

Futhark

International Journal of Runic Studies

Containing proceedings of the
Seventh International Symposium on Runes and Runic
Inscriptions, Oslo, 9–14 August 2010

Part 1: Plenary lectures

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Vol. 4 · 2013

Published with financial support from the
Nordic Publications Committee for Humanist
and Social Sciences Periodicals (NOP-HS)

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<http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:uu:diva-211527>

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ISSN 1892-0950

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Foreword

Volume 4 of *Futhark* contains revised versions of (a) the keynote address, by Michael P. Barnes, and (b) the other plenary lectures held at the Seventh International Symposium on Runes and Runic Inscriptions (Oslo, 9–14 August 2010). It constitutes the first part of the conference proceedings.

The theme of the symposium was “Runes in Context”. The contributions of six of the eight plenary speakers invited to the meeting appear in this volume, each of them developing different aspects of the symposium theme. A seventh speaker, Lisbeth Imer, has published a shorter Danish version of her presentation “Defining Contexts”, namely “Fortidens kalejdoskop – om definitionen af kontekster i runologien”, *Arkæologisk Forum* 24 (2011), 37–42. The eighth plenary talk, “Post-Reformation Runic Inscriptions in Norway” by K. Jonas Nordby, was in essence a general introduction to the exhibition of post-Reformation runic inscriptions which he organised at the Norwegian Folk Museum, Oslo.

Also in the current issue are short notices, a debate and reviews. The editors would once again especially like to encourage the submission of short notices to the periodical.

The next volume of the journal will see publication of the second part of the conference proceedings, encompassing selected papers from the symposium which have not already appeared elsewhere. A list of such papers as have been published separately will be found in the “Foreword” to that issue.

Although the article section of *Futhark* volume 5 (2014) will in all likelihood be filled by symposium papers, the editors are happy for other articles to be submitted to the journal, which if accepted will be published in the following issue, volume 6 (2015).

It is now possible for institutions and individuals to place a standing order for the journal at the e-mail address acta@ub.uu.se. We urge those interested to place their order.

James E. Knirk

Henrik Williams

Correction to *Futhark* Volume 3

Last year's issue, *Futhark* volume 3 (2012, publ. 2013), contained the contribution "Runes about a Snow-White Woman: The Lund Gaming-Piece Revisited" by Rikke Steenholt Olesen. Regrettably, there is an error in the article on p. 94 which was introduced at the type-setting stage and not spotted during proof reading. In the transliteration proposed by the author a character in the fourth line was unfortunately deleted. Instead of the published

- (1) **þeta:ræist**
- (2) **rolfr:þorkissun**
- (3) **honom:uar:þāngar**
- (4) **blandat:ump[þ<h]asn**
- (5) **huitu:snot**

the transliteration should have read (with the correction underlined here):

- (1) **þeta:ræist**
- (2) **rolfr:þorkissun**
- (3) **honom:uar:þāngar**
- (4) **blandat:ump[þ<h]asnæ**
- (5) **huitu:snot**

The editors very much regret the mistake, for which the author was not responsible, and urge the readers of *Futhark* to rectify the error in their printed copies of the issue.

What Is Runology, and Where Does It Stand Today?

Michael P. Barnes

Abstract

The purpose of this contribution is to offer a critical appraisal of runology as currently practised. The article begins by asking what runology is, and possible ways of defining the subject are discussed. Theory and methodology are then considered. While there is much to be learnt from analysis of the methods runologists employ, the search for runological theories turns out to be an unrewarding exercise. Theories from other disciplines have on occasion informed and guided runological procedures, however, and this is exemplified through an examination of the role graphemics has played in recent discussion of rune forms and how they may best be transliterated into the roman alphabet. The article concludes with brief consideration of problems that have arisen in the reading and interpretation of runic inscriptions, and a plea is entered for a critical and dispassionate approach to runological endeavour.

Keywords: runology, theory, methodology, graphemes, transliteration, interpretation

Introduction

In recent years several scholars have presented critical examinations of the state of runology. They have offered varying views of the subject and suggested different ways forward. Most recently James Knirk has obtained funding for a project (*Lesning og tolkning av runeinnskifter: runologiens teori og metode*, ‘The reading and interpretation of runic inscriptions: the theory and method of runology’) whose principal objectives are: (i) to define runology as a subject or field of research; (ii) to establish the theoretical (philological) basis for runological research; (iii) to evaluate and develop the subject’s methodological tools. The most

Barnes, Michael P. “What Is Runology, and Where Does It Stand Today?”
Futhark: International Journal of Runic Studies 4 (2013), 7–30.

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important outcome of the project is to be a *Handbook of Runology*. Such a work will differ from previous introductions to the subject. Rather than offer a general survey of runes and runic inscriptions, it will lay down a methodological basis for the study of runic script and the examination, reading and interpretation of inscriptions. For the first time a text-book will be available for the student of runes, showing how things should, or at least might, be done. This is a project of some significance. Runic writing is of considerable linguistic, historical and cultural importance, and the study of runic writing in all its aspects is badly in need of critical reappraisal. Those working with runes require at the very least: (i) a definition of the subject; (ii) a statement of accepted, or at least acceptable, methodological procedures; (iii) a series of constraints within which they can work. Without these minimum requirements “runology” is anything and everything: it is unclear where it begins and ends, and there is no obvious dividing line between the serious practitioner and the charlatan.

An individual scholar like myself clearly cannot anticipate the outcome of an in-depth investigation into the theory and method of runology. One elderly academic of modest talents is no substitute for the eminent team who are to compile the proposed *Handbook*. I shall be unable, I fear, to define runology, to establish a theoretical basis for runological research or to develop the subject’s methodological tools—not least within the confines of a symposium paper. My aims are rather to raise and discuss a number of questions of the kind I imagine the compilers of the *Handbook* will have to tackle.

I take as my starting point the critical examinations of runology I alluded to at the outset. These include the following: Claiborne Thompson, “On Transcribing Runic Inscriptions” (1981); Terje Spurkland, “Runologi—arkeologi, historie eller språkvitenskap?” (1987); Judith Jesch, “Runic Inscriptions and Social History: Some Problems of Method” (1994); Elmer Antonsen, “What Kind of Science is Runology?” (1995); Lena Peterson, “Runologi: Försök till ett aktuellt signalement” (1996); Michael Lerche Nielsen, “Runologien mellem sprogvidenskaben og arkæologien—med et sideblik på de forskellige tolkninger af Glavendrupindskriften” (1997); Kurt Braunmüller, “Methodische Probleme in der Runologie—einige Überlegungen aus linguistischer Sicht” (1998); Karin Seim, “Runologi” (2004, 2nd ed. 2013); Klaus Düwel, “Runic” (2004); Ray Page, “Seeing and Observing” (2005); and Düwel’s chapter “Vom Fund zur Deutung” in *Runenkunde* (4th ed. 2008, 15–22). I shall also bear in mind two contributions of my own: “On Types of Argumentation in Runic Studies” (1994) and “Mål og metode i runeforskningen” (2011a).

A definition of “runology”

Between them the authors referred to suggest or imply that runology comprises elements of linguistics, philology, palaeography, archaeology, cultural, religious, legal, literary and art history, mythology, cryptology, and occultism; others might want to add further fields of research, onomastics for example. Many of the contributors stress approvingly the interdisciplinary nature of runology (in part, perhaps, a genuflection to the gods of our time).

Two important questions arise from a claim made by Spurkland in his contribution: “Skal man operere med et vitenskapelig fagområde ‘runologi’, må det ha elementer av arkeologi, kulturhistorie og språkvitenskap i seg” (‘If there is to be a discipline called “runology”, it must contain elements of archaeology, cultural history and linguistics’; 1987, 56). But how obvious is it, I wonder, that runology should constitute a discipline in its own right? And how can one define a discipline that comprises so many disparate elements? Certainly, if a discipline cannot be defined, it is hardly meaningful to treat it as such. Peterson (1996, 41) argues for a narrow and a broad definition of runology. According to her narrow definition, it is a branch of linguistics; more broadly defined it includes analyses and evaluations of objects of study that bear witness to all kinds of circumstances of the past other than the purely linguistic. For my own part (Barnes 2011a, 147–49) I have questioned whether the study of runes and runic inscriptions requires the establishment of an independent discipline, noting that ogam, for example, does not seem to have called forth generations of ogamologists. I further enquire how much sense it makes to treat runic writing in comparative isolation from writing in rival scripts. On the other hand, as Lerche Nielsen emphasises (1997, 37), runic research is one of the oldest branches of scholarly endeavour in Scandinavia, with roots stretching back to the Renaissance; so it has the weight of tradition behind it. Also to be considered is the need for a theoretical and methodological basis on which the study of runes and runic inscriptions can be built, and that must surely start with some attempt to define, or at least delimit, the field as an area of academic activity?

Although I cannot offer a ready definition, I have a reasonably clear view of what runological research essentially entails. Runes are an alphabetical system of writing, and for the most part they are used to record language. An independent runological discipline, if it is to be established, must therefore deal with the runic symbols themselves, individually and

as systems, with their development, and their use to record language. Runic inscriptions are sequences of runes placed on an object, and these the runologist will attempt first to read and then to interpret. Reading will involve examination of the inscription itself, since photographs are subject to tricks of the light and drawings will always contain an element of subjectivity. Interpretation will often require help from and some knowledge of other disciplines, notably archaeology. But archaeology is not runology, any more than are art history, mythology, or occultism.

I am struck by how many of the authors listed above approach “runology” as though it were first and foremost concerned with the interpretation of inscriptions. My view is rather different. Core aspects of the discipline are to me: the origin of the runic alphabet; the change from the older *futhorc* to the Anglo-Saxon *futhorc* and the younger Scandinavian *futhork*; the development of the additional runic characters of the Scandinavian Middle Ages and their status; runes as graphemic systems; the distinction between graphs, graph-types, graphemes and units of the *futhork* or runerow (see below); the principles and practice of transliteration. I would also suggest that the reading of runic inscriptions is more central to runology than their interpretation. The reading must be done first and must be undertaken by someone with experience in the field. Thereafter come attempts at interpretation, which may in some circumstances be made by historians, archaeologists and others—provided they possess the requisite linguistic knowledge, understand how the reading was arrived at, and have a proper grasp of all the caveats the reader has expressed.

I thus disagree with Spurkland that runology must contain elements of archaeology and cultural history. The runologist will almost certainly need to consult archaeological and historical expertise, but archaeology and history are not runology. Runology is to do with runes and runic writing. There will of course be grey areas. Peterson asks (1996, 40) whether an archaeologist who makes detailed analyses of the grooves of runes and of the ornament of rune-stones is a runologist. On the whole, I think not. Such a person is rather an archaeologist mapping the grooves cut on stones. The results arrived at may assist the runologist, but the endeavour is not strictly runological. This can be true, wholly or partly, of a wide range of studies that take runic inscriptions as their subject matter. Jesch (1994), for example, is a thoughtful and salutary contribution, which discusses difficulties in undertaking quantitative analyses of the information in runic inscriptions. However, many of the questions raised concern the collection and sifting of data and as such apply to quantitative analyses in general.

I have approached the defining of runology chiefly as a theoretical problem but I want to emphasise the practical aspect as well. As indicated earlier, the more elements of other disciplines “runology” is to include, the harder it becomes to define, and if we cannot define it, we can hardly map out its methodology and practice. Which would take us back to square one.

Runological theory

In his project description Knirk questions the use of the term “runology” on the grounds that the lack of a fundamental theoretical and methodological apparatus is palpable enough to render the “-ology” suffix inappropriate, suggesting as it does the existence of a well-established discipline. I agree that “runology” can give false associations (though on a practical level attempts to avoid “runology” and “runological” can lead to some fairly tortuous English). What I am far less certain about is where the theoretical basis of runology is to be found.

First, I suspect, we would need to agree what “theory” means. Much in runic research that goes under this heading would be better called “idea”, “suggestion” or “claim”. Consider, for example, “Theorien über die Bildung des älteren Runenalphabets” (‘theories about the creation of the older runic alphabet’; Grønvik 2001, 10–28); the “theory” that the total number of runes in a rune-row had to correspond to a multiple of eight (Spurkland 2005, 80); and the “mange teoriar” (‘many theories’) that have been advanced to explain the relationship between the long-branch and short-twig runes (Liestøl 1969, 474). If, as the *Oxford English Dictionary* suggests, and linguistic science endorses, a theory should be a statement of general laws or principles and have explanatory power, it is not easy to see where the theoretical basis of runology might lie.

Workers in the runic field have on occasion appealed to general principles, but it has not always been clear what the principles were or how they impinged on the argument. Erik Moltke, for example, would refer to the laws of alphabet history (e.g. 1985, 68, 173 f.), but I cannot see that he ever expounded these in detail so that the validity of his assertions could be checked. Braunnüller (1998, 16–20), attacking the idea that the runes were invented and used in “splendid isolation” from other cultures, appears to argue that language contact is the force behind almost all linguistic innovation and change, and that explanations in runology must, where relevant, take account of that circumstance. He instances in particular the change from the older to the younger *futhorc*. This has

perhaps the makings of a theory, but I am not sure it is borne out by the facts. There was undoubtedly contact (and thus presumably language contact) between the Roman Empire and Scandinavia at the time most people assume the runes to have been invented, and several runes look very like roman capitals and have more or less the same sound values. But how much contact was there with the Mediterranean world and its languages in the period A.D. 550–700? Braunmüller envisages a group of rune-carvers at this time with “fundiertes linguistisches Wissen” (‘soundly based linguistic understanding’), their insight gained from schooling of a type inherited from the ancient world and maintained through contact with the South. Only this, in his view, can explain the systematic nature of the change from the older to the younger *futhorc*. Michael Schulte, on the other hand, argues that the younger *futhorc* was the result not of a reform but of a gradual process of evolution (see, e.g., 2006a; 2006b; 2009). He contrasts developments in Scandinavia with those in Anglo-Saxon England: the relative cultural isolation of Scandinavia meant that the impetus to bring the rune-row up-to-date was lacking there, while in England the presence of the roman alphabet turned rune-carvers’ minds to thoughts of reform. The loss of **g** and **d** from the Scandinavian rune-row, which most have regarded as the result of a conscious decision, can only be put down to natural wastage, according to Schulte, because general “Verschriftungsprinzipien” (‘principles of rendering speech into writing’) dictate that change in usage will happen first, to be confirmed later by change in the system (2006a, 20). So here we have a possible theory that language contact lies at the root of almost all language change challenged (in this particular instance) by a possible theory that change in usage will precede any change in the system. For my part I would like to see both theories expounded in full with copious examples of how they work in practice. Even with such explication, I suspect lack of data from the period of transition between the older and younger *futhorc* would make it difficult to judge which theory, if either, had the greater explanatory power. And we would then be little further on.

Of course theory has played its part in runic research. I have myself appealed to phonemics and graphemics, and criticised those who write as though “speech sound” and “phoneme” were interchangeable concepts. But these are well-established linguistic theories used by certain runologists. They are not runological theories.

Many problems in runology are simply not susceptible to explanation by theory. The bulk of the Manx runic crosses are confidently assigned to the period c. 930–1020 by art historians. This conclusion is based on

observation and comparison. Some runologists (e.g. Holman 1998) have pointed out that certain rune-forms on the crosses as well as aspects of their language hint at a later date. That conclusion likewise derives from experience. In a paper from 1998 Hagland and Page suggest that the practice of dotting in runic writing may have arisen in the British Isles. Knirk has recently argued against that view (2010). Neither party to the debate appeals to theory, and with good reason. What we suffer from both here and in the case of the Manx crosses is lack of data, not lack of theory.

Finally: theory can often be so far removed from actual objects of study that it becomes hard to discern its purpose. A recent book by Piotr Chruszczewski (2006) summons up all manner of theories in an attempt to analyse twenty-nine Viking-Age runic inscriptions on stone from “North-Central Jutland” – the aim of the analysis being to show how various formulaic expressions employed in the inscriptions can shed light on discursive practices in the society from which the texts spring. The journey to the twenty-nine inscriptions is long. It takes in *inter alia*: anthropological linguistics, contact linguistics, language death, the development of Germanic from Indo-European, pidgins, creoles and mixed languages, Scandinavian invasions of the British Isles and their linguistic aftermath, the creation of writing, literacy, and the origin and development of the runic alphabet and runic writing – many of the topics accompanied by a fearsome theoretical apparatus. But the brief analysis of the texts of the twenty-nine inscriptions reveals very little. The conclusion is – as one might expect – that they do not differ greatly from the generality of Jutlandic or other Scandinavian commemorative inscriptions of the Viking Age. The relevance of the extensive and diverse theorising Chruszczewski brings to his task is to me wholly opaque.

Runological methodology

Methodology I find considerably easier to get to grips with than theory. Where theory can be abstract and vague, often seemingly far removed from immediate problems, methodology is at the heart of most serious runological endeavour. There has nevertheless been a general lack of thought about method and procedure – what might be deemed acceptable and what unacceptable, for example – as Peterson recognises in her critical 1996 analysis. In an admonitory tone she notes (p. 39) that as well as a definition of runology, a description of the aims of runological research, and a critical self-examination of the discipline by its practitioners, we

need an account of its methodology – the clear implication being that up to now there has been something of a methodological free-for-all.

Methods will of course vary, depending on the object of study. Field runologists examine inscriptions with a view to reading and interpreting them. Here, as Peterson avers (1996, 44), it is an essential part of runological method to distinguish between reading and interpretation. The runologist first attempts to read what s/he thinks to see. It is of course hard to do this without bringing to bear preconceived notions of what particular inscriptions might be expected to say, and that problem has to be freely acknowledged. Nevertheless, the reading should be primarily the result of observation. When it has been established to the runologist's satisfaction, and presented in the form of a drawing, an idealised runic representation and/or a transliteration, an interpretation can be essayed. That will usually involve an attempt to identify words and to mould them together into an edited text, which can then be translated into a modern language to help non-specialist readers. It is an essential part of this process that all uncertainties in the reading and interpretation are made clear.

Methodological guidelines for the interpretation of inscriptions have so far been conspicuous by their absence, and it is certain much detailed work needs to be done in this area. Yet only if runologists indicate what is and what is not permissible can purveyors of make-believe such as Ole Landsverk and Alf Mongé (see, e.g., 1967) or Kjell Aartun (1994) be kept at bay. The difficulties are considerable, as Braunmüller's article "Mutmaßungen zum Maltstein" (1991) unwittingly makes clear. Commendably, the author sets out to provide a set of interpretational procedures that can be checked and replicated. He does not know, or mind, he says, whether the interpretation of the Malt inscription he arrives at is right or wrong – his aim is solely to initiate a discussion about methodology and to indicate how things might be better done. The result, alas, is not reassuring. Not only does Braunmüller commit the cardinal error of confusing reading and interpretation, as Peterson stresses (1996, 44); his interpretation involves considerable textual emendation and the assumption that the Malt carver made widespread use of abbreviation. And it does not end there: while Braunmüller regards it as axiomatic that the carver adhered to the most common syntactic patterns of Viking-Age Scandinavian, he allows him where necessary for the interpretation to deviate from them – for example by using the reflexive possessive *sinni* where non-reflexive *hans* is to be expected.

Braunmüller can be forgiven for getting himself in a tangle (though perhaps not for the self-confident language in which his lesson in

methodology is couched). The way forward is much more problematic than he allows. By way of illustration I introduce the Reistad inscription from Vest-Agder, Norway (KJ 74, to be dated probably some time before A.D. 500). The inscription is in three lines and is normally read:

iupingaz

ekwakraz:unnam

wraitha

The sequences **iupingaz** and **wakraz** are interpreted as personal names (of disputed meaning); **ek** (or perhaps **ik**) is almost certainly the pronoun 'I'. So far there is a measure of agreement. Antonsen (2002, 5) reads **idringaz** rather than **iupingaz**, but still recognises a personal name here (which he "translates" 'of memorable lineage'). The segment **unnam wraitha**, on the other hand, has been taken in two completely different ways: by many as *undnam wraitha*, meaning something like 'undertook the writing'; by Thórhallur Eythórsson (1999) as 'took Wraithaz', where **wraitha** (acc. sg.) represents an earlier form of Old Norse *reit* 'marked-out space', and is the name given to a farm (cf. the *Rei-* in modern *Reistad*). The first of the two words has also been read **unnamz** (Antonsen 2002, 6 f.), whereupon it metamorphoses into a by-name qualifying **wakraz**, and **wraitha** becomes a 1st person sg. past tense (strong) verb form: 'I Wakraz, the untakeable, wrote [this]'. The only point the three interpretations of this part of the inscription agree on is that the sequence **nam** is somehow to be connected with a verb meaning 'take'.

One area of disagreement in this case concerns the reading. Before embarking on an interpretation the runologist must be confident s/he can recognise the runic graphs. I have not examined the Reistad stone closely myself and so can offer no firm opinion on its runes. But as a general rule, uncertainty about what is actually carved on an object should give pause for thought. The radically differing interpretations, too, ought to act as a warning signal. None is unproblematic. The difficulty with **unnam** as a verb form (stressed by Antonsen, 2002, 6 f.) is that **un** is a highly unlikely runic spelling of *und-* at the relevant period (an assimilation /und-/ > /un:/, as envisaged by Eythórsson 1999, 191, is not to be expected so early). The understanding of **wraitha** as 'writing' suffers from an absence of corroborative evidence from later Scandinavian or other Germanic languages, while as a past tense verb form it has been criticised as too archaic. If it is a noun meaning something like 'marked-out piece of land', it renders the Reistad stone typologically odd by turning it into

a proclamation of ownership, for which there seem to be no parallels among the inscriptions in the older *fupark*.

The problem here, as commonly where runic inscriptions are subject to rival interpretations, is to identify grounds for preferring one interpretation to another. Is it possible to establish some “hierarchy of doubt”? Can the lack of parallels to putative **wraita** ‘writing’ be said to weigh more heavily than the dearth of older-*fupark* rune-stones documenting claims to land? Is it as certain as some assert that a North-West Germanic or Scandinavian strong past tense verb form would have lost its end vowel by the fifth or sixth century? And is the conviction that ‘(I) wrote’ could have taken the form /wraita/ at this period more, or less, surely grounded than the claim that /nd/ in *und-* could have assimilated to /n:/ (or that /nd/ could have been written **n**)? On the evidence so far adduced I do not see how we are to rank these rival interpretations and assertions in terms of plausibility, and my conclusion would therefore be that the sense of the Reistad stone still eludes us. Given our tenuous grasp of language in Scandinavia in the pre-syncope period and our relative ignorance of early Germanic society, not least in the first six or seven centuries of the Christian era – with the resulting uncertainty about how rune-writers might have expressed themselves and what they might have thought it important to record – I have no high hopes that future interpretations of the Reistad inscription will prove any more persuasive.

We may wonder where this leaves runological methodology. In fact the only purely runological question in the various attempts to get to grips with Reistad concerns the reading. Here one might suggest that a group of experienced readers of runes examine the stone and try to agree on what they think to see. The interpretations, on the other hand (aside, perhaps, from the disagreement about whether **un** can be a way of writing *und-*), owe little to runology. They follow traditional philological practice, where educated guesswork – supported by parallels (or not, as the case may be) – is the order of the day.

My overall conclusion is thus, I fear, that the interpretation procedures we are looking for may prove hard or well-nigh impossible to establish. Scarcity of data will often be an insurmountable obstacle – the lack of enough information on which to base an interpretation that will satisfy the majority. One consequence of this, as Ray Page and I have both argued, should be a cultivation of the subjunctive. It will not do for runologists to plug their own interpretations to the exclusion of others of equal validity – or non-validity – in the manner of politicians seeking to convince a sceptical public that only their policies can save the nation.

Theory and method — graphemics and transliteration practice

I now turn to an area in which linguistic theory and runological methodology meet. My aim is to show how a well-established theory from a related discipline can inform and guide runological procedures. I first present a highly simplified sketch of the theory (for a detailed exposition, cf. Spurkland 1991).

Graphemics is a branch of linguistics that seeks to identify the contrastive units in the writing system of a language—just as phonemics aims to establish the contrastive units of a sound system. Both are identified by function. The contrastive units of a writing system are called graphemes. Like phonemes, these are an abstraction. You cannot see a grapheme any more than you can hear a phoneme. What you see are graphs, which are the individual realisations of graphemes. Take Viking-Age $\mathring{1}$, $\bar{1}$, \uparrow . Each of these runic characters may vary in a multitude of ways: the vertical may be of different lengths, it may be absolutely upright, slightly or notably slanting, or it may curve, for example. But if you place any variant of $\mathring{1}$, $\bar{1}$, \uparrow between $\mathfrak{D}|$ and \mathfrak{t} you have the word *petta* ‘this [nom./acc. n.]’. If instead you substitute \mathfrak{t} for $\mathring{1}$, $\bar{1}$, or \uparrow , you have *penna* ‘this [acc. m.]’. The characters $\mathring{1}$, $\bar{1}$, \uparrow with all their varieties of form can thus be classified as realisations of a single grapheme, whereas a rune with a descending right branch extending from roughly midway on the vertical is a different grapheme. Substitution tests of this kind would show that \mathfrak{t} , a rune with a descending crossing branch about midway on the vertical, is a variant of \mathfrak{t} . Variants of a grapheme are called allographs, on the model of allophones, which are variants of phonemes. The characters $\mathring{1}$, $\bar{1}$, \uparrow are thus allographs of a runic grapheme we can portray as **t**, while \mathfrak{t} , \mathfrak{t} are allographs of **n**. The choice of roman transliterations to represent runic graphemes means we are able to bring a degree of abstraction to the process, which accords with the abstract status of the grapheme: we do not have to make an arbitrary selection from among the myriad of realisations of each rune. It is possible, of course, to use runes to denote runic graphemes, but they must then be marked in some way to indicate their status: we could, for example, place the chosen symbol between angular brackets, as $\langle\mathring{1}\rangle$, $\langle\mathfrak{t}\rangle$.

The difference between $\mathring{1}$, $\bar{1}$, and \uparrow is often considered to be of a different order from that between, say, $\mathring{1}$ and variants thereof with slanting, curved or wiggly verticals. In recognition of this, the concept “graph-type” is used. A graph-type is a variant of a grapheme clearly distinguishable from other variants by one or more features. Unlike a grapheme, however, it

is not an abstract concept: it is classified on the basis of observation, not function. This leaves a great deal of discretion to the observer, and the classification of graphs into graph-types can therefore vary according to the judgements of the investigator and the purposes for which the classification is made.

Some writing carries no linguistic message. Runic inscriptions recording partial or complete *fuparks* are examples of such. These cannot be used to establish graphemic oppositions since there is no linguistic function that would make a substitution test possible. What we have in the rune-row is not a graphemic inventory, but rather the raw material from which a graphemic inventory can be built. A clear distinction has thus to be made between a runic grapheme and a *fupark* unit (cf. Dyvik 1996, 13).

The upshot of these considerations is that a rune can be analysed on four different levels: as a graph (an individual realisation), a graph-type, a grapheme and a unit of the *fupark*.

So much for the theory. What of its implications for runological methodology? As a general point, I would argue for a heightened awareness of precisely what we have in mind when we write about runic characters. As a concrete example, I take the matter of transliteration.

The conversion of the characters of one script into those of another is not a simple process, and there can be differing views on how it should be undertaken. It is to say the least surprising that Thompson's paper on transliteration given to the First International Symposium on Runes and Runic Inscriptions does not consider the process at all, but is concerned solely with "the establishment of a unified system of notation for transcribing runic inscriptions" (1981, 89). When transliterating from runic to roman we ought at least to be able to agree that we cannot invoke sound value: if speech sound were to be the guiding principle the end result would be a phonetic transcription rather than a transliteration. The alternative is a system based on shape—the form of the written symbols to be transliterated. But are the roman equivalents of the runic characters to represent graphs, graph-types, graphemes or *fupark* units—or some combination? Graphs, as will readily be acknowledged, are wholly unsuited to the purpose. The accuracy of observation required would be beyond the reach of mere mortals and the complexity of the roman equivalents mind-boggling—with no practical gain at the end of the process. Much the same can be said of transliteration by graph-type. Even if one could find a satisfactory basis for determining which features were typologically significant, it would be difficult to build a system of transliteration on the result that was easier to read than the runes

themselves (cf. Barnes 2000, 148 f.). Transliteration based on graphemes presupposes a graphemic analysis, which requires a clearly identifiable system of writing. In spite of the considerable complexities involved, this does seem to offer a feasible way forward. Transliteration according to position in the *futhork* also presents possibilities, but is hampered by the fact that additional medieval characters (such as dotted runes) one might want to distinguish – on the grounds that they have, or can have, contrastive function – appear not to have been regarded by rune-writers as part of the row.

Transliteration practice has up to now seldom reflected the theoretical and methodological considerations I have outlined here. Shape has been the chief determinant, though there has also been phonological input. Because transliteration serves a practical purpose, roman equivalents have been chosen that will suggest to the reader the approximate sounds different runes (however conceived) are thought to have denoted. There is no harm in this, but the tendency can be taken too far, as when ᚥ is transliterated now **ø**, now **ϕ**, or ᚦ now **ϕ**, now **ϕ**, depending on the phonetic value attributed to the character in different contexts (cf. respectively *NlyR*, 3: 155; *DR, Text*, cols. 952, 968–71). Such a procedure involves subjective judgement; it also introduces uncertainty, because the transliteration suggests the existence of two distinct runic characters, whereas only one is in fact involved. Phonetic considerations aside, what most transliterators of runes have done is to reproduce in roman what they considered to be the distinctive units of a given system of runic writing – however they came to that conception.

Some might argue that the transliteration of runes to roman hitherto has not thrown up major problems, even if it has mostly lacked an explicit theoretical basis. There are, though, many oddities to be found. The fourth rune appears in several different guises (ᚦ, ᚦ, ᚦ, for example); it is also transliterated in different ways (**a**, **ã**, **o**). However, although shape is for most transliterators the guiding principle, there is no correlation in this case between shape and roman equivalent; rather it is presumed phonetic value that determines whether **a**, **ã** or **o** is used. To add to the uncertainty, ᚦ may in some contexts also be transliterated **b**. A way around these problems lies in the positing of discrete systems of runic writing, for which different systems of transliteration are employed. Awareness of this as a possible expedient appears – as indicated above – to underlie some of the varying transliteration practices we find, though few have attempted to make explicit the processes they followed.

More serious difficulties affect the transliteration of the additional

characters of medieval Scandinavian runic writing. Traditionally, for example, ᚱ has been transliterated **y**, ᚷ **g**, ᚹ **e**. As a purely practical device this is perhaps acceptable: when we come across **e**, we know that the runic character concerned is a dotted ᚱ, and so on. However, the impression can easily be gained that **e** is an “*e*-rune”, whereas in reality ᚹ (in the tenth and eleventh century, at least) is a marked form of ᚱ, which may denote [e(:)] but can also stand for other sounds, notably [æ(:)], and sometimes even [i(:)] (cf. Lagman 1990, 78). There are two problems here, a practical and a theoretical. The practical problem is: how does one transliterate dotted characters in a way that alerts the reader to their status? Before a solution can be proposed, however, that status must first be elucidated, which is a theoretical problem.

Dotted runic characters can hardly be classified as *fupark* units, because they are very seldom included in rune-row inscriptions, and when they are, appear to be randomly selected and ordered. They might be considered graph-types—clearly recognisable variants of particular graphemes. Yet the pair ᚱ/ᚹ, for example, differ from the trio ᚱ, ᚱ̇, ᚱ̈ in that ᚹ often has a different function from ᚱ. This suggests graphemic status, but the fact that ᚱ and ᚹ are not always clearly distinguished by function renders that a slightly tricky analysis. In the Middle Ages, where ᚹ is very often used to denote [e(:)], and ᚱ does not normally denote other sounds, it is perhaps unproblematic to analyse it as a grapheme. But in the late Viking Age, where dotting seems to be used “för att markera ett ljudvärde som ristarna fann det angeläget att markera i förhållande till andra ljud som den ostungna runan kunde stå för” (‘to mark a sound value which the carvers considered it important to mark relative to other sounds which the undotted rune could stand for’; Lagman 1990, 153), the graphemic status of ᚹ and other dotted runes is less clear. At what point does a variant marked for an indeterminate function turn into a grapheme?

Whatever else, these theoretical deliberations make clear that ᚹ in its initial incarnation is not an “*e*-rune”, nor is ᚱ a “*y*-rune” or ᚷ a “*g*-rune”. A soundly based system of transliteration, it seems to me, should try to capture what it can of the essence of the dotted runes (and the other additional characters of medieval Scandinavian runic writing). In *The Runic Inscriptions of Viking Age Dublin* (1997) and *The Scandinavian Runic Inscriptions of Britain* (2006) my co-author(s) and I sought to put this desideratum into practice by making the transliterations of dotted runes approximate as closely as possible to the runic characters themselves. To render ᚹ, for example, we applied diacritic dots to roman **i**, giving **ī**—a variant of **i** distinguished by dotting. Dots above consonant

letters present typographical obstacles, but these can be overcome. An alternative is to use small capitals, thus **ı** for **†**, but that moves the transliteration equivalent further from actual runic practice. From a more purely theoretical perspective, we reasoned, **ı̇** for **†** takes account of the fact that the character is neither a free variant of **ı** (if it were we would transliterate it **ı**) nor—in its early life, at least—an independent grapheme (in which case some other letter than **ı** would be appropriate), but rather a variant—dotted to distinguish it for one purpose or another from its undotted counterpart. Here, it seems to me, consideration of the theoretical basis of transliteration has pointed the way to a principled and practical solution.

In this brief exposition I have only been able to examine the basics of what is a fairly complex topic. The issues are given much fuller discussion in Barnes (2011b).

Further considerations

The critical examinations of the state of runology enumerated at the beginning of this paper deal with a number of different issues. Certain questions recur, while others are raised more sparingly. Peterson's 1996 article is the most wide-ranging of the contributions, and I have found it helpful to structure my remaining comments on what I consider the more important of the points she makes.

Peterson begins by asking what runology is and offering various answers. That is a question I have discussed at some length already. She moves on to theory and methodology, matters to which I have also devoted considerable attention. Yet there are additional methodological questions raised by her and others that deserve scrutiny. I consider first approaches to interpretation as envisaged by Düwel (2004) and Lerche Nielsen (1997).

Düwel's contribution appeared in a volume entitled *Early Germanic Literature and Culture*. As befits such a work, the perspective from which he views runes and runic writing is almost exclusively that of the older *futhork*. Although something is said of the essential features of early runic writing, the emphasis is very much on problems encountered in the reading and interpretation of individual older-*futhork* inscriptions. By way of illustration widely differing interpretations of the Tune and Eggja stones (KJ 72, KJ 101) are presented, and reasons for the differences of understanding analysed. Apart from disagreement on readings and the expansion of lacunae, there are the "varied assumptions and presuppositions" scholars bring to the task (2004, 130). Düwel shows in

considerable detail how these have affected the interpretation of Eggja, and sums up as follows (2004, 131): “Thus the enigma of the Eggja inscription, despite all the efforts of leading runologists ... is still unsolved and will probably remain so.” This conclusion surely rather misses the point. It is not because of the “varied assumptions and presuppositions” that no interpretation of Eggja has so far satisfied the scholarly community; rather it is because there is no agreed way of measuring the validity of competing interpretations. And this stems from the extreme paucity of linguistic and cultural data from Scandinavia in the period concerned. In such circumstances a *Handbook of Runology* might require a measure of self-criticism and restraint from would-be interpreters—beginning with a frank admission of any preconceived views with which they approach an inscription, backed up by a pledge to keep such views in check or at least to acknowledge freely the part they play in the exposition. That way non-runologists would have a better understanding of the degree of trust they could place in individual interpretations.

The approach suggested here is not far removed from that espoused by Lerche Nielsen (1997), who uses the Viking-Age Glavendrup stone (DR 209) to show what a dispassionate examination of an enigmatic inscription might look like. First he castigates a number of procedures that in his view have brought runology into disrepute: recourse to textual emendation, particularly the assumption of omissions and abbreviations that have no obvious parallels; reliance on reconstructed forms of otherwise unknown words, or on undocumented semantic developments of recorded words; interpretations based on cult or magical practices for which we otherwise have no evidence. Turning to the Glavendrup inscription Lerche Nielsen points out what he considers to be the advantages and disadvantages of earlier interpretations, but refrains from promoting any particular view himself because he finds the evidence insufficiently persuasive. He warns against basing conclusions on too sparse a knowledge of other disciplines and against allowing academic fashion to influence interpretations, citing the rush to embrace “magic” in the inter-war years, and the sudden discovery of “power structures” in more recent times. If future interpreters of runic inscriptions would follow Lerche Nielsen’s practice, scholars in other disciplines—and the general public too—would at the very least have a clearer idea of what was reasonably well established and what mere conjecture.

As an example of “en fin demonstration av metod” (‘an excellent demonstration of method’) Peterson cites Lagman’s 1989 article on regularities and irregularities in the orthography of Swedish Viking-Age memorial

inscriptions. His piece concludes with a “*tolkningsschema*” – recommendations for the step-by-step interpretation of inscriptions. This is a thoughtful and innovative contribution. Its impact is lessened, however, by a weakness in the basic premise on which it is founded. Lagman holds that the most natural spelling rule for rune-carvers was: “*Skriv som det låter!*” (‘Write as it sounds!’; 1989, 28). But as Dyvik points out (1996, 20 f.), experience in trying to establish alphabetic writing systems for hitherto unwritten languages has shown what a demanding and complicated task speech-sound analysis is, even of one’s native language. Dyvik thinks, in contrast to Lagman, that the regularities we find in runic orthography have to do with a written tradition passed on from teacher to pupil. He invites comparison with the first attempts at writing by a five-year-old who has just mastered the alphabet, or the orthography of a dyslexic: in comparison runic writing appears far too “*velordnet*” (‘well organised’) to be the product of spontaneous sound analysis. I am in full agreement with Dyvik, and have myself argued that those learning to write with runes tried to memorise a particular spelling of the more common words – often without complete success, as attested by the considerable orthographic variety encountered. However, while I do not have complete faith in Lagman’s methodology, for the reasons here given, I applaud his attempt to get to grips with a fundamental question in runology. It is by advancing hypotheses and testing them that we take the subject forward.

Antonsen, it could be argued, has performed a similar service. He has urged a “*rigorous linguistic approach*” both to the history of runic writing and the interpretation of inscriptions. This has led him to the view that the runes are much older than most have thought and that the language of the inscriptions in the older *futhark* is closer to Common Germanic than to later Scandinavian (cf., e.g., 2002, 3–13, 93–117). He gets short shrift from Peterson, however (1996, 44). She praises his stubborn insistence that the runes are linguistic, not magic, symbols, but otherwise dismisses him as a “*desk runologist*” on the grounds that many of his linguistic arguments are based on idiosyncratic readings: “*Han ser – eller låtsas se? – runor som ingen annan kan se*” (‘He sees – or affects to see – runes that no one else can see’). Düwel, too, finds Antonsen’s approach rather far removed from reality. “*The impression sometimes arises*”, he writes, “*that linguistic analyses strain the linguistic record and become an artistic game*” (2004, 137). It is clear the scholar he has chiefly in his sights is Antonsen.

Linguistic argumentation leads to improbability when the phonemic system that the oldest *futhark* inscriptions are based upon is traced back to the middle

of the first millennium B.C., thereby establishing the origin of runic writing in a pre-classical Greek alphabet.

For my part I would suggest that both Peterson and Düwel dismiss Antonsen too summarily. To establish the plausibility or otherwise of his new readings a group of experienced field runologists should examine the inscriptions concerned and report on their findings—in the way I have already suggested. The case that leads Antonsen (and his pupil Morris—cf. Morris 1988) to move the origin of runic writing back to near the middle of the first millennium B.C. is cogently argued and by no means without interest. It founders not because of its artificiality but because of the dearth of runic inscriptions between the supposed period of origin and A.D. c. 160, and the lack of a trail of such inscriptions leading from the Mediterranean northwards towards Scandinavia. My complaint against Antonsen and Morris is rather that they have been unwilling to engage with the reasonable criticisms their proposal about the high age of the *fupark* has attracted. Antonsen regularly substituted confident assertion for reasoned argument in an area where there is little we can be confident about. Indeed, over-confidence characterised much of his scholarship. Not only did he urge his own views to the exclusion of all others, he seemed at times to elevate subjectivity to a virtue. In his examination of the “science” of runology, he goes so far as to claim that the minds of those who do not see what he sees are “out of focus” (1995, 127; a revised version of this paper is Antonsen 2002, 1–15). He comments on:

the problem that has faced so many a runologist trying to read and interpret the oldest runic inscriptions ... WE CANNOT ALWAYS DEPEND ON THE EYES OF THESE INVESTIGATORS, BECAUSE THEIR MINDS WERE NOT IN PROPER FOCUS. They often could not recognize what was actually before their eyes, or correctly identify and emend errors in the text.

This assertion prefaces a restatement of the view that the language of the oldest runic inscriptions is much closer to Proto-Germanic than it is to Old Norse and a claim that the minds of scholars who failed to recognise that “basic fact” were not focused on “the proper language”. Over fifty years previously Gustav Indrebø had opined of the oldest runic inscriptions as linguistic remnants: “Dei kann ikkje stå so sers langt frå samgermansk” (“They cannot be so very far removed from Common Germanic”; 1951, 41), and there is much to suggest he and Antonsen are right about their linguistic status. But the way to show that is through the deploying of evidence. The bald claim: “I can see things others cannot see” is unlikely to

convince anyone with a modicum of critical sense. As a general conclusion and recommendation in this instance I can do no better than reiterate one of the suggestions I made in my paper “On Types of Argumentation in Runic Studies” (1994, 26).

We must ask ourselves not just: “What evidence is there in support of my theory?” but also (and preferably more often than the former): “What evidence is there against it?”

In other words, we must not become missionaries trying to convert others to our point of view. We must learn to sift and weigh evidence dispassionately.

Runes and magic is a subject Peterson touches on only briefly, and I will follow her example. Serious runologists have, I think, abandoned the epigraphical maxim “that whatever cannot be readily understood must be sorcery” (Page 1999, 100), although in a highly speculative section of his paper to the Fourth International Symposium on Runes and Runic Inscriptions in Göttingen Braunmüller appears to be making valiant efforts to reinstate the general principle (1998, 7–13). Crucial in the context of runes and magic is the distinction between runes as magical symbols in themselves and their use to write incantations. Clearly, any script can be used in an attempt to invoke the supernatural. To determine whether a given runic inscription has that aim, one needs a definition of magic as well as close study of the object bearing the inscription and its likely context. It is quite a different proposition to claim that people believed the mere employment of runes was enough to harness magic powers. The evidence for the existence of such belief among rune-carvers is in my view slight.

Page (1999, 106–16) surveys the field. Having discussed the etymology of Old English *run* and cognates in other Germanic languages, and possible “magical” contexts of certain inscriptions, he concludes: “it is the literary evidence that bears the burden of the theory of rune magic.” This evidence comes chiefly from medieval Iceland, a society clearly familiar with traditions that associated runes and supernatural powers—not, however, a society much given to writing in runes, to judge from the paucity of inscriptions it produced and their largely post-1200 date. Indeed, some have considered runic writing in Iceland to have been inspired by a renaissance of the art in medieval Norway (Bæksted 1942, 20). It is not hard to imagine that people with little or no everyday experience of runic script could come to view it as esoteric and shrouded in mystery. On the other hand, it seems improbable in the extreme that

the inhabitants of medieval Scandinavian towns such as Bergen could have shared the Icelanders' conceptions. I would thus find it problematic to join Braumüller (1998, 8) in citing the procedure described in *Egils saga* ch. 44 of inscribing runes on a drinking horn containing a poisonous concoction and smearing them with blood (whereupon the horn burst asunder) as evidence of actual practice among rune-carvers.

With the association of runes and magic apparently still widespread in many circles it is important that a *Handbook of Runology* enable students to approach the topic without preconceptions. The evidential basis for runes as magical symbols, and for their use in writing spells, should be laid out as clearly and dispassionately as possible.

The impingement of national or political considerations on runic studies is arguably no longer a serious problem. Peterson, I note, does not address the matter in her examination of runology. Debate about whether the fifteenth rune of the older *futhork*, ƿ, should be transliterated **R** or **Z** now concerns the relative weight to be attached to (assumed) phonetic as opposed to phonemic status, where previously it centred on **R** as evidence for the existence of a specifically Scandinavian linguistic entity before the transitional period (Antonsen 2002, 73–91). The perversion of runic studies in the Third Reich has been thoroughly documented in all its absurdity (Hunger 1984), and the use of runes by neo-Nazi organisations can likewise easily be recognised for the nonsense it is. Erik Moltke's belief that all important innovations in runic writing took place in Denmark may now safely be ascribed to an excess of patriotic zeal. Yet political ghosts still seem on occasion to haunt runic research. I have at least the suspicion that Braumüller's dismissal of significant Germanic input into runic writing stems in part from a desire to exorcise the demons of the past (1998, 17 f.).

Conclusion

Peterson (1996) draws attention to several encouraging developments in runic research. I concur in her positive assessment, but will refrain from singling out specific trends, works or scholars. My aim here has rather been to raise questions about runology, specifically about how it might be defined and how most efficiently and rewardingly pursued in the future. I have drawn a number of conclusions along the way, and I do not want to invite the charge of repetitiousness by rehearsing them here. I will, however, offer a few final observations by way of summary.

1. A meaningful definition of runology must, I think, be narrow. If it is to include archaeology, mythology and all kinds of history there might as well be no definition at all.
2. Runological theory can only come from the application to specific runological problems of theories from other disciplines. It is hard to identify the basis on which a purely runological theory could be built.
3. In certain areas there is scope for the elaboration of runological methodology, but probably not in all. The interpretation of inscriptions is a case in point. Lack of knowledge hampers our understanding of many inscriptions and it seems unlikely a general interpretation procedure could be devised that all or most runologists would accept.
4. Whatever methods and procedures we adopt, we must strive for transparency. Everything must be laid bare so the reader can follow our deductive processes and thus gain a fuller understanding of how our conclusions have been reached.
5. Transparency requires the use of plain language: we must avoid as far as possible expressing ourselves “in the rather forbidding format that specialists adopt to convince their colleagues of their scholarship” (Page 1993, 155).
6. We must be willing to give up attempts to interpret inscriptions where the evidence is insufficient (cf. Seim 1991, 84 f.). A charge of defeatism may well be levelled or the cry go up: “the reader has a right to know what you believe!” But if you believe you do not know what an inscription means because the evidence is too slight, the honest thing is to say so.

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„Keine Denkmäler werden größer sein ...“: Was ist ein Runendenkmal?

Klaus Düwel

Fred Wulf (1929–2005)
zur Erinnerung

Abstract

‘What is a runic monument?’ is the main question discussed in this contribution. Reflections are offered on the relationship between the German word *Denkmal* and Latin *monumentum*. An overview is then provided of the terms used in the inscriptions themselves to denote a runic monument, be it inscribed with the older or younger futhork. References in the runic texts to the aesthetic appearance of Viking Age memorials are examined, and the various characteristics mentioned are categorized under the following headings: beauty and stateliness, magnitude and monumentality, publicity and renown, unsurpassability and uniqueness, colour and multicolouredness, poeticism and alliteration (verse design). Additional features are identified as characterizing such memorials, in particular impressive outer or physical appearance including artistic decoration. Runic monuments are comparable to Horace’s *monumentum aere perennius* ‘a monument more lasting than bronze’.

Keywords: Runic memorials, runestones, object markers, monument terminology, runic poetry

Wort und Sache

Viele Jahre habe ich unreflektiert von ‚Runendenkmal‘ und ‚-denkmälern‘ gesprochen.¹ Erst als ich vor einigen Jahren für Hoops’ *Real-*

¹ Gängige Titel sind: *Die deutschen Runendenkmäler* (Henning 1889) oder *Die einheimischen Runendenkmäler des Festlandes* (Arntz und Zeiss 1939), *The Old-Northern Runic Monuments*

Düwel, Klaus. “Keine Denkmäler werden größer sein ...“:
Was ist ein Runendenkmal?”
Futhork: International Journal of Runic Studies 4 (2013), 31–60.

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lexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde die Artikel „Runen und Runendenkmäler“, aber auch „Runeninschriften“ schreiben sollte (Düwel 2003b, 2003c),² begann ich, darüber nachzudenken: Was ist eigentlich ein ‚Runendenkmal‘? Natürlich kann jedes ausgegrabene Vorzeitobjekt ein Bodendenkmal heißen und entsprechend jeder Altertumsfund mit Runen ein Runendenkmal. Fasst man aber den Begriff *Denkmal*³ enger und berücksichtigt die mit seinen Elementen *Denk-* und *-mal* verbundenen Bedeutungen, erfolgt Eingrenzung der Vielfalt und Ausschluss der Randphänomene, z. B. lose Gegenstände. *Denken*, *gedenken*, also ‚sich erinnern‘ ist das Hauptmerkmal, das *Mal* dazu bildet ein ‚Zeichen‘, eine ‚Markierung‘; das *Denkmal* erweist sich damit als „Erinnerungs-Zeichen“⁴, als Memorialobjekt. „Seine Funktion ist es, bemerkenswerte lebende oder tote Personen, Institutionen oder Fakten zu vergegenwärtigen [und dadurch] Zeitgenossen und kommenden Generationen in Erinnerung zu rufen“ (*Lexikon des Mittelalters*, 3: Sp. 697). Beziehungen zur lat. *memoria* und zum griech. *mnēmósynon* (danach die deutsche Lehnprägung *Denkmal*) führen in das weite Feld der Gedenk- und Gedächtniskultur. Ein früherer Zeuge ist Isidor von Sevilla mit seinen *Etymologiae* (Anfang 7. Jahrhundert): *Historia* und *memoria* hängen zusammen (*Historia est narratio rei gestae ... Historiae autem ideo monumenta dicuntur, eo quod memoriam tribuant rerum gestarum, Etym.* I, 41, 1 f.). Der *Memoria* dient „die Anfertigung von Denkmälern, Erinnerungen bzw. historischen Werken (*monumenta*).“ Es sind „die Verstorbenen, zu deren Erinnerung man Monumente errichtet“ (*Monumentum ideo nuncupatur eo quod mentem moneat ad defuncti memoriam, Etym.* XV, 11, 1, vgl. Simek 2000, 257). Runendenkmäler sind in erster Linie Memorial-Monumente⁵, ob nun Grabmäler oder Kenotaphe.

of Scandinavia and England (Stephens 1866–1901) oder „De tyske Runemindesmærker“ bzw. *De danske Runemindesmærker* (Wimmer 1894, 1893–1908). In den norwegischen und schwedischen Editionen heißt es von Anfang an durchgehend *Runeindskrifter* bzw. *runinskrifter*.

² Im ersten Artikel habe ich alle Materialien zusammengestellt, auf denen Runen vorkommen, und dazu die Grundgedanken für die hier ausgeführten Merkmalkategorien dargestellt.

³ Ich habe mich an den einschlägigen Lexika orientiert, besonders am *Deutschen Wörterbuch* der Brüder Grimm (2: 941 f., s.v. denkmal). Den historischen Denkmalbegriff bestimmt Johann Gustav Droysen in seiner *Historik* (1971, § 23; zuerst 1858).

⁴ So in Zedlers *Universal-Lexikon* (1732–1750, 7: Sp. 557 s.v. Denckmahl).

⁵ *Monument* ‚großes Denkmal‘, ebenfalls im 16. Jahrhundert aus dem gleichlautenden lat. *monumentum* ‚Erinnerungszeichen, Denkzeichen, Denkmal‘ (zu lat. *monēre* ‚jemanden an etwas denken lassen, erinnern, mahnen‘) entlehnt, wird im Deutschen durchaus als Fremdwort empfunden und fehlt bezeichnenderweise im Grimmschen Wörterbuch (Bd. 6, 1885).

Damit ist aber auch festgelegt, dass es sich um Runensteine handelt, kaum um runenbeschriftete lose Gegenstände.

Inskriptenterminologie

Was besagen die Inschriften solcher Runensteine aus der älteren Periode, die seit dem 4. Jahrhundert auftreten? Wird überhaupt die Einheit von Inschriftenträger und Inschrift (sozusagen Epitaph und Epigraph) bezeichnet? Das trifft vielleicht für die komplizierte Inschrift auf dem norwegischen Stein von KJ 72 Tune zu. Hier ist der Stein (*stainar*) für Wöduridar bestimmt; auf KJ 80 Rävsaal (Bohuslän) steht der Plural **haripulfs · stainar** und umfasst den Runenstein und eine Steinsetzung. Daneben gibt es **halar** ‚(besonders flacher oder runder) Stein‘, so auf KJ 81 Stenstad „Ingijös Stein“, der eine rundliche Form hat, oder **arina** in „Hrörar ... bearbeitete diese Steinplatte“ (KJ 71 By), einer Inschrift, die tatsächlich in eine lange, dünne Steinplatte eingeritzt ist. Weiter gibt es **warur** ‚Steinhegung‘ („N.N.s Steinhegung“) auf KJ 79 Tomstad, einem Steinfragment, das zu einem aufrecht in einer Steinsetzung stehenden Stein gehört haben dürfte. Die wenigen Belege zeigen einen bemerkenswerten Befund: Die Bezeichnung eines Denkmals entspricht in etwa seiner Form bzw. seiner Vergesellschaftung mit anderen Steinobjekten.

