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Abstract
In 2009 an early runic inscription was discovered on a triangular projecting area that through subsequent excavation was confirmed to be at the lower part of a funerary monument. Yet such find reports and commentaries as have appeared to date have tended not to assess the Hogganvik inscription principally as a commemorative expression, as an example of a broader memorial epigraphic tradition. Rather than as an epigraphic record of the history of emotions, suggestions of magic appear in the main treatments of the remarkable find. After all, lexically irregular sequences found on other early runic memorials are often taken as signs they feature a magical aspect. Taking the Hogganvik inscription in its broader linguistic and archaeological context, however, suggests a rather different understanding is to be assumed for the early Norwegian memorial. Instead of reflecting magic, the less clear sections of the Hogganvik text can more regularly be understood as abbreviated or otherwise obscurely expressed sequences.

Keywords: Hogganvik runestone (Vest-Agder), runic inscriptions, history of emotions, onomastics, memorialisation, curses, abbreviations

Introduction
The question of what constitutes proper method in the humanities was of particular concern to scholars such as Wilhelm Dilthey. In his *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften* (1883), Dilthey laid out his own understanding of what social scientists such as Max Weber (1922) would come to call *Verstehen*—interpretative understanding of humanly derived expressions. It remains rare, however, in runological discourse for interpretative issues to be treated explicitly, even in assessments of
recently uncovered finds such as the older runic memorial text unearthed at Hogganvik, Norway, in 2009. The early runic texts are usually not approached in terms of broader developments in ancient or medieval historiography such as the “epigraphic habit” of Roman experience first emphasised by Ramsay MacMullen (1982) or the more recent history of emotions approach to early medieval funerary memorials advanced by Barbara Rosenwein (2006, 57–78). This includes previous interpretations of the Hogganvik memorial, discovered by Henrik and Arnfinn Henriksen while clearing away stumps on their property in the village of Sånum-Lundevik, in the Norwegian county of Vest-Agder. A reflection of the long-discussed matter of interpretative method, however, can be seen in discussions of the role that historical imagination plays in runic studies, particularly as the matter was set out by Ray Page in the first edition of his *Introduction to English Runes* (1973, 13–15).

**Background**

In the first edition of his “little red book”, Page contrasts the approach to epigraphic interpretation of Karl Schneider (1956) with that of Erik Moltke (cf. Moltke 1985)—and even the extremely reactive stance taken by Anders Bæksted (1952). Page’s main concern here was interpretations of runic texts that are overly reliant on magical explanation, often without using any sort of formal substantiation of what magic is and what it may reasonably be taken to constitute in a runic context (cf. Page 1964 = 1995, 105–25, Nielsen 1985). Runology has long been practised very much by scholars with the opposite approach to what Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf privately derided as “DM-Wissenschaft” (Braun et al. 1995, 232).

For Wilamowitz, classical epigraphy was evidently a pedantic form of scholarship that was overly obsessed with cataloguing relatively trivial expressions such as funerary epigraphs (*DM* or *D(is) M(anibus)* ‘to the spirits of the dead’ being a common formula in Roman funerary inscriptions). Such epigraphers were apparently so lacking in intellectual ambition they never felt able to venture beyond the bounds of their texts—their work never seemed to allow them to contribute anything of importance to broader scholarship. There is likewise usually little engagement in “sceptical” runology with the key interpretative issue in historical analysis—i.e. how to deal with what the historical philosopher (and epigrapher) R. G. Collingwood (1946) saw as the essentially unempirical nature of historical understanding. In 1967 Page had already written mockingly of “that law of runology which ordains that all unintelligible inscriptions shall be thought
magical” in reference to the *ignotum per ignotius* reasoning of Schneider. But much of what is presented in the works of Page and his magic-abjuring followers remains limited to matters of kinds which saw them fail to develop their scholarship beyond the level of descriptive empiricism.

The main source of magical interpretations in runic studies at the time was the German comparativist Wolfgang Krause whose corpus of older runic inscriptions (Krause and Jankuhn 1966) is filled with conjecture of Page’s “imaginative” type. The interpretations favoured by Krause, however, often make runic epigraphs appear more remarkable than comparable texts found in Roman tradition and suggest a kind of Northern exceptionalism that is asserted but not properly demonstrated. The approach of many scholars since the 1970s has been to ally themselves to the culturist ambitions of Krause but to reject his penchant for interpreting runic texts as magical. Nonetheless both of the scholars to have published extended treatments of the Hogganvik inscription since 2009 can be faulted for fulfilling Page’s law (the “Second Law of Runodynamics” according to Page in Düwel 1981, 18) in their assessments of the early Norwegian memorial. They may also be criticised for failing to develop their treatments of the Hogganvik inscription to the fuller interpretative level that Marc Bloch (1954 [1949]) explained properly constitutes historical understanding.

