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

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VII. 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^a: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^a: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 AD⁶⁶. The brooch itself is of local manufacture, and so is the inscription, made in the so-called tremolo-style⁶⁷.

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

⁶⁶ At the beginning of the first century AD, the Roman empire reached its largest expansion. On the continent the troops 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 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 Øvre 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.

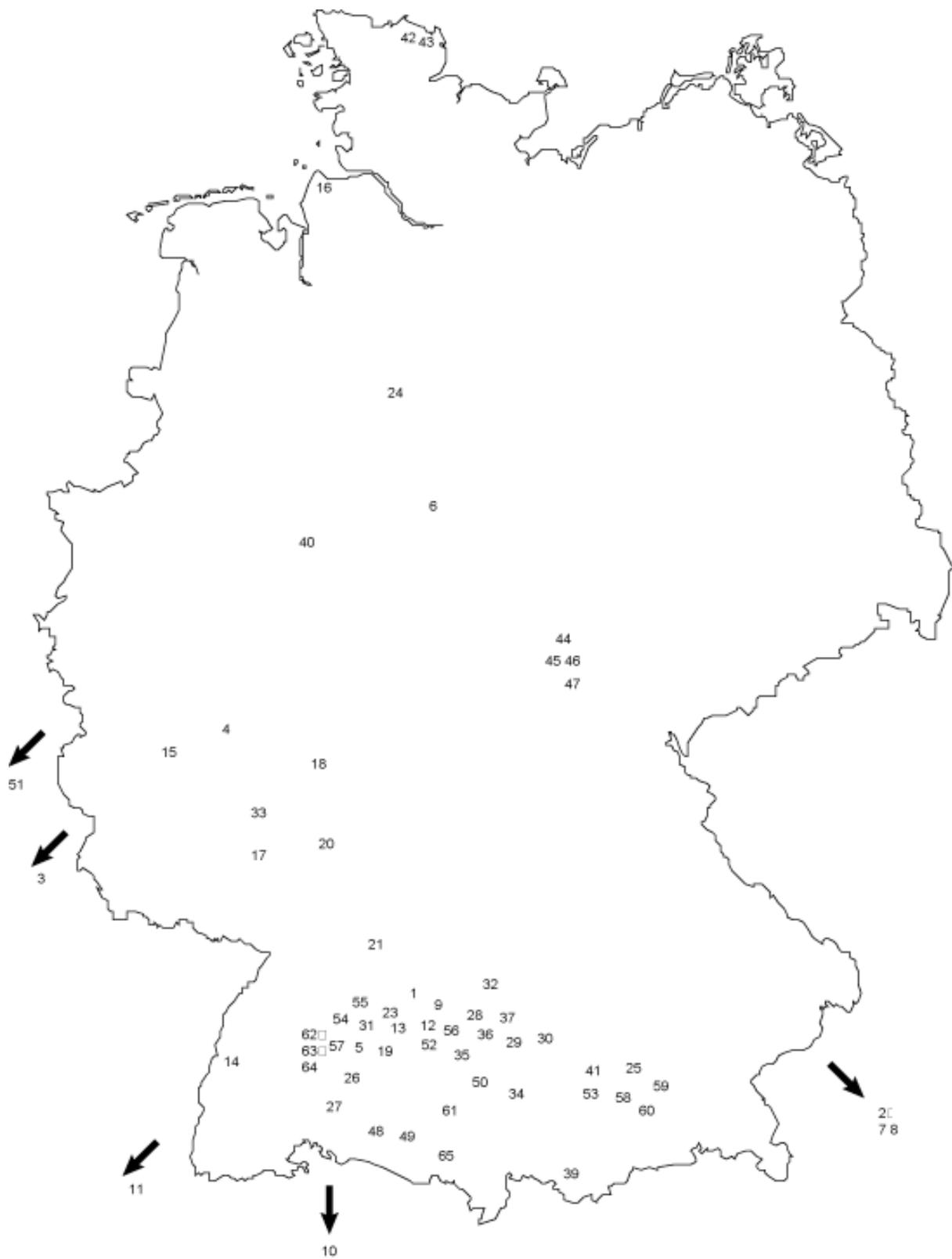
Kirchheim Teck and Neudingen-Baar I; 'rune-crosses' occur for instance in Soest and Schretzheim III. The loops of the **b** rune are mostly widely separated, which occurs fairly often in Continental and Frisian inscriptions (cf. also Odenstedt 1990:93-96), but less frequently in early English inscriptions. 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 graveyard. The runic inscriptions (if genuine!) from the Weser estuary cannot be dated, since the inscriptions were made on subfossile bones (Pieper 1989; Stoklund 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 Reallexikon*: '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, Dischingen (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.

