Runes around the North Sea and on the Continent AD 150-700; texts & contexts
Looijenga, Jantina Helena

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VI.  CONTINENTAL RUNIC INSCRIPTIONS  (from ca. 200 - 700)

1. Introduction

The Continental Runic Corpus contains mainly inscriptions from Germany, complemented with attestations from France, Belgium, Hungary and Switzerland. The bracteates from Nebenstedt and Sievern (5th c.) are listed among the Bracteate Corpus (nrs. 29 and 36). The Thorsberg (Schleswig-Holstein) objects are included here, since these objects originate from a region between Lower Elbe and Rhine, i.e. the Continent. The inscriptions are probably made during the production process (see Chapter II, 4.3). The runic items from the Netherlands are treated in a separate Chapter (nr. IX), although, from a geographical point of view, one might want to list them among the Continental Corpus (cf. Arntz & Zeiss 1939). The reason they are not included in The Continental Corpus is their status aparte, and their being linked especially to the English runic tradition, although they can be linked to the Danish and the Continental traditions, too.

The Continental inscriptions are also known as the South-Germanic Runic Corpus. Epigraphical runic writing on the Continent is recorded from circa 200 - 700. Although its runic character is disputed, the oldest item might be the Meldorf fibula (first half first century, found in Schleswig-Holstein). This brooch shows an inscription that can be interpreted as Roman: IDIN ‘for Ida’, or as runic: hiwi ‘spouse'. Seebold (1994:64) regards the lettering as ‘untypical’ but apparently runic, since he transliterates in bold lettering idin ‘for Ida', although runologically this cannot be defended; for instance the form of Roman N cannot be transliterated n, but should be h in runic terms. The sign in the form of a Roman D may be a rune representing w or þ. Stoklund (1994:96) agrees with Düwel & Gebühr (1981:166,169) that the inscription was meant only as an ornamental filling in of the surface. I think it is writing of some sort. In the area around Meldorf near the westcoast of Schleswig-Holstein many Roman artifacts have been found, dating from the first half of the first century AD. The brooch itself is of local manufacture, and so is the inscription, made in the so-called tremolo-style.

The host of inscriptions date from circa 500-700, well within the Merovingian period. The runic stock belongs to the older fuþark exclusively. Characteristic is the almost exclusive use of double-barred h. A runic variety is a k rune resembling the younger Scandinavian fuþark k, used to render either k or ch in Griesheim Cholo and Nordendorf II elch. A peculiar variety of the l rune, known from bracteate-legends, is found in Griesheim and Charnay. Furthermore the Sternrune g appears in Eichstetten, and an ornamental form of the z rune in Charnay and Balingen. Bindrunes in uncommon combinations occur, for instance in

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66 At the beginning of the first century AD, the Roman empire reached its largest expansion. On the continent the troupes came as far as the mouth of the river Elbe, which is quite near the later village of Meldorf on the North Sea coast.

67 The tremolo-style is a decoration-style. Letters or runes are made by way of zig-zag lines instead of straight lines. This decoration pattern can be found fairly often on all kinds of metal objects; for instance on Ovre Stabu, Næsbjerg, Donzdorf. One may conclude from this that runes were known among metal-smiths, not only as ornamentation signs, but, since the runes form words, also as a script.
Kirchheim Teck and Neudingen-Baar I; ‘rune-crosses’ occur for instance in Soest and Schretzheim III. The loops of the b rune are mostly widely separated, which occurs fairly often in Continental and Frisian inscriptions (cf. also Odenstedt 1990:93-96), but less frequently in early English inscriptions. I wonder whether this way of writing with relatively long hasta's has been influenced by Merovingian manuscript-writing in the so-called Rhine-Frankish script type, with angular, high and narrow letterforms. Another characteristic feature is that the runic items are all precious objects with only one exception: the wooden stave of Neudingen-Baar, which is probably part of a weaving loom and, therefore, the only utensil. Geographically, the greater part of the objects has been found in Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria, less frequently in the Middle-Rhine area and Thuringia and only a few in North Germany. The objects from Hungary, Belgium, Switzerland, France and England ('Kent') may be referred to as outliers from a runic centre, which seems to have had its nucleus in South and Central Germany. On the other hand, the possible existence of a Frankish runic tradition may not be overlooked (see for instance Chapter III, 9.8.).

Runic objects found in North Germany belong to the oldest attestations. The two Thorsberg finds date from circa 200 AD. Others date from the Migration Period, such as Fallward near Cuxhaven (early 5th c.), which was dug up from among the remains of an exceptional ship burial in a gravefield. The runic inscriptions (if genuine!) from the Weser estuary cannot be dated, since the inscriptions were made on subfossile bones (Pieper 1989; Stoklind 1994:95). Furthermore there are the silver disc from Liebenau (4th c.) and the bracteates from Sievern and Nebenstedt (5th c.), all in Niedersachsen. The only Migration Period item from southern Germany is the silver neckring from Aalen (5th c.), an unlocated find.

Falsifications are the items known as: Rubring, Trier, Kärlich, Arguel, Kleines Schulerloch. (About Kärlich and Kleines Schulerloch see Düwel in Hoops Realllexikon: 'Fälschungen'). I have not inspected these items, but find-histories and photographs were self-evident.

Recent surveys of the South Germanic or Continental Corpus: Opitz 1977, 1979, 1982, 1986; Düwel 1991 and 1994. Older surveys: Arntz & Zeiss 1939, Krause & Jankuhn 1966, Jänichen 1967. The datings of the objects are based on Roth 1981, and on personal communication with individual archaeologists, e.g. Dr. Wamers (Aalen), Dr. Czysc (Pforzen) and Volker Hilberg (Griesheim). I have personally examined most inscriptions, but in some cases I had to rely on photographs (Aquincum, Bezenye, Dirschingen (lost), Engers (lost), Friedberg (lost), Gammertingen, Heilbronn-Böckingen, Schretzheim II (not available for inspection), Weimar III (lost), Chéhéry (not available for inspection), Weingarten III (not available for inspection). The objects are listed alphabetically.
Map 7. Findspots of runic objects in Germany.
2. CHECKLIST OF CONTINENTAL INSCRIPTIONS

Legible and (partly) interpretable inscriptions.

1. **Aalen** (Baden-Württemberg, Germany), silver neckring with almandine-inlay, dated 1st half 5th c.; the almandines are added in the 6th c. Said to be found in 1945 near Aalen. Seen in the Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Frankfurt am Main. It has four runes **noru** scratched onto the inner edge opposite of the catch.

This may be the name of the owner. **noru** < Gmc *nōruz*, nsm. u-stem Noru. Torques ornamented like the Aalen one are known in an area that stretches from Scandinavia to Rumania, with a centre around the Main. They are classical Roman in origin, and belong to the "elbgermanisch-alamannischen Horizont der ersten Hälfte des 5. Jahrhunderts" (Wamers 1986:20f.). Such neckrings seem to be a sign of the ruling status of a prominent man (Düwel 1991:282).

2. **Aquincum** (Budapest, Hungary), Langobardic or Suebic gilt-silver bow-fibula, one of a pair. Dated 1st h. 6th c. The pair was found in 1940 as part of a hoard near the entrance of the Roman theatre of Aquincum. Now in the Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum, Budapest.

The runes read **fuparkgw ?laig : kingia**.

The first part is a futhark-quotation, followed, in my opinion, by an owner-formula. The initial runes: ?l immediately follow upon the needle holder and assumingly were part of a longer inscription, which may have contained a name. Hence, the needle-holder is a later addition. The inscription may therefore have been made during the production process of the brooch. The rune, which I transliterate as g has been read as n by Krause (1964:357), but since both strokes are about equally long, I suppose a g must be read. Thus emerges a verbform: aig 1 or 3 sg. pres. ind. 'own', cf. Go. aih, inf. Gmc *aigan* 'to own'. kingia = kingia asf. jō-stem, (Krause 1964:357f.; Gering, 1887:94: kinga "Henkelmünze von frauen als schmuck getragen". The sound value of the rune † apparently is [η] here, but might as well be [ŋ] (Odenstedt 1990:103ff. with ref.). This rune is followed by l, but if the sequence is reversed, it reads kinga, ð-stem. This would be more suitable, since there is a semantical difference between kingia and kinga (Düwel 1992:80). ON and NlC kinga means 'brooch', while NlC kingja is a sort of buckle. ‘l owns the brooch’.

3. **Arlon** (Luxembourg, Belgium), silver bulla, dated 1st th. 7th c. Found in 1936 in Frankish row-gravefield (Roosens & Alenus-Lecerf 1965:119-127). Seen in Musée Luxembourgeois, Arlon. The runes read: **godun o e srasuwa(m)ud wo?gt**
The spare parts indicate the lost runes that have vanished together with parts of the bulla. godun is a PN, dsf. n-stem: ‘for Goda’. rasuwa(m)n[d] is probably also a PN, nsm. Rasuw-amund; the first element is rasuwa-, cf. OE raeswa ‘leader, ruler’. The (m) in rasuwa(m)n[d] has weathered away. The [n] in -mund has been omitted before the homorganic d, a common practice in runic writing. The second element -mund, < Gmc *mundō ‘hand, protection, security’, is originally a feminine ð-stem. However, names ending in -mund are masculine among the Franks (cf. Gregory of Tours’ Historiae Francorum). The centre of manufacture of bullae was Mainz, but Franconian names would not have been out of the ordinary, since Mainz had a Rhine-Franconian dialect in OHG times. The last rune might be t, although its sidetwigs are missing. The third rune in wo?gt may be a damaged r, in view of what is left of the rune. wo(r)gt may be taken as a verbform: worgt = worhta, 3 sg. pret. ind. of OHG wurken ‘to work, to make’. The inscription would thus be a maker’s formula. Nedoma (1992:6) offers another proposal. Inspired by the recorded name Votrilo he suggests to read a PN wōpro.


The runes are clearly legible and inscribed in two parts opposite each other on the footplate, which is the only part of the brooch that is left. The runes read: [madali+ ubada].

