Corpus Editions of Inscriptions in the Older Futhark

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Abstract
The history of corpus editions of the inscriptions in the older futhark dates back to the 1800s. From an early date, the editions diverged into two strands on the basis of the linguistic and geographic classification of the texts: the Scandinavian "Ancient Norse" inscriptions, which were always treated as part of the corpus of the Scandinavian countries, and the "Gothic" and "German" ones, later also referred to as the "Continental", "South" or "East Germanic" inscriptions, which from Rudolf Henning's 1889 edition on were the main focus of German-language runological study. Wolfgang Krause brought both strands together in his comprehensive edition of one hundred of the main older futhark inscriptions in 1937. His revision, supplemented by new finds and with archaeological contributions by Herbert Jankuhn, appeared in 1966 as *Die Runeninschriften im älteren Futhark*. This at the time complete corpus edition has long been considered the standard work on these inscriptions. The large number of finds uncovered in the following years was for a long time only presented in individual publications or summarised in collections with a limited focus. Not until the new millennium were the first steps taken towards a new edition to succeed Krause's 1966 edition, initially in the form of the digital collection of the Kiel Rune Project, subsequently as planned editions by Göttingen and Kiel universities, and finally within the scope of the Göttingen Academy of Sciences and Humanities project Runic Writing in the Germanic Languages (RuneS).

Keywords: runic inscriptions, older futhark, corpus editions, Continental inscriptions, "German" inscriptions, "Gothic" inscriptions, South Germanic inscriptions, East Germanic inscriptions

Early editorial work: inception and interrelationships

The starting point for modern editorial work on the inscriptions in the older futhark dates back to the 1800s, with origins traceable to the

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comprehensive corpus editions of the Scandinavian countries that had been produced since the last decades of the century (cf. Källström 2022, 7–10; Lerche Nielsen forthcoming; Knirk 2022, 29–31; Finnur Jónsson 1918 also provides an overview of the older works). Another source can be found in the numerous individual publications that were contemporaneously appearing in Denmark and Germany on the so-called Gothic and German inscriptions. The different criteria employed to establish the various corpora of inscriptions played a crucial role in the interdependent history of these early inventories. For the Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish corpora, the criteria were exclusively geographic and linguistic: the modern (in some cases historical) borders and linguistic classification as Scandinavian (Nordic, i.e. Ancient Norse) were the basis for the inclusion of inscriptions. The runic objects thus were (and are still) mainly included in these national collections independent of their affiliation with different futharks; only in the context of the corpus of Norwegian inscriptions were these signalled as a separate subgroup, namely those with 'older runes', i.e. *Norges Indskrifter med de ældre runer* (*NIæR*).

Comparable criteria defined the "German" and "Gothic", and also the so-called Continental inscriptions. From the second half of the 1800s, these encompassed all the runic objects that were linguistically interpreted as "German" or "Gothic" (based on the threefold division into "Nordic", "Gothic" and "German" established by August Schleicher in *Die Deutsche Sprache*, 1860, 94), or which had been found on the European continent (sometimes, in accordance with geographical accuracy, also subsuming some or all of the Frisian inscriptions; see below and Arntz and Zeiss 1939; Findell 2012). While in principle the find locations of the "Gothic" inscriptions extended over the entire distribution area of the inscriptions in the older futhark, including Scandinavia, the locations of the "German" inscriptions were generally on the Continent, most of them from the area of present-day Germany.

The concept of "German" runes had already been introduced into the research in the first half of the 1800s by Wilhelm Grimm in his *Ueber deutsche Runen* (1821), even though no epigraphic evidence had yet been found that would support such a geographic or linguistic classification. Thus although Grimm's work did not comprise the first inventory of "German" runic inscriptions in the older futhark, to some extent it did lay the foundation for subsequent work in this area. Grimm's comparative investigation of manuscript rune-rows and rune-alphabets led him to posit the existence of a "German" rune-row that would have been brought to England with the emigrating Saxons and would have been similar, in

relation to the number of signs and their formal characteristics, to the Anglo-Saxon runes (1821, sect. 18). The final conclusion deduced from this hypothesis was that it would be natural to assume a general distribution of these runes in Germany (p. 162), a supposition that has subsequently been more than confirmed by almost 100 "German" (i.e. what are today called "South Germanic") runic inscriptions. Even though more than forty years would pass until the discovery of the first inscription in older runes from Germany (fibula 1 from Nordendorf, KJ 151 [SG-88]), his hypothesis in terms of the existence of an "older" rune-row with epigraphic evidence from Germany must be described as groundbreaking.

Work on the "German" and "Gothic" inscriptions in the 1800s

The increase in the number of Continental inscriptions with suspected "Gothic" or "German" linguistic forms led to increasing discussion in the second half of the 1800s, primarily between German and Danish researchers, about this group of inscriptions. George Stephens in his four-volume *Old-Northern Runic Monuments of Scandinavia and England* (1866–1901) had already drawn up the first list of Continental finds under the heading "Wanderers" (six inscriptions in all, including also Nordendorf 1; cf. vol. 2 [1867–68]: 565–603 and 880–84), although, due in part to flawed readings, he failed to recognise the linguistic character of these inscriptions and judged them to be scattered Old Norse specimens (cf. a swift response in the review by Ludvig Wimmer, 1867, 1–41).

Finally, with the publication of Wimmer's opus on the origin and development of runic writing in the Nordic countries (1874) it was proved that this group employed an older futhark that preceded the younger, sixteen-character Scandinavian one. Wimmer (1874, 56–60 and 263–65) was the first to classify objects from Germany, including all six of Stephens's first "wanderers" plus the new find KJ 144 [SG-34] Frei-Laubersheim, specifically as inscriptions in the older rune-row (p. 57). In the scope of his revisions and the expansion of his work in *Die Runenschrift* (1887), he was able to augment this list by a further six finds. As he had already done in the preceding version (1874, 57), he explicitly distinguished these from a second group of Continental inscriptions that on the evidence of the runic forms seemed instead to employ the Anglo-Saxon futhorc. Only in exceptional cases, however, did he provide further details on the reading and interpretation of inscriptions (e.g. on KJ 33 Kovel′ [traditionally Kowel],

cf. Wimmer 1887, 62–65). The runic finds essentially served as part of an argument in which Wimmer identified runic writing as the medium of all the Germanic tribes in the north, east, south and west (1874, 60, 71; 1887, 65, 74). He described the linguistic forms of the Continental finds in this context as 'purely Gothic', 'Germanic' or even 'German' and 'West Germanic' (1887, 60–65); often, however, in the absence of unequivocal linguistic features, he used the find location to determine the linguistic categorisation of the inscription (p. 63).