†XRN

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**.

ƿNÞfIN<XÞ fIX : <ϥf

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 \uparrow apparently is [iŋ] here, but might as well be [ŋ] (Odenstedt 1990:103ff. with ref.). This rune is followed by **i**, but if the sequence is reversed, it reads *kinga*, *ō*-stem. This would be more suitable, since there is a semantical difference between *kingia* and *kinga* (Düwel 1992^a:80). ON and NlC *kinga* means 'brooch', while NlC *kingja* is a sort of buckle. 'Jl 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**

XOMN† Ɱ M ꝛ RƿENPF NMP 

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)u[n]d** is probably also a PN, nsm. *Rasuw-amund*; the first element is **rasuwa-**, cf. OE *ræswa* 'leader, ruler'. The (**m**) in **rasuwa(m)u[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 *ō*-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 *Votriilo* he suggests to read a PN *wōpro*.

4. *Bad Ems* (Hessen, Germany), fragment of a gilt-silver bow-fibula, dated 3rd th. 6th c. Found in 1878, probably Frankish (Werner 1935:329f.). Now in Römisches-Germanisches Museum, Köln.

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**].

MFMFN† NBFMF

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 **maþla-* 'redenswerte Sache', with svarabhakti *-a-*: **maþala*, **maðala*. Cf. also OHG *mahal* 'Gerichtsstätte, Versammlung' (Gottschald 1982:337). The **d** rune in the inscription denotes the voiced allophone of *þ* according to Krause. *Arum* (The Netherlands) shows a parallel: **edæ** = *ēðæ* = *ēthæ* 'oath'. **madali** could be a man's name, nsm. *ja*-stem *Madali*; or a woman's name derived from *Madala*, nsf. *ō*- 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) *Sipæbaed*.

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 zdnloamiluk.

<NMM1X1HMX11

9. Bopfingen (Baden-Württemberg, Germany), golden(?) disc-brooch with runes. Dated end 6th c. Found in a woman's grave. Seen in Württembergisches Landesmuseum, Stuttgart. The runes read **mauo**.



This may be taken either as *mauō* or *mawō*, 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* dsf. *ō*-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 aftmu**.



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 *bu* 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.

11. Charnay (Burgundy, France), silver bow-fibula. Dated 2nd th. 6th c. Found in 1830 in a Frankish row-gravefield (Düwel & Roth 1981:372-375 and Düwel 1994:278f.) on the bank of the Saône. Seen in Musée des Antiquités Nationales, St. Germain-en-Laye, France.

The runes are carved between framing lines on the headplate: **fuparkgwhnijpztblem :upfnpai:id dan:liano**



On the footplate is: **īia**. 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 *fupark*; the final runes: **d** and **o** are abraded. **p** has the form of an upside down **e** rune: ʞ .

The text continues with *uþf(i)npai*, 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. *ō*-stem *Liano*. The **I** in **liano** is a rare variety, it has the form of the Anglo-Saxon *cēn* rune 𐌺 and is also found in *Griesheim* below, nr. 20. Curiously enough, the **I** in the *fupark* on the same brooch has the common form 𐌺 . The **k** rune in the *fupark* is rendered 𐌿 . For **īia** I have no interpretation. (Arntz 1939:173, 192; Krause 1966:20f.; Antonsen 1975:77). 'fupark. May Liano get to know/find out Idda'.

12. *Dischingen I* (Baden-Württemberg, Germany), one of a pair of silver bow-fibulae with almandine-inlay. Dated mid 6th c. Found in 1954, now missing.

Both brooches are inscribed.

I: **wigka** or **winka**.

