

Texts and Contexts of the Oldest Runic Inscriptions



Tineke Looijenga



THE NORTHERN WORLD    BRILL

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27. NEUDINGEN-BAAR I (Baden-Württemberg, Germany). In the Landesamt für Denkmalpflege, Freiburg. A gilded bronze bow-fibula, possibly Frankish, dated late 6th c. Found in 1988 in a woman's grave. The inscription is carved in three rows beneath each other and is partly abraded, due to weathering and oxidization of the surface. The tinned surface of the back has nearly corroded away, but the runes left their impressions in the bronze layer underneath.

Part of the runes can be read, row 1: ?ud??. Row 2: **midu** Row 3: **klefilpa**

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The runes of the first row cannot all be reconstructed. The first sign may be an ingress sign. The second row is clear: **midu**, pre-OHG **mīda*, **mēda*, OHG *miata* < Gmc **mezdō* 'reward' nsf. *ō*-stem. This 'reward' may denote the brooch itself, cf. the legend of the UNDELEY bracteate (chapter six, nr. 46), which has **medu** 'reward = the bracteate'.

Another interpretation of the second row of the text may be that it is an adjective, OHG *mitti*, OS *middi*, 'in the middle'. The initial rune of the third row \wedge is remarkably big, and it could denote **k** or **u**, but it deviates from the other **u** runes in the inscription. It has the form of a rather large roof, similar to MÜNCHEN-AUBING III, see below, nr. 68. The last two runes are written as a bindrune **pa**. The sequence is read as **klefilp** by Düwel (1990:8), who suggested a connection with the OHG verb *klīban* 'to attach, to fasten'. *klēf* may be 1 or 3 sg. pret. ind. of *klīban*'. When taking the **f** double, we may read **klef** and **[f]ilpa**; the latter: *(f)ilpa*, < Gmc **filita-*, NHG *Filz* 'woolen garment, cloak' (cf. Kluge/Seebold 1989:214: *Filz* < Gmc **filita-*). The brooch is exceptionally large, so it could be used to fasten a cloak. The inscription may say something like: 'the reward = the brooch fastened the cloak'.