one sidetwig to the right, at the middle of the headstaff. I think the rune has been inserted afterwards, since it is smaller and tucked in between the preceding and following runes. In that case it is most likely **l**. At first I took it for an incomplete *thorn*.

The fourth anomalous rune resembles a double Roman **V**, or a double **u** rune, executed upside-down. Its value may be established by analyzing the rest of the text.

The fifth rune is clearly a *thorn*. The sixth character is similar to the fourth, only rendered somewhat larger. The following character

appears to me as a bindrune of **w** and **a**. The **w** was cut first, since the lower sidetwig of the **a** cuts through the lower part of the hook of the **w**. The last rune is an **s**, rendered in double lines. Thus we have **hal?p?was**.

The sequence **p?was** reminds one of a well-known Germanic name-element, nominative *þewaz*, such as occurs in **owlþubewaz** of the THORSBERG (chapter seven, nr. 43) bronze sword chape. Therefore I take it that the mysterious sign that looks like a double V must represent **e**. When comparing its form to the well-known runic  $\mathfrak{E}$ , both characters share the upper part. Normally the two headstaves of the **e** rune run vertically, and here we find two slanting lines that touch at their ends. There is a parallel in the lost inscription of ENGERS (Continental Corpus, chapter seven, nr. 16), reading **leub**. Here the headstaves of the **e** rune slant towards each other, although without touching.

**haleþewas** I take as a personal name in the genitive, masculine *a*-stem. The first part of this compound might be *hāle-*, < Gmc *\*hail-*, adj. 'whole, safe, unhurt', or, if *hale*, it may be connected with ON *hali* (and Middle Irish *cail* De Vries 1962:204), the meaning might be 'spear'.

The second part is *-þewas*, gsm. *a*-stem, 'thane, retainer, warrior'.

After the division dots follow three runes **ann**. This is a verb form, 1 or 3 sg. pres. ind. 'grants', cf. Seebold 1970:79f., who lists ON *ann* 'grants', inf. *unna* 'to grant'.

The next part of the inscription has a remarkable lay-out, probably caused by lack of space. The upper part reads **kesjam**. The lower part reads **logens**. Others take the V-formed rune as representing a variant of runic **u**, so they propose transliterating **kusjam loguns** (see Bammesberger, ed. 1999).

De Vries (1962:307) lists ON *kesja* f. 'javelin'. This strikes me as puzzling; the scabbard mount belonged to a sword, not a spear. Fritzner (1891:279) lists ON *kesja* f. 'spjót' and gives examples of attestations, in *Gammelnorsk bibelhistoria*, *Formanna sögur*, *Egils saga*, *Sturlunga saga* and *Flateyjarbók*. These occurrences are of a much later date than the Bergakker inscription. Since the meaning 'javelin' in these books is recorded at least six centuries later than the Bergakker inscription, I wondered (a) whether *kesja* had another meaning in the early 5th c. and (b) what could be the word's background. In the centuries that have elapsed, a change in the naming of weapon types might have occurred. If *kesja* initially were a designation of a sword,

one must assume that much later a confusion in the naming of weapons might have taken place.<sup>3</sup> Much (1959:84ff.) observed in his description of the types of weapons used by Germanic tribes that a sword was a rare type of armament.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps a sword was not originally a Germanic piece of weaponry. It seems plausible for Germanic warriors to have adopted a Celtic sword, since the Celts had a long and famous history of forging swords.

I investigated the possibility whether **kesjam** might conceal a loanword. Might *kesja* have been the name of a certain type of sword that was adopted from the Celts (or via the Romans) into Germanic society? This may not be too farfetched, since the region where the object was produced was Provincial Roman/Frankish. If (in the early 5th c.) we have a form *kesja* in a formerly Roman-occupied area, this might reflect a vulgar Latin word such as *GESA* or *CESA*.<sup>5</sup> In Latin we find *GESA*, *CESA*, *GÆSUM* (Du Cange 1954:62, 278), which could be either a “*hastas Galli, vel jaculum*” (= javelin) and a “*gladius*” (= sword).<sup>6</sup> According to Schmidt (1983:761), *gaesum* is

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<sup>3</sup> There is another instance of confusion of sword and spear in a runic inscription. The *LIEBENAU* inscription (Continental Corpus, 4th c.) may be read **ra[u]zwi**. Gmc *\*rauza-* means ‘tube’, ‘hollow stem’, cf. ON *reyr* ‘reed’, metaphorically ‘spear’, perhaps also meaning ‘sword’. The inscription is on a silver disc that may have been part of a sword belt (Düwel 1972).

<sup>4</sup> It is unclear to what extent the Germanic warriors were equipped with swords at the beginning of our era. Behmer (1939:15) informs us that the Germans knew three types of swords: the one-edged hewing-sword, the two-edged short Roman *gladius* and the long Roman two-edged sword, the so called La Tène III type (Celtic), which was used by the Roman cavalry. This sword type was the basis for the Germanic Migration Period sword (Behmer 1939:18). The one-edged sword was actually a big knife, a *sax*.

<sup>5</sup> An element such as *Gesa-* is found in the names of the *Gaesatae* and the *Matronae Gaesahenae* and *Matronae Gesationum*. A soldier of the *Cohors I Vindellicorum* was called *Cassius Gesatus*. According to Alföldy (1968:106) the name *Gesatus* is a cognomen, referring to the man’s weapons. As to the tribe of the *Gaesatae* (recorded in 236 BC in the Alps), these people may have been Celts, so perhaps *gaes-* is a Celtic name for a Celtic La Tène sword.

<sup>6</sup> A well-known word for ‘sword’ in Latin is *gladius*. Schmidt (1967:159) states that Lat. *gladius* can be verified as a Gallic loan with the help of the Island-Celtic languages. Island-Celtic words for ‘sword’ are Cymr. *clddyf*, Bret. *klézé*, Irish *claideb*; these may be united together with *gladius* under *\*kladi-*. The fact that *gladius* is a loan and not an inherited word, is proved by two facts: a) the change of initial *k* > *g* occurs in Latin only with loanwords; b) Ennius (239–169 BC) already attests *gladius*, which by then has dispelled the old Latin hereditary *ēnsis*, Old Ind. *asih*, which was used only in a poetic sense (Walde-Hofmann 1930–1956:406). The motive for discarding it was the adoption of the two-edged Celtic sword by the Romans. The *ēnsis* was short, more like a dagger. As to the time of the adoption, we may

a loan from Celtic. Latin *gaesum*, Gallo-Greek *gaisos* or *gaison* 'light javelin' is, according to Walde-Hofmann (1930–1956:575f.) to be connected with Old Irish *gai*, *gae* 'spear'; *gaide* = *pilatus*. In OHG, OS we have *gēr*, in OE *gār*, in ON *geirr* 'spear' < Gmc *\*gairaz*; cf. De Vries 1962:161f.: 'heavy iron javelin'.<sup>7</sup>

The word seems to be connected or related to a root GAES- or perhaps better CAES-. In the latter case I suggest an early or secondary (and perhaps afterwards lost) connection with Lat. *caesim* [caedō] adv. 'by cutting, with cuts', 'with the edge of the sword', as opposed to *punctim* 'with stabs, to prod, to pierce'. The basic meaning of the Latin verb *caedō*, *caedere*, *cecidi*, *caesum* is 'to strike, beat, cut, kill'. The form *\*caesia-* might be a nomen agentis, with a root *caes-* plus the suffix *-jan* (Meid 1967:97). If the word was borrowed from Latin, this would have happened before the 6th c., when the *c* was still pronounced *k*. The meaning would then be 'cutter', e.g. a person fighting with a certain weapon, such as a *gladiator*, only here the weapon is not a *gladius*, but a different type of sword. One may think of the soldiers known as *Gaesatae*, who were called after their special weapon, the *gaison* or *gaisos*. The *kesjam* would then be warriors fighting with a *kesja* 'sword-fighters'.

Once introduced into Gmc, *kesja* would have been declined according to Germanic standards. The ending *-am* in *kesjam* then indicates a dative plural, and might thus be the indirect object of **ann** + dative, which would render 'H.'s, he grants the sword-fighters **logens**'.

**logens** appears at first enigmatic. In OS we find *logna* 'sword', f. *ō-* or *n-*stem. De Vries lists ON *logi* m. 'sword'. In Gothic, the genitive singular and acc. plural of the the weak declension ends in

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consider the first invasions by Celts into Italy (fourth century BC), according to Schmidt (1967:163).

<sup>7</sup> According to De Vries (1962:161f.), the Germanic word has been considered a loan from Lat. Gall. GAESUM, however incorrectly, since he states that the opposite seems to have been the case, because there existed a Germanic tribe, the *Gaesatae*. However this is disputed. Schwarz (1956:46f.) states that a people named GAESATEIS are recorded living in the Alps in 236 BC. They fought in the service of North-Italic Celts against the Romans in 225 BC. Their swords were of Celtic make. According to Schwarz (1956:46) *Gaesatae* is no tribal name, but a Celtic definition of soldiers, named after Celt. *\*gaison* 'spear'. Schönfeld (1965) lists no *Gaesatae* in his book on Germanic personal and tribal names. As cognomina, *Gesatus* and *Gaisionis* are known from Celtic and Germanic mercenaries, resp. from Vindelica and lower Germany. In fact, these names point to the armament of the soldier (Alföldy 1968:106f.).

-ns. Since **logens** is the object of the sentence, it is acc. plural, of \**loge* ‘sword’. I suggest that the endings of both **kesjam** and **logens** are relics of an older stage of Gmc, which are attested in Gothic, but not in West Gmc.

When interpreting the text in this manner, we get a semantically perfect sentence: ‘of Haleþewaz, he grants the sword-fighters swords’.

It is possible that a weapon smith wrote this text on the scabbard mount as a sort of promotion for his work. Or the text refers to a warlord, who bestows certain precious swords on his *comitatus*.

However, if mount and inscription should be regarded as a votive gift, to *Hurstrga* (‘she who dwells on a wooded hill in the low-lands’) or somebody else (her successor at the ritual site?), the name *Haleþewaz*, literally meaning *Spear-warrior*, might point to a ‘spear god’. It is tempting to suggest that Woden may have been *Hurstrga*’s successor, but this may be too speculative, although Woden’s attribute was the spear.

18. BORGHAREN (Limburg). In September 1999 a bronze belt buckle with a runic inscription was found in a man’s grave near Borgharen, in Limburg (Looijenga 2000<sup>b</sup> and 2003:231–240). The grave belonged to a small Merovingian cemetery and is dated ca. 600. The buckle with its inscription can be dated third quarter of the 6th c. The burial ground was clustered around the hypocaustum (heating system) of a bath building belonging to a former Roman villa. The cemetery was partly excavated in 1995 and 1999 by the Department of Urban Development and Ground Maintenance, Municipality of Maastricht (Dijkman 2003: 212–230).

The runes are on the front of the buckle and read from left to right: **bobō**. The individual who was buried with the buckle was a man of between fifty and sixty years old.



The bronze belt buckle with runes was found at the man’s feet. The runes are clearly legible, ‘o’ is \**odilan*. The runes may be labelled ‘Continental’; because of the older fupark form of the ‘o’  $\text{X}$ ; and especially because of the form of the ‘b’-runes, which have their pockets far apart, such as can be found in inscriptions from Bavaria (for instance the SCHWANGAU S-fibula) and Alamannia (for instance the wooden stave of NEUDINGEN), the ENGERS bow-fibula (Rheinland-Pfalz) and the WEIMAR bronze belt buckle (Thüringen).



The ‘o’ rune shows typical ‘Continental’ features of carving as well: the runographer first carved the ‘cross’: X and then the ‘roof’: ^; compare with, for instance, the NORDENDORF I bow-fibula (Bavaria) and the WEINGARTEN S-fibula (Baden-Württemberg).

The runes are carved on the visible side of the object, which is a very rare phenomenon; compare for example the PFORZEN (Bavaria) belt buckle, which also has its inscription on the front side.

