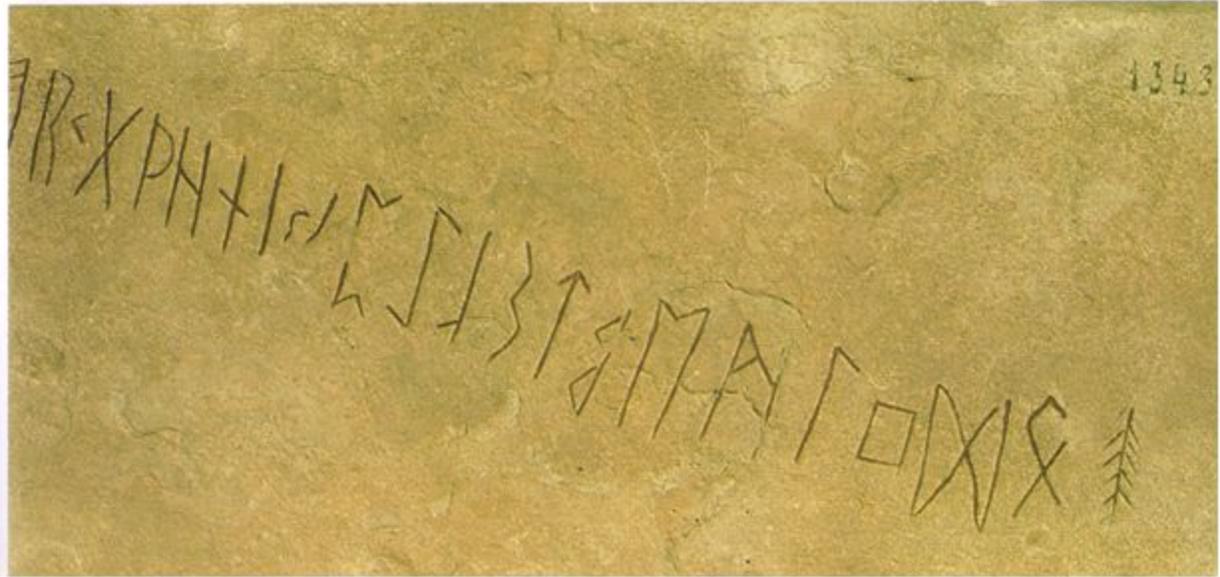


# The Runes:

## In Study and Application



“Knowest thou, how to write,  
Knowest thou, how to color,  
Knowest thou, how to bid,  
Knowest thou, how to send  
knowest thou, how to read?  
knowest thou, how to carry out?  
knowest thou, how to bless?  
knowest thou, how to put to sleep?”  
*--Hávamál, The Poetic Edda*

By: Mike Smith, Úlfar aff Jera Þjóð  
East Coast Thing, 2016

# Outline:

## *I. The Brief Origins of the Runes*

- A. Etruscan & Indigenous
- B. Mythical

## *II. A System within Cultural Context*

### *III. Archeological Evidence*

- A. Bracteates
- B. Rune Stones
- C. Miscellaneous

### *IV. The Runes Themselves*

- A. Futharks(?)
- B. Rune Poems
  - 1. Old English Rune Poems (8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> cent.)
  - 2. Norwegian Rune Poems (12<sup>th</sup> cent.)
  - 3. Icelandic Rune Poems (15<sup>th</sup> cent.)
- 4. The Abecedarium Nordmannicum (mid-800s)
- 5. Modern Swedish Rune Poems (late 1500s)

## *V. Magical Implications- (How?, What?, Where?, Huh?)*

- A. "What We Know" Magical Theory Summary

### *VI. In Application*

- A. Knowledge Repository
- B. Symbols and the Mind
- C. Visualization, Intoning, & Internalizing
  - D. Placebo, Nocebo
  - E. Focus and Meditation

