

What is Rune-Song?

Rune-Song contains the essence of the system of Rune-Galdor-- the use of Runic sounds to create new realities stemming from the consciousness of the Runer. The tape which accompanies the book demonstrates clearly for the first time just *how* the Runic sounds are to be made. After centuries of silence the song of the Runes can again be Heard.

Features of Rune-Song:

- Ritual Workings with Galdors (Rune-Songs)
- Guides to the Pronunciation of the Rune-Names
- Guides to the Pronunciation of Old Germanic Languages
- Original Language Texts and Translations of:
 - The Old English Rune Poem
 - The Old Norwegian Rune-Rhyme
 - The Old Icelandic Rune Poem
 - The Old High German *Abecedarium Nordmannicum*
- Practical Guide to the Construction and Interpretation of Galdors
- Recitation of the Extended Galdors of the Elder Futhark
- Readings of Magical Runic Inscriptions from the Elder Age

Hear the Ravens' Call!

Sound is one of the great independent components making up the whole of a Rune. The others are *meaning* (to which the sound is most closely related), shape (the visible part), and number (which gives a hidden context to each Rune in the futhark system). To work with a Rune or combination of Runes completely, the Runer must take all of the aspects into consideration. But *sound* must be given its special due-- and this can only be done after *actually hearing the rune sounds*.

In the days of the Elder Gild, Runelore was passed from hand to eye, and from mouth to ear-- only by actually hearing the sounds of the Runes will the Runers of today understand their true meaning. This is part of their mystery.

-- Edred Thorsson
Yrmin-Drighten
The Rune-Gild

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RUNE-SONG

by
Edred Thorsson



Runa-Raven Press



Rune-Song:
A Practical Guide to Rune-Caldor

by

Edred Thorsson

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To the Memory
of
Mitchell Edwin Wade

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Introduction

The Rune-Song Guide to Galdor

After two decades of writing books and articles on the runic tradition, I can say that the question I have gotten most often has to do with the correct pronunciation of the Rune names, and other words central to the runic tradition. *Rune-Song* is designed to answer those questions in the most complete and systematic way possible.

In order to use the system explained in this combined book and tape course in *Rune-Song* you should first read this book all the way through to get a sense of the scope of the work. After this initial reading is complete, you should begin playing the tape and following along in the text of this book. The *Rune-Song* book and tape together make a complete course in the practice of Rune-galdor, or mantra magic.

The tape *Rune-Song*, designed to work with this text, contains the complete lore of the ancient Runes and keys to its use in practical magical work. The Runes are a fairly new phenomenon in English-speaking magical circles. Often one of the most confusing aspects of Rune-work is the use of unfamiliar words in what seem to be exotic languages. *Rune-Song* will clear the way to a full understanding of all of the sounds of the languages used in the magical study of the Runes, so that the Runer can pronounce the Rune names and use the sacred runic chants or *galdrar* in a perfected fashion.

The lore on the first part of the tape can be used directly in practical work as well as the more overtly magical material on the second part. The *futhark* itself is a potent magical song, and the Rune poems most certainly have their roots in the magical divinatory traditions of the ancient North. In learning the *sonic lore* of the Runes, the Runer is participating in the timeless form of the most ancient *oral tradition* of the Runers.

In ancient times the vast bulk of the esoteric lore of the Runes and of the actual practice of Rune magic was codified in *oral* or *vocal* forms. The Rune carvings that have survived to this day are only the tip of a mysterious iceberg. Elder Rune-masters transmitted their Rune-wisdom in the form of oral teachings, Rune poems, rituals and incantations or galdors. It is no mere coincidence that one of the general words for "magic" in Old Norse, *galdr*, really

means more simply, "incantation." This is ultimately derived from the verb *gala*, which describes the call of the raven or crow. This shows how overridingly important correct *vocal* performance is in this kind of magic.

Sound is one of the great independent components making up the whole of a Rune. The others are *meaning* (to which the sound is most closely related), shape, and number (which gives a hidden context to each Rune in the futhark system). To work with a Rune or combination of Runes completely, the Runer must take all of the aspects into consideration. But *sound* must be given its special due—and this can only be done after actually *hearing* the runic sounds.

There is an ancient hidden lore in the North concerning the occult values of individual sounds and their most simple forms of combined forces. This system is fully outlined on pages 33–38 below. The historical runic futhark systems for the first time allowed the ancient northern magicians to give systematic and graphic form to their essentially vocal formulas. The hidden lore of the vocal formulas really constitutes a kind of "sonic Kabbalah" in which secret affinities and significances are to be discovered not through numerical correspondences, but through correspondences in syllabic *sound values*.

Rune-Song contains the entire tradition of the historical futharks, the complete texts of all of the Rune poems in their original languages along with translations, a selection of some of the most powerful ancient runic inscriptions themselves, and a complete set of magical songs or *galdrar* for each of the 24 Runes of the Elder Futhark. Each of these aspects will be explained fully in the text of this book, so that the combination of the book and tape will make up a complete course in the sonic magic of the Runes.

The Germanic Languages

The sonic lore of the Runes is contained in a number of Germanic languages, ancient and modern, and in the sound systems of those languages. It should be kept in mind that English too is a Germanic language, and the lore and sounds of the runic tradition is really the esoteric tradition of our own ancestors—not really that of some exotic culture such as that represented by the Hebrew or Egyptian.

You might notice that some of what is said here will bear a close resemblance to what you might know about the Indian systems of *mantras*, or the Gnostic Greek verbal formulas. This is probably no accident, as the Germanic, Greek and Indian (as well as Celtic, Slavic, Italic, and Iranian) all share the same ultimate Indo-European roots when it comes not only to language, but also to deep-seated religious and magical practices and beliefs. This apparently *academic* knowledge is important when trying to get a deep-level inner *feeling* for the timeless lines of interconnections between and among magical systems. The branches of this family tree of languages, and also esoteric traditions at the folk-level, are shown in Figure 1 in a somewhat simplified form.

The Germanic or Teutonic language group began to differentiate itself from the Indo-European stream around 700 BCE in the region of northern Germany and southern Scandinavia. This language is called Proto-Germanic by scholars. Although we have no Germanic texts from this time, the oldest of the runic inscriptions show a language very close to what this language was. In fact the Elder Futhark was encoded in this very tongue. This is why the Elder Futhark actually represents the basic common Germanic esoteric tradition. The oldest language has been reconstructed fairly exactly by scholars using the highly reliable comparative method.

In the period around 100 BCE to about 200 CE the various Germanic languages began to break up into slightly different dialects. So that we can identify Northern Germanic (or primitive Nordic), a Southern Germanic, and Eastern Germanic groups. A part of the Northern Germanic branch would eventually develop into Old Norse (Old Icelandic, Old Norwegian) which codifies the Younger Runic tradition. Southern Germanic would develop into the various dialects of German—as well as Anglo-Saxon or Old English in which the Anglo-Frisian runic system is encoded. It is obvious that there was a common Germanic runic system going back a few centuries BCE. This has been reconstructed as the Elder Futhark tradition. The Old Norse Younger Futhark or the Anglo-Frisian tradition represent the later developments of this original system.

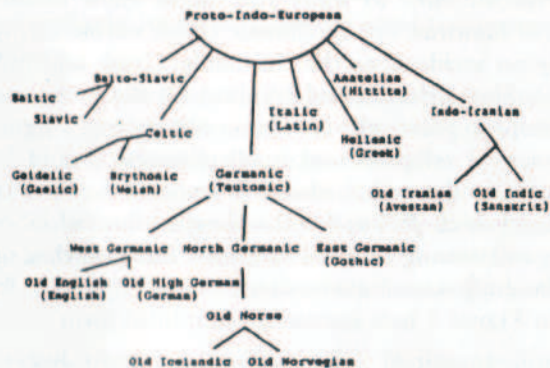


Figure 1: Family-Tree of the Indo-European and Germanic Languages

Guides to the Pronunciation of Old Germanic Languages

For purposes of the tape, it is important that the listener have some sort of written guide to the sounds being heard. Therefore I have provided the following guidelines to the pronunciation of the various languages heard on the recording, as well as on those having to do with the pronunciation of the Rune names in the futhark order, ample time will be provided for you to repeat the name or word in order to perfect your pronunciation.

Pronunciation Guide for Proto-Germanic

The consonants b, d, f, k, l, m, n, p, t, and w are pronounced identically with the modern English versions. Note: In the sacred or magical pronunciations in actual Rune-song of the long versions of a vowel (ā) is often used in place of the normal short one (a).

ā	as in <i>father</i> (heard in <i>ansuz</i>)
a	as in <i>artistic</i> (heard in <i>hagalaz</i>)
ē	as in <i>ay</i> in <i>bay</i> (heard in <i>kēnaz</i>)
e	as in <i>men</i> (heard in <i>berkano</i>)
ī	as in <i>ee</i> in <i>feet</i> (heard in <i>īsa</i>)
i	as in <i>it</i> (heard in <i>ōpila</i>)
ī/ei	a lax neutral version of <i>ī</i> (heard in <i>eihwaz</i>)

ō	as in <i>omit</i> (heard in <i>ōpila</i>)
o	as in <i>ore</i> (heard in the first <i>o</i> in <i>sowilō</i>)
ū	as in <i>rule</i> (heard in <i>ūruz</i>)
u	as in <i>put</i> (heard in <i>purisaz</i>)
ai	as the long English <i>i</i> in <i>ice</i> (heard in <i>raidō</i>)
au	as the <i>ou</i> in <i>house</i> (heard in <i>laukaz</i>)
þ	voiceless <i>th</i> in <i>thin</i> (heard in <i>purisaz</i>)
ð	voiced <i>th</i> in <i>father</i> (heard in <i>raidō</i>)
r	Germanic uvular <i>r</i> (heard in <i>raidō</i>)
g	always "hard" as in <i>gift</i> (heard in <i>gebō</i>)
h	initially as modern English <i>h</i> (heard in <i>hagalaz</i>) medially as a heavily aspirated <i>h</i> (heard in <i>chwaz</i>)
j	as modern English <i>y</i> in <i>year</i> (heard in <i>jēra</i>)
-z	only occurs finally—sounds halfway between the modern <i>z</i> and the <i>s</i> in <i>pleasure</i> (heard in <i>elhaz</i>)
s	always voiceless as in <i>sing</i> (heard in <i>sowilō</i>)
ng	always soft as in <i>going</i> , never as in <i>finger</i> (heard in <i>ingwaz</i>)

Pronunciation Guide for Old English

The consonants b, d, l, m, n, p, t, w, and x are pronounced approximately as in modern English.

