

Runic Inscriptions Reflecting Linguistic Contacts between West Slav Lands and Southern Scandinavia

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Introduction

From the perspective of the average Danish school-child the encounters between the Scandinavian-speaking population in southern Scandinavia and West Slav tribes in the late Viking Age and during the medieval period seem to consist of endless combat and pillaging. Whenever one side of the Baltic coast was weakened by civil wars or internal turmoil, invaders from the opposite coast tried to take advantage of the situation. However, Danish schoolchildren are told that in the end the Danes gained the upper hand, unlike in later military campaigns in Danish history. Thus, these events form an important part in the creation of Danish national romantic self-understanding.

The historical annals which deal with this period naturally focus on martial deeds and battles as focal points in the events of history. However, when studying the most learned of these annalists, Saxo Grammaticus, it is evident that the description of the enemy as such is also very negative: Slavs seemingly have bad habits, they are primitive, and — if they do negotiate — they are replete with false words. In all this, of course, they are very unlike their Danish counterparts. This impression of constant hostilities is in turn contradicted by the fact that numerous marriage bonds linked the royal families around the Baltic according to the same historical sources.

Archaeological evidence also demonstrates the large-scale trading and exchange of goods that involved all the populations in the Baltic region. In Scandinavia the presence of Slavic occupation or settlement has been suggested from the island of Als in the west to the island settlement of

Mölleholmen on an inland lake near the south coast of Skåne in the east (Mölleholmen is published by Rüdiger Kelm (2000) but his hypothesis has been questioned by Thorbjörn Brorsson (2004: 233–34)). Between these two locations, place names speak of Slavic settlements on the islands of Lolland, Falster and Møn south of Sjælland (Housted 1994), just as a number of Russian place names have been claimed to witness traces of the Vikings (Vasmer 1931: 649–74).

On the island of Langeland excavations at the medieval fortification Guldborg in 1993 seem to confirm a Slavic onslaught on the Danish defenders (Skaarup 1997). South of the Baltic Sea chamber burials, burial customs, ship tumuli and marketplaces along the inland rivers bear witness to a substantial Scandinavian presence. The majority of the archaeological artefacts, however, suggest trade and the presence of Slavic settlements points in a more peaceful direction.

This forces us to bear in mind that Saxo's literary description of the Slavs not only served to legitimize the crusade against the West Slav tribes, it also presented the Scandinavians as noble heathens who — although bewildered by magicians and tricksters — were of their own free will searching for the truth of God, whereas the Slavs were savage and wicked heathens who required to be enlightened with the aid of the sword. In this respect the historical records are literary texts or political pamphlets rather than neutral records of the events.

To what extent did the two populations interact linguistically? According to Saxo there was no mutual intelligibility between the Scandinavian and Slavic populations. Among the armies there would often be people who could understand a word or two and figure out the intentions of the enemy, but translators seemed to be compulsory when it came to peace negotiations.

The rather great linguistic difference between Slavic and Scandinavian languages provides a good explanation for this but it is not necessarily the only explanation and bilingualism might have been more common than the written sources lead us to believe.

Loan words are also an important subject, and a complex one, especially in this case, because Low German at an early stage and High German at a later stage have been both primary and intermediary sources for the exchange of loan words between Slavic and Scandinavian. Slavic loan-words in Scandinavian are mainly linked to trade activities but it is hard to establish when and how a specific words such as *bismer*(*vægt*) 'steelyard', *silke* 'silk', *torv* 'square/market place' and *tolk* 'interpreter' in

Danish have entered the language without reliable written contemporary documentation (Svane 1989: 26–32, Thörnqvist 1948).

1. Personal names

Another important linguistic source is personal names. It is well-attested that Slavic names were transferred to Scandinavia via royal marriages and later through the landed gentry from Pomerania who were established in Denmark, for instance common first names as *Valdemar* and *Preben* in Denmark, *Svante* and possibly *Gustav* in Sweden from Slavic *Vladimir*, *Pritbor*, *Svatopolk* and *Gostislav*. Similarly, a few Scandinavian names entered the Slavic dialects, most notably *Igor*, *Oleg* and *Olga* from Old Norse *Ingvarr*, *Helgi/Helga* (Svane 1989). Personal names are not, however, identical with ethnicity: Just as modern Danes are called *Brian* or *Ivan* without having the slightest idea as to where these names come from, personal names like *Ketill* and *Magnús* in the Viking Age also demonstrate cultural exchange, although admittedly in a much more limited number than today.

