

Futhark

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Main editors

James E. Knirk and Henrik Williams

Assistant editor

Marco Bianchi

Guest editors of the Lancaster symposium proceedings

Michael P. Barnes and Judith Jesch

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*University of Oslo
Uppsala University*

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Foreword

The idea of a runological periodical is not new. Already in 1908 L. Fr. (Frits) Lällfler tried to persuade the The Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities to start a journal called *Runa: Tidskrift för runforskning*. Lällfler had the support of the great runologists Magnus Olsen in Oslo and Ludvig Wimmer in Copenhagen, but the scheme was foiled since there was a fear in Sweden that *Runa* would compete with the already initiated publication of *Sveriges runinskrifter*.

One hundred years later James Knirk took the initiative to launch a journal for runic studies. This is its first issue. The periodical is a co-operative effort between the runological centers in Oslo and Uppsala. Our sincere desire is that it will prove to be a welcome outlet for runic studies that are not in the form of monographs. Contributions are invited in Danish, English, German, Norwegian and Swedish. Please visit our website <http://www.futhark-journal.com> for further information.

We take the word *runic* to refer to all scientific study dealing with phenomena related to objects bearing runes (within the Germanic tradition). Not only runologists in the stricter sense are thus welcome, but also archaeologists, historians in various disciplines, theologians, etc., who work with runes or runic inscriptions, as well as phenomena otherwise connected with runic objects.

The first issue of *Futhark* is primarily devoted to presenting selected papers from the Sixth International Symposium on Runes and Runic Inscriptions, held in Lancaster in 2005. Michael Barnes and Judith Jesch have kindly served as guest editors for this part. The remainder of the issue is dedicated to reviews. There may be other sections, as well, in the future.

A journal starting in 2010 has to decide what the ideal form of publication is. We have chosen the best of the two worlds, i.e. both a freely available digital version and the choice of ordering a traditional paper copy.

We hope that *Futhark: International Journal of Runic Studies* will be well received among scholars and other readers interested in runic matters.

James E. Knirk

Henrik Williams

Runes and Editors: The Changing Face of Corpus Editions

Michael P. Barnes

In a recent article Karin Seim (2005) discusses the relationship between observation and interpretation in runic studies. She takes as her starting-point a statement by the nineteenth-century runologist, George Stephens (1867, 214): “Jeg giver kun, hvad der står, ikke hvad der burde stå” (‘I only reproduce what is in the inscription, not what ought to be there’). This affirmation of the primacy of observation came in reply to critics, in particular Ludvig Wimmer, who complained, *inter alia*, that Stephens’s readings of runic inscriptions were often unconstrained by the grammars and lexica of the languages in which they were written (Wimmer 1867, especially 1–27). While in no way offering a defence of the would-be *savant* of Copenhagen, Seim stresses the danger that lurks for those blessed with greater linguistic insight than Stephens: they will tend to see what their training has led them to expect to see. But of course the ignorant are not to be deemed free of preconceptions either. Indeed, it is hard to see how anyone could set about reading an ancient text without some notion of what it might say. Nevertheless, it must be counted one of the prime tasks of those editing epigraphic texts to distinguish as rigorously as they can between observation and interpretation.

The editor has many other tasks as well. One is to present what he or she has read. In the case of runic inscriptions presentation can take a number of forms. Today’s editors will usually offer the reader several or all of the following: normalised runes, a transliteration into another, usually the roman, alphabet, an edited text, a translation into a modern language. These four modes imply clear distinctions, some of which go back to that between observation and interpretation. Even though the presentation of an inscription in the form of normalised runes and/or transliteration cannot be without an element of interpretation, it should be firmly rooted

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in observation. The runes and/or roman letters should render as closely as is useful what the runologist thinks to have seen. An edited text and translation, on the other hand, will normally emerge from the interpretation. The difference between a rendering in normalised runes and one in another alphabet, as also between an edited text and a translation, might be thought clear enough, but is only so on the most obvious level. The reduction of the runic graphs found in inscriptions to some printed or electronic ideal involves many of the same processes and problems as transliteration. In particular it requires the editor to decide on the level of detail needed: to what degree is infinite graphic variety to be systematised? Transliteration does, of course, involve the additional and by no means straightforward question of the basis on which roman or other alphabet equivalents are to be chosen. Edited text and translation are, one would think, distinct enough entities, but in practice the two can become entwined, as we shall see.

There was in times past less appreciation of what the presentation of runic inscriptions involved, or should involve, than is the case today. It would be troubling if that were not so, for it would indicate a total lack of progress in this area of runology. However, the past is not a single *primaeval* night from which modern runology emerged into the light of day. Just as there are marked differences between the types of preconception earlier runologists bring to their reading of inscriptions, so too we find clear disparities in the ways they present what they have read.

Stephens fares no better in this department than as a reader of inscriptions. One of his several presentations of the older-*fupark* Möjbro stone may serve as an example (1884, 11f.). What I think he would have called his transliteration runs: ÆNÆHÆ, HÆISLÆ, GINIA, FRÆWÆRÆDÆA. That is rather different from the **frawaradaz|anahahaislagina|z** on which modern runologists seem to have agreed. The accompanying translation, offered “with great diffidence” is: ‘*Sir-ÆNÆHÆ, Sir-HÆISLÆ, the-lady-GINIA, raised-this-stone-to-the-lord-FRÆWÆRÆD*’. That too is considerably at variance with the message others have derived from this inscription, though it does conform broadly to Elmer Antonsen’s typology of the older runic inscriptions (1980; 2002, 207–35). I do not criticise here the fact that Stephens bases his reading on a drawing of the inscription taken from Göransson’s *Bautil* (1750), though we may wonder why he also prints, but then ignores, a rival drawing by Carl Säve that conforms more closely to what is now painted on the stone. Misreadings, or divergent readings, are to some extent a hazard of the game. Nor am I greatly concerned that he treats older runic ƒ as though it were Anglo-Saxon æ. It took some time before all

the characters of the older runic alphabet were recognised for what they are. It is the presentation of the Möjbro inscription that is so woefully inadequate. The reading is neither a transliteration nor an edited text, but a hybrid. The runic characters are rendered into roman one by one right enough, but spaces are introduced between words, and commas and a stop added. Far worse: the roman rendering of individual runes can vary according to Stephens's understanding of what the inscription says. To mention the cruder sleights of hand: the penultimate character in his reading is shown as a clear † in the drawing, but he nevertheless renders it <Æ>; conversely, his rune 10 is shown as †, but the roman equivalent he chooses is <L>; the character he gives as <W> is portrayed in his drawing as †. Things are no better in the translation. The lower case letters are Stephens's "expansions", which are in fact indistinguishable from interpretation. Here, then, we have confusion of translation with the text that would most naturally and clearly emerge as the end product of a discussion of the reading. It must undeniably have been easier to invent bits of text in English than in pre-Old Norse, but judging from his efforts here and elsewhere (see, e.g., 1863, 87; Barnes 1994, 24, 103 f.), Stephens was not one to resist the linguistic challenges that came his way. Quite what preconceptions led Stephens to give his reading of Möjbro the interpretation he did, I am unsure. He would of course have been aware that many runic stones are of commemorative type, and for whatever reason he seems to have concluded that -Æ represented a nominative masculine singular ending, while -A might be nominative feminine or dative masculine singular (though 'to GINLÆ [m.] [and] to FRÆWÆRÆDÆ' is then an alternative interpretation). The 'sir's, 'lady' and 'lord' presumably reflect the sensibilities of the Victorian age rather than a belief that it was in such terms people addressed each other in Migration Age Möjbro.

It is hard in the light of the foregoing to subscribe to Stephens's view in the foreword to his *Handbook of the Old-Northern Runic Monuments ...* (1884, vii): "On the whole, my system of transliteration and translation remains, as far as I can see, not only unshaken, but abundantly strengthened and proved by the many *new* finds." On the contrary, the "system" almost guarantees that unless an inscription conforms to Stephens's preconceptions and is brief, plain and clear to read, it will emerge battered and bruised from its brush with the "errander of Cheapinghaven" (Wawn 2000, 215–44). The long text on the Rök stone provides a good example of what Stephens can achieve with a relatively obscure piece of runic writing. Part of face A of this inscription is read, edited and translated as follows by modern scholars (with occasional variation in the detail):

**sakumukminiþathuariarualraubaruarintuar|parsuaptualfsinumuarinu
mnartualraubu|baparsāmānāumisumānum**

*Sagum ok minni [or ungmænni] þat, hværiar valraubar varin tvaR þaR, svað
tvalf sinnum varin numnaR at valraubu, baðar sāmān ā ymissum mānnum.*

‘I also tell that ancient tale [or: ‘I tell the young men that’, or yet something other], which two pieces of war booty they were that were taken twelve times as war booty, both together from various men.’

We may argue about certain features here (for my part I am far from certain there was no *u*-mutation in early ninth-century Östergötland), but few, I think, would want to depart radically from the above. Stephens’s system can bring up rather different readings and translations (e.g. 1884, 36):

SAKUM, UK MINI ÞAT:
HUAR I AR-UAL
RAUBAR UARIN
TUA, ÞAR’S UA_Þ
TUALF SINUM
UARINUM NART,
UAL-RAUBR
BAÞ, AR SOMO,
NOUMIS_SU-MONOM.

*‘We-saw, and remember-thou that:
Where in yore-fight
booty’s Warin (hero, = WAMUTH)
two— where he battled ón
with-twelve his
Warins bravely—
war-spoils
gained. Thane of Glory.
from-Noumi’s sea-men.’*

Sensing that this close translation lacks clarity and punch, Stephens goes on to take the text “more freely and poetically”. That gives us the following stirring piece of alliterative verse (1884, 38):

‘WE SAW, FORGET IT NEVER!
WHERE, IN FIRST FIELD
FRESH SPOILS SEEKING, —
WITH HIS WARINS TWELVE

WARRING BRAVELY —
 TWOFOLD VICTORY,
 HARD-EARN'D TRIUMPHS,
 THE STRIPLING GAIN'D
 O'ER SEAMEN OF NOUMI'

From these glimpses of a deservedly forgotten past one could be forgiven for concluding that Stephens represents the nadir of what in its day was offered and accepted as serious runic scholarship. But that would be to do him an injustice. As Andrew Wawn has shown (1995; 2000, 215–44, especially 236–42), Stephens's scholarship was the product of a relatively coherent world view. He was fiercely opposed to what he regarded as the "Germanisation" of philology, and saw attempts to systematise and standardise languages of the past as the outcome of a German obsession with order and rules. He argued that there had once been a loose-knit old-northern linguistic unity that encompassed England and Scandinavia. The Migration and Viking Age runic inscriptions of Britain, Denmark, Norway and Sweden he viewed as prime sources for this northern form of Teutonic, claiming that they bore more reliable testimony to its fragmented and unstandardised nature than the reconstructed Old Icelandic of nineteenth-century grammars. As Wawn points out (2000, 241), an essential benefit of this line of reasoning is "the creation of a scepticism-free zone inside which his [Stephens's] own runic decipherments and broader dreams of old northern glory can have free rein". Even so, Stephens touches on a dilemma that has often been ignored. When dealing with periods of language development for which there is little direct evidence, scholars tend to reconstruct a uniform variety and try to match such evidence as exists with their reconstruction. They do this not so much from a love of order and discipline as to impose constraints. For in a world where readings can be justified by appeal to otherwise unknown dialectal varieties, nothing can be tested and so nothing falsified. Yet the idea that the Germanic of Scandinavia was variation-free until well into the Viking Age conflicts with the results of socio-linguistic research and general linguistic experience. It is in particular hard to see how the radical changes of the Scandinavian syncope period can have been accomplished without wide-scale dialectal variation (cf. Barnes 1997; 2003). The dilemma is thus between uniform reconstruction masquerading as reality on the one hand and unrestrained speculation on the other. It is of course possible to take a position somewhere between the two extremes. Stephens, who clearly did not think in the terms I have just outlined, located himself unhesitatingly on the speculative fringe.

That fringe was in fact rather crowded. As a speculative interpreter of runic inscriptions Stephens had several formidable British rivals, who hastened to join in the fun. These were on the whole people with rather less knowledge than their Copenhagen colleague. And they lacked the protection of the “scepticism-free zone” he had created for himself, for, unlike Stephens, they offered no justification for the readings and interpretations they put into circulation. Their approach was rather that of the ill-prepared undergraduate struggling with an unseen translation: grasp at such words as you think you recognise and fill in the gaps with guesswork. Where the brighter undergraduate will use the context provided by his or her understanding of the passage concerned, the nineteenth-century British runester seems to have been guided by little more than vague perceptions of the ancient North—although in the case of the Orkney Maeshowe inscriptions, there were the added dimensions of wild weather and treacherous seas.

Judging by the number of competing interpretations offered, the Maeshowe corpus exerted an irresistible fascination on the nineteenth-century antiquarian mind. Of the various contemporaries of Stephens who had a go at making sense of these graffiti, I will mention the three most outrageous: Thomas Barclay, Ralph Carr, and John Mitchell. Their presentation of the inscriptions is more or less on a par with Stephens’s efforts. The romanisations of the runic sequences hover uncertainly between transliteration and edited text; translation and interpretation can be hard to distinguish; and so on. But it is the end results that give the mind serious cause to boggle. These surpass anything I have encountered from undergraduates doing battle with Old Norse texts. Barclay’s Maeshowe inscriptions (1863) tell of udallers, of murder, banishment and gallows, of travel in southern lands, golden numbers, funeral honours, eternal rest in heaven, and of “a lady of faultless character, of graceful manners, and of honourable descent”; he also introduces us to a number of named individuals, of whom the charmingly titled “Okon of the tooth” certainly deserves mention. According to Carr (1868), Maeshowe once boasted a “How-warden”; other characters that populate his inscriptions include a “Mirk-Quene”, “Purblindy the snow-stricken”, “Jarl Æily” and “Simon Sihry from Ronaldsey”. We also learn of falcons, otters, whalesmen and of shag-behosed, kilted, swimming harpooners. Mitchell’s Maeshowe world (1863) chiefly revolves around ships and shipwrecks. The messages of the inscriptions range from the tame “wrecked, and near this”, by way of “Dark misty weather. Ship labouring hard” to “Behold the Ship was abandoned/ and the Hull lies there among the breakers”. This last text perhaps points to the visible remains of an earlier dramatic episode that Mitchell conjures up:

“Jerusalem leaders wrecked on the Orkney cliffs / In a mist slothfully”. Even the Maeshowe *fupark* inscription (No. 5) is pressed into nautical service. In Mitchell’s interpretation, it becomes “Futhorkh bound to the North-East”, where Futhorkh is the name of a “ship or person ... returning home” (1863, 58).

Had Barclay, Carr and Mitchell been rank amateurs or raw students, their efforts might have been dismissed with a marginal “tut tut!” together with some general indications of where they had gone wrong. But Barclay was an established academic—Principal of the University of Glasgow no less; Carr and Mitchell did not enjoy quite the same elevated status, but, like Barclay, both were members of antiquarian societies of repute, Mitchell styling himself “Fellow of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries of Denmark; Joint-Secretary for Foreign Correspondence Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, etc.” (1863, [iii]). None of them made their runic offerings in any spirit of humility. Barclay refrains from comment on his interpretations, but presents them with the assurance of a man in total command of the subject. Carr feigns a kind of modesty, before going on to opine that with his “somewhat long experience” of Anglo-Saxon he may be able to “perceive the meanings of some words or turns of expression more clearly than even Scandinavian scholars have yet explained them” (1868, 71). Mitchell is at once withering in his judgement of others and confident of the worth of his own contributions: had anyone working on the Maeshowe corpus “afforded the requisite elucidation of the Runes”, he would, he affirms, “have been spared considerable labour” (1863, x).

Such misguided “scholarship” is of course not the exclusive domain of the nineteenth-century enthusiast. The internet, as we know, is awash with runic tosh. The names of O. G. Landsverk and Alf Mongé can still raise a weary smile (cf. Haugen 1981). And it is only a few years since a member of the Celtic Department in the University of Aberdeen transformed a selection of Pictish ogam inscriptions into some distinctly odd-looking “Old Norse” texts (Cox 1999).

Compared with these dilettantes Stephens can almost take on the appearance of a rigorous scholar. At the request of James Farrer, excavator of Maeshowe, he made one of the first attempts to read and interpret the runic inscriptions in the cairn, and the results of his efforts were included in Farrer’s 1862 publication of the excavation. There is no doubt that Stephens gets much closer to the sense of these graffiti than Barclay, Carr and Mitchell. But, alas, Farrer cast his net more widely, and side-by-side with the Cheapinghaven professor’s expositions stand the rival contributions of Carl Christian Rafn and Peter Andreas Munch (Farrer 1862, 25–40). In this

test of talent the competition is for the most part too stiff. The Scandinavian scholars exhibit a far clearer understanding than Stephens of the workings of Old Norse grammar and are thus in a much better position to offer plausible interpretations of the inscriptions. One might ask why there should be this difference between the British Stephens and the Scandinavian Rafn and Munch. We can hardly assume that the medieval language was more accessible to the latter two as native speakers of Danish and Norwegian respectively, since Stephens was himself quite at home in the modern Scandinavian idioms. The more likely explanation is that Scandinavian philological scholarship was strongly influenced by the German orderliness the Englishman so despised. Nineteenth-century Scandinavian education at all levels was, after all, based on the German model. In Britain, on the other hand, the tradition of the amateur gentleman scholar seems to have been firmly entrenched.

Scandinavian philological scholarship in general and runic studies in particular undoubtedly had solid foundations on which to build. Pioneers like Bureus in Sweden and Worm in Denmark—working before the era of “*wissenschaftliches Runenstudium*” as an early historian of the field dubs it (Jaffé 1937, 47; cf. also Düwel 2008, 220)—managed by and large to get closer to the message of the inscriptions they treated than the nineteenth-century British amateurs. Thus Worm, for example, makes fairly short work of the two Jelling inscriptions, faltering only in a few places. The famous **tanmarkar:but** of Jelling 1 is interpreted as a relative clause ‘QVÆ DANIAM EXORNAVIT’, **but** being seen as some form of the Danish verb *bygge* ‘build’; the interpretation of the phrase as a byname, already current in Worm’s day, is challenged (1643, 339–41). The sequence towards the bottom of face A of Jelling 2, **sa|haraltr[:]ias:sār·uan·tanmaurk** ‘That Haraldr who won for himself Denmark’, is read *Haraltr Kesor van Tanmaurk* (the initial **sa** being transferred to the previous word) and taken to mean ‘HARALDUS IMPERATOR RECUPERAVIT DANIAM’. Face C of the same inscription with its worn middle section becomes *Aug tini folk Kristno* ‘ET EARUM INCOLAS AD FIDEM CHRISTIANAM CONVERTIT’ instead of **auktani|karpi|kristnā** ‘and made the Danes Christian’ (1643, 333). These divergences from the modern interpretation apart, Worm delivers an accurate analysis of the words and their grammatical relationships, and is thus able to arrive at a fairly satisfactory understanding of the two inscriptions. He had less success with the Norwegian older-*futhark* Tune inscription, which is barely recognisable in the schematic drawings he published (1643, 478)—but then he was working almost 200 years before the older runic alphabet was satisfactorily deciphered. Recognising his inability

to read the Tune runes, Worm does not embark of the type of idle guessing game favoured by nineteenth-century British interpreters. He is content to admit defeat (1643, 479): “Ejus [Tune’s] delineationem exhibere placuit, etsi de interpretatione planè desperem.”

In Sweden, Worm’s near contemporaries, Bureus and Verelius, showed a similar understanding of the younger *fupark* and its inscriptions. Bureus mastered many of the finer details of runic writing, and Verelius knew enough to engage in serious polemic against Worm. It is no surprise to find that both are able to offer reasonably accurate readings and interpretations of numbers of inscriptions. Under their detailed scrutiny, the complex text on the Hillersjö stone (U 29), for example, emerges clearly enough as an inheritance document (cf. *SRI*, 6:36 f.), though it is not clear why Verelius locates the stone in “Helsingeland” (1675, 34). Like Worm, when faced with the indecipherable these two early runologists are willing to admit defeat. Verelius reproduces Bureus’s careful drawings of the staveless Malsta and Hälsingtuna inscriptions but declares that such “Willoruner” (‘cryptic runes’) are not meant to be understood and that effort spent on trying to decipher them has little point. The drawings are included, however, just in case anyone wants to try his hand at interpreting them (1675, 66 f.). As Jansson points out (1983, 7 f.), it must have come as an unpleasant surprise to Verelius to discover that in the very same year he published his *Manuductio compendiosa ad runographiam Scandicam antiqvam*, his compatriot, Magnus Celsius, had found the key to the staveless runes.

With forerunners of the calibre of Worm, Bureus, Verelius and Celsius, it is scarcely surprising that by the nineteenth century runic studies had progressed further in Scandinavia than in Britain. In the editing department the names of Liljegren and Dybeck in Sweden, Thorsen and Wimmer in Denmark and Munch and Bugge in Norway come particularly to mind.

Liljegren’s *Run-Urkunder* (1833) makes reference to 3000 inscriptions, Swedish and other, some 2000 of which are transliterated into the roman alphabet. Although Liljegren’s transliterations are not as precise as modern scholarship demands, they most definitely are transliterations: there is nothing of the confusion with interpretation and edited text we find in nineteenth-century British scholarship. Indeed, Liljegren offers no interpretations at all (nor does he include drawings).

Dybeck (1855–57[–59]; 1860–76) presents a selection of Swedish inscriptions in the form of normalised runes, transliteration and drawing, but provides little in the way of interpretation. His transliterations are less precise than those of Liljegren in that he replaces separators with spaces between words. Nor is he above the occasional bit of editorial interference,

as where the Gripsholm inscription's (Sö 179) **pinsat** becomes PINSA (A)T (1855–57[–59], 1: 24).

Thorsen (1864–80) organises a fairly comprehensive ramble through the Danish runestones, offering some sound and some implausible interpretations on the way. Instructive is his treatment of the Jutlandic Bække 2 inscription. This runs, rather unpromisingly: **hribnā:ktubi:kriu kubpsj|aft:uibrukmpusin**. Thorsen's transliteration is identical with the modern version, except that he uses bold capitals, with a slightly variant capital <A> to indicate the fourth rune of the younger *fupark* (1864–80, 1: 22). His interpretation, which recognises that the inscription is drastically abbreviated, doubtless owes much to other scholars, in particular C. C. Rafn and Carl Säve (Thorsen 1864–80, 2.2: 4; Rafn 1861, 189–94, 272 f.). But where Säve saw the first **k** of the inscription as an abbreviation of the conjunction *auk* 'and' connecting two personal names and **kriu** as a shortened form of *gerðu* 'made', Thorsen reshaped the sequence as "KUBTI:GIRUA", i.e. *køpti gerva* 'paid to make' (1864–80, 2.2: 5). Such a construction, is, I think, without parallel, but is perhaps only slightly less plausible than Rafn's explanation of **kriukub** as *grjótkumbl* 'stone-monument' (1861, 193), an interpretation recently resuscitated by Moltke (1985, 386). All more or less agree that the remainder of the inscription is to be taken as *þósi aft Viborg móður sína* 'this [monument] after Viborg, his mother' (cf., e.g., *DR, Text*, 55–57; Moltke 1985, 386). While we may detect here a faint echo of the wild guesses of nineteenth-century British runesters, the crucial point that the message is abbreviated has been understood. Stephens (1866–1901, 2: 731–33), as it happens, cheerfully accepted Säve's interpretation, though it is amusing to speculate what he would have made of Bække 2 without the guidance of the Scandinavians — not to mention the fun Barclay, Carr and Mitchell and their ilk could have had with it.

Thorsen's transliteration of this difficult runic sequence is irreproachable. The same cannot however be said of many of the other inscriptions he treats. The very uncertainty of Bække 2 seems to have inspired him with caution. When faced with more readily comprehensible texts, Thorsen has no qualms about adding a dose of interpretation to his observation. Instead of a transliteration of Jelling 2, for example, the reader is given a "Læsning ... i Olddansk" ('reading ... in Old Danish'; 1864–80, 2.2: 28). While this follows the original reasonably closely, all **ks** that denote /g/ are rendered <G>, spaces are introduced between words unseparated on the stone, the fourth rune is given as <O> (contrast Bække 2 above) and the text is here and there expanded. This procedure marks a decline in comparison with Liljegren's faithful reproduction of the runes in roman letters.

P. A. Munch, unlike Liljegren, Dybeck and Thorsen, and later Wimmer and Bugge, did not produce a runic corpus edition. He was nevertheless a leading figure in nineteenth-century runological research. Munch's approach to runic inscriptions is critical, sober and cautious, and he is able to bring a wealth of linguistic and historical knowledge to bear on their interpretation. In 1857, for example, we find him castigating Ole Worm for the inaccuracy of his illustrations in "*Monumenta danica*" (1857a, 3f.; see also 1857b, 72f.). Since this criticism comes as a prelude to a (for its time) remarkably penetrating analysis of the Tune inscription, that is perhaps not surprising (cf. p. 14f. above). But Munch goes further, claiming that few, if any, of Worm's illustrations are faithful copies of the runic inscriptions they claim to portray, and concluding that far from benefiting scholarship his work has caused considerable damage. Although one may suspect a certain anti-Danish sentiment in this attack, the content and style are in fact fairly typical of the author: Worm is condemned first and foremost for having been far less accurate than someone treating runological topics should be. Munch can be equally withering about aspects of British scholarship. Making one of several contributions to a long-running polemic in the Scandinavian press (cf. Barnes 1992), he speaks of those "som sandsynligvis efter engelske Dilettanters Viis snarere føle sig tiltrukne af hvad der gjør Sprell og synes 'striking' end af det grundigere, der optræder i en beskednere Form" ('who probably in the manner of English dilettantes feel themselves more drawn to what causes a stir and seems "striking" than to more painstaking endeavour that appears in a humbler guise'; Munch 1862, 28).

This polemic arose from a dispute about who had the right to publish the Maeshowe corpus, a project in which Munch was heavily involved. His provisional readings and interpretations of the inscriptions appeared in the Norwegian *Illustreret Nyhedsblad* (Munch 1861), and were followed by a more considered account in Farrer's Maeshowe book of 1862 (p. 13 above). Comparing Munch's efforts with those of Stephens and Rafn in the Farrer volume, one cannot deny it is the Norwegian who best understands what the inscriptions say. And just as well, for Munch affirms as part of the above-mentioned polemic how easy most of the Maeshowe corpus was to read and interpret (1862, 27): "de Dele af Indskriften, som kunne læses, ere saa lette at finde ud af, at Læsningen er den simpleste Sag af Verden, og for alle Sagkyndige maa synes saaledes" ('those parts of the collection which can be read are so easy to understand that reading them is the simplest thing in the world, something that must be obvious to any expert'). As a transliterator, or perhaps one should say presenter, of runic texts Munch is less convincing. His readings, like those of so many of his contemporaries,

combine the reproduction of the runes in roman with editorial features such as word spacing, punctuation and capitalisation. He may also use one and the same roman letter to transliterate different runes as when ⟨o⟩ is allowed to represent the ᚠ, ᚦ and ᚧ of the Maeshowe inscriptions (e.g. 1861, 206; Farrer 1862, 26, 32). It should be observed, however, that Munch may not have been solely responsible for the final form of his contribution to Farrer's volume.

With Ludvig Wimmer's *De danske runemindesmærker* (1895–1908), we enter the era of the modern runic corpus edition. The work is by no means comprehensive, concentrating on commemorative runestones to the exclusion of much else, but each of the inscriptions included is treated according to a set format. Information is given about the stone or other object bearing the inscription—find circumstances, history (as far as is known), current location, material and dimensions. The inscription is described, and the size, shapes, and peculiarities of individual runes commented on as appropriate. There follows a transliteration into lower-case, wide-spaced roman, with separators shown. Rounded brackets indicate uncertain readings, square brackets expansions and readings taken from earlier accounts, although the distinction here is not absolute. Next comes an edited text in a normalised “olddansk” (‘Old Danish’) and then a translation into modern Danish placed within double inverted commas. Each runic object is illustrated. Treatment of the individual inscriptions is preceded by a lengthy introduction in which the Danish commemorative runestones are discussed as a group. Themes here include: the purpose of the stones; their general appearance; the age, geographical spread, names and current locations of the inscriptions; rune forms; the sound value(s) of the runes; the language and content of the inscriptions; rune carvers; the art of the runestones; stones with runelike symbols; Danish runic monuments abroad.

With such a range of topics covered, it seems churlish to point to weaknesses in Wimmer's edition—yet weaknesses there are. One of the most serious deficiencies is the absence of a discussion of the principles on which the work is based and an account of how it was compiled. This can lead to various kinds of uncertainty, of which, by way of example, I mention one. The Snoldelev inscription (DR 248) is transliterated thus by Wimmer (1895–1908, 2: 342):

kun' ualtstain' sunar'
 ruhalts' þular' aꝛsalhauku(m) [!']

Although this looks to be a fairly careful piece of work, the end result disguises the fact that the carver used both ᚦ and ᚠ for /a/. Thus the first

line runs: ƚŋʀ·ŋʀʀʀʀʀʀʀʀʀ. The rune ƚ in the second line, on the other hand, is rendered ⟨a⟩. What the reader is left to ponder is whether Wimmer’s transliteration here is phonetically based or whether he is treating ʀ and ƚ as variants of the same rune. Equally unclear is the reasoning that might have led him to adopt either of these procedures. We are at some remove here from the explicitness required of today’s runic editors.

Like Wimmer’s monumental work, Sophus Bugge’s edition of the Norwegian inscriptions in the older runic alphabet (*NIæR*) has many of the trappings of a modern corpus edition. Each inscription is treated in more or less the same way: introductory remarks about its discovery and state of preservation are followed by measurements and an indication of where it is currently to be found. The runes are reproduced in normalised form and precisely transliterated into bold roman lower case (although uncertainty of reading is not normally indicated). Out of the ensuing discussion, which takes in runography, language, message and context, comes a modified transliteration incorporating word separation, which is then translated into Dano-Norwegian. Drawings and/or photographs of the inscriptions are also provided. The lengthy introduction which precedes the treatment of individual inscriptions takes the reader far afield: to the origin and development of runic writing, rune names, and related topics—matters we today might think do not belong in an account of Norway’s inscriptions in the older runes. However, we should remember that Bugge’s edition was compiled at a time when knowledge of the older alphabet and its relationship with the younger was relatively fresh, so that much that is second-nature to us required explanation. More pertinently from the modern reader’s perspective, the introduction also offers a brief account of the older *fupark*, in the course of which transliteration equivalents are given for each of the twenty-four runes, variant forms discussed and sound values elaborated. Here we are not far removed from the idea of the distinct written character, whether defined as grapheme or *fupark* unit (Barnes and Page 2006)—although Bugge could not of course have thought or written in such terms.

From Bugge we move firmly into the twentieth century and the corpus editions we still by and large consult—notwithstanding some of the volumes go back well over 60 years. *Sveriges runinskrifter* (*SRI*), *Norges innskrifter med de yngre runer* (*NIyR*), *Danmarks runeindskrifter* (*DR*), *Die Runeninschriften im älteren Futhark* (*RäF*) and *Islands runeindskrifter* (*IR*) differ considerably from each other in approach, structure and degree of personal input. *SRI* and *NIyR* concentrate on the individual inscription, consigning the broader aspects of their corpus to introductory remarks, final

reflections, indices or asides. *SRI*, not least because of the size of the corpus, has a spread of contributors. Perhaps because of this, it is less subject to editorial whim than *NlyR*, which up to and including volume 5 was virtually the private province of Magnus Olsen. In some respects *SRI* seems to have been guided by a remarkably consistent editorial policy. Thus the runes of the younger *fubark* tend to be transliterated by the same letters of the roman alphabet from volume to volume: ʰ and its variants, for example, are regularly **o**. There is greater emphasis on presenting the inscriptions than interpreting every detail—a tradition that perhaps owes something to Liljegren and Dybeck. Throughout, considerable attention is paid to earlier research. Differences between particular parts of the series can of course be observed: it would be strange otherwise given that the edition has been over 100 years in the making. The practice of printing a normalised version of the runes of each inscription, for example, is found only in *Ölands runinskrifter*, the very first volume. And as time goes on interpretation tends to loom larger. Certain discrepancies appear to go back to individual editors. The volumes that bear Sven B. F. Jansson’s name lack detailed introductions and thus often fail to deal with broader questions raised by the corpus. A partial exception is *Gästriklands runinskrifter*, whose brief introduction nevertheless emphasises the role of the individual inscription as the basic building block of *SRI* according to “runverkets planläggning” (‘the planning of the [Swedish] corpus edition’; *SRI*, 15.1: 22).

NlyR, as already noted, has the same general structure as *SRI*. However the Norwegian work differs from its Swedish counterpart in an important respect. Olsen, the chief (and for a long time sole) editor devotes a great deal of space to the context and background of his inscriptions, and in doing so is apt to allow his imagination to wander. Instead of a sober weighing up of the possibilities, a tale is spun—though often with such conviction that the unwary reader may take what he is told for fact. In his presentation of the individual inscription, Olsen for the most part follows the pattern established by Bugge. He gives normalised runic representations, transliterations and translations, but in the place of *NlæR*’s modified transliteration he provides an edited text in italics. Olsen is less fastidious in his transliterations than Bugge. He introduces word spacing right from the start—not perhaps too serious in that he also includes a normalised representation of the runes. More problematically, ʰ may be transliterated by both **q** and **o**, ʰ and its variants by **o** and **ø**—all according to Olsen’s understanding of the sounds denoted. This element of uncertainty means the reader cannot rely on the transliterations of *NlyR* to reflect observation; an element of interpretation lurks within. The procedure whereby ʰ is rendered now **q** now **o** can of

course be justified by appeal to different systems of runic writing, but Olsen does not do this. Indeed, nowhere in *NlyR* are the principles that underlie transliteration practice discussed or even enunciated.

DR is organised very differently from *SRI* and *NlyR*. More like an encyclopaedia, it is much easier to use for those seeking specific details than either of the other two. The disadvantage is that the story of an individual inscription may have to be teased out of different parts of the work. Nevertheless, *DR* contains a much wider spectrum of information than its Swedish and Norwegian counterparts, and this information is presented in more structured, systematised and accessible form. A clear distinction is maintained between observation and interpretation, which means that transliteration practice, for example, is explicit even though the principles that underlie it are not discussed.

Like the first five volumes of *NlyR*, *RäF* is very much the product of single mind—a fairly capacious mind, it must be said, which could call on a wide range of knowledge and also grasp the importance of giving the runic material it was dealing with precise, systematic and consistent presentation. It was not, though, a mind that understood the virtue of transparency. Thus, the introduction to *RäF*, while offering some useful insights into the older runic alphabet, provides few clues for those who would understand how this corpus edition came into being, why it takes the form it does, and what thinking lies behind the presentations. Nor do the introductory remarks reveal why the editor had such a firm belief in the value of rune forms as a dating tool. Furthermore, the background of cult and magic against which many of the inscriptions in *RäF* are seen appears to be a fundamental premise rather than a hypothesis to be demonstrated.

In some respects Anders Bæksted's *Islands runeindskrifter* is the most advanced of all the early and mid-twentieth-century runic corpus editions. It begins with a foreword—a light mixture of *modus operandi* and *apologia pro opere meo*—and continues with a full-blown introduction. The introduction deals with the following topics: the history of runic writing in Iceland; the types of runic material found there; the content of inscriptions and of runic writing found in medieval manuscripts; the general appearance of different types of inscription; the rune forms employed; dating; the history of research on the Icelandic runic material. Treatment of individual inscriptions is based on the following template: find circumstances, history and present location; specification of the runic artefact or the position of the runes in the case of those found in caves etc.; particulars of the inscription including measurements; date of examination; transliteration into wide-spaced, lower-case roman; edited text in italics. Peculiarities in the inscription or

problems with the reading are dealt with in notes that follow the edited text. In conclusion there is a bibliography for each inscription with selected quotations from the works cited.

About the principles underlying his transliteration practice, Bæksted is a little more forthcoming than his contemporaries. The Icelanders, he maintains, used runes as roman alphabet equivalents: “som ligefremme erstatninger for det tilsvarende latinske bogstav” (‘as simple replacements for the corresponding latin letter’; *IR*, 37). His system of transliteration is based on this notion of equivalence and thus has the roman alphabet as its starting point rather than the runic—a reversal of the normal procedure. While clear and explicit enough, such an approach obviates the need for discussion of the finer points of transliteration. It is hardly self-evident, for example, that ᚠ and ᚱ should both be transliterated <o>, but Bæksted is content to do so because he considers <o> to be the letter an Icelander writing in the roman alphabet would have used in the relevant contexts.

It remains to be said that all of these twentieth-century editions are copiously illustrated, though the quality of photographs and drawings, in particular in *NIyR* and the early volumes of *SRI*, may leave something to be desired.

The editing of runic inscriptions did not of course end with Bæksted and his contemporaries. Occasional volumes and fascicles have appeared since their day, although the tempo of production has sunk—indeed, it can sometimes seem to stand in inverse proportion to the money, time and technological know-how employed. Much of the runic corpus editing of the last 50 years or so has been in continuation of existing projects, notably *SRI* and *NIyR*. Although the most recent volumes of *SRI* show marked improvements on those published earlier and volume 6 of *NIyR* makes something of a leap forward in terms of information density, accuracy and clarity, neither project can reasonably be expected to provide the forum for a radical reappraisal of editing techniques.

There will of course be different views on what makes for a good runic corpus edition. I should like therefore to conclude by setting out what I consider the requirements of such a work.

The first concerns explicitness. There should be an account of how the editor(s) moved from concept to end product. As part of this there would be discussion of:

- (a) How the corpus was established: what was admitted, what left out, and why.
- (b) The circumstances in which the editor(s) examined the inscriptions

and the extent to which this could have affected the reliability of their readings.

- (c) The form in which the inscriptions are presented and the reasoning behind the choice.
- (d) The principles according to which runes are normalised and transliterations made.
- (e) The distinction between observation and interpretation, and how far it is possible to maintain it.
- (f) The preconceptions the editor(s) bring to their task. Do they espouse a particular point of view or are they agnostic? On what premises are their interpretations based?

A second requirement is for caution. Authoritarian pronouncements about the meaning and age of inscriptions should be avoided where no certainty exists. The chief task of the editor must be to set out the data, allowing readers to make their own judgements. That is not, of course, to say that editors must refrain from expressing opinions about what they think plausible.

A third requirement is for awareness of the pitfalls confronting the editor who dabbles in disciplines of which s/he has little experience. And as a corollary to this: circumspection in relying on assertions by scholars in fields the editor is not trained to assess.

These three basic requirements should be observed throughout the edition. Other desiderata can probably be satisfactorily accommodated in introductory chapters.

One such chapter should place the corpus in a wider context. How do the inscriptions relate to what is known of the society in which they are believed to have been carved? How do they relate to writing in other alphabets? And how do they relate to one another—are there common features or is the collection scattered and disparate?

Another chapter might consider how far the corpus reflects what was actually carved. If, as often seems likely, the material represents a tiny fraction of the total number of inscriptions made, what conclusions about language, culture, technical competence and political and ethnic relationships can safely be drawn from it?

A further chapter could usefully ponder how the inscriptions came into being. What was the source of the text? What opportunities did the carver's material offer? How much care did he bring to his task? How skilled was he?

Investigation should normally also be made into the system or systems of runic writing employed, and the type or types of language and orthography

found. Here the editor may occasionally draw a blank, in which case s/he should refrain from seeking to impose order where none can be discerned.

Something could also be said about the location and accessibility of the inscriptions. Where are they to be found and what conditions is the runologist likely to meet when s/he goes to examine them. It may also be helpful to stress that runic artefacts in collections are not necessarily static: they may move between collections, and collections may change name and location — quite often and rather bafflingly in some cases.

It goes almost without saying that consistency is a virtue, because it makes things easier for the reader. Each inscription should as far as practicable be presented in the same way; transliteration principles, once established, should be adhered to; those using phonetic and phonemic notation should distinguish rigorously between the two. And so on.

Finally, I enter a plea against electronic editions. I appreciate the ease with which they can be updated, but therein lies the snag. Nothing is permanent, and therefore there is nothing that can usefully be referred to. For all its alleged disadvantages, the old-fashioned book still has much to recommend it.

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Read What's There: Interpreting Runestone Inscriptions

Henrik Williams

It is not difficult to find established interpretations of runestone texts that presuppose carving errors. Sometimes these are obvious, especially when we are dealing with common words like 'raise' or 'stone'. But less common words such as names are often assumed to be miscarved too. The following examples may be cited, taken from the national corpus editions or other recognised published sources.

Arbitrarily omitted runes:

U 519 **irbrn** *Gæirbiorn*

N 210 **hala** *helga*

U 838 **pufr** *Pölfir*

Nä 12 **s-ukn** *s[t]ýksun*

Tumbo church stone **faskr** *FastgæiRR/-gærðr* (as interpreted by Jansson 1965, 14)

U 729 **tekr** *drængr*

U 865 **...ulfas** *Īgulfastr*

Vs 11† [**kufri**] *Guðfriðr*

Ög 91 **yuia** *Örōkia*

Gs 13 **lanklans** *læiðangr lands*

Erroneous runes:

DR 298 **itinkil** *Stenkel*

Sm 69 **suil** *Svæinn*

Vs 4 **brkia** *biðia*

Sö 174 [**ub**]lubr *Öblauðr* (as interpreted by Otterbjörk 1983, 40)

U 676 **kulua** *Kylfa*

Sö 82 **puþr krkum** *dauðr ī Grikkum*

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Superfluous runes:

Fällbro stone **raupkar** *Hrōðgæirr* (as interpreted by Jansson 1946, 259)

Sö 174 [**ub**]lubr *Ólafr*

U 1022 **althrn** *Halfdan*

Why is it that none of the eminent runologists responsible for these interpretations seem to have any problem in assuming serious carving errors, sometimes in inscriptions that otherwise look orthographically perfect? A clue is offered by Magnus Olsen, who in his treatment of N210 Oddernes 2 refers to the book *Upplands runstenar* by Otto von Friesen. In this work, von Friesen passed severe judgement on the trustworthiness of runestone orthography (1913, 86):

Det är en allmänt gängse föreställning bland filologerna, en föreställning som också kan iakttagas hos åtskilliga af dem, som mer ingående studerat de nordiska runinskrifterna och äga en mer omfattande autopsi på området, att felristningar i runinskrifterna äro sällsynta. Man är t. o. m. i princip obenägen att antaga sådana och föredrar att bakom oväntade ristningsformer se verkliga språkformer, äfven om dessa endast med stor svårighet låta sig förlikas med fornspråkets grammatik och stilistik I själfva verket visar redan en tämligen flyktig granskning att felristningar äro vanliga äfven hos ... mästarne.

(‘There is a notion prevalent among philologists, a notion which may also be observed among many of those who have studied the Scandinavian runic inscriptions more intimately and have extensive experience of personal observation in the field, that miscarvings in runic inscriptions are rare. There is even a reluctance in principle to assume such [miscarvings] and a preference for seeing real forms of language behind unexpected forms in inscriptions, even if they may only be reconciled with the grammar and style of the ancient language with great difficulty In reality, a casual inspection is enough to show that miscarvings are common even by the ... masters.’)

Von Friesen based his statement on an investigation of some forty runestone inscriptions from Uppland (1913, 86), among which he found between thirty and forty certain or probable miscarvings.

Another Uppsala professor, Bengt Hesselman, clearly influenced by von Friesen, later proclaimed (1945, 78): ‘Men runstensortografi är nu inte mycket att hålla sig till’ (‘But the orthography on runestones is not much to go by’).

It is obvious that the condescending opinion expressed by several prominent scholars when runology was in its first bloom (in modern times) did severely affect attitudes towards the value of runic inscriptions as linguistic sources. This has also had an effect on non-runologists who often feel put off

by the supposed unreliability of runic texts, as well as being repelled by the very technical vocabulary of runic specialists and our strange preoccupation with seemingly trifling details.

In this paper I want to question whether the spelling on runestones really is as bad as von Friesen claims, but I would first like to speculate a bit on what caused his negative approach. It is my view that nineteenth-century scholars had ruined the reputation of runic inscriptions. Pioneers such as Carl Säve, Richard Dybeck and the infamous George Stephens did much good in publishing or at least illustrating many runestones, but also a great deal of damage to runic scholarship with their often undisciplined and fanciful interpretations.

Otto von Friesen's negativity towards his predecessors, and perhaps even some of his contemporaries, was however also due to a shift in the academic paradigm—a shift which is underlined by his mentioning the grammar and style of the ancient language, as if these are indisputable and unchanging. As early as the 1860s, Ludvig Wimmer had introduced the strict discipline of the neo-grammarians into runology, demanding structure and sound methodology. The inspired guesswork of Stephens became obsolete overnight, and to my mind it shows the greatness of the Norwegian Sophus Bugge that he was humble enough to admit this.

But even if runologists such as Wimmer, Bugge, and Magnus Olsen had a much higher scholarly standing than their predecessors, the discipline itself was still only in its infancy and the two Norwegians certainly had their share of unhealthy imagination. Not even the solid contributions of Adolf Noreen and Lis Jacobsen were enough to clean up the bad practices. Scientific runology only became properly established with the rise of such names as Elias Wessén and Aslak Liestøl, and the Danish quartet of Lis Jacobsen—now in her prime—Erik Moltke, Anders Bæksted, and Karl Martin Nielsen. Of these I would hold up in particular Elias Wessén, who combined the sober judgment of a brilliant field runologist, the thoroughness of a conscientious editor, and the profound learning of a leading language historian with a very high level of productivity.

The damage was already done, however, and none of the great names mentioned here made any real effort to establish runology as a recognised field of scholarship, as was demonstrated by Michael Barnes (1994) in his stern lecture at the Third International Symposium on Runes and Runic Inscriptions. (Perhaps there were simply too few good runologists. There have always been many more amateurs and even dilettantes within the field than fully trained philologists specialising in runes.) The exemplary corpus edition *Danmarks runeindskrifter* is something of an exception to this

rule. It presents a balanced account of miscarvings (s.v. ‘Fejrlisting’, *DR, Text*, 802–05), for example, and even establishes two sound principles for accepting such occurrences: that incomprehensible or conspicuously spelled words are more likely to be miscarvings, and that the same is true of words occurring in otherwise more or less flawed texts; the percentage of error among established runographers is presumed to be quite small. Examples are presented; however, abbreviations and omissions are excluded and treated separately (cols. 1047–49, where there may be found a somewhat richer store of deviant forms).

The neo-grammarians did runology a tremendous service in demanding that the texts should conform to what we know about runic Scandinavian language/s. The haphazard variation taken for granted by Stephens (and still by his modern counterparts) was simply not accepted. But the new paradigm came with two drawbacks. The first is the fallacy that just as language developed according to sound laws, so all variation, all alternative forms, had to be explained by competing laws. Many silly sound laws with extremely limited scope have seen the light of day as a result. The problem, of course, was that the neo-grammarians were children of their age, as are we all. They believed in standards and norms and did not like the anarchy of living language all that much. “Label it and regulate it!” was the creed of the times. Hence, even scholars like Wessén view the variation in runic inscriptions with scepticism. Yet it is evident that there is a much greater range of competing forms on the runestones than in later medieval manuscripts, and far from all of the variation can be explained in chronological or dialectological terms.

The other fallacy of the neo-grammarian runologists affected all philologists of the old school. Scholarly philology of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century felt itself to be at the apex of scientific accomplishment. The Old Norse text editions of the time contained a good deal of guesswork based on the assumption that the modern philologist knew better what these texts meant and what form they had originally taken than did the medieval copyist who had produced the only known record of the text. It is sufficient to refer once again to the quotation from von Friesen (1913, 86) in which he self-confidently identifies carving errors on the sole grounds that the runographers do not write a word the way they should have to satisfy the spelling rules set up by von Friesen himself; note also that it is he alone who has the privilege of determining what the word is supposed to be.

The key words within Old Philology were conjecture and emendation. This is only one example of the chronological colonialism in historical

scholarship so typical of a century ago. The presumption was that the modern scholar knew better what a runic inscription carved a thousand years before meant than the person who actually wrote it. Personally I find this quite preposterous.

Not until Svante Lagman published his important paper in defence of rune-carvers' orthography in 1988 (reprinted with minor corrections 1989) did anyone truly try to grapple with the question of miscarvings. Lagman sorted the aberrant forms ("avvikande skrivningar", 1989, 29–36) into two main groups. The first one consists of forms that are fully motivated phonologically or orthographically, while the second group is made up of forms that are not fully motivated. But in this second group there are many examples of what one might call less severe errors such as a transposition of runes or graphic confusion as in the mix-up of † and ‡. The innovative aspect of Lagman's paper is that it manifests a much more sophisticated approach to the concept of "miscarving". Just because something deviates from the expected, does not mean we may neglect to discuss which type of deviation we are dealing with and how it affects the linguistic evidence offered by the inscription. Lagman discovered that true errors are in fact very few, below one per cent in comparison with the expected forms. He also launched a seven-step programme for the interpretation of runic inscriptions.

In my doctoral dissertation I tried to follow up Lagman's findings. I also emphasised that words in runic texts are in principle written according to the way they were pronounced, an axiom which has been far from universally accepted. But it is not my purpose to discuss this matter now. What I want to consider is the extent to which we may trust the runic records in the shape we find them, regardless of why a certain form was chosen.

Is this really important? Is it not just another of those trifling details into which runologists, myself in particular, like to probe? On the contrary, I suggest that the question of the reliability of runic orthography lies at the very heart of runological scholarship. If we cannot trust what is there, how are we to know what a runic text is really intended to say? We have to deal with this question or suffer the consequences.

A major problem here is that most inscriptions are already published in scholarly editions by renowned runologists. The very authority of these giants in the runic field means that their understanding of an inscription often inhibits later researchers in arriving at a different view — not only of that particular text, but of the genre in general.

There are also at least two sides to the problem. The first is the less serious and has to do with the commonness or otherwise of errors. Initially, I presented almost a score of cases where miscarvings have been assumed.

Some of these have already been given other interpretations, presupposing no carving errors, and I will in future analyses try to do the same for the rest. But even if the actual number of errors were twice or thrice as high, or even twenty times higher, they would still constitute exceptions to the rule in the several thousands of well-published inscriptions, and are therefore statistically not highly significant. Most of the suspect interpretations furthermore affect personal names, and it may seem of little importance whether an otherwise unknown person a millennium ago was called one thing or another.

Now, this last objection happens to be wrong. The inventory of names in runic sources is not a question of importance only to onomastic scholars interested in formation types, regional distribution and so forth. The way the stock of personal names is made up gives us unique and invaluable information about mentality and social patterns in ancient times. This is why Sven B. F. Jansson's interpretation of **raupkar** as *Hrōðgæirr* on the Fällbro stone must not be accepted uncritically. Jansson (1946, 259) claims: "Faderns namn Rodger bör väl, trots den egendomliga — folketymologiska(?) — stavningen uppfattas som *Hrōðgæirr*, ett välbekant germanskt mansnamn" ("The name of the father, *Rodger*, should, in spite of the strange spelling — a folk etymology? — probably be understood as *Hrōðgæirr*, a well-known Germanic man's name"). Evert Salberger (1978, 119–25) did not agree, and was able to show convincingly with orthographical and onomastic arguments that **raupkar** must instead be interpreted as *Rauðkārr*, the name of a man with red, curly hair. Instead of a run-of-the mill two-element name that says little new about Viking Age naming patterns, we have a unique appellation that tells us something meaningful about the man in the inscription and what was considered a significant human trait when giving someone a name. I am convinced that behind quite a few runic sequences that are considered bad spellings of common names, there lie concealed rare and exciting name formations.

More important, however, is the second problem with misinterpretations of this kind. They trick us into misjudging the competence of runographers and their readers, and that has huge implications for our view of runic literacy and the very function of runic inscriptions.

As an example we may here take the interpretation of U 729 Ågersta's **tekr** as *drængr*. Sven B. F. Jansson writes (in *SRI*, 8: 264): "Trots de invändningar, som ... ha gjorts mot förslaget att uppfatta **tekr** som felristning för **trekr**, förefaller denna lösning avgjort rimligast" ('Notwithstanding the objections which have ... been made against the proposal that **tekr** should be regarded as a miscarving of **trekr**, this seems by far the most likely solution'). The

interpretation presented by Jansson originated with Otto von Friesen, and von Friesen's assumption of a miscarving here was included in the list he compiled which I referred to initially. Having received Jansson's support the interpretation has been universally accepted, even by Judith Jesch (1998), who presented a close analysis of the whole inscription at the Göttingen International Runic Symposium. She posits (p. 462) "two fundamental characteristics of memorial inscriptions from the late Viking Age", the first of which is "that the meaning of the inscriptions resides not only in the words of their texts, but also in the very materiality of the monuments that preserve those words". I have no difficulty with the second part of this claim, but I do want to point out that "the meaning of the inscriptions" does reside primarily in the words; it is therefore of utmost importance that these words have been interpreted convincingly. Jesch does indeed notice the deviant orthography of **tekr**. She writes (p. 465, note 10): "... one could question whether the sequence **tekr** actually represents the word *drængr* ... If *drængr* was intended, then we have a rare example of a genuine carving error (Lagman 1989:37). If not, then it is hard to imagine what word was intended." Jesch, however, obviously felt the interpretation *drængr* to be certain enough to keep its place in her discussion of the runic monument. She writes (1998, 468):

Balli's readers will be members of a select group of those qualified to appreciate his text. To express this meaning, Balli carefully chose the word *drængr*; as it is not in an alliterating position, any one-syllable word (such as *maðr*) would have done. Instead, he chose a word that often has a strong connotation of the intimacy and exclusivity of an in-group In this inscription the word is used somewhat anomalously (as far as runic inscriptions go) to refer to a cultural in-group, rather than a military one, but the semantic link is clear enough.

Now, Jesch's article has many virtues and does not rely to any great extent on the interpretation of **tekr**. But her understanding of the word does play a role in her argumentation, and the claims she makes about this part of the text seem a little over-confident, given that the inscription does not actually contain the word *drængr*. Jesch admits her inability to suggest another meaning for this runic sequence. But Evert Salberger (2003) is not so lacking in imagination. He proposes (pp. 681–86) the attractive interpretation *tǫkr* 'alert, adept', presupposing a delabialised form. I consider his explanation to be distinctly superior to von Friesen's and I have chosen this case to illustrate the dangers of accepting interpretations founded on the assumption of a carving error.

The heart of the matter is our attitude towards the recipients of runic

texts. It has been claimed by some that the ability to read runes was very limited and that the texts primarily had other than communicative purposes. I personally have no problem accepting this as long as we are dealing with periods or areas where runic inscriptions are scarce. There are extremely few runic texts from before A.D. 500, for example, and even if there must have been many, many more than the ones we happen to have found, the artefacts themselves with their laconic messages, sometimes placed out of sight, emphasise that writing in those days was an exclusive act with limited application and presumably mastered by few. That the inscriptions contain a fair number of errors is thus not an improbable assumption.

From later periods there may be an abundance of runic texts, yet by no means all have a clear communicative purpose. I am thinking of the many medieval carvings that lack obvious sense. But again, the genre of these texts indicates that they were not intended to be read by all and sundry. A large number probably consist of writing exercises or are simply aimless scribbles made for entertainment. Many may also have a hidden purpose. Again, I have no problem in accepting that inscriptions such as these contain runic sequences which do not contain intelligible words.

However, when we are dealing with the Viking Age runestones in the Scandinavian heartlands, it is a very different matter. Their number, their concentration, their location, their nature, their size, and the scope of their inscriptions all indicate that they were meant to be seen and presumably read by more than a few. And this is where we run into problems with the view that carving errors on these monuments not only abound but occur haphazardly. One illustrative example, mentioned initially, is Erik Brate's interpretation of Ög 91 **yuia** as *Örōkia* (in *SRI*, 2:91): "Troligen är ock ristningen **yuia** en sådan [ett förkortat skrivsätt], då någon direkt motsvarighet därtill svårligen skall anträffas, och mansnamnet *Örōkia* ligger då närmast till hands att tänka på" ('Probably the carving **yuia** is one too [an abbreviation], given that there seems to be no direct parallel, and that being so, the male name *Örōkia* springs most readily to mind'). I beg to differ (see below). Even if we allow ourselves to assume for a moment that contemporary readers already knew what the first name of the inscription would be, and, should it have slipped their mind, only needed the most rudimentary orthographical representation to jog their memory, no more is implied than that the names and other words behind deficient spellings such as this are forever lost. Brate has absolutely no way of proving that his interpretation is more than a wild guess.

But is it really likely that contemporary readers would have been able to equate **yuia** with *Örōkia*? Of course the carver would have known what this

sequence meant and presumably the putative Ōrōkia, who commissioned the monument, was able to make it out, although he is unlikely to have been very pleased with the botched spelling unless, of course, it was his own work and he was unable to perform any better. Readers outside the group intimately concerned with the inscription were, however, at a disadvantage. One could perhaps argue that people in the neighbourhood may also have known to whom the text referred and thus been in a position to solve the puzzle. This would mean, though, that some runestones were only meant to be read locally, which may indeed be true of an unimpressive monument such as Ög 91 with its brief and unelaborated inscription and very simple design.

Yet, presumed carving errors are not, at least not in Sweden, restricted to substandard or even “middle-class” runestones. Many of the examples presented at the beginning of this paper stem from high status monuments, judging by the length and content of the texts: U 729 Ågersta, Sö 174 Aspö church and Gs 13 Söderby, for example, are all over two metres tall and have between 123 and 155 runes, yet inferior spellings have been identified on each of them.

Should we then accept the prevalent attitude that carving errors may occur on any type of runestone by any carver and in any textual position, and furthermore that we as modern runologists are in a position to perceive the true meaning behind the most garbled scribbles, confusing even to the readers of the time? That would suggest that not only runestone inscriptions but the scholarship of runology itself was in a sorry state. If many interpretations rely on no more than guesswork, the accuracy of which depends solely on the authority of the runologist doing the guessing, I very much doubt that other scholars in the humanities will be greatly impressed by the reliability of the sources we are investigating or the results we reach.

For my own part I refuse to be a defeatist. I would like to set up a competing hypothesis: runestone texts are with few exceptions well adapted to the purposes they were intended to serve. This compels me to take a closer look at the context and communicative situation of the Viking Age inscriptions. I would claim that we have a pretty poor understanding of these factors and lack answers to many of the most fundamental questions. Who could read and write runes, and how many such people were there? Was it critically important that all words were written unambiguously? What were the mental tools used to decode an inscription and precisely what orthographical rules were followed?

An important key to disentangling some of the apparent confusion in

runic orthography was offered in an article by Evert Salberger (2001). It is not published in one of the better-known journals and it is easy to miss this important contribution, which occurs in a brief passage in a rather lengthy text. Salberger's suggestion is that we should make a distinction between the writing of ordinary words on the one hand and names on the other, the "spelling" of the former being less important. This explains why even runic inscriptions with seemingly substandard writing may be decoded and interpreted with confidence—as long as the deviant orthography is restricted to words we understand anyway. Returning to the example of Ög 91 **yuia**: Brate's claim that it would be hard to find any direct parallels to this sequence and that the male name *Örōkia* springs most readily to mind (see above) is difficult to accept. Following Salberger's lead we are now forced to come up with a better solution. Fortunately, a straightforward interpretation of **yuia** as a Runic Swedish female name *Øyia* (cf. Old Norse *Eyja*) may be offered.

I believe Salberger has touched upon a most important principle behind runic orthography, and one we should have caught sight of long ago. It is simply a question of functional load: unexpected words need more clues to enable the reader to decipher them. But the distinction is not as Salberger suggested between names and non-names. Rather it is between formulaic and non-formulaic words. This means that formulas must be seen as a vital concept in runology. In fact, there are only four of these standard ingredients to worry about: memorial formulas, obituaries, prayers and signatures. The formulas were standardised to an amazing extent, allowing for little variation, and much of that restricted to the sequence of the elements included. It was by mastering and anticipating various elements in the formulas that the reader of a runestone text was able to crack its code. This is also what constitutes Viking Age literacy. Since every literate person knew what the text was going to say, it was mostly a matter of orientation: Where am I now, what is this word likely to be? Almost all elements could be predicted and the writing of the standardised ones only had to be explicit enough to enable you to distinguish between, say, 'stone' and 'staff'. But non-standardised words were quite a different matter. In dealing with names, at least you knew your solution had to reflect the established or possible stock of names. In the case of other words, however, you probably only had a general idea of what type of lexical item to expect. As to exactly which name and which unpredictable lexical item, you had to rely on the runic orthography alone. That is why the writing of these words is so important and why we have to trust what is there. There is simply no other way of determining what the text says. Thus the reader of U729 Ågersta had no

clue to what the sequence **tekr** meant when s/he reached that part of the inscription, apart from the fact that it was a word denoting a person. If there had been reason to suspect a stock phrase containing the element *drængr* it would have been a different matter, but that does not seem to be the case. The reader had only the runes and a language shared with the carver as the means of deciphering this element. Some probably failed. That is what constitutes degrees of literacy and is why our Viking Age forebears found it no less challenging and presumably no less rewarding to grapple with a runestone than we do today.

It is quite common for editors of runestone inscriptions to refer to carving mistakes elsewhere in an inscription or on other stones by the same carver as evidence in favour of there being an error in a particular word they are discussing. This practice is without merit when the words compared do not have the same functional load.

There is nothing surprising about the concept of functional load in connection with runestone writing. It is rather that the nineteenth-century prejudice against non-standardised forms of language has made us blind to it. I suspect that young teenagers of today would find it much easier to relate to Viking Age orthographic practices than many of their elders. We must remember that we are dealing with the early stages of a writing technique, at least in terms of genre. Newspaper headlines offer a parallel: as they developed there was a need to adapt the somewhat cumbersome spelling of English, and forms such as *nite* for *night* appeared. The same tendency is evident in most if not all media where space is restricted. It is common, for example, to communicate in short form on car number plates (“4 u 2” = ‘for you, too’) or in personal ads (“SJF” = ‘Single Jewish Female’, “LTR” = ‘Long Term Relationship’). The best modern parallel might be the Internet chat medium and especially the Short Message Service on mobile phones. Reading an SMS from my teenage daughter can present quite a challenge as it will abound in abbreviations, many of which are made up on the spot. When questioned about this, she declares that all words in frequent use are susceptible to abbreviation. Of course, I am not suggesting that runestone texts used standardised or prearranged abbreviations, or that they are exact counterparts to the modern SMS, since the latter, after all, belongs to a completely different textual universe. But the basic distinction made between regular and less predictable elements is a common denominator.

One major difference between runic and modern writing is the ambiguity of the former, due to the restricted number of runes available. This constitutes a separate problem, which I will not go into here, but which I believe is also capable of solution. The decisive factor is our attitude towards

runestone texts, which fundamentally affects our prospect of interpreting them correctly.

The basic point to keep in mind is that there is no key, no answer book, where one can look up the correct solutions to the textual puzzles one encounters. One simply has to exercise care in determining which interpretations are possible, and of these, which is the most likely. It may be a comforting thought that the original readers faced the same predicament as we do and ran the same risk of misinterpreting from time to time what they encountered. In New Philology this is not a problem: Every reader rewrites the text afresh. But our forbears did so, I think, firmly believing that each runic sequence in front of them meant what it said.

