

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

3. *Oostum* (Groningen), two halves of a comb, antler, found in 1908 in the *terp*. Seen at the GM, Groningen. Date: 8th c. On both sides are runes. Side A: aib ka[m]bu; side B: deda habuku.

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The runes have so-called ornamental forms: the **b** has three pockets, the **h** has three bars. These graphic variations are unique so far. A parallel may be the recently found inscription from *Fallward* (Continental Corpus, nr. 15), which shows an **a** with three side-strokes.

Aib is a PN, *i-* or *ja-*stem. The ending is lost, which occurs frequently in Runic West Gmc.,

certainly at this date. **ka[m]bu** asm. *a*-stem, Gmc **kambaz* 'comb'. The omission of a nasal (here *m*) before a homorganic consonant is a typical feature of runic writing (although not without exceptions, such as can be seen in **awimund**, *Weimar III*, Continental Corpus). Another instance that shows omission of the nasal is **umædit** = *u(n)mædit* (see below, *Rasquert*). The nom. and acc. ending *-u* of a masculine *a*-stem (*kambu*) can only be a reflex of Gmc **-az* (Düwel/Tempel 1968/70; Nielsen 1991^a:300).

Side B: **deda** 3 sg. pret. ind. 'did, made' (Nielsen 1991^a:299, Bammesberger 1991^c:305ff.), OFris inf. *duā*. **habuku** < **habukaz*, PN nsm. *a*-stem. The text runs thus: 'Aib made the comb. Habuku'. However, a female PN *Habuke* is equally possible, here dsf. *ō*-stem (cf. Nielsen 1984^b:13f., Düwel/Tempel 1969/70:366), hence we get the text 'Aib made the comb for Habuke'. Last but not least *Habuku* may be in the nominative, nsf. *ō*-stem, and is thus subject. 'Habuku made the comb (for) Aib' (cf. Düwel/Tempel, 1970:367). The syntax is then VSO. In the first interpretation the syntax is SOV. The ending *-u* < Gmc **-ō* is not restricted to Runic Frisian, but occurs also in the North and West Gmc languages, like for instance in **lapu** 'invitation', nsf. *ō*-stem (cf. Nielsen 1984b, 1991^a and 1994). As regards the name *Habuku* 'hawk', cf. **haukoþuz** on the VANGA stone (Östergötland), which has been interpreted by Krause (1966:148) as an agent noun of the verb **haukōn* < **habukōn* 'being like a hawk'.