Gedenksteine der altenglischen Überlieferung liegen später und kennen nur **bekun** ‚(erhöhtes, weithin scheinendes) Zeichen; Denkmal‘ (neuengl. *beacon*, vgl. deutsch *Bake*), z. B. Thornhill III (Yorkshire): „Gilswith errichtete nach Berhtswith ein Denkmal auf einem Erdhügel. Betet für ihre Seele“ – *becun on bergi / gebiddaþ þær saule*.⁶

Gegenüber dieser eher spärlich vorkommenden Terminologie bietet sich ein reiches Tableau in den Runensteininschriften der Wikingerzeit in Skandinavien (Schweden 2681; Dänemark 237; Norwegen 89)⁷. Das recht stereotype Formular der Totengedenkinschriften besteht im Kern aus der obligatorischen Gedenk- und Errichterformel, die in der Regel einen

Im Englischen heißt es mit diesem Wort *The Old-Northern Runic Monuments ...* (Stephens 1866–1901), im Französischen entsprechend *Les monuments runiques de l'Allemagne* (1895, allerdings Übersetzung von Wimmer 1894).

⁶ In der Übersetzung wechselt Page (1999, 141 f.) zwischen „monument“ und „memorial“. Auch in den Inschriften von Falstone (Northumberland) und Overchurch (Cheshire) begegnet *becun*, zur Semantik s. Page 1999, 154 f. Ferner kommen noch auf Fragmenten von Kreuzen vor: *libbæcun* ‚corpse-monument‘, that is, ‚memorial stone‘“ (Crowl, Lincolnshire, *ibd.*, 142) sowie *sigb[e]c[n]* (Bewcastle, Cumberland, *ibd.*, 145).

⁷ Die Zahl der Steinmonumente mit Runeninschriften nach Palm 2004, 477 f.

Terminus oder eine nähere Angabe zum Denkmal enthält. Die runenskanandinavische (vor allem 10.–12. Jahrhundert) Terminologie der Denkmalmarkierer⁸ umfasst *stæinn* (allein in Schweden 1424), *kum(b)l* (insgesamt 127), *mærki* (92), *minni* (3), *hæll* (14), *hvalf* (5)⁹, *viti* (1), *vitring* (5), *stafR* (6), *skæið* (1), *haugR* (2) in je spezifischer Ausprägung des bezeichneten ‚Denkmals‘. Vereinzelt kommen verstärkende Komposita vor mit *stæin-*: bei *-kumbl*, *-mærki*, *-hvalf*, auch tautologisch *-hæll*, sowie durch Stabreim verbundene Zwillingsformeln wie *stæinn ok stafar* ‚Stein und Stäbe‘ (Sö 56 Fyrby). Von Interesse ist auch die Kumulation solcher Termini in einer Inschrift: *skæið*, *stæinn* und *haugR* (DR 230 Tryggevælde) oder *stæinar*, *brō*, *haugR* (U 135 Broby). Inhaltlich erstreckt sich die Terminologie 1.) auf das Material und seine Verwendung (*stæinn*, *hæll*, *hvalf*) und 2.) auf die Funktion als Zeichen im weitesten Sinne (*kum(b)l*, *mærki*, *minni*, *viti*).

Unter den zahlreichen, nämlich 1424 mit ‚Stein‘ bezeichneten schwedischen Runensteinen zeigen 114 Inschriften die Pluralform. „Dies deutet darauf hin, dass neben dem Runenstein noch weitere Steine errichtet wurden, beispielsweise weitere Runensteine, aber auch Bild- oder Bauta- steine, die mit dem Runenstein ein Ensemble bildeten“ (Klos 2009, 193). Das gilt etwa für die drei Steine von Sjonhem (G 134–G 136), die gesamt und einzeln (‚der zweite‘, ‚der dritte‘) in den Inschriften genannt werden. Dieses Steinmonument überbietet Iarlabanki mit vier, allerdings ungezählten Runensteinen (U 127, U 164, U 212, U 261), die ursprünglich die Iarlabanki-Brücke markierten. Der Plural *stæinar* kann sich auf umgebende Steinsetzungen (Steinreihen oder -kreise bzw. Schiffssetzungen, z. B. DR 329–DR 331, DR 314) beziehen, von denen – wenn überhaupt – oft nur Reste erhalten sind. Bei Vs 13 Badelunda konnte man die in der Inschrift erwähnten **staina** × **pasi** × **ala**, 14 an der Zahl, wieder auffinden und hat sie mit anderen erneut in einer Steinsetzung aufgestellt (Jansson 1987, 125). Bei anderen Bezeichnungen mag der Gebrauch von Singular und Plural ohne Bedeutungsunterschied sein, wie es Jansson und Wessén

⁸ Die folgenden (wohl nicht vollständigen) Zahlenangaben habe ich, sofern vorhanden, aus Klos 2009 gezogen. Des Weiteren habe ich die dänische Runenausgabe sowie Lena Petersons *Svenskt runordsregister* (2006) benutzt. Für die allgemeine Darstellung wurden hier runenschwedische Sprachformen gewählt, so dass *stæinn* auch runendän. *stēn* umfasst. (Sonst werden im Artikel runenschwedische, altgutnische, runendänische und altnordische Normalisierungen verwendet.) Eine erste zusammenfassende Behandlung bietet Else Ebel (1963, Kap. 5), eine jüngere Darstellung findet sich bei Palm (1992, 177–200: Wikingerzeit; 233–237: Mittelalter). Der hier verwandte Ausdruck ‚Denkmalmarkierer‘ übersetzt schwedisch *monumentmarkörer* (Palm 1992, 177 und passim).

⁹ Vgl. dazu Ljung (2010).

(zu G 113 Ardre 3, SRI, 11: 208) für *mærki* in uppländischen Inschriften angeben.

Inschriftencharakteristika zur ästhetischen Erscheinung eines Runendenkmals¹⁰

Stattlichkeit und Schönheit

In einem nächsten Schritt soll geprüft werden, ob durch schmückende Beiwörter, *epitheta ornantia*, eine bestimmte Betonung und Besonderung beabsichtigt ist, die ein Denkmal gegenüber anderen auszeichnet. Da ist vor allem das Adjektiv *gōðr* ‚gut‘ und zwar in dem denkmalcharakterisierenden Sinne von ‚stattlich, eindrucksvoll, herausragend‘. Es kennzeichnet eine ästhetische Qualität, während es auf Personen bezogen in ethischer Hinsicht gebraucht wird (*boni homines*).

In der Kirche von Ardre auf Gotland fand man im Boden neben dem bekannten und berühmten Bildstein (Ardre 8) andere Steine mit Runeninschriften. Den einen setzten Söhne nach ihrem Vater *Likhvatr*, zwei Männer machten das „gute/stattliche Denkmal“ (G 113 *merki gōð*, Plural, hier in altgutnischer Normalisierung). Die Söhne *Likhvatrs* machten ein (weiteres) „stattliches Denkmal“ (G 114 *merki gutt*), das „[größte] Denkmal, das man sehen kann“ (*merki m[est] ... ar menn siā*, s. Snædal 2002, 73). Es war ein Steinkistengrab, von dem die vier Wände erhalten blieben. Ein weiteres Adjektiv dieser Art, *fagr* ‚schön‘, kommt ebenfalls vor. Auf einem Stein aus Gästrikland (Gs 19 Ockelbo) steht: „Blesa ließ diese schönen Steindenkmäler (*stæinkumbl þessa fagru*) errichten nach ihrem Sohn *Svarthofði* ...“ (vgl. U 219 Vallentuna-Fragment). Blesas Denkmal ist verloren gegangen, aber alte Zeichnungen zeigen das reich geschmückte Bildfeld, in dem einige Szenen (Drachenstich) den Sigurddarstellungen zugewiesen wurden.

Zu Stattlichkeit und Schönheit gehört auch das Adjektiv *mærkilikr* ‚denkwürdig, bemerkenswert‘ und ‚stattlich, prachtvoll‘, allerdings nur zweimal belegt. Einer der Belege findet sich auf U 773 Enköping-Näs (*mærki mæ[r[k]ili[k]t*), einem Stein, der allerdings nur 1,55 m hoch und

¹⁰ Die folgenden Gesichtspunkte entsprechen einer neuzeitlichen Ästhetik und stehen unter der Voraussetzung, dass auch die mittelalterliche Sicht- und Betrachtungsweise nicht völlig abweichend gewesen sein wird. In Tatarkiewicz (1979–1987) findet sich keine einschlägige Passage. Viele der im Folgenden angeführten Runeninschriften sind auch in Marold 2010 behandelt, besonders im Abschnitt „Das gepriesene Denkmal“.

0,72 m breit ist. Offenbar hängen solche Kennzeichnungen auch vom subjektiven Empfinden der Auftraggeber ab.

Der zweite Beleg findet sich in G 188 Mästerby, dessen verlorene Partie, **mirk** **mirlakt**, aus alten Zeichnungen ergänzt werden kann und als runenschwed. *mærki mæ[rk]ili[k]t* ‚stattliches Denkmal‘ normalisiert wird. Thorgunn Snædal (2002, 77) nimmt Anstoß an dem zweimal ergänzten *k* und an der Tatsache, dass in einem alliterierenden Komplex das gleiche Wort zweimal angewendet wird. Stattdessen schlägt sie eine altgutnische Normalisierung zu *merki mēr[i]lekt* vor. Das erste Glied stellt sie zum Adjektiv altschwed. *mær* ‚berühmt, wert zu erwähnen, rühmendwert‘ und erhält so die Bedeutung ‚rühmendwertes Denkmal‘, eine passende Beschreibung dieses Steins, der, ausgehend von dem erhaltenen Fragment, sehr schön gewesen sein muss, wie sie schreibt. Snædal normalisiert G 188 Mästerby: ... *auk Bötaiðr þaun litu raisa stain ... haitu(?) merki mērlekt*¹¹ *æftir mann gōðan* ‚... und Bötaiðr, die ließen den Stein errichten [und] nannten(?) (ihn) ein rühmendwertes¹² Denkmal‘. Obwohl Snædal die Möglichkeit nicht erwägt, kann der nun verbleibende einzige Beleg **merki merilit** auf U 773 Enköping-Näs mit einem geringfügigen Eingriff ebenfalls als *mærki mæ[rili]k]t* ‚rühmendwertes Denkmal‘ aufgefasst werden. Dadurch würde auch die Diskrepanz zwischen Bezeichnung und natürlicher Größe des Steins aufgehoben.

Größe und Monumentalität

Auch Größe und Monumentalität, die mit dem Adjektiv *mikill/mykill* ‚groß‘ angezeigt werden, spielen in diesem Zusammenhang eine Rolle. Ein Beispiel bietet der nicht erhalten gebliebene Steinblock (1,50 × 1,30 m) von U 300 Skånela, mit dem eine Þyrví „ein großes Denkmal nach einem ‚guten‘ Mann“ (*mærki mykit / æftir mann gōðan*) namens Halfdan setzen ließ. Entsprechend heißt es in einem neueren Fund einer Runenstein-Inschrift „... Hier [steht] ein großes/mächtiges Denkmal (*mærki mikit*) nach einem ‚guten‘ Mann“ (U Fv1986;84 Bo Hof, Gemeinde Lidingö, Uppland¹³), vgl. U 102 Viby (*mærki mykit*). Dazu ein weiteres Beispiel:

¹¹ Diesmal fehlt die *i*-Ergänzung in der Fuge.

¹² Merkwürdigerweise greift Snædal (2002, 78) in ihrer neuschwedischen Übersetzung wieder auf das alte *stättligt* ‚stattlich‘ zurück, das sie doch gerade durch ihre Neudeutung ersetzt hatte. Im Übrigen möchte sie ein im weiteren Verlauf der Inschrift vorkommendes **miu[k] tyrlak** (Pl. Akk. n.?) als *miuk dýrlek* („mycket praktfulla“) auf das Denkmal selbst beziehen, wenn auch der genaue Zusammenhang unklar bleibt.

¹³ Gustavson (1986, 84) erklärt den Ausdruck *mærki mykit* als wohlbekannte Formulierung,

„Tati hieb im Gedenken an seinen Vater Skagi dieses große Denkmal (*mærki it mikla*) zurecht, von dem man immer erzählen/hören soll“ (Sö 41 Björke).

Verstärkt wird das Adjektiv *mikill* ‚groß‘ durch *all-* ‚sehr‘ zu *allr* ‚all, ganz, vollständig‘, z. B.: Ein Mann ließ einen sehr mächtigen Stein (*stæinn allmikinn*), knapp zwei Meter im Quadrat, von einem anderen Ort herbeiführen und ließ mit seiner Frau das Denkmal (*kumbl þessa*, Plural) nach ihrem Sohn errichten (U 735 Långarnö). Die Wendung *stæinn allmikinn* kann Balli nach Meinung Wulfs (2003, 987) auf einer heute verlorenen Partie des Steins U 437 Broby gesehen haben.

Verstärkende Funktion kann auch der Komparativ übernehmen, so in der zusammenhängenden Inschrift auf den beiden uppländischen Steinen von Bällsta: Drei Männer, Ulfks Söhne, machten hier einen Thingplatz. „Keine Denkmäler / werden größer sein / als jene, die Ulfks Söhne, / tapfere Männer, / nach ihrem Vater machten“ – im Original in rhythmischer Form mit Stabreim (U 225, Abb. 1):

<i>Munu æigi mærki</i>	<i>mæiri verða,</i>
<i>þan Ulf's synir</i>	<i>æftir gærðu,</i>
<i>sniallir svæinar,</i>	<i>at sinn faður.</i>

Entsprechend die Fortsetzung (U 226): „Sie errichteten Steine / und machten / den großen Stab / zu Wahrzeichen [des Ruhms]“,

<i>Ræistu stæina</i>	<i>ok staf unnu</i>
<i>ok inn mikla</i>	<i>at iarteknum.</i>

Die Denkmäler von Bällsta sind monumental: zwei Runensteine auf dem Thingplatz mit dem mächtigen Stab als Ruhmeszeichen. Man sollte meinen, solch eine Formulierung müsse einmalig sein. Doch erscheint der Anfang *Munu æigi mærki / mæiri verða*, wie ein Zitat wirkend (Wulf 2003, 979), noch in einer anderen Inschrift aus Uppland (U 69 Eggeby), in der eine Mutter ihres einzigen Sohnes mit einem Brückenbau gedenkt.¹⁴

als stabende Formel, die vielleicht auch (so Wulf 2003, 980) auf U Fv1974;203 Åby, Gemeinde Björklinge, Uppland vorliegt.

¹⁴ Möglicherweise enthält die Inschrift, wie Wulf (ibid., 980) erwägt, zwei Langzeilen: *Munu æigi mærki mæiri verða / möður gærði // æftir sun / sinn æiniga*.



Abb. 1. Das schwedische Runendenkmal U 225 Bällsta aus Uppland mit dem ersten Teil der Gedenkinschrift in rhythmischer Form mit Stabreim: „Keine Denkmäler / werden größer sein ...“. Foto: Bengt A. Lundberg (1985), © Riksantikvarieämbetet, Stockholm/Visby.

Öffentlichkeit und Bekanntheit

Aus den bisher besprochenen Inschriften wurde bereits deutlich, dass auch andere Aspekte als die herausgehobenen – Stattlichkeit und Schönheit sowie Größe und Monumentalität – vorhanden sind, nämlich Öffentlichkeit und Bekanntheit, wenn es in U 102 Viby z. B. heißt: „ein großes Denkmal / für viele Menschen“ (*mykit mæarki / fyrir [m]argum manni*). Für die Emendation **[m]arkum mani** sprechen mehrere Gründe, nicht zuletzt die Alliteration.

Unsicherer ist dagegen ein zweites Beispiel (Sö 41 Björke): „das große Denkmal, von dem man immer (erzählen) hören soll“ (*mæarki it mikla / man i (h)øyrrn*), denn Lesung und Deutung sind problematisch (s. Källström 2007, 159 Anm. 167).

Unüberbietbarkeit und Einmaligkeit

Unüberbietbarkeit und Einmaligkeit zeigt beim Bällsta-Denkmal bereits die erste Stabreimzeile „Keine Denkmäler / werden größer sein ...“ (*Munu æigi mæarki / mæiri verða ...*, U 225), die auf U 69 Eggeby noch ein weiteres Mal vorkommt. Es ist vor allem das Adverb *æigi* ‚nicht‘, im Sinne von ‚nie‘, hier übersetzt mit ‚keine‘, das diesen Eindruck vermittelt. So auch in der alliterierenden Schlusszeile des Weg-Monumentes von U 323 Sälna: „Nie kann ein Weg-Denkmal / besser sein“ (*Mā æigi brautarkuml / bætra verða*). In der Kombination von Adverb und Komparativ kommt die beabsichtigte Vorstellung der Einmaligkeit zum Ausdruck.

Die vollständige Strophe des gut 3 m hohen Steins von Sälna bietet darüber hinaus einen weiteren denkmalcharakterisierenden Aspekt, der im folgenden Abschnitt besprochen wird.

Dauer und Ewigkeit

Dauer und Ewigkeit werden ebenfalls meist mit einem Adverb ausgedrückt, nämlich *æi* ‚immer‘, der genaue Gegensatz zu *æigi* im Sinne von ‚nie‘. Dies kann mit dem Eingang der Strophe von Sälna illustriert werden, wo die beiden Adverbien die Aussage umschließen. Die Strophe folgt auf die Gedenkinschrift dreier Söhne für ihren Vater und die Fürbittformel: „Immer wird liegen / solange die Menschheit lebt / die fest gefügte Brücke / breit nach dem trefflichen (Mann). / Junge Männer machten sie / nach ihrem Vater. / Nie kann ein Weg-Denkmal / besser sein“,

<i>Æi mun liggia</i>	<i>með aldr lifir</i>
<i>brō harðslagin,</i>	<i>bræið æft gōðan.</i>
<i>Svæinar gærðu</i>	<i>at sinn faður.</i>
<i>Mā æigi brautarkuml</i>	<i>bætra verða.</i>

In einmaliger¹⁵ Weise zeigt diese strophisch gestaltete Inschrift nebeneinander die denkmalcharakterisierenden Elemente der Unüberbietbarkeit (*æigi* + Komparativ) und der Dauer, des Ewigwährenden (*æi*). Klos (2009, 154) meint, unter Berufung auf Beck (1978, 559), dass mit ‚Weg-Denkmal‘ nicht der mächtige Runenstein, sondern die Brücke gemeint sei. Es spricht

¹⁵ Hübler 1996, 146 macht in seiner Interpretation auf zwei Phänomene aufmerksam, die nur in dieser Inschrift auftreten: die Verwendung von *aldr* ‚Zeitalter, Leben‘ in temporalem Zusammenhang und das einmalige, wegen der Alliteration gebildete Kompositum *brautarkuml*. Zur Kritik von Hüblers Arbeit s. Wulf 1998, 95–97.

jedoch einiges dafür, das Ensemble von Runenstein am Wege und dessen Befestigung durch die Brücke zusammen als Weg-Denkmal aufzufassen, auch wenn der Stein selbst nur in der Errichterformel genannt wird. Die metrisch-stilistische Struktur der Vollstrophe hat Naumann (1998, 709) analysiert: Das „Adynaton“, die Umschreibung von ‚niemals‘ durch Berufung auf das Eintreten eines unmöglichen Ereignisses, „als typische [rhetorische] Übertreibungs- und Verfremdungsfigur“ ziele dem Sinn nach darauf, „daß der Nachruf des Toten die Lebensdauer des Steins selbst ... oder die der Brücke ... überdauern möge.“ Dieser Sinn „wird jedoch klar, wenn man statt der ‚immer‘-Formel das implizierte adynatische ‚niemals‘ unterlegt: ‚Eher gehe die Brücke, der Stein, die Menschheit unter, als daß ...“¹⁶.

Zwei Vorstellungsbereiche begegnen dabei: Der Bezug auf die Lebensdauer von Runenstein und Runenstäben sowie der Bezug auf die Existenz von Menschheit und Welt. Von ersterem stehen beispielhaft beide Teile auf dem Stein von Sm 16 Nöbbele nebeneinander: „Deshalb wird des tüchtigen Mannes / gedacht werden, / solange der Stein lebt [= existiert] / und die Stäbe der Runen“

*P̄y mun gō[ðs manns u]m getit verða
með stæinn lifr ok stafir rún[a].¹⁷*

Auf dänischer Seite entspricht dem „Ewig wird stehen, / solange der Stein lebt [= existiert], / diese Gedenkschrift, / die Æskil machte“ (DR 212 Tillitse):

*Ē mun standa mæþ stēn lifr
witrind [für vitring] sū ær wan Æskil.*

Dies ist übrigens der einzige Selbsterrichterstein aus Dänemark.

Ähnlich, allerdings unsicher hergestellt aus einer defekten Inschrift: „Ewig wird stehen, / solange der Stein am Leben ist, / diese Gedenkschrift, / die Sylfa(?) ausführte“ (DR 229 Sandby 3):

*Ē mun s[t]an[da mæþ stēn ā] lif
witring sūsi ær wan Sylfa.*

¹⁶ Nach Naumann (ibd.) lässt sich das Adynaton in Nachrufgedichten „angemessen aus den affektiven und expressiven Ausdrucksbedürfnissen der Panegyrik erklären“. Runische Belege sind ihm außerdem noch folgende Inschriften: Sm 16 Nöbbele, U 69 Eggeby, U 225–U 226 Bällsta, G 343 St. Hans, Visby, DR 212 Tillitse und DR 229 Sandby.

¹⁷ Snædal 2002, 70 f. weist auf eine Parallele, den Runenstein von G 80 Linde, hin, bei der allerdings der Text nach älterer Dokumentation ergänzt wird: *Stain lit Böt[ul]f(r)stafa[merki] ...* „Den Stein ließ Bötulfr als ein (Runen)Stab-Denkmal“ [sc. errichten].

Hier „ist nicht der Stein allein gemeint, sondern das ganze Denkmal“ (Wulf 2003, 978). Eine dritte dänische Inschrift gehört ebenfalls hierher: „Diese Stäbe / werden für Þörgunnr/ sehr lange leben“ (DR 40 Randbøl):

*Þēr stafar munu Þörgunni
miðk længi lifa.*

Ganz ähnlich kann auch die Inschrift auf dem Stein von DR 119 Spentrup (s. Moltke 1985, 541) ergänzt werden.

Versuchsweise möchte ich Sö 61 Ösby einbeziehen. In der Inschrift heißt es in eigentümlicher Konstruktion *stæinn æfila standr* „ewiglich steht der Stein“.¹⁸

Der zweite Vorstellungsbereich bezieht sich auf die Existenz von Menschheit und Welt. Zwei Inschriften stehen auf dem Felsblock U 114 Runby, die erste (A) erwähnt das Behauen des Steins und den Bau einer gepflasterten Steinbrücke (s. dazu Klos 2009, 175), die zweite (B) besagt: „Dies [= die Steinbrücke und die runenbeschriebenen Felswände] soll als Erinnerung an die [in A namentlich genannten drei] Männer stehen, / solange Menschen leben“ (*Þat skal at minnum manna, / meðan mænn lifa*).¹⁹

Ob solche Inschriften gültige Voraussagen enthalten, mag man mit Blick auf das interessanteste Runendenkmal dieser Gruppe bezweifeln. Im Jahre 1982 wurde bei archäologischen Ausgrabungen in der St. Hans Kirchenruine in Visby eine unvollständige, in vier verschieden große Teile zerbrochene Grabplatte mit einer am Rand entlanglaufenden Inschrift gefunden (G 343, Snædal 2002, 84). Anfang und Ende zeigen Lücken auf diesem malträtierten *kumbl*, doch erhalten blieben die stabenden Zeilen: „Immer, solange die Welt wacht [= besteht], / liegt dieses Denkmal hier / über dem Manne, / nach dem es der Erbe / gemacht hat“,

¹⁸ Den Deutungsvorschlag *æfila* ‚ewiglich‘ für Sö 61 **e(f)ila** hatte bereits Bugge vorgelegt. Im Editionsartikel zu dieser Inschrift (SRI, 3: 47) lehnte Brate jedoch diesen Vorschlag ab unter Verweis auf Sö 207 Överselö und U 792 Ulunda *hæfila* ‚tüchtig, mannhaft‘ mit der eigens aufgestellten Bedeutung ‚stattlich‘ (so auch Peterson 2006, s.v. *hæfila*). Zu den Einzelheiten der Forschungsgeschichte s. Hübler 1996, 44 f. Die Belege für altnord. *æfiliga* (*Stjórn*) und altschwed. *ävinnelika* (s. Söderwall 1884–1918, 2.2: 1157) liegen spät.

¹⁹ Eindrucksvoll schließt Jansson (1987, 161) seine Übersicht über die wikingerzeitlichen schwedischen Runensteine mit diesen Worten und kommentiert: „The anticipation of the carver of the Runby block ... has – so far at least – proved true: his runes will remain, he says, ‘in memory of the men as long as mankind lives’.“

*Ey miðan vereld vakir*²⁰
liggr merki hier yfir manni þaim
ar erfingi eftir [g]ierði.

Diese Inschriften bewegen sich in einem christlichen Kontext, und die darin fixierten Vorstellungen mögen als Hybris, ja als Todsünde *superbia* erscheinen. Doch lagen wohl solche Gedanken den Angehörigen und Auftraggebern aus der selbstbewussten Oberschicht recht fern.

Auf der anderen Seite gibt es zwei sörmländische Runensteine, die in der Runenschlinge einen großen Hammer zeigen (Sö 86 Åby und Sö 111 Stenkvista). „Auffälligerweise wird das Runendenkmal hier nicht mit dem gewöhnlichen Terminus *stæinn* ... bezeichnet, sondern mit dem Ausdruck *mærki sīrūn*“, der, nur hier belegt, „ein mit immerwährenden Runen geschmücktes Denkmal“ bedeuten kann.²¹ „In der Hoffnung darauf, daß die Gottheit dafür sorgen wird, daß das Denkmal lange Zeit bestehen bleibt, wird das Denkmal durch das göttliche Symbol des Hammers unter den Schutz Thors gestellt“ (Hultgård 1998, 733).²²

Erkennbarkeit und Sichtbarkeit

Während die Rubriken Öffentlichkeit und Bekanntheit, Unüberbietbarkeit und Einmaligkeit sowie Dauer und Ewigkeit aus den vorgängigen Inschriften unter Beachtung von *æi* ‚immer‘ entwickelt worden sind, gehe ich nun wieder einen Schritt zurück und wende mich erneut einem Adjektiv zu, das ein weiteres Element von Denkmalkennzeichnung darstellt: *kænnilīkr* ‚erkennbar‘. Die insgesamt rhythmisch angelegte Inschrift des schon herangezogenen Steins von Sm 16 Nöbbele besagt, dass vier Söhne zum Gedenken an ihren Vater Kali ein gut erkennbares, ein ins Auge springendes („eye-catching“²³) Denkmal errichtet haben:

²⁰ „Diese poetische Formulierung ist einzigartig, weder Substantiv noch Verb sind sonst in Runeninschriften belegt“ (Hübler 1996, 145) – schließlich ist „*verald* hier authentisch die früheste nordische Wiedergabe von christlich-lateinisch *saeculum*“ (freundlicher Hinweis von Hans-Peter Naumann), und das macht die Wahl als Titel *Medan världen vakar* durch Thorgunn Snædal (2002) gut verständlich.

²¹ Unter Annahme der temporalen statt der lokalen Bedeutung des Präfixes *sī-*, wie sie in *símálugr* ‚stets redend‘ (*Konungs skuggsjá*, 50,1) und *sískelfir* ‚ständig sich Bewegender (= Krieger)‘ (Egill Skallagrímsson, *Lausavísur*, Nr. 24,5) vorkommt.

²² Diesen paganen Zeugnissen hat Hultgård (1998, 732 f.) christliche gegenübergestellt, ebenfalls in Södermanland, in deren Maskendarstellungen er den neuen Gott Christus abgebildet sieht (Sö 112 Kolunda, Sö 167 Landshammar, Sö 367 Släbro).

²³ So die treffende Übersetzung von Peter Foote (Jansson 1987, 137).

ræisþu þæir svæinar æftir sinn faður
kumbl kænnilíkt æftir Kala dauðan.

Erkennbarkeit und Sichtbarkeit sind wichtige Merkmale eines Denkmals, wenn es denn wahrgenommen werden soll. Schon bei *Ardre 4* (G 114) hieß es „das [größte] Denkmal, das man sehen kann“ (*Merki ... ar menn siā*). Damit man Denkmäler gut sehen kann, werden sie oft an Wegen aufgestellt, wie die beiden Steine von *Tjuvstigen*, deren Inschriften in drei metrischen Halbstrophen (*Fornyrðislag*) festhalten: Zwei Männer errichteten die Steine nach ihren Brüdern „nächst dem Wege“ (*at brøðr sīna / brautu næsta*, Sö 34). Sie starben im „Osten“. Auf dem anderen (Sö 35) steht: „*Ingigærðr* ließ einen zweiten Stein errichten nach ihren Söhnen, ein sichtbares (Denkmal)²⁴ machte sie“ oder auch: „machte sichtbare (Steine)“, wenn die schwierige Stelle so gedeutet werden darf:

Lēt Ingigærðr annan ræisa stæin
at syni sīna sýna gærði.

„Hier soll stehen / der Stein nahe dem Wege“ (*Hēr mun standa / stæinn nær brautu*) heißt es anderwärts (*U 838 Ryda*). Die sichtbare Aufstellung von Steinen „nächst dem Wege“ entspricht der Feststellung aus den *Hávamál* (Str. 72) der *Edda*: „Selten stehen Gedenksteine nahe dem Wege, setzt sie nicht ein Verwandter dem Verwandten“,

sialdan bautasteinar standa brauto nær,
nema reisi niðr at nið.

Der Standort ist wichtig für die Sichtbarkeit, die ein „Denkzeichen“ besonders „an einer Wegkreuzung“ hat (*vitring þessa / ā vegamōti*), wie es gleichlautend für das *kumbl* (so bezeichnet in der Errichterformel) bei *Sm 45 Bräkentorp* und *Sm 60 Skaftarp* heißt; „in beiden Inschriften ist *witring* Apposition zu *kumbl*, bezeichnet also das ganze Denkmal“ (*Wulf 2003, 978*).²⁵ Es kann aber auch die Aufstellung eines Runensteins zwischen zwei Höfen diesen in besonderer Weise sichtbar machen (dazu *Jesch 1998, 468–470*), wie es auf *U 729 Ågersta* festgehalten wird: „Hier wird stehen / der Stein zwischen Höfen. / Es rate der Mann, / der runenkundig ist, / die Runen, / die Balli ritzte [= schrieb]“,

²⁴ Peter Foote (ibd., 139): „a visible cenotaph“.

²⁵ So auch *Marold 2010, 7* (im Abschnitt „Die syntaktische Beziehung von Vers und Prosa“).

<i>Hiær mun standa</i> ²⁶	<i>stæinn miðli býia</i>
<i>Rāði drængr</i>	<i>þar rýnn sē</i>
<i>rūnum þæim</i>	<i>sum Balli rīsti.</i> ²⁷

Mit Salberger (2003, 684 f.) ist **tekr** nicht mit *drængr*, sondern mit *tōkr* ‚findig, zügig‘ zu deuten; dann heißt die Zeile: „Es lese/rate findig/zügig, der runenkundig ist ...“ (s. Düwel 2008, 133).

In besonderer Weise sind Erkennbarkeit und Sichtbarkeit gegeben, wenn ein Runenstein auf einer natürlichen Anhöhe, einem Hügel oder Berg steht. Dafür gibt es bemerkenswerte Zeugnisse, zwei davon auf den Steinen von Hällestad 1 und 2: „Krieger errichteten / nach ihrem Bruder / den Stein auf einer Anhöhe / fest stehend mit Runen“ (DR 295):

<i>Sattu drængiar</i>	<i>æftir sin bröpur</i>
<i>stēn ā biargi</i>	<i>stōþan rūnum.</i>

Und mit Übernahme der Anzeile in Zeile 2 und Vervollständigung zu einer neuen Langzeile (DR 296): „Nun soll stehen / der Stein auf dem Hügel“ (*nū skal standa / stēn ā biargi*).

Den gotländischen Stein von G 203 Hogrän hat ein Sigmundr samt einem Brückenbau zum Gedenken an Vater und Brüder errichten lassen. Schlangenwindungen wurden entworfen und in den Stein gehauen. „Sigmundr hat auf diese Weise ein Gedenkzeichen/Denkmal geschaffen“ (*Sigmundr hefīr slīku unnit kuml ...*). In rhythmisch geformten stabreimenden Zeilen schließt die Inschrift: „Hier soll stehen / der Stein als Denkmal/Gedenkzeichen / leuchtend auf der Anhöhe / und die Brücke davor. / Rōðbiern ritzte [= schrieb] / diese Runen, / einige doch Gairlaifr, / er kennt sie gut“ (vgl. Snædal 2002, 79):

<i>Hier mun standa</i>	<i>stainn at merki</i>
<i>bie(r)tr ā biergi</i>	<i>en brō fyrir.</i>

²⁶ Marold 2010, 7 (im Abschnitt „Das gepriesene Denkmal“) weist auf die Erinnerungsfunktion am Ende einiger Inschriften hin, zu denen in „abgeschwächter Form ... auch Versinschriften zu zählen [seien], die mit der Formel *Hiær mun standa stæinn...* (G 203, U 707, U 729, U 838), *Nu skal standa [stēn]...* (DR 296), *Her skal standa stæina[r]...* (Sö 206, vgl. U Fv1983;228) beginnen.“ Nach Wulf (2003, 977) handelt es sich bei dieser Wendung um „umlaufendes Formelgut“, für das er neben den Balli-Belegen (U 707, U 729, U 838) weitere Beispiele bringt. Bei DR 295 und DR 296 sowie bei Sm 45 und Sm 60 rechnet er „mit einem Zitat“ (S. 978).

²⁷ Balli spielt im Vergleich mit Fōtr bei Wulf (2003, 970) eine besondere Rolle für die These, „daß die Formulierung der Inschrift weitgehend das Werk des Ritzers war“ bzw. „daß die Mehrzahl der Runenverse von den Runenmeistern stammt“ (S. 1004).

Rōðbiern rīsti *rūniR þessa(R).*
Gairlaur sumar *AR gerla kann.*

Das adverbial verwendete Adjektiv *biertr* ‚leuchtend, bunt‘ weist auf eine farbige Gestaltung, eine Ausmalung, womöglich in grellen, schreienden Farben, wie schwedisch *bjärt* ‚grell, schreiend, auffallend‘ anzeigt. Was fällt auch mehr ins Auge als ein bunt bemalter Stein, noch dazu auf einem Hügel oder Berg? Damit ist ein weiteres Merkmal aus einer Inschrift benannt, mit dem Erkennbarkeit und Sichtbarkeit noch verstärkt werden können.

Farbigkeit und Buntheit

Durch Farbigkeit und Buntheit können auch relativ kleine Steine, wie der von G 280 Pilgård, zumal wenn sie auf einem Hügel gestanden haben (Gustavson 2001, 17 f., 31), ein eindrucksvolles Runendenkmal darstellen. „Hellbemalt stellten diesen Stein auf“ (*Biar(t)fänn steddur / siso stain*, Snædal 2002, 53; Düwel 2003a, 160) Brüder zum Gedenken an einen Rafrn, der bei der Überwindung der Dnjepr-Stromschnellen zu Tode gekommen war (Krause 1952; Düwel 2003a, 161 f.).

Ein zweites Adjektiv weist in dieselbe Richtung: In der rhythmisch abgefassten Inschrift auf dem Stein von Sö 213 Nybble heißt es: „Den Stein hieb Æsbiörn (zurecht) / bemalt zum Denkmal / (er) umband [= beschrieb] mit Runen / Gylla errichtete ihn nach Gæirbiörn ...“,

Stæin hiogg Æsbiörn *stæindan at vitum* [Plural],
bant með rūnum *ræisti Gylla at Gæirbiörn*

Nach dieser Gedenkinschrift lautet der Schluss: „Rate (die Runen), wer kann“ (*Rāði sār kunnī*). Das hier adjektivisch verwendete Partizipium Praeteriti Sing. mask. Akk. *stæindan* gehört zum zweimal belegten Verbum *stæina* ‚malen‘, dem *fā* ‚malen, färben, (Runen) ritzen‘²⁸ als *terminus technicus* (Ebel 1963, 30–35) zur Seite steht. Eine Inschrift (Sö 347 Gerstaberger) bezeugt sogar die arbeitsteilige Herstellung von Runenbeschriftung und Ausmalung von Schlangenband und Runen: „Æsbiörn schrieb (die Runen) und Ulfr malte“ (*Æsbiörn rīsti / ok Ulfr stæindi*).

²⁸ Die Belege sind hier nicht im Einzelnen aufgeführt, da unsicher ist, ob nicht durchgehend schon allein das Verfertigen der Runen die Bedeutung bestimmt, wie bei den Brakteaten IK 11 Åsum-C, IK 241,1 Åskatorp-F und IK 241,2 Väsby(?) -F. Die ursprüngliche Bedeutung ‚malen (die Runen mit roter Farbe)‘ dürfte noch in KJ 60 Vetteland, KJ 63 Einang, KJ 67 Noleby im Übergang zur Bedeutung ‚schreiben‘ mitschwingen.

Ähnlich auch Sö 205 Överselö, allerdings mit problematischer Konjektur *stæindi* aus **stink**. Runensteine sind also ausgemalt gewesen. Die Farben haben dem Zahn der Zeit nicht standhalten können. Doch sind unter günstigen Bedingungen Spuren der ursprünglichen Bemalung erhalten geblieben. Der Stein aus der St. Paul's Kathedrale in London hatte dem Fundbericht nach dunkle Reliefformate auf naturfarbenem Grund. Auf dieser Grundlage basiert ein Rekonstruktionsversuch.

Bei den Farbbefunden hat sich vor allem rot und schwarz, aber auch braun und weiß ergeben. Entsprechend hat man die farbige Bemalung einiger Steine zu rekonstruieren versucht, z. B. in der Kirche in Resmo (Öl 6; Jansson 1987, 153), ebenso in der Kirche von Köping auf Öland, wo zahlreiche Fragmente mit originalen Farbbrechen entdeckt wurden (Owe 2002). Noch heute ist es üblich, die Runen der schwedischen Steine meist rot auszumalen.²⁹ Bemerkenswert ist dabei, dass offenbar ursprünglich die Runen verschiedenfarbig ausgemalt wurden, aber nicht jeweils jede Rune oder jedes Wort in wechselnder Farbe, sondern nach syntaktischen Einheiten, z. B. eine zusammengehörige Verbalphrase (*lēt ræisa* „ließ errichten“, s. Owe 2002, Nr. 69, Pl. 10) oder eine Sinneinheit wie Name und Beinamen oder ähnlich, z. B. *Si(g)rīðr mār* „Sigriðr, das Mädchen“³⁰. Jedenfalls gilt für die Runensteine auch wie für viele antike Hinterlassenschaften, dass unser von den erhaltenen Überresten geprägter ‚einfarbiger‘ Blick nicht der mehrfarbigen, bunten einstigen Wirklichkeit entspricht.³¹

Bis jetzt haben wir aus den Runeninschriften eine Reihe von Kennzeichen entnommen, die ein Runendenkmal markieren. Es sind Stattlichkeit und Schönheit, Größe und Monumentalität, Öffentlichkeit und Bekanntheit, Unüberbietbarkeit und Einmaligkeit, Dauer und Ewigkeit, Erkennbarkeit und Sichtbarkeit sowie Farbigkeit und Buntheit.

Schließlich und außerhalb der sprachlich-lexikalischen Charakterisierungen und Bezeichnungen als Merkmal für ein Runendenkmal kann auch der bisher bereits öfter bemerkte poetische Schmuck, der sich in

²⁹ Als Vorbild könnte die Inschrift auf dem Stein von Sö 206 Överselö gedient haben: „Hier sollen stehen / diese Steine / gerötet [= rot] mit Runen, / Guðlaug errichtete sie ...“ (*Hēr skal standa / stæinar þessir, / rünur ruðnir / ræisti Guðlaug ...*). Die ist der einzige Beleg für das Verbum *riūða* (Ebel 1963, 36, so auch bei Peterson 2006).

³⁰ Auf einem Stein in der St. Lars Kirche in Linköping (Ög Fv1958;252), Abb. bei Lietoff 1999, 27.

³¹ Graepler 2011. Dass eine rekonstruierende Farbgebung nach heutiger ästhetischer Auffassung auch verfehlt, ja kitschig sein kann, zeigt der Versuch einer Ausmalung des großen Jellingsteins im Besuchszentrum Kongernes Jelling.

Alliterationen, regelrecht gebauten Stabreimzeilen, überhaupt in einer Vergestaltung darbietet und sich in dichterischer Überhöhung präsentiert, den Denkmalaspekt einer Inschrift und ihres Trägers ausmachen.

Alliteration und Vergestaltung

Schönheit, Größe und Farbigkeit werden, wie die bisher angeführten Belege zeigen, in der Runeninschrift direkt angesprochen. Der poetische Schmuck dagegen, der eine Inschrift auszeichnet, ist beim Lesen eher über das Ohr als über das Auge wahrnehmbar und somit von einer anderen Qualität. Alliteration/Stabreim und Vergestaltung zeigen sich in unterschiedlicher Weise von einer einzigen stabenden Langzeile über mehrzeilige Stabreimverse und Strophen bis hin zu komplizierten skaldischen Formen. Wie es Hans-Peter Naumann ausdrückt (1998, 697):

Als häufigste runische Repräsentationsform des *fornyrðislag* erscheint ... das einfache Kurzverspaar (*visuffjórðungr*), das in den prosaeingeleiteten Memorialinschriften des 11. Jahrhunderts vielfach Höhepunkt und Ausklang des Epitaphs bildet. Die zweithäufigsten Kategorien sind der Zweizeiler (*visuhelmingr*) und der Dreizeiler, den man – wohl ritzflächenbedingt – als ‚reduzierte‘ Vollstrophe betrachten darf. Steininschriftlich ist die voll ausgebildete Strophe zu vier Verszeilen seltener vertreten als in den spätmittelalterlichen Dichtungsbelegen, die aus dem losen Fundgut stammen. Welche Restriktionen der metrischen Durchformung längerer Textgebilde im Rahmen der Runenmemoria entgegenstehen, zeigen eindrücklich die schwedischen Inschriften von Tjuvstigen und Bällsta, die ihre sechs bzw. sieben Kurzverspaare auf jeweils zwei Steine verteilen (Sö 34, Sö 35 bzw. U 225, U 226).

Es folgen Beispiele für die verschiedenartigen Realisierungen, zuerst eine Langzeile (U 838 Ryda, s. S. 43 oben) und dann zwei Langzeilen³² (Sö 206 Överselö, s. S. 46, Anm. 29 oben):

<i>Hēr mun standa</i>	<i>stæinn nær brautu;</i>
<i>Hēr skal standa</i>	<i>stæinar þessir</i>
<i>rūnum ruðnik</i>	<i>ræisti Guðlaug.</i>

Drei Zeilen bietet G 343 St. Hans, Visby (s. S. 41 f. oben):

Ey miðan vereld vakir

³² Nach Marold (2010, 1, im Abschnitt „Das Corpus der ‚runischen Dichtung‘“) bilden mindestens zwei Langzeilen eine Strophe.

<i>liggr merki hier</i>	<i>yfir manni þaim</i>
<i>ar erfingi</i>	<i>eftir [g]ierði.³³</i>

Ein anderes Beispiel bietet der Runenmeister Balli, „dessen Inschriften den höchsten Anteil an Versen aufweisen“ (Wulf 2003, 986), mit U 729 Ågersta (s. S. 43 f. oben):

<i>Hiær mun standa</i>	<i>stæinn miðli býia.</i>
<i>Rāði tōkr</i>	<i>þar rýnn sē</i>
<i>rūnum þæim</i>	<i>sum Balli rīsti.</i>

Zur Metrik bemerkt Wulf (ibd.): „Es gibt keine überzähligen Hebungen, die Stäbe stehen auf den stärkstbetonten Silben (*raði* in Zeile zwei kann den Stab tragen ...), es steht lediglich in Zeile 3 der Hauptstab auf der vierten Hebung statt auf der dritten.“³⁴

Eine vierzeilige Strophe begegnet auf dem Stein U 323 Sälna (s. S. 39 f. oben):

<i>Æi mun liggia</i>	<i>með aldr lifir</i>
<i>brō harðslagin,</i>	<i>bræið æft gōðan.</i>
<i>Svæinar gærðu</i>	<i>at sinn faður.</i>
<i>Mā æigi brautarkuml</i>	<i>bætra verða.</i>

Naumann bemerkt dazu (1998, 709): „Die Vollstrophe verschränkt in ihrem ersten Helming auf elaborierte Weise eine metrische Figur³⁵ mit einer semantischen. Gekreuzte Alliteration ($\text{æ} : l : a : l$) hebt ein implizites Adynaton [s. dazu oben S. 39 f.] hervor (*æi mun liggia / með aldr lifir*)“. Diese Strophe im *Fornyrðislag* „gehört zu den gelungensten der Runendichtung“ urteilt Wulf (2003, 1003), der ausführlich kommentiert und resümiert: „Dieser Autor hat tiefere Einsichten in die Gesetze stabreimender Dichtung als viele andere Verfasser von Runenversen.“ Da in

³³ Wulf (2003, 1003) kommentiert: „Die erste Zeile ist keine Langzeile, auch wenn beabsichtigt gewesen sein sollte, Vokal mit /v/ staben zu lassen – es fehlt eine Hebung. Vielleicht war dem Verfasser eine Vollzeile aus einer *Ljóðaháttir*-Strophe in den Sinn gekommen?“ (Vgl. *Fjölsvinnsmál*, Str. 12,6: *æ meðan öld lifir*, ohne *æ* auch *Völuspá*, Str. 16,6, *Gripisspá*, Str. 23,6 und 41,6, *Innsteinslied*, Str. 18,6, *Edda-Bruchstücke*, II, Str. 3,4). Problematisch ist die Auffassung von Marold (2010, 7, im Abschnitt „Leseaufforderung“): Drei Vollzeilen mit jeweils drei Hebungen.

³⁴ Während zu Beginn einwandfreie, stabende Langzeilen vorliegen (Wulf 2003, 986, 988), kommen bei Balli auch „Verstöß[e] gegen die Technik des Alliterationsverses“ vor, die nebst anderen „Fehlern“ Wulf (S. 987) bespricht.

³⁵ Zuvor heißt es: „Als zusätzlicher metrischer Schmuck tritt relativ häufig die gekreuzte und umschließende Alliteration hinzu (ab/ab bzw. ba/ab) ...“ (Naumann 1998, 708).

der vorausgehenden Fürbittformel die Zwillingsformeln *and ok sēlu* ‚Geist und Seele‘ und *sakar ok syndir* ‚Vergehen und Sünden‘ mit jeweils zwei betonten Silben auf die Strophe vorbereiten (mit Hinweis auf von See 1967, 22 f.), bedeute das: Die Prosa der Eingangsformeln und die Verse haben einen Urheber. „Der Runenmeister hat nicht einen Poeten, einen Liederdichter beauftragt, eine Strophe für den Stein zu verfassen, sondern das hat er selber geleistet“ (Wulf 2003, 1003).

Sven B. F. Jansson sagt einmal (1987, 139): „The inscription on the rune stones at Tjuvstigen (*þiúðstígr?* ‘public path’) in Södermanland [Sö 34 und Sö 35] consists of twelve lines³⁶, making three half-strophes in *fornyrðislag*“ (vgl. S. 43 und 47 oben):

<i>Styrlaugr ok Holmbr</i>	<i>stæina ræistu</i>
<i>at brøðr sīna</i>	<i>brautu næsta.</i>
<i>Þæir ændaðus</i>	<i>ī austrvegi,</i>
<i>Þörkæll ok Styrbjörn,</i>	<i>þiagnar gōðir.</i>
<i>Lēt Ingigærðr</i>	<i>annan ræisa stæin</i>
<i>at syni sīna,</i>	<i>sýna gærði.</i>

„Styrlaugr und Holmbr / errichteten die Steine / zum Gedenken an ihre Brüder / dem Weg am nächsten. / Sie endeten / auf Ostfahrt, / Þörkell und Styrbjörn, / vortreffliche *þiagnar*. / Es ließ Ingigæirr bzw. Ingigærðr / den anderen Stein errichten / zum Gedenken an seine bzw. ihre Söhne / er bzw. sie machte diese (d. h. die beiden Ritzungen) sichtbar.“ (Naumann, in Vorbereitung, Nr. 57–58, leicht abweichend von der bisherigen Übersetzung.)

Auch begegnet eine *Ljóðahátt*-Halbstrophe³⁷ (DR 40 Randbøl, s. S. 41 oben):

Þēr stafar munu Þörgunni
miðk længi lifa.

In den bisher angeführten Inschriften hieß es *Rāði sār kunni* (Sö 213) oder *Rāði tōkr / þar rýnn sē* (U 729). Die Tätigkeit des *rāða*, zu der ein Betrachter der Inschrift aufgefordert wird, umfasst einen Prozess folgender Schritte: sehen, lesen, deuten und damit verstehen und zwar nicht nur dem Wortsinn nach, sondern auch die metrische-poetische Gestaltung erfassend. Das aber setzt wohl ein lautes Lesen voraus, bei dem erst die artikulierten Hebungen und Alliterationen die Struktur einer Langzeile und die einer Strophe oder Halbstrophe hörbar werden lassen. Fred

³⁶ Hier in Langzeilen geboten.

³⁷ Naumann 1998, 699 mit Hinweis auf Kabell 1978, 186.

Wulf (2003, 997 f.) hat das am Beispiel der Inschrift von Sö 320 Stäringe verdeutlicht: „Der war ostwärts / mit Ingvarr, / ein tüchtiger Mann, / Sohn der Líføy“,

*Sār VAR austr með Ingvari,
dræng sniallan, sun Líføyar.*

Einheimische wussten über die Verse Bescheid, Wulf schreibt:

Vorüberziehende, jedenfalls solche, die häufiger Gelegenheit gehabt hatten, Inschriften auf Gedenksteinen zu lesen, können, als sie *austr* lasen, hellhörig geworden sein und gegen Ende der Inschrift waren die unmittelbar aufeinander folgenden Stäbe in *sniallan* und *sun* unüberhörbar. ‚Unüberhörbar‘, denn die Inschrift wurde laut gelesen, und diese lange Inschrift (93 Runen) mit Sicherheit zweimal.

Einmalig und daher unüberbietbar ist nach einer konventionellen Gedenkinschrift der Totenpreis in einer runenepigraphischen *Dróttkvætt*-Strophe, dem vornehmsten und schwierigsten Strophenmaß der Skalden, auf dem Karlevi-Stein, über den Hans-Peter Naumann schreibt (1998, 701):

Der um das Jahr 1000 von Leuten vermutlich westnordischer Herkunft gesetzte öländische Stein von Karlevi (Öl 1; DR 411) führt das Metrum in einer klassisch durchgebildeten Nachrufstrophe vor. Vergleicht man sie mit dem ersten überlieferten normgerechten *dróttkvætt*-Gedicht, Þorbjörn hornklofis fragmentarischer Glymdrápa vom Ende des 9. Jahrhunderts, so lassen sich rein formal gesehen weder Unterschiede in der Hendingstechnik noch im Kenninggebrauch feststellen.

Im Prosaabschnitt am Anfang der Inschrift steht: „Dieser Stein ist gesetzt nach Sibbi, (dem) trefflichen/guten, Sohn Foldarrs. Und seine Kriegerschar setzte auf der Insel (diese) Toten-[Erinnerung].“ Die folgende Strophe besagt: „Verborgen liegt, dem folgten / – die meisten wussten das – die größten / Taten, der Krieger, / in diesem Hügel. / Es wird nicht herrschen / ein kampfstarker, / rechtschaffener Krieger / über das Land in Dänemark.“ In altnordischer Sprache hergestellt lautet die Strophe (der Stabreim ist durch Fettdruck, die skaldischen Binnenreime werden durch Kursive gekennzeichnet):

Folginn liggr hinn's fylgðu
(flestr vissi þat) mestar
dæðir dolga Þrúðar
draugr í þeimsi haugi.