𐌿 𐌺 𐌿 𐌺 𐌿 𐌺 𐌿

II: **ea** or **el**, see below nr. 52.

wigka is probably a PN, nsf. with diminutive ending *-ka*, *ō*- or *n*-stem, first part *wīg-* < Gmc **wīg-*, OHG *wīg*, *wīc*, 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' \wedge , which is also found in *Pforzen*, *München-Aubing III*, *Watchfield* (England), and possibly *Neudingen-Baar*.

13. *Donzdorf* (Baden-Württemberg, Germany), a pair of Scandinavian silver bow-fibulae, in all likelihood imported from Jutland. Dated 1st h. 6th c. Found in 1964 in a rich woman's grave in a row-gravefield. Seen in Württembergisches Landesmuseum, Stuttgart.

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

𐌺 𐌿 𐌺 𐌿 𐌺 𐌿 𐌺 𐌿

Runes 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 (1994^b:237, 265) this is an instance of the very rare makers' inscriptions in the German corpus (the others are, according to Düwel, *Wurmlingen* and *Schretzheim III*). The **eho** inscription is part of the overall ornamentation of the back of the brooch. **eho** may be a feminine PN, nsf. *ō*-stem *Ehō*. 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*, *Æpa*, 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 **æhæ** *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 1994^b:144f.).

14. *Eichstetten* (Baden-Württemberg, Germany), silver mouthpiece of a spatha. Dated mid 6th c. Found in 1980 in a man's grave. Seen in Museum für Ur- und Frühgeschichte 'Colombischlössle', Freiburg.

The runes read: **fiaginþ muni wiwogan**.

𐌿𐌺𐌹𐌶𐌺𐌸 𐌿𐌺𐌹𐌶𐌺𐌸 𐌿𐌺𐌹𐌶𐌺𐌸 𐌿𐌺𐌹𐌶𐌺𐌸

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* †, otherwise in Germany known from Anglo-Saxon runerows in manuscripts and the GANDERSHEIM box (Schwab 1973). The *Sternrune* is epigraphically attested in England: DOVER **jislheard** and THORNHILL III **jilsuiþ**, and in the Netherlands *Westeremden A* **adujislu jisuhil[1]du**. The rune appears in these five cases in the same sequence *jī-/gī-* (see also Parsons 1994:201-204). In **fiaginþ** the last two runes **þ** 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. *jō*-stem *Fiaginth*, cf. *Fiaspurc* (Förstemann 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 *wīw-* 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 *wīgant* 'warrior'. A connection with *wīthen* '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 attestations of 'consecrator, consecrating' are doubtful (perhaps except for bracteate inscriptions; about the problem of who consecrates and what is to be consecrated, see Seebold 1994^b:612ff.). *Wīwo-* may be a variation on OHG names like *Wīwa*, *Wīwila*. Förstemann (1990:1626) mentions VIV as an enigmatic root; Peterson (1994^b: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. nsm./f./n. *a-/ō*-stem 'dear, beloved' (see also *Niederstotzingen*, 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).

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: \uparrow . Since this letter is in between two consonants, it might denote a vowel. The rune is a parallel to \uparrow and \downarrow in *Britsum* (The Netherlands, nr. 14), transliterated **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. *ō*-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. *ō*-stem, *Bada*, cf. *Bad Ems*. **gihiali** = *gihaili* 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 *heilīf*. 'hail, bliss, salvation'; **dmiu** = **d[o]mi[n]u[s]** 'Lord'; '(my) hail (and) salvation (is the) Lord'. In OS, *gibada* 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.

ᚱᚱᚹᚹᚱ

Düwel (1972:134-141) read and interpreted **ra[u]zwi** < Gmc **rauzwīh* "der Rohr (=Speer)-Geweihete"; cf. Gmc **rauza/rausa* 'tube, hollow stem'.

rauz- may mean 'spear' or 'sword', cf. ON *reyr* '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 *Rauzwī(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 Hading brothers.

25. München-Aubing I, (Bayern, Germany), a pair of Langobardic? gilt-silver *Fünfknopffibeln*. Dated mid 6th c. Found in 1939 in a woman's grave, nr. 304, in a row-gravefield. Seen in the Prähistorische Staatssammlung, München.