*Bobo* may be regarded as the name of the owner. The name is well-known in Merovingian contexts. Bobo is listed in Hermann Reichert’s ‘Lexikon der altgermanischen Namen’, vol. 1, p. 144. Gregory of Tours, in *Hist. Franc.*, mentions a dux Bobo as son of Mummolinus.

Reichert, when consulted about the name Bobo, writes: “Short names like this explode in Merovingian times among Franks, Visigoths, and later on they spread further. The fashion must have started among the Merovingian Franks”.

In the inscriptions of the Continental Corpus we find a relatively large number of short names. Bobo recalls Boso (FREILAUBERSHEIM), Bubo (WEIMAR), Dado (WEINGARTEN), Ado (GAMMERTINGEN), Kolo (GRIESHEIM), Mauo (BOPFINGEN) and Leubo (SCHRETZHEIM).

Because of the location (Maastricht is close to Herstal, one of the centres of Merovingian power), the grave gifts and the name Bobo, we may conclude that the deceased was a Frankish *miles*. Since he was buried in his family’s cemetery, he was apparently settled in the region.

19. WIJNALDUM B (Friesland). A gold pendant, found with a metal detector in 1990. In the FM, Leeuwarden. Dated ca. 600. This type of pendant is known from 6th-c. women’s graves in Mittelfranken, Germany, and East Gothic cemeteries in Lombardy; and the origin may be the (east) Mediterranean. On the back is a runic inscription, which can be read as **hiwi**

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The **h**-rune has one bar, which is unique in OFris and Continental inscriptions, so possibly the inscription was added outside Frisia or was made by a non-Frisian runographer. (Remembering that the English tradition used single-barred **h** especially in its early period up to the end of the 7th c.). The **w** rune is drawn in one stroke;

the pocket is not closed. *hīwi* dsf. *i*-stem, ‘to the mater familias’, cf. OS and OHG *hīwa* f. *n*-stem, ‘spouse’; cf. also OS *hīwiski* ‘family’, OS *hīwian* ‘to marry’. The inscription on the MELDORF brooch (dated ca. 50 AD) can be read as *hīwi*, which, according to Düwel (1981<sup>c</sup>:12) is a “fairly well-known etymon, which occurs, for instance, in Gothic *heīwa-frauja* ‘landlord, master of the house’”. The ÅRSTAD (Norway, see Appendix, Norway, nr. 2) stone has an inscription **hiwigaz** nsm. *a*-stem ‘one with strong familial ties’ (Antonsen 1975:34f.).

### Miscellaneous

20. HAMWIC (England). Knucklebone of a horse found in a medieval waste-pit in Hamwic near Southampton, England. Now in the God’s House Tower Museum, Southampton. No date. The runic text is:

**kataë**

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*kāte* is nsf. *ōn*-stem, ‘phalanx’, Du.: ‘koot’ (id.), < Gmc *\*kautōn*. *kāte* has *ā* < Gmc *\*au*. This would point to a Frisian provenance for the inscription (Hofmann 1976). According to Nielsen (1991<sup>a</sup>:301), ... “-*a*(-) < Gmc *\*-a*(-), which crops up after short syllables (*edæboda*, *umæ*), or derives from IE *\*-ā/-ō* + nasal (*kataë*, *umæ*)”.

### 3. Legible but uninterpretable inscriptions

21. KANTENS (Groningen). Comb case, bone, found in 1903 in the *terp*. In the GM, Groningen. The comb is dated early 5th c. which makes it the oldest rune find of the Frisian *terp*-area. Parallels for this comb type have been found in East England and Hoogeteintum. Only two runes can be distinguished: **ii**. The **i** has a dash at its foot. No interpretation.

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22. HOOGETEINTUM (Friesland). Comb, antler, found in 1928 in an inhumation grave in the *terp*. In the FM, Leeuwarden. Dated 7th c. Parallels for this comb have been found in the entire marshes area along the North Sea coast and in Scandinavia.

The comb is broken and badly damaged. According to Düwel/Tempel (1968/70:368) some runes can be read on one half of the comb: **?nlu**. The other half of the comb shows a few lines which may be taken for a bindrune consisting of three runes. Two **d** runes are connected by a zig-zag line, perhaps rendering **ded**

††N M̄M̄M̄

**ded** is possibly 1 or 3 sg. pret. ind. ‘did, made’, OFris pret. *dede*, inf. *duā* ‘to do, make’. The regular form would be *dede*, cf. Bammesberger 1991<sup>a</sup>:305–308.

23. WIJNALDUM A. A piece of antler, found in 1914. In the FM, Leeuwarden. No date. On two sides the antler piece is inscribed, on one side with ornaments such as crosses, squares and triangles; the other side has runes in a cartouche ending in some ornament. One end of the antler piece is badly weathered and so are the runes carved on it. If some of the runes are taken to be mirror-runes, partly executed upside-down, a reading could be, from left to right,

**z w f u w i z w ???**

Y ↓ Ψ // † | Y ↓

I have no interpretation for this sequence. If all signs are read as single runes, although some of them are doubled or mirrored, one may read **z n g z u n g i z n g ???** which, when read from right to left may be interpreted as *?ngz inguz ngz*, which might be the name of the Germanic god *Inguz*, repeated three times (Sipma 1960:70).

#### 4. Summary and Conclusions

The runic finds described in this chapter concern 23 objects, of which 21 are considered to belong to the Frisian runic tradition. They were not all found in Frisia, but some in England, one in the Ardennes and one in Ostfriesland. The 22nd object turned up in the river estuary of Rhine and Maas; the 23rd object was found in the far south of the Netherlands, on the border with Belgium. Both these objects and their runes do not have any Frisian connotations, but rather point to a Continental/Frankish context.

Of the 23 listed inscriptions, 20 are legible and interpretable; 11 consist of one word, 2 have two words, 7 consist of more than two words. In all I counted 19 personal names, of 15 men and 4 women. The object is mentioned 7 times. There are 8 sentences.

Metal: gold 5; silver 2; bronze 1.

Other than metal: antler 5; bone 3; yew-wood 4; whale bone 2; whale ivory 1.

Twelve objects display Anglo-Frisian runes and/or the double-barred **h**. The latter was common to the Anglo-Saxon, Frisian and Continental traditions. Two rather early inscriptions display single-barred **h** (Bergakker, early 5th c., and Wijnaldum B, 6th c.). The use of single-barred **h** is found in early English and Scandinavian inscriptions, but both the Bergakker and Wijnaldum B objects have Continental connotations rather than Scandinavian or English.

The beginning of runic writing in the Netherlands may be dated ca. 400 AD. The runic tradition probably ended due to a political change: the conquest of the central Netherlands and Frisia by the Carolingian Franks in the course of the eighth century and the subsequent Christianization, which introduced the Latin alphabet. It may have taken some time for the Latin alphabet to gain superiority, as some of the runic items date from the ninth century. Bernsterburen and Westeremden B might even be dated later, because of their (variants of) younger fupark runes. One might consider two runic periods. Period I would include Bergakker and Borgharen, the runic solidi, Wijnaldum A, and some of the combs: Ferwerd and Amay. Period II would then include Westeremden B (no date, but probably later than 800), Bernsterburen, Rasquert (ca. 800), Oostum, Toornwerd, Arum (all eighth or ninth centuries).

With regard to the problem of dating, sixteen objects have been found in the provinces of Groningen and Friesland, all excavated from *terpen* and *wierden*. They are therefore difficult to date, due to a lack of context. Two runic objects have been found in a grave: the combs of Hoogebeintum and Amay. On the basis of stylistic or iconographic characteristics, the symbolic swords, the coins, combs, the Bergakker and Borgharen items and the Bernsterburen staff can be dated approximately. Although the corpus is small, there is quite a lot of variety in texts and objects, including the materials.

The fact that one of the oldest inscriptions turned up near the Roman *limes* in the Betuwe is highly interesting. The object belongs to a provincial Roman context that might be labelled Frankish, regarding the object itself, the findplace and the early fifth-century date. It may belong to a Frankish runic tradition, since the find from Borgharen, the runic *sceattas* (seventh century) and the Belgian and some of the Rhineland and Alamannian finds have a Frankish connotation as well.

In the fifth century, there were several connections between the Rhineland, the central and southern parts of the Netherlands, North Gallia and South England, which may indicate a Frankish sphere of influence. Runes are likely to have entered that sphere.

The provenance of the *sceattas* could fit into a Frankish numismatic context, since they were struck in the regions near the estuary of the Scheldt (Page 1996:136f.).

Hines (1996) discusses the nature of the coins at great length: are they Frisian or Anglo-Saxon? Did they play a role as high-value items in an exchange network? They certainly fit a Merovingian context, although the “Frisian runic gold coins may have been both the media and the symbols of an exchange network that was emphatically distinct from, but at the same time related and even connected to, a Merovingian Frankish one that dominated western Europe from the Rhine southwards. The idea of a competitive division between spheres of influence, allegiance and culture in north-western Germanic Europe in the Early Middle Ages is one that has gradually been gaining support” (Hines 1996:57).

The runes on the Borgharen object, and to a lesser degree also the Bergakker item, show significant differences in style, ductus and technical realisation, which are very similar to the runes used in Alamannia and the Rhineland. The so-called Continental runes are different, when compared to runes in the North and overseas. The Continental runic tradition thus clearly differs from those of the coastal regions and the Scandinavian peninsula. The question is how to interpret these differences.

The Borgharen and Bergakker inscriptions clearly belong to the so-called Continental runic tradition, and more exactly, to a (pre-) Merovingian Frankish branch. These finds once again emphasize the existence of runic knowledge among the Franks living in the downstream area of the rivers Maas and Rhine. The Borgharen find may

be regarded a stepping stone linking the runic landscapes of the Ardennes (Belgica I) and the Maas/Rhine delta with the Rhineland (Germania I and II) and Alamannia.

A rune that could be diagnostic for a North Sea Migration Period Runic tradition may be  $\lambda$  **k**, to be found in Kragehul I, Lindholm (both Danish, chapter five, nrs. 20 and 21), Hantum (Frisia), the **skanomodu** coin (possibly Frisian), Chessel Down I and II (England, chapter eight, nrs. 2 and 6). As far as dating these items was possible, the dates run between 400 (the Danish items) and 610 (the coin).

Oostum, Toornwerd, the silver and gold coins, Rasquert, Arum, Westeremden A and B, Bernsterburen and Hamwic exhibit Anglo-Frisian runes, or testify to Anglo-Frisian contacts.

Four inscriptions may show links with Scandinavia: multiple-line runes in Wijnaldum A and Britsum, the 'I so-and-so' formula in Rasquert, and the appearance of younger fuþark runes in Westeremden B, Bernsterburen and Britsum. On the whole this may point to nothing more than that there were contacts between Scandinavia and Frisia in the early Middle Ages. But on the other hand it may imply that there was (at least from the eighth century onwards) substantial Scandinavian influence on Frisian rune-writing, which was perhaps due to Viking activities. The Viking silver hoard (found in 1999) from around 850 on the former island of Wieringen points to contacts, and possibly co-operation in 'raiding and trading' activities. The Viking Rorik obtained certain privileges in Holland and Dorestad from 840 onwards.

## APPENDIX

### SWEDISH AND NORWEGIAN INSCRIPTIONS IN THE OLDER FUPARK

Sources: Marstrander 1953, Krause/Jankuhn 1966, Antonsen 1975, Høst 1976. Jansson 1987, Grønvik 1981, 1987, Haavaldsen 1991 (Nowele 18). Excellent photographs exist in Krause/Jankuhn, Jansson and Høst (and Marstrander, who has pictures of some stones still *in situ*), and in the corpus editions of the Scandinavian countries:

*Norges Indskrifter med de ældre Runer*. Norges Indskrifter indtil Reformationen. Inledning. Vols. I–III. Eds. Sophus Bugge & Magnus Olsen. Christiania 1891–1924. Vol. IV, ed. A. Liestøl, Oslo 1980.

*Sveriges runinskrifter*. Utg. av Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien. Stockholm, 1900–1981.