Munat *reið*-Viðurr *ráða*
rógstarkr í Danmarku
Endils iarmungrundar
ørgrandari landi

In die Strophe sind zahlreiche Kenningar eingebettet.³⁸

Der Karlevi-Stein steht heute auf einem kleinen, künstlich aufgeworfenen Hügel etwa 300 m vom Inselufer entfernt am Kalmarsund. Noch im 17. Jahrhundert war er wohl am ursprünglichen Ort zwischen zwei Grabhügeln aufgestellt (*SRI*, 1: 16). Ob einer davon der in der Strophe erwähnte ist, kann nicht mehr geklärt werden. Die Runen- und Sprachformen datieren die Inschrift auf etwa 1000. Eine eindeutige geographisch-kulturelle Zuordnung ist nicht möglich, Stil und Sprache der Strophe vergleichen sich der zeitgleichen norwegisch-isländischen Skaldik, aber es gibt auch eine Reihe ostskandinavischer Sprachmerkmale, wie auch die boustrophedon-Anordnung der Inschriftzeilen an dänische Muster anknüpft.³⁹

In besonderem Maße gilt für die Karlevi-Inschrift, dass die „Runenmetrik“ vorwiegend „Nachruhdichtung“ ist und als solche zweierlei Funktionen erfüllt: „Die versförmigen Nekrologe dienen enkomiastischen Zwecken, und sie realisieren über die metrisch-rhetorische Gestaltung Dekormöglichkeiten, die als exzeptionelle Stilcharakteristika gewollt Abstand zur Masse der prosaischen Gedenkschriften schaffen“ (Naumann 1998, 708).

Nach Marold (1998, 671) ist das Karlevi-Denkmal „ein Stein für einen Herrscher“. Zwar werden wie in anderen Inschriften auch seine kriegerischen Taten erwähnt, „aber gerühmt wird seine Herrschertugend. Auch hier finden wir den Unvergleichlichkeitstopos⁴⁰ – kein kampfstärkerer Fürst wird in Dänemark herrschen, keiner der ‚in höherem Maß[e]

³⁸ Vgl. den umfassenden Artikel von Marold (2003), Düwel 2008, 134 f., ferner Andrén 2007.

³⁹ Zu den verschiedenen Bezügen s. Andrén 2007, der sie als „patchwork“ bezeichnet und die Inschrift insgesamt in die frühe Geschichte Ölands einzubetten versucht.

⁴⁰ „Zum rhetorischen Repertoire“ zählt Hans-Peter Naumann (1998, 708) „Wiederholungs- und Abwandlungsfiguren, aber auch semantische Tropen wie Litotes, Hyperbel und das Adynaton“, wie bei U 323 Sälva (s. oben S. 39 f.). Der Unvergleichlichkeitstopos kann auch mit Hilfe einer letzten Endes gemeingermanischen Formel dargeboten werden, wie auf dem Stein von Sö 154 Skarpåker, der besagt: „Gunnarr errichtete diesen Stein nach Ljöbiörn, seinem Sohn“ (Langzweigrunen). Es folgt in stablosen Runen: *Jarð skal rifna / ok upphiminn* „Die Erde wird zerreißen / und der Himmel darüber.“ Der Sinn: Erde und Himmel werden vergehen, bevor ein Mensch wie Ljöbiörn wiederkommen wird (Marold 1998, 669 f.; Wulf 2003, 1002; Düwel 2008, 137).

Schaden abwehrt vom Land.“ Einzigartig bleibt dieses Runendenkmal für einen herausragenden Vertreter der Oberschicht jener Zeit.

Auf dem mit 1,37 m Höhe keineswegs auffälligen rundlichen (Durchmesser 0,68–0,72m) und schmucklosen Stein entspricht der poetische Schmuck in Wort und Vers in der Inschrift-Strophe dem ornamentalen und figürlichen Schmuck anderer Runensteine, genauer: Runen-Bild-Steine, die ebensogut als Runendenkmäler bezeichnet werden können.

Auf dem norwegischen Alstad-Stein sind zwei Inschriften eingetragen, außerdem bietet der 2,50 m hohe, aber schmale Stein auf der Vorderseite reichen figürlichen Bildschmuck. Die ältere Inschrift (N 61) gehört zum Typ der Gedenkinschrift. Die Runen auf der Vorderseite sind stark beschädigt und werden von Magnus Olsen (*NlyR*, 1: 150) als *ok mynda-stein (mætt)ir þausi* hergestellt. Inscriptliches (**m**)*unta* hat schon Bugge wegen des reichen Bildschmucks auf dem Stein mit altnord. *mynd* ‚Gestalt, Figur, Bild‘ verbunden. Damit wird der Alstad-Stein (um das Jahr 1000 datiert nach Spurkland 2005, 101) als *mynda-steinn*, d. h. ‚Bildstein‘ bezeichnet. Gerade die nur hier vorkommende Bezeichnung *mynda-steinn* ‚Bildstein‘ macht den Denkmalcharakter aus.

Äußere Erscheinung und epigraphische Besonderheiten als Kennzeichen von Runendenkmälern

Meine Darlegung versucht, Kriterien für ein Runendenkmal aus den Inschriften selbst zu gewinnen, und zwar aus solchen Inschriften, die auf sich selbst und ihren Kontext verweisen. Runendenkmäler sind jedoch darüber hinaus sehr viele andere, in deren Inschriften Größe, Farbigkeit usw. nicht eigens ausgedrückt sind. Diese weisen die entsprechenden Merkmale jedoch bereits in ihrer äußeren Erscheinung auf, wie die folgende Beispiele zeigen: KJ 97/DR 360 Björketorp, DR 42 Jelling 2, DR 282–DR 286 Hunnestad, DR 334 und DR 335 Västra Strö, Ög 136 Rök, Vg 119 Sparlösa, Sö 101 Ramsund, U 1161 Altuna, N 449 Kuli, N 84 Vang, N 68 Dynna.

Darüber hinaus wäre zu erwägen, ob nicht im damaligen zeitgenössischen Verständnis auch runenepigraphische Besonderheiten wie nicht-lexikalische Inschriften, vor allem in Uppland und Södermanland (s. zuletzt Bianchi 2010, 165–222), oder der Wechsel von Runenschriftarten (Langzweigrunen, stablosen Runen, wie auf Sö 154 Skarpåker, s. dazu Anm. 40) einschließlich der gebundenen Runen (schwed. *samstavsrunor*)

und der Geheimrunen, besser Runenchiffren, für die Charakterisierung als Runendenkmal eine Rolle spielten.

Summa

Die zuletzt angedeuteten Möglichkeiten zur Bestimmung eines Runendenkmals lassen sich wohl kaum verbindlich festlegen und bedürfen weiterer Untersuchungen. Auf die sichere Seite kommen wir – jedenfalls ist es die einzige wissenschaftliche, d. h. intersubjektiv überprüfbare Vorgehensweise –, wenn wir die Inschriftenterminologie zugrunde legen, die uns als Denkmalmarkierer eine Reihe von Bezeichnungen und Epitheta bereitstellt, zu denen die spezifische Poetizität der Totenmemoria in einigen Inschriften hinzutritt.

Unter den Tausenden von Runeninschriften der Wikingerzeit sind es freilich nur wenige, die diese Merkmale ausdrücklich nennen oder hervorheben. Sie können daher im strengen Sinn als die auch im Verständnis der Zeit genuinen ‚Runendenkmäler‘ bezeichnet werden. Und sie sind einmalige originale Dokumente, authentische Selbstzeugnisse, kostbare Traditionen, die dem Horazischen *monumentum aere perennius* nahe kommen: „Ein Denkmal, fester, ewiger als Erz“.

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English summary

“No monuments will be greater ...’: What is a runic monument?”

German *Denkmal* (cf. Latin *monumentum*) in its narrow sense designates, according to Grimm: “preserved written works; testimonies of former times; relics”. Thus also in titles of books concerning runic inscriptions: *Die deutschen Runendenkmäler* (“The German runic monuments”) or *Die einheimischen Runendenkmäler des Festlandes* (“The native runic monuments of the Continent”), corresponding to titles in other languages such as *The Old-Northern Runic Monuments* or *De danske Runemindesmærker* (“The Danish runic monuments”). *Denk-mal* in the sense of German “Gedenk-Zeichen” (literally ‘thought-mark’) is linked to German words such as *Gedächtnismal*, *Erinnerungszeichen* ‘memorial sign’,

meaning the everlasting memory of a person or an event. A *Denkmal* ‘monument’ is thus a phenomenon of memory or remembrance culture. “Making monuments or historical works (*monumenta*)” serves memory (*memoria*), and it is the deceased “in whose memory monuments are erected” according to Isidor of Sevilla.

Memorial inscriptions in the older futhark contain as designations for the monument itself the following terms: **stainar** ‘stone’ (also plural); **halar** ‘flat or round stone’; **arina** ‘flat stone’; and **warur** ‘stone enclosure’ as on the stone fragment from Tomstad, which probably originally stood in an upright position in a stone setting. The terms in which a monument is described correspond roughly to its shape or its association with other objects. Anglo-Saxon runic inscriptions witness only *becun* ‘sign, mark’ (cf. English *beacon*).

Viking Age runic commemorative inscriptions in Scandinavia abound with words for the memorial itself: *stæinn* ‘stone, monument’; *kum(b)l* ‘sign, stone heap, monument’; *mærki* ‘landmark, monument’; *minni* ‘memento, memory, commemoration’; *hæll* ‘flat stone, rock face, boulder’; *viti* ‘marker’; *vitring* ‘proclamation, memorial’; *stafR* ‘stave, pole’; *hvalf* ‘vault, coffin’; *skæið* ‘ship-setting’; *haugR* ‘burial mound’. There are also augmentative compounds in which *stæin-* is combined with *-kumbl*, *-mærki*, *-hvalf*, and tautologically with *-hæll*; and further the twin formula *stæinn ok stafar*. The designations refer to the material and its use or design (*stæinn*, *hæll*, *hvalf*) or to the monument’s function as a sign in the broadest sense (*kumbl*, *mærki*, *minni*, *viti*). Adjectives characterising monuments are *gōðr* ‘good, stately, impressive, exceptional’; *fagr* ‘beautiful’; *mærkilíkr* ‘noteworthy, remarkable’; *mikill* ‘big’; *kænnilíkr* ‘recognizable, visible’; *sýnn* ‘visible’; *stæindr* ‘painted’; *biartr* ‘coloured, glaring’. There are also scattered instances of augmentation with *all-* ‘very’ or the comparatives *mæiri* ‘bigger’ or *bætri* ‘better’ as well as the adverbs *æi* ‘always’ and *æfila* ‘for ever’.

Several features to do with the aesthetic appearance of runic monuments are mentioned or commented on in the inscriptions themselves. An examination of what the texts say about the monuments can help to define their characteristics. Beauty and stateliness are proclaimed by Gs 19† ‘these fair stone-monuments’ and G 114 ‘the good marker’. Magnitude and monumentality are referred to in Sö 41 ‘the great marker’ (cf. U 102, U 300), U 735 ‘the very great stone brought from (its) place out of Langgarn’ and U 225 ‘no mark will be greater’ (cf. U 69). Publicity and prominence are suggested by U 102 ‘a great landmark for many(?) men’, unsurpassability and uniqueness by U 225 (see above) and U 323 ‘no wayside monument will be better’, preceded by ‘ever will (it) lie, while mankind lives on, the firm-founded broad bridge’. Duration and eternity are mentioned in U 323 (above); U 114 ‘it shall stand in memory of the man as long as mankind lives’; G 343 ‘ever while the world wakes lies here over the man the marker which his heir made in his memory’; DR 40 ‘very long will these staves live for Þörgunnr’; DR 212 ‘ever will stand, while the stone lives [= exists], this proclamation’ (cf. DR 229); Sö 61 ‘it forever stands in memory of Þörbiörn’; Sm 16 ‘so the good man will be commemorated while the stone and the rune-staves live’. Recognizability and visibility are indicated by Sm 16 ‘raised the recognizable monument’; Sö 35

‘had another stone raised ... made them visible’; Sö 34 ‘stones next to the road’ (cf. U 838); Sm 45 ‘this memorial at the cross-roads’ (cf. Sm 60); DR 295, DR 296 ‘the stone on the hill’; G 203 ‘here may the stone stand as a marker, clearly, on the hill’. Colour and multicolouredness are exemplified by G 280 ‘raised this stone, bright and shining’; Sö 347 ‘Äsbiörn carved and Ulfar painted’; Sö 213 ‘Äsbiörn cut the stone, painted as a marker’; Sö 206 ‘here shall these stones stand, reddened with runes’.

A linguistic feature of the inscriptions not commented on in the texts themselves is poetic form, i.e. alliteration and verse structure. Examples may be found in for instance U 225, Sö 34, DR 40 (see all above). Öl 1/DR 411 Karlevi even presents a skaldic strophe complete with the prescribed alliteration, internal rhymes, and complicated kennings: ‘He lies concealed, / who (most men knew that) / was attended by the greatest / deeds, a warrior in this mound. / Never will there rule / a more honest, / hard-fighting warrior / over land in Denmark.’

Poetical ornamentation corresponds to ornamental or figurative decoration. Poetry and decoration are found together on very many Viking Ages stones. On one of them, Sö 154, there are in addition to otherwise long-branch runes, staveless runes in the poetic formula: ‘Earth shall be riven / and the heavens above’. Discussion would be required to determine how many features are necessary for one to be able to “identify” a runic monument. Note the discrepancy between real size (c. 1.50 × 1 m) and high status term in the case of Sm 16 (‘the remarkable monument’; cf. U 773 ‘the monumental/praiseworthy landmark’). Does this represent a different aesthetic view from what one imagines to have been the norm? Or did the stone originally stand on a hill? Or is the choice of wording simply due to a desire to achieve alliteration *kumbl kænnilikt – mæрки mærkilikt*?

There are several monuments with runic inscriptions which do not contain comments on the commemorative object itself, but which due to their outward appearance must nevertheless be considered self-evident ‘runic monuments’. These include: KJ 97/DR 360 Björketorp, DR 42 Jelling 2, DR 282–DR 286 Hunnestad, DR 335 Västra Strö, Ög 136 Rök, Sö 101 Ramsund, N 84 Vang, N 68 Dynna – all of them impressive runic monuments. Even the mixture of different runic writing systems (long-branch and staveless runes, same-stave runes and coded runes) may be an indicator of a special kind of memorial.

Runic monuments as described in this article are comparable to Horace’s *monumentum aere perennius* ‘a monument more lasting than bronze’.

Danksagung

Eine erste Fassung habe ich 2007 an der Universität Basel als Vortrag gehalten. Für die Herrichtung des Manuskriptes danke ich Elisabeth Maria Magin, Göttingen, und für eine kritische Lektüre Lena Peterson, Uppsala, und vor allem *in metricis* Hans-Peter Naumann, Zürich.

Konkordanz der hier angeführten und
bei Naumann (in Vorbereitung) behandelten
metrischen Inschriften

DR 40	Randbøl	Nr. 11
DR 212	Tillitse	Nr. 16
DR 295	Hällestad 1	Nr. 23
DR 296	Hällestad 2	Nr. 24
Öl 1	Karlevi	Nr. 26
G 113	Ardre 3	Nr. 31
G 188	Mästerby	Nr. 32
G 203	Hogrän	Nr. 33
G 343	St. Hans, Visby	Nr. 36
Sm 16	Nöbbele	Nr. 38
Sm 45	Bräkentorp	Nr. 44
Sm 60	Skaftarp	Nr. 45
Sö 34–Sö 35	Tjuvstigen	Nr. 57–58
Sö 41	Björke	Nr. 59
Sö 61	Ösby	Nr. 64
Sö 154	Skarpåker	Nr. 79
Sö 213	Nybble	Nr. 92
Sö 320	Stäringe	Nr. 94
U 102	Viby	Nr. 99
U 225–U 226	Bällsta	Nr. 106–107
U 300	Skånela	Nr. 108
U 323	Sälna	Nr. 109
U 729	Ågersta	Nr. 122

Runstenarnas sociala dimension

Henrik Williams

Abstract

A case is made for defining runology as runic philology, the ultimate goal of which is to arrive at a “basic” interpretation of rune-texts. Scandinavian runestones from the Viking Age are not, however, only sources for old languages and writing practices. They may tell us much about contemporary cultures and the social role played therein by runic monuments, information which may in turn be used to understand better the texts themselves. A discussion is offered of the different angles from which the social aspects might be studied: stone types, monument location, carving technique and ornamentation, monument status levels, runic usage, phonology, morphology, as well as lexemes, including names.

Keywords: Runestones, social status, runic monuments, Viking Age culture

Runologi, runfilologi och runska studier

Detta är en uppsats som kommer att ställa många frågor men svara på nästan inga. Den är inte heller inventerande i någon egentlig mening utan mest exemplifierande. Dessutom är den mycket kortfattad i förhållande till de stora frågor som här bara antyds och den detaljerade diskussion som jag skulle behöva föra. Slutligen vill jag inte hävda att de faktorer som berörs nedan med nödvändighet belägger vissa sociala mönster bara att de är lämpliga objekt för att undersöka om det kan förhålla sig så. Många komplikationer har stillatigande förbigåtts, vilket med rätta har påpekats av de vetenskapliga bedömarna av uppsatsen.

Min utgångspunkt är en belysning av ett delsyfte med forskningen rörande vikingatida runstenar i Norden. Runologins mål är att med främst lingvistiska metoder tolka runinskrifter. Men lingvistikens är här ett medel, inte ett primärt mål. Oavsett hur rigoröst vi tillämpar språkvetenskapliga

Williams, Henrik. “Runstenarnas sociala dimension.”
Futhark: International Journal of Runic Studies 4 (2013), 61–76.

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teorier och metoder, och det bör vi göra (Barnes 1994, Braunmüller 1998), och oavsett vilka landvinningar som sker inom utforskningen av runinskrifternas språkliga dimensioner, vilka förvisso är av största vikt, är det tolkningen som enligt min mening är runologins yttersta mål. Utan en tolkning finns inget underlag för de flesta typer av lingvistiska undersökningar. Lingvistik utgående från runtexter å ena sidan och runologi å den andra förutsätter på så vis varandra.

Att tolka texter är en uppgift inom området filologi och enligt denna användning av ordet kan runologi därmed förstås som *runfilologi*. Det bör påpekas att den runfilologiska tolkningen inte är vare sig fullständig eller slutgiltig i det avseendet att den skulle förklara och sätta i perspektiv all information texten innehåller och implicerar. Det rör sig snarast om en identifikation av de lexikala enheterna och deras syntaktiska samband, vilket bildar underlag för en översättning av textens basala mening. Men min uppsats skall inte primärt handla om runologi i detta avseende utan om de resultat som kan vinnas i en utvidgad tolkning i andra sammanhang, såsom historiska, litteraturvetenskapliga, arkeologiska och religionsvetenskapliga. Dessa discipliners inriktning på studiet av runinskrifters innehåll och de inskriftsbärande föremålen som artefakter samt deras kontext definierar jag som del av runska studier (engelska *runic studies*, tyska *runische Studien*). På detta sätt blir runologi en (del)disciplin inom ett större, övergripande område.

Adjektivet *runsk* är mycket sällsynt i svenska och har främst använts i äldre tid. Ordet är möjligen vanligare i danska och norska men dess motsvarigheter är fullkomligt accepterade i engelska och tyska. Jag anser att det är dags att återuppliva det i fastlandsnordiska språk. Att resultaten från runska studier sedan i högsta grad påverkar även runfilologin är något som också skulle behöva behandlas ingående. Tolkningsförsök kan dels påverka nya tolkningsförsök, dels bilda basen för vidare studier som i sin tur influerar hur vi tolkar inskrifter.

Monumentalitet

Jag förmodar att ett runmonument som utmärks av en större investering i något avseende och av en högre ambition att vara manifesterande också är förknippat med högre status. Högstatusgrupper i samhället kunde i och för sig åstadkomma mindre ambitiösa monument men knappast tvärtom. För en person som tillhörde en lågstatusgrupp var troligen resandet av en runsten, hur dålig den än var, en prestation i sig.

Runstenarnas sociala dimension handlar om hur sociala faktorer som

bland annat grupper och individers status, samhälleliga funktioner och relationer mellan personer avspeglas i de vikingatida runtexterna och de monument på vilka de återfinns. Detta är enligt min mening en viktig om än något eftersatt forskningsfråga inom runska studier och den är av största vikt för bedömningen av hur monumenten passar in i dåtidens samhälle, något som har fått en viss uppmärksamhet i tidigare forskning främst från arkeologiskt och i viss mån historiskt håll (se bland annat M. G. Larsson 1990, 129, dens. 1997, 179–81; Zachrisson 1998, 159; *Hikuin* 32; Øeby Nielsen 2007, 109–17). En övergripande diskussion saknas dock ännu. En sådan skall heller inte erbjudas i detta sammanhang, jag vill dock beröra ett antal av de synvinklar, ur vilka man skulle kunna studera frågan. Jag begränsar mig också i princip till själva runmonumenten och deras ristningar och nämner i detta sammanhang i stort sett bara kontextuella faktorer som exempelvis samband med andra fornlämningar och bebyggelsegränser.

Stenmaterial

I sin mönstergilla genomgång av Jarlabanke-släktens runmonument skriver Helmer Gustavson och Klas-Göran Selinge (1988, 49): ”Vid ett studium av det svenska runverket får man understundom intrycket, att många slutsatser och värderingar bygger på ganska intuitiva eller subjektiva ställningstaganden.” På sistone har dock geologisk och petrografisk information blivit mycket bättre, inte minst genom undersökningar av Karl Eric Hagström (2002, 2008) och i synnerhet genom Stefan Hagenfeldt och Rune Palms viktiga bok om runmonument av sandsten (1996).

Valet av runstensmaterial var rimligen viktigt. Ett intuitivt intryck är att för högstatusmonument verkar ristaren välja en sten av god kvalitet. Men typ av sten (gnejs/granit, sandsten, kalksten o.s.v.) kan också vara av betydelse, och kanske är stenmaterialets utseende relevant, eller är det en tillfällighet att den ornamenterade Sm 35 Replösa (fig. 1) utmärks av sällsynt attraktiva skiftningar i stenytan?

Storlek och eventuellt form har rimligen betydelse, men det är omdebatterat om det är monumentets storlek eller själva ristningsytans storlek som är viktigast. Gustavson och Selinge (1988, 54) talar om ”proportionselement” i form av bredden och höjden på ristningsytan, vilket de föredrar att ta hänsyn till hellre än till måtten för hela den tillgängliga stenytan. De skriver: ”Vi tror att den förstnämnda [= ristningsytan] är ett bättre mått på intentionerna med ristningen, medan själva blockets storlek också kan vara beroende av andra faktorer vid stenfångsten såsom



Fig. 1. Sm 35 Replösa. Foto: Bengt A. Lundberg (1985), © Riksantikvarieämbetet, Stockholm.

brytningsteknik ... etc.” Att både stenstorlek och ristningsyta kan vara av betydelse påpekar de emellertid. Det förra bör då undersökas under material, det senare under ristning.

Också antalet ristade ytor bör vara signifikant och det är knappast en tillfällighet att runstenarnas runsten, Ög 136 Rök, är ristad på hela fem sidor. Generellt skulle man kunna gissa att monument bestående av mer än en ristningsyta har en förhöjd status.

Även om man i första hand har använt vad som står till buds på platsen för runstensresandet antyder transport av en sten att resaren hade större resurser och att vissa råämnen var mer attraktiva än andra. En del uppenbara högstatusmonument meddelar uttryckligen att de har transporterats, t.ex. NIyR 61 Alstad och Hs 14 Malsta, men också andra av mer blygsam utformning, t.ex. DR 201† Allerup, U 414† Norrsunda kyrka och eventuellt Vg 33 Stommen (Harris 2006, 11 not 7). I fallet U 414† anger den förlorade inskriften själv att den helt uppenbart i Uppland ristade runstenen hade forslats från Gotland, och bevarade avbildningar visar att den hade typisk gotländsk svampform. Man räknar också med att den har varit av kalk- eller sandsten (Sven B. F. Jansson i *SRI*, 7:

192). Två kalkstensrunstenar från Uppland, U 300† Skånela kyrka och U 1028 Lena kyrka, kan naturligtvis också ha gotländskt ursprung. För vissa högstatusmonument har stenfångsten diskuterats, t.ex. för NIyR 61 Alstad (Victor Moritz Goldschmidt i *NIyR*, 1: 157–59) som har forslats från en ö över 100 kilometer från monumentets placering (s. 159), de så kallade Jarlabanke-stenarna (Gustavson och Selinge 1988, 52–54) och Öl 1 Karlevi (Williams 1996, 436 not 3). För att välja ett norskt runmonument, NIyR 68 Dynna, utmärker det sig inte endast för sin ”eiendommelige, skønne form” (Magnus Olsen i *NIyR*, 1: 193) och sin unika och fångslande bildutsmyckning. Den nästan tre meter höga och smala stenen har liksom Alstadstenen och NIyR 66 Gran kirke 4 inte hämtats lokalt (jfr Goldschmidt i *NIyR*, 1: 157–59).

Lokalitet

Placeringen av ett monument kan antyda social status. Det kan röra sig om läge vid bro eller vadställe, bygräns, gravfält, hamn, kyrka, tingsplats, väg och ör (vägbank). Alla dessa lägen nämns uttryckligen i inskrifter, utom gravfält (däremot en gång kyrkogård), trots att placering där uppenbarligen är mycket vanlig (Klos 2009, 341, jfr dock Källström 2010, 261, och M. G. Larsson 2010, 250 f.). Kan det bero på att en gravfältsplacering är neutral och således inget att omnämna, om nu antagandet verkligen stämmer?

För att bara ta ett exempel verkar runstenar som nämner *braut* ’väg’ alla utmärkas av vad som skulle kunna förmodas vara högstatusmarkörer. Av någon anledning är monumenten begränsade till Södermanland och Uppland och fördelar sig mellan att nämna att de står vid vägen och att resarna har låtit bygga densamma (tabell 1). Fyra av dessa runstenar ingår i parmonument (Sö 34 + Sö 35 Tjuvstigen, Sö 311 + Sö 312 vid gamla Turingevägen), tre är signerade (Sö 34, Sö 312, U 707 Kungs-Husby kyrka) och minst fyra innehåller vers (Sö 34, U 323 Sälna, U 707, U 838 Ryda kungsgård; Hübler 1996, 160, 163).¹ Sö 311 och U 149† Hagby är så skadade att vi inte kan avgöra deras ursprungliga längd. Alla de övriga inskrifterna är över medellängd eller till och med mycket långa; särskilt U 323 med sina

¹ Under symposiet i Oslo frågade prof. em. Edith Marold, Kiel, efter mitt föredrag om vers är en statusmarkör. Jag missförstod hennes fråga och gav ett oklart svar. Självklart bör man anse att poetiska inslag bidrar till en högre status. Alla tillägg till eller utbroderingar av den basala minnesformeln på en runsten innebär en extra investering i tid och tankemöda och antyder större omsorg om inskriftens innehåll och textens påverkan på läsarna. Högre status får definieras som en fråga om ambition snarast än effekt, det är avsikten inte resultatet som är avgörande.

Table 1. Runmonument som nämner ordet *braut* 'väg'

	Parmonument	Signerad	Vers	Ord/runor	Lång text
Sö 34 + Sö 35	×	×	× + ×	19/103 + 16/68	× + ×
Sö 311 + Sö 312	×	×	–	12/57 + 19/85	– + ×
U 101	–	–	–	25/119	×
U 149†	–	–	–	9/42	–
U 323	–	–	×	44/192	×
U 707	–	×	?	22/89	×
U 838	–	–	×	26/112	×

192 runor (trots skada) utmärker sig. Vikingatida texter på sten omfattar i snitt cirka 10 ord och 43 runor, inräknat alla runmonument samt knappt 14 ord och drygt 62 runor om man bara räknar inskrifter utan lakuner.

Fornminneskontexten är naturligtvis också viktig. Hit räknas närliggande fornlämningar och stormannagårdar samt det förhållande huruvida runstenen själv uppger sig ingå i kluster tillsammans med bauta-stenar, en hög eller stav, eller om den ingår i ett flerstensmonument med ytterligare en eller fler ristade stenar. Också omnämmandet av ortnamn kan föras hit (F. Larsson 2007, 26, 29 f.).

Ristningsteknik

Tekniken är en viktig aspekt, skicklighet eller bristen därpå kommenteras ofta i korpusutgåvorna. Noggrannhet kan också vara relevant, vilket ådagaläggs genom tillvägagångssättet vid arbetets utförande, troligen slingorna först (U 393, Meijer 1992, 55 f.) och eventuellt skissning av runorna före djuphuggning (s. 57 f.; se också U 884) samt möjligheten av att alla huvudstavarna höggs före bistavarna (Meijer 2007). Ristningens allmänna karaktäristika är absolut av vikt: ”rakhet”, elegans, bredd och djup. Även bemålning kan nämnas (Anderson 1954, Práinsson 1999, Tronner, Nord och Gustavson 2002).

Störst roll spelar nog ändå ornamentiken med bland annat slingupp-läggning, djurornamentik, figurframställning och kors. Grundforskningen är här ovanligt omfattande, men veterligen har ännu inget riktigt försök gjorts att relatera observationerna till sociala faktorer.

Status

Jag har ovan talat om *högstatusmonument*, skikten därunder bör i konsekvensens namn kallas *mellanstatusmonument* och *lågstatusmonument*. En del av de aspekter som har nämnts tycks också osökt kunna länkas in i ett statusresonemang. I storlek och utseende ovanligt imponerande monument med en framträdande placering och med en koppling till andra fenomen som har inneburit ytterligare en investering från stenresarens sida innebär rimligen att det handlar om beställarens resursstyrka och därmed höga status. Av naturliga skäl befinner sig de flesta runmonument i mellanskiktet, men kanske har man överdrivit ”medelklass”-aspekten av runstensristandet. I varje fall finns det en hel del monument som höjer sig över mängden i något avseende och inte så få som å andra sidan utmärks av olika lågstatusmarkörer. Särskilt de senare anser jag har fått för litet uppmärksamhet.

Det är dock viktigt att statusfrågan relateras till olika tiders och olika regioners förutsättningar och preferenser. Runstenarna i exempelvis Uppland skiljer ut sig genom sin mycket elaborerade djuornamentik och inte sällan också genom storlek, medan monumenten i t.ex. Södermanland vid en första anblick kan se mindre imponerande ut. En närmare studie av runtexternas innehåll och utformning ger dock vid handen att högstatusristningar är väl så rikligt företrädda i det senare landskapet. Här förekommer t.ex. runpoesi och avancerat skriftbruk i långt högre grad. Därmed kommer man osökt in på frågor om språk och runsystem.

Det finns en mängd runologiska företeelser som kan relateras till ett resonemang om runmonuments statusrelation. Jag vill diskutera vissa av dem, hierarkiskt med början nedifrån.

Runbruk

Användningen av runformer ur den äldre futharken för chifferändamål på Ög 136 Rök är exempel på avancerat skriftbruk och måste rimligen vara ytterligare en högstatusmarkör för detta monument. Däremot är det inte sagt att äldre runformer generellt har denna funktion, utom möjligen på Ög 43 Ingelstad med sitt urnordiska \mathfrak{M} , här rimligen en begreppsruna för att beteckna ristarnamnet *Dagr*. Annars är äldre runformer nog att betrakta mer som ett övergångsfenomen än direkt statusrelaterade. Frågan är dock om användningen av till exempel maskros- \mathfrak{m} , \mathfrak{P} , bara representerar ett utvecklingsstadium eller också en statusmarkör. Däremot kan t.ex. stol- \mathfrak{s} , \mathfrak{h} , möjligen men långt ifrån säkert vara en lågstatusmarkör eftersom



Fig. 2. Sö 133 Väringe. Foto: Thorgunn Snædal (1993), © Riksantikvarieämbetet, Stockholm.

runformen i första hand verkar användas som en rättelse (Meijer 2007, 35 f.). Rättelser i sig innebär dock omsorg och en viss noggrannhet, åtminstone sekundärt (jfr MacLeod 2002, 132–38). Det visar hur svårt det är att statusbestämma runformer.

Frågan om kortkvistrunornas användning har diskuterats livligt, inte minst på sistone. I debatten har nämnts möjligheten av att kortkvistrunformer som mindre ”utsmyckade” har en generellt lägre status, åtminstone under senvikingatid (Wessén 1969, 28). Detta är enligt min mening tveksamt. Däremot är det möjligt att de ännu enklare stavlösa runorna snarast indikerar avancerat runbruk och därmed högre status, senast antytt av Marco Bianchi (2010, 161, 163), åtminstone i inskrifter med blandad användning av runsystem.

Slutligen borde diskuteras om vissa runformer inte skall ses som enbart misslyckade utan möjligen som en variant av lägre status. Ett exempel kan vara den märkliga **r**-runan med formen **h** på bland annat Sö 133 Väringe. där i kontrast med formen **l** för **r**, vilken kan uppfattas som att ett

redundant drag har strukits (fast fördelningen rimligen bör vara tvärtom: ʀ för ʀ och ʀ för ʀ). Att denna runsten tillhör lågstatusmonumenten framgår med all önskvärd tydlighet av dess klumpiga komposition (fig. 2).

Att avvikande runformer inte entydigt måste tolkas som lågstatusmarkörer framgår klart av exempelvis Sm 39 Ryssby kyrka där den första runan, **k**, ʀ, ”har en sällsynt och karaktäristisk form: ... bistaven utgår åt vänster” (Jansson 1964, 228). Att detta inte är en tillfällighet utan denna ristares medvetna val framgår av att: ”Samma originella form ... har inskriftens andra **k**-runa”. Stenen har ansevärliga dimensioner, totalt 250 × 95 × 25 cm och runorna är som minst 13, som mest hela 21 cm höga (s. 226). Monumentet gör på mig till och med i sitt nuvarande, svårt skadade skick ett imponerande intryck; detta till trots beskriver Sven B. F. Jansson ristaren som ”ej ... någon framstående runmästare” (s. 230). Det är en smakfråga, och jag kan inte dela hans åsikt.

Fonologi och morfologi

Man skulle kunna argumentera för att ristare med lägre status, och därmed möjligen mindre rutin, kan ha varit mer benägna för att låta företeelser som t.ex. inskottsvokaler och assimilationer och andra kommunikationsförsvårande skriftliga representationer komma till uttryck. Det är dock långt ifrån säkert. Och när man kommer till markerade, mindre väntade omljudsformer dels ökar informationsvärdet, dels verkar de inte vara begränsade till lågstatusmonument. Sålunda kan en runföljd som **rietr** för *rétta* [rʲe:t:æ] på Nä 12 Stora Mellösa kyrka antyda ett genuint uttal (Williams 2007, 19) men också att den oväntade skrivningen av slutvokalismen kan vara kommunikationsförsvårande och därmed möjligen en lågstatusmarkör. Dock kan beteckningen för rotvokalen här i stället antyda en förbindelse med den s.k. birkasvenskan/hedebynordiskan (se Elmevik 2010 med litt.) vilket i så fall skulle kunna innebära en hög status. Något som däremot verkar ha en klarare koppling till ett lågstatusperspektiv är beteckningen av initialt /s/ med ett slags vokalisk upptakt, t.ex. **isiin** *stein* (ack.) på DR 394 Øster Marie 5, där förenat med skrivningen **ruþur** för *bróður*.

Den runnordiska morfologin genomgår en gradvis förändring. Ett exempel är de sekundära runsvenska genitivformerna *Ingur* för äldre *Ingu* och *faðurs* för *faður*. I vissa inskrifter förekommer singulara verbformer där man av syntaktiska skäl har förväntat sig plurala, t.ex. U 519 Salmunge **riti** för förväntat *réttu*, Sm 36 Bolmaryd **sat** för *settu* och Vs 27 Grällsta **lit** för *létu*. Företeelsen har vanligtvis tolkats som tydande på utelämnade

runor, men en alternativ förklaring är att ristaren tänkte i moduler och alltför formelartat, vilket möjligen kan länkas till lågstatusmonument. Sannolikt är dock också att (möjligen konsekvent) singulära former av verb har sitt ursprung i grupper av lägre status, frågan är bara hur tidigt man kan räkna med denna företeelse.

Lexem

På ett litet antal nordiska runstenar återfinns en runföljd **rit**. På NIyR 160 Fyresdal (och på runsänket NIyR 230 Reve) har detta tolkats som *reit*, preteritum av verbet *ríta* 'risse, streke; skrive' men på DR 397 Øster Larsker 1 och Ög 91 Järstads kyrkogård som felristning eller "förkortning" av *reisti*. Borde inte även de två sistnämnda runföljderna kunna tolkas som *reit*, trots att verbet inte verkar vara belagt på fornöstnordiskt område? Man kan tänka sig att ordet har bevarats sociolektiskt i Danmark och Sverige, det har trots allt bevisligen funnits där före vikingatiden (DR 359 Istaby **warait** *wrait*).

Det är bland personbeteckningarna som vi har det rikaste fältet för sociologiska resonemang. Här finns lexem som tydligt markerar hög status, som *dróttinn* 'herre', *dróttning* 'drottning, husfru, fru', *forungi* 'hövding', *goði* 'gode', *hersir* 'hövding', *hýfrefya* 'hushållets härskarinna', *jarl* 'jarl', *konungr* 'kung', *landmaðr* 'landsman', *skati* 'hövding, furste', *stallari* 'stallare', *stillir* 'hövding', *stýrimaðr* 'skeppsförare, skeppshövding', *þegn* 'tegn, man, kämpe', *þulr* 'thul' och *vísi* 'ledare, hövding'. Det finns också en mängd till synes statusmässigt mer neutrala beteckningar, även om jag tror att en del eller kanske till och med de flesta av dem nog ändå är statusmarkerande i någon utsträckning. Jag utelämnar tills vidare släktskaps-, relations- och folkslagsbeteckningar även om särskilt de förra skulle kunna vara av intresse. Bland övriga ord kan nämnas *bómaðr* 'jordägare', *bónði* 'bonde, make, äkta man, husbonde', *drengr* '(ung) man', *félagi* 'bolagsman, kamrat', *floti* 'sjökrigare', *gengr* 'följesman', *halr* 'man', *heimþegi* 'hirdman, huskarl', *húskarl* 'huskarl', *karl* 'karl, man', *kona* 'kvinna, hustru', *lagsmaðr* 'följesman', *maðr* 'man, människa', *mær* 'mö, flicka', *matunautr* 'matlagskamrat, följeslagare', *óníðingr* 'icke niding, aktad man, frikostig person', *ráðkona* 'hushållerska', *sinni* 'följeslagare', *skipari* 'skeppsman, skeppskamrat', *smiðr* 'smed', *sveinn* 'sven, yngling' och *víkingr* 'viking'. En del av dessa ord förekommer endast i poesi, vilket i sig kan vara signifikant (se fotnot 1).

Några ord kan kopplas till en ofri ställning i samhället, såsom *leysi* 'fri-given', även om det i sig inte behöver betyda låg status, vilket visas av *bryti*

'bryte, förvaltare' som betecknar en ämbetsinnehavare med betydande ställning (Brink 2008, 5 f.). Man måste också resa ett varningens finger för att vissa ord som betecknar medlemmar av familjen eller hushållet har tolkats som neutrala medan de i själva verket kan tänkas avse personer av ofri status, så *fōstra* 'hemma (född och) uppfostrad kvinnlig träl' och *fōstri* 'hemma (född och) uppfostrad manlig träl'.

Inte bara appellativ är av intresse, många adjektiv har en uppenbar statusladdning, så exempelvis *góðr* 'god', *hannarr* 'händig', *hollr* 'huld, nådig', *málsþakr* 'värtalig, talför', *mildr* 'mild, givmild, frikostig', *nýtr* 'duglig, rask, duktig', *ráðsþakr* 'rådig', *rýnn* 'runkunnig' och *slægr* 'skicklig, konstförfaren'.

Bland lexemen intar personnamnen en särställning. Vissa namn, särskilt vissa tvåledade och enledade utgörande primära substantiv, har förknippats med mellanstatus, exempelvis *Sveinn* och *Geirhjálmr*; andra namn som *Eiríkr*, *Hákon* och *Ragnhildr* anses ha en högre status (se Elias Wessén i *SRI*, 7: 427). Namngivning utifrån variationsprincipen, där elementen i tvåledade namn växlar rätt fritt, kan under senvikingatid snarast knytas till mellanstatusgruppen. Allitterationsprincipen däremot, där namn börjar med samma konsonant eller skilda vokaler, förknippas i första hand med högstatusgruppen. Lågstatusnamn är svårare att urskilja, och delvis verkar det som om de ofria i det fornnordiska samhället bar samma namn som mellanskiktet. Men bland namnen på manliga trälar i *Rígsþula* återfinns några också i runmaterialet och skulle vara värda att undersöka, nämligen *Drumbr*, *Fúlnir* och *Hqsvir*. Ett namn som *Kulbeinn* (se Fridell 2006, 51–53) är också synnerligen suggestivt, och pekar i sin tur mot binamnen som rimligen bör utgöra en rik källa till studier av social variation. Slutligen kan man spekulera i om kortformer som *Atti* och *Etti* utan säker etymologi kan vara statusmarkerande (Williams 2008, 14 f. med litt.).

Slutsatser

Det bör påpekas att runstenarnas sociala dimension inte bara är av betydelse för forskningen inom området runska studier utan också i högsta grad för disciplinen runologi i snävare mening. En klarare uppfattning av i vilken social kontext en runristning har tillkommit och avser att fungera återverkar också i hög grad på tolkningen av inskriftens språkliga budskap. Om man kan fastställa att ett monument utmärks av tydliga statusmarkörer öppnar detta för att tillämpa sociolingvistiska aspekter vid texttolkningen.

Ett studium av runstenarnas sociala dimension kan ha konstruktiva resultat med både interna och externa implikationer. Det avgörande är om man kan etablera objektiva kriterier för att särskilja runmonumenten statusmässigt. Monumentets och ristningsytans storlek samt inskriftens längd, vilken dock inte är en oberoende faktor, kan vara företeelser att mäta. Man får diskutera vilka andra som borde ingå. Det viktiga är att när vi väl har etablerat ett antal inskrifter som sannolikt tillhörande någon av de tre statusgrupperna hög, mellan och låg kan en undersökning av runologiska och språkliga fenomen representerade inom respektive grupp bli ett effektivt redskap för att peka ut ytterligare faktorer som är relevanta vid undersökningen av social variation.

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English summary

“The social dimension of runestones”

The goal of runology cannot only be to decipher runic texts; the ultimate goal must also be philological, to produce a “basic” interpretation (an edited text) of the inscriptions, once read. In this respect runology may be defined as runic philology. But the results of this endeavour must be put to use by people working in areas of runic studies dealing with different facets of historical research. Their findings, as well as the philological results themselves, can be reapplied within runology to gain greater insight into the texts.

One aspect which has not been studied sufficiently is that of the social dimension of runic monuments. The degree of monumentality is presumably related to social status. The relationship of runestones to other cultural phenomena may be investigated on many levels, some of which are discussed briefly under the following themes: stone types, monument location, carving technique and ornamentation, monument status levels, runic usage, phonology, morphology, as well as lexemes, including names.

Choice of stone type was important in selecting surfaces suitable for carving, resistant to environmental forces and of fitting shape and size. Monuments with more than one writing surface probably had higher status, and so perhaps did stones transported to a site rather than taken from close by.

The location of a monument is probably significant and sites are mentioned in many inscriptions; only the very popular placement on or by grave fields is not, maybe because this is a “default value”. It seems as if most of the seven runic inscriptions that mention roads (*braut*), either the positioning of the stone by the roadway or the construction thereof, evidence high-status indicators; they may for example be signed, be part of a multiple monument and have long texts, and as often as not incorporating verse.

The quality of the carving and ornamentation may say something about the status of a monument. No comprehensive study of such features has been made.

The status levels of monuments obviously vary. Previously, almost all runestones were ascribed to the “upper-middle class” of society. There are, however, some memorials from a yet higher stratum and even more from lower strata, including newly freed slaves. This is evident from the various features mentioned above as

well as the linguistic and runological aspects of the stones, discussion of which follows.

Variation in runic usage encompasses the presence of runes from the older futhark, certain Viking Age graph-types such as 𐀃 (**m**) and 𐀆 (**s**), staveless runes, coded runes and short-twig runes. With the probable exception of the latter, these variants may be indicative of status. Certain seemingly degraded allographs may be typical of low-status monuments, but not all deviant forms should be regarded as of sub-standard quality.

Certain phonological traits may have had a sociological basis. The secondary diphthongization of /e:/ to [ie] may be an example, but its social standing is uncertain. Difficulties in analyzing consonant clusters or initial /s/ are more likely evidence of lower status carvers.

Morphological changes are attested in Viking Age inscriptions, which is to be expected. Some, however, seem to predate the regular development by centuries. One instance is the use of verbs in singular form after a plural subject. It is possible that these early examples are not miscarvings as has previously been assumed, but rather indicative of a tendency to simplify personal verb inflection among lower-status carvers.

Considerable social diversity is indicated by the lexemes and especially the names appearing in runestone texts. The sequence **rit** in some apparently lower-status East Norse inscriptions has been explained as a miscarving for *reisti* ‘raised’. The word *rita* did, however, exist in pre-Viking times, and it is conceivable that a form *reit* could have been preserved as an archaic feature in certain sociolects.

Many personal designations (such as *dróttning* ‘queen’ and *goði* ‘priest’) indicate high-status positions and a few (such as *leysi* ‘freedman’) lower standing. Most words designating types of people seem neutral (*karl* ‘man’ and *mær* ‘maiden’) but may in fact indicate social status, as may many adjectives such as *góðr* ‘good’ and *hannarr* ‘handy’.

Names such as *Eiríkr* and *Ragnhildr* have been said to indicate high status, whereas *Sveinn* and *Geirhjálmr* would perhaps be middle-of-the-road names. Low-status candidates might be *Kolbeinn* and *Atti*.

If we could establish objective criteria for determining the status level of runic monuments it would lead to a deeper understanding of how runes and the language in runic texts express status. That might in turn become a tool for determining the social status of monuments where other evidence is unavailable. In this way we could gain an insight into facets of Viking Age society we have not had before.

Runes and Words: Runic Lexicography in Context

Judith Jesch

Abstract

The paper begins by noting the lack of a comprehensive dictionary of Scandinavian runic inscriptions, as well as the absence of the runic evidence from most dictionaries of the early Scandinavian languages, and considers possible reasons for this. Runic inscriptions may need a different kind of dictionary, because they require a different kind of reading that takes extra-linguistic as well as linguistic contexts into account (a process that has been called “interdisciplinary semantics”). Using the examples of the words *bóndi* and *þegn* in Viking Age inscriptions, the paper shows how the variety of available contexts enables a richer definition of these and other words, which might facilitate a different type of dictionary, based on discursive definitions.

Keywords: Viking Age, runestones, lexicography, semantics, *bóndi*, *þegn*

Runes and lexicography

The latest version of the Scandinavian Runic Text Database (*Samnordisk runtextdatabas*, published in 2008) records 6578 inscriptions: 270 in the older futhark, 3619 from the Viking Age, 2673 labelled “medieval”, and 16 judged to be post-medieval.¹ This is a substantial corpus of the Scandinavian languages through well over a millennium that is frequently ignored by dictionaries, which overwhelmingly draw their material from manuscript sources. For example, the “Einleitung” to the *Altnordisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (first published 1957–60) begins by claiming that “Wir kennen die altwestnordische sprache ausschliesslich aus lite-

¹ The numbers are slightly higher in all categories in version 3, to be published soon.

Jesch, Judith. “Runes and Words: Runic Lexicography in Context.”
Futhark: International Journal of Runic Studies 4 (2013), 77–100.

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rarischen quellen” (‘We know the Old West Norse language exclusively from literary sources’; de Vries 1977, vii). This attitude is shared by some historians who feel able to claim that the medieval Scandinavian laws “are the oldest surviving texts in the vernacular in all Scandinavian countries” (Nedkvitne 2005, 290).

Some dictionaries do include runic evidence, though rarely thoroughly or systematically. *An Icelandic-English Dictionary* focuses on “the words used in this old classical literature”, as one would expect from the title, but does list “Runic inscriptions” in the “Classification of works and authors cited in this dictionary” (Cleasby et al. 1957, xii). However, the number of examples actually cited is very small, even the entry on *rún* does not make use of any runic inscriptions. Other dictionaries of Old West Norse tend to exclude runic inscriptions. I have not found any runic material in Fritzner (1883–1972), while the *Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog* explicitly restricts itself to “the vocabulary of the prose writings of Old Norse, as transmitted in Norwegian and Icelandic manuscripts” (*ONP, Registre*, 15). Finnur Jónsson’s *Lexicon Poeticum* (1931) cites runic vocabulary from the Karlevi inscription because it is included in his edition of skaldic poetry, but not I think otherwise. On the East Norse side, Söderwall’s *Ordbok öfver svenska medeltids-språket* (1884–1918) and its *Supplement* (1925–73) both explicitly exclude runic inscriptions, while the ongoing *Gammeldansk ordbog* does include runic inscriptions, but only later ones that are contemporary with its manuscript sources, i.e. from c. 1100.

Most dictionary-makers, whether dealing with living or dead languages, have an enormous body of material on which to base their definitions, and have to be selective. These examples show how this selection is done according to a particular understanding of the source language, which can be defined both geographically and chronologically. Historical dictionaries can further restrict the material through the sources they use, thus Söderwall excludes the Swedish laws, while Fritzner and *ONP* do use the Norwegian and Icelandic ones.

There is no dictionary of all runic inscriptions as such, but there are a variety of lexical aids. Most of the volumes of the national corpus editions (*DR, NIyR, SRI*) include glossaries, or word-lists. Lena Peterson’s *Svenskt runordsregister* (1989 and subsequent editions) covers the inscriptions of Viking Age Sweden, while her *Nordiskt runnamnslexikon* (2007) covers the proper names in all Scandinavian Viking Age inscriptions. While the “Ord- og navneforråd” of *Danmarks runeindskrifter* is ambitious, frequently providing notes on etymology, interpretation or cognates, the other lists mostly give only minimal grammatical information and simple,

if any, definitions, in the modern national languages. Presumably there is no dictionary of runic inscriptions because dictionaries tend to be based on a particular language, and there is no “runic” language as such. A “runic” dictionary would be one that selected its evidence based on the alphabet, rather than on the language, in which its source material was written. Although this would be a departure from usual lexicographical practice, there are several reasons why such a dictionary would make sense, not least because the runic material is largely ignored by other dictionaries and still needs fully to be recorded.

However, a dictionary based on the whole runic corpus would be awkward. The corpus extends over a wide geographical area covering (albeit unevenly) a substantial portion of Europe. Even leaving aside those inscriptions in which runes are used to write a non-Germanic language, such as Latin, it is clear that the corpus is not all in one language and is therefore unlikely to be neatly encompassed in one dictionary. It could be argued that it would be better to split the runic corpus into its constituent languages and incorporate the material into the respective dictionaries. And indeed the ongoing *Dictionary of Old English* includes Anglo-Saxon runic inscriptions in its source material. The majority of these inscriptions are earlier than the majority of Old English manuscripts, though there is some overlap, providing a useful parallel to the Scandinavian situation, where there is a similarly uneven, but overlapping, chronological distribution of inscriptions and manuscripts. But the corpora of both Anglo-Saxon runic inscriptions and Old English manuscripts are substantially smaller than their Scandinavian equivalents, enabling them to be encompassed in one dictionary. One could conclude that, since runic inscriptions are just another way of writing languages for which we generally also have other sorts of evidence, it would be artificial to split them off on the basis of alphabet for the purposes of lexicography. Yet that is exactly what has on the whole been done for the Viking Age and medieval Scandinavian vernaculars. The relatively small number of inscriptions in the older futhark present further problems to lexicographers, as well as having no equivalent manuscript-based corpus for comparison, and it is hard to see how best to incorporate them into a dictionary.

