

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,
in het openbaar te verdedigen op
donderdag 27 november 1997
des namiddags om 1.15 uur

door

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Geboren op 12 juni 1948
te Groningen

36. *Szabadbattyán* (Hungary). Dated first half 5th c.

The inscription is on the back of a silver buckle. The front is decorated after an antique ornamental style (description and photograph in Krause 1966). The inscription may be read **marings** = *marings*, nsm. *a*-stem.

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The 𐌆 rune is transliterated **ing** in **marings**, and has a similar lanternshape as in, e.g., *Lejcani* and *Køng*. Antonsen (1975:74) transliterates **marings**, "Marings [i.e. descendent of Mar(h)s; or: horseman]" and considers the language East Gmc. (*Thorsberg* has **mariz**). Krause (1966:311) interprets: *marings* < **marhings* "Kurzform zu Namen mit *marha-* 'Pferd'", presenting a short *a*, thus producing a Gothic PN, nsm. *a*-stem, 'Horseman'. Since runes do not show vowel length, one may read *māring-s* with long *ā*, which would present some Germanic dialect other than Gothic, e.g. Langobardic. This, however, is not very likely (see below). I agree with Antonsen that the symbol that accompanies the inscription is a malformed swastika and no **d** rune. I prefer to interpret the inscription as Gothic, because this is most plausible in view of the combination findplace, decoration and the ending *-s*.

In my opinion, **marings** is another instance of a tribal name, namely of an East Gothic tribe. It can be connected with the text on the Rök stone: **skati marika skati mæringa** 'the first among the Mærings', e.g. King Theodoric. The text is part of the so-called "Theodoricstrophe" on the Rök stone (Östergötland, Sweden, dated appr. 9th c.; for a description and pictures, see Jansson 1987). The word *Mæringa* denotes the royal house of Theodoric, and might have been constructed after a personal name with the element *mār*, *mēr*, and a suffix *-ing*, such as can be found in the names of Theodoric's father *Theodomērs*, and his brothers *Walamērs* and *Widumērs*.