

Scandinavian Runes and the Runestones of Sweden and America



Monitor Lodge
VASA Order of America
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Runes versus Runestones

Runes are the characters (staves) that make up the alphabet for the Viking Era language(s).

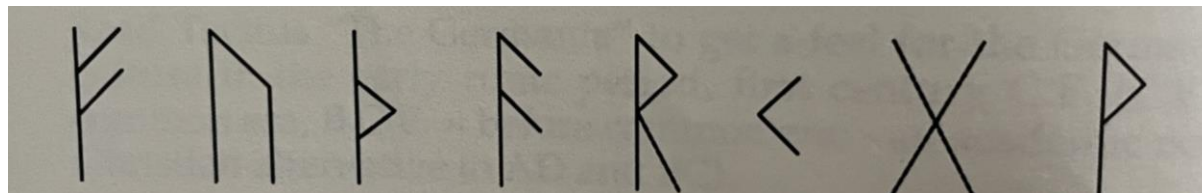
- Each rune stave represents a unique phoneme (vowel and consonant sounds of a language).

Runestones are boulders or large upright stones inscribed with *runes*.

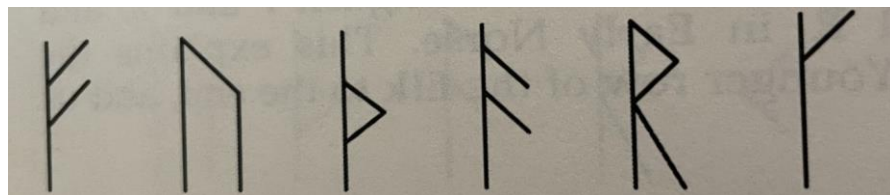
- Sweden has the most runestones in the world.
- The earliest oldest runestones are dated to the Iron Age in Norway.
- Runestones/archeologic records suggest runes had cultural and mnemonic meanings.
- Common "meanings" assigned to the runes are associated with the rune poems and esoteric practices.

Three Runic Alphabets

Elder Futhark	Anglo-Saxon Futhorc	Younger Futhark
24 runes <i>(3 Aetts of 8)</i>	33 runes <i>(3 Aettes of 8 – last 2 flipped! + 9)</i>	16 runes <i>(1 Aett of 6; 2 Aetts of 5)</i>
Runestones in Scandinavia, England, and Germany. AD 150-800	Runestones in United Kingdom (old English and old Frisian). AD 400-1100	Runestones in Scandinavia and England. Not in Germany. AD 800-1100



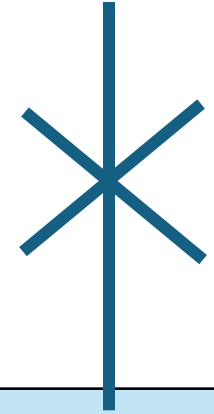
f u th a r k g w



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Rune Poems for *Hagall* (H)