A dictionary restricted to the Scandinavian corpus (without the older futhark inscriptions), would however have its own coherence, both geographical and linguistic, and would have several benefits. Since this corpus is relatively small, it would be possible to take all of it into account, recording every occurrence of every word, in a way that is not possible with the manuscript material that forms the basis of other dictionaries of

the early Scandinavian languages. Inscriptions in Latin would present a challenge, but they are relatively few, and since some expressions such as *Ave Maria* are arguably also in the vernacular, and since the runic spelling of Latin words provides information about Scandinavian pronunciation, there are good grounds for including these too. The runic corpus also usefully covers those parts of the Scandinavian-speaking world with no medieval manuscripts in that vernacular (e.g. Greenland, or Britain and Ireland). Over half of the Scandinavian runic corpus records the respective languages before they were written in manuscripts, and thereby provides evidence for the antecedent languages. Even those runic inscriptions that overlap chronologically and geographically with manuscript writing usually emanate from different socio-cultural circumstances and so give insights into different registers and usages. Thus, there are many good reasons to isolate the vocabulary of runic inscriptions from that recorded in the chronologically partially overlapping manuscript record, and a runic dictionary would have much to contribute to our understanding of both the diachronic and the diatopic development of the Scandinavian languages.

Because of the smallness of the corpus (relative to manuscript sources), and because of the materiality of the inscriptions, it would also be possible to make a runic dictionary in a distinctive way. Dictionary-makers distinguish between different kinds of definitions. Among others, synthetic (basically synonyms), analytical (essentially explanatory) and encyclopedic (reflecting real-world knowledge) definitions can be ranked on an increasing scale of richness of information (Geeraerts 2003, 89 f.). The runic corpus is particularly suitable for what might be called “discursive” definitions, somewhere between the analytical and the encyclopedic. An example of such definitions from a rather different type of corpus are the entries in the ongoing *Vocabulary of English Place-Names* (Parsons et al. 1997–) which are, essentially, short word-studies. These can include discussions of etymology, attestations in other sources, linguistic development, semantic range, figurative or metaphorical usages, and relationships with other words in the same or similar semantic fields, as well as providing modern meaning equivalents. More detailed word-studies are, of course, a well-established field of research in Scandinavian philology, and have been applied to runic vocabulary items too (e.g. most recently Williams 2012). But a dictionary containing such shorter word-studies of the complete lexicon, and not just the more exciting words, would be singularly appropriate to the runic corpus. This paper will explore what it is that is so special about the runic corpus that it might justify this more expansive approach to dictionary-making, with a focus

on the processes by which we establish the meanings of words in Viking Age and medieval inscriptions in Scandinavian runes.

Many of these processes are traditional in historical philology as applied to manuscript texts. However, runic inscriptions present a different kind of textuality which requires more than purely linguistic methods to decode it. There has been some discussion about the nature of runology, whether it is a purely philological or linguistic discipline, or whether a study of the inscriptions also has to take account of physical and other contexts (e.g. Peterson 1996b, Lerche Nielsen 1997). On the whole, opinions are not totally polarised but fit into a continuum, with different scholars emphasising different aspects. More recently, younger scholars in particular have been investigating the ways in which the whole runic object “means” (Stern 2009, Bianchi 2010), showing how the decoration, design and layout of runestones in particular contribute to the meaning of the inscriptions, making them multi-modal objects. I myself have argued (Jesch 1998) that the materiality of runestones is as much a part of their meaning as their textuality. Terje Spurkland (2004, 342) has proposed the term “runacy” in recognition of the fact that writing in runes differs from manuscript literacy both in its medium and in its communicative contexts. The implication is that “runate” texts, differently written, also require different forms of reading.

Such discussions can seem to stretch the concept of “meaning” beyond that which seems appropriate in a lexicographical context, though even here there is a recognition that words cannot be understood without some reference to the world in which they are used. Christian Kay has shown (2000, 64 f.) how lexicographers often operate in a pragmatic way which acknowledges this need for real-world reference, while semantic theorists, unencumbered by the practical necessity of providing definitions, more often ignore it, and she argued for the importance of “interdisciplinary semantics”, a concept that is particularly useful for runic inscriptions. But even without getting too deeply into the ways in which the visual, material, pseudo-runic or non-runic aspects of runic inscriptions can “mean”, it is possible to see that these aspects help to understand what the runic texts say and, therefore, what the words in them mean. We do not easily have access to real-world knowledge from the time the inscriptions were made, but their material contexts do suggest one aspect of this real-world knowledge, or at least they present something that is real. Similarly, the linguistic and communication contexts of runic inscriptions are often rather particular, as many have shown (e.g. Spurkland 2005), and also need to be taken into account in the analysis.

This then is the starting-point: runology in a lexicographical context requires a reading of the runes in their own particular range of contexts. The contexts most relevant to an understanding of runic vocabulary are listed here and some of them will be explored further below:

- semantic contexts:
 - immediate (e.g. collocations)
 - structural (e.g. synonyms, antonyms)
 - onomastic (given names and nicknames)
- discourse contexts:
 - formulas
 - deixis
 - poetry
- physical contexts:
 - the object itself/materiality
 - decorative and structural elements
 - physical surroundings
- functional contexts:
 - communication
 - monumentality

The runic lexicon – two case-studies from Viking Age inscriptions

The word bóndi and linguistic contexts

It is generally recognised that the “study of the lexicon ... straddles the study of purely linguistic aspects of language and the more general study of culture, since the vocabularies of languages are shaped by and reflect the intellectual and material culture in which their speakers function” (Harbert 2007, 21). In the case of dead languages, the lexicon takes on even more importance as a significant source of evidence for the reconstruction of a past culture.

The meanings of individual words in dead languages are reconstructed by a variety of means. The foremost of these are traditionally (1) etymology, including more specifically (2) comparison with cognates in other languages (including descendants and relatives of the source language), and (3) context. While etymology and cognates are normally used explicitly, contexts tend to be used more implicitly and their significance is rarely clarified in the process of establishing meaning. Runic inscriptions provide

some excellent examples of how a variety of contexts can inform both the lexicographical translation of runic vocabulary and the reconstruction of a past culture.

An amusing and intriguing example is the decision of the Scandinavian Runic Text Database (not, admittedly, a dictionary) to translate the very frequent word *bóndi* by the archaic English word *husbandman*.² The editors of the database appear to have forced this solution on themselves by their principled decision always to translate a particular word in a particular way, a decision that makes searching easier but can be linguistically confusing. At first glance, *husbandman* could appear to be well chosen. Any native speaker of English will recognise the first element of the target word as meaning ‘male spouse, married man’, which is indeed one of the meanings of the source word. Some, though probably a minority of, native speakers of English will also recognise the whole word in its archaic meaning of ‘farmer’, perhaps by means of association with some expressions which are still current in the language, such as ‘animal husbandry’. And ‘farmer’ is indeed one of the relevant meanings of the source word. This solution may seem neat to the linguistically aware runologist, but remains odd to the native speaker of English. The word *husbandman* is no longer current, instead we speak of either a *farmer*, or a *husband*, two very different words with very different meanings. So, while attempting cleverly to combine two meanings in one, the translation *husbandman* manages actually to convey neither, at least not in contemporary English.

The word *bóndi* is thus a simple example of the fact well known to all translators and lexicographers, though difficult to get across to undergraduates, that there is rarely a one-to-one mapping of words between a source language and a target language. It is already well known that in the medieval forms of the Scandinavian languages the word *bóndi* covered the range of meanings already mentioned, and more, and that these meanings are interrelated. All this can be known from reading the Icelandic sagas, or from studying the historical development of the Scandinavian languages (and indeed their influence on English, giving the latter its word *husband*). Any dictionary can, and will, do what Peterson’s *Svenskt runordsregister* has done and list the three basic meanings of ‘farmer’, ‘husband’ and ‘head of a household’ (though we can note that the third of these is not implied in the translation ‘husbandman’). The three meanings are united by the

² For the sake of consistency, and because they occur in a variety of sources of different provenance, the words under discussion will be presented in their normalised Old West Norse form (as in, e.g., *ONP*).

Table 1. The meanings of *bóndi* in Viking Age inscriptions. The categories are explained fully in the text.

	A 'husband'			AB 'husband' and/or 'householder/farmer'			B 'householder/farmer'			C uncertain		
	A1 + fem. + gen. + family	A2 + fem. + gen.		AB1 + fem.	AB2 + fem. + gen. + farm	AB3 + fem. + farm	B1 + farm	B2 + masc. + gen.	B3 + Ø	C1 + gen.	C2 + Ø	
Öl	2	1		-	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	7
Ög	5	6		1	-	1	-	3	1	3	2	22
Sö	15	1		1	1	-	1	3	-	2	3	27
Sm	1	-		-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	3
Vg	3	3		-	-	-	-	1	1	-	2	10
U	71	28		5	-	-	3	1	4	7	7	126
Vs	-	-		1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Nä	2	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	3
Gs	-	1		-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2
DR	3	2		-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	8
Total	102	42		8	1	1	5	8	9	18	15	209
Combined Totals		144			10			22			33	209

concept of ‘mastery’ or ‘authority’. So what, if anything, can a study of runic inscriptions contribute to our understanding of the word *bóndi*? In particular, can a contextual interpretation of the occurrences of this word help to distinguish its different meanings and assign them to individual inscriptions? This is something that is eschewed by both the Scandinavian Runic Text Database and Peterson, but is done in the glossary to *DR*.

It is fortunate that the word *bóndi* occurs sufficiently frequently for it to be possible to discern patterns in the evidence, encapsulated in table 1 (see also Sawyer 2000, 106–10, 184).³ In the Viking Age Scandinavian runic corpus, there are 144 inscriptions in which a person designated as a *bóndi* is said (e.g. through the use of a genitive or other possessive form) to be in a relationship with a person with a feminine name and the word is therefore most likely to have the primary meaning ‘husband, spouse’ (category A). Of these 144 inscriptions, 102 also make reference to other family members, suggesting the focus is on the married couple as the basis of the family, rather than on them as a couple *per se*.⁴ There are ten inscriptions in which there is a feminine personal name somewhere in the inscription, but it does not collocate directly with the word *bóndi*, leaving it an open question as to whether the *bóndi* is the woman’s husband or not (category AB)—in these the meaning is indeterminate. In two cases there is also reference to a farm, strengthening the possibility of the ‘farmer’ or ‘householder’ meaning while not excluding ‘husband’. There are then 22 inscriptions without any feminine name in which it is therefore presumed that the meaning is either (or both) ‘farmer’ or ‘householder’ (category B). Eight of these do in fact indicate a personal relationship through a genitival form, but the person with whom the *bóndi* is in a relationship has a masculine name. These eight inscriptions (category B2) are the most secure evidence for a meaning which excludes that of ‘husband’, although whether that meaning is ‘farmer’ or ‘householder’ or something else is still not clear. Finally, there are 33 inscriptions which are too fragmentary to enable the meaning of the word to be established (category C). However, eighteen of these instances are in a genitival collocation which could, as we have just seen, include a relationship with a male member of the household, but which is nevertheless overwhelmingly more likely to suggest the meaning ‘husband’, as in category A. In quite a few cases, a

³ Sawyer’s numbers are slightly higher than mine, probably because I have been more cautious in interpreting fragmentary inscriptions.

⁴ While it is not always possible entirely to exclude the meaning ‘master (of a female servant)’ for the inscriptions in category A, these numbers do suggest that the word appears predominantly in a family context.

Table 2. The distribution of *góðr* in collocation with the different meanings of *bóndi* in Viking Age inscriptions

	‘husband’	‘farmer/ householder’	Ambiguous/ uncertain/both	Total
Ög	3	3	2	8
Sö	2	2	4	8
Vg	–	2	–	2
U	1	6	1	8
Vs	–	–	1	1
DR	–	3	–	3
Total	6	16	8	30

female name is present in the inscription, and it is only the fragmentary nature of it that means we cannot directly see the collocation. From this it can be concluded that, in the usage of memorial inscriptions, a substantial majority of the instances of the word *bóndi* carry the primary meaning of ‘husband, male spouse’. Even if we chose to assign categories AB and C entirely to the meaning ‘farmer/householder’, the preponderance of the ‘husband’ meaning would still be in a ratio of at least 2:1. If we ignore the uncertain or ambiguous categories and count only the certain categories of A and B, then the ratio of ‘husband’ to ‘farmer’ is closer to 6:1. The real ratio will of course be somewhere in between 2:1 and 6:1, though probability suggests it would be closer to the latter.

Some of the people who are designated as a *bóndi* are further given the epithet *góðr* ‘good’. Were these people good husbands or good farmers? In spite of the frequency of the meaning ‘husband’ overall, the figures suggest that when the adjective is used, it is most often used with the less common meaning (table 2; cf. also Sawyer 2000, 107, 178–83), i.e. to praise someone for satisfactorily fulfilling his role as a farmer, or as the head of a farming household, rather than for his qualities as a husband. There are 30 inscriptions in which the commemorated man is called a *góðr bóndi*—in only six of these is this phrase used of a woman’s husband, eight are ambiguous (because fragmentary) and sixteen have no evident marital associations and are therefore most likely to refer to the deceased’s agricultural or household role. Thus, even though the instances in which

Table 3. Occurrences of *verr* ‘husband’ in Viking Age inscriptions

	‘husband’	+ <i>þegn</i>	+ verse
Ög	1	–	–
Sö	2	1	1
Vg	2	2	1
U	2	–	1
G	1	–	–
DR	7	2	–
N	1	–	–
Total	16	5	3

bóndi does not mean ‘husband’ are in a significant minority overall, and are therefore less likely to occur, when they do occur they are proportionally much more likely to collocate with the adjective *góðr*. This does not necessarily imply that there was a shortage of good husbands in Viking Age Scandinavia. But it does suggest that the evaluation of someone’s career, or role in life, especially using the adjective *góðr*, was generally considered to be a more appropriate topic for a public memorial inscription than an evaluation of his marriage.

The different semantic components of *bóndi* are by no means mutually exclusive. In Viking Age Scandinavia, as in other pre-industrial communities, most people lived on what we would call a farm, most farmers were married, and most married men were considered to be the head of their farming household. The three roles go together and the meanings are therefore at some level impossible to separate. The two types of linguistic context, or collocation, analysed here provide different levels of confidence in understanding the different meanings. When *bóndi* collocates with a feminine name and a possessive, this can be regarded as positive evidence for the meaning ‘male spouse, husband’ (though it does not preclude other meanings). However, when such a collocation is absent, there is only negative, and therefore less conclusive, evidence for the meaning ‘farmer’ or ‘head of a household’.

Before leaving husbands, farmers and householders, it is worth briefly

considering what alternatives there were for these words. Closely related to *bóndi* is *búmaðr*, which can be translated with *ONP* as ‘farmer, man who makes his living by farming, householder’, though it may also have connotations of the wealthy and generous host (*DR, Text*, col. 344). It occurs in one inscription (DR 291), in which the commemorated person is described as both *beztr búmanna* and the *bóndi* of the woman commissioning the monument, neatly illustrating the distinction.

There is also another word meaning ‘husband’ available to rune carvers, and that is *verr* (table 3). This word occurs in only fifteen or sixteen inscriptions (G 252 is uncertain), so only just over 10 % of the number of occurrences of *bóndi* with the same meaning. The examples suggest that its lower frequency may be explained by the venerability of the term. Seven of the occurrences are in Denmark, including some early inscriptions such as Glavendrup (DR 209) and Tryggevælde (DR 230), suggesting that it is a more archaic term, even when used in later inscriptions. Archaic words are often used in special contexts and, in three of the inscriptions, the word *verr* occurs in a part of the inscription that is formulated as verse (Sö 137, Vg 59, U 226). A number of the inscriptions have other markers of high, or at least special, status, including five where the commemorated is said to have been a *þegn*, a word discussed further below. All of this contributes to a sense that *verr* is not the normal, everyday word for ‘husband’ in the Viking Age but signals a special register. Furthermore, there is no evidence in these inscriptions that *verr* has any connotations relevant to farming or households, rather it does appear just to mean ‘husband’.

The word þegn and non-linguistic contexts

The purpose of the detailed analysis of *bóndi* has been to show how linguistic contexts can illuminate the shades of meaning of just one, albeit quite significant, word. Yet, the contexts of runic inscriptions are not only linguistic, but encompass other aspects of these monuments. This can be illustrated by the word *þegn*, which has been extensively discussed, with different scholars coming to radically different conclusions.⁵ The most successful discussions are those that aim to pinpoint the uses and meanings of particular words in particular contexts, avoiding the temptation of the very broad brush, particularly with words like this which are clearly sensitive to social changes and prone to regular semantic shifts. I have

⁵ References to older scholarship can be found in Jesch 1993; 1994; 2001, 225–29; see also Sawyer 2000, 103–07, Syrett 2000 and Goetting 2006 and further references there.

argued (Jesch 2001, 225–29; 2011, 41–44) that, in the late Viking Age at least, the word *þegn* refers to the upper echelons of the established landowning classes, rather than to agents of an expanding monarchy, or older, retired warriors, as has been suggested by others, and that the word means more than just ‘free man’ (as assumed by Källström 2012, 53). I have also argued for keeping the discussion of *þegn* separate from that of *drengr*: the clear difference between them in the Danish inscriptions at least has been illustrated in Søren Sindbæk’s application of network analysis to the material (2008, 46–49). But I have not previously analysed the shades of meaning of *þegn* as thoroughly as I have with *drengr*, and think there may still be more to be wrung from it, using the perspective of “interdisciplinary semantics” (Kay 2000, 64 f.). This method implies that a variety of both linguistic and non-linguistic contexts can illuminate the shades of meaning of this word in Viking Age runic inscriptions. Whereas in the case of *bóndi*, the contexts were mainly linguistic, in this case non-linguistic contexts are also relevant.

As everyone knows, and as has been most extensively demonstrated by Rune Palm (1992), the distribution of Viking Age runestone inscriptions is not even, neither in time nor in space. But even within this uneven overall pattern, the distribution of inscriptions commemorating one or more *þegns* is unusual, with concentrations in Denmark, Västergötland and Södermanland. Certainly, distribution patterns may be random and not necessarily directly related to social or economic circumstances, as was pointed out by Gunhild Øby Nielsen in her study of some Danish inscriptions (2005, 118–20). Despite this, the 47 monuments commemorating *þegns* share a number of characteristics which do seem to define them as a group. These shared characteristics, both linguistic and physical, all link to concepts of land, ancestry and status. A close analysis reveals the following characteristics of *þegn*-monuments (see also table 4):

- Interest in family and genealogy:
 - naming of family members other than the commissioner(s) and the commemorated (DR 277, DR 291, DR AUD1995;279, Vg 115, Vg 158)
 - related stones nearby (Vg 102 and Vg 103, Sm 36 and Sm 37, Sö 34 and Sö 35, Sö 45 and Sö 367)
 - mention of women (DR 98, DR 99, DR 106, DR 143, DR 209, DR 277, DR 291, DR 293, Vg 59, Vg 115, Vg 150, Sö 367; possibly also Ög 200)
- Complexity of monuments:
 - *kuml*, normally referring (Nielsen 1953) to a monument consisting of at least one runestone plus at least one uninscribed stone or

Table 4. Characteristics of Viking Age monuments on which the commemorated is said to have been a *þegn*. Some inscriptions have more than one feature, others have none.

	Number of inscriptions	Family and ancestry			Complex monuments			Power	
		Other family members named	Related stones nearby	Mention of women	<i>kuml</i>	<i>steinar</i>	Mound/cemetery/bridge/ship-setting	<i>þróttar</i>	superlatives
Ög	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Sö	8	-	2	1	-	1	1	7	-
Sm	2	-	1	-	2	-	1	-	2
Vg	18	2	1	3	3	-	2	-	-
DR	18	3	-	8	5	1	2	-	2
Totals	47	5	4	12	11	2	6	7	4

other monumental construction (DR 143, DR 209, DR 277, DR 293, DR 294, Vg 101, Vg 103, Vg 115, Sm 35, Sm 36, Sm 37, Ög 200)

- *steinar*, multiple stones (DR 143, Sö 34)
- context of mound/cemetery/bridge/causeway/ship-setting (DR 143, DR 209, Vg 115, Vg 157, Sm 35, Sö 367)
- Statements of power:
 - *þróttar þegn* (Sö 90, Sö 112, Sö 151, Sö 158, Sö 170, Sö 367, Sö Fv1948;295)
 - superlatives (DR 277, DR AUD1995;279, Sm 35, Sm 37)

It seems reasonable to postulate that these features arise from the same or similar social impulses. The frequent reference to women, and the naming of family members other than the commissioner and the commemorated, indicate a concern with ancestry and family. The complexity of the monuments, with multiple stones or other forms of commemoration such as ship-settings or burial mounds, suggests a settled and wealthy community, tied closely to the land. The use of superlatives also tends to correlate with social status, as does probably the phrase *þróttar þegn* (or Runic Swed. *þröttar þiagn*), restricted to seven inscriptions from Söder-

Table 5. Characteristics of Viking Age monuments on which the commemorated is called *þegn*. Some inscriptions have more than one feature, others have none.

	Number of inscriptions	Family and ancestry			Complex monuments			Power	
		Other family members named	Related stones nearby	Mention of women	<i>kuml</i>	<i>steinar</i>	Mound/cemetery/bridge/ship-setting	<i>þröttar</i>	superlatives
Sö	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Sm	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
U	6	-	2	2	-	1	5	-	-
Totals	9	1	2	2	-	1	6	-	-

manland, which will be discussed further below. None of these features is particularly significant on its own, but taken together, they build up a picture of the kind of person most likely to be described as a *þegn*. This suggests that *þegns* belong to the long-established landowning classes who liked to emphasise their standing in the community by displaying their family history on runestones, and by placing a variety of costly and complex monuments in their local landscape. These people were the key to local power in the late Viking Age.

These patterns can also be seen in those runestones which commemorate not a *þegn*, but someone called *Þegn*. Unlike the *þegn*-group, these inscriptions can include commissioners called *Þegn*, as well as the commemorated, and there is a small number of compound names in *þegn* (Peterson 2007, 224 f., Källström 2012, 53), but for consistency of comparison, only those in which the commemorated are called *þegn* are discussed here. These inscriptions form a small group with a concentration in Uppland, in contrast to the *þegn*-group. The extent to which Viking Age names were meaningful to their bearers or to those who gave them is debatable, even though many names must have been linguistically transparent. But it is at least interesting to observe that inscriptions commemorating someone named *Þegn* have some of the same features as those using the common noun (table 5). Thus, U 999 refers in the inscription to ‘stones’ in the plural, and was surrounded by *bautasteinar*, mounds and other runestones, including some mentioning the same people. U Fv1978;226 may

be related to U 353: both mention a bridge or causeway, as do U 363 and U 456. Women are implicated in U 34 and U 363. Sö 349 is located in a cemetery with mounds and stone setting. So although the total number of inscriptions commemorating a man called *Pegn* is small, their features are similar to those in which this word is used as a common noun. The least typical inscription, Sm 71, is significant in understanding this group. Here a man commemorates five generations of his paternal ancestors, the most distant one being called *Pegn*. The interest and pride in genealogy is clearly marked in the inscription, even though there is no evidence for any of the other features.

Returning to the *þegn*-group, the inscriptions from Södermanland share many of the features that are characteristic of the group as a whole, but they differ in one respect, a difference which is important enough to suggest they form a sub-group of their own. Seven out of the eight inscriptions from Södermanland commemorate not just *þegns* but *þegns* who are qualified by the word *þróttar*, the gen. sg. of a masc. noun *þrótt* apparently meaning 'strength, power'. This is a fascinating collocation which still requires full explication, and also poses the question of whether the *þegns* of Södermanland were like other *þegns*, or were they somehow different?

Most of the *þróttar þegn*-inscriptions have distinctive features in addition to the ones already noted. Six of the seven make use of unusual rune forms, both coded and same-stave runes, as discussed by Bianchi (2010, 118–51). Several of them also have unusual decoration: three (Sö 112, Sö 170 and Sö 367) have a mask, and one (Sö 158) has a ship design. These features also have to be drawn into the equation when attempting to understand what a *þróttar þegn* was, even if unusual runes, masks and ship-designs are particularly associated with inscriptions from Södermanland and may therefore not have any special significance for these particular inscriptions. Here, it is necessary to return to linguistic contexts.

There are several noteworthy linguistic features. As already noted, *þróttar* is a noun in the genitive singular, giving a phrase that is translated by the Scandinavian Runic Text Database as *thegn of strength*. In the other 40 inscriptions, the word *þegn* is always qualified by an adjective. In fact, the word never appears without being qualified in some way (table 6). What the table shows is that the Södermanland inscriptions are quite distinct from the others, which most frequently use the adjective *góðr*, but also its derivatives, such as *beztr* and *algóðr*. Even the other adjectives used, *fyrstr*, *nýtr* and *heiðverðr*, all belong to the same general sphere of meaning in which one person is evaluated (always positively) in relation

Table 6. Qualifiers of the noun *þegn* when used of the commemorated

	<i>góðr</i>	<i>algóðr</i>	<i>beztr</i>	<i>fyrstr</i>	<i>nýtr</i>	<i>heiðverðr</i>	<i>þróttar</i>	
Ög	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	1
Sö	1	–	–	–	–	–	7	8
Sm	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	2
Vg	18	–	–	–	–	–	–	18
DR	14	1	1	1	–	1	–	18
Totals	34	1	2	1	1	1	7	47

to others. But *þróttar* does not fit this pattern, not being an adjective, nor belonging to this semantic field. Indeed it is not quite clear what it means in this context. Does it mean that the *þegns* concerned possessed strength, and if so was that personal physical strength or military strength in the form of a retinue? Or did they have some other form of power, which was neither physical nor military? In any case, the phrase appears to be a statement of fact rather than an evaluation.

At this point it is necessary to take a closer look at the word *þróttar*, and also to introduce other Viking Age discourses that form a further possible context for runic inscriptions. *Þróttar* occurs in both poetry and prose in Old Norse, and its meaning of ‘strength’, along with a particular connotation of ‘endurance’, in some cases even superhuman endurance, are evident from the examples provided in the dictionaries. In the *Volsunga saga* account of the cutting out of Högni’s heart, his personal physical endurance of this is described using the word *þróttar* (Finch 1965, 71). Within the same story cycle, a more abstract meaning occurs in stanza 15 of the eddic poem *Hamðismál* (Neckel and Kuhn 1983, 271). Here the ability (*þróttar*) of the sons of Guðrún to carry out their revenge diminishes by one third when they first kill their half-brother Erpr, leading to their own death.

Dictionaries (e.g. Finnur Jónsson 1931) claim that *Þróttar* is one of the names of the god Óðinn, though there does not appear to be direct evidence for this in any texts; it does not, for instance, appear in the names of Óðinn listed by Snorri in his *Edda* (Faulkes 1982, 21 f.). Rather, this seems to be a scholarly extrapolation from the way the word is used in kennings. *Þróttar* appears as both base-word and determinant in a range of kennings for warrior, battle, sword, shield, raven and poetry, all of which taken together do indeed suggest an Odinic referent. Thus, *Þróttar* is used as the

base-word in a complex warrior-kenning in stanza 17 of Sigvatr Þórðarson's *Erfidrápa*, his memorial poem on St Óláfr, composed after the king's death in 1030 (*SPSMA*, 1: 684 f.). It is used as the determinant in stanza 16 of Óttarr svarti's *Höfuðlausn*, a poem datable to the 1020s and also about Óláfr, in which battle is *Þróttar þing* 'the assembly of Þróttir' (*SPSMA*, 1: 761 f.). If *Þróttar þing* means 'battle' in poetry that is not much later than the Sörmlandic inscriptions, could *Þróttar þegn* also be a kenning meaning 'warrior', perhaps 'warrior devoted to Óðinn'? Certainly, in one of the inscriptions, Sö 170, three men commemorate their father who was 'with the Greeks' and died somewhere that is unfortunately not decipherable but may have been out in the east — he may have been a warrior of some kind.

The fact that three of the seven *þróttar þegn*-inscriptions have crosses on them (Sö 112, Sö 151, Sö Fv1948;295) does not necessarily vitiate this Odinic interpretation, for both Óláfr and his skalds Óttarr and Sigvatr were Christian, but did not turn up their noses at pagan imagery in the special context of poetry. Moreover, one could argue that some kennings and kenning-types were so well established that their pagan connotations were not especially salient. One of the stones (Sö 112) has both a mask and a cross, and two others (Sö 170 and Sö 367) are decorated with a mask, while Sö 158 is decorated with a ship. The iconography is thus mixed, like the poetic imagery. The most recent discussion of such runic masks, by Else Roesdahl and David Wilson (2006), concludes that the most likely function of the masks is apotropaic, or protective, and they note that many such stones, as indeed the one at Släbro (Sö 367), were originally placed at river-crossings. The crosses on these monuments could have had the same function. At the same time, it cannot be denied that masks are associated with Óðinn in mythological texts (cf. his names *Grímr* and *Grímnir*), and such associations cannot be ruled out.

A possible objection to the interpretation of *þróttar þegn* as a warrior-kenning, with or without Odinic associations, is that such metaphorical language is generally foreign to the rather straightforward memorial discourses of runestone inscriptions. With the notable exception of the Karlevi stone, exclusively poetic language is uncommon, even in the inscriptions which are in verse. But it is not totally absent — the stones from Djulefors (Sö 65) and Gripsholm (Sö 179), and several others, use poetic diction as well as the rather straightforward alliterative statements that characterise other "poetry" on runestones. Djulefors says of its hero that he *arði barði* 'ploughed with his prow', an agricultural image of sailing that does not appear otherwise in Old Norse until the twelfth century. Gripsholm has the common poetic trope of 'feeding the eagle', meaning providing

the eagle with carrion on the battlefield. Both of these inscriptions are also from Södermanland, where the bulk of runic poetry comes from. Although poetic language is not the norm in runic memorial inscriptions, it is therefore not possible to rule out its use in the seven *þróttar þegn*-inscriptions, even though these are not in verse. In Södermanland, poetic diction is another of the optional extras that were favoured for the very special monuments in this region, along with masks, crosses, ships, coded runes, same-stave runes, and metrical or alliterative statements.

To return to the question posed above: are the *þróttar þegns* therefore the same as normal *þegns*? The interpretation just proposed might suggest an answer of “no” – after all a far-travelling warrior is quite different from a settled landowner, even if the same person might at different times in his life be both. But the whole point of poetic language, especially kennings, is that it enables the mind to keep two different meanings in play at the same time (Stockwell 2002, 106 f.). A ship does not plough, yet its action in the water is like that of a plough in the soil. The food of eagles is not what we normally think of as food. A *þróttar þegn* is both a *þegn* and not a *þegn*, he is praised for being a warrior, or like a warrior, but in reality he is perhaps just an influential landowner. So the *þróttar þegns* were just like other *þegns*, as shown by the feature analysis carried out above, but with an added dimension, that mysterious and poetical quality of *þróttar*, whether or not that quality is explicitly associated with Óðinn.

Conclusion

These examples have demonstrated some of the uses of “interdisciplinary semantics” in understanding the runic lexicon, a method which requires a reading of the runes in their own particular range of contexts, and a recognition that these contexts go beyond the purely linguistic. The discussion has touched on most of the contexts outlined in the introduction above, though with a focus on the semantic and the physical. The evidence of some of the alternative discourses of the time, such as poetry, has also been adduced. Because the runic corpus is relatively small, this kind of analysis can feasibly be extended to the whole lexicon. In many cases this kind of analysis is also relevant to form-words as well as content words – an example of this can be found in Lena Peterson’s article (1996a) on the prepositions *aft/æft*, *at* and *æftir*. Her analysis is primarily linguistic, but considers a range of factors including stylistic and semantic, and takes its point of departure in a distribution analysis.

“Interdisciplinary semantics” is particularly important because of the

nature of the runic corpus. These inscriptions are original, largely unmediated and contemporary documents for the period in which they were produced. Compared to other early documents, inscriptions in the runic corpus are relatively easily datable to a time of composition and locatable in space and, since few if any involve transmission by copying, they are less likely to be a linguistic palimpsest and more likely to be accurately representative of the language of that time and place. When it comes to reconstructing the culture, as well as the language, of the past, the vocabulary of runic inscriptions therefore provides evidence that not only predates the manuscript record, but is also more precise in many ways, even if it is less extensive. While manuscript texts also have contexts that illuminate them in various ways, such as the illustrations, marginalia, glosses, and other kinds of paratexts, these are often of more interest for what they say about the reception of the text than about its inception. However, the contexts of all runic inscriptions, but the Viking Age memorial stones in particular, locate them in the real world of their time, and they give us a unique gateway to that world, if only we are adept at reading them correctly.

In this way, the most useful dictionary of runic inscriptions would have discursive definitions, somewhere between the analytic and the encyclopedic. Not all words would need as extensive discussion as *bóndi* and *þegn*, but these examples have demonstrated a range of the linguistic and non-linguistic contexts that need to be taken into account in writing definitions of words in runic inscriptions. All entries in a runic dictionary would therefore need to include reference to the relevant semantic, discourse, physical and functional contexts, which will vary with the word being defined.

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U (+ no.) = inscription published in *Upplands runinskrifter*, i.e. *SRI*, 6–9.

U Fv1978;226 = inscription from Ösby, Lunda parish, Uppland. Published in Helmer Gustavson and Thorgunn Snædal Brink. “Runfynd 1977.” *Fornvännen* 73 (1978), 220–28 (at p. 226).

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Öl = inscription published in *Ölands runinskrifter*, i.e. *SRI*, 1.

Vikingatida och medeltida skrifttraditioner: Några iakttagelser med utgångspunkt i det svenska runmaterialet

Magnus Källström

Abstract

The aim of this paper is not to give a full description of how the runic alphabet was used and developed in different parts of Scandinavia in the two periods in question, but rather to present a few selected cases that can shed light on one or two important issues relevant to the long history of runic script. Most of the examples are taken from Sweden. They comprise inscriptions which are either unpublished or have been ignored in the discussion of the development of runic script. The topics touched upon include the relationship between the long-branch and short-twig runes, the adoption of **h** as a way of denoting fricative *g*, the origin of some of the characters used in the medieval writing system and differences of runic tradition in various parts of Sweden.

Keywords: Runic alphabet, transitional runic inscriptions, the younger futhark, long-branch runes, short-twig runes, Birka, medieval runes, fricative *g*, runic literacy, Sigtuna, Uppland, Västergötland

Runalfabetet har använts under en mycket lång tid och över ett relativt stort område. Det är därför inte särskilt konstigt att det har genomgått många förändringar och att utvecklingen tagit olika vägar på olika platser. Den mest radikala omformningen skedde i Norden i början av vikingatiden med bland annat en kraftig reduktion av antalet runtecken, men också genom skapandet av nya parallella varianter.

Källström, Magnus. "Vikingatida och medeltida skrifttraditioner: Några iakttagelser med utgångspunkt i det svenska runmaterialet." *Futhark: International Journal of Runic Studies* 4 (2013), 101–28.

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Syftet med detta bidrag är inte att ge en fullständig översikt av de vikingatida och medeltida skrifttraditionerna, utan att göra ett antal utvalda nedslag och ta upp några av de problemställningar som rör utvecklingen av runorna som skriftsystem under dessa perioder. Utvecklingen måste givetvis ses i ett övergripande nordiskt perspektiv, som inkluderar de nordiska bosättningarna i både öst och väst. En sådan undersökning skulle dock bli alldeles för omfattande. Jag har därför valt att utgå från det svenska materialet med ett antal exempel som illustrerar olika problemställningar. Flera av dessa inskrifter är nog relativt okända och de har därför sällan eller aldrig utnyttjats i diskussionen. Även om utgångspunkten har varit företeelser från svenskt område kan dessa iakttagelser förhoppningsvis också kasta ljus över utvecklingen på annat håll.

Uppkomsten av den 16-typiga futharken

En lika viktig som svårbemästrad fråga handlar om övergången från den äldre 24-typiga runraden till den 16-typiga variant som användes under vikingatid och större delen av medeltiden. Framför allt har man diskuterat om den vikingatida futharken har uppkommit genom en stegvis utveckling av det äldre systemet eller om den har skapats momentant genom någon sorts reform (se t.ex. Schulte 2009, Stoklund 2010). Båda teorierna bygger egentligen på ett mycket begränsat material, där ett fåtal inskrifter och ibland till och med något enstaka belägg har fått utgöra hela bevismaterialet. Förmodligen behövs ett ganska stort nytillskott av väldaterade fynd från den aktuella perioden innan dessa frågor kan avgöras med någon större säkerhet.

Det verkar dock rimligt att omstöpningsen av skriftsystemet började med förändringar inom den 24-typiga runraden men att det sista steget, där teckenantalet bestämdes till just 16 med ett antal bestämda funktioner, togs av en liten grupp människor med kontakter och möjligheter att sprida dessa nya idéer (jfr Grønvik 2001, 61–83, Knirk 2010, 188 f.). Var och när detta skedde vet vi inte säkert, men det runristade skalltaget från Ribe i Danmark, numera daterat till cirka 725–750, är förmodligen inte alltför avlägset i vare sig tid eller rum (jfr Grønvik 2001, 80 f.; den reviderade dateringen enligt Søvsø i denna volym, jfr Stoklund 2010, 240). Detta fynd visar hur som helst att det vikingatida runsystemet har funnits färdigutbildat i Syddanmark senast i mitten av 700-talet. Vid samma tid har förmodligen den äldre runraden också gått ur bruk. Visserligen kan äldre runformer dyka upp senare, men det verkar då alltid vara med speciella

syften. Ett sådant exempel är de två raderna med äldre runor på baksidan av Rökstenen (Ög 136), där dessa används som en sorts lönnskrift. Samtidigt måste man komma ihåg att denna lönnskrift faktiskt bara är belagd här och att den därför knappast har varit särskilt spridd. Ett annat exempel är \mathfrak{M} -runan på Ingelstadhällen (Ög 43) i Östergötland, som sannolikt ska uppfattas som en begreppsruna och som ett ideogram för mansnamnet *Dagr* (*SRI*, 2: 43). Också detta fall är ganska isolerat, även om det kan finnas ytterligare några förekomster av denna typ av begreppsrunor. Slutligen är det väl inte omöjligt att de äldre teckenformerna kan ha använts som magiska tecken, utan att man egentligen kände eller tog hänsyn till deras ursprungliga ljudvärden. En sådan användning föreligger möjligen på den amulett, som 1993 påträffades vid en arkeologisk undersökning vid Hovgården på Adelsö i Uppland (U NOR1994;26A). Det är dock inte uteslutet att det här kan röra sig om ett hittills otolkat lönnskriftssystem, vilket likheten med de bekanta amulettinskrifterna från Gorodišče i Ryssland skulle kunna tyda på (se bilder i Melnikova 2001, 181–189, 440).

I en av de tidigaste varianterna med yngre runor användes fortfarande några av de delvis mer komplicerade runformerna från den äldre futharken: \mathfrak{f} **a**, \mathfrak{k} **a**, \mathfrak{h} **h** och \mathfrak{m} **m**. Vi känner denna teckenuppsättning främst genom några runstenar på Fyn, bl.a. den berömda Helnæsstenen (DR 190). Dessa runor blev med tiden ersatta av de enklare former som möter på den själländska Gørlevstenen (DR 239), där dock \mathfrak{g} -runan fortfarande har formen \mathfrak{f} . Däremot finns det skäl att ifrågasätta om det förekommer några säkra exempel på inskrifter i den yngre futharken som innehåller urnordiska teckenformer utöver de 16 runor som finns i den vikingatida runradens teckenuppsättning.

I litteraturen figurerar ett antal sådana inskrifter. Till dessa hör den stora runbildsten, som ligger framför altaret i Gothems kyrka på Gotland (G 157), där man har antagit en \mathfrak{g} -runa av urnordisk typ (\mathfrak{X}), fastän resten av inskriften verkar bestå av kortkvistrunor (fig. 1).¹ I Gotlands runinskrifter (*SRI*, 12: 47) translittereras inskriften på följande sätt:

...uþurfratagr-u-a...

Något försök till tolkning har inte gjorts trots att det av stavelsestrukturen framgår att det bör röra sig om en meningsgivande inskrift. Det är dock frågan om det X-formiga tecknet verkligen ska uppfattas som en runa.

¹ Runan **a** har visserligen formen \mathfrak{f} med dubbelsidig bistav, men denna är närmast att betrakta som normalformen i de gotländska runinskrifterna med kortkvistrunor (se Johnsen 1968, 93, Källström 2012, 122).

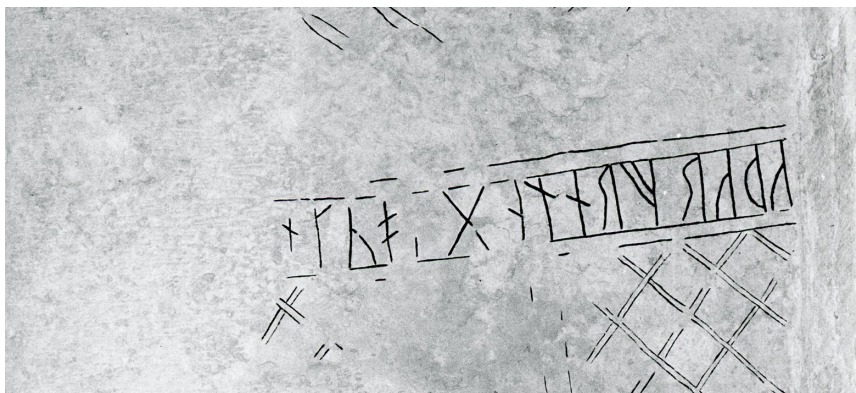


Fig. 1. Inskriften på runbildstenen G 157 i Gothems kyrka, Gotland. Foto: Raymond Hejdström (Runverkets fotosamling, Riksantikvarieambetet, Stockholm).

Ett liknande tecken förekommer nämligen i en del andra sammanhang, t.ex. i slutet av inskriften på Kärnbostenen (Sö 176, se *SRI*, 3: plansch 85), vilken liksom G 157 är ristad med kortkvistrunor. Även på den av Åsmund Kåresson signerade Gs 13 Söderby, Valbo socken, i Gästrikland finns två liknande tecken (se *SRI*, 15.1: plansch 9).

Redan Carl Säve har uppfattat krysset på Gothemsstenen som ett skiljetecken (se referat i *SRI*, 11: 47), något som senare också har föreslagits av Lisbeth Imer (2007, "Katalog", 133). Jag skulle dock snarare vilja se det som ett avslutningstecken, vilket är den funktion som motsvarande tecken har på Kärnbostenen. På stenen i Gothems kyrka ser man också att det är ett större avstånd på ömse sidor om det X-formiga tecknet än mellan runorna i inskriften, vilket är ett starkt indicium på att det inte alls rör sig om en runa. Dessutom är runorna till höger om tecknet ristade från höger till vänster, medan de som står till vänster har motsatt läsriktning; det senare framgår tydligt av **u**-runan. Inskriften ska i så fall i stället läsas på följande sätt:

...oḷubr X ...uḷurfrata

Någon säker tolkning är inte möjlig att ge, men beträffande runföljden **...uḷurfrata** är det frestande att tänka sig ett släktskapsord [*br*]ōður eller [*m*]ōður följt av ett namn i genitiv. Det senare skulle vara mansnamnet fornsvenska *Frænde* (*SMP*, 2: 124–27), även om man då kanske hade väntat sig en skrivning med åsruna.² Andra tolkningsmöjligheter skulle också

² På Pilgårdsstenen, G 280, som också är ristad med kortkvistrunor, verkar en särskild

kunna diskuteras, men jag menar att det står klart att inskriften från Gothems kyrka inte innehåller någon runa av urnordisk typ, utan att det rör sig om en inskrift med enbart kortkvistrunor.

Ett liknande exempel finns på Rävvalsstenen i Bohuslän (Bo KJ80), där man har tvistat om det inledande namnet innehåller en **w**- eller **þ**-runa. Att läsningen **þ** måste äga företräde fastslogs visserligen redan på 1940-talet (se Andersen 1947, 306–08), men genom att Krause i sin utgåva 1966 höll fast vid tolkningen av namnet som (gen.) *Hariwulfs* (Krause och Jankuhn 1966, 184 f.) har den felaktiga **w**-läsningen levt vidare.³ Inskriften bör alltså återges som **haripulfs · staina[ᚱ]**, vilket kan tolkas som *Hrīðulfs* (eller med ett omkastningsfel: *Hræiðulfs*) *stæinar* (beträffande tolkningen av namnet se Allén 2007). Rävvalsstenen inordnar sig då också utan problem i den äldsta gruppen av inskrifter med långkvistvarianten av den 16-typiga futharken, den s.k. Helnæsgruppen.

Andra inskrifter som skulle behöva granskas på nytt mot bakgrund av de ovan nämnda exemplen är bl.a. Sölvesborgsstenen (DR 356) i Blekinge (kan verkligen inte den antagna **w**-runan ha varit **b**?) och runstenen från Vatn (N KJ68) i Norge (hur säker är egentligen läsningen av **o**-runan?). Kanske kan en sådan granskning visa att det trots allt råder en ganska skarp skiljelinje mellan de inskrifter som har ristats med den äldre 24-typiga futharken och dem som tillhör det yngre systemet, vilket i så fall är ett mycket viktigt konstaterande.

Långkvistrunor och kortkvistrunor

Exemplen ovan leder oss in på förhållandet mellan de olika varianter av den yngre futharken som har varit i bruk under vikingatiden. Från handböckerna känner vi igen termer som *långkvistrunor*, *kortkvistrunor* och *stavlösa runor*. Indelningen och beteckningarna är som bekant moderna uppfinningar och gränserna mellan varianterna kan ibland vara flytande. Samtidigt är de inte helt gripna ur luften utan fångar åtminstone under

beteckning för /ã/ saknas (**biarfaa** *biartfänn*, **kua[m]u** *kvāmu*). I inskriften har man tidigare också läst ordet **siso**, vilket har tolkats som ett demonstrativt pronomen (se Snædal 2002, 54 med hänvisningar), men i den läsning som hävdas i manuset till tredje delen av Gotlands runinskrifter lämnas den sista runan oidentifierad. På spjutspetsen från Svenskens (G 225) förekommer dock en runföljd **oþn** som har tolkats som ett omkastningsfel för **þon þann**.

³ Se t.ex. Peterson 1992, 94 f. — Stenen undersöktes 1996 av Helmer Gustavson, som framhåller att runan är ”i det närmaste [...] bevarad i hela sin höjd” och att ”den bör läsas som **þ**, inte som **w**” (Gustavson 1996). Jag har vid en egen granskning den 29 april 2011 kommit till samma resultat.

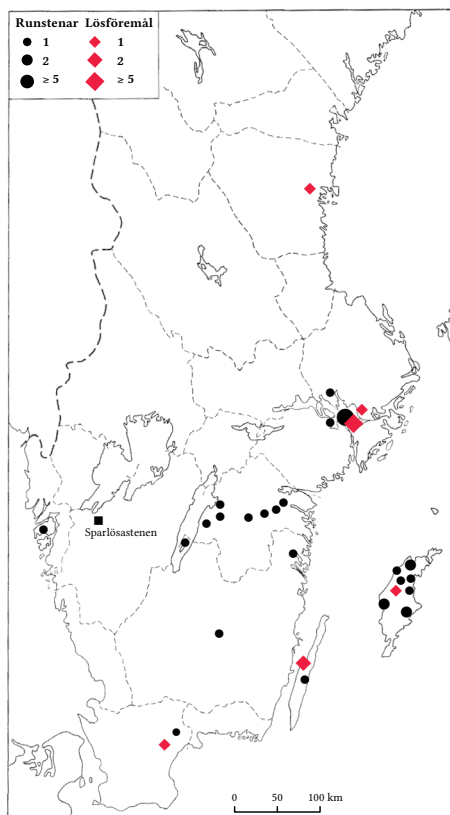


Fig. 2. Den geografiska spridningen av inskrifter med kortkvistrunor före c:a år 1000 i Sverige. Karta: författaren.

äldre vikingatid en del av de variationer i runbruket som kan iaktas i olika delar av Skandinavien.

Det som vi i dag kallar långkvistrunor verkar under vikingatidens två första århundraden ha dominerat i Danmark, medan kortkvistrunorna är typiska för Sverige och Norge. På nutida svenskt område finns ett fyrtiotal inskrifter med kortkvistrunor, som av olika skäl kan dateras till 800- eller 900-talen. Av dessa utgörs cirka 30 av runstenar. Stenarna förekommer i stort sett över hela landet, även om de är något mer frekventa i några landskap som Östergötland, Gotland och Uppland (fig. 2). Dessutom finns ett tiotal inskrifter med kortkvistrunor på lösföremål, vilka i huvudsak uppträder i samma områden som stenmonumenten.

Inskrifter med enbart långkvistrunor är däremot mycket sällsynta på nutida svenskt område under denna period, och bland steninskrifterna är



Fig. 3. Den geografiska spridningen av inskrifter med långkvistrunor före c:a år 1000 i Sverige. Karta: författaren.

det endast ett fåtal som är ristade med denna variant. Hit hör ett fragment från Finsta i Skederids socken i Uppland som har tydliga beröringspunkter med den danska Helnæsgruppen (Källström 2007b, 2012), samt U 10 Dalby, Adelsö socken, som förmodligen också är ganska tidig (se Nordén 1943, 219–22). Från Sydsverige (och gammalt danskt resp. norskt område) stammar Örjastenen (DR 333) och den nyfunna runstenen vid Färlöv (DR NOR1998;21) i Skåne samt den ovan nämnda Rävstalstenen (Bo KJ80) i Bohuslän. Möjligen ska också inskriften på Roesstenen från Gotland (G 40) och Sölvesborgstenen (DR 356) i Blekinge räknas till denna grupp. Slående är att dessa stenar så gott som uteslutande uppträder i kustbygderna (fig. 3) och aldrig i inlandet som runstenarna med kortkvistrunor gör. De fåtal inskrifter på lösföremål med inskrifter som kan karakteriseras som långkvistrunor följer samma mönster.

Det har sagts att de båda varianterna ofta förekommer blandade med varandra och att det därför kan vara felaktigt att göra en skarp åtskillnad mellan systemen (Barnes 2006). Ett tydligt exempel på sådan blandning förekommer som bekant på Sparlösaasten i Västergötland (Vg 119), men den framstår från svensk synpunkt som ett unikum. Under 800- och 900-talen är nämligen ”blandinskrifter” mycket sällsynta om man tar hänsyn till att vissa runformer är gemensamma för båda systemen. Runorna **n**, **a** och **o** med dubbelsidiga bistavar kan nämligen lika gärna ingå i kortkvistsystemet på samma sätt som **o**-runan med ensidiga bistavar är en naturlig del av långkvistrunesystemet fram till slutet av 900-talet. Av de cirka 40 kortkvistruneinskrifter som är kända från dagens Sverige är det endast i ett knappt tiotal som det finns inslag av entydiga långkvistrunor och då i regel bara något enstaka tecken.

Av spridningskartorna kan man få intrycket av att de båda varianterna av den yngre futharken nästan har uteslutit varandra på svenskt område, men med tanke på det ganska begränsade materialet kanske denna bild är skenbar. Det finns dock åtminstone en plats där de båda varianterna har förekommit sida vid sida, nämligen handelsplatsen Birka i Mälaren. Denna stadsbildning existerade från mitten av 700-talet fram till omkring 970, då den lades öde. Detta gör att inskrifter påträffade inom det gamla stadsområdet (”Svarta jorden”) grovt kan dateras till äldre vikingatid, även om vi saknar närmare uppgifter om fyndförhållandena.

Från Birka finns för närvarande 18 inskrifter kända, varav åtta utgörs av fragment av runstenar, medan de övriga är ristade på lösföremål. En runsten från Björkö by, som ligger ett stycke ifrån den vikingatida staden, kan med ledning av ornamentiken dateras till senare hälften av 1000-talet.⁴ De övriga är påträffade inom det gamla stadsområdet och tillhör följaktligen en äldre tid.⁵ Med tanke på hur få inskrifter från tiden före tusenårsskiftet som är kända från svenskt område, utgör detta en påfallande koncentration av runfynd från vikingatidens två första århundraden.

Runstenarna från stadsområdet verkar till övervägande del ha varit ristade med kortkvistrunor, medan föremålsinskrifterna ger en betydligt brokigare bild. Kortkvistrunorna tycks dock även ha dominerat inom denna grupp. Som exempel kan nämnas ett litet täljstensstycke

⁴ I februari 2013 kunde det konstateras att samtliga tio runstensfragment som har påträffats i Björkö by (U 6, U 7, U 8 samt tre senare påträffade fragment) utgör delar av en och samma sten (se den preliminära redogörelsen i Källström 2013b).

⁵ U 4, U 5 och U 9. Av de åtta fragment som har upptagits under U 9 döljer sig rester av fem olika runstenar. Tre fragment har passning och ett (SHM inv. nr 14134) är sannolikt ingen runsten, utan en slipsten.