The first steps towards the understanding of these complex issues have been taken—I have already mentioned Svante Lagman's (1989) pioneering contribution. Many as yet undeciphered runic sequences need to be examined in the belief they can be properly understood, and many existing interpretations need to be re-examined insofar as they rest on the assumption of unmotivated carving errors. A tremendous amount of work remains to be done—entertaining and rewarding work.

To summarise: A number of runic sequences have been interpreted by assuming that the orthography is not to be trusted. Miscarvings or misspellings do indeed exist in the runic corpus. However, I have tried to show in this paper that the notion of carving errors is not one that should be appealed too lightly in the case of non-formulaic words.

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Runes and Romans in the North

Lisbeth M. Imer

The runic inscriptions in Scandinavia from the Late Roman Iron Age (A.D. c. 160–375) form a well-defined group, chronologically as well as geographically. The function of these earliest runic inscriptions has often been discussed. Do they have a magic purpose, are they the products of illiterate artisans, or should they be interpreted as mere imitations of Latin script, which the Scandinavians had been in more or less direct contact with for most of the Roman Iron Age? Several scholars have discussed this problem, some of them from a philological point of view (e.g. Krause and Jankuhn 1966; Antonsen 1975; Düwel 1981; 2008), and others stressing more the contexts of the inscriptions in addition to the textual content (e.g. Stoklund 1995; Hines 1997).

When considering the function of runic inscriptions, it is important to keep both the philological and the archaeological approach in mind, i.e. to examine the texts with an eye to their chronological, physical and spatial contexts. Moreover, it is of fundamental importance for our understanding of the inscriptions to compare them with contemporary writing in other kinds of script from roughly the same area.

In the following I shall give an example of a contextual analysis of a group of runic inscriptions and Latin imprints from the Late Roman Iron Age in Scandinavia. Using chronology as the means of classifying the inscriptions is important for the investigation, because the function of the inscriptions may easily have changed over time.

Latin inscriptions and imprints in the Early Roman Iron Age

Writing was not unknown to the Scandinavians at the time of the invention of runic writing. In the Early Roman Iron Age (A.D. c. 1–160) at least forty-nine Latin inscriptions and imprints are known from the Scandinavian area,

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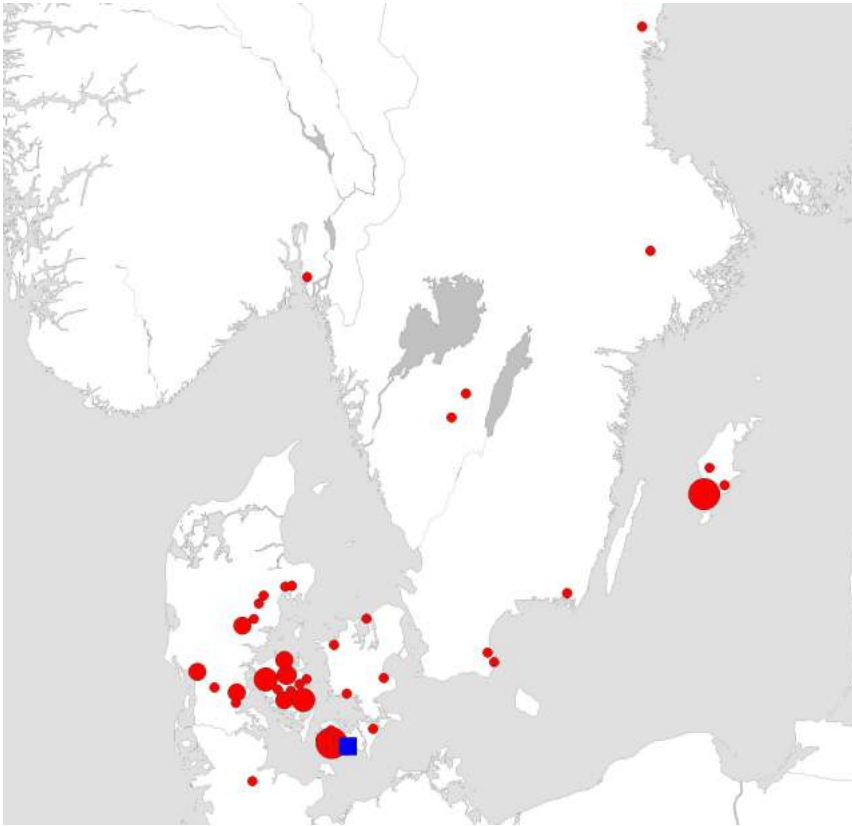
Table 1. The number of different Roman imports with fabrication stamps in the Early Roman Iron Age (A.D. c. 1–160)

Saucepans	32
Ladles	7
Strainers	7
Buckets	1
Silver beakers	2

the majority of them are manufacturers' marks on Roman bronze imports (Table 1). In this period, Roman imports to Scandinavia were generally concentrated in Denmark and on the island of Gotland. Mainland Sweden had a smaller number of finds, while Norway only represented 10% of the total (Lund Hansen 1987, 127, maps 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6). The distribution of bronze imports with manufacturers' marks reflects this overall picture very well (Map 1).

The bronze objects (saucepans, ladles, and strainers), which are objects of Roman tableware, are only found in rich grave contexts and are interpreted as being the result of trade with the Romans or as Roman gifts. By far the greater number of them are not stamped, but in the few cases where they are, the imprints consist of Latin capitals, giving names in the genitive, or in the nominative followed by an F for *fecit* 'made', or in some cases abbreviations for 'NN made'. The names are either Roman or Gallic (Lund Hansen 1987, 153). Heinrich Willers (1907, 85f.) divided them into three different groups: (1) Names in the genitive, known from Pompeii and consisting of *pronomen*, *nomen* and *cognomen* (*tria nomina*). (2) Names in the genitive, not known from Pompeii, both *tria nomina* and single names. (3) Names in the nominative sometimes followed by an F for *fecit*.

Some of the earliest examples of writing in Iron Age Scandinavia are the inscriptions on the two silver cups from the grave at Hoby on Lolland, dated to the first half of the first century A.D. On the side of each cup and between the pictures, the Greek inscription *Chirisophos epói* 'Chirisophos made' is punched in, one with Greek letters, the other with Latin letters. Cheirisophos was a Greek silversmith, who probably worked in Rome or Campania at the time of Augustus. Furthermore the Roman name "Silius" is carved on the base of each cup (Werner 1966, 7f.). Silius is probably the former owner most likely to be identified as *Caius Silius*, who was stationed in Mainz, in A.D. 14–21, as the commander of the upper Rhine army (Storgaard 2003, 112). Underneath the base of each cup the exact weight is punched, in Latin



Map 1. The distribution of Greek and Latin imprints and inscriptions in the Early Roman Iron Age (A.D. c. 1–160). Square: Greek inscriptions. Circles: Latin inscriptions and imprints (small circle: 1 find, larger circle: 2–3 finds, largest circle: 4–5 finds).

letters, probably information given by the workshop. Calculations of the weight of the two cups have been carried out by Frands Herschend (1999).

The practice of inscribing the weight of the object was quite common in the Roman Empire, and it is possible that the problematic inscription on the potsherd from Osterrönfeld in Northern Germany, also dated to the first century A.D., should be interpreted in this way. The object carries three characters that Edith Marold has interpreted either as runes or as Latin letters (Dietz, Marold, and Jöns 1996), but when considering this inscription in the light of the silver cups from Hoby and the inscriptions on the silver ingots from the hoard of Kaiseraugst, Switzerland (Martin 1984, 386–92), it seems more likely to be a Roman weight designation (Fig. 1). The inscription

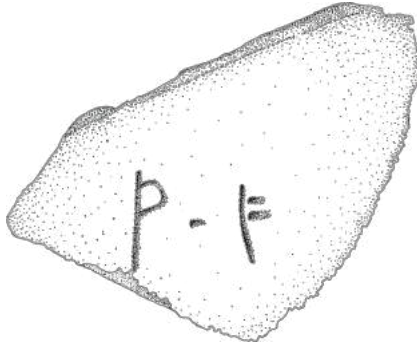


Fig. 1. The potsherd from Osterrönfeld. Drawing by the author on the basis of photo by Dietz, Marold, and Jöns 1996.

on the potsherd, P-I=, might be interpreted as ‘P(ound) one plus two units of the pound’, i.e. ‘One pound and two *unciae*’ in accordance with the interpretations of the Hoby cups by Herschend. Weight designations on ceramics are, as far as I am aware, not very common, but one might suggest that this particular piece of pottery was used as a weight in connection with the weighing of other objects.

In the Early Roman Iron Age most inscriptions found in Scandinavia are placed on objects and in contexts that indicate a connection with the elite. The question is whether the Germanic peoples of Scandinavia could read the inscriptions on these objects and whether they had a grasp of Latin and Greek writing at all? The majority of the inscriptions were placed on the objects in the process of manufacture, but the potsherd from Osterrönfeld must come from a Germanic product, and therefore it is possible that it was inscribed in Germania.

Inscriptions in the Late Roman Iron Age

From the Late Roman Iron Age about fifty runic inscriptions are recorded, whereas more than a hundred Latin inscriptions and imprints have been found in Scandinavia. The material on which the Latin inscriptions occur shows a greater diversity than in the previous period. Roman swords with manufacturers’ marks comprise a new and overwhelmingly large group of finds in the Scandinavian area, while *terra sigillata* are less well represented (Table 2 and Map 2).

In this article we shall take a quick look at the Latin inscriptions and imprints which are recorded in the Late Roman Iron Age, and then

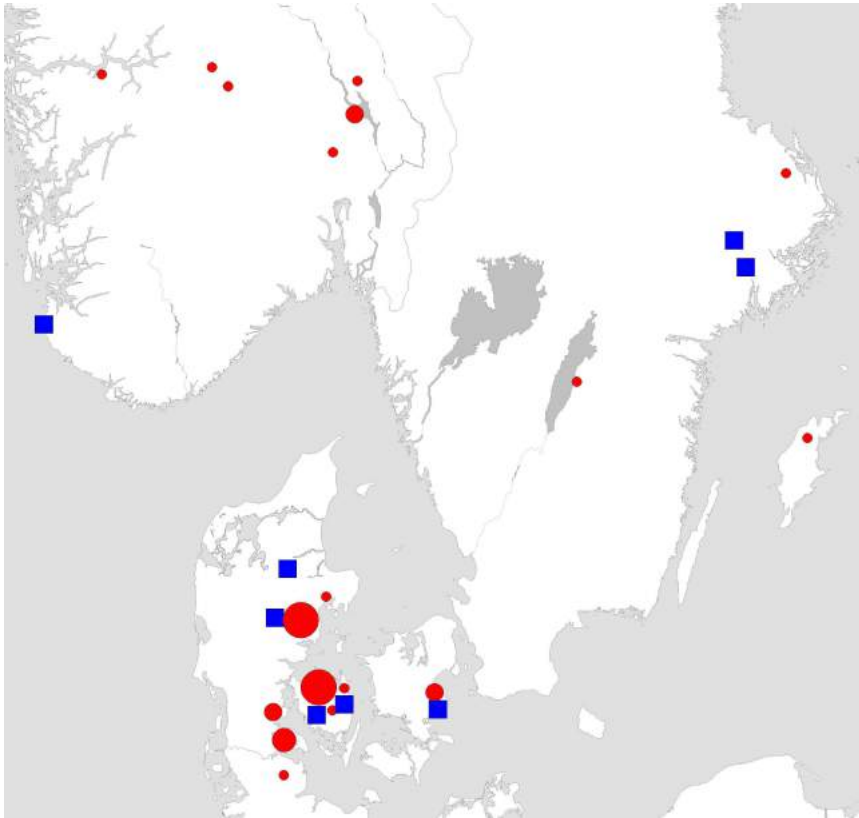
Table 2. The number of different Roman imports with fabrication stamps in the Late Roman Iron Age (A.D. c. 160–375)

Swords	c. 92
Bandoleer fittings	5
Samian ware (<i>terra sigillata</i>)	3
Buckets	3
Armlet	1
Shield boss	1
Fibula	1
Roman coins	c. 12,000

concentrate on the manufacturers' marks on swords in order to prepare for a comparison with the runic inscriptions on weapons from the same period.

Roman coins

Roman coins form by far the largest group of objects with Latin inscriptions found in Scandinavia from the Roman Iron Age. The texts on these coins give the names of Roman emperors and occasionally the name of the place where they were minted. From Scandinavia about 12,000 Roman coins are known, primarily single finds and hoards (Horsnæs 2008). The bulk of these are silver coins (*denarii*), struck in the period A.D. 69–192 (Horsnæs 2003, 335). In 1995 about 3000 of these coins, dating from the first century B.C. to the sixth century A.D., were found in Denmark (Kromann 1995, 347), although the chronology is quite difficult to interpret. The majority are struck in the Early Roman Iron Age, yet these coins, when found in archaeologically datable contexts, belong to the Late Roman Iron Age. This means that the coins must have been in circulation for a very long time (Horsnæs 2003, 336 f.), without doubt longer than most of the other artefact types. Now a total of c. 4600 Roman coins have been found in Denmark, the large hoards of Råmosen and Smørenge containing almost 500 coins each (Horsnæs 2003, 336). Some of the coins are single finds, and the question therefore arises: How were the coins used and by whom? In Illerup Ådal one of the biggest groups of *denarii* consists of single coins and small groups of finds. One of the largest groups was found in close association with one of the richest warrior equipments in this weapon deposit, which suggests that the coins indicate high social status (Horsnæs 2003, 334). Coins are only



Map 2. The distribution of Greek and Latin imprints and inscriptions in the Late Roman Iron Age (A.D. c. 160–375). It should be noted that the stamped swords in the large weapon deposits in Jutland and on the island of Fyn (the two largest circles) may have a different point of origin, as the artefacts from the deposits are the results of battles with neighbouring regions. Squares: Greek inscriptions. Circles: Latin inscriptions and imprints (small circle: 1 find, larger circles: 2–4 finds, largest circle: 5 or more finds).

rarely found in grave contexts. Some twenty of the thousands of graves in Denmark from the Roman Iron Age contain coins. The majority of these belong to the elite (cf. Nielsen 1988, 149–65), and this confirms the picture from Illerup Ådal that coins are indicative of high social rank. However, it is crucial to bear in mind that one of the largest assemblages of coins in Denmark is the approximately 1000 single-find coins from the settlement and trading centre of Gudme-Lundeborg on Fyn (Lars Jørgensen, personal

communication). Whether these were used in trade imitating Roman tradition is yet to be determined.

Terra sigillata

The Roman tableware *terra sigillata*, or Samian ware, was a very common object within the Roman Empire. In the early first century A.D. the workshops of *Terra sigillata* were placed in the Roman provinces of Gaul, Germania, and Britain where thousands of pieces were produced, and this continued until the middle of the third century A.D. Despite this intense production, very few examples of *terra sigillata* reached the Scandinavian area, the period of import being limited to the Late Roman Iron Age. Only three of the imported pots carry manufacturers' marks, i.e. two pots from graves at Møllegårdsmarken, Fyn, and one from a grave at Valløby, Sjælland. The ones from Møllegårdsmarken are early imports (second half of the second century) produced at the workshop of Cerialis III and Cerialis V at Rheinzabern, and the one from Valløby is a later product (first half of the third century) from the workshop of Comitialis at Westerndorf (Lund Hansen 1982; 1987, 179–84).

A shield boss from Thorsbjerg

In the weapon deposit of Thorsbjerg a Latin inscription was found on the front of one of the shield bosses of Roman provenance (Engelhardt 1863, 33; Raddatz 1987, 43). The inscription AEL·AELIANUS is an abbreviation for *Aelius Aelianus*, a Roman name meaning 'Aelius, son of Aelius'. The inscription is punched, as the Hoby cups and the armllet from Boltinggård (see below), and should probably be interpreted as an owner's inscription. Owner's inscriptions of this kind are quite common on Roman military equipment.

A fibula from Øvre Stabu

When examining some runic inscriptions and their contexts in the archives of the Museum of Cultural History (incorporating Oldsaksamlingen) in Oslo, I coincidentally came across a bronze fibula from Øvre Stabu with some marks on the back of the plate. These marks have not been noted before (cf. Rygh 1895, 127 f.; Schetelig 1914, 5 f.; Herteig 1955, 23 f.); on the drawing in Schetelig's publication (1914, fig. 1) some scratches are very discretely marked on the plate, but it is obvious that they are not interpreted as intentionally



Fig. 2. The fibula from one of the graves at Øvre Stabu in Norway. Drawing by the author.

cut symbols of any kind. In my opinion these marks are not merely scratches or errors resulting from the production of the fibula. On the contrary they are very distinct characters applied to the fibula either in the casting process or immediately after the production, when the bronze was still hot (Fig. 2). This procedure is also seen on Roman fibulae with inscriptions, which are known in quite large numbers on the Continent (Behrens 1950). The question remains, how the characters on the fibula from Øvre Stabu should be read: XL or XI meaning '40' or '11', if Latin. Alternatively the marks could be runic, **gi...** or **...ig**, but such an inscription does not seem to correspond to other known runic inscriptions. The inscriptions on the Roman fibulae from the Continent are often placed on the plate as on the fibula from Øvre Stabu, these inscriptions being the manufacturers' names. The abbreviations should probably be interpreted in the same way (Behrens 1950, 2). Referring to these Roman fibulae it is possible that the inscription or the symbols on the fibula from Øvre Stabu should be interpreted as the manufacturer's name, the only identified example of this kind of inscription on fibulae in Northern Europe. On the other hand the inscription on the Øvre Stabu fibula looks very much like a Roman number as mentioned above. Numbers on fibulae are not yet known, and the interpretation of the inscription is therefore uncertain.

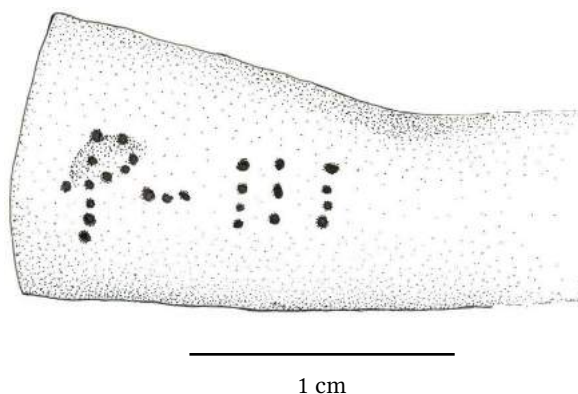


Fig. 3. The *Kolben* armlet from Boltinggård, Fyn. From Henriksen and Horsnæs 2004, fig. 13.

An armlet from Boltinggård

In 1905, half an armlet of the Germanic *Kolben* type was discovered, probably belonging to the hoard of Boltinggård. Other artefacts from the hoard are fifteen Roman *aurei* and *solidi* from the fourth century A.D., most of them struck in Trier, and a golden necklace (Henriksen and Horsnæs 2004). This type of armlet was used for a period of almost 300 years from A.D. c. 200 to c. 500, the most well known probably being the ones from Himlingøje, dated to the first half of the third century A.D., and from the Frankish King Childeric's grave from A.D. c. 481. The armlets were probably worn by the highest-ranking leaders of Germanic society (Lund Hansen 2001, 180 f.). On the armlet from Boltinggård a Latin weight specification P-III is punched (Fig. 3). Henriksen and Horsnæs have interpreted this as three Roman pounds, but it can hardly be the actual weight of the armlet, as the sum of three Roman pounds would be 972 grams. The original weight must have been about 80 grams. Henriksen and Horsnæs then suggest that the value of the golden armlet corresponds to three Roman pounds of silver (Henriksen and Horsnæs 2004, 134). Frands Herschend (personal communication), on the other hand, suggests a slightly different interpretation. The Roman pound was divided into twelve *unciae*. The sum of three *unciae* is 81,792 grams, which corresponds very well to the actual weight of the armlet. It is possible that the dash after the P indicates that the vertical strokes should be interpreted as units of a pound.

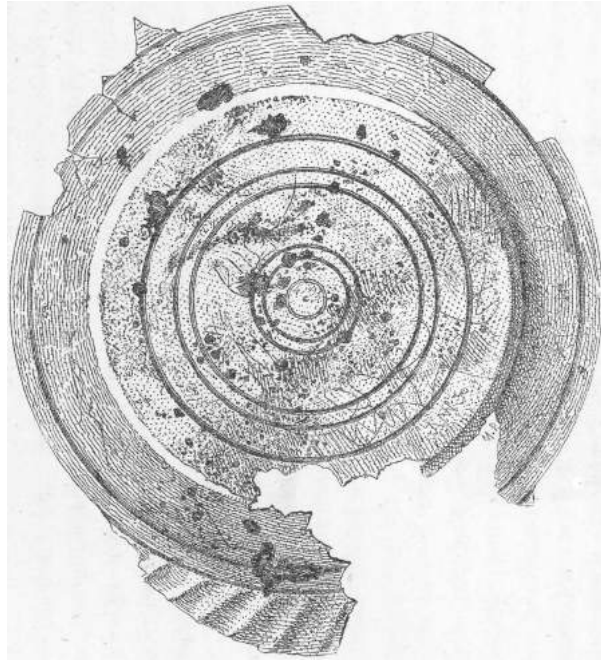


Fig. 4. The drawing of the weight specification on the ribbed bucket from the grave of Valløby in Denmark. From Engelhardt 1873, 305.

The bucket from Valløby

A ribbed bucket was found as a part of the rich grave equipment from a man's grave at Valløby, Denmark (Engelhardt 1873). The grave also contained an example of *terra sigillata* with a manufacturer's mark. In 1884 George Stephens in his book on the *Old-Northern Runic Monuments* suggested the inscription on the ribbed bucket to be runic, a man's name 'Wisa' (Stephens 1884, 138). According to Willers (1907, 52), Bohn interpreted the inscription as an abbreviation of the owner's name, *Res[titutus]*, written with Latin letters. The latter interpretation was based on a drawing that Engelhardt sent him (Fig. 4), and it must have been the horizontal scratch that goes through the inscription which led Bohn to interpret the first letter as an *r*. I had a chance to look at the bucket in the summer of 2005, and it was quite evident that the scratch has a clearly different character than the letters on the bucket. In my opinion, the inscription gives neither a runic nor a Latin name. It is more likely the weight of the bucket, P II S I, i.e. two Roman pounds and one *semis*

(half a pound), and can thus be compared to some of the inscriptions from the hoard at Kaiseraugst, Switzerland, which was found in 1961 (cf. Martin 1984, 386–92), to the Boltinggård armlet, and maybe also the potsherd from Osterrönfeld. It would be interesting to investigate the actual weight of the ribbed bucket, but the object is unfortunately so badly damaged that this would be impossible.

Scandinavia in the Late Roman Iron Age

In the Late Roman Iron Age, i.e. at the time of the earliest recorded evidence of runic writing, Roman influence on the barbaric North was massive. From the middle of the second century onwards, Scandinavian society went through political changes, which caused a fundamental transformation in the structures of for example farmsteads and agricultural production. Moreover, trading centres such as the Gudme-Lundeborg complex appeared as a new type of settlement, where trade superseded agriculture as the primary function. On sites like these specialised craftsmen had their business, and the economy of these sites might have been very similar to the economy of the Roman Empire when we consider the large amount of stray-find coins. It might be significant to note that the carrying of arms might be seen as a specialised skill as opposed to the previous more or less unsystematic army equipment (Storgaard 2003, 108 f.). It is also in this social context that the larger part of the weapon deposits in Denmark and the southern parts of Sweden takes place. The depositing of large quantities of booty was a new type of votive offering that began in the Roman Iron Age as opposed to the previous offerings of humans and smaller deposits of army equipment. The weapon deposits reflect a highly specialised and standardized army structure, which among other things indicates that the production of domestic weapons like lances, spears and shields took place at centralized workshops. This was the case within the Roman Empire as well as in the barbaric North. In the first half of the third century the primary weapon for a Germanic soldier was a lance; the Roman double-edged sword, the *spatha* and the spear being secondary weapons (Xenia Pauli Jensen, personal communication).

Swords

The swords used in battles between the different Scandinavian regions were produced within the Roman Empire, either in Italy or in the Gallic provinces. In the Late Roman Iron Age, swords from these Roman and

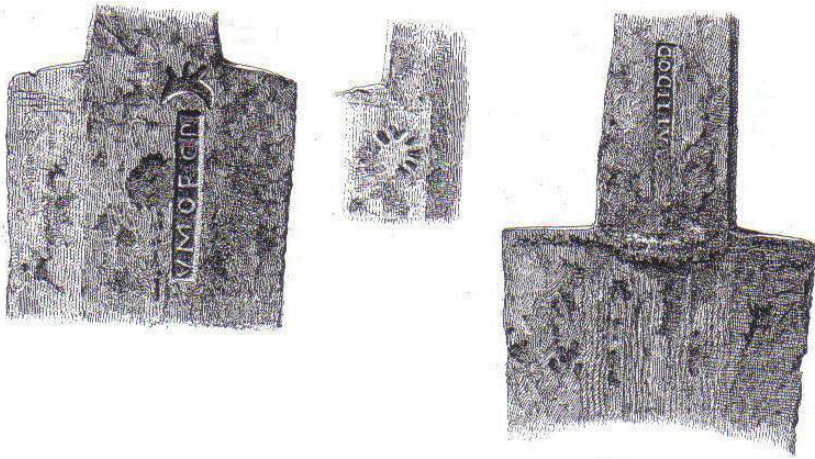


Fig. 5. Round and rectangular stamps on swords. From Biborski 1994.

provincial workshops appeared in large numbers in the Germanic area, as a result of legal or illegal trade with weapons or as Roman gifts to Germanic allies. The majority of the swords are found in the large weapon deposits in Denmark (Illerup Ådal, Vimose, Hedelisker, Illemose, Ejsbøl, and Nydam), which are interpreted as the result of either Danish defence or Danish attacks on neighbouring regions, or they are the result of neighbouring allies sacrificing their war equipment together (Ilkjær 1993; Jørgensen 2001; Pauli Jensen 2008, 296–302). In the bog of Thorsbjerg only a few swords are preserved owing to the chemical composition of this bog, which does not preserve iron (Christensen 2003, 347). It should be emphasized that the swords from the bog finds have probably not been used in the Danish area before the deposition, but have been imported and used in the neighbouring hostile areas, i.e. Norway and Sweden (cf. Ilkjær 1993).

The practice of applying manufacturers' marks onto the swords lasted for some centuries only. In the beginning of the first century A.D., manufacturers' marks are recorded on swords from the Polish area, and from the late third century and onwards no manufacturers' marks are known on swords at all, the youngest example being a *spatha* from Ejsbøl bog with the encrusted letters ALF from the second half of the third century (Biborski 1994, 173–76).

The geographical distribution of manufacturers' marks on swords is shown in Map 2. The circles in the Danish area represent the weapon deposits and

thereby probably swords of non-Danish origin. In Denmark, swords with manufacturers' marks are not represented in the graves, primarily due to the generally poor preservation of artefacts. In contrast, such swords are present in the weapon graves of Norway and Sweden with four and two examples.

The imprints can be divided into two categories: round imprints with or without letters and rectangular imprints with letters (Fig. 5; Biborski 1994, 171–73; Biborski and Ilkjær 2006, 296–309). The letter imprints consist of names, parts of names or abbreviations. Sometimes, the letter F or M for *fecit* or *manu* follows the names or abbreviations, just as with the bronze imports in the Early Roman Iron Age. At present more than eighty names can be distinguished, most of them Celtic indicating that a great deal of the weapon production took place in Gaul.

Only in two cases have identical imprints been found on more than one sword. The imprint DORVSF appears on two swords from Illerup Ådal, and BORICCVS·F appears on the sword from the grave at Gullen in Norway and on the sword from the weapon deposit at Hedelisker in Jutland.

The manufacturers' marks on the imported Roman swords are mainly placed near the shoulder of the sword or on the tongue. Sometimes the imprint is placed in such a way that it must have been invisible when the handle was attached (Fig. 5). We must bear in mind though, that most of the swords were imported as blades only, which means that the handles were attached only after they finally had been chosen by the buyer (Pauli Jensen, Jørgensen, and Lund Hansen 2003, 322). This indicates that the manufacturers' mark was important primarily at the moment of changing hands in trade, and that it has been a sort of certificate of the quality of the sword blades.

Summing up

The overall impression of Latin script from the Late Roman Iron Age in Scandinavia is that most of the inscriptions are manufacturers' marks or inscriptions applied to the object in the process of manufacture. The imprints consist of names and abbreviations like F and M for *fecit* and *manu*, and what is particularly interesting is that the manufacturers' marks are often concealed when the weapon has been supplied with a handle. In the following we shall turn our attention to the runic inscriptions that are found in the same chronological and spatial contexts as the swords with Latin imprints.

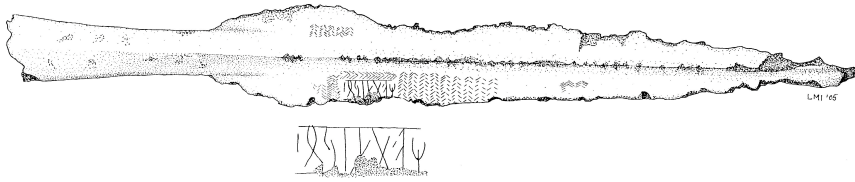


Fig. 6. The Vimose lancehead with one of the runic inscriptions of **wagnijo**. Drawing by the author.

The runic inscriptions

In a contextual analysis of runic inscriptions and Latin imprints in the Late Roman Iron Age, it is necessary to include all artefacts with writing from the period and look for similarities and differences in the material in relation to their spatial context, the type of artefact on which the runic inscription is applied, the position of the inscription, and the textual contents. It is evident that fabrication marks can be placed on almost any kind of object, but because of the limits of this article, I am going to emphasize the Scandinavian runic inscriptions on military equipment, which are most likely to be interpreted as imitations of Latin imprints. Other runic inscriptions, like owner's inscriptions, are treated elsewhere (Imer 2007).

Lances and spears

In the Late Roman Iron Age, as opposed to in the Viking Age, the difference between a lance and a spear is quite remarkable. Both are produced at large weapon factories, and for some types of lances, for example the Vennolum type, there are more than 400 examples throughout Scandinavia, with the widest distribution in the Swedish and Norwegian areas (Ilkjær 1990). It is worth noting though, that the function of the two weapons is very different. The lance is used in close combat only, as the primary weapon, and can be used several times. The spear, on the other hand, is used as a throwing spear at some distance from the enemy and can, naturally, be used only once.

The lanceheads from Vimose and Illerup Ådal

Three of the lances of the Vennolum type carry the exact same inscriptions, the **wagnijo** inscriptions that have become quite well known among runologists (Fig. 6). One of the inscriptions (on the lancehead from Illerup Ådal, no. FHM 1880 IMZ) is actually not an inscription as such, but an imprint executed with runes. With the Latin imprints on the swords in mind,

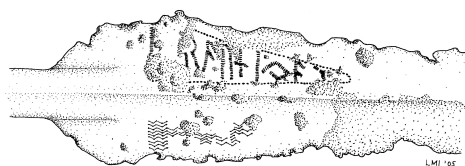


Fig. 7. The lancehead from Øvre Stabu in Norway. Drawing by the author

it seems very likely that this kind of manufacturers' mark has been applied to the weapons of attack that have been produced in the Scandinavian area. The two other **wagnijo** inscriptions might be interpreted as imitations of this particular imprint. The Scandinavian elite had seen these imprints in great numbers on for example the imported Roman sword blades, and might have wanted to apply these quality marks on weapons that they have produced at their own factories. This has also been noted by Marie Stoklund (1995, 335), who has suggested that the name *Wagnijō* should be interpreted as the name of the weapon smith. Klaus Düwel accepts this interpretation and adds that the name *Wagnijō* can also refer to the function of the lance and the sound of it when sailing through the air towards the enemy. *Wagnijō* is interpreted as 'the rushing' or 'the whizzing' (Düwel 2008, 27). This is hardly the case though, with this type of weapon. As mentioned above, the lances are for use only in close combat as the primary weapon and hence not meant to be thrown at the enemy as a spear. Bearing in mind that the identical name is used on three lances, one of them imprinted, it seems reasonable to interpret it as the name of the weapon smith, alternatively the name of the weapon factory owner. In this respect, it might also be worth noting that runic inscriptions are generally placed on lances. The only spearhead with a runic inscription is the problematic example from Rozwadów in Poland (Krause and Jankuhn 1966, 81 f.), and one might question whether the marks on this artefact are runic or not. In my opinion runic inscriptions were mainly placed on lances because they were used as the primary weapon of attack. Once you have thrown your spear away, you can make no use of it anymore, whereas the lance is kept close and can be used several times.

The lanceheads from Øvre Stabu and Mos

Two other lances, Øvre Stabu from Norway (Fig. 7) and Mos from Gotland (Fig. 8), have runic inscriptions, which are interpreted as names. The lance from Øvre Stabu is a Vennolum type, and the inscription on it is executed

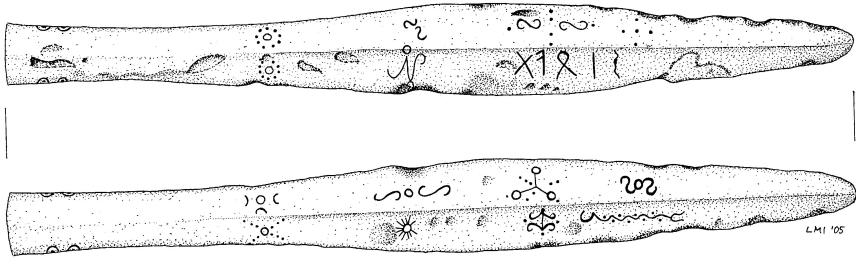


Fig. 8. The lancehead from Mos in Sweden. Drawing by the author.

in tremolo-stitch technique, as is the ornamentation on the blade. The runes on the lancehead from Mos are decorated with tin or silver inlay, as is the ornamentation on this lancehead.

In earlier interpretations, the inscriptions have been taken to be the names of the weapons on which they are written, and this reading becomes the evidence for the function of these weapons of attack. *Raunijaz* means ‘tester’ and should refer to the characteristics of the lance as a tester of the enemy (Krause and Jankuhn 1966, 76). *Gaois* (if this is the correct reading of this inscription) means ‘the barking one’ and should refer to the lance barking at or intimidating the enemy (Düwel 1981, 147–50; 2008, 24). The problem with interpreting the lancehead from Mos as *Gaois* is in the reading order of the runes. The runes are written from the right to the left — **sioag** — but are interpreted from the left to the right as **gaois**. As far as I am aware, this is the only runic inscription from the period where the interpretation does not follow the reading order. In my opinion, the interpretations of the lanceheads from Øvre Stabu and Mos are quite speculative and might be the product of a desire to read the runic inscriptions on the basis of the information given in the Old Icelandic saga texts, where the custom of naming weapons of different kinds is common. The problem of comparing artefacts from the third century A.D. with written texts from the Middle Ages is obvious. It is important to bear in mind that society went through enormous changes in the first millennium A.D., and comparisons of artefacts from the Iron Age with medieval texts should be avoided.

One could suggest the inscriptions to be owner’s inscriptions, but as the inscriptions are carried out in the same way as the ornamentation of the blades, it is very likely that the inscriptions are applied to the lances in the process of manufacture. Moreover, by comparing the lances to the sword blades and to the **wagnijo** lances from Illerup Ådal and Vimose, it seems

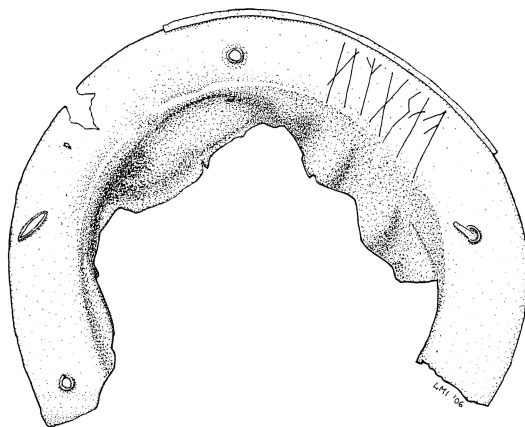


Fig. 9. The shield boss from Thorsbjerg with the runic inscription. From Engelhardt 1869, pl. 8.

more plausible to interpret them as manufacturers' names or as the names of the weapon factories' owners.

The shield boss from Thorsbjerg

Another possible parallel to the Latin imprints on swords is the shield boss from Thorsbjerg (Fig. 9). The runic inscription **aṅsgz** (previously read **aīsgz**; new reading by Lisbeth Imer in 2006) is placed on the back of the object; consequently the inscription is concealed when the shield boss is applied to the wooden shield (Imer 2007, 134f.). The inscription, and the position of it, has puzzled many scholars (Düwel 1981, 136f. with further references), partly because of the unnatural ending of the inscription with the letter *h*. The expected ending of the word would be *z*, as is the normal ending of masculine words in the nominative. Furthermore, the sequence **aṅsgz** (or **aīsgz**) cannot be compared to any known words or parts of words. Düwel (1981, 136; 2008, 17f.) holds this inscription to be uninterpretable, while Krause (in Krause and Jankuhn 1966, 56) and Antonsen (1975, 30) considered the runes to have a magical purpose because of their position at the back of the object. Stoklund (1995, 327) suggests the inscription to be a runic imitation of the Latin owner's inscription on the other shield boss from Thorsbjerg (see above), and finally Moltke (1985, 99) considered the inscription to be the bad job of an illiterate artisan.

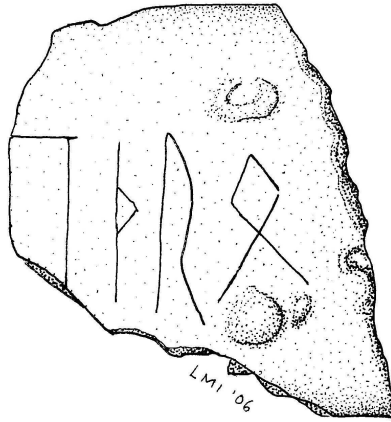


Fig. 10. The runic inscription from Gudme in Denmark. Drawing by the author.

In my opinion the Thorsbjerg inscription is more likely to be interpreted as a runic copy of the Latin manufacturers' marks that are registered on so many Roman swords found in the same kind of spatial context. If we transliterate the inscription in two sequences **an̄sgz h**, we end up with an inscription which in its form very much has the appearance of a Latin imprint, only runic. If we divide the inscription like this, the first sequence ends with the letter *z*, which would be expected for names in the nominative. This could be interpreted as an abbreviation of the manufacturer's name, which is also seen in many cases on the Latin manufacturers' marks. The latter sequence—the *h*—might be another abbreviation; just as the *M* or the *F* are the abbreviations of *manu* and *fecit*. One might suggest the abbreviation for 'from the hand', which corresponds the Latin *manu*. Of course, this interpretation implies that the producer of the shield was able to read and understand the Latin imprints, and capable of translating them into a Germanic language. This I find quite likely in a period where Roman contact was very strong.

A new runic inscription from Gudme

In the spring of 2005 a new runic artefact was discovered by the use of a metal detector at the Gudme-Lundeborg complex on Fyn. The object is probably a fragment of an ornament for a shield boss very similar to the

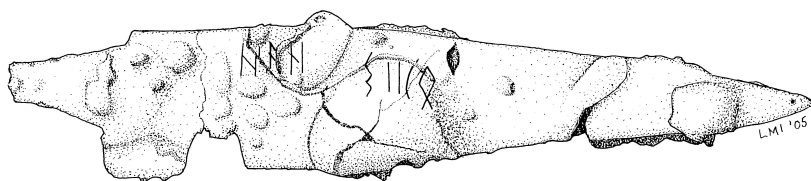


Fig. 11. The knife from Møllegårdsmarken in Denmark. Drawing by the author.

one from Gommern in Germany or the ones from Illerup Ådal, which are dated to the third century A.D. (Becker 2000, 142–47). It could also bear some resemblance to the ornamental belts from Ejsbøl bog and Neudorf-Bornstein from the late third century (Carnap-Bornheim 2003, 242 f.) and to the officer's belt from Nydam from the early fourth century (Jørgensen and Petersen 2003, 266–68). However, I am inclined to accept the former interpretation because of the significant resemblance in size, the position of the gilded silver foil, and the position of the small silver rivets. Additionally, the rivets seem too small to be able to fix the fitting onto a heavy, military leather belt.

Because of its similarity to the military objects from the third and fourth centuries, this new inscription from Gudme must be dated to the Late Roman Iron Age.

The inscription on the back is fragmented, **...epro** (Fig. 10), but can probably be compared with the very similar name on the back of the necklace from Strårup in the southern part of Jutland. It is very tempting to suggest that the objects are fabricates of the same person. The execution of the runes is much alike; with the very open *r*-runes, the **ps** with quite small pockets and the very similar form of the *o*-runes.

The position of the runes on the back of the object is comparable with the shield boss from Thorsbjerg. When attached to a wooden shield or to a military belt, the inscription from Gudme must have been concealed when the object was in use. To my mind, this can be interpreted as an imitation of the Latin imprints which were also concealed on the imported swords when the objects had been furnished with handles. We must imagine that manufacturers' marks had their primary function as quality marks when objects changed hands in trade.

Table 3. The runic inscriptions presumably to be interpreted as imitations of Latin imprints

Illerup Ådal lancehead 1	wagnijo
Illerup Ådal lancehead 2	wagnijo
Vimose lancehead	wagnijo
Mos lancehead	sioag
Øvre Stabu lancehead	raunijaz
Thorsbjerg shield boss	aṅsgz h
Gudme shield boss/military belt fitting (?)	...eþro
Møllegårdsmarken knife	haṅ? s??ko

The knife from Møllegårdsmarken

In 1992 a runic inscription was discovered on an iron knife from a cremation grave at the large graveyard of Møllegårdsmarken, Fyn. The 14-cm-long knife belonged to a weapon grave containing, among other things, a lance, a smaller knife, and a pair of scissors. According to the equipment of the grave, it should be dated to the latter part of the second century A.D. or to the first half of the third century A.D. The knife was found in a grave that contained weapon equipment, and the knife should probably be interpreted as a weapon knife (Henriksen 2009, 168 f.).

The inscription is very corroded and difficult to read due to cracks and lines in the surface of the object, and was first published by Stoklund in 1993 with the following reading in two sequences: **hth shko** (Stoklund 1993, 255–57; 1995, 340). When the opportunity arose for her to look at the artefact again, Stoklund agreed that the inscription might instead be read **haṅ? s??ko** (Fig. 11). The inscription is still difficult to interpret, but the latter sequence might be interpreted as a name beginning with *s-* and ending, like many other early runic names, with *-o*. The first sequence might be the remaining parts of a word that has something to do with ‘hand’, although the ending of this sequence is so corroded that this cannot be decided. Due to the corrosion, theoretically runes could have been placed in the empty space between the two sequences, as well as on other parts of the knife. It nevertheless seems logical to interpret the inscription on the knife as a manufacturer’s mark like many others on weapon equipment from the Late Roman Iron Age.

Final remarks

Having analysed a number of texts from the Late Roman Iron Age, it seems apparent that the importance of the Roman Empire is crucial for our understanding of the runic inscriptions and the society in which they functioned. Analysing the inscriptions on the basis of their chronological and physical context is important for any consideration of the function of the earliest runic inscriptions. Concealed inscriptions are not necessarily magic, as has been put forward by Krause, Antonsen, and others, and it seems logical to interpret at least some of the earliest runic inscriptions as imitations of Latin manufacturers' marks (Table 3).

The Romans had great influence on Scandinavian society in gift exchange, trade and even economy. Bearing this in mind, it is only natural that the importance of applying manufacturer's names onto domestically produced artefacts had been adopted from the Romans and turned into a Scandinavian tradition.

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The Older *Futhorc* and Roman Script Literacy

Terje Spurkland

Introduction

The origin of runic script is a constantly recurring theme among runologists and others interested in runes and runic inscriptions. The view of the matter that seems to have the strongest support is “the Latin theory” in some variant or other: a conviction that the invention of the older *futhorc* was to a large extent inspired by roman script. The main evidence for this is the fact that several of the runic characters seem to be direct copies of Latin letters. The genesis of runic script is therefore assumed to be the result of close encounters between a non-literate Northern Europe and a literate Roman Empire.

My intention with this paper is not to discuss the different theories about the origin of runes; in what follows the Latin theory is taken for granted. Instead I want to put forward some ideas about how the cultural meeting between a non-literate Germanic and a literate Roman world might have taken place and how this meeting may have stimulated the Germanic peoples to create their own vernacular script.

It is an oft-neglected fact that whoever conceived the older *futhorc* must have been familiar with the script that inspired it, and also with texts written in that alphabet—from my point of view, Latin. The originators of the runes must have been able to write and read Latin; they must have witnessed the script in action and observed how texts were used, i.e., the pragmatic function of written texts. If they did not know how to use this means of communication and were not convinced that writing represented

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social progress of some kind, they would not have bothered to copy it and adapt it for their own language and uses. In short: runic script originated in a literate context.

The concept of literacy

“Literacy” has become a key word among scholars dealing with the different uses of script. Even so, many do not attach more to the notion than a certain ability to read and write. If one does not ascribe more to literacy than a way of measuring reading and writing capabilities among a group of people, the study of written communication is unlikely to progress. The new perspectives the concept of literacy might offer are dependent upon a definition that goes much further. It is essential that it focuses on the social implications of reading and writing and the uses of texts. Rosamund McKitteric emphasises that literacy in any society is not just a matter of who could read and write, “but one of how their skills function, and of the adjustments—mental, emotional, intellectual, physical and technological—necessary to accommodate it” (1990, 5).

Most scholars today make a distinction between various kinds of literacy, as for example M. B. Parkes in “The Literacy of the Laity” (1973). He differentiates between “professional literacy”, i.e. that of the scholar or the professional man of letters, “cultivated literacy”, i.e. that of recreation, and “pragmatic literacy”, i.e. the literacy of one who has to read or write in the course of conducting any kind of business.

Brian Stock added to the definition the notion of “textuality”—that written texts have to function within a “textual community”. A textual community is made up of a group of people who demonstrate a parallel use of texts, “both to structure the internal behaviour of the group’s members and to provide solidarity against the outside world” (1983, 90). As I understand Parkes’s specification of the three different aspects of literacy, Stock’s textuality might be included in each one of them. Professional, cultivated, and pragmatic literacy all call for an overt use of texts.

Stock, however, makes a distinction between literacy and textuality, claiming that the one does not equate with the other. One can be literate without the explicit use of texts, and one can use texts extensively without evidencing genuine literacy. This implies that both the literate and the non-literate might make use of texts. For Stock, then, there is a fundamental distinction between the creation and dissemination of texts on the one hand

and their reception on the other, and the reception of texts does not require knowledge of reading.

Roman literacy

These definitions of the concept of literacy are part of a theoretical framework developed for the study of reading and writing and the dissemination of texts in the Middle Ages. The scholars referred to above are all prominent medievalists, and their works – among many – have elaborated the concept of medieval literacy as a common denominator for the proliferation of script and the uses of texts in the Middle Ages. Even if there are substantial differences between the textual genres of this period and those of Antiquity, the concept of medieval literacy is universal or general to the extent that the same definitions should be applicable to both. Despite the genre distinctions, there should be no fundamental difference between medieval and ancient literacy, when these are understood as the social implications of reading and writing and the uses of texts.

In his book *Ancient Literacy* William V. Harris restricts the term “literacy” to those who could read in the Graeco-Roman world. His main question is (1989, 3): “How widely were the capabilities of reading and writing diffused among the inhabitants of the classical Greek and Roman worlds, the rich and the poor, the free and the slaves, men and women, town-dwellers and country-people?” To draw a line between the literate and illiterate population he refers to UNESCO’s attempt to define an illiterate as someone “who cannot with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life”. Harris’s illiteracy corresponds to the condition of being “analphabetic”; an “analphabete” according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* is “one who is totally illiterate or unable to read”.

Harris introduces two subcategories of literacy: “scribal literacy”, i.e. “literacy restricted to a specialised group which uses it for such purposes as maintaining palace records” (1989, 7), and “craftsman’s literacy”, i.e. “not the literacy of an individual craftsman but the condition in which the majority, or a near-majority, of skilled craftsmen are literate, while women and unskilled labourers and peasants are mainly not” (1989, 8). The association with Parkes’s pragmatic literacy is evident. So, when I talk about ancient literacy I have a different understanding of the concept from Harris, and am forced to “translate” manifestations of his literacy to expressions of literacy as I comprehend the concept.

Where did the *Germani* come across manifestations of Roman literacy?

In his book Harris (1989) seeks to classify the different uses of script in the Graeco-Roman world in terms of:

- Trade and commerce
- Social and political matters
- Memorials
- Religion and cult
- Literature and teaching

Even if we do not take a definite stand on the question of the distribution of these diverse uses across the population, it should be evident that Parkes's three different types of literacy are represented here. Script used in trade and commerce and social and political matters ought to reflect pragmatic literacy; memorials, religion and cult ought to imply cultural literacy; while literature and teaching would be manifestations of both cultural and professional literacy.

The key question from our point of view is then: to what extent were the Germanic peoples confronted with these different types of ancient literacy? Or, to put it more plainly: to what extent did the North Europeans come into contact with the different functions of writing enumerated here? There is every reason to believe that anyone in the Roman Empire taking part in one or more of the above activities would very soon come across manifestations of writing. And it is precisely situations like these that must have inspired the North Europeans to create a script for their own purposes.

The different uses of script that the North Europeans may have come across will have manifested themselves on wooden tablets, papyrus, earthenware, parchment, monuments, weapons or domestic objects, wherever it was appropriate to write. Each of the materials had its special connection to one or more of the specified writing functions. These different types of "manuscript" were not equally accessible to every member of society. Some were displayed so they might be observed by as many as possible, for example memorial inscriptions on monuments; others such as papyrus and parchment manuscripts had their audience among a restricted elite.

There are two main areas where North Europeans and Romans came into contact in ancient times: the city of Rome and the provinces west and north of the Empire and the frontier lines, the *limes*. The contact would in principle have been of two main kinds, trade and warfare. As regards the

latter, the North Europeans were either fighting against the Romans in order to protect their own territory, or serving as soldiers in Roman armies. The possibilities for cultural contact and cultural exchanges are obvious.

Trade

It seems evident that the Romans made frequent use of writing in their business affairs. The running of an upper-class household, which could include both urban and farm property, required the use of documents and the maintenance of written records. Not only the proprietor but also those he was dealing with would be involved in acts of writing. In the time of Augustus, the Romans began to use documents in connection with the borrowing of money. This has been taken as an indication that in Rome, at least, the ability to write was growing more common. It was not always the proprietors and traders themselves who did the reading and writing, however, and it was not uncommon to have slaves performing both functions. In such cases we have a group of people making use of texts without themselves necessarily being capable of reading and writing. This would be an example of Brian Stock's textuality without literacy.

It is precisely such textuality that must have been the North Europeans' gateway to literacy and the art of reading and writing. They observed texts in action—either the various documents used in trade and commerce, or the more conspicuous public inscriptions in stone and bronze—monuments, records, etc.—that were often displayed in towns.

Monumental epigraphy

Among the different manifestations of literacy found in the Roman Empire the most familiar and widespread is the monumental. The material collected in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* now runs to c. 250,000 items or more. Funerary stones probably represent about 170,000–190,000 of the total (Saller and Shaw 1984). The production of inscriptions varied over time, increasing in the first and second centuries of the Christian era, reaching a peak around A.D. 150, and declining sharply to a low point in the middle of the third century.

Roman monuments operated through images and inscriptions that were directed at the eye of the observer (Woolf 1996, 25). It is therefore reasonable to assume that any barbarian who came into close contact with the Romans and Roman culture, either in Rome itself or in the provinces, would notice

at least some of these texts. It should also be observed that the high-point of Roman monumental epigraphy coincided with the period in which runic script is supposed to have been created, i.e. the second century of the Christian era.

The most common types of monumental epigraphy were votive inscriptions and epitaphs. Votive inscriptions were not long, consisting normally of the name of the god, the name of the dedicator and a formulaic acronym like VSLM, standing for a version of *Voto solverunt libentes merito* ‘We fulfilled the vow willingly to the deserving god’/‘We fulfilled the vow willingly for the assistance’. Some additional information might be supplied, such as an expansion of the name of the dedicators or the phrase *pro salute* ‘in return for good health’, which would emphasise the deal made between the dedicator and the god. The stone bearing the dedication is often shaped like an altar, sometimes decorated with a pictorial representation of the god (Woolf 1996, 27).

The other main type of epigraphy consisted of funerary inscriptions on tombstones. A typical Roman funerary inscription did not only name the deceased. The name of the person erecting the stone, the commemorator, is also cited. The commemorator’s name is included in eighty per cent of extant funerary inscriptions from the western Roman Empire. The proportion varies from province to province, with the civilian population of Noricum (i.e. Austria) having the highest frequency (99.1%!). In all areas it was the military population that had the highest average of the groups studied (Meyer 1990, 75). What is important for us to observe is that funerary inscriptions which include the commemorator’s name are proportionally most frequent in an area where Germanic peoples were active and among the social groups they are supposed to have had contact with.

Epigraphy on weapons, ornaments and everyday utensils

In addition to making monumental inscriptions in stone, the Romans also cut, scratched, stamped, painted or otherwise “wrote” on metal, bricks, tiles, earthenware and glass. The artefacts concerned could be weapons, ornaments or everyday utensils. Despite the differences in writing material and writing techniques, and the functions of the artefacts, the inscriptions all have in common the purpose of communicating to the reader an intelligible message, long or short, formal or informal. The messenger might be a carpenter signing his work in some way or other, an owner expressing his ownership or naming the artefact. References to manufacture and ownership can be made in many ways: by simple naming of the owner,

by various formulas relating to manufacture and/or ownership, and by different kinds of invocation of supernatural powers for the protection of the artefact, manufacturer and/or owner.

Writing in the army—the Vindolanda tablets

Several scholars have emphasised the importance of writing in the Roman army. According to Woolf (2000, 892) it was used in:

managing the supply and movements of large numbers of men and goods, in coordinating the activities of different units and in maintaining an intelligence advantage over potential enemies. Frontier systems comprised complex communication networks and writing played an important role, along with roads and signal towers, in transmitting information along them.

Many of the military procedures required that a fair number of soldiers be literate.

In an article entitled “The Literate Roman Soldier” Edward Best affirms that knowledge of reading was necessary for soldiers participating in the Roman military (1966–67, 122). Orders and information were often written down on wooden tablets, so-called tessera (< Greek *tessares* ‘four’), to be circulated among the soldiers. Whether every single man in a camp was able to read the messages on the tessera is not clear, but the orders were certainly addressed to all personnel from the tribune to the common foot soldier. Best regards this as evidence that the written word was established as a means of conveying messages in the Roman army. His conclusion is therefore that by the first century B.C. the Roman soldier was expected to possess enough knowledge to read a simple message (1966–67, 126).

The military use of writing observed by Best should not beguile us into claiming the existence of mass literacy in the Roman army. Suffice it to say that a competent soldier could not have been a complete analphabete. He must have had some basic knowledge of reading, and perhaps writing as well. There is also every reason to maintain that a Roman soldier would have grasped the rudimentary implications of literacy during his service. The incised wooden tablets represented texts in action; the soldiers observed how these texts were produced, circulated and read out— aspects of pragmatic literacy in miniature. And it might have been here, on the fortified Roman frontier line, the *limes*, that Germanic mercenaries had their first encounter with writing and the pragmatic use of written texts. And it could also have been here that the initial idea of a vernacular Germanic script was born.

The wooden tablets discovered during the excavations at Vindolanda,

the Roman frontier post on Hadrian's Wall in northern England, may shed light on these questions. These excavations began in earnest in 1971, and in March 1973 the archaeologists came across two small thin fragments of wood with some peculiar marks on them that appeared to be made with ink. The two scraps, measuring 16×3 cm, proved to be fragments of a letter to someone serving at Vindolanda around A.D. 100. The reconstructed text reads as follows:

- I *ram tibi paria udon[um
t ab Sattua solearum[
duo et subligariorum[
duo solearum paria du[o*
- II *]um salutare.[
]ndem Elpidem Iu[
.enum Tetricum et omn[es
c]ontibernales cum quibus[
o[opto felicissimus uiuas.[*

'... I have sent (?) you ... pairs of socks from Sattua, two pairs of sandals and two pairs of underpants, two pairs of sandals. ... Greet ...ndes, Elpis, Iu..., ...enus, Tetricus and all your messmates with whom I hope you live in the greatest good fortune.' (TV I 38, in Bowman and Thomas 1983.)

Today the number of individual texts runs to approximately 1200. The tablets are dated to the period A.D. 90–120. The writing is done on a smooth surface with pen and ink, the ink made from carbon, gum arabic and water. The subject matter of the texts is varied. There are military documents and reports, accounts and records of commodities that relate both to the military and domestic organisation of the camp; there are also large numbers of personal letters. The documents, reports and accounts clearly originated at Vindolanda. When it comes to the correspondence, there are drafts or copies of letters written by people in the camp. There are, however, also letters sent to people at Vindolanda from correspondents living elsewhere, within the occupied area of Britain or north-western Gaul or even in Rome itself (Bowman 1994, 109–25).

From our point of view there is one issue that must be stressed in connection with garrison life at Vindolanda. The troops stationed there were Batavians and Tungrians, and these are Germanic peoples. In his book *Garrison Life at Vindolanda* (2002), Anthony Birley claims that about 200 of the individuals named in the writing tablets may be identified as Batavian or Tungrian garrison-members—roughly half of the total number. Birley

emphasises that almost all of these people have a single name, and were clearly not Roman citizens. They would have had to wait for this privilege until they had served twenty-five years (2002, 99). In letters, names will naturally occur in references to sender and addressee, and these could have been literate individuals in the strict sense of the word, ones who knew how to read and write Latin. Alternatively they may have had someone else to do the reading and writing for them. If a person is simply mentioned by name in a letter or in accounts and lists, we can know nothing about his ability to read and write. It would, however, be reasonable to draw the conclusion that the persons named on the Vindolanda tablets lived and worked in surroundings where the use of written texts—a certain degree of literacy—must have been a dominant factor.

Another point that should be stressed is that this form of communication does not seem to have been restricted to the higher ranks in the garrison. Even slaves appear to have been active members of the textual community of Vindolanda. The slave Severus, for example, sent a letter to his colleague Candidus about the cost of some items to be purchased for the great festival of Saturn, the Saturnalia:

I *S[eu]er[u]s Candido suo
salutem
souxtum saturnalicium
(asses) iiii aut sexs rogo frater
explices et radices ne mi-
us (denarii) s(emissem)*

II *uale frater
Candido Genialis
praeffecti
a Seuero
...i seruo*

‘Severus to his Candidus, greetings. Regarding the ... for the Saturnalia, I ask you, brother, to see them at a price of 4 or six asses and radishes to the value of no less than one-half denarius. Farewell brother. To Candidus, slave of Genialis the prefect, from Severus, slave of’ (TV II 301 in Bowman and Thomas 1994.)

The Vindolanda tablets have given us new and substantial evidence about reading and writing in the Roman army. It is, however, difficult to estimate the extent of these skills among the soldiers. It could be that there were a small number of skilled writers and readers who wrote and read the various documents for the people involved. The important point is that these

tablets offer evidence of a society in which the use of texts must have been a common feature; every member of the society must at least have observed script in action, not to mention witnessed the pragmatic use of texts. Even analphabetic barbarians must have seen some of the tablets and gained an impression of their communicative functions, an impression they could have taken back home with them, which might in turn have inspired them to invent a similar means of communication of their own. So the degree of literacy, as I use the term, must have been quite extensive.

Reflections of Roman literacy in the early Scandinavian runic inscriptions

The Vindolanda tablets represent the most widely used type of portable, everyday document in the north-western provinces and perhaps beyond. Everyone who has studied the use of writing in medieval Scandinavia will be familiar with the type of written communication manifested by these tablets. The similarity to the rune-sticks deposited in the soil of medieval Scandinavian towns some 1100 years later is striking. The basic material is much the same, that is, pieces of wood pre-prepared to a greater or lesser extent for writing, but pen and ink have given way to the knife, and the technique is now incising or carving. The subject matter and function of tablets and rune-sticks are, however, not merely similar but identical. Indeed, the letters and accounts from Vindolanda could just as well have been carved in runes on a stick in medieval Bergen, and vice versa. The letter from Severus to Candidus about purchases for the Saturnalia has much in common with the eleven-hundred-year younger runic letter found at Bryggen in Bergen: **porkæll myntære senter þer pipar** ‘Porkell mintmaster sends you pepper’ (N 651; *NlyR*, 6: 118 f.)

It has always been difficult to find substantial evidence for the theory that wood was the primary material for writing in runes. Proponents of the idea have had to resort to an *argumentum ex silencio*: since wood is not as resistant as stone and metal the oldest inscriptions on wood have yielded to the ravages of time. The main argument in favour of the theory has been that the angular shape of the runes indicates that they were designed for inscribing in wood. If stone and metal had been the primary materials there would have been no reason to restrict their form in this way. When hundreds of rune-sticks began to emerge from the medieval Scandinavian soil in the latter half of the twentieth century, adherents of the “prevalence-of-wood theory” found new arguments to bolster their belief. The new finds seemed to show that runes were being used for fundamentally the same purposes in the

Middle Ages as when runic writing originated in the Roman period. Similar inscriptions are known from the Viking Age. In Hedeby archaeologists came across wooden sticks with runic inscriptions very much like those dug up in medieval Scandinavian towns. And the stick from Staraja Ladoga, from the early Viking period, is also of the same type (Liestøl 1971). The Viking Age rune-sticks are far fewer in number than their medieval counterparts; we are counting in tens rather than hundreds. Viking Age soil does not seem to have preserved wood as well as the medieval ground. Nevertheless, if we are allowed to use our sources retrospectively, the distance between the medieval and the assumed original practice becomes shorter if we take the Viking Age material into consideration.

We should also keep in mind literary references from Antiquity to what may be runes carved in wood. We have Tacitus who in *Germania*, ch. 10, reports how the *Germani* drew lots using twigs marked with certain signs, *notis*, and we have the sixth-century poet and bishop of Poitiers, Venantius Fortunatus, sending a letter to his friend Flavus, reproaching him for not answering his letters. The message is: there are no excuses for not writing to me, write in any language you want, any script you like.

*barbara fraxineis pingatur rhuna tabellis
quodque papyrus agit virgula plana valet*

‘barbarian runes might be painted on ash tablets,
what papyrus serves as, a plane twig manages as well’
(*Carmina* VII.18, “Ad Flavum”; Leo 1881, 172 f.)

How strong these literary references are as evidence for the use of runes is open to question. There is reason to believe that neither Tacitus nor Venantius Fortunatus had first-hand knowledge of the use of runic script; their statements were probably based on hearsay. On the other hand, if we view these statements in the light of the preceding discussion, they offer circumstantial evidence in support of the theory that runes were originally intended to be inscribed in wood, inspired by Roman literacy as it is manifested on the tablets from Vindolanda.