Often, though, a name provides a good starting point for discussing linguistic contact. An example of this is the Slavic name *Gnemer*, which occurs a few times in the Danish Middle Ages (Danmarks gamle Personnavne 1: 374). According to King Valdemar's land register from 1231 a man named *Gnemer* owned a village on the island of Falster. It has been argued quite convincingly that this village must be identical with the present-day village *Sønder Grimmelstrup* not far from a cluster of Slavic place names (Housted 1994: 43 (map 3)). The name of the village goes back to **Gnemærsthorp*, where the first element *Gnemær* has been reinterpreted as Scandinavian *Grimar* (Lisse 1974: 124). It is plausible that this *Gnemerus* is the same person who is mentioned in *Knýtlinga saga* as *Guenmarr Ketilsson* who served in Valdemar's army and captured the lookout of the Slavic defending army. Saxo's *Gesta Danorum* also mentions a certain *Guemerus Falstricus*, who served in the Danish coastal defence. According to Saxo, Gnemerus "had too close connections with the Slavs" and Gnemerus reveals the Danish war plans to them.¹

¹ *Gesta Danorum*, liber 14: 44, 9: "Is Guemmerus nimia Sclauorum familiaritate corruptus nostrę gentis consilia latenter eis prodere consueuerat" (vol. 2, p. 414).

Although *Ketill* is a common Viking-Age personal name, its combination with *Gnemer* can hardly be a coincidence. If we assume that it is in fact the same *Gnemer*, he is the son of *Ketill* — a Scandinavian name. Despite the fact that he obviously speaks Slavic as well as Danish, it remains a puzzle to decide his ethnic ties: the written sources disagree about his loyalty.

Another linguistic way of handling the clash of languages is name change. According to a runestone from Sønder Vissing in central Jutland King Harold Bluetooth's wife had the Scandinavian name *Tófa*, although she was the daughter of *Mbstivoj*, “knjaz” or king of the Abotrites. In the runic inscription his name is rendered **mistiuis** in the genitive thus showing a linguistic adaption to the Old Norse masculine *ija*-declension. This, however, does not explain why *Tófa* has a Scandinavian name. One explanation might be that *Tófa*'s mother was Scandinavian but it might also be the case that *Tófa* changed her name as a sign of loyalty when she was accepted into the royal line of Denmark.

A parallel to this is the Christian name that several rulers took after their conversion, for instance Queen Olga of Kiev took the name Yelena (Helen) when she was baptized in the 940s. Name change has contemporary as well as modern parallels. According to *Jómsvíkinga saga* King of the Wends *Búrizlafr*'s three daughters also have Scandinavian names: *Ástríðr*, *Gunnhildr* and *Geira*. The reason for this might be that as a part of the plot in the narrative they all end up marrying Scandinavians.

Apart from the limited number of Slavic personal names which have been borrowed into Scandinavian, inhabitants' names — sometimes used as personal names — occur in Scandinavian place names and runic inscriptions, *vindir* “the West Slav” occurs frequently in Danish place names such as *Vinderup*, and *Vindeboder* in Roskilde. Similarly the inhabitants' name **imbri* ‘person from the island of Fehmarn’ occurs in *Emdrup* (1186 Imbrethorp, see Jørgensen 2006: 65–66). *Imbri* is not as frequent as for instance *saxi* ‘person from Saxony’ or *aenglir* ‘person from England’ in Danish place names.

In runic inscriptions we find inhabitants' names used as forenames, for instance *Æistr/Æisti/Æistmaðr* “person from Estonia” and *Tafæistr* “person from Tavastland (in Finland)”. Henrik Williams deals with an occurrence of *vindr* on the Swedish runestone, Sö 351, in his comment to this paper. Due to the often ambiguous runic orthography other occurrences of *vindr* may well have been listed as spellings of the common male personal name *Øyindr/Øyvindr* (Peterson 2007: 269–70).