Taking the example of a Roman funerary inscription “carved from a single block, made for a single purpose”, Bloch (pp. 119 f.) claimed that “nothing could be more variegated than the evidences which there await the probing of the scholar’s lancet.” Bloch admitted that he knew how to read Roman inscriptions, but “not how to cross-question them” (Bloch 1954, 54). Early runic memorial inscriptions might more profitably be approached in terms of Bloch’s (p. 71) “struggle with documents”, (p. 53) “the prime necessity of well-conducted historical research”. E. H. Carr (1964, 30) took Bloch’s notion of interpretative struggle further, describing a “continuous process of interaction between a historian and his facts”. Rather than matters magical, ancient memorials may be more convincingly examined in light of MacMullen’s notion of an “epigraphic habit” and the broader “emotional turn” (Plamper 2010) that has recently emerged elsewhere in historical studies.

The Hogganvik inscription

In 2009, the first older runic memorial to have been discovered in Norway in over fifty years was announced in the Scandinavian press. As head of
the Runic Archives in Oslo, James Knirk was duly given access to the find, eventually publishing a full report on the memorial and its discovery in the archaeological journal *Viking* in 2011. The University of Agder’s Michael Schulte also produced an analysis of the inscription which appeared in a Festschrift for the Dutch Nordicist Arend Quak that year after presenting a more typologically sophisticated study of the runestone text to the Agder Academy of Sciences in 2010 (and cf. also Schulte 2013). The inscription from Hogganvik proved an exceptional and exciting find for Norwegian runology.

The Hogganvik stone is 152 cm broad and 145 cm high, is a reddish augen gneiss, and is rounded at the top where the longest section of the inscription is found. Dated to the late Roman Iron Age (i.e. A.D. c. 150/160–375/400) by Imer (2015, 122) on account of the rectangular form of its e-runes, the Hogganvik inscription features four lines of text which are read by Knirk (2011, 28) from right to left as:

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kelbapewas⁝stainaz⁝aaasrpkf
aarpaa⁝inananaḅoz
eknaudigastiz
ekerafaz
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Much of the Hogganvik text is fairly readily interpretable, but not all parts of the inscription made immediate sense to Knirk and Schulte. The inscription clearly features an explanation that the stone belonged to a figure called *Kelbaþewaz*, other early runic memorials often featuring the name of the memorialised in a genitival relationship to a suitably funerary object description such as *stainaz* ‘stone’. The inscription also features two first-person statements, *ek naudigastiz* and *ek erafaz*, with the latter seeming to represent an expected *‘erbaz* (cf. Old Norse [hereafter ON] *jarfr* (ierfr) ‘wolverine’), the apparent devoicing perhaps a sign of medial voicing of /f/ (and hence the orthographic equivalence of -b- and -f-) emerging at the phonetic level; cf. the By stone’s (-)laiif- (KJ 71) vs. the Myklebostad memorial’s -[la]ib- (KJ 77; Schulte 2010, 59 f.). After all, the erector of the Järsberg memorial (KJ 70) similarly describes himself by relating that he is called …ubazhite:harabanaz – i.e. with an idionym followed by what seems best to be understood as an animal cognomen (*erfaz* or ‘wolverine’ at Hogganvik, _harabanaz_ or ‘raven’ at Järsberg). But not much of the rest of the text on the Hogganvik stone could be interpreted precisely by either of the earliest publishers of interpretations of the find.
Apart from the most obviously interpretable sections, the Hogganvik inscription features two seemingly non-lexical sequences as well as a prepositional phrase that Knirk and Schulte interpret differently. Both also suggest that the (apparently) non-lexical sequences may be magical, citing a study by the German runologist Klaus Düwel (1988 = 2011) which seeks to explain the seemingly nonsensical early runic letter sequences that appear so commonly on the Old Germanic bracteates in terms of classical forms of letter magic. But what a magical alphabetic sequence would mean on a runic memorial is not fully explored by Knirk or Schulte.

The name Kelbapewaz is one of several early runic examples of dithematic names in -þewaz, much as the element -gastiz is particularly well attested among the oldest Nordic finds (Peterson 2004). The element -þewaz is also found as an independent lexical item in early runic inscriptions and is often interpreted literally as ‘servant’ (rather than Krause’s ‘liege man’). The first element kelba- is evidently a full-grade variant of the Common Germanic word for ‘calf’ (cf. Old English [hereafter OE] cilfer, Old High German [hereafter OHG] chilburra ‘chilver, ewe lamb’ < *kelbizjō/-uzjō; cf. Schulte 2010, 52; Knirk 2011, 31). A heroic interpretation ‘calf-thane’ (i.e. a name for a young warrior) also makes much better sense than (merely) ‘calf-servant’—a þewaz (as someone who ‘served’ militarily) presumably represented one of the middle-ranking figures (or liegemen) who featured in Iron Age armies (cf. Mees 2003, 59 f.; Pauli Jensen et al. 2003). Naudigastiz is more transparently to be translated literally as ‘need-guest’—i.e. a guest who is (or has been) in need—an onomastic indexing of the early Germanic (and indeed Indo-European) tradition of (military) hospitality (Wessén 1927, 44 f.; cf. Watkins 1996, 246; Schulte 2011, 63).