# I. Brief Origins of the Runes

## Historical Rune Origins “Quickie”:

North-Italic/Etruscan Theory by C.S.J. Marstrander (1928), strengthened & modified by Wolfgang Krause (1937) is the strongest. With alterations to the original theory, the Raetic (Bolzano) seems most likely according to Bernard Mees (2000). It theorizes that Germanic peoples living in the Alps region adopted North-Italic scripts as early as 300BC when Cimbri came in contact with the writing system, adopted it to a degree, and then passed onto the Suebi which then in turn spread it up through the Rhineland, to the North Sea, into Jutland, and thus into Scandinavia. No finds of runic script that early (earliest is Meldorf Brooch 50 CE) occur, but the Helm of Negu inscription uses North-Italic to write in a Germanic language! It is believed to be a combination of North-Italic script with indigenous symbols that has existed since the Bronze Age. Some of these ideographic symbols show similarities to the various runestaves, but were probably used to convey ideas and concepts rather than an actual form of writing. \*\*Note: The “notae” of Tacitus (Ch. 10, *Germania*) on the carved strips of wood would have occurred around 98 CE.

\*\*\*Only examples of FULL Elder Futhark rows are on the Kylver Stone (400 CE), the Vadstena and Motala bracteates (450-550 CE), the Grumpan bracteate (450-550 CE), the marble column of Breza (500 CE). Particals include the Beuchte Fibula (450-550 CE), the Charnay fibula (550-600 CE), and the Aquincum fibula (550 CE).

Magic will be defined as; the practice of using charms, spells, or rituals to influence the metaphysical and physical (subjective) world in such a way as to produce desired effects in the physical, objective world, either internally or externally.

## Mythic Rune Origins “Quickie”:

According to various myths, legends, and specifically to the Elder (or Poetic) Edda, the god, Óðinn hangs himself on Yggdrasil (the cosmic world tree) for 9 nights in a form of (and almost shamanic) runic initiatory self-sacrifice where on the edge of death he is able to recognize, codify, and communicate the concepts in which the rune staves represent. \*\*Note: Óðinn did not “create” them, they were already in existence.

138

Veit ek, at ek hekk vindgameiði á  
nætr allar níu,  
geiri undaðr ok gefinn Óðni,  
sjalfur sjalfum mér,  
á þeim meiði er manngi veit  
hvers af rótum renn.

139.

Við hleifi mik sældu né við hornigi,  
nýsta ek niðr,  
nam ek upp rúnar, æpandi nam,  
fell ek aftr þaðan.

I know that I hung, on a wind swept tree  
for all of nine nights,  
wounded by spear, and given to Odin,  
myself to myself,  
on that tree of which no man knows  
from what root it rises.

139.

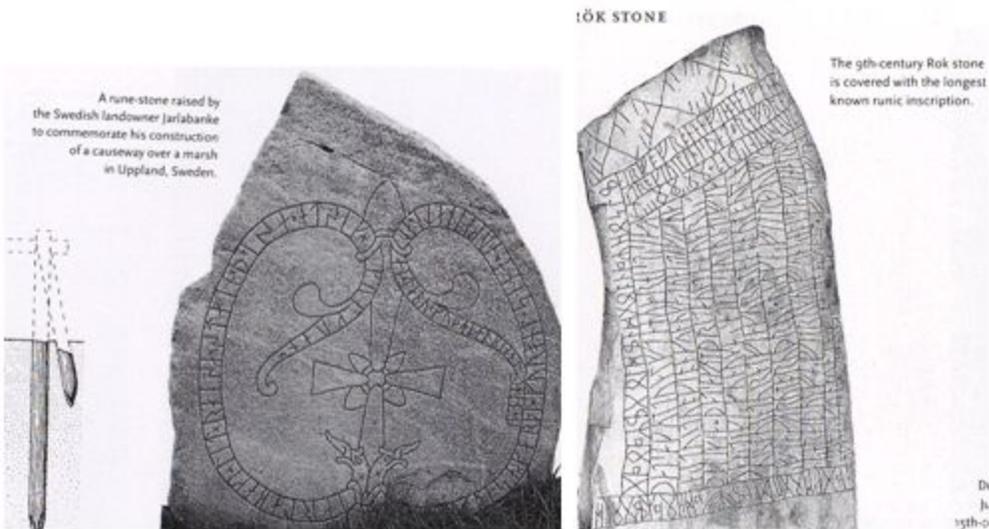
They dealt me no bread, nor drinking horn.  
I looked down, I drew up the runes,  
screaming I took them up,  
and fell back from there.  
--Havamal, Chisholm transl.