There is no doubt that inhabitants' names reflect linguistic contacts, but without circumstantial evidence it is hard to establish the exact kind of linguistic effect and significance of these encounters.

2. Runic inscriptions

In order to establish how the West Slavs and the Scandinavians coexisted in the eleventh and twelfth centuries it is possible to involve further evidence which in my opinion has been both misjudged by previous scholars and overlooked or underestimated in more recent research, namely fifteen runic inscriptions from the West Slavic area. Most of the inscriptions were carved into the concave and convex sides of ribs from cattle while the bone surface was still soft after cooking. Thus, we may assume that they were produced locally at the find spots.

The corpus comes from six find-places, most notably eight pieces of bone with runic inscriptions in Starigard/Oldenburg, which were discovered together with several other objects of Scandinavian origin during the archaeological excavations 1973–87. The runic inscriptions were found in debris layers from an urban settlement close to the royal residence of the Wagrian knjaz on the plateau of the fortified hill-top. The inscriptions are archaeologically dated to the second half of the eleventh century or the first half of the twelfth century. Three similar inscriptions are known from Alt Lübeck plus single bone-finds from Ralswiek and Kamień Pomorski. The remaining list of runic finds includes a soapstone amulet from Alt Lübeck, a wooden stick from Wolin with an uncertain inscription and a gaming piece from debris layers in Kałdus on the banks of the river Vistula. For further bibliographical data I will point to the appendix.

The rune-types in the inscriptions all belong to the typical late Viking-Age type, that is long-branch runes with a variety of dotted runes and short-twig variant forms. There is nothing to suggest specific medieval runological developments (differentiation between **ɑ** and **æ**; **o** and **ø**, as well as the **ýr**-rune, **ṛ**, for the vowel /y/). One of the inscriptions from Starigard/Oldenburg seems to reflect South Scandinavian linguistic developments, thus pointing to the area from which the rune-carver came. All the legible inscriptions are in Scandinavian and the types of inscriptions can be found elsewhere in similar urban runic finds from Scandinavia. In the following I shall go through the fifteen finds thematically.

Illegible inscriptions

First of all, it should be emphasized that informal inscriptions on bone pieces are often illegible. The people who carved them were probably not intending for us to see them — and in some Norwegian parallels from Tønsberg, Bergen and Trondheim, one may suspect that the rune-carvers were drunk or just having a good time. The thigh bone from Ralswiek **tu** and Starigard/Oldenburg 5 **sinkn:** may serve as examples. The scattered runes on the odd soap-stone object, Alt Lübeck 2, probably belong to this group too. It should be noted, however, that the proportion of meaningful inscriptions from the West Slav lands seems to be at the same level or even higher than, for instance, urban finds from Lund, Sigtuna, Gamlebyen in Oslo, and Dublin.

Statements of ownership

Another well-known type of inscription is the statement of ownership: “N.N. owns me” or “N.N. owns this or that object”. The latter type is attested on the gaming piece from Kałdus, which was found in 2002. The object is made of antler and it belongs to a very common type of artefact. The inscription — which I have unfortunately not investigated myself — seems to be worn, and it is not certain that it was carved on the banks of the river Vistula. Kałdus was an important trading centre on this river with finds of chamber graves and other Scandinavian imports. According to the information available, the gaming piece was found in debris layers underneath a Romanesque ecclesiastical building (Lerche Nielsen 2003 [2005]). The inscription reads: **ion a tafl** ‘John owns the gaming piece (or the game)’. As well as being the earliest recording of the Old Norse word *tafl*, the personal name Old Norse *Jón* is interesting. *Jón* is the earliest Christian personal name to become common in Scandinavian (compare the list of recorded occurrences in Peterson 2007: 141).

The first find from the fortified stronghold Alt Lübeck six kilometres down the river from present-day Lübeck carries a similar inscription **baa : knif : kopa....**, *Pā(i) ā knīf gōða[n]*, ‘Pāi “the peacock” owns a good knife (which carved the inscription)’. Johannes Brøndum-Nielsen’s interpretation of the inscription from 1952 was put forward before urban runic inscriptions became well-known. He suggested that the inscription

object was a knife handle and that the inscription consists of a rare genitive-construction plus a lacking nominative ending and a svarabhakti-vowel: *Pāa knīf[r] gōðær*. I mention this because his interpretation occurs quite frequently in the runological literature.

