

# Texts and Contexts of the Oldest Runic Inscriptions



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24. KIRCHHEIM TECK I (Baden-Württemberg, Germany). In the Württembergisches Landesmuseum, Stuttgart. A silver-gilt bow-fibula. Found in a woman's grave in 1972. Date mid 6th c.

The runic inscription is very abraded, since the brooch was used for a long time before it was deposited with its owner in the grave. Part of the runic inscription can still be read: **badagihialali dmiu**



The swastika can be taken as a rune cross  $\times = \text{g}$  with four sidetwigs attached to the extremities of the cross, thus forming four times the rune for **i**. I take the cross to represent a bindrune: **gi**. The cross is carved on top of the double-barred **h** rune in **hiali**. Hence I take the sequence **gi** as preceding **hiali**. (Opitz (1979:366) prefers to interpret the X as a Christian cross, referring to Greek  $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$  = Christus.)

**bada** is a PN, nsf.  $\bar{o}$ -stem, *Bada*.

**gihiali** = *gihaili*, 2 sg. pres. imp., taken that the sequence **ia** is reversed.  $\text{f}$  is a bindrune of **a + l**. This may mean: 'you must make well', inf. OHG *heilen*, *gi-heilen* 'to heal, to save, to rescue'. If the legend and the cross as a whole are taken as Christian (there was a *Goldblattkreuz* in the same grave) one may interpret the text as follows: **bada** means 'consolation'; **haili** means 'salvation', cf. OHG *heilī* f. 'hail, bliss, salvation'. **dmiu** may mean **d[o]mi[n]u[s]** 'Lord'.

The legend may read: '(my) hail (and) salvation (is the) Lord'. In OS, *gibada* is recorded twice in the Heliand: 3161 and 5828, meaning: 'comfort, reassurance' or even: 'new life *in Christo*' (Opitz 1978:21).