### III. Archeological Evidence:

#### A. Examples of Bracteates



#### B. Examples of Rune Stones



## IV. The Runes Themselves

### Old English Rune Poems

#### For the Elder FUPARK:

[Wealth] is the comfort  
to everyone  
although everyone ought  
to deal it out freely  
if he wants to get approval  
from the lord.

[Aurochs] 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.

[Thorn] is very sharp;  
for every thane  
who grasps it; it is harmful  
and exceedingly cruel  
to every man  
who lies upon them.

[God/Mouth] is the chieftain  
of all speech,  
the mainstay of wisdom  
and a comfort to the wise ones,  
for every noble warrior  
hope and happiness.

[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.

[Torch] is to every living man  
known by its fire,  
it is clear and bright  
it usually burns

when the athelings  
rest inside the hall.

[Gift] is for everyone  
a pride and praise  
help and worthiness;  
and of every homeless adventurer  
it is the estate and substance  
for those who have nothing else.

[Joy] is had  
by the one who knows few troubles  
afflictions and sorrow,  
and to him who himself has  
power and blessedness,  
and a good enough home.

[Hail] is the whitest of grains,  
it comes from the high heavens  
showers of wind hurl 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.

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

[Harvest] is the hope of men,  
when god lets,  
holy king of heaven,  
the earth gives  
her bright fruits  
to the nobles ones and the needy.

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

[Lot box] is always  
play and laughter  
among bold men,  
where the warriors sit  
in the beer hall,  
happily together.

[Elk's] sedge has its home  
most often in the fen,  
it waxes in the water  
and grimly wounds  
and it burns  
any man who,  
in any way,  
tries to grasp it.

[Sun] is by seamen  
always hoped for  
when they fare far distant  
over the fishes' bath  
until the brine-stallion  
they bring to land.

[Tir] is a star,  
it keeps faith well  
with athelings,  
always on its course  
over the mists of night  
it never fails.

[Birch] is without fruit  
yet it still bears  
limbs without fertile seed;  
it has beautiful branches,  
high on its crown  
it is finely covered,  
loaded with leaves,  
touching the sky.

[Horse] is, in front of the earls  
the joy of athelings,  
a charger proud on its hooves;  
when concerning it, heroes  
and wealthy men on warhorses  
exchange speech,  
and it is always a comfort  
to the restless.

[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 heed its bridle.

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

[Day] is the lord's messenger,  
dear to all men,  
the rule's famous light;  
it is mirth and hope  
to the rich and poor  
and is useful for 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.

[Oak] is on the earth  
for the children of men  
the nourishment of meat;  
it often fares  
over the gannet's bath:  
The sea finds out  
whether the oak keeps  
noble troth.

[Ash] is very tall,  
and very dear to men  
firm on its base  
it holds its place rightly  
although it is attacked  
by many men.

[Yew bow] is for athlings  
and noble alike  
a joy and sign of worth,  
it is excellent on a horse,  
steadfast on 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 by water,  
where it lives in joy.

[Grave] is hateful  
to every noble  
when steadily  
the flesh begins-  
the corpse- to become cold  
to choose the earth  
palely as a bedmate;  
fruits fall  
joys pass away,  
bonds of faith dissolve.

**Old Norwegian Rune Poems**  
**For the Elder FUPARK:**

[Wealth] causes strife among kinsmen;  
the wolf grows up in the woods.

[Slag] is from bad iron;  
often the reindeer runs on the hard snow.

[Thurs] causes the sickness of women;  
few are cheerful from misfortune.