The Wolin stick

Next I shall turn to the Wolin wooden stick which — according to my limited information I have to confess, the Viking og Hvidekrist catalogue no. 258 (Filipowiak 1992) — was found in the foundations of a house in the harbour which was probably owned by a Scandinavian tradesman. Only the top of the incised symbols are visible, and therefore the inscription could be interpreted as either purely ornamental or runic. If the latter, it can be compared to runic finds with the so-called “Puzzle of the thirty counters” or “Ludus Sancti Petri”. However, a dating to the eleventh century seems very early indeed, since the Scandinavian parallels are from the High Middle Ages.

Inscriptions with personal names and the rune-row

A substantial amount of urban rune-finds consists of personal names. Probably it was simply the rune-carver who had fun writing his name. The same type of inscription is very common, for instance the graffiti from the Roman town Pompeii and modern name-tags. Starigard/Oldenburg 2 seems to represent various attempts to write the Old Norse name *Ørn* or the identical noun which means ‘eagle’. No. 3 has the personal name *Faxi*, which is also a word for ‘horse’. Starigard/Oldenburg 1 has on the concave side the inscription **porki**, most probably an unfinished rendering of *Pōrkill* or perhaps *Pōrgæirr*. The opposite side has the beginning of the rune-row **fupo**, the *futhark* plus two runes — **as** — from the middle section **hnias**.

This inscription throws light on another old find, the bone piece from Kamień Pomorski, which was found during excavations on the fortified hill-top of the settlement in 1956. The runes **kur** perhaps reflect a personal name (Larsson 2002: 41 with references), but I find this rather uncertain,

whereas **fup** is most likely to be interpreted as the beginning of a *futhark*-inscription. An alternative explanation — *fuð* also means ‘female genitalia’ — was put forward by the Danish runologist Erik Moltke in his older days (1985: 463–64). Although the ambiguous meaning could be intentional and despite the fact that inscriptions with the naughty meaning of *fuð* do exist, it is most likely that writing down the *futhark* in itself demonstrated the skills of the carver, perhaps in some cases a learning process (Knirk 1994, Seim 1999). The complete *futhark* is to be found on Starigard/Oldenburg 8 and — with a common misspelling — on the Alt-Lübeck 3.

Syllabarium or writing exercise

Starigard/Oldenburg 4 has on the convex side an inscription, which seems to make sense but proves to be pure nonsense: **abi:bataba:iestaba**. In my earlier publication of this inscription I have listed some of the “words” which might be read. However, it now seems more plausible in my opinion that the reoccurring *ba-bi* is a reminiscence of a so-called syllabarium, which is a method of teaching orthography. Several medieval Norwegian examples have been published by Karin Fjellhammer Seim (1998) a much older example from Sigtuna has been published recently by Helmer Gustavson (2007). On the concave side of the rib is the unmistakably naughty inscription: **kukr : kus kutu | kys**, “penis kiss the vulva, kiss”. Most other urban settlements have provided similarly naughty inscriptions which have parallels in the sagas.

Letter

Starigard/Oldenburg 6 is a letter, and the rib has been reshaped so that it resembles a wooden runic stick. Although letters have been found in Bergen, this type of inscription is unfamiliar in other Scandinavian urban settlements with rune-finds. The inscription: **bermin:erinde:þat:ik:ei:hafa:skyrtē**, *Bær mīn ærindæ þat ek æi hafa skyrtæ* “Convey my messages so that I don’t suffer any loss/drawback” could of course also be read as an amulet, but I prefer to see it as a straightforward message. The ending *-æ*

points to Southern Scandinavia, and the form without breaking of the pronoun **ek** “I”, may — but not necessarily so — point to Jutland. We should certainly like to know more about the circumstances behind this inscription!

Riddle

Finally Starigard/Oldenburg 7 bears an inscription which must be interpreted as a proverb:

(-)ak:eigi:ha:a:hafi:uti:heltr:tak:hu... [T]ak æigi hā ā hafi ūti. Hældr tak hū[n].