A comprehensive editorial approach was first adopted by Rudolf Henning in *Die deutschen Runendenkmäler* (1889). Central to this inventory are sixteen articles that deal systematically with the individual 'runic monuments' and detail the following: find history; description of object and context of discovery; runic forms; transliteration; linguistic discussion of the morphological units; dating, cultural-historical classification and sometimes also ethnic classification on the basis of linguistic or archaeological findings; geographical and historical information about the find location. In addition, there is a detailed discussion of any symbols or ornamentation accompanying the inscription that are used for dating as well as for cultural-historical interpretations (cf. e.g. Müncheberg, i.e. KJ 32 Dahmsdorf). All of these aspects are discussed with an account given of contemporary research as well as older readings and interpretations (including the heavily criticised readings of Dietrich [cf. *inter alia* 1869], on whom see also Wimmer 1867, 41–50). Four plates with drawings of the objects and their inscriptions are found in a supplement to this collection.

Particularly noteworthy and characteristic of the editorial approach is the extensive discussion on selection and inclusion of the inscriptions in the corpus. Objects whose runic character is regarded as dubious (p. iii, including $^{(o)}$SG-53 Hohenstadt) or whose authenticity can be questioned (pp. iii f. and 156, e.g. KJ 143 [SG-77] Mayen, formerly Engers) are excluded. The numerical difference between Henning's corpus (16 inscriptions) and Wimmer's almost contemporary list (13 finds; 1887, 56–59) is explained by the fact that Henning included full entries on the Continental bracteates. All but two of the inscriptions included by Henning comprise part of the accepted corpus today.

Despite the sparsity of the material and on the basis of sometimes rather speculative interpretations, the language of the runic inscriptions is discussed in an extensive chapter of results (pp. 135–55) that also considers textual and typological features and draws far-reaching conclusions regarding the development of runic forms and orthography, relying heavily on quite uncertain datings. Some of the well-known Scandinavian

inscriptions in the older futhark are also included for comparative purposes. While most of these observations are now dated and in many regards obsolete, important foundations were laid here, particularly those pertaining to the much-discussed special character of the "German" (later "South Germanic") runic tradition.

Wimmer's monograph *De tyske runemindesmærker*, published in 1894, is a direct reaction to suggested readings of the German inscriptions by Henning (especially his sweeping generalisations in the final chapter) as well as by Bugge (in *NIæR*, 1 [1893]: 136–42); Henning in particular is faulted for his almost consistent lack of distinction between what is entirely certain, probable (in varying degrees) or totally uncertain (p. 21). Wimmer comments only on those objects whose reading or interpretation he considers dubious, however; this and the absence of the required structure and method mean his work cannot be regarded as an alternative corpus edition. The presentation and discussion of two new finds comprise a further focus of his work.

A number of the readings and even some of the interpretations suggested at this time remain current (e.g. Wimmer's reading of the Kovel′ inscription [1887, 62 f.] or Henning's interpretation of Frei-Laubersheim); in other cases, the poor condition of the objects hinders reading, so that even today any improvement in understanding appears unattainable (e.g. KJ 145 [SG-95] Osthofen). Some readings were distorted, however, by contemporary misconceptions of the linguistic function of some of the runes. This applies in the oldest of the named works particularly to the *z/ʀ*-rune, which was assigned vocalic function (cf. e.g. Stephens 1866–1901, 2 [1867–68]: 565–603) or which in view of its graphic similarity to the younger futhark *m*-rune was transliterated with **m** (Dietrich 1865). Not until the works of Bugge and Wimmer was a scientific stage of research corresponding to modern scholarship attained on this point.

Confusion over runic allographs, such as the variant of the *e*-rune with a straight connecting branch (cf. e.g. **luþro** [KJ 42 Strårup] for **leþro** in Wimmer 1867, 55), or the as-yet unacknowledged difference between the *j*- and *ŋ*-runes, characterises the readings, however, until the turn of the century and beyond (e.g. still **rannga** and **ran(i)nga** [KJ 32 Dahmsdorf] in Henning 1889, 9, and Wimmer 1894, 22).

Important editorial projects of the 1900s

In both of the comprehensive inventories that appeared in the 1930s, fundamental problems relating to the reading of individual characters, which had partly characterised the work of the 1800s, had been overcome. The fact that both handbooks drew, moreover, on a clearly larger bank of inscriptions is due more to their character and concept than to any real increase in the number of inscriptions involved. While Arntz and Zeiss's edition of the 'indigenous' runic monuments of the Continent (1939) adopted a geographical approach, and thereby encompassed all of the Continental finds (43 entries in total) including the Frisian inscriptions known at this time (see below), it was Krause who in 1937 first collected "German", "Gothic" and Scandinavian inscriptions into one volume (with 100 main entries), based on the criterion of their common employment of the older futhark.

As conceptually different as they are, both inventories to varying degrees show the influence of the so-called *Sinnbildforschung* 'research into symbols' that influenced contemporary understanding of runes (cf. Hunger 1984 on the relevant political and ideological background and its influence on scientific discussions and work on the editions, esp. pp. 180–237; for a discussion from a Scandinavian perspective, see Nielsen 1986, 143–53). This branch of study regarded runes as the descendants of Bronze Age iconographic symbols to which an ideographic function was attributed. The notion was embraced by Krause, who combined it with the theory of the runes originating from North Italic phonetic letters into a theory of the double valence of runic characters (cf., e.g., 1937, 423–27). On this premise he grounded his reading of some runic signs as *Begriffsrunen* 'runic ideographs', to which the reconstructed 'rune-names' (designations) known from later sources were attached (for scholarly criticism, see Moltke 1941, 107). Arntz also assumed a phase of runic symbolism but identified this phase in the preserved older futhark inscriptions as fundamentally at an end. His perception of the inscriptions was, however, affected by another postulated function of the runes: these were not originally used for communicative purposes but functioned in all areas of "folk belief" (cf. 1939, 133–43). Only later, as a result of Christianisation, had they spilt into profane areas and, like Latin writing, functioned as "letters" to convey every kind of expression. According to Arntz, confirmation of the age-old 'active power' (German *Wirkmacht*) of the runes, manifested in the runic signs themselves, was found only in the Scandinavian inscriptions in the older futhark or in the pre-Christian

inscriptions of the Continent, to which in general all the Alemannic (cf. p. 136) and Frisian (cf. p. 133) runic objects were assigned. In general, the "German" inscriptions (predominantly products of the so-called Frankish tradition) evidenced the new, profane usage.

Helmut Arntz and Hans Zeiss

Die einheimischen Runendenkmäler des Festlandes (1939) by Helmut Arntz and Hans Zeiss was planned as the first volume of a complete corpus edition of older runic objects. Political developments and Arntz's deployment to the Front from 1939 resulted, however, in the volume remaining the only publication of an uncompleted project. The book comprises forty-three full articles on runic inscriptions, of which six are classified as 'East Germanic monuments' and thirty-seven as 'German and Frisian'; it is the first co-authored collaboration between a linguist and an archaeologist. The adjective *einheimisch* 'indigenous' functions as the decisive criterion for inclusion in the inventory. Discarded as 'not indigenous' were the bracteate inscriptions which, like the related single finds such as the KJ 46 Körlin ring as well as Continental inscriptions in the younger futhark (such as the runes on the Piraeus/Venice lion) and *runica manuscripta*, were collectively characterised as 'North Germanic' (cf. p. ix). The inscriptions from Frisia known at that time were contrarily counted as 'indigenous' (cf. the argument on pp. 107–11). The inclusion of these objects, hitherto often classified as English imports, was based in the theory that the runes had long been known in Frisia and had been brought in by immigrants ('conquerors') from the area around Thorsberg. The original older rune-row was then modified by the addition of characters as a result of the linguistic mix. The finds without the extra signs thus testify both to the coexistence of two rows as well as to their different users.