The obviously lexical part of the Hogganvik text for which the proper interpretation is disputed is the collocation in(n)ana nabōz, literally ‘from within the nave’. Schulte (2010, 56; 2013, 124) notes that Old Norse nǫf can also refer to the corner of a house (presumably because the junctures of timber were seen to be comparable to that of the nave of a wooden wheel), but in some later dialects (and place-names) the same form can also mean ‘protruding rock, elevated headland, promontory, cape’, evidently a development of the semantic ‘corner’. Bjorvand and Lindeman (2007, 786 f.) argue that two different etymological roots are involved, with the meaning ‘corner of house’ semantically unrelated to ‘nave’. At any rate, comparable runic memorials do not feature the preposition in(n)ana; nor do they clearly feature references to headlands, wheel naves or the corners of houses.
The early runic memorial habit

It is quite clear, however, even from a superficial survey of the somewhat over forty early runestone inscriptions which have survived, that textual formulas and subtypes can be isolated within the overall older funerary genre. Memorial epigraphy is typically formulaic—funerary inscriptions usually represent the clearest epigraphic testimony for what Weber (1922, 12–16) characterised as traditional action (cf. Mees 2013, 327 f.). Much like sets of Iron Age grave goods, funerary epigraphs typically accord to standard typologies and feature recurrent formulas because they are solemn emotional expressions that are public in character (cf. Rosenwein 2006, 61). Like Roman memorials, they clearly reflect a form of “epigraphic habit” (MacMullen 1982) and often feature little more than indications of who the memorialised was and who set the monument up. Since all forms of memorial epigraphy are stereotypical, the disagreement which has arisen in interpretations of the Hogganvik inscription may perhaps be resolved by a fuller consideration of the fundamental formulaic characteristics of the older runic memorial habit.

The Hogganvik inscription was found near the remains of an Iron Age graveyard or burial site (Glørstad et al. 2011) and clearly belongs to the early Nordic genre of runestone texts that characteristically feature a man’s name in the genitive and a labelling of the associated grave or memorial stone. The Bø stone’s hnað das hlaiwa ‘Hnaðaz’s grave’, Stenstad’s igjon halaz ‘Ingijo’s stone’ and the similar hariwulfz·stainaz ‘Hari wulfz’s stones’ on the transitional/younger Rävsal memorial are parade examples of this labelling type (KJ 78, KJ 81 and KJ 80, respectively; cf. Antonsen 2002, 191, and Schulte 2010, 49 f., 2013, 121). In contrast, early runic magico-religious inscriptions often feature item descriptions and naming expressions or names, but these are never brought together syntactically in the (genitival) manner seen at Hogganvik (MacLeod and Mees 2004; 2006, 71–101). Early Nordic runestone texts sometimes also feature what are usually taken to represent locativising prepositional phrases (another feature absent from early runic magico-religious texts), but the proper interpretation of such expressions has often been debated. The Möjbro inscription features the form anahahai, taken by Krause and also Antonsen as ana ha(n)hai ‘on a steed’ (cf. ON hestr < *hanhistaz ‘stallion’) — i.e. as a description which reflects the image of a horse and rider that also appears on the stone (KJ 99; Antonsen 1975, no. 11). Yet *hanhaz is not *hanhistaz—a form *hanhaz is not paralleled in Germanic with a meaning ‘steed’. Hence Staffan Fridell (2008, 2009)
has more recently suggested a toponymic interpretation ‘at Hå’, with 
hahai instead representing the name of the place where the memorialised 
warrior died (although the apparent Sanskrit cognate śankú- ‘peg, spike’ 
and Old Church Slavonic søkū ‘branch’ suggest that Hå was a u-stem in 
Germanic). The Rö memorial features what seems to have been meant 
as another prepositional phrase beginning with the preposition ana, but 
with the rest of the line largely unreadable today (KJ 73). Even less clear is 
the inscription on the Nordhuglo stone that instead finishes simply with 
the sequence ih, which has often been supposed (since Bugge, NiæR, no. 
49) to represent an abbreviation for in Hugla ‘in Huglo’ (KJ 65), although 
this interpretation is rather speculative. The Hogganvik text, however, 
reads in(n)ana ‘within’, not in ‘in’ or ana ‘at, upon’ as would be expected 
in connection with a place-name. Schulte’s connection of naboż with a 
geographical description of the location of the monument ‘within the area 
of the protruding rocks’ seems rather unlikely in this light.

Indeed the preposition in(n)ana clearly represents a locativising expres-
sion which etymologically means ‘from within’, the suffix -na being direc-
tional (cf. Latin -nē in supernē ‘from above’, Goth. utana ‘from without’, 
aftana ‘from behind’ etc.; Schmidt 1962, 178–81 and 183 f.). Surely the 
semantic which fits best with a directional ‘from within’ is ‘corner of a 
house’ — i.e. a formation of a type which is widely paralleled in Old Norse; 
cf. ON innan borgar ‘within the town’, innan hallar ‘within the hall’, 
innanveggja ‘within the walls’ and (especially) innandura, innangard, 
inngåtta, innanhúss and innanstokks, all of which signify ‘at home, 
indoors’. The Hogganvik expression innanaboż can be understood as metonymic, then — i.e. with the literal meaning ‘from within the corner of 
a house’ indicating ‘at home, within the corners/walls of his house’. If the 
use, albeit limited, of prepositional phrases in other runestone memorials 
can be used as a guide, then the description innanaboż looks as if it 
indicates that Kelbapewaz died at home, rather than (more heroically) out 
of doors. No indication comparable to the Möjbro stone’s slaginaz ‘slain’ 
is given, but the Möjbro inscription is unique among the older runic texts 
by featuring an explicit verbal indication of dying.