[Estuary] is the way of most journeys;  
but the sheath is the one for swords.

[Riding] is said to be the worst for horses;  
Regin forges the best sword.

[Sore] is the curse of children;  
grief makes a man pale.

[Hail] is the coldest of grains;  
Hroptir 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.

[Good Harvest] is the profit of men;  
I say that Fróði was generous.

[Sun] is the light of the lands;  
I bow to the holiness.

[Týr] is the one-handed among the Æsir;  
the smith has to blow often.

[Birch] is the limb greenest with leaves;  
Loki brought the luck of deceit.

[Man] is the increase of dust;  
mighty is the talons' spread of the hawk.

[Water] is that which falls from the mountain;  
as a force; but gold things are costly.

[Yew] is the greenest wood in the winter;  
there is usually, when it burns, singeing.

### **Old Icelandic Rune Poems**

#### **For the Elder Futhark:**

[Wealth] causes strife among kinsmen,  
and the fire of the flood-tide,  
and the path of the wrym.

[Drizzle] is the weeping of clouds,  
and the diminisher of the rim of ice,  
and the object of the herdsman's hate.

[Thurs] is the torment of women,  
and the dweller in the rocks,

and the husband of Varðrúna.

[Ase] is the olden-father,  
and Ásgarð's chieftain,  
and the leader of Valhöll.

[Riding] is a blessed sitting,  
and a swift journey,  
and the toil of the horse.

[Sore] is the bale of children,  
and a scourge,  
and the house of rotten flesh.

[Hail] is that cold grain,  
and a shower of sleet,  
and the destroyer of snakes.

[Need] is grief of the bondmaid,  
and a hard condition to be in,  
and toilsome work.

[Ice] is the rind of the river,  
and the roof of the waves,  
and a danger for fey men.

[Good Harvest] is the profit of all men,  
and a good summer,  
and a ripened field.

[Sun] is the shield of the clouds,  
and a shining glory,  
and the life-long destroyer of ice.

[Týr] is the one-handed god,  
and the leavings of the wolf,  
and the ruler of the temple.

]Birch] is a leafy limb,  
and a little tree,  
and a youthful wood.

[Man] is the joy of man,  
and the increase of dust,  
and the adornment of ships.

[Wetness] is churning water,  
and a wide kettle,

and the land of fish.

[Yew] is a strung bow,  
and brittle iron,  
and Farbauti of the arrow.

### **The Abecedarium Nordmanicum:**

Fee first,  
Aurochs after,  
Thurs the third stave,  
The Ase is above him,  
Wheel is written last,  
Then cleaves cancre;  
Hail has        need  
Ice,        year,    and sun.  
Tiu,        birch    and man in the middle  
Water the bright  
Yew holds all.

### **The Modern Swedish Rune Poems:**

Property is a comfort to kinsmen.  
Drizzle is the worst weather.  
Thurs is the torment of women.  
A mouth is in every river.  
The rider is the ruin of horses.  
A sore is worst in the flesh.  
Hail is best when in the house.  
Need is the only choice.  
Ice is the broadest bridge.  
Tyr is worst among specters.  
Year is widest in leaf.  
A birch stand is the greenest grove.  
Sun is highest in heaven.  
Law is the honor of the land.

## V. Magical Implications

### Where did they get that?

#### Facts:

\*\*Meldorf Brooch (50 CE) is the earliest runic archeological find.

\*\*Caesar: *The Conquest of Gaul*, Book I, 53; writes of the Germanic tribes, “consulting the lots three times” (58 CE)

\*\*Tacitus: *Germania*, Chapter 10; writes, “For omens and the casting of lots they have the highest regard. Their procedure in casting lots is always the same. They cut off a branch of a nut-bearing tree and slice it into strips; these they mark with different signs and throw them completely at random onto a white cloth. Then the priest of the state, if the consultation is a public one, or the father of the family if private, offers a prayer to the gods, and looking up at the sky picks up three strips, one at a time, and reads their meaning from the signs previously scored upon them.” (98 CE)

\*\**The Poetic Edda, Havamal*, stanza 80

Þat er þá reynt, er þú að rúnum spyrr	It is found when you ask the runes
inum reginkunnum,	which are known to the Regin
þeim er gerðu ginnregin	made by the Ginnregin
ok fáði fimbulpulr;	drawn by Fimbulthul
þá hefir hann bazt, ef hann þegir.	it is best to keep silent.

