

# Texts and Contexts of the Oldest Runic Inscriptions



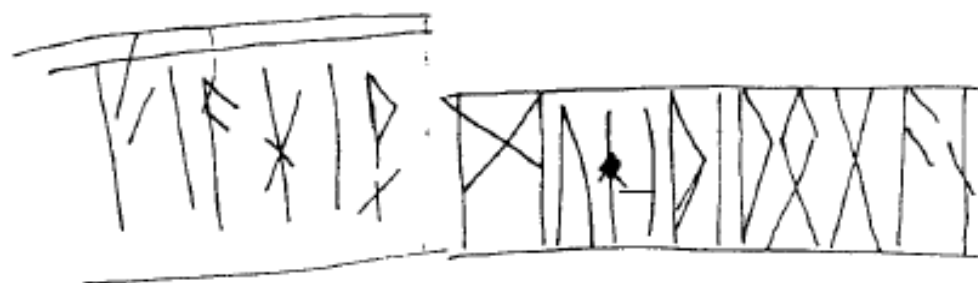
Tineke Looijenga



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15. EICHSTETTEN (Baden-Württemberg, Germany). In the Museum für Ur- und Frühgeschichte ‘Colombischlössle’, Freiburg. A silver mouth piece for a spatha. Dated mid 6th c. Found in 1980 in a man’s grave. The runes read: **fiaginþ muni wiwogan**



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The **w** runes have exceedingly large loops, as on the MELDORF brooch, several bracteates and the SCHWEINDORF solidus (chapter nine, nr. 7).

The **g** in **wiwogan** is rendered X; the **g** in **fiaginþ** is the so-called star rune †, otherwise known from Anglo-Saxon rune rows in manuscripts and the Gandersheim Casket (Schwab 1973, Looijenga & Vennemann 2000).<sup>2</sup>

In **fiaginþ** the last two runes are written as a bindrune. The feature bindrune is also well-known from Anglo-Saxon inscriptions on the Continent, e.g. from the pilgrims’ names at Monte St. Angelo in Italy (Derolez 1983).

**fiaginþ** I take to be a PN, nsf. *jō*-stem *Fiaginth*, cf. *Fiaspurc* (Förstemann 1990:504); *-ginth* may be an alternative for *-gunth*, OHG *-gund* nsf. *jō*-stem ‘battle’, a frequent suffix in women’s names, cf. SCHRETZHEIM I (below, nr. 35). Note that also *-birg* and *-burg* display the divergence *i*—*u*. They also occur as second name-elements.

**wiwogan** I take to be a PN, asm. *n*-stem. Other names with initial *wī*- in runic inscriptions are: **wiwaz** (TUNE) ‘the darting-one’ (Antonsen 1975:44f.) and **wiwila** (VEBLUNGSNES), **uuigaz** on ESKATORP and VÄSBY (chapter six, nr. 10), **wimæd** on WESTEREMDEN B (chapter nine, nr. 13). The element **wi**- might be connected with OHG *wīgan* ‘to fight’, especially because of the *-g* in *wiwogan*, taken that

<sup>2</sup> The star rune is epigraphically attested in England: DOVER **jīslheard** and THORNHILL III **jīlsuiþ**, and in the Netherlands in WESTEREMDEN A: **adujislu jīsubldu**. The rune appears in these five cases in the same sequence *jī*-/*gī*- (see also Parsons 1994:201–204).

the name is related to OHG *wīgant* ‘warrior’. A connection with *wīhen* ‘to consecrate’ is also a probability. Wulf (1994:36ff.), however, is of the opinion that in cases like these a connection with ‘to fight’ is the more likely, since meanings such as ‘consecrater, consecrating’ are doubtful (perhaps except for bracteate inscriptions).

*Wīwo-* may be a variation on OHG names like *Wīwa*, *Wīwila*. Förstemann (1990:1626) mentions VIV as an enigmatic root; Peterson (1994<sup>b</sup>:147–149, with ref.) says about *Wīwaz* etc.: “an extremely tricky group of names”.

**muni** is 3 sg. opt. ‘may F. Remember’, cf. Go. *ga-munan* ‘to remember’. As a whole, the text can be taken as: ‘may Fiaginth remember Wiwoga’.

The graphic representation of the **w** rune and the use of the star rune may point to an Anglo-Frisian (-influenced) runographer. (For another reading and interpretation see Opitz, 1982).