Non-lexical sequences

The seemingly non-lexical sequences on the Hogganvik stone are linked 
by both Knirk and Schulte with magical interpretations of comparable 
orderings which appear on early runic amulets. Nordén (1934, 1940) inter-
preted several of the early Nordic runestone inscriptions as funerary curses
and many such interpretations duly feature in the corpus edition of older runic texts produced by Krause and Jankuhn. Schulte (2013, 122) similarly cites Page (1987, 30) who claims that some early runestone inscriptions include magical features that seem to have been intended to “keep the grave from desecration or the corpse in the grave”, much as if the Hogganvik sequences represent some sort of magical threat arraigned against thieves or haunting. Page, however, was clearly referring to the appearance of the etymologically controversial magico-religious term alu as the sole form recorded on the Elgesem runestone and the palindrome sueus from the Kylver runestone which can both be paralleled by forms that appear in amuletic epigraphy (KJ 57 and KJ 1, respectively). Early runic alu is a relatively common term in bracteate texts and a similar palindrome to the Kylver form sueus is reflected in the Roman-letter sequence siusuis which appears on the medallion imitation from Kälder (IK 286).

Yet few of the texts of Nordén’s grave-haunting type feature non-lexical sequences and nothing directly comparable to the Hogganvik forms aaasrpkf and aarpau is known from any of the bracteates. The first expression is somewhat reminiscent of the sequence auṣrpkf preserved on the Roskilde bracteate (Hauck and Heizmann 2003) which seems to represent a scrambled form of fuṣark, with the a moved to where the equivalent character, A, appears in the Roman abecedarium and the f-rune taking the place where the corresponding letter, F, comes in the Latin pedagogical ordering. A more recent bracteate find from Stavnsager similarly features a spelling aalul that includes comparable letter doubling but appears to represent an irregular form of the common early runic charm word alu (Axboe and Imer 2012). Rather than comparing with attested bracteate sequences, however, Schulte (2010, 53f.; 2013, 123) cites the evidence of inscriptions such as the transitional-runic Ällerstad memorial which ends with a sequence kkkiiii; kkk that is often taken to be magical (KJ 59). Triple repetition (such as kkk) is often connected with magical and religious expressions, in what West (2007, 106) characterises as “liturgical-magical” iteration. Such repetitions are also reflected in some younger runic texts where their context is more clearly magical — e.g. the three i-runes of the eleventh-century amulet from Sigtuna which has been read as iii isir pis isir ‘iii ice, these ice’ in the inscription (Eriksson and Zetterholm 1933; MacLeod and Mees 2006, 118).

But Krause (in KJ 59) instead interpreted the final Ällerstad sequence as a form of cryptic runes, taking kkkiiii;kkk to represent a coded form of the common early runic bracteate term alu. His derivation, however, relies on the coding system of so-called is-runes developed for the sixteen-character younger futhark, and hence seems quite implausibly anachronistic.
There appear to be four possible interpretations of such expressions—either as abbreviations, coded sequences, linguistically meaningless expressions or magical letter orderings. Knirk and Schulte assume that the last possibility is the most likely at Hogganvik, relying on the approach to such sequences advocated by Düwel for the irregular spellings attested on the Migration Age bracteates. But the difficult Hogganvik expressions are only broadly paralleled on the bracteates and the Hogganvik inscription shows no other sign that it was intended to be magical. Instead, it features elements that are not reflected in other early runic magico-religious inscriptions, but that are typical of memorial texts. The characteristic features of early runic magical inscriptions are names (and longer naming expressions), item descriptions, letter sequences (often futhark orderings), “charm” words (such as early runic alu) and magical symbols (such as swastikas) — but not possessive genitive anthroponyms and locativising prepositional phrases (MacLeod and Mees 2004, 2006, 71–101). The inscription on the early Nordic Kylver stone is generally thought to be magical as it features a futhark row and a tree-like symbol (as well as the palindrome sueus), while the appearance of alu as the sole term on the Elgesem stone is unambiguously cultic or magical. The Kylver and Elgesem texts do not feature memorial formulas or vocabulary and are typologically unlike the Hogganvik memorial which is otherwise quite clearly to be associated formulaically with other, non-magical runestone inscriptions. The Hogganvik memorial seems to represent a typical commemorative expression supplemented by some non-lexical sequences that may or may not be magical and which from a Roman perspective seem unlikely to represent a magico-religious addition to the early runic memorial habit.