The discussion on the individual inscriptions in this handbook is notable for its attention to detail: find location, tribal affiliation, type of object, dating, find year, find history and authenticity according to the prevailing state of research are systematically described before readings and interpretations are broached. Arntz's avowed purpose is to cover all of the older literature in the articles and thereby present older readings and interpretations in depth. This feature of the book gives it value as a work on the history of the field although the individual articles—also incorporating lengthy quotations from older literature—become interminably long. The extensive appendix is helpful in this regard as it begins with a clear summary of every inscription (pp. 442–68); it further

contains different indices of the inscriptions and concludes with a concise grammar. Illustrations are provided in a supplement with forty-four plates (photographs of the objects) complemented by a distribution map.

Overall, however, the book should be used cautiously. In the reading of individual inscriptions, ornamental signs were counted as meaningful symbols. For the interpretation, great significance was generally attached to the find location, postulated tribal affiliation and assumption of the character of the inscription on the basis of the type of object (with women's fibulae, for example); these considerations also generally justified allocation to a specific type of inscription (such as pagan or Christian). Some of the interpretations—predominantly those attributed to pagan tradition (cf. Dahmsdorf, Kovel′)—reach far beyond linguistics to express the lofty ideals of the Germanic hero and warrior.

Wolfgang Krause

While Arntz and Zeiss explicitly placed their work in the tradition of Henning (1889), Wolfgang Krause with *Runeninschriften im älteren Futhark* (1937) followed the framework of the lists of Ancient Norse inscriptions in the grammar of Old Norwegian and Old Icelandic by Adolf Noreen (1923) and in the runic grammar by Alexander Jóhannesson (1923). The stated purpose of his presentation was to create a guide to the oldest runic tradition for university use, for which neither the lists in the grammars nor the already partly outdated Scandinavian national corpus editions (*Sveriges runinskrifter* and *NIæR*) could be used. For the first time, the selection criterion for the collection of inscriptions was here the twenty-four-character older futhark, in which Scandinavian as well as "German" inscriptions were composed; this decision thus combined the two hitherto separate strands of editorial work. Those using the longer Anglo-Frisian rune-row (for an overview of these corpora see Findell 2022) or the sixteen-character Scandinavian rune-row were categorically excluded. The individual articles on the inscriptions proceed systematically from find report and transliteration of the inscription with grammatical explanations of the segmented word forms and a transcription of the text as a whole (including translation) through to an overall interpretation of the inscription, concluding with a dating (partly establishing a relative chronology on the basis of linguistic and graphematic phenomena) and a select bibliography of the inscription. Illustrations of the objects and inscriptions are integrated into the text of the articles. The appendix (1937, 656–78) offers a grammatical overview with phonology, morphology, and

syntax, as well as extensive indices with a specific section on the date and tribal affiliations of the inscriptions (pp. 670 f.).

Krause did not regard his handbook as a corpus of older futhark inscriptions, instead characterising it as a 'collection'. While it covered the material in its entirety, the inscriptions were not given equal weight. Instead, Krause (1937, vii) provided a selection of one hundred 'main inscriptions' that appeared particularly important to him from a cultural-historical point of view, and that he therefore considered at length and numbered individually. Other inscriptions appeared only in annotations: thus, for example, a note on Tørvika (KJ 92 Tørvika A) summarily incorporated five further stone inscriptions (1937, 590 f.). Beyond its formal limits, the collection thus comprised another subjective selection dependent on presumed cultural-historical value based on the preferred interpretation. Some inscriptions that were classified as 'degenerate' and 'meaningless' (e.g. KJ 62 Tørvika B; on the criteria for the exclusion of further finds, cf. also p. 429) were completely omitted so that a balanced overview of the older runic tradition did not really emerge. The interpretation of the inscriptions also underpinned the structure of the collection as a whole. Inscriptions that belong together in space and time were often considered apart (e.g. the inscriptions from Blekinge) and assigned to different functional groups. The following groupings were recognised: (1) futhark (rune-row) inscriptions, (2) magico-poetic names of spears, (3) magical word formulae, (4) rune-masters' inscriptions, (5) incantations and rituals, (6) funeral inscriptions, (7) runo-magically effective inscriptions, (8) High German dedication inscriptions.

The continuation of Krause's research on the older runic inscriptions led in 1966 to the standard work of enduring relevance, *Die Runeninschriften im älteren Futhark*. As the slightly modified title suggests, this was not a new edition of the 1937 collection but rather the first complete corpus of inscriptions, realised together with the archaeologist Herbert Jankuhn. Krause nevertheless reveals his close relationship with the 1937 edition in his introduction, where he however explicitly disassociates himself from the earlier-assumed connection of runes with Bronze Age symbols. This is also reflected in some of the texts in a modification of the ideographic interpretations put forward in 1937 (compare for example KJ 29 Lindholmen in 1937, 479, to 1966, 69). The differentiation between *Lautrunen* 'phonetic runes' and *Begriffsrunen* 'ideographic runes' is however fundamentally maintained (cf. e.g. KJ 95 Gummarp, 1966, 206). A change is also apparent in the new structure of the handbook, no longer based on interpretational content groupings but largely on the type of object or find context. The

futhark (rune-row) inscriptions and the South Germanic inscriptions still form separate groups. The term "South Germanic" is used here for the first time to classify the runic objects earlier characterised as "German" inscriptions, Krause specifying that the term refers to those languages which merged under the generic term "German" in the Carolingian Age (1966, 277). The change in concept (and further finds since 1937) raised the number of full entries to 167 (32 of them, including three of the rune-row inscriptions, forming the group of South Germanic inscriptions) in what was meant to be an exhaustive collection.

Despite the book's palpably new structure and priorities, the chapter introductions still feature interpretative approaches and fundamental assumptions from the 1937 collection. The cultic or magical function of the inscriptions, which had previously been prominently stressed, is downgraded only slightly in the 1966 edition: this is very clear in chapter seven on the pictureless standing stones and stone slabs, in which the older chapter headings reappear as new sub-headings, i. e. magical formulae, rune-masters' inscriptions and funeral inscriptions (see above). The precariousness of the evaluation of the content and cultural-historical classification of individual inscriptions is shown in a comparison of the 1937 and 1966 articles on KJ 60 Vetteland. From the inscription KJ 73 Rö Krause extrapolates a complete inscription for Vetteland (1937, 543–45), although only a fragment of the stone itself was known at this time. The second fragment, available for the 1966 edition, makes clear just how unhelpful in terms of predicting content the available comparative material and assumed inscriptional type were.