There may have been more runes preceding [madali and following ubada]. The left half of the m is broken away with the rest of the brooch, the l is smaller than the preceding a and the next i. The little cross following madali may be a word-divider (Krause 1935:331ff.), or a Christian marking, cf. Osthofen, nr. 32. madali is according to Krause (1935:332) a PN nsm. based on Gmc *mål- ‘reihenswerte Sache’, with svarabhakti -a-: *målā, *mådalā. Cf. also OHG mahal ‘Gerichtsstätte, Versammlung’ (Gottschald 1982:337). The d rune in the inscription denotes the voiced allophone of ŭ according to Krause. Arum (The Netherlands) shows a parallel: edae = ēðae = ēðae ‘oath’. madali could be a man’s name, nsm. ja-stem Madali; or a woman’s name derived from Madala, nsf. ð- or n-stem (Kaufmann 1965:97). In ubada the nasal before homorganic b may be omitted: Krause (1935:332f.) reads umbada; a merger of umbi ‘around’ and (gi)bada ‘consolation’. Another possibility may be a hypocoristic woman’s name: U-bada nsf. wō-stem; -bada cf. ON bǫð, OE beadu ‘battle’, cf. Loveden Hill (English Corpus, nr. 7) Sīþæbæd.

5. Balingen (Baden-Württemberg, Germany), golden disc-brooch with almandine-inlay. Date 3rd th. 6th c. Found in 1872 in a row-gravefield. Seen in Württembergisches Landesmuseum, Stuttgart. The runes run from right to left between two concentric circles and read: a u/r zdnoamiluk.
The \textit{k} is retrograde and has the form of a little hook, which is also found on \textit{Aquincum}, \textit{Charnay} and \textit{Kent}. \textit{z} has the elaborated Charnay-form, with one sidetwig missing. The initial rune \textit{a}, is followed by an enigmatic runeform, it might be a failure of \textit{u} or \textit{r}, or even \textit{i} and \textit{s}. Opitz (1977:9) suggested to read \textit{a(ns)uz}, but this is conjecture to my mind. The sequence that follows, is \textit{dnlo} = \textit{d[a]n[i]lo}. \textit{Danilo} is probably a PN, cf. Gothic PNs like \textit{Danus}, \textit{Danila}. \textit{Danilo} is nsm. \textit{n}-stem, with diminutive \textit{-l-} suffix; \textit{Amilu(n)k} may be a patronymic, according to Krause (1966:303) and Opitz (1977:9). The root \textit{*am} and its elaboration \textit{*amal} (Gottschald 1982:87) may point to a connection with the East Gothic royal family of the \textit{Amalians}.


Two rune sequences on the backside read: \textit{fuparzj buirso}.

\[ \text{VNDRFY} \quad \text{BNI\text{\textdagger}} \]

On the footplate are some ornamental lines. \textit{fuparzj} is a \textit{fupark}-quotation. The function of \textit{fupark}-quotations is unclear (see Corpus Bracteates). \textit{buirso} = \textit{buriso}, which may be a female PN, \textit{n/dsf. \=o}-stem, or a masculine PN, nsm. \textit{n}-stem \textit{Buriso}.


I: \textit{godahid unj}?

\[ \text{XMFHW} \quad \text{\A\H\dagger} \]

\textit{godahid} is a PN., a compound of \textit{Goda-} (see above, nr. 3) and \textit{-hi(l)d} < Gmc \textit{*hildjō}, dsf. \textit{jō}-stem, ending has dropped, 'to Godah(i)d'. The second word Krause (1966:300) tentatively read as \textit{unj}; the \textit{a} is uncertain. Krause supposed \textit{unj} to be miswritten for \textit{wunja} n/asf. \textit{jō}-stem, "Wonne" = 'joy'. But initial \textit{w} is retained before vowels in OHG (Braune/Eggers §106).

II: \textit{?arsiboda segun}.

\[ \text{FBXM} \quad \text{XMX\textdagger} \]

\textit{arsiboda} might be preceded by a \textit{k} in the roof form: \textit{\&} like in \textit{Pforzen} (see below), but seems incomplete (on the photograph); the stroke may be an ingress sign. \textit{arsiboda} PN gsf. \textit{\=o}-stem \textit{Arsiboda}'s. The \textit{b} only shows one loop (Düwel 1994:234). \textit{segun} = OHG \textit{segun}, nsm. \textit{a}-stem, 'bless', which points to Christian influence (Düwel 1982:40). There is variation in \textit{s}-runes: one has four strokes, one three. 'To Godah(i)d, (with) sympathy (?)\textit{, Arsiboda}'s bless'.

This may be taken either as *mauō* or *mawā* in the latter case u is used for w. In OHG manuscript orthography the use of u, uu for w is common, cf. also urait for wrait, below, nr. 27, and bracteates **Nebenstedt** and **Raum Køge** (Bracteate Corpus, nrs. 29, 32) with, resp. uū and farauisa. Mawō ő-stem, ‘for the girl’, cf. OHG *mau(w)a*, cf. Go. mawi f. ‘girl’. A brooch is a typical woman's adornment, often obtained at a young age. Another interpretation could be an Alamannic or Frankish man's name, *Mauo*, nsm. n-stem.

10. **Bülach** (Kanton Zürich, Switzerland), Alamannic silver disc-brooch with almandine-inlay. Dated 3rd th. 6th. Found in 1927 in a woman's grave in a row-gravefield. Seen in Schweizerisches Landesmuseum, Zürich. The runes are carved in three rows below each other and read: **frifridil du afmtu**.

Both in this inscription as in those from Bezenye (above, nrs. 7 and 8), the d rune has been realised by cutting the vertical strokes first and then the cross in between: |X|

frifridil nsm. a-stem, ‘husband’, or it is a PN, Frifridil, a petname. du 2 sg. pers. pron. ‘you’, although instead of du one would have expected a spelling *fu* in the 6th c. In the third row I read an a and a retrograde f, carved at some distance from each other, followed by tmu. Initial f of frifridil is also retrograde. There is an l-looking form to the right hand bottom and some scratches. Perhaps aft may be interpreted as ‘after, later’, see also **Oberflacht afd**. (Other interpretations: Opitz 1977:14; Krause 1966:307f.; Arntz 1939:171). An interpretation of the whole text seems impossible.


On the footplate is: **ii₄a**. The fibula is broken; the cracks have damaged the h rune; some other two runes on the footplate are invisible now (see the photograph in the **Reallexikon**, entry Charnay, Tafel 20; and the drawing in Krause 1966:21). The runic text consists of a nearly complete fuþark; the final runes: d and o are abraded. p has the form of an upside down e rune: ú.
The text continues with *uþf(i)nþai*, reflecting an East Germanic dialect, 3 sg. pres. opt. ‘may he/she find out, get to know’, inf. *uþfinþan*. *iddan* is a PN asm. *n*-stem *Idda*, which must be the object of the sentence. Subject is then *liano*, PN nsm. *n*-stem *Liano*, or PN nsf. *-stem* *Liano*. The *l* in *liano* is a rare variety, it has the form of the Anglo-Saxon *cœn* rune † and is also found in *Griesheim* below, nr. 20. Curiously enough, the *l* in the *fuþark* on the same brooch has the common form †. The *k* rune in the *fuþark* is rendered ‘. For *ïia* I have no interpretation. (Arntz 1939:173, 192; Krause 1966:20f.; Antonsen 1975:77). ‘fuþark. May *Liano* get to know/find out *Idda*’.


I: *wigka* or *winka*.

II: *æa* or *el*, see below nr. 52.

*wigka* is probably a PN, nsf. with diminutive ending *-ka*, *-stem or n*-stem, first part *wīg-* < Gmc *wīg-*, OHG *wīg*, *wŭc*, m. or n. ‘battle’, inf. OHG *wīgan* ‘to fight’. The strokes of the *g*-rune are not equally long, so an *n*-rune might be read as well. Thus we get *winka*, *win-* cf. OHG *wini* m. ‘friend’. The *k* rune has the form of a ‘roof’ †, which is also found in *Pforzen, München-Aubing III, Watchfield* (England), and possibly *Neudingen-Baar*.


One of the brooches bears runes, reading *eho*.

* Runs and decoration are carved in tremolo-technique, otherwise known from ØVRE STABU (Norway), MELDORF (Schleswig-Holstein) and NÆSBJERG (Denmark). The *h* rune is single-barred, which may point to Scandinavian influence. According to Düwel (1994b:237, 265) this is an instance of the very rare makers’ inscriptions in the German corpus (the others are, according to Düwel, WURMLINGEN and SCHRZTZEHM III). The *eho* inscription is part of the overall ornamentation of the back of the brooch. *eho* may be a feminine PN, nsf. *-stem Eho*. Otherwise it could be a masculine PN, nsm. *n*-stem *Eho*. The *h* may represent [x] or [ç]. OS has *ehuscalcos* ‘horsegrooms’. Germanic PNs with an element ‘horse’ are quite rare, according to Stanley (1990:61), but there are the mythological brothers *Hengest* and *Horsa*: ‘Stallion’ and ‘Horse’, and the moneyer’s name on hundreds of *sceattas: epa* or *æpa*, a PN, nsm. *n*-stem, *Epa, Åpa*, based on Celtic *Epo* ‘horse’ (Kaufmann 1965:14). Wulf (1994:32) is of the opinion that horse designations as element in PNs are quite common (and not only in Germanic). Also *ehæ Hantum* (Dutch Corpus), (*e)he Åsum) and *ehwu* (Tirup Heide) belong to this name category (taken they are names). (Jänichen 1967:234; Düwel & Roth 1977:410; Peterson 1994b:144ff.).