Archaeological evidence

Most scholars agree that the runes and runic script originated in a cross-cultural context; the Germanic inventor(s) must have got the idea from someone or somewhere, and someone or something must have convinced them of the advantages of literacy. If this cultural inspiration came from

the Romans, there ought to be evidence of the Roman background in the oldest inscriptions. There can be no doubt that those who created the runic alphabet, the older *futhorc*, were familiar with Roman script and knew the Latin language. If they had no knowledge of Roman speech and writing, they would not have been able to understand the general theoretical principles alphabetic script is based on, and they could not have appreciated the utility of literacy. In other words, the inventors of runic script must have been bilingual. One fact that supports that argument is that the Germanic alphabet creators did not simply copy what they saw around them. They observed alphabetic script in action, they understood the principle behind it, and once they had grasped the concept they released themselves from strict adherence to the model and made adaptations such as the special characters, the idiosyncratic grapho-phonological correlations and the *futhorc* order of the alphabet. The older *futhorc* reflects various linguistic considerations, the most conspicuous of which is the seemingly one-to-one relation between phoneme and grapheme. This would have been impossible had the originators not been bilingual.

One crucial question that has to be asked in this connection is: how long did the cross-cultural and bilingual basis for the runic script last, and to what extent did it extend outside the Roman Empire? I would not go as far as Kurt Braunmüller (2004) who seems to suppose that the kind of “Zweisprachigkeit” or “Mehrsprachigkeit” envisaged here lasted in Scandinavia from late Antiquity to the beginning of the Middle Ages. His explanation of syntactic peculiarities in the Eikeland brooch inscription as manifestations of Latin influence stemming from the bilingualism of the carver seems to me far-fetched. It is not plausible that a local rune-carver in Jæren on the south-west coast of Norway in the last part of the sixth century was bilingual in Scandinavian and Latin to the extent that he was influenced by Latin syntax when writing in the vernacular using the native alphabet.

It is, however, possible to rephrase the above question: when the Germanic inventors of the runes set about creating their own script, did they do so while still in physical contact with the Romans within the borders of the Empire, thus bringing this cultural innovation home with them, or did they return to their homelands and when settled there once more come to think about the reading and writing they had become familiar with while abroad and so start to construct a script for their own use? For my part I think that runic writing originated among bilingual Germanic people while they were still in physical contact with the Romans and Roman culture on the Continent. After the introduction of the new alphabet, it very quickly spread

northwards, in particular to Scandinavia. Then the umbilical cord to the source became looser, or could have been cut completely, and runic script started to live its own independent life. The people who brought the script back home with them may have been bilingual, but after some generations knowledge of Latin no longer remained an essential part of Migration Age Scandinavian runic literacy. It is certainly possible that one or more of the forefathers of the person who made the Eikeland inscription knew Latin from the time they were serving in the Roman army or trading with the Romans, but the Eikeland rune-carver himself need never have seen a Roman or heard any other language than the sixth-century dialect of Jæren.

I am in no way claiming that the cultural connections with the Continent were cut during the Migration Age. On the contrary, people went back and forth in Europe at the time, and the same was doubtless true of cultural impulses. What I am trying to say is that the influence of Roman literacy on the development of runic activity in Scandinavia changed; it was no longer as strong as when the Germanic peoples were taught the secrets of alphabetic writing by the Romans. Even though runic script was created in contact with Roman literacy, it was brought into use within the Germanic sphere. That might explain the distinctive characteristics of the script that cannot be reflections of the Latin alphabet. We must assume that after runic writing was introduced, contact with its Roman origins became tenuous, allowing it to develop independently of the model.

Even if we reject Braunmüller's "Zweisprachigkeit der Runenmeister" as a source of influence on Migration Age Scandinavian, and we grant the older runes a certain independence vis-à-vis the context in which they were created, we might still look for reflections of Germanic-Roman contact in the oldest runic inscriptions.

There does exist some concrete evidence of contact between runic script and Roman literacy. The iron lancehead from Øvre Stabu is the oldest runic artefact found in Norway. The inscription reads $\mathfrak{R}\mathfrak{f}\mathfrak{N}\mathfrak{t}\mathfrak{I}\mathfrak{S}\mathfrak{Y}$ **raunijar**, corresponding to Old Norse *reynir*, meaning 'tester, trier, prober'. The term must refer either to the artefact itself or its owner or bearer. The grave where the lancehead was deposited is dated to A.D. 175–200—on the basis of a Roman sword also deposited there. According to Asbjørn Herteig (1955, 21) this must be a Roman or provincial-Roman product, since the workmanship is of a very high standard. The sword has a figure encrustation of the goddess Victoria with two roman capitals underneath: SF. The letters clearly represent a craftsman's signature with S an abbreviation of his name and F the first letter of the word *fecit* 'S. made [this sword]'. On a bronze casserole from Wiesbaden is the signature SILVANVSF, which Herteig (1955, 18)

equates with the inscription on the Øvre Stabu sword. How a Roman sword came to Toten in Norway is impossible to say. The owner must have been the man buried in the grave, and whether he had come into direct contact with the manufacturer himself while visiting Rome or the Roman provinces, or had obtained it from someone else who brought the sword to Norway, we shall never know. What is important in the current context is that our man had been in possession of two objects with two different types of writing, Latin and runic. Both the material on which the writing is found and the function of the script are similar. If we are right in assuming that the runes were created by people who saw roman script in action, then the Øvre Stabu finds may provide an example of just such a scenario.

We have a parallel example from Einang in Valdres, not too far removed from Øvre Stabu. In an area with numerous grave mounds we find one of the two Norwegian runestones from the Migration period that still stand in the place they were erected. The mounds surrounding the Einang stone are dated to A.D. 340–400. The inscription is commonly read [**ek gu/o**] **dagastirrunofaihid** ‘I, Godagastir, painted/wrote the inscription’. In a grave nearby archaeologists came across a Roman sword with a rectangular stamp in Latin capitals that may represent a name: RANVICI. The sword would appear to be evidence of direct or indirect contact between people in Valdres and the Romans. There is every reason to believe that Godagastir belonged to an upper social class in Einang—and he knew how to read and write runes. From where did he get that knowledge? Both the rune carver from Øvre Stabu and Godagastir from Einang might have had direct or indirect dealings with subjects of the Roman Empire who in turn had been in contact with Roman script culture. The Einang stone and the grave find from nearby offer further evidence of the possibility of close contacts between literate Romans and Scandinavians.

There is one further type of artefact that should be mentioned in this connection: the bracteates. There can be no doubt they were inspired by Roman (and Byzantine) coins and medallions.

Textual Evidence

The most conspicuous manifestation of ancient literacy that the Germanic peoples came across in their encounters with the Romans must have been the stone epigraphy. The publishing of statements on stone is regarded as a characteristic element of the Roman way of life. In the provinces, including north-western Europe, it is reckoned to be a practice acquired from the conquerors (MacMullen 1982, 238). There is every reason to believe that the

Scandinavian habit of erecting runestones was also copied from Roman practice; the production of Roman stone inscriptions is estimated to have peaked in about A.D. 150, the period when the older *futhark* was being developed. Another 200 years elapsed, however, before the Scandinavians started to erect stones and establish an epigraphic tradition of their own. When we compare the appearance of a Roman stone monument with that of an early Scandinavian runestone, the similarity is not striking. The Roman model is far more elaborate, the texts more extensive, and at first sight it can be difficult to see any connection between these two diverse epigraphic traditions. Roman epigraphic literacy appears more developed or more sophisticated than its early Scandinavian counterpart. We must however keep in mind that the Roman monuments that might have inspired the Scandinavians to erect runestones represent a well-established epigraphic tradition, while the extant early Scandinavian runic monuments manifest an epigraphic tradition in its initial stage. It is also a rather short tradition, for it lasted but a couple of hundred years — the fourth and fifth centuries. In the sixth, it disappeared almost entirely, and did not really burst into bloom until the last part of the Viking Age. It would therefore be reasonable to say that the habit of erecting runestones was inspired by Roman epigraphic tradition; the Scandinavians, however, adapted this cultural import to their own situation.

There is one typical feature of Roman stone epigraphy that it is worthwhile looking for in the early Scandinavian variant of the tradition. That is the tendency to include the commemorator or sponsor on memorial stones. The strong urge to mention oneself when raising a monument in honour of a deceased kinsman is often supposed to be a characteristic of the conceited Scandinavians. The Athenians had been erecting tombstones in considerable numbers for four centuries before the Romans adopted the custom; however, to name the commemorator was not an Athenian custom. The classical Athenian tombstone centres on the deceased and only rarely mentions the commemorator. Roman tombstones from the republican period display a strong tradition of the deceased + commemorator pattern, although the very earliest funerary inscriptions were simple names, as was the case in Athens. Whatever the ultimate origins of the Roman practice, it cannot be ascribed to outside influences but must have answered to particular Roman needs (Meyer 1990).

The question is then whether the Scandinavian commemorator + deceased pattern which predominates on Viking Age runestones, 'X raised this stone in memory of Y', has its origin in the deceased + commemorator pattern of Roman tombstones. If so, we should expect to find manifestations of this

influence in the early Scandinavian material as well. However, a search for vestiges of the Roman deceased + commemorator pattern among the earliest runestones yields very meagre results. Krause and Jankuhn (1966) operate with the term *Gedenksteine*, which seems to cover all memorial stones. Numbers 71–94 in their corpus are *Gedenksteine*, a total of twenty-four. These they split up into two subgroups: *doppelseitige Gedenkschriften* “in denen der Name des Toten neben dem Namen dessen, der den Stein setzte, oder dem des Runenmeisters eingemeißelt ist” (pp. 128f.), and *einseitige Gedenksteine* “auf denen — mit oder ohne Beitext — nur ein einziger Name im Genitiv oder Nominativ oder zwei parallel geordnete Namen im Nominativ erscheinen” (p. 129). Here we are supposed to have the name(s) of the deceased, or, in the case of the single nominatives, either the deceased or the “Runenmeister”.

It is among the *doppelseitige Gedenkschriften* we should look for a commemorator + deceased or deceased + commemorator pattern or formula. There are not more than seven such inscriptions, numbers 71–77 in the corpus. These are By, Tune, Rö, Reistad, Kjøllevik, Opedal, and Myklebostad. One clear example of a commemorator + deceased formula among the seven is Tune, which says **ek wiwar after woduride witadahalaiban worahto** [runor] ‘I Wiwar after Woduridar, the bread-ward, wrought [runes]’. In addition, Hagustaldar on the Kjøllevik stone tells that he buried his son, without it being clear whether the second name in the nominative is indeed that of the son. In the remaining five inscriptions there is no explicit expression of a relationship between deceased and commemorator, it is merely implied.

We must make certain reservations when it comes to Krause and Jankuhn’s grouping of the early Scandinavian runestones. There could well be commemorative inscriptions concealed among those placed in other subgroups. The Blekinge stones are singled out as a special category, but it seems clear to me that the Istaby stone, at least, is a *doppelseitige Gedenkschrift* as both the deceased, Hariwulfr, and the commemorator, the runecarver Haþuwulfr, are mentioned. I also wonder whether some of the inscriptions grouped as “magische Formeln” might not be of commemorative type, as for instance the fragmentary lines on the Vettelund stone, where it is stated that someone was the victim of a deceitful attack (Antonsen 2002, 174), or of supernatural powers (Høst 1976, 86f.). The object is referred to as “my son’s stone” and we also learn that someone whose name is lost painted or made (the runes). So here we have both a deceased and one or two commemorators. But even if we can

add the odd example to the group of stones that mention both deceased and commemorator, we are nowhere near the proportion documented from the Roman Empire.

It should therefore be clear that the Roman practice of including the commemorator's name on funerary tombstones had only percolated through in a small way to the raisers of the early Scandinavian runestones. As for the commemorator + deceased formula 'X raised this stone in memory of Y'—almost ubiquitous on Viking Age runestones—there is only one example in the extant early Scandinavian material. The evidence for assuming this formula goes back to the earliest runic memorial stones is thus very slight. What one might wonder, however, is whether the seemingly formulaic expression *ek/X rúnōr faihidō/faihidē* has its equivalent in the Roman votive inscriptions' VSLM; 'I fulfilled the vow' > 'I carved the runes'.

If we are right in assuming that the early Scandinavian custom of erecting inscribed stone monuments owed its origin to Roman tradition, then we should expect at least some similarities in epigraphical layout. At first glance the characteristic feature of the Roman layout seems completely absent from the Scandinavian material. In Roman epigraphy the letters are placed horizontally on the stone; the early Scandinavian rune-carvers in contrast set their texts vertically. In some cases this discrepancy may be due to natural causes; the shape of the Scandinavian stones demands vertical rather than horizontal texts. It is, for example, difficult to see how the carver of the Kjøllevik inscription could have followed the Roman layout. There are however stones a-plenty in Scandinavia that could have provided early Scandinavian rune-carvers with appropriate surfaces for horizontal runic texts.

We should keep in mind, though, that stone raising was not a custom the Scandinavians inherited from the Romans. The tradition of erecting *bauta(r)steinar*—stone monuments associated with graves—goes back at least to the pre-Roman Iron Age or even the Bronze Age. The first element of *bautarsteinn* (or *bautaðarsteinn*) is considered to be related to ON *bauta* '[to] beat, strike, pierce, stab'. A supposed derivate is *beytill* m. (< Germ. **bautila*- 'thruster' 'pusher') meaning the penis of a horse. On this basis it has been suggested that *bautarsteinar* originally functioned as phallus symbols and therefore needed to be tall and slim. According to Fritznér (1973, s.v.) a *bautaðarsteinn* is "en Sten af samme Skikkelse som et Spyd eller andet Redskab som bruges til dermed at stikke, støde" ('a stone with the same appearance as a spear or other instrument used for stabbing or piercing with'). What the early Scandinavians inherited from the Romans

was therefore not the custom of erecting memorial stones, but the custom of equipping such stones with inscriptions. And given the traditional shape of the *bautarsteinn*, the vertical layout of the texts was almost inevitable.

There are however several instances of squarer stones being used by early Scandinavian rune-carvers with the possibilities this offered for placing the inscription horizontally. In some cases they stuck to their vertical *bautarsteinn* tradition (e.g. for the longer name on the Berga stone, though the second, shorter name runs horizontally; KJ 86), in others they took the opportunity to follow the Roman pattern and set the text horizontally (e.g. on the Skärkind stone, KJ 87). This leads one to wonder whether the carver of the transitional Björketorp inscription (KJ 97) might be one of those who followed Roman tradition when the opportunity arose. But we must also bear in mind that rune-carvers may have been inspired to adopt a horizontal layout by other types of written source than stone monuments — manuscripts, books or even wooden tablets of the Vindolanda type.

One more thing has to be said about the vertical versus horizontal layout of runestone texts. Let us cast a glance at the Stentoften stone, height 118 cm, width 77 cm, lots of space for a horizontal positioning of the inscription. Nevertheless the runes run vertically. There are, though, reasons for believing the stone lay flat on the ground when the carver did his work. And if we put the stone in that position, we get — for the most part — a horizontally oriented text. That is quite possibly the image the carver had in his mind as he set to work, but when the stone was erected, the horizontal text had become vertical.

Conclusion

There is every reason to suppose that the older *fupark* was developed after Germanic peoples had encountered Roman literacy around the first century of the Christian era. However, once they had adopted the idea of alphabetic writing, the *Germani* rather quickly distanced themselves from the model and gave runic script its own characteristics. There is some evidence of close contact between Roman and runic when it comes to loose objects such as weapons and bracteates. The erection of stone monuments, on the other hand, was a custom the Scandinavians, or their Germanic ancestors on the Scandinavian peninsula, seem to have established independently. The placing of inscriptions on these monuments, however, was a feature inspired by knowledge of Roman stone epigraphy. When it comes to runic inscriptions in wood, the evidence — such as the Vindolanda tablets or references in literary sources — is chiefly indirect. Those wishing to plead

the case for wood are thrown back on an *argumentum ex silencio*. Absence of evidence, however, is not necessarily evidence of absence. And whether runic inscriptions in the older *fuþark* represent a written culture that could be called literate—whether there existed something we might term older *fuþark* runacy—is a discussion that must be left for another occasion.

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“How to Do Things with Runes”: Illocutionary Forces and Communicative Purposes behind the Runic Inscriptions in the Older *Fuþark*

Christiane Zimmermann

Runic inscriptions in the older *fuþark* have so far been the subject chiefly of two types of scholarly investigation. The first may be called corpus presentations or corpus studies, which regard the inscriptions above all from the point of view of their common characteristics. Criteria which establish the inscriptions in the older *fuþark* as a single and homogeneous corpus have been (a) the use of a stable inventory of graphemes, and (b)—leaving the scattered and controversial evidence of Gothic features in the older runic language aside (cf. Peterson 1998 for a critical survey)—the apparently homogeneous, pre- or supradialectal language which was initially labelled “Spätgemeingermanisch” (Kuhn 1955), subsequently renamed “Northwest Germanic” (Antonsen 1965), and—focussing on the long-lasting “exceptional linguistic uniformity”—is sometimes referred to as a “runic koiné” (Makaev 1996 [1965], 45).

As a consequence of this approach, subcorpora have been sought chiefly among those groups of inscriptions which systematically employ differing forms of graphemes. This is the case, for example, with the so-called South-Germanic or Continental inscriptions which, as a subgroup of the runic inscriptions in the older *fuþark*, are defined by the use of double-barred **h**, i.e. ᚨ, for /h/. Another group frequently treated separately are the late Scandinavian inscriptions—first of all the Blekinge quartet and the Eggja stone—which are regularly referred to as “transitional inscriptions” (for a

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discussion of this term see Barnes 2001). This group is set apart from earlier runic writings because here the first traces of a change in the presupposed phoneme-grapheme relation of the twenty-four-character (older) *fupark* can be detected, the final stage of which is the reduction to the sixteen-character (younger) *fubark*. The development of specific North- or South- respectively West-Germanic language features is often used as supporting evidence for the above mentioned subgroupings.¹

The main focus of the second type of approach might be said to consist of the search for the meaning – and in most cases this is the semantic meaning only – of an individual inscription. Such interpretations are, however, often based on the notion of a homogeneous corpus, the reason for this possibly lying in the limited number of inscriptions that exist. Thus, both approaches suggest – to differing degrees – a conception of the older inscriptions as a homogeneous group where the function and meaning of, for example, one of the early texts from around A.D. 200 might be illuminated by consulting those from some hundred years later in time, and from totally different geographical areas and cultural contexts.

This conception of the older runic inscriptions with its origin in a basically dyadic or de Saussurean understanding of the linguistic sign is in many ways inconsistent with the methods applied in today's textual sciences and linguistics or, to put it in another way: What group of texts or utterances covering a time-span of more than 500 years and stretching over the larger part of present-day Europe would be considered a homogeneous entity just because of their apparent graphemic, phonemic and morphemic uniformity?

The need for a more differentiated approach becomes most apparent when we turn to the questions of: (1) the functions and uses of early runic writing, and (2) the practitioners of this culture of literacy.

Whereas answers to the first set of questions tended to be deduced either from earlier historical sources, as, for example, the famous mention of *notae* in Tacitus's *Germania*, ch. 10, or from much later literary texts (e.g. *Egils saga* [1933], 109, 171, and 229 f.), and were sometimes solely dependent on the individual interpreter's preconceptions (cf. the surveys of K. M. Nielsen 1985, Düwel 1992a, and the resumé in Stoklund 1994), more recent runological studies (in the wake of Bæksted's *Målruner og trolldruner* 1952) have

¹ The Scandinavian editions *DR*, *NIÆR*, *SRI*, and related publications (e.g. Høst 1976; Jansson 1987; Moltke 1985) might also be considered to be or to contain subgroupings of the inscriptions in the older *fupark*. But as the subcorpora they present are not motivated from within the written material itself – they are selected because they belong to national corpora – they do not represent a more differentiated approach with respect to the functions and meaning of the inscriptions in the older *fupark*.

identified three main contexts of use for early runic script: “sacral/cultic”, “profane”, and “magic” (cf. e.g. Düwel 1997; Nedoma 1998). Nevertheless, the individual functions which are listed (see e.g. Musset 1965, 141–67; Odenstedt 1990, 170–73; Düwel 2008, 11 f.) tend to be determined pragmatically² rather than by following a consistent pragmalinguistic taxonomy (cf. below); a systematic but differentiated study that looks for distinct functions and their particular distribution in time has so far been lacking.

As to the question of the practitioners of early runic literacy, the question of the so-called “rune-masters”, this is generally answered by pointing to the **erilaz/irilaz** inscriptions (found on the Kragehul spearshaft, KJ 27, the Lindholmen amulet, KJ 29, the Bratsberg fibula, KJ 16, the Väsby/Eskatorp bracteate(s), KJ 128, the Järsberg stone, KJ 70, the Rosseland stone, KJ 69, the By stone, KJ 71, and the Veblungsnes cliff, KJ 56). But these two notions — bearers of runic knowledge, and inscriptions containing the word **erilaz/irilaz** — do not mesh easily together, or at least not without a number of additional premises. Runic inscriptions in the older *futhark* go back to at least the second century A.D., whereas inscriptions which contain the word **erilaz/irilaz** are confined exclusively to the fifth and the sixth centuries (Düwel 1992b, 59; 2008, 12).³ Against this background an interpretation of the inscription on the Meldorf fibula (cf. Düwel and Gebühr 1981) as *irili* ‘to the rune-master’ (Mees 1997) — although in the best tradition of the “homogeneous” approach — seems rather improbable.

Instead of assuming that the inscriptions in the older *futhark* stem from one homogeneous literate culture, it would seem much more reasonable to reckon with a set of differing “cultures” which might be characterised by different text-types showing a particular distribution in time, space and context.

But how could such different types of written utterances or text-types be determined? A possible starting point for an investigation of this kind might

² Düwel himself (2008, 11 f.) points to the inherent difficulties of such a task and lists the different types of inscriptions with a certain reservation.

³ These are the traditional datings. As the **erilaz/irilaz** inscriptions are found on a great variety of objects (bracteates, a fibulae, a spearshaft, stones), the datings vary greatly in their reliability. Whereas the datings for the fibula, the lancehead and the bracteates may be considered to be relatively reliable, the datings for the stone inscriptions are more problematic. This is also stressed by Knirk in his article on the Rosseland stone (2003, 359): “Die Runeninschrift von R. wird gewöhnlich etwa in das 5. Jh. datiert, könnte aber dem gesamten Zeitraum der Runensteine mit klassischem Urnord. (350–500/550) zugehören.”

be to adopt the findings of communication science as a theoretical basis. One of the basic theories in this field is the so-called speech act theory.⁴

Speech act theory (going back to Austin's *How to Do Things with Words*, 1962) is concerned with what a speaker "does" in saying something. This "doing" which is at the centre of every utterance, is the communicative and social act performed in uttering sounds, words, phrases or sentences of a language. Thus, the focus of linguistic attention might be said no longer to rest on the formal side of the utterance acts, meaning the production of well-formed sentences, of sounds and words with sense and reference (the so-called "locutionary act", cf. Austin 1962, 94–98), but rather on the socio-functional side of this utterance, meaning the communicative act or force conventionally achieved by it (the so-called "illocutionary act", cf. Austin 1962, 98 f.). In this sense speech act theory deals with the underlying communicative functions performed by utterance acts.

By applying the concepts of speech act theory to the runic inscriptions in the older *futhark* it might be possible to determine different types of communicative acts represented by these written utterances. But how can specific speech acts be identified, and which are to be expected?

J. R. Searle (1969), building upon Austin's work, introduced several ideas that provide an important framework for the application of the speech act theory to discourse. Most significant is his classification of speech acts (Searle 1976).⁵ He distinguishes five types or classes of illocutionary act which he assumes to be universally valid: (1) the "representatives" such as reports or statements, (2) the "directives" which comprise such speech acts as requests or advice, (3) the "commissives" such as promises or threats, (4) the "expressives" which comprise speech acts like those involved in congratulating, welcoming or wishing and (5) the "declarations" which comprise communicative acts like appointing or naming.

The identification of a specific utterance act as belonging to one of these five classes of illocutionary acts is usually indicated by the so-called "illocutionary force indicating devices" which manifest themselves linguistically (through specific linguistic elements or structures), paralinguistically (through e.g. specific intonation patterns) or through the linguistic and situational context of the utterance.

⁴ Some ideas on the applicability of speech act theory to the runic inscriptions in the older *futhark* were presented at the runic conference in Eichstätt in 2003 (cf. Zimmermann 2006).

⁵ Since the first taxonomical approach (cf. Austin 1962), several classifications of illocutionary acts have been proposed (cf. for example Habermas 1971, 111 ff.; Maas 1972, 199 ff.; Wunderlich 1976, 77 ff.; Bayer 1984, 138 ff.; Ossner 1985, 101 ff.). As Searle's taxonomy is the most commonly used and accepted, it has been selected for the purpose of this paper.

Although the five types of illocutionary acts or forces can be expressed in different ways by using specific linguistic elements, there is always one linguistic structure, the so-called “explicit performative”, which does this explicitly. Explicit performatives are sentences displaying a characteristic double structure in which a performative verb like promise, threaten, plead or report in a characteristic “I-formula” is used to introduce or classify the expression comprising the actual propositional content: “I promise to be there tonight” as well as “I’ll be there tonight, that’s a promise” might be taken as examples of such explicit syntactic double structures. There are of course further linguistic elements and structures which function as illocutionary markers such as interrogative or imperative sentence structures, word order in general, sentence mood, the use of particular adverbs, particles or conjunctions, or formulaic expressions and specific lexical items.⁶

Taking a brief look at the written utterances in the corpus of runic inscriptions with these indicating devices in mind we quickly find instances of expressions which exhibit the above-mentioned linguistic markers. These are, for example, utterances using I-formulas in combination with specific verbs such as ‘do’, ‘name’ or ‘consecrate’: An example of such a structure is the inscription on the Lindholmen amulet, KJ 29, the beginning of which is generally transliterated as **ekerilazsawilagazhateka** and which—following the traditional interpretations—could be translated as ‘I the eril here am called wilagar (= ‘the cunning one’)’ (e.g. Krause and Jankuhn 1966, 70), or ‘I the eril am called Sawilagar’ (e.g. Moltke 1985, 106). The illocutionary act of “naming”, which in the sentence above is expressed by the verb **haitan* can, according to Searle (1976), be classified as a representative or declarative speech act, depending on whether the speaker by naming the person simply represents the world as it is or creates new facts in the world (Hoffmann 1999, 213–234).

In addition to the sentences with I-formulas, there also are imperative or possibly optative sentence structures pointing towards directive illocutionary acts, such as the one on the Tørvika stone B, KJ 62: **heprodwen...**, meaning ‘Clear off from here!’ (Krause and Jankuhn 1966, 140 f.; Høst 1976, 74–76) or on the Strøm whetstone, KJ 50: **wate hali hino horna | haha skapi hapu ligi**, translated as ‘May the horn wet this stone! Harm the aftermath! May that which is mown down lie!’ (Krause and Jankuhn 1966, 110–13), or ‘Wet this stone, horn! Scathe, scythe! Lie, that which is mown down!’ (Antonsen 1975, no. 45; 1986, 335 f.). There are even runic sequences which seem to function as performative classifications of the following written utterance,

⁶ Cf. the inventories listed in Austin (1962, 73–82), Searle (1969, 30 f.), or Wunderlich (1976, 75).

e.g. the **uþarabasba** ‘harm-prophecy’ on the Björketorp stone,⁷ which may be interpreted as labelling the whole inscription as a commissive speech act.

But even though the communicative meaning of an utterance is in many cases linguistically encoded by such illocutionary force indicators as mentioned above, and thus conventionalized (Searle 1969, 45),⁸ there often is no simple correlation between the surface structure of an utterance and its underlying illocutionary force or meaning. Sometimes there is even a total lack of clear or unambiguous linguistic elements which would point to the illocutionary act intended by the speaker. The expression “I’ll be there tonight” for instance might be a prediction, a promise, or even a threat.

In cases like these, spoken utterances usually provide additional cues such as intonation or specific forms of phonation; in oral communication, nonverbal communicators, such as gestures or facial expressions, may also be involved and can help in disambiguating the uttered expression and in revealing the communicative intention behind it. The given situation in which the utterance is produced might be of equal relevance as the given socio-cultural context (cf. the notion of interpretive “frames” in discourse analysis).

Initially developed in connection with spoken utterances, the findings of speech act theory were soon also applied to neighbouring linguistic disciplines, particularly to the study of texts and text-types. All five classes of illocutionary forces or communicative intentions have been transferred and are now used in a similar fashion to differentiate specific types of texts (Brinker 1983). The change of the communicative medium, however, brings about several changes which could be crucial in the application of speech act theory to the interpretation of the runic inscriptions in the older *futhark*.

For one, these changes concern the interplay of actors in the communicative act and other factors relevant to successful communication, possibly leading to functional shifts with regard to the devices meant to identify the illocutionary or communicative act. For another, there may be

⁷ Although the readings and interpretations of the remaining parts of the inscription on the Björketorp stone vary greatly from scholar to scholar, the interpretation of **uþarabasba** as ‘harm-prophecy’ or ‘foreboding of bad things’ is generally accepted (cf. for example Krause and Jankuhn 1966, 214–18; Antonsen 1975, no. 120; Moltke 1985, 141f.). Jacobsen and Moltke (in *DR, Text*, 410–414) and N. Å. Nielsen (1968, 29), however, assume a different syntactic structure of **uþarabasba** and consequently translate it as ‘Ruin I foresee’.

⁸ This understanding of a conventionalized relation between the utterance, the employed linguistic elements and the communicative meaning of the utterance stands in contrast to the Gricean concept of “meaning”, which is solely based on the context of the utterance and the speaker’s intention (cf. Grice 1991a [1957]; 1991b [1969]; 1991c [1968]).

some restrictions regarding the kind of communicative acts being rendered into writing (cf. for the following Ehlich 1994; Raible 1994).

Thus, due to the change of medium a number of further questions have to be taken into account in determining the meaning of texts and text-types. These questions are:

- (1) What are the general consequences for the communicative act when rendered into written form?
- (2) What possible restrictions with regard to the range of communicative acts are to be considered when dealing with early literacy?
- (3) What changes have to be taken into account concerning the speaker/hearer respectively emittent/recipient relation?
- (4) What illocutionary markers can be expected to reveal the encoded communicative intention?

Script and writing in general can be seen as a device for the prolongation of a spoken utterance (Ehlich 1994, 19 f.). Extending the duration of the existence of an utterance and thereby its communicative meaning is especially relevant in contexts in which it seems of some importance that the utterance outlives its given oral context. Transfer to the written medium allows it to be preserved for a longer period of time. Writing down an utterance might also suggest itself when the utterance comprises a communicative act which is somehow connected with a future situation, e.g., commissive acts such as promises and threats (cf. the **uþarabasba** on the Björketorp stone).

It is the first of these reasons for writing in particular, namely preserving an utterance, which seems to stand at the beginning of literacy (Ehlich 1994, 25). Communicative acts which manifest themselves in writing in the earliest phases of literacy tend to belong to a more private domain and are rarely of wider social or communal relevance.⁹

The changes concerning the communication model itself can be described as a double process of dissociation: On the one hand, the co-presence of speaker and hearer is dissolved, along with their specific social situation during communication; on the other hand, rendering an utterance into writing entails the complete loss of the actual situational context of the spoken utterance.

These changes lead to compensation processes which may be described

⁹ The basic functions of literacy listed for example by Hines (1997, 83) are thus in their entirety simply not to be expected for the earliest phases in the adoption of writing and literacy (cf. also Page 1973, 104 f.). It is not by the mere fact that it begins to use a writing system that a society necessarily changes from an oral to a literate society; this is also stressed by Williams (1997, 187).

as transference processes. Paralinguistic features of the utterance as well as the specific communicative situation that can contribute, for example, emotional and other circumstantial aspects to the meaning of the utterance, are often transferred to parameters of the written utterance, serving as new communicative markers there. These parameters also include the text-bearing object, which therefore can contribute to the communicative meaning of the written utterance (Ehlich 1994, 24).

This is of special importance for early literate communities in which utterances are not written down on neutral objects such as today's paper or medieval parchment. Instead, they are often written down on meaningful objects, objects which have a specific place and function in their respective material culture (cf. also Herschend 2001, 367). In connection with monumental inscriptions on stone this communicative relevance of the text bearer itself has been mentioned and included in determining the meaning of these inscriptions (cf. for example Øeby Nielsen 2001).

These and other correlations will be of significance when speech act theory is employed in the search for the meaning of the runic inscriptions. In addition to the decoding — if available — of the linguistic markers in the inscriptions themselves, the communicative context of the utterance must be reconstructed; this means that questions have to be formulated (a) with respect to the speaker respectively emittent and the hearer respectively recipient of the message, and (b) concerning the original utterance situation and the contribution of the inscribed object to the communicative meaning of the written utterance.

Returning to the original question of the heterogeneity or homogeneity of the runic inscriptions in the older *futhark*, it might seem advisable in the context of an initial case study to start with a well-defined group of inscriptions.

For the early phase of runic literacy, such a well-defined group of inscriptions can be found within present-day Denmark. Here, several objects have been discovered — most of them during archaeological excavations — that can be dated to the first half of the third century A.D., i.e. all of them in a period of one or at most two generations. The objects under discussion are, on the one hand, the early women's fibulae, which can be dated to the period C1b of the late Roman Iron Age (ca. 200/210–250/260, one of them a little later), and, on the other hand, the weapons from bog deposits, dating from the same archaeological period, perhaps some years earlier.

All in all, five of the six Danish runic fibulae (the following characterizations of the objects are — if not otherwise specified — all based on the publications by Bæksted 1945; Moltke 1951; 1964; 1985; Stoklund 1985; 1994;

1995a; 1995b) belong to the group of the so-called rosette fibulae (Lund-Hansen 1995, 212–14; Ethelberg 2000, 51–53): the Værløse, the Himlingøje 2, the Næsbjerg, the Nøvling/Lundegårde, and the Udby/Skovgårde fibula. All fibulae mentioned were found in the context of women’s graves (Himlingøje 2 in an exceptionally rich context), three on Seeland, and two are from Jutland; the fibula 1 of Himlingøje, which is of the so-called bow-fibula type and was also found on Seeland, is dated a little later than the above group of rosette fibulae (i.e. period C1b–C2).

The reconstruction of the communicative contexts of the inscriptions on these runic objects in the first instance requires data about the “when” and “where” of the inscriptions: For all fibulae, it may be assumed that the inscriptions were incised after the completion of the fibula itself—which means that the “writing” of these inscriptions was not a regular part of the fibulae’s manufacturing process. This may be proved by ornamentations and decorative patterns that undoubtedly were already on the object before the inscriptions were engraved, the inscriptions themselves even being incised with a different tool (e.g. on the Værløse fibula). Details of the construction of the fibulae would also indicate that the runes were engraved at some later point in time: A case in point is the covering plate above the catch-plate, which was already fixed on the fibula, thus reducing the space for engraving, while at the same time obstructing it (this is most evident on the Udby and Himlingøje 2 fibulae, a further example might be the inscription on the Nøvling/Lundegårde fibula).

These features may be taken as arguments for the assumption of two separate processes, a manufacturing process and an inscribing process. They also point to the fact that the inscribing process took place some time after the production and was not carried out by the same person, otherwise the incising of the runes would presumably have been integrated more conveniently into the manufacturing sequence.

The different inscribing techniques and the varying orientation and placing of the inscriptions on the objects themselves also point to independent and individual inscribing acts being set apart from the production process of the fibulae, as both the obverse as well as the reverse side of the catch-plate were used, the inscriptions themselves running from the upper end of the plate to the lower end or vice versa; sometimes the top of the runes point towards the pin, sometimes the bottom. In sum, there is nothing to indicate a common engraving tradition. In addition, the fibulae show right-to-left and left-to-right inscriptions and some variation in the rune graphs, which in turn suggest different writers (for details on the individual fibulae see Table 1).

Table 1. Danish runic fibulae

Name	Type of object	Context/Dating	Features of the inscription and the inscribed object	Transliteration
Himlingøje 1	bow fibula	single find, C1b/C2 (cf. Lund Hansen 1995, 97, 143 f.; 1998, 168)	Inscription on the reverse side of the fibula's triangular foot. Left-to-right inscription. Inscription runs from the upper end of the fibula's foot to the lower end. Runes do not run parallel to the imitation bead-wire border ornament on the reverse side of the fibula's foot.	harriso
Værløse	rosette fibula	grave find, woman's grave, C1b (cf. Vebæk 1945, 77 f.; Lund Hansen 1987, 410; 1998, 168)	Inscription on the obverse side of the fibula's catch-plate. Left-to-right inscription. Inscription starts at the upper end of the catch-plate; bottom of the runes point to the pin. Both sides of the catch-plate are engraved with a tremolo decoration: a framing line around the border of the catch-plate and a swastika. Inscription is engraved with a different instrument and in a different technique; it is later than the decoration, as it crosses the tremolo border and makes way for the swastika. Signs of abrasion at the tremolo border below.	alugod
Himlingøje 2	rosette fibula, damaged, pin catch only partly preserved	grave find, rich woman's grave, C1b (cf. Lund Hansen 1995, 105 f., 152–158; 1998, 167)	Inscription on the catch-plate of the fibula, on the reverse side facing the pin. Left-to-right inscription. Inscription runs towards the upper end of the catch-plate; bottom of the runes point to the pin. No further ornamentation.	...wīduhudaz

[Table 1]

Name	Type of object	Context/Dating	Features of the inscription and the inscribed object	Transliteration
Næsbjerg	rosette fibula, silver coating, very badly damaged	grave find, woman's grave, C1b (cf. Ringtved 1986, 126–28; Lund Hansen 1998, 169)	Inscription on the catch-plate of the fibula, on the reverse side facing the pin. Right-to-left inscription. Inscription starts at the upper end of the catch-plate; bottom of the runes point to the pin. The framing line and the runes are engraved in the tremolo technique, the runes in a slightly finer tremolo, bottom of the runes cross the framing line; the obverse side of the catch-plate also shows tremolo decoration. In addition further simple lines and scratches as well as ladder-like ornaments between the runic characters, which are later than the runes and sometimes also cross the tremolo border.	?arafnis?
Nøvling/ Lundegårde	rosette fibula	grave find, woman's grave, C1b (cf. Marseen 1964, 35; Ringtved 1986, 151–53; Lund Hansen 1998, 169)	Inscription on the obverse side of the catch-plate. Left-to-right inscription. Inscription starts at the upper end of the catch-plate; bottom of the runes point to the pin. Runes are considerably smaller and do not go from the top to the bottom of the catch-plate. No further ornamentation.	bidawarjajaz talgldai
Udby/ Skovgårde	rosette fibula	grave find, woman's grave, C1b (cf. Lund Hansen 1998, 168 f.; Ethelberg 2000, 50–53)	Inscription on the reverse side of the catch-plate. Left-right/right-left running inscription: lamo runs from right to left, talgida from left to right; word divider between lamo and talgida . Top of the runes point to the pin. No further decoration on the side with the inscription, but an iterative ornamental pattern on the obverse side. No sign of wear.	lamo talgida

These observations are especially important, as the group of the Danish rosette fibulae, due to the striking agreements both in construction and in decoration, and due to their local distribution with a significant concentration on Seeland, are regarded as products of presumably one workshop only (Lund Hansen 1995, 213; Ethelberg 2000, 52). The two fibulae among them displaying the closest similarities in decoration (i.e. the Himlingøje 2 and the Udby/Skovgårde fibula)—a fact which Lund Hansen (1998, 170) puts down to them being manufactured in the same workshop, presumably even by the same craftsman—exhibit distinctly different inscriptions.

Data on the social context of these inscriptions can be obtained by enquiring about the value of the objects themselves and through their archaeological context. All rosette fibulae come from well-documented graves and relate to an exceptionally high social context. They can be regarded as typical women's jewellery, as all of them were found in richly equipped women's graves. The only exception is the Himlingøje bow fibula; being a single find, the archaeological context of this object cannot be reconstructed with certainty. The decoration of this object, however, also suggests that its wearer was of high social standing.

Although the distribution of the fibulae is not restricted to archaeologically prominent centres with so-called "status 1 burials" (Lund Hansen 1998, 162–66), wherever they surface, they represent the highest social level on the site. As only five of the fifty-three Danish rosette fibulae discovered so far bear runic inscriptions, it may be possible to conclude further that a prestige object such as a rosette fibula did not inevitably require a runic inscription. The place where the inscription was applied would suggest that the engraving of a runic inscription hardly increased the public prestige already inherent in the object. At any rate, the inscriptions on the rosette fibulae and on the bow fibula are not or not immediately visible to the eye. Thus the inscription could hardly have fulfilled a public function, or have been meant for public display. As the catch-plate of the rosette fibulae is usually decorated in varying styles and patterns, a runic inscription might quite easily have been misinterpreted as some kind of ornamentation. The Næsbjerg rosette fibula is a clear case in point: here, both sides of the catch-plate are "decorated" using the tremolo technique, but whereas the pin side bears a runic inscription incised in the tremolo-stitch technique, the obverse side of the catch-plate "only" exhibits a decorative border lining and a zig-zag pattern carried out in the same technique and filled out with some rather simple lines and scratches (cf. Moltke 1951, 55; Marstrander 1952, 92).

The placing of the inscriptions and their concealment may also allow for conclusions to be drawn about the partners in the communicative act: if

the inscriptions were not generally visible or discernible as such, the only possible recipients of the text seem to be the women who owned the fibulae, being the only persons with access to it.

Furthermore, the object itself may be characterized as belonging to a woman’s personal sphere. It is not a unique object, as there are fifty-two further specimens, and apart from indicating high status, there seems to be no additional public meaning to it.

The reconstructed context of the inscriptions on the early runic fibulae and thereby the context of the written utterance acts so far point to individual communicative acts which belong to the private or personal sphere.

The inscriptions themselves show two different surface structures: On the one hand they can be classified as one-word utterances generally interpreted as personal names. Two of these names can, without doubt, be classified as male personal names: these are **wīduhudaz** on the Himlingøje 2 fibula and **bidawarijaz** on the Nøvling/Lundegårde fibula. The other names are unusual in that they show rather unexpected vowels as case-endings (cf. H. F. Nielsen 2000, 149 f., 153–55), but also names which could be and have been interpreted as male personal names (for **alugod** on the Værløse fibula cf. Stiles 1984, 28 f.; for **hariso** and **lamo** cf. Stoklund 1991; 1994, 98, 105; Seibold 1994, 62–64; for an extensive discussion of the personal names cf. Peterson 1994).

The second group of texts is constructed like a declarative sentence. The verb used in these inscriptions is **talgijan*, which presumably refers to the act of incising the inscription (e.g. Moltke 1964; Krause and Jankuhn 1966, 38); the precise meaning of **talgijan* is, however, obscure. Both inscriptions displaying this verb use the past tense, a feature which could be of some importance when compared to the later runic inscriptions in the older *futhark*. However, none of these texts contains unambiguous linguistic indicators which give a reason for classifying these utterances as anything other than representative utterance acts.

Some of the names, though — and these are the common denominator of this group of inscriptions — have been analysed as hypocoristic formations, nicknames, short forms or affectionate forms of names; some names seem to be strikingly unofficial. These interpretations correspond perfectly to the communicative context reconstructed above and point to the private nature of the communication.

Whether the inscriptions containing the verb **talgijan* actually differ in type from the one-word inscriptions and thus represent a different communicative act, may be a point of discussion. However, the identity of the contexts may justify the hypothesis that we are dealing with different

surface structures of one type of communicative act and meaning only (cf. the Gricean “meaning” concept, Grice 1991a–c).

Due to the absence of unambiguous linguistic markers the determination of the communicative act performed by these written utterances necessarily chiefly relies on the communicative context and the fact that they were written down. The combination of this context and the utterance acts on the Danish women’s fibulae strongly suggests that we are dealing with an individual, personal kind of communication that is focussed on mentioning a male personal name in a female context. The writing down of the name keeps it present, the specific communicative context of the utterance is represented by writing it on the meaningful object of a woman’s fibula, accessible only to the woman herself. Taking these cues together, we might speak of an emotive or, in speech act terms, expressive communicative act.

In most of their characteristic features the early runic inscriptions on the Danish women’s fibulae thus differ greatly from their slightly earlier or contemporary Roman counterparts (cf. Behrens 1950;¹⁰ for a general survey of Roman literacy in the Roman provinces see Rüger 1998). These “inscriptions” are usually cast in the manufacturing process of the fibula or hammered into it, using a die, when putting the parts of the fibula together; there are therefore quite frequently a number of fibulae showing an identical or a very similar stamp. The stamps are most often placed on the obverse side of the fibulae’s head or on the bow of the fibulae and are thus in principle visible to the public (cf. for example the NERTOMARUS or AUCISSA types, Behrens 1950, 3, 6 f.)—although there are also some interesting exceptions to the rule.¹¹ Consequently these “inscriptions” are all interpreted as manufacturers’ marks, with a representative communicative function. Although the runic characters were presumably modelled on the Roman letters (cf. for example Williams 1997)—in the case of the runic inscriptions on the fibulae—the “writing” techniques employed are clearly different from the Roman examples, as is the use the script was put to in that particular context.¹² Rather than speaking of an imitation of the Roman use of letters in this context, it would be more appropriate to speak of an inspiration from the Roman use of letters—if at all.

¹⁰ I thank Lisbeth Imer from the National Museum in Copenhagen for pointing this article out to me.

¹¹ Quite interesting in this context might be the DRVCIEDO stamp found on the catch-plate (!) of a *Kragenfibel* or the BIBI or CON stamps on the reverse side of some of the thistle brooches (Behrens 1950, 4–6).

¹² For the different fibula types of the early Roman Iron Age, their distribution and relations see § 31–33 in *Fibel und Fibeltracht* (2000).

The second group of inscriptions which will be discussed in the following are the runic inscriptions on weapons from Danish bog deposits; among these there will be special focus on the finds from Illerup Ådal. All objects with runic inscriptions from Illerup Ådal have been deposited during the oldest depository phase on site A, which could be dated to the early years of the third century (Ilkjær 2000).

Out of the nine objects with inscriptions found on this site, six are weapons: There are three mounts for a shield-handle carrying the inscriptions **swarta**, **lagupewa** and **nipijo tawide**, two lanceheads with the inscription **wagnijo**, and a chape. As the linguistic meaningfulness of the inscription on the chape has been questioned (Stoklund 1987, 296), it will be excluded from the following considerations. As the objects belong to two different types of weapons — weapons for defence versus weapons of attack — the lanceheads and the mounts will be discussed separately (the following characterizations of the objects are — if not otherwise specified — all based on the publications by Ilkjær and Lønstrup 1982; Moltke and Stoklund 1982; Stoklund 1985; 1987; 1995a).

The reconstruction of the communicative contexts of the inscriptions on the two lanceheads leads to a completely different picture than the one given by the examination of the runic fibulae. Both lanceheads show an almost identical inscription that is positioned near the broadest spot of the lancehead. In one case the inscription was struck with a die — the runes standing out in relief — (i.e. Illerup lancehead IMZ), in the second it was incised into the metal (i.e. Illerup lancehead INL). Both inscriptions exhibit framing lines above as well as below the runes; in addition, both objects are decorated in a similar fashion, displaying the same fish-bone kind of pattern close to the inscriptions. Since some lines of this ornament do overlap the framing lines of the inscriptions, it may be assumed that the inscriptions were struck or incised before or at the same time as the decoration; all these features have led to the conclusion that the inscriptions have to be seen in connection with the production of the lances. In contrast to the fibulae with runic inscriptions, the lanceheads therefore do not represent examples of an individual use of writing.

From a communicative point of view, the lancehead inscriptions — unlike the fibula inscriptions — can be regarded as being meant to be visible to everyone, which means that the inscription has a more public character, possibly even a public function.

Both lanceheads from Illerup belong to a lance type which can be dated to the time around A.D. 200 and which belongs to the standard armament of a Scandinavian warrior of the time. The objects themselves are therefore not

to be regarded as indicators of a social elite, although it has been assumed that the production of these technologically advanced weapons was carried out under the supervision of the military elite and at one workshop only (Carnap-Bornheim and Ilkjær 1996, 385).

In this context of serial production, it is striking that only two of the more than 300 lanceheads from Illerup site A bear an inscription, especially, as has been proven in one case, as a die was used for it.¹³ Focussing only on these numbers, a connection between the weapons with inscriptions and the military leaders, reconstructed on the basis of the archaeological evidence, seems to be possible. The analysis of bog material from the Illerup site A reveals that approximately five military leaders constituted the highest military and therefore social rank, approximately forty men belonged to a middle military rank and more than 300 to the lowest rank (Ilkjær 2000).

Although the inscriptions on the lanceheads by their identity strongly suggest the interpretation as manufacturer's marks—and thereby point to a representative communicative function—the small number of objects may indicate that they are nevertheless somehow connected to the military elite and may thus have a different communicative meaning. The relatively small number is all the more remarkable when compared with the average number of Roman stamps found on the swords from Illerup: more than 50% of these have Roman manufacturers' marks or inscriptions stamped on the blade (Ilkjær and Lønstrup 1976, 106 f.; 1983, 107, 110).

The inscription on the lanceheads itself, which reads **wagnijo**, is generally explained as a male personal name (cf. also H. F. Nielsen 2000, 153–55), and does not give any linguistic indication that would unambiguously point to a communicative function. The fact that the name was written down at all indicates, of course, that it was meant to be kept present—in this context publicly present.

The three mounts for shield-handles exhibit a different picture yet again. The question of the “when” of these inscriptions can be answered for all three objects with the time after the fastening of the mounts to the shield. A great similarity in the placing of the runes on the mounts and in the forms of the runic characters themselves can be observed for the two mounts made of silver.¹⁴ Both of them show the same variants of runic **þ** and **w** with symmetrical pockets at the top respectively the centre of the

¹³ A third lancehead displaying the same inscription and ornamentation, but also incised like the one on Illerup INL, was found during the excavations of the bog deposit in Vimose (cf. the remarks in Stoklund 1985, 23).

¹⁴ Investigations of the five silver mounts for shield-handles from Illerup have shown that they were all manufactured at the same workshop (Carnap-Bornheim and Ilkjær 1996, 443).

stave. Interestingly enough, the same feature is observable for the *w*-rune in the **wagnijo** inscription on the lanceheads; as a consequence, this group of inscriptions makes a very unified impression, all the inscriptions also running from right to left. Compared to the heterogeneity of the inscriptions on the fibulae presented above, these features are remarkable and might point to a common background. All the same—as Stoklund (1985, 12) stresses—the inscriptions on the Illerup shield-handles 2 and 3 are neither made with the same tool, nor by the same hand.

Unlike the inscriptions on the silver mounts, the bronze mount shows the common, more simple variant of the *w*-rune; because of the separate placing of the final *a*-rune in **swarta**, it generally makes the impression of being less planned.

As two of the mounts are made of silver and one of bronze, a connection with the highest rank and the middle rank, respectively, of the military hierarchy seems plausible.

The inscriptions on all three objects are very clear and easily visible, however, their position on the mounts themselves, which are on the reverse side of the shield, might suggest that the utterances and their communicative function may be focussed on the owner of the shield.¹⁵

The variety of linguistic structures in these inscriptions corresponds well to the fibula inscriptions; nevertheless, interesting differences become apparent: As on the women’s fibulae, one-word utterances that consist of a name (**lagupewa** on the shield-handle mount 3; **swarta** on the shield-handle mount 1) as well as one inscription with a declarative sentence (**nijijo tawide** ‘Nijijo made’ on the shield-handle mount 2) can be analysed: The subject of this declarative sentence is again a name, the verb at its centre is in the past tense. In contrast to the inscriptions on the fibulae, the verb here is **taujan*, which is commonly understood to mean ‘to make’ in a very general sense. In later inscriptions in the older *fubark*, this verb can have a concrete object as its complement, like ‘horn’ (**horna** on the Gallehus horn, KJ 43), or an abstract object like ‘invitation’ (**lapodu** on the Trollhättan bracteate KJ 130) or ‘luck, contentment’ (as has been suggested for the sequence **tojek**) **a unapou** on the Noleby stone, KJ 67); the closest parallel in time and space, however, points to a concrete object as complement (cf. the Gallehus

¹⁵ This feature also holds for the inscription on the Thorsberg shield-boss and constitutes an interesting contrast to the Roman inscription AEL(IVS) AELIANVS—on the obverse of a shield-boss stemming from the same archaeological find context and usually interpreted as an owner’s inscription (cf. Stoklund 1995a, 326 f.); both artefacts are contemporary to the Illerup site A (Ilkjær and Lønstrup 1982).

horn). Illocutionary indicators, which would give cause for classifying this utterance as anything other than a representative utterance act, are lacking.

Perhaps the general external similarity of the inscriptions on the two silver mounts which was mentioned above would imply a comparable communicative function, in spite of the variation in linguistic structure. In this case again, different surface structures would stand for the same communication act. The use of the verb **taujan* might suggest a manufacturer's inscription, but the further communicative context, for example the placing, does not completely agree with this interpretation. A comparison with the inscriptions on the lanceheads might also lead to the conclusion that the inscriptions on the mounts have to be interpreted as more individual inscribing acts (cf. also Stoklund 1987, 298).

The difference in character of these two object types may also be a reason for postulating different communicative meanings of the inscriptions. At least in the Middle Ages, shields are objects of special importance in the relationship between rulers and their followers. In the written sources, shields are time and again highlighted as rulers' presents. But whether the shield mounts from Illerup with their runic inscriptions can be seen against such a background, must remain mere speculation.

To sum up, the comparison of these earliest groups of runic inscriptions has shown that the runic inscriptions in the older *fupark* from the period around A.D. 200 are quite heterogeneous. It seems possible to differentiate between visible and public written utterances and utterances of a more individual and private character. The incising of the inscriptions took place, on the one hand, during the production of the objects, and after the manufacturing process on the other (cf. also the distinction made by Antonsen 1987).

Generally speaking, there seems to be no correlation between the archaeological context of the artefacts themselves and the communicative function or context of the inscriptions incised on them. There are no indicators which would point to the fact that the inscriptions on the women's fibulae were incised in connection with a burial ceremony, neither are the inscriptions on the lanceheads, for example, to be seen in connection with the depositing of these objects. As to the owners of these runic objects, they seem to be exclusively members of the higher or highest social and military ranks.

With the help of linguistic analysis alone, the communicative function of the utterance acts could not be definitely determined; different communicative functions, however, have been made plausible by analysing the various communicative contexts.

The linguistic surface structure of the utterances in the groups discussed is very similar. Two different types are found: on the one hand, one-word

utterances of names, on the other hand, declarative sentences, consisting of a name in subject function and a verb in the past tense. There is, however, a difference in the use of verbs, the inscriptions on the fibulae showing **talgijan*, the inscription on the Illerup mount 2 **taujan*.

The comparison with Roman inscriptions on similar objects has shown that the characteristics of the earliest runic inscriptions found so far—with the exception of the inscription/stamp series on the Illerup and Vimose lanceheads—are quite distinct and should therefore rather not be described as “imitations” of the respective uses of Roman script.

Even within this confined group of early runic inscriptions, it is possible to distinguish different communicative and writing traditions. A short glance at the later inscriptions in the older *fubark*, especially the sentence structures with I-formulas and the use of verbs in the present tense, show clearly that a more refined study of the types of written utterances in their contexts would be desirable.¹⁶

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¹⁶ My thanks go to Dr. Kerstin Kazzazi (Department of German Philology, Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt) and Dr. Alastair Walker (Department of Frisian Philology, Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel) for tidying up the English of this article.

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The Names of the *u*-Rune¹

Inmaculada Senra Silva

Introduction

This article seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the name, or rather names, of the *u*-rune. *Ūr(r)* has usually been viewed as one of the most uncertain rune-names since most or all the main sources seem to indicate different meanings. *Ūr* in the *Old English Rune Poem* apparently means ‘aurochs’. The *Icelandic Rune Poem* identifies *úr* as meaning ‘precipitation, drizzle’, and concentrates on its negative consequences for crops. Editors have as a rule translated *úr* in the *Norwegian Rune Poem* as ‘slag’: “dross comes from bad iron” (Dickins 1915, 25); “Schlacke kommt von schlechtem eisen” (Wimmer 1887, 276).

As a starting-point for the analysis of any rune-name, the etymological basis of the “standard” (or traditionally accepted) meaning or meanings ascribed to it is central. Old English *ūr* ‘aurochs’ comes from Germanic **ūruz* and corresponds to Old Norse *úrr*. This does not appear to have been a common word in Old English or Old Norse. There was, though, a word for ‘ox’ in the Germanic languages: **uhsan-* (> Old High German *ohso*, Old Frisian *oxa*, Gothic *aūhsa*, Old Norse *uxi/oxi*), which combines with *ūr* in Old High German to form *urohso*, German *Aurochs*, whence Modern English *aurochs*. The Latin term *ūrus* is a loanword from Germanic.

The Old Norse word *úr* (neuter) means ‘humidity, drizzle’, as in modern Norwegian, cf. Swedish *ur* ‘snowy weather’, Norwegian *yr* ‘drizzle’, Orkney Norn *ūr* ‘fine rain’, Shetland Norn *urek* ‘water from the bottom of a boat’, Latin *ūrīna* ‘urine’. Modern Icelandic *úr* for drizzle is archaic or poetic. The

¹ I would like to thank Professor James Knirk (University of Oslo) who read through earlier drafts of this paper and provided useful criticism and valuable suggestions for improvement. Any shortcomings that remain are my responsibility alone.

normal word for rain is *rigning* or *regn*. A related verb *ýra* is, however, sometimes heard in the construction *það ýrir úr lofti*, meaning that a very fine, light rain is falling. According to Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon (1989, s.v. 1 *úr*), there is a neuter noun *úr* meaning ‘slag, cinders’, cognate with Low German *ur*, Dutch *oer* ‘(bog) ore’.

The Old English Rune Poem

The Anglo-Saxon text differs from the Scandinavian rune poems in that it comprises twenty-nine stanzas against the sixteen of the other two. Eight runes from the Common Germanic *futhorc* lacking in the younger sixteen-rune alphabet are included in this text. Furthermore, the Old English *futhorc* has several new runes additional to those found in the original twenty-four-character row. A few names found in the Old English poem, such as *peorð* and *eolhx*, are *hapax legomena*, so their meanings can only be deduced from the context in which they appear. This is most probably because the rune-names preserve earlier Germanic language material, and some of them survive only as relics.

The *u*-stanza reads as follows (Halsall 1981, 86 f.):

ƿ (ūr) byþ anmōdand	oferhyrmed,
felafrēcne dēor	— feohteþ mid hornum —
mære mōrstapa;	þæt is mōdig wuht!

‘The aurochs is courageous and has huge horns,
a very fierce beast — it fights with its horns —
a notorious moor-stalker; that is a brave creature!’

The name of the *u*-rune in the *Old English Rune Poem* is thus *ūr*, understood as ‘aurochs’. On the basis of this stanza the original Germanic name has been reconstructed as **ūruz* ‘aurochs’ (cf. Krause and Jankuhn 1966, 4; Düwel 2008, 7, 198–200). But this word is a *hapax* in Old English. The aurochs survived only in the forests on the Continent and was little known to Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians. Lack of knowledge of the animal and its name could have led to confusion of Old Norse *úrr* ‘aurochs’ with the very similarly pronounced *úr* ‘drizzle’ by Scandinavians learning and using the rune-names or rune poems. The two words developed into complete homonyms in Modern Icelandic, and were perhaps already homonyms or virtual homonyms in the medieval period. Confusion of this kind is by no means improbable since there seems to be another example of the

substitution of homonyms in the Norwegian and Icelandic rune poems, namely *áss*-*óss*. The name of ʀ **α**, the fourth rune in the Germanic *futhorc*, has been reconstructed as **ansur*, meaning ‘heathen god’, Latin *anses* ‘god’ (Krause and Jankuhn 1966, 4; Düwel 2008, 8, 198–200). During the Viking Age, as the result of loss of [n] and compensatory lengthening of the preceding nasal vowel [ã], this word became [ã:sʊr]. Then *u*-umlaut and syncope took place and it became [õ:sʊr] and ultimately [õ:s:]. In the paradigm *-u* did not occur in all endings and there thus came to be variation in the root vocalism between [ã:] and [õ:]. Finally – somewhen in the eleventh century – the root vowel [õ:] became denasalised and further rounded and closed to [o:] (> *óss*), by which time the fourth rune had in many places assumed the shape ʀ. In time this rune lost the value [ã(:)]. From the late Viking Age onwards it seems no longer used to represent any kind of a nasal sound, but instead denotes rounded vowels, especially [o(:)], and occasionally the glide [w]. The variation in the root vowel of the paradigms of the various **ansur* reflexes in the Viking Age and Scandinavian Middle Ages between [a:] and [õ:], or later [a:] and [o:], was often levelled; generally this was in favour of [a:], but [o:] could also be the final product (given the nasal, or historically nasal, environment), yielding *óss*. There was thus variation *áss/óss*. In the *Icelandic Rune Poem*, the spelling *oss* is recorded.

There is, though, another Old Norse word *óss*, which derives from Germanic **ōsa-* (cf. Latin *ōs*), with the meaning ‘river mouth’. So in Old Norse – at least after the eleventh century – there existed two homonyms, one coming from Germanic **ansuz* and the other from Germanic **ōsa-*. Gradually *áss* displaced *óss* as the word for ‘god’, but *áss* could not be used as the name of the fourth rune since by then ʀ had come to denote [o(:)]. Hence the Icelandic decision to construe the name as ‘river mouth’ rather than ‘god’. Here may lie the explanation for the different meanings given to *óss* in the Norwegian and Icelandic rune poems.

The Norwegian Rune Poem

Discussion of rune-names as they appear in the *Norwegian Rune Poem* has as a rule relied on standard editions such as the ones by Wimmer (1887) and Dickins (1915). The most recent investigation of the text and its preservation is by Page (2003).

The poem survives in three late copies: the earliest version appears in printed form in Worm’s *Runer seu Danica literatura antiquissima* (1st ed. 1636; 2nd ed. 1651). Worm found the text on the flyleaf of an Old Norwegian

legal codex and had it copied. Another copy appears in MS Bartholiniana D in the Royal Library, Copenhagen. This was made by Árni Magnússon and can be dated between 1684 (when Árni became amanuensis for Bartholin) and 1690 (when Bartholin died; cf. Kålund 1884–91, 2f.). The last copy is found in MS papp. fol. 64 from the second half of the seventeenth century, preserved in the Royal Library, Stockholm. The manuscript is in three different hands: those of Jón Eggertsson, Helgi Ólafsson, and an unknown scribe. It is now agreed that the poem, found on p. 74, was most probably included after 1680, the year in which Jón Eggertsson, who wrote this leaf, went to Copenhagen to work for the Swedish government.

The poem consists of sixteen stanzas of a common pattern, each of them containing two lines. The first describes by circumlocution the name of a rune of the sixteen-character Norse *fupark*, while the second has a statement which by and large seems unrelated to the matter in the first line (but cf. Liestøl 1949, and more recently but inspiring less confidence, Neuner 2006). The *u*-stanza, according to the different copies, goes as follows:

JE	Þ. er af illu iarne, oft læyper ræin a hiarne
AM	Þ. er af illu iarne. oft læyper ræin a hiarne.
W	Ur er af ellu jarni Opt sleipur Rani a hiarni.

There are various problems here. In the first line, Jón Eggertsson (JE) and Árni Magnússon (AM) have the reading “illu”, ‘bad, of poor quality’, against Worm’s (W) “ellu”, probably for *eldu* ‘heated’. Kålund (1884–91, 7) maintains that, since both Árni Magnússon and Jón Eggertsson have “illu”, this must be what stood in the original. However, he also states that it could well have been a mistake for “ellu” (i.e. “eldu”), which Worm (or his copyist) must then have corrected. So whatever the word *úr* meant in the poem, the line should be read as either ‘Þ/Ur comes from bad iron’ or ‘Þ/Ur comes from heated iron’.