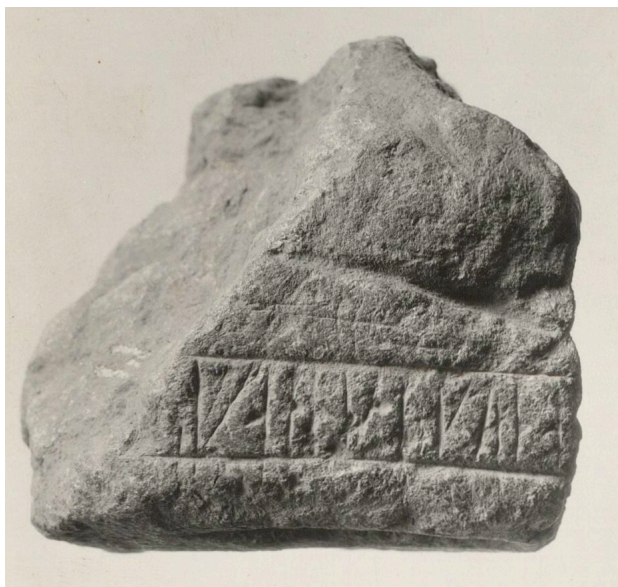


Fig. 4. Täljstensstycke med inskrift med kortkvistrunor funnet i Svarta jorden på Björkö, Adelsö socken (U Fv1921(2);14). Foto: ATA 1938.

(U Fv1921(2);14, fig. 4), som ska ha påträffats i den södra delen av Svarta jorden och som införlivades i Historiska museets samlingar 1920 (SHM inv. nr 16481). Inskriften lyder (enligt min läsning 2007): **...rfahok • ukula**⁶ och bör av fördelningen av vokal- och konsonantrunor att döma vara meningsgivande, även om det är svårt att ge någon entydig tolkning.⁷

Ett annat intressant fynd är ett runristat bryne av sandsten som också ska ha framkommit i Svarta jorden (U Fv1913;276, fig. 5). Även detta är ett gammalt fynd som inköptes till Historiska museet redan 1913 (inv. nr 14981), men som av någon anledning aldrig har figurerat i den runologiska diskussionen. Den främsta anledningen är givetvis att det inte har blivit publicerat. Inskriften består av en urnordisk **o**-runa följt av runföljden **puf**t. Rent teoretiskt skulle detta kunna vara en urnordisk

⁶ Bistaven i den sjunde runan är något otydlig och det är möjligt att runan ska läsas som **r**.

⁷ Det är exempelvis inte omöjligt att **fa** svarar mot presens eller imperativ av verbet *fā* 'gripa; skaffa', medan **hok** (som p.g.a. årsuman måste innehålla ett nasalt element) kan återge akkusativformen av en motsvarighet till fornsvenska *hanker*. Detta var under medeltiden bl.a. en beteckning för ett vidjeband som användes för att förtöja båtar eller binda samman störrarna i en gårdsgård (se Schlyter resp. Söderwall, s.v. *hanker*).



Fig. 5. Runristad sandstenbryne funnet i Svarta jorden på Björkö, Adelsö socken (U Fv1913;276). Foto: ATA 1938.

inskrift, eftersom de senare runorna har i stort sett samma form både i den 24-typiga futharken och i långkvistvarianten av den yngre runraden.⁸ Fyndförhållandena – så långt vi nu känner dem – talar dock för att den är vikingatida. Runföljden **puft** skulle mycket väl kunna svara mot substantivet *pyft* f. 'tjuvnad', medan funktionen hos den urnordiska **o**-runan är mera oklar. Det ligger dock nära till hands att tänka på en begreppsruna, som i så fall borde svara mot ordet *ōðal* 'odal'.

Som ett tredje exempel från Svarta jorden vill jag nämna en runristad bennål, som påträffades 1924 (U ANF1937;172, SHM inv. nr 17473). Fyndet publicerades 1937 av Arthur Nordén (1937, 171–76), på vars uppgifter och läsning alla senare omnämnanden i litteraturen bygger. På nålen finns två rader med runor, varav den ena är ganska hårt åtgången. Den andra är däremot relativt oskadad och bör snarast läsas: **pura • ishapiṛ • liṛ** (fig. 6).⁹ Runorna tillhör genomgående långkvistvarianten av den yngre run-

⁸ Det bör nämnas att den spetsiga bistaven i **p**-runan påminner mer om de varianter av detta tecken som förekommer i inskrifter med den äldre runraden, även om den där är relativt sällsynt (se sammanställning hos Odenstedt 1990, 31–34).

⁹ Nordén (1937, 174) återger det sista ordet som **liik**, men denna läsning är uppenbarligen felaktig. Jag fann vid min egen undersökning den 9 november 2009 att man i stället för **ik** av allt att döma bara ska läsa ett runtecken. Detta tecken består av en rak huvudstav som inte når ända upp till den övre ramlinjen. Till höger om denna huvudstav utgår en ganska

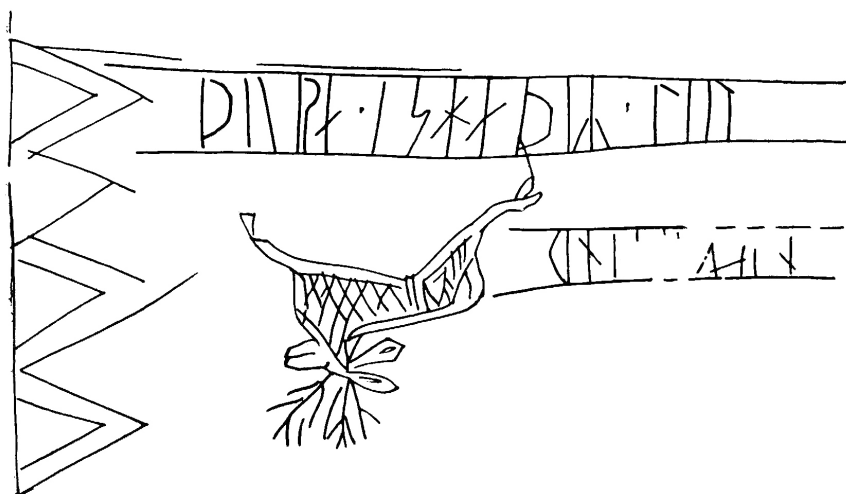


Fig. 6. Detalj av inskriften på en bennål från Svarta jorden på Björkö, Adelsö socken (U ANF1937;172). Teckningen är baserad på Nordén (1937) men reviderad av författaren i enlighet med resultaten av undersökningarna 2009 och 2011.

raden. På nålen finns också en hjortfigur, som Nordén lägger till grund för dateringen av föremålet. Han menar att denna kopierats från något av de s.k. "Birkamynten", som han med stöd av äldre litteratur daterar till tiden 870–900 (Nordén 1937, 171). Nålen har därför senare antagits härröra från tiden omkring 900 (jfr t.ex. Imer 2007, "Katalog", 21). Det bör dock noteras att den mynttyp som Nordén använder för sin datering sedan länge är omdaterad till cirka 825 (se Malmer 1966, 209). Om det stämmer att hjortfiguren har kopierats från något av dessa mynt är det möjligt att det i stället rör sig om en 800-talsinskrift och i så fall kanske det hittills äldsta daterbara föremålet med långkvistrunor i Mälardalen. Samtidigt måste man komma ihåg att dateringen av mynttypen givetvis endast ger en möjlig terminus post quem för tillkomsten av ristningarna på bennålen och att de givetvis kan vara senare.

Att vi finner en så stor variation i den vikingatida futharken på en plats som Birka är knappast förvånande. Liknande drag kan också iaktas i

djupt ristad linje snett nedåt höger som får sin fortsättning i en relativt rak linje som löper i lodrät riktning ned till den nedre ramlinjen. Den senare staven verkar vara ristad flera gånger. Linjen har ingen fortsättning ovanför den sneda linjen, vilket visar att de måste uppfattas som delar av samma runa. Närmast till hands ligger att tolka runan som **r** trots den avvikande formen gentemot **r**-runan i det första ordet. Alternativt rör det sig om en **u**-runa. Den **k**-bistav som Nordén trott sig se tycks bara bestå av missfärgningar i ytan.

det tidiga runinskriftsmaterialet från Hedeby, även om detta är betydligt mindre (se Imer 2007, ”Tekst”, 230 f.). I Birka och Hedeby har givetvis människor från många olika håll mötts, och det är mycket rimligt – som många tidigare också har tänkt sig – att det just är genom de stora handelsplatserna som kunskapen om olika varianter av futharken har spridit sig till olika delar av den vikingatida världen.

De många frågetecknen kring den vikingatida runradens äldsta historia beror delvis på att vi känner relativt få inskrifter från denna tid. För Sveriges del rör det sig om cirka 50 inskrifter, varav flera är fragmentariska och många svårtolkade. Strax före år 1000 sker dock en drastisk förändring och källorna börjar flöda rikare. Detta hänger givetvis samman med det plötsligt uppblomstrande kristna runstensmodet, som först har etablerats i Danmark och därifrån spridit sig norrut. Med detta runstensmode följer också ”danska” runformer dvs. långkvistrunorna, vilka så gott som fullständigt kommer att dominera runinskrifterna i landskapen upp till Mälaren. Norr om denna gräns ser det lite annorlunda ut. I den äldsta gruppen av uppländska runstenar – de s.k. oornerade stenarna – förekommer endast långkvistrunor och även i ortografin finner man tydliga beröringspunkter med bruket i de sydligare landskapen. Intressant är att denna sammanhållna grupp av ristningar endast förekommer i den östra delen av landskapet och i närheten av goda kommunikationsleder (jfr von Friesen 1933a, 206). Uppländska runinskrifter av senare datum har däremot ofta inslag av kortkvistrunor, framför allt $\uparrow \mathbf{a}$ och $\uparrow \mathbf{n}$, men även $\uparrow \mathbf{s}$ och $\uparrow \mathbf{t}$. Sådana ”blandade” teckensystem är också mycket vanliga i Norrlandslandskapen och förekommer även på Öland. Däremot är de gotländska runinskrifterna från senvikingatiden för det mesta ristade med långkvistrunor (Snædal 2002, 88), vilket kanske är lite förvånande med tanke på den stora andelen av ristningar med kortkvistrunor på ön under äldre vikingatid.

Det kanske intressantaste bruket finner man på runstenarna i landskapen Hälsingland, Medelpad och Jämtland (Källström 2010, 112–17). Teckenuppsättningen utgörs som nämnts ofta av en blandning av långkvist- och kortkvistformer, där \mathbf{a} , \mathbf{n} , \mathbf{s} och \mathbf{t} vanligen hör till det senare systemet. Inskrifterna innehåller också många ålderdomliga drag. Exempelvis används skiljetecken mycket sparsamt, och i vissa inskrifter saknas markering av ordskillnad helt. Detta stämmer inte alls med de skriftkonventioner som tillämpas på runstenarna i resten av landet vid samma tid och där bland annat bruket av skiljetecken snarare är regel än undantag. De runor som vi finner på de norrländska runstenarna bör därför snarast uppfattas som en särskild variant av den vikingatida futharken, som har

utvecklats lokalt i området under en tidigare period och som går tillbaka på äldre mönster. En liknande teckenuppsättning förekommer också på ett antal runstenar från Norduppland, som av ornamentiken att döma bör tillhöra tidigt 1000-tal. Detta tyder på att denna variant av den vikingatida futharken kan ha haft en större utbredning men överflyglats av de skriftkonventioner som var förbundna med det från söder kommande runstensmodet. Bristen på runinskrifter i Mellansverige från tiden före år 1000 gör det tyvärr för närvarande svårt att pröva denna hypotes.

En innovation i den yngre futharken: h-runan som tecken för frikativt g

Även om den 16-typiga futharken behåller sitt teckenantal och ordningen mellan runtecknen genom hela vikingatiden, sker flera förändringar inom systemet och vissa runor får förändrade ljudvärden. Ett bekant fall är den s.k. åsrunan (𐌺 med varianter), som övergår från att markera nasalerat /a(:)/ till att återge /o(:)/. Ett annat är yrrunan (𐌶), som i och med sammanfallet mellan de båda *r*-ljuden blir överflödig och därför börjar användas för vokalljud. En tredje novation är systemet med stingningar, som gav ristarna möjlighet till en mer nyanserad återgivning av språkljuden. Dessa tre förändringar i den yngre futharken har ingående studerats i avhandlingar av Henrik Williams (1990), Patrik Larsson (2002) resp. Svante Lagman (1990). Jag vill därför i stället koncentrera mig på ett speciellt fenomen som dyker upp i materialet under vikingatiden, nämligen bruket av **h**-runan som tecken för s.k. frikativt g [ɣ].

I de vikingatida runinskrifterna är detta bruk så gott som uteslutande knutet till svenskt område, och framför allt Uppland. Det enda undantaget finns på runstenen DR 138 Suldrup på Nordjylland, där namnet *Ofæigr* återges som ack. **ufah**. I Norge har (ännu) inte framkommit några exempel som kan dateras till vikingatid (se Spurkland 1991, 212 f.).

Att **h**-runan har fått detta ljudvärde förutom att beteckna /h/ i den yngre futharken har förklarats på flera olika sätt. I äldre litteratur har man ofta velat se ett samband med **j**-runan i den anglosaxiska futhorcen, som ju hade samma form (𐌶) och som i några få inskrifter också verkar ha använts för [ɣ]. Otto von Friesen (1933a, 209 f.) menade att detta ortografiska drag hade förmedlats från England genom runristaren Åsmund Kåresson, som han ville identifiera med en engelsk missionsbiskop Osmundus, nämnd av Adam av Bremen. Denna förklaring har dock avvisats på övertygande sätt av bl.a. Claiborne W. Thompson (1975, 161–67).

Andra har velat se användningen av **h**-runan för [ɣ] som en inhemsk

utveckling. Terje Spurkland (1991, 214–16) har exempelvis satt uppkomsten av denna beteckning i samband med de stora förändringarna i konsonantsystemet under övergången mellan urnordisk och runnordisk tid. Ett resultat av denna förändring var att den frikativa varianten av /g/, dvs. [ɣ], kom i komplementär distribution inte bara med klusilt /g/ utan också med /h/. Det bör då ha legat nära till hands att använda **h**-runan även för [ɣ], eftersom /h/ också var frikativt. Denna förklaring är mycket tilltalande, men det är svårt att förstå varför det inte finns några exempel på **h**-skrivningar för [ɣ] förrän i början av 1000-talet. Samtidigt måste det uppmärksammas att introduktionen av en sådan ortografisk konvention kan verka överflödigt, eftersom den stungna **k**-runan fyllde samma funktion inom systemet.

Jag kan tänka mig åtminstone två olika förklaringar till detta. Antingen är bruket att beteckna [ɣ] med **h**-runan äldre än de stungna runorna, som först verkar ha etablerats i slutet av 900-talet, eller också har denna ortografiska konvention utvecklats i ett område där de stungna runorna inte användes eller kanske till och med var helt okända.

Ser man på spridningen av de vikingatida inskrifterna med **h**-runan som tecken för [ɣ] är dessa tydligt koncentrerade till Mälardalen och framför Uppland (fig. 7). Det finns dock samtidigt spridda exempel även i andra landsändar som Medelpad, Västergötland och centrala Småland. Av ornamentiken att döma är många av dessa inskrifter samtida med de äldsta exemplen i Uppland, vilket gör det mycket svårt att utifrån kartbilden finna ett tänkbart centrum för novationen. En möjlighet är faktiskt att bruket först har utvecklats i något av Norrlandslandskapen, eftersom stungna runor här verkar ha varit i stort sett helt okända under vikingatiden (Lagman 1990, 135). I denna skriftmiljö har det alltså inte rört sig om någon överflödigt innovation utan en uppenbar förbättring av skriftsystemet. Förmedlaren av denna novation till Mälardalen skulle i så fall kunna vara just den tidigare nämnde runristaren Åsmund Kåresson, eftersom det finns mycket som tyder på att han faktiskt kan ha haft sina rötter i just Medelpad, där **h**-runan förekommer i den aktuella funktionen (se Källström 2007a, 285–89, 2010, 118–25). Detta förklarar dock inte de tidiga förekomsterna av **h** för [ɣ] i Västergötland och Småland. Kanske ska man i stället tänka sig att det märkliga spridningsmönstret beror på att denna konvention har etablerats mycket tidigare, men att den av någon anledning inte blir synlig i runmaterialet förrän under 1000-talet. Denna förklaring är kanske mer tilltalande, men det är samtidigt svårt att förstå varför ristarna under 800- och 900-talen alltid använder **k**-runan för att återge [ɣ] och aldrig **h**, om denna möjlighet verkligen fanns.

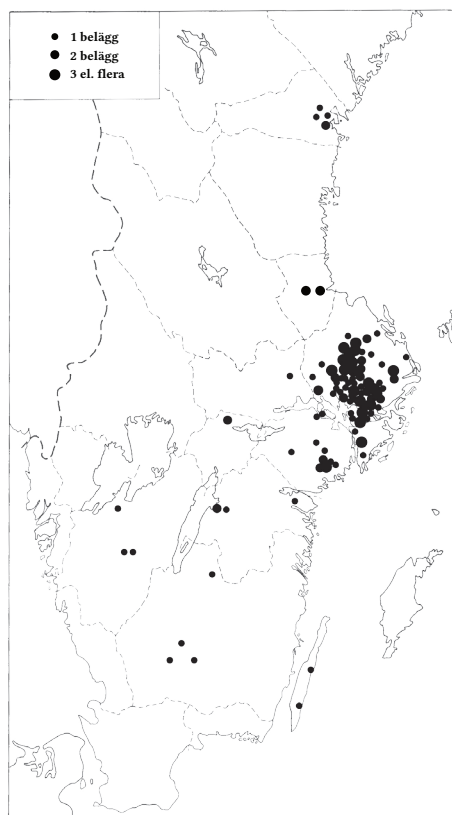


Fig. 7. Spridningen av inskrifter med **h**-runan som beteckning för [ɣ] i Sverige. Karta: författaren.

Oavsett hur beteckningen har uppkommit, kan det konstateras att idén att använda **h**-runan för frikativt *g* med tiden skulle bli en succé i inskrifter med den yngre futharken. Under medeltiden finner vi bruket spritt över hela Skandinavien liksom på mer avlägsna platser som Orkney, Färöarna och Grönland. Hur spridningen har gått till vågar jag för närvarande inte spekulera om, men däremot har jag en idé om varför beteckningsättet har kunnat etableras så lätt. Om **h**-runan användes konsekvent för [ɣ] kunde den stungna runan **g** i samma ställning reserveras för /g:/, vilket gav ytterligare en opposition i systemet. Att man medvetet eller omedvetet faktiskt kan ha resonerat så antyds av exemplen på dubbelteckningar i svenska medeltidsinskrifter. Dubbelteckning av **g** förekommer här endast två gånger (**liggia** Vg 94, Vg 138), trots att en beteckning av /g:/ som involverar en **g**-runa är belagd 23 gånger i materialet. Att dubbelteckning

av just **g** är så pass sällsynt i detta urval (10 %) kan bero på att detta ansågs onödigt när man ändå kunde sluta sig till att **g**-runa i denna ställning måste återge ett långt klusilt /g/.

Medeltida skriftrationer

Resonemangen om **h**-runans utvidgade användningsområden har fört oss in i medeltiden och till det medeltida skriftbruket. Medan runraden under vikingatiden tycks ha varit ganska opåverkad av latinskriften, finner man under medeltiden tydliga influenser därifrån. Samtidigt verkar detta inflytande på det inhemska skriftsystemet ha varierat i olika delar av Norden.

Ett framträdande drag i det medeltida teckensystemet är förekomsten av s.k. stungna runor. Flera av dessa var etablerade redan under vikingatiden, även om det bara är **† e**, **ƿ g** och **h y** som förekommer i någon större utsträckning. Det finns dock även exempel på en del andra typer som man kanske oftare associerar med medeltiden. Den stungna **d**-runan (och då i varianten **†**) är känd genom sporadiska exempel från Uppland, Öland och Bornholm redan under den senare delen av 1000-talet. En enstaka stungen **p**-runa (**ᵔ**) förekommer på en västgötsk runsten av vikingatida typ (Vg 20), och på de mynt som Sven Estridsson lät prägla i Lund 1065–76 finner man också de första beläggen på **ᵔ ᵔ** (Stoklund 2006, 371, 373).¹⁰

Även om ett mer utpräglat bruk av stungna runor kan sägas vara utmärkande för den medeltida runtraditionen är det tydligt att bruket som sådant har sina rötter i vikingatiden och inte nödvändigtvis behöver bero på inflytande från den latinska skriftkulturen (se även Knirk 2010). När det gäller ett annat drag, differentieringen **† a** : **† æ** och **† o** : **† ø**, är det däremot ganska troligt att mönstret kommer från en miljö där bruket av latinskrift har varit väl etablerat. Magnus Olsen (1933, 98–100, i *NIyR*, 5: 243) menade att åtskillnaden **† a** : **† æ** kunde gå tillbaka till 1000-talet, men som Jan Ragnar Hagland (1994, 261) och senare Terje Spurkland (1995, 11 f.) har visat är det rimligare att denna konvention har etablerats i Norge först under den första hälften av 1100-talet. Detta stämmer väl med det äldsta arkeologiskt daterade exemplet från Sverige, nämligen en trästicka från Lödöse (Vg 280), som på stratigrafiska grunder har förts till 1100-talets första hälft (Svärdström 1982, 22, 50). Något lika tidigt fynd med

¹⁰ En enstaka stungen **p**-runa uppträder även på en sörmländsk runsten (Sö 318 Sund, Helgesta socken). Den ingår i ordet *drunknaði*, där en stingning skulle kunna vara motiverad, men man har här inte tillskrivit den någon speciell betydelse (se Wessén i *SRI*, 3: 294 med not 1.)

denna differentiering från Danmark verkar inte finnas, utan företeelsen tycks här först uppträda under den senare hälften av 1100-talet.¹¹ Detta tyder på att det rör sig om en novation på västnordiskt område, vilken först så småningom har nått Sverige och Danmark.

Några lokala utvecklingar: Uppland och Västergötland.

Vad vi i dag uppfattar som den medeltida runtraditionen har alltså först gradvis etablerat sig i olika delar av Norden. Det kanske tydligaste exemplet på detta finns i Uppland, där det senvikingatida runstensresandet var som mest intensivt och där det pågick ännu under 1100-talets första tredjedel. En framträdande grupp i det allra yngsta skiktet är de sandstensrunstenar som av allt att döma restes vid tidiga centrala kyrkogårdar runt om i Uppland (Hagenfeldt och Palm 1996, 59–62). Trots att många av dessa stenar säkert tillhör det tidiga 1100-talet innehåller inskrifterna inga som helst spår av differentieringen **ɑ : æ**,¹² och både runformer och ortografi anknyter i stället till de vikingatida mönstren.

Det medeltida runbruket i Uppland känner vi annars främst genom runristade föremål funna i medeltidsstäder som Sigtuna och Uppsala samt i mindre utsträckning i Enköping och Stockholm. Ett fåtal lösfynd har gjorts i andra miljöer som exempelvis gården Mälby i Tillinge socken utanför Enköping (se Beronius Jörpeland och Seiler 2011, 365–68) och utanför kyrkogården i Gamla Uppsala (Göthberg 2008, 61). Dessutom kan nämnas de två stenmästarsignaturerna från Vallentuna kyrka (U 219, U 220) samt den märkliga resta stenen från Hargs skog i nordöstra Uppland (U 595), som till form och textinnehåll anknyter till den äldre runstens-traditionen.

Medeltida gravmonument är däremot mycket sällsynta i Uppland och det kända antalet uppgår inte ens till tio.¹³ Det intressanta är att flera av

¹¹ De danska exempel som har daterats till tiden före omkring 1150 är samtliga osäkra. DR 405 Klemensker har i *DR (Text, sp. 464)* en högst svävande datering ("Periode 3 el. 4: Før-Middelalder (olda.) el. Middelalder (æmda.)"). Den möjliga **æ**-runan (†) på ett knivskaft från Lund (DR EM85;466B), funnen i kulturlager från första hälften av 1100-talet, kan också uppfattas som en **e**-runa (se Gustavson och Snædal Brink 1981, 193). Slutligen kan nämnas DR Schl22 Schlesvig, som tidigare har daterats till slutet av 1000-talet eller till 1100-talet. Det rör sig dock om ett lösfynd och runtypologiskt tillhör inskriften snarare tiden omkring 1200 (Lerche Nielsen, Stoklund och Düwel 2001, 229).

¹² Ett antaget exempel på fragmentet U 65 från Spånga kyrka har med rätta avisats av Per Stille (1999).

¹³ U 15, U 64, U 398, U 413, U 440, U 799, U 989, U Fv1959;196 Hammarby kyrka. Därtill kommer några osäkra exempel: U 105†, U 417†, U 441† samt U 396, som förmodligen

dessa har runformer och en ortografi som inte alls skiljer sig från den vikingatida. Som ett exempel kan nämnas den massiva stenkistan från Hammarby kyrka (U Fv1959;196), där inskriften kan återges på följande sätt (jfr Jansson 1959, 196):

× **kręstin** × **let** × **giara** × **merki** × **eftir** × **sun sen** × **huir sum runum riþr** × **hafi bynir** × **firir** × **ala h¹⁴ sial** × **suni** · **uar faþir ala** ×

Kristin lét giæra mærki æftir sun sinn. Hværr sum rúnur ráðr hafi bönir fyrir Ála/Alla sial. Suni var faðir Ála/Alla.

”Kristin lät göra minnesmärket efter sin son. Var och en som läser runorna må ha böner för Åles (Alles) själ. Sune var Åles (Alles) fader.”

Beträffande runformerna kan det noteras att **a**- och **n**-runorna genomgående har ensidiga bistavar och att ristaren använder de stungna runorna **g**, **e** och **y**. Detta är dock drag som också förekommer i rent vikingatida runinskrifter. Särskilt påfallande är att **r**-runan fortfarande är i bruk och dessutom används på etymologiskt korrekt sätt.

Detta kan jämföras med det runbruk som är känt från Sigtuna under samma tid. I staden har fram till i dag påträffats mer än hundra runristade föremål, vilka omfattar en period från cirka 990 till den senare delen av 1200-talet. Liksom på Hammarbykistan använder de runkunniga i Sigtuna ofta **n**- och **a**-runor med ensidiga bistavar och de stungna runorna **g**, **e** och **y**, men det finns inga spår av tydliga medeltida novationer som t.ex. differentieringen **a** : **æ** förrän under 1200-talet.¹⁵ Detta talar för att man i Sigtuna har följt den vikingatida skrifttraditionen så sent som under andra hälften av 1100-talet.

Det kan också vara intressant att jämföra det uppländska runbruket med hur det har sett ut i en annan del av Sverige under samma period, nämligen Västergötland. Här finns ingen motsvarighet till det sena runstensmodet i Uppland, men i stället har runristade gravkistor bestående av flera hällar förmodligen uppförts vid många kyrkor redan i mitten av 1000-talet. Dessa gravkistor kom senare att följas av liggande massiva gravhällar med runor. På kistmonumenten råder ännu den vikingatida

aldrig har burit någon runinskrift. Även U Fv1993;231 Frösunda kyrka tycks ha varit ett liggande monument, men anknyter i det ornamentala utförandet tydligt till den vikingatida traditionen. — Om en nyligen uppmärksammas gravhäll med runor i Giresta kyrka se nedan.

¹⁴ Namnet återges ofta som **alah**, men av allt att döma har den avslutande **þ**-runan uppkommit genom att ett kryssformigt skiljetecken har huggits ovanpå en felristad huvudstav.

¹⁵ Detta förekommer endast i en enda inskrift, U Fv1983;229. Den är på stratigrafiska grunder daterad till 1200-talet (Gustavson, Snædal Brink och Strid 1983, 229).

skriftrationen, medan de massiva gravhällarna innehåller mängder av typiskt medeltida drag som t.ex. långkvistrunor för **æ** och **ø**, stungna runor som **d**, **ð**, **p** och **v**, dubbeltecknade konsonanter, ett stort inslag av bindrunor m.m. Den senare typen av gravmonument har daterats till andra hälften av 1100-talet och till början av 1200-talet (se *SRI*, 5: lv), och de är alltså samtida med det sena runmaterialet i Sigtuna och många av gravmonumenten i Uppland.

Frågan är hur denna skillnad mellan Uppland och Västergötland ska förklaras. Kanske hade de runkunniga i Västergötland en närmare kontakt med kyrkan och den kristna bokkulturen än sina kollegor i Mellansverige, vilket banade vägen för novationer hämtade från bruket av latinskrift, t.ex. uppkomsten av särskilda runor för /æ(:)/ och /ø(:)/, fler stungna runor, dubbelteckning etc. (se även Palm 1997, som särskilt har studerat förhållandena i Västergötland). En annan orsak kan ha varit närheten till Norge, där flera av de ovan nämnda dragen verkar ha etablerats relativt tidigt. I Uppland fanns däremot vid samma tid en levande skriftration med rötter i vikingatiden, som följde enklare konventioner. Att denna tradition var livskraftig ännu under 1100-talet kan bero på att runstensresandet var extra intensivt i området, och att mängden av runmonument som förekom runt om i landskapet har verkat konserverande på skriftbruket. Tydligt har detta även gällt mer inofficiella sammanhang, vilket framgår av föremålsinskrifterna från Sigtuna.

Med tiden har dock även upplänningen tagit till sig de medeltida nymodigheterna, vilket finns dokumenterat i såväl sten som andra material. Fynden som belyser denna utveckling är ännu ganska få, men som avslutning tänkte jag nämna en inskrift som först på senare tid har uppmärksammats och som bidrar med en viktig pusselbit.

I december 2009 fick jag ett telefonsamtal från en privatperson som undrade om några runor som skulle finnas på en gravhäll från 1600-talet i Giresta kyrka i Uppland. Trots efterforskningar i olika arkiv kunde jag inte hitta några uppgifter om några sådana runor. Gravhällens latinska inskrift fanns däremot omtalad ett par gånger och den visar att hällen lagts över en pastor Andreas som dog den 3 februari 1631, vilket väckte misstankar om att runorna kunde tillhöra samma tid.

Först i juni i 2010 fick jag möjlighet att undersöka gravhällen närmare och kom ganska snart fram till att det inte alls rörde sig om några efterreformatiska runor utan om en tidigare okänd medeltida inskrift. Tyvärr är den ena långsidan av gravhällen täckt av en kabeltrumma, men hällen har förmodligen trapetsoid form och runorna står med basen mot huvudändan och följaktligen upp och ner i förhållande till

1600-talsinskriften. Gravhällen måste alltså ha blivit återanvänd. Dessvärre täcker kabeltrumman också en del av runinskriften, men det som för närvarande kan läsas är följande:

...laf-u- stafby hān • ligær h...

...(i) Stafbȳ, hann ligger h[æ]r].

”... (i) Staby, han ligger här.”

Inskriften innehåller två bindrunor och gör skillnad mellan **a** och **æ**. Vokalen /y(:)/ har markerats med den gamla **r**-runan (𐀚). Detta är som bekant det normala tecknet för detta ljud i Västnorden redan under vikingatiden, medan runan i Sverige först får detta ljudvärde under medeltid, men bruket är då begränsat till landskapen Småland, Västergötland och Östergötland (Larsson 2002, 185 f.). Detta är alltså första gången som runan har belagts med detta ljudvärde i Mälardalen. Det kan också noteras att **g**-runan i ordet *ligger* – som kanske väntat (se ovan) – är enkeltecknad. Ortnamnet **stafby** tilldrar sig ett naturligtvis särskilt intresse. Det avser utan tvivel det nutida Staby, en herrgård i Giresta socken, belägen 3 km SSV om kyrkan. Namnet är tidigast belagt 1298 som *stabby* (SD 2, 296), men skrevs under 1300-talet ofta *Stafby* (excerpter i Ortnamnsregistret). Under 1400-talet finner man däremot mest skrivningar utan *f*. Återgivningen av ortnamnet som **stafby** på Girestahällen talar alltså för den att inte är yngre än 1300-talet.

Det är ganska få uppländska runinskrifter som uppvisar en liknande avancerad runanvändning som på Girestahällen. Närmast ligger gravhällen i Långtora kyrka (U 799), som på rätt osäkra grunder har antagits tillhöra tiden omkring år 1200 (SRI, 8: 401). Ett annat exempel är gravhällen U 15 från Ekerö kyrka, där språket är latin. Den senare har tidigare genom en djärv kombination av ett par historiska källor daterats till mitten av 1100-talet (SRI, 6: 24), men tillhör enligt en senare konsthistorisk bedömning i stället slutet av 1200-talet (se Gustavson 1994, 71).¹⁶

Med tanke på bristen på runristade gravhällar från medeltiden i Uppland är den nyupptäckta Girestahällen ett glädjande nytillskott. Det märkliga är att det har dröjt så länge innan runorna uppmärksammades, trots att gravhällen ligger i golvet till det nuvarande koret. Förmodligen ska orsaken sökas i kyrkans tragiska historia. Den medeltida kyrkan var tydligen illa byggd redan från början och den revs och återuppbyggdes därför under 1700-talet. Denna kyrka brann 1911, varvid hela inredningen också

¹⁶ Dateringen har enligt en anteckning i Runverkets fältexemplar C gjorts av konsthistorikern Rune Norberg.

förstördes. Kyrkan byggdes dock upp på nytt och moderniserades. På hällen finns fortfarande tydliga spår av sot på den plats där runorna står. Det är därför sannolikt att denna del av hällen har varit dold av någonting av trä fram till branden. Att runorna inte har uppmärksammat senare är mera märkligt, men kanske har den omfattande förstörelsen gjort att man inte har räknat med att det funnits något av större ålder kvar i kyrkan. Runorna har alltså fått ruva på sin hemlighet fram tills nu.

Slutord

Som förhoppningsvis har framgått ovan bjuder studiet av de vikingatida och medeltida skriftrationerna i Norden på många intressanta problemställningar. Om vissa kan man ha ganska välgrundade uppfattningar, medan andra ännu väntar på sin lösning. Inte minst utvecklingen av den 16-typiga futharken under äldre vikingatid är ofullständigt känd, vilket framför allt beror på det ganska begränsade antal inskrifter som vi har att arbeta med. Varje nytt fynd från denna tidsperiod kan därför bidra med ny kunskap och förtjänar att lyftas fram i ljuset.

Den relativt glesa kartbilden över runfynden från vikingatidens två första århundraden ger kanske en grov uppfattning om utbredningen av runkunskapen, men knappast om intensiteten. Förmodligen utgör det runmaterial som har bevarats till våra dagar inte mer än en bråkdel av de runtexter som en gång har skapats, annars skulle runorna nog aldrig ha överlevt som skriftsystem. Att runkunskapen har odlats på vikingatida handelsplatser och i stadsbildningar som exempelvis Birka är kanske inte särskilt förvånande, men runskriften måste också ha använts i andra miljöer och av andra aktörer. Utan ett mer utbrett bruk skulle knappast en minnessten som Rökstenen i Östergötland ha ristats eller lagtexten på Forsaringen i Hälsingland ha nedtecknats.

Även den sena vikingatidens skriftbruk förtjänar fördjupade studier. Inte minst den skarpa gränsen mellan bruket av långkvistrunor och blandformerna norr om Mälaren är intressant. Kanske speglar skillnaden i skriftbruket i detta fall till och med en politisk indelning?

Runbruket under medeltiden är inte mindre komplext med inflytandet från det nyintroducerade latinska alfabetet, ett bruk som dock verkar ha varierat på olika platser. Det är här tydligt att utvecklingen gått snabbare i Sydsverige och att upplanningarna länge höll kvar de enklare konventioner som tillämpades under vikingatiden. Samtidigt kunde ett ortografiskt drag som **h**-runan för frikativt *g*, som tidigare i stort sett varit koncentrerat just till Uppland, under medeltiden plötsligt vara i allmänt

bruk över hela Norden. Hur detta har gått till är ännu inte kartlagt och här finns uppenbarligen mer att göra.

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English Summary

“Viking Age and medieval writing traditions: Observations based on material from Swedish runic inscriptions”

This paper deals with a number of different questions relating to the development of runic script. It spans a period ranging from the beginning of the Viking Age to the High Middle Ages. Special attention is paid to a selection of lesser known runic inscriptions from Sweden that contribute in one way or another to our understanding of the topics discussed.

A crucial issue is the transition from the twenty-four character futhark to the Viking Age rune-row with its inventory of just sixteen signs. The author believes that the transition started as the result of gradual developments in the

older futhark, but he is convinced that the final step, the reduction to sixteen characters, was the brainchild of a single literate person, or a small group, with the ability to spread their new ideas. This assumption is based chiefly on the fact that there seems to be very little overlap between the two systems. It is further shown that certain examples of single runes from the older system alleged to occur in younger-futhark inscriptions (as **g** in G 157 from Gotland, or **w** on the Rävsaal stone from Bohuslän) stem either from misconceptions or incorrect readings.

The relationship between the two main variants of the younger futhark is also discussed. In Sweden up to c. 1000 the short-twig runes seem to have dominated: some 40 inscriptions of this type occur there as against roughly 10 in long-branch runes. The find spots of the long-branch inscriptions are either connected to coastal sites or to trading centers such as Birka in Lake Mälaren. This speaks in favor of there having been two more or less discrete variants of the younger futhark in Sweden (within its current borders) prior to the beginning of the eleventh century.

With the introduction of the rune-stone fashion the situation altered drastically and the long-branch runes became the dominant system as far up as Lake Mälaren. In Uppland and the provinces of northern Sweden (Norrländ) many inscriptions combine a selection of short-twig characters with the long-branch runes, and in the north this “mixed” system is often found in company with archaic features as, for example, the sparing use of word dividers or even a total lack of word separation. This suggests that the mixture of rune forms used in the provinces north of Lake Mälaren are to be seen as the remains of an earlier writing tradition.

Another feature dealt with in this paper is the use of **h** to denote so-called fricative *g*, i.e. [ɣ]. In the Viking Age this feature is found almost exclusively in runic inscriptions from Sweden and it has sometimes been ascribed to the influence of particular rune carvers as, for example, Åsmund Kåresson. Instances of **h** for [ɣ] in Viking Age inscriptions show a very peculiar pattern of distribution, however. Most of the examples come from the Mälars region, especially Uppland, but there are also early examples from districts such as Medelpad, Västergötland and Småland. One possibility is that the innovation originated in northern Sweden where dotted runes seem to have been unknown (𐌵 **g** was the alternative way of denoting [ɣ] in the younger system), but this assumption does not explain the early occurrences in regions such as Västergötland and Småland. It is also possible that the scattered distribution might represent traces of an orthographic rule established at a much earlier date, but not visible in the preserved material until the beginning of the eleventh century. This explanation seems the more attractive, but it is then difficult to understand why the carvers of short-twig inscriptions in the ninth and tenth centuries always used **k** for the fricative variant of /*g*/ and never **h**, if the option was open to them.

Concerning the writing traditions in the Middle Ages the author has limited the discussion to a few features as, for example, the differentiation of what had previously been variant forms of **a** and **o** to create unique symbols for /æ/ and /ø/.

To judge from currently accepted datings this innovation seems to have begun in western Scandinavia in the twelfth century, and from there to have spread to Sweden and Denmark.

These and other innovations in the medieval runic system were not accepted by all literate milieux simultaneously, as can be illustrated by a brief study of runic inscriptions of the relevant period from Västergötland and Uppland. In Västergötland many medieval rune forms, and even certain scribal conventions borrowed from roman script, were well established as early as the beginning of twelfth century. In Uppland, on the other hand, it seems as though the simpler Viking Age system with use of only a few dotted runes and without unique symbols for /æ/ and /ø/ held sway up until around 1200. It is not unlikely that this is in some way connected with the longevity of the rune-stone fashion in Uppland, where runic monuments of traditional Viking Age type were produced and set up as late as 1100–1130.

Christian Prayers and Invocations in Scandinavian Runic Inscriptions from the Viking Age and Middle Ages

Kristel Zilmer

Abstract

Previous studies of Christian runic inscriptions have tended to deal with particular types of inscription from defined periods of time. This article analyses all the relevant Scandinavian runic material from the Viking Age and the Middle Ages, focusing on textual features and material contexts of inscriptions that use prayers and invocations. Its main aim is to explore the dynamics of what may be termed “the runic prayer tradition” with a view to identifying potentially stable elements of this tradition as well as those that alter over time. Two main categories of prayer and invocation explored are formulations in the vernacular and in Church Latin. The results of the study reveal various possibilities of variation in the runic prayer tradition, but also suggest links and overlaps between the earlier and later vernacular prayers. The evidence further suggests some sort of a division between a monumental (or public) form of discourse in connection with rune-stones, grave monuments and church buildings – which are dominated by vernacular prayers – and that of various loose objects, where Latin prayer formulas seem to be favoured.

Keywords: Viking Age, Middle Ages, Scandinavia, Christianity, Christian runic inscriptions, prayer, invocation, vernacular, Latin

Many runic inscriptions from the Viking Age and Middle Ages are directly related to Christian culture – they originate from a period during which Christianity was introduced and gradually institutionalized. The emergence and increase in number of certain types of inscription have

Zilmer, Kristel. “Christian Prayers and Invocations in Scandinavian Runic Inscriptions from the Viking Age and Middle Ages”

Futhark: International Journal of Runic Studies 4 (2013), 129–71.

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been associated with Christian practices. There has, for example, been discussion of the role of Christianization in the rise and spread of the late Viking Age rune-stone custom. The obvious and immediate outcomes of the interaction between the native epigraphic tradition and Christianity, however, are medieval Christian runic inscriptions on grave monuments, on the walls and furnishings of stave and stone churches as well as on different types of religious object.

A common approach to Christian runic inscriptions is to look at particular types of inscription, categories of artifact, regions or periods of time. This article explores some aspects of the dynamics of the overall tradition, based upon preserved Viking Age and medieval inscriptions from Denmark, Norway and Sweden. There are a few concentrations of inscriptions in other parts of the Nordic realm where settlers of Scandinavian origin made use of runic script, but these date either from the Viking Age (the Isle of Man) or predominantly from the Middle Ages (Iceland and Greenland). This material does not allow for the study of the dynamics of Christian runic inscriptions in the way the material from Scandinavia proper does. The focus is on Christian prayers and invocations. Other expressions of Christianity are ignored, e.g., cross ornamentation and pictorial evidence, which especially in the case of stone monuments complement the textual elements. Various Christian features of rune-stones and grave monuments have been examined in previous studies – either in isolation or in combination with each other. The focus here is narrowed to the analysis of textual features and material contexts of inscriptions that use runic prayers, with the aim of distinguishing those features which are relatively stable elements of the corpus from those which alter over time.

The corpus

Prayers, invocations and blessings are the most common verbal expressions of Christianity in runic inscriptions from the Viking Age and Middle Ages. In addition there are Christian terms (such as *kristinn* ‘Christian’, *kross* ‘cross’, *kalikr* ‘chalice’), Christian personal names, and references to practices that have received a Christian interpretation – for instance, Viking Age and early medieval inscriptions may refer to the making of ‘bridges’ and clearing of paths, which was considered a pious act. In this study Christian prayers and invocations have received a broad definition. Besides formulas that explicitly solicit help and consideration from God or some other divine agency, I have included quotations from

Scripture, liturgical formulas and other texts of varying content, structure and length that invoke divine assistance, blessing and protection. Also considered are inscriptions that refer to the act of praying in that they ask readers to pray for somebody's soul. Inscriptions that consist merely of one or more sacred names — such as different names for God, names of saints, the evangelists, the archangels — qualify for inclusion in that they express a form of devotion and serve invocatory purposes. Inscriptions whose intention is unclear, and which may indeed contain no reference to the divine at all, have been omitted. Problems that arise from following the approach here outlined will be commented upon below.

This study does not differentiate between the various supplicative and manipulative functions and contexts of use of Christian prayers and invocations in terms of traditional dichotomies categorized as religion versus magic. With certain types of text, like medieval charms and incantations modelled upon Christian vocabulary, and certain types of object, such as Christian amulets, the manipulative and ritualistic purpose may seem evident. However, some inscriptions and artifacts hover uncertainly between the spheres of religion and magic (cf. Spurkland 2012, especially 198–200; Steenholt Olesen 2007, 38; on Christian and magic formulas in runic inscriptions, see also MacLeod and Mees 2006, especially 184–210; McKinnell, Simek, and Düwel 2004, 147–61, 172–89). Furthermore, the scholarship of the past decades has started viewing magic as an inherent part of medieval religion and culture. Studies have concerned what can be described as “the large grey area of popular practices in Christian Europe that are not clearly magic or miracle, but lie on a spectrum in between” (Jolly 2002, 7; cf. Kieckhefer 1989; more specifically on medieval textual amulets, see Skemer 2006). Instead of operating with universal labels such as “magic” and “religion”, one needs to examine particular practices in their own contexts (Jolly 2002, 11). In the following analysis of runic prayers and invocations I will from time to time comment on such individual or general concerns and practices as the inscriptions may illuminate.

Proceeding from the broad definition just outlined, and including possible fragmentary evidence, we can estimate that approximately 13 per cent of the runic material from the Viking Age and early medieval period (up to c. 1150/1200; see chart 1) contains Christian prayers and invocations. In inscriptions that date from the High and Late Middle Ages (c. 1150/1200–1500) the proportion is around 18 per cent. There are, however, a greater number of debatable cases in the high and late medieval group; if we limit ourselves to the unambiguous examples, the ratio

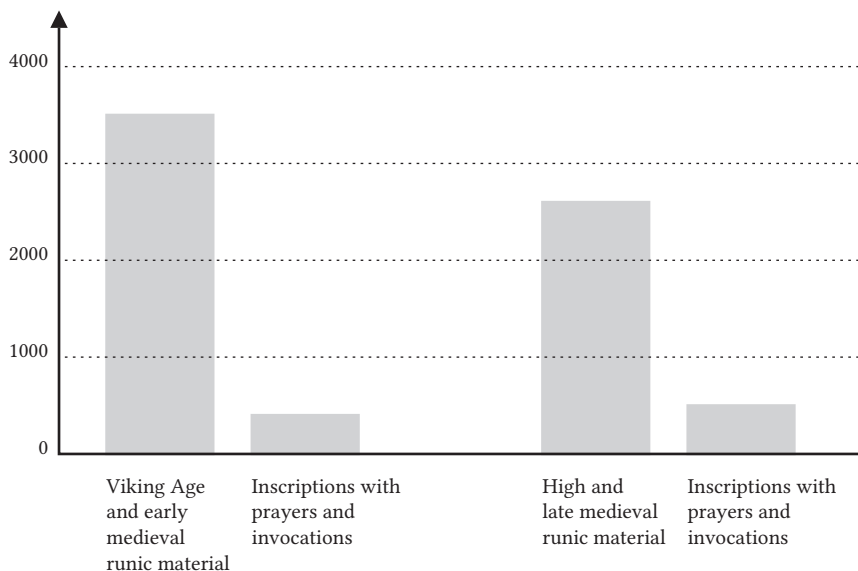


Chart 1. Number of inscriptions containing Christian prayers and invocations in comparison with total number of inscriptions

is around 14 per cent. This division into a fundamentally Viking Age and medieval corpus and the figures presented in chart 1 (which are numbers of inscriptions) are based on the Scandinavian Runic Text Database. The database has been used as the main source for establishing the corpus; updates and corrections as well as information on new finds have as far as possible been taken into consideration.¹

The material does not indicate any drastic changes in the general proportion of recorded prayers and invocations from the two periods, despite changes in the nature of the material (types of inscription, artifact, etc.). Further analysis of different chronological and regional groups of

¹ I have used the latest version of the database, from 2008, with a few divergences. Certain dating principles remain debatable. There is an overlap between the two groups, which also makes the classification of some inscriptions arbitrary. Inscriptions that have been given a date range of c. 1100–1400 are categorized as high or late medieval; those from c. 1000–1150 as Viking Age/early medieval. For information on new finds, see, e.g., *Danske Runeskrifter*, i.e. <http://runer.ku.dk/>, and the reports (“Rapporter från runverksamheten”) available at <http://www.raa.se/kulturarvet/arkeologi-fornlamningar-och-fynd/runstenar/rapporter/>. It is not possible to discuss all the criteria related to the inclusion or exclusion of individual inscriptions in this article; I have, however, assessed and catalogued each of them individually.

inscriptions would be needed to trace developments along the Viking Age and medieval timeline, but that is a matter for future studies.

Two main categories of prayer and invocation can be distinguished using linguistic criteria: (1) vernacular or vernacularized formulations; (2) quotations and formulas in Church Latin.² Besides traditional Latin texts the latter category includes words and expressions that are of Hebrew or Greek origin but were used by the Roman Church; in runic inscriptions these elements are often recorded together with Latin formulas. As an alternative, runic prayers can be categorized according to whether they are freely formulated texts, adaptations of conventional formulas, or fixed quotations. For the purposes of the current study the distinction between vernacular and Latin prayers will suffice. Besides vernacular and Latin prayers I recognise an additional group of around 45 inscriptions that are formulated in the vernacular, but also contain Latin prayer elements or record requests to pray the *Pater Noster* or the *Ave Maria*. Their main features as well as the problems related to the study of inscriptions of mixed linguistic content will be commented upon below.

Determining whether a given text should be categorized as vernacular or Latin can be problematic – factors to consider are spelling, morphology, textual content and co-text (i.e. type of inscription and whether any associated or surrounding text is in the vernacular or in Latin), and the context of the artifact. What should count as explicitly Latin elements in runic inscriptions has been much discussed (see e.g. Knirk 1998, Ertl 1994, Gustavson 1994a, 1994b). Since this study is concerned primarily with formulation, prayers and invocations are defined as vernacular or Latin based chiefly upon their content and the textual context in which they are found, although spelling variants and grammatical forms have also been taken into account. The criteria for recognising a text as “vernacular” are perhaps broader than in some previous studies. In addition to clearly vernacular formulations this group includes various sacred names and Christian terms that either appear within a vernacular context or are recorded in a form that does not automatically imply direct Latin input. The Latin group consists of religious texts of various length, some of which consist of (series of) sacred names in Latin form. Inscriptions that

² ‘Formula’ is in this study used to denote certain standard phrases – in the vernacular or in Latin – that are repeated in various inscriptions. They may follow more or less fixed patterns of wording, but they also allow for some variation in content and structure. ‘Formulation’ is a general term used to describe the wording and composition of runic inscriptions; it covers freely formulated texts as well as different types of formula and quotation.

demonstrate mixed features with regard to their form and content belong in the third (combined) group, mentioned above. A different approach would be to consider the memorized quotations of *Ave Maria* and *Pater Noster*—recognisable as such because used within a predominantly vernacular context—as loan-words or vernacularized phrases. The use of the *Ave Maria* and the *Pater Noster* as conventional prayer formulas and the occurrence of the Latin titles of prayers in vernacular contexts will be discussed in the section on Latin prayer formulas.

Contextual considerations are important when setting up different groups of inscriptions. Indeed, one and the same element may be included in either the vernacular or the Latin group depending upon the way it is used in a particular inscription. The name of the archangel Michael, Old Norse *Mikjáll* (recorded with a number of variant spellings in runes), can serve as an example. On the one hand, we have vernacular prayers like *Mikjáll gæti ond hans*³ ‘May Michael watch over his spirit’, recorded on the Ängby rune-stone (U 478) or *Guð hjalpi sál hans ok sankta Mikjáll* ‘May God and Saint Michael help his soul’ on the Klemensker stone 4 from Bornholm (DR 402). In both inscriptions the name is recorded as **mihel**. According to Wessén and Jansson (*SRI*, 7: 298) this may reflect a pronunciation of the fricative consonant, [ç], corresponding to Latin *ch* in *Michael*. The prayer on the Klemensker stone addresses × **sata** × **mihel**, *sankta Mikjáll* ‘Saint Michael’—as do some other prayers on Danish and Gotlandic rune-stones. The use of *sanktus/sankta* (also recorded with variant spellings) is of interest in the present context; we are dealing with a word of foreign origin but in the runic inscriptions concerned it can be understood as a vernacularized element. Indeed, on the Klemensker stone *sankta* modifies masculine *Mikjáll*, a usage that can perhaps be compared to that of other loan-words signifying titles, like *herra* ‘master, lord’ (Jacobsen and Moltke in *DR, Text*, col. 706).

In contrast to these examples, we find *Michael* (**mikael**) and the names of the other archangels on a medieval folded lead plate of unknown origin (A 284). The inscription contains Latin words and phrases, some of which appear corrupt. In this context we may certainly consider the name *Michael* as an element of a Latin inscription. Other sacred names,

³ For the sake of consistency edited texts of Scandinavian runic inscriptions are given in normalized Old West Norse, taken in the first instance from the Scandinavian Runic Text Database, though also checked against corpus editions or other available publications. Transliterations too follow in general the database, with modifications such as bows for bind-runes. Also English translations are in the first instance taken from the database, but have on occasion been altered slightly or improved.

for example *Jesus* and *Maria*, may similarly find their place either in the vernacular or the Latin group. *Jesus* used together with *Kristr* can be taken as a vernacularized element (Old Norse *Jésús Kristr*), whereas *Jesus Kristus* and *Jesus Nazarenus* can be considered Latin elements, although this would also depend upon the context they appear in. If contextual elements are lacking, the classification will simply have to rely on the recorded forms of names and, where applicable, the use of declensional endings (cf., e.g., **petrus/pætrus** *Petrus* vs. **petr/pætær** *Pétr*).