The **w** runes have exceedingly large loops, like in **Schweindorf** (see Dutch Corpus). Such a runic form for **w** appears particularly on runic coins. The **g** in **wiwogan** is rendered \( \times \); the **g** in **fiaginþ** is the so-called **Sternrune** \( \mathfrak{f} \), otherwise in Germany known from Anglo-Saxon runerows in manuscripts and the **GANDESHMIE** box (Schwab 1973). The **Sternrune** is epigraphically attested in England: DOVER *jislheard* and THORNHILL II *jilsuiþ*, and in the Netherlands **WESTEREMDEN A adujslu jisuhl[1]du**. The rune appears in these five cases in the same sequence \( j/gF \) (see also Parsons 1994:201-204). In **fiaginþ** the last two runes **nh** are written as a bindrune. The feature bindrune is also well-known from Anglo-Saxon inscriptions on the Continent, e.g. from the pilgrims’ names at Monte St. Angelo in Italy. **fiaginþ** I take to be a PN nsf. \( jß-\)stem *Fiaginth*, cf. Fiaspurc (Fürstemann 1990:504); -ginth may be a misspelling for -*gunth*, OHG -*gund* nsf. jō-stem ‘battle’, a frequent suffix in women's names, cf. **SCHRETZHEIM I**. (Note that both -*birg* and -*burg* occur as second name-element).

**wiwogan** may be a PN too, asm. *n*-stem. Other names with initial *wēn-* in runic inscriptions are: **wiwaz** (TUNE) ‘the darting-one’ (Antonsen 1975:44f.) and **wiwila** (VEBLUNGSNES). The element **wi**- might be connected with OHG wīgan ‘to fight’, especially because of the -*g-* in **wiwogan**, taken that the name is a variation on OHG wīganst ‘warrior’. A connection with *wēhen* ‘to consecrate’ is less probable. Wulf (1994:36ff.) is of the opinion that in cases like these a connection with ‘to fight’ is likely, since all runic attests of ‘consecrater, consecrating’ are doubtful (perhaps except for bracteate inscriptions; about the problem of who consecrates and what is to be consecrated, see Seebold 1994:612ff.). **Wīvo-** may be a variation on OHG names like Wīwa, Wīwila. Fürstemann (1990:1626) mentions VIV as an enigmatic root; Peterson (1994b:147-149, with ref.) says about Wīwaz etc.: "an extremely tricky group of names". **muni** 3 sg. opt. ‘may F. remember’, cf. Go. ga-*munan* ‘to remember’. As a whole, the text can be taken as: ‘may Fiaginth remember Wiwoga'. The graphic representation of the **w** rune and the use of the **Sternrune** may point to an English or Frisian (-influenced) runographer. (Another reading and interpretation: Opitz 1982).

15. **Engers** (Rheinland-Pfalz, Germany), gilt-silver bow-fibula. Found in a woman's grave in a Frankish row-gravefield near Kaltenengers in 1885. Dated 3rd th. 6th c. Melted. The runes read **leub**.

Two interpretations are possible: 1. noun., nsn. *a*-stem ‘love’. 2. adj. nsn./f./n. *a/-ō*-stem ‘dear, beloved’ (see also Niederstötzingen, here nr. 28). According to the drawing in Henning (1889:156) the form of the **e** rune resembles the peculiar form of **e** in **Bergakker**, (The Netherlands). Both objects may have belonged to Franks, living in the Rhine area. The name-element **Leub**- is typical for the Rhine region (Weisgerber 1966/67:220).
16. *Fallward* (Niedersachsen, Germany), a wooden footstool, richly decorated in *Kerbschnitt* after Mediterranean fashion. It was found in 1994 during excavations of a gravefield near Wremen, 4 km. south of the well-known *terp* of Feddersen Wierde (Düwel 1994:14ff.). Seen in Museum Bederkesa.

The stool has on one side a sketch of a dog chasing a deer or elk, and on the other side a runic inscription: *ksamella lguskaþi*. The runes run left.

The first *a* in *ksamella* has three sidetwigs, which reminds of the so-called ornamental forms of the *Qostum* inscription (The Netherlands), showing a *b* with three loops and an *h* with three bars. The *s* runes are in three strokes. The *k* rune has been rendered as a little hook, such as in *Balingen*, *Charnay*, *Aquincum* and *Kent*. *ksamella* is a misspelling for *skamella*, cf. Latin *scamellus*, German *Schemel* ‘footstool’. *lguskaþi* can be read either *(a)guskaþi* (cf. *Illerup laguþewa*) or *(a)lguskaþi*. Its initial *a* is the ultimate rune of *skamella*. Presumably, *Alguskaþi* is a name. The second element -*skapi* may be 2 sg. imp. of *skapjan* ‘to hurt, to damage’ (Antonsen 1975:54), cf. *hahaskapi* on the *STRØM* wetstone; in Krause’s (1966:112) transliteration and interpretation *haða skapi*, 3 sg. opt. ‘damage the growth’. Other possibilities: a nomen actionis ‘hurt’, or a nomen agentis ‘hurter’, either male of female, *i*-stem (compare the Dutch name *Tesselschade*, daughter of a ship-owner who lost part of his fleet in a terrible storm near the island Tessel). *Skaði* is also known as the name of the giantess whom *Njǫrdr*, god of the sea, married. *algo*- ‘elk’, ON *elgr*. If there is a connection between the drawing and the inscription, *Alguskaþi* may be the dog’s name ‘Elkhunter’. If nomen agentis, the language may be West Gmc, masculine nom. with loss of the nominative marker -*z* < *skapiz*.

The footstool was part of rare and precious gravegifts in a rich ship burial. Among these was a wooden chair, also richly decorated in *Kerbschnitt* with meanders and swastikas, after Mediterranean fashion. The deceased was buried with his Roman military equipment. The elk was not yet extinct in North Germany in the early Middle-Ages and there existed a special breed of dogs for chasing elks. The text can be interpreted as: ‘footstool (depicting) Alguskaþi’, since this might refer to the picture of the dog on the footstool.

17. *Freilaubersheim* (Rheinhessen, Germany), gilt-silver bow-fibula, one of a pair, probably Frankish. Found in 1872/73 in a woman’s grave in a row-gravefield. Seen in Landesmuseum, Mainz. Date 3rd th. 6th c. The runes are carved in two rows: above and below the needle. The upper row reads *boso:wraetruna*. The lower row has *pkda?ina: golida*. 

*Engers fibula. (Taken from R. Henning - Die deutschen Runendenkmäler, Strassburg 1889, fig. 19).*
boso is an Alamannic or Frankish PN, nsm. n-stem Boso (cf. the Frankish duke Boso in Gregory of Tours' Historiae Francorum). wraet 3 sg. pret. ind. 'he wrote', inf. Gmc *wrītan 'to write', with ae for older ai, cf. Neudingen-Baar II, Schwangau and Weingarten I. runa apf. ó-stem, runā 'the runes'. The lower row starts with some heavily abraded runes; the first most likely is a thorn, but the loop is nearly at the bottom of the headstaff, and vaguely another loop higher up the headstaff can be perceived. Probably by mistake a b was carved first, perhaps due to a confusion with the b of boso right above, and then changed into a thorn. It is followed by a large hook < k, in order to get þk, cf. OS þ(i)k 'you', pron., acc. of the 2nd. pers. da?ina PN nsf. ó-stem, Da?ina. The third rune is illegible now, but earlier read as representing þ, golida 3 sg. pret. ind. '(she) greeted', inf. Gmc *gōljan, Go. gōljan, 'to greet'. (Krause 1966:47; Ebel 1963:14, 107f.; Antonsen 1975:58). 'Boso wrote (the) runes; Daþina greeted you'.

18. Friedberg (Hessen, Germany), silver disc-brooch with almandine-inlay, one of a pair. Dated 3rd th. 6th c. (Arntz & Zeiss 1939:232 ff.). Found in 1885 in a woman's grave; lost in World War II.

The runes read: þuruþhild.


Twice is carved: ado.


The runes read: kolo:agilaþruþ. 

This may be a PN nsm. n-stem, Ado, which is a shortened version of a name like Adalbertus (Kaufmann 1965:17, 86, 90).
**Kolo** is a PN, nsm. **Kolo**, perhaps to be connected with ON kollir ‘helmet’ (Gottschald 1982:297). **agilapruf** is also a PN, n/asf. jō-stem Agilapruf. Agila- may be connected with Go. agis, OHG egīf. ‘scare, fear’ (Kaufmann 1965:88, 89), or with Gmc *agjô- ‘sword, edge’, like in agi amudon on the ROSSELAND stone, Norway, and the name of a Langobardic king Agilimund (cf. Antonsen 1975:51). A Bavarian family of dukes bore the name *Agilolfing*. About the second name-element -þruþ, cf. **Friedberg**. The k rune of kolo has the form of the k from the younger Danish fuþark. The runeform is also attested in Nordendorf II and Hailfingen. I wonder whether this divergent rune form might denote ch, product of the OHG soundshift of k. In that case we may read Cholo. The soundshift k- > kɔ- (ch-) occurred only in Alamanic and Bavarian. The findplace, Hessen, need not debar the possibility of the soundshift in this inscription. Both object and runographer were moveable.

Another curiosity is the l rune, which has the form of the Anglo-Saxon cēn rune. This peculiar l rune is on the Continent otherwise only attested in Charnay (once, in liano). Until the Griesheim inscription turned up, a reading liano or kiano in Charnay was arbitrary. Especially its occurrence in Agilapruf, where it only can denote l and certainly no k, was decisive. Kolo or Cholo is a Frankish or Alamannic man’s name, because of the ending -o, cf. Boso, Freilaubersheim. The r-rune is similar to the r in Weingarten I; other parallels are: Nordendorf II, Wurmlingen, Niederstotzingen, Friedberg, Bülach and Soest.


On the square fitting are runes, running left, partly damaged by the perforations made for the rivets. The runes run from right to left ikarwi.

In my opinion the initial rune is a yew rune, which has retained one sidetwig; the other got lost in the perforation. Krause 1966:295ff. and Düwel 1994b:264f. read l. The second rune is a small hook, carved rather low, and is partly damaged by the same perforation that took the lower part of the preceding yew rune away.