It has been traditionally claimed that *úr* here means ‘slag’ (‘slag comes from heated/bad iron’). Let us then look at dictionary entries and references for *úr* and see how the word is defined.

Jón Rúgmann in his *Monosyllaba islandica â Jona Rvgman collecta* (1676) has “Ur Ignis”, that is, *úr* ‘fire’, quite possibly based on material from Ole Worm (1636; 1651). Fritznér (1886–96) gives two definitions of *úr*. The first is “fint Regn, Taageregn” (‘fine rain’), the second “Runen som betegner *u*” (‘the rune which denotes *u*’).

In Sveinbjörn Egilsson (1913–16), *úr* is glossed both as “slakker” (‘slag’; with reference to the *Norwegian Rune Poem*) and “fugtighed, ruskregn, vand” (‘humidity, rain, water’). In *Norrøn ordbok* two different entries are

provided. The first has two definitions, “yr, fint regn” (‘fine rain’) and “namn på runebokestaven for *u*” (‘name of the *u*-rune’). The second has “sinder, slag av smelta jern” ‘cinders, slag from smelted iron’, which is connected to the rune poem.

Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon (1989) has nine entries for *úr*. The first is marked as neuter, and glossed as “sindur, gjall”, that is, ‘cinders, slag’. As noted above, Ásgeir relates this word to Low German *ur* and Dutch *oer* (‘(bog) ore’). He also associates it with *aur* ‘clay, mud’ (‘leir, for’). He feels that etymologically this might be the same word as the second entry, which means ‘rain’ (“regn, væta, vessi”). It can be masculine, feminine, or neuter. Entry number 3 is a nineteenth-century word; it is marked as neuter and refers to the soft inner parts of crustaceans. Entry 4 (neuter), which is an Icelandic dialect word from the nineteenth century, is a crustacean (a type of crab or other sea-creature). Entry 5 is an eighteenth-century word meaning ‘bad temper’. From that same century comes entry 6, *úr* (neuter), meaning ‘clock, watch’, cognate with German *Uhr* (also neuter). Entry 7 is *úr* (masculine) from Old Norse *úrr* ‘aurochs’ (“úruxi”). Ásgeir discusses the rune-name and believes *úr* ‘aurochs’ to have been the original designation. Entry 8 is an adjective, a reflex of earlier *úrr*. He defines it as ‘fragile, from poor raw material (of iron)’ (“stökkur, úr lélegu hráefni (um járn)”). Entry 9, finally, is the preposition *úr*. So there are five entries which are not ascribed to the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. Only three are defined as nouns, namely the neut. ‘cinder, slag’, the masc./fem./neut. ‘light rain’, and the masc. ‘aurochs’. The noun meaning ‘aurochs’ and the adjective denoting ‘of bad quality’ (Old Norse *úrr*, Modern Icelandic *úr*) were homonyms in Old Norse.

In *Íslensk orðabók* (2002) there are six words spelt *úr*. They are mostly given as neuter. The first entry, however, is *úr* (masc.) “úruxi”. The third is neuter and entails various definitions, among them (1) “suddi, úði” (‘drizzle, fine rain’), and (2) “sindur, neistaflug (af glóandi smíðajárni)”, that is, ‘sparks’. Entry 4 is *úr* (masc. or neut.) “rún sem samsvarar *u/ú, v*” (‘rune corresponding to *u/ú, v*’). Entry 5 is the obsolete adjective *úr* “stökkur, lélegur” (‘brittle, of little worth’), with the example “úrt járn”. Other definitions relate to more recent loanwords, dialect words, etc., conforming to the definitions listed in Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon (1989).

It should be noted that the adjective *úrr* is not listed in Fritzner (1886–96), but occurs in the supplementary fourth volume (1972), with reference to *úr* in Finnur Jónsson’s revised edition of Sveinbjörn Egilsson (1913–16). It is glossed as “slagfullt” (‘full of slag’) in relation to iron, and is followed by the quotation “úrt járn, kvað kerling, ok átti kníf deigan” (‘impure iron,

said the (old) woman, who had a dull knife’). *Norrøn ordbok* also gives this meaning and the same quotation. The adjective is further listed in the Arnamagnæan *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose*, again accompanied by the same single quotation. This is a Wellerism, i.e., a three-part saying consisting of a direct quotation, an identification of the speaker, and a description of the circumstances that make the statement memorable and give it a new emphasis or added depth. The “úrt járn” quotation appears in *Gull-Ásu-Pórðar þáttr* in *Austfirðinga sögur* (Jón Jóhannesson 1950, 348), which follows AM 518 4to (1600–1700). It is not found in the *Morkinskinna* version (text probably c. 1200, preserved manuscript c. 1275) nor in the compilation *Hulda-Hrokkinskinna* (from the fourteenth century), so it was apparently not part of the text in the 1300s. In his edition, Jón Jóhannesson attempts to explain *úrt járn* by comparing it with the *illu járni* of the *Norwegian Rune Poem*. The adjective *úrr* has thus made its way into Old Norse dictionaries in order to explain the one occurrence in AM 518 4to. It is not present in the version of the story preserved in medieval manuscripts, but appears in a modernised and expanded version of the *þáttr* from the 1600s which includes some newer Icelandic words.

To sum up, the dictionary references are to *úr* ‘rain’, and when the meaning ‘slag’ is given, it is almost always with reference to the *Norwegian Rune Poem* (cf. Sveinbjörn Egilsson 1913–16; *Norrøn ordbok*). But Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon (1989) suggests an etymological connection for *úr* ‘slag’ and a derived adjective *úrr* with connotations of impure iron.

From the above discussion, it might be concluded that the meaning ‘slag’ usually assigned to the word *úr* in the *Norwegian Rune Poem* was based on the firm understanding that the author of the poem had this word in mind and not the homonym meaning ‘rain’, as in the *Icelandic Rune Poem*. There are, however, grounds for questioning such an interpretation.

Kålund (1884–91, 7 f.) observes: “Úr er af illu járni” kunde give mening, hvis man turde tage ‘úr’ i betydningen ‘slagger’ i henhold til hvad Jón Ólafsson lejlighedsvis ytrer i sin *Runologia* (KBAdd. 8, fol. S. 141), ‘Sunnlendíngar kalla smidju wr, þat Nordlingar smidju giall” (“Úr er af illu járni” could make sense if one allowed oneself to take “úr” as “slag” bearing in mind Jón Ólafsson’s passing comment in his *Runologia* ... “people in the south of Iceland use *smithy úr* of what northerners call *smithy slag*”). It is interesting that the word *smidju/smiðju* ‘smithy’ is included in this “definition”, for one could easily take ‘smithy light-rain’ as a shower of sparks.

In chapter 16 of his *Runer seu Danica literatura antiquissima* (1636; 1651) Worm renders the meaning of all the rune-names followed by an explanation of their significance. In relation to *úr*, he writes:

Aquarum impetu delabentium rivos indicat: ut & nimbium guttis densioribus cum impetu delabentem: inde quoq; per metaphoram ad alia; quandam cum hisce similitudinem habentia accomodatur, ut ad scintillas ex ferro ignito pulsatione exilientes.

‘*Úr* indicates river-waters flowing with full force: likewise a cloudburst of very heavy drops falling with force: hence, also, metaphorically, it is used to refer to other things which bear a certain similarity to these, such as the sparks given off by white-hot iron when it is struck.’

Worm does not overlook the twofold meaning of *úr* in the Icelandic and Norwegian rune poems. He tries to explain the ‘slag’ sense as a metaphorical usage, based on the spray of rainlike sparks that can occur when hot iron is struck.

The archaeologist Arne Emil Christensen has explained what happens when iron is heated (personal communication).

When you forge iron, the heating process has the extra effect of forming a surface layer of iron oxide on the piece as it reaches the red-hot forging temperature. When hammering, this oxide loosens and may well be likened to a spray of rain from the anvil. In large forging operations, quite an amount is formed due to the numerous reheatings necessary. The usual shape of the oxide is flat flakes. If you hammer-weld two pieces of iron together, a flux is needed to get the oxide away from the surfaces to be joined. The old flux was sand, and the oxide-slag mixture may then take the shape of small drops. The modern Norwegian name is ‘hammerslagg’, the modern English is ‘scale’ or ‘hammer scale’.

Úr (‘fine rain’) in the *Norwegian Rune Poem* could thus be a metaphor for ‘sparks’, understood as a spray of rainlike sparks, and this suggests there may have been a misunderstanding of what was meant. I am therefore inclined to agree with Worm’s understanding of *úr* in this poem and with Kålund’s (1884–91) support for Worm’s interpretation (note also the definition of *úr* as ‘sparks’ in *Íslensk orðabók* 2002). If this is right, both *eldu* (spelt “ellu” by Worm) and *illu* could be correct readings: sparks come from the impurities in heated iron (*illu* implying ‘impurities’, *eldu* ‘heated’). The translation would be either ‘sparks come from the impurities of iron’ or ‘sparks come from heated iron’.

The Icelandic Rune Poem

The text of the *Icelandic Rune Poem* is preserved in two early manuscripts: AM 687d 4to and AM 461 12mo. The poem is also recorded in later

manuscripts and in printed books from the seventeenth century, but these texts are based on the two earliest copies. A new edition with full details of the known textual history was published by Page in 1998.

The *Icelandic Rune Poem* consists of sixteen stanzas of a common pattern, each having as subject a rune of the sixteen-character *fuþark*. In contrast to the Old Norwegian poem, the stanzas are composed of three periphrases or kennings alluding to the rune-name (*þrídeilur*). The *u*-stanza reads:

A **u** er skygja gratur ok skæra þuer[rir ok] hirdis hatr Vmbre Visi
 B Vr er skya gratr og skarar þorir og hirdis hatr

A ‘**u** [úr] is crying of the clouds, destroyer/diminisher of mown hay and shepherd’s hate.
 B úr is crying of the clouds, diminisher? of mown hay and shepherd’s hate.’

The three kennings in this stanza describe rain. One does so neutrally (‘crying of the clouds’), whereas the other two emphasise the negative consequences of too much rain or of rain falling on crops at the wrong time. The Latin gloss on the rune-name in text A is *yMBER* ‘rain’.

The Swedish Rune Poem

There are two sources for the *Swedish Rune Poem*. The text was edited for the first time in Bureus’s copper-plate print *Runakänslanäs Lärä-span*. This is known as *Runtavlan*. The other source is Granius’s text, edited most recently by Quak (1987; cf. also Bauer 2003, 209–33).

Bureus’s text seems to include the rune-name as part of the periphrasis: **UR i uästan uäþr**. It is interesting to note that in this version *ur* and *uäþr* are given as two separate words rather than a compound. The sentence may be understood as ‘rain in the west wind; westerly weather’.

The *u*-verse in Granius’s text reads *urväder värst*. He renders the name of the rune as ‘storm, bad weather’. The verse might then translate as ‘stormy/bad weather (is) the worst’. But the text may be corrupt – not least in view of the fact that Bureus has *úr* as a separate word – and should perhaps be corrected to: *ur väder värst* ‘rain (is) the worst weather’. However this may be, both versions seem to interpret *úr* as bad weather.

Other manuscript and epigraphical material

Having dealt with the major sources, I now move to a summary presentation of other material relevant to the name of the *u*-rune. These, mainly younger,

sources may be able to cast light on the earlier material. In general they are late and consist mostly of manuscript material. Much information may be obtained from them on the use of the names but little on their actual meaning. The only exception is an inscription from the old church in Bø, Telemark: a single stanza consisting of eight half-lines, linked two-and-two by alliteration. All these lines, except for the first and last, are circumlocutions. Once each rune-name has been decoded, they spell out the female name **kuprun** (*Guðrún*), someone the poet is probably in love with. He may be suffering from unrequited love, and that is why he cannot fall asleep.

This text identifies the name of the *u*-rune by means of two circumlocutions in the manner of the rune poems: *fjón svinkanda* ‘workers’ hate’ and *heys víti* ‘hay’s destruction’, i.e. ‘rain’ (cf. Louis-Jensen 1994, 36; my translation).

Svæfn bannar mér,	‘[It/She] prevents me from sleeping;	
sótt er barna,	[it/she] is children’s sickness	(= <i>kaun k</i>)
fjón svinkanda,	workers’ hate	(= <i>úr u</i>)
fjalls íbúi,	mountain’s inhabitant	(= <i>þurs þ</i>)
hests ærfaði,	horse’s work	(= <i>reið r</i>)
auk heys víti,	and hay’s destruction	(= <i>úr u</i>)
þræls vansæla,	thrall’s unhappiness	(= <i>nauð n</i>)
þat skulu ráða.	[people] will have to work it out.’	

Although the inscription is Norwegian, it does not lend support to the notion that there was a specifically Norwegian name ‘slag’ for the *u*-rune. Rather it shows that in Norway just as in Iceland the name was understood as ‘light rain’.

Late records of the rune-names have to be sought exclusively in Scandinavia, since runic tradition lasted much longer in the North than elsewhere. Works based on what is obviously genuine runic tradition were written in the 1600s and 1700s or even later.

In an attempt to reconstruct the text of the *Icelandic Rune Poem*, Page (1998, 24) sifted through data from these later works and noted that by the eighteenth century a fund of runic lore had developed around the kennings of which this poem consists. The doubt he expresses about the value of such late material for our understanding of the poem and its history is fully justified. However, it seems clear that the meanings of the rune-names to be found in these documents do not as a rule diverge from those of earlier sources. What their authors may have done is make innovative combinations in order to obtain a larger number of periphrases that could be used in poetry. That may be why we sometimes find uncommon or unexpected circumlocutions in this material.

The tradition of the *rímur* poets

In the fourteenth century a new form of narrative poetry came into being in Iceland: it was known as *ríma* ‘rhyme’, pl. *rímur*. Most of the *rímur* belonging to the late Middle Ages are anonymous. However, after 1500 the poet frequently identifies himself in his work, although he does not always give his name in ordinary form, but may conceal it in a cryptic rendering, which the reader has to convert into letters (Craigie 1952, 289). This practice goes under the modern Icelandic heading *fólgin nöfn* ‘concealed names’. It is found in some earlier *rímur*, but becomes more frequent in later centuries. The importance of *fólgin nöfn* for the present study lies in the fact that on some occasions (mainly after 1600) the poet indicates his name to the reader with the help of rune-names, though usually replacing them with synonyms, kennings or even homonyms (Craigie 1952, 289). I will give two examples by way of illustration.

The first comes from a poet called Árni Böðvarsson á Ökrum (1713–77; see Páll Eggert Ólason 1915, 123 f.; my literal translation — note that some of the rune-name synonyms seem incoherent).

<i>Fióls blóma fegurð sé</i>	A	<i>Eikin blómguð aldin regn</i>	B A U
<i>fýsir þangað ríða.</i>	R	<i>Óðins burinn hreldur</i>	D
<i>Sumir mæðast sorginne</i>	N	<i>úði sumar marsins megn</i>	U A R
<i>svellið springur víða.</i>	I	<i>mæðir Hlýrnis eldur.</i>	S

Uppheims funi álpta grund **S O**
ærin harmur þjóða. **N**
Marga gírnir stytta stund
starfi meður ljóða.

‘I see the beauty of violets	The blooming oak, fruits, rain,
and long to ride thither.	Óðinn’s harmed son,
Some are troubled by the sorrow,	drizzle, summer, the horse’s strength
the ice bursts in many places.	troubles the fire of heaven.

Heaven’s flame, the ground of swans,
 substantial grief of peoples.
 Many like to spend time
 working with poetry.’

Rune-name synonyms or circumlocutions have been employed to code the poet’s name, Arni Baudvarsson: *úr* is replaced by two synonyms, *regn* ‘rain’ in the first pair of lines of the second stanza, and *úði* ‘drizzle’ in the second.

Guðmundur Erlendsson á Felli (†1670) concealed his name in *Æsopus-rímur* (Páll Eggert Ólason 1915, 126 f.; my translation).

<i>Sturlað kaunið steypiregn</i> G U	<i>Aðhnígandi úr sem reið</i> U R
<i>stunginn Týr og maður</i> D M	<i>eg þess nafnið játa</i>
<i>élkers-baun og eymdin megn</i> U N	<i>Golnis sandinn geðs af leið</i>
<i>ásinn þrábenjaður.</i> D	<i>er greiddi um ræðu máta.</i>

‘The disturbed ulcer, pouring rain, dotted Týr (or: stabbed god/Týr) and man, heaven’s bean and the great misery, severely wounded god.	The coming drizzle as riding/ carriage, I admit his/its name Óðinn’s sand from the mind that untangled the speech.’
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In this text both plain rune-names (*maður*, *úr*, *reið*) and poetic synonyms are used. In the first line *steypiregn* ‘pouring rain’ is a synonym for *úr* ‘drizzle’. *Élkers-baun* is an *úr* kenning. *Él-ker* (*él*- ‘snow-shower’, *-ker* ‘tub, container’) is a ‘snow-shower’s tub’, and thus refers to *himinn* ‘heaven, the sky’. A bean of or from heaven is rain. *Stunginn Týr* could be either a plain rune-name (‘dotted Týr/ṡ’, i.e. **d**) or a circumlocution in which the god’s name is used as a generic.

Runologia

Runologia (AM 413 fol., previously Royal Library, Copenhagen Addit. 8 fol.) is without doubt the most important eighteenth-century manuscript containing material on rune-names. Its author is Jón Ólafsson of Grunnavík (1705–79). The work was written in 1732, but the original has not survived. AM 413 fol., the only preserved copy, dates from 1752. *Runologia* is an immense storehouse of rune-name periphrases. Part 3, chapter 1, for example, entitled *De parafrasi runica, um dylgiurnar* (fols. 130–35), contains lists of thematically repetitive rune-name circumlocutions (with the runes arranged in ABC order). A few illustrative examples are:

Úr er skýja grátr. Skaði þerris og hirðis hatr ... hláka hrið. Himinn-svite ... undir-rót svella.
‘Úr is clouds’ tears. Damage to dryness and shepherd’s hate ... thaw’s storm.
Heaven’s sweat ... cause of swells (waves).’

The periphrases *skýja grátr* and *hirðis hatr* also appear in the *Icelandic Rune Poem*. However, where the Old Icelandic text has *skæra þverris* ‘destroyer of mown hay’, we here find *skaði þerris* ‘damage to dryness’. This could be

a general statement to be interpreted as ‘wetness’, but it could equally well refer more specifically to the drying of hay. That would mean that the same idea is being expressed by two words that alliterate with the ones used in the poem.

In spite of the fact that Jón seems elsewhere to conflate the Norwegian and Old Icelandic rune-name traditions, he does not do so in the case of *úr*. In his presentation the name signifies ‘rain’. The meaning ‘slag’ he nowhere records.

Manuductio compendiosa ad runographiam scandicam antiqvam

The Swedish scholar Olaus Verelius wrote his *Manuductio compendiosa ad runographiam Scandicam antiqvam* in 1675. It comprises runic material similar to that found in Jón Ólafsson’s and Worm’s works. Chapter seven (pp. 24–34) has the typical descriptions of the rune-names of the sixteenth-character *fupark*, presenting first the rune itself, then the name identified by means of *þrídæilur*, although sometimes they are reduced to *tvídæilur*. Certain of these periphrases are identical or similar to the ones found in the *Swedish Rune Poem*. The poem itself is embedded in a text together with other material. Its context is clearly calendrical, since Verelius also provides the names of the three extra golden numbers: *aurlaugr*, *twimadur*, and *belgþor*, though without explanatory periphrases. He most probably took this material from Bureus. In relation to the *u*-rune he writes:

∟ Secunda est Runa, & *Ur* nominator h. est, *nivosa & horrida procella*; cujus symbolum: *Ur er vesta veder*: i.e. *pessima aeris tempestas est procella illa horrida*.

‘∟ is the second rune, and is called *ur*, i.e., *terrible snow storm*; whose symbol [is]: *Ur is the worst weather*: i.e., *a terrible storm is the worst tempest*.’

The description of *úr* as *nivosa & horrida procella* is not taken from the rune poems; ‘rain’ has here been transformed into ‘worst weather, a storm’, presumably on the basis of the periphrasis *vesta veder*, which is most probably a variant of Bureus’s *uástan uäþr* ‘westerly weather’.

Conclusion

All these additional sources confirm the Icelandic ‘light rain’ definition of *úr*, and thereby support the hypothesis that the definition given in the *Norwegian Rune Poem* is metaphorical. The inscription from the old church

in Bø shows that the Icelandic definition was used in Norway as well, and Jón Ólafsson's *Runologia* implies that the Norwegian sense 'slag' was unknown in Iceland.

Summing-up

The aim of this article has been to shed light on the names of the *u*-rune, and more specifically on the meaning and interpretation of *úr* in the *Norwegian Rune Poem*. On the basis of the investigation, the following conclusions seem warranted. First, the 'aurochs', of the *Old English Rune Poem*, may well have been the original name of the rune, but this name and/or animal was little known and *úrr*'aurochs' could thus have been replaced by a homonym in Scandinavian tradition. Second, Old Norse *úr*'light rain' appears to be the standard name in the Scandinavian poems, except perhaps the Norwegian. Third, the meaning usually assigned to the name in the *Norwegian Rune Poem* could indicate the substitution of yet another homonym, *úr*'slag' (cf. the possible etymological correspondences in Low German and Dutch). Nonetheless, since no traces of the meaning 'slag' are found in any of the later sources, not even the medieval Norwegian inscription from Bø, the metaphorical interpretation of *úr* as referring to rainlike sparks, suggested by Worm and supported by Kålund, may well be correct.

In an etymological discussion of Norwegian *aur*, Bjorvand (2006, 102) independently arrives at the conclusion that Old Norse *úr* for 'slag (of melted iron)' is most probably a secondary metaphorical use of the word to denote a 'rain' of glowing iron sparks.

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Deictic References in Runic Inscriptions on Voyage Runestones

Kristel Zilmer

Introduction

In the Swedish province of Västergötland, there stands a runestone at Härlingstorp farm, Edsvära parish, in the district of Skåning (Vg 61), where a mother commemorates her son who died while travelling abroad. The present site of the stone is not far from its assumed original setting; it was found by a ford leading over the nearby Härlingstorp brook.

The monument is of granite and is just over one metre high. The upper right section is missing, but this has been supplied from earlier records. Despite the damage, the design of the monument seems clear: the inscription is fitted into two bands, the outer one forming a continuous frame around the face of the stone. The content of the inscription is thus divided between the two bands. Beginning at the lower left corner, the runes in the outer band (following *Samnordisk runtextdatabas*) read as follows: **: tula : sati : sten : þ... ...[ir kr : sun] : sin : harþa × kuþon : trok : sa ×**. In normalised Runic Swedish, the message (including the suppletion) is thus: *Tōla satti stæin þ[annsi æft]ir Gæir, sun sinn, harða gōðan dræng* ‘Tola placed this stone after GæirR, her son, a very good *drængR*’, concluding with the demonstrative pronoun *sā*, which introduces the second part of the inscription. This brings us to the inner band, which provides additional information about the deceased: **uarþ : tuþr : o : uastr:uakm : i : uikiku, varð dauðr a vestrvegum i vikingu** ‘died in the west on a “viking voyage”’.

The inscription as a whole contains several noteworthy features, not least in the matter of vocabulary. Thus, we find here one of the three occurrences in the runic material of the phrase *i vikingu*; the other examples are found in

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two inscriptions from Skåne, DR 330 and DR 334. According to Jesch, it is not obvious what kind of enterprises the feminine noun *viking* (Old Norse *viking*) referred to: “the contexts could be expeditions of either raiding or trading (or both)” (2001, 55). Vg 61 and DR 334 were set up to commemorate men said to have died during such Viking activity—in the former case somewhere in the west, in the latter the north. DR 330 follows a more general pattern of commemoration, referring, as far as can be seen, to men who are widely acclaimed on account of their Viking activity. In all three inscriptions the term *viking* is thus used of the activities of men who engaged in travelling.

The second specifically Viking vocabulary item found on Vg 61 is the well-studied and much more frequently documented *drængr* (ON *drengr*), here modified by sg. acc. *harða gōðan* and characterising the deceased. Travelling has been identified as an activity *drængiar* engaged in: “taking part in viking or merchant expeditions to other countries seems to have been a commendable task for a *drængr*” (Strid 1987, 312; cf. also Jesch 1993, 170). Jesch (2001, 216–32) offers a fresh insight into the semantic range of the term in various contexts. According to her, its central connotations in runic inscriptions signal in-group identification and/or youth (2001, 229 f.).

The above points illustrate some of the things one may choose to focus on when discussing an inscription such as Härlingstorp. One could equally well stress its importance as an example of an inscription commissioned by a female commissioner on her own. In the present context, though, Härlingstorp serves as a suitable point of departure for yet other reasons.

First, Vg 61 demonstrates how the inscription focuses attention on the monument by use of the wording *stæin þ[annsi]* ‘this stone’—a formulation that carries an extended, extra-linguistic meaning in that it points out the medium for the message in a very direct manner. Looking at the design of the stone we notice that *stæin þ[annsi]* is carved along the top (although the section that carried the latter word is not preserved, apart from the initial **þ**).

Second, it is interesting to observe the dative plural form *ā vestrvegum* ‘on western ways’—carved **uastr:uakm** and placed in the upper right part of the inner band. This piece of information provides a rather broad frame of reference for the young man’s itinerary. The only other runic inscription that mentions *vestrvegr* is Sö 62, but there the reference is singular, and incorporated into the phrase *ī veg varð dauðr vestr* ‘died on the western way’. The designation of the eastern route, *austrvegr*, which is recorded in five runic inscriptions (Sö 34, Sö 126, Sö Fv 1954; 22, Vg 135 †, U 366 †), also appears in the singular. In skaldic poetry and saga literature, on the other hand, we also find plural forms of *austrvegr*, showing the ambiguous and gradually changing nature of the label, which, depending on context, could

designate various territories that were considered part of the eastern world (cf., e.g., Jackson 2003, 29–36).

The aim of the current paper is to discuss various types of deictic features in runic inscriptions to do with travelling—of which Vg 61 with its *stæin þ[annsi]* and *ā vestrvegum* forms one example. In the following I shall clarify what is meant by ‘deictic feature’, identify suitable sources, and justify the approach adopted in the present study.

Deictic features—What are they?

The term deixis originates from Greek, and its literal meaning is “display”. According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, deixis refers to “the pointing or specifying function of some words (as definite articles and demonstrative pronouns) whose denotation changes from one discourse to another”.

Deictic words thus derive at least some of their meaning from the situation (i.e. extra-linguistic context); their “use and interpretation depend on the location of the speaker and/or addressee within a particular setting” (O’Grady, Dobrovolsky, and Katamba 1997, 711). In other words, the interpretation of deictic markers varies according to when and where and by whom they are applied.

Typical categories of deixis are person deixis, place deixis, and time deixis (cf. Fillmore 1997, 61 f.). Person deixis refers to the participants in the act of communication: the sender, the addressee, and the potential broader audience. Common markers of this type of deixis are personal pronouns, such as *I* and *you*. Typical place-deictic terms are *this* and *here* (proximal deictic markers) versus *that* and *there* (distal deictic markers), which demonstrate closeness to or distance from the sender’s perspective. Time-deictic terms would for example be adverbs, such as *now*, *then* and *today*, and they are linked to the speaker’s perspective through a specific temporal point of reference.

Runic inscriptions that tell of travels

The source group for the current study includes more than 200 stone inscriptions that date from the Viking Age or Early Middle Ages and can be categorised as of traditional commemorative type. All contain references to travel, usually in the form of named destinations (place- and or inhabitant-names)—often locations where the commemorated person(s) died. Alternatively, the inscriptions may speak of travel in general terms, or contain bynames appropriate to people who travelled to certain destinations.

The total number of runestones referring to voyages cannot be established with certainty, since it can sometimes be hard to determine the nature of the evidence. Fragmentary inscriptions, for example, may not make clear whether the person commemorated died away from home; the same applies to inscriptions that do not specify localities (e.g. those that mention death by drowning).

Voyage runestones have long constituted a popular research topic, and they have been used as sources in a number of connections (there is an overview in Zilmer 2005, 66–72). In general we can distinguish between three main types of study (cf. Zilmer 2005, 67):

- (a) general surveys of runic references to voyages to the east or west, or both
- (b) discussions of groups of inscriptions with the same or similar historical reference, such as the *Knutr/danegeld* inscriptions and the *Ingvarr* inscriptions
- (c) studies of voyage inscriptions for the light they shed on contemporary society or vice-versa (e.g. the socio-economic background of the travellers, the political organisation behind the expeditions, or the purpose of the voyages)

A common approach has been to offer general surveys of the reached destinations and try to place the information about travelling in the context of other historical evidence—to connect the recorded journeys with known events, historical figures and practices. In the present study I will approach this group of inscriptions from a different point of view, finding them to be a useful point of departure when discussing particular semantic and contextual features of the runic discourse.

The reason for selecting voyage runestones as source material is the following. We may expect that besides the most common deictic markers—also found on other stones—these inscriptions will contain potentially interesting place- and time-deictic expressions, since they are concerned with mobility in relation to particular spatio-temporal reference points. Although not exclusively, such inscriptions often record death away from home, which in itself requires a certain distance to be marked: the place the commemorated person died is distinct from the memorial site and the home territory of the stone-raisers. Inscriptions on voyage runestones should by their very nature illuminate various ways of presenting the orientational features of language.

Exemplification of deictic features

The following presentation will to a certain extent be based on the terminology used by earlier scholars who have worked in the field. A primary distinction is usually drawn between the standard commemorative formula and various types of supplement (cf., e.g., Thompson 1975, 12–21; Palm 1992, 133–36; Hübler 1996, 39–41, 78–80; Jesch 1998, 463 f.). This is in order to bring out the seeming uniformity as well as the role of variation in runic texts. However, it should be remembered that inscriptions are more than texts: the layout and the way the different elements are placed on the stone adds to the specific experience of runic textuality. In particular I would wish to emphasise the importance of the visual dimension of runic inscriptions (as, e.g., Jesch 1998; Andrén 2000; Øby Nielsen 2001). Of course, there is always the risk that one may read more into the inscriptions' visual imagery than is actually there. The approach adopted here is more conservative. I wish simply to direct attention towards some forms of interplay between the content of the inscription and the layout.

The inscriptions studied contain a number of deictic expressions that derive their meaning from the context of utterance and represent the perspective of the people involved in commissioning the monument. A typical example is the phrase already referred to in the introduction to this article—the common phrase 'this stone'. As we can see, the monument marker is complemented by a demonstrative pronoun with place-deictic function. This focuses additional attention on the medium of the inscription, but also on other components of a monument. More than 125 inscriptions in my corpus make use of this strategy (the number may be even higher if fragmentary inscriptions are taken into account).

Typically we meet the phrase 'this stone' in the main memorial formula, as for example in the above-mentioned Härlingstorp inscription, or in Ög 104 Gillberga: *Rauðr ræisti stæin þennsi æftir Tök[a], brōður sinn* 'Rauðr raised this stone after Toki, his brother'. As we learn from the supplements in the latter inscription the deceased was a very good *drængr*, who was killed in England. Sometimes the plural form is used, as in the case of Vs 1 Stora Ryttern (Fig. 1), where the reference to pl. acc. *stæina þāsi* 'these stones' indicates that there was at least one other stone besides that carrying the inscription—indeed, from the same church ruins comes its possible fellow, Vs 2, which is decorated with a cross. Furthermore, Vs 1 includes an additional monument marker, in the form of the rather specific term 'staff': *Guðlæifr satti staf ok stæina þāsi æftir Slagva, sun sinn* 'Guðlæifr placed a staff and these stones after Slagvi, his son'. 'Staff' occurs in the inscription

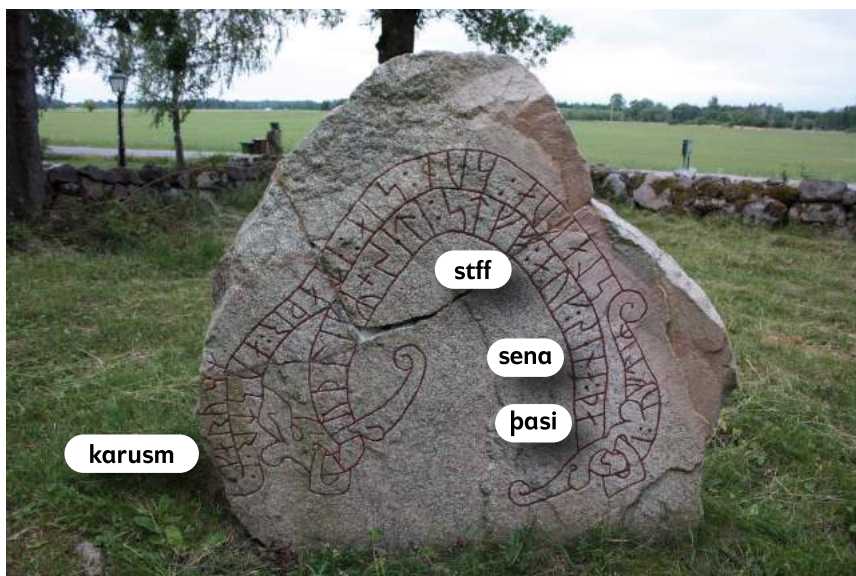


Fig. 1. The runestone from Stora Ryttern (Vs 1). Foto by the author.

without its own deictic marker, but the word occupies a central position on the stone, carved into the top part of the inner zoomorphic band. The inclusion of ‘these’ after ‘stones’ serves to point out that several stones were included in the same monument complex. It is also a theoretical possibility that the formulation as well as the design of the carving was modified to take account of the layout of the memorial.

Another interesting feature of the Stora Ryttern inscription is its conclusion—with the identification of the place where Slagvi died carved into the lower left corner of the stone: **austr** • **i** • ‘east in’ and **karusm** • stand with the bases of the runes facing each other, reminiscent of a mirror image. The interpretation of **karusm** as either *Garðar* (the territory of Old Rus) or Chorezm has been discussed on a number of occasions (cf., e.g., Jansson 1946, 265; Arne 1947, 290–292; *SRI*, 13: 8 f.; Lagman 1990, 97).

Monument markers other than ‘stone’ can be found in the memorial formula, also accompanied by a demonstrative pronoun. To mention but a few: we meet ‘this bridge’ in Ög 68 Ekeby church (*Svæina gærði brō þessi æftir Øyvind, brōður sinn* ‘Svæina made this bridge after Øyvindr, her brother’), thus focusing on the construction of a bridge instead of the runic monument. U73 Hansta exhibits a somewhat aberrant memorial formula, introduced by the phrase ‘these markers’ instead of the name(s) of the

commissioner(s): *Þessun mærki æru gar æftir syni Ingur* ‘These markers are made after Inga’s sons’. Nor are the names of the deceased mentioned; the additional information offered concerns lines of inheritance and the fact that the sons died *ī Grikkium* (i.e. in Byzantium). However, here we have to consult the second Hansta monument, U72, which details the names of the commissioners and the commemorated. The Västra Strö monument (DR334) uses ‘these runes’ as a blanket designation for the memorial: *Faþir lét hoggwa runar þæssi æftir Azur, broþur sin* ‘Faðir had these runes cut after Azurr, his brother’. That runestone still stands at its original location, and has to be viewed together with the second Västra Strö monument (DR335), which refers to ‘this stone’, and also commemorates a traveller (more precisely, a person who owned a ship together with the commissioner Faðir). Furthermore, from the same spot several non-inscribed stones and a mound are known, adding significance to the memorial setting. Finally, we could mention the phrases ‘this monument’/‘these monuments’, as for example recorded in Ög8 Kälvesten that commemorates a traveller who fell in the east: *Stygur/Styggur gærði kumbl þau aft Öyvind, sunu sinn* ‘Stygur/Styggur made these monuments after Öyvindr, his son’, and Sö 173 Tystberga that speaks of a man who had been in the west for a long time, and then died in the east with Ingvarr — at the same time leaving it unclear which one of the two deceased the inscription mentions is to be understood by *hann* ‘he’: *Myskia ok Manni/Māni létu ræisa kumbl þausi at bröður sinn Hröðgæir ok faður sinn Holmstæin* ‘Myskia and Manni/Mani had these monuments raised after their brother Hroðgæir and their father Holmstæinn’. We also meet the monument marker *kumbl* in Sö 319 Sannerby, which exhibits an interesting design. Here we can observe a clear distinction between the main content and supplementary information in the layout. Running along the band framing the stone we find the memorial formula *Finnviðr(?) gærði kuml þessi æftir Gæirbiorn, faður sinn* ‘Finnviðr made these monuments after Gæirbiorn, his father’, with *kuml þessi* placed centrally at the top. The supplementary information concerning the deceased is found in the middle of the stone, arranged more or less symmetrically around the cross: *hann varð dauðr vestr* ‘he died in the west’.

The monument marker *kumbl* has been understood by some to refer to a memorial consisting of more than one element, including the inscription (Palm 1992, 177). Stoklund (1991, 287), however, stresses that the word’s regular plural form in Danish inscriptions need not imply more than a single memorial stone; rather *kumbl* (pl.) may function as a collective label designating a stone covered with runes.

So far we have concentrated on the deictic marker “this” as it occurs in the

main memorial formula, but it may be inserted into the supplements as well. Thus, the runestone from Västerljung church, Sö 40 – which speaks of rather shorter travels – contains the phrase ‘these runes’ (*rūnar þārsi*) in the carver formula, whereas in the memorial formula the grammatical object (i.e. the monument) has actually been left implicit (*Hōnæfr ræisti at Gæirmarr, faður sinn* ‘Hōnæfr raised after Gæirmarr, his father’). On the other hand, some inscriptions have several parallel foci, each marked by the demonstrative pronoun. For example in Sö 46 Hormesta – commemorating a traveller to England – the memorial formula includes *stæin þannsi* ‘this stone’, while the supplement identifies the makers of ‘this monument’ (*kumbl giærðu þatsi*). Sö 55 Bjudby (also after a traveller to England) uses the phrase sg. acc. *stæin þenna* ‘this stone’ both in the memorial and the carver formula. In the Nora rock inscription U 130, the memorial formula identifies the medium as ‘this rock-slab’ (sg. acc. *hælli þessa*), whereas in the supplement we find information about ‘this estate’ that the commissioner owns: *ER þessi býr þæira oðal ok ættærfi, Finnviðar suna ā Ælgiastaðum* ‘This farm is their allodial and inherited property, the sons of Finnviðr at Ælgiastaðir’. With the impressive rock on which the inscription is carved still preserved in its original setting – close to a river that flows into Edsviken bay – the deictic markers in the text carry an extended extra-linguistic meaning even for us, the modern audience. The farm at Älgesta, located some 30 km away, must have functioned as the centre of the family’s estate, which even included the lands at Nora (see further Zilmer 2005, 103 f.).

It is interesting to analyse the use of demonstrative pronouns in related monuments. The well-known Broby runestones U 135 and U 136 commemorate the same man, the latter inscription revealing that he headed for Jerusalem and died away among the Greeks (*uppī Grikkium*). U 136 refers to ‘these stones’ (pl. acc. *stæina þessa*) in its memorial formula; U 135 does the same but includes the additional monument markers ‘this bridge’ (sg. acc. *brō þessa*) and ‘this mound’ (sg. acc. *haug þenna*). An alternative approach can be seen in the inscriptions from Sjonhem church, Gotland, G 134, G 135 and G 136†. G 134 begins with the statement *Hrōðvisl ok Hrōðælfir þaun lētu ræisa stæina æftir sy[ni sīna] þrīa* ‘Hrōðvisl and Hrōðælfir, they had stones raised after their three sons’. It then moves to focus on the monument in question (*þenna æftir ...*). G 135 and the lost G 136† begin in a similar way. In other cases, only one of the related monuments makes use of the deictic marker ‘this’ (cf., e.g., U 241 and U 240).

As for the potential motives behind the use of ‘this’, it has been suggested that it could be a type of convention, marking the responsibility of the commissioners for the raising of the runestone:

Så länge ansvaret för en runsten låg på de namngivna personerna i inskriften kunde det kännas naturligare att just 'denna sten' markerades. Om däremot ansvaret låg på andra personer kunde bestämdheten/konkretionen gärna komma i bakgrunden och själva företeelsen 'att resa sten' träda i förgrunden (Palm 1992, 226 f.).

(‘As long as the responsibility for a runestone lay with the people named in the inscription, it may have felt more natural to emphasise “this very stone”. If on the other hand the responsibility lay with other people, the definiteness/concretisation could be relegated to the background and the act of “raising the stone” given prominence.’)

However, the nature of the preserved evidence does not of itself allow us to confirm this idea. We have to reckon with the possibility of both regional and carver-related variation here (cf. Palm 1992, 223–28). Individual preferences should not be overlooked either — these could have been steered by the design of the inscription and the physical features of the monument. Conceivably, we may here be witnessing a way in which stone-raisers/commissioners emphasised the significance of a particular monument in relation to the surrounding landscape and/or other components of a memorial, or expressed proximity with regard to a communicative reference point. In the current state of our understanding all such suggestions must remain in the realm of speculation; in order to discover more about the meaning and function of ‘this’, the whole available runic corpus must be studied systematically, taking into consideration not only the explicit textual patterns but also the layout, the size and the appearance of the monument and its broader communicative setting.

Whether or not a given commemorative runic inscription uses a demonstrative pronoun, the monument on which the inscription stands can still be observed by the putative reader. To that extent the deictic marker ‘this’ may have a very direct gestural function that is lacking in other contexts. In inscriptions that use the demonstrative pronoun the presumed spatio-temporal proximity to the sender of the message as well as to the site of the memorial is quite apparent, whereas inscriptions that lack the demonstrative pronoun leave us with the impression of a more general and abstract statement. In voyage runestones that simultaneously refer to various destinations away from the location of the stone, ‘this’ obviously adds a separate focus on the present point of reference.

The deictic marker ‘this’ belongs to the category of spatial deictics. Other place-deictic terms that figure in the present corpus are ‘here’ and ‘there’. One such example is to be found in the Lundby inscription, Sö 131: *Spiūti*,

Halfdan, þæir ræisþu stæin þannsi æftir Skarða, brōður sinn. Fōr austr heðan með Ingvari, ā Særklandi liggR sunR Øyvindar ‘Spiuti, Halfdan, they raised this stone after Skarði, their brother. [He] went east from here with Ingvarr, in Særkland lies the son of Øyvindr’. The inscription portrays the journey as leading away from a given point of reference, identified as movement *heðan*, ‘from here’. Movement that leads to a distant place outside one’s local setting may also be depicted in terms of travelling ‘away/abroad’ and ‘far’, as for example in the supplementary texts of the Gripsholm inscription, Sö 179: *Þæir fōru drængila fiarri at gulli ok austarla ærni gāfu, dōu sunnarla ā Særklandi* ‘They went like men far in search of gold and in the east gave [food] to the eagle; [they] died in the south in Særkland’; the Tibble inscription, U 611: *Hann ūti fioll ī liði Frøygæirs* ‘He fell abroad in Frøygæirr’s band’; the inscription from Tierp church, U 1143: *Hann fōr bort með Ingvari* ‘He went off with Ingvarr’; and the Västra Ledinge inscription, U 518: *Hann ændaðis ī Silu nōr en þæir andrir ūt ī Grikkium* ‘He died north in Sila, but the others [died] away in Byzantium’. The last example includes references to two different places of death. According to Otterbjörk (1961, 33), the first, *ī Silu nōr*, forms an antithesis to *ūt ī Grikkium* (for comments on the semantics of *ūt ī*, see Salberger 1997). This view receives support from the layout of the inscription, with the two place adverbials standing almost opposite each other in different lines of the zoomorphic band. With one man dying closer to home, in the sound of *Sila* (Kolsundet), and the other two in a far-off region, it is indeed natural to emphasise the fact that the latter incident occurred ‘away/abroad’ in Byzantium.

In the Fjuckby inscription, U 1016, it is the adverbs *ūti* ‘abroad’ and *hæima* ‘at home’ that direct attention towards two different arenas. The statement about the first son perishing abroad is clear: *Sā hēt Āki, sem’s ūti fōrs* ‘He was called Aki who died abroad’ — the interpretation of the rest of the inscription is, however, open to considerable doubt. The problem is how the sequence **kuam·:hn krik·:hafnir:haima tu** should be understood: according to one version the travelling son came to *Grikkhafnir* (‘the Byzantine harbours’), whereas the one son whose name we do not know died at home. Alternatively, the statement concerning the first son is *kvam hann Grikkia* ‘he came to Byzantium’, while *Hafnir* renders the name of the second (see further Wulf 1997).

We could also mention the lost G 136†, which was presumably raised after a man the inscription says died at home (*dō hæima*), whereas the related monuments G 134 and G 135 both commemorate travellers. Another case where the adverb *hæima* marks a contrast with the setting abroad is

the Bjudby inscription, Sö 55: *Var til Ænglands ungr drængr farinn, varð þā hæima at harmi dauðr* ‘Had gone to England a young man, then died at home greatly mourned’. This statement concerns one and the same person, a *drængr* who had been to England and afterwards—as indicated by the time-deictic word *þā* ‘then’—died at home. Sö 55 shows that information about travelling need not always serve to identify the place of death but can also emphasise a person’s significance. This is the case with one of the Haddeby inscriptions, DR 3, set up after King Sveinn’s retainer: *æs was farin wæstr, æn nú warþ døpr at Hēþabý* ‘who had travelled west, but now met death at Hedeby’. Here it is the time-deictic word ‘now’ (*nú*) that emphasises the contrast between the two arenas of action—the west and the (local) surroundings of Hedeby. The distinction is supported by the layout—the front of the monument is reserved for the memorial formula, the supplement about travelling, and the words *æn nú*, which form a link to the second part of the inscription, while the statement about the retainer’s death is found along the edge of the stone.

Place-deictic features are also used in connection with verbs of motion, which usually represent the perspective of the speaker (stone-raiser) and signify movement away from that point of reference. The typical scheme is: personal pronoun + the verb *fara* + various adverbs/directional indicators and/or place-names. However, it should be noted that not all voyage runestones focus on movement; often they simply state that death occurred somewhere away from home (e.g. *hann varð austr dauðr* ‘he died in the east’). Occasionally, an interesting mixture of distal and proximal features occurs, as we have already seen in the case of U 1016. There the memorial formula is supplemented with information about the son who perished abroad, and it is also stated that he steered a ship and came (*kvam hann*) to Byzantium. Normally the verb ‘come’ would signal movement towards the speaker; here it is used in connection with a distant destination that the traveller was able to reach, thus shifting the point of reference.

The frequent references to journeys to the east and west can themselves be considered distal deictic markers. The statement: “He travelled to the east/died in the east” means, in other words: “He went there (and hence died away from here)”. Often only the general terms *austr/vestr*, *austarla/vestarla*, *austrvegr/vestrvegr* are used and the exact destination is left unspecified. For example, ten inscriptions record the term *austr* without any additional details that might identify where the deceased was headed (Ög 30, Sö 92?, Sö 308?, Vg 184, Vg 197, U 154, U 283†, U 504, U 898, DR 108). In other inscriptions, too, only the direction term *austr* is used, but these

contain supplementary references—for example the name of the leader of the expedition, as in the case of the Ingvarr inscriptions—that may point to a particular place or at least region.

Vestr occurs in eight runic inscriptions without any further information about the event or the destination (ÖgFv1970;310, Sö 53†, Sö 159, Sö 319, Vg 197, U 504, DR 3, DR 266). But as in the case of the “eastern” inscriptions, there are also instances where the general indication of travel to the west is combined with supplementary details (cf. Ög 68, Sö 14, Sö 260, U 668, G 370).

Sometimes, of course, we find that the east/west marker is used in combination with a specified locality; for example, *vestr* figures in two or perhaps three inscriptions together with the destination England (Sö 166, Gs 8, possibly Sm 104), while we often encounter *austr* in connection with the destinations *Garðar* and *Grikkjar*. On the other hand, these and other places can be given as destinations without the inclusion of directional guides (cf. Zilmer 2005, 223–32).

At the same time, all such designations reflect the orientational map of the speaker—the directional guides ‘east’ and ‘west’ are most probably used in agreement with the (explicit or implicit) destinations that were regarded as located in a particular part of the world. The way they are defined proclaims geographical knowledge and awareness of common travel routes.

As an illustrative example we could look at one of the Aspa inscriptions, Sö 137, which seems to tell of travels to the east. The stone stands at the side of a road. The district around Aspa is known for other runestones as well (Sö 136†, Sö 138, Sö 141, Sö Fv1948;289), and its proximity to the important medieval communication route of Erikskata has been stressed. The runestones at Aspa must have been connected with an early centre of some sort, as the content of the inscriptions also indicates. Sö 137’s inscription is divided between the northern and the southern side of the stone, and consists of a memorial formula in prose and an alliterating supplement. On the northern (possibly front) face there is a single band of text, with the inscription running upwards: *Þōra ræisþi stæin þ[ann]si at Öþi, bōanda sinn* ‘Þora raised this stone after Öþir, her husband’. The statement of relationship comes at the top. On the southern face the inscription continues up the middle text band and then down along the band on the right (there are also some runes on the left, but their reading is highly uncertain): *Stæinn sārsi standr at Öþi ā þingstaði at Þōru ver. Hann vestarla væknti(?) karla* ‘This stone stands after Öþir at the assembly place, after Þora’s man. In the west he armed [his] men’.

On this stone, a woman thus commemorates her dead husband, who is said (apparently) to have armed his men in the west. The site of the stone

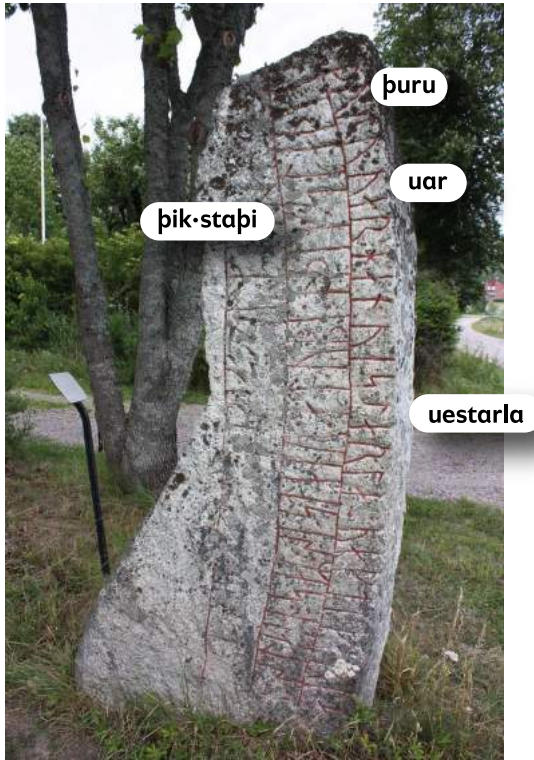


Fig. 2. The Aspa stone, Sö 137. Foto by the author.

at the local assembly place is emphasised. Further significant features are: the repetition of the deictic marker ‘this’ on both sides of the stone; the change to present tense in the statement about the location of the stone at the assembly place; and the visual prominence given to that part of the inscription as well as to the relationship between raiser and deceased. The supplement about the western activities of Øpir employs the directional guide *vestarla*, which is carved along the right edge of the monument.

A similar focus on the location of the monument is found on a further Aspa stone, Sö 138, which now stands opposite Sö 137 on the other side of the road. The memorial formula (also in the present tense) is introduced by the place-deictic term *hiar*, ‘here’: *Hiar standr stæinn at gōðan Ōpis arfa ok Þōrunnar, Gyllu brōðurs* ‘Here stands the stone after the good heir of Øpir and Þorunnr, brother of Gylla’.

We shall now take a closer look at the deictic features of the tenses used

on commemorative runestones. Tense as a device to indicate past, present and future is in essence deictic, since temporal reference is defined according to a given time of utterance. Because there are various ways of expressing past, present and future, the understanding of temporal categories is necessarily somewhat complex. The tense system in the Old Scandinavian languages (and in the modern ones for that) distinguishes past from present by means of inflections, whereas for the marking of other tense categories constructions with auxiliary verbs are used.

Runic inscriptions present information in a predominantly retrospective manner, using past tense constructions. Following the commemorative convention, the commissioners state that they raised the stone or had the stone raised in someone's memory; supplements often explain what the person did or was known for. With the recording of such statements, the commissioners were in a way already distancing themselves from the act of raising a stone. It was perhaps the symbolic moment when the stone was engraved (i.e. the point at which the inscription was encoded) that served as the point of reference. Alternatively, we may regard the inscription as orientated towards its future decoding—the past tense in the memorial formula would feel natural to potential viewers who would view the monument when it was already in position.

However, runic monuments also allow for the shifting of viewpoints, and the inclusion of statements that are related to a present or future moment. The alternation of temporal categories sometimes places emphasis on the “here and now” aspect—as already illustrated in some of the examples above—which simultaneously signals the permanent value of the monument (or its message) in the future (cf., e.g., Sö 137 and Sö 138, as well as U 130). The present tense is often used to refer to permanent and timeless circumstances, as in the Galteland inscription, N184: *Einn er Guð* ‘God is one’.

We also find the present tense in supplements describing the circumstances of a person's death. To cite a few examples: in Sö 131, discussed above, the commemorated person is said to lie in Serkland (*ā Særklandi liggR sunR Øyvindar*); the Spånga inscription (Sö 164) explains that the deceased lies inhumed in the west (*liggR vestarla of hulinn?*); the Valleberga inscription (DR337) commemorates two men who lie in London (*æn þer liggia i Lundunum*); and the Schleswig inscription (DR6) is made in memory of a man who rests at *Skia* in England (*A Ænglandi i Skiu hwilis*). The use of the present tense projects the speaker's perspective over to a distant setting—where the commemorated persons died and lie buried now and for ever. With the help of the commemorative inscription on a runestone raised at home the physical distance is overcome—indefinitely.

Other examples of alternation between different temporal horizons may be noted. In the now missing Stäket inscription (U 605†), the self-honouring formula probably used the past tense, whereas the supplement referred to the woman's intention to travel east to Jerusalem (*hon vill austr fara ok út til Iōrsala*). The Österberga inscription (Sö 159) is set up by two men after their father, who is said to have been in the west for a long time (*Hann vestr hafir of varit længi*). The last statement does not make the fact of death explicit but since it says that the man has been away for a considerable amount of time, we can deduce that he is now most likely considered dead (cf. U 344 and U 343†). On the other hand, the phrase 'he sits in Garðar' (*sitr Garðum*) in the Gårdby inscription (Öl 28) does not imply the person's death; the inscription simply seems to focus on the fact that he is not present.

Typical examples of prospective utterances are the frequent Christian prayers for the soul of the deceased (of the type *Guð hialpi sálu/and hans* 'God help his soul/spirit') and appeals to the potential viewers of the monument to read/interpret the inscription/the runes (cf., e.g., Öl 28). These and similar statements introduce a broader temporal and spatial dimension into the runic texts, expressing expectations that reach from the moment of the inscription's production into an unlimited future.

We conclude this exemplification of deictic features with a few short comments on the use of personal pronouns. Runic inscriptions function mostly as third-person mini-narratives. Normally the textual context allows us to understand who the inscription refers to through the use of third-person pronouns, although the reference is not always clear. Occasionally we find first- or second-person pronouns. A good example is provided by the runestone from Gåsinge church (Sö 14) that tells of travels in the west. The monument is set up by a woman and her two daughters after their husband/father. The inscription consists of the memorial formula, a prayer and a supplement about the deceased. In that last part of the inscription the first-person form is used: *Væit iak, þæt var Svæi[nn] vestr með Gautr/Knūti* 'I know that Svæinn was in the west with Gautr/Knutr'. Who is this 'I' who claims that he/she knows that the man was in the west? Is this the voice of one of the commissioners, the carver, or perhaps the memorial itself – which thus participates in a symbolic conversation with its potential viewers? In support of regarding this 'I' as a reference to the carver, one could cite the carver formula in the Varpsund inscription (U 654; commemorating a man who was killed in the east with Ingvarr), where the first-person pronoun is used: *Alrikr(?) ræist-ek rúnar* 'Alrikr, I carved the runes'. Nevertheless, the 'I' we meet in Sö 14 may in fact represent an abstract voice, perhaps that of the tradition that speaks through the runic monument.

As noted earlier, in order to understand the meaning of deictic references, we have to relate them to their extra-linguistic context. With runic inscriptions this is not at all an easy task, indeed it may be impossible. Important bits of information often remain hidden, which makes the inscription appear unanchored, despite the fact that it may contain specific references. Consider for example the inscription from Dalum churchyard (Vg 197): *Tōki ok þæiR brōðr ræistu stæin þennsi æftiR brōðr sīna. ER varð dauðr vestr, en annarr austr* ‘Toki and his brothers raised this stone after their brothers. He died in the west, but another in the east’. We learn that a man and his brothers have raised the stone in memory of their brothers, and that one died in the west, and the other in the east. However, the names of the dead brothers are not given, nor are we told who died in the west and who in the east—or, for that matter, even where that “west” or “east” was.

Conclusions

Although runic commemorative inscriptions predominantly follow the principles of retrospective mini-narrative in the third person, the deictic expressions used and various features of layout show that they are tied in a unique manner to what could be called their original moment of utterance, fixed in the horizon of the people who once commissioned and produced the monuments. Thanks to the durability of stone these bygone moments of utterance can still be experienced at first hand, and they have at the same time taken on an image of monumentality and permanence. Seen in this light the mode of expression of runic commemorative inscription could even be called a kind of materialised and visualised speech.

The study of place- and time-deictic references draws attention to the interplay between the proximal and distal aspects of the language of commemorative runestones. It can further be argued that as a result of their immediate gestural function, proximal deictic features create an image of orality in the mode of expression applied on runestones; there emerges a kind of encounter between the original commissioners of the memorial and the potential audience (more about this in Zilmer 2010). In the case of voyage stones under study here we observe the interaction between the perspectives of ‘here and now’ and the ‘there and then’. Something that is physically distant may in fact be presented as (psychologically) close, or vice versa—this accords with the overall commemorative purpose of the stones. The differences of being ‘away’ as opposed to staying at home are also well marked.

The analysis of deictic features in voyage runestones is but one way to

show that, despite their seemingly uniform textual composition, commemorative inscriptions exhibit a number of individual features that should be taken into consideration. The insertion of deictic markers is one obvious linguistic strategy for creating variation in the structure and content of the inscriptions and focusing on various topics. Furthermore, in terms of their extended extra-linguistic nature, the deictic markers also point at different levels of contextuality around runestones. For one, the study of runic textuality can benefit from the analysis of the design of the inscription on the monument; the placement of particular pieces of information on the stone can carry visual significance even when it is not intentional and simply results from the applied schemes of layout. In addition, the physical features of the monument and the communicative setting around it must also be taken into account as far as possible. The text itself is merely one part of the visual, physical and communicative whole. Indeed, the manner in which the components of the inscription are arranged on the stone or the stone placed in a particular setting also carries an extended deictic meaning. We are dealing here with a gestural function of the inscription/monument — the inclusion of a particular content element, or the setting of the stone, draws attention to something in a direct and visual manner.

I believe that further study of different types of deictic reference in the whole corpus of runestone inscriptions may cast light on the significant role of variation in the language of commemorative runestones. Deictic references reveal one way of how to vary the applied formulations, and at the same time they anchor the runic monuments in particular settings. To be able to approach these settings it is necessary to acknowledge and appreciate the many individual features of the inscriptions — which may be found in their textuality, layout patterns and the environment in which many of them still stand.

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Some Thoughts on the Rune-Carver Øpir: A Revaluation of the Storvreta Stone (U 1022) and Some Related Carvings

Magnus Källström

Introduction

Fifty runic inscriptions in the Mälars Valley are signed by a man who calls himself *Øpir*. Even if this well-known Upplandic rune-carver is believed to have executed many runestones, most scholars agree that some of the stones signed *Øpir* must be the work of other men. No modern runologist thinks, for example, that the Upplandic *Øpir* is identical to the *Øpir* who carved the runestone at Gryt church in Södermanland (Sö 11), and it is also disputed how many *Øpir*s we have to reckon with in Uppland. Frands Herschend (1998) has tried to divide the Upplandic *Øpir* into two, depending on whether the name is spelt with a dotted *u*-rune or not, and Laila Kitzler Åhfeldt (2002) has detected several different hands in the signed carvings by analysing the cutting technique. Even for those who embrace the traditional opinion that there was only one rune-carver *Øpir* in Uppland, there are three runestones that are usually dismissed, since they deviate from the rest of *Øpir*'s carvings. All three are found in the vicinity of Uppsala. One originates from Håga in Bondkyrka parish (U 896) but is now moved to Uppsala, another was discovered in the city itself (U 940), while the last still stands in Storvreta in Ärentuna parish (U 1022). In *Upplands runinskrifter* the inscriptions are transliterated, transcribed and interpreted as follows (the runes inside square brackets are taken from older sources):

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U 896 (SRI, 8:607):

... [l]itu raisa stæin + fir · ont · iy--m + sun + sain + tauþr + fita + faþum
· i tai · ma...

riþ runar ubir

... *letu ræisa stæin fyr and Øyndar(?)*, *sun sinn*, *dauðr [i] hvitavaðum i Danma[rku](?)* ... *Reð runar Øpir*.

“... läto resa stenen för sin son Önds(?) ande. [Han blev] död i dopkläder i Danmark(?) ... Øpir ombesörjde runorna.”

‘... had the stone raised for the spirit of Eyndr(?), their son. [He] died in baptismal robes in Denmark(?) ... Øpir was responsible for the runes.’

U 940 (SRI, 9:41):

· ihul · auḷ · þurkir · litu · rita · stæin · iftir · kitilfastr · faþur · sin · hialbi
· sal

kilauh hont

riþ · runar · ubir

Igull ok Þorgæirr letu retta stæin æftir Kættilfast, faður sinn. Hialpi sal. Gillaug ... and(?). *Reð runar Øpir*.

“Igul och Torger läto uppresa stenen till minne av Kættilfast, sin fader. [Gud] hjälpe själen. Gillög ... Øpir rådde runorna.”

‘Igull and Þorgæirr had the stone erected in memory of Kættilfastr, their father. May [God] help his soul. Gillaug ... Øpir arranged the runes.’

U 1022 (SRI, 9:248):

[ui]kn[i · a]uk · althrn · uk ailifr · akhun · runfriþ · litu · rita · stæin · iftir
ilhu[ta k]aþur · sin
ubir [r--st-] ru[na]

Vigi(?) ok Hal(f)dan(?) ok Ælifr, Hakon, Runfrið letu retta stæin æftir Illuga(?), faður sinn. Øpir risti runa[r].

“Vige(?) och Halvdan(?) och Eliv, Håkon, Runfrid läto uppresa stenen till minne av Illuge(?), sin fader. Øpir ristade runorna.”

‘Vigi(?) and Halfdan(?) and Ælifr, Hakon, Runfrið had the stone erected in memory of Illugi(?), their father. Øpir carved the runes.’

In the inscriptions from Håga (U 896) and Uppsala (U 940) the carver used the verb *rāða* in the signature (*Rēð rūnar Øpir*), and there is disagreement about the exact meaning the word has in this context (see the overview in Åhlén 1997, 50–54). Marit Åhlén (1997, 60) suggests the wording could indicate that Øpir gave advice to a less skilled rune-carver who then executed the stone, but this interpretation is not unproblematic. The signature on the Storvreta stone (U 1022) is only partly legible today, but according to older sources it can be interpreted as *Øpir risti rūnar* “Øpir carved the runes”.