As expected, vernacular prayers completely dominate the Viking Age and early medieval material (c. 450 instances). They are recorded on raised runic monuments and early Christian gravestones; in addition there are a few possible examples on loose items. Vernacular prayers also account for almost 50 per cent (c. 240 instances) of preserved high and late medieval runic prayers and invocations, which occur in inscriptions on medieval gravestones, in stave and stone churches, on church furniture, and on a variety of loose items. Even if we exclude fragmentary or questionable evidence—for instance, several Gotlandic gravestone inscriptions which in their present state contain only vernacular formulations, but may originally have included Latin elements—the ratio is still around 43 per cent. The general proportion of preserved vernacular prayers in the medieval material is not altered by the exclusion of inscriptions that simply refer to the act of saying prayers (most notable in Gotlandic gravestone inscriptions), which could be interpreted as implicit references to the conventional *Pater Noster* and *Ave Maria*. On the other hand, inscriptions of this type sometimes incorporate complete prayers in the vernacular or combine vernacular prayers and Latin elements. Overall, vernacular formulations continued to form a significant part of what might be termed “the runic prayer language” even after the era of the traditional runestone. Whether or not medieval vernacular prayers formed an unbroken link with the traditions of the Viking Age is less clear, and a question to which I shall return below.

Latin prayers, invocations and blessings are very much a phenomenon of the High and Late Middle Ages, and they account for around 41 per cent of the material (c. 200 instances). They occur in the same contexts as inscriptions with vernacular prayers, i.e. on church buildings, gravestones, church furniture, and loose items. To the corpus we can add one relatively early example of *Ave Maria*, **āue maria**, recorded on a grave slab from Gretlanda (Vg 164), dated to the end of the eleventh century and thus belonging to the group of early medieval grave monuments.

In the mixed group of runic prayers and invocations we find a rune-

stone from Backgården (Vg 76, c. 1100) which refers to the praying of the *Pater (Noster)*, **pat ær : reṭ : h[-ær]ium : atbiþia : bat[ær]** ‘It is right for everyone to pray the *Pater (Noster)*’. There is a further uncertain case on a fragmentary eleventh-century stone inscription from Öland (Öl 44). The stone has a four-word vernacular prayer *Guð hjalpi sálu hans* and a sequence **lis : iki**, which has been interpreted *Les Ave* ‘read Hail (Mary)’ (Brate in *SRI*, 1: 113). The use of both vernacular and Latin elements is a phenomenon found mainly in gravestone inscriptions from Gotland and parts of mainland Sweden, but occasional examples are known from other contexts (church walls and furnishings, loose items).

Vernacular prayers and invocations

Vernacular prayers from the late Viking Age and the early medieval period tend to be variations and modifications of the common formula *Guð hjalpi ǫnd/sál(u) hans* (or: *hennar/þeira*) ‘May God help his (or: her/their) spirit/soul’. The composition of the prayer has been analysed in various studies and will not be re-examined here (on structural and content-related variations, see Zilmer 2012 with references). Previous scholarship has also tried to trace the origin of the formula through theological analysis of its components and core message. There has been discussion of the extent to which the prayers recorded on rune-stones may have been influenced by elements from the Latin liturgy of the dead; although some indirect influence has been identified, direct borrowings are not very evident (Beskow 1994, cf. Gschwantler 1998). Certain features of runic prayers have been interpreted as evidence of popular religiosity (Gschwantler 1998; see also Williams 1996a, 1996b).

The origin of *Guð hjalpi ǫnd/sál(u) hans* has thus far remained unexplained. It is conceivable that the formula stems from prayers originally designed for missionary purposes. Prayers of this type may first have been introduced into other Germanic languages as a means of spreading the Christian message and reached Scandinavia by different paths (Gschwantler 1998, 738, 743 f.; cf. Segelberg 1972, 162, 170–76). Although the number of vernacular rune-stone prayers found outside the core area in central Sweden remains limited, variants of the formula can be traced in different parts of Scandinavia. This would indicate independent manifestations of the tradition, though possibly modelled on one common source. At the same time, the analysis of variation in prayer formulations and their regional distribution shows runic prayers to have been dynamic elements of vernacular tradition rather than the formalized tools of Christian mission

(Zilmer 2012). The oral context around the prayers is of significance — they function as immediate appeals and the inscriptions refer to the reciting of prayers (Zilmer 2009, Palm 2006). This is well illustrated by the inscription on the Berga stone (U 947), with its statement: *Nú er sál sagt svá: hjalpi Guð* ‘This is now said for (his) soul: may God help’.

During the Viking Age and the early medieval period vernacular prayers are first and foremost a rune-stone phenomenon. Nearly 400 instances are recorded on raised stones, boulders and bare rock; close to 70 per cent of this material originates from two central Swedish provinces, Uppland and Södermanland. Vernacular prayers also occur on early Christian grave monuments (up to 50 instances, if fragmentary evidence and a few questionable cases are included) and the odd loose item. As an example of the latter may be mentioned the inscription on a walking stick from Schleswig (DR Schl4), dated to the eleventh century. On two adjacent sides of the stick, A and D, the same prayer is repeated, albeit with different spelling, which may suggest different carvers or a practice situation: **krist : haba suia · harbara · | kris- × hialb × suein × harbara ·** *Kristr hjalpi Svein harpara* ‘May Christ help Sveinn Harper’. A whetstone from Sigtuna (U Fv1984;257) carries a prayer containing the formula *Guð hjalpi: kup · hia-... | ant · han-*. This artifact may date from the second half of the eleventh century, although it has by some been assigned to the twelfth or even later.

The use of similar prayers on raised rune-stones and early Christian grave monuments emphasizes some of the connections and overlapping features between the two types of monument. As is well known, rune-stones and grave monuments from the late Viking Age and the early medieval period formed part of a broader commemorative tradition, at least in parts of Scandinavia (cf., e.g., Ljung 2009, 195 f.). Sometimes it can be difficult to distinguish one type of monument from the other typologically. At the same time, one might expect that due to their closer connection to sites of early churches and Christian burials, grave monuments would have represented a more established form of religious practice, with possible consequences for the verbal formulation. This is not, however, borne out by the evidence. Inscriptions on grave monuments reflect formulations known from Viking Age rune-stones, with some adaptations or additions probably due to memorial type and burial practice. Such reflection is clear, for instance, in the material from the province of Östergötland where we find nearly thirty vernacular prayers on early Christian grave monuments, although several are only fragmentarily recorded. On an eleventh-century stone from Skänninge (Ög 239) we thus find the traditional

prayer *Guð hjalpi sálu þeira beggja* ‘May God help both of their souls’. The commemorative formula identifies the stone as a grave slab by pointing out that it was laid by the commissioner, not raised (*lagði stein þenna* ‘laid this stone’).

There is, however, one significant difference between the wording of the prayers on rune-stones and early Christian grave monuments. The rune-stone prayers employ both *sál* og *önd*, which judging from the overall material were more or less interchangeable, notwithstanding certain regional fashions and carver-related preferences can be observed. The term *önd* is virtually absent from prayers on grave monuments, insofar as this can be determined (i.e. leaving aside fragmentary evidence). Exceptions are: Ög 139† from Västra Tollstad church (*Guð hjalpi önd ...* ‘May God help (his) spirit’), Sö 356 from Eskilstuna (*Gu[ð hjalpi] önd hans [ok] Gu[ðs móðir] ok þe[ira manna] sem gera létu* ‘May God and God’s mother help his spirit and (the spirit) of those men who had (this) made’), Vg 105 from Särestad (*[Guð] hjalpi önd hans ok sú helga sankta María* ‘May God and the holy Saint Mary help his spirit’), and N 187 from Årdal church (*Hjalpi Guð öndu ...* ‘May God help (his) spirit’). These exceptions may possibly be due to regional customs. Nevertheless, it is of interest that prayers on grave monuments that are more or less contemporary with the rune-stones by and large do not record *önd*. This could be a discourse-related feature, possibly motivated by the type of monument.

The composition and contents of vernacular prayers and invocations originating from the High and Late Middle Ages are more varied. It is a point of discussion whether certain earlier and later vernacular prayers can be viewed as links within a relatively stable tradition. I noted above that rune-stones and early Christian grave monuments make use of prayers of the same type. That the later material shows the continuing use of vernacular prayers of similar composition to those earlier ones is perhaps even more significant. Formulas of the type *Guð hjalpi önd/sál(u) hans* (with modifications) were not restricted to the Viking Age and early medieval period but also make their appearance in high and late medieval inscriptions, for example on grave monuments and in stone and stave churches. There they could be used alone or together with other formulas.

The basic four-word formula is found on a twelfth-century grave monument from Vrigstad (Sm 83): *Guð hjalpi sálu han[s]*. A lost medieval gravestone from Hopperstad stave church (N 390†), seems to have carried a prayer addressing *Guð dróttinn* ‘Lord God’ and naming the person for whose soul the prayer was made. According to a seventeenth-century drawing it stated: + **koþ trotin hialli iaþo** + **kætilla** + *Guð dróttinn*

hjalpi sálu Ketils. A medieval stone from Selje (N 419) contains a more all-embracing prayer to Christ and adds the adverb *vel* ‘well’: *Kristr, hjalp oss vel* ‘Christ, help us well’.⁴

Certain prayers may be expanded by soliciting divine assistance for the person(s) responsible for carving the inscription or making the monument. A well-known example comes from Hopperstad stave church (N 393), and the prayer also expresses the expectation that people will read the runes that have been carved: *Dróttinn hjalpi þeim manni, er þessar rúnar reist, svá þeim, er þær ræðr* ‘May the Lord help the man who carved these runes; likewise him who reads them’.⁵

Other vernacular prayers in runic inscriptions from the High and Late Middle Ages may follow similar patterns but use different verbs. We find: (*Guð*) *signi* ‘(God) bless’, *náði* ‘be gracious’, *geymi* ‘protect’, *blessi* ‘bless’, *gæti* ‘protect/watch over’, *gefi* ‘give’, *sé* ‘see’, etc. carved on a wide range of objects.⁶ Variation in the structure and components of prayers is not an innovative feature in the later medieval inscriptions. As mentioned above, such variation is well documented in prayers on rune-stones and early Christian grave monuments. What is new in the material from the High and Late Middle Ages is the combination of various formulations on one and the same item. The four sides of a mid-thirteenth-century runic stick from Bryggen (B 13) contain prayers to God, St. Mary, and all God’s saints together with the invocation of several individual saints. The prayers use different verbs and demonstrate varying structure – besides *hjalpi* (as in: *Hjalpi mér Klemetr, hjalpi mér allir Guðs helgir ...* ‘Help me, Clement, help me, all of Gods holy (men) [= saints]’), we find *gefi* (*Guð gefi oss byr ok gæfu María* ‘May God give us good wind, and Mary good luck’), *gæti* (*Allir helgir menn, gæti mín nótt ok dag, lífs míns ok sálu* ‘May all saints protect me by night and day, my life [= body] and soul’) and *sé* and *signi* (*Guð sé mik ok signi* ‘May God see me and bless me’). Parts of the inscription are incidentally carved using coded runes of varying design.

From Kaupanger stave church comes a different kind of variation. There we find three instances of the simple prayer *Guð gæti* ‘May God protect’, rendered with different spellings. A 85 has: **kup gæ**, A 86: **gub g**, A 87: **gud gæte**. A 85 and A 86 occur on the same pillar and are incomplete,

⁴ See, e.g., N 346, N 54 and N 42. Cf. G 104B and G 108.

⁵ See, e.g., Bo NIYR;1, DR 347, N 411, N 478. Cf. Sm 26, N 506 (with *Guð signi* ‘God bless’) and N 149 (with *Guð blessi* ‘God bless’).

⁶ See, e.g., Sm 54, Sm 117†, Vg 144, Nā 20, DR 173, N 22†, N 128†, N 368. Several inscriptions from Gotland, Bryggen in Bergen and elsewhere in Norway record vernacular prayers of this type with different verbs.

although they might be considered to be abbreviations; A 87 is two pillars away from them. The three inscriptions are obviously carved by different people, as the form of the runes makes evident, and most likely document successive attempts at reproduction or copying of the same text. The various spellings of ‘God’ could, however, reflect different attempts at arriving at an acceptable rendering of this word in runes.

As these examples show, vernacular prayers with wording similar to the *Guð hjalpi* formula occur in various Norwegian inscriptions. We also find parallels in the Danish, mainland Swedish and Gotlandic material. Given that in Norway use of the prayer *Guð hjalpi ond/sál(u) hans* is limited in the earlier inscriptions, we may here be dealing with a local development in high and late medieval runic tradition. At the same time, this may be a matter of chance, since the overall number of Norwegian rune-stones and early Christian grave monuments is modest.⁷ Regardless of whether later medieval prayers in Norway represent a modified version of earlier prayer practices or an independent phase of religious expression, it is significant that vernacular formulas are well documented in the high and late medieval inscriptions there. The possibility of tracing continuing or overlapping practices is greater in the case of later medieval runic grave monuments from the Swedish provinces of Östergötland, Småland and Västergötland where we also have ample evidence of the use of prayers on rune-stones and early Christian grave monuments. To these we can add the island of Gotland, where vernacular prayers occur on (picture-stone shaped) rune-stones dating from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, a custom continued in the runic inscriptions placed on later medieval grave monuments.⁸

Other types of vernacular runic prayer and invocation are known from different parts of Scandinavia; these differ from the *Guð hjalpi* pattern and introduce new elements into the vernacular prayer language. Various later medieval runic prayers refer to the act of prayer itself by employing the verb *biðja* ‘pray’. Possible earlier examples of *biðja* occur on two fragmentary rune-stones, from Södermanland (Sö Fv1954;19) and Väst-

⁷ For examples of prayers, see N 63, N 187 as well as N 185† and N 237†.

⁸ Late medieval runic inscriptions in Gotland could arguably be seen as separate from the rest of the Scandinavian tradition. Christian runic inscriptions from Gotland—from the Viking Age as well as the whole medieval period—nevertheless share many common features with the material elsewhere. The late medieval Gotlandic inscriptions are included in the survey in order to provide a comprehensive overview of developments within the runic prayer tradition in different parts of Scandinavia.

Table 1. Examples of formulations with the verb *biðja* ‘pray’

<i>Ek bið(r) / bið ek ...</i> ‘I pray/beg ...’	Vg 163, grave slab, thirteenth century (<i>Herra Guð bið ek signa ...</i> ‘I beg God the Lord to bless ...’); G 104A, church-wall inscription, fifteenth century (<i>Sóta herra Jésús Kristus, ek biðr þik fyrir þá synd(?) ok *dróvilsi þín sóta móður frú María mæR</i> ‘Sweet Lord Jesus Christ, I pray to you for(?) your sweet mother Lady Mary the maid that sin and distress ...’)
<i>Hverr sem biðr fyrir ...</i> ‘whosoever prays for ...’ / <i>N.N. bið fyrir ...</i> ‘N.N. prays for ...’	G 3, grave slab, second half of fourteenth century (<i>Hverr sem biðr fyrir henna[r]</i> ... ‘Whosoever prays for her ...’); DR EM85;432A, church-wall inscription, twelfth century (<i>Thomás prestR bið fyrir mik</i> ‘Priest Thomás pray for me’)
<i>Biðið (bónir) fyrir ...</i> ‘pray (prayers) for ...’	G 12, grave slab, c. 1349 (<i>Bið[i]ð bónir ...</i> ‘Pray prayers ...’); G 33, grave slab, fourteenth century (<i>Biðið fyrir þeira sálum</i> ‘Pray for their souls’); N 264, monastery inscription, fourteenth century (<i>Biðið fyri[r] Biðið fyrir sál [Randviðs(?)/Ragnvalds(?)] ...</i> ‘Pray for Pray for Randviðr’s(?)/Ragnvaldr’s(?) soul ...’)
<i>Biðið góðs fyrir ...</i> ‘pray for good (i.e. mercy) for ...’	G 282, grave slab, fifteenth century? (<i>Ér biðið góðs fyrir Margítu sál af Otheim, á mik</i> ‘Pray for good for Margíta of Otheimr’s soul, [who?] owns me’); G 322, grave slab, 1230–60 (<i>Biðið góðs fyrir hans sál</i> ‘Pray well for his soul’)
<i>Biðjum oss ...</i> ‘we pray for ourselves ...’	G 128, church inscription, sixteenth century (<i>Vér biðjum oss ...</i> ‘We pray for ourselves ...’)
<i>Lát biðja fyrir ...</i> ‘have people pray for ...’	G 201, grave slab, fourteenth century (<i>Ok hon bað: lá[t] biðja fyrir hans sál</i> ‘And she ordered: Have people pray for his soul’)

manland (Vs 4). In inscriptions from the High and Late Middle Ages we find a variety of formulations that employ this verb (see table 1).

The majority of these formulations are known from Gotlandic grave-stone and church-building inscriptions, but they also appear in Norway, Denmark and mainland Sweden. As well as in wholly vernacular inscriptions we find *biðja* used in connection with recitation of the *Pater Noster*. It is also found on a thirteenth-century wooden stick from Bryggen

(N 289) that may have functioned as a rosary. In line C we have: ... *þik ok biðja mér miskunnar viðr þik ok Maríu, móður*, ‘... you and pray for mercy for me from you and Mary, (your) mother’. The beginnings of lines A and B have been compared to the *Kyrie* (*Kyrie eleison* and *Christe eleison* respectively). The reference to *María móðir* in line C has been linked to *Sancta Maria Dei genitrix*, and that part of the inscription interpreted as an introduction to the *Ave Maria* (Liestøl in *NjyR*, 6: 51; cf. Spurkland 2012, 191). At the same time, the mention of Mary the mother may also accord with vernacular invocations of Mary as God’s mother that are known from contemporary as well as earlier runic material. The inscription as a whole exhibits a blend of expressions that may have their background in Latin texts adapted for vernacular prayer. This is significant, since in general medieval runic material does not contain many examples of the reformulation in the vernacular of specific Latin religious texts. When identifiable scriptural, liturgical and other general religious quotations are carved in runes, they are usually given in Latin (see, however, the runic stick B 524 containing an Old Norse version of a short passage from the *Passio Sancti Andreae Apostoli*).⁹

Looking at possible lines of textual development and changes from earlier practice, we observe that the later medieval vernacular prayers make greater use of individual reference. Personal names are documented in around 6 per cent of the vernacular prayers from the Viking Age and early medieval period. The common strategy at this time was to formulate prayers with personal pronouns in the third person, although the commemorative formulas normally identify the deceased by the name. In the High and Late Middle Ages personal names are frequently included in vernacular prayers on Gotlandic gravestones, and occasional examples can be found elsewhere.¹⁰ They are also used in prayers known from Norwegian and Gotlandic church walls and furnishings. The approximate percentage of prayers with personal names in the Gotlandic material is 35;¹¹ the proportion would be even higher if we excluded all fragmentary and uncertain evidence where the potential use of personal names cannot be established (on the vocabulary of Gotlandic inscriptions, see Snædal 2002, 184–88). In addition to personal names, some Gotlandic prayers include

⁹ In addition there are non-religious Latin inscriptions from the High and Late Middle Ages, frequently quoting poetry.

¹⁰ See, e.g., Ög 49, Sm 54, Sm 117†, DR 103.

¹¹ The percentage remains the same if inscriptions from the combined group are added – i.e. vernacular prayers including references to *Pater Noster* and *Ave Maria* or some other Latin elements.

the occasional place-name reflecting the common custom of identifying an individual by their place of origin or abode recorded in other Gotlandic runic inscriptions. A fourteenth-century grave slab from Lärbro church (G 295) has the prayer: *Biðið góðs fyrir B[óthe]iðar(?) sá[l] af Bjergi, som hér hvílisk* ‘Pray for good for the soul of Bótheiðr(?) of Bjerg, who rests here’. In the Norwegian material – comprising inscriptions on gravestones, on church walls and furniture, and on various loose items – the percentage of prayer formulations containing personal names is around 16.¹² In this case, the number would be higher if we excluded examples which cannot be shown with certainty to be prayers. Various formulations are used, e.g., *Statt í friði Guðs, Ása* ‘Stand in God’s peace, Ása’ (N 46, Lom stave church) or *Haldi hinn helgi Dróttinn hǫnd yfir Brynjólfs ǫndu* ‘May the holy Lord hold (His) hand over Brynjólfr’s spirit’ (N 319, Urnes stave church).

The inclusion of personal names in prayer formulas reflects certain general features of the discourse of runic inscriptions in the High and Late Middle Ages. For one thing, we find such names in the memorial language of contemporary grave monuments (as in that of the Viking Age rune-stones and the funerary monuments of the Early Middle Ages). Further, they form part of the personal graffiti appearing in stone and stave churches where importance is given to recording one’s presence in the church. The inclusion of personal names can also be motivated by a wish to focus on the person(s) who made or owned a particular object. This is exemplified by a thirteenth-century baptismal font from Hossmo church (Sm 164): *Ek bið þik ... at þú biðr nafnliga fyrir þann mann, sem m[i]k gerði; Jakob hét h[ann]* ‘I beg you ... that you pray for the man who made me, and mention his name; he was called Jakob’. However, whereas earlier prayers tend to mention individual family members,¹³ their later medieval counterparts may stress the fact that they relate to a broader community of Christians. Personal references can be combined with the idea that those commemorated are members of Christian society.¹⁴ Some prayer formulas are for example intended for the benefit of all Christian souls, as is the last phrase in the inscription on the fourteenth-century

¹² This only refers to formulations that are intended to benefit the person identified; the inclusion of sacred names is not taken as evidence of the use of personal names.

¹³ See, however, the rune-stone from Tierp church (U 1143), *Guð dróttinn hjalpi ǫnd [all]ra kristinna* ‘May the Lord God help the spirits of all Christians’; also possibly the Grinda stone (Sö 165), *Kristr hjalp ǫnd kristinna(?)* ‘May Christ help the spirit of Christians(?)’.

¹⁴ An early example is the Folsberga stone (U 719), *[K]ristr láti koma ǫnd Tuma/Tumma í ljós ok paradísi ok í þann heim bezta kristnum* ‘May Christ let Tumi’s/Tummi’s spirit enter into light and paradise and into the best world for Christians’.

grave slab from Silte church (G 63): *Kristr, Maríu sonr, náði ǫllum sem hér hvílask undir, ok ǫllum kristnum sálum* ‘Christ, son of Mary, be gracious to all who rest hereunder, and to all Christian souls’.

A separate category included in this study comprises sacred names. The intention behind some of the references concerned remains uncertain, especially where single names—for example, *María, Nikulás*—are recorded. Are these inscriptions to be taken as invocations calling upon divine assistance, or are they personal names (i.e. maker’s or owner’s formulas or records of someone’s presence in a church)? The question also arises whether certain sacred names should be categorized as vernacular or Latin elements (see the discussion above). I have ignored inscriptions that do not offer a clear indication of whether the name is sacred or simply that of some individual. The case of *María*, however, is different, since we do not normally encounter it as a personal name in Scandinavian runic inscriptions. In the Middle Ages the name was sacred and therefore unsuitable for ordinary people. There is, though, the odd exception. According to *Necrologium Lundense* a twelfth-century nun in Lund named *Ása* was called *María* (DGP, 1: col. 910). A lost twelfth-century runic gravestone from Öretyd (Sm 117†) seems to offer a further example: *Guð, Maríu sonr, signi hústrú Maríu sál af Áslabúðum* ‘May God, Mary’s son, bless the soul of housewife María of Áslabúðir’. Inscriptions containing the name *María* are thus generally taken as invocations of the Virgin Mary. Excluded, however, are several doubtful examples which according to earlier interpretations consist of runic Mary monograms. More recent investigations have shown that some of these monograms are not runic at all. Yet other inscriptions do have *María* carved partly or completely in bind-runes—each case has to be assessed separately.¹⁵

It is also possible that the name *Maria* might have functioned as a drastic abbreviation of the Latin prayer *Ave Maria*. That would make it natural to include such inscriptions in the Latin group. However, we also find the name used in wholly vernacular contexts where it clearly cannot stand for *Ave Maria*. A vernacular invocation of Mary is found in the formulation *Hjalp(i) María* ‘Mary help’ (e.g. G 104A, G 105). Further examples of vernacular formulations also need to be considered, including: *sálug María* ‘Blessed Mary’ (Hs 19), *Guð, María* ‘God, Mary’ (A 27), *María, móðir Guðs* ‘Mary, mother of God’ (G 142, cf. G 383, N 289), *María mæx* ‘the maid Mary’ (Bo NIYR;1, cf. G 104A), *Guð minn ok hin helga María*

¹⁵ The assessments are based either on personal examination of inscriptions or examinations undertaken by other scholars (as, for example, those in Knirk 1992, 13; 1998, 484).

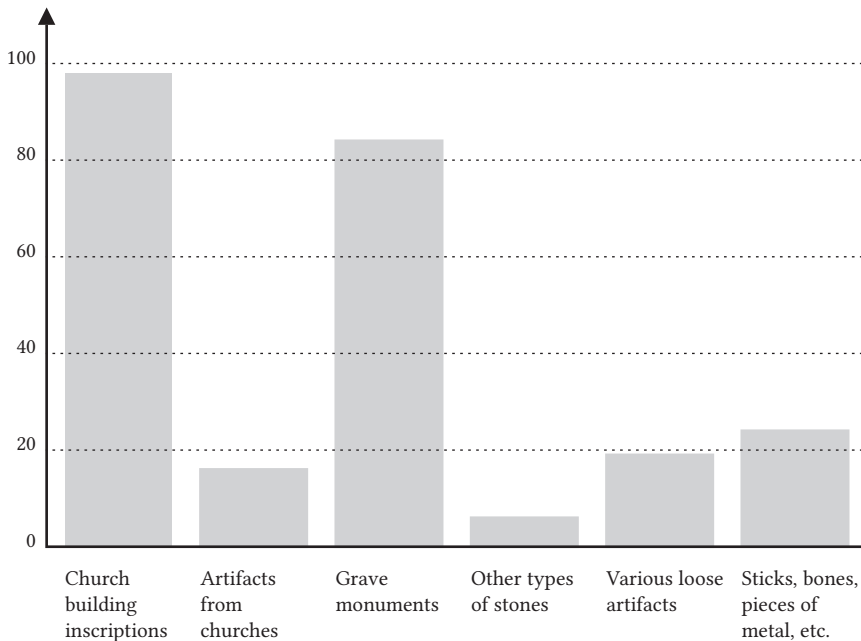


Chart 2. Types of artifact with high and late medieval prayers and invocations in the vernacular

‘My God and the holy Mary’ (N 396). To these later medieval examples we can add the fact that vernacular prayers from the Viking Age and the early Middle Ages can be addressed to *sankta María*. Furthermore, we find the prayer *Guð hjalpi ok Mar[í]a qnd Sibb[a]* ... ‘May God and Mary help Sibbi’s spirit ...’ on a rune-stone from Uppland (U 558). In the light of these and other examples, there is no reason to suppose use of the name *Maria* must imply a reference to the *Ave Maria*. On the other hand, as noted earlier, the context in which the name stands is an important factor in determining whether it is to be regarded as a vernacular or Latin element—compare, for example, the use of the name in B 1 (where it appears by itself but in conjunction with vernacular words and phrases: *Eysteinn á mik* and *hermaðr*) and N 634 (with Latin formulas: *O Alpha, Christus et Alpha* | *Jesus et Maria* ...).

To conclude this overview of medieval prayers and invocations in the vernacular, it is important to say a few words about the contexts in which the texts are found and the types of artifact that bear them (see chart 2; the numbers are absolute, not percentages).

The largest category consists of prayers and invocations found carved

into stone or wooden church buildings (on the walls or other parts of the structure), either inside or out. These account for around 40 per cent of the total material. The choice of runes in such an environment is noteworthy. Different types of inscription, not just prayers and invocations, coexist and interact within the same space. The specific locations of all types of church inscription can be combined with the analysis of their varying spheres of usage. Prayers form one type where it would be interesting to look more specifically at possible distinctions or overlaps between public and private spheres, and discuss instances of clerical usage and examples of private devotion. Jones (2010) has noted that vernacular prayers in Norwegian stave churches are commonly found in those parts of the church that the congregation had access to (on contextual aspects of church inscriptions, see also Gustavson 1991).

Most of the vernacular prayers and invocations carved into church buildings are found in Norway, Gotland and Denmark, with occasional examples from mainland Sweden. Almost two-thirds of the Norwegian material originates from stave churches, complemented by inscriptions from Nidaros Cathedral and a few other stone structures. However, vernacular prayers and invocations from stone churches dominate in the overall Scandinavian corpus—due to the fact that numerous inscriptions have been incised into the plaster of Gotlandic and Danish churches. It is not always easy to determine how far inscriptions in churches are intended as supplications (see the discussion of sacred names above). In addition, there are casual graffiti in the form of personal names which might have functioned as prayers in the sense that certain people wanted to mark their presence in the church as a way of seeking divine assistance. Since the motivation underlying such personal graffiti is unclear, they have been omitted from the corpus.

The second largest group comprises prayers and invocations occurring on high and late medieval grave monuments. Including fragmentary and questionable examples they form about 34 per cent of the total. A large proportion come from Gotland, but vernacular prayers are also recorded on grave monuments from other parts of Sweden (Östergötland, Småland, Västergötland, Närke, Bohuslän) as well as Denmark and Norway. I have emphasized the continuing significance of such prayers—of both traditional and innovative type. This particular group demonstrates clearly that vernacular prayers were not replaced by Latin equivalents, as might perhaps be expected given that medieval grave inscriptions do certainly make use of Latin burial formulas (e.g., *hic iacet*) or adaptations of these (*hér liggr* ‘here lies’). In fact, there are roughly six times as many vernacular

prayers and invocations preserved as Latin ones. In addition to medieval grave monuments, I have set up a small group comprising a few stones of unknown function or origin and individually found bricks.

The third largest group consists of prayers, invocations and blessings recorded on various small items such as wooden sticks, pieces of bone, and metal. I have separated these from other types of loose object, in that they had no other initial primary function than as a surface for writing and thus gained their supplicatory or manipulative function from the texts that were inscribed on them or the practices and rituals that were associated with them. In comparison with the two biggest groups the number of these inscriptions is limited; they account for around 9 per cent of the total corpus. The material is mostly Norwegian, with finds from Bryggen and other parts of the country; in addition there are sporadic examples from other parts of Scandinavia. The objects and their texts have to be examined with a view to identifying individual manipulative practices. At the same time, the general features of the devotional language of this third group do not differ significantly from other contexts. There are a number of inscriptions containing simple prayers, invocations and blessings—addressed, for example to *Guð* and using verbs like *blessi*, *signi*, *gæti*, etc.—which do not reveal any deeper concerns or underlying manipulative purposes. As stated on a thirteenth-century runic stick from Bryggen (B 403): *Guð, er alt má, blessi Sigurð prest, er mik á* ‘May God, who presides over all things, bless Sigurðr the priest, who owns me’. Here we even have a cleric carving or commissioning a blessing with runes on a wooden stick. A good example of a rather long vernacular inscription of this type expressing religious devotion is the above-mentioned N 289 from Bryggen which contains *inter alia* phrases that can be compared to the *Kyrie*. In some cases the inscriptions leave it unclear whether someone is simply practising their writing skills or expressing personal piety. Circumstances seem to be quite different when it comes to the inscribing of Latin texts on the same types of object, which are also a more numerous category (see below).

The fourth largest group with almost the same proportion as the previous one, i.e. nearly 8 per cent, contains prayers and invocations written on non-ecclesiastical loose artifacts. This category includes everyday objects that were for some reason or other inscribed with runic texts. We find vernacular invocations, blessings and prayers on wooden vessels, rings, knife handles, whetstones and yet other artifacts. An example is the prayer to God on a bone hairpin from Mære church (N 534), where the text can be interpreted as a type of protective formula: *Gæti Guð þess er ek olmaða*

‘May God protect him whom I enraged’. On a worked wooden fragment, perhaps part of a knife sheath, from Bryggen (B 591) we find the sequence **kupmriusua**, which according to one interpretation may contain the personal name *Guðmundr*, but it is perhaps more likely to say *Guð Mariúson(?)* ‘God, Mary’s son’; the **r** in the inscription may in fact be the bind-rune **ar**. The material contains other possible examples of the invoking of Mary; her name may be carved in full (though possibly using bind-runes) or only the initial two or three runes may be given. The function of such inscriptions is unclear.

Finally, we have prayers and invocations preserved on church furnishings and loose items that originate from churches – the fifth group, which accounts for around 6 per cent of the material. In this group we find inscriptions on baptismal fonts, censers, church bells, crucifixes, church door rings and door fittings. From what has been preserved it seems Latin prayers are favoured on certain types of ecclesiastical item, such as church bells. Nevertheless, we also encounter vernacular invocations of, for example, *Guð* and *Jésús Krístr*, and vernacular prayers. A thirteenth-century censer from Fyn (DR 173) records: **: guþ : si**, which stands for *Guð si[gni]*; the rest of the inscription, which consists of a maker’s formula, is in Latin.

Prayers and invocations in Latin

The other main category of medieval runic prayers and invocations shows evidence of direct input from Church Latin. Typical are inscriptions that contain the prayers *Ave Maria* and *Pater Noster*, but we also find quotations from Scripture or the liturgy or material based on these, as well as different types of incantation and blessing. There are inscriptions that quote the Trinitarian formula *In nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti*, various psalms, litanies (e.g. the *Ordo Commendationis Animae* or the *laudes* litany starting with the words *Christus vincit*, *Christus regnat*, *Christus imperat*), hymns and antiphons (e.g. *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, the *Ecce crucem* antiphon and the Anthem of the Blessed Virgin or the so-called *Five gaude* antiphon). Several inscriptions make use of special acronyms and collections of sacred names and titles, including a variety of the names for God according to the *Alma Chorus Domini*, as well as the names of the apostles, the four evangelists, the archangels, different saints and various biblical figures. The discussion here is limited to the use of the *Ave Maria* and the *Pater Noster*.

Most Latin prayers and invocations appear as fixed quotations,

forming, as they do, core elements of memorized religious expression. However, such quotations can vary: most often only certain clauses of the texts are cited, depending perhaps on what was considered customary or necessary, or simply due to the limitations of the size of, or available writing space on, the artifacts. This variation in length can be best observed in inscriptions that contain parts of the *Ave Maria* and the *Pater Noster*. In the runic material these two prayers are as a rule not quoted in their complete form, as it was known in the Middle Ages.

In its present form the *Ave Maria* is composed of three parts. In the Middle Ages the first two, the so-called scriptural component, were in use—that is, the Angel Gabriel’s words saluting the Virgin (according to Luke 1:28), and the greeting of St. Elizabeth (Luke 1:42). These two salutations could be attached to each other naturally, as the first one has the words *benedicta tu in mulieribus* and the second *benedicta tu inter mulieres* ‘blessed art thou among women’. Regarding the origins of the prayer, there is evidence of the reciting of Marian salutations from the fifth and sixth century onwards, but the use of the joint prayer as an accepted form of private devotion can only be traced from around the mid-eleventh century (Helander 1956, 284). The rise and spread of the joint prayer formula can be connected to series of verses and responses as used in the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin. In the period the runic inscriptions reflect, the *Ave Maria* was becoming increasingly popular as a devotional formula in Catholic tradition. Its popularity is also affirmed by the collections of Marian legends that started to appear in the early twelfth century. In the High Middle Ages the prayer was completed by the addition of *Jesus (Christus)*—in apposition to “fruit of thy womb”—and *Amen* (Helander 1956, 285). At the same time it is uncertain whether it was the general custom to include the clause *et benedictus fructus ventris tui* ‘and blessed is the fruit of thy womb’. The third part of the prayer, with the petition for Mary’s intercession, was added at some point in the fifteenth century. It was included in its current form in the Catechism of the Council of Trent of 1566.

The *Pater Noster* also goes under the name *Oratio Dominica*. Two versions of the prayer occur in the New Testament, a shorter one in the Gospel of Luke 11:2–4 and a longer, and more traditional, one in the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew 6:9–13. In both contexts the prayer is given as an instruction on how to pray. The *Pater Noster* consists of an introductory formula and seven petitions, a structure that was followed in the Middle Ages. The difference between the two versions lies primarily in the fact that Luke has only five of the seven petitions (lacking the third

and the seventh). The *Pater Noster* played a central role in the devotional life of the medieval Church. It was part of the Ordinary of the Mass and of most liturgical rites, and it also functioned as a liturgical daily prayer and was used in private devotion.

In the Nordic countries the *Ave Maria* and the *Pater Noster* formed core elements of catechetical religious instruction together with the *Credo* (the Apostles' Creed). Several medieval statutes and laws emphasize the importance of teaching these prayers in the vernacular and describe proper procedures for praying (see Helander 1956, 285; Molland 1968, 130 f.). *The Old Norwegian Homily Book* (AM 619 4°, from c. 1200) contains vernacular interpretations of and commentaries on each of the petitions in the *Pater Noster*, which are cited in Latin (cf. also *The Old Icelandic Homily Book* or *Íslensk hómiljubók*, Stock. Perg. 4° no. 15; see Wisén 1872, 28–35). The commentary starts with the words: “VER fyngium pater noster qui es in celis. Ðat er fva a vára tungu. Faðer var fa er er a himnum” (Indrebø 1931, 153) ‘We sing *Pater Noster qui es in cœlis*. That is, in our language: Our Father which art in heaven’. The same source offers an Old Norse rendering of the *Ave Maria*, as part of a homily for Christmas Day (Indrebø 1931, 33). Vernacular versions of the *Ave Maria* and the *Pater Noster* are also recorded in various fourteenth- and fifteenth-century manuscripts (see Kilström 1968, 128 f.; Geete 1907–09, 3–5, 94). It is of some interest in the light of this that Scandinavian runic inscriptions show that the *Pater Noster* and the *Ave Maria* continued to be recited in Latin throughout the Middle Ages. Inscriptions written in the vernacular but containing a request to say the prayers also refer to *Pater Noster* and *Ave Maria*. The use of the Latin titles of the prayers is common in vernacular manuscripts as well, as for example in Cod. Ups. C 50 from the latter half of the fifteenth century: “Huru människian skal bidhia til gudh mädh pater noster oc Ave Maria til jomffrw Maria” (Geete 1907–09, 4) ‘How people are to pray to God with the *Pater Noster* and to the virgin Mary with the *Ave Maria*’ — this is followed by vernacular renderings of both prayers.

The numbers of runic *Ave Maria* and *Pater Noster* prayers given in different studies vary according to the classification criteria used and the extent dubious and corrupt evidence is included (cf. Spurkland 2012, 192; Sidselrud 2000 with references). In her examination of the Norwegian material Sidselrud arrives at fifty-seven *Ave Maria* inscriptions (with some additional examples that contain only the name *Maria* in a Latin context) and twenty-one for *Pater Noster* (Sidselrud 2000, 39–46). However, certain inscriptions that are part of Sidselrud’s corpus have to be excluded or should, at the very least, be questioned. These include, for example,

various inscriptions that may or may not contain some (initial) letters of the prayer formulas, dubious Mary monograms, and inscriptions that only consist of the name *Maria* or the first letters thereof, with no clear indication of whether or not it is part of the *Ave Maria*. As discussed above, simple invocations of Mary do not necessarily qualify as renderings of the Latin prayer, since the name was also used in appeals expressed in the vernacular.

The Scandinavian runic material (taken from the Scandinavian Runic Text Database with the addition of a few new finds) contains around ninety *Ave Maria* inscriptions, complete or partial. Eleven of these are categorized here as belonging to the combined group – as well as reciting or referring to the *Ave Maria*, the inscriptions may contain vernacular prayers or speak of the practice of praying. The corpus further includes ten to twelve questionable instances, i.e. inscriptions that contain a sequence of runes possibly suggestive of *Ave*. Also included are inscriptions on two rune-stones from Västergötland (Vg 165 and Vg 221) where the prayer itself is carved in roman letters. Inscriptions that only consist of the name *Maria* have been left out for the reasons stated above. The regional distribution of the material cannot be taken as representative of the spread of the prayer, but results rather from circumstances of preservation and accidents of discovery. Recent finds of *Ave Maria* inscriptions on several small metal amulets and on the walls of various medieval churches have altered the regional distribution somewhat – and more of the same kind may be expected to surface also elsewhere. So far most of the finds registered have been from Norway, Denmark, Västergötland, Gotland and Småland, with a few from other Swedish provinces. The Norwegian material – recorded mainly in churches and on rune-sticks and other wooden items from Bryggen – accounts for over one-third of the total corpus. It should be pointed out that inscriptions which refer in the vernacular to the reciting of the *Ave Maria* or which combine the Latin prayer with vernacular formulas are known chiefly from Gotland, with single finds from Östergötland, Västergötland, Småland, Närke and Denmark.

More than thirty-five *Pater Noster* runic inscriptions are known from Scandinavia. Nineteen of these exhibit some part of the prayer – most frequently the opening words *Pater Noster* – in company with vernacular prayers. Around five are of questionable value. *Pater Noster* inscriptions are known from Norway – which accounts for almost half the overall material – Gotland and Västergötland. Occasional finds occur in Östergötland, Närke and Denmark. Inscriptions that refer to the *Pater Noster* in

Table 2. Examples of inscriptions with the *Ave Maria*

<i>Ave</i>	N 625, runic stick, c. 1300: auē is carved close to the left end of the stick; the writer may have intended to carve a longer part of the prayer but did not complete his task; another possible example is Sö Fv1974;210, on the base of a late medieval(?) stave-tankard, where among various incised lines the sequence of three runes auæ has been identified
<i>Ave Maria</i> ^a	Vg 164, grave slab, end of eleventh century: auē maria ; DR EM85;516B, church-wall inscription, 1150–1300: auē māria ; N 622, base of a stave-tankard, early fifteenth century: +auē māria
<i>Ave Maria gratia</i>	N 531, church-wall inscription: auē māria gracia ; Sm 22, church bell, first half of fourteenth century: afe maria : gracia (with a name of a brother and <i>Jesus Kristus</i>)
<i>Ave Maria gratia plena</i>	Vg 210, church bell, 1228: : aue : maria : gracia : plena : ; G 127, church-wall inscription: afe maraa : garasia : plēna
<i>Ave Maria gratia plena Dominus</i>	DR 50, sword pommel, 1250–1300: auæ : ma : gracia : btæna : þominu , also in roman letters AVE MARIA : O MR ACIA : PLENA
<i>Ave Maria gratia plena Dominus tecum benedicta tu in mulieribus</i>	N 307, church-wall inscription: auē maria gracia blena dominus tecum benedicta tu in mulie ; A 63, wooden plug, fourteenth century: auē maria gracia plena dominus tekum benedicta tu in mulieribus
<i>Ave Maria gratia plena Dominus tecum benedicta tu in mulieribus et benedictus</i>	N 347, iron door ring: + hafe maria krasia blena tomius stekum benatita us in mulieribus æþ be
<i>Ave Maria gratia plena Dominus tecum benedicta tu in mulieribus et benedictus fructus ventris tui amen</i>	Sm 82†, church bell, second half of twelfth century: [tikānt : omaiān auē maria : grazia : plina : tominus : tekum : benetikta tū : i mulieribus : æþ benetiktūs fruktūs : uæntris tūi amæn :] , with added <i>Dicant omnia</i> ; N 617, runic stick, c. 1250: auē maria gracia plena tominus tekum benetikta tū in mulieribus æþ benetiktūs fruktus uentris tui amen

^a There are inscriptions (church graffiti, inscriptions on loose items) that besides just *Ave* contain only the initial letter(s) of *Maria*.

vernacular contexts are mostly Gotlandic, with a few finds from Västergötland, Norway and Östergötland.

The overall evidence thus shows that the *Ave Maria* in Scandinavian runic inscriptions is usually cited as a prayer, but occasionally the two words are employed as the title of the prayer in connection with vernacular appeals to pray. The *Ave Maria* is more dominant in the overall material than the *Pater Noster*, and it occurs more widely. This does not necessarily indicate a greater spread or popularity of the prayer, but may have to do with the types of evidence that have been preserved, forms of textual culture and contexts of usage. It is nevertheless true that *Ave Maria* inscriptions occur in a wide range of settings: some are ecclesiastical and monumental, others are secular and more casual, yet others relate to popular practices and seem to have practical concerns (cf. Sidselrud 2000, 64–86). This underlines the nature of the *Ave Maria* as a mode of both public and private devotion.

Judging from what has been preserved, runic citations of the *Pater Noster* are less common than is the case with the *Ave Maria*. The prayer is recorded in clerical settings and on small Christian (lead) amulets, with a few finds originating from (seemingly) secular contexts. More than half of the *Pater Noster* inscriptions consist of just the opening word or two of the prayer in connection with vernacular requests to pray. This practice is first and foremost found on medieval grave monuments where references to the prayer seem to be motivated by a particular type of memorial discourse. This is illustrated by the early thirteenth-century gravestone from For church in North Trøndelag (N 536). The stone was made to commemorate a certain *Síra Klemetr*, a priest, and the inscription includes the request: *Biðð Pater Noster fyrir sál hans* ‘Pray the *Pater Noster* for his soul’. It is known that the *Pater Noster* could be recited in the churchyard for the benefit of the deceased; the practice is described together with other devotional acts in indulgence privileges for various churches (*Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, 3: no. 522 from 1395, and 13: no. 67 from 1408; cf. Molland 1968, 131). Medieval runic grave monuments that include an appeal to say the *Pater Noster* for the person commemorated probably reflect the same tradition.

Some of the recorded variants of the two prayers, with illustrative examples, are provided in table 2. The most common variant is as expected the two-word formula *Ave Maria*, which is recorded in more than 40 per cent of the material. The examples in table 2 demonstrate the use of the phrase in a variety of inscriptions. The gravestone from Gretlanda (Vg 164), dating from the end of the eleventh century, provides a rather

Table 3. Examples of inscriptions with the *Pater Noster*

<i>Pater</i>	N 555, church-wall inscription: p·patær ∴; N 557, church-wall inscription: p·patær r
<i>Pater noster</i>	G 372, church-wall inscription, thirteenth century: batr noṭr ; N 79, gravestone: ∴ pater ∴ noster ∴; N 616, runic stick, c. 1170, side C: b batær ∴ nøstær
<i>Pater noster qui es in cælis</i>	N 570, church-wall inscription: pater noster ki es in slis
<i>Pater noster qui es in cælis sanctificetur</i>	A 173 (N 816), runic stick, 1150–1200: bater · nuster · kui es in seli ∴ santibisetur
<i>Pater noster qui es in cælis sanctificetur nomen tuum adveniat regnum</i>	N 615, runic stick, c. 1200: pater ∴ noster ∴ kui s in selo ∴ santafisetur ∴ nomen tum ∴ apfeniāp reṅo[m] ...
<i>Pater noster qui es in cælis sanctificetur nomen tuum adveniat regnum tuum fiat voluntas tua sicut in cælo et in terra</i>	A 123, lead cross: · pater n oster · ki es in celis sanctificetūr nomen tūum · aduenia tþ regnum tū um f...þ uoluntas tū ...kūtþ in clo æþ ...rra · (the inscription includes other phrases and formulas, among them <i>Sit super nos! Ab omni malo, amen</i>)
<i>Pater noster qui es in cælis sanctificetur nomen tuum adveniat regnum tuum fiat voluntas tua sicut in cælo et in terra panem nostrum cotidianum da nobis odie et dimitte nobis debita nostra sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris et ne nos inducas in temtationem sed libera nos a malo amen</i>	N 53, lead sheet, + patær nostær kui æs inn celiss ∴ s ānktificetur nomen tūuūm apueniāp r/regnum tūum fiāþ uoluntas tua sikuþ inn selo æþ inn tærra panæm nosstrum kotid ianum dānobis odie æþ dimitte nobis debitanost ra sikuþ æþ nos dimittimuss debitoribuss noss triss æþ ne nos inndukass inn tæmtacionæm sæþ li berānos a malo amen (the inscription ends with the names of the four evangelists)

early example, bearing in mind that it was only around this time that the *Ave Maria* as a devotional formula gained popularity. A few fourteenth-century church-bell inscriptions from Västergötland (Vg 222, Vg 245, Vg 247, Vg 253) complement the phrase *Ave Maria* with *Jesus*, following practice in the High Middle Ages. Besides *Ave Maria* we find several inscriptions with either just *Ave* or *Ave Maria gratia*. When it comes to the

former, the interpretation *Ave* seems justified in a good number of cases (cf. e.g. $\widehat{\text{aue}}$ in N 343, aue in A 105 and $\widehat{\text{aui}}$ in A 233). Sometimes we cannot be certain the carved sequence was indeed meant to stand for *Ave*, but this may be considered an option (cf. au in N 45 or $\widehat{\text{aun}}$ in Vg Fv2007;37). Other variants of the *Ave Maria* occur more randomly. However, the complete prayer consisting of both salutations is found in more than ten inscriptions, which is similar to the number containing either only *Ave* or *Ave Maria gratia*. As stated earlier, it is unclear how common it was to include the clause *et benedictus fructus ventris tui* during the Middle Ages. The runic evidence thus assumes some importance since it demonstrates the use of the complete prayer in different parts of Scandinavia.¹⁶ Of further interest is the Lille Myregård lead amulet from Bornholm (Dk Bh36) where the word *sanctissima* is added: *Ave sanctissima Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum, benedicta tu in mulieribus et benedictus fructus ventris tui*.

We may now move on to *Pater Noster* citations (see table 3). It comes as no surprise that more than half of the material uses just the first two words of the prayer; as in the case of *Ave Maria* this can be considered the title. The formula is most common in inscriptions that urge the praying of the *Pater Noster*, although sometimes only *Pater* may be used; as for example in the inscription on the Backgården stone (Vg 76): *Pat er rétt h[v]erjum at biðja Pat[er]* ‘It is right for everyone to pray the *Pater (Noster)*’. Otherwise the single word *Pater* occurs chiefly in church-building inscriptions. Longer sequences of the prayer are also quoted, as on a lead cross from Osen, Norway (A 123). The complete *Pater Noster* is found on a small lead amulet from Ulstad in Oppland (N 53). Some runic items (probably amulets) use *Pater Noster* together with a variety of Latin words and expressions, which together make up powerful collections of Christian formulas and charms. The Blæsinge lead amulet from Denmark (DR Aarb1987;205), for instance, contains protective formulas against sickness together with the *Ecce crucem* antiphon, the Trinitarian formula, acclamations of the *Christus vincit* type, the holy acronym *agla* and *Pater Noster*.

Four or five inscriptions have elements of both the *Pater Noster* and the *Ave Maria*. On a runic stick from Lom stave church in Oppland (A 72) the initial sequences of the two prayers are carved on different sides,

¹⁶ As well as Sm 82† and N 617, see Sm 38, Sm 145 (which adds *Amen + In manus tuas D[omine]*), Vg 221 (with the prayer in roman script), D Fv1980;230 (adding *Amen. Alfa et o[mega]. Agla. Deus adiuva. Jesus Christus Dominus noster*), DR 166 (which contains the complete prayer, a name and an additional *Ave Maria gr[atia]*), DR 336† (with *Amen*), Dk Bh36. Cf. also N 142† and the fragmentary N 618, which may have carried the complete prayer.