The individual articles are now prefaced by a more extensive archaeological introduction, although some of the datings are obsolete. In their broader structure, the articles fundamentally correspond to the form of the older collection. More space is, however, devoted to the discussion of single runic forms, and the weight is thereby shifted from interpretation to reading and transliteration. This also leads to a more systematic separation of the transliteration, which in the discussion is consistently presented as the first step, from the transcription, which follows only in the second stage. The photographs that had formerly been integrated into the text are now contained, in a clearer and expanded form, in the second part of the handbook with seventy-two plates.

Nothing corresponding to the 1937 appendix with an overview of the grammar of the inscriptions was included; instead this appeared separately, in the 1971 posthumously published grammar entitled *Die Sprache der urnordischen Runeninschriften*, also with a list of inscriptions (127

in number), whose interpretations in some cases deviated slightly from those of the 1966 handbook.

A catalogue of the oldest runic inscriptions comprising the Scandinavian as well as the South Germanic corpus was also included in Ènver A. Makaev's almost contemporaneous grammar *The Language of the Oldest Runic Inscriptions*, which was published in Russian in 1965 but translated to English only in 1996. A condensed list of 146 inscriptions in the older futhark presented with name, transliteration and a short comment or translation (pp. 85–91) forms the basis of this grammar. It is Makaev's declared aim to shed light on the question of the language type of the older runic inscriptions (1996, 9). Contrasting the notions and theories on Common Germanic and its dialectal differentiation of the 1800s and 1900s with the attested runic language forms he succeeds in showing the supradialectal character of the earliest runic language (with minor individual local features) which he termed a "runic koine" due to its stability and conservativeness even in later phases of the older futhark period (see esp. pp. 46–48). For Makaev the language of the older inscriptions formed the "transitional link between Common Germanic and the earliest literary languages of the various Germanic peoples" (p. 48). Apart from the list of inscriptions, Makaev also includes an extensive discussion of the relationhip between phonemes and graphemes, a list of grammatical forms, and a detailed glossary of the word forms attested in the inscriptions (pp. 100–123). Although different in structure and corpus selection his work can be seen as a counterpart to Krause's 1971 grammar.

Elmer H. Antonsen

A distinct alternative to Krause's model is first attempted by Elmer H. Antonsen, who adopts a new approach in *A Concise Grammar of the Older Runic Inscriptions* (1975), a work influenced by Makaev's grammar (cf. Antonsen's introductory note to Makaev 1996 [1965], 7, and his review of 1968). In addition to the grammar alluded to in the title (pp. 1–28), this also contains a concise presentation of the corpus of inscriptions to date (pp. 29–89). The 121 runic inscriptions are arranged on the basis of interpretation as linguistic testimonies of the four major Germanic language or dialect groups, i.e. as evidence of Northwest Germanic (93 inscriptions), East Germanic (5 inscriptions), (Ingveonic) West Germanic or North Sea Germanic (8 inscriptions) and North Germanic (15 inscriptions, explicitly including one West Nordic and five East Nordic inscriptions, cf. p. 27). They comprise a selection of the total corpus of the older futhark, since

included are "only those which lend themselves to linguistic interpretation" (p. viii). A rather arbitrary time barrier of A.D. 600–650 is drawn, leaving the KJ 101 Eggja inscription out of consideration. The South Germanic inscriptions are in general not included, although the four futhark (rune-row) inscriptions, under the heading West Germanic inscriptions, comprise exceptions.

Standard features of the presentation of inscriptions include: name of find; geographic information; dating (albeit without specifying the criteria applied); transliteration of the text (without clear marking of uncertain passages; the reading sequence is already often interpretative); discussion of problematic readings and orthographic peculiarities; segmentation of the text into word units; remarks on the etymology; translation into English; and a short bibliography.

Antonsen's stated goal is a work "which looks to the inscriptions anew and attempts to interpret them from a strictly linguistic point of view" (p. viii). He emphasises—also in clear contrast to Krause's edition—the primacy of a purely linguistic analysis over an interdisciplinary and thereby possibly cultural-historically biased one.

Antonsen's own understanding of the inscriptions is affected on his part, however, by assumptions about the Proto-Germanic phonological system, the writing system derived from it, and the correspondence of sound to sign in the older futhark. A direct consequence of these assumptions is reflected in the transliteration of two runes. Antonsen attributes to the ᛇ rune the original phonemic value /ǣ/ and therefore consistently transliterates **ǣ** (with an unexpected length marker). Instead of transliterating the ᛉ rune with the traditional **ʀ**—originally motivated by the classification of the oldest runic language as Ancient Norse—he uses **z** throughout, with reference to a reconstructed phonemic value of /z/. Only the latter has met with some acceptance and has since been more widely employed (cf. e.g. the Scandinavian Runic Text Database).

His linguistic and epigraphic assumptions successively lead to new interpretations, which postulate an older phonological stage for some of the inscriptions and so often demand an earlier dating than had been assigned in previous works. A second group of new interpretations are based on new readings which in general have little or no basis (cf. the detailed criticism in Knirk 1977), rendering his interpretation of the inscriptions and his integration of the word forms discerned into the reconstructed system of the "runic language" questionable. The lack of argument hinders appreciation of the precise approach to the interpretation of the inscriptions; interpretations and etymological asso-

ciations are left unexplained; the background for the chosen deductions is not transparent; and much of the material is comprehensible only when checked against the sparse grammatical introduction. The necessity of accepting the concurrence of sometimes difficult philological presuppositions with problematic new readings, resulting in new lexicalisations of the inscriptions, means Antonsen's analyses can only be used critically and very cautiously as a basis for further investigation. His purely linguistically based analyses have nevertheless led to important observations and put earlier interpretations into perspective (see most recently Bernard Mees 2020).

Collections and editions of subcorpora in the 1900s and early 2000s

Scandinavian inscriptions

Carl J. S. Marstrander's *De nordiske runeinnskrifter i eldre alfabet* was, according to the author, never intended as a "Corpus Inscriptionum" (1953, 1) although it contains the beginnings of an extensive collection intended to cover a large portion of the Scandinavian material. The weight of the presentation lies in the proferred interpretations; other data are mentioned only superficially and the short bibliographies under the individual runic objects make no claims to completeness. In addition to the Danish and Swedish inscriptions published in the journal *Viking* in 1953, the Norwegian inscriptions and the Scandinavian runic bracteates were to be published in a second paper. This second part, for which a palaeographic, linguistic and cultural-historical evaluation of the complete corpus was also promised, never appeared.

The Danish and Swedish inscriptions known from the standard inventories are systematically presented according to region. The individual entries comprise the following details: a short bibliography or reference; an archaeological dating (although with no further archaeological discussion); a reading of the inscription (sometimes providing a new reading that is still current, e.g. **makija** on the KJ 22 Vimose chape 1); in some cases a transcription into normalised Old Norse or into a reconstructed linguistic form from the Migration Period; a comprehensive discussion of the linguistic inventory of the inscriptions and in this context also an evaluation of previous attempts at interpretation. The sections conclude with the most probable interpretation (with a translation into Norwegian), in

many cases his own, arrived at by considering a large number of cultural, historical and literary parallels (see e.g. the KJ 20 Thorsberg chape).

