

## The "Elder" Futhark

Alright... getting on with the theme of Rune Magick, now we look at the Gothic or "Elder" Futhark, the system of runes most commonly used in North America and some parts of Europe by runecasters. Sometimes this system is also called the Common Germanic Futhark, though there is a slight difference between the two in the ordering of a couple of the runes.

Let it be said here, that the "Elder" Futhark Runes almost certainly had uses far beyond mere divination - however, aside from a few mysterious Rune-stones (far more survive for the [Younger Futhark](#)), little context survives of their usage... today in the United States, it's often the only Runic system most practitioners know of, and all sorts of people from part-time psychics and wiccans to hard-core Asatruars use the "Elder" runes for divination and occasionally bindrunes and inscription spells. Most of the divination methods are of modern invention, and it's impossible to know for sure how the early pre-Viking Norse peoples used the Elder Futhark in castings. Tacitus provides a few clues to the runecasting practices of their southern kinfolk in *Germania*, and his account is contemporary to the period of the Elder Futhark's usage, but his description of the practice is typically vague, in classic dismissive xenophobic Roman style.

The meanings of these runes are difficult to glean. Unlike the [Younger Futhark](#) and the [Anglo-Saxon Futhorc](#), there is no original rune poem surviving for the Elder Futhark. Their meanings and even their pronunciations have had to be reconstructed based on later sources and what is known of the Gothic language. However, since many of the same runes are present in the Anglo-Saxon system, the Anglo-Saxon rune poem provides some clues as to their meanings.

The Elder Futhark is considered the ancestor of both the Younger and Anglo-Saxon systems, though by divergent means. The [Younger Futhark](#) was derived through contraction and likely "reverse-engineering" by Viking skalds in the 6th and 7th centuries in Scandinavia, to return the Runes to [their more primal and esoteric Odinic form of 18 Runes, as mentioned in the \*Hávamál\*](#), of which only the first 16 were revived successfully by the Viking skalds. The [Anglo-Saxon Futhorc](#) by contrast was developed far earlier in Germany and Frisia through a complex and variegated process of expansion by various German tribes, a process which typically inched forward following military conquests, and continued after the Futhorc was exported to England by the Angles, Jutes and Saxons in the 5th century CE.

What follows is a condensed breakdown of the literal meanings of each rune followed by the generally accepted esoteric meanings used in Runic divination and magical work. The reverse (upside-down) and murk-stave (left-horizontal) positions are symbolic of potential negative tendencies of that rune. Typically runes rotated right-horizontal can be viewed positively (as in an upright rune), with caution - except when a rune is in some way symmetrical, and thus identical in upright and reversed position (in which case all horizontal forms may be considered "murk"). Alternately, you can also adapt the more symbolic and nuanced divination method used in [Armanen divination](#).

The Elder Futhark, rightly or wrongly, has been divided in modern times into three "Aetts" or sets of Eight, for a total of 24 runes. The infamous 25th "[blank rune](#)" sometimes added to the Elder Futhark is a new-age commercial invention with [no basis](#) in any rune tradition.

Freyr's Aett (or Yggdrasil's Root of Arising)



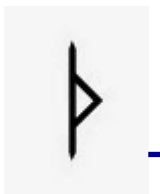
**[Fehu](#)**: (F: Domestic cattle, wealth.) Possessions won or earned, earned income, luck. Abundance, financial strength in the present or near future. Sign of hope and plenty, success and happiness. Financial success. Energy, foresight, fertility, creation/transformation.

Fehu Reversed or Murkstave: Loss of personal property, esteem, or something that you put in effort to keep. It indicates some sort of failure. Greed, burnout, atrophy, discord. Cowardice, stupidity, poverty, slavery, bondage.



**[Uruz](#)**: (U: Aurochs, a wild ox.) Physical strength and speed, untamed potential. The primitive and untainted original state of things. A time of great energy and health. Strength and longevity in old age. Freedom, raw energy, perseverance, tenacity, understanding, ancient wisdom. Sexual desire, potency. The shaping of power and pattern, formulation of the self.

Uruz Reversed or Murkstave: Weakness, obsession, misdirected force, domination by others. Sickness, inconsistency, instability, ignorance. Impulsiveness, brutality, rashness, callousness, rage.



**[Thurisaz](#)**: (TH: Thorn, the god Thor, or a Giant.) Reactive force,

directed force of destruction and defense, conflict. Instinctual will, vital eroticism, regenerative catalyst. A tendency toward change. Purging, cleansing fire. Male sexuality, penetrative energy, fertilization. (Thor, the Thunder god, is both a god of fertility and protector of man against the Giants.)