Table 4. The *Ave Maria* in inscriptions from Bryggen

N 617, runic stick, c. 1250	auē maria gracia plena tominus tekom benetikta tū in mulieribus æþ benetiktuš fruktus uentris tui amen
N 618, broken runic stick, c. 1250	...s : æt : benedikdus : fruktus : ...kus : uilelmus
N 619, runic stick, c. 1170–1200?	auē maria kracia blena
N 620, runic stick, c. 1375	auē maria
N 621, runic stick, shaped as a skewer, c. 1335	auē maria
N 622, base of a stave-tankard, c. 1400	+auē māria
N 623, base of a stave-tankard, c. 1400–1475 (side A)	auē māria
N 624, base of a stave-tankard, c. 1400	auē ma
N 625, runic stick, c. 1300	auē
N 638, folded lead plate, c. 1350–1400? (inside)	þoysoþieæþnnoapnacþia auē māria iisus kristr auē māria
B 3, base of a wooden bowl, c. 1350	+au+ +ma
?B 422, base of a wooden bowl, c. 1335, doubtful Ave Maria	ami
?B 581, base of a wooden bowl, c. 1300, doubtful Ave	ui
B 611, runic stick, c. 1300	auē ma-
B 623, runic stick, fragmentary, c. 1250	...- : dominus : te-... ... benedictus : ...

combined with the names of three evangelists: + **pater nostær gui | es i clis mapeu :** | **markus lukas | au maria gracia**. *Pater noster qui* most likely introduces the inscription, as indicated by the cross sign. The next part of the prayer *es in cælis* occurs on a different side of the stick where it stands together with the name *Matthæus*. In three grave monument inscriptions from Gotland the formulas *Pater Noster* (ok) *Ave Maria* are

used together with vernacular appeals (G 60, G 62†, G 168†). Finally, on a fragmentary fourteenth-century knife sheath of leather from Örebro (Nä Fv1979;236) the words **māria pātær** *Maria Pater*(?) occur together on one side, with an additional **pātær** *Pater*(?) on the other side; **māria** and **pātær** may be interpreted as references to the prayers, not least because they are used together. Furthermore, the runic spelling of these words accords with what we find in various other *Ave Maria* and *Pater Noster* inscriptions (for alternative interpretations, see Gustavson and Snædal Brink 1979, 235–38).

As an example of different ways of rendering parts of these prayers in runes, we can look at inscriptions that cite the short sequence *Ave Maria*. Three examples were provided in table 2: Vg 164 **āue maria**; DR EM85;516B **āue māria** and N 622, **+āue māria**. All three inscriptions use a bind-rune in *Ave*, although not always the same one; two have a bind-rune in *Maria* as well. Looking at all the inscriptions with shorter and longer versions of the prayer where the phrase *Ave Maria* occurs, we can observe (insofar as it can be established) that roughly 46 percent use one or more bind-runes, and that these may occur in either *Ave* or *Maria* or both. However, if we consider inscriptions that record only the sequence *Ave Maria* with no further part of the prayer added, the percentage of those with bind-runes is nearly 60, i.e. almost two-thirds. We may here be able to identify a customary way of carving the short form of the prayer in runes. The material shows that it is common to write either the first and second or all three runes in *Ave* as a ligature. In the case of *Maria* the usual option is to use a bind-rune in **ār**, although **mā** occurs as well. A bind-rune may be employed even when the initial letters of *Maria* alone are carved, as in the inscription from Borgund stave church (N 383): **āue mā**. These conventions occur in a variety of settings – graffiti in church buildings, inscriptions on church bells and grave monuments as well as on runic sticks and other loose objects. We may be dealing here with a particular visual form of the prayer that could be used in runic inscriptions regardless of the material employed (stone, wood, metal) – a form that could be quickly and easily acquired and perhaps almost mechanically reproduced.

The *Ave Maria* inscriptions in the Bryggen material are considered separately (see table 4). The list includes fifteen items: two among them, B 422 and B 581, are considered questionable.¹⁷ The interpretations of **ami**

¹⁷ A further example of a questionable *Ave* inscription is the early fifteenth-century runic stick B 666, the suggested reading of which is **āuþ**. Alternative readings are equally possible,

as *A[ve] M[ar]i[a]* and **ui** as *[A]ve* do not entirely convince when compared with other runic renderings of *Ave Maria*. On the other hand, both inscriptions are recorded on wooden bowls, a type of artifact which sometimes bears runic *Ave Maria* prayers. On that basis the two have been included in the overview. Six of the inscriptions use bind-runes, in five cases the usage is found in the sequence *Ave Maria*. If we consider only the inscriptions that contain *Ave Ma[ria]* and no further part of the prayer, the ratio is five out of eight. The type of artifact may be of importance here, since four out of the five inscriptions with bind-runes are recorded on the bases of stave-tankards or wooden bowls (the fifth is on a lead amulet). The numbers are clearly too small for the drawing of serious conclusions, but they perhaps indicate features that may be of interest. There is a further matter of chronological interest. Longer versions of the prayer are recorded in inscriptions dating from the end of the twelfth and the mid-thirteenth century, whereas the strongly abbreviated forms are a feature of the fourteenth and fifteenth century.

In future studies it would be interesting to examine shorter and longer versions of the *Ave Maria* and other Latin prayers in order to see what, if any, differences they exhibit. It could be that the shorter texts acquired a particular written form and as such were easily memorized and reproduced, rather like maker's and ownership marks. Longer citations, on the other hand, would have required some graphophonological analysis, at least where the text was not copied from a pre-existing original, resulting in inscriptions, which, as is indeed the case, demonstrate varying degrees of literacy and knowledge of Latin.

Another issue concerns the use of prayers in inscriptions that employ both runes and roman letters. Some seventy medieval Scandinavian runic inscriptions contain individual roman letters or shorter or longer passages in roman script, formulated in the vernacular or Latin. This parallel and in some cases hybrid use of the two scripts occurs on different types of object that originate from a variety of communicative contexts, for example gravestones, church bells, church graffiti, lead amulets, various loose items including runic sticks. Prayers and invocations are recorded in around thirty such inscriptions, the majority being Latin prayers, in particular citations of the *Ave Maria*. The use of Latin in inscriptions that mix the scripts is of interest – we might perhaps expect that Latin text

hence this potential example is excluded from table 4. Other inscriptions to consider in addition to the *Ave Maria* type are: N 626 (base of a stave-tankard, **māria**), B 295 (runic stick, c. 1200, **mr̥ai**); and B 362 (base of a wooden bowl, c. 1200, **ma**). Cf. also N 645 (runic stick, c. 1250, containing the sequence : **māriuas**).

would be carved in roman script, this being possibly considered a more conventional form of writing for these types of text. However, what we find is that the *Ave Maria* prayers are by and large carved in runes. But it is noticeable that different strategies are used.

On a gravestone from Södra Ving church (Vg 165), dated to the second half of the twelfth century, we find virtually parallel texts in runes and roman, placed along opposite edges and appearing as visually equal entities. The difference between the inscriptions is that AVE MARIA GRATIA appears on one side carved in roman letters, whereas on the other, the master's formula *Haraldr steinmeistari gerði* 'Haraldr the stonemaster made (it)' is added in runes. On a mid-fourteenth-century church bell from Malma church (Vg 222) *Ave Maria Jesus* is given in runes, whereas the master's formula HAQUINUS MAGISTER appears in roman script.¹⁸ A different case again is the inscription recorded on a bronze sword pommel dating from the second half of the thirteenth century, found in Ikast (DR 50), where *Ave Maria* is carved in both runes and roman: **auæ : ma : grasia : btæna : pominu | AVE MARIA : O | MR ACIA : PLENA : .** Finally to be mentioned is the twelfth-century grave slab from Öreryd churchyard (Sm 115). The prayer *Ave Maria gratia plena, Dominus tecum, benedicta tu in mulieribus* is carved in runes; in roman script, placed in the middle of the slab, is a *hic iacet* 'here lies' burial formula in Latin and an appeal to read *Ave*: LEGE A[VE] (see Tjäder 1993).¹⁹

Different strategies, it thus appears, are employed in the recording of Latin prayers on items that carry runes and roman letters. Although the cases are not numerous, they cast light on some of the domains in which the use of the two scripts overlaps in the Middle Ages. It is, for example, worth noting that the material does not support the theory proposed by some (cf., e.g., Gustavson 1994a, 324) that roman script enjoyed a higher status in inscriptions than runes. In the varying environments in which the inscriptions occur we can observe layouts which confer more or less equal visual status on the two scripts, or there may be a certain logical division between them which is not based on hierarchical considerations. In other cases the inscriptions demonstrate a rather accidental mixing of runic and roman letters.

From the mixing of scripts I now turn to the mixed use of Latin and vernacular elements in the runic prayer language. The number of inscriptions

¹⁸ See also Vg 245, Vg 247 and Vg 253. Vg 221, however, has the complete prayer in roman script.

¹⁹ Cf. Sm 145 where the burial formula is in roman script, whereas the vernacular appeal to pray as well as the complete *Ave Maria* are given in runes.

in the group with mixed linguistic content is not high; the textual evidence consists mainly of vernacular prayers or devotional statements into which elements from (originally) Latin prayers have been introduced. In my introduction the question was raised whether titles like *Pater Noster* and *Ave Maria* in these inscriptions could be characterized as loan-words or vernacularized phrases. Based upon the structure and wording of texts, it is in reality impossible to make any broader claims about how the producers or readers of the inscriptions experienced these central Christian elements linguistically and textually. There is though a clear mixing of different types and styles of runic prayers. In addition to asking readers to pray or sing the *Pater Noster* or the *Ave Maria* for somebody's soul, several inscriptions include explicitly vernacular prayers of the same style as are found on rune-stones and early medieval grave monuments. Some inscriptions contain complete prayers both in Latin and in the vernacular.

A lost inscription on a plank from Klepp church in Rogaland, possibly dating from the twelfth century (N 227†), provides a useful example. It was an *ártíð* inscription recording the date on which the anniversary mass for the soul of the deceased was to be said: *Ártíð er Ingibjargar Káradóttur þrim nóttum eptir krossmessu um várit* 'Ingibjörg Kári's daughter's anniversary day is three nights after spring Cross-mass'. The text further appealed to potential readers to pray: *Hverr sá maðr rúnar þessar sér, þá syngi Pater Noster fyrir sál hennar* 'May every man (who) sees these runes sing the *Pater Noster* for her soul'. The inscription concluded with a prayer in traditional vernacular style: *Hjalpi Guð þeim er svá gerir* 'God help him who does so'.

This text can be compared with the inscription on a gravestone from Fornåsa church (Ög 35): *Biðjum vára Pater [Nost]er hans sál til ró ok til náða ok Ráðborgar sál. Guð gefi þeira sál himinríki* 'Let us pray our *Pater Noster* for the peace and mercy of his soul and Ráðborg's soul. May God give their soul(s) to heaven'. As was the case in N 227† immediately above, the inscription refers to the praying of the *Pater Noster*, complemented by a separate vernacular prayer.

Several corresponding examples are known from the Gotlandic grave-stones, a monumental tradition that continued into the fourteenth and fifteenth century (sporadically even later). Formulations that call upon the reader to pray (*biðja*) or sing (*syngja*) the *Pater Noster* or the *Ave Maria* for the soul of the deceased are also found in Gotlandic church-wall inscriptions, either on their own or together with other formulations and vernacular prayers. There are also inscriptions that contain other Latin elements. A fourteenth-century gravestone from Fårö church (G 334) has

a prayer that mentions a certain Lafranz, and the inscription goes on to ask Jesus Christ to be gracious to all the Christian souls that rest in the church; ending with the formulaic *Amen*, it reads: *Guð náði Lafranzar sál ok Nikulás, hans bróðursonr, lét mik gera. Bótulfr, sem kirkju bygði, hann gerði mik. Jésús Kristus náði öllum kristnum sálum, sem hér hvílask. Amen* ‘God have mercy on Lafranz’s soul, and Nikulás, his brother’s son, had me made. Bótulfr, who built the church, he made me. Jesus Christ have mercy on all the Christian souls which rest here. Amen’.

Finally we have inscriptions that record complete prayers in Latin and the vernacular. The Ulbølle censer from Fyn (DR 183), dating from the thirteenth century, contains a vernacular prayer to God, *Guð signi þann mik gerði* ‘God bless him (who) made me’ alongside *Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum, benedicta tu in mulieribus*. An interesting mixture of elements is recorded on an early fourteenth-century runic stick from Bryggen (N 636), with the acronym *agla* and Old Norse *Guð* ‘God’ together with the *sator arepo* palindrome, followed by the names of the archangels, *Jésús Kristr* and the vernacular formula *María gætt mín* ‘Mary protect me’: **+ a+g+l+a + guþt + sateor + arę... | rafael : gabriel : m---... | uasus krst : mariua : gætt min f...** These and other examples demonstrate how different types of word and expression can co-exist in medieval runic inscriptions.

I will complete my discussion with some comments on the types of setting in which Latin prayers and invocations are recorded (see chart 3; the numbers are again absolute, not percentages). The largest group of prayers, invocations, blessings and sundry Christian formulas in Latin consists of records on runic sticks, metal amulets and pieces of bone, which altogether make up around 37 per cent of the material. It should be noted that on small items like these there are over three times as many Latin formulations as vernacular prayers and invocations. The textual features of the group are diverse: several inscriptions appear as collections of sacred names, religious references or scriptural and liturgical citations. A variety of individual practices are documented, which is not surprising given that we are here dealing with religious terms, blessings, protective formulas and charms. Common examples include: the *Ave Maria* and the *Pater Noster*, the *Christus vincit* formula, the Trinitarian formula, various names for God, the names of the four evangelists, the acronym *agla* and quotations from the Psalms of David. In several inscriptions the main motivation behind the use of Christian phrases and formulas seems to be some practical concern or need rather than religious devotion. Some of the texts are corrupt, allowing for the identification of only the odd name

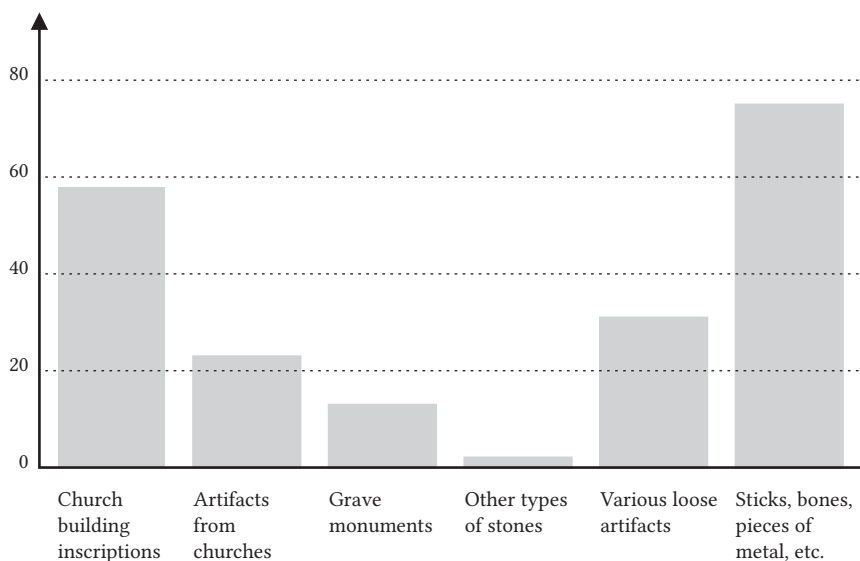


Chart 3. Types of artifact with high and late medieval prayers and invocations in Latin

or some distorted passages. More than half of the material originates from Norway, and consists mainly of runic sticks from Bryggen in Bergen. In addition we have several lead amulets from Denmark as well as other finds from different parts of Scandinavia.

Latin prayers and invocations on other types of loose artifact account for 15 per cent of the material. Most of the finds originate from Norway and Denmark. In this group as well we see that the number of objects carrying Latin prayers and invocations exceeds those with vernacular formulations. Besides various everyday objects such as stave-tankards and wooden bowls, knife handles, rings, a spindle-whorl and a sword pommel we find religious texts in Latin carved on lead crosses which are likely to have served as personal amulets. The texts extend from one or two straightforward words like *Ave* or *Maria* to longer prayers, protective formulas and liturgical passages. Quotations from the *Ave Maria* seem to be particularly common on stave-tankards and wooden bowls, as noted above.

Inscriptions on church furnishings and items originating from churches make up around 11 per cent of the corpus of Latin prayers and invocations. The numbers are not large, but still we can observe that there are rather more Latin prayers and invocations recorded than vernacular ones, although this may result from the chance of preservation. It is possible to

surmise that certain practices are connected with certain types of object. Church bells, for instance, tend to carry Latin quotations, particularly from the *Ave Maria*, with finds from Småland, Västergötland, Värmland, Denmark and Norway. The use of *Ave Maria* inscriptions on church bells has also been noted outside Scandinavia; the Scandinavian runic material thus follows a common pattern.

Inscriptions in church buildings account for around 29 per cent of Latin prayers and invocations, making up the second largest group. The greatest number come from stone churches, especially those in Denmark and on Gotland. The Norwegian material is dominated by inscriptions from stave churches, with only the occasional find from stone buildings. Annette Jones (2010) has indicated that the majority of Latin prayers in Norwegian stave churches occur in chancels, although some are found close to portals where they may have performed a protective function (the results of this analysis may need to be modified when prayers, invocations and various sacred names are examined together). On the whole Scandinavian churches tend to preserve more runic prayers and invocations in the vernacular than in Latin – true of both the stone and stave variety. Thus, in the overall material there are around 1.7 times as many vernacular prayers and invocations as there are Latin; for stone churches the figure is 1.6 and for stave churches 1.8. These numbers may, of course, reflect chance results, showing no more than what commonly occurred in different parts of Scandinavia. Nevertheless, it is telling that there are not more cases of Latin prayers recorded in Scandinavian churches, particularly stone churches from important milieux. Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim, for example, has a number of runic prayers and invocations in the vernacular, but only one example of a possible *Amen* (N 473). A rather doubtful case there of *Pater Noster* is N 497, which besides a statement concerning people who drowned in the fjord includes the sequence: **p-r : ---qr̥**.

Finally, we have a limited number of Latin prayers and invocations preserved on medieval gravestones from different parts of Scandinavia. They form c. 6 per cent of the material (to this we can add a few finds of Latin formulations on other kinds of medieval stone). As mentioned above, this type of artifact is dominated by vernacular prayers and invocations. The texts in Latin quote common prayers like the *Ave Maria* or invoke some divine figure. Two Danish gravestones from Skåne carry complete funerary texts in Latin: *Anima famuli tui Benedicti tecum sine fine requiescat in pace. Amen* ‘May the soul of Thy servant Benedict rest with Thee in peace without end. Amen’ (DR 340†); and *In manus tuas, Domine,*

commendo spiritum tuum, Ása ‘Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend thy spirit, Ása’ (DR 350, cf. Luke 23:46). A further example is provided by the grave slab from Öreryd churchyard (Sm 115), discussed above, which has in roman script the Latin burial formula *HIC IACET* and an appeal to read the *Ave Maria*, followed by the prayer itself in runes. In other cases the burial formula may be in the vernacular, but rounded off by a phrase in Latin, as on the gravestone from Øye stave church (N 79): *Hér hvíllir Þóra, móðir Eiríks prests. Pater Noster* ‘Here rests Þóra, mother of Eiríkr the priest. Pater Noster’.

This material may be complemented by the medieval gravestone inscriptions that combine vernacular and Latin prayers and invocations or include vernacular requests to pray the *Pater Noster* or the *Ave Maria* (c. 25 instances). As mentioned earlier, these combinations are particularly common on medieval Gotland, but they also occur on grave monuments from Östergötland, Småland, Västergötland and Norway. Such gravestone inscriptions exceed in number those which have prayers and invocations in Latin only. Combined vernacular and Latin formulations are also known from church walls, and occasional examples are found on church furnishings and different types of loose object.

Conclusions

In this examination of Christian runic inscriptions in Scandinavia during the Viking Age and Middle Ages, a broad definition of vernacular and Latin runic prayers and invocations was the point of departure. The material included a variety of Christian phrases, formulas and names, connected by the underlying purpose of seeking divine assistance or blessing, although the exact motives and concerns doubtless differ from one inscription to another. In addition to distinguishing between vernacular and Latin prayers and invocations, I have discussed inscriptions that use prayers of mixed style where formulations in both forms of language can appear side-by-side. It is apparent that in the medieval context vernacular and Latin elements could be used together as part of a common arsenal of prayer. Although an analysis undertaken on the basis of the wording of runic inscriptions cannot be fully representative of the many aspects of Viking Age and medieval prayer tradition, and although the results presented here are affected by various circumstances of preservation and interpretation, there are still some general observations to be made.

Overall in the runic material vernacular prayers and invocations outnumber the Latin ones by almost 3.5 to 1 – largely due to their presence on

a considerable number of late Viking Age rune-stones and early Christian grave monuments. Prayers of the common type ‘May God help his spirit/soul’ represent an early phase of vernacular runic prayer in Scandinavia, making their first appearance on raised commemorative stones. The continuing importance of vernacular prayers is clearly documented in different types of high and late medieval inscription, especially those found in stone and stave churches and on grave monuments, where they form part of an established medieval Christian culture. Various links and overlaps can be noted between the earlier and later vernacular prayers, and these make it possible to suggest the existence of some sort of continuous tradition running from the Viking Age into the Middle Ages. However, the more specific contours of the tradition cannot at present be confidently identified. Also observable are innovative elements that set high and late medieval prayers and invocations apart from earlier manifestations of the genre. All the while we must bear in mind that the preserved material may represent a chance selection of different regional and chronological expressions of the general custom. It is, however, the case that the composition of vernacular prayers in runic inscriptions from different periods reveals various possibilities of structural and content-related variation. This emphasizes their dynamic nature. We also observe that over the course of time vernacular prayer language becomes more varied.

In contrast, Latin prayer formulations appear as more or less fixed quotations, but one can find variation both in their length and function, the latter ranging from religious devotion to practical concerns and also encompassing amuletic-ritualistic usage. Latin prayers and invocations are adapted to the runic context in various ways. The spelling conventions, grammatical forms and vocabulary of these and other preserved runic Latin texts document degrees of competence in Latin amongst certain members of society such as the clergy, but these features also cast light on the acquaintance of ordinary people with widely recited Latin texts and even reflect outcomes of the copying and imitation of Latin texts by certain “illiterate” (i.e. non-Latin reading/writing) individuals.

The number of Latin prayers and invocations in the high and late medieval material remains below that of their vernacular counterparts. However, the spread of common Latin prayer formulas is confirmed by references to such prayers in vernacular appeals to pray. The core elements of the Latin prayer tradition, the *Ave Maria* and the *Pater Noster*, occur on numerous occasions – both shorter and longer variants of the prayers being recorded. Most commonly we find the opening two words

of the prayers, but there are also extended quotations, especially of the *Ave Maria*. The lengthier renditions may demonstrate a more detailed acquaintance with Latin prayers. However, in comparison with the relatively dynamic nature of the vernacular prayers, the Latin formulas still figure primarily as quotations that have been put into runic writing from memory or copied most likely from a runic exemplar.

The contexts in which both vernacular and Latin runic prayers and invocations occur vary to a great extent. These texts can be carved into a variety of smaller and larger artifacts of stone, wood, metal, bone or leather. Prayers and invocations are recorded on commemorative rune-stones and various types of grave monument, in the fabric of stone and stave churches, on ecclesiastical objects and other items that are associated with churches as well as on different everyday artifacts with seemingly no devotional purpose at all. Prayers and invocations also appear on runic sticks and pieces of bone and metal where they may express a variety of concerns.

The overview presented in this study has shown that the prayers recorded on rune-stones, grave monuments and on the inside or outside of church buildings are dominated by vernacular formulations. Of special significance is the well-documented use of vernacular prayers and invocations on medieval grave monuments. It should also be emphasized that both stone and stave churches record more prayers and invocations in the vernacular than in Latin. On the other hand, Latin prayers and invocations are used to a greater extent on different types of loose object – this includes the everyday kind as well as items originating from churches. Among the latter we find objects that were used in the celebration of mass, which explains the use of Latin formulas. The dominant role of Latin prayers and invocations becomes especially clear when considering small objects that served primarily as a surface for writing, such as runic sticks, lead plates and bands, and pieces of bone. As pointed out above, they carry about three times as many Latin as vernacular formulations. The use of different Christian terms, names and expressions in Latin is also determined by the type of object bearing the inscription and the textual culture it represents – this is especially evident in the case of small lead amulets and crosses of varying materials (cf. Knirk 1998; Ertl 1994).

On the basis of this data it is reasonable to conclude that forms of runic prayer could vary depending on the context and type of artifact involved. First, there is the monumental context, connected with objects like rune-stones and grave monuments, and in a certain sense also with church buildings where runic inscriptions became a part of the fabric of the holy

edifice. Despite the fact that numerous inscriptions in church buildings may be characterized as (personal) graffiti, they nevertheless occur in a context that gave them a broader public and religious function. Seen in this light, it is possible that the setting of vernacular prayers and invocations in monumental or public contexts may have been motivated *inter alia* by the wish to reach a wider audience. Second, we have the discourse of the various loose objects. Here we find a certain preference for Latin prayers, invocations and blessings. Besides being connected to particular types of object and textual genre the use of Latin formulas in this context may also have to do with the mediation of specific knowledge and private concerns, such as the possible protection of contents in stave-tankards and wooden bowls. The distinction between these two roughly delineated spheres of use is by no means absolute, since copious examples of commonly recited Latin prayers and invocations occur in church buildings and on grave monuments, while vernacular prayers and invocations frequently appear on different types of loose object. Last but not least, we find inscriptions where prayers and invocations of mixed style, form of language and type of script are recorded, showing that the distinction between vernacular and Latin elements in medieval expression of Christianity is itself uncertain. This underlines the dynamic and mixed nature of the runic prayer tradition during the late Viking Age and Middle Ages. Its multiple regional, chronological, local and individual manifestations will need to be addressed in future studies.

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Om dateringen af Ribe runehjerneskalen

Morten Søvsø

Abstract

One of the most famous finds from the earliest historical period of the city of Ribe (southern Jutland, Denmark) is the fragment of a human skull, with a drilled hole, that has a relatively long runic inscription incised on one surface. Scholars have discussed the reading, interpretation and dating of the runes ever since the piece was excavated in 1973. In the present article, the find circumstances and other archaeological background information is presented; they permit the time of loss or deposition of the runic object to be narrowed down with great probability to the years A.D. 725–50.

Keywords: Ribe, runic skull fragment, archaeological dating

I efteråret 1972 blev der udført gravearbejder i kælderens under kunstmuseet i Ribe. Den imponerende bygning i nederlandsk renæssancestil slog revner, og fundamentene måtte forstærkes. Oprindeligt var huset opført i 1864 som privatbolig for tekstilfabrikanten Balthasar Giørtz, men havde siden 1891 huset byens kunstmuseum. Det var i de opgravede sorte jordmasser fra kælderen under huset, at en ansat fra byens andet museum, Den Antikvariske Samling, i 1972 ved et tilfældigt besøg fandt kronhjortetakker, keramik og glasperler, som kunne dateres til vikingetiden.

Hermed var det endelig lykkedes at finde vikingetidens Ribe, og opdagelsen blev samtidig startskuddet for en omfattende udgravningskampagne, som skulle vise sig at kunne føre byens historie tilbage til omkring år 700. Disse udgravninger er publiceret i serien *Ribe Excavations 1970–76*, bd. 1–6 (red. Mogens Bencard m.fl.), som udkom i perioden 1981–2010.

Første led i 1970'ernes udgravninger var en serie prøveundersøgelser

Søvsø, Morten. "Om dateringen af Ribe runehjerneskalen."
Futhark: International Journal of Runic Studies 4 (2013), 173–76.

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i området på nordsiden af Ribe Å, og ét af disse felter blev placeret i kælderen under kunstmuseet. På Den antikvariske Samling i Ribe [= ASR] fik undersøgelsen journalnummer 6M73, med det aktuelle felt betegnet som "område 5, Kunstmuseets kælder". Under udgravningen fremkom i juli 1973 et sensationelt fund fra kulturlagene, et fragment af en hjerne-skål med gennemboring, som ved den efterfølgende rengøring viste sig at være tæt beskrevet med runer (cf. Stoklund 2004). Nationalmuseets daværende runeekspert, Erik Moltke, opholdt sig i Ribe på dette tidspunkt, og stykket blev umiddelbart overgivet til ham til nærmere undersøgelse (Moltke 1973).

I begejstringen over det fine fund blev de nøjagtige fundoplysninger ikke skrevet ned, og den egentlige museale registrering fandt først sted flere år senere, hvor runehjerneskillen fik fundnummer D13764 (Bencard 1990, 42). Den sene registrering har som beklagelig konsekvens, at der altid vil være en smule usikkerhed omkring runeamulettens stratigrafiske tilhørsforhold og dermed også dens datering. Men dette gælder for så vidt hele udgravningskampagnen i 1970'erne, som blev gennemført ved afgravninger i såkaldt kunstige strata, fastlagt efter på forhånd definerede niveauer uden at følge lagenes naturlige grænser. Denne metode var den på det tidspunkt fremherskende ved udgravninger i kulturlag og kan medføre sammenblanding af lag fra forskellige tider, især hvis lagfølgen er præget af mange nedgravninger.

I publikationen af udgravningen er de nøjagtige fundomstændigheder søgt rekonstrueret, og på baggrund af fundtidspunktet er det muligt at tilskrive runeamuletten til opsamlingerne AK eller AI, som begge er opsamlet imellem kote 3,96 og 4,12 meter over havet (Bencard 1990, 42; svarende til udgravningens niveau 214–230). Selve fundstedet lå i udgravningens sydøstre hjørne. Til trods for at runehjerneskillens nøjagtige fundoplysninger således først er sammenstykket på et senere tidspunkt, må man alligevel regne med, at de er præcise. Oplysningerne er baseret på de involveredes egne erindringer og understøttet af forskellige notater.

Udgravningerne i 1970'erne var de første til at løfte sløret for, at der nord for Ribe Å befandt sig resterne af en velreguleret markedsplads, som havde sin første storhedstid i 700- og 800-årene (Feveile 2006). Senere udgravninger har vist, at denne tidlige bydannelses vigtigste element var en vej langs åbredden, hvor der på begge sider var anlagt 6–8 meter brede parceller, hvor håndværkere og handlende tilvirkede og falbød deres varer. På parcellerne aflejredes tykke affaldslag bestående af håndværkernes affaldsprodukter blandet med byens skidt. Lagene indeholder tusindvis af fund, heriblandt også tabte mønter, og enkelte steder er bevarings-

forholdene så gode, at der endnu findes bevaret egetømmer. I en række tilfælde har disse tømmerstykker kunnet dateres dendrokronologisk.

I 1980 introduceredes en ny teknik ved udgravninger i Ribes kulturlag. I stedet for at grave sig nedefter i på forhånd definerede niveauer, fulgte man nu det enkelte lag, og fundene blev tilskrevet det lag, de stammede fra. Denne såkaldt stratigrafiske udgravningsteknik anvendes stadig og giver mulighed for detaljerede analyser af fundene fra lagserier såsom lagene på Ribes markedsplads.

Siden fundet af runehjerneskillen i 1973 er vores viden om det ældste Ribe, dets grundlæggelse, struktur og udvikling over tid blevet væsentligt større. Udgravningerne i tidsrummet 1984–2000 er publiceret i 2006 i *Ribe studier: Det ældste Ribe*, bd. 1.1 og 1.2 (red. Claus Feveile). Særligt udgravningen ASR 9 Posthuset, som fandt sted umiddelbart sydøst for kunstmuseet, har udbygget og forfinet opfattelsen af den lagserie, som runehjerneskillen fandtes i (Feveile og Jensen 2006). Det er nu klart, at fundstedet var en håndværkerparcel ud mod den gennemgående hande- lsgade, og at lagene på stedet var gradvis akkumulerede gennem markeds- pladsens funktionstid. Der er ingen tegn på, at fundstedet var forstyrret af senere gravearbejder, som kunne have bragt yngre fund ned i et dybere niveau.

Forskelle i udgravningsteknik, forskellige kronologisystemer og publi- kationsseriernes ulige struktur gør det til en vanskelig opgave at sammen- ligne 1970'ernes udgravninger med de senere, men runehjerneskillen blev fundet i lag som tilskrives Bencards fase 2, der svarer til Feveile og Jensens fase C – en fase af markedspladsen, hvor lagene gennemgående er meget organiske og således også har indeholdt en del tømmer, som har kunnet dateres dendrokronologisk. På baggrund af en række dendro- kronologiske dateringer og genstandsfund kan det med stor sikkerhed fastlægges, at fasens lagserie blev dannet i tidsrummet ca. 725–ca. 760 e. Kr. (Feveile og Jensen 2006, 126–128). Inden for denne tidsramme må runehjerneskillen anses for at være blevet tabt. Ud fra de rekonstruerede fundoplysninger synes fundet at være gjort omtrent midt i fasens lag. Kulturlagene på parcellerne i det ældste Ribe er dannet ved mange successive deponeringer af affald, stammende både fra mennesker og dyr. Af og til er disse affaldsdynger og møddinger blevet jævnet ud, og mange gange er niveauet hævet ved hjælp af tilførte opfyldsmaterialer. De mangeartede aktiviteter har tilsammen skabt en kompleks lagserie, som siden dannelsen har været under langsom nedbrydning. Med dette in mente er der ikke grundlag for at datere runehjerneskillens fundniveau snævrere end til tidsrummet 725–750 e. Kr. Bemærk, at der er tale om

tabs- eller deponeringstidspunktet og ikke om tidspunktet for genstandens fremstilling.

Er denne datering sikker? Nej. Uerkendte forhold kan have ført yngre fund ned i et dybere niveau, eller der kan være sket menneskelige fejl et sted i processen, men dette forbehold gælder stort set alle arkæologiske fund. I den tilgængelige dokumentation er der ikke noget, som tyder på, at det skulle være tilfældet med runehjerneskillen, og således må dateringen til 725–750 e. Kr. anses for overvejende sandsynlig.

Vil ¹⁴C-datering af hjerneskillen kunne give en mere præcis datering? Næppe. Dertil er usikkerheden i selve metoden for høj. Dateringen vil også kunne være påvirket af den diæt, hjerneskillens leverandør i sin tid indtog, og efterfølgende konservering af runehjerneskillen kan have kontamineret stykket med yngre kulstof.

Litteratur

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Ortnamnet *Hassmyra* på Vs 24

Staffan Fridell

På den kända inskriften Vs 24 från Hassmyra i Västmanland (numera vid Fläckebo hembygdsgård) finns enligt allmän mening det äldsta belägget på bynamet *Hassmyra*. Det står i genitiv styrt av prepositionen *til*. Sven B. F. Jansson (1964, 72) återger prepositionsfrasen translittererad som **til** × **hasuimura**, vilket han transkriberar som *til Hasvimyra*. I namnregistret är uppslagsformen ”*Hasvimyran* f. pl.”. Sophus Bugge (Brate och Bugge 1891, 226) säger däremot: ”Jeg formoder, at der skal læses **hasumura**, *Hasumýra*.” Han kommenterar inte närmare varför han anser att man ska läsa runorna så. Lena Peterson (2007, 313) translittererar liksom Jansson ortnamnet som **hasuimura**, men har uppslagsformen *Hasumýran*, försedd med frågetecken.

Jansson (1964, 73) påpekar dock att det faktiskt finns mer att läsa här på stenen: ”I 65 **u** [det första **u**:et i ortnamnet] finnas spår av en felristning: från huvudstaven utgå **m**-bistavar. Ristaren har alltså först ristat **hasm**, vilket han sedan ändrar till **hasu**.” Han förklarar senare i artikeln detta något utförligare (s. 75): ”I denna runföljd finnas spår av felhuggning: ristaren har först ristat **hasm**, vilket han ändrar till **hasum**; därefter har han mellan **u** och **m** inskjutit en *i*-runa. Detta torde visa, att Balle har varit osäker på hur ortnamnet skulle ristas.”

Jag har själv på plats kunnat bekräfta Janssons läsning i detta avseende. Med tanke på felristningen bör man i stället rätteligen translitterera **hasmūimura**. En translitterering bör ju objektivt återge vilka runor som går att läsa på stenen, oavsett vilka teorier man har om ristarens avsikter eller tillvägagångssätt, och då finns det faktiskt en binderuna **mū** här.

Jansson har säkert rätt i att binderunan är en följd av en felristning men har enligt min mening inte rätt förstått vad som har hänt. Jag menar att ristaren faktiskt hela tiden har haft för avsikt att hugga **hasumura**. Han hoppar dock av misstag över den första **u**-runan och ristar i stället det **m** som skulle komma härnäst. Ristaren upptäcker inte sitt misstag förrän han

Fridell, Staffan. “Ortnamnet *Hassmyra* på Vs 24.”
Futhark: International Journal of Runic Studies 4 (2013), 177–79.

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Fig. 1. Del av Vs 24 Hassmyra som imålad ristning, med felristningarna i grått

har huggit in huvudstaven till nästföljande runa i sin planering, nämligen **u**. Han går då tillbaka och ändrar **m**-runan till ett **u**. Egentligen borde han sedan fortsätta med att bygga ut den redan huggna huvudstaven (i det planerade andra **u**:et) till ett **m**, men han menar förmodligen då att ett sådant **m**, i synnerhet dess vänstra bistav, skulle komma alltför nära det första **u**:et. Han bestämmer sig därför för att låta den huggna huvudstaven förbli som den är och inte måla i den i den färdiga ristningen (på samma sätt som **m**-bistavarna i den första **m**-runan, som rättats till ett **u**, inte heller ska målas), utan han går i stället vidare med att till höger om den ristade huvudstaven hugga nästa runa i sin ursprungliga planering, nämligen ett **m**. Eftersom han inte tänker måla den ensamma huvudstaven, så låter han **m**:et hamna relativt nära denna. I en omålad inskrift blir den ensamma huvudstaven ett **i**, vilket, som Jansson (1964, 73) påpekar ”står trångt mellan 65 **u** och 67 **m**”. I en imålad ristning har det stått **hasumura** (se fig. 1).

Sophus Bugge (Brate och Bugge 1891, 226) har tilltalande tolkat förliden i namnet *Hassmyra* som bestämd form pluralis av ett adjektiv motsvarande fvn. *hōss* ’grå’. Fonemet /o/ kan som bekant i östnordiska runinskrifter betecknas på flera sätt: **o**, **a** eller digrafer som **au** eller **ao** är väl de vanligaste. Mansnamnet *Hōswi*, som är belagt på två uppländska runstenar avseende samma person, skrivs ena gången **haosui** (U 77) och andra gången **hasui** (U 78). Eftersom detta namn sannolikt är en substantiverad, svag form av samma adjektiv *hōss* (Peterson 2007, 132), så visar de två runbeläggen på mansnamnet dels att adjektivet faktiskt funnits i Östnorden under vikingatiden, dels att det också på östnordiskt område haft omljudsvokal.

Ortnamnet *Hassmyra* är senare belagt i två olika medeltida texter: ”in hasumyrum”, ”in hasumurum” (1371 Skl Vsm f. 8r), ”hasamyrom” (1399 9/10 Västerås DRApp). Lars Hellberg (muntlig uppgift i referat hos Lagman

1990, 83) har föreslagit att efterleden i namnet inte är *myr* f., utan i stället motsvarar det beslättrade dialektordet *mur* m. – med samma betydelse: 'sankmark, myr, mosse' – som är väl belagt i naturnamn i Gästrikland, Uppland och Västmanland. Det kan dock, enligt min mening, inte säkert avgöras om det är *myr* eller *mur* som är ursprunglig efterled i namnet.

Sammanfattningsvis bör man alltså visserligen translitterera ortnamnet i Vs 24 som **hasmūimura** men transkribera det som *Hōsumȳra* (-mūra), gen. av det plurala ortnamnet *Hōsumȳrar* (-mūrar) 'de grå myrarna'.

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Vad betyder *Bautil*?

Staffan Fridell

År 1750 utkom i Stockholm en bok med följande fullständiga titel:

Bautil, Det är: Alle Svea ok Götha Rikens Runstenar, Upreste Ifrån verdens år 2000 till Christi år 1000; För detta, efter Störvördigast i åminnelse Konung Gustaf Adolfs Ok Konung Karl XI:tes Befallning afritade ok til största delen uti former inskurne; Men nu, efter Vår Allernådigaste Konung Fridrich I:stas Befallning Ok Riksens Höglöflige Ständers begäran, Med några anmärkningar utgifne.

Boken innehåller ett stort antal avbildningar av runstenar och har därför kommit att få ett stort källvärde för runologin. Utgivare samt författare av den i flera avseenden vidlyftiga textkommentaren var Johan Göransson, som föddes i Gillberga i Värmland 1712 och avled 1769. Han var student i både Lund och Uppsala, utbildade sig till präst och skrev en avhandling om det hebreiska språket. Hans största insatser, vid sidan av *Bautil*, var att han i tryck utgav delar av Snorres *Edda* (enligt Codex Upsaliensis) samt *Völuspá*. Han har karakteriserats som den siste rudbeckianen och hans alster överflödar av halsbrytande etymologiska resonemang med syfte att i Rudbecks anda förhårliga Sveriges tidiga historia (*SBL*).

Såvitt jag vet finns det bara två försök till förklaring av boktiteln *Bautil*. Johan Gustaf Liljegren skriver i sin *Run-lära* (1832, 75): ”*Bautil* lærer vara danadt af *bauti*, bautasten och skall wäl således betyda Bautastenssamling.” Susanne Haugen menar i sin doktorsavhandling *Från bautasten till bautastor* (2007, 205) att: ”Namnet *Bautil* kan vara en lärd bildning av *baut-* och instrumentalsuffixet *-il* utan *i-*omljud.”

Gemensamt för dessa båda tolkningar är att de ser namnet *Bautil* som en reguljär ordbildning som kan analyseras som en avledning bestående av rot och suffix. Liljegren betraktar tydligen *-il* som ett kollektivsuffix, medan Haugen något förvånande talar om ett instrumentalsuffix. Till

Fridell, Staffan. “Vad betyder *Bautil*?”

Futhark: International Journal of Runic Studies 4 (2013), 181–85.

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Liljegrens förklaring kan man vidare anmärka att något **bauti* med betydelsen 'bautasten' inte är belagt.

För att komma fram till en lösning av problemet bör man göra som alltid i historisk humanistisk forskning: gå till källorna. I detta fall betyder det att undersöka vad som Göransson själv skriver i boken *Bautil*:

Denna Bok innehåller ... i) den nytta, som desse Bötahäller göra uti Svenska Historien (innehållsförteckningen).

Då Hadorph hade låtit i trä inskära öfver et tusende af dessa stenar / begynte han deras uttydning samt en beskrifning i allmänhet om dessa Bötahäller ... ("Underrättelse om dessa Runstenar", [1 f.]).

Frågas det af hvad stånd de varit, efter hvilka dessa Bötahäller äro ristade / så vitna stenarna sielfva i denna saken ("Underrättelse om dessa Runstenar", [2.]).

De enfaldige hafva med sådana Konunga Bauta-heller bedrifvit afguderie ... ("Underrättelse om dessa Runstenar", [2]).

den Öfversta Prästen i Riket var icke mer än en / ok flera kan jag icke visa på våra Bötahäller ... ("Underrättelse om dessa Runstenar", [2]).

Af andras vitnesbörd kunna också dessa Bötahällers ålder inhämtas ("Underrättelse om dessa Runstenar", [4]).

Om jag icke felar / så talar Sankuniaton nog tydeligen om dessa stenar / sägande: Borean han uptänkte Bøthällar / i det han med mycken konst uthögg stenar med bilder uti. Utom dess har den forna tiden haft mycket at tala om den Bøtil / Bautil eller Baitylos/ som Rhea satte åt Thor för Jupiter eller Jupitor ... ("Underrättelse om dessa Runstenar", [5]).

Men hans Rhea eller Församling satte up sina Bøtilar / det är: Jls / Juls eller Thors Bøter ... ("Underrättelse om dessa Runstenar", [5]).

Man kan alltså se att Göransson på ett påtagligt medvetet sätt använder varierande, men uppenbarligen synonyma uttryck. I de första sex citaten talar han om *bötahäller* eller *bauta-heller* (i pluralis) och menar uppenbarligen nordiska runstenar. I de två sist citerade styckena är det däremot fråga om en antik kontext – som i rudbeckiansk anda inkorporeras i en nordisk genom identifikationen av Jupiter med Tor – och där är variationen större: singularformerna *bøtil*, *bautil* och *baitylos*, samt pluralformerna *bøthällar* och *bøtilar*.

Det är framför allt i det näst sista stycket tydligt hur Göransson bygger upp en etymologisk konstruktion med avsikt att sammanbinda det nordiska ordet *bautasten* med det grekiska *baitylos* och därmed även

sammankoppla de två företeelserna: nordiska runstenar och grekisk-feniciska heliga stenar.

Detta är dock inte Göranssons egna idéer utan något han har hämtat från en något äldre rudbeckian, nämligen Eric Julius Björner. Denne var född i Timrå 1696 och avled 1750. Han studerade i Uppsala och skrev en historisk avhandling med titeln *De Svedia borealis*. Han fick anställning vid Antikvitetsarkivet i Stockholm och utgav bl.a. isländska sagor (*SBL*). I sin bok *Inledning till de yfverborna göters gamla häfder* (1738, 44) skriver han:

Jag har i mit Exam. Run. § 11. och den därtill höriga Mantissa bevisat, at dessa våra Böta-stenar, eljest Böta-ilar eller Hellar kallade, varit enahanda med de så af Grækerna namngifna Bætyli.

Det han syftar på är ett långt manuskript på latin med titeln "Examen Runicum" (Kungliga biblioteket, Stockholm, Signum Fm 9). Frågan utreds här vidlyftigt och långrandigt, men det räcker med att citera ur en central mening (pag. 37):

Bautilar, bauthellar, seu quod idem est Bautasteinar [...] etymon est a boeta, reparare, seu bita, vita, signare, indicare.

Det är alltså Björner som är den som första gången använder ordet *bautil* (i pluralis: *bautilar*). Uppenbarligen har han själv hittat på ordet med syfte att fungera som en felande etymologisk länk mellan *bautasten* och *baitylos*.

Som Haugen (2007, 180–98; jfr även Jonsson 2008, 46 f.) tydligt har visat, introducerades det fornvästnordiska ordet *bautasteinn* 'minnessten' i Sverige av Olof Verelius (1664, 80) i en not i utgåvan av *Götriks och Rolfs saga*. Verelius anpassar delvis ordet till svenska genom att skriva *bauta stener*. I Peringskiölds utgåva av *Heimskringla* 1697 förekommer för första gången *bötastenar*, där alltså försvenskningen gått vidare även till förleden. Denna form kommer sedan att dominera fram till Möllers svensk-tyska ordbok 1790, där *bautasten* åter etableras och tydligen sedan blir norm.

Det Björner gör är alltså inte bara att lansera det tydligt konstruerade *bautil* som en etymologisk felande länk, utan även den ytligt sett normala svenska sammansättningen *bötahäll* är helt och hållet uppfunnen av Björner med samma syfte. Det framgår inte minst av de glidande formuleringarna "Böta-stenar, eljest Böta-ilar eller Hellar kallade" och "Bautilar, bauthellar, seu quod idem est Bautasteinar".

Den underliggande ”logiken” i Biörners och Göranssons etymologiska konstruktion är alltså sannolikt ungefärligen följande:

- 1 Eftersom en häll är en sten, så kan man byta ut efterleden i *bautasten*, *bötasten* mot *häll* och få ett ord *bautahäll*, *bötahäll* med samma betydelse.
- 2 Eftersom runnordiskt *hæll* f. genom *h*-bortfall och uttalsreduktion borde kunna bli *il*, vilket bevisas av att ordet *häll* på några uppländska runstenar (i ackusativ) skrivs **eli** (U 145, U 497, URR1987;134) eller **ili** (U 90, U 163), så borde *bautahäll*, *bötahäll* kunna bli *bautail*, *bötail*. Fyra av inskrifterna finns för övrigt avbildade i *Bautil*, liksom även U 435 med sammansättningen *stæinhæll* läst som **staenel**.
- 3 Eftersom bindevokal kan falla bort i sammansättningar, särskilt vid hiatus, så borde *bautail*, *bötail* kunna bli *bautil*, *bötil*.
- 4 *Bautil*, *bötil* är nästan samma ord som grekiska *baitylos* (bortsett från vokalerna, vilka ju i rudbeckiansk etymologi ofta är utbytbara).
- 5 Alltså är *bautasten* och *baitylos* besläktade ord och avser likartade företeelser. Vilket skulle bevisas.

Svaret på frågan vad betyder *Bautil* är alltså: Det har ingen egentlig etymologisk betydelse utan är en ren konstruktion avsedd att utgöra en förbindelselänk mellan *bautasten* och grekiska *baitylos*. Den går alltså inte att analysera som en reguljär ordbildning med rot och suffix. Däremot är det klart att Biörner och Göransson båda avsåg att *bautil* skulle uppfattas som ett ord i singularis (utan kollektiv betydelse). I sin kontext i bokverket kan det väl bäst helt enkelt översättas med ’runsten’.

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The Tune Memorial's **asijostez**

Bernard Mees

In his recent analysis of the Tune inscription (KJ 72), Thórhallur Eythórsson (2013) attempts to use a mixture of common sense and etymology to overcome Wilson's law — i.e. the “first law of runo-dynamics” which (as stated by Page 1999, 10) holds that there will be as many interpretations of any inscription as there are interpreters of it. Eythórsson makes a number of disputable claims in his paper, however, perhaps most strikingly in his refusal to allow a reading of side B's attested spelling **sijostez** as a haplographic **asijostez** (with initial **a** represented by the final **a** in the preceding **arbija**). After all, haplography of the *homoioagrammaton* or same-letter type looks to be clearly attested in the Pietroasele inscription's **wihailag** for *wih hailag* (KJ 41) and the Wremen text's **ksamella lguskapi** for *skamella alguskapi* (Schön et al. 2006), so it is hard to understand Eythórsson's contention that no sure examples of such graphematic elisions are attested in the early runic corpus.

Marstrander's (1930, 320 f.) original proposal was based on an understanding that a form **sijostez** had no clear comparandum elsewhere in Germanic, but that forms in **ans-* were well known, the term **ansuz* ‘god’ being attested in several early runic inscriptions: onomastically as *A(n)su-* and as a dat. sg. *a(n)sau*. Eythórsson instead points to Old Frisian *sia* ‘offspring, descendants’ as a possible cognate, following Löffler's (1892) connection of **sijostez** and *sia* with forms like the Old Norse reflexive pronouns *sik*, *sér*, *sín* and *sinn* (< **se-*, **sei-*). But Old Frisian *sia* ‘offspring’ is linked with Old Frisian *sia* (< **sēan*) ‘sow’ by Köbler (2003, s.v. *siā*), much as Latin *sēmen* ‘seed, shoot, race, progeny, offspring, origin, author’ stems from the same root (Pokorny 1959–69, 889–91). Löffler's etymology (< **se(i)-iō-*) is less principled than Köbler's as it assumes a derivation from a pronominal construction of a type which is otherwise unparalleled — Eythórsson's example (after Löffler) of Old Church Slavonic *svojъ* ‘self's, own’ (cf. Old Prussian *swais* ‘id.’) is not usually held to be a

Mees, Bernard. “The Tune Memorial's **asijostez**.”
Futhark: International Journal of Runic Studies 4 (2013), 187–90.

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-jo- derivative, but rather to be modelled on Old Church Slavonic *mojb* (m.) < **mojos* ‘mine’ (cf. Old Prussian *mais* ‘id.’) and Old Church Slavonic *tvojv* (m.) < **t(u)ojos* ‘yours’ (cf. Old Prussian. *tvais* ‘id.’), terms which are generally accounted re-fashioned, thematised forms of the inherited genitive singular enclitic pronouns **moi* ‘of me’ and **t(u)oi* ‘of you’ (Schmidt 1978, 129; Fortson 2010, 143). Bjorvand (2008) presents an equally speculative etymology seeking to connect both **sijostez** and *sia* with Indo-European **sh₂ei-* ‘bind’, a derivation which, although it has clearer Indo-European morphological justification (cf. Latvian *sija* ‘supporting beam under a bridge’, Lithuanian *sijà* ‘connecting beam, timber bridgework’), is rejected by Eythórsson on semantic grounds. In my view, both Bjorvand and Eythórsson present quite unlikely etymologies for **sijostez** and *sia*.

Marstrander’s reading of **asijostez** as *āsijōstēz* ‘closest to the Aesir’ is probably best taken as *a(n)sijōstēz* ‘godliest, most divine’. It is rather better supported empirically than are Löffler’s and Bjorvand’s suggestions, as not only do the regular Indo-European terms for ‘heavenly, divine’ feature a similar palatal affix (cf. Sanskrit *divyá-*, Greek *δῖος* ‘heavenly’ and Latin *dīus*, *dīvus* ‘divine’, the latter also commonly substantivised as ‘god’),¹ but as Marstrander (1930, 321) points out such a formation might also explain the unexpected inflexional vocalism in Jordanes’ description *Anses* (*non pueros homines sed semideos, id est Ansis vocaverunt*; *Get.* xiii 78, ed. Mommsen 1882) as well as the *i*-umlaut in the Old English gen. pl. cognate *ēsa* (attested as a form of ‘shot’ in a charm in the *Lacnunga*). The Indo-European ancestor of *Anses* is clearly best reconstructed as a *u*-stem **h₂ensu-* as is indicated by the likely Hittite cognate *haššu-* ‘king’ as well as the surer comparanda Sanskrit *ásura-* ‘godlike, powerful’ and Avestan *ahura-* ‘god, lord’ (Kloekhorst 2008, 372–74, *pace* Bammesberger 1996). The Tune form **asijostez** may well have developed from an adjectival construction morphologically comparable to an early Nordic patronymic such as the Istaby stone’s (KJ 98) **haeruwulafiz** (< **Heruwulfijaz*), the underlying form **ansijaz* (like Latin *dīvus* ‘god, divine’) presumably taking on a substantive as well as its original adjectival function in early Germanic.