#### A. *Sweden*

Some four or five stones may be connected with a grave, some others originally stood in a *stensättning*, in a row or a circle. Some were re-used as stepping stones over a brook, or as part of a fence, or in buildings such as towers, churches or farms. This secondary use may be the reason that many stones have disappeared. However, it is amazing that so few runic objects from the archaic period are known from Sweden, whereas there are so many finds from the Viking age, for instance. Also the fact that we have next to no grave finds is astonishing, when compared to the other corpora described in this book.

#### 1. *Stones*

1. BERGA (Trosa, Södermanland). This runestone was known in the early 19th c. but was lost and subsequently rediscovered in 1861, when the stone was used as part of a meadow fence. The stone has two inscriptions, one horizontal, running from right to left: **fino**. The other runs vertically, from right to left: **saligastiz**. These are

names; Fino may be a woman's name, Saligastiz is a man's name. Both names may point to these people's descent; the woman coming from Finland or Lapland, the man belonging to the tribe of the Salii (see chapter three).

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2. ELLESTAD (Söderköping, Östergötland). Found in 1934 in a garden in Ellestad, near Söderköping. Now in Statens Hist. Museum at Stockholm. There are runes on two sides. The inscription starts on one side, and runs from bottom to top, runes running left. A large piece of stone has been broken away, so some runes may have been lost on this side. The inscription continues on the top of the stone with the greater part of the text. One wonders how people were supposed to see all the runes, but, since the stone is not very high (110 cms), I presume they had to bend over to read.

Krause (1966:132ff.) transliterated the long side, from right to left:  
**ekAsigimArAzAfs[**

the top:

**kArAisidokA**

**stAinAz**

**kk kiiii kkk[**

The star rune † occurs, denoting an 'a' sound, transliterated as **A**, similar to its value on the Blekinge stones (see chapter five, nrs. 41–44). Also **k** written ᚢ can be found in the BJÖRKETORP and STENTOFTEN inscriptions, and on the EIKELAND brooch (Norway, see below, nr. 31).

As to 'I' written as **ekA**, compare with **ekA** in STENTOFTEN (chapter five, nr. 41), and **hateka** 'I am called' in LINDHOLM (chapter five, nr. 21). The ELLESTAD stone and the Blekinge stones may be dated 7th c.

The first part of the inscription can be interpreted as: 'I, Sigimaraz, **Afs[.**' An edge of the stone has broken away. Runes following **Afs** have disappeared.

The second line can be taken as: **(e)kA rAisido [e]kA**, which means 'I raised, I', continuing in the next line with the object, reading from left to right: **stAinaz** 'stone'. The last section includes **k** four times and **i** four times, of which the intention can only be guessed at.



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3. **JÄRSBERG** (Kristinehamn, Värmland). The runestone seems to have been part of a ring of stones. The runes were discovered in 1862. The top of the stone is missing and probably a part of the inscription as well.

One side of the stone bears runes running vertically, from top to bottom. The greater part can be read from left to right; only one word: **hait** runs from right to left. The layout of the inscription is rather clumsy, and the ends of both runerows run into each other. Since the last runes, **waritu**, were carved around a corner, one gets the impression that the carver reckoned with the fact that part of the stone had to be buried in the ground, and that there would not be enough room for the inscription.

**hait**[

**ekerilazrunozwaritu**

**]ubazhite:harabanaz**

The meaning may be: 'I am called. . . , I, erilaz wrote the runes, . . . ubaz I am called, Hrabnaz'. . . **ubaz** is probably the last part of a name such as Leubaz (Antonsen 1975:56f.). Erilaz is a rank or title. The difference between the two spellings **hite** and **hait**, both meaning 'I am called', has been explained by the supposition that an **a** is missing in **hite**, or that the preceding **h** should have had two side-ticks, in order to create a bindrune **ha**. Hrabnaz means 'raven'.

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4. **KALLEBY** (Tanum, Bohuslän). This large stone was found early in the 19th c. It was used as a stepping stone in a brook. The runes run left vertically, reading **prawijan haitinazwas**.

The runes are carved in much rounder forms than can be rendered here. The meaning may be something like: 'I was called stubborn'.

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5. **KINNEVE** (Västergötland). In the Museum of Skara. Small rectangular piece of soapstone; one hook has broken away, so that one rune (the initial rune of the inscription) is badly damaged. It was found in 1843, when it was turned up by a plough. It is said to have had some connection with a grave, although there is no evidence for that. The inscription runs from right to left:

**ǰizaluh**

ᚱ/ᚱᚱᚱ

The initial rune may have been **s**, in three strokes: ᚱ, according to Krause. One may want to isolate **alu**, which is a well-known word in runic inscriptions, probably indicating a well-wish, but since it is uncertain whether we have one word here, or several words, symbols or abbreviations, I am reluctant to propose any interpretation.

6. **KROGSTA** (Tuna, Uppland). The stone was known in the 17th c. It may have belonged to a grave field. There are two runic inscriptions, and a picture of a man who raises his arms and spreads his fingers. One inscription is next to the man, running vertically, and should be read from right to left **mwsieij**. This seems unintelligible, so perhaps the carver was not very literate, or did not intend to write something meaningful. The rune transliterated **j** has been rendered in an unusual way, in two little hooks above one another. On another side of the stone is a vertical inscription, runes running left: **siaīnaz**. Apparently the rune **ī** should be taken as a mistake for **t**, thus rendering **stainaz** ‘stone’.

ᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ

ᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ

7. **KYLVER** (Stånga parish, Gotland). Limestone slab, which may have been part of the linings of a grave (a so-called *Steinkist*). This has been doubted by (among others) Bäcksted (1952) and Haavaldsen (personal communication 1995). Found in 1902, now in Statens Historiska Museum Stockholm. The slab has two runic inscriptions. One is a complete fupark inscription, followed by a ‘tree’. The initial rune, **f** is abraded.

A. The sequence runs thus: **(f)uparkgwhnīpīzstbemlngdo**

B. The second inscription is: **sueus**.

l N 41R < X P H H 6 C J Y Z T 3 M M 0 M X      3 N M N 3

As to **A**: the sequence deviates from other fubark-sequences. The yew rune usually follows **ij**. Here it is interchanged with **p**. The **a**-rune is reversed, as well as **b** and **s**.

As to **B**: **sueus** is a palindrome, but one may wonder whether it also means something? I suggest transliterating it as *suevs*, Gothic nominative singular for a member of the tribe of the Suebi. For other instances of (abbreviations of) fubarks, see chapter six, 4.

8. MÖJBRO (Hagby, Uppland). Now in Statens Historiska Museum. The stone has been known for a long time. It was used as a stepping stone near a well, so some runes and pictures are abraded. Earlier it must have stood erect as a standing stone, since the lower part of the stone has been buried; this is clear from the fact that it is a different colour. It bears a picture of a man on horseback, accompanied by two dogs. The man wields a spear or sword and a shield. The runes are carved in two horizontal rows beneath each other, running left on a base line. They read from right to left:

**anahahaislaginaz frawaradaz**. The final **z** rune of **slaginaz** has been carved higher up, due to lack of space. The meaning may be ‘slain on (his) steed, Frawaradaz’. **hahai** should be taken as **ha[n]hai** ‘runner’, Gmc *\*hanhaz*. The stone is clearly a monument for a warrior, slain in battle.

Y

11X11311H1111  
Y1M1R111R1

9. NOLEBY (Västergötland). Now in Statens Historiska Museum. The stone was discovered in a wall near a farmhouse, in 1894. The runes are on one side and run from left to right. They stand on base lines, in neat rows right beneath each other. The lines have been drawn and cut first (there are more lines than runes). Krause (1966:148ff.) proposed transliterating:

**runofahiraginakudotojeka**  
**unapou:suhurah:susi h?atin**  
**hakupo**

Actually only the first line can be interpreted. ‘Rune(s), I paint,



The name Swabaharjaz literally means ‘Suebian warrior’. The name Stainawarjaz means ‘Stone guard’ or ‘Keeper of stones’. I presume that his profession may have been that of a quarry owner; at any rate he was the runographer. The surface of a runestone must be prepared, i.e. made smooth, before cutting the runes. Sometimes lines are also carved first. The man Hra?az, was probably the person who commissioned the runes, and had the stone erected for the man with the gaping wound.

ᚱᚰᚱᚱᚱ ᚱᚢᚰᚱᚱᚱ ᚱᚱᚱ  
 ᚰᚱ ᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ ᚱᚱᚱ  
 ᚰᚱ ᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ  
 ᚰᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ ᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ

12. SKÅÄNG (Södermanland). The stone carries two runic inscriptions, dating from different periods. In 1830 the first inscription, written with younger fubark runes, was discovered. The runes curve along the edges in a snake-form. In 1867 a second inscription in older fubark runes was discovered, in the centre of the stone. The runes run vertically, from top to bottom, and read: **harijazleugaz**. This means: ‘Harijaz, the Leugaz (= member of the tribe of the Lugii)’, compare with the Vimose comb (dated ca. 160 AD), which bears a runic inscription reading **harja** (chapter five, nr. 12, and chapter three).

The two **z** runes in the Skåäng inscription differ in form, the first in the ‘ornamental’ doubled or mirrored form, such as in Charnay (chapter seven, nr. 11), the second in the common single form.

ᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ

13. SKÄRKIND (Östergötland). Now in the churchyard. Discovered in 1876, when it lay, runes up, in the choir of the church of Skärkind. The inscription is nearly in the centre of the stone. The runes run horizontally, and read: **skipaleubaz**. This is probably a name, meaning: ‘skin-lover’. The first part should then be taken as **ski[n]ba-**. The second part, **leubaz**, occurs frequently as a name in the Rhineland, Germany (see chapter three). In runic inscriptions in Germany, forms of **leubo**, **leuba**, etc. are frequently met with. Possibly the name denotes a profession: a Rhenish merchant of skins.



heads of DAHMSDORF, KOWEL, ROZWADÓW (see chapter two and the Introductions to chapter five and chapter seven).

It is uncertain in what direction the runes should be read. From right to left: **sioag**. Or from left to right: **gaois**. No interpretation, unless one might want to suppose that the **i** rune is erroneous for a **p** rune, and that we should read: **gaops**, which may refer to the tribe of the Goths (see also chapter five, Illerup V **gaupz**, perhaps referring to the well-known tribe of the Gautaz).

X1XK

18. VALLENTUNA (Uppland). A knucklebone was found in 1980 in a cremation grave in a grave mound in the cemetery of Rickeby. A date of ca. 600 is possible based on the context: the other grave goods such as a helmet, a sword, combs etc. On four fragments, which could be fitted together, are runes, reading: **hlAhAhAukzAlbu??**

This may be a personal name, the first part being **hlAhA**, which can be related to the OIc verb *hlæja* ‘to laugh’, The second part is **hAukz** ‘hawk’, a name-element which occurs often. Thus we get ‘laughing hawk’, perhaps somebody’s nickname? The final part, **Albu** cannot be interpreted. On a fifth fragment of the knucklebone are some traces of runes, which cannot be read. (Gustavson 1983:142–150).

H†H†H†H†NY †††††

### 3. *Uncertain, or no runes*

19. HIMMELSTALUND (Norrköping, Östergötland). This inscription is on bedrock and part of a large group of Bronze Age rock carvings. Discovered in 1871/2. The ‘runic’ character of the inscription is not convincing. It may be a late graffiti. A left-running **b** is very clear, followed by perhaps **ua**. It should be pointed out that **b** (B) is not necessarily a rune, since the Latin alphabet uses the same graph.

1/1

### 4. *Conclusion*

Only eighteen older-fubark runic objects covering four or five centuries are recorded from Swedish territory. 16 are interpretable, 2

are legible, but an interpretation fails. Even if one included the objects listed under the Danish Corpus (from Skåne and Blekinge), the total number is disappointingly and astonishingly low. One must assume that many objects have been lost. As far as the density of finds are concerned, Bohuslän and Gotland are at the top, followed by Östergötland and Västergötland. By far the most inscriptions are on stone, and these mainly are memorials. In many cases the runestones were re-used, since they made suitable building material in churches and farmhouses.