Ik might be taken for ik, 1 sg. pers. pron. ‘I’. Obviously the yew rune was used to denote i or ɨ, cf. u/u wū in the Nebenstedt bracteate, and sjæbæd (Loveden Hill, English Corpus, nr.7). **arwi** may be a PN, nsm., derived from *arwa, wa-stem, cf. OS aru, ON qrr and OE earu < Gmc *arwaz ‘ready for harvesting, mature, ripe’. Otherwise one may consider a connection with OHG arbi ‘inheritance’ (Gottschald 1982:173), cf. the name of the Langobardic bishop Arbeo. A third possibility may be to take the name as a compound of *arw- plus the ending -wīz = -wi(g), ‘battle’, cf. wigka nr. 12 and ra[u]zwi nr. 24.

22. ‘Kent’ I, or ‘the Bateman brooch’ (England), one of a pair of gilt-silver radiate-headed brooches, dated 6th c., said to be ‘Merovingian’ and to originate from the Continent. Provenance unknown; bought at a sale (see for more information Chapter II, 8.3.). Seen in the British Museum, London.

The runes are carved rather clumsily, and the lay-out of the inscription is in a slipshod style.
Tentatively I propose a reading ik w?fau or w?far gadu. Whether there is a final rune after gadu is uncertain.

The k rune has the form of a little hook ˚, cf. Heilbronn and Balingen. The inscription starts with ik (OS, OHG) or ic (OE), 1 sg. pers. pron. ‘I’. w?fau or w?far seems at first unintelligible; especially an ending (?) -au is enigmatic. The last two runes are written as a bindrune. This feature is not unusual in Continental inscriptions, and occurs in uncommon combinations. Probably we should read r instead of u, since sometimes the runeforms r and u appear nearly identical, cf. Charnay (above, nr. 11) and the readings houaz or horaz on the Fünen I-C bracteate (see Bracteate Corpus). Thus I opt for w?far. The second rune looks like a reversed younger k rune: ↓. Since this letter is in between two consonants, it might denote a vowel. The rune is a parallel to ↓ and ↓ in Britsum (The Netherlands, nr. 14), transcribed æ. Thus we obtain wæfar, which may be a PN, a nomen actionis of a verb such as OE wæfan ‘to wrap’ and ON veifa ‘to swing, sway’ and ‘to throw’. Perhaps the name refers to the profession of weaver? gadu may be nsf. or dsf. ē-stem ‘companion’, here ‘wife’, or: ‘to my wife’, cf. OE gada m. ‘companion’; Dutch gade ‘husband’, ‘wife’; MHG gate ‘Genosse, Gatte’ (Holthausen 1963:121). The inscription may read: ‘I Wæfar, to my wife’.

23. Kirchheim Teck (Baden-Württemberg, Germany), gilt-silver bow-fibula. Found in a woman’s grave in 1972. Date mid 6th c. Seen in Württembergisches Landesmuseum, Stuttgart. The runic inscription is very much abraded, since the brooch was used for a long time before it was deposited with its owner in the grave. Part of the runic inscription can still be read: badagihiali dmiu.

The part gi is written as a cross with four sidetwigs attached to the cross’ extremities, thus forming four times the rune for i. I take the cross plus i to represent gi. This combination is carved on top of the double-barred h rune. (Opitz (1979:366) prefers to interpret the cross as X, referring to Greek X[PICTOC] or as the sign of the Christian cross. One may as well interpret the sign as a swastika. bada PN nsf. ē-stem, Bada, cf. Bad Ems. gihiali = ghiali 2 sg. pres. imp. ‘you must make well’, inf. OHG heilen, gi-heilen ‘to heal, to save, to rescue’. If the legend and cross as a whole is taken as Christian (there was a Goldblattkreuz in the same grave) one may interpret the text as follows: bada ‘consolation’, haili ‘salvation’, cf. OHG heilī. ‘hail, bliss, salvation’; dmiu = d[o]m[i][n][u][s] ‘Lord’; ‘(my) hail (and) salvation (is the) Lord’. In OS, gihada is recorded twice in the Heliand: 3161 and 5828, meaning: ‘comfort, reassurance’ or even: ‘new life in Christo’ (Opitz 1978:21).

24. Liebenau, (Niedersachsen, Germany), silver disc, possibly part of a swordbelt. Dated 4th c. Found in 1957 in a rich man’s grave. Seen in Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover. The runes are on the front side, and very difficult to identify. The surface has been damaged and the runes are of unequal size.
Düwel (1972:134-141) read and interpreted ra[u]zwi < Gmc *rauzwīh "der Rohr (=Speer)-Geweihnte"; cf. Gmc *rauzwa/rausa 'tube, hollow stem'.

rauz- may mean ‘spear’ or ‘sword’, cf. ON reyri ‘reed’, in metaphorical sense ‘spear, sword’. The second part -wī may either be connected with OHG wīhen, OS wīhian ‘to consecrate’ (cf. above, Eichstetten, nr. 14), or -wī may be derived from *wīgan ‘to fight’ (see also nrs. 12 and 21, above). If it is a PN, it is perhaps short for Rauzwī̄(gaz), nsm. a-stem, which may mean either ‘The One who is consecrated to the spear’ or ‘Spear- c.q. Swordfighter’. A name connected with some warrior’s cult? RAUS is also known as the name of one of the Hasding brothers.


Both brooches have runes, the inscription of nr I contains two words: segalo sigila.

For the inscription on the other brooch see below, München-Aubing II, nr. 59.

segalo may be a PN, nsm. n-stem, Segalo. sigila may be interpreted in several ways; it might be a male PN, nsm. a-stem Sigila (attested in Gregory of Tours’ Historiae Francorum), or it is a female PN nsf. ð-stem. The names contain a well-known name-element: OHG sigu ‘victory’ followed by an l-suffix, common for names. Another interpretation of sigila is to take it as a word denoting the object itself: nsf./n. ‘brooch’, cf. OE sigle, sigel ‘brooch’. The inscription of Harford Farm (English Corpus) reads: luda gibœ̄tæ sigilæ ‘Luda repaired the brooch’. Both segalo and sigila are related to Latin sigillum, since the Latin ending -um can be rendered by both -a and -o in OHG. But Latin -i- in the initial syllable remains -i- in OHG. Therefore sigila is most likely to render Latin sigillum. The text may run thus ‘brooch, Segalo’. It would be the third object of the Continental Corpus (with Aquincum and Fallward), which is named in the text.


The inscription is carved in three rows below each other and is partly abraded, due to weathering and oxidation of the surface. The tinned surface of the back has nearly corroded away, but the runes left their impressions in the bronze layer underneath.

Part of the runes can be read, row 1: s? u? d ?? . Row 2: midu Row 3: k/u/lefil ba.

The last two runes are written as a bindrune ba. The runes of the first row cannot all be reconstructed. The second row is clear: midu, pre-OHG *mīda, *mēda, OHG miata < Gmc *mezdō ‘reward’ nsf. ð-stem. This ‘reward’ may denote the very brooch, cf. the legend of the Undley bracteate (Bracteate Corpus), which has: maga medu ‘reward of the kinsmen’.
Another interpretation of the second row of the text may be that it is an adjective, OHG mitti, OS middi, 'in the middle'. The initial rune of the third row is remarkably big, it could denote k or u, but it deviates from the other u runes in the inscription. It has the form of a rather large roof, similar to Münichen-Aubing III, see below, nr. 60. The sequence is read as klefilp by Düwel (1990:8), who suggested a connection with the OHG verb klīban ‘to attach, to fasten’. klef may be 1 or 3 sg. pret. ind. of klīban. When taking the f double, we get (f)ilpa, < Gmc *filta-, NHG Filz ‘woollen garment, cloak’ (cf. Kluge/Seebold 1989:214: Filz < Gmc *filta-). The brooch is exceptionally large, so it could be used to fasten a cloak. The inscription may say something as ‘the brooch fastened the cloak’.


The runes are clearly legible: lbi:imuba:hamale:blipgup:uraitruna.

The final two words in the inscription are without division marks. lbi probably is short for l[iu]bi, a feminine abstract adjective with nominative ending ī, īn-stem, ‘love’. imuba is a PN, nsf. ā-stem, Imuba, maybe connected with Im-, Em- from Irmin-, Ermin- (Fürstemann 1966:949), or Irn- (Kaufmann 1965:139 ff.). hamale is also a PN, dsm. a-stem ‘to Hamal’, the name-element ham- may point to a soldier in arms, according to Förstemann (1966:743). blipgup is a third PN, nsf. jō-stem, Blīþgu(n)th, the name-element Blīði- means ‘glad’ (Fürstemann 1966:313), for the second name-element -gu(n)þ see above Eichstetten. urait = wrait, 3 sg. pret. ind. ‘wrote’, Gmc. *wrītan. Freilaubersheim has: wraet and Weingarten I: writ. runa apf. ā-stem, runā ‘the runes’. ‘Love, Imuba for Hamal, Blīþgunþ wrote (the) runes’.


The girdle set looks brand-new. The strap end was made of a silver strip from a former sheath mouth, which was inscribed before it got reused. Thus, the runes may have nothing to do with the strap end (cf. Düwel 1994:264). There are runes on both sides of the strip; some of the runes show rare and unique forms.


The b in the last part is reversed, the sequence enu is in bindrunes. The whole inscription appears to be made by an unpractised runecarver; some signs barely escape the impression of being pseudo-runes or script-imitation. Recognizable is the sequence liub, it might be an adj. nsm./fl./n. a-/ā-stem, ‘dear, beloved’; or a substantive, nsm. a-stem ‘love’. Cf. Engers, nr. 15 leub. Interesting is the spelling of the diphthong, which shows a development from Gmc *eu > iu in Alamannic and Bavarian before labial; in Franconian the development would be either eu or eo (Braune/Eggers § 47, Anm. 1), cf. leob in Weimar I, nr. 44. The third ‘word’ in the
inscription might be read from right to left \textit{de\textit{(d)u\textit{(n)}}}, which would point to a maker's formula. Trying to make sense of the rest inevitably will lead into speculation. (See also Düwel 1992:55).