ā	as in <i>father</i> (heard in <i>āc</i>)
a	as <i>o</i> in <i>hot</i> (heard in <i>man</i>)
æ	as <i>ai</i> in <i>airy</i> (heard in <i>dælan</i> , to deal, give)
æ	as <i>a</i> in <i>hat</i> (heard in <i>æsc</i>)
ē	as <i>a</i> in <i>fate</i> (heard in <i>cēn</i>)
e	as in <i>met</i> (heard in <i>eh</i>)
ī	as in <i>machine</i> (heard in <i>īs</i>)
i	as in <i>bit</i> (heard in <i>Ing</i>)
ō	as in <i>note</i> (heard in <i>ō</i>)
o	as in <i>au</i> in <i>audacious</i> (heard in <i>ðorn</i>)
ū	as <i>oo</i> in <i>doom</i> (heard in <i>ūr</i>)
u	as in <i>pull</i> (heard in <i>gyfu</i>)
ȳ	as <i>u</i> in German <i>Tür-ee</i> with rounded lips (heard in <i>nyd</i>)
y	as <i>u</i> in German <i>Hütte-i</i> with rounded lips (heard in <i>wyn</i>)
ēa	as <i>ai</i> in <i>airy</i> plus <i>a</i> in <i>Cuba</i> (heard in <i>ēar</i>)
ea	as <i>a</i> in <i>hat</i> plus <i>a</i> in <i>Cuba</i> (heard in <i>earð</i> , dwelling)
ēo	as <i>a</i> in <i>fate</i> plus <i>o</i> in <i>poetic</i> (heard in <i>ēoh</i>)
eo	as <i>e</i> in <i>met</i> plus <i>o</i> in <i>poetic</i> (as heard in <i>feoh</i>)
īo	as <i>i</i> in <i>machine</i> plus <i>o</i> in <i>poetic</i> (heard in <i>īor</i>)
ċ	as <i>ch</i> in <i>chalk</i> (heard in <i>cēn</i>)

c	as in <i>call</i> (heard in <i>calc</i>)
cg	as <i>dj</i> in <i>bridge</i> (heard in <i>eolhx-secg</i>)
f	initially, finally and before voiceless consonants as in <i>father</i> (as heard in <i>feoh</i>) between vowels or between vowels and voiced consonants as <i>v</i> in <i>over</i> (heard in <i>gyfu</i>)
ff	always as <i>f</i> in <i>father</i>
ġ	as <i>y</i> in <i>yield</i> (heard in <i>ġēr</i>)
g	as <i>g</i> in German <i>sagen</i> (heard in <i>lagu</i>)
h	initially and before vowels as in <i>hand</i> before consonants and after vowels as <i>ch</i> in German <i>ich</i> (as heard in <i>feoh</i>)
ng	as in <i>finger</i> (heard in <i>ing</i>)
r	strongly trilled with the tip of the tongue (heard in <i>rād</i>)
s	initially, finally and before voiceless consonants as in <i>soon</i> (heard in <i>siġel</i>) between vowels or between vowels and voiced consonants as <i>z</i> in <i>prize</i>
sc	as <i>sh</i> in <i>ship</i> (heard in <i>scur</i> , shower)
ss	as <i>s</i> in <i>soon</i> (heard in <i>blyss</i> , bliss, happiness, bliss)
þ/ð	initially, finally and before voiceless consonants as <i>th</i> in <i>thin</i> (heard in <i>ðorn</i>) between vowels or between vowels and voiced consonants as <i>th</i> in <i>then</i> (heard in <i>staþul</i> , base)
þþ/ðð	as <i>th</i> in <i>thin</i> (heard in <i>siððan</i> , afterwards)

Pronunciation Guide for Old Norse

Usually the consonants b, d, f, k, l, and v are as in modern English.

á	as in <i>father</i> (heard in <i>ár</i>)
a	as in <i>artistic</i> (heard in <i>hagall</i>)
é	as <i>ay</i> in <i>bay</i> (heard in <i>fé</i>)
e	as in <i>men</i> (heard in <i>ferð</i> , journey)
í	as <i>ee</i> in <i>feet</i> (heard in <i>íss</i>)
i	as in <i>it</i> (heard in <i>viðr</i> , wood, tree)
ó	as in <i>omit</i> (heard in <i>sól</i>)
o	as in <i>ore</i> (heard in <i>frost</i> , frost)
ö	as in <i>not</i> (heard in <i>lögr</i>)
ø	same as <i>o</i> (heard in <i>nøkr</i> , a naked man)
ú	as in <i>put</i> (heard in <i>þurs</i>)
æ	as <i>ai</i> in <i>hair</i> (heard in <i>flæro</i> , deceit)
œ	as <i>u</i> in <i>slur</i> (heard in <i>laufgrænstr</i> , most leafy-green)

ý	as in German <i>Tür</i> - <i>ee</i> with rounded lips (heard in <i>Týr</i>)
y	as in German <i>Hütte</i> - <i>i</i> with rounded lips <i>drykk</i> , drink)
au	as <i>ou</i> in <i>house</i> (heard in <i>kaun</i>)
ei	as <i>i</i> in <i>ice</i> (heard in <i>reið</i>)
ey	same as <i>ei</i> (heard in <i>streyta</i> , to ornament)
g	always hard as in <i>go</i> (heard in <i>hagall</i>)
ng	always as in <i>long</i> - never as in <i>finger</i> (heard in <i>ungsamligr</i> , youthful)
h	same as English except before consonants, then as <i>wh</i> in <i>where</i> (heard in <i>hreinn</i> , reindeer)
j	as English <i>y</i> in <i>year</i> (heard in <i>bjarkan</i>)
p	as in English, except before <i>t</i> then this <i>pt</i> cluster is pronounced <i>ft</i> (heard in <i>opt</i> , often)
r	trilled <i>r</i> (heard in <i>reið</i>)
s	voiceless as in <i>sing</i> , except after <i>r</i> then as <i>sh</i> (heard in <i>þurs</i>)
þ	in initial position voiceless as in <i>thin</i> (heard in <i>þurs</i>)
ð	in medial or final position voiced <i>th</i> in <i>then</i> (heard in <i>nauð</i>)
ll	pronounced <i>dl</i> after long vowels and diphthongs (heard in <i>köllum</i> , we call)
rl	pronounced <i>dl</i> (heard in <i>jarl</i> , nobleman, 'earl')
rn	pronounced <i>dn</i> (heard in <i>járn</i> , iron)
nn	pronounced <i>dn</i> after long vowels and diphthongs (heard in <i>hreinn</i> , reindeer)

The Traditional Germanic Futhark

The Futhark system has its origins somewhere in the latter centuries before the beginning of the common era. The oldest form of the tradition is the 24 Rune Elder Futhark. It is a unique Germanic innovation, but the impetus for its development probably comes from one or several Mediterranean alphabets. It may have been based on a North Italic script, or the Roman, or even the Greek alphabet. But in any event the Futhark is acknowledged as being a unique form particular to the Germanic peoples and known throughout the Germanic tribal areas for a period of at least a thousand years. The oldest known runic inscription is the brooch of Meldorf (from around 45 CE)—but the origin of the Runes must go back at least 200 years prior to then.

As an off-shoot of the Elder Futhark there developed an Anglo-Frisian or Old English Futhorc which was really an expansion of

the Elder Futhark. There were at first five additional Runes, which eventually expanded to a total of 33 Runes. But only the first 29 were used in runic *inscriptions*. The others were only found in the runic manuscripts. The Anglo-Frisian system developed in present-day northern Germany and Holland and was transferred to England with the migration of the Angles, Saxons and Jutes from the European continent to Britain around 450 CE. That runic tradition remained alive— even surviving Christianization — until after the Norman conquest in 1066.

The Elder Futhark continued to be used in Scandinavia until around 750–800 CE when it was systematically reformed into the 16 Rune Younger Futhark by the gild of Rune-masters in that region. This new system was used throughout Viking Age Scandinavia until around 1150–1200 when the futhark system was for the most part transformed into a runic alphabet. Whereas up until that time the futhark had maintained its systemic independence from the Roman/Latin alphabet, after around 1200 the influence of Christian culture with its Latin writing system came to dominate. This meant that where there had been the unique f-u-th-a-r-k order, there was now an a-b-c order for the runic characters. This breakdown is also indicative of a breakdown in the culture that supported the independent unique culture of the Rune-masters.

The Abecedarium Nordmannicum (The ABC's of the Northmen) is a strange piece of learned doggerel which nevertheless shows that the 16 Rune futhark was known at least academically in Germany in the 800s, and the Norse Rune poems show that the 16 Rune futhark system continued to be *known*, if not *used*, as late as the 1400s.

In the early part of this century a magical runic system was derived by Guido von List from the evidence of the Old Norse poem "Hávamál" contained in the *Poetic Edda*. This system can be called the Armanen Futhark of 18 Runes. Sonically, this system is very simple. More details on its working in magic are covered in *Rune-Might*.

In learning the correct pronunciations of the Rune names, the Runer will not only increase the effectiveness of his or her magic, but will also be able to communicate with others on runic topics with more authority and knowledge. In singing the Rune names the Runer will be again setting into motion sound vibrations that have not been heard in centuries. But these sounds will echo through the aeons.

The futharks themselves are magical songs or *galdrar*. Many ancient inscriptions consist of a futhark row only, or the futhark makes up a part of the magical inscription. Carving and/or singing the entire futhark series in the correct order can have the magical effect of re-creating the world for the magician, of putting things back in their natural order, and holding at bay unwanted influences.

The tape contains the Rune names in all the systems as they would have been pronounced as simple words. These can serve as guides to the general pronunciation of the languages in question. On the second part of the tape the futhark systems are sung or "chanted" in various ways suited to use as magical galdor.