Thurisaz Reversed or Murkstave: Danger, defenselessness, compulsion, betrayal, dullness. Evil, malice, hatred, torment, violence, spite, lies. A bad man or woman. Rape?

A square box containing the runic symbol for Ansuz, which is a vertical line with a short horizontal line at the top and a diagonal line extending from the top to the right.

**Ansuz**: (A: The Asa, ancestral god, i.e. Odin.) A revealing message or insight, communication. Signals, inspiration, enthusiasm, speech, true vision, power of words and naming. Blessings, the taking of advice. Good health, harmony, truth, wisdom.

Ansuz Reversed or Murkstave: Misunderstanding, delusion, manipulation by others, boredom. Vanity and grandiloquence. (Odin is a mighty, but cunning god. He always has his own agenda, and may send disaster upon those who prove unworthy of his gifts and guidance.)

A square box containing the runic symbol for Raidho, which is a vertical line with a short horizontal line at the top and a diagonal line extending from the top to the right, with a small horizontal line at the bottom.

**Raidho**: (R: The Ride, wagon, wheel or chariot.) Travel, both in physical terms and those of lifestyle direction. A journey, relocation, evolution, change of place or setting. Seeing a larger perspective, Right Action, Ritual, worldly wisdom. Seeing the right move to make and deciding upon it. Personal rhythm, world rhythm, dance of life.

Raidho Reversed or Murkstave: Crisis, rigidity, stasis, injustice, irrationality. Disruption, dislocation, demotion, delusion, possibly a death.



**Kenaz**: (K: Beacon or torch.) Vision, revelation, knowledge, creativity, inspiration, intuitive knowledge, cunning, technical ability. Vital fire of life, harnessed power, fire of transformation and regeneration. Power to create your own reality, the power of light. Open to new strength, energy, and power now. Passion, sexual love.

Kenaz Reversed or Murkstave: Disease, breakup, instability, lack of creativity. Nakedness, exposure, loss of illusion and false hope.



**Gebo**: (G: Gift.) Gifts, both in the sense of sacrifice and of generosity, indicating balance. All matters in relation to exchanges, including contracts, personal relationships and partnerships.

Gebo Murkstave (Gebo cannot be reversed, but may lie in perpendicular opposition): Greed, loneliness, dependence, over-sacrifice, unrequited giving. Obligation, toll, privation, bribery.



**Wunjo**: (W or V: Joy.) Joy, comfort, pleasure. Fellowship, harmony, prosperity. Ecstasy, glory, spiritual reward, but also the possibility of going "over the top". If restrained, the meaning is general success and recognition of worth.

Wunjo Reversed or Murkstave: Stultification, boredom, sorrow, strife, alienation. Delirium, intoxication, possession by higher forces, impractical enthusiasm. Raging frenzy, berserker.

Heimdall's Aett (or Yggdrasil's Root of Being)

The image shows the runes for Hagalaz, which are two vertical lines with a horizontal bar at the top, forming a square shape.

**Hagalaz**: (H: Hail.) Wrath of nature, destructive, uncontrolled forces, especially the weather, or within the unconscious - but also the ability to withstand them and regrow. Tempering, testing, trial. Controlled crisis, leading to completion, inner harmony.

Hagalaz Murkstave (Hagalaz cannot be reversed, but may lie in opposition): Natural disaster, catastrophe. Stagnation, loss of power. Pain, loss, suffering, hardship, sickness, crisis.

The image shows the runes for Naudhiz, which are a vertical line with a horizontal bar at the top and a diagonal line crossing the vertical line from the top right to the bottom left.

**Naudhiz**: (N: Need.) Delays, restriction. Resistance leading to strength, innovation, need-fire (self-reliance). Distress, confusion, conflict, and the power of will to overcome them. Acceptance of shortcomings, and determination to find a better solution to them. A time to exercise patience. Recognition of one's fate. Major self-initiated change. Face your fears.

Naudhiz Murkstave (Naudhiz cannot be reversed, but may lie in opposition): Constraint of freedom, distress, toil, drudgery, laxity. Necessity, extremity, want, deprivation, starvation, need, poverty, emotional hunger.

The image shows the rune for Isa, which is a single vertical line.

