

Texts and Contexts of the Oldest Runic Inscriptions



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38. SCHRETZHEIM III (Bayrisch Schwaben, Germany). In the same museum as the other Schretzheim finds. An iron ring sword, dated 2nd h. 6th c. Found in 1894 in a man's grave in a row-grave field. The runes are made by way of silver thread inlay; this would point to the smith as the maker (the same practice as in WURLINGEN, see below, nr. 51).

The inscription is actually a rune-cross, which is the rune *g* X with four runes attached to its extremities. Those four runes are *a b a r* (Klingenberg & Koch 1974). Together with *g*, one may read: *gabar*



Other rune-crosses occur in SOEST, KIRCHHEIM, UNDLEY (England), KRAGEHUL (Denmark).

gabar is perhaps a hypocoristic PN, nsm. *Gabar* < **Gabahari*, consisting of *gaba-* f. 'gift' and *hari* or *heri* m. 'warrior' *ja*-stem, Gmc **harjaz*. In Saxo Grammaticus we find a personage with the name *Gevarus*, which, according to Simek (1984:127), may be derived from an earlier Saxon PN *Geb(a)heri*.

A ring sword was a typical prestige sword, used among the Merovingian elite and granted to a faithful warrior by his leader or king.