

**RUNES AROUND THE NORTH SEA AND
ON THE CONTINENT AD 150-700;
TEXTS & CONTEXTS**

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van het doctoraat in de Letteren,
aan de Rijksuniversiteit van Groningen
op gezag van de
Rector Magnificus, dr. F. van der Woude,
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door

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13. Westeremden B (Groningen), small yew-wooden stick, found in 1917. Seen at the GM, Groningen. No date. The stick has three prepared sides, two of them covered with runes. Some runes exhibit a unique form. They appear to represent mirror-runes. Other runes belong to the younger Scandinavian *futhork*. Furtheron there are Anglo-Frisian runes and runes from the common older *futhork*. The **h** is double-barred. The **s** is represented by the book-hand **s ʝ**. The **p** has a somewhat unfinished form. It appears once in a single form and once in a mirrored form: 𐌰.

Three separate parts can be distinguished in the runic legend. The inscription starts with **oph?muji?adaamluþ:**, ending in a word-division sign. When the stick is turned 180°, reading can be proceeded on the same side, starting from the division mark **:wimæ?ahþu??:**. On a second prepared side can be read **iwio?u?du?ale**.

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𐌶𐌰𐌽𐌰𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸𐌰𐌶𐌵𐌹𐌸𐌶𐌰𐌽𐌰𐌹𐌸𐌹𐌸

Seebold (1990) reads: **ophæmu givēda æmluþ:iwi ok upduna (a)le wimôv æh þusē**.

The form 𐌵 occurs thrice in the inscription. From the context it must represent a vowel; probably æ, which could have been rendered by the Anglo-Frisian *æsc*, but for some reason this rune does not occur in this inscription. I suppose 𐌵 might be a younger *futhork* variety. It is transliterated æ in **ophæmu**, which would reflect a fronted *æ* in *hæm* < *hām* < Gmc **haim-* 'home', an intermediary stage towards OFris *ē* in *hēm*, rendering the development of Gmc **ai*

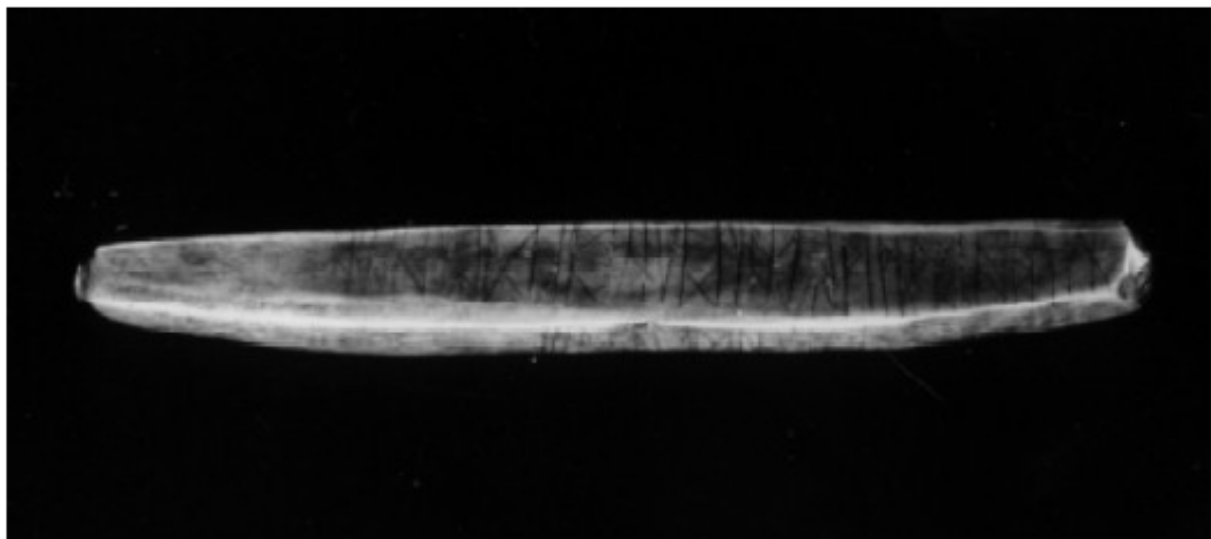
> OFris \bar{a} > \bar{e} > \bar{e} , in which case we would have another attestation of monophthongization of Gmc $*ai$ > OFris \bar{a} . The same rune also occurs in $\bar{e}h$ and in $\bar{e}mlu\bar{p}$.

The **a** in **upduna (a)le** is the Anglo-Frisian $\bar{a}c$, written once but meant to be read twice in **upduna (a)le**. (This occurs more often; in *Fallward* **skamella (a)lguskabi**).

As has been said above, the inscription contains some mirrored runes, such as **p** \bar{c} in **upduna** based on the form of single **p** in **ophæmu**.



Yew-wooden stick of Westeremden.



The rune \bar{c} might be taken as a mirror-rune **b** in **jibada** (instead of Seebold's **givēda**; the *Sternrune* \bar{c} should be transliterated **j**, see above, nr. 12). The middle rune \bar{c} I transliterate **a**, rendered in a rune form known from the younger Danish futhark. Also in **pusa** it is transliterated **a**, although the sidetwig slants to the right, whereas it slants to the left in **jibada**. It might seem strange that we would have two different runeforms both transliterated **a** in one

word, **jibada**, but I suggest the runecarver wanted to differ between two *a*-like sounds. The ƿ̄ appears to represent a palatal *a*, whereas the ƿ̄ denotes a velar *a*. There is no opposition stressed - unstressed, or long - short.

jibada = *gibada* 'fate, luck', recorded twice in the OS Heliand: 3161 and 5828, meaning 'comfort, reassurance' or even 'new life in *Christo*' (Opitz 1978:21), cf. *Bad Ems* (Continental Corpus). The mirror-rune 𐌆, here transliterated **b**, occurs once again in the inscription; from its form it can both represent **b** or **d**; it represents **d** in *wimæd*.

My transliteration runs thus:

op hæmu jibada æmluþ : iwi ok up duna (a)le wimæd æh þusa.

æmluþ has been explained by Seebold (1990:421) as 3 sg. pres. ind. 'stays, remains', analogous to ON *amla* 'to strain oneself'.

iwi appears to mean 'yew', cf. Gmc **ihwaz*, **īwaz*, m., although it is difficult to explain its form; it might be a locative or instrumental, according to Seebold (1990:415).

ok = *āk* 'also'; **up** = *op* 'upon', **duna** asf. *n*-stem 'dune, hill, *terp*'.

(a)le is an optative to Gmc **ala-* 'to grow' (Seebold 1990:415).

wimæd is probably a masculine PN, nsm. *a*-stem. The *æ* is the product of *i*-mutation of *o/ō*, represented by 𐌆.

æh 3 sg. pres. ind. 'to have', cf. OFris *āch* (Markey 1981:157).

þusa may be compared to the dem. pron. masc. acc. *þisse* 'this one' (Markey 1981:136).

The interpretation of the text is nearly the same as the one proposed by Seebold: 'at the homestead stays good fortune; may it also grow near the yew on the *terp*; Wimæd owns this'. The stick can be taken as a building offer.

Since the inscription exhibits *i*-mutation, bookhand *s* and runes from the younger *futhorc*, the date must be later than, say, 750 AD.