In the scope of the argumentation, possible readings and interpretations are continually considered and criticised so that the reader can follow the process of interpretation step by step, although in some places the work conveys an unfinished and unstructured impression as a consequence. The magical character of runic inscriptions was presupposed, even with inscriptions that were not linguistically interpretable (cf. e.g. KJ 25 Vimose plane, 1953, 53–59). Magical runic ideographs and number symbolism are also the basis of numerous interpretations as well as some readings (cf. the Vimose chape 1).

The inscriptions are richly illustrated, although the quality of the pictures varies considerably. Most of the images are reproductions from older publications. There are in addition Marstrander's own photographs showing the back of objects or inscriptional details, ornamentation or related items. These often provide information that is important for the evaluation of the inscription (and the accompanying signs, as for example on the fibula from KJ 11 Værløse) or for differentiating between writing and ornamentation.

The work of Ottar Grønvik must also be mentioned in connection with the Scandinavian inscriptions. In addition to comprehensive and detailed linguistic re-evaluations of individual inscriptions (e.g. *Runene på Tunesteinen*, 1981 [on which see the published dissertation defence in Grønvik et al. 1984] or *Runene på Eggjasteinen*, 1985), the more comprehensive collections *Fra Ågedal til Setre* (1987) and *Fra Vimose til Ødemotland* (1996) are notable for their new readings and interpretations of a large number of Norwegian, Swedish and Danish inscriptions. For the individual inscriptions, precise information on the find circumstances, archaeological dating and older interpretations is provided prior to Grønvik's own interpretation and linguistic analysis of the inscription which concludes each chapter; this structure is particularly noticeable in *Fra Ågedal til Setre*. Grønvik does not adopt a new editorial approach, as the aim of his collections is rather the reconstruction of linguistic developmental stages of the "Nordic language" from Ancient Norse within the time period of c. A.D. 200 to 800. These stages are based on different phases during the process of final syllable reduction, which he illustrates via the development of the paradigms of the *a*-, *i*-, *u*-, *ō*- and *ōn*-stems. He finds linguistic support for these stages in the inscriptions discussed in the first part of his work, all of which are assigned to the 500s and regarded as written records of the spoken language of the time. He thereby positions himself

against the idea of a conservative, archaic character in runic epigraphy and tradition-bound epigraphers, as well as the existence of a runic koine that permitted hardly any variation (cf. Makaev 1996 [1965], 23–48; see above). The four stages that Grønvik identifies are: 'Ancient Norse' (200–500), 'Elder Norse' (500–580), 'Younger Norse' (580–800/830), and 'Viking Age Norwegian' (from 800/830), each with several subgroups.

Acceptance of these postulated stages of linguistic development ultimately depends entirely on the new readings and interpretations proposed by Grønvik, which range from daring to fantastic—partly because they rely on expansions of the texts or assume unsubstantiated etymologies. Particular highlights of the monograph are the IK 1 Ågedal and KJ 17 Fonnås inscriptions, which until then in whole or part had evaded certain reading or interpretation, and which were read anew and interpreted as supporting pillars in Grønvik's arrangement of linguistic stages. The new readings and interpretations offered can thus not always be used as a sound foundation for further studies but can only individually be considered cautiously and critically for further understanding of the inscriptions.

The same applies to *Fra Vimose til Ødemotland* (1996). The twenty-eight inscriptions that are the subject of the monograph date with one exception from c. A.D. 200 to 600. Grønvik's interest here is exclusively on the function of the inscriptions in their cultural-historical context. Against older views that emphasised the magical character of the inscriptions, he stresses their cultic and religious function in connection with different elements of funeral rites (cf. pp. 5 f., and the summary, p. 122). As in the preceding monograph, however, the analytical procedures introduced are often problematic, ranging from apparently arbitrary textual augmentations (cf. e.g. KJ 29 Lindholmen) to questionable etymologies (cf. e.g. KJ 29n.2 Ødemotland), which Grønvik largely rationalises by assumptions about the meaning and function of the inscription. Grønvik's new evaluations of these inscriptions therefore cannot be uncritically accepted (cf. also the review by Birkmann in 1998).

After Grønvik, a more comprehensive study of the Scandinavian inscriptions in the older futhark did not appear until Lisbeth M. Imer's dissertation *Jernalderens runeindskrifter i Norden—Kronologi og kontekst* (2015; abridged and revised version of the 2007b work). The particular importance of this work lies not in the assessment and discussion of the transliterations or interpretations presented but in the fundamental re-evaluation and updating of the method of dating objects and inscriptions, at the time hugely outdated, which she carries out on the basis of current archaeological chronologies. In cases where the inscribed object cannot

be classified into archaeo-chronological typologies (as for example with the majority of runestones as well as with many loose finds), Imer works out a secondary chronological classification based on comparison of the rune forms with reliably dated objects (pp. 49–52). The result is a new and comprehensive chronology of the runic inscriptions in the older futhark which also includes numerous new discoveries from the preceding decades. The study is accompanied by a catalogue of older futhark inscriptions in which basic data on the object, its context and the inscription are noted but which is not intended as a new edition of inscriptions in the older futhark. Some inaccuracies mar the entries though; affected are not only drawings, e.g. KJ 101 Eggja with an incomplete and modified adaptation of the drawing from *NIæR*, but also readings and translations, e.g. KJ 102 Roes and KJ 17a Eikeland where respectively transliteration and translation show mistakes and omissions.

Bracteate inscriptions

The bracteate inscriptions were regarded by editors from early on as a relatively autonomous corpus of inscriptions and only exceptionally incorporated into the inventories of inscriptions in the older futhark; even then only those with fairly conclusively readable and interpretable inscriptions were admitted. Of the 128 gold bracteates with runes known by 1951 (from 96 different moulds, and from a total of 760 bracteates), Krause (1966, 238) included only 75 in his inventory. In the interim (until the end of 2010), the absolute number with runes had almost doubled to 222 (from 153 different moulds, and from a total of over 1000; cf. Axboe 2011, 296). With the publication of *Ikonographischer Katalog*, vols. 1.2–3.2 of *Die Goldbrakteaten der Völkerwanderungszeit* (1985–89)—also available on the internet since 2009—and the final volume of evaluation (Heizmann and Axboe 2011), a full compilation of this group of objects became available that considered all the runic bracteates then known in their relevant context.

The individual entries in this catalogue are structured according to a strict scheme that provides information about find location; date and find context; exempla from the same mould (and in the evaluative volume of 2011 also on 'families of formulae', cf. Pesch 2008); details on condition, size and weight; a detailed description of iconography and accompanying signs, as well as a reading and interpretation of any script symbols. The reading, interpretation and classification of the runic inscriptions was from the beginning the subject of Klaus Düwel's expertise. The catalogue

thus provides an invaluable foundation for further work on the gold bracteates and their inscriptions. The lack of supplementary commentary on problems distinguishing between majuscules and runes, the process of interpretation, understanding of the imagery of the bracteates and on the postulated interdependence of text and pictorial elements means the volumes are to be understood solely as catalogues. These are, however, not purely descriptive, but presuppose interpretative schemes established by long years of research. Concentrated information on these points and also on the descriptive scheme of the objects is found in the introductory volume (Hauck 1985) as well as in the final evaluative volume of the work (Heizmann and Axboe 2011; cf. also the informative critical review by Wicker and Williams in 2013).