“Don’t find the oarlock out at sea, better use the top of the mast (for hoisting the sail)”

On the opposite side of the bone there is an as yet uninterpreted inscription ...**uran marum**. Similar proverbs are well known in Old Norse literature. Even within the runic corpus there are parallels, for instance from the town of Lund (Moltke 1985: 460): *Bōndi rīsti mālrūnu / ārar ara æru fiaðrar*. ‘Bōndi carved the riddle (?): “The oars of the eagle are the feathers”.’

Discussion

What can be deduced from the corpus of inscriptions found south of the Baltic? First of all, earlier scholars have paid little attention to this find group. In 1968 the German scholar Hans Jürgen Eggers provided a good survey of the runic corpus but apart from the thirty or so runic coins from silver hoards in Pomerania, there were too few rune finds to draw conclusions. Seemingly Eggers’ main interest was to document the mere presence of runes south of the Baltic Sea and to show Iron-Age rune finds and tell anecdotes about runic frauds.

The late Wolfgang Laur includes the runic finds from Alt Lübeck and the first finds from Starigard/Oldenburg in his *Runendenkmäler in Schleswig-Holstein und in Nordschleswig*, but it was not until the latest edition shortly before Laur’s death in 2006 that all inscriptions from Holstein were included.

Today we can in my opinion give a more complete picture: The majority of rune-finds south of the Baltic Sea have been found within an urban setting, namely in the harbours of Wolin and Ralswiek and in the fortified hill-tops at Alt Lübeck, Starigard/Oldenburg and Kamień Pomorski near the Slavic magnates' personal quarters.

Generally speaking, the find history resembles urban finds in Scandinavia: The only runic inscription from Vordingborg in southern Sjælland, for instance, was found in the oldest layers which predate King Valdemar's impressive fortification. Nothing suggests hostilities such as those Brøndum-Nielsen took for granted in 1952 when he suggested that a Danish soldier in King Valdemar's army "lost his knife or even his life" during the siege of Lübeck in 1203. On the contrary, the runic inscriptions both regarding the types of inscriptions and the linguistic competence match other Scandinavian urban finds in Haithaby, Schleswig (Stoklund & Düwel 2001), Lund (Moltke 1985), Lödöse (Svårdström 1982), Sigtuna, Tønsberg (Gosling 1989), Gamlebyen Oslo (Liestøl 1977, Liestøl & Nestor 1987), Bergen (Liestøl 1964), and Trondheim (Hagland 1990, Hagland ms.). The number of legible inscriptions even exceeds the runic finds from the viking colony in Dublin (Barnes, Hagland & Page 1997).

This substantial Scandinavian presence can be interpreted in several ways, however. There may have been Scandinavian prisoners of war or hostages who should secure a peace treaty who could have carved the inscriptions. A Scandinavian royal guard similar to the Varangians might also have been responsible for the messages. Finally — and in my opinion most plausibly — Scandinavian merchants could have had permanent trade missions in the Slavic towns, just like *Vindeboder* in the Royal Danish town of Roskilde.

The main conclusion to be drawn from the runic evidence is that the medieval sources seem to exaggerate the clash between the Scandinavians and their neighbours across the Baltic Sea, probably due to ideological reasons relevant to the age of the crusades. Runestones may tell of sudden death, but this undoubtedly has to express individual bravery and honour rather than a general negative attitude towards foreigners, and in fact other runestones attest peaceful trade activities. Although small pieces of bone may seem boring — they provide a more plausible eyewitness report from the exact time and place of the events.

Postscriptum

It has not been possible to include a new runic find from Poland, a cross-shaped amulet from Kałdus, in this paper due to lack of sufficient information.

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Summary

This article discusses the discrepancy between historical accounts of the contacts between Scandinavians and West Slavs in the late Viking Age and early Middle Ages on the one hand and linguistic evidence — loan words, place-names, personal names, and runic inscriptions — on the other. The main focus is the small corpus of runic inscriptions found in urban contexts along the south coast of the Baltic Sea. The inscriptions were previously seen as signs of hostilities, but the finds from Starigard (Oldenburg) in particular now point in a much more peaceful direction. The runic texts represent a high degree of literacy and the text types are very similar to finds from urban runic finds in mainland Scandinavia. This suggests a state of peaceful co-existence between Scandinavians and West Slavs and a permanent presence in the Slavic Towns, for instance of a diplomatic or mercantile nature or by a band of mercenaries.

