

**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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37. *Pietroassa* (Rumania). Dated first half 5th c., according to the text in the Catalogue of the exhibition *Goldhelm* (1994:230). The inscription is on a gold neckring, which has been cut right through the middle of the inscription, so the rune that was there is badly damaged or has disappeared. The runes read **gutani?wihailag**.

XN↑FH | P | HFIFX

A lot of guesswork about which rune has vanished has been done; see a recent list by Nedoma (1991-93). A new reading and interpretation has been put forward by Reichert (1991-93). I studied the object myself in April 1994, in the *Schirn Kunsthalle* at Frankfurt am Main, where the object was part of the exhibition *Goldhelm* in the Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte. If only one rune was lost when the neckring was cut, in my opinion that rune may have been an s or j. The upper part is still visible left of the cut. To the right of the cut it seems as if also a part of a rune can be distinguished, but I think this is damage, a scratch, maybe made by the cutter.



The two pieces of the neckring of Pietroassa.

These traces have been interpreted as the remains of an $\hat{\lambda}$ (**ǣðilaz*) rune, but this cannot be correct (cf. Reichert). As there obviously is the little hook on the left side, one may choose between the runes s or j (Reichert prefers to read j). In both readings, the lower part of the rune, which in either way should have had the form of a hook, is lost. Both **gutaniis wi hailag** or **gutani j wihailag** may offer something meaningful.

When choosing the last reading, one must consider the j rune as a *Begriffsrune* for **jēra* ‘good year, harvest’ (cf. *Stentoften*, below, nr. 42), also Reichert’s interpretation (1991-93:239), who comments: “in wulfilanischer Orthographie (...): *gutane jer weih hailag*”.

As to the reading of **gutaniis**, I suggest to consider to take this as *gutaneis* ‘Gothic’, adj. nominative sg. masculine **wi[h]** may be taken as Go. *weih* nsn. ‘sanctuary’; **hailag** adj. ‘holy’. The inscription therefore may be interpreted: ‘Gothic (object). Sacrosanct’.