The runic inscription consists of two parts, carved on the back of the headplate. One part is written in three rows of runes below each other; when the object is turned 180°, another row near the edge of the headplate can be perceived. These runes are much more abraded than those of the other part, which is probably due to the fact that the edge of the brooch was more exposed to attrition.

The first part reads: \textit{logapore wodan wiguponar??}. The second part: \textit{awa (l)eubwini??}.

First row: \textit{logapore}, npm. \textit{ja-stem logapore} ‘intriguers’ or ‘magicians’ (Düwel 1983:128 and 1991:278). This interpretation is based on a word found in OE glosses: \textit{logper, logeper}, used to translate two Latin words: the Greek loanword \textit{cacomicanos} ‘mischiefplotting’, and \textit{marsius} ‘snake-charmer’ (Schwab 1981:42ff., with ref.). Second row: \textit{wodan} GN nsm. \textit{a-stem Wödan}. Third row: \textit{wiguponar} GN nsm. \textit{a-stem, Wígathonar}. The part \textit{wigu-} is commonly associated with OHG \textit{wen} ‘to hallow’, which may have something to do with one of the god's roles: to hallow runes or marriages a.o. (Cf. GLAVENDRUP, Fyn, Denmark: \textit{þur uiki} ‘may Thor hallow’). But, again, Wulf (1994:37, with ref.) considers a consecrating function of Thor contested. When considering \textit{wigu-} derived from OHG \textit{wígan} ‘to fight’, a more suitable epithet would arise: \textit{fighting-Donar}. There is a scratch that looks like \textit{l} attached to the top of the \textit{o} rune of \textit{þonar}.

When turning the brooch 180°, a second inscription can be read, although the runes are nearly invisible. It starts with \textit{awa}, which obviously is a PN nsf. \textit{ð-stem} Awa, cf. the diminutive PN \textit{Awila} (Kaufmann 1965:90), which may be connected with \textit{auja} (see below, nr. 32 \textit{Oettingen aujiang}).

As a result of the fact that the brooch has been broken and mended, the initial rune of the next part is damaged: the assumed \textit{l} rune of \textit{(l)eubwini} is invisible now. The word ends in a confusion of signs, probably because \textit{(l)eubwini} imminently coincides with the end of \textit{wiguponar}. Between both words are several lines, and whether or not there is a yew rune among those lines, I am not sure. I take the lines as division marks. \textit{Leubwini} is a PN or epithet, nsm. \textit{i-stem} ‘dear friend’. The whole text is interpreted by Düwel (1982) as an abolition formula concerning the pagan gods Wodan and Wígathonar: ‘intriguers are Wodan and Wígathonar', signed by two people: Awa and Leubwini. It seems a strange text for a brooch, especially since it has been worn for a long time.

Polomé (1989:140ff.) rejects Düwel's hypothesis, a) on linguistic grounds: the ending \textit{-e} of \textit{logapore} is anomalous; b) on stylistic grounds: a triad of names would conform better; and c) on historic grounds: the early 7th c. (actually mid 6th c. TL) may be too early for a Christian runic inscription; and d) on mythological grounds: magic and deceit may characterize Wodan, but that cannot be said of Donar! (But see Düwel 1992:358ff.).

I would not exclude the possibility that the text mentions a \textit{Göttertrias}, including the mysterious \textit{Logapore} next to Wodan and Donar. Schwab (1981:45) interprets \textit{logapore} as a
One may think of the runic text of the Ribe cranium (early 8th c.), which contains the invocation of three gods:

\textit{UlfR auk Óðinn auk HótiuR} (cf. Stoklund 1996). The last name might point to Týr, OHG \textit{Ziu}, OE \textit{Tiw}.

The text is clearly legible, but difficult to interpret. The last rune may strike as enigmatic, but it has the form of the \textit{k} rune from the younger Scandinavian \textit{fuþark}, and it is similar to the \textit{k} rune of \textit{Griesheim} in \textit{kolo}. I propose to divide the sequence \textit{birlnioelk} in \textit{birl[i]n io elk}. \textit{birlin} may be a masc. PN nsm. \textit{n}-stem, a diminutive based on OHG \textit{bero} 'bear' (cf. Gottschald 1982:100, 101). This is followed by \textit{io(j) 'and'. \textit{elk} should be read \textit{elch} < Gmc *elha- 'elk'. Presumably, the rune form \textit{v}, here transliterated \textit{k}, must have had the value [k\textepsilon] from \textit{scratch}, and thus would be no product of the OHG sound shift of \textit{k} > \textit{ch}. One may wonder, whether this graph was a local (South Germanic) runic invention, and no import from the North.

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

31. \textit{Oberflacht} (Baden-Württemberg, Germany), silver \textit{Sieblöffel}, dated 3rd th. 6th c. (Düwel 1994b:244). Found in the 19th century by Freiherr von Ow-Wachendorf on his property, and kept in the family's archaeological collection at Wachendorf. Seen there. There is no find-report. A \textit{Sieblöffel} is a Christian liturgical object. Runes on the back cover about the whole length of the handle, in unusually wide and large forms.

The runes read: \textit{gba:dulþafd}.

\textit{XB1:MN:DFM}X

The \textit{g} is a clear cross; the first \textit{a} is reversed. The \textit{b} rune is quite gross. The sidetwig of the \textit{l} is almost lost in a crack. The sidetwigs of both \textit{f} runes are extremely long and set far apart. \textit{dulp} is a well-known word, nsf. \textit{i}-stem/rootnoun, 'religious feast', cf. OHG \textit{tuld}, MHG \textit{dult}, Go. \textit{dulps}. The first part may be \textit{g[el]ba} 'gift' nst. \textit{ð}-stem. The sequence \textit{afd} might be interpreted as \textit{aft} adv. 'after, later' (see \textit{Bülach}, nr. 10), taken that the rune \textit{d} is chosen because of the

\footnote{One may think of the runic text of the Ribe cranium (early 8th c.), which contains the invocation of three gods: \textit{UlfR auk Óðinn auk HótiuR} (cf. Stoklund 1996). The last name might point to Týr, OHG \textit{Ziu}, OE \textit{Tiw}.}
initial sound of its name, which had become tag (with OHG sound shift), instead of older dag < *dagaz. Would the text mean as much as: 'gift - feast - hereafter' indicating this is a gift on the occasion of the feast? I realize that the syntax is inadequate, but this may be due to the lack of space. (Other interpretations: Klingenberg 1974:81-94, and Opitz 1977:35).

32. Oettingen (Bayern, Germany), silver disc-brooch, one of a pair, dated 2nd h. 6th c. Found in 1975 in a woman's grave. Seen in the Bayerisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Schwaben, Augsburg.
The runes read: auijabrg or auisabrg.

The first rune is a damaged a with only the two sidetwigs visible, part of the headstaff is missing. The fourth rune may represent s or j. Compared to the form of the j rune in Charnay and to several other s runes of the Continental inscriptions, the transcription j is most plausible. auijab[ri]rg PN nsf. Awijab[i]rg or Auijab[i]rg, consisting of Awija- or Auija- and -birg. For the first part of the name cf. Awa, Nordendorf I, nr. 29. The second part -birg is nsf. jō-stem, ‘protection, guard’. If auija should be equalled with auja on bracteates, it may be connected with ‘hail, good luck’: cf. gibu auja on Seeland-II-C (see Bracteate Corpus). The sequence auwija is recorded on the Vimose buckle (Danish Corpus). Antonsen (1975:75) reads and interprets this as auw-ija, with West Gmc gemination of u = w before j. (Betz 1979:241-245; Düwel 1991:280).

33. Osthofen (Rheinhessen, Germany), gilted bronze disc-brooch, 2nd h. 7th c. Found in 1854 in an ancient Frankish cemetery near Osthofen. Seen in Landesmuseum, Mainz. Runes are cut between concentric lines. The brooch is broken, a large part is lost and the surface from what is left has badly eroded, therefore an undefined number of runes is illegible now. One may perceive only go furadi di le+

The last rune has a little cross fastened to it. The first word may be emended to got or god ‘God', or emended to a fem. PN like Goda, cf. Arlon nr. 3. fura is a preposition, ‘before'; di = dih, 2 sg. pers. pron. acc. ‘you'; or dir, 2 sg. pers. pron. dative. This is followed by di and le, which might, with some fantasy, be emended to di(ofi)le ‘devil’ (cf. Opitz 1979:36).

34. Pforzen (Bayern, Germany) silver belt buckle with runes on the frontside, which is rare (cf Liebenau, above, nr. 24). Dated mid 6th c. Found in 1991 in a man's grave. Seen in the Bayerisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Schwaben, Augsburg. The runes are distinctly carved in two rows below each other, ending in ornamental lines.
They read: .aigil.andi.ai(r)un 1.tahu:gasokun.
I take the dots between the words as word-dividers. The h in tahu belongs to the oldest attestations of the double-barred h rune. The a rune in aïlrun has very long sidetwigs, it seems as if the lower one is elongated since it has a twist halfway. The end of the twig crosses the bottom line on which the runes stand. The upper sidetwig crosses the headstaff of the following rune. The elongated part of the lower sidetwig looks like if it actually is part of the next rune, apparently a yew-rune. One would then get the sequence ai in aïlrun. This presumably is a female PN, because of the second element -rûn. One may wonder whether the diphthong ai in aïlrun is pronounced differently from the diphthong in aigil.

*aigil* is a PN too, nsm. a-stem Aigil, connected either with Gmc *agjō ‘sword, edge’ (cf. De Vries 1962:94f., who derives ON Egill and OHG Agilo < Gmc *agilaz), or with Go. agis ‘scare, fear’. See also Agila in *Griesheim*. The spelling of aïgil is interesting; in later OHG ai > ei, which would render *Eigil*. FRANKS CASKET (8th c., probably Northumbrian) has ægili; it may be that the initial rune of aïgil was meant by the carver to render an æ-like sound, an intermediate stage of a > æ > e.