Abbreviations and repetitions

The most orthographically regular manner by which to explain an unpronounceable sequence of letterforms is as an abbreviation. Standard epigraphic formulas often appear abbreviated in Latin epigraphy, sequences such as Dis Manibus ‘to the spirits of the dead’, sit tibi terra levis ‘may the earth lie lightly upon you’, hoc monumentum heredem non sequitur ‘this tomb does not pass to the heir’ and sua pecunia ‘from his own money’ often appearing as DM, STTL, HMHNS or SP (Keppie 1991, 138 f.). Some early Nordic bracteate texts also appear to feature abbreviations such as r(ūnōz) ‘runes’ and f(aihidō) ‘I drew, I decorated’ which are not clearly motivated on magico-religious grounds (KJ 132 and KJ 134) and the
sequence ih on the Nordhuglo stone has long been thought to represent a similar abbreviation. Imer (2011, 22) argues that an abbreviation w(orahtō) or w(ritu) is to be understood on the Gärđlōsa fibula (KJ 12) and Schneider (1975, 116) similarly suggested than an abbreviation h(aitē) was intended on the Thorsberg shield boss (KJ 21).

Some unpronounceable sequences of runes, however, can evidently be ascribed to coding rather than abbreviation. The representation of the patently magical þistil, mistil, kistil (or ‘thistle, mistletoe, casket’) formula as þmk:iii:sss:ttt:iii:lll on the eleventh-century Ledberg stone is the most transparent instance of coding in Northern memorial epigraphy (Moltke 1985, 171; MacLeod and Mees 2006, 145 f.). Similarly, the reference to ṣṭāba þri(a) | ᵃff in the transitional inscription on the Gummarp stone (KJ 95) is often taken to indicate a triple repetition of the rune name *fehu ‘cattle, wealth’ (MacLeod and Mees 2006, 112) and authors such as Krause put considerable effort into promoting similarly ideographic or coded interpretations of obscure sequences in early runic texts. Clear references to *fehu, however, are otherwise unparalleled in early runic epigraphy, whereas employments of *faihjan ‘draw, decorate, colour’ are quite common (with an abbreviated form possibly evidenced on the Femø bracteate). Hence an interpretation of the Gummarp inscription (which was destroyed in a fire in the eighteenth century and is only known today from illustrations) with more parallels is [afstr] Ḥaþuwoləfr sat(t)e; ṣṭaba þri(j)a f(āhda), f(āhda), f(āhda), ‘Set up in memory of Ḥaþuwoləfr; three staves I drew, I drew, I drew’. Commonly used terms such as fecit ‘made’ are routinely abbreviated in Latin epigraphy and are represented in some of the maker’s marks which appear on weapons imported into the North during the later Roman Iron Age (Imer 2011). Indeed a double abbreviation FF is preserved in several Roman inscriptions as an abbreviation for fecerunt ‘(they) made’ (e.g. CIL, 3: no. 4197) and doubling and tripling is regularly used in Roman epigraphy to indicate plurality. A memorial inscription from Lyon, for instance, ends with the sequence PPP CCC SSS AAA DDD which is clearly a tripled abbreviation of the common Latin memorial formula p(onendum) c(uraverunt) s(ub) a(scia) d(edicaverunt) ‘(all three) caused (this) to be placed (and) dedicated while it was under construction’ (CIL, 13: no. 2016). A similar threefold repetition of a form of the fabricatory verb *faihjan (‘three staves they drew’?) would seem—from a Roman perspective—to be the best paralleled interpretation of the difficult Gummarp sequence.

A comparably “sceptical” approach might accordingly be taken to the difficult Ällerstad sequence which also has the impression of an abbrevi-
ation about it, although an alternative procedure involving parallels in the
non-runic world may be to compare it with the numeric sequences that
often appear in Roman texts—as indications of time, weight, distance,
price or the like (Gordon 1983, 44–49). With its four i-runes, the sequence
looks much like it is numeric and Roman memorials sometimes feature
temporal expressions such as *vixit ann(os) vi, m(ensisibus) viii, d(ieibus) xxii*,
‘lived for six years, eight months and twenty-two days’ (Gordon 1983,
no. 99). Given the origin of the Roman numeral v in a representation of
a hand, the Ällerstad sequence *kkiiiiikk* (where each of the k-runes
takes the transitional form *y*) could be interpreted as a similar attempt to
indicate three numbers: 10 (years), 9 (months and) 15 (days).

Schulte, however, compares the Hogganvik sequences to the non-lexical
form *aaaaaaaazzznnn*bmuttt on the Lindholmen amulet (KJ 29), an
expression which has often been connected with the medieval magical
tradition of *þurs þríu* ‘three þ-runes’ (or thurses), *ása átta* ‘eight a-runes’
(or Æsir) and *naudir niu* ‘nine n-runes’ (or needs); see MacLeod and Mees
(2006, 121 f.). Yet precisely what an inscription on a piece of worked horn
might have to do with the early Nordic memorial habit is not
made clear by Schulte. Alliterating expressions such as *þurs þríu* may
instead be related to the younger runic practice of indicating the names of
the Old Norse numerals in abbreviated forms: i.e. as *e(inn), t(veir), þ(rír),
f(jórir), f(imm), s(ex), s(jau), á(tta), n(iu), t(iu)* etc. (MacLeod and Mees
2006, 147 f.). In younger runic employment, a þ-rune (called *þurs*) could
in this case serve as an abbreviation for *þríu* ‘three’, an a-rune for *átta*
‘eight’ and an n-rune for *niu* ‘nine’, and a tradition where such alliterating
numerical pairs were taken to be magical appears to have developed in
medieval times. But nothing similar to the younger numeric employment
is clearly evidenced in older epigraphy, and only three (or perhaps four)
n-runes (i.e. rather than nine) are preserved in the Lindholmen inscription
(which Krause nonetheless persisted in interpreting as a long sequence
of ideographs). The irregular sequences on the Hogganvik stone show
no obvious similarity with the repeated runes found on the Lindholmen
amulet which can alternatively be taken as a sort of coded term or name
(perhaps Az(i)n[a]mu(n)d(az), if not a reversed form of *tumbnax* ‘of the
tip’; cf. ON *tumba* ‘tumble’, OHG *zumba* ‘stub, tip, penis’) and appear in
a context that clearly supports a magical interpretation (Grønvik 1996,
70–73, MacLeod and Mees 2006, 92). A more mundane explanation for the
Hogganvik sequences would seem to be much better paralleled in early
runic memorial epigraphy.
Memorial and magical inscriptions