Runic inscriptions in material other than stone seem to have been lost altogether, except for three items. As far as runestones are concerned, in nearly all cases the surfaces were prepared, e.g. cut into boulders, and the surface has been smoothed before cutting the runes.

It is remarkable that, unlike in other regions, nearly no precious objects with runes have been found, and nearly no weapons. When compared to the runic tradition on the Continent, in Denmark and England, the Swedish archaic tradition presents a completely different picture. We must exercise caution: we don't know what has been lost, so any conclusion must be very tentative.

### B. *Norway*

Twenty-six inscriptions can be connected with graves or grave sites (mounds): Bratsberg A, Einang, Søvtedt, Stenstad, Ødemotland, Øvre Stabu, Nordgården, Tu, Eggja, Fedja, Elgesem, Årstad, Tørvika A and B, Vatn, Tanem, Nedre Hov, Tveito, Fløksand, Gjersvik, Fosse, Frøyhov, Strand, Sunde, Eikeland; perhaps Opedal and Eidsvåg as well.

Seven inscriptions are on objects without an archaeological context: Barmen, Bratsberg B, Førde, Møgedal, Strøm, Vetteland, and Fonnås.

Four objects have no provenance: Frederikstad, Bjørnerud, Mauland, Utgård.

Original location unknown or uncertain: Tune, By, Belland, Austad, Bø, Tomstad, Kjølevik, Myklebostad A & B, Amla, Farsund, Nordhuglo, Belgau (present location and owner unknown), Rosseland, Reistad, Setre.

Lost: Saude stone, Veblungsnes cliff face, Hammeren cliff face, Helmen stone, Anda stone, Aukra copper bowl, Helgemo stone, Torgård stone, Tiller stone, Vestre Steinvik slab, Vårem slab.





HIPIXFY  
 ZFRFTN

PIPIFY

3. BARMEN (Isle in the Nordfjord, Sogn og Fjordane). The stone still stands in its original place, near the beach together with another bauta stone. The runes run right, vertically, from top to bottom: **ikpirbijzru**

Both Krause (1996:144ff.) and Antonsen (1975:48) proposed reading **ekpirbijazru**[noz] with **ek** instead of **ik**. The suggested **a** rune only shows its headstaff. The **b** rune is abraded. Probably a maker's inscription: 'I, Thirbiji/az (made the) ru(nes)'.

IKPIRBI|ZYRN

4. BELLAND (Austad, Lyngdal, Vest-Agder). Now in Oldsaksamlingen Oslo. Known since 1850. The stone served as a bridge over a creek. The runes run right, and there is only one word: **kepan**, which may be a man's name, perhaps in the genitive 'Keþa's' (cf. Saude, with **wadaradas** in the genitive as well), or in the accusative: 'to Keþa'. In view of the layout of the runes on the stone, it may be presumed that originally there were more runes (see photograph in Høst 1976:89).

KIPI

5. Bø (Sokndal, Dalane, Kirkebø, Rogaland). Now in Oldsaksamlingen, Oslo. First mentioned in 1865, when the stone was used as a bench. Earlier it served as a bridge over a brook, and still earlier it may have stood on a gravemound. The runes are rather clear, and read: **hnabdashlaiwa**. Krause assumes that **hnabudas** should be read, with a bindrune **bu**, but both Antonsen and Høst doubt that. The interpretation is easy: 'Grave of Hnabdas'.

HTFBWFJHFFIF

6. BRATSBERG A (Strinda, Trondheim, Sør-Trøndelag). Found around 1806 in a grave mound near the farm of Bratsberg. Other grave



Of course, all of these options may belong to one cultural complex.

For the readers' sake, the inscription, which is nearly without word-division signs or separations between the words, is given below divided into words, although some runes are abraded or very difficult to read:

A: **hin wArb nAseu maz mAdē þaim kAibA i bormoþa huni  
huwAz ob kam hArisa hi a lat gotnA fiskz or?? nAuim  
suwimade fokli f?s????? galande**

B: **Alu misurki**

C: **nis solu sot uk ni sAkse stAin skorin ni???? maz  
nAkdan isn??r??z ni wiltiz manz lAgi??**

A: "The man showered this (stone) with corpse-sea (= blood), and with it scraped the cross-pieces (on which runes were written) on the bore-tired plank (= the sledge on which the stone was carried). Which of the (rune)flock has come onto (the stone), hither into the land of men? The fish which firm in its intent swam through the corpse-stream, the bird would crow (screech) if it could tear at corpses.

B: **Alu** (the) criminal (who disturbs the grave)?

C: Not is (the stone) struck by the sun, nor cut with a knife, neither sharp-eyed men nor those who are bewitched shall lay (it) down". (Krause 1971:143f.; Haavaldsen 1991:50f).

Gerd Høst starts with line C, then A, then B. Her interpretation is:

C. "Not is the (spot, stone) searched by the sun and not is the stone cut by a(n iron) knife. Not shall a man uncover (the stone) when the moon is waning. Not shall wild men remove (the stone).

A. The (stone) is sprinkled with corpse-sea (blood), scraped with cross-pieces on the bore-tired plank (boat). As whom came the war god (Odin?) on the (boat) here to the land of the Goths (men)? As a fish, swimming out of the river of fear (?), as a bird. . . . singing.

B. Protection against the criminal".

Høst points out that the text refers to ancient burial rites, which should be carried out not in the sun (but at night), not while the moon is waning, nor with anything made of iron.

Perhaps Odin is referred to, the Germanic counterpart of the Roman Mercurius, both of whom acted as gods of the dead, as *psycho pomp*, carrying the souls of the dead to the underworld.

HIL P4RB T4M4N MF4 M4WM D4M <4B4 I B4RM4D4 H4H H4M44 4B <4M H4 H4  
 F 44T X4T44 F444 44 F 44 N4M 4N M4WM F444 F X4444  
 \* 44R4  
 H4 444N 44T N4 H4 444M 4444 44444 H4 MF4 T4444 H4 R 4 H4 44444  
 M444 T444

9. EIDSVÅG (Bergen, Hordaland). Now in the Bergen Museum. Found in 1901 in a field near the Eidsvåg farm. The stone apparently belonged to a *stenrös*—a group of stones set up in a circle. Traces of ashes may point to a cremation grave. The runes run from top to bottom and read: **harazaz**. Either the carver wrongly repeated the second syllable, or the first **a** is to be understood as a svarabhakti vowel. In the latter case we may get a PN: Hrazaz, which would mean ‘The agile one’. Otherwise one may read Haraz, ‘The grey one’.

H4R4F4F4F4

10. EINANG (Vestre Slide, Oppland). *In situ*. Until recently, the stone still stood on a grave mound, surrounded by a circle of small stones (*stenrös*). Now a little roof has been put over the stone to prevent it from further weathering. Only a few runes can be perceived now, reading from right to left: **e tizrunofaihido**. The inscription starts with **e**, presumably followed by **k** and a name, perhaps ending in *-gastiz*. It is a maker’s inscription: ‘I, . . . . . tiz painted the rune (e.g. the inscription)’. Earlier accounts of the inscription mention the name Godagastiz.

44M4M444444444 M

11. ELGESEM (Sandefjord, Vestfold). Now in Bygdøy, Oslo. The stone was found in 1870 face-down in a grave mound. The site was that of a large boat-shaped stone-setting, with at least 18 grave mounds. The stone originally may have been erected on top of a mound. This can be deduced from the fact that the upper part has weathered, and it is quite easy to see which part has been in the soil.

The runes are in the centre of the stone, running left from top to bottom: **alu**

The connection with a grave mound may imply that **alu** has a ritual, religious or magical connotation. The word occurs often, especially on bracteates (see the section ALU in the introduction to chapter five, Bracteates with Runes).

Alu

12. FARSUND (Vest Agder). This stone was built into a wall, and was first mentioned in 1805. It is still on the original site. The runes read: **lkif** or **tkif**. No interpretation.

13. KJØLEVIK (Strand, Ryfylke, Rogaland). Now in Oldsaksamlingen at Oslo. The stone was found in 1882 in a potato cellar of the farm Kjøløvik at Strand, north-east of Stavanger. It was said to have once stood on a grave. The runes run from right to left. The inscription is in three rows beneath another:

**hadulaikaz**

**ekhagustadaz**

**hlaaiwidomaguminino**

The interpretation is: ‘Hadulaikaz. I, Hagusta(l)daz buried my son’. The runographer made a mistake when carving a **z** rune instead of an **h** rune in the second row. Upon discovering his error, he changed it into **h**. The language used does not show traces of syncope, hence the language of the inscription is regarded archaic. However, since the text is so formulaic any dating between 200 and 600 is possible. **hlaaiwido** is 1 sg. pret. ind. of Gmc *\*hlaiwijan* ‘to bury’, cf. **hlaiwa** ‘grave’ on the Bø stone. The use of double **a** in **hlaaiwido** may be interesting. Presumably both **as** in the names are pronounced short, whereas the double **a** in the verb form indicates length.

Y 7 1 1 1 / M 1 1 H

Y 1 M 1 1 7 / X 1 1 1 M

X 1 1 1 M / X 1 1 M 1 1 1 1 1 1 H

14. MØGEDAL (Egersund, Dalane, Rogaland). Now in Stavanger Museum. Discovered in 1914, when the stone was removed and broken into four pieces. The stone probably stood originally along

the roadside. One side has very large runes, running from top to bottom, and from right to left. They are clearly legible: **laipigaz**, which may be a PN, meaning ‘travelling one’ (Antonsen 1975:57) or ‘the sad one’ (Krause 1966:196) or ‘the awful one’ (Høst 1976:84, who adds that negative-sounding names are common in Norway).

YIX|K11

15. MYKLEBOSTAD A & B (Vistdal, Møre og Romsdal). Now in Bygdøy, Oslo. Stone A was discovered in 1852, stone B in 1888. B had served as a threshold, but was said to have been part of a stone-setting, together with a second runestone. Haavaldsen (1991:19) mentions that “there is nothing in the find-report to indicate that it was found within or by a barrow”. It was only in 1928 that Marstrander discovered that both stones were really one. Stone B has: **asugasdi**. Stone A has: **lai :aih so ai i oruma ib**. As is shown by the empty places, the stone and its runes have been severely weathered. Actually only the first part is clear: a man’s name: Asugasdi(z). The spelling **sd** instead of *st* may seem strange, but this is perhaps due to the personal pronunciation of the carver. Note that runographers wrote according to how it sounds. Compare also to **arogisd** in the SCHRETZHEIM I inscription (Continental Corpus, nr. 36). Only the runes of stone B are represented here:

YIX|K11

16. NORDHUGLO (Stord, Isle of Huglo, Hordaland). Now in the Historisk Museum Bergen. The stone has been used for some time as part of a bridge. The runes were discovered in 1910. They run from right to left and vertically, from bottom to top (!). They are quite clear and read: **ekgudijaungandizih**

The stone has been damaged beyond the rune **h**, so there may have been some runes following. The meaning of the text is: ‘I, gudija (priest, chief), not bewitched (acting without magic), **ih**?’ Similar texts are found in GÅRDLÖSA (Skåne, Danish Corpus, nr. 13) **ek unwodz** (I, the not raving) and RASQUERT (Groningen, the Netherlands, nr. 16): **eku[n]mædit** (I, not made mad).

HYIM+IX+11+IM+IX+M





learned) writing'. Or, considering the possibility of a **z** at the end of **unnam**, Antonsen (1995:130) proposes to read **unnamz** = 'untakeable'.

The name Iupingaz may refer to the Germanic tribe of the Iuthungi, known to be living in Raetia in the Roman period.


  
 INÞIXFY
   
 M<P<R<FYN<FFM
   
 PRITF

19. ROSSELAND (Kvam, Hardanger, Hordaland). Now in Bygdøy, Oslo. Found in 1947 while demolishing an old shed. The stone may perhaps be associated with a grave mound in the vicinity. The runes run left, and are carved in a vertical row, reading from top to bottom: **ekwagigazirilazagilamudon**.