The Elder Futhark

Name	Sound	Shape	Meaning
fehu	f	𐌸	CATTLE (wealth, dynamic power)
ūruz	u	𐌹	AUROCHS (vital formative force)
þurisaz	þ	𐌺	THURS (giant, breaker of resistance)
ansuz	a	𐌰	GOD (Woden, sovereign ancestral god)
raiðō	r	𐌷	CHARIOT (vehicle on path of power)
kēnaz	k	𐌶	TORCH (controlled energy)
gebō	g	𐌵	GIFT (exchanged powers)
wunjō	w	𐌴	JOY (harmony of like forces)
hagalaz	h	𐌶	HAIL (destruction, seed form)
nauðiz	n	𐌶	NEED (distress, self created fire)
īsa	i	𐌶	ICE (contraction)
jēra	j[y]	𐌶	YEAR (good harvest, orbits, cycles)
eihwaz	ī	𐌶	YEW (axis of heaven-earth-hel)
perþrō	p	𐌶	LOTBOX (evolutionary force)
elhaz	-z	𐌶	ELK (protective teaching force)
sowilō	s	𐌶	SUN (sun-wheel, crystalized light)
tīwaz	t	𐌶	TYR (sky-god, sovereign order)
berkanō	b	𐌶	BIRCH (-Goddess, container/releaser)
ehwaz	e	𐌶	HORSE (trust)
mannaz	m	𐌶	HUMAN (psychic order of the gods)
laguz	l	𐌶	WATER (life energy, organic growth)
ingwaz	ng	𐌶	ING (earth-god, gestation process)
dagaz	d	𐌶	DAY (twilight/dawn paradox)
ōþila	o	𐌶	ESTATE (ancestral spiritual power)

The Old English Futhorc

Name	Sound	Shape	Meaning
feoh	f	ƿ	CATTLE (wealth)
ūr	u	ᚱ	AUROCHS (vital power)
þorn	þ/ð	ᚦ	THORN (harmful power)
ōs	o	ᚷ	GOD or MOUTH (conscious power)
rād	r	ᚱ	RIDING (ordered power)
ċēn	ċ[ch]	ᚲ	TORCH (creative power)
gyfu	g[y]	ᚷ	GIFT (exchanged power)
wyn	w	ƿ	JOY (harmonious power)
hægl	h	ᚱ	HAIL (catastrophic power)
nȳd	n	ᚦ	NEED (necessary power)
īs	i	ᚲ	ICE (condensation)
ġēr	y	ᚦ	YEAR (cyclical power)
ēoh	eo	ᚷ	YEW (eternity)
peorð	p	ᚷ	DICEBOX (evolutionary power)
eolhx	x	ᚷ	ELKS-SEDGE REED (awakening power)
sigel	s	ᚷ	SUN (guiding power)
tīr	t	ᚦ	TIW/TYR or SIGN or GLORY (rational power)
beorc	b	ᚦ	BIRCH or POPLAR TREE (emerging power)
eh	e	ᚱ	HORSE (energy, trust)
man	m	ᚱ	MAN (human being, metamorphic power)
lagu	l	ᚦ	WATER (living, growing power)
ing	ng	ᚦ	ING (a god or divine hero, resting power)
dæg	d	ᚱ	DAY (shining power)
ēpel	ē[ay]	ᚲ	ESTATE (order)
āc	a	ᚱ	OAK (strength)
æsc	æ	ᚱ	ASH (steadfastness)
ȳr	y	ᚦ	GOLD DECORATION or BOW (worthiness)
ēar	ea	ᚦ	EARTH-GRAVE (dissolution)
īor	eo/io	ᚲ	SERPENT (adaptation)
cweorþ	q	ᚲ	FIRE-TWIRL (?) (spark of life)
calc	c	ᚲ	CHALICE or CHALK (containment)
stān	st	ᚲ	STONE (manifestation)
gār	g	ᚲ	GAR (spear, sovereign power)

The Younger Futhark

Name	Sound	Shape	Meaning
fé	f	ƿ	LIVESTOCK, GOLD, WEALTH
úr	u/o/v	ᚱ	DRIZZLE or SLAG or AUROCHS
þurs	þ/ð	ᚦ	THURS (giant)
áss	a	ᚷ	GOD (Óðinn)
reið	r	ᚱ	RIDING or THUNDERCLAP
kaun	k/g/ng	ƿ	A SORE
hagall	h	ᚲ	HAIL
nauð	n	ᚦ	NEED
íss	i/e/j	ᚲ	ICE
ár	a	ᚱ	GOOD YEAR/HARVEST
sól	s	ᚷ	SUN
Týr	t/d/nd	ᚦ	TYR (sky-god)
bjarkan	b/p/mb	ᚦ	BIRCH (-GODDESS)
maðr	m	ƿ	MAN (human being)
lögr	l	ᚦ	WATER or SEA or WATERFALL
ýr	-r	ᚦ	YEW or YEW BOW

The Armanen Futhork

Name	Sound	Shape	Meaning
FA	f	ᚦ	Primal fire, change, sending power
UR	u	ᚱ	Eternity, telluric magnetism
THORN	th	ᚦ	Action, evolutionary power
OS	o	ᚷ	Breath, the word
RIT	r	ᚱ	Primal law, rhythm
KA	k	ƿ	Generation, art, ability
HAGAL	h	ᚲ	All-enclosure, harmony, order
NOT	n	ᚦ	Compulsion of fate
IS	i	ᚲ	Ego, personal power, control
AR	a	ᚱ	Wisdom, beauty, virtue
SIG	s	ᚷ	Victory, power to actualize
TYR	t	ᚦ	Power, spiraling development
BAR	b	ᚦ	Becoming, birth, concealment
LAF	l	ᚦ	Life, law, love
MAN	m	ƿ	Increase, fullness, health
YR	y	ᚦ	Decrease, confusion, death
EH	e	ᚲ	Marriage, justice, duration
GIBOR	g	ᚲ	Cosmic consciousness, the gift

The Poetic Tradition

The Poetic tradition surrounding the Runes is complex. One part of it has to do with the mytho-magical poems that deal with the origin and use of the Runes and their place in the magical philosophy of the ancient North. Another part has to do with the actual poetic stanzas created to explain or interpret the Rune names in the various historical traditions. This latter aspect of the tradition contains the Rune poems themselves.

Here we will present the most important set of poetic stanzas having to do with the origin and use of the Runes in the Old Norse Tradition as well as all four extant traditional Rune poems.

Understanding the myth of the origin of the Runes is one of the most essential steps in becoming a true Rune-master. To truly and deeply *understand* this myth the Runer must *hear* the sounds of the lore. This is best done through the first part of the so-called *Rúnatal's þátrr Óðins* section of the "Hávamál" contained in the *Poetic Edda*.

Historically this poem probably dates from the 10th century, but the themes and myths certainly go back into the most remote ages of the Germanic tradition.

What we have in the form of these stanzas is the pattern of primeval initiation in which the archetypal Rune-master, Óðinn, gives (sacrifices) himself to himself, turning within to face his deepest and most secret self—where he finds the Runes (mysteries of the world and consciousness) and synthesizes them within his awareness—he "takes them up." All would-be Rune-masters must do this same thing in one way or another if they are to follow the Way of Woden.

Here I have put the initial stanzas of this section of the "Hávamál" which deal with the myth of Óðinn's self-sacrifice and the practice of Rune-craft.

Rúnatal's þátrr Óðins (The Yarn of Odin's Rune-Tally)

Veit ek, at ek hekk vindgameiði á
nætr allar níu,
geiri undaðr ok gefinn Óðni,
sjálfr sjálfum mér,
á þeim meiði, er mangi veit,
hvers hann af rótum renn.

Við hleifi mik sældu né við hornigi,
nysta ek niðr;
nam ek upp rúnar, æpandi nam,
fell ek aptr þaðan.

Fimbulljóð níu nam ek af inum frægja syni,
Bölpors, Bestlu föður,
ok ek drykk of gat ins dyra mjaðr,
ausinn Óðræri.

Þá nam ek frœvaz ok fróðr vera
ok vaxa ok vel hafaz;
orð mér af orði orðz leitanði,
verk mér af verki verks leitaði.

Rúnar munt þú finna ok ráðna stafi,
mjök stóra stafi,
mjök stinna stafi,
er fáði fimbulþulr
ok gørðu ginregin
ok reist Hroptr rögn.

Óðinn með Ásum enn fyr álfum Dáinn,
Dvalinn dvergum fyrir,
Ásviðr jötnum fyrir,
ek reist sjálfr sumar.

Veiztu, hvé rísta skal, veiztu hvé raða skal?
veiztu, hvé fá skal, veiztu, hvé freista skal?
veiztu, hvé biðja skal, veiztu, hvé blóta skal?
veiztu, hvé senda skal, veiztu, hvé sóa skal?

Betra er óbeðit, enn sé ofblótið,
ey sér til gildis gjöf;
betra er ósent, enn sé ofsóit.
Svá þundr um reist fyrir þjóða rök;
þar hann up um reis, er hann aptr of kom.

(Translation of the Yarn of Odin's Rune-Tally)

I know that I hung on a windy tree
all of nights nine,
wounded by gar and given to Óðinn,
myself to myself,
on that tree, of which no one knows
from what roots it rises.

They dealt me no bread nor drinking horn,
I looked down
I took up the runes, I took them wailing,
then I fell back again.

Nine mighty songs I took from the famous son
of Bolthorn, father of Bestla,
and I got drink of the dearest mead,
pouring out of Óðrœrir.

Then I began to grow and to be wise
and to wax and do well;
to me came word from word— seeking the word,
to me came work from work— seeking the work.

Runes wilt thou find and read the the staves
very strong staves,
very stalwart staves,
which the mighty theal colored
and the magical gods made
and Hropt of the gods carved them.

Óðinn among the Æsir, and for the elves Dáinn,
Dvalinn for the dwarves,
Ásvidh for the etins,
I carved some for myself.

Knowest thou, how to write, knowest thou, how to read?
knowest thou, how to color, knowest thou, how to carry out?
knowest thou, how to bid, knowest thou, how to bless?
knowest thou, how to send knowest thou, how to put to sleep?

Better unbidden, than over-sacrificed,
for a gift always looks for gain;
better unspent, than be over-slaughtered.
Thus Thundr carved before folk were fated;
there he rose up, when he came back.

The Rune Poems

In learning the lore of the Rune poems the Runer is participating in the most ancient of all known runic traditions—the codification of lore in poetic form. This kind of lore-learning has its own magical rewards. But beyond this, the stanzas of the Rune poems can be used as mnemonics in runic divination, or as actual galdor-chants corresponding to the Runes that are being called upon.

It is certain that Runelore was codified in poetic stanzas from the earliest of times. This is the way the skald-magicians of the North preserved their eternal wisdom through the ages. This wisdom was, of course, preserved orally. The only things that were written down were certain magical formulas. In later times the last vestiges of this Runelore was written down, and it is only from this late evidence that we know anything about the ancient Rune poems. The original Rune poem, or poems, have not survived. But the connections between the ones that we do have show their common origin and also perhaps speak to the fact that there was a continuing inter-connectedness among the Rune-masters even after the coming of Christianity.

Note that old Germanic poetry is based on the poetic principle of alliteration. This kind of poetry is thought by many to have been developed out of the practice of casting Rune-lots and creating poetic stanzas to interpret the Runes with words beginning with the same sound as the Runes that showed up in the Rune-cast.