A rather clearer comparison, however, may be with the similarly not-immediately interpretable expression that appears on the obverse of the Krogsta stone (KJ 100). It is taken by MacLeod and Mees (2006, 110) to be magico-religious, yet even this rather minimalist runestone text can be understood as a member of a well-attested early runic sub-genre of memorial monuments. Moreover, Imer (2015, 154) has dated the Krogsta monument (by means of the shape of its e-rune) to the late Roman Iron Age, much like the similarly funerary Hogganvik stone — i.e. to the period A.D. c. 150/160–375/400.

The most outstanding feature of the Krogsta stone is the picture of a man that it bears, the representation having its arms extended in a manner which in both ancient and early Christian contexts is usually regarded as a representation of praying (Klauser 1959; 1960). This orans or ‘one who prays’ posture taken by the figure suggests that the person represented at Krogsta was considered very pious (perhaps even a pagan gudja or priest). The picture is also accompanied by two inscriptions, one on the front of the stone and one on its back. Only the text on the reverse of the stone seems immediately readable, however, and even it appears to be deficient in one striking manner.

The readable Krogsta text is siainaz, a sequence that has usually been taken as a mistake for the common early runic term stainaz ‘stone’ with the (comparatively rare) i-rune apparently standing erroneously for what was meant to be a t-rune. The other Krogsta expression seems quite uninterpretable lexically, however, reading mwsieij*, a perhaps incomplete sequence. It seems that a slightly substandard text on one side of the Krogsta stone has been complemented by an even less regular one on the other.

Yet the most characteristic feature of the Krogsta inscription would seem to be its labelling of the associated stone. This behaviour suggests (given the memorials which feature texts of the genitive name plus object description type) that the more obviously lexical Krogsta sequence should be interpreted as ‘(this pious man’s) stone’ — i.e. as a mixed pictorial/orthographic reflection of the ‘NN’s stone/grave’ formula typical of the early runic memorial habit. The orans figure seems to serve as the pictorial equivalent of an anthroponym, the labelling of the object representing a kind of deixis (or linguistic “pointing”) which (equally) stands in contrast to the usual tendency in more literate cultures for the focus of such labelling to be on naming the owner of a find rather than the associated object.
Typically, however, the difficult sequence which accompanies the orans representation at Krogsta is treated as completely opaque by scholars. Yet the use of the i-rune where we would expect a runic t on the more immediately interpretable side suggests that a similar reading should be entertained for the sequence on the orans face of the stone. This, then, as Seebold (1994, 79) suggests could be taken as evidence that mwsteij* was supposed to be understood as featuring a sequence steij*, a form which he links with an obliquely inflected variant of stainaz. Nonetheless if it is to be interpreted in such a manner, a spelling steij* would appear more likely to represent a development of Proto-Germanic *stajanan (< Indo-European *steh₂-, *sth₂-eh₁i/ë-) ‘stand, remain’; cf. OHG stēn, stān, Old Saxon stān, Latin stō, stāre, Oscan stait, stahint, Old Church Slavonic stojō, stojati and the younger runic stændr stæinn ‘stands the stone’ formula (Sihler 1995, 529 f.; Källström 2007, 52). Given the early j-loss in *stajanan (Thórhallsdóttir 1993, 35 f.), steij* looks as if it may continue analogical vocalism (cf. OHG stēn < *stai-). If so, the inscription on the orans side of the Krogsta stone could possibly be read as mw stæij[u], with mw representing an abbreviation — i.e. a typical fabricant (NN statuit or ‘NN set up’) expression and not a magical sequence of a type not clearly paralleled elsewhere in runic epigraphy.

The Krogsta expression mwsteij* may thus represent an irregularly expressed but typical mundane formation, and hence like the sequence kkkiiiiikkk on the Alléstad memorial may not be a good example of a magical sequence on an early runic memorial. Yet some of the older and transitional runestone inscriptions are undoubtedly magico-religious in character, the Elgesem monument being found in a burial mound, much as the Kylver stone was found in a grave. These texts, however, clearly accord to the magico-religious genre described by MacLeod and Mees (2004; 2006, 71–101) and not to those usually attested in early runic memorial epigraphy. The date at which magico-religious textual features first found their way into the runic memorial habit is unclear. As it is possible to interpret both the Krogsta and the Alléstad inscriptions as wholly mundane, albeit in part abbreviated or otherwise orthographically irregular memorial expressions, a similar opacity might well be present in the Hogganvik inscription.