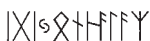
This means: 'I, Wagigaz, irilaz, for Agilamudo'. Probably someone with the title irilaz (= erilaz), whose name was Wagigaz, raised the monument for a woman, named Agilamu(n)d.


  
 †XW/M11IX1Y11R1Y1XIX19>M

20. SAUDE (Sauherad, Telemark). The stone is only known from a drawing from 1636, by Ole Worm. According to Sophus Bugge the transcription should be: **wadaradas**, which is probably a man's name, in the genitive. See the drawing in Krause 1966:187.

21. STENSTAD (Ulefoss, Telemark). Now at the Jægerspris Palais park on the Danish isle of Sealand. The stone, an erratic, was found in 1781 in a grave mound near the farm Stenstad. The woman's grave under the runestone contained a bronze fibula, silver-gilt jewellery, a wooden bucket with bronze mounts, a weaving comb, pearls, a gold finger ring and four earthenware urns. The inscription runs from top to bottom. The runes run right on a base line and are clearly legible. They read:

**igijonhalaz** 'I(n)gijo's rock'.


  
 |X|oX<FFFY

22. SUNDE (Isle of Askrova, Kinn, Sogn og Fjordane). Found in 1945 in a grave mound, together with a spinning whorl, hence the grave was a woman's grave. The runes must be read from right to left, and are carved from top to bottom in the centre of the stone: **widugastiz**. This may be a man's name, literally meaning 'Woodguest', which might denote a wolf, cf. **widuhudaz** 'Woodhound', which also might mean 'wolf' (HIMLINGØYE, Danish Corpus, nr. 14). On the isles on Norway's west coast there were no woods, so probably the man came from the eastern or southern parts of the country. He may have been the person who commissioned the runes, perhaps the buried woman's husband (the ending *-iz* is masculine).

YIT3IX/MI9

23. TANEM (Klæbu sn, Sør Trøndelag). Found during excavations of a grave mound in 1813. In a second nearby grave mound some grave goods were found; a spear, an urn with an iron bottom. These finds may give an indication of the date of the grave mounds. The runestone was first used as a threshold in one of the Tanem farm buildings. Its inscription was only detected in 1864. The stone was then brought to Oldsaksamlingen, Oslo. The runes, between framing lines, are severely abraded. Krause proposes reading: **mairlingu**. This may be a woman's name, or perhaps a PN derived from a tribal name, such as **marings** on SZABADBÁTTYAN (chapter five, nr. 39), and **skati marika** 'the first among the Mærings' (Rök stone, 9th c.).

MFRM9N

24. TØRVIKA A and B (Kvam, Hordaland). Two stones were found in the vicinity of a disturbed grave; they may have been part of the sarcophagus lining and roof. The runes of the two slabs were carved by two different persons.

Stone A was found in 1880. The stone was cut to make it fit the grave's roof, destroying a rune in the action. The runes run left and are quite clear: **ladawarijaz**. Above runes 4: **a** and 5: **w a u** a **u** rune has been cut, so one should probably read: **ladauwarijaz**. This may be a personal name, or a word denoting someone's function: La(n)dauwarijaz 'Land-guard' or 'Defender of the Land'. The inserted **-u-** may be meant to express pronunciation, although this seems redundant.

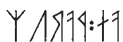


Stone B was found in 1883 in the same burial chamber. The runes were carved with a sharp tool, probably a knife. The runes display graceful dashes to their tops or bottoms, which give the impression of serifs, otherwise known from bookhand. But at this time in Norway, during the Migration Period or earlier (long before people there started to write with Roman letters) these features may just be an expression of a personal style. The runes run left, and are not easy to decipher. The first rune, reading from right to left, may be either **d** or a double-barred **h**, or even a **p** and **i** pressed close together. The second is **e**, perhaps a bindrune **ew** or **el**, followed by **prod**, then a mirrored **w**, or an **ing** rune, then a variant of the **d** rune, or a mirrored **e**. A slanting stroke through one of the headstaves may point to an **n**. The last two runes are **gk**. Thus one may read: **d/hew/lprod wd/egk** or **(i)ngd/egk**.

Any interpretation seems impossible.



25. TOMSTAD (Vanse sn, Vest-Agder). Now in Oslo. A fragment of a runestone, found in 1851 or 1852 in a field near the farm of Tomstad. It served as a threshold for the Tomstad kitchen. The runes run from right to left, and are rather abraded. One can read: **Jan:waruz**. The part **an** may be the end of a name; **waruz** means ‘protection, dwelling’. It can also denote stones which were used as berth or mooring place for a boat (Høst 1967:92). Anyway, the word may point to an enclosure of stones, perhaps a stone setting or a grave. According to Antonsen (1975:68) the stone belonged to a monument made of more than one stone.



26. TUNE (Sarpsborg, Østfold). Now in Oldsaksamlingen at Oslo. The stone was discovered in 1600 in the west side of a cemetery wall. The stone has been inscribed on two prepared flat sides by two different runographers. The inscription made by the first carver starts on side A, and proceeds on side B, done by the second carver.



(Vallentuna, see above). Hence one must assume that the inscription was made much later than the burial, or that stone and burial have nothing to do with each other. If this appears to be unlikely, one must assume that the star rune already existed in the 5th c. denoting an ‘a’-sound, transliterated as **A**, which in its turn would mean that the loss of initial ‘j’ such as found in \**ǰāra* > *āra* also occurred in, or before, the 5th c. (see Blekinge stones, chapter five, 7).

↑\*|↑↑

28. VATN (Værnes, Sør Trøndelag). Now in the Museum College of Science, Trondheim. Found in 1871 inside a grave mound. The stone, which has been severely damaged, has two inscriptions, one cut deep and clear; the other is shallow and difficult to read. Inscription A displays 7 runes, running right: **rhoAltz**, which is a name: Rhoaltz, or Hroaltz. Immediately following **z** another inscription, **B**, has been carved: **fai**[hido]? (see Krause 1966:152f.). This would be a maker’s formula: ‘R. painted (the runes)’. As regards the **A**, see above, nr. 27, and chapter five, 7, the Blekinge stones).

RHØ↑↑↑\*|

29. VETTELAND (Hå, Jæren, Rogaland). The stone has been broken, and two pieces were found separately from each other (both in time and in distance). The two parts were later put together again in Stavanger Museum. The first part was found in 1896, turned up by a plough. The second part was found in 1937. A third part is still missing. The first stone has two inscriptions; the lower row only shows the upper part of the staves. Nevertheless the runes can be deciphered. The second stone displays the remains of three inscriptions; the upper and second rows match the upper and second row of the first stone. The third row lacks its beginning, which is on the still-missing stone.

The runes run right and can be read thus:

**flagdafaikinaz ist**  
**magozminassta ina**  
**dazfaihido**

The part **flagda faikinaz ist** appears to be a kenning-like formula, meaning something like ‘threatened by monsters is’ (Krause

1966:136ff.), or ‘subject to deceitful attack is’ (Antonsen 1975:38). But the section **ist** can be emended to [ra]**ist** ‘raised, erected’, hence the sentence means something like: ‘troll-threatened raised’. The second line can be divided into: **magoz minas staina** ‘(the) stone (for) my sons’, followed by ‘. . . daz painted (made) (the runes)’.

𐀀𐀁𐀂𐀃𐀄𐀅𐀆𐀇𐀈𐀉𐀊𐀋𐀌𐀍𐀎𐀏𐀐𐀑𐀒𐀓𐀔𐀕𐀖𐀗𐀘𐀙𐀚𐀛𐀜𐀝𐀞𐀟𐀠𐀡𐀢𐀣𐀤𐀥𐀦𐀧𐀨𐀩𐀪𐀫𐀬𐀭𐀮𐀯𐀰𐀱𐀲𐀳𐀴𐀵𐀶𐀷𐀸𐀹𐀺𐀻𐀼𐀽𐀾𐀿  
 𐀀𐀁𐀂𐀃𐀄𐀅𐀆𐀇𐀈𐀉𐀊𐀋𐀌𐀍𐀎𐀏𐀐𐀑𐀒𐀓𐀔𐀕𐀖𐀗𐀘𐀙𐀚𐀛𐀜𐀝𐀞𐀟𐀠𐀡𐀢𐀣𐀤𐀥𐀦𐀧𐀨𐀩𐀪𐀫𐀬𐀭𐀮𐀯𐀰𐀱𐀲𐀳𐀴𐀵𐀶𐀷𐀸𐀹𐀺𐀻𐀼𐀽𐀾𐀿  
 𐀀𐀁𐀂𐀃𐀄𐀅𐀆𐀇𐀈𐀉𐀊𐀋𐀌𐀍𐀎𐀏𐀐𐀑𐀒𐀓𐀔𐀕𐀖𐀗𐀘𐀙𐀚𐀛𐀜𐀝𐀞𐀟𐀠𐀡𐀢𐀣𐀤𐀥𐀦𐀧𐀨𐀩𐀪𐀫𐀬𐀭𐀮𐀯𐀰𐀱𐀲𐀳𐀴𐀵𐀶𐀷𐀸𐀹𐀺𐀻𐀼𐀽𐀾𐀿

## 2. *Brooches*

30. BRATSBERG B (Gjerpen, Telemark). No known find circumstances; only the find place, the farm of Bratsberg, is known. In 1937 the brooch came to Oslo. The silver brooch is dated ca. 500. The inscription is in framing lines on the back, partly in bindrunes and easy to read: **ekerilaz**. This means ‘I Eirilaz’, which may point to a rank or status, or perhaps to the tribal name of the Heruli. At any rate it is not a personal name, since **ek erilaz** has a formulaic character; the sequence is well known and found relatively often among the early inscriptions of Denmark, Norway and Sweden (see also KRAGEHUL, Denmark, chapter five, nr. 20).

𐀀𐀁𐀂𐀃𐀄𐀅𐀆𐀇𐀈𐀉𐀊𐀋𐀌𐀍𐀎𐀏𐀐𐀑𐀒𐀓𐀔𐀕𐀖𐀗𐀘𐀙𐀚𐀛𐀜𐀝𐀞𐀟𐀠𐀡𐀢𐀣𐀤𐀥𐀦𐀧𐀨𐀩𐀪𐀫𐀬𐀭𐀮𐀯𐀰𐀱𐀲𐀳𐀴𐀵𐀶𐀷𐀸𐀹𐀺𐀻𐀼𐀽𐀾𐀿

31. EIKELAND (Time, Rogaland). A gilded bronze fibula, dated ca. 600, found in a grave in 1965. The runes on the back are damaged. The **k** rune 𐀀 has the same shape as on the Blekinge stones (only upside-down) and in the ELLESTAD inscription (Sweden, nr. 2). The runic legend reads: **ekwizwiwiowrituirunozasni**. There is one bindrune, transliterated as **za**: 𐀀. The legend can be interpreted as ‘I, Wiz, for Wiwi, (I) write in runes, **asni**’. The part **asni** may be an abbreviation for something that can only be guessed at, although Grønvik (1981:183) interprets it as ‘(for my) beloved’.

𐀀𐀁𐀂𐀃𐀄𐀅𐀆𐀇𐀈𐀉𐀊𐀋𐀌𐀍𐀎𐀏𐀐𐀑𐀒𐀓𐀔𐀕𐀖𐀗𐀘𐀙𐀚𐀛𐀜𐀝𐀞𐀟𐀠𐀡𐀢𐀣𐀤𐀥𐀦𐀧𐀨𐀩𐀪𐀫𐀬𐀭𐀮𐀯𐀰𐀱𐀲𐀳𐀴𐀵𐀶𐀷𐀸𐀹𐀺𐀻𐀼𐀽𐀾𐀿

32. FONNÅS (Øvre Rendal, Hedmark). Found in 1877, as a stray find. Now in Oldsaksamlingen, Oslo. The silver-gilt brooch is very large

and carries a long inscription on the back of the headplate. It is dated ca. 550.