Since this implies that Øpir actually did the carving himself, the inscription is of a certain interest.

The Sturvreta stone (U 1022)

At first sight the Sturvreta stone (Fig. 1) does not look like an Øpir stone at all, and the inscription offers several odd and uncommon spellings. Richard Dybeck (1860–76, 1:33) who studied the runestone in 1864 remarks that Øpir is hardly himself in this carving (“Ubbe är här knappt sig sjelf”), and in *Upplands runinskrifter* (SRI, 9:249 f.), Elias Wessén gives several reasons why the stone cannot be the work of Øpir. Above all he calls attention to the uneven and shallow cutting technique, which he finds foreign to this carver. According to Wessén, it is more likely that U 1022 is executed by an anonymous runesmith, one who he believed cut the majority of the runestones in Ärentuna parish. Wessén also claims that this carver imitated Øpir on a runestone at Ärentuna church (U 1015) and in the light of this he thinks the carver may have got permission to use Øpir’s name on U 1022. However, Wessén does not exclude the possibility that Øpir had something to do with the inscription, for example by supplying a draft for the text. Marit Åhlén too (1997, 59 f.) dismisses the Sturvreta stone as one of Øpir’s signed works, on account of the ornamentation and the strange spellings of some of the personal names.

All the same, it is undeniable that the last part of this inscription comprises a sentence which begins with the name *Øpir* and ends with the word *rūnar*, and is therefore very likely to be a carver signature. These circumstances call for a more thorough description and analysis of the stone and its inscription.

The Sturvreta stone is recorded as early as in 1667, and it seems to have been located at roughly the same place then as it is today. In the oldest account of it (*Rannsakningar efter antikviteter*, 1.1:17), some stone heaps (“Några Steenhoopar”) are also mentioned, and these must be identified with a grave-field containing mounds and round stone-settings, adjacent to the runestone.

In spite of the fact that the Sturvreta stone has been known since the seventeenth century, there are only two drawings predating the publication in *Upplands runinskrifter* in 1953. The first one was made in the late seventeenth century by Johan Leitz under the supervision of Johan Hadorph and formed the basis of a woodcut, later printed in *Bautil* (1750) as number 509. The second drawing was made about two hundred years later by Richard Dybeck and was reproduced in the first volume of his *Sverikes runurkunder*



Fig. 1. U 1022 Storvreta, Ärentuna parish. Photo: Iwar Anderson; Antikvariskt-topografiska arkivet, Swedish National Heritage Board, Stockholm.

(1860–76). A comparison between the two drawings shows that Dybeck’s is not totally independent of the woodcut in *Bautil*, since the stone is depicted at exactly the same angle and with identical proportions. Dybeck probably produced his drawing by using a copy of the woodcut, which he collated with the incisions on the stone.

These drawings – and especially the woodcut – are important, since parts of the inscription are now lost. The carver signature in particular has come under discussion, Wessén (*SRI*, 9:249) even considering the possibility that the text here was reconstructed by Hadorph. In the woodcut in *Bautil* the runes are given as **ubir r...st... runa**. Dybeck, however, could only read:

u... sti ...una. Today only a few runes can be made out. The first word clearly reads **ubir**, while the last begins with **ru** followed by traces of two other runes. The first of these seems to be **α** rather than **n**, as it was depicted on the woodcut in *Bautil*, a reading apparently confirmed by the photograph in *Upplands runinskrifter* (SRI, 9: plate 57, see Fig. 1). This does not, however, affect the interpretation of the word as *rūnar*, since **n** and **α** are sometimes confused in runic inscriptions (see, for example, Lagman 1989, 33 f.). More crucial is the physical distance between the assumed subject *Øpir* and the object *rūnar*. The reading in *Bautil* and the interpretation in *Upplands runinskrifter* suggest that only five runes should be missing, but the section that is weathered away measures nearly 80 cm. Marit Åhlén (1997, 60) suggests the original text was possibly something like *Øpir rēð, Stæinn rīsti rūna(r)*, but if the position of **st** is depicted with tolerable accuracy on the woodcut, there would be no room for the verb *rīsti*. To judge from the woodcut, the runes in this part of the inscription were widely spaced, as in the words that terminate the main text in the tail of the zoomorphic band. It thus seems preferable to adhere to the traditional interpretation of the last part of the inscription.

As mentioned above, the ornamentation of the stone does not correspond to the rest of Øpir's work, and Elias Wessén (in SRI, 9: 249) has even claimed that the rune forms are uncharacteristic of him. Øpir does not in fact exhibit many characteristic rune forms, but as shown by Åhlén (1997, 65, 79 f.) he often uses both the long-branch and the short-twig variants of **n** and **α**, while very seldom employing the reversed variant of **s** (𐌺). Now this fits well with the forms found on the Storvreta stone, so we can hardly cite uncharacteristic runic usage as evidence against Øpir's authorship. For his word separators the carver uses a single dot or a small vertical stroke, which also corresponds to the habits of Øpir.

If we move on to the orthography of the inscription we find several oddities, but also words which look quite normal. It is therefore appropriate to ask whether the inscription is as strange as claimed and, consequently, if it is possible to explain some of the spellings differently than hitherto.

Let us start with the first name **[ui]kn[i]**, several of whose runes are based on the woodcut in *Bautil*. Parts of these runes can still be seen and are indeed mentioned by Wessén in his commentary (SRI, 9: 249). According to Wessén, **[ui]kn[i]** could be a representation of the male name *Vīgi*, but he offers no explanation of the unexpected **n**. Arend Quak (1978, 64) suggests that **[ui]kn[i]** might render the name *Vīgæirr* with **n** miscarved for **α** and the final **r** omitted at the end. As a parallel he offers the spelling **ihulkai** (acc.) for *Igulgæir* on U 938, attributed to Øpir. One could add **porka-** (nom.) on

U 1072, signed by Øpir, which could be the name *ÞorgæIRR*. The sequence has hitherto been interpreted as *Þorkell*, but this would then be the only occasion Øpir uses **a** to denote short /e/ (cf. Åhlén 1997, 88). Thus, Quak may be right about **[ui]kn[i]**, even if his interpretation presupposes a mistake by the carver. Personally, I would prefer a simpler explanation, and I wonder if the runes represent a female name **Vignȳ*. No such name is attested, but both of the elements occur in runic inscriptions, and there are also parallels to the spelling of the last element **-ni** (for example **þurni** *Þörnȳ*, Vg 169, and **sikni** *Signȳ*, U 305).

When it comes to the following name, **althrn**, there is no doubt about the reading of the runes, but the interpretation is problematic. Wessén is probably right in seeing here the well-known name *Halfdan*, which occurs with different spellings more than forty times in Swedish runic inscriptions. No exact counterpart to the strange form on the Storvreta stone is known, but it should be noted that the “real” Øpir obviously had problems with this name. On his signed stones we meet spellings such as **halfntan** (U 229) and **alfntan** (U 462) with a superfluous **n** in the middle of the name, while an even more confused **alfnthan** is found in an attributed carving (U 925).

The next name on U 1022, **akhun**, is not difficult to interpret: the runes undoubtedly represent the well-attested name *Hākon*. According to Wessén, a few characters have been transposed, but it is difficult to understand why initial **h** should have been moved to a position in the middle of the name. It is simpler to assume omission of initial /h/, as in many other runic inscriptions, and that the **h** represents unetymological /h/ in front of the unstressed vowel. The carver most likely intended **un** to represent a suffix, thinking that *Hākon* was composed in the same way as for example *Auðunn* (for a discussion of the formation and etymology of *Hākon*, see Melefors 1993). Unetymological **hs** in this position are infrequent, though the rune can occasionally be found before semivowels in the second element of compounds, as for example **inkihualtr** *Ingivaldr* (U 311) and **huita · huaþum** *hvītavāðum* (U 1036). There are also a few cases where an extraneous **h** is found in front of a vowel in an ending as in **kuikhan** *kvik(v)an* (U 308), **girkha** *Grikka* (U 922; concerning the *a*-stem inflection of this word see Svårdström in *SRI*, 12: 235), **ionha** *Iōna*(?) (U 922; see Williams 1990, 104, note 38) and **[suthi]** *Sōti* (U 1032). U 922, it should be noted, is a stone signed by Øpir.

Before we leave this part of the inscription it must be noted that the carver spells the conjunction *ok* ‘and’ both **[a]uk** and **uk**. He also omits this conjunction between the names of the last three sponsors. The first feature is known from about 20 runic inscriptions in Uppland, the majority either

signed or attributed to Asmundr Karasunn or Øpir.¹ Outside the work of these two carvers the feature is very rare; several of the inscriptions exhibiting it are lost and in some cases the reading is doubtful. In Uppland there are also about twenty inscriptions (including some uncertain examples) where the conjunction has been omitted between the names of some of the sponsors. A few of these are signed by carvers such as Likbjörn, Snari or Asmundr Karasunn, but four of them bear the signature of Øpir and at least two more can be attributed to him.²

Since the formula *lētu rētta stæin æftir* exhibits no peculiarities in U 1022, there is nothing to comment on until we reach the name of the deceased. Only the first four runes are fully preserved, but if we trust the readings of Hadorph and Dybeck, it can be read **ilhu[*tfa*]**. Wessén (in *SRI*, 9: 249) explained this with some hesitation as a spelling of the name *Illugi*. He assumes **f** to be a misreading for **g**, but can find no explanation for the **t** (“**t** förefaller alldeles omotiverat”). The vertical of this rune is still preserved, but there are no traces of a branch to the left and there probably never was one. The branch to the right on the other hand can be clearly seen descending over a natural elevation in the stone. A reading **l** thus seems more likely than **t**. If we accept this reading we arrive at the sequence **ilhu[*lfa*]**, which could represent the accusative of the male name *Hælgulfr*, known from the occasional runestone in Södermanland and Närke (Sö 188, Sö 352, Nä 31).³ This interpretation does presuppose a superfluous character, namely the **a** at the end of the name, but this rune seems easier to explain than a totally unmotivated **t**. It could for example be an epenthetic vowel, resulting from a clustering of several consonants across the word boundary. As I have pointed out elsewhere (Källström 2002, 12–15), this feature is found in other runic inscriptions, for example **þiupburhu lit** in U 322, which can be analysed as /þiu:þborg^o le:t/, or **biurno sun** /biqrn^a sun/ in U 346 † (the name of this individual is written **biurn** *Biurn* in another inscription, U 356).

¹ Signed carvings: Asmundr (in some cases with co-carvers) U 986, U 998, U 1144, U 1149; Øpir U 287, U 462, U 1034, U 1159. Unsigned carvings: U 173 (Øpir), U 174 †, U 241 (Asmundr), U 343 † (Asmundr), U 361 †, U 431 (Asmundr), U 498 †, U 540 (Asmundr), U 617, U 875 (Asmundr), U 920, U 1032, U 1090 †, U 1145 (Asmundr).

² Signed: Likbjörn UFv1976;104; Snari UFv1953;266; Asmundr U 884(?); Øpir U 181, U 922, U 1072, U 1106. Unsigned: U 61, U 193 (Asmundr?), U 361 † (?), U 492 (?), U 606 (?), U 627 †, U 843 †, U 917 (Øpir), U 952 † (Øpir), U 968 †, U 1027, U 1036, U 1122.

³ The sequence **hikkulfr** on Sö 178, interpreted as *Hælgulfr* in *SRI*, 3: 152, is more likely to represent the name *Hægulfr* with a repeated **k**.

If **ihhul[fa f]aþur** is the correct reading,⁴ the sequence can be analysed similarly as /hælgulf^a faþur/. Of course, we cannot rule out the possibility that the superfluous **a** is due to a miscarving resulting from anticipation of the stressed vowel in the following *faður*.

Finally, we need to pay some attention to the last word of the inscription, transliterated **ru[na]** by Wessén, who supplies the two final runes from the woodcut in *Bautil*. As mentioned above, the third rune does indeed seem to be **a**, but we can exclude the possibility that there once was a final **r** (or **r**). The form **runa** for *rūnar* is uncommon in the Upplandic material, with just seventeen examples in addition to the one under discussion here.⁵ Since the word *rūnar* often occurs in signatures, it is no surprise to find that thirteen or perhaps fourteen of these inscriptions are signed by the carver. We encounter the names of Manni, Þorgautr, Viseti and Ærinfastr, but a total of eight of these inscriptions are signed by Øpir. There is a further example of a miscarved **ruan** (for **runa**) on U 229, signed by Øpir.

To sum up this investigation: there are several uncommon, indeed extraordinary, spellings on the Storvreta stone. Although they can be explained in various ways, it is noteworthy that most of them recur in inscriptions signed by Øpir. This calls for an explanation. It is perhaps conceivable that the inexperienced Storvreta carver admired the great master so much that he travelled around the district collecting such unusual spellings as he could find on Øpir's stones in order to use them all in one single inscription of his own. It is perhaps more plausible, however, to view the two Øpirs as one and the same and to surmise that the Storvreta stone represents one of Øpir's earliest carvings, executed before he had developed his characteristic style. The simple ornamentation and the shallow cutting technique argue in favour of such an interpretation, and as I will show below, the geographical distribution of Øpir's carvings points in the same direction.

A tentative chronology of Øpir's signed runestones

Since Øpir's production is very large he must have worked for a great many years, and it is quite probable that his style changed over this time. If we look at the ornamentation of the signed carvings, we can discern at least

⁴ The first rune in the word *faður* is read as **k** in *Bautil*, but as **f** by Dybeck. Wessén shows no preserved rune in this position, but my own investigations (25 July 2005) revealed the remains of an **f**.

⁵ Signed carvings: Manni U 1007; Þorgautr U 308, U 958; Viseti U 337, Ærinfastr U 41; Øpir U 279, U 287, U 288, U 544, U 566, U 880, U 926†(?), U 1063, Unknown U 1016(?). Unsigned carvings: U 99, U 112 (Þorgautr), U 144.

five groups based purely on the shape of the rune-animal's head (see Fig. 2 and Appendix). In all five groups the head is seen in profile. Group 1 is first and foremost characterised by the long lobe hanging from the snout and the elongated ear, which follows the neck-line very closely. In group 2 we find a head similar to the first, but thinner and more elongated. Group 3's head is perhaps the one that most typifies Øpir's carvings. It is slightly bent and has a very short lobe at the snout and often a triangular-shaped ear. In group 4 we meet a stiffer and more triangular variant of the group 3 head, often with the ear reduced to a curved line and the eye omitted. Type 5 is defined by a head with a beaklike snout and an often reversed almond-shaped eye.

If we look at other elements of the carvings in relation to these five groups, we find that they are often connected with a particular type of head. Group 1 heads sometimes co-occur with small serpents with "moustaches", a feature which with one exception is missing from the other groups. In carvings exhibiting group 2 and 3 heads the tail of the rune-animal often follows a zigzag pattern before it ends in a foot. There are also a several cases where the rune-animal has a hind leg at a right angle to the body, the point where they connect decorated with a spiral; these are only found together with group 3 heads. The crosses on Øpir's stones do not vary greatly, though it should be noted that cross-rays are rather frequent in those that co-occur with group 1 heads but rare in the other groups.

In the light of this it seems to me likely that the five groups represent a chronological sequence. Fortunately it is possible to substantiate the chronological relationship between some of the groups. At Gällsta in Valentuna parish there is a runestone (U 229) signed by Øpir which belongs to my group 2. This stone was erected by Halfdan and Tobbi in memory of their father Uddi. Later these brothers were commemorated by their children, who also employed Øpir to cut the relevant stones (U 232, U 233). These unsigned, but characteristic, carvings belong to my group 4 and 5 respectively. This indicates there was a generation, or at least 15 to 20 years, between the first stone at Gällsta and the other two.⁶

If we compare a couple of carvings with the same basic design from my

⁶ Halfdan, who was probably the elder brother at Gällsta, had four children. On his memorial stone (U 231) a daughter Heðinvī is mentioned first, which probably means she was older than her brothers. According to Sven B. F. Jansson (in *SRI*, 6: 317 f.) she may be identical with a Heðinvī who commemorated her husband Holmgautr at Åsta, Angarns parish (U 210). The name *Heðinvī* is only recorded in these two carvings, which argues in favour of Jansson's assumption. The Åsta carving is signed by Øpir and belongs to my group 3, which could fit in with the chronology, if we assume that Holmgautr died before his father-in-law. This is possible, but unsusceptible of proof.

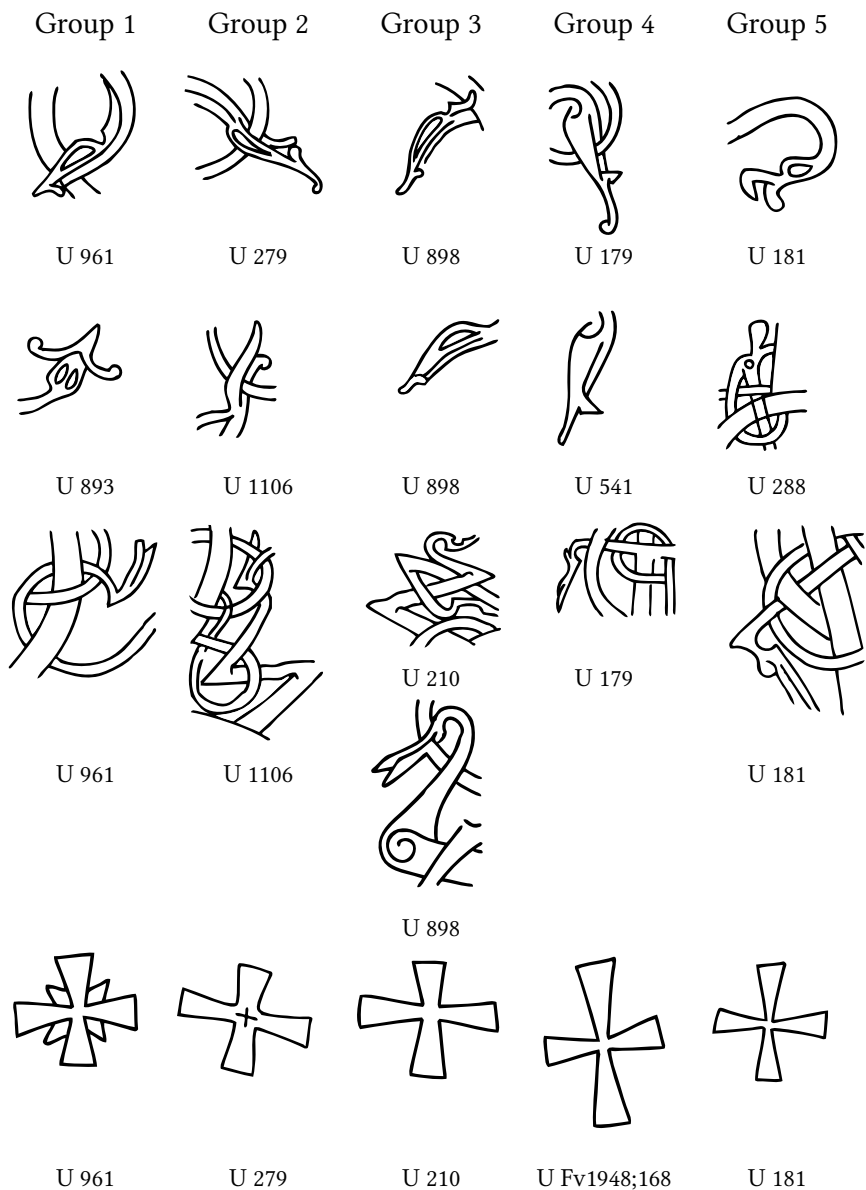
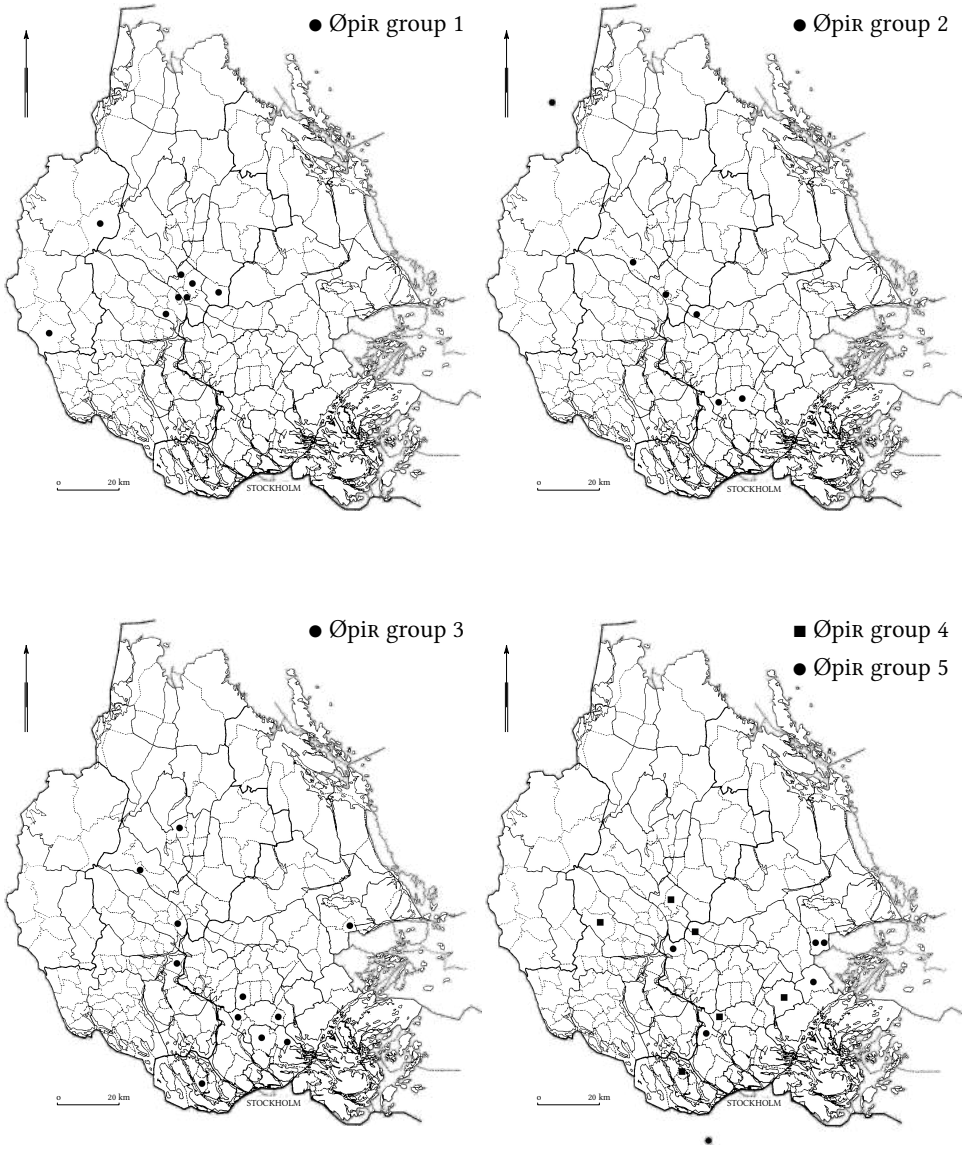
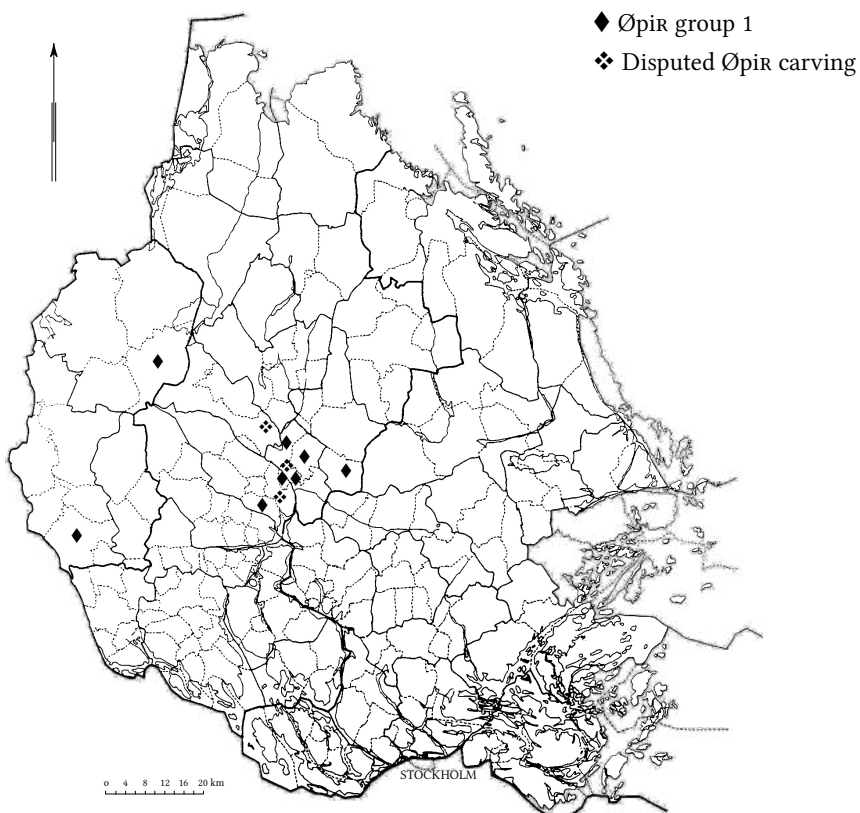


Fig. 2. Proposed typology of Øpir's signed carvings based on the design of the head of the rune-animals and the crosses. Drawing by the author.



Map 1. The distribution of Øpir's signed carvings by proposed group



Map 2. The distribution of the three disputed Øpir carvings (U896, U940 and U1022) in comparison with the carvings in group 1

first three groups—for example U961 (group 1), U279 (group 2) and U898 (group 3)—they give the impression of a carver who is getting more and more confident in his profession. That gives reason to believe that group 1 comprises the earliest carvings and that group 3 should follow group 2. It should be noted that this sketchy typology based only on Øpir's signed carvings accords well with Anne-Sofie Gräslund's typology of the Upplandic runestones (see for example Gräslund 1998). My groups 1–3 correspond to the group she has called Pr (= Profile) 4, while my 4 and 5 comprise carvings that she recognises as Pr 5. It is also interesting to note that Gräslund has classified one runestone in my group 1 (U893) as a transitional type between Pr 3 and Pr 4, which supports the idea that this group is early. In my group 3

there is another example of a possible transitional type (U 168†), but in this case between the late groups Pr 4 and Pr 5, which also accords well with my typology.

If we map the inscriptions of these groups, an interesting pattern can be observed (Map 1). The carvings of my group 1 are concentrated in the vicinity of Uppsala with a few examples out to the west. Group 2 has a wider distribution with one stone in Gästrikland and the odd carving in the south-east. Greater activity by Øpir in this latter area begins with the group 3 carvings, and continues with those of groups 4 and 5. To judge from this distribution, it is likely that Øpir started his career in the vicinity of Uppsala, and it is then not without interest that Storvreta and the other two disputed Øpir-stones (U 896, U 940) are found in the same area (Map 2). In my view, this argues in favour of identifying the Øpir of the Storvreta stone with the well-known carver of the same name.

We can compare this pattern with the work of another famous Upplandic carver, Fotr. He has only signed a few inscriptions, but it looks as though almost every signed stone marks a change of style. There is a big step from the rather simple runestone at Danmark church (U 945) to the highly decorated example at Stav in Roslags-Kulla parish (U 177). One of the signed stones (U 464) has very simple ornamentation and the carving exhibits a shallow cutting technique, which differs from the rest of Fotr's carvings. Wessén makes no attempt in *Upplands runinskrifter* to attribute the stone to another carver. Rather, he argues (*SRI*, 7:278) that this is probably an early work of Fotr's, executed before he became a master of his craft ("Sannolikt är den ... ett ungdomsverk av den ännu icke färdige mästaren"). U 464 seems to be a good parallel to U 1022. If we can accept the former as executed by Fotr at the beginning of his career, why cannot the latter be an early work of Øpir's?

Did Øpir start as an imitator?

We know little about how the Viking Age rune-carver learned his skills, even if some conclusions can be drawn from the information in the signatures. It seems reasonable to suppose that the profession sometimes passed from father to son, as was the case with the carvers Fotr and Þorgautr Fots arfi ('Fotr's heir'), and there are several instances of two carvers having worked together on the same stone. This has led to the conclusion that there was some kind of system of masters and apprentices, but was it also possible for a carver to learn his profession simply by imitating existing monuments? In the Uppsala area, where Øpir probably started his career, there may not



Fig. 3. The Brunnby stone, Funbo parish (U993). The signature is now missing, but can according to older sources be interpreted as *Øpir rīst[i]*. It is followed by the name *Biqrn*, still preserved. The function of this name is uncertain. Photo: Iwar Anderson; Antikvariskt-topografiska arkivet, Swedish National Heritage Board, Stockholm.

have been many pre-existing runestones. Beyond a handful of monuments executed by what were clearly local runographers as Brandr, Asbjørn and Grimr Skald, the only carver with a sizeable production prior to Øpir is Asmundr Karasunn. It is interesting to note that Per Stille (1999, 142) has tried to attribute the Uppsala stone with the mysterious signature *Rēð rūnar* *Øpir* (U940) to Asmundr. He stresses (p. 212) that the two carvers worked in the same area and that they were probably related to each other in some way. The attribution of U940 to Asmundr has been rejected by Henrik Williams (2000, 112 f.), but there are undoubtedly many features in this carving—for

example the cross, the verb *rētta* and certain of the rune forms – which are reminiscent of Asmundr’s style. The problem could easily be solved, if we assumed U 940 to have been cut by Øpir at the very beginning of his career in imitation of an Asmundr carving. A parallel can be found in the Brunnby stone, Funbo parish (U 993), which originally bore the signature of Øpir (Fig. 3). The carving does not look any more like an Øpir stone than U 940, but in this case no one has ever questioned Øpir’s authorship. Special attention must be paid to the cross with the rounded cross-rays on the upper part of the stone. This is the only example of such a cross in Øpir’s production, but it is a very common form in the carvings of Asmundr and almost one of his hallmarks (Thompson 1975, 91). It thus seems very likely that Øpir copied the cross from an Asmundr stone in the neighbourhood. The design of the rune-animal’s head is not entirely typical for Øpir, but the long ear, which follows the neckline, would place the carving in my group 1 and would thus indicate that this is an early inscription.

If we search for other examples of this kind of cross on stones which are obviously not executed by Asmundr, we find at least five in the vicinity of Uppsala: U 995†, U 1017, U 1032, U 1036 and U 1056. In all five the rune-animal is carved in three loops in a pyramid like construction. This pattern was often used by Øpir in his classical carvings, but the rest of the ornamentation shows little similarity to his work. I cannot claim that all these carvings are executed by the young and as-yet inexperienced Øpir, but two of them have examples of an unetymological **h** before a vowel or semivowel in medial position ([**suth**]i *Sōti* and **ik**[**huar**] *Ingvar*, U 1032, **anhuit** *Andvētt*, **huita** · **huaþum** *hvītavāðum*, U 1036) and one (U 1032) exhibits variation between **auk** and **uk** in the spelling of the conjunction *ok*. The possibility that Øpir may have made some of these carvings at an early stage of his career should not be ruled out. The issue needs further investigation.

Conclusions

In this article I have discussed the inscription on the Storvreta stone (U 1022) at length, and also touched upon the two other runestones where the name Øpir occurs in a context that makes it likely it is a carver signature (U 896 and U 940). I think runologists have been too hasty in rejecting these stones as the work of the well-known rune-carver Øpir. The unwillingness to accept them as such seems to rest on the silent assumption that there was little or no development in a rune-carver’s work. Such an assumption is almost certainly false, which I hope I have demonstrated by my suggested typology of Øpir’s signed carvings. A clear parallel can be found in the

work of Fotr. Of course, there are still problems to be solved. U 896 and U 940 exhibit forms which are not found in other inscriptions by Øpir, for example **fita + faþum** for *hvítavāðum* (U 896) or nominative **kitilfastr** for expected accusative (U 940; cf. Åhlén 1997, 54–58). These orthographic peculiarities are perhaps less troublesome if we assume we are dealing with the works of a beginner.

My proposal that Øpir started his career on his own and as an imitator of Asmundr Karasunn may be bold, but many of the lesser-known carvers in Uppland and Södermanland must certainly have learned the profession in a similar way. Claiborne Thompson, it will be recalled, suggested (1972) that Øpir was the pupil of a certain Igulfastr, but the interpretations of the two inscriptions (U 961 and UFv1953;263) on which this assumption was based are doubtful, and it is not entirely certain that such a carver ever existed (cf. Stille 1999, 145 f.). On the other hand, I do not think Øpir developed his skills entirely on his own. I suspect that somewhat later in his career he came under the influence of a now largely forgotten rune-carver, probably named Øynjutr, but this is a matter to which I will return on another occasion.

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Appendix

List of carvings signed by Öpir and placed in the five provisional groups. In the right column the typological classification of Anne-Sofie Gräslund is given (based on information taken from the Scandinavian Runic-text Database, version 2004).

Group 1:		Group 3:		Group 4:	
U 893	Pr3–Pr4	U 36	Pr4	Sö 308	Pr5
U 922	Pr4	U 142	Pr4	U 104	Pr5
U 961	Pr4	U 168†	Pr4–Pr5?	U 179	Pr5
U 984†	Pr4?	U 210	Pr4	U 541	Pr5
U 993	Pr4	U 287	Pr4	U 544	Pr5
U 1159	Pr4	U 307	Pr4	U 1034	Pr5
U 1177	Pr4	U 566	Pr4	U Fv1948;168	Pr5
		U 687	Pr4		
Group 2:		U 898	Pr4	Group 5:	
U 229	Pr4	U 1063	Pr4	U 23	Pr5
U 279	Pr4	U 1072	Pr4	U 181	Pr5
U 489	Pr4			U 288	Pr5
U 1106	Pr4			U 485	Pr5
U Fv1976;107	Pr4			U 880	Pr5
Gs 4†	Pr4			U 970	Pr5

The following carvings have been excluded since the rune-animal's head is either missing or impossible to classify on the basis of older drawings:

U 118†	Pr4
U 122†	Pr4
U 262†	Pr4?
U 315†	Pr4
U 462	Pr3–Pr4?
U 565†	Pr4?
U 926†	Pr4?
U 973	Pr5
U 1100	Pr4

Runic Amulets from Medieval Denmark

Rikke Steenholt Olesen

Runic amulets from medieval Denmark are primarily metal objects. The number of examples known has increased greatly in recent years and the material now makes up one of the largest groups of runic inscriptions from the medieval period. New finds are continually being made, not least owing to the increased use of metal detectors by both archaeologists and others.

The aim of this paper is to give a survey of the distribution of the Danish runic finds considered to be amulets, and by reference to concrete examples to illustrate similarities and differences in their manufacture and state of preservation. The content of the inscriptions will also be examined, with particular emphasis on amulet texts as a genre. Finally, I will consider what the Danish runic amulets can contribute to the debate on literacy, and to what practical uses these objects may have been put.

Definitions and methodological problems

My material comprises objects that are registered at the National Museum of Denmark in Copenhagen (not all of which are necessarily published). They come from “medieval Denmark”, which includes Skåne and Schleswig as well as the present-day kingdom. “Medieval” refers to the period A.D. c. 1070–1500.

“Amulet” is used in accordance with the definition formulated in the corpus edition *Danmarks runeindskrifter* (DR, Text, 774 f.). That definition is based on the (presumed) protective/healing function of the object and the assumption that this (magical) function is directly related to, and made effective by, the runic writing the object bears. The criteria may seem vague, but since the aim of this paper is to give a survey of objects already categorised as amulets, it seems sensible to operate with established terms.

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Map 1. The distribution of amulet finds

Metal amulets are difficult to date. An archaeological dating is not usually possible since we are dealing here for the most part with stray finds. To be sure, peripheral archaeological contexts such as settlement sites can indicate a period of human activity, but settlements can often be shown to have existed for several hundreds of years. The dating of amulets is thus often based on linguistic features—primarily runic typology. The linguistic dates tentatively assigned to metal amulets by Marie Stoklund over the past two decades are usually very broad; for instance “the medieval period” or “late medieval period or later”. The runological features that have been used as indicators of “early” or “late” medieval inscriptions appear more and more uncertain as the finds increase—a matter on which Stoklund and I are in agreement. Relevant here are, for example, single-sided branches, † for /æ(:)/, lack of an etymological basis to the choice between \mathbb{R} and \mathbb{A} , and the use of special symbols for roman letters which do not have equivalents in the futhark, for example \mathbb{L} for *c*, saltire crosses or \mathbb{X} for *x* and \mathbb{P} for *q*, all considered to be indicative of later inscriptions. All the same, there are interesting chronological perspectives to the physical, linguistic/runological, and textual characteristics of the amulet inscriptions, but further comparative

studies need to be undertaken in order to establish more precise dating criteria. It is also to be hoped that more runic amulets will be found in datable archaeological contexts.

The distribution of runic amulets found in medieval Denmark

At the present time forty-eight metal amulets inscribed with runes, or a mixture of runes and runelike characters, are registered in Denmark (cf. Map 1). As many as seventeen of these were discovered between 2000 and 2005 illustrating the recent large increase in the number of finds. The use of metal detectors has been and is still very prevalent on Bornholm, and it is from here the majority of new finds are reported (three in 2005). The distribution map may not give a reliable picture of the relative number of amulets made in the different regions, but the east-west divide is striking. I have asked archaeologists from Fyn if excavators and those using metal detectors there are aware of these apparently insignificant small (folded) sheets of metal, and I was assured that the search is just as intense as on Bornholm. Nevertheless no runic amulets except for a well-known lead tablet from Odense (DR 204) have yet been found on Fyn.

The physical characteristics of metal objects with runes

The majority of the Danish metal amulets are of lead, all in all thirty-seven. Two, both from Bornholm, are of silver (one of them a reused Arabic coin) and seven are bronze or copper. There are also two amulets from Skåne, registered in the archives only as small sheets of metal. The amulets vary considerably in appearance, but certain features seem to be significant. A small number are pierced, for example: the Roskilde bronze amulet from Zealand (DR 246), the Østermarie silver amulet from Bornholm (Stoklund 2000, 286–88; 2003, 863–67) and the Søborg lead amulet from north-eastern Zealand (Stoklund 1987, 198 f.). This suggests that such amulets were worn close to the body, as jewellery perhaps. A wooden amulet 12 cm in length, the so-called Roskilde *upu* stick (Moltke 1985, 489 f.), may be seen as a parallel to these pierced metal objects since it too is equipped with a hole. A bronze amulet found in the area of the ruined castle of Hjortholm on Zealand has a forged loop. The Danish runologist Erik Moltke did not believe this object, discovered in the late 1950s, was genuine and it was never published. It is inscribed on three sides and the characters that can be identified seem to be a mixture of Viking Age and medieval runes; the remainder can only be



Fig. 1. Gyldensgård bronze amulet. Photo: The National Museum of Copenhagen.

described as runelike symbols. Two Viking Age metal amulets with forged loops were found in the former USSR (Melnikova 1987, 164–66), and pierced wooden and metal objects as well as a number of metal artefacts with forged loops are known from both Sweden and Norway.

In general the silver, copper and bronze amulets are considered to be the oldest types. Rune forms on both the Roskilde bronze and the Østermarie silver amulet suggest that their inscriptions were made in the early medieval period (late eleventh century). The Søborg lead amulet runes bear some resemblance to those on the Roskilde piece (Stoklund 1987, 199) and it is possible that these three artefacts are contemporary, even though lead amulets are normally dated to the period after A.D. 1100, and most often to the thirteenth century. At the time of my lecture on which this article is based, Klaus Düwel argued that a lead amulet like the one from Søborg cannot have been worn round the neck on a string since the metal is far too fragile. The Roskilde and Hjortholm bronze amulets, on the other hand, still have a piece of string attached to them, which makes it highly likely they were worn in this fashion. If the Søborg piece was not pierced for a functional reason it could be a copy of an older type and may then have been made later than the runes suggest. But it could well be the earliest example of a lead runic amulet from the Danish region.

Folding is another significant feature of medieval metal amulets. However, a number show no indications of this practice, e.g. the Søborg lead amulet, the Høje Tåstrup lead tablet from eastern Zealand (Stoklund 1994, 264–66), the fragmentary Ottestrup lead tablet (Stoklund 1987, 202f.) and the lead fragment no. 4 (a shearing) from Tårnborgh (Stoklund 1994, 268), both the latter from western Zealand. Two recent finds from the Roskilde area have more unusual shapes: the Himmelev amulet (Stoklund 2005a, 7) consists of a small, solid and slightly curved piece of lead (3 cm in length), while the Roskilde (Hedegade) find is formed as a four-sided stick of lead

(approximately 5 cm long; Stoklund 2005b). A tablet from Kävlinge in Skåne furnishes a further example of an unfolded lead amulet (Gustavson 1999, 20–23). There are no instances of folded amulets made of materials other than lead. Most of these objects are rectangular, some are rounded at one end (finger-shaped), e.g. the Roskilde bronze amulet and a recent bronze amulet find from Gyldensgård, Østermarie parish on Bornholm (Stoklund, Imer, and Steenholt Olesen 2006, 7 f.; cf. Fig. 1).

The folded amulets are small, solid objects. Typically, a beaten-out square or oblong piece of lead has been folded or rolled over one or more times and firm pressure then applied to it. Some amulets, e.g. the Allindemagle lead fragment from central Zealand (Stoklund 1994, 262–64) and the Dalgård lead amulet from Borbjerg parish in Jutland (Stoklund, Imer, and Steenholt Olesen 2006, 6 f.), have characteristic circular marks, presumably from teeth.

Where possible, newly found amulets are unfolded during the conservation process, but the metal often snaps. The lead strip from Viborg, for example, broke into eight pieces (Stoklund 1996, 282–84), and the Lille Myregård lead amulet from Nylarsker parish on Bornholm (Stoklund, Imer, and Steenholt Olesen 2006, 4–6) now consists of nine fragments of different sizes (cf. Fig. 2–3).

A lead fragment from Glim near Roskilde is of particular interest since its shape indicates that it might be a part of a cross arm (Stoklund 1993, 259 f., with reference to James Knirk). The Norwegian runic corpus contains several examples of elegant cross-shaped lead amulets, but none of the lead crosses from the Danish region are inscribed with runes. There are in fact linguistic indications on the Glim fragment of a Norwegian connection. Runic crosses of metal and wood are known from both Sweden and Norway, but the only cross with runes from Denmark is shaped from a walrus tooth and is not an amulet (DR 413, the Gunnhild cross).

The archaeological context

As already noted, the majority of the objects we are concerned with here are stray finds. In most cases it is uncertain whether the amulets were accidentally lost on the ground or deposited intentionally. A Viking Age grave find from Järfälla in Sweden revealed a rune-inscribed copper amulet inside a small leather purse (Gustavson 1969), another indication that runic amulets were kept close to the person they were meant to protect.

Some amulets have been found in church, chapel, grave or graveyard contexts, among them three of those already mentioned: the Odense lead tablet was discovered in a graveyard (though not in a specific grave), while



Fig. 2. Lille Myregård lead amulet. Photo: The National Museum of Copenhagen.

the Viborg lead strip comes from a male grave as does the Høje Tåstrup lead tablet. Some of the Norwegian runic lead crosses were found in burial mounds much older than the crosses themselves. It has been suggested on the basis of this evidence that the crosses were intended to protect against ghosts and evil powers in general (Knudsen 1995, 26). However, the majority of the Danish amulet finds come from settlement sites (especially true of

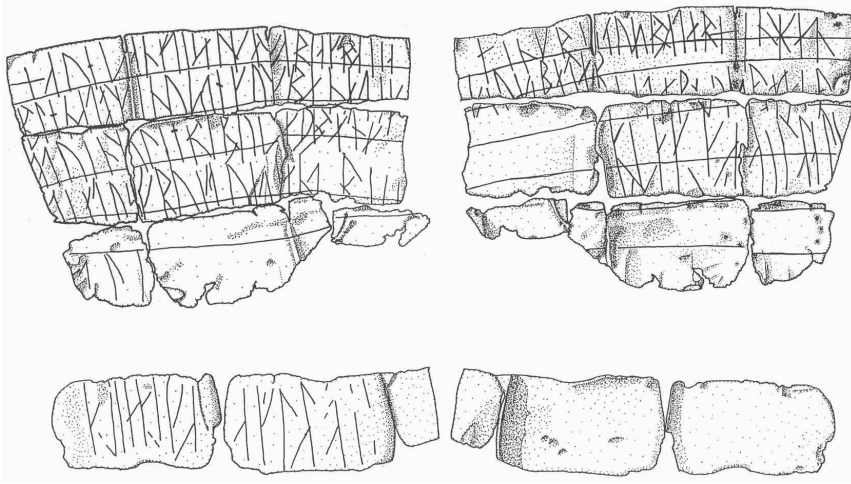


Fig. 3. Lille Myregård lead amulet. Drawing by Lisbeth Imer; © The National Museum of Copenhagen.

Bornholm) and some were found in hoards. The grave context is, judging from the Danish runic amulets as a whole, the exception rather than the rule — as Marie Stoklund has stressed on several occasions (cf., e.g., Stoklund 1987, 198).

The lack of linguistic meaning

Less than half of the Danish amulet inscriptions are linguistically meaningful. There is also a large group whose meaning is very uncertain. This is not least due to corrosion of the surface, often severe, or to fractures and damage from the folding that allow too few runes to be identified. Nevertheless, some fragmentary inscriptions give the impression of having had linguistically meaningful or at least recognisable contents. The Uppåkra bronze strip, for example, has the fragmentary inscription: **...?ilkar × un × ra...**, where the sequence **ilkar** could be the remains of a personal name (Stoklund 2001, 8f.), while the Povlsker lead amulet inscription: **gor|in-g|n-æpigort** (Stoklund 2005a, 8; cf. Fig. 4) seems to be a further example of a magical formula known from the Odense lead tablet, from two inscriptions on amulet objects from Norway (A 194 and B 594) and from an inscription on a wooden stick from Sweden (Gustavson 1987, 122–25). There are other cases where runes can be identified more or less easily but the inscription seems nonsensical.

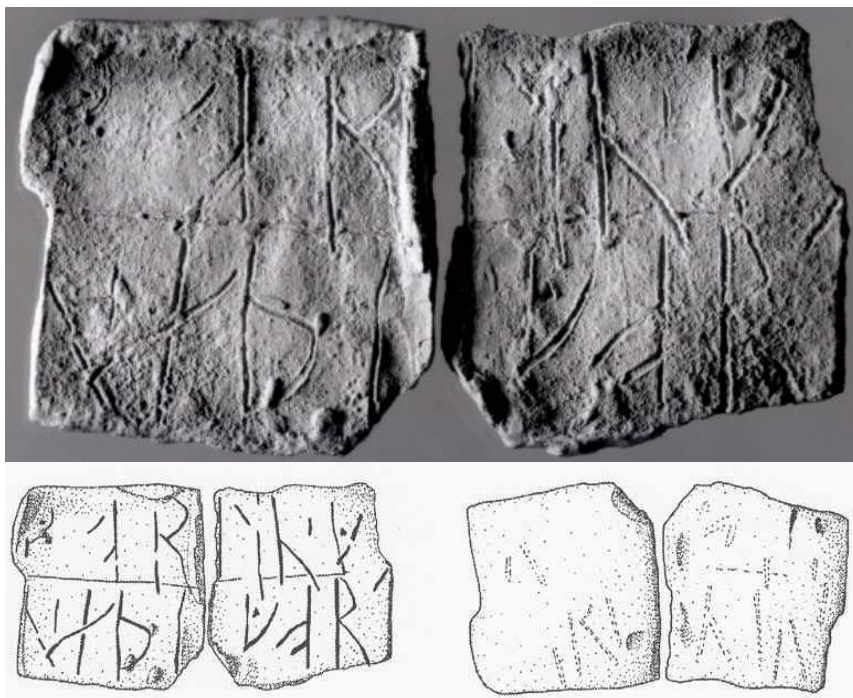


Fig. 4. Povlsker lead amulet. Photo: The National Museum of Copenhagen. Drawing by Lisbeth Imer; © The National Museum of Copenhagen.

Some inscriptions appear to be almost ornamental, consisting of runelike symbols and/or repetitions of characters and sequences. These could be interpreted as alphabet magic, code, the result of incompetent copying or as plain nonsense. Though uninterpretable, such inscriptions must of course be considered when dealing with questions of literacy and the use of script in the medieval period.

Linguistically meaningful inscriptions in the vernacular

The frequency of inscriptions in the vernacular on metal amulets from the Danish region is unfortunately very low. In the following, two inscriptions which are clearly written in the vernacular will be discussed: the bronze amulet from Roskilde and the Østermarie silver amulet from Bornholm.

The two-sided inscription on the Roskilde amulet has only been partially

interpreted. On side A, the Old Norse man's name *Sigvarð(r)* (**siuarþ**) can be identified as well as a number of coded or perhaps ornamental runes. Side B begins with the sequence **luf**r; there is then again a short sequence of strange-looking "runes" and characters, and finally three *r*-runes and a small ✕-like mark. In *Danmarks runeindskrifter* some of the coded runes are deciphered and transliterated according to a system known from Norway (cf. N 443 Rødven kirke), but still the sequence does not seem to make sense. There is a resemblance to the amulet inscriptions from the former USSR, mentioned above, but these have not in my view been convincingly interpreted either.

The Østermarie silver amulet is a fragment only, so parts of the text are missing. The inscription has been thoroughly discussed by Stoklund (2000, 286–88; 2003, 863–67). The runes are relatively well shaped, and well preserved, and several words can be identified, but the order in which things are to be read is a problem. While working on the amulet I began to have doubts about the linear order proposed by Stoklund (2003, 863). Her reading is as follows:

- A (1) **sigmoþri**...
 (2) **þirsi**...
 (3) **...?arnsmo** (inverted)
- B (1) **suaristar**...
 (2) **runarauk**...
 (3) **...ǫrheili** (inverted)
 (4) **...akireistþi** (inverted)
 (5) **-rk** (vertically up the left side)

The strange inverted setting of some of the lines could be easily explained if the layout is assumed to parallel the curving pattern known from many runestones. This was suggested to Stoklund by both Jonas Nordby (personal communication) and Magnus Källström (personal communication) when the inscription was first published in *Nytt om runer* 15 for 2000. The reason Stoklund rejected the suggestion at the time is that she was convinced the vertical of the *r*-rune in **runar** was intersected by the final *k*-rune in **þi-rk**. However, the verticals—including that of the relevant *r*-rune—all end in a typical triangular fashion (visible on the published photographs) formed by the point of the knife. In my view the line that the *k*-rune intersects is not part of the *r*-rune, but an accidental mark—perhaps the vertical of the **r** was overcut. Stoklund and I have discussed this and she agrees that the alternative reading I offer is plausible. I suggest:

- A (1) **sigmoþri...**
 (2) **...?arnsmo**
 (3) **þirsi...**
- B (1) **suaristar...**
 (2) **...akireistþj-rkrunarauk...**
 (3) **...arheilj**

Irrespective of the order in which the runes are read, the fragmentary state of the Østermarie inscription means that a complete interpretation is impossible. On side B **reist** can be identified with certainty as the Old Norse verb *reist* ‘carved’. Stoklund takes the following **þj-rk** as the Old Norse noun *bjarg* ‘help’ and sees this as the object of *reist*. ‘Carved help’ is not a frequent statement in runic inscriptions, where the object of *reist* is most usually *rúnar* ‘runes’, but the (very complex) text on the Swedish Kvinneby amulet may support her interpretation (cf. Stoklund 2000, 288, with reference to Westlund 1989, 43). In addition, a Swedish amulet inscription from Öland (Solberga) contains the Old Norse verb *bjarga* ‘help, save’ (Gustavson 2004, 63–66).

My new reading makes it possible to identify a compound *bjargrúnar* ‘help-runes’ as the object, known from the Eddaic poem *Sigrdrifumál*, and this provides securer motivation for the sequence **þj-rk**. *Bjargrúnar*, together with the compound *bótrúnar* ‘runes of help and recovery’, are also found at the beginning of an apparently formulaic inscription from Bergen, Norway (B 257): *Ríst ek bótrúnar, ríst ek bjargrúnar* This particular object is dated to approximately 1335 (Liestøl 1964, 40–50).

A recent copper find from Skänninge in Östergötland can perhaps cast light on both the Østermarie and the Roskilde amulets. This copper amulet is also a fragment, presumably from the late Viking Age/early medieval period, and parts of the inscription are missing. Helmer Gustavson has suggested the reading (side A) **luf-unarij...** (side B) **...kbutrunar** and reconstructed the text as follows (normalised as Old Norse): *Lyf[r]únar rí[st] [e]k, bótrúnar* (Gustavson 2003, 32) ‘Healing runes I cut, runes of help and recovery’ (my translation). In a later publication Gustavson has suggested (side A) **...kbutrunar** (side B) **luf-unarij...** and reconstructed: *Rí[st e]k bótrúnar, lyfrúnar* ‘I cut runes of help and recovery, healing runes’ (Björkhager and Gustavson 2004, 193; my translation).

The Old Norse verb *lyfja* ‘heal; cure’ and the noun *lyf* ‘charm, magic remedy’ are words associated with the practice of magic. The inscription on a copper amulet from Sigtuna, for example, contains the request: *Njót*

lyfja ‘Make good use of the healing (charms)’ (cf. Nordén 1943, 172), and the contents of the inscription appear to be related to the healing of a fever. The inscription on the medieval wooden Danish amulet known as the Ribe healing-stick contains the sequence (normalised as Old Norse): *ok lyf-tungu at lyfja* ‘and a healing tongue to cure’ (Moltke 1985, 494). Although written in Old Danish (and containing a few Jutlandic forms), the text is considered to stem from a Norwegian original. This inscription also appears to have been intended to cure a fever. The amulet is not least remarkable for the fact that the text betrays a considerable measure of Christian influence.

In the light of these considerations the inscription on side B of the Roskilde amulet may well be interpreted as containing the magic healing element *lyf* (as also suggested by Ivar Lindquist 1932, 66 f.). The first runes **lufr** are perhaps to be seen as an abbreviation of *lyfr[únar]*.

The Østermarie and Roskilde amulets both contain a personal name, possibly those of the persons they were meant to heal or protect. The sparse wording does not indicate Christian influence. The text of the Østermarie amulet seems to come from Old Norse literary tradition and the words *bjargrúnar*, *bótrúnar* and *lyfrúnar* can be seen as indicating that the use of runes had a particular status in healing rituals. Possibly, too, the use of runelike characters on the Roskilde amulet reflects the fact that the healing procedure was meant to work in an atmosphere of secrecy. This notion is perhaps supported by the large number of nonsensical runic amulet inscriptions.

Linguistically meaningful inscriptions in Latin

The majority of amulets with legible texts contain Latin or pseudo-Latin words and phrases. The earliest example from Denmark is most probably the late eleventh-century inscription on an Arabic silver coin from Bornholm. The contents of these Latin inscriptions are related to religious prayers of the Roman Church and religious practice in general (on their background, cf., e.g., Gjerløw 1955; Gustavson 1984; 1994; Ertl 1994; Knirk 1998). They often exhibit combinations of several different quotations. Some are short, consisting of only a few runes, while others contain complete formulas from prayers or blessings. The longest runic inscriptions from Denmark are to be found among those written in Latin.

Of very frequent occurrence is the word *agla*, which is considered to be an acronym of Hebrew origin and not therefore a Latin word as such. It occurs in Latin environments, however, often as part of the formula *agla gala laga*, with the runes transposed in the second and third elements. The

frequency of the word in magical contexts indicates that it was considered to be powerful; seven of a total of ten amulet inscriptions in Latin/pseudo-Latin contain the word *agla* or *agla* formulas (Odense lead tablet, Glim lead fragment, Viborg lead strip, Selsø lead strip from Zealand (Stoklund 1996, 284 f.), Tårnborgh lead tablet no. 1 (Stoklund 1987, 203–05), Blæsinge lead tablet from western Zealand (Stoklund 1987, 204–08), and the find from Lille Myregård — see below). More sporadically the names of evangelists are mentioned in runic inscriptions, e.g. on the Selsø lead strip and the Glim fragment. Otherwise we find, for example, *Ave Maria*, *Pater noster*, *Christus vincit*, and *In nomine Patris* formulas. In addition, an instance of *Alfa et Omega* is found on lead tablet no. 3 from Tårnborgh, which also contains the magic formula *abracadabra* (Stoklund 1989, 205).

The recent find from Lille Myregård on Bornholm revealed a long version of *Ave Maria* together with the sequence (normalised as classical Latin): *Increatus Pater*, *Immensus Pater*, *Aeternus Pater*, which occurs in the Catholic Athanasian creed. A parallel can be found in an inscription on a wooden stick from Bergen (B 619, see *NlyR*, 6:239) apparently formulated specifically against an eye disease. This particular use is also supported by occurrences in other medieval sources (Ohrt 1917, 220 f., 224–26). In general, the evidence from late medieval medical books makes clear that specific Latin phrases were used in rituals of protection and for the healing of fevers, eye diseases, boils, and so on.

Personal names also occur now and again in the Latin texts. The Odense lead tablet was meant to deliver a woman called *Ása* from evil and lead tablet no. 3 from Tårnborgh was apparently meant to liberate one *Andrés*. The Roskilde (Hedegade) lead stick also contains a woman's name, *Kristína*, but both *Andrés* and *Kristína* can of course refer to saints.

Lead tablets with Latin inscriptions in roman letters are also known from the Danish area, but unfortunately they have not been systematically registered. I am aware of the existence of small metal fragments with roman script from Randers, Tårnborgh and Bornholm, but the most important find in the present context is the lead tablet from Romdrup in Jutland (Christiansen 1981), since the content of this inscription forms a close parallel to that of the runic Blæsinge lead tablet (Stoklund 1987, 205). Roman-letter inscriptions from Schleswig and Halberstadt in Germany present further obvious parallels (Düwel 2001, 227–52). If the majority of metal amulet finds in Denmark turn out to be runic, we may perhaps conclude that runes were considered more effectual than roman letters, but this is still an open question.

Medieval pronunciation of post-classical Latin seems to be reflected to at least some degree in runic inscriptions. Certain spellings point to fricative

pronunciations that are not documented in manuscripts, in particular the use of the *þ*-runes for roman *t* in final position after unaccented vowels. Very often the Latin conjunction *et* 'and' is spelled **ep** or **æþ**. A striking example is **ræhnþ** for *regnat* 'rules', found in both the Selsø lead strip (Stoklund 1996, 284 f.) and the Østermarie lead amulet inscriptions (Stoklund 2004, 4–6). The use of the *h*-runes for the roman letter *g* doubtless also reflects a fricative sound. The Selsø inscription contains further indications that those who wrote Latin using runes might perform a rudimentary phonetic analysis rather than copy directly from an original (cf. Stoklund 1996, 285). In contrast, the Blæsinge lead tablet substitutes runes for letters mechanically, as is clear from the use of special characters to correspond the roman letters *c*, *q* and *x*.

The inscription on the lead tablet from Kävlinge, Skåne, contains both elements: phonetic spellings and special characters for *x* and *c*, and is thus difficult to categorise. It does not consist of random quotations, but is a blessing on a household formulated for a specific occasion and is as such unique.

In order to make a plausible analysis of runic texts written in Latin it is important to be able to compare different features within one and the same text, not least runic typology, spelling and morphology. This is unfortunately impossible in most cases given the brevity of the inscriptions and the limited number of words they contain.

Amulet inscriptions and literacy

Medieval runic amulets also have something to contribute to the debate on literacy. The inscriptions on the folded amulets cannot be seen as written communication between individuals, however, which rather complicates matters. The often casual appearance of the inscriptions indicates that the writing was primarily functional – not aesthetical as in manuscripts. And the carvers of the meaningful texts and those able to reproduce Latin correctly must have had some literary skills and were most probably members of the clergy. In many cases, however, it seems to have been of no importance that the inscriptions made sense. The members of church congregations, who were probably the users (and buyers) of the amulets, would hardly have been able to distinguish runes from runelike symbols or read Latin aloud (correct or not); and those who bought folded amulets will have had difficulty in gauging their content or judging their quality. So the process of writing itself, perhaps together with an oral realisation, was presumably what made the magic effective. The fact that some amulets are cut from

larger — already inscribed — tablets, with obvious disregard for the existing text, implies a degree of mass production, and this is certainly supported by the number of finds.

Final remarks

The evidence from Denmark points to a continuous use of runic amulets from the late eleventh to the late fifteenth century (perhaps even stretching into the sixteenth). Some amulets were probably kept close to the persons or the things they were meant to protect, while others were deposited in suitable (occult/sacred?) places. Some must have been commissioned work (cf. the personal names and the blessing on the Kävlinge lead tablet), but most seem to have been manufactured for general use — by anyone who felt the need for protection.

Amulets underwent several changes during the period they were in use, all closely related to the Christian religion. The folded and inscribed lead type was most likely introduced as a Continental, Catholic practice (cf. Düwel 2001, 252–55), but interestingly enough the local, runic, script was not replaced, though the vernacular language and the traditional textual contents soon were. The medieval runic amulet in Denmark seems to be a hybrid, containing both traditional and novel elements.

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Two Scripts in an Evolving Urban Setting: The Case of Medieval Nidaros Once Again

Jan Ragnar Hagland

In 1997 the city of Trondheim celebrated—with great pomp and circumstance—its millennium. The choice of this particular year reflects a 200-year-old tradition of jubilees in Trondheim, the first of which took place in 1797 when eight hundred years of urban history was felt to call for public celebration. The historical sources used to establish the date of founding of the town that was later to become the holy city of St. Olaf were first and foremost the various sagas about Óláfr Tryggvason (Hagland 2001, 96 f.). Here is not the place to go into detail about the early history of Nidaros or its historiography. Suffice to say that the date decided on in 1797 has not been seriously challenged since, neither by historians nor archaeologists. That is to say, there is at present a reasonable consensus about the early phases of the medieval city: its beginnings go back to the last decade of the tenth century or so—which gives us a perspective of about a thousand years—an unusually long period for a process of urbanisation in these northern latitudes.

In general the emergence of urban settlements seems to have provided seminal contexts for the growth of literacy, in medieval times and earlier. One important reason for raising yet again the question of literacy and the use of different scripts in the evolving urban environment by the estuary of the river *Nið* (in Norway's Trøndelag region) is the fact that since the previous International Symposium on Runes and Runic Inscriptions more evidence on the subject has become available. As far as the epigraphic evidence in particular is concerned, we are in a better position than before to study the interplay between runes and roman letters. The main reason for this is Martin Syrett's thorough and well-documented publication *The*

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Roman-Alphabet Inscriptions of Medieval Trondheim (2002). Together with the inscriptions already published in *Norges innskrifter med de yngre runer* and a recent web publication of the medieval Trondheim runes,¹ Syrett's work allows for more comprehensive comparison and analysis of the entire epigraphic material than has previously been possible.

An additional reason to want to look once again at questions pertaining to early literacy in a medieval Norwegian city in the context of the International Symposiums on Runes and Runic Inscriptions is the present author's modest foray into the subject ten years ago — at the fourth symposium in Göttingen in 1995. This contribution was however based on less extensive evidence and its purpose was to shed light on a more general aspect of medieval studies (Hagland 1998, 621–26).