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

ᚱᚱᚹᚹᚱ ᚱᚱᚹᚹᚱ

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. *ō*-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 gibœtæ 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.

26. Neudingen-Baar I (Baden-Württemberg, Germany), gilded bronze bow-fibula, possibly Frankish, dated late 6th c. Found in 1988 in a woman's grave. Seen in Landesamt für Denkmalpflege, Freiburg.

The inscription is carved in three rows below each other and is partly abraded, due to weathering and oxidization 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/ulefil þa**.

ᚱᚱᚹᚹᚱ | ᚱᚱᚹᚹᚱ ᚱᚱᚹᚹᚱ

The last two runes are written as a bindrune **þa**. 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. *ō*-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'.

inscription might be read from right to left *de(d)u(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^a:55).

29. *Nordendorf I* (Bayern, Germany), gilt-silver bow-fibula, dated mid 6th c. Found in 1843. Seen in Römisches Museum, Augsburg.

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: **logapore wodan wiguponar??**. The second part: **awa (I)leubwini??**.

ᚠᚲᚦᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ ᚱᚲᚱᚱᚱ ᚱᚲᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ ᚱᚱᚱ ᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ

First row: **logapore**, npm. *ja*-stem *logapore* ‘intriguers’ or ‘magicians’ (Düwel 1983:128 and 1991:278). This interpretation is based on a word found in OE glosses: *logper*, *logeper*, used to translate two Latin words: the Greek loanword *cacomicanos* ‘mischiefplotting’, and *marsius* ‘snake-charmer’ (Schwab 1981:42ff., with ref.). Second row: **wodan** GN nsm. *a*-stem *Wōdan*. Third row: **wiguponar** GN nsm. *a*-stem, *Wīguthonar*. The part *wīgu-* is commonly associated with OHG *wīhen* ‘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: **pur uiki** ‘may Thor hallow’). But, again, Wulf (1994:37, with ref.) considers a consecrating function of Thor contested. When considering *wīgu-* derived from OHG *wīgan* ‘to fight’, a more suitable epithet would arise: *fighting-Donar*. There is a scratch that looks like **I** attached to the top of the **o** rune of **ponar**.

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

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 **I** rune of **(I)leubwini** is invisible now. The word ends in a confusion of signs, probably because **(I)leubwini** imminently coincides with the end of **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. *Leubwini* is a PN or epithet, nsm. *i*-stem ‘dear friend’. The whole text is interpreted by Düwel (1982) as an abolition formula concerning the pagan gods Wodan and Wiguthonar: ‘intriguers are Wodan and Wiguthonar’, 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 *-e* of *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^b:358ff.).

I would not exclude the possibility that the text mentions a *Göttertrias*, including the mysterious *Logapore* next to Wodan and Donar. Schwab (1981:45) interprets *logapore* as a

dative singular of a personal name, the name of the receiver of the brooch. I regard her remark about the meaning of *marsius* very interesting: "in the OE glosses to Aldhelm's *De Laudibus Virginitatis* the plural *marsi* is interpreted by *incantatores* and is glossed *þyrsa(s)* 'demons, sorcerers' and *wyrmgalera(s)* 'snakecharmers'". There is one Germanic god who is associated with snakes, and who is of a demonic nature: *Loki* (cf. De Vries 1957:262f. and Dumézil 1973:63). Schwab (1981:43) and Düwel (1982:80ff.) provide several interpretations of and references to *logapore*. Schwab suggests that in the gloss *marsius = logeþer* in Cotton MS Cleopatra A III in the immediate vicinity of the entry *mars = tiw*, there might be a possible confusion of the scribe. In other words, *mars(ius) = logeþer = tiw*, so the mysterious first name on the brooch may refer to Týr?⁶⁸

30. *Nordendorf II* (Bayern, Germany), gilt-silver bow-fibula, dated mid 6th c. Found in 1844, seen in the Römisches Museum, Augsburg.
The runes read **birlnioelk**.