The Old English Rune Poem contains the 29 Rune Anglo-Frisian Futhorc. The text of this poem only survives in the form of a transcription made by Humfrey Wanley from an Old English manuscript which was later destroyed in the fire at the Cottonian library in 1731. The poem was first printed in the *Thesaurus* by George Hickes. The language of the poem shows that it was composed in the present form around 950-1000, but the oldest version of the poem probably dates from around 900.

The Old Norwegian Rune Rhyme comes from the time around 1200. Here, its language has been somewhat regularized to Old Norse standards for the sake of clarity, but the languages were virtually identical. This poem is clearly part of the same tradition as the Old Icelandic Rune Poem—but the Norwegian poem, although it is older in linguistic terms, shows more influence from Christianity than the Icelandic poem does. This is more evidence to show how the Icelanders preserved pagan lore relatively intact for long periods of time. The Norwegian rhyme consists of 16 couplets, the second of the two is an esoteric commentary on the first. At first the two parts may seem to have nothing to do with one another—this provides material for magical meditation.

The Old Icelandic Rune Poem dates from as late as the 1400s but contains lore from the most ancient sources. The poem gives a great deal of information about each Rune in two alliterating half-lines, followed by an independent internally alliterating single half-line. These three half-lines are followed by two independent words: a Latin “translation” or esoteric interpretation of the Rune name, and an Old Icelandic word for chieftain or king which alliterates with the Rune name. In the translation I have given what the name for chieftain or king means according to its etymology. Note that the Latin gloss, or translation and the word for “king” included in the manuscript are not actually a part of the poem itself, and they are therefore not read on the tape.

The Abecedarium Nordmannicum comes from sometime during the 900s, but does not seem to have been originally a part of the independent tradition of the northern Rune-masters. It is more likely that this is a piece of learned game-playing with an exotic alphabet. But it is included here for the sake of completeness. Its language is an artificial mixture of Old High and Low German.

The Old English Rune Poem

ƿ (Feoh) byþ frōfur fira ġehwylcūm;
sceal ðeah manna ġehwylc miçlun hyt dælan,
ġif hē wile for drihtne dōmes hlēotan.

Ń (Ūr) byþ anmōd and oferhyned,
felafrēcne dēor —feohteþ, mid hornum—
mære mōrstapa; þæt is mōdiġ wuht!

þ (ðorn) byþ ðearle scearp, ðegna ġehwylcūm
anfenges yfyl, unġemetun rēþe
manna ġehwylcūn ðe him mid resteð.

ŷ (Ōs) byþ ordfruma ælcra spræce,
wisdōmes wraþu and witena frōfur
and eorla ġehwām ēadnys and tōhiht.

ᚱ (Rād) byþ on recyde rinca ġehwylcūm
sefte, and swiþhwæt ðām ðe sitteþ onufan
mære mæġenheardum ofer mīlpaþas.

ᚲ (Ċēn) byþ cwicera ġehwām cūþ on fyre,
blāc and beorhtlic; byrneþ oftust
ðær hi æþelingas inne restaþ.

ᚷ (Gyfu) gumena byþ ġleng and herenys
wraþu and wyrþscype; and wræcna ġehwām
ār and ætwist, ðe byþ oþra lēas.

ƿ (Wyn) ne bruceþ ðe can wēana lýt,
sāres and sorge, and him sylfa hæþ
blād and blysse and ēac byrga ġeniht.

ᚹ (Hæġl) byþ hwītust corna; hwyrft hit of heofones lyfte,
wealcaþ hit windes scūra; weorþeþ hit tō wætere syððan.

ᚺ (Nýd) byþ nearu on brēostan; weorþeþ hi ðeah oft niþa
bearnum
tō helpe and to hæle ġehwæþre, ġif hi his hlystaþ æror.

l (Ís) byþ oferceald, unġemetum slidor;
ġlisnaþ ġlæshlúttur ġimmum ġelicust;
flōr forste ġehworuht, fæġer ansýne.

ᚫ (Ċēr) byþ gumena hiht, ðon god læteþ,
hāliġ heofones cyning, hrūsan syllan
beorhte blēda beornum and ðearfum.

ᚢ (Ēoh) byþ ūtan unsmēþe trēow
heard hrūsan fæst, hyrde fyres,
wyrtrumun underwreþyd, wynan on ēþle.

ᚦ (Peorð) byþ symble pleġa and hlehter
wlancum on middum, ðar wigan sittaþ
on bēorsele bliþe ætsomne.

Ƶ (Eolhx) secg eard hæfþ oftust on fenne,
wexeð on wature, wundaþ grimme,
blōde breneð beorna gehwylcne
ðe him ænigne onfeng gedēð.

ʒ (Sigel) sēmannum symble biþ on hihte,
ðonn hī hine feriaþ ofer fises beþ,
oþ hī brimhengest bringeþ tō lande.

↑ (Tīr) biþ tacna sum; healdeð trýwa wel
wiþ æbelingas; ā biþ on færylde
ofer nihta genipu; nāgre swiçeþ.

ʒ (Beorc) byþ blēda leas; bereþ efne swā ðeah
tānas būtan tūdder; biþ on telgum wlitig,
hēah on helme, hrysted fægere;
geloden leāfum, lyfte getenge.

Ɔ (Eh) byþ for eorlum æbelinga wyn,
hors hōfum wlanc, ðær him hæleþas ymb,
welege on wicgum, wrixlaþ spræce;
and biþ unstillum æfre frofur.

Ɔ (Man) byþ on myrgþe his māgan leof;
seal þeah anra gehwylc oðrum swīcan,
for ðām dryhten wyle dōme sine
þæt earne flæsc eorþan betæcan.

↑ (Lagu) byþ leodum langsum gepūht,
gif hī sculun nēþun on nacan tealtum,
and hī sæyþa swyþe brēgaþ,
and se brimhengest bridles ne gýmeð.

Ƿ (Ing) wæs ærest med East-Denum
gesewen secgun, oþ hē siððan est
ofer wæg gewāt; wæn æfter ran;
ðus hearingas ðone hæle nemdun.

Ƿ (Ēpel) byþ oferleof āghwylcūm men,
gif he mōt ðær rihtes and gerysena on
brūcan on bolde blēadum oftast.

Ɔ (Dæg) byþ drihtnes sond, dēore mannūm,
mære metodes leoht, myrgþ and tōhiht
eādgum and earmum, eallum brīce.

Ʒ (Āc) byþ on eorþan elda bearnum
flæscas fōdor; fereþ gelōme
ofer ganotes bæþ; —garsecg fandaþ
hwæþer āc hæbbe æpele trēowe.

Ʒ (Æsc) biþ oferhēah, eldum dýre,
stīþ on stapule; stede rihte hylt,
dēah him feohtan on fīras monige.

Ɔ (Ȫr) byþ æbelinga and eorla gehwæs
wyn and wyrþmynd; byþ on wicge fægere,
fæstlic on færelde, fyrdgeatewa sum.

* (Ior) byþ eafixa; and ðeah a bruceþ
fōdres on foldan; hafaþ fægernes eard,
wætre beworpen, ðær hē wynnum leofaþ.

↑ (Ēar) byþ egle eorla gehwylcūn,
ðonn fæstlice flæsc onginneþ
hrāw cōlian, hrūsan cēosan
blac tō gebeddan; blēda gedreosaþ,
wynna gewitaþ, wera gra geswicaþ.

Translation of the Old English Rune Poem

Ƶ (Wealth) is a comfort to every man
although every man ought to deal it out freely
if he wants, before the lord, his lot of judgment.

ʒ (Urus) is fearless and greatly horned
a very fierce beast, it fights with its horns,
a famous roamer of the moor it is a courageous animal.

ʒ (Thorn) is very sharp; for every thegn
who grasps it, it is harmful, and exceedingly cruel
to every man who lies upon it.

Ʒ (God) is the chieftain of all speech,
the mainstay of wisdom and comfort to the wise,
for every noble warrior hope and happiness.

Ɔ (Riding) is in the hall to every warrior
easy, but very hard for the one who sits up
on a powerful horse over miles of road.

ᚖ (Torch) is to every living person known by its fire
it is clear and bright it usually burns
when the noble-men rest inside the hall.

× (Gift) is for every man a pride and praise,
help and worthiness; (and) of every homeless adventurer,
it is estate and substance for those who have nothing else.

ƿ (Joy) is had by the one who knows few troubles
pains or sorrows, and to him who himself has
power and blessedness, and also the plenty of towns.

ᚱ (Hail) is the whitest of grains, it comes from high in heaven.
a shower of wind hurls it, then it turns to water.

† (Need) is constricting on the chest
although to the children of men it often becomes
a help and salvation nevertheless
if they heed it in time.

l (Ice) is very cold and exceedingly slippery;
it glistens, clear as glass, very much like gems,
a floor made of frost is fair to see.

ᚦ (Harvest) is the hope of men, when god lets,
holy king of heaven, the Earth give
her bright fruits to the nobles and the needy.

∫ (Yew) is on the outside a rough tree
and hard, firm in the earth, keeper of the fire,
supported by roots, (it is a) joy on the estate.

ᚲ (Lotbox) is always play and laughter
among bold men, where the warriors sit
in the beer-hall, happy together.

ƿ (Elk's) sedge has its home most often in the fen,
it waxes in the water and grimly wounds
and burns with blood any bairn
who in any way tries to grasp it.

ᚱ (Sun) is by sea-men always hoped for
when they fare away over the fishes' bath (=sea)
until the brine-stallion (=ship) they bring to land.

↑ (Tir) is a token, it keeps troth well
with noble-men always on its course
over the mists of night, it never fails.

ᚷ (Birch) is without fruit just the same it bears
shoots without seed; it has beautiful branches
high on its crown it is finely covered
loaded with leaves, touching the sky.

ᚾ (Horse) is, in front of the warriors, the joy of noble-men.
a charger proud on its hoofs; when concerning it, heroes—
wealthy men—on war-horses exchange speech,
and it is to the restless always a comfort.

ᚰ (Man) is in his mirth dear to his kinsmen;
although each shall depart from the other;
for the lord wants to commit, by his decree,
that frail flesh to the earth.

↑ (Water) is to people seemingly unending
if they should venture out on an unsteady ship,
and the sea-waves frighten them very much,
and the brine-stallion does not mind his bridle.

× (Ing) was first among the East-Danes
seen by men until he again eastward
went over the wave; the wain followed on;
this is what the warriors called the hero.

ᚰ (Day) is the lord's messenger, dear to men,
the ruler's famous light; (it is) mirth and hope
to rich and poor (and) is useful to all.

× (Estate) is very dear to every man,
if he can enjoy what is right and according to custom
in his dwelling, most often in prosperity.