A: runes running right: **whsbidult**

B: running left: **wkshu**

C: running left: **jlsklz**

D: running left: **ijzspjrbse**

Since this legend is enigmatic and unintelligible, I guess that it is in code. Perhaps one has to switch letters according to some unknown system. Some otherwise regularly occurring runes are missing: **a, f, g, n, m, þ, o**.

Grønvik (1987:40ff.) gives another transliteration, and another sequence of reading:

D: **iAR AA rb e**

A: **wh wwidulti**

B: **wk hu**

C: **Al klR**

He interprets this as “Grandmother gives heritage to the young (woman), who is very caring for the owner of the farm Holt and (her) inhabitants”.

33. STRAND (Åford, SØr-Trøndelag). The bronze brooch was found in 1872 in a woman’s grave, together with an earthenware spinning whorl, dated to the 2nd half 6th c. The runes are between framing lines, and read: **siklislAhli**. The first part seems clear, **sikli** may be compared to **sigila** on the MÜNCHEN-AUBING brooch (Germany, chapter seven, nr. 25) and **sigilæ** on the HARFORD FARM brooch (England, chapter eight, nr. 4), meaning ‘brooch’, thus naming the object. These brooches are all dated 6th c. The second part, however, is less clear, although one may consider it to be an anagram of a name, hidden in **snAhli**. Grønvik (1987:163f.) gives a survey of interpretations, and he himself settles with the interpretation **siklislAhli** meaning: ‘Sigli = the brooch (i)s guarding the dead (person)’.

ŷ|<|>|>|\*|H|

34. TU (Klepp, Jæren, Rogaland). Now in Oldsaksamlingen, Oslo. Two fragments of a silver fibula with runes were found in 1901 in a 5th c. woman's grave. Other grave goods were a bronze brooch, a gold ring, an iron knife, a green glass bead, and earthenware potsherds. The runes on the brooch are between framing lines and rather damaged, so they are difficult to read. From the photograph in Krause (1966, Tafel 9) the first rune seems to be an **h** to me, in the form of a reverted Roman N. The third rune may be **k**. There are some more runes, but illegible. The legend seems unintelligible to me.

### 3. *Scrapers and a comb*

35. FLØKSAND (Meland, Hordaland). A scraper, found in 1908 in a cremation urn in the Bergen Museum. This urn came from a woman's grave and was brought to the museum in 1864. The urn contained a comb, some needles, another scraper and the remains of a bear's claw. The scraper has been damaged by heat, but the runes are clearly legible; they run from right to left: **linalaukaza**. There is one bindrune:  $\lambda$ , the same as the one in EIKELAND (above, nr. 31). This particular bindrune is found on the KRAGEHUL spear shaft (Funen, Denmark), on several bracteates and on the JÄRSBERG stone (Värmland, Sweden), so we may conclude that it was commonly known in Scandinavia.

The translation of **lina laukaz** is 'linen (and) leek'. Leek is onion or garlic. Both linen and leek were used for preserving goods from decay (see chapter six, 6). Since the words alliterate and are written on a scraper for cleaning hides, one may presume a symbolic function for the text. Perhaps the charmlike text may indicate fertility and prosperity? In this context the 14th c. *Vølsa þátrr*, Eddica Minora 124 (see Krause 1966:85) is often referred to, in which a heathen fertility ritual in North Norway is described: a horse's phallus was kept preserved with the help of linen and leek. The farmer's wife sang a song over the object before handing it to her family, who passed the phallus round from one to another.

$\lambda$  > /111111

36. GJERSVIK (Tysnes, Hordaland). Now in the Bergen Museum. A scraper, found in 1913 in a grave, together with a cremation urn,



a bear's claw, silver jewellery, a comb, and a bone spoon. The scraper is broken into fragments, some of which have been lost. Therefore, the entire runic inscription, which runs left, cannot be reconstructed. What can be perceived is:

**d fiopi lllllllll**

Whatever this means is unknown; it is conjectured that the ten **l** runes may have something to do with the **linalaukaz** formula on the Fløksand scraper. The rune names for **l** have been handed down differently in manuscripts from the 10th c. as both *laukaz* and *lin*. Apparently, the confusion may be due to the combined occurrence of these words.

37. NEDRE HOV (Garns sn, Hadeland, Oppland). A fragment of what may have been a scraper or a comb was found in 1868 in a cremation grave, with sherds of two urns, an iron comb, an iron knife, two iron keys, two iron needles, a bone staff with ornaments, etc. The runes on the fragment read: **ekad**, which may be a part of a text such as: 'I, Ad . . .'.

∏◊

38. SETRE (Isle of Bømlo, Hordaland). Now in the Bergen Museum. A comb, found in 1932 in a cave, together with several tools from the Stone Age and the Iron Age, and with a bronze bow-fibula. The comb is dated 7th c. and ornamented with point-circles. It has three runic inscriptions. On one side, on a base line, is: **hAl** and **mAz**; on the same side one can read, after the comb is turned halfway round: **mAunA**, also on a base line. On the other side is, on a base line: **Alu** (the **l** rune has a very long sidetwig, to the bottom, it looks like a **u** rune), followed by: **naAlu?nanA** (not on a base line). I am inclined to think that two names are written on the first side: 'Halmaz' and 'Mauna', and that on the other side the words **Alu** and another name 'Nana' may occur. On the other hand, **hAl** means 'rock' and **mAz** means 'girl'. Grønvik (1987:7–29) gives a survey of interpretations, including his own. He considers the text a poem with alliterating rhyme, meaning: "the stone setting may thrive, open all, love all!" In a later interpretation he proposes: "young girl lay back, help yourself (to the food & drink) and enjoy all".



In this case the signs run left, and may perhaps be read as: **ingada**. The **d** (if it is a **d**) is a cross written in a quadrangle. However, the inscription may at least partly be considered as runic, because of the two **a** runes, since these signs are unambiguously runes.



42. ODEMØTLAND (Nærbo, Jæren, Rogaland). Now in the Bergen Museum. This bone piece was found in 1891 in a mound together with charred bones in an urn. On the same site fragments of pottery and broken pieces of a comb were found. The bone piece has been ornamented in a way which reminds one of the LINDHOLM bone piece (chapter five, nr. 21). Besides, the runes show similarity to the KRAGEHUL knife shaft (chapter five, nr. 30) and the BRITSUM piece of yew (chapter nine, nr. 14). It has been assumed that these objects were amulets. The runes of the Odemøtland bone piece are written in two rows, between framing lines, one running left, the other running right. Some runes are carved in double lines, some are single. From right to left one may read: **uhautrewbu?rinuajidpinnu uetuupabiuhnsfi-tiardpinuu** (according to the transcription given in Haavaldsen 1991). Bugge proposed reading: “Uha urte. Eburinu aijid pinnu wé. Tunþa bi Uhan fahidi tiand pinnu”. This would mean: “Uha prepared, Eburinu owns this holy object. Tuntha wrote together with Uha the inscription in this row” (see Haavaldsen 1991:15).

43. ØVRE STABU (Oppland). In Oldsaksamlingen, Oslo. This spearhead is one of the oldest runic items. It is of the Vennolum-type (see chapter three), dated 2nd half of the 2nd c. The runes read **raunijaz**.

This noun is an nsm. *ja*-stem, meaning ‘tester’, probably the name (duty) of the spearhead. The spearhead was found in a cremation grave in a barrow. Other grave gifts were a sword with a figure of Victoria on it, and weapons similar to those found in the Vimose bog (Haavaldsen 1991:23,45). The runes are carved in tremolo or zig-zag style.



44. STRØM (Dolm, Isle of Hitra, Strømfjord, Sør-Trondelag). Now in the Trondheim Museum. A whetstone, found in 1908 in a pile





in a marginal use of magic in runic inscriptions of the archaic period.

Basically, the archaic runic tradition in Norway does not present a different picture from the Swedish tradition, although in Norway more objects have survived. Compared with other areas, the Scandinavian tradition displays a substantial difference because of the many runestones with memorial and ritual texts. Perhaps this should be understood as a typical and exclusive Scandinavian development. Runographers in other areas may have inscribed similar texts on perishable material. If this were the case it cannot have been for lack of stones, since, particularly in Denmark, they were readily available. This problem has not yet found a satisfactory explanation. As regards the texts, the use and aim of apparently nonsense sequences has not yet been explained. The illegibility or unintelligibility of the inscriptions may have to do with illiteracy, or magic, or just for the sake of writing letters without any significance, or even sophisticated codes; it is impossible to tell.

The archaic runic texts are the only written records from a society of which we still know very little. The extreme paucity of information limits our ability to reconstruct the past. It is possible that increasingly sophisticated technology will produce more finds, and this may enable future runologists to decipher runic texts to a greater degree than is possible at the moment.

For now, a mysterious shroud still covers runic lore—and the speed with which our era moves away from the Runic Age makes one fear that even in the twenty-first century the old problems will not be solved. Runologists of the nineteenth century were able to study a society in which quite a lot of information about the past was preserved and still present. Now, in the twenty-first century, the rural, isolated, old fashioned and closed communities are rapidly disappearing. Our world is governed by information and communication technology, which turns the world into a global village where everything and everybody comes to resemble one another. Old habits and old fashions die, memories of old times disappear. Soon, there will be only ‘virtual knowledge’ of the past if we do not proceed with our work based on the scientific disciplines of historical linguistics, fieldwork, history and archaeology.

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JASP	Jutland Archaeological Society Publications
ERGA	Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde
ABäG	Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik
FmaS	Frühmittelalterliche Studien
BAR	British Archaeological Reports
NoR	Nytt om Runer
ROB	Rijksdienst voor Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek
A.	Auflage

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Whitby II: 137, 138, 291  
Wijnaldum A: 102, 119, 131, 132,  
325, 326, 328 plate 25b  
Wijnaldum B: 16, 125, 137, 299, 323,  
326 plate 29  
Wheatley Hill: 292  
Willoughby-on-the-Wolds: 294  
Wurmlingen: 132, 137, 263

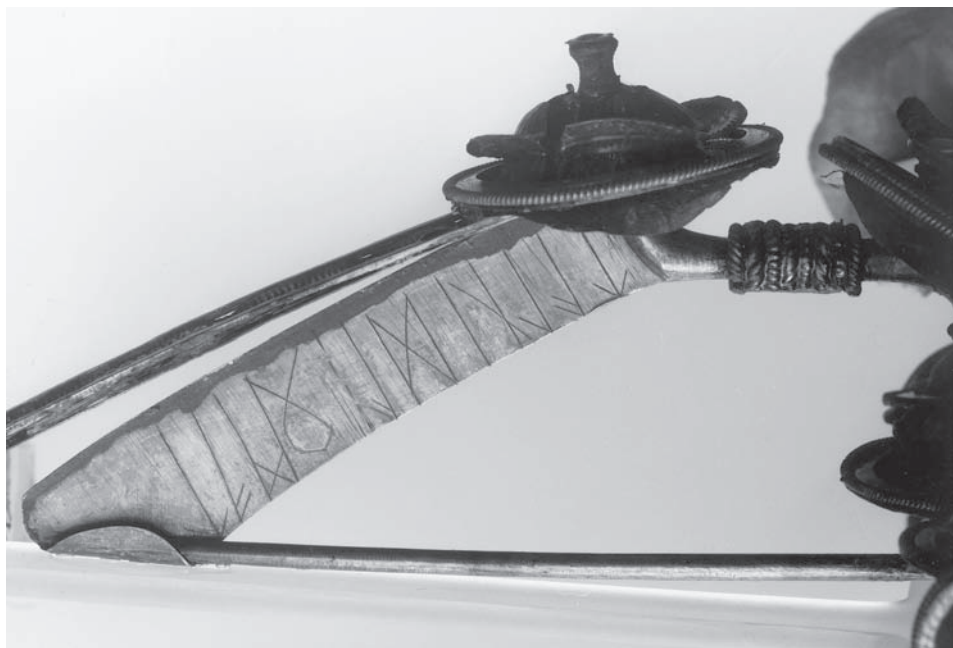


Plate 1a. Udby, Ch. V, nr. 17. Photo: Kit Weiss, by courtesy of the Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen.