**andi** conj. ‘and’. aïlrun PN nsf. ð-stem Aïlrûn. The supposed yew rune i presents a problem. One would expect *Alrûn*. The names Aïgil and Aïlran (Aïlûn) remind of the much later recorded ON Völundr story, in which Egill is his brother, and Qlurun< *Alrûna* is one of the swanmaidens. She is the one who becomes Egill’s partner. Egil helps his brother to get away from imprisonment by giving him wings to fly from the island on which he is kept prisoner. Furthermore, Egill is known as an exceptionally skilled archer (Marold 1996). Etymologically, aïlrun would not render the later OHG name Alrûn, nor the ON Qlurun. I suggest tentatively two solutions: (1) the runecarver made a graphical mistake. He actually wanted to carve aïlrun, but made an I too many and subsequently elongated the sidetwigs of the preceding a, or he carved a yew-rune indeed, but could not erase the graph. Anyhow, I think the sequence ai is a scribal error. Or, and this is very speculative, the forerunner of the name, represented here as aïlrun, is the mysterious Albrunam, Albriniam or Auriniam (Much 1959:119), from Chapter 9 of Tacitus’ Germania.

The second line starts with I. The text proceeds with tahu. I connect this word with either Go. tahjan ‘tear apart, scatter’, or Go. *tûhus < Gmc *tanhuz; OHG zûh, adj. u-stem ‘tough’ (Köbler 1989:520). The third word is gasokun 3 plur. pret. ind. of a verb like Go. ga-sakan ‘to quarrel, to dispute’, or OHG ga-sakan ‘to condemn, to fight’. Clearly both persons, Aïgil and Aïlrûn, strongly condemned or fought something; the object presumably is I, whatever that may be.70 Another solution may be to take I as the first letter of a name, e.g. the name of a person who was fought by A. and A.

69 Olrûn was the daughter of King Kiár of Valland. Kjárr = Caesar, according to De Vries (1962:312). Valland is the land of the Romans or the Merovingians. Völundr is the name of a famous smith, a hero’s name, according to De Vries. So, if I understand this well, the story is about a relation between a daughter of a Roman emperor and the brother of a famous weaponsmith. She came disguised as a swanmaiden, e.g. a Valkyrie, from the South. The second part, -run may be either of Celto-Germanic or of Celtic origin (Schönfeld 1965:196). The name element may mean ‘secret’. It is remarkable that the name-element -run is otherwise not attested in the surviving names of any of the early runic traditions (see Peterson 1994 for instance).

70 Düwel (1994b:290f.) proposes to regard the sidetwig of the I rune to be connected with the left sidetwig of the following t - although the twigs do not meet - and thus take this as a bindrune ei. Thus he obtains: elahu ‘elk’. However, this is problematic, as there even is a dot between I and t, which, because of the presence of other dots in the inscription, must be a word divider.
I suppose that the text on the Pforzen buckle is a quote from a lost version of the Völundr story. Assuming that the verse alliterated, the enigmatic I may have been preceded by an a, in [a]: Aigil andi Ailiðin (a)l tahu gasokun. al adj. ‘all, everything’. The text may be taken as: ‘A. and A. fought (all, or L.) vigorously’.

35. Schretzheim I (Bayrisch Schwaben, Germany), a silver bulla, which is an amulet box. Dated ca. 600. Found in 1892 in a rich woman’s grave in a row-gravefield. Seen in the Stadt- und Hochstiftmuseum, Dillingen a.d. Donau. The runes are on the bottom and on the lid. On the bottom a maker's or writer's formula, alagupleuba: dedun. On the lid is arogisd.

The s is very small; its upper part may have weathered away.

The first part contains two female names. alagup is a PN, nsf. jō-stem Alagun(th), consisting of ala- ‘all’ and -gu(n)th ‘battle’. leuba is also a PN, nsf. n-stem Leuba. After the division marks follows de?un = de(d)un 3 pl. pret. ind. ‘they did, made’, cf. OHG tuon ‘to do, make’. I take it that the ladies made the runes, rather than the box. Or they were the commissioners. arogisd can be divided in arogis and d. Arog(IS) is a PN, nsm. a-stem, consisting of Aro- ‘eagle’, and the well-known name-element -g(s)(l). One might interpret the rune d to render t (cf. Seebold (1990:160 and Braune/Eggers § 163) because of the OHG sound shift d > t. The rune name dag was pronounced in OHG as tag (see above, Oberflacht), but was still written d. Some manuscript runerows show the replacement of the rune name dag by OHG tac, e.g. in the Leiden ms. Voss. Lat. F.125, St. Gallen ms. 270, Kassel ms. Theol. F.65, as well as in the signature of the scribe Ratgar in St. Gallen ms. 127 (Derolez 1954:194, 217, 271, 441; and Derolez 1983:90). Cf. also isd = ist in Weimar III, below, nr. 46. Also the d’s in the above dedun may thus be interpreted to be pronounced as t’s. Hence we may read here Arogist or possibly Arogast, taken that the runecarver omitted the sidetwigs of an intended a. Arogast, then, is a PN, nsm. i-stem, -gast < Gmc *gastiz.

36. Schretzheim II (Bayrisch Schwaben, Germany), silver disc-brooch with almandines, dated 2nd h. 6th c. Found in 1946 in a woman’s grave in a row-gravefield. Kept in the same museum as Schretzheim I and III. The inscription is damaged, some runes are lost. The remaining runes read: sipwagadin leubo.

The s is in five strokes. The first word may be read si(n)pwagadin, consisting of si(n)b- (nasal omitted before homorganic b) f. ‘companion’ and wag(j)a(n)d-in nsf. jō-stem, a compound of a pres. part.: ‘travelling’, and the fem. ending -in < *-injð (Braune/Eggers § 211). Loveden Hill (English Corpus, nr.7) has Sippeæad ‘companion in battle’. Sipwagadin might thus mean: ‘female travel companion’. According to Opitz (1977:38f.) wagjandin is dsm. n-stem, meaning ‘to the (male) traveller’ and pointing to Wodan, “the viator indefessus”. leubo is a PN, nsm. n-stem ‘Leubo’, or an adj. nsm./f/n. a-/jð-stem ‘love’ (Braune/Eggers § 267). The text may mean ‘Leubo (love) to my travel companion’ = spouse?
37. **Schretzheim III** (Bayrisch Schwaben, Germany), iron ring-sword, dated 2nd h. 6th c. Found in 1894 in a man's grave in a row-gravefield. Seen in the above mentioned (nr. 35) museum. The runes are made by way of silverthread inlay; this would point to the smith as the maker (the same practice as in Wurmlingen, see below). The inscription consists of a rune-cross (the rune g) and four runes: **a b a r** which are attached to the extremities of the cross. (Klingenberg & Koch 1974). Thus one may read **gabar** or **abar g**.

Other rune-crosses occur in **Soest, Kirchheim, Undley, Kragehul**. **gabar** is perhaps a hypocoristic PN, nsm. **Gabar < *Gabahari**, consisting of **gaba**- f. ‘gift’ and **hari or heri** m. ‘warrior’ **ja-stem**, Gmc **harjaz**. With Saxo Grammaticus we find a personage with the name **Gevarus**, which, according to Simek (1984:127), may be derived from an earlier Saxon PN **Geb(a)heri**.

A ring-sword was a typical prestige sword, used among the Merovingian elite and granted to a faithful warrior by his leader or king.

39. **Schwangau** (Bayern, Germany), gilt-silver **Scheibenfibel or S-fibel**, dated around 600. Found in 1981 in an Alamannic woman's grave. Seen in the Prähistorische Staatssammlung, München. The runes have a vertical long-stretched form, are carefully and clearly carved. They read **aebi**.

The **b** has its loops far apart. **aebi** is a PN nsm. **i- or ja-stem AEbi**. In OHG, the spelling **ai** is older than **ae** (cf. *Pforzen, Freilaubersheim, Weingarten I*) and becomes in later OHG **ei**.

40. **Soest** (Westfalen, Germany), gold disc-brooch with almandines, dated 3rd th. 6th c. Found in 1930 in a rich woman's grave in a row-gravefield. Seen in the Soester Burgmuseum. The runes read: **rada:daþa gatano**

**gatano** is written as a rune-cross **×** with four runes: **a t a n** attached to the extremities of the cross (cf. **Schretzheim III**, nr. 37 and **Kirchheim** nr. 22). An **o** is written separately. The first two words are separated by a division mark. **dapa** is a PN, nsf. **ð-stem Datha**, **rada** might be a PN nsf. **ð-stem Rada**, but since the middle dental is written **d** and not **p** as in **Dapa**, I suggest **rada** to be a verbform, actually **rāðan(e)** (with ending **-ē < -ai**), cf. OHG **rātan**, OS **rādan** ‘to guess, to read’, 3 sg. pres. opt. ‘may Datha guess (read)’. The final **a** in **rada** may be intended as analogy to the first **a** (vowel harmony) or to rhyme with Datha. **gatano** may be a PN, nsm. **n-stem**. Obviously, Datha should guess the name that was hidden in the rune-cross. A parallel case may be the Charnay-inscription, in which Liano had to find out (the name of) Idda.
41. **Steindorf** (Oberbayern, Germany), sax, dated 2nd h. 6th c. (Düwel 1994:271). Found in 1929 in a man's grave as the only gravegift. Seen in the Prähistorische Staatssammlung, München. The iron sax is badly corroded; parts of the runes and of the ornamentation are gone. The runes were carved in double lines and probably nielloed with silver inlay. The opening sign is a kind of triangle. The initial rune **h** and the following **u** form a bindrune; the third rune could be **i**, the fourth an **s**. Two strokes follow. One is **i**, the next has been damaged by corrosion and cannot be reconstructed. The last runes can be deciphered as **a**, **l** and **d**. Tentatively I read **huisi?ald**.

This may denote **Huisiwald**, a name that reminds of a Bavarian noble family: the **Huosi**, which are mentioned in the *Lex Baiuwariorum*. The second part of the name may be **-wald**, inf. **waldan** 'to rule'. Another interpretation has Düwel (1994:271, with ref.).