1st rune of the 2nd Aett

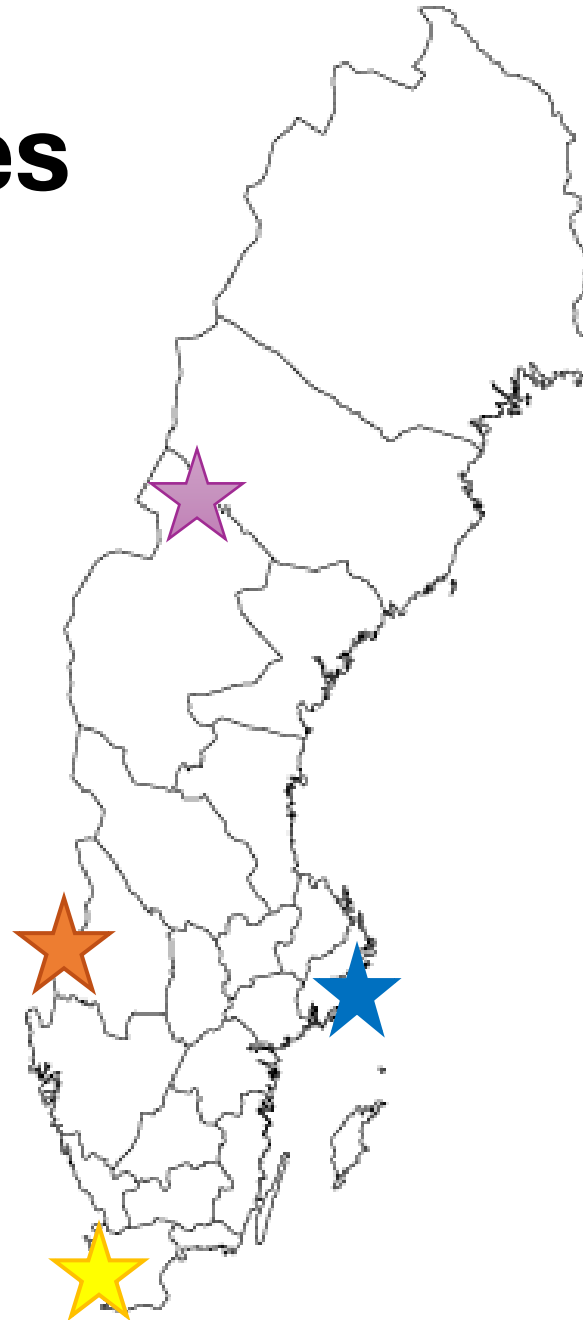


<p><u>Old Icelandic</u> Arnamagæan manuscripts 15th century</p>	<p><u>Old Norwegian</u> 17th-century copy of a 13th-century manuscript</p>	<p><u>Old Swedish</u> Letter from ~1600; Published in 1908</p>
<p>Hail is cold grain / and driving sleet / and sickness of serpents</p>	<p>Hail is the coldest of grains / Christ shaped the primaeval world</p>	<p>Hail is best when home/ Christ shaped the primaeval world</p>
<p><i>{Hagall} er kaldarkorn / Ok krapadrifa / Ok snaka sott</i></p>	<p><i>{Hagall} er kaldstr korna / Kriistr scóp hæimenn forna</i></p>	<p><i>Hagl Regn hårdast. Tijdwinter godt Korn åhr.</i></p>

Norwegian Rune Poem is in skaldic metre: 1st line "(rune name)(copula) X" // 2nd rhyming line with details.

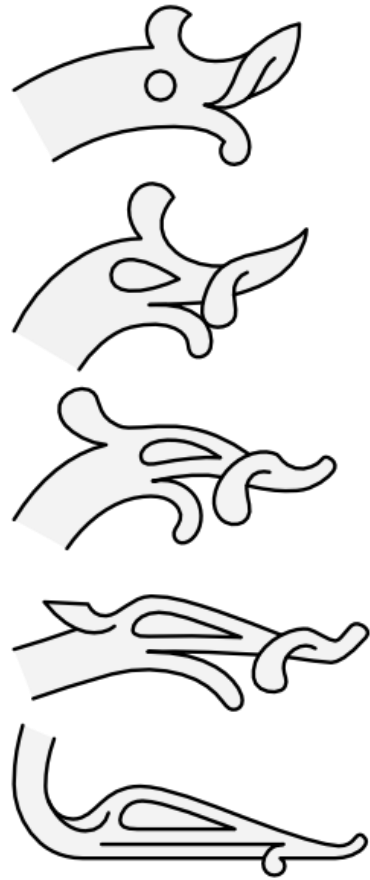
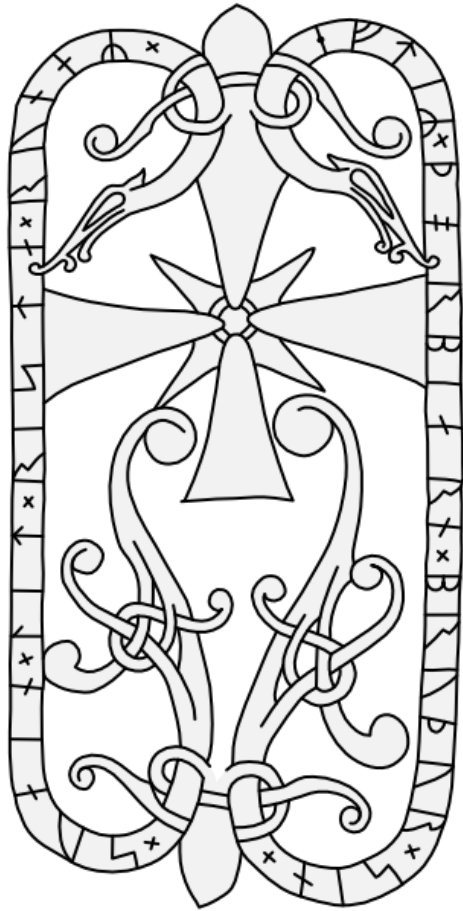
Swedish Runestones

- Estimated 1500-2500 stones across Sweden
- Honor the dead, mark territory, commemorate events
- *Younger Futhark*



★	<u>Stockholms: 668</u>
•	<u>Uppsala: 507</u>
•	<u>Södermanlands: 269</u>
•	<u>Östergötlands: 237</u>
•	<u>Västra Götalands: 207</u>
•	<u>Gotlands: 168</u>
•	<u>Jönköpings: 109</u>
★	<u>Skåne: 92</u>
•	<u>Kalmar: 64</u>
•	<u>Västmanlands: 47</u>
•	<u>Kronobergs: 47</u>
•	<u>Gävleborgs: 36</u>
•	<u>Örebro: 20</u>
•	<u>Västernorrlands: 20</u>
★	<u>Värmlands: 13</u>
•	<u>Blekinge: 11</u>
•	<u>Hallands: 7</u>
•	<u>Dalarnas: 4</u>
•	<u>Västerbottens: 3</u>
★	<u>Jämtlands: 2</u>

