

Runic inscriptions presented by Derolez in “Runica manuscripta”

Derolez presents a thorough study of runic traces from manuscripts, with a noted interest for English runes. His conclusion is: ‘On the Continent we have an actual break in the runic tradition. We no longer believe in ‘German’ runic lore to be found in manuscripts: all we find can be traced to English sources, with some rare additions of Scandinavian material’. There is little to say against this statement, due to the large amount of English runes found in the manuscripts. The only exception to the rule might be the *Abecedarium Nordmannicum* found on the continent. It contains runes very similar to the Danish ones (Viking time), with some explanations written in Old Low German.

The Futhorcs

There are so many Futhorcs and runic alphabets (in the alphabets, the order of the letters is the one of the Latin alphabet, no longer the one of the Futhark) that it is impossible to report all of them. Most people refer to the English runes through the famous Hickes’ edition of the Old English rune poem: they take it as the one reference to English runes. Derolez’ study shows that the other sources are also valuable (and not simple followers of Hickes’ edition).

Derolez reports on the four English manuscripts (being copies of each other, these four manuscripts represent only two distinct traditions), and nine Continental manuscripts which all show English Futhorcs. We will now look at a few examples of the variation that can be seen when consulting these manuscripts. One cause for variation can be the scribe’s incompetence in the matter of runes, but we can only decide that in obvious cases.

Cotton MS Domitian A 9:

This manuscript describes a Futhorc of 33 runes, upon which two different scribes, and a 16th century ‘corrector’, have left traces. It is obvious that one of the two scribes inverted the rune Dagaz (here called *deg*) and the rune Mannaz (here called *mann*) [*I guess because of their relatively similar forms*]. Both scribes wrongly attribute the name *epel* to rune Ehwaz (but both give its correct sound value of ‘e’). One scribe assigns the correct sound value of ‘oe’ to the rune Epel (the English equivalent to Germanic rune Oþala), but doesn’t give it a name. Finally both put the rune Epel after the rune Dæg (which is the name of the English equivalent to Germanic rune Dagaz). It is impossible to determine whether or not Epel should in principle follow or precede Dæg. As we shall see, both cases are met, since many other Futhorcs put them in a different order.

(note: to be complete, I must say that one scribe wrote ‘pro’ over rune Epel but, since he also added an alternate form to the rune, it is obvious that ‘pro’ in this case means that one form can be used for the other (‘pro’ in Latin).)

feoh	ur	þorn	os	rað	cen	gifu	wen	Hegel	neað	inc	ge ^a ur	sigel	peorð	↳ sig
·ꝥ	·Ꝛ	·þ	·ꝛ	·Ꝟ	·h	·X	·ꝥ	·Ꝛ	·ꝥ	·ꝥ	·ꝥ	·ꝥ	·ꝥ	·ꝥ
f	u	ð	o	r	c	g	uu	h	n	i	ge	eo	p	x s
tir	berc	eþel	deg	lagu	inc	mann	↳pro	ac	ælc	yr	tir			
·ꝥ	·ꝥ	·ꝥ	·ꝥ	·ꝥ	·ꝥ	·ꝥ	·ꝥ	·ꝥ	·ꝥ	·ꝥ	·ꝥ			
t	b	e	m	l	ing	ð ^m	oe	a	ae	y	ear			
orient.	cur.	iolx	z	et										
io	q	k	sc	g										
*	·ꝥ	·ꝥ	·ꝥ	·ꝥ										
ior	cweorð	calc	stan	gar										

(note : This is only a near facsimile of the manuscript. I use the modern form of the letters.)

The names of the runes are given mainly by the second later scribe. In order to avoid confusion arising from the way letters are written, here is the list of the names of runes of this manuscript:

feoh, ur, ðorn, os, rað, cen, gifu, wen, Hegel, neað, inc [should be is], gear, sigel, peorð, [rune X without a name], sig, tir, berc, eþel [in place of mann], deg, lagu, inc [correctly called ing by the first scribe], mann [in place of eþel], [rune oe without a name], ac [here altered into ar], ælc, yr, ear [given by the first scribe], [follow five runes seemingly still quite young at the time the manuscript was first written]: ior [the ‘orent’ that the

second scribe added above is not understood], cweorð, calc, stan, gar. The 34th sign was added by the second scribe. It is a rounded x that was left without a name in the first row.

Another interesting thing to note is that runes wen and Hegel are separated by two dots, runes sig and tir are separated by three dots, indicating the limits of the first *aett* and the second *aett* of runes of the Germanic Futhark. No separation occurs later, which leads one to suppose that the supplementary runes of the English Futhorc seem to have been added in the third *aett*.