Looked at in the context of the main theme of the sixth symposium in Lancaster in 2005, “Languages and Scripts in Contact”, it seems fair to say that Nidaros up to about 1200 displays aspects of literacy which involve both languages and scripts in contact. Right from the start there seems to have been a relatively well-established tradition of runic writing in the city. From the latter part of the eleventh century there is evidence for the epigraphic use of roman letters as well. And as early as the middle of the twelfth century manuscript literacy is documented in Nidaros, encompassing, it seems, both a foreign strand in Latin and a domestic one in Old Norwegian written with roman letters—the Carolingian-insular minuscule in particular. We shall look briefly at each of these aspects in turn, with the initial aim of summing up our present knowledge of literacy in Nidaros around the year 1200. For reasons of space this paper cannot go much beyond 1200. Thereafter we will try to investigate the intricate question of contact or interplay, if any, between runic and roman writing in a Norwegian context in the early years of the Scandinavian High Middle Ages.

In order to do so we need a quick survey of the sources currently known that can be dated between the end of the tenth and the beginning of the thirteenth century. Datable finds carrying runic inscriptions indicate that runic script was available and used from the very beginnings of the town-like settlement by the estuary of the river *Nið* (cf. Hagland 1998, 623). All the runic material found in archaeological contexts earlier than c. 1200 during the Trondheim excavations carried out from 1973 onwards is presented in Tables 1–3. In addition to this material there is the possibility that a few of the forty-one inscriptions found on the walls of Nidaros cathedral may be older than 1200. That cannot be established with any degree of certainty,

¹ <http://www.hf.ntnu.no/nor/Publik/RUNER/runer-N774-N894.htm>

however. On the other hand, there is an inscription on a gravestone, reused as building material in a part of the cathedral erected in the first decade of the thirteenth century that can most probably be placed in the late eleventh century (cf. Hagland 1994, 36).

At present a total of 168 runic inscriptions are known from medieval Trondheim. As can be seen from Tables 1 and 2, forty-three, or more than a quarter of the total, are from archaeological contexts older than c. 1200, to which can be added a few inscriptions with runelike characters (cf. Table 3). There is thus every reason to assume a certain degree of runic literacy in the first two centuries of urban settlement in Nidaros—even though it does not seem to point in any particular direction in terms of function. The arguments concerning this need not be rehearsed here as more detailed discussion of those aspects of the oldest part of the material can be found in Hagland 1998 (pp. 623–26).

Co-existing with runic writing in Nidaros in the period up to c. 1200 is a certain amount of non-runic, that is to say roman-alphabet, epigraphic writing. The extent of this is more difficult to assess and its use seems to be confined to fairly well defined functional domains. Most notable is the use of roman script on coins struck in Nidaros, amply evidenced in finds from elsewhere. The Trondheim excavations, however, have unearthed only one coin minted in this early period that carries a clear legend in roman letters. The great majority of coins, including a possibly runic one, have garbled or confused legends. The purpose of writing in this particular case was apparently its expressive and not its denotative function, and its effects in terms of literacy above all symbolic—“literacy displayed” is an expression used about similar manifestations elsewhere (cf. Mitchell 1990 and Hagland 1998, 623)

As Syrett points out (2002, 1: 106–08 and 133–36), the Trondheim inscriptions in the roman alphabet are extremely difficult to date. Even so it seems that his corpus contains very few written before c. 1225.² Based on a combination of typological and archaeological criteria he places—with considerable reservation—a total of just eight in the early period, while the complete corpus numbers 119. These eight early inscriptions are all listed in Table 4. They are—one or possibly two excepted—all written in Latin.

Manuscript writing—the third type of literacy—was clearly in existence in Nidaros by the second half of the twelfth century. The manuscripts

² Syrett (2002, 1: 135 f.) divides the corpus of roman-alphabet inscriptions from medieval Trondheim into three periods: early (c. 1150 to 1225), middle (c. 1225 to 1325/50), and later (c. 1325 to 1537).

Table 1. Trondheim runic inscriptions from before c. 1200 with possible linguistic meaning

<i>NlyR</i> no.	Museum no.	Transliterated text	Phase ^a
N 807	[N-37328]	(a) —]ʔn·þurkrimr:kupmutr:suin: (b) ʔʔʔʔh:krimr (c) —]halkiair[—	2
N 831	[N-96784]	(a) sa:ristisaatsumarlakantakhru[— (b) uksiuitame	2
N 851	[N-38298]	skraþi	2
N 828	[N-94621]	×ulfr·risti·ʔʔ [twig runes]	3
N 830	[N-40930]	þurkair·raist	3
N 832	[N-94416]	rifrap·ilfaraukristnokhuast	3
N 837	[N-57185]	(a) ilir:men:æro:þeir:era:mela (b) os	3
N 839	[N-94415]	airikr:kerþisbitu:o:hafi	3
N 840	[N-95829]	ek·an·ikeu:uʔʔ	3
N 883	[N-93775]	þ	3
N 881	[N-32965]	þ	3–4
N 804	[N-37425]	kirira	4
N 835	[N-33434]	(a) ×uintauka:alokaþspita× (b) uitauki:lokaʔ	4
N 844	[N-33456]	—]ʔlt·es·uer·	4
N 845	[N-37975]	—]irþeunana	4
N 853	[N-32000]	—]æzur×	4
N 882	[N-33552]	þ	4
N 797	[N-91694]	(a) sikmuntrasæk (b) þena	4–5
N 824	[N-93495]	isisa:isisa ʔʔ	4–5
N 826	[N-31495]	iuar:ræist:runar:þæsar:her:ero: þær:uer:uarom?þorstæin[—	5
N 850	[N-30690]	(a) lukilsk (b) sk	5
N 855	[N-30844]	þo	5

^a Phases 2 and 3: early 11th century; phase 4: late 11th century; phase 5: early 12th century, and phase 6: late 12th century.

[Table 1]

NlyR no.	Museum no.	Transliterated text	Phase
N 810	[N-37065]	—]iastbmly	6
N 811	[N-52445]	[f]upork	6
N 812	[N-93494]	fpr	6
N 815	[N-27723]	(a) ×fpuorkhniastbmly× lio[<u]la (b) þatirmønøþruormønøþrti (c) kina:ræistrunarþesar:friakoælt	6
N 816	[N-32836]	(a) bater-nuster-kuiesinseli:santibisetur (b) suæen-ouþunarsunr:ræist:runar:þesar (c) fuþorkh	6
N 827	[N-92238]	arkilristirunarþissar	6
N 843	[N-93816]	×???:kus:mik:merir	6
N 846	[N-29151]	sikrmin	6
N 847	[N-31496]	lutr	6

concerned were written primarily in Latin, it seems, and concerned ecclesiastical administration. A certain production of literary texts in Latin as well as in the vernacular must also be assumed to have taken place in Nidaros in this period. Even if we do not know the precise details of the textual history or the manuscript transmission of important works such as *Historia Norwegiae* and *Passio Olavi*, there must have been a relatively high degree of literary activity in Latin in Nidaros, particularly during Archbishop Eysteinn Erlendsson's period in office (1161–88, cf. Mortensen 2000, 97). Rather as with the literary texts, the administrative correspondence from the archbishopric of Nidaros has left us with very little evidence, if any, of early, locally based literacy in Latin. It is, however, possible to deduce a certain level of activity indirectly from sources such as papal letters and later transcripts of archiepiscopal decrees. In addition fragments of liturgical books from this early period may still be extant. In the present state of research, however, the number of such survivals is uncertain.

The emerging manuscript literacy in Latin was paralleled by a modest production of literary texts in the vernacular. The extent of this is likewise unknown, but as distinct from Latin manuscript culture in Nidaros, palpable traces of its vernacular counterpart still exist. Two manuscript fragments, apparently written in Nidaros before c. 1200, are preserved. One consists of three leaves of a book of legends (AM 655 IX 4to; cf. Seip 1955, 87), containing

Table 2. Trondheim runic inscriptions from before c. 1200 — apparently nonsensical

<i>NlyR</i> no.	Museum no.	Transliterated text	Phase
N 870	[N-39592]	— ^a	3
N 859	[N-78941]	urna:poisar unt:rist	4
N 860	[N-78942]	niua-auaft ^b	4
N 861	[N-78943]	× unaek:mhiu-enbepr · · enb [<m]eþ[<r]r	4
N 864	[N-32395]	iurlurukiaikuaitu	4
N 865	[N-37974]	× r?u:irnuhi?????ruarnisr × irik:ak:iui:kumukis?irtil ×	4
N 866	[N-38509]	× urastanrpaanik kari-kral:sbfuyu ×	4
N 869	[N-38150]	—]? ifr:lqta:ahtuapr:brypn [— —] i:fiartif:iqhankq? [—	4
N 876	[N-33833]	ri [— ri [—	4
N 884	[N-33909]	[coin] × uininiuqig+ ^b	4
N 863	[N-34071]	kui:n??[—]? i	4–6

^a This is a heavily damaged inscription. It has been tentatively restored by Aslak Liestøl as **entriþiristiruna**[—, *Endriði risti rúna*[r], which is possible but undemonstrable. Should Liestøl's interpretation be correct, the inscription would of course no longer be nonsensical.

^b Perhaps merely runelike characters.

parts of a *Plácíðuss saga*, a *Blásiuss saga*, and a *Matheuss saga*. The other is part of a cadastre for St. John's Church in Nidaros (NRA 73; cf. Seip 1955, 88). Both the fragments display linguistic features commonly associated with Nidaros and the Trøndelag region (cf. Hægstad 1899, 12–14; for details about regional features in Old Norse in general, cf. Hagland 2004). The three leaves of the book of legends have been dated by Seip (1955, 87) to about 1150 or somewhat later and have since commonly been considered the oldest extant Norwegian manuscript written in the vernacular. The fragment seems to be copied from an exemplar, the age and origins of which are uncertain. Ultimately these texts are translations from Latin. The very fact, however, that the extant fragment is copied from an exemplar indicates the existence, to some extent at least, of a manuscript culture in Nidaros as early as the middle of the twelfth century — a manuscript culture which implies the use of

Table 3. Objects from Trondheim from before c. 1200 with runelike characters

Museum no.	Inscribed object	Phase
[N-39374]	Fragment of wooden plane	3
[N-93231]	Whittled piece of wood	3
[N-93649]	Piece of wood	3
[N-93773]	Piece of wood	3
[N-64300]	Fragment of bone	6
[N-77614]	Whittled piece of wood	6

Latin as well as the vernacular. By the end of the twelfth century this culture was able, it seems, to create literary texts of its own, not merely undertake translations. *Ágrip*—a short text dealing with the history of the kings of Norway from the late ninth to the early twelfth century—is most probably a product of twelfth-century Nidaros manuscript culture (cf. Driscoll 1995, xi). Beyond that, the extent of literary activity of this kind is difficult to assess. Altogether then, the manuscript literacy of pre-1200 Nidaros has left us with very few concrete traces. Even so, it must be regarded as an indisputable part of life in the city by the time the twelfth century was drawing to a close.

When comparing the corpus of runic inscriptions presented in Tables 1 and 2 with those in the roman alphabet listed in Table 4, certain differences become apparent. First it is worth noticing that with one exception (N816) none of the runic inscriptions found in archaeological contexts older than c. 1200 can with any degree of certainty be determined as Latin or even as attempts at writing in that language. Some of the nonsensical ones might perhaps represent ambitions in that direction, but judging from the transliterations given in Table 2 this does not seem very likely. Apart from the opening words of the Lord's Prayer in line a of N816 the closest we come to Latin in this small corpus is, it seems, the word fragment *-æzur*, or possibly *-æsur*, in N853 (Table 1). Carved on a decorated bone fragment of what might well be a jewel box, the runes here no doubt denote the final part of a word *tressur* evidenced as *træzsur* in the apparent sense 'jewel box' in a fourteenth-century charter from Bergen (cf. *Norrøn ordbok*, 441). At the time it was carved this word probably had the status of an assimilated loan in Old Norse.

On the other hand five, possibly six, of the eight non-runic inscriptions (Table 4) are written in Latin. Syrett's no. 103 is the only unambiguously Old Norse one—a gravestone inscribed with the text HER HVILA BON

Table 4. Non-runic inscriptions older than c. 1200

Syrett no.	Type of inscription	Language
[2]	Dedication in chapel	Latin
[3]	Dedication in chapel	Latin
[4]	Dedication in chapel	Latin
[25]	Gravestone	Latin
[80]	Gravestone	Latin
[103]	Gravestone	Old Norse
[112]	Insription on excavated object	Old Norse (?)
[113]	Insription on excavated object	Latin

ENDRIÐA OK LVCIV — *Hér hvíla börn Eindriða ok Lucíu* ‘Here the children of Eindriði and Lucía rest’. Syrett’s no. 112 is a neatly inscribed metal knife-handle, which says ERIC NEDRI. The spelling of the personal name with a final *c* and the uncertain linguistic form and content of the second word might well imply, if not Latin, an intended Latinisation (cf. Syrett 2002, 1:399).

The remaining six inscriptions are all written in Latin: Syrett’s nos. 2, 3, and 4 are chapel and altar dedications in Nidaros cathedral, nos. 25, 80, and 103 (fragments of) gravestones. The first of the three dedication inscriptions dates itself to the year 1161 (Syrett 2002, 1:143). The roman-alphabet texts in Latin are on the whole longer than those in the runic corpus. The runic inscriptions vary from one single rune to seventy-eight (N 816) while their roman-alphabet counterparts have from six (Syrett’s no. 113) to 214 characters (Syrett’s no. 2). One feels tempted on the basis of such evidence to conclude that inscriptions written in Latin with the roman alphabet carry more information than the runic examples and could thus be considered to represent a more advanced level of literacy—to be more “literate”. The modest number of preserved non-runic inscriptions and the rather specific nature of the longer texts, however, scarcely allow far-reaching generalisations based on length.

Even if a solid majority of the runic inscriptions convey more or less intelligible messages in the vernacular, and the majority of the non-runic ones bear texts in Latin, there is not a complete correlation between script and language, as we have seen. That is to say, either script can be employed, to a certain extent at least, to write both the vernacular and Latin. Nonetheless, the evidence currently available appears to suggest both a chronological and a functional distribution of some sort between the two scripts as used

in Nidaros prior to c. 1200 for epigraphic purposes. Except on coins there is no evidence at all of the epigraphic use of roman script in the early part of the period dealt with here. The inscriptions we know in the roman alphabet are clearly connected with the Church — on gravestones and in dedications in the main. Only two are found on portable objects comparable to those on which the runic inscriptions are carved — and even one of those is inscribed with the abbreviated form of the *Nomen sacrum* (Syrett's no. 113). Judging from the scanty material we have, then, epigraphic use of the roman alphabet in Nidaros is a phenomenon first and foremost of the latter part of twelfth century and later. The impression of a chronological shift in the use of scripts in Church contexts is strengthened by the knowledge that the only inscribed gravestone that is undeniably older than the mid-twelfth century carries a runic rather than a roman-alphabet inscription.³ It would nevertheless be wrong to think that people stopped using runes in ecclesiastical contexts completely at any given point in the twelfth century. The inscription N816 with the seven first words of the Lord's Prayer in impeccable Latin together with the formulaic carver signature in Old Norse — *Sveinn Auðunarsunn reist rúnar þessar* 'Sveinn son of Auðunn carved these runes' — was made by someone with a modicum of clerical education, we must assume.

On the epigraphic level, then, scripts as well as languages can be shown to have co-existed to a certain extent during the first two centuries of Nidaros's history — two scripts and two languages, that is to say: runes and roman letters, Old Norse and Latin. Use of runes seems to have been fairly common right from the earliest days of the city's history. At some point towards the end of the eleventh or at the beginning of the twelfth century epigraphic use of roman letters begins, first and foremost in Church contexts, it seems. The fact that the roman-alphabet inscriptions are almost exclusively found in or near the cathedral together with the almost total lack of such inscriptions on the portable objects found in the city excavations argues for a functional distribution of the two scripts. This is, of course, something that has been suggested before. But the existence of a *Pater noster* in runes on a portable object and of runic graffiti on the cathedral walls (most likely younger than c. 1200) suggest that this functional distribution should not *per se* be related to Christianity and the Church in an abstract sense, as has been urged by some. On the basis of current evidence it seems more relevant to think of a "monumental" or "memorial" factor associated with the Church as decisive for the choice of what appears to have been the marked epigraphic script

³ Namely N508, containing what seems to be the oldest attested form of the Old Norse personal name *Vilhjálmr* (cf. Hagland 1994, 34–37).

(roman). Whether or not this also has to do with social status of those who made or commissioned these inscriptions is difficult to tell from the evidence adduced here.

As is well known, the co-existence of runes and manuscript literacy has been seen as important in determining certain developments in the medieval *fupark* and runic orthography. The material presented in Table 1 shows a runic inventory beyond the sixteen in the *fupark*. What we see in the inscriptions from phase 3 onwards is the dotted *íss*-rune representing the front unrounded mid vowel /e(:)/ (and /æ(:)/) together with the long-branch *ár*-rune representing /æ/, as it seems (and often in addition /e/). There is no sign of dotted consonant runes, nor do we see geminated runes used to represent long consonants. This is all as is to be expected—entirely according to the book. It is, nevertheless, reassuring to see everything fall into place in a real corpus of runes. If, conversely, we look at the scanty Nidaros manuscript evidence, it is possible to detect features that can be interpreted as the result of contact or interplay with what Terje Spurkland likes to call “runacy”. Thus on one leaf, chosen at random from the fragment AM 655 IX 4to mentioned above (a fragment of *Blasíuss saga*, cf. Kålund 1905, no. 9), a striking uncertainty about how to represent long consonants catches one’s eye, e.g. *aller matto ~ mate han* ‘all must ~ must he’; *ec ~ ecc* ‘I ~ I’; *biart læicc ~ grim læic* ‘brightness ~ cruelty’, etc. Even if instances like these should not be over-interpreted, such variation might be explained as confusion caused by the scribe’s two-script competence. As runologists we are used to looking for the effects of this kind of situation first and foremost on runes and runic writing. It is, though, needless to say, also possible to see the interplay between the scripts from the opposite vantage point.

To conclude: let me point to a possible common ground—in a very tangible sense—for interplay between the two scripts. In Trondheim, as in other places, a corpus of wax tablets—diptychs—has been unearthed, the finest of which are from contexts dated between c. 1175 and c. 1225 (cf. Christophersen 1987, 85)—towards the end of the period under discussion here. We know from elsewhere that tablets such as these were used to convey texts written with roman letters. The Trondheim tablets have marks in the wood that clearly indicate that runes were carved in the wax above. That implies that runes were used for writing much longer texts than the ones we know from the corpus of casual portable objects. It is possible that such tablets were also bearers of texts in roman letters in Trondheim, but that we cannot prove. Nevertheless, the equipment for a very close interplay between the scripts was undeniably available towards the end of the twelfth century.

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Evidence of Runic and Roman Script in Contact in Post-Viking Age Norway

Karin Fjellhammer Seim

Runes were invented in close contact with the roman alphabet, somewhere in Europe, probably during the first century of the Christian era. Over the centuries runic script spread and changed, until it once more came into contact with the roman alphabet. In Norway the two writing systems met again after almost a thousand years. The earliest runic inscription found in Norway (the lancehead from Øvre Stabu) dates from as early as A.D. 180 (Düwel 2008, 24). We can only guess how widespread knowledge of runes was among the population, but enough people must have been involved in the writing and reading of the script for its use to have been perpetuated over the centuries. Exactly who the people concerned were is unknown, but they probably either belonged to or served a social elite. Towards the end of the Viking Age, not later than the eleventh century, the roman alphabet was brought to Norway by the Christian church and its clergy. As far as we know, the missionary bishops and priests active in Norway came mainly from England.

Naturally, this new alphabet must have come into contact with the native runic script in some way or other. The runes did not flee the country; people continued to make runic inscriptions. In fact, from what has survived it seems that output was increased. At the same time some members of the native population gradually learnt to read and write the Latin language, and became acquainted with the roman alphabet. They were probably sons of the well-off, ready for positions in the new church organisation and eventually in the king's growing administration. Exactly when the roman alphabet was first used to write the vernacular – Old Norwegian/Old Norse – we do not

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know. The oldest surviving vernacular manuscripts are from the middle of the twelfth century, but most scholars think the practice goes back to the middle of the eleventh (Haugen 2004, 177–79).

Thus two different alphabets were used in the same area and in the same period of time to write the same language: medieval Norway had become a two-script society. We know little about the interaction between those representing the old runic literacy and the new literate elite. One may wonder whether they were in fact the same people, or if different groups of people used different alphabets for different purposes. There exists, however, conspicuous evidence of direct contact between, indeed even intermixture of, the two scripts, so there must have been people who knew both. This assumption gains added credibility from the not infrequent occurrence of inscriptions written in acceptable Latin.

In this paper I am going to present evidence of contact between runic and roman script in post-Viking Age Norway. I will start with the texts that most easily catch the eye, i.e. those written with letters of both scripts, and I will call them mixed texts whether they are roman-alphabet manuscripts with occasional runes, or epigraphical material with a mixture of roman letters and runes. Evidence of contact can, however, also be more indirect, accessible only through interpretation of certain features of a text or of the writing system, the one system showing possible influence from the other. In the second part of my paper I will concentrate on the various indirect ways in which the roman alphabet influenced runic writing.

The first mixed texts to consider are Old Norse vernacular manuscripts. The roman alphabet itself as used to write Norwegian contains traces of influence from runic script. The letter *þ* is in origin a rune, but it was added to the roman alphabet in Anglo-Saxon England. It is unlikely the Norwegians repeated the process and borrowed it anew; almost certainly *þ* followed the roman alphabet from England to Norway (Haugen 2004, 181).

In both England and Norway the occasional rune may be used as an abbreviation sign in roman-alphabet manuscripts, whereby the runic character stands in place of its name. The idea is certainly English, but the actual runic form found in Norwegian manuscripts is not. While English scribes use English **d** and **m** as abbreviation signs for *dæg* ‘day’ and *man* ‘man’ (Page 1999, 77 f.), their Norwegian counterparts adopt the Norwegian **m**, **ŷ**, for the word *maðr* ‘man’. This abbreviation is found in e.g. AM 315 e fol. and NRA 1 b (manuscripts of *The Older Gulaping Law*) and AM 619 4to (*The Old Norwegian Homily Book*). These manuscripts are either from the beginning of the thirteenth century or possibly a little earlier. At least some Norwegians with a roman-script education knew enough of the Norwegian

rune row, its characters and their names, to be able to select its **m** as an appropriate abbreviation sign.

The Norwegian epigraphical material containing letters from both scripts is usually grouped with “runic inscriptions” in museums and collections, and labelled as such. And when published, such material tends to appear in editions of runic inscriptions. That does not, however, imply a preponderance of runic characters. It is simply a reflection of the fact that runes and runic inscriptions have attracted more attention and been more thoroughly studied in Norway than their roman-alphabet counterparts. An unpublished inscription with eleven roman letters and a single rune from the excavations at Bryggen (the Hanseatic Wharf) in Bergen is thus registered as runic and given the number B 454 in the catalogue of the Bryggen runic material. It consists of two sequences, one with six roman letters: AVROVE, the other with five roman letters and one rune: AVR^hVE, i.e. an **o** in place of roman *O*.

Other artefacts show a more equal distribution of runes and roman characters, but as Aslak Liestøl points out in his edition of the runic inscriptions in Latin from the Bryggen excavations, such mixed texts are not very frequent (*NlyR*, 6:69). That is true not only of the Bergen material but Norwegian epigraphy as a whole. I have found only eleven objects with mixed inscriptions published in the six printed volumes of the corpus edition *Norges innskrifter med de yngre runer* (*NlyR*). These volumes contain about 670 inscriptions of post-Viking Age origin, i.e. those normally termed “medieval”. A further 600 or so such inscriptions have yet to be definitively published in the corpus edition. Without claiming exhaustive knowledge of the material, it is my impression that mixed inscriptions occur no more frequently in this collection than in the printed material.

Not all eleven mixed inscriptions from the corpus edition exhibit the same type of mixture. Three of the texts switch from one script to the other and back again in the middle of a word or sentence, like B 454 mentioned above. One of them, looking relatively unprofessional, is on a church bell (N 268), another is cut into the wooden cover of a Psalter book belonging to a church (N 553), the third is pricked into a gold ring of low quality workmanship (N 635). All three are quite short, two of them in Old Norse, the third (on the ring) containing only the names of the four evangelists. The mixture of scripts and the quality of these three inscriptions bear witness to people poorly trained in the art of writing. They clearly knew characters from both alphabets, but were perhaps unable to tell the two apart. Surprisingly, at least two of the inscriptions are connected to a church and may have been designed by clergymen. The dating of these inscriptions in the corpus edition is rather vague, but they probably belong to the thirteenth and fourteenth

centuries and thus spring from what had undoubtedly been a two-script society for at least two hundred years.

A mixed inscription of a different type stands on a gravestone from Trøndelag: N 457, dated to the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century. It is in Old Norse and quite long, the characters are evenly cut, and the layout gives a pleasing impression, even if the surface is now very worn. The inscription starts with roman letters, which proceed round the edge for most of the way. Suddenly, in the middle of the word *faðir*, the carver switches to runes: ... FAþer ..., and continues in this script for the most part, right until the end—probably eleven additional words that are now no longer easy to read. The sudden shift in the middle of a word may be the result of bad planning: the carver suddenly realising he was running out of space. As runes are normally slimmer than roman letters, he simply turned to the other alphabet he knew, and completed his work. The result looks quite natural and elegant. We can imagine such a person being well trained in both alphabets and capable of keeping them apart, perhaps offering to carve gravestone texts in either script depending on the wish or requirement of his customers. This is the only Norwegian medieval gravestone known today with a mixed inscription, but several purely runic gravestones have survived as well as a number in roman script.

The other seven objects with mixed inscriptions have their runes and roman letters kept strictly apart, with two separate lines or texts—one in runes, one in roman—on the same object. In most cases, however, a single carver was probably responsible for both, and we can only speculate on why he changed from the one script to the other as he moved from line to line or side to side. Two of the objects are church bells, each carrying two inscriptions entirely or chiefly in Latin, a long one written with runes, a shorter one with roman letters. Both bells are now lost and known only from old drawings, so we cannot be absolutely sure how the inscriptions were made. But the workmanship seems considerably superior to that of the thoroughly mixed-script bell text mentioned above.

A few church bells come with inscriptions purely in runic script. Together with the gravestones mentioned above they show that runes were not shunned by the Church. On the contrary, it clearly deemed them suitable for several purposes, including dedication inscriptions and builders' signatures on church walls. In Tingvoll church in Nordmøre a man called *Gunnarr* has left a long and beautifully made runic inscription in Old Norse on a marble ashlar above the altar (N 446), telling us that he “made” the church. Whether he actually did some manual labour himself or just commissioned the building is uncertain, but he addresses *yþr lærþa menn* ‘you learned

men' as well as 'all those able to read' his inscription. He clearly expects the 'learned men', i.e. the clergy, to be able to read his runes.

Returning to the mixed inscriptions that keep the two scripts apart, we have N 338, written on a small wooden stick found under the floor of Urnes stave church in Sogn. On one side there is a nearly complete roman alphabet, on another traces of the last part of a *futhark*. The purpose of the object is unclear, but the two lines supply further evidence of a person or persons who mastered both scripts, using them side-by-side, probably for the same purpose.

In addition to those published in the runic corpus edition, there is a small but interesting group of mixed inscriptions on seals attached to medieval diplomas or charters, chiefly from the fourteenth century. Their existence has not been widely known and they are ignored in the literature on runes, but recently they have received attention in a *hovedoppgave* (M.A. thesis) written by Jan Christian Nilssen at the University of Oslo (2005). The particular seals that Nilssen presents have a legend with the name of the owner in roman letters, together with one or two runes placed in the middle of the seal, giving the first or the first two sounds of the individual's given name. A few other seals from the same period have one or two roman letters in the middle instead of runes, but with the same function. Seals are definitely part of the literate, roman-script side of the two-script society, attached as they are to diplomas, and the personal name with roman letters in the seal's legend usually appears in latinised form. With their added runes these seals are a link to the other side of the two-script society, hinting at the name of the owner to those who might not be fluent in roman script.

Leaving the cases of direct contact between the two alphabets, I now turn to the more indirect evidence. In *Norges innskifter med de yngre runer* scholars such as Magnus Olsen, Aslak Liestøl and James Knirk have drawn attention to a few runic inscriptions which seem to reveal misunderstanding of an original written in roman letters, possibly even in Latin. It is assumed that it was primarily the abbreviation signs used in roman-alphabet texts that were problematic or unknown to the runic copyists. An inscription from Bergen, quoting a few lines from the Psalter, has some misspellings that Liestøl suggests in the corpus edition are the result of an uninformed rune-carver's copying of a roman-script original. The inscription is N 628, and its b line runs as follows: **dihssidominosdomiossedeadæhstrismeoe**, i.e. *Dixit Dominus Domino meo: Sede a dextris meis*. Liestøl points in particular to the second **do**, which must stand for *domino*. He assumes that this word was abbreviated by contraction in the original, i.e. *do* + an abbreviation sign, and that the sign escaped the attention of the rune-carver. Nevertheless, he

must have been able to read and copy roman script to a certain extent, even when the language was Latin (*NlyR*, 6:44–47).

Some of the rune-carvers may also have seen, understood and even tried to copy the problematic abbreviation signs of the roman-script original when they made their runic transcript. Aslak Liestøl has suggested (*NlyR*, 6:55–62) that some remarkable runes with unusual branches in another Latin-language inscription from Bergen (N 632) may be the result of such an attempt. The inscription throws up so many problems and contains so many apparent errors that Liestøl had to propose it was a copy of a copy in runes of a roman-script original. He could well be right, but certainty in such matters is hard to come by. Liestøl also drew attention to two exceptional runes in the same inscription. He is probably right in claiming that they are modelled on the roman letters *w* and *q*. The first is literally a double *u*, one inside the other (a runic form not totally unknown in Danish inscriptions; N 632 has a few other features that point to Denmark). The second looks like a combination of a roman minuscule *q* and an ordinary **k**—the latter to indicate the sound of the character. This hybrid *q* also occurs twice in a bind with **u** (in the word *quinque*).

N 632's **q** and **w** were not part of the inventory of characters that most Norwegian rune-carvers had at their disposal—as far as we can tell from surviving inscriptions, where **k** usually stands for *q* and **u** for *w*. Somewhat commoner is the use of distinct runes for *c* and *z*. Norwegian carvers often employed long-branch **s** (**h**) for these two, while reserving short-twig **s** (¹) for *s* (the opposite of practice in Denmark and Sweden). A likely explanation of the choice of **h** for *z* is the similarity of form. That probably also lies behind the occasional use of plain ***** or modified ***** for *x*.

Consideration of these attempts to provide runic equivalents for most or all of the roman letters brings us to the question of the expansion of the runic writing system from sixteen to over twenty units. This expansion and the concomitant transition from runes with several phonemic values to less ambiguous characters seem to have started at approximately the same time as the first contacts between runes and the roman alphabet. Thus it is possible it was the roman alphabet which provided the impetus for the modernisation of the Viking Age runic writing system, carvers adopting from the new alphabet the idea of roughly one letter for each phoneme.

Unfortunately there are not many Norwegian inscriptions extant from this transitional period, and thus the various stages in the expansion cannot be dated at all accurately. In the surviving material, for example, all dotted runes except **e** occur in what appear to be twelfth-century inscriptions; **e** is

found in eleventh-century inscriptions from Trondheim and on runic coins from the same century.

Although the writing system was thus refined, the *fupark* with its sixteen runes in their traditional order remained intact throughout the medieval period—as over seventy medieval Norwegian *fupark* inscriptions bear witness (Seim 1998). There is thus a dichotomy in the post-Viking Age runic system: the *fupark* remained the basic alphabet, and while additional distinctive characters were used in writing, they never became an integrated part of the runic alphabet.

The discrepancy between the extended runic writing system and the traditional *fupark* of sixteen characters must have been noticed by rune-carvers and been compared to the roman system where all the characters used in writing also had their place in the alphabet. One product of this comparison was undoubtedly the so-called extended *fupark* inscriptions, a group of twelve *fuparks* with one to five extra runes added to the basic sixteen. There is no indication of a fixed order among these additional characters. Indeed, one of the inscriptions concerned (A 24b) has its four extra runes placed within the *fupark*, two of them immediately following the runes from which they are derived. Thus **e** (i.e. dotted **i**) comes after **i**, while **p** follows **b**.

In some of these extended *fuparks*, and some of the unextended ones as well, a small but conspicuous change in the traditional order of the characters can be noticed. Instead of **ml** we find **lm**, possibly in imitation of roman-alphabet order. Among sixty-eight medieval Norwegian *fuparks* that contain both **m** and **l**, twenty-five have **l** preceding **m** (Seim 1998, 116). The reason the roman model did not inspire further changes in the *fupark* order—if that is indeed what happened—may be the fact that apart from **ml**, only **s** and **t** are neighbours in both the *fupark* and the roman alphabet. And of course this latter pair follows the same order in both systems.

A really conspicuous Norwegian example of the influence of the roman alphabet on the runic are the *abc*-inscriptions. These list the runes in roman-alphabet rather than *fupark* order, and in order to fill all the slots they give runic equivalents for *c*, *q*, *x*, *z*. While the extended *fupark* inscriptions seem to be feeble attempts at imitating the roman script practice of listing all the units of the writing system, the *abc*-inscriptions are more or less full-scale transliterations of the roman alphabet. But this is not at all typical of the way runes were presented and transmitted: the *abc*-inscriptions number only four, while we have more than seventy *fuparks* with the traditional order intact (Seim 1998, 149).

The traditional *fupark* order is also found in runic inscriptions containing sequences of syllables, interpreted as syllabaries of the kind that were used in the Middle Ages (and even earlier) in the teaching of elementary reading and writing in the roman script and Latin language. The idea of using syllabaries seems to have been borrowed from this type of school training into the probably more unorganised teaching of runic script, and is thus evidence of contact between people from both sides of the two-script divide—people interested or involved in elementary teaching. But while the original syllabaries used in the teaching of roman script were structured according to the order of the roman alphabet (*ba, be, bi, bo, bu, ca, ce, ci, co, cu, da, de, di, do, du ...* or *ab, ac, ad, af ... eb, ec, ed, ef ...*), most runic syllabaries are entirely or partially based on the *fupark* order, even if they do not extend very far (Seim 1991). The relevant parts of a couple of inscriptions from Bergen run: **fu:fo:fi:fy:uf:up:u**[- (B 100), **fufafififopopapipu** (B 647a). None of the Norwegian runic syllabaries follows the order of the roman alphabet.

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Die späten *Runica Manuscripta* aus Island. Was versteht man unter *málrúnir*?

Alessia Bauer

Seit 1995, nämlich seit dem Vierten Internationalen Symposium über Runen und Runeninschriften steht fest, dass die isländischen *Runica Manuscripta* bis heute nur partiell bearbeitet worden sind. In Göttingen gab Wilhelm Heizmann eine Übersicht über die älteren *Runica Manuscripta* aus Island. Doch aus praktischen Gründen hatte er zahlreiche Handschriften der isländischen Sammlungen – vorwiegend auf Papier – nicht berücksichtigen können. Meine Forschungsarbeit setzt diese Untersuchungen fort, vor allem mit jüngeren Quellen. Das gesichtete Material besteht aus knapp 70 unedierten Manuskripten, die in den Sammlungen auf Island aufbewahrt sind. Davon sind zwei aus dem 17. Jh., 18 aus dem 18. Jh., 43 (und somit die meisten) aus dem 19., und sogar drei aus dem 20. Jh. Wie bereits erwähnt, sind die meisten Handschriften aus Papier und nur fünf aus Pergament. Eine vollständige Sichtung des Materials könnte Heizmanns Ergebnisse bestätigen oder sie mit neuen Erkenntnissen ergänzen.

Den Begriff *Runica Manuscripta* werde ich im weiten Sinne verwenden und alles berücksichtigen, was mit Runen zu tun hat und auf Pergament oder Papier tradiert wurde, von runenähnlichen Zeichen bis zu den Runennamen und Runengedichten. Der in der gesamten Überlieferung belegte Terminus *málrúnir*, etwa ‚Sprachrunen‘, scheint sich in der Neuzeit auf alles zu beziehen, was mit Runen zu tun hat, Runenreihen, Runennamen, Namensumschreibungen usw. (dazu siehe u. a. Bauer 2003a und b). Das Wort ist bereits in Snorris *Háttatal* belegt, wo den *málrúnir* eine gewichtige Rolle gegenüber den restlichen Runen eingeräumt wird; dort lautet es nämlich: *Pessi* [d. h. *dróttkvæðr hátttr*] *er upphaf allra hátta, sem málrúnar eru fyrir*

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ǫðrum rúnnum ‚Das dróttkvætt-Versmaß ist der Ursprung aller Versmaße, so wie die Sprachrunen [der Ursprung] der anderen Runen sind‘.

Zur „Runenprovinz“ Island: Der spärlichen epigraphischen Überlieferung steht in Island eine äußerst umfangreiche und reichhaltige Handschriftentradition gegenüber. Anders Bæksted (in *IR*) zählte 1942 54 Inschriften, davon 47 Runensteine und sieben auf losen Gegenständen; im Laufe der Zeit hat sich die Anzahl durch neue Ausgrabungen um einiges vermehrt (siehe Snædal 2000; 2003; Knirk 1986; 1994). Epigraphische Runeninschriften sind verhältnismäßig spät auf der Insel belegt: Eine der ältesten Inschriften befindet sich auf der Kirchentür von Valþjófsstaðir und wird um 1200 datiert. Die Zeit der sog. „Runenleichensteine“ beginnt um 1350, erreicht ihren Höhepunkt um 1400–1500 und klingt dann im 17. Jh. aus (vgl. Bæksted in *IR*, 58). Diese epigraphischen Runen stellen ein spätes Phänomen mit vergleichbarer Parallele auf Gotland dar, wo die Runenschrift von der Kirche in Dienst genommen wurde (hier wie auf Island sind es meist Grabsteine, die Runeninschriften tragen und bei Kirchen liegen). Als Island im 9. Jh. vorwiegend von Norwegern besiedelt wurde, gab es in Norwegen nicht den Brauch, Runensteine zu errichten. Ein zweiter Höhepunkt von epigraphischen Runen, die nicht in monumentalem Sinne, sondern zu praktischen Zwecken verwendet wurden— wie beispielsweise in Bergen (dazu *NlyR*, Bd. 6)—entwickelte sich erst viel später, offensichtlich ohne Einfluss auf Island zu haben. Die Runen waren den Isländern natürlich ein Begriff, blieben jedoch eher ein *Curiosum* als ein praktisches Kommunikationsmittel und wurden im Kontext von erfundenen Alphabeten aufgezeichnet (Bæksted in *IR*, 15). In diesem Sinne sind m. E. auch die Siegrunen, Heilrunen und all die anderen Runen zu verstehen, die in der *Lieder-Edda* genannt werden. Merkwürdigerweise scheinen fast ausschließlich literarische Zeugnisse, wie die isländischen Sagas, den epigraphischen Brauch der Runen auf *kefli* ‚Holzstäbchen‘ zu belegen, doch vielleicht aufgrund der Verderblichkeit des Materials haben wir kaum Zeugnisse davon erhalten. Ein mit Runen beritztes Holzstäbchen, das 1993 in Viðey ans Tagelicht gekommen ist, bestätigt diesen Brauch. Dabei handelt es sich um die älteste Inschrift aus Island und datiert ins 10./11. Jh. (siehe Snædal 2000, 17).

Dass die *Runica Manuscripta* auf Island verhältnismäßig früh bezeugt sind, hat man schon in der älteren Forschung festgestellt: Die ersten Runeneinträge in Manuskripten sind bereits im 12. Jh. bezeugt (AM 315d fol., ca. 1150–1175).

Grundsätzlich gilt, dass die Handschriften des 17.–19. Jhs. nicht mehr sehr sorgfältig aufgezeichnet sind. In der Themenauswahl und der Zusammenstellung der Texte kann man kein System erkennen, wie es im Mittelalter

und der frühen Neuzeit durchaus der Fall war. Im Mittelalter stellten die schreibenden Mönche Werke nach einem bestimmten Plan zusammen, hier sind aber Laien und Privatleute tätig, die scheinbar ohne Systematik alles zusammentrugen, was sie interessierte und wessen sie habhaft werden konnten.

Darstellung des gesichteten Materials

Nachfolgend sind die von mir gesichteten Handschriften aufgelistet, wobei ich mich auf die Darstellung der Runeneinträge beschränken werde, für die Beschreibung der Handschriften und deren gesamten Inhalts aber auf die Handschriftenkataloge verweise (Páll Eggert Ólason 1918–1937; 1947; Grímur M. Helgason and Lárus H. Blöndal 1970). Gleichzeitig wird versucht herauszustellen, ob sich der Stoff den neun von Heizmann aufgestellten Kategorien zuordnen lässt oder ob neue Kategorien in Frage kommen. Anders Bæksted (in *IR*, 26), der sich als erster mit isländischen Handschriften (wenn auch in einer geringen Auswahl) beschäftigte, teilt die Runeneinträge grob in zwei Gruppen ein: Einerseits Runen, die Bestandteil des Textes sind, und andererseits bedeutend jüngere Marginalanmerkungen. Diese Einteilung erweist sich für die jüngeren *Runica Manuscripta* nicht als passend, denn die späten Runeneinträge sind immer integrierter Bestandteil der Handschriften.

Zum besseren Verständnis möchte ich auf folgendes hinweisen: Isl. *málrúnir* übersetze ich mit ‚Sprachrunen‘, wobei dies als *Terminus technicus* auch von deutschen Forschern auf Isländisch verwendet wird. Isl. *deilur*, etymologisch verbunden mit dem Verb *deila* ‚teilen‘, bezieht sich im allgemeinen auf die Runengedichte, insbesondere auf das isländische Runengedicht, auch *þrídeilur* etwa ‚Dreiteiler‘ genannt, und auf das altnorwegische, das auch als *tvídeilur* ‚Zweiteiler‘ überliefert wird. Gelegentlich findet sich diese Bezeichnung für die poetischen Umschreibungen der Runennamen, die teilweise auch nur in Form von Listen überliefert sind.

Zu dem vorliegenden Artikel kam es, weil ich im Laufe meiner Beschäftigung mit den *Runica Manuscripta* aus Skandinavien feststellen mußte, dass eine Aufstellung der Manuskript-Runen aus Island nur in geringem Maße ausgearbeitet worden war. Das junge Alter der Handschriften hat m. E. zu Unrecht dazu geführt, dass sie aus der Forschung bisher ausgelassen wurden.

Anhand der Handschriftenkataloge, welche die Runeneinträge knapp—meist nur mit der Bezeichnung *málrúnir*—verzeichnen, habe ich die Sichtung der genannten Manuskripte im Landbókasafn Íslands in Reykjavík vorgenommen. Dabei konnte ich nicht nur die einzelnen Einträge sichten,

sondern auch den Kontext der Überlieferung feststellen und eventuelle Zusammenhänge mit weiteren Texten, die in den jeweiligen Handschriften enthalten sind, erstellen.

Die folgende Präsentation des Materials ist deshalb als Bestandsaufnahme mit Katalogcharakter gedacht, deren Ziel die Darstellung der gesamten unedierten *Runica Manuscripta* aus Island ist. Nach einer kurzen Einleitung zu den jeweiligen Kategorien werden die Manuskripte einzeln erwähnt und die Seiten hervorgehoben, die Runeneinträge aufweisen. Hierbei werden zugunsten der Vollständigkeit auch Redundanzen in Kauf genommen.

1. Einzelne Runenzeichen

In der jüngeren Überlieferung ist die Gruppe der Runenzeichen, die in lateinischem Schriftkontext als Begriffsrunen verwendet worden sind, nicht mehr vertreten. Dabei waren es vorwiegend die *f*- und *m*-Rune, die jeweils für die Substantive *fé* ‚Reichtum‘ und *maðr* ‚Mann‘ standen (zu den Begriffsrunen siehe Düwel 1976). Diese spielten in den älteren Handschriften noch eine wichtige Rolle. Grundsätzlich gilt, dass die Runen in jüngerer Zeit äußerst selten mit lateinischen Buchstaben vermengt werden. Wenn dies dennoch geschieht, dann werden die Runen als Buchstabenschrift und nicht als Begriffsrunen verwendet. So finden sich gelegentlich Wörter bzw. ganze Sätze, die mit Runen abgefasst sind und integrierter Bestandteil eines Textes mit lateinischen Buchstaben sind.

2. Zeugnisse einer theoretischen Beschäftigung mit Runen

Die zweite Kategorie betrifft die Zeugnisse einer theoretischen Beschäftigung mit Runen, darunter die grammatischen Traktate des *Codex Wormianus*. Solche Zeugnisse vermehren sich in der jüngsten Zeit. Sie alle weisen auf ein großes Interesse an den Runen nicht nur seitens der Gelehrten – wie beispielsweise Björn Jónsson aus Skarðsá¹ (1574–1655) oder Jón Ólafsson aus Grunnavík² (1705–1779) – sondern auch von Seite der Laien in Form von anonymen Schriften. Darin wird Runenwissen mehr oder weniger systematisch aufgezeichnet. Viele davon verraten die Kenntnis der „kanonischen“ Runenwerke, vor allem Worms *Danica Literatura* aber auch des isländischen Pendant – der *Runologia* des Jón Ólafsson.

¹ Siehe *Forfatterlexikon*, 4: 305 f.

² Siehe Jón Helgason 1926.

Acht Handschriften³ belegen vollständige oder fragmentarische Abschriften des Runenwerkes *Samtak um Rúner* des Isländers Björn Jónsson aus Skarðsá aus dem Jahre 1642. Der Traktat wurde nie gedruckt, genoss jedoch einen hohen Bekanntheitsgrad und wurde auch in Kontinentalskandinavien mehrfach abgeschrieben, wie in den Papierhandschriften Papp. fol. nr. 38 und R694 (beide in Uppsala universitetsbibliotek), sowie Steph. 21 (Kopenhagen). Der Abhandlung, die zur gleichen Zeit wie das Werk von Ole Worm entstand, scheint ein völlig anderes Konzept zugrunde zu liegen: Während Worm theoretische Grundsätze darlegt und zugleich zahlreiche Aspekte der Runen-Epigraphik darstellt, beschränkt sich Björn Jónsson auf eine rein theoretische Ebene. Merkwürdigerweise schildert der Autor zudem in den beiden letzten Kapiteln des Traktates die Macht und Kraft der Runen und gibt diesbezüglich bestimmte Anweisungen, was mit Runen erlaubt sei und was nicht. Dies erscheint symptomatisch für die Verhältnisse auf Island, wo für Jahrhunderte die Runenkunde verpönt gewesen ist. Im 17. Jh. haftete auf Island den Runen der Verdacht der Zauberei an, und die Beschäftigung mit dieser Schrift konnte gefährlich werden. Man denke z. B. an Jón Rögnvaldsson, der 1625 in einem Prozeß wegen Zauberei u. a. mit Runen als erster zum Tode auf dem Scheiterhaufen verurteilt wurde (dazu Degn, Lehmann und Unverhau 1983). Ausgerechnet zu dieser Zeit ließ König Gustav Adolf II. von Schweden die Altertümer und Runendenkmäler als Zeichen kultureller Überlegenheit gegenüber den anderen skandinavischen Staaten sammeln. Während sich Dänemark und Schweden im 17. Jh. einen kulturellen Kampf lieferten und u. a. die Sammeltätigkeit der Reichsantiquare und die Entstehung von Runenabhandlungen förderten, fanden sich auf Island kaum Gelehrte, die Ole Worm durch Mitteilungen und Erläuterungen über die Runenpraxis auf Island helfen konnten, wie der umfangreiche Briefwechsel bestätigt (Langebek 1751; Schepelern 1965–1968).

Zwei Handschriften, Lbs 243 4to^x (1761) und Lbs 993 4to^x (um 1800), enthalten eine vollständige bzw. fragmentarische Abschrift des Runenwerkes *Runologia* von Jón Ólafsson aus Grunnavík, der 1732 die Arbeit verfaßte und 1752 überarbeitete. Die *Runologia* stellt die *Summa* der damaligen Runenkenntnisse dar und bietet u. a. den größten Katalog an Runennamenschreibungen. (Die Edition des Autographs, AM 413 fol.^x aus dem Jahr 1752, das sich in Kopenhagen befindet, wird derzeit von Bauer und Heizmann vorbereitet.)

³ Lbs 290 4to^x (18.–19. Jh.), Lbs 445 4to^x (1830), Lbs 636 4to^x (1750–1760), Lbs 756 4to^x (1777), Lbs 1199 4to^x (17.–18. Jh.), JS 91 4to^x (1870), JS 435 8vo^x (17.–18. Jh.) und ÍB 299 4to^x (1764). Hochgestelltes x hinter der Signatur bezeichnet die Papierhandschriften.

Dieser Gruppe sind zudem zwei Handschriften aus dem 17. bzw. 18. Jh. und vier weitere Handschriften aus dem 19. Jh. zuzuordnen, die unter der Bezeichnung *Rúnafræði* ‚Runenkunde‘ gehen können. Sie alle haben einen ausgeprägt theoretischen Charakter, handeln beispielsweise von der Erfindung der Runen durch Odin und der Einteilung der Runenreihe in drei *ættir* und erörtern verschiedene Aspekte der Runenschrift, nämlich Runenformen, Runennamen und Runengedichte sowie Vergleiche zwischen den Runenzeichen und anderen Schriften, beispielsweise den griechischen Buchstaben.

Lbs 2294 4to^x (1880): Auf S. 342 beginnt ein längerer Abschnitt über die Runenschrift, der die Überschrift *Um Rúnir, um Rúnanna uppruna og brúkun* ‚Über Runen, über den Ursprung der Runen und ihre Anwendung‘ trägt. Manche Abschnitte sind in Anlehnung an die *Runologia* des Jón Ólafsson verfasst, jedoch nicht wörtlich abgeschrieben.

Lbs 1037 8vo^x (1830–1840): Die Handschrift enthält das *Rúnaverk Geirs Vigfússonar á Akureyri*, in dem u. a. verschiedene Tabellen abgebildet werden, z. T. mit echten Runen und z. T. mit Phantasiezeichen. Auf den Seiten 63 f. sind *Maalrúnir* wiedergegeben, hier eine Liste mit Runenzeichen, Lautwerten (im Sinne der lateinischen Entsprechungen) und Runennamen in alphabetischer Reihenfolge angeordnet. Die Seiten 66–70 überliefern das altnorwegische Runengedicht, das an manchen Stellen von allen Primärquellen und mir bekannten Abschriften abweicht.

Lbs 2683 8vo^x (19. Jh.): Die Handschrift besteht aus vielen separaten Heften, von denen eins *Rúnafræði* ‚Runenkunde‘ enthält. Auffallend ist die erste Überschrift, die *E periculo Runologico* ‚Aus der Gefahr der Runen‘ lautet. Als erstes erscheint eine Tabelle mit dem jüngeren *fupark*, in der jeweils der Zahlenwert, das Runenzeichen, der Lautwert und der Name wiedergegeben sind. Es folgen die angelsächsischen Runen für *æ e œ p w c*, die einige Lautwerte wiedergeben, welche im jüngeren *fupark* nicht oder nicht mehr vertreten sind. Interessant ist der Vergleich zwischen den griechischen Buchstaben und den Runen, bei dem neun Fälle genannt werden, in denen erstere möglicherweise als Vorlage für das *fupark* gedient haben könnten. Es folgen weitere Vergleiche zwischen den Runen und der Ogham-Schrift bzw. den phönizischen Buchstaben. Aufgezeichnet sind zudem epigraphische Inschriften, u. a. die Inschrift von Gallehus und Inschriften von verschiedenen isländischen Grabsteinen. Zum Schluß kommen Reihen von Runen, Zweigrunen (auch Geheimrunen genannt, dazu Düwel 1998) und *villuletur* etwa ‚Irrbuchstaben‘ vor. Letztere stellen eine absichtlich umgestellte Reihenfolge des lateinischen Alphabets dar; sie dienten vermutlich als kryptographisches System zur Verschlüsselung von Texten und sind auf Island zahlreich belegt.

JS 149 fol^r (19. Jh.): Die Handschrift besteht ausschließlich aus losen Blättern unterschiedlicher Größe. Der Großteil davon handelt von der Runenschrift, manche Seiten enthalten Anmerkungen auf Isländisch und Dänisch über bestimmte epigraphische Runeninschriften aus Kontinentalskandinavien. Zudem sind Zeitungsartikel über Neufunde gesammelt worden. Im großen und ganzen ist kein System hinter dieser Sammlung zu erkennen.

ÍB 643 8vo (1772): Pergamentheft ohne Paginierung. Auf den ersten Seiten geht es um die Runenschrift (*Um Rúner*). Dabei handelt es sich offensichtlich um den Anfang einer Runenabhandlung, in der nach einer kurzen Einleitung die Odin-Strophen aus den *Hávamál* (Strophe 138 f.) über die Erfindung der Runen durch den Asengott dargeboten werden. Es folgt die Einteilung der Runenreihe in drei *ættir*, die von der Erklärung bestimmter Lautwerte begleitet ist (z. B. *ᚱ fyrir y*). Danach werden die Runennamen aufgelistet und erläutert. Auf zwei Seiten ist das norwegische Runengedicht mit Runenzeichen und einem isländischen Kommentar aufgeführt. Damit endet der Teil der Handschrift, der sich auf die Runen bezieht.

ÍB 658 8vo^x (1642): Die Handschrift handelt ausschließlich von der Runenschrift. Gleich am Anfang findet sich die Abbildung eines Runensteins, samt Transliteration der Inschrift. Der Traktat behandelt die Frage nach dem Ursprung der Runen aus Odins Selbstopfer, schildert die Einteilung der Runenreihe in drei *ættir* und listet die Runennamen auf. Aufgeführt sind zudem das altnorwegische Runengedicht, dem am Rande die Erläuterungen von Ole Worm aus seiner *Danica Literatura* hinzugefügt sind, und die ältere Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes, das nach der Vorlage von *Linguae Septentrionalis Elementa* des Runólfur Jónsson⁴ (1651) abgeschrieben wurde.

3. Namen-Inschriften

Die dritte Kategorie bilden die Namen-Inschriften. Die Monogramm-Runen, welche Namen von Schreibern, Auftraggebern oder Besitzern wiedergeben und sich auf dem Titelblatt bzw. am Ende einer Handschrift befanden, verwandeln sich im Laufe der Zeit immer mehr in abstrakte *bomærker* (dänisch, etwa „Hausmarken“), die ihren Bezug zu den Runenzeichen allmählich verlieren. Seit dem 14. Jh. sind diese auf Island und Norwegen u. a. auf den Planken von Stabkirchen zahlreich belegt. Möglicherweise haben sie ursprünglich mit Runenzeichen zu tun, wie schon Ole Worm behauptet (1651, 117). Nach Homeyer (1890, 20) sind *bomærker* konkrete Figuren,

⁴ Siehe *Forfatterlexikon*, 3: 310.

die von Bild und Buchstaben unabhängig sind; anders als Monogramme verhalten sie sich ähnlich wie *galdrarúnir* ‚Zauberrunen‘ (s. u.). Über die Gestalt der *bomærker* gibt Homeyer (1890, 139–141) verschiedene Interpretationsmöglichkeiten. Fest steht, dass diese geometrische Figuren sind, deren Hauptteil der senkrechte Stab ist, an welchen die übrigen Striche und Zweige ansetzen. Er geht davon aus, dass man Runen als Vorbild für die Marken genommen habe.

4. Überschriften

Nicht mehr belegt ist die vierte Kategorie, nämlich die Überschriften, die mit Runen aufgezeichnet sind. Sie waren bereits in der älteren Überlieferung lediglich eine periphere Erscheinung.

5. Zauber und Magie

Die bereits in der älteren Überlieferung schwach vertretene Gruppe von Runeneinträgen, die die Verwendung von Runen für Zauber und Magie belegen, ist in der jüngsten Überlieferung ebenfalls nicht mehr bezeugt. Stattdessen werden sog. *galdrarúnir* ‚Zauberrunen‘ wiedergegeben, die in der Regel im Zusammenhang mit *galdrar* ‚Zauber‘ in Form von Zaubersprüchen stehen. *Galdrarúnir* sind aus der Kombination verschiedener Hauptstäbe und Querstriche gestaltet, die vielleicht ursprünglich als Binderunen entstanden waren, sich aber im Laufe der Zeit von der Runenschrift immer stärker differenzierten. Jón Ólafsson widmete den *galdrarúnir* ein langes Kapitel seiner *Runologia* (Teil 2, Kap. 4), wobei er eindeutig auf Binderunen und nicht so sehr auf die abstrakteren *galdrarúnir* Bezug nimmt.

Lbs 2413 8vo* (um 1800): Die Handschrift ist ein *galdra*-Heft, in dem jeder Zauberspruch von Zeichnungen runenähnlicher Zeichen—eben *galdrarúnir*—begleitet ist. Es sind eigentlich keine Runen vorhanden, doch der letzte Satz des Heftes lautet: ... *í Nafni Föðurs og Sonar og Heiliga Andes og skrifu í Málrúnum* ‚... im Namen des Vaters, des Sohnes und des Heiligen Geistes, und [sie] schreiben in Sprachrunen‘.

6.–8. Runenreihen, Runennamen, Runengedichte

Am zahlreichsten vertreten sind die Kategorien 6–8, nämlich die Runenreihen und Geheimschriften, Runennamen und Runengedichte. In der jüngsten Überlieferung kommen diese oft zusammen in derselben Handschrift vor, weshalb sie hier nicht nach einzelnen Kategorien getrennt werden.

Dabei handelt es sich meist um die spätmittelalterlichen Alphabetrunen⁵ **abcdefghijklmnopstuyþzæ**, deren Anzahl geringfügig schwankt je nach dem, ob die Zeichen **z**, **ø** und **æ** vorkommen oder nicht. Manchmal werden auch lediglich die 16 Zeichen des jüngeren *fupark* wiedergegeben. Hingegen wird nirgends das ältere *fupark* abgebildet. Die nordische Tradition von Ole Worm bis zu den schwedischen Gelehrten und den Isländern, darunter Jón Ólafsson, kannte das ältere *fupark* nicht und ging davon aus, dass das jüngere *fupark* der ursprüngliche Runenreihe entsprach.

Die Runenzeichen erhalten in den Handschriften immer neue Varianten, die von den authentischen Runen stark abweichen. Oft treten diese Reihen ohne weiteren Kontext auf, so dass die Bestimmung ihrer Funktion offen bleiben muß. Mit isl. *rúnir* (Pl. Fem. von *rúna*) sind aber nicht ausschließlich Runenzeichen gemeint, sondern viele verschiedene Schriftarten (z. T. erfundene), die in der Regel einen „Eigennamen“ und die Zusatzbezeichnung *rúnir* tragen. Manchmal wird diese Bezeichnung durch *letur* oder *stafir* ‚Buchstaben‘ ersetzt. Man kann sicherlich von einem antiquarischen Interesse sprechen, das die Kompilation von zahlreichen Runen- und Schriftenreihen vorantrieb.

Eine erhebliche Anzahl von Handschriften überliefert die nordischen Runennamen. Diesen sind teilweise Runenzeichen und Zeichenvarianten bzw. Lautwerte beigefügt. Sie werden meist in Listen und Tabellen aufgeführt.

Noch zahlreicher als die Runennamenlisten sind die Aufzeichnungen der Runengedichte und der Runennamenumschreibungen. Das altisländische und altnorwegische Runengedicht werden oft ohne Zusammenhang zum restlichen Inhalt einer Handschrift aufgezeichnet. Die Schreiber geben manchmal ihre Quelle bekannt, manchmal erkennt man an bestimmten Stellen, welchem Werk die Abschriften entstammen (z. B. Ole Worm, Runólfur Jónsson, Jón Ólafsson, die teilweise in der orthographischen Wiedergabe bzw. inhaltlich voneinander abweichen). Durchaus populär scheint die jüngere Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes gewesen zu sein, die nicht auf eine bestimmte Vorlage zurückzuführen ist, sondern aus der willkürlichen Kombination von Runennamenumschreibungen immer neu entsteht. Die kenningartigen Umschreibungen variieren oft in Anzahl und

⁵ Alphabetrunen unterscheiden sich vom *fupark* dadurch, dass sie nach der alphabetischen Reihenfolge angeordnet sind und dass ihre Anzahl bis zu 24 Zeichen vermehrt wird. Während die Folge **abcdefghijklmnopstuyþ** in der Regel feststeht, sind die Zusatzzeichen beliebig aufgeführt. Alphabetrunen entsprechen mit wenigen Abweichungen den norwegischen Mittelalterrunen, die aus den 16 Zeichen des jüngeren *fupark* und den punktierten bzw. neu-erfundenen Zeichen bestanden.

Reihenfolge, so dass der Eindruck entsteht, sie seien allgemein bekannt und verbreitet gewesen und jeder habe sie frei niederschreiben können.

Diese Gruppe enthält eine einzige Handschrift aus dem 17. Jh., 11 aus dem 18. Jh., 33 aus dem 19. Jh. und sogar drei Hefte aus dem 20. Jh.

Lbs 66 4to^x (17.–18. Jh.): Die Seiten 57–59 sind jeweils in zwei Spalten aufgeteilt, in denen untereinander die Runennamen der Alphabetrunen (**α–æ**) mit ihren Umschreibungen erfasst sind, was hier am Beispiel der *a*-Rune veranschaulicht wird: *Aar er himna skejnkýng, jarða grooðj, og vallna, akurgrooða, flugu faugnuður, gleða þjóða, siglu fákur á ferð, hlutur og anauð*, wörtlich ‚(Gutes) Jahr ist Geschenk des Himmels, Fruchtbarkeit der Erde und der Täler, Fruchtbarkeit des Ackers, Freude der Fliege, Freude des Volkes, Pferd des Mastes (→ Schiff) auf der Reise, Schicksal und Bedrängnis‘.

Lbs 590 4to^x (um 1850): Ab Seite 3 stehen Listen mit griechischen Buchstaben, *málrúnir* (hier eine Runenreihe nur mit Lautwerten und bis zu fünf Zeichenvarianten) und sog. *villuletur*.

Lbs 908 8vo^x (1760–1770): ohne Paginierung. Als 17. Abschnitt kommt eine Tabelle mit 16 Spalten und verschiedenen Alphabeten, u. a. *málrúnir*, vor.

Lbs 632, 4to^x (ca. 1810): Ab Seite 85 werden unter dem Titel *Nockrar Málrúna deilur* tabellarisch jeweils drei Lautwerte pro Zeile aufgeführt und unterhalb drei Runennamen und bis zu 24 Umschreibungen aufgeführt; auf Seite 92 steht das vollständige altnorwegische Runengedicht. Es folgen *Sprang letur*, d. h. lateinische Buchstaben in der unüblichen Reihenfolge *gualtxyzþælknmfocethpzs*. Die letzten sechs Seiten der Handschrift enthalten viele verschiedene Schriftreihen, die zwar meist als *Rúner* bezeichnet sind, doch in der Tat eher Phantasiezeichen und Geheimrunen darstellen. Am Ende sind *Þeir gömlu Rúna Bókstafr* ‚Die alten Runenzeichen‘ aufgezeichnet, mit dem Lautwert und jeweils einem Runenzeichen versehen, in alphabetischer Reihenfolge.

