Inscriptions from the first period that were discovered after the death of Krause

The only two very ancient inscriptions found after Krause’s death are given in Moltke’s book. They are:

128. Illerup lance-heads (dated 200)
Both blades bear a man’s name: ojinggaR, and one of them in relief, meaning that it had been made with a stamp. This strongly suggests that it is an armorer’s stamp mark.

129. Meldorf fibula (dated to the first century, 50-100, which makes it the oldest runic find)
...iþih.

It was found in 1979 and is said to be a spring-case fibula. The inscription was not translated.

Some other ‘classical’ inscriptions

The inscriptions covered above do not by any means exhaust all the well-known inscriptions. As I stated above, I have ignored many inscriptions that I found a bit redundant with those already presented, or of an obvious Christian content. In this section, I present some of the inscriptions found in Düwel (who gives mainly Krause’s translations) and in Antonsen. My criteria for selecting these inscriptions were based on whether I felt they would be of special value to the reader interested in the Nordic culture or in magic. I always give Krause’s translation first, followed by Antonsen’s when it differs from Krause’s. Notice however that any comments of a linguistic nature are drawn from Antonsen.

130. Arstad stone (Norway, mid-6th century)

hiwigather saralu unywinaR
The alu of saralu is translated as ‘magic’ and sar is translated by ‘protection’ following several words in Primitive German, Old High German and Gothic containing the root sar and meaning ‘weapon’.
Hiwig [i.e., the one of the home; or the downy]: here protection against magic. Jungwins’s (tomb stands here). Antonsen reads: hiwigath saralu ekwinaR. He interprets winai as ‘friend’, and ignores the alu, he translates accordingly:
‘Hiwigath [i.e., the one with strong family ties]. (For) Saralu [i.e., the protectress]. I, for my friend ...’

131. Alt-Ladoga piece of wood (near St. Petersburg, around year 900)

Runic original not provided by Düwel.
‘It died he high [i.e., over him] with a stone worn Walter of the corpse [i.e., the warrior], the shining one, the spoiler of men, in the powerful way of the plow [i.e., the earth].’

132. Beuchte Fibula (Niedersachse, Germany, 550-600)

fuþarRj
buirso
Antonsen translates the second one as a name, Buriso meaning ‘little daughter’. He only comments the first inscription by noticing that its R looks like it would have been traced in three steps: . He does not comment about these three steps, but, for me, they make very clear some of the intent of the rune master. He or she wanted to write the word futhark, and used the branches of R as a Kaunan bound to an Algiz. Why his or her ‘little daughter’ needed to receive the runes Algiz Jeran, we can only guess.

133. Charnay Fibula (France, 550-600)
One face shows a futhark missing its last three runes, and the other face shows two inscriptions

upafaþai : id and dan : liano
Antonsen reads up faþai iddan liano, i.e. ‘to husband Iddo (i.e., the doer). Liano (feminine name of unknown meaning)’

134. Dahmsdorf spear head (Brandenburg, 3rd century)
135. Dischingen bow fibula

Two fibulas have been found, one carries a name, and the other the inscription: which reads Ansuz Ehwaz written reverse, hence Krause’s interpretation: a magical formula ‘horse-Aesir’ (the Aesir are the Old Norse gods).

136. Elgesem stone (South-Norway, around year 400)
The first inscription alu found on a stone.

137. Helnes stone (Fünen, date: Younger Futhark inscription)
The inscription speaks of the stone builder as a ‘NuRa-ðóði’ meaning that he was a ‘priest-chief’ as I call them, for the people of the land of Nuza.

138. Kleines Schulerloch wall cave (Kelheim a. d. Donau, 6-7th century)

140. Ledberg stone
It also shows also the formula [bmkiiissstttiiilll] found on Gorlev Stone (see Runic inscription # 150, below).

141. Nordendorf bow fibula (near Augsburg, 7th century?)

142. Oklunda slate fragment (Sweden, around year 900)

143. Pietroassa gold ring (Rumania, 300-400)

My personal comment is that the o meaning ópal is a somewhat strong hypothesis made up to avoid seeing a feminine form. Nevertheless, ópal is neutral in Old Norse, which goes quite well which the two neutral adjectives Düwel sees. This inscription is still discussed by the specialists, without more conclusive arguments, at least so I think.
144. Rök stone (Norway/Sweden, 1st half of the 9th century).
After a classical inscription telling who wrought the stone, a skaldic poem is found:

Reð þioðrikR  It reigned Theodoric  SitiR nu garuR  Sits now armed
hinn þurmoði,  him full of courage,  a guta sinum,  on (gothic) horse him
stilliR flutna,  prince of the warriors  skialdi umb fatlaðR,  shield on shoulder
strandu HraðmaraR.  on the beaches of the sea  skati Möringa.  Hero of the Mâringe
Hreid.

This poem has been interpreted has an allusion to the so-called ‘wild hunt’ that Odin carries on earth during Yule time, which has been leaving traces in many Germanic legends, as described other parts of this site.

145. Skarpaker stone (Sweden, Younger Futhark runes)
It contains a short skaldic poem which can be seen as christian or Heathen as well:
Jarð skal rifna  The earth will tear off
ok upphiminn  and the sky as well.

146. Auzon, the so-called ‘Franks Casket’
This is the only example of English runes that I will give here. Marijane Osborn has presented a very thorough explanation of it, carefully studying the possible links between the drawings and the runes on the casket. Recently, Page has delivered a new complete study of this inscription, which tends to reduce to almost zero any knowledge we could have on it. Here is an analysis of the positions of these two authors.
(to be completed)

Return to runic inscriptions