(note: The Futhark was divided into three groups of eight runes each. These subdivisions are indicated on the Vadstena and Grumpan bracteates (sixth century), but we have no earlier evidence.

There is much evidence of a late division in the three *aetts* when cryptographic runes were used, and they are reported in detail by Derolez. These cryptographic runes constitute a system for writing secret runes that works as already explained with runic inscription 22: Each rune would be designated by two numbers. The first one, varying from 1 to 3, designates the *aett* that the rune belongs to, and the second one, varying from 1 to 8, designates the place of the rune in the *aett*. For example, Uruz, as the second rune of the first *aett*, would be called '1-2', Laukaz being the fourth rune of the third *aett* would be called '3-4' etc.)

The 16th century 'corrections' are interesting since they contain some explanation of the rune-names, even though they are no longer considered as genuine runic knowledge.

The handwriting of these corrections have been identified as the one of a scholar named Robert Talbot (1505? - 1558). They are given in Latin as: *feoh* i [= *id est*] pecunia (= money); *gifu* i gratia (= favor); *hegel* i grando (= hail, shower of hail); *ethel* i patria (= home country); *deg* i dies (= day); *thorn* i spina (= thorn); *man* i homo (= man); *ar* i reverentia (= respect, awe); *aesc* i fraxinus (= ash); *gear* i annus (= year); *stan* i lapis (= stone); *Rad* i consilium (= deliberation); *berc* i cortex (= envelope); *sigel* i velum (= veil); *ur* i noster (= our).

Derolez says that the comments for *feoh*, *gifu*, *hegel*, *ethel*, *deg*, *thorn*, *man*, *ar* (except that it is confused with *ac* = oak, but one of the many meanings of *ar* in Anglo-Saxon is indeed 'respect'), *gear*, *stan* (*stan* means 'stone' in Anglo-Saxon) are justified, which is clear from the Anglo-Saxon meaning of the rune names. The four remaining runes seem to have been confused with similarly pronounced Anglo-Saxon words. *Rad* (riding) is confused with *raed* (= advice, counsel); *berc* (= bark) is confused with *beorc* (birch); *sigel* (= sun) is confused with *segl* (= veil); *ur* (bison) is confused with *ur* (our).

It seems to have been part of the normal knowledge of the runes in the Anglo-Saxon world to find these kinds of confusions. A bit later we shall see similar confusions (but now done on purpose) in Cynewulf's signatures.

The Old English rune poem is contained in a manuscript called **Cotton MS. Otho B 10** which was destroyed in 1731. Hence, it is known by copies only. This Futhorc contains 29 named runes, and rune Dagaz (called *daeg*) is after rune Othala (called *epel*). A fac-simile of this poem in Hickeys' *Thesaurus* is available in Maureen Halsall's book.

ƿ	ᚱ	ᚳ	ᚦ	ᚷ	ᚨ	×	ᚱ	ᚱ	ᚹ
feoh	ur	þorn	os	rad	cen	gyfu	wen	hægl	nyd
	ϕ	ᚲ	ᚮ	ᚱ	ᚷ	↑	ᚱ	ᚱ	ᚱ
is	ger	eoh	peorð	eolhx	sigel	tir	beorc	eh	man
ᚲ	ᚷ	ᚳ	ᚨ	ᚱ	ᚦ	ᚱ	×	ᚱ	
lagu	ing	eþel	daeg	ac	aesc	yr	iar	ear	

Another Futhorc is found in **Cotton MS Galba A2**, actually known as a fac-simile of Hickeys' edition. In this Futhorc, the name of rune Peorþ is badly transcribed. Rune eþel is given with a variant form, which is the one proposed also in Cotton MS Domitian A 9, and it confirms the hypothesis that the *pro* over the *epel* rune in Cotton MS Domitian A9 is indeed indicating that two alternate forms of eþel are possible. Note also that rune eþel now follows rune daeg.

This kind of variation is found in several other Futhorcs. I do not feel necessary to reproduce all of them here.