(Codex Regis 1643 CE, language of 700-1050 CE)

\*\**The Poetic Edda, Havamal*, stanza 111

Mál er at þylja þular stóli á	It is time to sing on the sage's seat
Urðarbrunni at,	at Urth's well.
sá ek ok þagðak, sá ek ok hugðak,	I saw and was silent, I watched and thought.
hlydda ek á manna mál; of rúnar heyrða ek dæma,	I heard the speech of men, I heard talk of runes.
né um ráðum þögðu	They were not silent at council.
Háva höllu at, Háva höllu í,	At Har's hall, in Har's hall
heyrða ek segja svá:	I heard them speak.

(Codex Regis 1643 CE, language of 700-1050 CE)

\*\*We all know Stanzas 138 through 164 (“I know that I hung.....hail they who heed them.”)

\*\**Galdr* = “magic” or “incantation” derived from *gala* = describes the call of a raven or crow.

\*\*Most theories derived from 19<sup>th</sup> century German Magicians!

## Magical Formulas:

ALU- Duel theory “Protection/Defense/Power” and “Ale”; found on Bjornerud gold bracteate, Årstad rune stone, Elgsem rune stone, the Setre comb, and Fosse bronze fittings.

EK ERILAR- “I am the Runemaster”, “I am the Heruli”; found on the Bratsberg Buckle, Veblungnes in Romsdal, Norheimsund at the Hardangerfjord and at Valsfjord in South-Trøndelag, all from before 500 AD. The inscription is also found in Denmark and Sweden, **ek erilaR** is also found in younger versions.

EGGJA RUNIC FLAGSTONE – A whole incantation warning for no one to ever move the stone as it is a holy marker. “The stone (the place) has not been hit by the sun and the stone has not been carved with (iron) knife. No man shall lay the stone bare while the moon is waning. No strange men shall remove the stone. This stone the runemaster sprinkled with blood, scraped with the blood the oarlock in the worn out boat. As whom came the army god with the boat here to the Goth's land? As the fish, swimming out of the horror (?) river, as the bird ..... crowing. Defense against the evil-doer(?)”

STRAND RUNIC BUCKLE – “The jewel is a protection against the dead.”

BJORKETORP RUNESTONE - “Here, I have hidden the secret of powerful runes, strong runes. The one who breaks this memorial will be eternally tormented by anger. Treacherous death will hit him. I foresee perdition.” Similar to the STENTOFTEN RUNESTONE which states, “The settlers, the newly arrived gave Hapuwulfz a good harvest, generously gave Hapuwulfz riches. This is a deep secret. Here I have hidden deep secrets. The one who breaks this memorial will be eternally tormented by anger. Treacherous death will hit him.”

VAERLOSE BROOCH- “alu-god” followed by a swastika. (200 CE)

SIEVERN BRACTEATE – “I carve the runes” w/ a head depicting breath coming from the mouth.

GUMMARP STONE – “Hathuwulf set three staves” followed by three Fehu runes.

\*\*\*Random Info: Of around 900 bracteates found, 130 have runic inscriptions.

\*\*\*Sweden boasts the most (by far) runic inscriptions, over 3000.

\*\*\*Only examples of FULL Elder Futhark rows are on the Kylver Stone (400 CE), the Vadstena and Motala bracteates (450-550 CE), the Grumpan bracteate (450-550 CE), the marble column of Breza (500 CE). Partials include the Beuchte Fibula (450-550 CE), the Charnay fibula (550-600 CE), and the Aquincum fibula (550 CE).

