

Texts and Contexts of the Oldest Runic Inscriptions



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THE NORTHERN WORLD    BRILL

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30. NORDENDORF I (Bavaria, Germany). In the Römisches Museum, Augsburg. A silver-gilt bow-fibula, dated mid 6th c. Found in 1843.

The runic inscription consists of two parts, carved on the back of the headplate. One part is written in three rows of runes beneath each other; when the object is turned 180°, another row near the edge of the headplate can be perceived. These runes are much more abraded than those of the other part, which is probably due to the fact that the edge of the brooch was more exposed and vulnerable to attrition. There is a scratch that looks like I attached to the top of the **o** rune of **ponar**.

The first part reads: **logapore wodan wiguponar??**

The second part has: **awa (l)eubwini??**

ᚱᚰᚰᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ
ᚱᚰᚱᚱᚱ
ᚱᚰᚰᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ
ᚱᚱᚱ ᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ

First row: **logapore**, npm. *ja*-stem *logapore* ‘intriguers’ or ‘magicians’ (Düwel 1983:128 and 1991:278). This interpretation is based on a word found in OE glosses: *logper*, *logeper*, used to translate the Greek *cacomicanos* ‘mischief plotting’, and the Latin *marsius* ‘snake-charmer’ (Schwab 1981:42ff., with ref.).

Second row: **wodan**, GN nsm. *a*-stem *Wōdan*.

Third row: **wiguponar**, GN nsm. *a*-stem, *Wīguponar*. The part *wīgu-* is commonly associated with OHG *wīhen* ‘to hallow’, which may have something to do with one of the god’s roles: to hallow runes or marriages, such as can be found in the inscription of the stone of Glavendrup, in Denmark: **pur uiki** ‘may Thor hallow’. Deriving *wīgu-* from OHG *wīgan* ‘to fight’, produces another epithet: *fighting-Donar*.

When turning the brooch 180°, a second inscription can be read, although the runes are nearly invisible. It starts with **awa**, which obviously is a PN nsf. *ō*-stem *Awa* (Kaufmann 1965:90), which may be connected with **auja** (see below, nr. 33 OETTINGEN **aujabrg**).

As a result of the brooch having been broken and later glued back together, the initial rune of the next part is damaged: the assumed **I** of **(I)eubwini** is invisible now. The word ends in a confusion of signs, probably because **(I)eubwini** coincides with the end of **wiguponar**. Between both words are several lines, and whether or not the yew rune seen by others is among those lines, I am not sure.

Leubwini is a PN or epithet, nsm. *i*-stem ‘dear friend’. The whole text is interpreted by Düwel (1982) as a rejection formula concerning the pagan gods Wodan and Wiguponar: ‘intriguers are Wodan and Wiguponar’, signed by two people: Awa and Leubwini. Such a declaration seems a strange text for a brooch, especially since the text was invisible.

Polomé (1989:140ff.) rejects Düwel’s hypothesis, a) on linguistic grounds: the ending *-e* of *logapore* is anomalous; b) on stylistic grounds: a triad of names would conform better; and c) on historic grounds: the early 7th c. (actually mid 6th c. TL) may be too early for a Christian runic inscription; and d) on mythological grounds: magic and deceit may characterize Wodan, but that cannot be said of Donar! (But see Düwel 1992^b:358ff.).

I would not exclude the possibility that the text mentions a *Göttertrias*, including the mysterious *Logapore* next to Wodan and Donar. Schwab (1981:45) interprets *logapore* as a dative singular of a personal name, the name of the receiver of the brooch. I regard her remark about *marsius* very interesting: “in the OE glosses to Aldhelm’s *De Laudibus Virginitatis* the plural *marsi* is interpreted by *incantatores* and is glossed *pyrsa(s)* ‘demons, sorcerers’ and *wyrmgalera(s)* ‘snakecharmers’”. There is one Germanic god who is associated with snakes, and who is of a demonic nature: *Loki* (cf. De Vries 1957:262f. and Dumézil 1973:63).

Schwab (1981:43) and Düwel (1982:80ff.) provide several interpretations of and references to *logapore*. Schwab suggests that in the gloss *marsius* = *logeper* in Cotton MS Cleopatra A III in the immediate vicinity of the entry *mars* = *tíw*, there might be a possible confusion of the scribe. In other words, *mars(ius)* = *logeper* = *tíw*, so the mysterious first name on the brooch may refer to Týr?³