**Isa**: (I: Ice.) A challenge or frustration. Psychological blocks to thought or activity, including grievances. Standstill, truce with the ego, or a time to turn inward and wait for what is to come, or to seek clarity. This rune reinforces runes around it.

Isa Murkstave (Isa cannot be reversed, but may lie in opposition): Ego-mania,

dullness, blindness, dissipation. Treachery, illusion, deceit, betrayal, guile, stealth, ambush, plots.



**Jera**: (J or Y: A year, a good harvest.) The results of earlier efforts are realized. A time of peace and happiness, fruitful season. It can break through stagnancy. Hopes and expectations of peace and prosperity. The promise of success earned. Life cycle, cyclical pattern of the universe. Everything changes, in its own time.

Jera Murkstave (Jera cannot be reversed, but may lie in opposition): Sudden setback, reversals. A major change, repetition, bad timing, poverty, conflict.



**Eihwaz**: (Ei: Yew tree.) Strength, reliability, dependability, trustworthiness. Enlightenment, endurance. Life and death. Defense and offense, barbed protection against evil magick. Strongly rooted and beautiful, with a sense of purpose. Indicates that you have set your sights on a reasonable target and can achieve your goals precisely. An effective person who can be relied upon as an ally, and is to be dreaded by enemies.

Eihwaz Murkstave (Eihwaz cannot be reversed, but may lie in opposition): Confusion, destruction, dissatisfaction, weakness.



**Perthro**: (P: Lot cup, pear tree, vagina.) Uncertain meaning, a secret matter, a mystery, hidden things and occult abilities. Initiation, knowledge of one's destiny, knowledge of future matters, determining the future or your path. Pertaining to things feminine, feminine mysteries including female fertility,

and vagina. Trysts without obligations. Good lot, fellowship and joy. Evolutionary change.

Perthro Reversed or Murkstave: Addiction, stagnation, loneliness, malaise.



**Algiz/Elhaz**: (Z or -R: Elk, protection.) Protection, a shield.

The protective urge to shelter oneself or others. Defense, warding off of evil, shield, guardian. Connection with the gods, awakening, higher life. It can be used to channel energies appropriately. Follow your instincts. Keep hold of success or maintain a position won or earned.

Algiz Reversed: or Murkstave: Hidden danger, consumption by divine forces, loss of divine link. Taboo, warning, turning away, that which repels.



**Sowilo**: (S: The sun.) Success, goals achieved, honor. The life-

force, health. A time when power will be available to you for positive changes in your life, victory, health, and success. Contact between the higher self and the unconscious. Wholeness, power, elemental force, sword of flame, cleansing fire.

Sowilo Murkstave (Sowilo cannot be reversed, but may lie in opposition): False goals, bad counsel, false success, gullibility, loss of goals. Destruction, retribution, justice, casting down of vanity. Wrath of god.

Tyr's Aett (or Yggdrasil's Root of Passing Away towards new Arising)



**Tiwaz**: (T: Tyr, the sky god.) Honor, justice, leadership and authority. Analysis, rationality. Knowing where one's true strengths lie. Willingness to self-sacrifice. Victory and success in any competition or in legal matters.

Tiwaz Reversed or Murkstave: One's energy and creative flow are blocked. Mental paralysis, over-analysis, over-sacrifice, injustice, imbalance. Strife, war, conflict, failure in competition. Dwindling passion, difficulties in communication, and possibly separation.



**Berkana**: (B: Berchta, the birch-goddess.) Birth, general fertility, both mental and physical and personal growth, liberation. Regenerative power and light of spring, renewal, promise of new beginnings, new growth. Arousal of desire. Pleasure that leads to parenthood (a closed-off counterpart of *Perthro*). A new birth or the likelihood of one. The prospering of an enterprise or venture.

Berkana Reversed or Murkstave: Family problems and or domestic troubles. Anxiety about someone close to you. Carelessness, abandon, loss of control. Blurring of consciousness, deceit, sterility, stagnation.



**Ehwaz**: (E: Horse, two horses.) Transportation and partnership. Movement and change for the better. Gradual development and steady progress are indicated. Harmony, teamwork, trust, loyalty. An ideal marriage or long-term partnership. Confirmation beyond doubt of the meanings of any positive runes drawn alongside it.

Ehwaz Reversed or Murkstave: This is not really a negative rune. A change is



perhaps craved. Lack of adequate partner. Feeling restless or confined in a situation. A seed of potential for reckless haste, disharmony, mistrust, betrayal.