Abecedarium Nordmannicum

The next figure shows how one can see the famous Abecedarium Nordmannicum which is contained in one of those manuscripts, called **MS. 878** found in **St. Gall's** library. The runes it contains are 'obviously' mostly representative of the Danish Viking Futhark of 16 runes. The text associated is in Old Low German (not in

Anglo-Saxon). It is dated from the 9th century, and it is therefore the older of all the runic poems that we have. You find below an attempt at providing you with a faithful fac-simile of this manuscript:

ſ feu forman ſ ur after þ thuris thrithen ſ os is themo ſ rat end
 ſ stabu obo os uuritan
 ſ chaon thanne ſ hagal ſ naut habet ſ is ſ ar ſ endi sol
 cliuot
 ſ tiu ſ brica ſ endi man ſ lago the leohto ſ yr al bihabet
 midi

The classical reading of this text, as given by Maureen Halsall, in 'The Old English Rune Poem : A Critical Edition,' is

(feu) forman;	ſ feu [<i>wealth</i>] first
(ur) after;	ſ ur [<i>aurochs</i>] after;
(thuris) thrithen stabu;	þ thuris [<i>giant</i>] the third letter;
(os) is themo obo;	ſ os [<i>pagan god</i>] is following it;
(rat) endos uuritan;	ſ rat [<i>riding</i>] write at the end;
(chaon) thanne cliuot.	ſ chaon [<i>ulcer</i>] cleaves next.
(hagal) (naut) habet,	ſ hagal [<i>hail</i>] has ſ naut [<i>need</i>],
(is), (ar), endi (sol).	ſ is [<i>ice</i>], † ar [<i>harvest</i>], and † sol [<i>sun</i>];
(tiu), (brica) endi (man)	ſ tiu [<i>Tiw</i>], † brica [<i>birch</i>] and † man [<i>man</i>] in the middle,
midi,	ſ lago [<i>water</i>] the clear;
(lago) the leohto;	
(yr) al bihabet.	ſ yr [<i>yew</i>] concludes the whole.

Cynewulf signatures

The Cynewulf signatures are contained in the Exeter book. They were written in 800 plus or minus 50 years. I present Maureen Halsall's translation with some comments inspired by Derolez and Gordon's translation.

First signature

Here anyone who takes pleasure in songs, if he is sharp of mind, may discover who composed these verses. There at the end stands ſ [*feoh* = wealth], which nobles enjoy on earth; but they cannot have it forever, dwelling in this world. ſ [*Wyn* = joy] must pass away; then those things accounted ſ [*Ur* = ours] on our own land, the transitory adornments of the body must perish, even as ſ [*lago* = water] glides away. When † [*cen* = torch?] and † [*yr* = bow?] perform their duty in the confines of the night, † [*nyd* = necessity], the service of the king, lies upon them. Now you may know who was made known to men in these words.

Derolez gives R. K. Gordon's translation in 'Anglo-Saxon poetry' (1934) who translates the part beginning by: 'When **h** and **ᚷ** ...' by : 'Then shall the *Bold Warrior* and the *Wretched One* crave help in the anguish of the night.' The idea behind this translation is that the meaning of the rune is the one of a word sounding very much like the name of the rune. For instance, *Cen* could be understood as *cenne* (bold, courageous). With this interpretation there is a kind of pun done by the poet, which makes a lot of sense, especially here where the 'normal' meaning of the runes, viz. 'torch' and 'bow' are nonsensical. Translating *ur* by 'ours' instead of 'aurochs' is done on similar grounds.

Second signature

Until then [*when he learned the story of St Helena's discovery of the Cross*] the man was always buffeted by sorrow-surges, like a failing **h** [*cen = torch*], although he received treasures of apple-shaped gold in the meadhall. **ᚷ** [*Yr = bow?*] lamented, the companion of **†** [*nyd = need*] endured oppressive misery, constraining secrets [*or, if rune can mean runstoef, the constraining rune, referring to nyd*], even where before him **ᚱ** [*eh = the horse*] measured the milelong roads, the proud one raced in its filigreed trappings. **ƿ** [*Wyn = joy*] is diminished, pleasure with the passage of years; youth is changed, the pride of former days. Once the splendour of youth was **ᚱ** [*Ur = ours*]. Now the old days are gone in the fullness of time, our life's joys departed as **ᚱ** [*lagu = water*] glides away, the hastening streams. For all men under heaven **ƿ** [*feoh = wealth*] is fleeting; the adornments of earth vanish like wind under the clouds.

Here as well Gordon's translation is more understandable. *Cen* takes back its usual meaning which is the one of torch (a torch that stop burning and thus is failing) but *Yr* is translated by 'the wretched' (which is indeed the companion of need), as in the preceding poem. It could be surprising that the same rune is given different meanings in two texts by the same author, but in the case of poetry, this is quite possible.

