RUNES AROUND THE NORTH SEA AND ON THE CONTINENT AD 150-700; TEXTS & CONTEXTS

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van het doctoraat in de Letteren, aan de Rijksuniversiteit van Groningen op gezag van de Rector Magnificus, dr. F. van der Woude, in het openbaar te verdedigen op donderdag 27 november 1997 des namiddags om 1.15 uur

door

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Geboren op 12 juni 1948 te Groningen 16. <u>Bernsterburen</u> (Friesland), a whalebone staff, found ca. 1880. Seen at the FM, Leeuwarden. Dated ca. 800. The staff is broken in seven pieces, two of them are lost. The T-formed handle ends on both sides in a stylized horse's head. The a is the Anglo-Frisian āc. The k is rendered by a rune known from the younger fupark and the Continental Corpus, e.g. in kolo (Griesheim), in elk (Nordendorf II).

About halfway on the staff are runic inscriptions in three separate places, tuda æwudu (or æludu) kius þu tuda.

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The middle part has no division marks. The first part, tuda, is preceded by a slanting stroke, which I interpret as an "inscription-opening sign". tuda is a PN, nsm. n-stem, cf. Gmc *peuð-'people'. The first two runes of the second part, in æludu or æwudu, are nearly vanished as a result of weathering. æwudu appears to have a parasite vowel in the middle; æwdu may be derived from the past part. of OFris āwa, auwa 'to show, reveal, represent', declined as a strong neuter adj.; or æwðu is a feminine abstract noun (Mitchell & Robinson 1986:59), asf. 'representation, evidence', or asm/apm. 'oathhelper(s), cf. OE æwda 'witness' (Knol & Looijenga 1990:236). Another interpretation of æwudu may be a PN nsm. < *æwuðaz. The second part -wud- occurs in many OE names: Wudumann, Widia, Wudga, Wudia (Insley, 1991b:320-322); cf. also OHG Wüdiger, Woderich, Wituram, Widego etc. However, the element wud etc. in these names is always attested as the first element of a dithematic PN, therefore a PN is not likely here.

When reading an I instead of w, we may get æludu, perhaps nsm. a-stem < *aluðaz, or an n-stem *aluða, with a weakened pronunciation of the last syllable. The element alu- is found more often in PNs, cf. alugod (<u>Værløse</u>, Danish Corpus) and aluko (FØRDE, Norway), cf. Seebold 1994:63. However, the part -du is difficult to explain as the second element of a PN, hence a PN æludu I do not think likely.

The part that follows, may exhibit a short-twig k and s, and would thus render the sequence kius bu 2 sg. pres. imp. 'you will choose'. The u in kius has an ambivalent form and may as well represent r (cf. Chapter IV.10.2). The short-twig s may be taken as a rather short-cut i (cf. Quak 1992:63f.) hence we would get kiribu, which may represent runic Swedish kiribu (cf. Peterson 1989:17f.), 3 sg. pret. ind. 'made', cf. Old Swedish gærðu, which would suit a preceding PN. This would render a well-known type of runic text: A. made (the inscription or the object or both) for T. Or, if æwudu indeed means 'witness', the text might mean 'Tuda, a witness (witnesses) he made, Tuda'.

A runic Swedish word in a 'Frisian' runic inscription is remarkable but not impossible.