What is clear about the Hogganvik sequences aasrpkf and aarpaa, however, is that they are quite different than the Kylver stone’s palindrome sueus or other kinds of magical letter sequences known from ancient magical sources, such as the row of Greek vowels (αηιουω) found on a Jasper amulet of uncertain provenance now in the National Museum in

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Nonetheless some letter doubling is evident in the Hogganvik sequence aarpaa in a manner comparable to that which appears in the Stavnsager bracteate’s aalul and the names uuigaz and ssigaduz on the Väsby and Svarteborg amulets (KJ 128 and KJ 47, i.e. IK 241 and IK 181, respectively; Wagner 2009). Certain kinds of partially and completely non-lexical sequences such as abecedaria and palindromes were used in both classical and early Germanic magic, but it is only the letter doubling in the Hogganvik sequences aaasrpkf and aarpaa that makes them seem potentially magical. Taken from the perspective of Roman funerary epigraphy, however, the two sequences seem more likely to represent abbreviated forms than they do magical expressions.

The Hogganvik sequences

As the Roman use of letter repetition suggests, the doubling and tripling of runic staves may not be clear evidence of a magical use of early Nordic writing. The difficult Hogganvik forms are evidently similar to each other as each features a repetition of a-runes and the sequence rp, and the Tune memorial (KJ 72) records a suitably funerary alliterating sequence arbiija … arbijano ‘inheritance … of the inheritors’ (Mees 2015). Yet the sequence rp would be more difficult to account for than aa as an abbreviation, as terms beginning with /p/ are typically restricted to loanwords in Proto-Germanic. And while an early North Germanic text comparable to sua pecunia might well have featured a reference to an early form of Old Norse penningar ‘pennies, money’, nothing similar is attested anywhere in runic epigraphy.

Nonetheless the triple repetition in aaasrpkf is reminiscent of the abbreviation AAA for annorum ‘years’ recently found on an amphora from Cologne (AE 2009: no. 918b) and the latter part of the difficult Hogganvik sequence is quite similar to the Roman memorial style d(e) s(ua) p(ecunia) c(uravit) f(aciendum) ‘paid for it with her own money’ (CIL, 1: no. 1688). The other Hogganvik form aarpaa, however, is also reminiscent of OE earp ‘dark, dusky’, a scribal or apophonic variant of OE eorp ‘idem’, and ON jarpr ‘swarthy, brown’; cf. OE Earpwald, Eorpwald. After all, a similar o-grade form is continued by Greek ὀρϕνός ‘dark, dusky’ and the Illerup shield mount features a semantically comparable anthroponym swarta ‘Black one’ (Moltke 1985, 95). Consequently the sequence aarpaa looks

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1 My thanks to Peter Penz of the National Museum in Copenhagen for this reference.
as if it may best be presumed to be another anthroponym, the fourth to be recognised on the Hogganvik stone.

Moreover, *er paz ‘dark, dusky’ has long been thought to represent the colour term from which the early North Germanic animal name *er baz ‘wolverine’ (and hence Hogganvik’s erafaz) derives. Their clear morphological relationship suggests that the two colour terms represent the detritus of an older Kluge’s law n-stem *erbōn, *arb naz (arp’taz), the colour and animal descriptions having the same relationship as Greek ὀρφνός ‘dark, dusky’ has to ὀρφος ‘dusky perch’ (Kluge 1884; Wood 1902, 71; Krahe and Meid 1969, 138 f.; Kroonen 2011, 55–84 and 133–46). The form aarpaa does not feature an epenthetic vowel comparable to that seen in erafaz, but this may merely be a sign that it is the fricative (i.e. not just the juncture with /r/) which has occasioned the epenthesis. Thus the sequence aarpaa looks as if it may have been related to the cognomen erafaz.

Letter doubling appears often enough in older runic texts that it seems to have been used occasionally as an emphasising strategy similar to ligaturing, the employment of mirror runes and other comparable forms of orthographic highlighting—hence, presumably, the appearance of letter repetition not just in names but also in more remarkable expressions such as the Lindholmen sequence aaaaaaaaaazzznnn∗bumutt (MacLeod 2006). If not a contraction of a name like Earpwald, Arpa however seems to represent a nickname based on the hair colour of the man who bore it, the cognomen ‘wolverine’ presumably (at least in part) being similarly inspired by the physical appearance of Naudigastiz. Schulte (2013, 122 f.) suggests that the designation ‘wolverine’ may also have indicated Naudigastiz’s elite social standing as references to fur coats appear in later Germanic anthroponyms (such as ON Biarnheðinn and OHG Mardhetin). But the sequence aarpaa is immediately followed by inananaḅoz, much as if Arpa (rather than Kelbāþewaz) is being described as in(n)ana nabōz—i.e. Arpa was the name that Naudigastiz was known by ‘at home, indoors’. Consequently, the style erafaz ‘Wolverine’ may have been Naudigastiz’s public (and elite) cognomen, aarpaa ‘Dark one, Dusky one’ his more colloquial nickname among members of his immediate household.