ᚱ (Oak) is on the Earth for the children of men
the nourishment of meat; it often fares
over the gannet's bath (=sea); The sea finds out
whether the oak keeps noble troth.

ƿ (Ash) is very tall, (and) very dear to men
steady on its base, it holds its stead rightly
though it is fought against by many folks.

ᚱ (Bow) is for nobleman and warrior alike
a joy and dignification, it is excellent on a horse,
steadfast on an expedition— (it is) a piece of war-gear.

* (Serpent) is a river-fish although it always takes
 food on land, it has a fair abode
 surrounded with water, where it lives in happiness.

∩ (Grave) is hateful to every warrior
 when steadily the flesh begins,
 the corpse, to become cold, to choose the earth
 palely as a bed-mate; fruits fall
 joys pass away, bonds of faith break.

The Old Norwegian Rune Rhyme

- Ƶ (Fé) veldr frænda rógi;
 foðisk úlfr í skógi.
 ∩ (Úr) es af illu jární;
 opt hleypr hreinn á hjarní.
 þ (Þurs) veldr kvenna kvillu;
 kátr verðr fár af illu.
 † (Óss) es flestra ferða fôr;
 en skálpr er sverðr.
 R (Reið) kveða hrossum versta;
 Reginn sló sverðit bezta.
 ʏ (Kaun) es beygja barna;
 böl gørir mann fólvan.
 * (Hagall) es kaldastr korna;
 Kristr skóp heim inn forna.
 ʒ (Nauð) gørir hneppa kosti;
 nøktan kelr í frosti.
 | (Ís) köllum brú breiða;
 blindan þarf at leiða.
 † (Ár) es gumna góði;
 getk at örr vas Fróði.
 6 (Sól) es landa ljómi;
 lútik helgum dómi.
 † (Týr) es einhendr Ása;
 opt verðr smiðr at blása.
 B (Bjarkan)'s laufgrænstr líma;
 Loki bar flærðar tíma.
 ʏ (Maðr) es moldar auki,
 mikil es greip á hauki.
 † (Lögr)'s es fellr ór fjalli, foss;
 en gull eru hnossir.

† (Ýr) es vetrgrænstr viðá;
 vant's, es brennr, at sviða.

Translation of the Old Norwegian Rune Rhyme

- Ƶ (Gold) causes strife among kinsmen;
 the wolf grows up in the woods.
 ∩ (Slag) is from bad iron;
 oft runs the reindeer on the hard snow.
 þ (Þurs) causes the sickness of women;
 few are cheerful from misfortune.
 † (A god) is the way of most journeys,
 but the sheath is (that way for) swords.
 R (Riding), it is said, is the worst for horses;
 Reginn forged the best sword.
 ʏ (Sore) is the curse of children;
 grief makes a man pale.
 * (Hail) is the coldest of grains;
 Christ shaped the world in ancient times.
 † (Need) makes for a difficult situation;
 the naked freeze in the frost.
 | (Ice), we call the broad bridge;
 the blind need to be led.
 † (Harvest) is the profit of men;
 I say that Fróði was generous.
 6 (Sun) is the light of the lands;
 I bow to the doom of holiness.
 † (Tyr) is the one-handed among the Æsir;
 the smith has to blow often.
 B (Birch-twig) is the limb greenest with leaves;
 Loki brought the luck of deceit.
 ʏ (Man) is the increase of dust;
 Mighty is the talon-span of the hawk.
 † (Water) is (that), which falls from the mountain
 (as) a force; but gold (objects) are costly things.
 † (Yew) is the greenest wood in the winter;
 there is usually, when it burns, singeing.

The Old Icelandic Rune Poem

- ƿ (Fé) er frænda róg ok flæðar viti
 ok grafseiðs gata.
 aurum. fylkir.
- Ɔ (Úr) er skýja grátr ok skára þverir
 ok hirðis hatr.
 umbre/imbre. vísi.
- þ (Þurs) er kvenna kvöl ok kletta búi
 ok varðrúnar verr.
 Saturnus. þengill.
- ǰ (Áss) er aldingautr ok ásgarðs jöfurr,
 ok valhallar vísi.
 Jupiter. oddviti.
- ƕ (Reið) er sitjandi sæla ok snúðig ferð
 ok jórs erfiði
 iter. ræsir.
- ʏ (Kaun) er barna böl ok bardaga för
 ok holdfúa hús.
 flagella. konungr.
- ✱ (Hagall) er kaldakorn ok krapadrífa
 ok snáka sótt.
 grando. hildingr.
- ƕ (Nauð) er þýjar þrá ok þungr kostr
 ok vássamlig verk.
 opera. niflungr.
- | (Íss) er árbörkr ok unnar þak
 ok feigra manna fár.
 glaciers. jöfurr.
- ǰ (Ár) er gumna góði ok gott sumar
 ok algróinn akr.
 annus. allvaldr.

- 6 (Sól) er skýja skjöldr ok skínandi röðull
 ok ísa aldrtregi.
 rota. siklingr.
- ↑ (Týr) er einhendr áss ok úlfs leifar
 ok hofa hilmir.
 Mars. tiggir.
- Ɔ (Bjarkan) er laufgat lim ok lítit tré
 ok ungsamligr viðr.
 abies. buðlungr.
- ʏ (Maðr) er manns gaman ok moldar auki
 ok skipa skreytir.
 homo. mildingr.
- † (Lögr) er vellanda vatn ok viðr ketill
 ok glömmunga grund.
 lacus. lofðungr.
- ↕ (Ýr) er bendr bogi ok brotgjarnt járn
 ok lífu fárbaugi.
 arcus. ynglingr.

Translation of the Old Icelandic Rune Poem

- ƿ (Gold) is the strife of kinsmen and fire of the flood-tide
 and the path of the serpent.
 Gold. "Leader of the war-band."
- Ɔ (Drizzle) is the weeping of clouds and the lessener of the
 rim of ice
 and (an object for) the herdsman's hate.
 Shadow, or Shower. "Leader."
- þ (Thurs) is the torment of women and the dweller in the rocks
 and the husband of the giantess Varð-rúna.
 Saturn. "Ruler of the legal assembly."
- ǰ (Ase) is the olden-father and Asgard's chieftain
 and the leader of Valhalla.
 Jupiter. "Point-leader."

- 𐀀 (Riding) is a blessed sitting and a swift journey
and the toil of the horse.
Journey. "Worthy-man."
- 𐀁 (Sore) is the bale of children and a scourge
and the house of rotten flesh.
Whip. "King."
- 𐀂 (Hail) is a cold grain and a shower of sleet
and the sickness of snakes.
Hail. "Battle-leader."
- 𐀃 (Need) is the grief of the bondmaid and a hard condition
and toilsome work.
Work. "Descendant of the mist."
- 𐀄 (Ice) is the rind of the river and the roof of the waves
and a danger for fey men.
Ice. "One who wears the boar helm."
- 𐀅 (Harvest) is the profit of all men and a good summer
and a ripened field.
Year. "All-ruler."
- 𐀆 (Sun) is the shield of the clouds and shining glory
and the life-long sorrow of ice.
Wheel. "Descendant of the victorious one."
- 𐀇 (Tyr) is the one-handed god and the leavings of the wolf
and the ruler of the temple.
Mars. "Director."
- 𐀈 (Birch-twigg) is a leafy limb and a little tree
and a youthful wood.
Silver Fir. "Protector."
- 𐀉 (Man) is the joy of man and the increase of dust
and the adornment of ships.
Human. "Generous one."

- 𐀊 (Water) is a churning lake and a wide kettle
and the land of fish.
Lake. "Praise-worthy one."
- 𐀋 (Yew) is a strong bow and brittle iron
and a giant of the arrow.
Bow. "Descendants of Yngvi."

The Abecedarium Nordmannicum

- 𐀌 (feu) forman;
𐀍 (ur) after;
𐀎 (thuris) thritten stabu;
𐀏 (os) is themo oboro;
𐀐 (rat) endos uuritan;
𐀑 (chaon) thanne cliuot.
* (Hagal) 𐀒 (naut) habet.
𐀓 (is), 𐀔 (ar), endi 𐀕 (sol)
𐀖 (tiu), 𐀗 (birca) endi 𐀘 (man) midi,
𐀙 (lago) the leohto;
𐀚 (yr) al behabet.

Translation of the Abecedarium Nordmannicum

- 𐀌 fee first
𐀍 urus after
𐀎 thurs the third stave,
𐀏 the Ase above him,
𐀐 wheel is written last,
𐀑 then cleaves canker;
* hail has 𐀒 need
𐀓 ice 𐀔 year 𐀕 and sun
𐀖 Tiu 𐀗 birch 𐀘 and man in the middle
𐀙 water the bright,
𐀚 yew holds all.

Some Magical Runic Inscriptions From the Elder Age

Just as it should be, most of the best books on Rune magic and wisdom now use the authentic 24 Rune Elder Futhark. This system is best because it contains all that will come later in seed form. However, the linguistic lore from the later periods of Runelore is

couched in languages keyed to the Anglo-Frisian Futhorc or the Younger Futhark. It would be beneficial to hear what the language sounded like when the Elder Futhark was in use, and at the same time hear magical incantations and poetry of the oldest Rune-masters echo through the ages.

With this in mind, I present readings of five of the most famous older magical runic inscriptions.

Here I will present what the actual Runes look like on the artifact; give a transliteration of the inscription, and a reading of it in the normalized form of the dialect in question. It is in this latter form that we can actually *hear* the voice of the Rune-masters.

Certain complexities of runology are unavoidable when dealing with the genuine artifacts. You will notice that the actual runic inscriptions are full of irregularities. These apparent irregularities usually had magical motivations. Whole books have been written on each of the inscriptions read here. Our main interest is to let the ancient Rune-masters *sing*.

The Stone of Järsberg

The red granite stone of Järsberg was probably carved around the year 500. It still stands near its original site in Sweden. It presents us with a typical Rune-master formula in which the master calls himself by two magical bynames *Ubar* (the malicious one) and *Hrabanaz* (the raven). These magical or initiatory names seem to be invoking dangerous and wise powers in the Rune-master, so that the power can be infused into the stone. The word *erilaz* is an official title of a Rune-master or member of the ancient gild of Rune-masters.

ubazhite:
harabanaz/hait
ekerilaz/runozwaritu

Ubar haitē!
Hrabanaz haitē!
Ek erilaz runoz writu!
Ubar, I am called!
Raven, I am called!
I, the runemaster, carve the runes!