Runestones and Style



- *RAK (oldest stones)* – unornamented, straight bands
- *Ringerike (1000-1075 AD)* – single motifs, symmetry, interwoven features
- *Urnes (1050-1125 AD)* – Geometric, simpler birds-eye-view styles, elongated

Ramsund Runestone (*Ringerike style*)

*Story of Sigurd slaying
the dragon / serpent*



Ramsundsberget, Mora, Södermanland, Sweden

[The Ramsund Carving Sö 101 - Gelmir](#)



Skramsta Runestone (*Urnes style*)

- *Haga, Uppland, Sweden*
- *Stone: 3.2 m high x 1.25 m wide (base), 0.45 m thick, rune ribbon is ~8 cm wide*
- *"Inscription starts at the bottom and moves towards the head" as follows:*

ITPITHTAR × NIT × RTHIT × HTIT × IPTIH × #NPT ×

PTPNRHT × TNPTNR × IPTIH × B#TIT × HT ×

Swedish Rune Map – Example from Nyköping

Link to Map: <https://runkartan.se/english/>

[Runhäll Fagerlötblocket, Sö126, L1985:4689, Bogsta 42:1 i Nyköping, Södermanland | Sveriges runkarta](#)

Uppgift	Innehåll
Latitud:	58.853764
Longitud:	17.157342
Lämnings-ID:	L1985:4689
Riksantikvarieämbetets ID:	Bogsta 42:1
Sveriges runinskrifter:	Sö126 (Södermanlands runinskrifter)
Plats:	Fagerlöt, Hamra skog
Placering:	Synlig ovan mark
Föremål:	Runhäll



Runestones "found" in the United States



Brittingham Stone (1960)

- Muir Knoll, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- 250 lbs. stone honors Thomas Brittingham Jr., using a quote from Havamal, *“To a good friend the way is not long, though he be far away.”*

<https://www.runforum.nordiska.uu.se/blog/american-runestones/>

Resources

- Havamal (YouTube @JacksonCrawford): <https://youtu.be/j3D51rEwSRY?si=TfdzDo5GIB4njnJE>
- Swedish Rune Map: <https://runkartan.se/english/>
- Uppsala Runic Forum (2009-2024): <https://www.runforum.nordiska.uu.se/en/>
- Birka: <http://viking.archeurope.com/settlement/sweden/birka/>
- Gelmir: <https://gelmir.com/>
- AngloSaxon Rune Blog: <https://www.theanglosaxons.com/runes/>
- <https://www.vikingskibsmuseet.dk/en/professions/education/viking-age-people/runes>

BOOKS (Amazon)

- The Rune Primer, A Down-to-Earth Guide to the Runes, Swyn Plowright
- Long Branches, Runes of the Younger Furtharl, Ann Groa Sheffield

Some additional rune and runestone information sources provided by Sara Huber after her March 2026 presentation:

This blog tells about the Minnesota Runestone controversy and the 19th century find by Olof Ohman on his farm in Kensington. For me the issues are stone carving style, written text, and date:

<https://conservationcorps.org/updates-stories/kensington-runestone/>



Here is the museum where you can find that artifact:

<https://runestonemuseum.org/runestone/>



[Runestone](https://runestonemuseum.org)

runestonemuseum.org

This is the article about the Viking Ship that traveled from Duluth to Bergen in 1982-1983:

<https://www.cbsnews.com/minnesota/news/viking-ship-hjemkomst-center-moorhead-norway/>



[Minnesota-Made Viking Ship That Sailed To Norway On Display In Moorhead](https://www.cbsnews.com/minnesota/news/viking-ship-hjemkomst-center-moorhead-norway/)

[cbsnews.com](https://www.cbsnews.com)

I got my vessel stories confused -- this is the Draken ship--it had the YouTube videos and more modern crossing of the Atlantic: <https://www.drakenhh.com/>



[Draken Harald Hårfagre \(Copy\)](https://www.drakenhh.com/)

[drakenhh.com](https://www.drakenhh.com/)

This is the wiki for the seven runstones around the church at Orkesta:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orkesta_Runestones



[Orkesta Runestones](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orkesta_Runestones)

en.wikipedia.org

This video shows the runstones at Fresta church in Vasby--many stone fragments were built into the church walls and the structure was built atop holy ground once used to celebrate Viking deities:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2gtGO24Ae4&feature=youtu.be>