Third signature

I shall behold the terror of the retribution for sin, for I believe it true, when many shall be brought in a host into the presence of the eternal Judge. Then **h** [*cen = torch?*] will tremble, will hear the King, the Ruler of heaven, speak, pronounce stern words to those who obeyed him negligently before in this world, when **ᚷ** [*yr = bow?*] and **†** [*nyd = need*] could very easily find comfort. There in that place must many a weary one await in terror what harsh punishment he intends to adjudge them according to their deeds. **ƿ** [*Wyn = joy*] in earthly treasures will have gone. For a long time **ᚱ** [*Ur = our possessions*], our share of life's joys, were surrounded by **ᚱ** *flodum* [*lagu flodum = flowing streams of water*], our **ƿ** [*feoh = wealth*] upon this earth. Then such adornments must burn in the funereal holocaust; bright and swift, the red flame will rage, angrily spread far and wide through the world. The meadows will perish, the fortified dwellings will burst apart. Fire will be on the move; that greediest of enemies will burn without compunction all the ancestral heritage that men once possessed, while earth's glory was theirs.

Gordon translates *Cen* again by 'the bold one' who also 'will tremble' in front of the 'Ruler of heaven'. *Yr* is also translated in the same way by 'the wretched', (who will be bolder than the bold ones in front of the Lord, at least in the Christian view).

Fourth signature

My soul must travel out of my body, I know not where, to the undiscovered country; from here I must go to seek another dwelling place according to my former works, journey where my earlier deeds take me. Sadly, **h** [*cen* = torch?], **ᚱ** [*yr* = bow?], and **†** [*nyd* = need?] will depart. The King will be stern, the giver of victories, when, stained with sins, **ᚱ** [*eh* = horse?], **ᚱ** [*wyn* = joy?], and **ᚱ** [*Ur* = our?] await in terror what he intends to adjudge to them according to their deeds, as a reward for the lives they have lived. **ᚱ** **ᚱ** [*lagu-feoh* = water-wealth? ie, the earth encompassed by the sea?] will tremble, lie troubled. I shall remember all the injury to my soul, the wounds of sin, that I persisted in inflicting while in this world.

We can try to explain this poem as follows. Now, the runes are in groups, namely groups of 3 + 3 + 2 runes. One can thus believe that each rune in each group expresses a variation of the same group's theme.

If *Cen* is translated by boldness, *Yr* by wretch, and *Nyd* by necessity, then the first group describes three main features of human life that flee away when life does, as the poem points out.

Since *Wyn* is related to physical pleasure, *Ur* (when translated as 'ours') to possessions, then *Eh*, the horse, can evoke the social position of a powerful person. In the Christian view, people enjoying these things have a good chance of being damned, thus they await death in terror.

Lagu - Feoh obviously alludes to a classical kenning that associates water and gold (often called 'the flame of the sea' in Skaldic poetry), and is still perpetuated in the expression 'the Rhine's gold' after the German Nibelungenslied. Since wealth is evoked here as a liquid element, its fear to die is represented by waves at its surface, hence it 'will tremble, lie troubled.'

Various riddles and poems

The Exeter book contains several riddles in which the runes do not always take their value, but are simple indicators. For instance, runes *Man*, *Wen*, and *Sigel* are used for indicating man, rejoicing, and sun. Contrary to that, one also finds *Sowelo* is also used to designate a shield (Anglo-Saxon *scield*), *Kaunan* for Latin *cygnus*, (i.e., the rune is given for a word whose first letter is the sound-value of the rune).

Here are a few of these riddles. The letters in bold and between two '.' are in fact drawn as runes in the manuscript.

Riddle # 24:

'... They call me **.x.**, also **.ae.** and **.r . o.** helps, and **.h.** and **.i.** Now I am named as these six runes clearly signify.'

The solution is classically given as 'hixorae = higorae = higure = magpie'.

Riddle # 19

On a journey I saw a proud **.s r o h.** with a shining head run very swiftly over the plain. On its back it had a brave **.n o m.**, a nailed road **.a g e w.** On a long journey, traveling fast on the road, he carried a strong **.c o f o a h.** The journey was very fine, the course of these. Say what I am called.

The answer is the sequence of words in runes, read (mostly) backwards, that is:

.hors mon wega haofoc., meaning 'on horseback, a man, in his fist, a hawk'.

Poems containing runes

A special chapter is devoted to the **Old English rune poem** and the **two Scandinavian poems**.