Detailed information on the basis and background of the self-contained interpretative construct, in which the interpretations of texts and images were inevitably embedded and correlated to each other, or on the individual processes of interpretation (as for example the assumption of abbreviations and 'distortions' of pictorial and textual elements) can be found only in the key publications of the researchers involved in the project, above all Karl Hauck, who as visionary leader of the entire project had a decisive influence on the overall interpretation of the gold bracteates. A pertinent and up-to-date overview of the history of research, with notes on numerous individual publications and further citations from secondary literature, is found in Behr 2011. A full discussion of rune forms and other writing on bracteates is provided by Sean Nowak (2003).

South Germanic and East Germanic inscriptions

For the subcorpus comprised by the South Germanic inscriptions, the works of Opitz (1977, 1979, 1987) and Meli (1988) must be mentioned (for a discussion of these works see also Düwel et al. 2020, pp. xxxi–xliv). Stephan Opitz's monograph *Die südgermanischen Runeninschriften* (1977, a dissertation supervised by Heinz Klingenberg) does not constitute an actual inventory but rather an academic study of the types of inscriptions pertinent to the runic tradition of the Merovingian Age. The basis for this study is an updated catalogue of the South Germanic inscriptions that Opitz presents on pages 7–55. The thirty-six inscriptions collected in Krause's 1966 inventory have increased in this list to fifty-six 'certain' inscriptions. Brief factual details are supplied for the fifty-six objects including information on: the object itself and its inscription; its context or circumstances of discovery; find location; current repository; year of

discovery; already published literature; and dating. A transliteration of the inscription as well as (preliminary) notes on interpretation and translation are also attached in some instances.

Detailed commentary on the interpretations is found in the second and third part of the study. The inscriptions are here grouped into various types, the inscriptions with religious or mythological content (pp. 57–134) comprising a particularly distinctive group. Opitz recognises in these inscriptions a prevailing "two-part structure", in which on the one hand an exemplary "mythic-religious" statement (in the form of the simple name of a god or prophet or an abridged reference to myth) and on the other a "private" part (usually realised explicitly in the form of a private name or implicitly through the presence of the wearer of the fibula) are combined (esp. p. 143). Opitz devotes a great deal of space to the religious inscriptions, the structure and content of which are determined on the basis of sometimes quite daring reading and interpretational procedures: at times the uncertainty indicated for the runic characters in the catalogue is lost in the reading; names of gods are identified on the basis of readings involving runic ideographs (KJ 155 [SG-23] Dischingen A and B); multiple reading of particular sequences based on runic numerology is required (KJ 151 [SG-88] Nordendorf 1); or the postulated significance of accompanying symbols (with recourse to Hauck's bracteate iconology) is the point of departure for the integrated mythic or religious interpretation of the inscription. In this section Opitz cites from and largely confirms the research of Heinz Klingenberg (cf. the representative work *Runenschrift—Schriftdenken—Runeninschriften*, 1973).

In the third section of the study, Opitz re-evaluates the considerations and classifications of the second section and rearranges the material (pp. 143–213). In doing so, he draws on the older typological approaches of Arntz and Zeiss (1939) as well as Krause (1937; 1966). Finally, for the corpus of South Germanic inscriptions, he differentiates between (1) inscriptions comprised only of personal names (pp. 165–77); (2) expanded name inscriptions (pp. 177–201); and (3) inscriptions without personal names (pp. 202–14).

The two-fold and contradictory nature of Opitz's approach is above all apparent in the classification of the Wurmlingen spearhead KJ 162 [SG-136], which is considered in the third part of the study along with inscriptions with private names yet in the beginning of the study understood as a two-part religious inscription—due to the interpretation of the "symbolic sign" preceding the inscription as mistletoe and thus as a reference to the myth of Baldr.

Although the second edition (Opitz 1979) is enlarged by two new discoveries and new literature is incorporated, it is essentially the same as the 1977 edition. The third edition (1987) is an unchanged reprint of the second one.

Supplemented by only a few inscriptions is Marcello Meli's *Alamannia Runica* (1988), which has more formal resemblance to an inventory than Opitz's book. The editorial section, which comprises around 80 of the approximately 220 pages of text, is embedded in a comprehensive description of runic literacy in the South Germanic area and also contains observations on, for example, the origin of the runes and the acquisition of runic knowledge. Fundamental questions of interpretation are also discussed, as for example whether (single) runes should be resolved ideographically or as abbreviations. The individual articles include a transliteration and usually a transcription. Existing readings and interpretations proposed by Arntz and Zeiss (1939), Krause (1966), Klingenberg (1973 etc.) or Opitz (1977) form the starting point, although in some cases, these are supplemented by the author's own hypotheses (e.g. KJ 155 [SG-23] Dischingen A and B). Details on the archaeological context or history of discovery are generally omitted, although some are found in a closing commentary that systematically reviews the entire corpus of inscriptions. This is supplemented by an appendix of Latin epigraphy on objects from the 600s from the area in consideration (cf. also below). The indices and a distribution map of the inscriptions have particular practical value, although there are no other illustrations.

A comprehensive study of the personal names of the South Germanic runic text corpus was presented in 2004 by Robert Nedoma (habilitation thesis at the University of Vienna); this also contains basic information about the inscptions in which the names are attested. Structured in the form of a dictionary, the study comprises 80 alphabetised name entries that provide extensive and highly condensed information on the inflected form and morphological structure of the attested names, show parallels from the Old Germanic onomasticon and from later written sources and classify the inherent name elements and suffixes with a view to the onomastic discourse of the previous literature (see section C of the entries; cf. e.g. s.v. AGIRIK: m.). The primary point of reference for the entries is Hermann Reicherts dictionary of Old Germanic names (1987–90). The linguistic description and classification of the names are preceded by basic data on the runic inscription summarising relevant information on the findplace and context as well as the object and its dating, followed by a transliteration, transcription and German translation of the inscription,

a classification of the type of inscription and references to the relevant literature (section B of the entry).

More thematically specific studies of the group of South Germanic inscriptions appeared in the following years, primarily in the form of dissertations. In *Phonological Evidence from the Continental Runic inscriptions*, Martin Findell (2012) presents an in-depth study of the phonological system(s) underlying the Continental runic inscriptions, applying the term "Continental" in the narrower sense, i.e. with reference only to those inscriptions from the Continent using the older futhark (p. 9); included, however, are also some inscriptions from Frisia (e.g. the Ferwerd comb) that do not show "any additional 'Anglo-Frisian' runes, or runic sequences which can only represent Frisian words" (pp. 394 f.). The vowel and consonant systems of late Proto-Germanic are his point of departure and also function as the structuring elements underlying the study. For each reconstructed vowel or consonant phoneme, Findell traces reflexes in the texts of the inscriptions and evaluates their written representations with a view to the known sound changes from Proto-Germanic to North-West Germanic and to the later Continental varieties of Old High German and Old Saxon. In contrast to the designations of the language of the inscriptions as Continental West Germanic, Pre-Old High German, Pre-Old Saxon, or South Germanic, Findell introduces the umbrella term "Continental Runic" to refer to the language varieties, i.e. "to the set of 'inland' WGmc dialects" (p. 4), respresented in the inscriptions. For a summary of the results see pp. 346–54.