The comparison Eythórsson makes of **sijostez arbijano** to Latin *suus heres* ‘his own heir’ also seems to undermine rather than support his contention, as a superlative form of *suus heres* would make little sense from the perspective of Roman law where the concept is absolute rather than gradational. Indeed even the old Roman law that Eythórsson cites contrasts a single *suus heres* with the ‘nearest’ agnate male heir: *Si*

¹ Cf. also Oscan *díviiai* ‘goddess’ (dat. sg.) and Gaulish *díiuion* ‘gods’ (gen. pl.).

intestato moritur, cui suus heres nec escit, adgnatus proximus familiam habeto ('If a person dies intestate, and has no self-successor, the nearest agnate male kinsman shall have possession of the deceased's household'; *Leg. xii tab.* v 4, ed. Bruns 1876). Instead *ansijōstēz* seems best translated as a eulogistic superlative, perhaps 'noblest' given the semantic extension of both Greek δῖος and Latin *dīvus* to mean 'noble, excellent' (e.g. in δῖα γυναικῶν 'noblest of women'; Hom., *Od.* iv 305, ed. Stanford 1965) as well as (merely) 'heavenly, divine'. The references to divine ancestry typical of Old Germanic genealogical tradition were clearly intended to be eulogistic and the comparable uses of descendants of Indo-European **h₂ensu-* as 'king' and 'lord' in Hittite and Indo-Iranian similarly suggest that a meaning 'noblest' (perhaps even, with Marstrand, in the sense 'of noblest lineage') may have been associated with an early runic *ansijōstēz*.

Marstrand's assessment of the Tune memorial is, in my opinion, one of his more important contributions to runology. Eythórsson's questioning of his rejection of Löffler's connection of the sequence **sijostez** with Old Frisian *sia* 'offspring' seems to me to reflect a common problem with runic methodology. The reason that Eythórsson cites for preferring Bugge's (*NlæR*, 1: 27 f.) interpretation of **dalidun** as *da(i)lidun* 'divided' (rejected by Marstrand) represents the same logic as that which Marstrand first applied to connect **asijostez** with **ansuz*—i.e. a conviction that interpretations of runic expressions should principally be made in terms of forms actually paralleled elsewhere in Germanic. Yet Löffler's connection of **sijostez** with Old Frisian *sia* is no more plausible (or reliable) than Seip's (1929) suggestion that **dalidun** represents a verbal development on Old Norse *dæll* 'facilis' only otherwise clearly paralleled in Slavic (cf. Old Church Slavonic *delati* 'work', Russian *delat* 'do'), whereas Marstrand's suggested reading *ansijōstēz* can at least be supported by the common enlargement of Indo-European (zero-grade) **diu-* 'god' by an adjectival suffix *-iō-* as well as by Jordanes' *Anses* and Old English *ēsa*. Marstrand's treatment of the Tune inscription may remain disputable in some respects, particularly his analysis the text on side B. But surely a more consistent and explicit runological method than that which Eythórsson has applied remains the best defence against the overproduction of epigraphic interpretations à la Wilson's law.

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On Tune's **sijostez** Once Again: A Reply to Bernard Mees

Thórhallur Eythórsson

In a recent paper on the runic inscription on the Tune stone, published in this journal (Eythórsson 2013), I propose a new analysis of the text on side B. Along with Läßler (1892), I argue in favor of taking **sijostez** at face value, as being derived from a reflexive stem Proto-Indo-European **s(e)wo-* in the archaic meaning ‘own, belonging to the family’ (actually, I analyze the form as *sījōstēz* rather than Läßler’s *sijōstēz*). I suggest that the phrase **sijostez arbijano** is an ancient legal term meaning ‘the closest of the family heirs’, comparable to early Latin *suus heres* ‘his own heir’, i.e. ‘family heir, self-successor’. I further argue that the form **dalidun** should be emended to **da(i)lidun** (to **dailijana* ‘divide, share’), as was done by Bugge (1891, 27 f.), giving **prijoz dohtriz da(i)lidun arbija** ‘three daughters shared the inheritance’. I conclude that the three daughters (of Wōdurīdaz) shared the inheritance as the closest family heirs, while some other person (perhaps Wīwaz) erected the stone.

Against this analysis, Bernard Mees in this issue of the journal expresses his opinion that Marstrander’s (1930, 320 f.) reading **asijostez** should be upheld. This opinion appears to be based more on *argumentum ex auctoritate* than on solid facts. The form *āsijōstēz* would be the superlative of **āsijaz* ‘divine’, to **āsuz* (**ansuz*) ‘god’. However, rather than assuming with Marstrander that the meaning of *āsijōstēz* is ‘closest to the god [*som stod Ásen nærmest*]’, Mees suggests that it means ‘most divine, i.e. the noblest’. The usage here would be that of a “eulogistic superlative”, characterizing the heirs mentioned in the inscription as ‘very noble’, allegedly in line with references to “divine ancestry typical of Old Germanic genealogical tradition”. Mees is critical of taking **sijostez** as derived from a reflexive (as per Läßler 1892) since “it assumes a derivation from a pronominal construction of a type which is otherwise unparalleled”. Finally, Mees

Eythórsson, Thórhallur. “On Tune’s **sijostez** Once Again: A Reply to Bernard Mees.”
Futhark: International Journal of Runic Studies 4 (2013), 191–94.

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finds the correspondence between the conjectured phrase **sījaz arbijan-* in Tune and Latin *suus heres* (brought for the first time into the discussion of this passage in my paper) lacking in cogency because “a superlative form of *suus heres* would make little sense from the perspective of Roman law where the concept is absolute rather than gradational”.

As argued in considerable detail in my paper, the form *sijōstēz* is possible from the point of view of Germanic historical word formation. Moreover, the early Latin legal term *suus heres*, containing a specific combination with the reflexive **s(e)wo-* ‘own, belonging to the family’, should by no means be dismissed lightly as a formal and semantic parallel to **sijostez arbijano** ‘the closest of the family heirs’. After all, such correspondences between related languages are the cornerstone of the comparative method in historical linguistics.

While the formal aspects are certainly important, the main argument for the reading **sijostez** is semantic and pragmatic in nature. As I discuss at length in the paper, following my analysis, the context on side B is that of three daughters as heirs sharing an inheritance (and not three daughters preparing a funeral feast, as in most other accounts). There is now a choice between two readings and interpretations of the text in question: either as **sijostez arbijano** ‘the closest of the family heirs’, following my analysis, or as **asijostez arbijano** ‘the very noble heirs’, as Mees would have it. However, that the form **arbijano** is evidently a partitive genitive suggests that there are more candidates for the inheritance than just the three daughters. Given that there is a pool of possible heirs, the question arises: which is the more pragmatically adequate statement: (a) the inheritance goes to the heirs who are next of kin, ‘the closest of the family heirs’, or (b) the inheritance goes to the heirs who are ‘very noble’. In my mind, there is no question that possibility (a) is the more adequate one. The reason is simple: it would have been considered important to state explicitly that the daughters were the ones among the heirs who were left the inheritance, perhaps because they were women, and there were three of them sharing the inheritance. This may also explain the “gradational” use of the adjective in this connection, i.e. why a superlative form was used; from the pool of family heirs, the *sui heredes*, the three daughters were the closest ones.

The alternative account defended by Mees raises the question why it would have been necessary to state that the daughters were ‘very noble’ heirs. This information appears entirely self-evident and therefore redundant; it stands to reason that the Tune stone was erected in memory of a powerful chieftain, and his daughters would thus certainly have been

noble. Moreover, the alleged “eulogistic superlative” *āsijōstēz* is not an exact formal match to Greek δῖα γυναικῶν ‘noblest of women’, mentioned by Mees, since the Greek expression never occurs with a superlative of the adjective.

In general terms, I argue that it is preferable to regard the text of the Tune inscription as a whole, rather than to focus on individual forms in isolation. Both *sijōstēz* and *āsijōstēz* are formally possible, but neither has much empirical support in comparative material. As stated above, the existence of the early Latin parallel *suus heres* is a crucial argument in favor of taking **sijostez** as *sijōstēz*, derived from a reflexive stem **s(e)wo-* ‘own, belonging to the family’. The original meaning of the reflexive is well attested in a derived adjectival form in Germanic, manifested by for instance Gothic *swēs* ‘own; property’ and Old Norse *sváss* ‘dear, beloved’ (for further examples see Eythórsson 2013, 27).

The form *āsijōstēz*, however, is problematic for a number of reasons. One problem has to do with the word formation, which would be unusual in Germanic, where such secondary adjective formations are rare (cf. Grønvik 1981, 111 with further references, Bjorvand 2008, 4–6). This reading also requires the additional assumption that double vowels are written single, for which there is tenuous evidence in the older runic inscriptions (*pace* Mees and others). Still, granting for the sake of argument that the reading **asijostez** were better supported than **sijostez**, then we would be faced with a situation in which we had a more plausible explanation of one particular word, but a less likely explanation of the text as a whole. Conversely, assuming a meaning ‘the closest of the family heirs’ rather than ‘very noble heirs’, the interpretation of the statement in lines B2–3 as a whole appears contextually more plausible although an individual word may not necessarily be well supported empirically.

Mees further criticizes my reasons for preferring the analysis of **dalidun** as **da(i)lidun** (*dailidun*) ‘divided, shared’ (Bugge 1891) rather than *dālidun* ‘made (nice), prepared’ (Seip 1929), claiming that they negate my support for Läßler’s association of *sijōstēz* (my *sijōstēz*) with Old Frisian *sia*, representing the “logic” applied by Marstrander himself, “i.e. a conviction that interpretations of runic expressions should principally be made in terms of forms actually paralleled elsewhere in Germanic”. As a matter of principle, it is indeed a good thing if there are attested parallels elsewhere in Germanic to forms in runic inscriptions, but it is more important that such a word could have existed in early Germanic. However, the main objection against positing *dālidun* ‘made (nice), prepared’ is not the fact that it does not occur in Germanic; rather, in the context of the inscription

information about who prepared the funeral feast is less pragmatically relevant than information about who shared the inheritance. Similarly, the main objection against assuming a form *āsijōstēz* is not that it is unattested in Germanic, but that calling the heirs ‘very noble’ appears less relevant in the context of a statement on inheritance than specifying their relationship to the deceased and the nature of their legal inheritance rights.

In my opinion, one of the most important methodological goals of runic studies, as of any other epigraphic and philological discipline, is to establish, by all available means (including common sense), the most plausible pragmatic context of a particular text. In accordance with this, I strongly feel that the application of the Law of Jante (*Janteloven*) is out of place in runology, according to which every interpretation is considered equal and one particular interpretation cannot be accepted as being better than the others. Mees too is against “the overproduction of epigraphic interpretations” and surely also believes that it is our task to argue for what we consider to be the best interpretation. I am convinced that the Tune inscription reports on the sharing of the inheritance (after the deceased *Wōdurīdaz*), and not on the preparation of the funeral feast, although it was in all likelihood a magnificent affair; similarly I think that it was much more important to specify that the three daughters were ‘the closest of the family heirs’ than to declare that they were ‘very noble’, although they no doubt were.

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Reviews

Zentrale Probleme bei der Erforschung der älteren Runen: Akten einer internationalen Tagung an der Norwegischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Ed. John Ole Askedal, Harald Bjarvand, James E. Knirk and Otto Erlend Nordgreen. Osloer Beiträge zur Germanistik 41. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2010. 253 pp. ISBN 978-3-631-60414-4, ISSN 0801-0781.

Reviewed by Henrik Williams

In September 2004 a symposium was held in Oslo with the theme “Central Research Problems in Connection with the Older Runes”, the proceedings of which were published in 2010. The symposium was initiated by the nestrix of Norwegian runology, Gerd Høst, who died in 2007 and to whose memory the volume is dedicated by its editors and their collaborator, Terje Spurkland. Eleven symposium contributions are published, written by scholars active in six countries. The origin of the runes has attracted two authors, the language of the oldest runic inscriptions three, Anglo-Saxon and Frisian runes one each and the transitional and earliest Viking Age runes four, all presented in a logical order.

Wilhelm Heizmann is the first to bat, discussing the three main theories of how runes came into being. He shows that there is no consensus (is there ever among runologists?) and stresses the scarcity of surviving material from which conclusions might be drawn. Following René Derolez he sets up a score of features characteristic of runic script on the basis of which he makes certain assumptions. A well-structured discussion of the problem is offered, and Heizmann concludes that runic script is derived from the roman alphabet since it was in longer and more intense contact with this than any other system of writing. It is a sensible result, probably shared by the largest group of runologists, although it has been challenged lately by Bernard Mees (in favor of a North Etruscan origin) and Theo Vennemann (in favor of a Phoenician origin), who have tried to show contacts between those respective cultures and the Germanic.

Helmut Birkhan’s contribution deals with runes and ogam, seen from the perspective of a Celticist. He lists nine similarities between the two scripts, the last of which is declared to be their sacral or magic use, a claim for which he offers no support. He also lists seven dissimilarities and comes to the conclusion that the writing systems do not have much in common and that perhaps the most striking of the similarities, the use of meaningful letter designations, does not prove a connection. He presents much information on ogam, interesting in itself but of limited practical use to the runologist. Birkhan rejects Elmar Seebold’s proposal that the *atbash* ordering of the semitic alphabet (A X B V C T D S E R etc.), conveyed though the Latin, explains the sequencing of the futhark—or

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the ogam for that matter. Nor does he think that is the case with the similar *albam* ordering, as suggested by Bernard Mees. Birkhan also views as problematic Thomas Markey's derivation of some central runic lexical items from would-be Etruscan semantic parallels, given that no loanwords have passed from that language into Germanic. Although Birkan shares the view that North-Etruscan script is the source of the runes, he weighs the evidence carefully and is no extremist. He is sceptical towards Mees's idea that runes were borrowed from several varieties of the North-Etruscan alphabet and thinks, with Helmut Rix, that it is unrealistic to indicate a specific set as the runic source. In spite of his generally sensible approach, he is happy to assert that the appearance of the oldest runic inscriptions in Denmark is due to the fact that they occur on easily transported objects, objects that in his view originated in the South, a claim for which he offers no archaeological or other evidence.

Edith Marold discusses the eternal question of whether the older runic inscriptions are written in one or several languages and what its/their relationship might be to the group of Germanic tongues as a whole. She observes with other runologists that the tree model of language development creates problems and that variation may better be ascribed to dialect geography and sociolinguistic causes. She also queries the concept of North-West Germanic espoused by Hans Kuhn, Elmer Antonsen and Hans Frede Nielsen as such a language or linguistic stage would in her view not give rise to as much variation in the inscriptions as is found. Marold is in general critical towards the concept of a distinct non-South Germanic, non-Gothic runic language. She also points out that the variation observed is such as may very well occur within a single language system, for example the interchange between *-o*, and *-a* endings. As a case study she examines the name written **lagupewa** and discusses whether this apparently Scandinavian inscription reflects a West Germanic *Lagupewa* (see now L. Peterson's "Reflections on the Inscription **lagupewa** on Shield Handle Mount 3 from Illerup", in *Namenwelten: Orts- und Personennamen in historischer Sicht*, ed. A. van Nahl et al., 659–77 [2004]). The paradox is also illustrated by the seemingly West Germanic **owlpupewaz** which would appear to reflect Scandinavian *Wulpupewaz*. Marold emphasizes the important observation by Reinhard Wenskus that the Migration Period does not just concern entire communities but also smaller groups led by military commanders. This may very well explain unexpected variants in the runic texts. Marold discusses in some detail the supposedly Gothic inscriptions and favors their identification as such, although she wisely declares the Næsbjerg fibula text to be uninterpretable. Finally, by way of a summary she sets out the following conclusions: (1) North-West Germanic was not homogenous, (2) it is not self-evident that find spot or origin of runic objects is related to the language system they manifest, (3) aberrations from an expected language standard could be the result of the mobility of the Migration Period, and (4) Gothic inscriptions on Gotland testify to the strong cultural ties between Scandinavians and Goths in the Baltic region. The three first points especially are convincingly argued, and I find Edith Marold's contribution both insightful and valuable.

Hans Frede Nielsen's contribution concentrates on one of the points just mentioned and he reiterates his stand on this topic (p. 95): "At some point within the life span of North-West Germanic, innovations occurring in the speech of the ancestors of the later West Germanic tribes established a common idiom diverging from the more conservative language of Scandinavia, where Norse innovations did not emerge until after 500 AD." He deliberates on the various inscriptions and words that illustrate language affiliation and linguistic change, helpfully delimiting posited stages in Early Runic and offering examples. The advantage with a presentation such as this is that it structures the material and makes it easy for new matter to be fitted in — or obvious where it does not, in which case changes to the system are required. The Frienstedt inscription discovered in 2011 may serve as an example. Found on a comb from the second half of the 3rd or early 4th century, it says **kaba kamba** < Proto-Germanic **kambaz* 'comb' (C. G. Schmidt, R. Nedoma and K. Düwel "Ein Kamm mit Runeninschrift aus Frienstedt (Stadt Erfurt)", *Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt* 43 [2013], 257–75, at 264 f.). From this it seems as if Nielsen's first criterion for the appearance of a specifically West Germanic form of language, loss of unaccented *-z, "which may not have occurred until (after) the third century AD" (p. 100), can now be narrowed down a bit. A problem, however, with all his periodisations is that they depend on datings that are far from reliable.

Ottar Grønvik died in May 2008 but this fact is not mentioned in the foreword (p. 7) although it is dated 17 months after his death. Grønvik's contribution on the Nordic characteristics of the language in the older runic inscriptions is presumably the last scholarly work published by this eminent specialist in the oldest Norse. In it, he returns to old hunting grounds, defending his view that older runic texts are fundamentally Scandinavian in nature. The discussion gets very technical but is as lucid as we have come to expect from this author. Much depends, however, on Grønvik's own interpretations, as for example of **asni** on the Eikeland clasp. It is thus unsettling that he changed his understanding of this word more than once, including in the work under review (p. 120 f.; cf. J. E. Knirk "The Runic Inscription on the Eikeland Clasp", in *Archäologie und Runen—Fallstudien zu Inschriften im älteren Futhark*, ed. O. Grimm and A. Pesch, forthcoming 2014).

Ray Page has also passed away (but in his case not until after the *Zentrale Probleme* volume was published). In his paper he surveys the changes within the Anglo-Saxon and (to a limited extent) the Frisian runic systems, and questions the proposal made by David Parsons that there was a late seventh-century runic reform in England, instigated by the Church. He has at least one valid criticism: why would the reformers have retained such runes as **ǃ** (*ih/eoh*) and **ǃ**? He also claims that runic inscriptions of the 8th century and later show a pattern of distribution that bears no relation to areas where the Church flourished, but in my view that is not a necessary condition for the acceptance of Parsons's argument. Page's contribution begins and ends with a barrage of questions, and he confesses (p. 148): "Much of this paper has been speculative, much requiring the use of the subjunctive verb." To those familiar with his *oeuvres* this comes as no surprise,

only perhaps that there were still verbs left to conjugate subjunctively. In a more serious vein one might add that Page was almost obsessively preoccupied by the possibility of new finds altering the existing picture; the matter is mentioned seven times in a dozen pages. But he did have a point: between 1973 and 1999 the Anglo-Saxon corpus grew by 50 % and the increase will not stop there. If Sweden's known runestones were augmented by a further thousand or so the general picture would probably not change radically. But for such a limited and varied material as the Anglo-Saxon this is always a risk, although I cannot see that Page's concern has as yet been justified. His extreme caution is thus perhaps somewhat overdone. And he does allow himself certain conclusions (p. 147): "What it seems from all this—and I give the minimal account of the developments—is that there was not one later reform of the *futhorc*, but a group of alterations and additions, making comparatively subtle changes to the writing system in different areas of England." I do think certain patterns are discernable however, and that Parsons was on to an important factor in runic development. Page also wonders why we should expect consistency from Anglo-Saxon rune carvers when there is so little visible in the plentiful Scandinavian inscriptions and among graduates of the modern English school system. I would agree that this speaks against spelling standards in any real sense of the word, but it does not preclude the existence of a unified force behind changes in the runic system, even if only for part of the process; and of course not all the intended effects may have been achieved.

Arend Quak examines the relationship between the score or so of Old Frisian inscriptions and other runic traditions. An initial problem is to delimit the corpus, since it is sometimes uncertain if we are dealing with Frisian runes or not, or whether such inscriptions constitute a group of their own or are just a subdivision of the English corpus. In addition, the oldest text (Bergakker ca. 425 CE) may indicate a tie to the original center of runic tradition—or a link to later Continental practices. The Hitsum bracteate is another object of ambiguous genesis, Scandinavian or local. Quak bases his discussion on the unequivocal reading **foro groba** (the editors have allowed somewhat inconsistent transliteration practices), but the reading of the second sequence is actually quite uncertain (see N. Wicker and H. Williams "Bracteates and Runes", *Futhark* 3 [2012], 151–213, at p. 187). Quak concurs with the division of early runic traditions into an oldest group in Scandinavia and northernmost Germany, a North Sea group, a British, and a Gothic-South European group. After 500, various innovations occur, among them double-barred **h**, **ŋ**. How did the Angles, Saxons and Jutes reach Britain? Perhaps or even probably by passing through Friesland. Archeological finds support this possibility. The other option is that Frisian runes were derived from the English; there was doubtless a certain interchange, but the existence of inscriptions such as Bergakker makes this option on the whole unlikely. The difficult question remains of where the innovations originated. Quak presumes that **ƿ** and **ƿ̅** at least were imported from England, and later **ŋ** from the Continent. Quak's contribution is interesting and a useful addition to the discussion of the small but quite important Frisian runic corpus.

Michael Schulte introduces the old chestnut of the transition from older to younger runes. He first discusses the language stages established by Ottar Grønvik, but finds various problems therein, including the non-conformity of certain examples and whether or not the syncope model actually accounts for the posited development. Schulte wants to add the presence of *schwa* forms, the weakening of vowels that were ultimately to be syncopated. Dialect geography, too, should according to him be taken into account, whereby syncope in the south could be 150 years older than in the north, putting the supposed language homogeneity in jeopardy. Yet other aspects of language could complicate the picture further, as for example the stylistic, a notion strongly advanced by Schulte. He also discusses the taxonomic model espoused by Elmer Antonsen, favoring among other things the presence in runic writing of preliminary stages of phonemic development. (In discussing /-z/ > /-r/ Schulte (p. 170) writes “**AR** (nicht **AZ**) und **SAR** (nicht **SAZ**)” which must be an oversight on his part, or that of the editors, since **R** and **Z** are simply transliterations of the same rune.) He is not convinced by the taxonomic approach which operates with orthographic confusion and analogy to achieve its results. Schulte advocates performance analysis whereby variation between such forms as **bariutip** and **barutr** may be explained in terms of casual speech phenomena. It is an elegant solution but very hard to falsify. He adds a number of examples, well known from his other works, but overall he emphasises the phonetic rather than the phonemic level, an approach I find it hard to disagree with.

Michael Barnes also tackles the transitional inscriptions, concentrating on the phonological and graphological aspects. He has earlier given preference to graphic over “linguistic” explanations of how the older futhark changed into the younger. Barnes in his customary sober style discusses Schulte’s examples of vowel reduction and finds most beset with problems, not least because the material is so small, as well as so uncertainly interpreted and dated. Yet, he acknowledges that his own strictly graphological approach has its problems since runes such as ʀ and ʁ were used for /w/ and /e/, respectively, long after their designations no longer complied with the acrophonic rules. He considers (p. 201) Schulte’s contribution as the only one that “offers a serious new theoretical approach to the problem” and graciously extols (p. 194) “the service he has done in compelling us to rethink the issues and re-examine the relevant graphological-phonological relationships in the transitional inscriptions”. I agree: it is impossible to ignore Schulte’s in-depth and theoretically innovative explanations. I also agree with Barnes that Schulte has not found the final explanation. Barnes’s examination of the various problems of syncope products and vowel phoneme representation is clarifying even if it brings us little closer to any solution. I must question, however, one of his assertions. He declares (p. 196) that “the supposed epenthetic vowel between /β/ and /r/ in **haborumz**” [haβ^orumr] on the Stentofte stone lacks explanation since such vowels are otherwise written **A** and possibly **e**. But **o** has been explained already by Lillemor Santesson, whom he refers to, as depending on the rounded vowel following, and by Michael Schulte (“Ein

kritischer Kommentar zum Erkenntnisstand der Blekinger Inschriften”, *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 135 [2006], 399–412, at p. 402) as the representation of a labialized sound after bilabial [β]. (There may be rounded epenthetic vowels in connection with bilabial /w/ in the uncertainly read and interpreted sequence ***orunq**ib*** [wor^umalaiβa] (?) on the Myklebostad stone, as well as in **suwimade** [s^uwimande] and **huwar** [h^uwær] on Eggja.) Finally, Barnes acting on a suggestion by Marie Stoklund, raises the possibility that the inception of the younger futhark might be as early as the sixth(!) century. It should at least be a proposition easily verified by future finds.

Harald Bjorvand considers the language and message of the Eggja inscription. He dates the monument on linguistic and runological grounds to 700–750, whereas archaeological and art historical indicators point to 650–700, but it is possible that both the horse figure on the stone and the grave it covered are older than the runes. The ship details mentioned in the text indicate a late eighth-century dating, however. The compromise is, and has mostly been, around 700. Bjorvand follows Grønvik’s reading, and the rest of his contribution consists of a detailed commentary on Grønvik’s interpretation with some independent suggestions. The result is that the protagonist of the text is the *nāfiskr*, a terrifying and aggressive sea monster which brings about the death of many humans and is the direct negative cause of the tragedy mentioned in the Eggja text. Grønvik’s total interpretation is controversial but the best yet produced, and Bjorvand’s modifications of it seem well founded.

Marie Stoklund concludes a challenging volume with her piece on transitional and Early Viking Age inscriptions from Denmark. She presents a number of relatively recent finds that may be part of the corpus, but there is also yet a third take on the transitional runes: she believes neither in Barnes’s typological/graphic definition nor in Schulte’s wholly linguistic approach but rather in complete and unreduced futharks. This means that the 24-character futhark was in use until it was replaced with the 16-character one, the first exponents of which are found on Gørlev 1, Malt and the Hedeby stick. Stoklund writes (p. 248): “We cannot tell whether the Ribe [skull inscription] carver had as his point of departure a futhark of twenty-four or sixteen runes.” Nevertheless she also states (p. 241): “I find it problematic to accept * denoting /a/ together with ᚠ for /h/ and ᚱ for /m/ in an inscription with the younger futhark.” But that would mean the Ribe inscription was carved in a 24-character futhark, using only fifteen symbols (there being no use for the fourth rune) since it has these very variants. Yet many of the runes show late forms and Stoklund herself thinks that the rune designations had changed radically by this time. Moreover the inscription itself shows younger-futhark use of one rune for two or more phonemes and also evidences syncope, breaking, assimilation and vowel mutation. I think Stoklund wants to make us realize that “we should not link the reduction of the number of runes too closely with the desire for simpler rune forms” (p. 248), and her point is well taken. The fact that three such outstanding runologists as Schulte, Barnes, and Stoklund have proposed radically different solutions to the problem of the transitional

runic system shows how complex the question is and that we shall have to work yet harder to solve it.

As will have become clear, the book just reviewed is highly technical and written by senior experts on the oldest inscriptions for those specializing in the field. It fulfils its purpose well, offering as many results as can be expected from a discussion of material fraught with difficulties of such magnitude. In spite of a six-year editorial process not all problems have been ironed out, however, although most of the occasional typos do not confuse. Nevertheless, on p. 199 the rune ʝ is twice rendered as °. I also deplore, as in other reviews before, the lack of indices, an all too common deficiency of scholarly works. But perhaps editors and book companies do not wish their products to be seriously used, only bought and perused?

Michael P. Barnes. *Runes: A Handbook*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012. xvi + 240 pp. 40 plates, 31 figures, 3 maps. ISBN 978-1-84383-778-7. £ 45.

Reviewed by Patrik Larsson

Runologiska översiktsverk finns det numera en hel del av, vanligtvis med någon form av nationell eller periodmässig tonvikt. Välbekanta och mer eller mindre aktuella exempel på det förstnämnda är Erik Moltkes *Runerne i Danmark og deres oprindelse* (1976; engelsk utgåva 1985: *Runes and Their Origin. Denmark and Elsewhere*), Sven B. F. Janssons *Runinskrifter i Sverige* (3:e uppl. 1984; engelsk utgåva 1987: *Runes in Sweden*), Terje Spurklands *I begynnelsen var ʝ Ɔ ʞ ʟ ʠ ʡ ʢ ʣ*. *Norske runer og runeinnskrifter* (2001; engelsk utgåva 2005: *Norwegian Runes and Runic Inscriptions*) och R. I. Pages *An Introduction to English Runes* (2:a uppl., 1999), medan verk som *Die Runeninschriften im älteren Futhark* (Krause och Jankuhn, 1966) och *Runmärkt. Från brev till klotter. Runorna under medeltiden* (red. S. Benneth et al., 1994) är exempel på det senare, då de fokuserar på inskrifter ristade med den äldre, 24-typiga runraden respektive medeltida inskrifter. Det förekommer dock också verk som syftar till att ge en mer heltäckande presentation av runor och runinskrifter, som Lucien Mussets *Introduction à la runologie* (1965) och Klaus Düwels *Runenkunde* (4:e uppl., 2008). Den förstnämnda är på franska och har vid detta lag närmare 50 år på nacken, medan den senare, skriven på tyska, har kommit i flera uppdaterade och utvidgade upplagor. Någon egentlig motsvarighet på engelska har dock inte funnits, möjligen med undantag för Ralph W. V. Elliots *Runes. An Introduction* (2:a uppl., 1989). Den är dock relativt kortfattad och en aning föråldrad (första upplagan kom redan 1959), så ett behov för en mer heltäckande och uppdaterad engelskspråkig översikt har funnits rätt länge, något den engelske runologen Michael P. Barnes nu tillgodosett med sin bok *Runes. A Handbook* (hädanefter refererad till som *Runes*).

Boken består av en allmän introduktion, ett kapitel om runornas ursprung och därefter nio kapitel som kronologiskt presenterar runorna och ett urval runtexter,

från inskrifter i den äldre futharken till efterreformatöriska inskrifter. Den anglosaxiska och frisiska runraden och inskrifter avfattade med denna ägnas egna kapitel. Efter den kronologiska genomgången följer ett antal tematiska kapitel, som behandlar ämnen såsom lönnrunor, runor i manuskript, läsning och tolkning av runinskrifter, hur runor kommit till användning inom litteratur och politik samt en kort historik över runforskningen. Boken avslutas med uppgifter om var olika kategorier av runinskrifter befinner sig eller förvaras, en ordlista, uppgifter om fonetisk och fonematisk notation, translittereringsprinciper och allra sist ett inskriftsregister.

I inledningen slås det fast att boken är tänkt att vara en introduktion i runologi, vilket definieras som "the study of runes and runic writing". Det är förstås en fullt rimlig definition, då den betonar studiet av själva runtecknen och skriften i sig. "Kärnan i runologin måste alltid vara språkvetenskaplig", som Lena Peterson har framhållit (i "Runologi. Försök till ett aktuellt signalement", *Saga och sed* 1995 [1996], 41). Peterson påpekar dock också att runologi kan definieras såväl snävt som brett, där det första perspektivet innebär att runologi betraktas som en rent språkvetenskaplig disciplin, det senare att den också kan innefatta "analyser och värderingar av studieobjektet såsom vittnesbörd om alla möjliga andra förhållanden än de språkliga i det förgångna". Sådana mer tvärvetenskapligt präglade perspektiv lyser dock i princip helt med sin frånvaro i *Runes*, liksom de diskussioner som på senare tid förts om runstenar som multimodala monument (se t.ex. Marco Bianchi, *Runor som resurs*, Uppsala 2010, kap. 2). Fokuset i *Runes* är definitivt på runorna som skriftecken och vad dessa tecken språkligt kan förmedla, dvs. det är den snäva definitionen av runologi som tillämpas.

Runologi har kallats "det möjligas konst", bland annat beroende på att brist på information eller osäkra premisser lämnat fältet öppet för olika, ibland högst skiljaktiga, tolkningar. Detta har gett upphov till den famösa "First Law of Runo-Dynamics" (*Runes*, s. 177), som deklarerar att "for every inscription there shall be as many interpretations as there are scholars working on it". Att det ligger mer än bara ett korn av sanning i detta måste nog medges – de flesta discipliner har säkert sin beskärda del av mer eller mindre oseriösa eller okunniga tillskyndare, men runologin tycks utöva en särskilt stark lockelse på allehanda självutnämnda experter. Även seriösa forskare, som i andra sammanhang kan framstå som högst kompetenta och tillförlitliga, kan då de ger sig i kast med något runologiskt ämne mer eller mindre överge sunt förnuft och dra alltför långtgående slutsatser, utan egentligt stöd i materialet. Det finns tyvärr många exempel på runologiska bidrag där gedigen kunskap och ett vetenskapligt präglat resonemang lyser med sin frånvaro, eller i varje fall inte är det starkast framträdande draget, och där detta i stället vägs upp av en starkt utvecklad spekulativ ådra, eller åtminstone en tendens att dra slutsatser på ett otillräckligt eller närmast obefintligt underlag. Detta är dock något Barnes starkt vänt sig emot, inte minst i uppsatsen "On Types of Argumentation in Runic Studies" (i *Proceedings of the Third International Symposium on Runes and Runic Inscriptions*, red. J. E. Knirk, Uppsala 1994, s. 11–29). Han framhåller också i *Runes* (s. 7) att det går att dela in runologer i två

kategorier, "the imaginative and the sceptical runologist. In a field unconstrained by established principles or generally accepted methodology, the imaginative scholar can allow him-/herself considerable freedom to speculate." Barnes menar att detta i förlängningen kan leda till att tolkningar och uppfattningar utan förankring eller stöd i materialet sprids till allmänheten. Att Barnes kan räknas till de skeptiska runologernas skara står ställt utom allt tvivel, och på otaliga ställen boken igenom framhålls att olika förhållanden är "unclear", "uncertain", "hard to judge", "hard to know what to make of", "deserves to be treated with caution", "impossible ... to decide", "not immediately obvious" och liknande. Han är med andra ord oerhört mån om att inte säga mer än han anser sig ha tillräckligt starkt stöd för, vilket naturligtvis är en lovvärd princip och säkert ett led i att försöka balansera bilden av runologin som "det möjligas konst".

En annan aspekt hos runor och runinskrifter som uppenbarligen fascinerar många är föreställningen att antingen själva runtecknen i sig eller inskrifter avfattade med dessa är magiska. Detta har i vissa fall till och med lett till att det faktum att inskrifter inte riktigt kan förstås eller tolkas tas som intäkt för att de är magiska. Denna typ av resonemang underkänner Barnes bestämt, liksom han är mycket noga med att påpeka att runor är en alfabetisk skrift som återger språk (i princip vilket som helst, men mest lämpat för germanska språk), men inte är ett språk i sig (se t.ex. s. 1, 194, 207 f.). Vid läsning av hela boken kan dessa påpekanden nästan bli i mesta laget, då de återkommer flera gånger, men med tanke på hur mycket oseriösa och direkt felaktiga uppgifter av detta slag som förekommer, inte minst på internet, är upprepningar kanske något man som läsare får ha överseende med, då missuppfattningarna uppenbarligen är alltför spridda.

Boken ger överlag ett gediget och tillförlitligt intryck, även om vissa detaljer alltid kan diskuteras (mer om detta nedan). Den är också väl korrekturläst; i hela boken förekommer endast, vad jag har kunnat se, ett par enstaka missar. Eftersom Barnes också är noga med att framför allt ge de stora linjerna och inte definitivt ta ställning i varje enskild fråga, utan hellre påpeka att det ibland finns alternativa uppfattningar, bör den kunna få rejäl räckvidd och också en relativt lång livslängd. En aspekt som dock inte imponerar särskilt mycket är bildkvaliteten, som i vissa fall är ganska skral. På några av bilderna kan man visserligen få en uppfattning om hur föremålet som bär inskriften ser ut, men att kunna läsa själva runtecknen är i princip omöjligt.

Barnes har, som antytts ovan, gjort sig känd som en stark förespråkare av att runologin måste präglas av metodisk stringens, entydiga och konsekvent använda termer samt tydliga och väl underbyggda argument. I det stora hela präglas *Runes* av dessa ledstjärnor, men på åtminstone en punkt i denna bok menar jag att han inte riktigt lever som han lär, och det gäller runornas s.k. namn (se s. 21 f. och 157–163). Om dessa kan vi läsa (s. 21): "Unlike the letters of the roman alphabet, runes had names (or, more precisely, designations, but "name" is the term commonly used)." Barnes förefaller dock inte helt övertygad om att det verkligen inte rör sig om namn trots allt, då han på s. 157 skriver att "runes

had names (or more precisely, perhaps, designations)”, dvs. här markeras en viss tvekan. Då det nu ändå är helt klart att man inom namnforskningen reserverar termen *namn* för egennamn, och som sådana kan runornas beteckningar inte betraktas, är det något påfallande att Barnes genom hela boken, på åtminstone ett femtontal olika ställen, använder termen *name* helt okommenterad, trots att han själv påpekat att runorna snarast inte bär sådana. Det enda argument som anförs är att *name* ”is the term commonly used”, vilket som jag ser det inte är ett särskilt starkt argument, speciellt inte om man själv påpekar att användningen av termen ifråga egentligen är felaktig. Här hade Barnes en möjlighet att slå fast att termen *name* egentligen inte borde användas om runornas beteckningar, och det är synd att denna möjlighet inte utnyttjats. Det kan också konstateras att Barnes i andra fall inte känner sig bunden av vad som är det vanligast förekommande bruket, då exempelvis hans translittereringsprinciper gällande hur stungna runor ska återges utgör ”a departure from normal practice” (s. 6). Han hade med andra ord inte heller behövt använda *name* bara för att det råkar vara ”the term commonly used”.

Något som får ganska stort utrymme i *Runes* är beskrivningar av de olika runraderna och deras former, funktioner samt de förändringar som skett med dessa, såväl regionalt som kronologiskt (se framför allt kap. 3, 5, 7 och 9). Här ges en fyllig beskrivning, bland annat med relativt utförliga och detaljerade diskussioner om vad som har orsakat reduktioner eller tillägg i de olika runraderna; framför allt det förstnämnda är ur ett skrifthistoriskt perspektiv ovanligt, och övergången från den äldre, 24-typiga runraden till den yngre, 16-typiga har därför diskuterats en hel del inom den runologiska forskningen och får därmed också sitt beskärda utrymme i *Runes*. Just behandlingen av runraderna och de frågor som sammanhänger med dessa är bland det jag tycker fungerar bäst i boken, och det är ju också något Barnes ägnat särskilt intresse i andra sammanhang, framför allt frågan om den yngre runradens uppkomst.

Att runstenar kom att resas under många hundra år, med en mängdmässig koncentration till den avslutande perioden (tiohundralet och en bit in på 1100-talet), är allmänt bekant, men vad var det egentligen som ledde till att runstenar upphörde att resas? I *Runes* (s. 100) ges följande svar:

With the introduction of Christianity and the establishment of churches, the Viking-Age commemorative stone – raised in the countryside, seemingly often in a public spot – eventually went out of use. In its place came the gravestone, located in a church or churchyard.

Detta är dock en sanning med modifikation. Det stämmer naturligtvis i så måtto att ett nytt begravningsskick ledde till en ändrad praxis, men med tanke på att så gott som samtliga senvikingatida runstenar är mer eller mindre tydligt kristna kan man knappast påstå att införandet av kristendomen i sig ledde till att runstensseden dog ut, då det snarare sammanfaller med en kraftig ökning av runstensresandet. Detta kan kanske uppfattas som en något petig anmärkning,

då det förstås var just kristendomens införande som i förlängningen ledde till det ändrade begravningskicket. Jag tycker ändå att det kan vara värt att hålla isär dessa två saker något, då ett så oerhört tydligt och karakteristiskt drag hos de senvikingatida runstenarna är just deras anknytning till kristendomen, något som kan riskera att gå förlorat med Barnes' formulering.

Den kategori av inskrifter som får den fylligaste och mest detaljerade beskrivningen är de medeltida inskrifterna. Barnes' framställning underlättas också av att inskrifterna delas in i ett antal olika grupper, såsom formella inskrifter, informella inskrifter på lösföremål, graffiti och latinska inskrifter. Att en sådan indelning inte alltid är okomplicerad är Barnes fullt medveten om, men det är ett sätt att strukturera materialet och det fungerar därigenom som en vägledning för läsaren. Även de vikingatida inskrifterna får en relativt utförlig behandling, men mitt intryck är att dessa, jämfört med de medeltida inskrifterna, ändå tas upp mer summariskt, och flera aspekter som sannolikt i första hand förknippas med vikingatida inskrifter, som runristare, attribuering och runstensornamentik, nämns inte alls eller endast mycket kortfattat.

Kapitel 12 i *Runes* behandlar olika former av lönnskrift. Här tas också förkortade skrivningar upp, och Barnes skriver att sådana "seems to be limited to words easily recoverable from the context", medan "personal names will have needed more careful handling" (s. 146), dvs. en tydlig reminiscens av principen om kommunikativ tyngd: ju mer förutsägbart ett ord är utifrån kontexten, desto mindre nogräknad kan ristaren vara med hur det ristats, och tvärtom (Henrik Williams, "Read What's There: Interpreting Runestone Inscriptions", *Futhark* 1 [2010], 27–39). Beträffande inledningen på inskriften Bække 2 (DR 30), i *Runes* translittererad **hribnā:ktubi**, skriver Barnes att den "may well have been clear enough to the contemporary reader, but the passing of some 1000 years has rendered it obscure" (s. 146). Att runföljden ifråga avser ett eller två personnamn är klart, men det finns alltså olika uppfattningar om ifall det rör sig om ett eller två namn, även om två förefaller sannolikare. Just i denna typ av resonemang uppfattar jag att det ligger en fara för anakronistiskt tänkande; anledningen till att vi kan tillåta större avvikelser i sådana partier som av kontexten ändå går att tolka är just att de för oss, omkring 1000 år i efterhand, är tolkbara nästan oavsett hur de är ristade, medan vi per automatik ställer högre krav på exempelvis personnamn, då dessa inte kan härledas ur kontexten. Att det dock förekommer en hel del runföljder som avser personnamn som inte kunnat tolkas (med säkerhet eller över huvud taget; se t.ex. listan över otolkade belägg i Lena Petersons *Nordiskt runnamnslexikon*, 5:e uppl., Uppsala 2007, s. 297–303) antyder att ristarna kanske inte var fullt så noga alla gånger trots att det rör sig om namn. Att förklara dessa med att de säkert var begripliga för sin samtid men inte för oss förefaller väl enkelt, och därtill helt omöjligt att verifiera. Att det finns en tendens till att mer formelartade och därmed förutsägbara delar av en inskrift kan innehålla en större andel förkortningar eller andra okonventionella skrivningar jämfört med exempelvis personnamnen verkar klart, men samtidigt tror jag inte man ska dra en alltför skarp gräns mellan dessa.

För att anknyta till faran med anakronistiska resonemang kan också Barnes slutsats beträffande graden av läskunnighet under vikingatiden anföras. Han menar att resandet av ett stort antal monument på allmänna platser ”implies a tolerably widespread ability to read what was written” (s. 88). Detta är naturligtvis en fullt rimlig slutsats, men faktum är att vi inte riktigt vet hur det förhåller sig med förmågan att läsa under vikingatiden, och det finns då en risk att vi utifrån vårt moderna perspektiv betraktar skrift som meningslös om inte tillräckligt många kan ta del av den genom att själva läsa den. Så behöver det ju inte ha varit på vikingatiden, utan dels kan skriften ses som bara en av komponenterna i en helhet, och inte nödvändigtvis den viktigaste, dels kan det skriftliga budskapet ha förmedlats muntligt av ett litet fåtal läskunniga (jfr översikten i Marco Bianchis *Runor som resurs*, Uppsala 2010, s. 34–38).

Efter i stort sett varje kapitel ges förslag till vidare läsning. Dessa inkluderar dock endast arbeten på engelska, vilket är förståeligt med tanke på att boken i första hand vänder sig till en engelskspråkig läsekrets. Samtidigt innebär det att urvalet blir begränsat och att inte alltid de mest centrala eller relevanta titlarna tas upp, då dessa kan vara avfattade på andra språk än just engelska. Den som verkligen vill fördjupa sig i runologi hittar väl ändå fram till dessa arbeten och lär sig förhoppningsvis att navigera genom texter på exempelvis tyska eller nordiska språk.

Kapitel 14 tar upp själva framställningen av runinskrifter, dvs. vilka material de förekommer i, vilka verktyg som brukades och vilka tekniker som användes för att forma själva runorna (hugga, skära, stansa etc.). En kort men informativ översikt.

Också kapitel 15 bör nämnas, då det genom tre exempel belyser hur läsning och tolkning av runinskrifter kan gå till. De utvalda inskrifterna är Kjøløvik (urnordisk inskrift, Norge), St Albans 2 (vikingatida inskrift, England) och Birsay 1 (sannolikt en medeltida inskrift, Brough of Birsay, Orkney), vilka har valts ut för att tillsammans kunna belysa olika metodiska och tolkningsmässiga frågor en runolog måste beakta vid arbetet med en inskrift. Möjligen kan man invända att urvalet inte är särskilt representativt, då exempelvis en typisk vikingatida runstensinskrift saknas, men det ger ändå en inblick i hur en runolog kan gå till väga när en inskrift ska läsas och tolkas. Man kan knappast säga att kapitlet ger en heltäckande introduktion till hur arbetet, från läsningen av runtecknen, till en tolkning i form av en fornspråklig normalisering och därefter till en modern översättning går till, men det är nog heller inte avsikten. Meningen är säkert att ge några smakprov på hur ett sådant arbete kan gå till, vilket också uppnås, men någon regelrätt lärobok i runinskriftstolkning är det knappast fråga om.

Sammanfattningsvis menar jag att *Runes*, trots de betänkligheter som jag anfört ovan, är ett välkommet bidrag till den runologiska litteraturen, eftersom en modern och relativt heltäckande översikt på engelska har saknats. Om en sådan här bok ska skrivas av en enda person är det oundvikligt att dennes bakgrund och preferenser till viss del lyser igenom, något det finns en tendens till i *Runes* (exempelvis att runraders utveckling samt brittiska och medeltida inskrifter

ligger närmare Barnes hjärta än vikingatida inskrifter), men på det stora hela tycker jag ändå att den fungerar väl som en orientering och introduktion till det vittfamnande och mångfacetterade ämne som runologin utgör. Att det finns detaljer som kan diskuteras eller att man kan tycka att vissa aspekter fått för lite uppmärksamhet ligger i sakens natur, men förhoppningsvis kan boken fungera som ett behändigt referensverk för de redan insatta. Dessutom borde den, just för att den är skriven på engelska, kunna nå ut till dem som inte annars skulle ha kommit i kontakt med runor och runinskrifter och fungera som en intresseväckare för dessa läsare. Vackert så!

Epigraphic Literacy and Christian Identity: Modes of Written Discourse in the Newly Christian European North. Ed. Kristel Zilmer and Judith Jesch. *Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy* 4. Turnhout: Brepols, 2012. 272 pp. ISBN 978-2-503-54294-2. 80.00 €.

Reviewed by Staffan Fridell

Denna bok är resultatet av en konferens i Bergen år 2009 med titeln "Practical Literacy and Christian Identity in Northern Europe". De flesta artiklar (sex av nio) behandlar runbruk och runkunnande, medan tre bidrag i stället handlar om de östslaviska björkbarktexterna. Alla artiklar är på engelska.

Magnus Källström ställer frågan: "Clerical or Lay Literacy in Late Viking Age Uppland?" Han knyter egentligen inte ihop framställningen genom att försöka sammanfattande besvara sin fråga, men tendensen i uppsatsen är ändå en skeptisk attityd mot dem som vill se runstensresandet under sen vikingatid som introducerat och mer eller mindre organiserat av kyrkan. Han framhåller att det finns ca 30 kända runristare i Uppland som har signerat endast en runinskrift, vilket ses som "an indication of a rather widespread runic literacy in Uppland at the time" (s. 44). Genom fallstudier av tre runristare visar författaren hur de har verkat i olika traditioner och kontexter. Fasttägn från Hållnäs i nordöstra Uppland arbetar i en lokal runristartradition utan kristna influenser, Ulv i Borresta och Torbjörn — båda i södra delen av landskapet — å andra sidan har påverkats tydligt av externa kontakter med den kristna kulturen via Danmark/England resp. friserna. Intressanta men inte helt övertygande är författarens tankar om att vissa förändringar i runornas skriftsystem skulle kunna ses som påverkan från den kristna, latinska skriftkulturen: tendensen att använda långkvistrunor i stället för kortkvistrunor, det ökande bruket av ordskillnadstecken, stungna runor.

Laila Kitzler Åhfeldt diskuterar "Carving Technique and Runic Literacy". Hon menar att mycket tyder på att det ofta funnits en arbetsfördelning mellan den/dem som huggit in ornamentiken och den/dem som ristat runor och att detta alltså ofta har varit olika personer med olika roller och olika kunskaper. Runristarna ("runographers") har varit relativt få, kvalificerade specialister som har verkat över stora geografiska områden, medan ornamentihuggarna arbetat mer lokalt

(och därmed varit flera till antalet). Ett par intressanta observationer gäller huggteknikens utveckling: Det verkar som om ovana runristare och nybörjare hugger ytligare och ojämnare än vana ristare, som åstadkommer djupare ristningsspår. Runristarnas professionalism tycks också allmänt sett ha ökat över tiden, eftersom det finns en tydlig tendens till att ristningsspåren blir djupare under andra halvan av 1000-talet.

Kristel Zilmer gör i artikeln "Christianity in Runes" en grundlig och nyttig genomgång av de olika böner som återfinns i runinskrifter, vad gäller formvarianter (fraser, ordförråd, ordföljd etc.) och deras geografiska variation.

Henrik Williams föreslår en nytolkning av frasen *dauðr i hwitawaðum*, som återfinns på sju uppländska runstenar. Man har hittills menat att uttrycket syftar på vita dopkläder, som nyligen kristnade och nydöpta burit på sin dödsbädd. Williams vill i stället tänka sig att det refererar till vita kläder burna efter den exklusivare ceremoni som kallas konfirmation, bl.a. med hänvisning till ett ställe i *Víga-Glúms saga*, där huvudpersonens död skildras. Förklaringen verkar fullt möjlig, men framläggs med vederbörlig försiktighet.

Michael Schulte diskuterar "Pragmatic Runic Literacy in Scandinavia c. 800–1300". Han konstaterar och ger många exempel på den vardagliga och utbredda användningen av runskrift under tidig medeltid. Detta kontrasteras mot det tydligt elitistiska runbruket under urnordisk tid. Problemet är vad som hände under mellanperioden, dvs. vikingatid. Schulte kommer fram till slutsatsen: "widespread runic literacy in medieval Scandinavia presupposes a Christian and hence Latin culture as its enriching background" (s. 181). Jag har svårt att se logiken bakom detta. På vilket sätt och med vilka mekanismer har kyrkans och statens användning av latinsk skrift i officiella sammanhang lett till en utbredd användning av runor bland folk i allmänhet? Som jag ser det är det troligare med en successivt utökad spridning av runbruk och runkunnande under vikingatid (oberoende av latinsk skrifttradition), med en kulmination under tidig medeltid. Den successiva utvecklingen av runskriften från urnordisk tid och framåt under vikingatid och medeltid följer de allmänna mönstren för utveckling och spridning av ett skriftsystem som går från begränsad användning för begränsade syften av en samhällselit till vardaglig användning av stora grupper i samhället (se min artikel "Graphic Variation and Change in the Younger Futhork", *NOWELE* 60/61 [2011], 69–88, på s. 84 f.).

Terje Spurkland ger, sist av runbidragen, en kort översikt över ämnet: "How Christian Were the Norwegians in the High Middle Ages? The Runic Evidence." Han diskuterar ämnet utifrån ett antal exempel på runinskrifter som innehåller kristna böner, vilka författaren ser som uttryck både för kristen kult och magi, utan att det egentligen går att skilja dessa båda syften åt.

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