The **Old English rune poem** is dated of the 10th or 11th century, but scholars agree that the original must have been written one or two centuries earlier. The manuscript has been destroyed and the only trace we have of it is Hickes' *Thesaurus* fac-simile, which looks like a fac-simile, but Derolez is rather

doubtful. Hickes might well have introduced something into the original. It contains the drawing and the name of 32 runes, and a short poem related to the first twenty-nine of them.



The **Scandinavian poems** are also given with the corresponding rune. The Norwegian one is dated from the 12th or 13rd century, while the Icelandic one is dated from the 16th century.



The famous poem **Beowulf** sometimes uses a rune for its meaning. For instance, the rune . **oe** . is used several times in place of the word *eþel*, but one must say much less often than the word *eþel* itself. One also finds rune . **m** . in place of the word 'man', and the rune . **s** . in place of word 'sun'.

The **Husband's message** is a long poem that a future husband has visibly sent to his future wife as a way to welcome her.

The part containing the runes is classically translated by:

Over old vow you two
put I together . **s . r** . together
. **ea . w** . and . **m** . stress the oath
that he pledges, and vows friendship,
that him living he would perform
that you often speak of in former days.

About the last rune, , Derolez notices that it has exactly the same form as the . **m** . in *Ruin and Riddle 19*, thus he reads . **m** ., , while most scholars follow the Futhorcs and read . **d** . Besides that, I wish to remark that it is strange to have two groups of two runes followed by a single one. Hence, I suggest that the 'd' look of

this rune is linked to the fact that it is in fact a bind-rune, containing  and  where this last rune *Gifu*, (as in the Old English rune poem), expresses the exchange of gifts between the two persons to be married.

Here is a word-for-word translation:

ofer eald gebeot incer twega
'over old promised-of you two [*you two is in the genitive form*]

Gecyre ic aetsomne . **s . r** . geador
'chosen I united . **s . r** . together'

. **ea . w** . ond . **m** . aðe benemnan,
. **ea . w** . and . **m** . oath to-assert-strongly

ðæt he ða waere ond ða winetreowe
'that he (or: they) thereupon pledge and thereupon conjugal-fidelity'

be him lifgendum laestan wolde,
'by-means-of him [dative singular of he] until-death to-perform would'

ðe git on aerdagum oft gespraeconn.
'who [or: when] you-two on [or: during, in exchange for, etc.] past-times often have-spoken-of'

Derolez presents an interpretation by E. A. Kock 'Interpretations and Emendations of Early English Texts', in *Anglia* 45, 1921, that gives the sense of 'the sun's road' = 'heaven' to **s . r** ., the sense of 'earth's joy' to **ea . w** ., and thus translates this part of the poem as: 'I place together Heaven, Earth and Man, confirming by an oath that he would keep, throughout his life, the compact and the faith etc.'

I believe that one should not attempt to reduce the pairs of runes to a single concept, but carefully keep the pairs, and, as said above, introduce a pair of bind-runes in place of the last one. The pair . **s . r** . expresses certainly the idea of a travel. That the travel be to the sun, or to victory (cf. Anglo-Saxon *sige* = victory which constitutes an obvious pun for *Sigel*, the name of rune . **s** .), are both possible. The following pair of runes obviously evokes earthy joys since . **ea** ., i.e. rune *Ear*, means earth and . **w** ., i.e. rune *Wyn*, means joy. The bind-rune can mean 'gift between humans' as does 'Gyfu Man.' I thus propose to interpret this part of the message as:

'I put a victorious (rune . **s** .) travel (rune . **r** .) together with the 'pleasures (rune . **w** .) of the earth (rune . **ea** .)' and that 'each gives to the other one (rune . **g** .) a human (rune . **m** .)' [*i.e. that each of them offers his/her person to the other one*].

The poem **Ruin** contains the rune . **m** . only. It is nevertheless interesting because it recalls the Old English rune poem for rune Pertho. Gordon gives the following translation of the short passage containing the rune:

‘Bright were the castle-dwellings, many the bath-houses, lofty the host of pinnacles, great the tumult of men, many a mead-hall full of the joys of men, till Fate overturned that.’

The verse containing the rune is: ‘meodoheall monig . **m** . dreama full’ where rune Man must be read as the first part of the word *mondreama*, meaning ‘of human joys’.

The comments of “De Inventione”

There is a very famous manuscript dealing with the invention of the alphabet which seems to express knowledge dating from the beginning of the ninth century (with some certain earlier filiations, especially for the parts discussing the Latin and Greek alphabet) and it is found in several copies, each one more or less different from the other. We shall designate this set of manuscripts by a generic name *De Inventione* (they are written in Latin), as does Derolez. In his study, he clustered the manuscripts into two classes. Class A (13 manuscripts) represents the German tradition of *De Inventione*, while class B (4 manuscripts) represents the French tradition. They are both supposed to derive from a yet unknown common ancestor. Each runic alphabet is introduced by a small text that allows us to compare the different versions.