Michelle Waldispühl, on the other hand, in her *Schreibpraktiken und Schriftwissen in südgermanischen Runeninschriften* (2013), focusses on the functions of epigraphic writing and strives to answer a variety of questions related not only to the writing techniques and writing implements that can be discerned in the inscriptions but also to writing practices and the writing competence of the script users. Most relevant in this context is her method and the basic principles and parameters which she establishes to describe the epigraphic and runographic features of the inscriptions as well as their visual layout; chosen parameters are, for example, the depth and profile of the carved lines, the height and width of the letters, the space(s) between them, and the positioning of the signs and sequences in the writing space (pp. 60–68). In contrast to Findell, Waldispühl concentrates on examples, focussing in her main analysis and adaptation of the developed method on eight selected inscriptions.

Both studies contain a catalogue in which the key information pertaining to the inscriptions under consideration are presented in summa-

rised form (Findell 2012, 365–489; Waldispühl 2013, 249–327). Apart from providing basic information such as findplace, object, context, dating and inscription, the focuses of the catalogues differ slightly, on the one hand presenting competing readings and interpretations from the relevant literature and evaluating them to arrive at a reconciled solution, on the other hand including and focussing on epigraphic and runographic details and presenting new readings based on personal examination (compare, e.g., the entries on KJ 144 [SG-34] Frei-Laubersheim in Findell [2012, 395 f.] and Waldispühl [2013, 271 f.]). Waldispühl also includes an appendix with high-quality drawings (pp. 354–408). Until the publication of the new edition of the South Germanic inscriptions (Düwel et al. 2020; see below), these three publications represented the most recent state of research on the South Germanic corpus in the early 2000s.

Finally, the indisputably or—in some cases rather controversially discussed (cf. e.g. the Bergakker scabbard mount, Bosman and Looijenga 1996, 9)—possibly "Gothic" or East Germanic inscriptions, were presented by Robert Nedoma (2010) in the form of an "editio minor". Apart from the catalogue of inscriptions this edition includes an introductory discussion of the criteria that may be employed for a possible delimitation of the corpus, an overview of the basic grapheme-phoneme correspondences and of the graphic variants, and some remarks on orthography and morphological features (pp. 1–9). The corpus presented on pp. 14–41 comprises nine inscriptions which are systematically presented with their basic data and an in-depth discussion of reading and interpretation. The signum OG (for "Ostgermanisch") is introduced to identify the designated East Germanic inscriptions.

With his book *Les Seigneurs des Anneaux* ('The Lords of the Rings') in 2008 (2nd rev. ed.), Svante Fischer laid the foundation for the first corpus edition of runic inscriptions from France (*Inscriptions runiques de France*) and thereby a new national inventory that partly belongs to the corpus of older futhark inscriptions. The only volume published to date of the planned two-volume series includes thirty-nine objects: thirty-seven sword pommels from ring-swords and two sword scabbard fittings. The subcorpus presented here is delimited archaeologically, i.e. on the basis of object typology and on hypotheses about the areas serviced by particular centres of production and distribution. Thus, objects discovered in England (Kent) or Germany such as Ash-Gilton and SG-26 Eichstetten, which have traditionally been assigned to the early Anglo-Saxon or South Germanic older futhark inscriptions, thus become part of the corpus of runic inscriptions from France.

The thirty-nine entries offer abundant information about the objects considered as well as their archaeological context. Transliteration, interpretation, chronological classification and a bibliography conclude each subsection. Particular attention is given to the reading and possible transliteration of single rune-like signs as well as short sequences of signs and to their differentiation from ornamentation.

The majority of the included objects show exclusively ornamentation of different formal design and technical execution, and therein lies the particular value of this collection. It provides a comprehensive overview of the spread of ornamentation and writing in a limited group of objects and highlights the challenges involved in making a clear-cut evaluation of this area. Of the thirty-seven sword pommels, only twelve are explicitly designated as bearing 'runic inscriptions' in a concluding table (p. 155). In accordance with traditional approaches, there remain at the end only three undisputedly acknowledged runic objects from France (SG-43 Grenay, SG-103 Saint-Dizier and Fréthun 1), which within the presented group of objects comprise an actual "French" runic corpus.

Databases and new comprehensive editions in the 2000s

As a result of the long-term project of the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) undertaken at the Nordic Institute at Kiel University from 1993 to 2012, an online database of inscriptions in the older futhark, Runendatei, has been available since 2000 at http://www.runenprojekt.uni-kiel.de with *inter alia* information about the archaeological context, object typology, suggested relevant readings and interpretations of the individual inscriptions since the 1850s, linguistic and etymological information for the interpreted lexical material as well as bibliographic information and one or several pictures (see also Zimmermann in Williams et al. 2022, 125–28). Along with Klaus Düwel's and Robert Nedoma's extensive work on the South Germanic inscriptions and the research of the RuneS Göttingen Academy of Sciences and Humanities project (Runische Schriftlichkeit in den germanischen Sprachen, i.e. Runic Writing in the Germanic Languages), this collection of data formed the basis of a new evaluation of the inscriptions in the older futhark, the first part of which appeared in 2020 entitled *Die südgermanischen Runeninschriften* (Düwel, Nedoma and Oehrl 2020). The edition comprises two volumes, the first containing an extensive introduction (pp. xvi–ccxxi) and the corpus of inscriptions (pp. 3–772), the second the bibliography and an appendix with illustrations and maps. As in the editions of Arntz and Zeiss (1939)

and Krause (1966), close collaboration with archaeology is apparent here, as required by Düwel in an early draft of the planned edition (Düwel and Roth 1986, 18). Archaeological contributions can be found both in separate entry sections and in the introduction, here often in considerations of the chronology of the finds. The comprehensive introductory chapter on the script and language of the South Germanic runic inscriptions (pp. lix–cxxviii) is dedicated to the linguistic classification and evaluation of the inscriptions. It lays out the terminological principles of the edition and evaluates the inscriptions in regard to phonology, graphematics, inflectional and semantic morphology as well as morpho-semantically determined types of text. Like other chapters in the introduction, this one is indebted to older publications (including Nedoma 2006; 2011). The chapter on the history of editions of the South Germanic corpus (pp. xxxi–xliv) as well as the condensed overview of the origin, distribution and disappearance of the South Germanic runic inscriptions (pp. xlv–li) neatly sum up Klaus Düwel's life-long research on this group of inscriptions.