**Mannaz**: (M: Man, mankind.) The Self; the individual or mankind. Your attitude toward others and their attitudes towards you. Friends and enemies, social order. Intelligence, forethought, create, skill, ability. Divine structure, intelligence, awareness. Expect to receive some sort of short-term aid or cooperation now.

Mannaz Reversed or Murkstave: Depression, mortality, blindness, self-delusion. Cunning, slyness, manipulation, craftiness, calculation. Expect no help now.



**Laguz**: (L: Water, a lake, or a leak.) Flow, water, sea, fertile source, healing power of renewal. Life energy and organic growth. Imagination and psychic matters. Dreams, mysteries, the unknown/hidden, the deep, the underworld. Success in travel or acquisition, but with the possibility of loss as the price of a life lesson.

Laguz Reversed or Murkstave: An indication of confusion in your life. You may be making poor judgments. Lack of creativity, being in a rut. Fear, avoidance, withering away, wasted energy. Madness, obsession, sickness, despair.



**Ingwaz**: (NG: Ing, the god of fertility, usually understood to be Freyr.) Male fertility, gestation, internal growth. Common virtues, common sense, simple strengths, family love, caring, human warmth, the home. Rest stage, a time of relief, of no anxiety. A time when all loose strings are tied and you are free

to move in a new direction. Be shining in your confidence.

Ingwaz Murkstave (Ingwaz cannot be reversed, but may lie in opposition - check the grain of the wood!): Impotence, movement without change. Production, toil, labor, work, often seemingly with no result in sight. Mental burnout.



**Dagaz**: (D: Day or dawn.) Breakthrough, awakening, awareness.

Daylight clarity as opposed to nighttime uncertainty. A time to embark upon an enterprise. The power of change directed by your will, transformation.

Hope/happiness. Security and certainty. Growth and release. Balance point, where opposites meet; time when one phase ends, and another begins.

Dagaz Murkstave (Dagaz cannot be reversed, but may lie in opposition): A completion, ending, limit, coming full circle - but without fulfilling results. Blindness, hopelessness, no new dawn for you.



**Othala**: (O: Ancestral property.) Inherited property or

possessions, a house, a home. What is truly important to one. Group order, noble authority, group prosperity. Land of birth, spiritual heritage, experience and fundamental values. Aid in spiritual and physical journeys. Source of safety, increase and abundance.

Othala Reversed or Murkstave: Lack of customary order, anarchy, slavery, poverty, homelessness. Bad karma, betrayal of hospitality, feuds, clannishness, provincialism. What a man is bound to.

## **The Younger Futhark**

Last time we covered the ["Elder" Futhark](#) and their (heavily) reconstructed meanings. Those runes were in common use in the age between the Indo-European migration period and the Viking Age (5th-8th centuries CE). As this period passed (characterized by increased exploration) the Elder Futhark was gradually replaced in Scandinavia by the Younger Futhark (16 runes), and in Germany, England and the Low Countries by the [Anglo-Saxon/Anglo-Frisian Futhorc](#) (from 29-33 runes).

The Younger Futhark (or Futhork) is a result of Scandinavian runic scholars shortening the Elder Futhark of the Germanic farmer class by 8 staves. This happened around the 7th and 8th centuries when the Anglo-Saxons were expanding their Futhark to consist of as many as 33 total runes. Paradoxically at the same time the Old Norse language was also expanding in complexity as it came into contact with new peoples and words through exploration and conquest, just as its futhark was being reduced in complexity!

The Younger Futhark was in this sense a deliberate attempt by Germanic peoples at symbolic revivalism - to return their Runic system back to its shorter and more esoteric original form in accordance with Odin's Rune-songs in the *Hávamál*. The skalds of the time apparently recognized only the first 16 rune-verses in the *Hávamál*, and their corresponding runes, unanimously as original Odinic runes - being in dispute over the identity of the remaining two. The [Armanen](#) system promoted by Guido von List, which recognizes all 18 Rune-verses in the poem as original, is the only other such attempt.

The Old Norse and Icelandic rune poems associated with the Younger Futhark are from preserved medieval texts, whose final forms were recorded in the 13th century or later, though likely based on older 8th century poems similar to the Anglo-Saxon rune poem. Whether the meanings in these poems are entirely divinatory meanings used by Viking age peoples or more like a combination of meanings and mnemonic teaching devices is still a mystery. In their current form both rune poems are probably no older than 13th century and thus may have changed considerably from their earlier forms. Because of this muddled history - albeit better than the total lack of lore for the Elder Futhark - these poems have likely lost much of their magickal symbolism. References to Christianity are peppered in with the original pagan lore, just as in the Anglo-Saxon rune poem, a sign that these poems had undergone many changes by the time they were written down. These poems were likely were being used by parents and village teachers to preserve ancient traditions for future generations amid a rapidly changing world.