42. **Thorsberg I** (Schleswig-Holstein, Germany), bronze sword-chape. Seen in the Museum Gottorf at Schleswig. This object and the Thorsbjerg shieldboss belong to a votive deposit of war booty. The objects' provenance is somewhere between Lower Elbe and Rhine. There are runes on both sides of the object, one side: **owlþuþewaz**; other side: **niwajemariz**.

**owlþuþewaz** is probably a PN, nsm. **a**-stem **Wolþuþewaz**, with reverse writing **ow**- for **wo**-; cf. *Fallward ksamella* for **skamella**. **Wolþu**- cf. Go **wulþus** 'exuberance, sumptuousness'. This is followed by **-þewaz** 'servant', nsm. **a**-stem. **niwajemariz** may be taken as an epithet or cognomen **ni-waje-mariz**, nsm. **i**-stem, "of immaculate repute" (Antonsen, 1975:30) or, literally, "nicht-schlechtberühmt" (Krause 1971:167; Seebold 1994:73). A root vowel **-o**- instead of the expected **-u**- in **wolþu**- < **wulþ-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 (1994:106ff.).

43. **Thorsberg II** (Schleswig-Holstein, Germany), shieldboss, bronze, **aïsgzh**. Seen in the same museum as the above, nr. 42. The inscription is on the inner side of the shieldboss. The runes run left, and read: **aïsgzh**.

The part **aïsg** may be emended to **ais[i]g[a/i]z**, and interpreted as a PN: **Aisigaz** or **Aïsigiz** nsm. **a**- or **i**- stem. Krause (1971:72) read **ais(i)g(a)z** "der Dahinstürmende". If so, the stem-vowel may be missing, though the nominative ending **-z** is present; cf. **gaubz**. (*Illedpur V*, Danish Corpus). Another possibility may be to take the sequence as a compound, of **ais(i)**- 'come storming in', cf. ON **eisa** 'to rush forward'; and **g[aïsa]z** = Gmc **g(aisa)z** 'spear', nsm. **a**-stem, cf. ON **geirr**. The meaning might be 'come, storm in, spear' (as defiant device of the shield). For **h** at least two possibilities may exist; it is either an ideographic rune **h** representing its name **hagala**- 'hail', or an abbreviation. Antonsen (1975:30 and 1995:131ff.) takes **aïsgz** to be representing **aisk-z** 'seeker', and **h** for ***hagala**- 'hail', thus he gets: 'seeker of hail',
an "eminently suitable designation for a shield when we realize that 'hail' is a metaphor for 'shower of spears and arrows'" (Antonsen 1995:132). This is certainly true, but during my research I became more and more convinced that the ancient runographers were particularly precise in their orthography, and I cannot imagine why they would choose a \(g\) for rendering a \(k\). I take it that the object, the shield, with a shieldboss made of \(a\)is, Lat. \(a\)es ‘bronze’ is addressed.

44, 45. Weimar I, II (Thüringen, Germany), a pair of gilt-silver bow-fibulae, dated 1st h. 6th c. Found in a woman's grave. The gravefield was excavated between 1895 - 1902. (Arntz & Zeiss 1939:360ff.). All Weimar finds have been seen in the Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte Charlottenburg, Berlin. With Weingarten the oldest attestations of double-barred \(h\). The runes are meticulously cut by a skilled carver. According to Arntz & Zeiss 1939:364ff. and Opitz 1977:46, another knob carries runes reading \(leob\). This inscription is very difficult to perceive now.

Brooch I. haribrig liub leob

HFRIBRIX NKB MMB

On the footplate is haribrig. This is a PN, nsf. \(j\)-stem Haribrig, consisting of hari- ‘army’, and -brig = -bųg, ‘protection’, cf. Oettingen. The brooch has three knobs left of a total of seven. On one of the knobs is carved liub, if substantive, it is an \(a\)-stem ‘love’, if adjective, it is a nsm./fn. \(a\)- or \(o\)-stem ‘dear, beloved’ (cf. liub in Niederstötzingen, nr. 28). leob may be a PN, nsm. \(a\)-stem (compare to leubo in Schretzheim II, nr. 36, and leub in Engers, nr. 15).

Brooch II. The runes read: sigibl/ad hiba bubo

EIXIBRD HBF BNBO

sigibl/ad is on the footplate. The runes are vague and abraded. The penultimate rune may be either \(a\) or \(l\) in Sigib(a)(l)d, a PN nsm. \(a\)-stem, consisting of sigi- ‘victory’, and -bald ‘bold, quick’, adj. \(a\)-stem. The last rune, \(d\), is carved on the concave side of the bottom of the footplate and only half of the rune can be perceived: \(\overset{\cdot}{d}\). The brooch has five knobs left of the original seven. One of the knobs bears neatly carved runes, reading hiba, which may be a female PN. Kaufmann (1965:12, 14, 141) lists Hibo, a petname for Hildibert, a masc. PN. I wonder whether hiba might be an alternative spelling for hīwa ‘spouse’. Another knob has bubo, probably a man's petname, see for instance Kaufmann 1965:132).

46. Weimar III (Thüringen, Germany), bronze belt buckle, dated 1st h. 6th c. Found in a woman's grave, during the same excavation period as Weimar I and II. Runes on the middle bar of the buckle read: ida:bigina:hahwar:

IDFBXiHF:HHFPFR

ida is a PN, nsf. \(o\)-stem or nsm. \(n\)-stem ‘Id(d)a’, cf. Charnay. bigina is also a PN, n/asf. \(j\)-\(o\)-stem, Bi(r)gina, consisting of bi(r)g- ‘protection’, (cf. Oettingen and Weimar I), and the
female suffix *-įnjo- or -in (Braune/Eggers § 211 Anm. 3a, 3b). **hahwar** is also a PN, *Hahwar*, nsm. *-i*stem, consisting of hah- ‘hedge, fence’, and -war(i), cf. OHG *warī*, *wēri* ‘defence’, OHG *werian* ‘to resist, to defence’.

On the other side of the bar is: **:awimund:isd:**?e??a:hahwar**.

**awimund** is a dithematic PN, nsm. *a*-stem *Awimund*, consisting of *awi*- (cf. awa *Nordendorf I, awija Oettingen*), and -mund (cf. Rasuwamu(n)id, *Arlon*, above, nr. 3). According to Seebold (1990:160), **isd** should be read *ist* ‘is’, 3 sg. pres. ind., inf. OHG *wesan*, cf. also Braune/Eggers § 163, and see **arogisd**, above, *Schretzheim* I. nr. 35. Unfortunately the rest of the inscription is heavily corroded and cannot be deciphered; certainly there is no **leob** as Arntz/Zeiss read, because the leftovers of at least five or six runes can be seen. On one of the edges of the buckle some runes can be noticed, but these are rather abraded. I could only perceive **iduni**, written from left to right. The **u** rune is upside down. *Iduni* might be a female PN.

47. **Weimar IV** (Thüringen, Germany), amber pearl, from the same grave as nr. 46 (see above), thus dated 1st h. 6th c. Lost. The runes on the photograph in Arntz & Zeiss I read as **:piuw:ida?:e??a:hahwar**

**piuw** nsf. *jō*-stem ‘maid, servant’; **ida** PN *I(d)da* and **hahwar** PN *Hahwar*, see above, nr. 41. Krause (1966:290) read **piup** "Freundliches, Gutes".


**aerguþ** PN nsf. *jō*-stem *Aergu(n)þ*. Krause (1966:306) read **alirgup**, but that cannot be right. The second rune is certainly *e*, the hook between both headstaffs even shows a little crossing. The same graph can be noted in Schwangau, aeberi nr. 39. Note that we find here also the spelling *ae* for older *ai*, like in Schwangau and Freilaubersheim. OHG *ai > ae > ē* before *r*, cf. OHG, OS šra- in *Éragunth*, which is synonymous with older *Aergunth*. The first element is *aer-* < Gmc *aizō* ‘honor, mercy, gift, regard, respect, esteem’; the second element is -gu(n)þ ‘battle, fight’, cf. Neudingen-Baar II and Eichstetten. After the division dots some lines can be distinguished, but I take them to be no writing signs. **feha** PN nsf. *ō*- or *n*-stem *Feha*, possibly, with grammatical change, connected with OHG *faginōn* ‘to enjoy oneself’. **writ** may be 3 sg. pres. ind. (without the ending -it in wrītī), or it is a pret. ind. but then one would expect *wraet* (in accordance with the spelling **aergup**).
I suppose the pres. ind. is meant, ‘F. writes’, inf. Gmc *wrītan. For ia I have no interpretation. Curiously, also Charnay (above, nr. 11) has a sequence iia. The h rune with a double bar belongs to the oldest attests.


This is a PN, nsm. n-stem Dado.

50. Wurmlingen, (Baden-Württemberg, Germany), iron spearhead, dated around 600 or a little later. Seen in the Württembergisches Landesmuseum, Stuttgart. Ornaments and runes were inlaid with silver. The runic part is preceded by a sign with unknown meaning: §. It reminds of the Anglo-Saxon beonna coins. The legends contain the sign γ, meaning ‘rex’. Upon the opening sign of the Wurmlingen inscription follows a word-divider, then runes :dorih, which may be (part of) a PN nsm. a-stem Dorih, possibly second part of a PN like Theodorich.

3. Illegible and/or uninterpretable inscriptions

The finds of Dischingen, Hailfingen, Hohenstadt, Peigen, Tannheim, Trossingen, Bopfingen are in the Württembergisches Landesmuseum, Stuttgart. The Herbrechtingen brooch is in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nürnberg. The Gräfelfing and München-Aubing finds are in the Prähistorische Staatssammlung, München. Weingarten III is in the hands of the excavator.