The Whetstone of Strøm

The whetstone of Strøm comes from the time around 600CE. It was found on the island of Hitra in Norway. This inscription is in the form of a powerful alliterative verse— which may have been a form of a song sung as the farmers cut the crops.

watehalinohorna
hahaskapinhapuligi
Wātē halli hino horna!
Haha skapi! Haðu liggi!
Let the horn wet the stone!
Sythe the hay! Let the crop lay!

The Stone of Noleby

The stone of Noleby, Sweden, is a feldspar rock found in 1894 inside a wall. It was probably originally in a grave mound, but was removed at some time in the past and used in construction. (This often happened with the old Runestones.) The inscription was carved around 600CE. It is a Runemaster formula intended to have the magical effect of holding a dead man in his grave-mound. The final call, to make the hawklike one “sharp,” is a call to the Runes and the gods from which they come, to make the Runemaster powerful so that he can do his magic. The formula SUHURAH : SUSIEH is a historical (elder age) example of the kind of galdor-formulas the Runer is taught to construct below.

RNI&YFHIREXIHFYDMS↑&#BE
 NFE&RD:ENHNRFH:ENELMH↓↓↓
 HEYDR

runofahiraginakudotojeka
 unapou:suhurah:susiehwatin
 hakuþo

Rūnō fāhi ragina-kundo.
 Tōj-eka unapou-
 SUHURAH:SUSIEH
 Hwatin haukoþu!

A rune I color, one stemming from the divine advisors.
 I make for satisfaction (in the grave).
 SUHURAH:SUSIEH
 May they make sharp the hawk-like one!

The Stone of Björketorp

The stone of Björketorp is still standing in Sweden as a part of a triangular arrangement of stones— which is important as its curse formula is designed to prevent anyone from disturbing the stones. It is a stone used in marking a holy place, not a marker for the dead. The inscription was carved in about 675CE. Magically it should be noted that one element of the curse is that anyone who would break the stone or the triangle is condemned to be outcast from the society which supports him.

Nþ*BR*SB*
 H*IDYRNþQR QþN
 Yþ*H*YH*IDMR*X
 Iþ*RNþ*Yþ*R*XMN
 HþMR*Mþ*þNþY
 NþIþYþMþ*þNþM
 ZþYþþþBþRNþY

uþArAbAsbA
 hAidRrunoronu
 fAlAhAkhAiderAg
 inArunARArAgeu
 hAerAmAlAusR
 utiArwelAdAude
 sArþAtbArutR.

Uparba-spā!
 Haidr-rūnō ronū falh-k hedra, ginna-rūnaR
 Ærgiu hearma-lausR, ūti æR wēla-daude,
 sAR þat brýtR.

Prophesy of doom!
 The row of bright runes I hid here,
 magically loaded runes.
 Through shamefulness, and restlessly,
 out there is a woeful death.
 (For) whoever breaks this (monument).

The Stone of Eggja

The stone of Eggja is a long and poetically sophisticated inscription. It was probably carved around the year 700CE. Although it is defective in many places, significant work in reconstructing the inscription has been done by scholars over the years. It was found as a part of a grave chamber in western Norway. The final formula on the stone: *alu missyrki!* sums up the intent of the inscription, which is to protect the grave from robbers. The magical term *alu* is discussed in more detail later.

þi 44 8 r n h q t n r þ i y þ y m y þ þ i t h y r r i t þ i M F A
 þ * y m f þ i n þ e r i t a t þ i r i t a m f þ a t þ x i . . .
 H i t þ r b t þ y m n m r a m þ m þ * i m y * i b * i b q r m q t * h n t i h n p
 * a q b y f m h * r i h f h i f i f t x q t þ * þ i y þ a q a þ . . . þ * n i
 m h n r i m f m m f r i þ . f x f i f t m . . .
 * r n m i y n r y i

- I. nissolusotuknisAksestAinskorinnixxxxmaR
nAkdanisniþrinRniwiltiRmanRlAglxx
- II. hinwArbnAseumaRmAdēþAimkAibAibormoþAhumihw
ARobkamhArisahialatgotnAfiskRoRfxxnAui
msuwimadefoklifxaxxxxxgalandxx
- III. Alumisurki
- (The sign "x" means there is a stave there, but it can no longer be read due to damage to the stone.)

Ni's sólo sótt ok ni saxe stæinn skorinn.

Ni læggi mannR nækðan, is niþ rinnr, ni viltiR
mænnR læggi ab.

Hinn varp náséo mannR máðe þæim kæipa í
bormóþa huni.

FiskR óR firna-vim svimmande, fogl í fianda lið galande.
Alu missyrki!

The stone is not touched by the sun and (is) not cut
by an (iron) knife.

No man may lay it bare, when the waning moon
runs (over the heavens).

Misguided men may not lay (the stone) aside.

The man here sprinkled this (stone) with the sea
of the corpse (=blood),

with it he rubbed the thole of the well-drilled boat.

As who (that is, in what shape) has the lord-god (=Óðinn)
come to the land of warriors.

A fish swimming out of the terrible stream, a bird screaming
into the enemy band.

Powerful magic (against) any wrongdoer!

Magical Rune-Songs

Galdrar

In the most ancient of inscriptions we have evidence of magical incantations, similar to the Indian *mantras* and sacred words. Some of these are not *words* in the usual sense, but rather sound-formulas conveying the root meaning of the Runes corresponding to those sounds. Others *combine* this aspect with an actual word which can be deciphered.

Trailblazing work in the field of "runic mantras" was done in this century by German Rune-magicians. A survey of their work appears in chapter 8 of *Rune Might* (Llewellyn, 1989).

The Magic of Runic Seed-Words

The individual simple runic sound values are in essence *kernals* which when combined with other sounds give rise to "seed-words." These seed-words can then be expanded indefinitely. Of course, the simple runic kernel sounds can stand alone and be combined with other kernel concepts, as well. The real underlying meaning of most of the sonic mysteries of the Runes can be found in the wisdom contained in the lore surrounding each individual Runestave. The doctrine of runic seed-words in the construction of Rune-galdors, or Rune-songs, is just a further refinement of the greater Rune-wisdom.

In the practices of mantric magic derived from the ancient Indo-European tradition there is a consistent emphasis placed on the significant arrangement of vowel-consonant combinations. These very simple combinations, such as fu, fa, fi, fe, fo are what we generally refer to as the *seed-words*. From these seeds great mysteries are sown. The runic seed-word chart below reveals the otherwise hidden runic doctrine in the very structure of the futhark. There are six vowels (each representing a basic essence or "element") and eighteen consonants (each representing a basic quality which might qualify or modify an essence). In truth the 24 Runes, and all of the complex lore attached to them are the real keys to this system, but within the strict practice of Rune-galdors we can simplify things at this stage in order to get into the system on a practical level.

It should be noted that the eighteen consonantal Rune-sounds can be divided into the traditional *ættir*, as there are six Rune-sounds left for each of the three *ættir* once the vowels have been removed. In the standard order there are, of course, two vowel sounds per *ætt*.

List of Runic Qualities of the Kernel-Sounds

Vowels

U Vitality, form (water)

A Consciousness, awareness (fire)

I Contraction, condensation, destruction (ice)

- E Power, energy (air)
- O Stability, order (earth)
- Ī Eternity, time, unity (motion/time)

Consonants

- F Dynamic, moving, fiery
- Th Directed, destructive
- R Ordered, right
- K Creative, keen
- G Giving, honorable, generous
- W Harmonious
- H Catastrophic
- N Necessary, resistant, needful
- J Cyclical
- P Evolutionary, turning
- Z Awakening, connective
- S Guiding
- T Rational, analytical, true
- B Emerging, catalytic
- M Metamorphic, transformative
- L Living, growing, increasing
- NG Resting, gestating
- D Shining, brilliant

The Use of the Seed-Words

Using the Table of Runic Seed-Words, you can see that the seed-word "ma" is to be interpreted as "transformative or metamorphic awareness or consciousness," the mirrored version "am" means exactly the same thing, as on this level the sounds do not really have a linear reality—they exist beyond time and space. Their sounds are eternal creative qualities. Therefore, as far as esoteric symbolism is concerned, "ma" = "am." It should also be made clear that in the construction of galdors single consonants or single vowels can be made to stand alone. The only restriction is that the combinations result in *pronounceable*, and preferably harmonious, forms.

It should also now be perfectly obvious how the complex runic galdors (*galdrar*) first published in *Futhark: a Handbook of Rune Magic* (Weiser, 1984) were generated. The magical task is to perform these Kernel-Sounds and seed-words, and so forth, *with full attention and concentration*.

In the related traditions of the interpretation and construction of "sacred syllables" in Indian *mantra-yoga* it is clear that the very sounds themselves carry the essence of the magical power, equal with the visible sign, and the intelligible secret meaning (=Rune). The secret permutations and cycles of these sounds encoded in the Indian system of *kala* was something Guido von List explored deeply. (For more details on this see chapter 8 of *Rune Might*.) But what you have before you here is not based on the Indian tradition. The runic system is something quite independent of the Indian, but they both share some common roots.

The enormous importance of sound in the runic tradition is emphasized in the myth of the origin of the Runes in consciousness of gods and humans. There the persona of the god Woden says: "I took up the runes/ wailing I took (them)." The original Old Norse reads: "nam ek upp rúnar/ cependi nam." It is highly significant that it is not said that he took them up "carving," or expressing them in some other medium. The symbolism of *vocal* or *sonic* power is shown to be primary. (This corresponds to the related traditions of the power of the Sanskrit *vac*, and the Greco-Gnostic *logos*— or "word.")

Our main purpose in this system of *Rune-Song* is to provide an active, operant system of Rune-galdor. However, the skills learned in this can be fairly easily translated into the ability to interpret already existing Rune-formulas. In each of the basic and traditional runic word-formulas discussed below I will demonstrate how this is to be done according to the Table of Seed-Words.

But from the operative perspective, the Runer will want to practice creating his or her own galdors for specific magical purposes. This is really quite easy once the keys have been revealed. As with all willed action, the Runer must start with a goal or an aim. Then a sound-formula is composed to encode that aim, and the formula is magically internalized in the subjective world, or soul, of the Runer where it will eventually have its magical effect.

Let us say that the Runer wants to create a galdor which will help bring a vague feeling of unfocused enthusiasm to a level of crystalized and focused inspiration and intelligence. With this aim

in mind the Runer will run through the Table of Seed-Words (either on paper or in some internalized spiritual form) and determine which combinations of which runic sounds will best encode this aim. A simple example of this would be: "tj-ma" = "rational and wise contraction (=focus) — metamorphic intelligence." (By the way, *tjma* is also the Old English word for "time.") This formula can also be encoded in visual form as a linear set of Runes ↑ | - N - F or as a bind-rune:



These visual shapes are then used as further tools with which to focus the will of the Runer in the singing of the Rune-galdor.