Keywords: Runes, Viking Age, contact linguistics in the South Baltic Sea, runic stray finds, urban runic text types, runic literacy

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Appendix:

List of runic inscriptions from Slavic settlements

Starigard/Oldenburg 1

Fragmentary rib from cattle (70 mm long, 30 mm wide) found in 1973. Archaeological dating: 2nd half of the eleventh century. Find number: 02 09 009 KA. Bibliography: Buchholz & Gabriel 1976: 162–66; Laur 1990: 53; Laur 2006: 46–47; Lerche Nielsen 1999, Lerche Nielsen 2001: 247–50; Lerche Nielsen 2005: 536.

Concave side (height of the runes: 16–21 mm)

porki

pōrki[ll]/pōrg[er]/pōrgī[sl]/pōrgi[ls]

Personal name *Thorkill, Thorgeirr, Thorgisl* or *Thorgils*

Convex side (height of the runes: 5 mm)

fupo | a(s)...

fupo[rk] | as...

The futhark | not interpreted

Starigard/Oldenburg 2

Fragmentary rib from cattle (137 mm long, 38 mm wide) found in 1973. Archaeological dating: end of the eleventh century. Find number: 02 10 019 KA. Bibliography: Buchholz & Gabriel 1976: 164–66; Laur 1990: 53; Laur 2006: 46–47; Lerche Nielsen 1999; Lerche Nielsen 2001: 250–54; Lerche Nielsen 2005: 536.

Concave side (height of the runes: 25–30 mm)

ur(n)

Ørn(?)

Personal name *Ørn(?)*

Convex side (by another rune-carver? height of the runes: approx. 20 mm)

urn + ???

Ørn(?) (+ did he try to write **urn** again?)

Personal name *Ørn(?)*

Starigard/Oldenburg 3

Rib from cattle broken off at both ends (115 mm long, 32 mm wide) found in 1980. Archaeological dating: second half of eleventh century. Find number: 08 11 004 KA. Bibliography: Laur 2006: 46–47; Lerche Nielsen 1999; Lerche Nielsen 2001: 254–55; Lerche Nielsen 2005: 536.

Concave side (height of the runes: 17–25 mm)

faksi

Faksi (Faxi)

Personal name *Faxi (?)*

Starigard/Oldenburg 4

Fragmentary rib from cattle (155 mm long, 28–31 mm wide) found in 1979. Archaeological dating: end of the eleventh century. Find number: 08 09 071 KA. Bibliography: Laur 2006: 46–47; Lerche Nielsen 1999; Lerche Nielsen 2001: 255–69; Lerche Nielsen 2005: 536.

Concave side (height of the runes: 15–20 mm)

kukr:kuskutu | kys

Kākr kȳss kuntu, kȳss!

“Penis kiss the vulva, kiss!”

Convex side (height of the runes: approx. 15 mm)

abi:bataba:iestaba

Uninterpreted — a so-called syllabarium?

Starigard/Oldenburg 5

Fragmentary rib from cattle (116 mm long, 18–25 mm wide) found in 1985. Archaeological dating: second half of the eleventh century. Find number: 12 15 155 KA. Bibliography: Laur 2006: 46–47; Lerche Nielsen 1999; Lerche Nielsen 2001: 260–61; Lerche Nielsen 2005: 536.

Convex side (height of the runes: approx. 15 mm)

sinkn:

No interpretation

Starigard/Oldenburg 6

Fragmentary rib from cattle (151 mm long, 10–17 mm wide) found in 1985. Archaeological dating: first half of the twelfth century. Find number: 12 14 188 KB. Bibliography: Laur 2006: 46–47; Lerche Nielsen 1999; Lerche Nielsen 2001: 261–64; Lerche Nielsen 2005: 536.

Concave side (height of the runes: 13–17 mm)

bermin:erinde:pat:ik:ei:hafa:skyrte

Bær mīn ærindæ þat ek æi hafa skørtæ(?).

“Convey my errands in such a way that I do not come to any disadvantage (?)”

Starigard/Oldenburg 7

Fragmentary rib from cattle broken off at both ends (136 mm long, 16–17 mm wide) found in 1984. Archaeological dating: first half of the twelfth century. Find number: 12 13 057 KA.