𐀀𐀃𐀆𐀇𐀉𐀊𐀋𐀌

The text is clearly legible, but difficult to interpret. The last rune may strike as enigmatic, but it has the form of the **k** rune from the younger Scandinavian *fubark*, and it is similar to the **k** rune of *Griesheim* in **kolo**. I propose to divide the sequence **birlnioelk** in **birl[i]n io elk**. **birlin** may be a masc. 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 form 𐀌, here transliterated **k**, must have had the value [kχ] from *scratch*, and thus would be no product of the OHG sound shift of *k > 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. *Oberflacht* (Baden-Württemberg, Germany), silver *Sieblöffel*, dated 3rd th. 6th c. (Düwel 1994^b: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 *Sieblöffel* is a Christian liturgical object. Runes on the back cover about the whole length of the handle, in unusual, relatively wide and large forms.

The runes read: **gba:dulþafd**.

𐀆𐀇𐀉:𐀊𐀋𐀌𐀍𐀎𐀏𐀐

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

⁶⁸ One may think of the runic text of the RIBE cranium (early 8th c.), which contains the invocation of three gods: *UlfR auk Óðinn auk HótiuR* (cf. Stoklund 1996). The last name might point to Týr, OHG *Zū*, OE *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: **aujabrg** or **auisabrg**.

𐌱𐌴𐌶𐌸𐌹𐌺

The first rune is a damaged **a** 𐌱 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. **aujab**[i]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* (Rheinhausen, Germany), gilded 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 indefinite number of runes is illegible now. One may perceive only **go furadi di le+**.

𐌸𐌺 𐌱𐌴𐌶𐌸 𐌸𐌹 𐌸𐌹+

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.aïlrún l.tahu:gasokun.**

·𐌱𐌴𐌶𐌸𐌹𐌺·𐌱𐌴𐌶𐌸𐌹𐌺·𐌸𐌹𐌺𐌹𐌺
𐌸·𐌸𐌹𐌺𐌹𐌺:𐌸𐌹𐌺𐌹𐌺𐌹𐌺𐌹𐌺

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 **ailrun** 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 **ailrun**. This presumably is a female PN, because of the second element *-rūn*. One may wonder whether the diphthong *ai* in **ailrun** 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 **aigil** 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 **aigil** was meant by the carver to render an *æ*-like sound, an intermediate stage of *a* > *æ* > *e*.

andi conj. 'and'. **ailrun** PN nsf. *ō*-stem *Ailrūn*. The supposed yew rune **ī** presents a problem. One would expect **Alrūn*. The names *Aigil* and *Alrūn* (*Ailrūn*) remind of the much later recorded ON *Vǫlundr* story, in which *Egill* is his brother, and *Ǫlrún*⁶⁹ < **Alrūna* is one of the swanmaidens. She is the one who becomes *Egill*'s partner. *Egill* 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, **ailrun** would not render the later OHG name *Alrūn*, nor the ON *Ǫlrún*. I suggest tentatively two solutions: (1) the runecarver made a graphical mistake. He actually wanted to carve **alrun**, 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 **ailrun**, is the mysterious *Albrunam*, *Albriniam* or *Aurinium* (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. **tāhus* < Gmc **tanhuz*; OHG *zāh*, 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-sahhan* 'to condemn, to fight'. Clearly both persons, *Aigil* and *Ailrūn*, strongly condemned or fought something; the object presumably is **I**, whatever that may be⁷⁰. 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 *Ǫlrún* 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. *Vǫlundr* 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 (1994^b: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 **el**. 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.

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:dapa gatano**



gatano is written as a rune-cross \times 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. *ō*-stem *Datha*. **rada** might be a PN nsf. *ō*-stem *Rada*, but since the middle dental is written **d** and not **þ** as in *Dapa*, I suggest **rada** to be a verbform, actually *rādē(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 Baiuvariorum*. The second part of the name may be *-wald*, inf. *waldan* 'to rule'. Another interpretation has Düwel (1994^b: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: **owlpupewaz**; other side: **niwajemariz**.



owlpupewaz is probably a PN, nsm. *a*-stem *Wolpupewaz*, with reverse writing **ow-** for **wo-**; cf. *Fallward 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 1994^a:73). 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 (1994^a:106f.).

43. *Thorsberg II* (Schleswig-Holstein, Germany), shieldboss, bronze, **aisgzh**. 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: **aisgzh**.