The following is a basic breakdown of the Younger Futhark runes, in their more common long-stem "Danish" form, along with the rune poems. In casting the Younger Futhark runes, modern Rune-Masters may use a system of readings that employs reversed and merkstave (horizontal) positions, either one or both horizonts being "murk" depending on whether the rune can be reversed or not, though there is no evidence that Vikings used such a system. They may

have had other means of determining whether a rune cast was positive or negative, such as proximity to other runes in a free-cast of the whole set. Many of the runes seem purely negative but this should be taken with a huge pinch of salt - it may be due to many garblings and bowdlerizations of the rune poems through the ages.

## Fé

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Sound: “f”

Stands for: Cattle (or Money, specifically gold and silver).

Derived from *Fehu* (in the Elder Futhark).

Casting meaning: Like other similar runes of different sets, *Fé* represents cattle and money - a wealth. However it is slightly different because in this wealth we take into account actually monetary pieces such as gold. *Fé* is not all good, however, for it warns us how unbalanced wealth can cause problems even between family members.

Old Norse Rune Poem: **Wealth is a source of discord among kinsmen; the wolf lives in the forest.**

Icelandic Rune Poem: **Source of discord among kinsmen - and fire of the sea - and path of the serpent.**

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## Ur

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Sound: “u”, “o”, “y”, “w”

Stands for: Drizzle (or Slurry).

Derived from *Uruz*.

Casting meaning: This rune represents how some things can develop from apparent nothingness and desolation. Like the fertile soil that can be created from volcanic ash which in turn with a slight amount of water and sunlight can spawn growth. Conversely, it can also imply how something as seemingly harmless as rain can cause major problems, causing mold to grow and ruining harvested grains.

Old Norse Rune Poem: **Dross comes from bad iron; the reindeer often races over the frozen snow.**

Icelandic Rune Poem: **Lamentation of the clouds - and ruin of the hay-harvest - and abomination of the shepherd.**

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## Thurs



Sound: “th”, “dh”

Stands for: Giants, or the god Thor, who often fought them.

Derived from *Thurisaz*.

Casting meaning: Brute force, the crusher. Like Thor and the the giants, *Thurs* contains a lot of power and strength - like its corresponding forms in all the other Futharks, it may even be a symbolic representation of Thor's hammer. It was often used in bind-runes or magic staves to bring extra power to the staves or bind-rune. Like many other runes, this can have a dual meaning: Thor uses his power to protect mankind, yet the Thurses or frost-giants - who were apparently more often associated with this rune during the late Viking age - are purely harmful and destructive.

Old Norse Rune Poem: **The Giant causes anguish to women; misfortune makes few men cheerful.**

Icelandic Rune Poem: **Torturer of women - and cliff-dweller - and husband of a giantess.**

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# Óss/Aoss

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Sound: “o” as in “oh” or “au” as in “Austria” but with more throat resonance.  
Stands for: God and also Mouth/speech. Essentially Odin's rune of divine speech and charisma, but “mouth” may also have metaphorical meanings apart from speech.

Derived from *Ansuz*. This rune has a number of alternate variants.

Casting meaning: This rune represents the power of communication, oral bonds, and the commanding force of well-crafted word and song.

Old Norse Rune Poem: **Estuary (river-mouth) is the way of most journeys; but a scabbard is [that] of swords.**

Icelandic Rune Poem: **Aged Gautr - and prince of Ásgardr - and lord of Vallhalla.**  
[These are all titles of Odin.]

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# Raeidh

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Sound: “r”

Stands for: Riding (as well as the means – Horse, Cart, etc.). Also represents the rider as a symbol of *right* and justice - akin to the German *ritter* or knight symbolizing order and law.

Derived from *Raidho*.

Casting meaning: Since this rune stands for the act of riding its symbolic meaning is one of a journey. A trip or adventure that we must undertake in order to fulfill/dominate a path or goal we have set out on.

