

Texts and Contexts of the Oldest Runic Inscriptions



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THE NORTHERN WORLD    BRILL

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31. NORDENDORF II (Bavaria, Germany). In the Römisches Museum, Augsburg. A silver-gilt bow-fibula, dated mid 6th c. Found in 1844.

The runes read **birlnioelk**

BIRNIOELK

The runes are clearly legible. The last rune may appear to be enigmatic, but it is similar to the **k** rune of GRIESHEIM in **kolo**. I propose dividing the sequence **birlnioelk** in **birl[i]n io elk**.

birlin may be a male PN, nsm. *n*-stem, a diminutive based on OHG *bero* 'bear' (cf. Gottschald 1982:100, 101).

This is followed by **io** *jo(h)* 'and'.

elk should be read *elch* < Gmc **elha-* 'elk'. Presumably, the rune \mathcal{Y} had the value $[\chi]$, being a result of the OHG sound shift of *k* > *ch*.

Bear and elk seem to have had a mythological connotation (cf. Birkhan 1970:431ff. and 448ff.).