If so, the earlier sequence aaasrpkf may also represent another orthographically unconventional reference to Naudigastiz. The final rune f could be understood as an abbreviated reference to Naudigastiz’s function as the inscriber or commissioner of the Hogganvik memorial, with aaasrpkf an abbreviated reference to Arpa writing (f(aihidē)) the inscription on Kelbāþewaz’s memorial stone. Indeed aaasrp could well
reflect a scrambled or irregular form of *arpa*, as if the sequence were meant to be read partly in a retrograde manner: i.e. as *sa aarp k f*, *sā Arp(a) K(elbaþewas) f(aihidē)*, ‘the one Arpa son of Kelbaþewaz drew’; cf. *sā þat boriutiþ* ‘the one that breaks (this)’ in the curse on the Stentoftsten stone (KJ 96). Yet the medial letters of the most difficult Hogganvik sequence are not clearly to be associated with an early-runic memorial style commonly attested elsewhere, so it may simply be better to leave *aaasrpkf* uninterpreted (i.e. as an unexplained sequence) and not to draw any conclusions from the unexpected form at all.

In contrast to Roman memorials, however, a more obvious characteristic of the Hogganvik inscription is that it gives considerably more space to describing the identity of the person who raised the stone than it does the memorialised. Some of the early Nordic memorial inscriptions only mention the name of the dead, but there are others, such as the Nordhugo text, which only seem to mention the name of the commissioner of the memorial. Still others spend rather more time describing who the manufacturers or (in the case of the Tune memorial) who the inheritors of the memorialised’s estate were. This unexpected feature suggests that a key function of some of the Iron Age monuments was to commemorate the act of raising the memorial as much as it was to celebrate the memory of the deceased. Ogam stones in contrast never feature indications of who raised them or who wrote (or benefited from) their early Irish inscriptions and Roman funerary epigraphs, although often mentioning the name of the commemorator, similarly focus mainly on the name and situation (titles, age at death, etc.) of the memorialised (Keppie 1991, 106 f.; Saller and Shaw 1984; McManus 1997, 51).

Yet MacMullen (1982) talks of the Imperial Roman epigraphic habit in terms of its “sense of audience” and Meyer (1996) explains the rapid growth in monumental epigraphy in the Roman provinces (the production of which is often thought to have peaked in the late second century) as due to a desire of the new, provincial elites of the Empire to demonstrate their Latinity. Speidel (2015, 335–37) similarly notes the habit of self-representation common in the epigraphs associated with Roman veterans and soldiers, particularly in texts which demonstrate the social standing of the commissioners of an inscription. It sometimes seems to have been the supplying of the name of the erector of the memorial that was considered most important in older runic tradition, as if the practice of raising runestones (rather than testifying to the deeds and social standing of the dead) was seen to be the most significant aspect of early Nordic commemoration. The main emotional display represented by the
Hogganvik monument seems to have been focussed on the (first-person) commemorator, not the (genitival) memorialised — and this inversion of textual focus so different from what typically applies in Roman funerary epigraphy appears to represent evidence for a remarkably self-predicative or agentive aspect to early Scandinavian commemoration.

**Conclusion**

Taken from a textual and pragmatic perspective, the inscriptions that appear on early Nordic funerary runestones seem quite different in many ways to those from the Viking and later periods where a stronger sense of epigraphic habit had evidently led to the development of a greater level of textual standardisation. The formulaic elements that appear in older runic memorials are often very simple possessive and labelling expressions of a kind that suggests deictic, oral language of a form reasonably to be expected in an only marginally literate culture. Other aspects of the early runic memorial texts typically represent rhetorical expansions, whether adding comments to the obvious memorialising context, naming the erector of the monument or adding some sort of elaboration to the name of the commissioner or the memorialised. Minimalistic from an emotional perspective, such extensions can also evidently include expressing part of the text in manners which are difficult to interpret today.

In the Hogganvik inscription, these extensions include a reference to *in(n)ana nabōz*, a prepositional phrase that seems best to be translated as ‘at home, indoors’. The phrase is immediately preceded by an orthographically unexpected form *aarpaα* that looks much like the expected o-grade equivalent of the Old English onomastic theme *Eorp-*, *Earp- ‘dark, dusky’*. A third, even less regular sequence is also represented on the stone, but whether it represents an abbreviated, coded or even magical sequence remains unclear. No clearly magical sequences are found on other early runic memorials, however, suggesting that an abbreviated or otherwise irregular text was intended by the carver.

Where younger memorial texts are often so standardised as to be predictable, the older runic memorial inscriptions are often much more interesting and varied. Many of the comments and styles found on early runic memorials are repeated often enough that their general typological character can be reconstructed. Difficult sequences found in early runic texts are also often thought to be magical. But the recent focus on epigraphic habits first articulated by the classicist MacMullen and the history of emotions approach promoted especially by the medievalist...
Rosenwein asks runologists to look at early memorials primarily in terms of audience, genre and emotion, and in this way bring runic studies more clearly into accord with the mainstream of contemporary epigraphic historiography.

**Bibliography**


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