The seventeen copies (each has been studied by Derolez) contain what is called a ‘runic alphabet’, that is the runes put in the same order as the Latin alphabet. The texts which introduce the runic alphabets are as follows.

Class A:

Litteras quippe quibus utuntur Marcomanni, quos nos Nordmannos vocamus, infra scriptas habemus (a quibus originem qui Theodiscam loquuntur linguam trahunt); cum quibus sua incantationesque ac divinationes significare procurant, qui adhuc pagano ritu involvuntur.

The letters which the Marcomanni use - we call them Nordmanni - we have written below; from them [i.e., the Nordmanni] those people descend who speak Germanic; with these [letters] they signify their songs, incantations and divinations, for [they] are still given to pagan practices.

Class B:

Hae quoque literarum figurae in gente Northmannorum feruntur inventae; quibus ob carminum eorum memoria et incantationum ita adhuc dicuntur; quibus et runstabas nomen imposuerunt, ob id, ut reor, quod his res absconditas vicissim scriptitando aperiebant.

These forms of letters are said to have been invented among the people of the Northmanni; it is said that they still use them to commit their songs and incantations to memory. They gave the name runstabas to these letters, I believe because by writing them they used to bring to light secret things.

These two versions tell us very clearly that the runes were used in songs and incantations (we know to be called galdr). There is a scholarly discussion about whether these texts are inspired by Tacitus’ Germania that describes a use of the runes. Derolez notices very aptly that Germania contains none of *carmina*, *incantationes*, nor *divinationes* which disproves a possible influence of Tacitus. It seems much more credible to attribute these words to the influence of the church’s war against Heathen practices. Derolez cites clerical texts that indeed contain the corresponding words, thus proving that *De Inventione* does not refer to Tacitus. This text helps us to understand that attributing the property of foreseeing to the runes can very well originate from clerics attacking their use, more than being an ‘immemorial usage’ as some claim (see a detailed argumentation in the appendix of chapter 1 of volume 1).

On the Lagu rune: an omission in Derolez’ work

Derolez cites a large number of variants for this rune, found in some 15 manuscripts. All are variants of *lagu* (*lago*, *laga*, or *lac*). Some variants might be misspellings, but even those staying near this form mean water. I suppose this explains why most runologists claim that it is ‘Krause’s fancy’ to name this rune *laukaz*, probably after Page (on p. 82 of ‘An Introduction to English Runes,’ he says: ‘Despite this general agreement Krause

would like to have us believe that the Germanic rune-name was *laukaz ...'). Page goes on destroying Krause's argument based on the magical use of the runes. For the moment, I will also ignore this part of Krause's argument, and return to the objective basis of this argument. Against Krause's alleged isolation, notice that most German runologists follow him, and that Polomé, a rather famous runologist, again clearly explained Krause's position in E. C. Polomé, 'The names of the runes,' in *Old English Runes and their Continental background*, (pp. 421-438). Aside from all kind of magic, even Page cannot contest that 'a few early examples of the name form certainly resemble *laukr*.' To be more precise, in the oldest recorded appearance of the rune's name, viz. in Codex Leidensis of the 10th century, the name of this rune is *laukr* which means 'leek', and has the Proto-Germanic root *laukaz.

The reason why this name was abandoned for a word whose root is *laguz might or might not be religious. This does not impede on the recorded fact that one of the earliest traces of this rune name the leek, not the water.

The rest of Krause's objective argument relies on the other well-recorded fact that many Germanic runic inscription show a **laukaR** as we have seen above.

Now that we have some evidence that the older name was laukaz and not laguz, we may speculate why this change occurred. I must say that I also find Krause's explanation very weak: the leek bore a large amount of magic, on that I agree, but this magical content is transmitted to us by the poetical Norse texts, written by those that Krause believed to have changed the meaning of the rune in order to hide its magic! In other words, the people of the Viking period were obviously convinced of the magic of the runes, and it is slightly absurd to suppose that they changed the name *laukr* into *lagu* in order to decrease its magical content, as Krause argues.

This part of Krause's arguing is not to be kept, but his conclusion is mostly based on the most ancient manuscript, and on several runic inscriptions, this conclusion is thus well-grounded.

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