51. Chéhéry, disc-brooch, 2nd h. 6th c. (private owner) DEOS DE htid:E sumngik (Düwel 1994:235f.).

52. Dischingen II, bow-fibula, mid 6th c. el/a

53. Gräfelfing, spatha, 1st h. 7th c. d/m w


55. Hailfingen II, S-fibula, mid 6th c. ??daana/l


57. Hohenstadt, bow-fibula, 3rd th. 6th c. u g/n n d/m h (ah?) j ugn/a ll

58. München-Aubing II, five-knob-fibula, mid 6th c. bd
59. München-Aubing III, disc-brooch, date unknown, nm?u/k

60. Peigen, disc-brooch, 2nd h. 6th c. eh - udo fh h single-barred.

61. Tannheim, hinge, date unknown, ??dui

62. Trossingen I, bow-fibula, 3rd th. 6th c. fl/a

63. 64. Trossingen II, two pairs of gilt-silver strap ends, 3rd th. 6th c. (Düwel 1994:b:264).

II. maisdi(?) III. hj/g


The Weser inscriptions (Niedersachsen, Germany)

These inscriptions were carved on fossilized bones, which were found in 1927/28 along the banks of the Weser-mouth. The bones are kept in the Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde und Vorgeschichte Oldenburg.

Pieper (1989) dated the runic bones to the 5th c., possibly the first half. Antonsen (1993:4f.) dates them no later than 400 AD. Dating the inscriptions is awkward, since they were made on yet subfossil bones. Provenance and context are suspicious; the bones are said to have been dredged up and found scattered along the banks of the river Weser; the runic inscriptions, however, seem, judging from their forms, to be closely connected. The runes have deviating, unique forms, not at all resembling known runes on bone objects. They are reminiscent of wide-cut runes on stone, such as on the Haithabu stones, formerly exposed at Kiel, nowadays at Schleswig. Kiel harbour was the place where the finder of the Weser bones worked for some time as a member of the Kriegsmarine. Since part of the Weser bones turned out to be falsifications, one must allow for the fact that the whole lot could be forged. In his investigations based on material science and criminological methods, the German archaeologist Pieper (1989) showed that part of the finds was doubtlessly forged, but the carvings in four subfossilized bones could in no way proved to be recent carved and therefore false. These were the only bones out of a total of seven bearing runelike inscriptions and pictures. The wear and tear the incisions would be expected to show after aged about 1500 years, were present; moreover, some of the weathering could not have been forged. (See Pieper 1989; and Antonsen 1993).

According to Pieper's transcription, the runic text on bone 4988, which also shows a depiction of a man with a ‘feather’ or ‘horn’ on his forehead, carrying an axe and holding a lance toward a horned animal, may be read latam ing hari kunni ing we hagal.
Pieper took the sign \( \text{\textae} \) to represent the so-called ing-rune, and transliterated likewise ing (see above). Otherwise the sign could be taken as a word-divider. Pieper interprets the text as latam : inghari kunni : ingwe / hagal "Lassen wir Inghari. Geschlecht des Ingwe. Verderben".
The text on bone 4990 (showing a depiction of a Roman sailing vessel, having its mainsail on the wrong side of the mast) may read loko : her.

\[ \text{\textae} \text{\textae} \text{\textae} \text{\textae} \]

Pieper interprets loko her "Ich schaue hier".
A bone artifact, nr. 4991, with a hole in one end, has a geometrical drawing and the following text: ulu hari dede.

\[ \text{\textae} \text{\textae} \text{\textae} \text{\textae} \]

Interpreted by Pieper as uluhari dede "Uluhari machte".
For an elaborate discussion of the interpretations, see Antonsen 1993.
Antonsen (1993:12ff.) proposes new readings and interpretations. His transliteration is the same as Pieper’s, only the sign \( \text{\textae} \) is taken as a word division sign. loko : her / latam \( \text{\textae} \) hari / kunni \( \text{\textae} \) we / hagal / uluhari dede. "I see here [a Roman vessel]. Let us, fighting kin, unleash woe-hail [i.e., battle]. Uluhari did (this) [i.e. executed this message]"
The language, according to Antonsen (1993), is West Germanic, on account of the gemination in kunni and the presence of the verb dede.

4. No runes
Bopfingen ring and one of the bow-fibulae from Trossingen. Both display a cross-like sign, probably scratches, deliberate or not.

5. The shift \( ai > ae \); the interchange of \( u \) and \( w \), and of \( b \) and \( w \).
If the orthography \( ai \) is older than \( ae \) (cf. Braune/Eggers §43,44), we may, in view of the archaeological dating of the objects, date the shift \( ai > ae \) to the first half of the 6th c. Neudingen Baar II with urait is dated to the 1st half of the 6th c. Freilaubersheim with wraet is dated to the 3rd th. 6th c. Weingarten I; aergup is dated mid 6th c., Schwangau with aebi is dated around 600.
The writing of \( u \) for \( w \), such as in uiu wëju (bracteate Nebenstedt (I)-B), is found on other Continental objects from the first half of the 6th c.: possibly in Oettingen auijabrg and certainly in Neudingen-Baar II urait. Possible spellings of \( b \) for \( w \) and vice versa, may be found on Heilbronn-Böckingen: arwi instead of arbi, and Weimar I: hiba instead of hiwa, both 6th c.
6. Summary and Conclusions

The Continental Corpus consists of 65 runic objects. I have listed a total of 50 legible and interpretable items; 15 runic inscriptions are uninterpretable or illegible. All inscriptions are carved on loose, relatively small, personal objects, nearly all of which survived as gravegifts. Most objects can be defined as prestige- and luxury goods, because of the material (gold, silver, almandine-inlay) and type of object, such as ring-swords. Nearly all runic objects have been found in rich to very rich graves, even princely graves of men, women and children.

The lay-out and the contents of the texts show great similarities. There is little variation in the type of texts, which mostly consist of names. As to the verbs referring to the practice of writing runes, we find urait, wraet, writ ‘wrote, writes’ and, if the verb ‘to do’ refers to runic writing, de(d)u(n) ‘did, made’ can be found twice. The verbform wo(r)gt ‘made’ is found once and is apparently a maker’s formula. Furthermore, with regard to verb forms, there is aig ‘I own’, upf[…]nbai ‘may he/she find out, get to know’, muni ‘may she remember’, golida ‘greeted’, gihali ‘you must make well’, klef ‘fastened’, gasokun ‘(they) condemned, fought’, rada ‘may guess’, isd for ist ‘he/she is’.

I have counted 31 masculine names, 27 feminine names, and 5 names that can be either masculine or feminine. One name is that of a dog. Further there are 15 verbforms. There are 15 sentences, containing a subject, a verbform and/or objects. 13 inscriptions consist of one word; 12 inscriptions have two words; 22 consist of more than 2 words with a maximum of 6. There are 3 fuþark-quotes.

The overall impression is that runic writing was restricted to a private atmosphere, in which especially personal names were of interest, presumably with a somewhat secretive, intimate purpose. One may wonder, whether in these inscriptions it is also the ‘gift-and-exchange’ policy that is in evidence. The giving-away of objects with someone’s (pet)name in runes upon it may have been some special privilege within certain families. The fact that the inscriptions are invisible to the public eye in nearly all cases (which was certainly done intentionally, as may be inferred from the extremely tiny lines on the back of nearly all objects), strengthens this impression. In contrast with runic material from other areas, the Continental tradition shows a remarkably limited, one-sided picture. The fact that we are dealing almost exclusively with gravefinds, consisting of mostly precious, small personal belongings, points to the fact that only one application of runic writing has become known to us. Objects and texts are confined to a particular category: of the owners (the deceased) and their closest relatives or relations. This may explain the enormous number of personal names. Texts that relate to more mundane practices would of course show more variety, such as can be found (although sparsely) in the Danish, Dutch and English traditions.

71 Shortly before closing this manuscript, seven new-finds, from 1995 and 1996, were brought to my attention. New-finds from 1995, published in Nytt om Runer 1996 (publ. 1997), p.13, are: (1) a silver disc-brooch with almandines from Gomadingen (Baden Württemberg), dated 2nd th. 6th c., reading ilgug or ilgul; (2) a silver disc-brooch with almandines from Kirchheim-Teck (Baden-Württemberg), dated 2nd h. 6th c., reading arugis. A third gilt-silver bow-fibula (not yet published) is from Lauchheim, dated 2nd h. 6th c., found in a rich woman's grave in 1995. The runic legend is aonofada. In 1996 another find from Pforzen turned up. The object is an ivory ring, which belonged to a bronze disc. It is dated around 600. The runes read ???aodlipurait:runa:. In a grave field near Donaueschingen two bracteates were found in a grave, dated 2nd h. 6th c. The runic legend is alu ota. I thank Prof. Düwel for mentioning the latter finds to me in a letter of June 1997.
The Continental runic inscriptions are found on the following artefacts:

- 39 brooches, all found in or considered to originate from women's graves.
- 11 weapons, or weapon-parts, all men's belongings
- 4 fittings and belt-buckles, belonging to men's gear
- 3 strap ends, both men and women's gear
- 2 amulet-caskets, from women's graves
- 2 amber pearls, from women's graves
- 1 ivory box, from a child's grave
- 1 neckring, provenance unknown, probably a man's adornment
- 1 wooden stave, weaving-implement, from a woman's grave
- 1 silver spoon, provenance unknown

It appears that the Continental runewriters were weaponsmiths and jewellers, who carved the inscriptions by order of someone belonging to the elite or upper middle-class. The limited vocabulary is also partly due to the small proportions of the objects. The texts belong to a category that is most frequent in runic heritage: owners', makers' and writers' formulae, and dedications. It appears that the texts were generally spelled correctly, which may mean that both client and artisan knew how to spell. This suggests an elaborate use of runes, an assumption not supported by substantial evidence. Texts like: Boso wrote the runes, or Blithgunth wrote the runes, suggest that the runecarver signed the inscription (cf. also Page 1995:307). Yet, I do not believe that in these exclusively personal, often intimate inscriptions the presence of the name of the artisan would have been appreciated. I am inclined to think that Boso or Blithgunth are the names of the commissioners, who did not personally write the text, but who ordered the inscription.