The part **aisgz** may be emended to **ais[i]g[a/i]z**, and interpreted as a PN: *Aisigaz* or *Aisigiz* 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. **gaupz**, (*Illerup 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[aisa]z** = Gmc **g(aiza)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 1995:131f.) takes **aisgz** 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 *ais*, Lat. *aes* '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 graveyard 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**

𐰇𐰏𐰚𐰚𐰚𐰚𐰚 𐰚𐰚𐰚 𐰚𐰚𐰚

On the footplate is **haribrig**. This is a PN, nsf. *jō*-stem *Haribrig*, consisting of *hari-* 'army', and *-brig* = *-birg*, '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./f./n. *a*- or *ō*-stem 'dear, beloved' (cf. **liub** in Niederstotzingen, 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**

𐰚𐰚𐰚𐰚𐰚𐰚 𐰇𐰏𐰚 𐰚𐰚𐰚𐰚

sigibl/ad is on the footplate. The runes are vague and abraded. The penultimate rune may be either **a** or **l** in *Sigib(a)ld*, a PN nsm. *a*-stem, consisting of *sigi-* 'victory', and *-ald* '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: 𐰚. 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:**

𐰚𐰏𐰚:𐰚𐰚𐰚𐰚𐰚:𐰇𐰏𐰚𐰚𐰚𐰚:

ida is a PN, nsf. *ō*-stem or nsm. *n*-stem 'Id(d)a', cf. Charnay. **bigina** is also a PN, n/asf. *jō*-*ō*-stem, *Bi(r)gina*, consisting of *bi(r)g-* 'protection', (cf. Oettingen and Weimar I), and the

I suppose the pres. ind. is meant, 'F. writes', inf. Gmc **wriþan*. For **ia** I have no interpretation. Curiously, also *Charnay* (above, nr. 11) has a sequence **ia**. The **h** rune with a double bar belongs to the oldest attests.

49. *Weingarten-II* (Baden-Württemberg, Germany), gilt-silver S-fibula. Dated mid 6th c. Found in 1955 in a woman's grave. The runes read **dado**.

𐌳𐌳𐌳𐌳

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: ʀ. It reminds of the Anglo-Saxon **beonna** coins. The legends contain the sign ʀ, 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*.

ʀ 𐌳𐌳𐌳𐌳

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^b:235f.).

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

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

54. Hailfingen I, sax, 2nd h. 7th c. (Düwel 1994^b:234).

𐌳𐌳𐌳𐌳𐌳𐌳𐌳𐌳

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

56. Herbrechtingen, bow-fibula. 3rd th. 6th c. **fpae** 𐌳𐌳𐌳 (Düwel 1994^b:234).

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

𐌳𐌳𐌳𐌳𐌳𐌳

58. München-Aubing II, five-knob-fibula, mid 6th c. **bd** 𐌳𐌳

59. München-Aubing III, disc-brooch, date unknown, **nm?u/k** ᚠᚱᚱᚱ

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

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

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

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

II. **maisdi(?)** ᚱᚱᚱᚱ

III. **hj/g** ᚱᚱ

65. Weingarten III, amber pearl, mid 6th c. (Düwel 1989^b:10). Illegible.

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 subfossile 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**.

ᚠᚠᚠᚠ ᚱᚱ ᚱᚱᚱᚱ ᚱᚱᚱᚱ ᚱᚱ ᚱᚱᚱᚱ ᚱᚱᚱᚱ

Pieper took the sign \gg 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 **lokom : her**.

𐌺𐌾𐌵𐌹𐌸𐌺𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸

Pieper interprets *lokom 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**.

𐌺𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸 : 𐌹𐌺𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸 𐌺𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸

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 \gg is taken as a word division sign. *lokom : her / latam < > hari / kunni < > 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 **uü** *wihju* (bracteate Nebenstedt (I)-B), is found on other Continental objects from the first half of the 6th c.: possibly in *Oettingen* **aiijabrg** 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 objects⁷¹. 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', **uþf[i]nþai** 'may he/she find out, get to know', **muni** 'may she remember', **golida** 'greeted', **gihaili** '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 *fubark*-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 **iglug** or **iglun**; (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 **???aodliþurait: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.