The ultimate magical power of complex runic formulas is multileveled. The sounds, shapes, and meanings of the individual Runes involved make up one level, the meaning of the word or significance of the whole arrangement of Runes can make up another level. There is a meta-poetic value in everything involved with the Runes.

The way in which Rune-galdors work magically is also multileveled. The more the Runer works with the system the more he or she will realize the depth of the transpersonal or archetypal value of the Rune-formulas. The stage at which the direct link between the Rune (sound/ shape/meaning) and "things" in the mundane universe is realized takes a good deal of work to reach. But right from the very beginning the focusing of will and psychic energy necessary to form a traditional Rune-galdor in harmony with your purpose has a magical effect on the self of the Runer and on the environment. Further concentration and "visualization" (or better said here "audialization") invested in the form of the galdor even more intensely focuses the universal form of the Rune on a symbolic and transpersonal level. From this level seemingly indirect effects will result. However, and this is of the utmost importance: *The level of effectiveness of the Rune galdor will be in direct proportion to the levels of skill with which the galdor was formulated and of will with which the galdor was loaded, or "charged."*

Table of Runic Seed-Words

	dynamic	directed	ordered	creative	giving	harmonious	catastrophic	necessary	cyclical	evolutionary	awakening	guiding	rational	emerging	metamorphic	living	resting	shining	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
	F	V	R	K	G	W	H	N	J	P	-Z	S	T	B	M	L	NG	D	
1 vitality	U	fu	pu	ru	ku	gu	wu	hu	nu	ju	pu	--	su	tu	bu	mu	lu	--	du
2 awareness	A	fa	pa	ra	ka	ga	wa	ha	na	ja	pa	--	sa	ta	ba	na	la	--	da
3 condensation	I	fi	pi	ri	ki	gi	wi	hi	ni	ji	pi	--	si	ti	bi	ni	li	--	di
4 energy	E	fe	pe	re	ke	ge	we	he	ne	je	pe	--	se	te	be	me	le	--	de
5 order	O	fo	po	ro	ko	go	wo	ho	no	jo	po	--	so	to	bo	mo	lo	--	do
6 time	I	fi	pi	ri	ki	gi	wi	hi	ni	ji	pi	--	si	ti	bi	ni	li	--	di
1 vitality	U	uf	uð	ur	uk	ug	uw	uh	un	--	up	uz	us	ut	ub	um	ul	ung	ud
2 awareness	A	af	að	ar	ak	ag	aw	ah	an	--	ap	az	as	at	ab	am	al	ang	ad
3 condensation	I	if	ið	ir	ik	ig	iw	ih	in	--	ip	iz	is	it	ib	im	il	ing	id
4 energy	E	ef	eð	er	ek	eg	ew	eh	en	--	ep	ez	es	et	eb	em	el	eng	ed
5 order	O	of	oð	or	ok	og	ow	oh	on	--	op	oz	os	ot	ob	om	ol	ong	od
6 time	I	if	ið	ir	ik	ig	iw	ih	in	--	ip	iz	is	it	ib	im	il	ing	id

For other practical insights into the practice of Rune-galdor, see *The Nine Doors of Midgard*, which contains a complete graded course in Rune-galdor.

The example of ritual working with the *foslau* formula below gives all the insight that is needed to work Rune-galdor in a highly direct and practical, yet traditional, way.

Traditional Rune-Galdors

All of the formulas presented in this section are also ones that appear one or more times in actual runic inscriptions from the elder age.

One of the oldest and most sacred formulas is that of the whole futhark. Its meaning is the collective power of the universal arrangement of cosmic principles in right order. As a Rune-song it has the power to set things right, or keep them in right order. The regular and daily singing of the entire futhark series of Rune names has an over-all calming, harmonizing, while at the same time, inspiring effect in the life of the Runer.

Alu is a formula that on the word-level means *ale* (originally the drink was named for its power to raise magical inspiration). Its true significance is as a formula to raise magical inspiration and to use that power in magical work for protection or anything else. The seed-word reading would be: "al-u" = "increasing consciousness in a vital form."

Laukaz means *leek* on the word-level. It is a symbol of growth and potency. Its seed-word reading would be: "la-uk-az" = "increasing or living consciousness, creative vitality, awakening consciousness."

Auja is a word for prosperity or well-being, good fortune, if you will. While the more expanded formula *gibu auja* literally means: I give good fortune! (Probably referring to the power of the Runemaster to create powerful runic talismans.) The seed-word interpretation would be: "gi-bu/a-u-ja" = "giving contraction-emerging vitality (a powerful bipolar concept) / consciousness-vitality-cyclical awareness."

Luwatuwa is an example of a formula which has no meaning on the word-level— but is a pure runic *mantra*. It only occurs once in the ancient record— on a bracteate (medallion) where it is followed by a complete futhark-formula. On one level its significance may be that of the primeval chaos out of which order (the futhark) emerges.

The seed-word analysis of this formula is especially interesting as *luwatuwa* seems to be an example of a galdor created according to the principles outlined here: "lu-wa-tu-wa" = "increasing vitality – harmonious intelligence – rational vitality." It would thus be a galdor for growing and wise use of the vital forces of life, governed by a harmonious intelligence or consciousness.

The *foslau* formula, which will be used as in the example of a complete Rune-song ritual working, is a scrambling of various elements: f (the first Rune) + o (the last Rune) = a kind of *alpha/omega* formula; sowilo (the sun, the transcendent goal), and lau (a disordered *alu*). Other interpretations are possible— and in the world of Rune magic one interpretation does not automatically cancel out another.

Finally, the most extensive set of galdor-formulas, or Rune-songs, is that of the expanded formulas of the 24 Runes of the Elder Futhark. The seed-principles of the Rune sounds are evolved through the vowel-sounds, creating the maximal expansion of vocal and magical power of which each Rune is capable. These are the basic songs. From these the Runer can weave his or her own Rune-songs for more specific magical ends.

Singing of Traditional Rune-Galdors

The Song of the Futhark

Fehu-ūruz-þurisaz-ansuz-raiðō-kēnaz-gebō-wunjō
hagalaz-nauðiz-īsa-jēra-eihwaz-perðrō-elhaz-sowilō
tīwaz-berkanō-ehwaz-mannaz-laguz-ingwaz-dagaz-ōðila

The *Alu*-formula

aaaallluuuu

The *Laukaz*-formula

llllaaaauuuukaaaazzzz

The *Auja*- and *Gibu auja*-formulas

aaaauuuujjjjaaaaa
giiibuuuu aaaaauuuujjjjaaaa

The *Luwatuwa*-formula

lllluuuuwwwwaaaa-tuuuuwwwwaaaa

Ritual Workings with Galdors

The Runer can use any Rune-song or galdor in a wide variety of magical ways to focus and direct the psyche and magical will to effect direct (yet sometimes subtle) changes in the Runer's own subjective or inner world or to affect the very fabric of the objective or outer worlds. In their simplest form a ritual working involving the use of Rune-song consists merely of *singing* (or "chanting") the sounds of the runic formula a certain number of times or for a certain amount of time. The work of preparing and constructing the sound-formula will also play a part in how effective your ultimate creation will be.

Working Outline

For those who wish to shape a more elaborate kind of ritual working for the use of Rune-songs, I include here complete instructions for the creation of such a working. The ritual working would consist of three main parts:

- I. HALLOWING of sacred space
- II. SINGING of the Rune-song or galdor
- III. LEAVING of sacred space

HALLOWING

To open the working, project the Hammer of Thunar (or Thorr) into the objective universe around you. This is a way of defining your field of action and "protecting" your sacred space from distracting intrusions. It also establishes a "power zone" in which to manifest your Rune-song. All this can be done by performing a ritual such as the Hammer-Working.

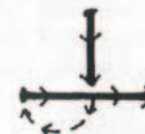
The Hammer-Working

1. Face North
2. Starting with *fehu* in the North, trace the shapes of the Runestaves in a ring around you at the level of your solar plexus. The ring should be about three to four feet away from you in the air. When you are finished you will end with the sign of *öpila* also in the North right next to the sign of *fehu*, and the Runes will form a complete band around you.

3. Stand in the cross-position (with your arms straight out from your sides) and visualize an equilateral cross lying horizontally in the plane of the Rune ring and your solar plexus— which will be the very center of that cross. The arms of the cross will end at the points where they touch the Rune band. Imagine a surrounding sphere of shimmering blue light with the red Rune-band as its equator. Then visualize the vertical axis coming through your length from infinite space above and from the infinite space below you.

4. Feel the force flowing into your center from all six directions as it builds a sphere of glowing red might. The color may be altered depending on the ritual intention.

5. The Runer should touch the heel of his or her hand to the breast at the center of power and thrust the hand forward, projecting the force from that center to a point on the inside face of the outer sphere. Then the Runer should sign the hammer \perp from the mass of magical might gathered and visualized at that point. The sign should be traced as shown:



During this process intone:

Hamarr í Norðri helga vé þetta ok hald vörð!
(Hammer in the north hallow and hold this holy stead!)

Then turning 90 degrees to the right trace again the hammer sign in the east saying:

Hamarr í Austri helga vé þetta ok hald vörð!
(Hammer in the East hallow and hold this holy stead!)

Then turning 90 degrees to the right again trace the hammer sign in the south and say:

Hamarr í Suðri helga vé þetta ok hald vörð!
(Hammer in the south hallow and hold this holy stead!)

And turning to the West, say:

Hamarr í Vestri helga vé þetta ok hald vörð!
(Hammer in the West hallow and hold this holy stead!)

Returning to the north, direct your attention upward and there directly overhead, at the apex of the sphere, trace the sign of the hammer, saying:

Hammar yfir mér helga vé þetta ok hald vörð!
(Hammer above me hallow and hold this holy stead!)

And then project the hammer sign below to the nadir of the sphere and say:

Hamarr undir mér helga vé þetta ok hald vörð!
(Hammer under me hallow and hold this holy stead!)

6. Now assume the cross position again and say:

Hamarr helga vé þetta ok hald vörð!
(Hammer hallow and hold this holy stead!)

Turning in the center of the ring repeat this once for each of the other four directions and once for the vertical axis. The visual effect should be one of axes connecting all six shining red hammers to your personal center, all engulfed by a field of sparkling deep blue light and surrounded by the band of bright red Runes.

7. Finally, center all the forces in the ring by folding your arms from the cross position toward you center, with your fingertips touching your solar plexus, saying:

Um mik ok í mér Ásgarðr ok Miðgarðr!
(Around me and in me Asgard and Midgard!)