The authors borrow the term "South Germanic" from Krause (1966, 277); it is however redefined (cf. pp. lviii–lxii) as a geographical term used to designate a largely west-central European 'runic province' (cf. p. lx). The language of the runic inscriptions in this area is regarded as a precursor to Old High German and Old Saxon variants, with the edition articles and summaries using the linguistic designations "Proto-Old High German", "Proto-Old Saxon" and "Early Lombardic". In practice, however, assignment to one of these language variants is not generally grounded in the linguistic features of the inscriptions but is secondarily carried over from find data: a central consideration is either the findplace of the object, as in the case of SG-2, the inscription on the fibula from Aquincum which is attributed to the Lombards and classified as "Early Lombardic", or else the ethnic evaluation of the finds taken from archaeological literature. The linguistic features of the inscriptions, such as for example specific epigraphic forms including the two-barred *h*-rune ᚺ, or the language forms of the texts themselves, usually however indicate no more than the generally West Germanic character of the language.

The appearance of one of these characteristics suffices to confirm affiliation with the corpus of South Germanic inscriptions: thus SG-25, the Donzdorf fibula, remains in the South Germanic corpus as it was found within the main area of distribution, even though the linguistic classification ("Ancient Norse", p. 156), the epigraphic characteristics (one-barred *h*-rune ᚻ) as well as the traditional archaeological determination of provenance assumes Scandinavian manufacture. By the same process and

primarily due to the find context and the object type, KJ-32, the Dahmsdorf spearhead, is not included in the edition (cf. Nedoma 2010, 20 f.).

The edition encompasses 141 entries in total, distinguished by the new signum SG for South Germanic. The large number of entries is explained not only by the number of finds since 1966 but is due also to a peculiarity in the selection of corpus: the edition includes not only authentic runic inscriptions but also those suspected or confirmed as forgeries (supplemented by * before the signum, cf. pp. cxliii–cxlvi) as well as inscriptions featuring characters whose runicity is considered dubious or unconfirmed (marked by a supplementary ° or (°) in the signum, cf. pp. ccxx f.). A total of 46 inscriptions and thereby more than a third of the entries account for this last group.

The inclusion of both groups deviates from previous practice in editions by Henning (1889), Arntz and Zeiss (1939) and also by Krause (1937; 1966), all of whom either excluded such finds with short remarks in the introductory text or foreword or gave them equal space in their editions without marking them out in any way. In favour of the new integrated form is the fact that the status of an inscription as "rune-like" or "forged" as well as "suspected of being forged" is fully reversible, as shown for example by SG-138, the Weser rune-bones, or (°)SG-53, the Hohenstadt fibula.

The entries follow a clear structure: a brief presentation with reading and interpretation is usually followed by three central sections: (1) "basic data" with key information on the object, find context, archaeological dating, current repository, details of production and placement of the inscription as well as a list of selected literature; (2) "object" with additional archaeological discussion and classification of the object, find context and dating; finally (3) "runic inscription" separated into "reading", "linguistic interpretation" and "function of the inscription".

The section with illustrations (pp. 889–1055) provides a large number of images for all 141 entries, including complete pictures of the front and back of the objects as well as details of the inscription; in some cases the photographs are supplemented with drawings. Numerous indices facilitate navigation of the edition, interpretation of the many abbreviations and the special terminological apparatus of the text.

The second part of the new edition, which will present the corpus of Scandinavian inscriptions including the new discoveries since 1966, is currently in preparation and due to appear in 2027. The individual entries draw in various ways on the research results and database of the Kiel Rune Project (Runendatei) and the work of the RuneS project. The graphetic and graph-typological descriptions in the section on reading draw on the

terminology of older studies of runic graphematics although they have been expanded and modified (cf. Christiane Zimmermann in Zimmermann and Zimmermann 2022). The structure of the individual entries is similar to the one used in the edition of South Germanic inscriptions described above: a section on the object bearing the inscription, its find context and circumstances, dating, production and condition of the inscription is followed by a section on the epigraphic evidence which culminates in a transliteration of the runic inscription. The section on the lingusitic interpretation and classification of the text summarises previous interpretations, relates them to each other, and evaluates and synthesises them as far as possible. A brief profile precedes the entries and provides key information; one or several pictures of the find will also be included. The edition will also contain a bibliography and index.

After the publishing licence has expired, the entries in the new editions will be merged with the relevant datasets of the RuneS database (https://runesdb.eu ; cf. also Zimmermann in Williams et al. 2022, 128–32) and the text of the editions will thus become available online for open access.

The epigraphic landscape for inscriptions in the older futhark

Right from the start, runic literacy was never an isolated writing culture but occurred at all times alongside other writing traditions, even though the scope and character of this contact changed enormously from the Roman Imperial period to the late Middle Ages. Of most significance for runic literacy in the older futhark was contact with Latin literacy, which initially need not have taken place right on the borders of the Roman Empire, but may also have occurred indirectly through the import of goods into the northern *Barbaricum.* Studies on the possible interdependence of the two writing cultures require not only the existence of up-to-date editions for the runic inscriptions but also review and cataloguing of the Latin epigraphy of both of these zones of contact.

Volume 13 of the relevant collection of Latin epigraphy, *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (*CIL*), contains the inscriptions of the Gallic and Germanic provinces *Germania inferior* and *Germania superior* and Part 3 also deals with *instrumentum domesticum.* But this volume dates from 1906. More recent finds from these groups of inscriptions are included in three addenda to *CIL*, published in the periodical *Bericht der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission* (Finke 1927; Nesselhauf 1939; Nesselhauf and Lieb

1960); new finds are also registered in the periodical *L'Année epigraphique* and the series *Epigraphische Studien*. The material found in the Epigraphic Database Heidelberg (Epigraphische Datenbank Heidelberg) is more comprehensive in comparison and also includes more recent individual publications which treat the Latin epigraphy from this area, although it is focused, as is often the case, on epigraphy on stone (see https://edh.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/projekt/provinzen for the publications on which the database relies). A collection of imported finds with Latin epigraphy from regions outside the Roman provinces is not planned to be part of either of these projects.

Most recently, imported goods to Scandinavia with Latin and Greek inscriptions—primarily manufacturer's marks and short epigraphs on *instrumentum domesticum*—have been the subject of a detailed study by Lisbeth M. Imer (cf. Imer 2007a; 2010). The supplementary catalogue is however not to be regarded as a complete register of these monuments. The overview is based on numerous older archaeological works, including the re-examination of the Illerup Ådal bog deposit finds and the fundamental study of Roman imports into Scandinavia by Ulla Lund Hansen (1987).

Klaus Düwel (1994) compiled an overview of the Merovingian Period (400s–700s) in the South Germanic area which considers the relationship between Latin and runic epigraphy. This collection was also not intended as a catalogue of the Latin inscriptions on loose objects of this time period. On the basis of object type, he considered Latin epigraphy and runic inscriptions on identical and comparable objects and distinguished these from the group of objects which contain only Latin epigraphy or runic inscriptions. Objects which contain both a Latin and a runic inscription received special attention. These features were omitted from the new edition of South Germanic runic inscriptions; there, objects inscribed with Latin inscriptions are treated only sporadically. An expansion and revision of Düwel's 1994 collection is thus overdue, as is a complete compilation of the Latin epigraphy of the northern *Barbaricum*. Only on such a foundation can the juxtaposition and mutual influence of both writing cultures for the period of older futhark writing be examined more closely.

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