## **Bibliography, References, & Helpful Works:**

### Papers/Articles:

- \*Bremmer Jr, Rolf H "Hermes-Mercury and Woden-Odin as Inventors of Alphabets: A Neglected Parallel", 1991
- \* Looijenga, Tineke "Runes Around the North Sea and on the Continent AD 150-700; Texts & Contexts", Groningen, 1997
- \*Mees, Bernard "The North Etruscan Thesis of the Origin of the Runes", *Arkiv for nordisk filologi*, 115 2000, 33-82
- \*Mitchell, Stephen A "The N-Rune and Nordic Charm Magic", 2007
- \*Poulsen, Grete Schmidt "The Complementarity of Magic in Nordic Mythology and Archeological Sources"
- \*Westcoat, Eirik "what goals had Galdralag? A Look at the Uses of Meter" Kalamazoo, 2013

### Books:

- Bailey, Michael D. *Magic and Superstition in Europe: A Concise History from Antiquity to the Present*. Lanham, MD, 2007
- Buckley, Joshua & Moynihan, Michael. Editors. *Tyr: Myth, Culture, Tradition Volume 3*. Atlanta, GA: Ultra, 2007.
- Buckley, Joshua & Cleary, Collin & Moynihan, Michael. Editors. *Tyr: Myth, Culture, Tradition Volume 4*. Atlanta, GA: Ultra, 2014.
- DuBois, Thomas A. *Nordic Religions in the Viking Age*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999.
- Ellis, Hilda Roderick. *The Road to Hel*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1968
- Flowers, Stephen E., ed. *The Galdrabok: A Medieval Icelandic Grimoire*. York Beach, ME: Weiser, 1989.
- Flowers, Stephen E. *A Concise Edition of Old English Runic Inscriptions*. Smithville, TX: Rûna-Raven Press, 1999.
- Hollander, Lee M., tr. *The Poetic Edda*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1962.
- Lecouteux, Claude. *Encyclopedia of Norse and Germanic Folklore, Mythology, and Magic*. Rochester: Inner Traditions, 2016
- Looijenga, Tineke. *Text and Contexts of the Oldest Runic Inscriptions*, Boston: Brill Leiden, 2003
- Pollington, Stephen. *Rudiments of Runelore*. Norfolk, England:Anglo-Saxon Books, 1995
- Pollington, Stephen. *Leechcraft: Early English Charms, Plantlore, and Healing*. Norfolk, England:Anglo-Saxon Books, 2008

Rafnsson, Magnús. *Rún: Galdrabók*. Hólmavík, Ísland: Galdrasýning á Ströndum, 2014

Rustad, Mary S. *The Black Books of Elverum*. Lakeville, MN: Galde Press, 2010

Sheffield, Ann Gróa. *Long Branches: Runes of the Younger Futhark*. Lulu.com, 2013

Simek, Rudolf. *Dictionary of Northern Mythology*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006

Słupecki, Leszek P. *Between Paganism and Christianity in the North*. Rzeszów: Wydawn. Uniw. Rzeszowskiego, 2009

Smith, Christopher Alan. *Icelandic Magic: Aims, Tools and Techniques of the Icelandic Sorcerers*. London: Avalonia, 2015

Sturluson, Snorri. *Edda*. tr. & ed. Anthony Faulkes. London: Everyman, 1987.

Sturluson, Snorri. *Heimskringla*, tr. Lee M. Hollander. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964.

Tacitus, Cornelius. *The Agricola and The Germania*. tr. H. Mattingly & S.A. Handford. Penguin Books Ltd, 1970.

Thorsson, Edred. *Runelore: A Handbook of Esoteric Runology*. York Beach, ME: Weiser, 1987.

Thorsson, Örnólfur. *The Sagas of the Icelanders: A Selection*. London: Penguin, 2001

Zoëga, Geir T. *A Concise Dictionary of Old Icelandic*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc, 2004

Web:  
The "No-cebo Effect" - <http://news.health.com/2011/02/16/placebo-effect-may-work-in-reverse/>