(This ritual also may be used at any time to balance and protect you and to hallow any place by the power of Thunar's Hammer.)

RUNE-SINGING

After the space has been hallowed and made ready for the working of the actual Rune-song the Runer should take up a comfortable position (either sitting or standing) in the center of the spherical space created by the Hammer-Working to perform the galdor.

Before beginning the actual performance, the Runer should do some deep breathing exercises to clear out the inner space of the sphere of any residual influences.

The example on the tape is that of the ancient *foslau*-formula. This formula occurs on a single talismanic bracteate that is now close to fifteen hundred years old.

On the tape I demonstrate how this kind of formula should be branched out and transformed sonically into more complex forms out of the root-form given:

foslau (= basic and holistic formula)
fehu-ōþila-sowilō-laguz-ansuz-ūruz (= runic analysis)
ffffooooosssllllaaaauuuu (= extended sonic performance)
fehu-ōþila-sowilō (= analysis of purely runic elements)
aaallluuu (= isolation of any true root-words contained in the formula, here the *alu*-formula)
fo-os-la-u (= an analysis of the formula according to the secret doctrine of seed-words)
ffffooooosssllllaaaauuuu (= a final holistic harmonization)

During the performance of this complex kind of Rune-song, the Runer (at the more advanced stages) will want to visualize a red form of light-energy riding on the breath as the Rune-song is sung on each exhalation. If the runic formula is intended to influence the outside world primarily, then you should visualize the red energy flowing *outward* more and more with each exhalation—filling your sphere of working more and more. If it is intended to affect your inner world primarily, then you should strongly visualize the red energy entering your lungs and branching out inside your body with each inhalation. The object is to move as much of the loaded or charged energy into the symbolic realm where you will let it to work. “Reddening” the atmosphere in your imagination has the same magical effect as “reddening” the Runes when they are actually carved or drawn.

For more details on the practices of runic breathing and visualization, the reader is referred to *The Nine Doors of Midgard*.

While the actual Rune-song is being sung, the Runer may have his or her eyes closed, or if outdoors the attention can be directed to the stars or sky. However, as a special expansion of the working into the realm of graphic magic, the Runer may wish to shape a bind-rune or galdor-stave to represent the song in a graphic shape. This bind-rune is usually a composite of all of the Runestaves used in the sound-galdor. It can be executed in red on

a white background and fixed to the wall or to a tree at eye-level in front of the Runer where the galdor is being performed. In such a case it would be the focus of the Runer's visual attention during the performance of the Rune-song.

A bind-rune for the *foslau*-formula (shown below) can be shaped from the sound to create a magical sigill which sums up the entire power of the formula in a single glyph. This magical sign can then work more directly on the unconscious to effect the magical transformations intended by the formula. This is intended only as an example of what the Runer can do using his or her own creativity. These are the traditional seeds of a vast complex of magical possibilities.

A *Foslau* Bind-Rune



The Rune-song should be performed continuously until the Runer gains a certain feeling of completion or satisfaction that the work has been done. The whole ritual (or just the Rune-song) may also be repeated on several different occasions.

LEAVING

To end the working the Runer should symbolically break the sphere and allow the gathered forces to find their way out into the world if they are to effect the objective world outside the Runer, or the entire contents of the sphere should be drawn into the Runer by a series of deep breaths in which all of the gathered energies are inhaled and centered in the heart of the Runer.

With the utterance of the traditional closing, "So shall it be!" the working of the *foslau*-formula is at an end.

The Galdors of the Elder Futhark

When shaping and performing a specific galdor, the Runer may wish to use combinations of the kernel sound with vowels (to create specific magical seed-words) or he or she may simply wish to use the traditional Rune name as the basis of the galdor. These can be combined and mixed as the Runer feels appropriate. The Rune galdors which first appeared in *Futhark* (Weiser, 1984) are extensive permutations of these various sound values for each of the 24 Runes of the Elder Futhark. The Runer may use these when invoking the total power of the Rune or Runes in question, or these galdors may be used as basic patterns for the formation of more complex and refined Rune-song. In a way the basic galdors presented here are like musical scales which underlie music, but which do not necessarily make up the song itself.

You will note that the structure of these exercises generally follows the plan of a threefold repetition of the Rune name, followed by a performance of the kernel sound value, which is followed by a fivefold circulation of the sound through the main vowels, and the cycle is completed with a repetition of the kernel sound, the name in an extended form, or some other sonic conclusion to the cycle of the Rune-song.

All Runers are encouraged to experiment with the kernel sounds, the seed-words, and the root-words in ways that are found to be most *effective*. The Rune-sounds are the "notes" in a kind of music of hidden meanings, or the "words" in a sort of language of the gods and goddesses themselves. The final teacher in this process will, as always, be the Runes themselves.

The 24 Basic Rune-Galdors

fehu fehu fehu

fffffff

fu fa fi fe fo

of ef if af uf

fffffff

uruz uruz uruz

uuuuuuuuuu

uuuuurrrrr

uuuuuuuuuu

burisaz burisaz burisaz
b b b b b b b b
bur þar þir þer þor
þu þa þi þe þo
þ þ þ þ þ þ þ þ

ansuz ansuz ansuz
aaaaaaaaa
aaannnssuuuzzz
aaaaaaaaa

raiðō raiðō raiðō
rrrrrrrrr
ru ra ri re ro
ruð rað rið reð roð
or er ir ar ur
mmmmr

kēnaz kēnaz kēnaz
ku ka ki ke ko
kun kan kin ken kon
ok ek ik ak uk

gebō gebō gebō
gu ga gi ge go
gub gab gib geb gob
og eg ig ag ug
geechooo

wunjō wunjō wunjō
wu wa wi we wo
wun wan win wen won
wo we wi wa wu
wwwuuunnn

hagalaz hagaz hagaz
hhhhhhhhh
hu ha hi he ho
hug hag hig heg hog
hhhaaagaaalaaazz

nauðiz nauðiz nauðiz
nnnnnnnnn
nu na ni ne no
nuð nað nið neð noð
un an in en on
nnnnnnnnn

īsa īsa īsa
iiiiiii
iiiisssss
ssssiiiiii
iiiiiii

jēra jēra jēra
jjjccerrraaa
ju ja ji je jo
jur jar jir jer jor
jjjccerrraaa

eihwaz eihwaz eihwaz
iiiiiii
īwu īwa īwi īwe īwo
īwo īwe īwi īwa īwu
iiiiiiiiiii

perðro perðro perðro
pu pa pi pe po
po pe pi pa pu
peccerrrððrrrooo

elhaz elhaz elhaz
zzzzzzzzz
uz az iz ez oz
oz ez iz az uz
zzzzzzzzz

sowilō sowilō sowilō
ssssssss
su sa si se so
sssooowwwiillloo
so se si sa su
sssooowwwiillloo

tīwaz tīwaz tīwaz
tu ta ti te to
tiiiwwaaa
to te ti ta tu
tiiiwwaaaazzz

berkanō berkanō berkanō
bu ba bi be bo
beeerrrkaaannn
bo be bi ba bu
beeerrrkaaannnooo

ehwaz ehwaz ehwaz
eeeeeeee
eeehhwwaaaazzz
eeeeeeee

mannaz mannaz mannaz
mmmaaannnnnnnn
mu ma mi me mo
mmmaaannnnnnnaazzz
mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm

laguz laguz laguz
llllllll
lu la li le lo
lllaaaguuu
lo le li la lu
lllaaaguuuzzz

ingwaz ingwaz ingwaz
iinnnggg
ung ang ing eng ong
ong eng ing ang ung
iinnngggwwaaaazzz

dagaz dagaz dagaz
ðððððððð
daaagaaazzz
du da di de do
do de di da du
daaagaaazzz

ōðila oðila oðila
oooooooo
oðul oðal oðil oðel oðol
oðol oðel oðil oðal oðul
oooooooo

This brings the galdors to a close, and as we read in the "Hávamál," we can end this work with the *words*:

Nú eru Háva mál kveðin, Háva höllu í,
allþorf ýta sonum,
oþorf jötna sonum;
heill, sá er kvað heill, sá er kann!
njóti, sá er nam,
heilir, þeir hlyddu!

Now the sayings of Hárr are said, in the hall of Hárr,
very useful to the sons of men,
of no use to the sons of etins;
hale he who speaks them, hale he who knows them,
needful to those who took them,
hale those who hear them.

Glossary

This glossary defines specifically runo-technological terms as well as words that might be used in unfamiliar contexts used throughout the text of this book and the accompanying tape.

ætt, pl. *ættir*, see airt.

airt, pl. airts: The eightfold division of the sky, and the eightfold divisions of the Elder Futhark into three groups of eight Runestaves. (From Old Norse *ætt*.)

bind-rune: Two or more Runestaves superimposed over one another, sometimes used to form galdor-staves.

formáli, pl. *formálar*: Old Norse. Formulaic speeches used to load ritual actions with magical intention.

galdor: 1) A Rune-magical incantation or *mantra*, a Rune-song. 2) A form of magic which often uses Runestaves as a method of objectifying verbal contents and thus objectify magical intent. (Old Norse *galdr*, pl. *galdrar*)

galdor-stave: A magical sign which may or may not have its origin as a bind-rune. Used as a focus for complex magical operations. (Old Norse *galdrastafr*, pl. *galdra-stafir*.)

hallowing: The part of a ritual in which the space where the ritual is to be performed is marked off from the profane world, made holy, and protected.

kernel-sound: The basic and simple sound values of the individual Runestaves. These are combined to create seed-words.

leaving: The formal closing of a ritual.

loading: "Charging" ritual space with Rune might.

lore: The tradition in all its aspects.

root-word: The first level of combinations of runic sounds that has basic meanings. Root-words grow out of *seed-words*.

rown: A verb meaning basically "to whisper secret things (that is, Runes)." It is the verb-form of *Rune*.

Rune-craft: The use of Runeskill (esoteric knowledge) for causing changes in the objective environment.

Runelore: A general term for teachings about Runes both exoteric and esoteric.

Runer: A general term for someone involved in Rune-Work.

Rune-song: The use of the voice in a magical operation involving the calling on runic forces through galdor. Can be considered a synonym for galdor.

Rune-stave: The physical shape of a runic character.

Runester: From Old Norse *rýnstr*, "one very skilled in Runes." General term for someone involved in deep-level runic studies.

Rune-Wisdom: Ability to apply Rune-skill to deep-level visions of the world and its hidden workings; runic philosophy.

Rune-Work: The willed effort and process of self-transformation using runic methods.

seed-word: The combination of simple runic kernel sounds into compound vowel/consonant combinations in the construction and performance of Rune-songs or galdors.

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