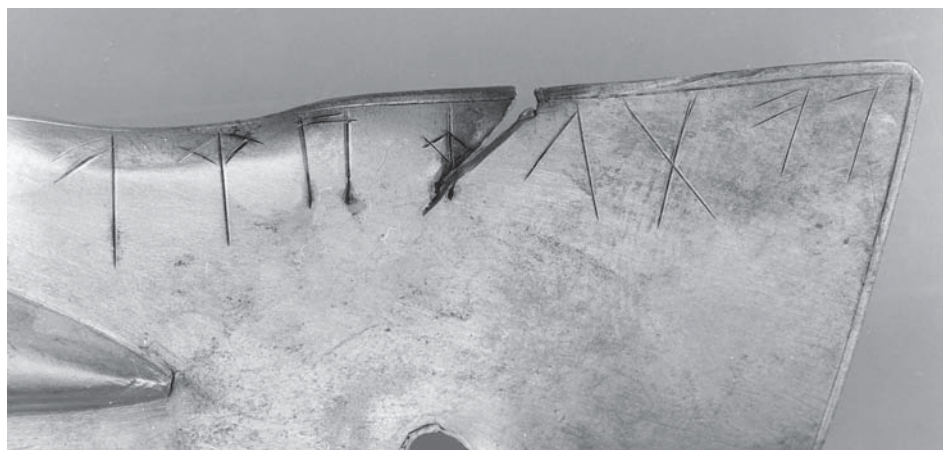


Plate 1b. Illerup III, Ch III, nr. 3. Photo: Lennart Larssen, by courtesy of Museum Moesgaard.



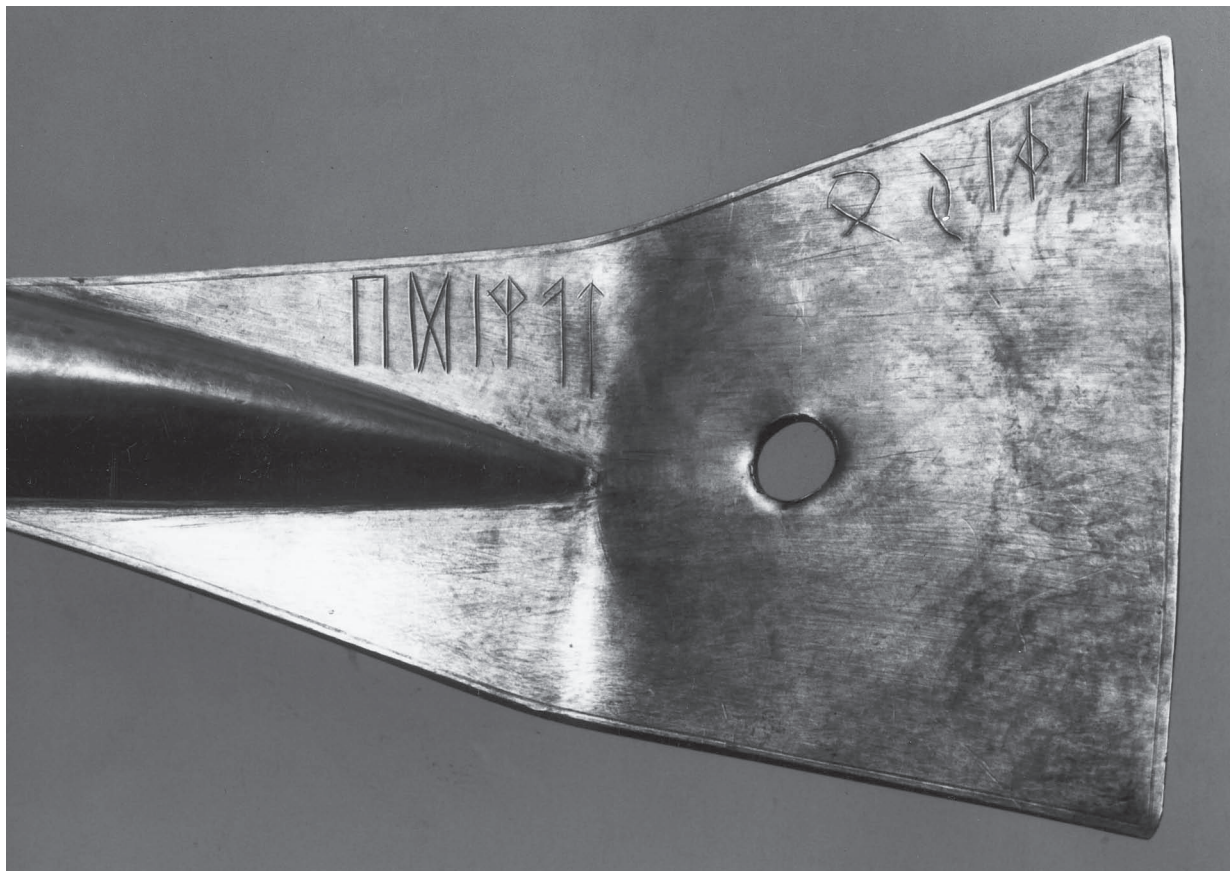


Plate 2. Illerup II, Ch. V, nr. 2. Photo: Jørgen Ilkjær, by courtesy of Museum Moesgaard.

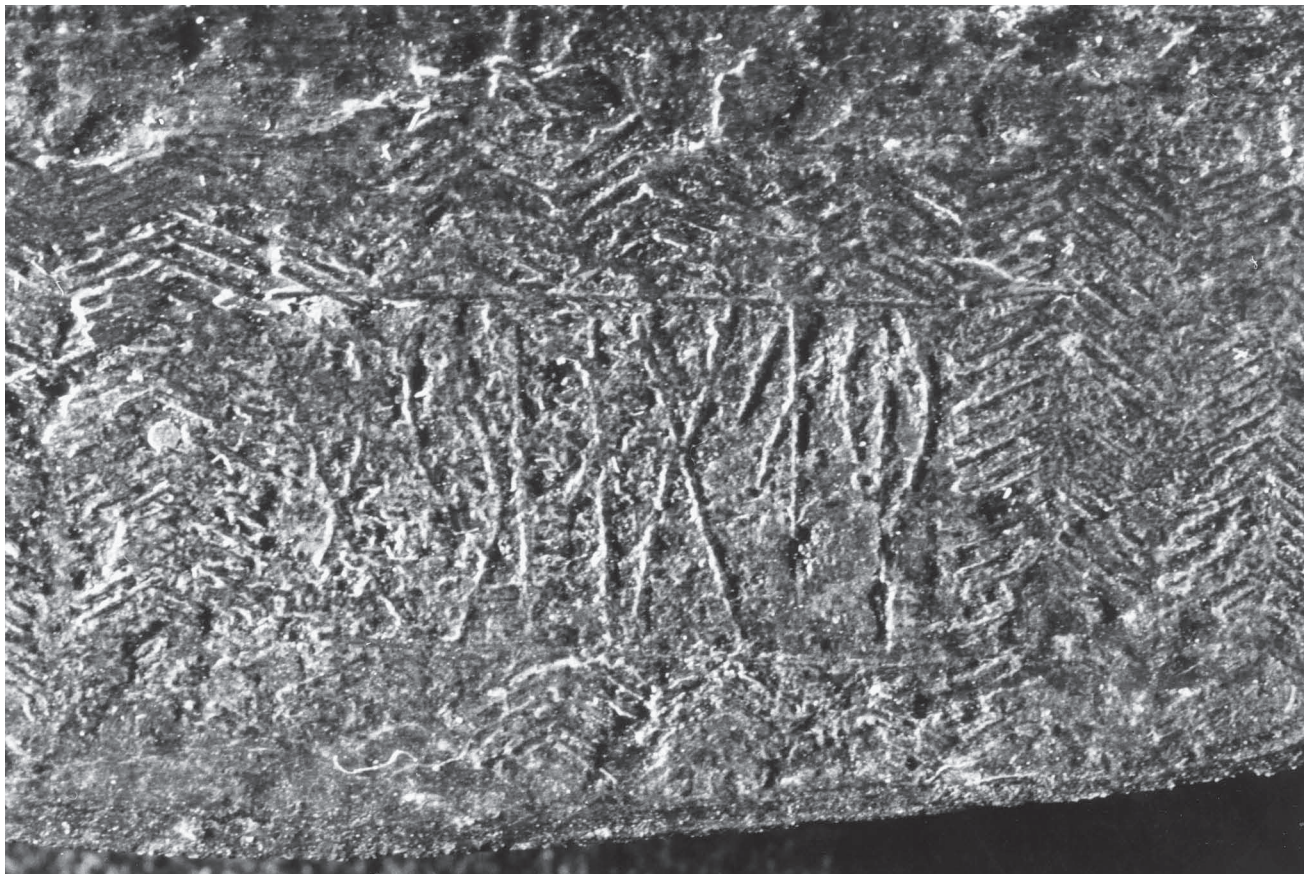


Plate 3. Illerup IV, Ch. V, nr. 4. Photo Lennart Larssen, by courtesy of Museum Moesgaard.





Plate 4a. Letcani, Ch. V, nr. 38.  
'FHE'.\*

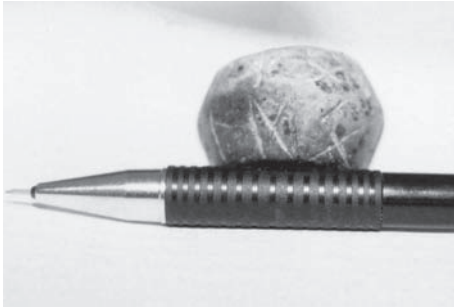


Plate 4b. Letcani, Ch. V, nr. 38.  
'ADO'.



Plate 4c. Letcani, Ch. V,  
nr. 38.  
'RANG  
:AD'.



Plate 4d. Letcani, Ch. V, nr. 38.  
'E or M' ?.

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\*Photographs of which no photo credit is given are made by the author.



Plate 5. Björketorp, Ch. V, nr. 41.

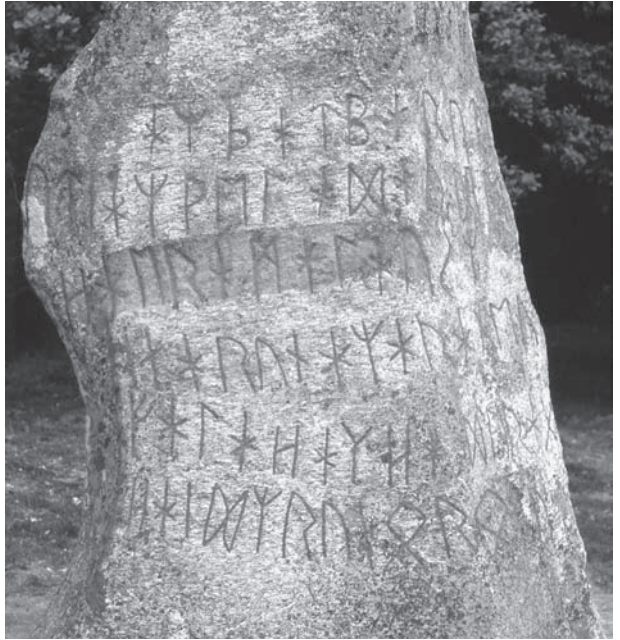




Plate 6a. Svarteborg-M, Ch. VI, nr. 43.



Plate 6b. Børringe-C, Ch. VI, nr. 5.



Plate 6c. Fünen-C, Ch. VI, nr. 11.

(All bracteates' photo's by Morten Axboe, Denmark)





Plate 7a. Skonager (III)-C, Ch. VI, nr. 39



Plate 7b. Års (III)-C, Ch. VI nr. 2.



Plate 8a. Skrydstrup-B, Ch. VI, nr. 40



Plate 8b. Tjurkö (I)-C, Ch. VI, nr. 45.



Plate 9a. Darum (V)-C, Ch. VI, nr. 8.



