

Abecedarium Nordmannicum

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The *Abecedarium Nordmannicum* is a presentation of the 16 runes of the [Younger Futhark](#) as a short poem (sometimes counted as one of the "[rune poems](#)"), in the 9th-century [Codex Sangallensis 878](#) (on page 321). The Younger Futhark are given after the Hebrew alphabet on the preceding page, and the [Anglo-Saxon futhorc](#) on the same page. The text of the rune poem was unfortunately destroyed in the 19th century by chemicals intended for its preservation. It survives in an 1828 drawing by [Wilhelm Grimm](#).

Under a heading *ABECEDARIUM NORD*, the manuscript presents the Younger Futhark in three lines. Linguistically, the text is a mixture of [Old Norse](#), [Old Saxon](#) and [Old High German](#). It is probably based on a Danish original, maybe imported from [Haithabu](#) to Lower Germany, and adapted to the idiom of its recipients. The background of the Carolingian notation of Norse runes is that of intensified contacts between the [Frankish Empire](#) and [Denmark](#) which necessitated interpreters for economic and political exchanges.

The following is a transcription of Grimm's drawing (the oblique stroke indicates words written below the line):

ƿ *feu forman* / ƿRƳT | Ɔ *ur after* | Ƨ *thuris thrit[c]en / stabu* | Ƨ *os ist [he]mo / oboro* | R *rat*
end/os uuritan
ƿ *cha[on] thanne / cliuot * hagal † nau[t] hab& | l is † ar ʒ endi so[l]*
[1] Ƨ *brica † endi man / midi* | ʀ *lagu the leohto* | ʒ *yr al bihab[et]*

The *Abecedarium Nordmannicum* is on the same page as the *Abecedarium Anguliscum* (the Anglo-Saxon runes). There are interlineal glosses for some of the runes specific to the Younger Futhark, giving their Anglo-Saxon phonetic equivalents: * *hagal* is glossed with 𐌺 *haegl*, † *ar* with ƿ *ac*, † *man* with 𐌺 *man*, and ʒ *yr* with ʒ *yr*. The content of the poem are the names of the runes, connected by a few additional alliterating words as mnemonical aids. For the *r*, *m* and *l* runes, the Anglo-Saxon names are given rather than the Scandinavian ones, as *rat*, *man* and *lagu* for *reidh*, *madr* and *logr*, respectively. The Anglo-Saxon runes ƿRƳT (*wreat*) written underneath the *feu forman* of the first line. It is not clear whether they should be considered part of the poem's text.

There are slight differences as to how the poem been read. Gallée (1894) reads the text as follows: [\[1\]](#)

Feu forman, Ur after, Thuris thritten stabu, Os ist imo oboro, Rat endost uuritan.
Chaon thanne cliuot Hagal Naut habet Is, Ar endi Sol.
Tiu, Brica, endi Man midi, Lagu the leohto, Yr al bihabet.

The *imo* in the first line is the reading of von Arx (); it is also read as (uninterpretable) *hiemo* or *heno* or *keno*. The name *tiu* is an emendation for a gap in the text. Dickins (1916) gave the following (cursive letters marking emendations):[\[2\]](#)

Feu forman / Ur after / Thuris thritten stabu, / Os is *himo* oboro / Rat endost ritan
Chaon thanne cliuôt. / Hagal, Naut habet / Is, Ar endi Sol
Tiu, Brica endi Man midi / Lagu the leohto / Yr al bihabet.

The text is interpreted as a simple mnemonic list of rune names, translating to something like:

"*Feu* [write] first, *Ur* after, *Thuris* the third letter, *Os* is following it, *Rat* write at the end."
"*Chaon* then follows ("cleaves"), *Hagal*, *Naut* has ("holds") *Is*, *Ar* and *Sol*."

"[*Tiu*], *Brica* and *Man* in the middle, *Lago* the bright, *Yr* concludes ("contains") the whole."

The text does not appear to associate any meaning with the letter names, merely describing their sequence in the futhark row. A possible exception to this is *lago* which is glossed as "the bright" (*lioht* being an Old High German adjective meaning "bright, light, clear", or as a noun *liohta* "lamp, beacon").

References

1. [^] Johan Hendrik Gallée *Altsaechsische Sprachdenkmaeler* (1894), p. 266
 2. [^] Bruce Dickins, *Runic and heroic poems of the old Teutonic peoples*, 1915, p. 34.
- Birkmann, Thomas (2004). "Codex Sangallensis und die Entwicklung der Runenreihe im Jüngerem Futhark". In Naumann, Hans-Peter; Lanter, Franziska; et al. (eds.). *Alemannien und der Norden*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter. pp. 213–223. [ISBN 3-11-017891-5](#).
 - Derolez, René (1965). *Scandinavian runes in continental manuscripts*, in: Bessinger, Creeds (eds.) Franciplegius, New York.