Lbs 636 4to^x (1750–1760): Die Seiten 28 ff. präsentieren das Runen-Kapitel aus den *Hávamál* mit Übersetzung und Interpretation schwieriger Wörter; auf den Seiten 360 f. werden Alphabetrunen (**abcdefghijklmnopqrstuypzþ**) folgendermaßen aufgelistet: Zunächst kommt der Lautwert, dann bis zu 13 Varianten der Runenzeichen und anschließend der Runenname, wobei **z** und **þ** ohne Namen präsentiert werden. Die Seiten 363–388 enthalten eine Abhandlung über die Runen mit dem Titel *Stutt Under Vijsan um Runer, undirritað B(jörn) I(óns)S(on) á Sk(arðs)á* ‚Kurze Unterweisung über Runen, aufgezeichnet von Björn Jónsson á Skarðsá‘ (s. o.), in dem u. a. die Abstammung der Runen von den Asen erklärt, die Runennamen aufgezeichnet, die Einteilung der Runenreihe in drei *ættir* und Geheimrunen

veranschaulicht und die ältere Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes präsentiert werden (‚Die Umschreibungen seien den meisten so bekannt, dass man keiner ausdrücklichen Erklärung bedarf‘ so der Text). Es wird zudem erklärt, dass die Runennamen *málrúnir* seien, die in der Kunst des Dichtens reichlich verwendet werden. Der Traktat endet mit den eddischen *Ljóð Brunhyldar* und seiner Runenlehre. Ganz zum Schluß werden die erlaubten und unerlaubten Methoden des Umgangs mit Runen geschildert. Dieses letzte Kapitel ist vermutlich nicht außerhalb des historischen Kontextes Islands zu verstehen, wo die Runenschrift lange Zeit mit Magie und Zauber in Verbindung stand und eine negative Konnotation hatte.

Lbs 1349 4to^x (um 1800; Abb. 1 und 2): Aufzeichnung von verschiedenen Runenreihen bzw. Geheimrunen und anderen Phantasieschriften und Runennamensumschreibungen, tabellarisch präsentiert und in Form der neueren Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes. Auf Seite 8 werden Alphabetrunen mit den entsprechenden Lautwerten aufgeführt. Auf den Seiten 8–37 folgen zahlreiche unterschiedliche Schriftreihen mit meist erfundenen Zeichen. Die Seiten 38f. bilden in tabellarischer Form die Alphabetrunen ab: zunächst der Lautwert, dann das Zeichen sowie jeweils eine Namensumschreibung und schließlich weitere Formen. Während die Zeichen kaum Runen ähneln, sind die Umschreibungen (z.B. *algróenn akur* ‚fruchtbarer Acker‘ für *a*, *barna bql* ‚der Kinder Schaden‘ für *k*) z. T. den Runengedichten entnommen. Auf den Seiten 42–46 folgt eine unvollständige Aufzeichnung des jüngeren isländischen Runengedichtes mit der Überschrift *Deilur* (Strophe **a–k**).

Lbs 2285 4to^x (1892–1895): Auf den Seiten 377–383 sind *Málrúna Deilur* aufgezeichnet, d.h. die jüngere Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes, das mit Lautwerten und Runennamen versehen ist. Auf den Seiten 383–386 folgen *villuletur*-Reihen und Runenreihen.

Lbs 2334 4to^x (1894): Auf den Seiten 394–408 kommen viele Tabellen mit Schriftreihen vor, u. a. Runen, *Ramvilluletur*, *Alfrúnir*, verschiedene Sorten von Geheimrunen und runenähnliche Zeichen. Ab Seite 408 folgt eine Rubrik mit der Überschrift *Málrúnir með sínum kenningum og dulin heitum* ‚Sprachrunen mit ihren Umschreibungen und verborgenen heiti‘. Hier werden in der Reihenfolge Runenzeichen, Namen und Zeichenvarianten aufgeführt, wobei die Namen immer korrekt wiedergegeben werden, die Zeichen aber nicht. Es folgt dann die jüngere Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes, in der am Anfang jedes Abschnittes der Lautwert, das Runenzeichen und der Name wiedergegeben werden (S. 408–414). Nach einem längeren Text über die Sternzeichen geht es auf den Seiten 458–487 mit *villuletur*-Reihen, den griechischen Buchstaben und *galdrarúnir* weiter. Am Fuße der Seite 517 ist das *Rúnastafróf* ‚Runenalphabet‘ mit Zeichen und Lautwerten abgebildet.

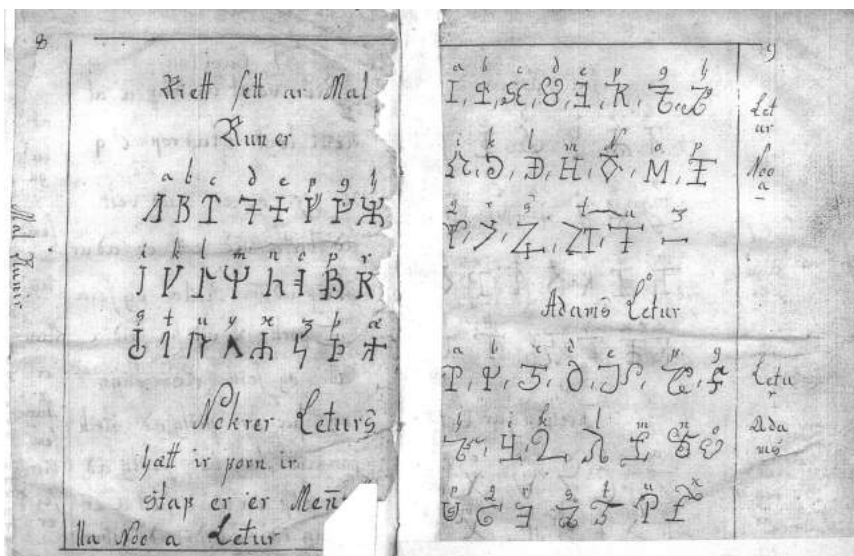


Abb. 1. Lbs 1349 4to^x, S. 8f. Foto: Landsbókasafn Íslands.

Daraufhin folgt auf Seite 518 eine verkürzte Version des altnorwegischen Runengedichtes, in der jeweils das Runenzeichen und lediglich die erste Zeile der Umschreibung (die im Großen und Ganzen den Kenningar des altisländischen Runengedichtes entsprechen) wiedergegeben werden. Dabei wird als einzige die *i*-Strophe vollständig als letzte aufgeführt. Ganz zum Schluß kommen zwei runenähnliche Zeichen, welche die Namen *oi* und *ør* tragen, für die neue Zweizeiler gedichtet wurden.

Lbs 2587 4to^x (20. Jh.): Auf den letzten Seiten werden in alphabetischer Reihenfolge die Lautwerte samt Runennamen und einer Umschreibung aufgeführt (einzige Ausnahme ist die *a*-Rune mit mehreren Umschreibungen), z. B. *B heitir Björk, kent við allar trjá tegundir*, ‚B heißt Birke, gekannt als alle Sorten Holz‘.

Lbs 385 8vo^x (ca. 1781): teilweise handschriftlich und teilweise gedruckt. In der Handschrift kommen hauptsächlich Kalenderberechnungen vor, und zwischen zwei Zeittabellen sind verschiedene Schriftreihen aufgeführt, u. a. *Haugbúa Letur* (Phantasiezeichen), *Málrúnir* (hier Alphabetrunen mit Lautwert und Runenzeichen, dann eine weitere Aufzeichnung mit Lautwert, drei–vier Zeichenvarianten und Runennamen, zwei Reihen ausschließlich mit Runenzeichen, erstere (**α–æ**) und letztere (**α–þ**), *Adal Runu Rúnir* genannt).

38		Deilur		þokar			
a	N	al grō eū akur	at 2 7	l	l	landa belti	l A K 9
b	þ	eū is blama	3 X 2 P	n	h	mand gam-ann	M L V 2
c	f	hvij pall	6 7 P I	n	R	þia þra	n + 2 h
d	g	svart skola þradi	d 7 m 2	o	p	valz þockur	o + 2 E
e	f	brokinn blar	e X h 2	p	v	lakning Lida	p 4 2 B
f	f	þranda Rogur	f v 2 E	4	p	lida sol	4 4 4 2 2
g	v	Mein id seert	9 2 X 2	r	e	þaku Madi	r h 9 R
h	þ	hög Manð þönd	h y X 2	s	p	þlira es lios	s d 4 h
i	r	unrar þeka	i l 2 E	þ	R	brandu brotin	þ 2 L A
k	g	barna böt	k X 2 E	u	v	skögar Rot	u 7 5 2
				x	l	þard sol	h 2 2
				a	φ	Mal allra Meini	a a 2

Abb. 2. Lbs 1349 4to^x, S. 38f. Foto: Landsbókasafn Íslands.

Lbs 1609 8vo^x (1810): ohne Paginierung; vollständige Abschrift der *Lieder-Edda*, anschließend *Nockrar Deilur tilfundnar í Rúnum* ‚Einige Deilur abgefasst in Runen‘ mit Lautwert, Runennamen und Umschreibungen der Alphabetrunen (a–o). Auf den letzten drei Seiten ist der Prolog der *Snorra Edda* aufgezeichnet.

Lbs 1063 8vo^x (19. Jh.): ohne Paginierung. Am Anfang der Handschrift sind auf sieben Seiten verteilt *Rúna Deilur* zu lesen, hier die jüngere Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes, das mit Runenzeichen, Lautwert und Runennamen versehen ist. Die ersten Umschreibungen jedes Abschnittes entsprechen den Kenningar der älteren Fassung.

Lbs 1674 8vo^x (ca. 1850): Auf den Seiten 2–12 steht die erweiterte Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes, in dem keine Runenzeichen vorkommen, sondern nur die jeweiligen Lautwerte und Runennamen mit bis zu 16 Umschreibungen pro Rune. Es folgen zwei Seiten mit *málrúnir*, hier ein Runenzeichen pro Zeile mit zahlreichen Varianten und dem zugehörigen Lautwert. Ab der Mitte der Seite 12 kommen zwei Abschriften des altnorwegischen Runengedichtes vor, die Worms *Danica Literatura* entnommen sind; zwischen diesen beiden Texten sind hebräische und griechische Buchstaben eingetragen.

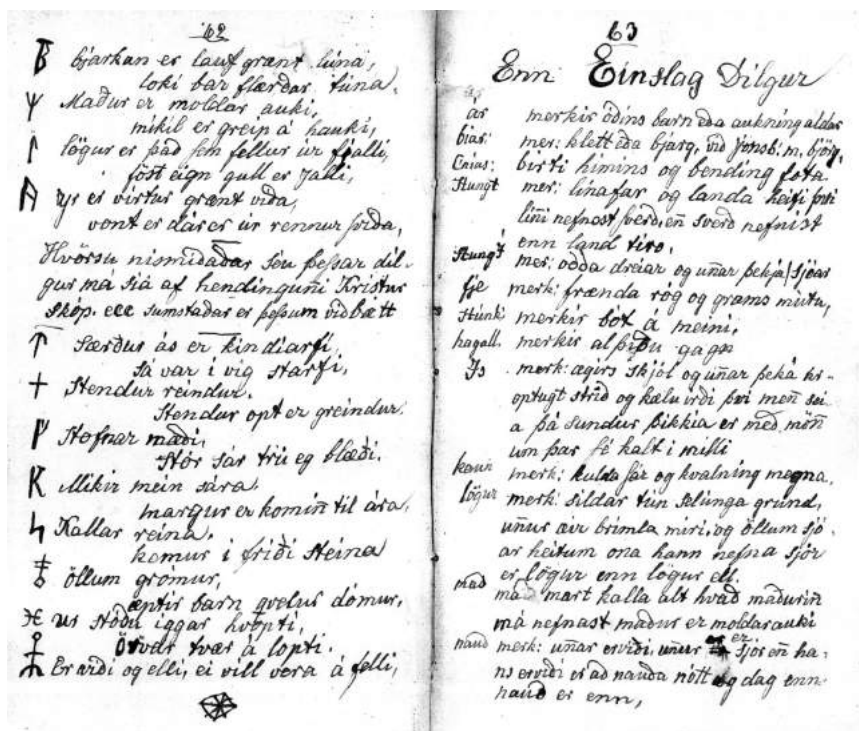
Lbs 2031 8vo (1780): Pergamentheft ohne Paginierung. Als erstes findet sich eine Abschrift der *Snorra Edda*, dann folgen sechs Seiten mit *málrúnir*, hier die jüngere Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes ohne Runenzeichen oder Namen, ausschließlich mit Lautwert (*a er gumna gaman* ‚a ist der Menschen Freude‘ usw.)

Lbs 2135 8vo^x (1881): Unter der Bezeichnung *málrúnir* werden hier verschiedene Tabellen mit Runenzeichen und den entsprechenden Lautwerten aufgeführt; es sind teilweise mehrere Varianten der Zeichen wiedergegeben, die nicht alle echten Runen entsprechen.

Lbs 2306 8vo^x (1780): ohne Paginierung. Die Handschrift beginnt mit einer Tabelle mit verschiedenen Schriften, gefolgt von einer Tabelle mit Runenzeichen und -namen. Der nächste Abschnitt trägt die Überschrift *Málrúna Stafer með merkingu þeirra nafna eptir því sé Dr. Olaus Worm* ‚Runenzeichen mit der Bedeutung ihrer Namen nach Dr. Olaus Worm‘ und enthält das altnorwegische Runengedicht. Es wiederholen sich auf etwa zehn Seiten weitere Tabellen und Listen mit Runenzeichen und deren Lautwerten bzw. *villuletur*-Reihen. Anschließend kommt die jüngere Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes mit der Überschrift *Málrúnir og Ráðrúnir* ‚Sprachrunen und Ratrunen‘ vor. Jeder Abschnitt enthält nur wenige Umschreibungen; der Runenname *óss* wird hier in Übereinstimmung mit der norwegischen Tradition als ‚Flussmündung‘ anstelle von ‚Asengott‘ interpretiert, und es werden Umschreibungen aufgeführt, die normalerweise den Runennamen *logr* ‚Wasser‘ (für die *l*-Rune) beschreiben.

Lbs 2480 8vo^x (1860): Hierbei handelt es sich um ein kleines Heft, das vorwiegend *vísur* ‚Strophen‘ enthält. Auf der vorletzten Seite liest man die Überschrift *Málrúna nöfn eptir Jón Þorkelsson á Heiði á Siðunni*; anders als erwartet kommen hier weder eine Aufstellung der Runennamen noch Runengedichte vor, sondern eine Art Reimerei, in der einige Runennamen genannt werden.

Lbs 2516 8vo^x (1876; Abb. 3): Ab Seite 24 sind viele Runenzeichen als integrierter Bestandteil des Textes zu lesen, die für einzelne Wörter bzw. für ganze Sätze stehen. Die Seiten 28 f. sind in zwei Spalten aufgeteilt und geben jeweils den Lautwert und einige Zeichenvarianten der Alphabetrunen wieder. Unter den Varianten sind viele erfundene Zeichen. Die Seite 29 schließt mit einer Aufzeichnung von *þrideilur* ab. Die Seiten 30–45 enthalten zahlreiche Schriftreihen, die abwechselnd die Bezeichnung *rúnir* oder *letur* tragen. Auf den Seiten 46–56 folgt die Abschrift von *Málrúna Deilur*, nämlich die jüngere Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes, das mit dem Runennamen und -zeichen versehen ist. Eine Art Runengedicht wiederholt sich auf den Seiten 56–59, doch diesmal in der *fupark*-Reihe

Abb. 3. LBS 2516 8vo^x, S. 62f. Foto: Landsbókasafn Íslands.

und – abgesehen von wenigen Ausnahmen – ohne die ursprünglichen Umschreibungen. Am Ende der Seite 59 ist von *þrideilur* die Rede, doch hier bezieht sich diese Bezeichnung auf die Einteilung des *þupark* in drei *ættir*. Als eine Art Zusammenfassung der beiden oben geschilderten Themen steht nun die ältere Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes, das der *Runologia* entnommen ist (wie dort sind auch hier am Anfang jedes Abschnittes die jeweiligen Runen in Form von Geheimrunen wiedergegeben). Auf den Seiten 61f. ist *tvídeilur* aufgezeichnet, wie das altnorwegische Runengedicht auch genannt wird. Der Text beschränkt sich nicht nur auf die 16 Zweizeiler der ursprünglichen Fassung, sondern enthält auch die neugedichteten Verse für die mittelalterlichen Zusatzrunen; die Quelle dafür ist mit ziemlicher Sicherheit die *Runologia* (diese Zusatzstrophen sind meines Wissens sonst nur in der *Runologia* (S. 145) und der Handschrift AM 738 4to^x (Bl. 79v) bezeugt). Die Handschrift vermittelt außerdem Wissen über die *Dylgjur* ‚Runennamenschreibungen‘ auf den Seiten 63f., wobei jeweils der Runenname und eine Umschreibung der Alphabetrunen genannt werden.

Die Seiten 64 f. weisen darauf hin, dass Runenzeichen und Umschreibungen eher zur Unterhaltung als zum richtigen Nutzen verwendet werden, damit die Dichter ihre Namen verschlüsseln können (*Pessir rúna stafir og dilgjur eru meir til gamans enn gagns. Þó skáldin séu vön að hilja með þeim nöfn sín, að menn á skilji þau nema með ígrundun og eptir leitni*). Es folgen verschiedene Namenrätsel (S. 66 f.); beim ersten wird der Name ‚Olaus Worm‘ durch neun Umschreibungen ausgedrückt, die nach dem akrophonischen Prinzip jeweils für einen Lautwert stehen. Erst auf den Seiten 112–124 kommen wieder Tabellen, die u. a. Runenzeichen und -namen bzw. viele andere Phantasieschriften enthalten. Schließlich kommen erneut Runen im Medizintraktat vor, mit dem die Handschrift endet. Zusammen mit einigen *galdrarúnir* ist dort ein Runentext aufgezeichnet.

Lbs 2527 8vo^x (1820–1840): Follierung. Auf Blatt 90v ist die jüngere Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes unter der Titel *Nockrar Deylur af stafrófinu* belegt. Jeder Abschnitt beginnt mit dem Lautwert und dem entsprechenden Runennamen und enthält einige Umschreibungen. Die Reihenfolge ist alphabetisch, doch die *k*-Rune ist zwischen **t** und **u** verstellt. Eine Besonderheit des Textes liegt darin, dass die *þ*-Rune umgedeutet wurde, den neuen Namen *þjóð* ‚Volk‘ erhielt und passende Umschreibungen zu der neuen Bedeutung (wie beispielsweise: *lands liður, laga nýter, fjöldi folks, foldar byggar*, in meiner Übersetzung: ‚Glieð des Landes, Nutzer der Gesetze, Menge des Volkes, des Landes Bauer‘).

Lbs 2565 8vo^x (1804): Unter der Überschrift *Málrúna Deilur* sind die Alphabetrunen mit Lautwert, Runennamen und -zeichen aufgeführt. Für manche Runen ist auch eine Umschreibung hinzugefügt. Ab Seite 25 beginnt die jüngere Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes mit Runenzeichen und fast durchgehend mit Runennamen versehen. Nacheinander werden zahlreiche Schriftreihen, u. a. griechische Buchstaben mit den Namen und *málrúnir* mit Varianten in alphabetischer Reihenfolge dargestellt (ein Teil der Handschrift kann der Kategorie *Miscellanea* zugeordnet werden, siehe unten).

Lbs 2650 8vo^x (19. Jh.): Auf Seite 66 sind *málrúnir* aufgezeichnet, d. h. zunächst eine Liste der Lautwerte mit den Runennamen alphabetisch angeordnet (*A er Ár, B er Bjarkan* usw.), dann die jüngere Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes, bei dem am Anfang der Abschnitte nur der Lautwert steht, gefolgt von einer halben Seite Umschreibungen pro Rune. Dem ersten Runenabschnitt folgen Rätsel, anschließend erneut drei Runenreihen mit Runenzeichen samt deren Lautwerten und eine zweite Version des isländischen Runengedichtes, die sonst nicht weiter belegte Umschreibungen aufführt.

Lbs 2691 8vo^x (19. Jh.): Ziemlich am Anfang des Heftes stehen auf 12 Seiten verteilt *Bundnar Málrúnir* ‚Gebundene Sprachrunen‘ hier die jüngere Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes, das Lautwerte, Runennamen und mehr als 20 Runennamenumschreibungen pro Rune belegt.

Lbs 2881 8vo^x (ca. 1935): eine Art Schulheft. Auf den Seiten 14 f. steht die ältere Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes, dann folgt ein Abschnitt (Seiten 15–24) mit dem Titel *Um Málrúnir*, in dem hintereinander Lautwert, Runenzeichen und Runenname und darunter viele Umschreibungen der Alphabetrunen stehen. Auf den Seiten 25–36 folgt eine zweite Liste mit der Überschrift *Málrúna Deilur*, die als Wiederholung der ersten gilt. Die Seiten 37–39 enthalten die Abschrift des altnorwegischen Runengedichtes und acht neugedichtete Zweizeiler, die aller Wahrscheinlichkeit nach der *Runologia* des Jón Ólafsson entnommen sind. Auf Seite 40 steht *Málrúna stafróf*, in dem Lautwert und verschiedene Varianten der Runenzeichen aufgeführt werden.

Lbs 2886 8vo^x (1938): Dabei handelt es sich um eine Art Übungs- oder Schulheft. Auf den letzten 22 Seiten des Heftes kommen unter der Überschrift *Málrúna Skýringar* ‚Erläuterungen der Sprachrunen‘ jeweils die Lautwerte, Runenzeichen und Runennamen vor, begleitet von zahlreichen Umschreibungen. Die Seiten sind in zwei Spalten aufgeteilt. Als Beispiel dafür, wie diese Umschreibungen verwendet werden konnten, ist in dieser Handschrift eine *Ríma* aufgezeichnet, bei der ein Halbvers einer Runennamenumschreibung entspricht, nämlich *barna bql* ‚der Kinder Schaden‘ als Umschreibung für *kaun* ‚Geschwür, Krankheit‘.

Lbs 2933 8vo^x (19. Jh.): Die Handschrift besteht aus einem Heft (8vo), vielen losen Blättern und einem zweiten kleineren Heft (16mo), das mit der jüngeren Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes einsetzt. Bemerkenswert ist, dass in dieser Abschrift z. T. bis zu fünf Zeichenvarianten am Anfang jeden Abschnittes aufgezeichnet sind. Es folgen Listen von *heiti* u. a. für Odin, für Waffen, Zwerge, Riesen sowie Frauen-*heiti*.

Lbs 3386 8vo^x (1806): ohne Paginierung. Circa in der Mitte der Handschrift beginnt ein Abschnitt über die Runen, der die Überschrift trägt *Hier skrifast Deilur Nockrar út af Stafrófinu* ‚Hier sind einige Deilur vom Alphabet geschrieben‘. Die Alphabetrunen werden ohne Zeichen, mit Lautwert, Runennamen und zahlreichen Umschreibungen präsentiert.

Lbs 3402 8vo^x (18.–19. Jh.): Am Ende der Handschrift kommt die gleiche Abschrift der jüngeren Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes wie in Lbs 3386 8vo^x vor, wobei die Orthographie leicht abweicht und hier die Rune **y** anstatt **x** steht. Es folgen verschiedene Reihen von *villuletur*. Die Überschrift *Málrúner eður klapprúner sem og kallast Walldemars rúner* ‚Sprachrunen

oder Klapprunen, die auch Waldemars Runen genannt werden⁶ leitet einen Abschnitt über die Einteilung des *fuþark* in drei *ættir* ein. Zu beachten ist, dass während die *f-ætt* (**fuþork**) korrekt wiedergegeben wird, schon die *h-ætt* eine Ungenauigkeit enthält (**hnyas** statt **hnias**) und die *t-ætt* weit mehr Runen enthält als üblich (**temblíx** statt **tbmly**); eine zusätzliche vierte *ætt* führt die mittelalterlichen Runen auf. Die in der Handschrift beigefügten Beispiele von Geheimrunen sind dennoch korrekt. Nach diesem Abschnitt folgen eine Runenreihe nur mit Zeichen und danach *Noaletur*, *Adamsletur*, *Málrúnir*, *Kellingar letur* und viele andere Schriftreihen mit erfundenen Zeichen. Unter der Überschrift *Einfalldar deilur* ‚Einfache Deilur‘ sind tabellarisch Lautwert, Runenzeichen und eine einzige Umschreibung, erneut der Lautwert und Zeichenvarianten (keine echten Runen) aufgeführt. Ziemlich einzigartig für spätere *Runica Manuscripta* ist die Aufzeichnung einer Runeninschrift auf einem losen Blatt, das zu dieser Handschrift gerechnet wird, die der Epigraphik entspricht, nämlich **hier : hvi⁶er : hraúason̄** : ..., *Hér hviler Hrava son* ‚Hier ruht der Sohn von Hravi‘.

Lbs 3708 8vo* (Ende des 19. Jhs.): Am Ende der Handschrift stehen drei Tabellen, in denen Lautwerte und 12 Zeichenvarianten pro Rune vorkommen. Ein Einleitungssatz auf Dänisch besagt, dass es sich dabei um die alte Schreibkunst handelt.

Lbs 3761 8vo (18. Jh.): In dem Pergamentheft werden mehrfach Alphabetrunen nur mit Lautwert und Zeichen aufgeführt. Dabei sind Querstriche und Bäuche leicht modifiziert und weisen eckige statt runde Formen auf. Es folgen verschiedene Schriftreihen, sog. *villuletur eður yraletur*, *rammvilluletur* und *trølla letur* (z.T. erfundene Zeichen), und *stungna rúner*, hier Geheimrunen mit der Besonderheit, dass sie alphabetisch angeordnet sind. Die zwei Reihen *Alphabetum Gothicum* und *Arianisk letur* entsprechen eigentlich echten Runenformen.

JS 43 4to* (1660–1680): Die letzten 12 Seiten enthalten Ausschnitte aus der *Runologia*. Unter der Überschrift *Prideilur Rúna*, 1. *De Nomine* ist die Einteilung des jüngeren *fuþark* in drei *ættir* dargestellt, und 2. *De figura et interpretatione ænigmatica* präsentiert die ältere Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes samt einer lateinischen Übersetzung. Es folgt ein Abschnitt mit dem Titel *Tvideilur uppa rúnir eður málrúna þýding*, in dem jeweils Runenzeichen mit zahlreichen Umschreibungen aufgezeichnet werden. Die Besonderheit dieses Abschnittes liegt darin, dass hierbei die Reihenfolge des jüngeren *fuþark* beibehalten wird und dass viele der Umschreibungen sonst nicht weiter belegt sind.

⁶ Fehler für I.

JS 248 4to^x (1846): Das Manuskript beginnt mit vielen Schriftreihen, darunter Runen. Eine Tabelle, die in zwei Spalten geteilt ist, gibt die Runennamen auf Althochdeutsch wieder (vgl. die sog. hrabanischen Runenalphabet in Derolez 1954; 1959). Es folgt eine zweite Tabelle mit den isländischen Runennamen. Auf Seite 210 kommen bei der Beschreibung der verschiedenen Walarten und Kleinfische Runeneinträge im Text vor (die Wörter *fiska kin*, *siilda kin* und andere werden in Runen notiert).

JS 307 8vo^x (ca. 1780): ohne Paginierung. In der Mitte der Handschrift kommt die ältere Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes vor, bei der am Anfang jeder Strophe die Runen in Form von Geheimrunen stehen (vgl. S. 140 f. der *Runologia*). Es folgt ein Runenalphabet auf zwei Zeilen verteilt, in dem Lautwert und Runennamen aufgeführt werden. Am Ende dieses Abschnittes ist noch die jüngere Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes zu lesen, die die Überschrift *Einar Málrúna Deilur* trägt (nur mit Runennamen versehen).

JS 377 8vo^x (1813): keine Paginierung, sondern Einteilung in thematische Abschnitte. Teil 2 enthält *Málrúna deilur*, hier ausschließlich mit Runennamen und deren Umschreibungen (jüngere Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes), Teil 7 ist *Nockrar Rúnar* betitelt und umfasst u. a. *Málrúnar þeirra nøfn*, eine Liste von Runenzeichen, Lautwerten und Runennamen bzw. *Málrúna stafróf* nur mit Runenzeichen und Runennamen. Auf neun Seiten verteilt kommen zudem zahlreiche Schriftreihen vor, von denen viele die Bezeichnung *Rúnir* tragen, die offensichtlich für ‚Buchstaben‘ steht, denn die meisten weisen keine echten Runen auf.

JS 395 8vo^x (1815): Die Seiten 76–82 umfassen einen kurzen Traktat über die Runen mit dem Titel *Stutt undervysan um Rúner* ‚Kurze Unterweisung über die Runen‘. Auf den Seiten 337–364 sind zahlreiche Schriftarten abgebildet, darunter auch *málrúnir*, *klapprúnir* und viele Phantasiezeichen.

JS 390 8vo^x (18.–19. Jh.): Auf den Seiten 100–105 sind eine Runenreihe mit vielen Varianten, den Lautwerten und den Runennamen, sowie *villulettur*-Reihen und Geheimrunen wiedergegeben. Auf den Seiten 267 und 271 f. sind weitere Schriftreihen abgebildet.

JS 392 8vo^x (1747–1752): Im Teil 10 der Handschrift (S. 221–226) stehen *Málrúnar þeirra Nøfn og mynder* ‚Sprachrunen, ihre Namen und Formen‘ mit Runenzeichen, Runennamen und Umschreibungen der Alphabetrunen versehen.

ÍB 383 4to^x (ca. 1860): Auf der ersten Seite sind griechische Buchstaben mit ihren Zahlwerten aufgeführt. Es folgen auf S. 8 verschiedene *villulettur*-Reihen und auf S. 9 *Málrúnir og þeirra þýðingar eðr Dylgiur* ‚Sprachrunen und ihre Bedeutungen oder Umschreibungen‘, die von einem Buch aus dem

Jahr 1810 abgeschrieben wurden. Auf den Seiten 11–19 kommen Tabellen vor, die viele Varianten der Alphabetrunen enthalten (vgl. Ole Worm und Jón Ólafssons *Runologia*). Zudem bilden die Seiten 20–40 auch Tabellen mit weiteren Schriftreihen ab (wie z.B. *Adalrúnir*, *Adamsletur*, *Alfrúnir*, *Ariard-Rúnir*, *Klapprúnir* und viele mehr). Ab Seite 51 sind *galdrarúnir* aufgezeichnet, welche in Begleittexten, die auch Runenzeichen enthalten, erklärt werden (z.B. für die *óttastafur* ‚Furchtstäbe‘ lautet die Erläuterung des Zeichens: *Rist þennan staf á eikarspiald og kasta fyrir fætur óvinnar þíns til að ótta honum*, wörtlich: ‚Ritze diesen Stab auf einen Eichendeckel und wirf ihn vor die Füße deines Feindes, um ihn zu erschrecken‘. Ein weiteres Beispiel enthält den Namen Olafs des Heiligen und lautet wie folgt: *Insigli olafs ens helga sem borin vóru á sér til varnar* ‚Siegel Olafs des Heiligen, die zum Schutz getragen wurden‘.

ÍB 68 8vo^x (1778): Am Schluß der Handschrift kommen *Maalrúna letur* vor, hier die jüngere Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes, die aus Runenzeichen, Runennamen und durchnummerierten Umschreibungen (bis zu 14) besteht.

ÍB 164 8vo^x (1818): Gleich auf der ersten Seite sind *Nockrar Mál Rúnir* abgebildet, hier Alphabetrunen, die auf drei Zeilen verteilt sind (**abcdefghi, klmopstuy, xzþæ**) mit den Lautwerten bzw. den Runenzeichen. Es folgen dann weitere Schriftreihen, nämlich *málrúnir* (mehr oder minder echte Runen) und *villuletur*-Reihen.

ÍB 165 8vo (18. Jh.): Pergamenthandschrift mit Folierung. Im vierten Teil der Handschrift steht auf Bl. 21r eine Runeninschrift als integrierter Bestandteil des Textes, die zwar zu entziffern ist, aber nicht zu verstehen; sie lautet: **hillenn?y?lm**. Teil 5 beginnt mit der Überschrift *Margvísleg Rúna letur* ‚Verschiedene Runenzeichen‘: Auf zwei Seiten werden die Alphabetrunen abgebildet, wobei jede Zeile jeweils einen Lautwert und Zeichenvarianten enthält. Am Ende von Teil 6 sind Tabellen mit vielen unterschiedlichen Schriften wiedergegeben, u.a. *villuletur*, Runen und Geheimrunen. Die Blätter 71r–74v enthalten verschiedene Versionen des jüngeren isländischen Runengedichtes, die voneinander abweichen und immer unterschiedliche Umschreibungen der Runennamen aufführen. Weder Lautwerte noch Runenzeichen sind vorhanden.

ÍB 179 8vo^x (18.–19. Jh.): Die Handschrift besteht aus verschiedenen Heften, die teilweise in sehr schlechtem Zustand sind. Ein separates Heft von 14 Seiten handelt ausschließlich von der Schrift im Allgemeinen. Auf der ersten Seite wird ein Abschnitt mit der Überschrift *Mál Rúner* eingeleitet, der die jüngere Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes auf sechs Seiten wiedergibt: zunächst der Lautwert, dann drei Zeichenvarianten und der Name und

anschließend drei–vier Zeilen mit Umschreibungen. Es folgt eine Tabelle mit der Überschrift *Hier skrifast ýmsleg fornaldar Letur* ‚Hier werden verschiedene altertümliche Buchstaben geschrieben‘, welche griechische Buchstaben sowie Alphabetrunen und weitere erfundene Schriften enthält.

ÍB 200 8vo^x (18.–19. Jh.): ohne Paginierung. Der Großteil der Handschrift enthält Abbildungen von Schriftreihen, u. a. *villuletur*, *haughua letur*, *tölu letur* (nur aus Zahlen bestehend), *puncta letur* (eine Art Morse-Alphabet), *málrúnir* (hier Alphabetrunen tabellarisch mit Lautwert und Runennamen aufgeführt). Es folgt eine Aufstellung mit jeweils einem Lautwert und einer Umschreibung der Alphabetrunen pro Zeile, wobei vermutlich aus Versehen die Umschreibungen um eine Zeile verschoben wurden und diese somit den Lautwerten nicht mehr entsprechen.

ÍB 291 8vo^x (1851): Auf den ersten Seiten sind Listen von *Heiti* und *Kenningar* aufgezeichnet. Die Seite 61 bildet verschiedene Schriftreihen von *klapprúnir* (verschiedene Geheimrunen), runenähnlichen Zeichen und *villuletur* ab. Die Seite 67 enthält *Mál Rúna Mindir* ‚Formen der Sprachrunen‘, nämlich drei Zeichenvarianten samt Lautwert. In einem Text, der die Überschrift *Logmanna* (Gen. Pl. von ‚Rechtssprecher‘) trägt, sind auf Seite 105 fünf Zeilen mit Runen ohne Worttrenner aufgezeichnet, die allerdings keinen sinnvollen Text ergeben.

ÍB 321 8vo (19. Jh.): Pergamentheft. Hierbei handelt es sich um „wissenschaftliche“ Miscellanea, die Ausschnitte über Medizin, Steine, *málrúnir* und Zeitrechnung enthalten. Mit der Überschrift *Hier skrifast Mál Rúnamerkingar* ‚Hier sind die Bedeutungen der Sprachrunen geschrieben‘ kommt auf den Seiten 83–89 die jüngere Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes vor, die nur mit dem Lautwert am Anfang jedes Abschnittes beginnt.

ÍB 777 8vo^x (1855): Ab Seite 280 finden sich Tabellen mit den Lautwerten und 12 Zeichenvarianten in alphabetischer Reihenfolge; es folgen eine zweite und eine dritte Tabelle, die Worms *Danica Literatura* entnommen sind, und für eine vierte Tabelle ist lediglich die Überschrift vorbereitet worden. Eine Besonderheit dieser Handschrift besteht darin, dass hier einzelne Wörter bzw. Sätze in längeren Texten mit Runen aufgezeichnet sind, wie z. B. im Satz *Lækningar ions guðmundssonar lærþa eftir stafrófi* ‚Heilungen des Jón Guðmundsson, des Gelehrten, nach dem Alphabet‘.

ÍBR 35 4to^x (ca. 1840): Bereits auf der Titelseite sind Runen und runenähnliche Zeichen abgebildet. Auf den Seiten 349–354 sind auf zwei Spalten das altnorwegische Runengedicht, das der Ausgabe von Runólfur Jónsson entnommen ist, und die jüngere Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes eingetragen. Auf den Seiten 453–455 wird eine Tabelle mit den Lautwerten, den Namen und jeweils drei Umschreibungen wiedergegeben; obwohl der

Text der älteren Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes entspricht, sind die Runen hier alphabetisch aufgereiht (vgl. AM 749 4to, die als eine der Primärquellen dafür gilt). So wie in AM 749 4to sind auch für die Mittelalterrunen **cdegxæ** neugedichtete Zeilen hinzugefügt worden. Auf den Seiten 456f. folgen weitere Erklärungen der Runennamen und unmittelbar danach die jüngere Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes.

ÍBR 23 8vo^x (18.–19. Jh.; Abb. 4): Auf Seite 121 kommt eine Runentabelle vor, in der bis zu 26 Zeichenvarianten begegnen. Es folgen dann verschiedene Schriftreihen (bis S. 127). Die Seiten 129–134 enthalten *Nockrar Deilur*, nämlich die jüngere Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes; die Besonderheit dieser Fassung besteht darin, dass dem Runenzeichen die neuisländische Aussprache des Lautwertes assoziiert wird (z. B. **b** für *bie*, sonst *bé* geschrieben). Die Handschrift enthält zudem zwei angelsächsische Runenreihen, eine davon vollständig und in alphabetischer Reihenfolge und eine zweite nur aus 11 Zeichen und Lautwerten bestehend. Es folgen vier Binderunen für **au**, **ok**, **tr** und **ll** und zum Schluß zwei Beispiele dafür, wie man die Namen *Óðinn* und *Ólafur* mit einer scheinbaren ‚Binderune‘ (Monogramm) zusammenfasst. Auf den letzten zwei Seiten der Handschrift sind zwei Grabinschriften – mit Runen geschrieben – jeweils aus Húsafellsbær am Borgarfjord bzw. aus Norðtunga, welche die typische Formel der Runenleichensteine *Hér hvíler N.N.* ‚Hier ruht N.N.‘ aufweisen.

ÍBR 45 8vo^x (19. Jh.): Auf den Seiten 70–81 sind *Málrúner* aufgeführt, hier die jüngere Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes; dabei werden der Lautwert, der Runenname mit der lateinischen Übersetzung und zahlreiche Umschreibungen wiedergegeben.

9. Miscellanea

In der Gruppe „Miscellanea“ listete Heizmann lediglich zwei Handschriften auf, die Illustrationen enthalten, welche z. T. zusammen mit Runen aufgezeichnet sind. Davon gibt es in der späteren Überlieferung kein Zeugnis mehr. Hier füge ich deshalb neu Wörter bzw. ganze Sätze ein, die in lateinischem Schriftkontext mit Runen geschrieben sind.

Lbs 2565 8vo^x (1804): Nach Reihen mit Alphabetrunen und der Abschrift des jüngeren isländischen Runengedichtes (s. o.) kommt zum Schluß ein auf fünf Zeilen verteilter Text, der mit Runen aufgezeichnet ist. Dieser lautet folgendermaßen: **raasen . þrisuar . rigner ./ freir . særder . iardir ./ sinar . tveir . suidriks ./ ht/thulde . fūnden / gudmundur er þetta.** *Rásinn, þrisvar rignir, Freyr særdir jarðir sínar, tveir Svidriks ?uldi funden;*



Abb. 4. ÍBR 23 8vo^x, S. 148 f. Foto: Landsbókasafn Íslands.

Guðmundur er þetta. ‚Der Lauf, dreimal regnet es, Freyr beschwört seine Erde, zwei Svidriks(?) ??? gefunden; Guðmundur ist dieser.‘

Lbs 2580 8vo^x (18.–19. Jh.): Am Ende der Handschrift kommen Runen und weitere Schriften vor, u. a. *klapprúnir* und griechische Buchstaben. Zudem ist eine Runeninschrift aufgezeichnet, die lautet: **adaukaastmillumhionaoak annartminna**, *að auka ást millum hjóna ok annar[s] minna* etwa ‚Die Liebe zwischen Eheleuten zu vermehren und anders(?) zu gedenken‘.

JS 314 4to^x (1838–1850): Die Handschrift besteht aus 13 verschiedenen Heften, von denen die Teile 1, 2, 3 und 7 *Runica Manuscripta* enthalten. Im ersten Heft sind auf S. 71 Personennamen und weitere Substantive mit Runen und mit lateinischen Buchstaben aufgezeichnet (z. B. **svin** *Sven*). Die Seite 80 bildet einen Abschnitt der Rök-Inschrift ab. Das zweite Heft enthält zahlreiche Anmerkungen über die Runenschrift auf Schwedisch, Englisch und Deutsch, die u. a. Grimms Runenwerk *Ueber deutsche Runen*

(1821) entnommen sind. Das dritte Heft besteht aus losen Blättern, die einige Runeninschriften wiedergeben. Das siebte Heft beginnt mit der Überschrift *Nörre Jyllans Rune mindesmærker* aus dem Jahr 1843. Das Manuskript gibt eine durchaus unsystematische Übersicht über die Runenschrift, ist in verschiedenen Sprachen verfasst und beschränkt sich meist auf Anmerkungen zu Inschriften bzw. anderen Fachbüchern.

Zusammenfassung

Aus dieser Übersicht geht hervor, dass die jüngeren *Runica Manuscripta* nicht mehr das breite Spektrum der älteren Überlieferung abdecken. Die Hälfte der von Heizmann gebildeten Kategorien, nämlich Kürzel, Namen-Inschriften, Überschriften und Legenden der Illustrationen, ist nicht mehr vertreten. Hingegen haben die Zeugnisse einer theoretischen Beschäftigung mit der Runenschrift und die Sammlungen von Runenreihen, -namen, und -gedichten insgesamt zugenommen. Zauber und Magie drücken sich nun anderweitig aus, nämlich in Form von *galdrarúnir*, die zwar ursprünglich als Binderunen entstanden sein dürften, die sich aber im Laufe der Zeit immer stärker von der Runenschrift unterscheiden.

Von besonderem Interesse ist die Tatsache, dass sich erstaunlicherweise auch auf Island, wo die Runen lange Zeit verpönt waren, eine gewisse Runentradition lange und hartnäckig hielt. Fest steht jedoch, dass die jüngste Runenüberlieferung nicht eine unverfälschte, vom Buchwissen unberührte Tradition darstellt, sondern vielmehr eine sekundäre. Die Fülle der handschriftlichen Überlieferung entspricht nicht wirklich einer tiefen Kenntnis und genauso wenig einer aktiven Anwendung der Runenschrift. Selten sind in den Manuskripten deutbare Texte, die mit Runen geschrieben sind, belegt.

Die Runennamen des jüngeren *fupark* sind hingegen getreu überliefert, und für die Zusatzrunen sind neue Namen erfunden worden, die im großen und ganzen übereinstimmend tradiert werden (z. B. *cnésól* für **c**, *plástur* für **p** und *æsa/æsi* für die letzte Rune **æ**).

Die Runengedichte bzw. die Listen mit den poetischen Umschreibungen der isländischen Runennamen sind bei weitem am zahlreichsten. Das Dichten neuer Umschreibungen bleibt weiterhin produktiv. Heizmann (1998, 528) behauptet zu Recht, „die naheliegende Erklärung für diese reiche Überlieferung zu den Runennamen [ist] in dem Phänomen der Namen-Rätsel zu suchen“. Und in der Tat erscheinen die *málrúnir*, wie diese Umschreibungen auch genannt werden, in vielen Handschriften als Ergänzung zu den *Rímur*, eine Art Repertoire für die *Rímur*-Dichter, aus dem sie schöpfen konnten (zu den *Rímur* siehe Finnur Jónsson, 1913–1922 und Björn K. Þórólfsson 1934). Für

die jüngere Fassung des isländischen Runengedichtes gelten die Ergebnisse meiner bisherigen Forschungen, die ich mit dem Material aus Kopenhagen durchgeführt hatte, nämlich dass die Umschreibungen allgemein bekannt waren (und das bis ins 20. Jh.) und ohne Vorlage niedergeschrieben und weitertradiert werden konnten (Bauer 2003a).

Das „rege und ununterbrochene Interesse an den Runen“, das Heizmann (1998, 530) bis in die Neuzeit feststellte, wird hiermit bestätigt, muss jedoch vielleicht anhand meines hier vorgestellten Materials leicht differenziert werden. Auch wenn sich in dieser Zeit eine „wissenschaftliche“ und systematische Auseinandersetzung mit Runen entwickelt, wie Traktate über die Runenschrift belegen, gehört der Großteil der späten *Runica Manuscripta* zu einer eher von Laien getragenen Runentradition. Es handelt sich dabei um ein Sekundärprodukt, nicht nur bezüglich des Mediums—Pergament bzw. Papier anstatt Steine, Metall, Holz—, sondern auch was die Inhalte betrifft. Dabei scheint grundsätzlich der Bezug zur echten Runentradition verlorengegangen zu sein. Runen stellen vielmehr ein *Curiosum* dar, oder aber sie werden funktionell zur *Rímur*-Dichtung verwendet. Es lässt sich kaum eine Kontinuität zu den epigraphischen Runen feststellen, so dass man sich fragen kann, ob die Runenkunde auf Island in der Frühneuzeit lebendig gewesen ist.

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Lbs 290 4to ^x	Lbs 2413 8vo ^x	JS 377 8vo ^x
Lbs 445 4to ^x	Lbs 2480 8vo ^x	JS 390 8vo ^x
Lbs 590 4to ^x	Lbs 2516 8vo ^x	JS 392 8vo ^x
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“He Landed on the Island of the Goths”: Haunted by Phantom Inscriptions

Michael Lerche Nielsen

Some 20% of documented Scandinavian runestones are now considered to be lost. Several of these are known to have been reused as building material in bridges or churches, or simply as rubble. Others have been destroyed due to ignorance, negligence, misunderstanding and the like. Thus, many runic scholars have had to deal with information from lost inscriptions in their research. Some scholars, in fact, seem to find unverifiable inscriptions more suitable for elucidating their speculations than surviving runic texts, but that is another story.

In this paper I shall take a closer look at the unusually high number of lost runestones that were reported by antiquarians in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The list includes a variety of inscriptions ranging from stones that were reported only once before they disappeared to highly valued runic monuments which have vanished since they were investigated and debated by our predecessors 300–400 years ago. After working with several of these inscriptions, I have become convinced that quite a few of them represent interpretations of various kinds and have no real existence. In this paper I term such inscriptions “phantom”. It is my hope to persuade fellow scholars to look more closely into the find history of runic inscriptions in general. Although I shall be warning here against misleading information from phantom inscriptions which may accumulate in dictionaries and surveys of runic material, it must also be emphasised that several new discoveries await us in the archives. My aim though is principally to call for a more methodological, in essence text-philological, approach to lost inscriptions.

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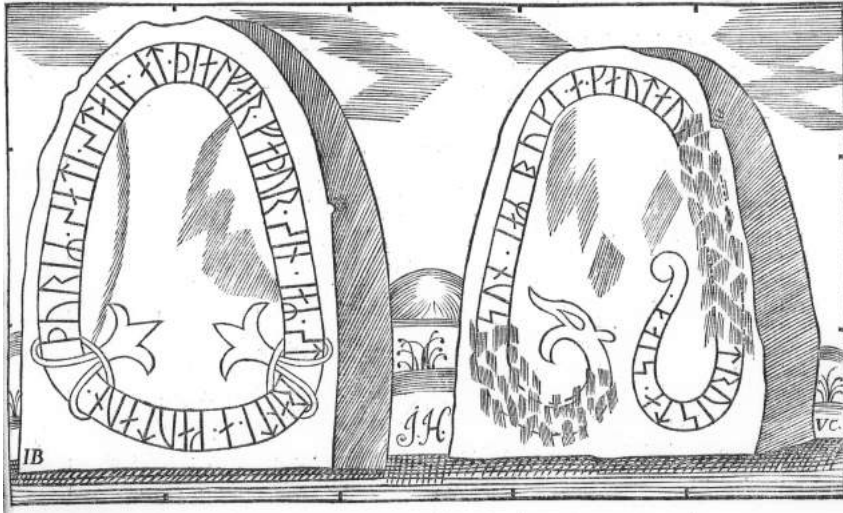


Fig. 1. Wood-block print of Ög 27–Ög 28† printed in *Bautil* (1750). The inscriptions mention Pjalfarr (Tjälvar) who discovered Gotland. Apparently both Johannes Bureus (“IB”) and Johan Hadorph (“J.H.”) approved the wood-block whereas “VC” is the name of the artist: Ulf Christoffersson.

The island of the Goths, Ög 27–Ög 28†

In the runic corpus editions one now and again comes across very unusual lost inscriptions which were recorded in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries. Several of these carry quite spectacular legends according to older interpretations. The quotation in the title of this paper comes from a remarkable pair from Öster Skam in Östergötland, Ög 27–Ög 28† (Fig. 1). According to Erik Brate (and *Samnordisk runtextdatabas*), these read:

Ög 27†

[**purir · sati · stain · at · pjalfar · faþur · sin · iar · stranti · a · kautaun ·**]
 ‘Þorir placed the stone in memory of Pjalfarr, his father, who landed in **kautaun**.’

Ög 28†

[**... sun · iar buki · a · kautaun ... truista · sina**]
 ‘... son, who lived in **kautaun** ... his/her husbandman.’

Both inscriptions are recorded only once, namely in Johan Hadorph’s (1630–1693) edition of the Gotlandic provincial law, *Gothlandz-laghen*

(1687, [3]f.). Apart from interpreting **truista** as “trognasta” (‘most faithful’), Hadorph’s translation is very close to that of *Östergötlands runinskrifter*: “Ture satte Steen åt Tialfe Fader sin, som strandade eller Strandstegh på Götha Öö” (Ög 27), and “Han bode eller bygde på Gautau med trognaste Hustru och Barn sina” (Ög 28).

In his *Företaal* ‘preface’ (p. [3]), where the Öster Skam stones are mentioned, Hadorph devotes much energy to documenting the presence of the personal name Pialfarr in runic inscriptions on the Swedish mainland. The reason for this is to prove the ancient connection between Gotland, Götaland and Svealand, which had been questioned by the Danish historian Hans Nielsen Strelow in 1633 in his book *Chronica Guthilandorum: Den Guthilandske Chronica*. Pialfarr of course is critical here as the key person in the mythological story of Gotland with which the so-called *Guta saga* commences (Mitchell 1993, 253). I will touch upon this dispute briefly below. A major proof of the connection Hadorph seeks to establish is of course the Öster Skam stones, which according to him were to be found in “Öster NyKyrkia Sochn och Öster Skams By” (now Skamby in Östra Ny socken). Unfortunately nobody has been able to find these two runestones since.

Hadorph states that his predecessor Johannes Bureus (1568–1652) possessed a drawing of the inscriptions. He furthermore claims that he inspected the pair of runestones on two occasions: “Deßa Stenars affskrift fins vthi Joh: Buræi Rune Rijtningar, för 60 Åhr sedan giorde, them iag sedan twenne Resor besicktigat och afrijta låtit”. Unfortunately no drawing of the inscriptions is preserved in Johannes Bureus’s runic manuscripts (*SRI*, 2:25, note 1) although an extensive investigation of his drawings has been carried out by Elisabeth Svärdström (1936). In fact, as far as we are aware today, Bureus knew only eight out of several hundred runic inscriptions from Östergötland.

We know from Hadorph’s biography that he made several expeditions to Östergötland in search for antiquities between 1671 and 1676 (Schück 1933, 211). The runic monuments were drawn by his assistants and wood-blocks were later produced for the intended edition of Swedish runic inscriptions which was later published by Göransson in *Bautil* from 1750.

Apart from a depiction of Ög 215 (*Bautil*, no. 1043), all the wood-block illustrations of inscriptions from Östergötland in *Bautil* are signed by either “IL” Johan Leitz (employed 1671–83), jointly by “IL” and “HE” Petrus Helgonius (employed 1683–85) or by “PT” Petrus Törnwall (retired in 1687). The information on the artists given here has been taken from Venneberg 1917, 15–30. In addition, Hadorph’s approval is indicated by the signature “IH”, “JH” or the like on each wood-block.

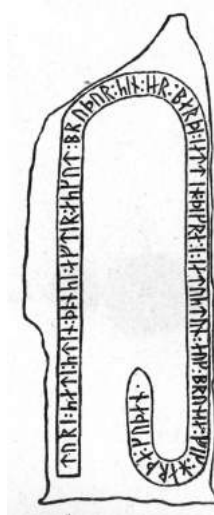


Fig. 2. Wood-block print of Ög 60† from “Järmsta” published by Olof Verelius in 1672. The inscription commemorates Asgautr who fought a huge giant.

The wood-block print of Ög 27–Ög 28†, Fig. 1, has been given a “seal of approval” by the appearance of the initials “IB” for Johannes Bureus and in the middle “J.H.” for Johan Hadorph. The signature to the right “VC” points to Ulf Christofferson, who was employed by the Antikvitetskollegium from 1687 until Hadorph died in 1693. The anachronistic juxtaposition of initials requires comment.

The surviving wood-block prints produced for Bureus are neither signed nor approved with a signature. Stylistically and artistically these wood-blocks are quite different from the depiction of Ög 27–Ög 28†, and it seems reasonable that the illustrations are in fact drawn by Ulf Christofferson.

On another occasion, in connection with the Vistena inscription, Ög 63, Hadorph points to Bureus (*Rannsakingar*, 2.1:296) but the wood-block print in *Bautil* (no. 876) is approved by “IH” and signed by “IL” (*SRI*, 2:62). No other illustration from Östergötland is ascribed to Bureus and his initials must have been added by Hadorph in order to assure the credibility of the Öster Skam stones.

Ulf Christoffersson travelled several times in search for antiquities in Småland and Öland “around 1690” (M. Nordström 2002, 231), and he has signed a lot of wood-block prints in *Bautil* from these provinces. Regarding Östergötland, Christoffersson’s drawing of Ög 11 could be compared with

Petrus Törnewall’s printed vis-à-vis in *Bautil* as no. 832 “På Kyrkogården” and no. 833 “J Kläckstapelen” respectively. Apart from *Bautil* no. 832 Christoffersson has only signed the Öster Skam drawing and *Bautil* no. 922 = Ög 183 from this province.

Although Brate does not accept Djalffarr in Ög 27–Ög 28† as the saga figure, he takes the inscriptions to be genuine. He does not, however, consider the possibility of a conflation with other inscriptions in Östergötland or elsewhere. For instance there are close resemblances with Ög 94 Harstad, and Ög 28† in my opinion might well reflect the text on Ög 26. Thus I consider the Öster Skam inscriptions most likely to be mediocre copies of some kind, probably shined up for the political purpose in Hadorph’s *Företaal*.

A lot of work still needs to be done in order to establish the genuineness or otherwise of the Öster Skam inscriptions. One may safely conclude, however, that the utmost caution is required in using word forms or lemmata from these inscriptions in dictionaries and the like. Nevertheless they have been cited on various occasions.

The slayer of a huge giant, Ög 60†

Another spectacular inscription is the runestone Ög 60† (Fig. 2), reported from a place called “Järmsta”, which is said to be situated in Dal härad, Östergötland. The inscription reads:

**[turi : sati : stin : þonsi : aftir : askut : brupur : sin : iar : barþi : iattin :
þikra : i : iatustun : auk : brunia : fik : harþa : kuþan .]**

‘Dyri placed this stone in memory of Asgautr, his brother, who lived(?) in Jatunstaðir(?) and Brunni, a very good valiant man(?)’

The translation (quoted from *Samnordisk runtextdatabas*) follows Erik Brate’s interpretation in *Östergötlands runinskrifter*. Ög 60† was first published in 1672 by Olof Verelius (1618–1682) in his extensive commentary on *Hervarar saga*. Verelius, however, interprets the inscription in a much more direct and yet striking manner (p. 192): *Thuro lapidem posuit Asguto fratri suo, qui caecidit magnum gigantem in Iatunstun, dedicavitque loricam Odino Deo* ‘Þori placed this stone in memory of his brother Asgautr who killed a huge giant in Jatunstaðir and dedicated the giant’s armour to the god Oðinn.’ The statement in *Östergötlands runinskrifter* that Verelius’s wood-block print of Ög 60† comes from Bureus cannot be confirmed. When Verelius mentions the Järmsta inscription in his *Manuductio compendiosa ad runographiam Scandicam* (1675, 16) it is only to point to his edition of *Hervarar saga*.

The linguistic unsoundness of the Järmsta inscription speaks for itself; in particular the use of **þ** for /d/ in **pikra** shows the typical fingerprint of the learned runologist. Again I think it is most probable that Järmsta results from a mix-up with other inscriptions, probably first and foremost Ög 132 Heda. The form **barþi**, then, is likely to be a misreading for **buki**, while Ög 132's **iatunstuþum** could have been read twice.

The son of Ingvarr víðfǫrli, Sö 295†

Phantom inscriptions are not of course restricted to Östergötland. Take for instance Sö 295† Skälby (now Lövstalund), Grödinge parish, Södermanland, which seems to refer to the famous Viking Ingvarr víðfǫrli:

[han ua iguars | sun]

'He was the son of Ingvarr.'

According to Elias Wessén (in *SRI*, 3:268f.) this inscription is mentioned by Johan Peringskiöld (1654–1720) in manuscript F h 31 in the Royal Library in Stockholm. The information comes from Richard Dybeck (1811–1877), but he only points to Peringskiöld's unspecified 'miscellanea manuscript' (1876, 40). I have no good explanation as to how this discrepancy has arisen. Thorgunn Snædal and I both inspected F h 31 several times in 2003 and 2004, but we have been unable to find any mention of Sö 295†. Perhaps the choice of manuscript number was a mere guess on Brate's part?

Probably Peringskiöld never inspected Sö 295†; nor did the inscription enter the Södermanland volume of his manuscript collection *Monumenta Svea-Gothorum*. It is therefore unwise to trust any historical or linguistic information which might be deduced from this inscription. I am also convinced that Sö 295† would have been omitted in any modern edition of runic inscriptions in Södermanland. Nevertheless all four lemmata from this inscription have entered dictionaries.

The island of the *Æsir*, U 649B†, and Atli from Atlantis, U 761†

We find the same type of material in Uppland. In *Upplands runinskrifter* (*SRI*, 8:104, see Fig. 3) Elias Wessén and Sven B. F. Jansson mention an inscription from Övergrans church which ends:

[...þr · buki · osaoiar · kuþ hulbi · ...]

'they lived in Asaøyiar ('the islands of the *Æsir*'). God help [their souls].'

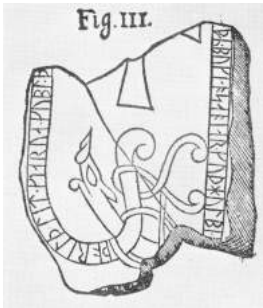


Fig. 3. U 649B† commemorates persons who settled the islands of Oðinn, Asaøyiar. Wood-block print from Olof Rudbeck’s renowned *Atlantica* ([1679]–1702).

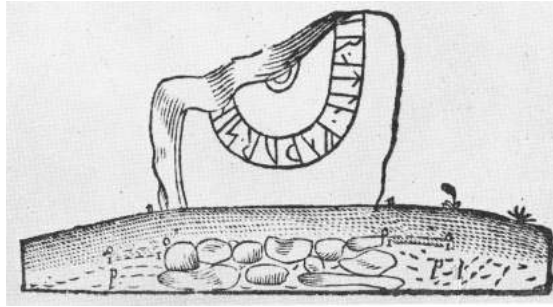


Fig. 4. Wood-block print of U 761† from Olof Rudbeck’s *Atlantica* ([1679]–1702). According to Rudbeck the find history of fragment confirms his hypothesis that the runestones were erected 400–500 years after the Flood. Similarly, Atli is the founder of Atland or Atlantica.

Although this inscription has not been allocated its own number in the corpus edition, it has nonetheless entered *Samnordisk runtextdatabas* as U 649B†.

U 761†—this time with a proper inscription number—is recorded from the neighbourhood of Enköping in Uppland. According to *SRI*, 8:319 (see Fig. 4) it reads:

[... .. ir · atln · faþur · sin ...]
 ‘in memory of Atli(?), his father’

The only person to record U 649B† and U 761† is the famous Olof Rudbeck Sr. (1630–1702).

Rudbeck published the two finds in his renowned four-volume *Atlantica* ([1679]–1702), where he goes to considerable lengths in his attempts to prove that descendants of the Biblical Japhet and his son Magog settled Sweden and invented the runes long before the Greek and Latin scripts were developed. This reflects the scholarly discussion that followed the publication of the famous historical works of Johannes Magnus (1488–1544) and Olaus Magnus (1490–1557): *Historia ... de omnibus Gothorum Sveonumque regibus* (1554) and *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (1555). Rudbeck, however, goes a bit further by locating Atlantis in Sweden, and his ideas, often termed Rudbeckianism, attracted several enthusiastic followers, including Johan Göransson (1712–1769), who published *Bautil* in 1750.

Other contemporary scholars held different opinions (Agrell 1955, 57), but for many years Rudbeck's excavations in Gamla Uppsala furnished the proof that an ancient temple devoted to Apollo = Baldr (Lindqvist 1930) was situated in the land of the Hyperboreans = Sweden (J. Nordström 1934).

The Atli stone serves a double purpose. Not only does it emphasise the *Atlantis* hypothesis, it is also used by Rudbeck in his dating of runestones to approximately 400 or 500 years after the Flood, based on observations of the geological layers in which the stone is said to be found. This in turn bolstered the long-standing belief that the sixteen-character *fupark* was primary, descending directly from Hebrew, and that the runestones were pre-Christian. Subsequent scholars—indeed until as late as 1800—considered the twenty-four-character *fupark* to be derived from the shorter sixteen-character version. It is troubling, though, that no other scholar has seen U 649B† or U 761†. We know that quite a number of antiquarians combed the neighbourhood of Enköping for runestones in the seventeenth century.

Again, although the publishers of *Upplands runinskrifter* are rather reluctant to accept these inscriptions, later scholars have tended to overlook their reservations.

Too good to be true, Sjörup 2

Sceptics will by now have noticed that all of the inscriptions dealt with so far have vanished over the course of time. Quite a few were reported only by a single scholar in the seventeenth or eighteenth century. The information regarding several of the find spots is inexact and it has proved impossible to locate them again in modern times.

In the light of this the corpus editions sometimes express doubt about the authenticity of the inscriptions, or at least the reliability of the readings that have come down to us. Unfortunately, however, not all readers of those editions seem to be aware of the problem. Non-runologists will often include not just uncertain but even dubious runic texts in their surveys. An example of this is the phantom Sjörup 2 inscription relegated to a footnote in *Danmarks runeindskrifter* and not given an independent inscription number (*DR, Text, 334*). The only mention of this inscription is in a manuscript written by Archbishop Jakob Benzelius (1683–1747) in the Engeström Collection in the Royal Library, Stockholm (MS Engeströmska samlingen, B VIII 2,22 — not B VIII 2,20 as stated in *Danmarks runeindskrifter*). Benzelius only quotes a translation of the inscription which he received from the antiquary Caspar Schönbeck (c. 1665–1731):

Thenna sten upreste jag för mina 2:ne Söner som blefvo slagne i Grickeland.
'I erected this stone in memory of my two sons who were killed in Greece.'