Plate 9b. Darum (I)-B, Ch. VI, nr. 7.





Plate 10a. Skodborghus-B, Ch. VI, nr. 38.



Plate 10b. Undley-A, Ch. VI, nr. 46.



Plate 11a. Vadstena-C, Ch. VI, nr. 47.



Plate 11b. Sievern-A, Ch. VI, nr. 37.





Plate 12a. Raum Køge-C, Ch. VI, nr. 32.



Plate 12b. Broholm-A: TANS PF AUG, Ch. II, nr. 5.



Plate 13a. Thorsberg II, Ch, VII, nr. 43.

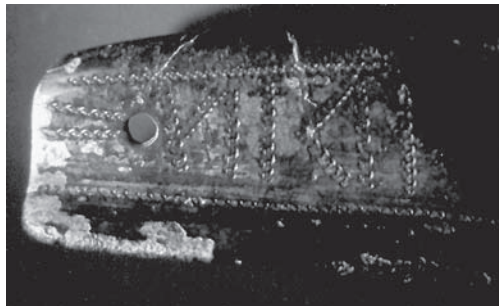


Plate 13b. Meldorf fibula.



Plate 13c. Meldorf fibula. Photo's by courtesy of the Archäologisches Landesmuseum, Schloss Gottorf, Schleswig.



Plate 14a. Aalen, Ch. VII, nr. 1. Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Frankfurt a. Main.



Plate 14b. Balingen, Ch. VII, nr. 5. Württembergisches Landesmuseum, Stuttgart.





Plate 15a. Donzdorf, Ch. VII, nr. 14. 'eho'.

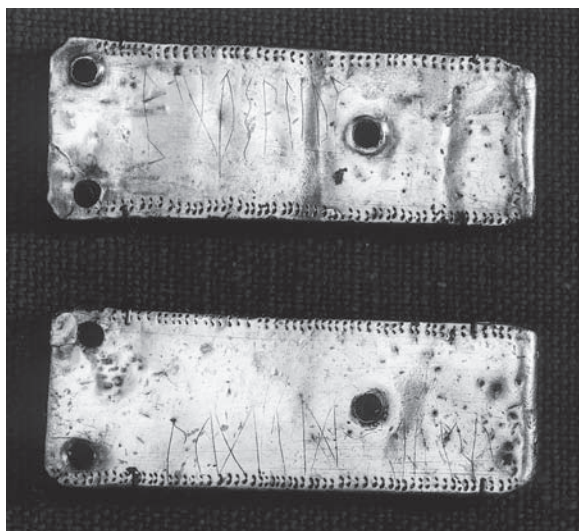


Plate 15b. Niederstotzingen, Ch. VII, nr. 29. Württembergisches Landesmuseum, Stuttgart.



Plate 16a. Griesheim, Ch. VII, nr. 21. 'Kolo'.



Plate 16b. Griesheim, Ch. VII, nr. 21. 'Agilapruß'.

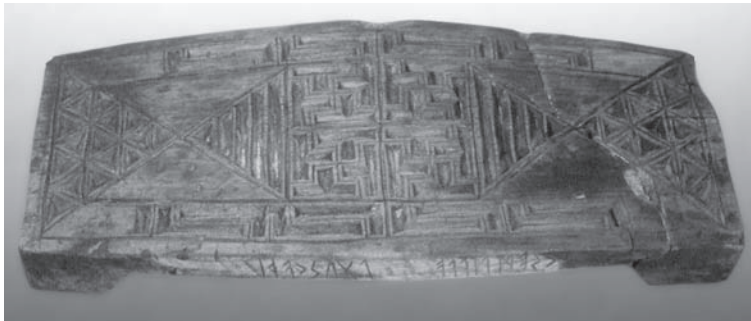


Plate 17a, b. Fallward, Ch. VII nr. 17. Photo's Museum Bederkesa.



Plate 17c. Breza, Ch. VII, nr. 10.



Plate 18. Ash Gilton, Ch. VIII, nr. 1. Photo's by courtesy of John Hines, Cardiff (18, 19, 20).





Plate 19. Harford Farm, Ch. VIII, nr. 4. Front. By courtesy of John Hines.





Plate 20. Harford Farm, Ch. VIII, nr. 4. Reverse. By courtesy of John Hines.



Plate 21. Spong Hill, Ch. VIII, nr. 8. Stamps, detail. Photo Norfolk Museum.



Plate 22. Spong Hill, Ch. VIII, nr. 8. Urn.





Plate 23a. Rasquert, Ch. IX, nr. 16



Plate 23b. Westeremden B, Ch. IX, nr. 13.

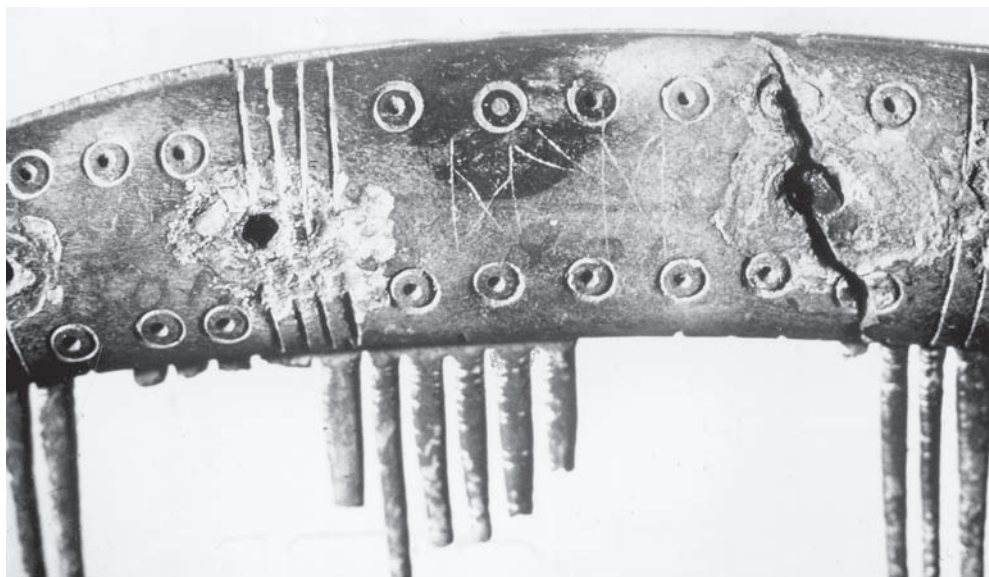


Plate 23c. Hoogebeintum, Ch. IX, nr. 22.



Plate 24a. Britsum, Ch. IX, nr. 11. Front.



Plate 24b. Britsum, Ch. IX, nr. 11. Reverse.

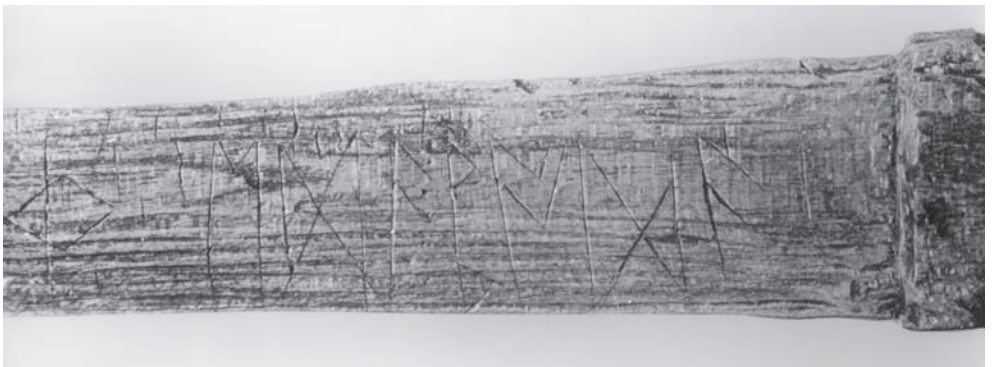


Plate 24c. Arum, Ch. IX, nr. 10. Photo's Fries Museum.



Plate 25a. Oostum, Ch. IX, nr. 3.



Plate 25b. Wijnaldum A, Ch. IX, nr. 23.

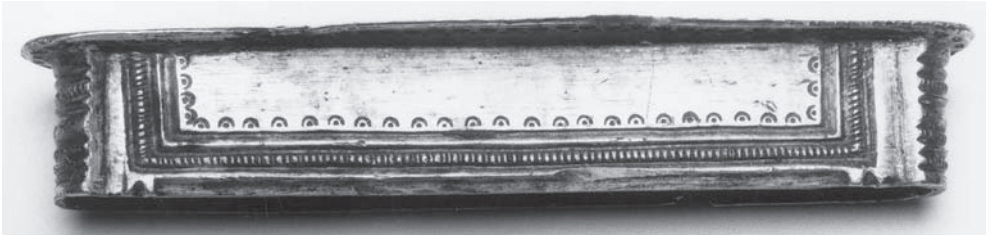


Plate 26a. Bergakker, Ch. IX, nr. 17. Front.



Plate 26b. Bergakker, Ch. IX, nr. 17. Reverse. Photo's Nol Roozeboom, Nijmegen, Museum Het Valkhof.



Plate 27a. Borgharen, Ch. IX, nr. 18. Photo Dienst SOG, Maastricht.



Plate 27b. Midlum sceat, Ch. IX, nr. 7. Photo Fries Museum.





Plate 28. Bernsterburen, Ch. IX, nr. 14. Photo's Fries Museum.



Plate 29. Wijnaldum B, Ch. IX, nr. 19 Photo's Fries Museum.



Plate 30a. Harlingen, Ch. IX, nr. 6.



Plate 30b. Ferwerd, Ch. IX, nr. 2. Photo's Fries Museum.

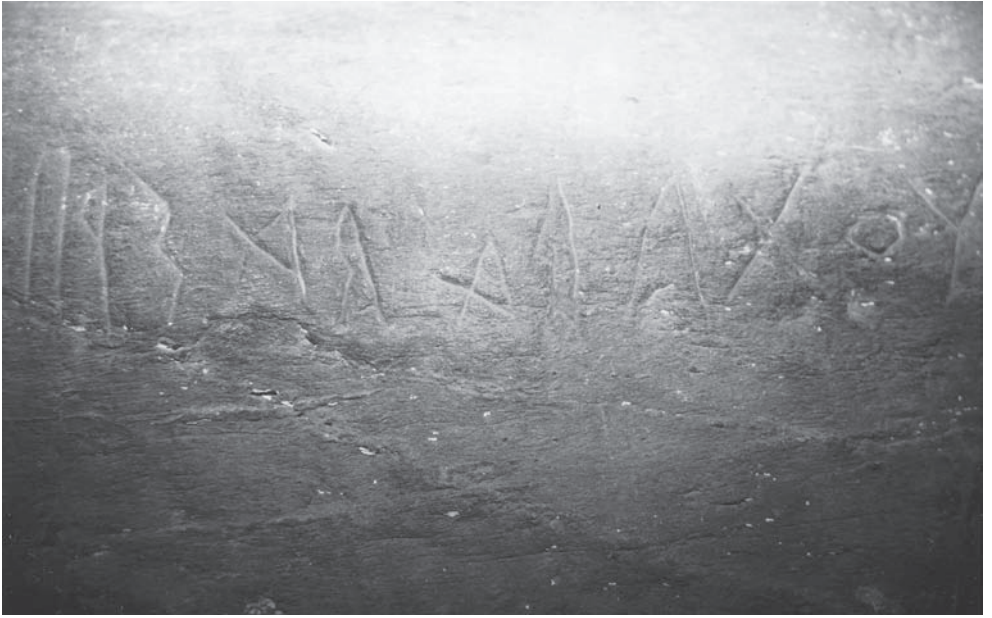


Plate 31. Opedal, Norway, Ch. X, nr. 17.





Plate 32a. Stentoften, Sweden, Ch. V, nr. 44.



Plate 32b. Skärkind, Sweden, Ch. X, nr. 13.



Plate 32c. Myklebostad A+B, Norway, Ch. X, nr. 15.