Bibliography: Laur 2006: 46–47; Lerche Nielsen 1999; Lerche Nielsen 2001: 264–68; Lerche Nielsen 2005: 536–37

Concave side (height of the runes: 13–17 mm)

(-)ak:eigi:ha:a:hafi:uti:heltr:tak:h(u)...

Tak æigi hā ā hafi ūti, tak heldr hūn (?).

“Don’t grab the oarlock out in the sea; rather hoist the sail (with the *hūnn*)”

Convex side (height of the runes: approx. 15 mm)

...uran:marum

No interpretation

Starigard/Oldenburg 8

Fragmentary rib from cattle (160 mm long, 18–28 mm wide) found in 1984. Archaeological dating: first half of the twelfth century. Find number: 12 13 057 KA. Bibliography: Laur 2006: 46–47; Lerche Nielsen 1999; Lerche Nielsen 2001: 268–70; Lerche Nielsen 2005: 536–36

Concave side (height of the runes: approx. 20 mm)

fuporkhniastbmlr

The complete row of runes

Alt Lübeck 1

Fragmentary rib from cattle (107 mm long, 29 mm wide). Found in 1948. Archaeological dating: second half of the eleventh century or twelfth century. Find number: Ber.Arch. HL 1938.2. Bibliography: Brøndum-Nielsen 1952: 49–52 + unpag. illustration; Eggers 1968: 9; Grabowski 2003: 158; Laur 1964–65: 258–60; Laur 2006: 47; Lerche Nielsen 1999: 28–30; Lerche Nielsen 2005: 537.

Concave side

baa:knif:koþa...

Pā(i) ā knīf gōðan

“Pái owns a good knife”

(Note: Brøndum-Nielsen and Laur give the implausible reading *Pāā knīfr gōðr* “Pái’s good knife”)

Alt Lübeck 2

Soap-stone object (measurements unknown). Find year: unknown. Archaeological dating: unknown. Find number: unknown. Bibliography: Grabowski 2002: 53.

Inscription

fo | l

No interpretation

Alt Lübeck 3

Fragmentary rib from cattle (154 mm long, 22–31 mm wide). Found in 2003 (during re-examination of finds from an excavation in 1953). Archaeological dating: eleventh or twelfth century. Find number: Ber. Arch. HL, AL 1953/2098. Bibliography: Tank 2004: 123–24.

Concave side

fupork:hnins:tbmlr

The complete row of runes with the common misspelling **n** for **a**.

Ralswiek

Thigh bone from cattle (measurements unknown). Find year: unknown. Dating: unknown. Find number: Kulturhistorisches Museum Stralsund Hd 648. Bibliography: Hermann 1992: 297; Lerche Nielsen 1999: 28–30; Lerche Nielsen 2005: 537.

Inscription

tu...

No interpretation (perhaps the beginning of a personal name)

Wolin

Wooden stick (yew-tree, 147 mm long). Find year: unknown. Dating: beginning of the eleventh century. Find number: IHKMPAN Warszawa, Wolin 695/79. Bibliography: Filipowiak 1992: 296; Lerche Nielsen 1999: 28–30; Lerche Nielsen 2005: 537.

Inscription:

Repetition of runes or ornament

Kamień Pomorski

Fragmentary rib from cattle (107 mm long). Found in 1956. Dating: First half of the eleventh century. Museum number: unknown. Bibliography: Zak & Salberger 1962–63: 324–35; Eggers 1968: 8; Lerche Nielsen 1999: 28–30; Larsson 2002: 41; Lerche Nielsen 2005: 537.

*Concave side***fup**

The beginning of the *futhark* or the obscene word *fuð* “vulva”.

*Convex side***kur**

Perhaps a (by)name **Kūrr* “a stooping person”.

Kałdus

Gaming piece made of antler (approx. 50 mm in diameter and 10 mm thick). Found 2002. Find number: unknown. Bibliography: Lerche Nielsen 2003 [2005]: 18 p.

*Inscription (on the back, height of the runes approx. 10–15 mm)***ionatafl**

Jōn ā tafl

“Jón (Scandinavian form of *John*) owns the gaming piece/the game”

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