The very dubious Sjörup 2 inscription has been included in a survey of the Viking Age and medieval Ystad Region of southern Sweden (Skansjö, Riddersporre, and Reinsnert 1989, 82), and I am afraid it is likely to mislead others in the future.

Lost inscriptions now and then, Kälby

It is important to emphasise that there is a great difference between well-attested inscriptions which have been destroyed in recent times and inscriptions of which only 300–400-year-old transcripts survive. When dealing with seventeenth- and eighteenth-century recordings it is important to understand the working methods and working conditions of our predecessors. How did the surviving transcripts come about and what were the skills, and ambitions, of those making them?

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries runic inscriptions were harder to access than now and scholars often had to rely completely on the transcripts of fellow workers in the field. No Xerox machines existed, so everything had to be copied by hand. It is thus not surprising that errors occur both in the rendering of runic texts and the names of find spots. *Upplands runinskrifter* provides an example in the form of the Kälby inscription from Skånela, which owes its existence to a misunderstanding on the part of Bureus when he compiled a clean copy manuscript (MS F a 5 in the Royal Library, Stockholm) from his old notebooks (MS F a 6). By mistake, Bureus copied the parish name from the previous inscription, at the same time misreading Bälby as Kälby. Thus the “Kälby” inscription turns out to be identical with U 626 from Håbo-Tibble parish.

Even when it comes to well-attested runestones we have to consider the methods of the early runologists. With few exceptions seventeenth- and eighteenth-century scholars roamed far and wide in their attempts to decode runic texts. The ability to make a connection between runic legend and an event portrayed in saga literature or the like served to underline the learning of the scholar concerned. The result was a good number of fantastic interpretations which are now more or less forgotten thanks to subsequent investigations of the inscriptions. One of many examples that might be adduced is the extensive interpretation history of the Bällsta stones, U 225–U 226, recounted in *SRI*, vol. 6.

Forged runes

Yet another product of scholarly learning of those days is mostly forgotten by present-day runologists. There are several renowned cases of forged “historical” texts and charters from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Johan Peringskiöld, for instance, published *Hjálmars ok Hramers saga* in 1700–01 and included a facsimile of the alleged medieval runic vellum fragments upon which the edition was based. Most likely the “runic fragments” were produced by Lucas Halpap under the auspices of Peringskiöld’s brother-in-law Carl Lundius (1638–1715). Halpap had defended his thesis on the subject some years earlier, but it took quite a while before he produced the fragments (Busch 2002, 213).

It is worth mentioning in connection with *Hjálmars ok Hramers saga* that the types of runes adopted in the forged vellum manuscript are very similar to those which can be found in a genuine fourteenth-century runic manuscript with an Old Scanian translation of the Lament of Mary (*Lamentatio virginis Mariae*). The lament had been discovered by Peringskiöld in Vallentuna church north of Stockholm and it was later published as an Old Swedish text in 1721 by his son Johan Fredrik (1689–1725).

In the preface there is a direct reference to the fragment of *Hramers saga*. Since manuscripts with runes are very rare, I suspect there is a connection between the genuine and the forged text but more work needs to be done in order to demonstrate this. We also need to work out how the genuine runic manuscript came from Skåne to Uppland in the seventeenth century. War-booty is one possibility, but purchase from a book collection is another likely explanation.

The circumstances under which the discovery was made and later published no doubt reflect the scholarly rivalry between Sweden and Denmark. In 1638 the Danish scholar Ole Worm purchased the famous *Codex Runicus*, which is now kept in the Arnemagnæan Collection in Copenhagen (AM 28 8vo), and from his letters it is clear that runic manuscripts were well-known among scholars at the time.

There are other examples of runic forgeries such as the Gulland document, which was “discovered” by the Danish historian Niels Poulsen Pedersen (c. 1522–c. 1579) and proved the descent of the Danes (the Cimbrii and the Goths) from Noah. This hypothesis was published and much debated in the seventeenth century, but to my knowledge the matter has never been studied from a runological point of view.

Yet another interesting document, the partly runic Häggum charter from Västergötland, which among other things “confirms” the existence of the

renowned *ætternisstapi* (Swedish *ättestupa*), was discovered by the rector of the parish, Thure Ljunggren (1748–1825), in 1794. As demonstrated by Staffan Fridell in 1998, the fraud probably served to flatter the nobleman Pehr Tham (1737–1820), who claimed that the ancient town of Sigtuna was situated in Västergötland rather than Uppland. The most famous counterfeiter of the period—the Uppsala scholar Nils Rabenius (1648–1717)—was also associated with well-known contemporary runic scholars.

These forgeries in no way call into question the overall validity of the runology carried out in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but they show how closely genuine runic texts and the most celebrated runic scholars became associated with forgeries. Bearing this in mind, it is no surprise that early runologists were sometimes inclined to accept fragments of text of extremely doubtful provenance in what can hardly be other than an attempt to glorify themselves and emphasise the heroic past of their country or region. The work of these desk-runologists—to use a well-known term coined by Erik Moltke—had implications beyond the textual: when a drawing of an inscription was not available, the transliteration could be fitted into any shape suitable for a runestone. Probably this was often the result of a simple mistake, but it could also serve to make an inscription appear more trustworthy.

Types of misunderstanding: the case of NÄ 12

As already mentioned, most of the curious misconceptions of the early runologists are now forgotten, having been superseded by the better-founded interpretations of later scholars. In some cases, however, old misconceptions survive as footnotes in the corpus editions. Let me illustrate this with a couple of examples:

The runestone from Stora Mellösa, Närke, was first recorded by Olof Celsius Sr. (1670–1756) in the eighteenth century. In Celsius’s transcript the inscription ends with the pious formulation **guf allin** ‘God alone’, and his drawing which is signed by J. G. Hallmann (1701–1757, Fig. 5), shows complex ornamentation. No such runestone is known today, however, and it is now clear that what is depicted is the rather briefer and considerably plainer stone that still survives in Stora Mellösa, NÄ 12 (Fig. 6). Except for the ‘God alone’ sequence there can be no doubt that the two texts are identical.

When we compare Hallmann’s drawing with other runestones known from Närke, it is easy to see what happened. For some unknown reason Hallmann fitted the text of the Stora Mellösa inscription into the text band of a runestone from Väsby, NÄ 8 (Fig. 7). The mistake was recognised by

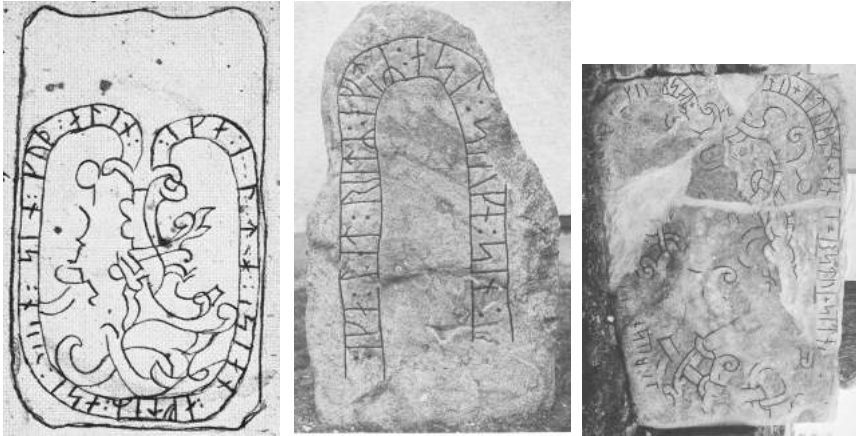


Fig. 5. J. G. Hallmann's drawing of Nä 12 from ca. 1750. By mistake Hallman has inserted the inscription on Nä 12 into the text band of his drawing of Nä 8.

Fig. 6. Stora Mellösa, Nä 12. Photo in *SRI*, vol. 14.1, reprinted by courtesy of Runverket, Swedish National Heritage Board.

Fig. 7. Väsby, Nä 8. Photo in *SRI*, vol. 14.1 reprinted by courtesy of Runverket, Swedish National Heritage Board.

Sven B. F. Jansson in *Närkes runinskrifter*, but the Celsius inscription might easily have continued to feature as independent carving. It could theoretically have been a lost runestone with a text almost identical to that of Nä 12 but carved by the same rune-carver as Nä 8.

There are several other examples where text has been added for reasons that can hardly be anything other than wishful thinking. On the seventeenth-century woodcut of Sö 224 Grödbby, Sorunda parish, Södermanland, one can clearly see the word **asfara** 'Asia-traveller'. This has been added in the middle of the description, seemingly for no other reason than to try to make the text more spectacular. The well-known Forsheda inscription from Småland, Sm 52, which mentions Lifsteinn 'who died in Gårdstånga in Skåne', is recorded twice by Johannes Bureus in the first half of the seventeenth century. In the shorter version, which was long conceived to be a separate inscription, the place-name **karp:stokum**, Gårdstånga, was misinterpreted as the statement **harpa + kup + opin**, *O durum deum Othinum*. For this reason Forsheda attracted a lot of interest from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century scholars. The shorter version is for instance discussed by Verelius in his comments on *Hervarar saga*, immediately following his presentation of the "Järmsta" inscription, Ög 60† (see above).

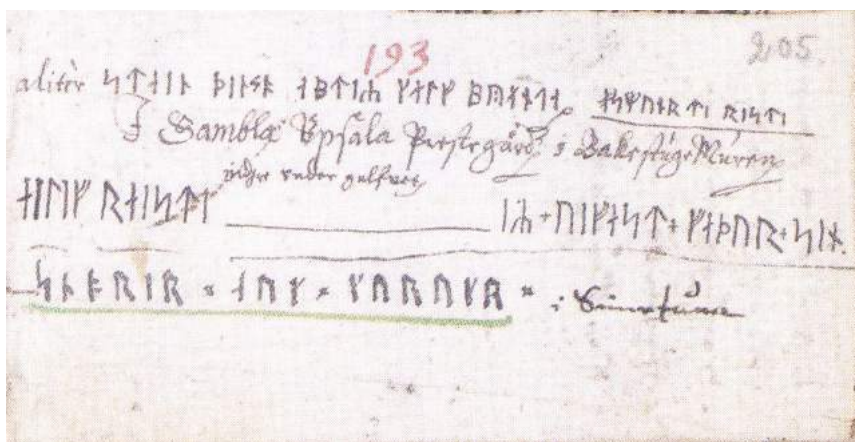


Fig. 8. U981† “aliter” recording in Bureus’s manuscript F a 6. Photo reprinted by courtesy of Kungliga Biblioteket, Handskriftsavdelningen.

Hidden in the baking oven, U981†

So far I have tried to point out some characteristic features of the working methods and working traditions of the early runologists. In the light of these observations it should not surprise us when today erroneous transcripts of one and the same inscription are sometimes incorrectly classified as separate texts. This has happened a number of times in our present corpus editions and further examples are likely to come to light in the future.

Some years ago, I was asked to review a *Festschrift* for Lena Peterson, *Runor och namn* (Uppsala 1999). An article in it by Henrik Williams dealing with stone-raisers’ names in two inscriptions from Gamla Uppsala, U980 and U981†, kept puzzling me. In the seventeenth century both inscriptions were reported to be in the vicarage next to the famous church, but today only fragments and a drawing of U980 by Johan Peringskiöld survive. Except for three accounts of U981† in Johannes Bureus’s manuscripts, the second inscription has vanished completely. The names of the stone-raisers appeared to be **ailifr** (U980) and **ailif** (U981†). In addition, the wording of the raiser formula on U981† is distinctly unusual. Furthermore, the idea of a brother and sister carrying a masculine and feminine variant of the same name seemed odd, indeed rather suspicious.

It was while observing the innocent word *aliter* in the illustration from Bureus’s manuscript F a 6 (Fig. 8) that I suddenly realised that U981† could be a conflation of U980 with another inscription. *Samnordisk runtextdatabas*



Fig. 9. : Wood-block print of U980(†) Gamla Uppsala printed in *Bautil* (1750). The fragments of the runestone were reassembled by Henrik Schütz (1647–93) probably in the 1680s or 1690s.

provided the answer immediately. The upper part of the transcription was probably an alternative reading of the last section of another inscription from Gamla Uppsala, U986† (Lerche Nielsen 2000).

Closer scrutiny revealed how this came about: at the beginning of the seventeenth century Johannes Bureus recorded a runestone that was built into the baking oven in the vicarage. The stone was subsequently broken into several pieces. In Bureus’s transcript of the inscription in his notebook F a 6, subsequently transferred to his clean copy F a 5, the incomplete transcription was for some reason mixed with U986†. When the stone was removed from the oven in the 1680s, the full text could finally be established (Fig. 9). Because of textual differences and the fact that Bureus did not give the exact find spot in his clean copy, the more complete reading was wrongly taken to be a completely new inscription. From this point on U981† took on an independent existence in the corpus editions.

I was puzzled by the fact that neither Elias Wessén nor Sven B. F. Jansson had investigated the similarity between the two inscriptions carefully when they published *SRI*, vol. 9. Instead, Wessén offers a learned digression on the family relationships and the apparent chronological gap between U980, which is attributed to the rune-carver Fotr, and U981† which is seemingly signed by Asmundr Karasunn, who also signed the neighbouring U986† (*SRI*, 9: 134). Thus U981† became accepted as a “lost inscription” and references to and phrases from it entered the works of later scholars—even

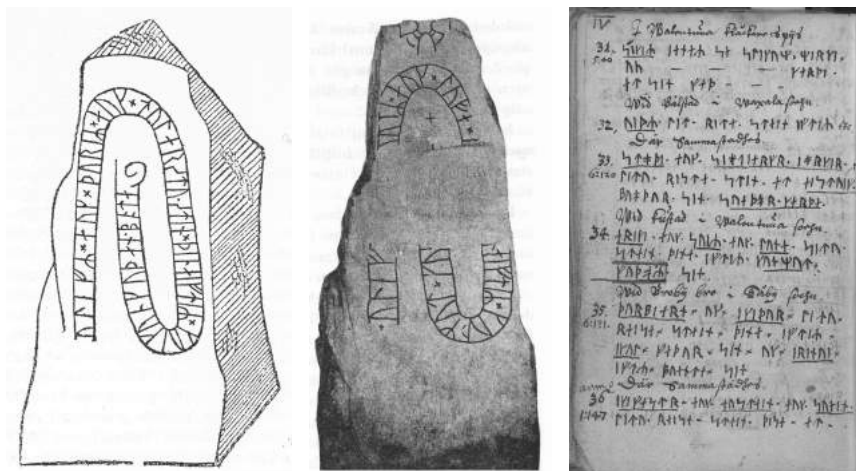


Fig. 10. Wood-block print of U 235† Kusta printed in *Bautil* (1750)

Fig. 11. Gravestone U 199 Vada. This reused runestone must be the “lost” Kusta stone. Photo in *SRI*, vol. 6, reprinted by courtesy of Runverket, Swedish National Heritage Board.

Fig. 12. Bureus’s MS F a 6 with U 234† Kusta, which is probably the same as U 235. Photo reprinted by courtesy of Kungliga Biblioteket, Handskriftsavdelningen.

Claiborne Thompson’s monograph on Asmundr Karasunn from 1975. In the future we must hope that U 981† will be recognised as the first recording of U 980 (Lerche Nielsen 2000).

Never forget the neighbouring church, U 234†–U 235†

In 1978 Evert Salberger was heavily criticised for his haphazard evaluation of a lost runic sequence **kuikun** on the Kusta stone, U 235† (Fig. 10). In his dissertation *Runsvenska namnstudier* Salberger interprets **kuikun** as *Kvīg-Unnr* ‘Bullock-Unnr’ (1978, 209), the sense of which could be explained as ‘Unnr, who owns/is fond of/is renowned for his cattle’. The author sees this as proof of bucolic naming practices among “stay-at-home” Vikings as opposed to those who went abroad pillaging.

Unfortunately, as Börje Westlund pointed out in his doctoral opposition, printed in *Namn och bygd* 1980, the editors of *Upplands runinskrifter* were not aware of the fact that U 235† had been transported a few miles from Kusta to the neighbouring parish church of Vada, where it had been re-used as a gravestone in 1849 (Fig. 11). A few decades later, when Richard Dybeck

rediscovered the stone, he identified it as bearing a hitherto unknown inscription. Subsequently the inscription received the number U 199 in *Upplands runinskrifter*.

The preserved part of the runestone clearly reveals that the personal name was not **kuikun** but **kupmut**, *Guðmund* (acc.). Dybeck's, Wessén's, Jansson's and Salberger's lack of thoroughness was later rectified when the Uppsala database was compiled. Discussions about bucolic naming practice among the *skrytbönder* 'boasting farmers' of the Mälars region also appear to have come to an abrupt end.

Westlund's work of demolition did not stop there. He went on to suggest that yet another lost Kusta inscription, U 234†, is probably nothing but a mediocre copy of U 235†/U 199 (Fig. 12). Sadly this observation only entered the Uppsala database as a footnote and thus various odd spellings and forms of personal names in U 234† have also entered dictionaries and hand-books.

In an article published in 2005 I have shown in greater detail than is possible here that it is much more likely U 234† is a copy of U 235†/U 199 than an independent inscription. The chief reasons for this conclusion are of course textual similarities but also the fact that Johan Axehiell (1608–1692) reported U 235†/U 199 "widh Kustad i Walentuna sochn" to Bureus, whereas Johannes Hadorph one generation later recorded the very similar inscription U 234† from exactly the same spot "Kusta Tompt" without noticing U 235†/U 199. In my opinion a switch of runestones like this is highly improbable.

I am convinced that there are similar cases of runic doublets still to be found in Uppland. I am currently working on an article dealing with U 816† and U 817† and more are in prospect. The impressive number of Upplandic inscriptions facilitates such mistakes but the merging of inscriptions can of course happen anywhere.

Conflated inscriptions from Östergötland

Far fewer runic inscriptions were recorded from Östergötland in the seventeenth century than from Södermanland and Uppland to the north. As already mentioned, Johannes Bureus knew but eight inscriptions from this province: Ög 17, Ög 39, Ög 63, Ög 136, Ög 207, Ög 226, Ög 227 and Ög 229 (Svärdström 1936, 58), whereas *Östergötlands runinskrifter* contains c. 250, not to mention more recent finds. The sparseness of early source material makes it much more difficult to demonstrate how mistakes came about. This is unfortunate, since a majority of the truly spectacular phantom inscriptions — some of which are cited at the beginning of this paper — come

from Östergötland. I can offer an illustration of the problem, although I must emphasise that the specific example I give requires further field and archive research.

Ög 195† is known only from a seventeenth-century wood-block print published in *Bautil* (Fig. 13). Göransson gives the heading “Söderby Bro” to this inscription, which is highly unusual in containing only two words **sunu sina** ‘his sons’. The grounds on which the publisher of *Östergötlands runinskrifter*, Erik Brate, identifies the provenance of the inscription as Hadelö in Mjölby parish, Vifolka härad, are, it must be said, uncertain. In the light of all this, it is worth comparing Ög 195† with other inscriptions from Östergötland containing the not very common acc. pl. *sunu sina*. One such is found in Styrstad, east of Norrköping, Ög 153. This unusual and very beautiful runestone was well known to seventeenth-century scholars. Another runestone containing the sequence **sunu sina** is Ög 157 Tingstad, Lösing härad (Fig. 14). When first recorded in the mid-nineteenth century this runestone was located in the south-east churchyard gateway. Its inscription reads:

--ti- + karþi × bru + þasi + a-tir + hemkil + auk + siba sunu × sina
 ‘--ti- made this bridge in memory of Hæmkell and Sibbi, his/her sons.’

One may wonder why this stone was not recorded by the seventeenth-century scholars who visited the church in search of antiquities. This goes particularly for Johan Hadorph, who approved the wood-block prints of runestones in Östergötland, among which is Ög 195†. According to Hadorph’s unpublished notebook (*Resanteckningar*, MS S 30 in Uppsala University Library) he personally investigated Tingstad church, but the only runestone he reports from there is Ög 156 (S 30, fol. 38), which at the time served as a threshold stone in the south doorway.

It seems unlikely to me that Hadorph could have missed a runestone lying in the churchyard. I therefore think it probable that Ög 157 was brought to Tingstad sometime in the eighteenth or nineteenth century, after Hadorph’s visit. Seventeenth-century investigators may well have inspected the runestone in its original setting, but that is a problem that still needs to be sorted out.

At any rate: because of the placement of **sunu × sina** in a separate text band in the middle of the Tingstad stone, I am inclined to think that Ög 195† may be an incomplete recording of the last part of this inscription. But if so, what happened to the rest of it? A database search for the diagnostic features of Tingstad shows similarities with another now-lost inscription recorded in *Bautil*, Ög 191†, from a place called “Nya Ree”. In *Östergötlands*

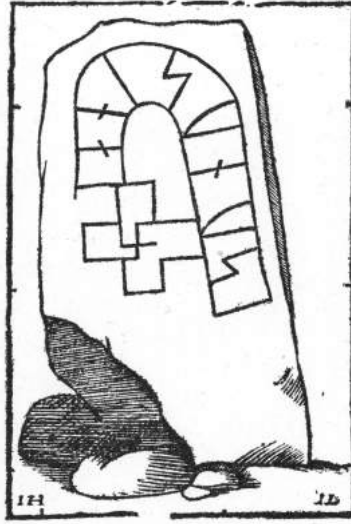


Fig. 13. Wood-block print of Ög 195† Hadelö printed in *Bautil* (1750). The expression **sunu sina** is perhaps a copy of the inscription Ög 157.

runinskrifter Erik Brate identifies this place-name as Nybble in Vikingstad parish, Valkebo härad, and reads the inscription as follows (Fig. 15):

[...:hir : risþi : stān : pasi : uftir : krimu : faþur : si...]
 ‘...-geirr (?) raised this stone in memory of Grimi/Grimulfr, his father.’

As readily seen, the texts of Ög 157 and Ög 191† are not very similar. In my opinion the textual differences may well be attributed to attempts by seventeenth-century scholars to identify well-known elements in the raiser formula in the same way as I have sought to show earlier. Since I have still not been able to check the Tingstad inscription myself, however, this hypothesis remains no more than an educated guess.

I also find it rather suspicious that *Östergötlands runinskrifter* includes two lost runestones from Tingstad, Ög 158† and Ög 159†. The two are mentioned only in the work of one nineteenth-century scholar, P. A. Säve (1811–1887), who had not himself personally inspected them, nor does he render their texts. In my opinion Ög 158† is most probably the same inscription as Ög 156†, whereas Ög 159† has probably been confused with Ög 157. At least, I find it implausible that so many runestones were visible in Säve’s time, when Johan Hadorph only reported Ög 156 from his visit to Tingstad in the late seventeenth century.

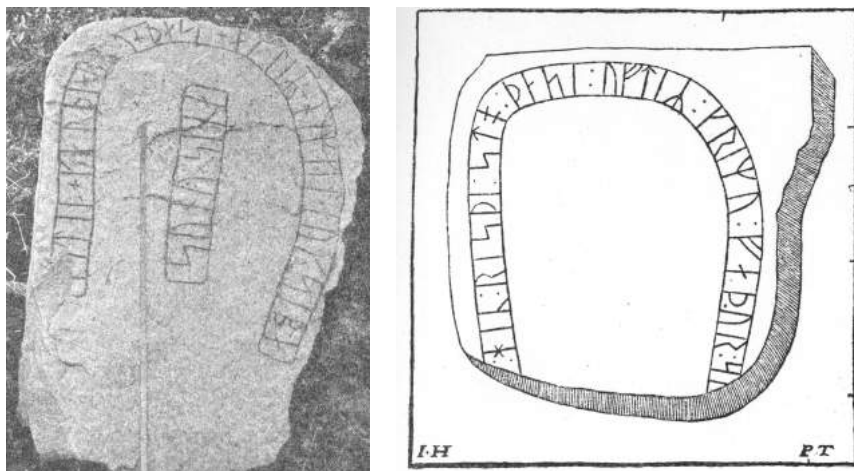


Fig. 14. Ög 157 Tingstad. Photo in *SRI*, vol. 2, reprinted by courtesy of Runverket, Swedish National Heritage Board.

Fig. 15. Wood-block print of Ög 191† Nybble printed in *Bautil* (1750). If Ög 195† shows the last part of the Tingstad inscription, Ög 191† may well be a mediocre recording of the remaining text on Ög 157.

I would thus suggest that the six inscriptions Ög 159†, Ög 191†, Ög 159† and Ög 157 plus Ög 158† and Ög 156 could probably be reduced to a mere two. Naturally this affects the distribution map for this particular area. It further affects the proportion of inscriptions considered to be lost. Such reevaluation may be thought both useful and necessary.

Sweden vs. Denmark

In this survey I have shown that there are a number of potential phantom inscriptions from Sweden. There are several reasons for their occurrence. The impressive number of Swedish runestones is itself a probable cause; with so many to keep track of, mix-ups could easily occur. Another reason is the scholarly climate of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, characterised as it was by rivalry between Sweden and Denmark concerning the true homeland of the Goths, the age of the runes, etc. A third cause is the publication history. In Sweden the first printed collection of runestones from the whole country was Göransson’s *Bautil* published in 1750. Denmark (including Skåne, Halland and Blekinge) and Norway got their first runic

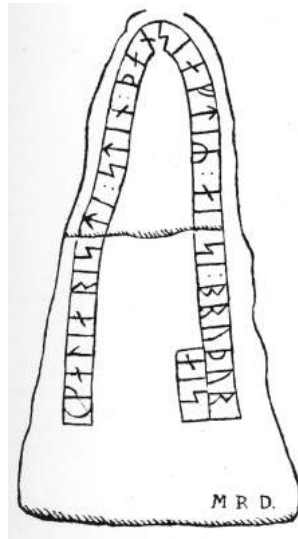


Fig. 16. The Skåne stone, DR 351†, drawn by Magnus Dublar Rönnou in 1716. The runestone shares several features with the Skivarp stone, DR 270. The illustration is copied from *Danmarks runeindskrifter*.

corpus edition in 1643 in Ole Worm's (1588–1654) *Danicorum monumentum libri sex*. This work formed a solid foundation for several generations of runologists. Worm was assisted by only a few informants, and his artist Jon Skonvig (†1664) reproduced most of the inscriptions during field trips sponsored by Worm. The total number of inscriptions Worm was dealing with was much smaller than that in Sweden so it was easier to avoid mixing up new discoveries with reports of older finds.

With such a solid starting point only a few suspect inscriptions from older scholarship have entered *Danmarks runeindskrifter*. One of the inscriptions from Århus in Worm's edition (DR 64†) was long regarded as independent until Moltke pointed out similarities between DR 64† and DR 63 in his dissertation (Moltke 1956–58, 2: 184 f.). When Worm reported DR 63 in his *Additamenta* from ca. 1651 he was not aware of the similarities with another Århus inscription published 1643 based on second-hand information *in chartis quibusdam*.

Furthermore I expect the apparently lost Tvorup (formerly spelled Torup) inscription, DR 154†, to be another Danish phantom. It is likely to be identical with the neighbouring Sjørring (formerly spelled Sjørind) inscription, DR 155. To be sure, Tvorup is much longer than Sjørring but there

are parallels to this, as shown above. In a series of articles from the first half of the twentieth century the philologist Frederik Orluf presented weighty arguments in favour of the two inscriptions being one and the same. These were rejected rather brusquely by Moltke in 1956–58, who however failed to take all of Orluf’s observations into account (Orluf 1911, 60; 1926; 1938). In my opinion we need to take a closer look at DR 154†.

A third rather dubious inscription in DR is the Skåne runestone (DR 351†; Fig. 16), which reads:

[kalia : risti : stin : þansi aftir : aisi : brupur | sia]
 ‘Galinn raised this stone in memory of Æsir, his brother.’

This inscription has several features in common with DR 270 as pointed out by Jacobsen and Moltke in *Danmarks runenindskrifter*, the form **risti** instead of the expected **risþi** could indicate a careless reading by a scholar familiar with inscriptions from central Sweden, and the personal names are a bit spurious too.

The Norwegian material I have yet to examine, but I have certainly noticed some suspicious lost inscriptions here and there.

Conclusion

The outcome of this survey is that we must be aware of possible double recordings in our corpus editions. We must also be very cautious when dealing with readings of lost inscriptions, even when we find items from them listed in dictionaries and handbooks.

Modern runologists have perhaps sometimes too willingly accepted that runestones recorded 300–400 years ago have vanished without trace. As a result, scholars have tended to adopt a rather naive attitude towards lost inscriptions from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the evaluation of specific readings from such inscriptions. Evert Salberger in particular has been criticised in this connection, but I am afraid that few of us can escape blame. As soon as an inscription has entered the corpus, we are inclined to accept it at face value.

More problematic, however, is the fact that lemmata from phantom inscriptions are included in databases and dictionaries, which take their information from corpus editions. Generally these entries are marked as lost, with brackets or the like, but nevertheless the reconstructed forms in for instance Lena Peterson’s *Svenskt runordsregister* (1989, 2nd ed. 1994) and *Nordiskt runnamnslexikon* (2007) occur side by side with verifiable forms from extant inscriptions. There is no attempt to grade the reliability of

individual lost inscriptions and consequently a number of unlikely-looking forms and a good few *hapax legomena* have entered the dictionaries.

Michael Barnes has on several occasions asked for more terminological exactitude in runology (e.g. Barnes 1994), and no doubt runologists have a lot to learn from the linguists in this respect. Runologists are stubborn creatures, however, which may explain why the spelling checker in my word-processing programme keeps suggesting the substitution of “rhinologists”. However this may be, I should like here to advocate greater strictness in dealing with “lost” inscriptions.

The method I have applied in this paper is not at all sophisticated. To me the acceptance of a lost inscription demands a thorough investigation of its history and circumstances. Here I deeply admire Ray Page, who combines text philology with runic studies. Naturally, comparing the surviving transcripts of an inscription and evaluating possible textual errors is the best way of establishing a reliable text.

In my view runology has to be more aware of the methodology of text philology, at least when scholars wish to draw on evidence from lost inscriptions. Above all, we must be aware that there is plenty yet to be found in archives: not only phantoms but also hitherto unrecorded inscriptions. One great step to facilitate such work would be internet access to the manuscript evidence.

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Reviews

Lydia Klos. *Runensteine in Schweden: Studien zu Aufstellungsort und Funktion*. Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde 64. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009. xvi + 434 pp. + 19 maps. ISBN 978-3-11-021464-2. € 129.95, \$ 182.

Reviewed by Mats G. Larsson

Huvudfrågan för Lydia Klos doktorsavhandling är på vilka platser i landskapet de svenska runstenarna ursprungligen har varit resta, en fråga som enligt henne beaktats alltför lite i tidigare forskning. Medan tolkningen av själva inskrifterna, stenarnas visuella gestaltning och deras kulturhistoriska sammanhang har gjorts till föremål för flera olika studier har hittills ingen separat undersökning ägnats åt deras rumsliga sammanhang, påpekar hon.

Det är ett stort och ambitiöst arbete Klos lagt ned på sin avhandling, och det har resulterat i en betydande textmassa. Endast en knapp tredjedel av texten ägnas dock åt undersökningen av runstenarnas fysiska placering. En ungefär lika stor del innehåller detaljerade språkliga genomgångar av ord i inskrifterna som kan ge upplysningar om stenarna och deras ursprungliga placering. Den resterande delen innehåller resonemang kring gravfälten, kristnandet och runstenarnas roll som minnesmärken.

Klos börjar med en relativt fyllig inledning till ämnet, som också innehåller en forskningshistorik med särskild inriktning på vad tidigare forskare kommit fram till vad gäller runstenarnas placering. Tyvärr har hon där i sin iver att visa hur lite som blivit gjort på området också förbigått och dessutom missuppfattat undersökningar som faktiskt blivit gjorda. Den genomgång av ca 300 runstenars placering som redan år 1990 publicerades inledningsvis i min *Runstenar och utlandsfärder* nämns således aldrig direkt fastän hon citerar ur boken på andra ställen i sin avhandling. I stället ges en fullkomligt felaktig uppgift där Klos påstår att jag kommit fram till att omkring 90% av runstenarna har rumslig förbindelse med gravar men att jag i första hand tolkar stenarna som gränsmarkeringar. I själva verket redovisar jag att av de runstenar som inte hittats i eller intill kyrkor har 30% anknytning till gravar och 26% till väg med eller utan anslutning till bro/vad, medan 26% kan knytas till trolig ägogräns. Det hela blir inte bättre av att Klos i sammanhanget refererar till en betydligt senare artikel av mig som inte alls innehåller någon sammanställning över runstensplaceringar. Även Torun Zachrissons betoning av runstenar som gränsmarkeringar i *Gård, gräns, gravfält* (1998) ges en alltför generell innebörd – läsaren får av Klos formulering intrycket att Zachrisson ser alla runstenar som gränsmarkeringar fastän hon aldrig har påstått detta.

Klos börjar sin undersökning med en noggrann och kritisk utsortering av de runstenar som kan antas stå på ursprunglig plats, 730 stenar, vilket givetvis är en utmärkt grund för det fortsatta arbetet. Det är dock svårbegripligt varför hon inte redan från början för bort de runristade föremål som inte är att betrakta som runstenar utan låter dessa komma tillbaka i statistiken långt fram i texten. Bland annat finns de med i sammanställningen över andelen stenar på ursprunglig plats i olika landskap, vilket ger en missvisande bild av förhållandena som dessutom används i den tillhörande analysen i texten.

I sin genomgång av runstenarnas placering använder sig Klos av metoden att undersöka på vilket avstånd från närmaste väg, bro, vatten, grav/gravfält, boplats etc. stenarna är resta. De avstånd hon därvid använder sig av är upp till 25, 50, 100, 500 resp. 1000 meter oavsett vilken företeelse det handlar om. Denna metod är i högsta grad diskutabel och verkar alltför schablonmässig. För att en runsten skall anses stå vid en väg borde betydligt kortare avstånd än 25 meter gälla, medan större avstånd kan vara relevanta för gravfält, bland annat med tanke på bortodling. Vad gäller de allra största avståndsgränserna kan man undra varför de överhuvudtaget är medtagna. Vad man får fram med dem är nog i första hand kontakt med bebyggda trakter, där vi redan vet att den absoluta merparten av runstenarna blev resta. Överhuvudtaget saknar man i Klos ganska mekaniska analyser just resonemang om sambandet mellan runstenarna och den forntida bebyggelsen, en fråga som haft en framträdande plats inom såväl bebyggelsearkeologin som runstensforskningen under de senaste decennierna.

Resultatet av undersökningen är att den allra största delen av runstenarna finns i anslutning till gravar. I det kortaste avståndsintervallet har 33% av runstenarna denna placering, det vill säga ungefär samma resultat som i min ovan refererade undersökning. Därefter kommer 22% med anknytning till andra runstenar och stenmonument, en grupp som mig veterligen inte tidigare behandlats och som det är mycket bra att Klos tar upp. Därefter kommer bäck, väg och bro i nämnd ordning med sammanlagt 23% av stenarna (förutsatt att det inte föreligger överlappningar mellan grupperna, vilket inte klart framgår av texten), det vill säga också här i samma storleksordning som i ovannämnda undersökning. Klos har dock använt betydligt mer restriktiva kriterier när det gäller vad som kan bedömas som forntida vägar.

När det gäller samband med gränser kommer Klos däremot till ett helt annorlunda resultat än exempelvis jag och Zachrisson. Endast 5% av runstenarna i 25-metersgruppen har enligt hennes resultat samband med sådana. Förklaringen är att hon i sina slutsatser kategoriskt bortsorterat alla anknytningar till ägogränser mellan byar och bara tagit hänsyn till socken-/häradsgränser och gränsrösen. Som skäl anför hon att i likhet med moderna vägar skulle moderna ägogränser omöjligt kunna överföras till vikingatida förhållanden eftersom befolkningstätheten på den tiden var betydligt mindre. För runstensresorna var dagens ägogränser därför inte relevanta, framhåller hon.

På bara några få rader avfärdar Klos således den bebyggelsehistoriska forskning som har en så lång tradition i Sverige. Kontinuiteten mellan sentida bygränser och

dem som finns belagda på jordebokskartorna från början av 1600-talet diskuteras överhuvudtaget inte i sammanhanget, och inte heller samma byars förekomst i 1500-talets jordeböcker, i medeltida källor och i runinskrifterna, där de ibland sägs ha gått i arv.

Klos har rätt i att vi inte säkert vet var vikingatidens ägo gränser gick. De forskare som har framhållit dessas betydelse för runstensresandet menar givetvis inte heller att stenarna ifråga stått vid en gräns som dragits i exakta linjer genom landskapet. Snarare har de i många fall fungerat som revirmarkeringar, ibland vid en skogsväg som leder till byn, ibland där byns odlade mark begynner. I många fall kan de just därför under senare tider ha uppfattats och utnyttjats som direkta gränstenar, vilket inte skulle ha blivit fallet om de inte stått just i egendomens utkanter.

I själva verket är Klos undersökning en tydlig bekräftelse på att det är så det har varit, för i den tabell över runstenar och gränser som hon presenterar har hon lyckligtvis redovisat även ägo gränser, även om hon inte tagit med dem i slutsumman. De runstenar som är resta på mindre än 25 meters avstånd från sådana gränser uppgår till hela 48% av materialet, högst bland alla de behandlade företeelserna och större andel än i någon annan undersökning. Vilka ägo gränser som mer exakt avses i begreppet *Grundstücksgrenze* framgår visserligen inte klart — möjligen ingår även sentida skiften av äldre byar, vilket skulle kunna förklara att andelen blivit så extremt hög — men under alla omständigheter borde siffran ha stämt Klos till eftertanke.

Klos går också igenom förhållandet mellan runstenar och vatten, där förutom bäckar även åar, sjöar, kärr och havet ingår. Här blir resultatet en mycket liten andel. Den grundläggande bristen i denna genomgång är att hon — som hon också själv framhåller — inte annat än i undantagsfall har beaktat den senvikingatida havsnivån, vilket bland annat lett till att hon betraktar vikingatidens Mälaren som en insjö i stället för en havsvik. Höjddinjen ifråga, omkring 5 meter över havet i Mälardalen, går ju faktiskt lätt att få fram med hjälp av den topografiska kartan, och hon skulle med användning av den ha kunnat få reda på om vissa runstenar som nu är belägna långt från vattnet i själva verket haft direkt anknytning till vikar, farleder eller sankna områden där det varit motiverat med en bro eller vägbank.

I genomgången av runtexter som kan ge upplysningar om stenarnas placering tar Klos upp ord som *bro*, *väg*, *berg* m.fl., och vad gäller stenarna själva *häll*, *märke* etc. Dessa huvudsakligen språkliga avsnitt ska jag som arkeolog inte gå närmare in på, men mot bakgrund av avhandlingens syfte ställer jag mig ändå frågande till varför de fått en sådan omfattning. I vissa fall gör Klos visserligen särskilt intressanta analyser, såsom vad gäller det svårtolkade *kumbl*, men för det mesta finns ju redan fullgoda översättningar av begreppen i *Sveriges runinskrifter* och framförallt i den särskilda förteckning över svenska runord med översättningar som publicerats och uppdaterats flera gånger av Lena Peterson. Denna förteckning har Klos vad jag kan förstå använt för att hitta de aktuella inskrifterna, men när det gäller översättningarna av orden saknar man den som regel i framställningen trots att Klos i de flesta fall kommer till samma resultat som Peterson.

Mer intressanta är då de jämförelser Klos gör mellan inskrifternas uppgifter och

den placering runstenarna faktiskt har. Hon visar där att stenarna i de flesta fall bedömts stå i enlighet med vad som sägs i texten, men att det också finns ett stort antal fall där de inte gör det. Ett antal stickprov visar dock att hon här liksom tidigare i avhandlingen har varit alldeles för kritisk till materialet och avfärdat placeringar som definitivt borde ha varit förda till någon av de grupper som behandlas.

Runblocket U 101 Södra Sättra, som nämner både väg och bro, uppges således av Klos inte ha någon förbindelse med någondera fastän det enligt *Sveriges runinskrifter* är beläget vid en stig genom skogen mellan Täby och Edsviken med spår efter en väg och utmed vilken det fanns sankmarker där kavelbroar varit nödvändiga. Liknande invändningar gäller U 323 Sälna med likartade textuppgifter. Den uppges av Klos ha trolig förbindelse med bro men sakna ursprunglig anknytning till väg, fastän den enligt de äldsta källorna stått vid Sälna stenbro längs vägen mellan Skånela och Vallentuna. Lika märkliga slutsatser dras för U 729 Ågersta, som enligt texten stått ”mellan byar” men som enligt Klos inte kan föras till någon i dag känd gräns, fastän det tydligt framgår av *Sveriges runinskrifter* att gränsen mellan Ågersta och Hummelsta gått just här före laga skiftet. Slutligen kan nämnas U 130 Nora, som är ristad på en häll vid byn men för vars placering Klos inte kan finna något samband med vare sig *byr* eller *oðal* i inskriftens *ER þessi byr þæira oðal ...*

I sina sammanfattningar och slutsatser betonar Klos i stort sett endast knytningen mellan runstenar och gravfält. Hon gör därför en längre genomgång av bakgrunden till och betydelsen av gravar och gravfält under förkristen tid, följd av tankar kring kristnandet och runstenarnas roll i denna process. Resonemangen innehåller flera intressanta infallsvinklar, och tanken att runstenarna är en sorts kristen ersättning för de äldre monumenten och därmed fungerat som ”broar mellan det förgångna och framtiden” är tilltalande.

I detta sammanhang kommer Klos lite överraskande också tillbaka till gränsfrågan, på så sätt att hon ser själva gravfälten som ett slags gränsmonument, och eftersom runstenarna är knutna till dessa blir då även dessa en markering av skiljet mellan in- och utmark men också en symbolisk dörr mellan de levande och de döda, menar hon. Hon utgår då från vissa forskares påståenden om att gravfälten mestadels låg omkring 500 meter från boplatserna; en uppgift som dock knappast överensstämmer med förhållandena i de trakter där de flesta av de undersökta runstenarna är resta. Gravfält i gränslägen förekommer visserligen där, men får snarare betraktas som undantag än som regel.

Sammanfattningsvis anser jag att avhandlingen skulle ha vunnit mycket på en större koncentration på huvudfrågan, runstenarnas placering i landskapet. Klos skulle då inte ha behövt greppa över så mycket utan bättre ha kunnat sätta sig in i den tidigare forskningen på området och framför allt kunnat få en större bebyggelsehistorisk insikt. Som det nu blivit har runstensplaceringar vid gravfält blivit starkt överbetonade på övriga lägens bekostnad, vilket lett till att stenarnas samband med de forntida ägoenheter som sådana kommit i skymundan.

Avhandlingen har bra register, vilket gör det lätt att hitta runstenar som omtalas i texten. Som supplement finns även välritade kartor över runstenarna i de olika landskapen som dessutom (med undantag för det runstenstäta Uppland) är försedda

med nummer och därmed kommer att vara mycket användbara för forskare. Någon katalog över de undersökta stenarna finns däremot inte, vilket är förstäligt med tanke på det utrymme en sådan skulle ha upptagit. Däremot skulle det ha varit en fördel med förteckningar över de runstenar som tillhör en viss placeringskategori, så att läsaren bättre kunnat avgöra hur Klos har gjort sina bedömningar.

Andreas Nievergelt. *Althochdeutsch in Runenschrift: Geheimschriftliche volkssprachige Griffelglossen. Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur*, Beihefte 11. Stuttgart: S. Hirzel Verlag, 2009. 214 pp. ISBN 978-3-7776-1671-1. €37.00, sFr. 62.90.

Reviewed by Svante Fischer

Det är mycket glädjande att se att de betydande ansträngningar som gjorts inom nyare schweizisk runologi genom det nationella forskningsprojektet *Medienwandel—Medienwechsel—Medienwissen. Historische Perspektiven* vid universitetet i Zürich redan gett fruktbara resultat. Man har medvetet tagit sig an ett stort och svårbemästrat skriftmaterial som härstammar från en materiell kultur som i huvudsak kommer språkvetenskapen tillgodo genom sakkunniga och lyckosamma arkeologiska utgrävningar och tålmodig paleografisk forskning i handskriftssamlingar. Ändå har man redan kunnat publicera denna studie av krypterade griffelinskrifter från karolingertid, liksom Martin Hannes Grafs studie av de mer intrikata runinskrifterna på deponerade statusföremål från den merovingertida radgravskulturen, såsom den tauscherade binderunan på svärdsklungan i Schretzheim grav 59 (se Marco Bianchis recension i denna årgång).

Andreas Nievergelts nya bok är en utmanande och koncentrationskrävande läsning som ställer mycken inlärd runologisk förförståelse liksom föregivna förkunskaper på huvudet. Den tudelade titeln till detta verk kan dock lätt missförstås vid en första anblick. Vad författaren framförallt avser med huvudtiteln *Althochdeutsch in Runenschrift* är i själva verket en krypterad skrift för latinska minuskler, först känt från kontinental skriptorier från 800-talet, även om det sannolikt finns en äldre senantik eller möjligen tidigkristen förlaga. Det handlar om knappt synliga ristarspår mellan de mödosamt präntade textraderna i karolingertida manuskript.

Krypteringschiffret det rör sig om i de chifferade griffelinskrifterna är i 90% av fallen det så kallade *Notae Bonifatiae*, eller *bfk*-chiffret. Det är ett mycket enkelt förskjutningschiffer, känt från klosterskriptorier sedan 800-talet. Krypteringen består i det att man ersätter de fem latinska vokalerna *a, e, i, o, u* med påföljande konsonanter i det latinska alfabetet: *b, f, k, p, x*. Här kan man påpeka att de fem grafer som denoterat fem vokaler sannolikt först lärts in utantill med allitererande minnesramsor. Noviserna i skriptorierna lär inte ha saknat humor och någon form av ordlek på latin med motsvarande fornhögtysk översättning låg säkert till grund för chiffrets minnesramsa. Senare under 1000-talet i klostret Tiefernsee infördes också

ett sekundärt *cgl*-chiffer, där man sonika tog den andra påföljande konsonanten i bruk. Nievergelt redogör föredömligt inledningsvis för den oinvidige hur kryptot fungerar. Därefter har den uppmärksamma läsaren inga större problem att förstå krypterade textstycken senare i boken.

Man måste också förklara den andra delen i bokens titel—*Geheimschriftliche Griffelglossen*—som syftar på skrifttypen det rör sig om, nämligen griffelinskrifter i form av glosor. Nievergelts arbete kan därför ses som en logisk fortsättning av projektledaren Elvira Glasers habilitationsskrift från Göttingen 1996 om griffelglosor som skriftfenomen. Som Nievergelt påpekar fanns det en rad olika sorters griffilar att tillgå i skriptoriet, och ju hårdare griffelmaterialet var desto djupare märken blev det i pergamentet. Ju mjukare griffeln är desto mer färgpigment släpper den ifrån sig. Detta har naturligtvis konsekvenser för bevaringsförhållanden. Till sist måste man kommentera termen *volkssprachig*. En betydande del av griffelinskrifterna är översättningar och kommentarer från latin till fornhögtyska

Hur mycket marginalia av det här slaget kan det tänkas existera? Nievergelt har sammanställt en viktig korpus av texter men av förståeliga skäl måst begränsa sig till ett fåtal handskrifter. Läsaren inser dock att det har funnits en subkulturell litterat mobil grupp som utan vidare kan ha spritt denna kunskap vida på kontinenten. Vad finns t.ex. i Leiden? Och vad finns i de svenska krigsbytena i Uppsala universitetsbibliotek och Kungliga Biblioteket från den epok då svenskar hämningslöst stal dyra böcker ur kontinentens förnämsta boksamlingar? En systematisk internationell studie av griffelinskrifter vore en intressant aspekt på en eventuell framtida repatriering av handskrifter från Sverige till kontinenten.

Var chifferskriften då verkligen så hemlig? Eller hade den ett annat syfte? En snabb frekvensanalys av griffelglosorna ger vid handen att *bfk*-chiffret löses utan någon större ansträngning av en klipsk novis. Som Nievergelt argumenterar är chiffret förmodligen produkten av inlärd vana: översatta latinska glosor skulle denoteras på fornhögtyska med chiffer, för det är så man fått lära sig att tänka själv inom ramen för ett ordnat system av tvåspråkig inläring. Eftersom det inte fanns någon standardiserad fornhögtyska har folk skrivit som de tyckte det lät. Ibland har man sökt finna synonymer på latin istället, och dessa har också stavats som det lät.

Man frågar sig genast hur officiellt detta var i klosterskriptoriet? Skrev man helt enkelt fuskklappar inför stränga läxförhör eller ville man hugfästa sin kunskap åt andra, efterkommande studerande? Genom dessa fantasiväckande frågeställningar får den idoge läsaren en svindlande inblick i en förfluten värld av förlorad kunskap.

Men vad har detta med runor att göra då? Nievergelts trägna arbete och dess betydelse för runologin kan knappast överskattas. Under andra hälften av 600-talet upphör skicket att nedlägga gravgåvor på kontinenten och därmed försvinner möjligheten att finna runristade föremål på alemanniska gravfält. Mellan 630 och 750 finns alltså en lucka där runornas utveckling är svår att följa eftersom den materiella kulturen manifesterar sig annorlunda i övergången från merovingertid till karolingertid. Vi måste därför flytta blickfånget till de karolingertida klostren som t.ex. Fleury i Frankrike, Fulda i Tyskland, Leiden i Nederländerna, och Sankt Gallen i Schweiz där den anglosaxiska runtraditionen kommit att anpassas till fornhögtyska.

Nievergelt redogör för ett tiotal olika griffelinskrifter med runor på fornhögtyska och för runica manuscripta i totalt elva olika handskrifter bevarade i Sankt Gallen. Däri förekommer bland annat binderunor liksom runinskrifter på latin. Detta mycket viktiga material får betraktas som relativt okänt hos de flesta av dagens runologer och borde förhoppningsvis leda till ett ökat intresse. De fornhögtyska griffelinskrifterna visar nämligen på en bred folklig tradition och kan inte avfärdas som ”lärd spekulation”.

Det går att spåra ljudförändringar i manuskriptrunraderna, särskilt i den långa runraden i Sankt Gallen handskrift 270, det s.k. Isruna-traktatet. De som skriver ned runraderna står inför samma problem som alla andra runkunniga vid den här tiden. Vad gör man när de ursprungliga ljudvärdena och runnamnen inte längre motsvaras av det talade språket? Det som framförallt är tydligt i manuskriptrunraderna är att man tacklar den andra germanska ljudskridningen stegvis, och inte med en enhetlig reform.

I handskrift 270 har utvecklingen $p > d$ (runan Dorn) och $d > t$ (runan Tag) skett, men däremot ännu inte $t > z$. Runan som senare skall komma att kallas *Ziu* benämns fortfarande *Ti*. Då runorna *Ti* och *Tag* återger samma ljud /t/ har de ansetts vara allografer och motsvara samma unciala *t*. Det finns viktiga skillnader mellan handskrift 270 och handskrift 878. I de hrabaniska runalfabeten i 878 har hela ljudövergången $p > d$, $d > t$, $t > z$ redan skett och runan **t** kallas följaktligen *Ziu*. Frågan är därför om det rör sig om en förtyskad anglosaxisk runrad eller snarare om en fornhögtysk runrad som utökats med anglosaxiska grafer via en inlånad tradition.

Nievergelts bok blåser nytt liv i viktig forskning och erbjuder nya jämförande perspektiv för runologin. Övergångsinskrifterna i Skandinavien måste förstas utifrån en betraktelse av det samtida anglosaxiska och kontinentala materialet. Det runologiska Schweiz är inte längre enkom den skivformade granatbroschen KJ 165 Bülach, det sönderblekta *Abedecarium Nordmannicum* och det obskyra Isruna-traktatet. Det vi får se i tryck är viktig grundforskning utifrån nya perspektiv. Projektet *Medienwandel—Medienwechsel—Medienwissen. Historische Perspektiven* fogar in Schweiz och kontinenten i diskussioner om den grafematiska övergångsperioden under vendeltid och vikingatid i Skandinavien samt tidig och sen anglosaxisk tid i Storbritannien. Det finns mycket mer att hämta ur detta projekt, och Nievergelts verk framstår som mycket lovande för den nya schweiziska runologin.

Martin Hannes Graf. *Paraschriftliche Zeichen in südgermanischen Runeninschriften: Studien zur Schriftkultur des kontinentalgermanischen Runenhorizonts*. Medienwandel – Medienwechsel – Medienwissen 12. Zürich: Chronos Verlag, 2010. 192 pp. + 19 illustrations. ISBN 978-3-0340-1012-2. CHF 38, € 24.50.

Reviewed by Marco Bianchi

Ibland ligger forskningsidéerna i luften. Att Martin H. Graf och undertecknad (*Runor som resurs*, 2008, s. 165–222) oberoende av varandra har tagit sig an ett liknande runinskriftsmaterial i geografiskt och kronologiskt vitt skilda områden kan därför kanske skyllas på mer än bara slumpen. I analysen av en viss skriftkultur är det av avgörande vikt att behandla samtliga aspekter av det som Graf kallar ”Schriftwissen”. Härunder faller också sådana skriftburna yttranden som inte låter sig infogas i en modern uppfattning av koherent skriftbruk och som i många fall lika gärna kunde räknas till de helt eller delvis ornamentala ristningarna. Med sin bok *Paraschriftliche Zeichen in südgermanischen Runeninschriften* behandlar Graf en korpus av sydgermanska inskrifter som befinner sig i just denna gråzon.

Boken delas in i en teoretisk och en empirisk del. I första delen redogörs för den skrifthistoriska kontexten i det folkvandringstida Sydtyskland och den teoretiska ram inom vilken undersökningen befinner sig. Därtill anknutet finns också ett antal för undersökningen viktiga begrepp definierade. Andra delen ägnas sedan ingående beskrivningar, läsningar och kommentarer av tolv utvalda ristningar med runor och runliknande tecken. Inskrifterna är av mycket skiftande språklig dignitet; Graf behandlar både inskriften på bältesspannet från Pforzen med en komplett huvudsats och fingerringen från Bopfingen, vars ristning består av ett enda kryss som med välvilliga ögon kan tolkas som runan **g**. Alla exempelristningar, undantaget svärds-skidemunblecket från Bopfingen, illustreras med tydliga fotografier. I ett sammanfattande kapitel redogörs sedan kort för undersökningens huvudsakliga resultat. Boken avslutas med ett fyndortsregister.

Författaren behandlar ett mycket utmanande material som är svårt att beskriva och systematisera med traditionella runologiska verktyg. Däremot är materialet av oskattbart värde för bedömningen av skriftkulturen som helhet. Det stora antalet inskrifter gör det oundvikligt att behandla dem på samma villkor som de runologiskt läs- och språkvetenskapligt (potentiellt) tolkningsbara inskrifterna och inskriftdelarna. Graf presterar mycket välkommen, eftertraktad och inte minst välgenomförd grundforskning i denna anda. Det är lätt att i bedömningen av ett sådant material hänge sig åt svärverifierade påståenden, men Graf lyckas på ett föredömligt sätt balansera empirin med de mer spekulativa inslagen, och i de fall hans utredningar bygger på osäkra antaganden markeras detta tydligt. Författaren är insatt inte bara i den runologiska och språkhistoriska utan också den historiska och arkeologiska litteraturen. Ett exempel på detta utgör behandlingen av kryssristningarna (med eller utan runor), där han försiktigt föreslår att dessa kan hänga ihop med de ägarmarkeringar som är kända från den romerska och tidiggermanska lagtraditionen.

Tyvärr får man ibland intrycket att författaren gömmer ovan antydd brist på handfasta resultat bakom invecklad vetenskapsprosa. Boken präglas av en komplicerad satsbyggnad som ofta gör det svårt att följa Grafs argumentation.

Grafs kriterier för urvalet i materialdelen förblir något oklara och diskuteras endast implicit eller i förbigående. Det övergripande syftet med materialurvalet är, som framgår av s. 20, att undersöka ”Schrift in ihrem Verhältnis zu ’Nicht-Schrift’”. Så ingår exempelvis den till sin läsning oproblematiske inskriften på bältesspannet från Pforzen såväl som den mycket svårästa inskriften på Peigenspannet. Hos den förra är det främst symbolerna i radernas avslutningar som intresserar, medan det hos den senare är de runliknande tecknen som står i fokus för undersökningen. Ingetdera är emellertid fallet hos det runda spannet från Oettingen. Inskriften på detta finns med på grund av en teckning hos Max Martin, på vilken några av runorna sannolikt är felaktigt återgivna. (”Kontinentalgermanische Runeninschriften aus archäologischer Sicht”, in *Alemannien und der Norden*, red. Hans-Peter Naumann, 2004, s. 165–212) Efter sin egen granskning rehabiliterar Graf Tineke Looijengas läsning **aujabrg** eller **ausabrg** med preferens för den förra, eftersom den möjliggör en språklig tolkning som ett annars icke-belagt kvinnonamn **Aujabrig* (s. 120–23). Och även den alternativa läsningen 4 **s** i stället för **j** skulle resultera, om än inte i ett lätt-identifierat språkligt yttrande, så dock i en inte helt orimlig translitterering. Det finns alltså ingen anledning att inkludera inskriften i katalogen; en enkel parentetisk hänvisning hade varit nog. En liknande parentes finns just i behandlingen av denna inskrift, när Graf nämmer ett par fullt läsbara men inte tolkningsbara runinskrifter, däribland reliefspannet från München-Aubing: ”(Grab 303 mit der Inschrift **wbd**)” (s. 123). Det är allt som sägs om denna inskrift, men här presterar Graf faktiskt en nyläsning efter egen granskning. Inskriften är läs- men inte tolkningsbar och kunde därmed utan vidare ha tagits upp i materialurvalet istället för Oettingenfibulan.

Inskriftsbeskrivningarna i bokens materialdel är mycket noggranna och väldokumenterade. I de flesta fallen hänvisas till författarens egna läsningar, och dessa sätts då alltid i relation till tidigare forskares bedömningar. Utredningarna om de olika runliknande tecknen är dock för det mesta mycket svåra följa, vilket kunde ha underlättats med avritningar. Två exempel där teckningar hade varit till stor hjälp är skramasaxen från Hailfingen och det runda spannet från Peigen. Författarens runologiska undersökning av Hailfingeninskriften tycks generellt bekräfta Robert Nedomas läsning. Graf ställer sig dock tveksam till läsningen **k** av formen liknande **ʃ**, eftersom säkra paralleller annars fattas i det sydgermanska materialet (s. 109). Några sidor senare, i behandlingen av Peigenspannet, är detta förbehåll som bortblåst. Här tolkar Graf motsvarande tecken **ʃ** som ”**k**-runenartiges Zeichen” (s. 124), alternativt som komponent i en tentativ bindruna **kr** (s. 126, not 504). Med endast fotografierna som underlag blir det mycket svårt för läsaren att bilda sig en egen uppfattning om den saken.

Graf ägnar de olika icke-språkliga kommunikativa aspekterna av objekt och inskrifter stort utrymme i första delen. Bl.a. redogör han kort för de huvudsakliga föremålstyperna, alltså bältesspannen, fibulor och vapen. Av materialurvalet att döma kunde den empiriska delen av undersökningen ha bidragit till att göra

denna generella beskrivning mer konkret. Jämför man Grafts urval med katalogen hos Martin (s. 198–206) visar det sig att sex av sju alemanniska vapeninskrifter finns med bland Grafts tolv inskrifter. Den sjunde är skramasaxen från Gräfelting (München), som enligt allmän uppfattning inte bär någon språkligt tolkningsbar inskrift och därmed mycket väl kunde ha platsat i undersökningen. Samtidigt som vapeninskrifter får opropotionerligt stort utrymme är den största gruppen av objekt, fibulor av olika slag, bara företrädd med tre exempel (Peigen grav 44, Oettingen grav 13 och Bülach grav 249). Man skulle gärna vilja veta om och på vilket sätt denna snedfördelning motsvarar materialets natur och hur det i så fall påverkar bedömningen av skriftkulturen. Här kunde Graf sannolikt ha stärkt sina kvalitativa analyser med några mer empiriska resonemang kring föremålstyper i förhållande till inskriftstyper.

Graf lyckas med andra ord inte riktigt knyta ihop säcken och binda samman bokens teori- och materialdelar. Detta ska dock på intet sätt förringa bokens förtjänster. Det blir tydligt gång på gång i Grafts analyser att en bedömning av de sydgermanska runinskrifterna utifrån kriterier som språklig koherens eller korrekt runbruk inte gör skriftkulturen rättvisa: "[Die] Primärfunktion [war] nicht die Aufzeichnung mündlicher Sprache zwecks Weitervermittlung" (s. 165). Skriften representerar ibland bara sig själv och inte något språkligt meddelande, och skrivprocessen framstår stundom som viktigare än produkten.

Frågor kring funktionen av runinskrifter har man länge sökt besvara inom runforskningen. Grafts metodiska grepp att närma sig problemet via runliknande tecken och paraskrift utgör ett tydligt steg framåt i beskrivningen av den kontinentalgermanska skriftkulturen under folkvandringstiden. Vi har nu fått en klarare uppfattning av de mentala processerna bakom bruket av runor och därmed om människorna bakom inskrifterna.

Contributors

- Michael P. Barnes*. Professor emeritus, Department of Scandinavian Studies, University College London, UK.
- Alessia Bauer*, Ph.D. Assistant professor, Institut für nordische Philologie, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, München, Germany.
- Marco Bianchi*, Ph.D. Researcher, Department of Scandinavian Languages, Uppsala University, Sweden.
- Svante Fischer*, Ph.D. Chargé de mission, Institut Runologique de France, Musée d'Archéologie Nationale, France.
- Jan Ragnar Hagland*. Professor, Department of Scandinavian Studies and Comparative Literature, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway.
- Lisbeth M. Imer*, Ph.D. Curator, The National Museum, Copenhagen, Denmark.
- Magnus Källström*, Ph.D. Post-doctoral fellow, The Swedish National Heritage Board, Visby, Sweden.
- Mats G. Larsson*. Associate professor. Vattholma, Sweden.
- Michael Lerche Nielsen*. Associate professor, Department of Scandinavian Research, University of Copenhagen, Denmark.
- Karin Fjellhammer Seim*. Associate professor, Department of Scandinavian Studies and Comparative Literature, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway.
- Inmaculada Senra Silva*. Tenured lecturer, Departamento de Filologías Extranjeras y sus Lingüísticas, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, Madrid, Spain.
- Terje Spurkland*. Associate professor, Department of Linguistics and Scandinavian Studies, University of Oslo, Norway.
- Rikke Steenholt Olesen*, Ph.D. Assistant professor, Department of Scandinavian Research, University of Copenhagen, Denmark.
- Henrik Williams*. Professor, Department of Scandinavian Languages, Uppsala University, Sweden.
- Kristel Zilmer*, Ph.D. Post-doctoral fellow, Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Bergen, Norway.
- Christiane Zimmermann*, Ph.D. Lecturer, Institute of Scandinavian Studies, Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel, Germany.

