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Texts and Contexts of the Oldest Runic Inscriptions



Tineke Looijenga



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42. Thorsberg I (Schleswig-Holstein, Germany). In the Museum Gottorf at Schleswig. A bronze sword chape, dated to ca. 200 AD. This object and the Thorsberg shield boss belong to a votive deposit of war booty. The provenance of the objects is somewhere between the Lower Elbe and the Rhine. There are runes on both sides of the sword chape; one side has: owlpupewaz; the other side has: niwajemariz. There is a bindrune of e plus m.

OPTONO PREY PREAMERLY

owlpupewaz is probably a PN, nsm. a-stem Wolpupewaz, with inverted order ow for wo; cf. Fallward, nr. 17, ksamella for skamella.

Wolpu- cf. Go wulpus 'exuberance, sumptuousness'. This is followed by -pewaz 'servant', nsm. a-stem.

niwajemariz may be taken as an epithet or cognomen ni-waje-māriz, nsm. i-stem, "of immaculate repute" (Antonsen, 1975:30) or, literally, "nicht-schlechtberühmt" (Krause 1971:167; Seebold 1994a:73). The use of a negative to express the opposite, occurs more often, for instance ek unwodz 'I, the not-raging one', on Gårdlösa (chapter five, nr. 13).

A root vowel -o- instead of the expected -u- in wolpu- < *wulp-u is an arbitrary spelling—alternation u/o (cf. Antonsen 1975:13). The language would be Proto-Norse or North-west Germanic, according to Stoklund (1994a:106f.).