Old Norse Rune Poem: **Riding is said to be the worst thing for horses; Reginn forged the finest sword.**

Icelandic Rune Poem: **Joy of the horsemen - and speedy journey - and toil of the steed.**

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# Kaun

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Sound: “k”, “g”

Stands for: Wound (Sore or Ulcer/burn).

Derived from *Kenaz* (torch).

Casting meaning: Although this rune stands for a wound or a burn, we must understand that it is through the suffering of such a wound that we gain new insight. This rune represents just that, the new insight that we gain from an illness or wound (physical or emotional), and the experience to prevent or deflect another such injury in the future.

Old Norse Rune Poem: Ulcer is fatal to children; death makes a corpse pale.

Icelandic Rune Poem: Disease fatal to children - and painful spot - and abode of mortification.

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# Hagall

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Sound: “h”

Stands for: Hail, storms.

Derived from *Hagalaz*.

Casting meaning: Just like hail will eventually transform into water we need to see that situations in our lives will do just the same. They will make a transformation from something restricting to something that flows more readily for us. This is what *Hagall* represents, a transformation of a situation into something more simple.

Old Norse Rune Poem: Hail is the coldest of grain; Christ created the world of old.

[This is clearly a Christian interpolation added in late medieval times.]

Icelandic Rune Poem: Cold grain - and shower of sleet - and sickness of serpents.

[Hail is known to paralyze and kill snakes, and thus make the fields safe to till for planting some not-so-cold grains.]

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# Naudhr



Sound: “n”

Stands for: Need (or Distress).

Derived from *Naudhiz*.

Casting meaning: The rune *Naudhr* represents not only need but also the effect of how we deal with it on one's fate or *Wyrd*. As well as the bondage we may fall into if we let the need of something overtake our lives.

Old Norse Rune Poem: **Constraint gives scant choice; a naked man is chilled by the frost.**

Icelandic Rune Poem: **Grief of the bond-maid - and state of oppression - and toilsome work.** [Debt/neediness is slavery?]

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# Is



Sound: “i”, “e”, “j” as in the “y” in “year”

Stands for: Ice

Derived from *Isa*. Also pronounced in place of *Jera*, though in magickal usage, *Ar* is substituted for *Jera*.

Casting meaning: Ice is unchanging and restricting and like ice this rune embodies the resistant power that tries to prevent change - while it keeps disturbances and chaos locked up, it may also trap the blind and unwary.

Old Norse Rune Poem: **Ice we call the broad bridge; the blind man must be led.**

Icelandic Rune Poem: **Bark of rivers - and roof of the wave - and destruction of the doomed.**

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# Ar





Sound: “a” as in “ah”

Stands for: A good year, abundance, sun-like bounty, harvest

Derived from *Jera* (primarily), with both chevrons passed over each other and joined at the pinch points into an oblique cross. This rune has a number of alternate variants.

Casting meaning: Ar is a rune of good results that come from the application of using our skills and knowledge at the proper time. Like the lush crops of a fall harvest resulting from the fertile soil and well timed planting season.

Old Norse Rune Poem: **Plenty is a boon to men; I say that Frodi was generous.**

[Ironically, Frodi was a semi-mythical Danish king - *circa* 1st century B.C. according to Snorri - whose legendary greed and avarice led to his destruction by his giantess slave girls Fenja and Menja.]

Icelandic Rune Poem: **Boon to men - and good summer - and thriving crops.**

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## Sól



Sound: “s”

Stands for: Sól - the Goddess of the Sun

Derived from *Sowilo*.

Casting meaning: This rune stands for the Sun Goddess called Sól in Scandinavia and Barbet in Germany and the Netherlands. It is a rune that signifies victory, success, and focused action under spiritual control.

Old Norse Rune Poem: **Sun is the light of the world; I bow to the divine decree.**

Icelandic Rune Poem: **Shield of the clouds - and shining ray - and destroyer of ice.**

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## Týr



Sound: “t”, “d”, “nt”, “nd”

Stands for: Tyr the swordsman, god of justice, honor, and self-sacrifice

Derived from *Tiwaz*.

Casting meaning: In the world of the cosmos this rune represents orderliness. In the physical world this rune signifies law and order.

Old Norse Rune Poem: **Tyr is a one-handed god; often does the smith have to blow.**

[Perhaps a reference to a swordsmith forging Tyr's sword?]

Icelandic Rune Poem: **God with one hand - and leavings of the wolf - and prince of temples.** [A reference to Tyr's pledge and sacrifice of his right hand to bind the giant wolf-demon Fenrir, thus being forever renowned as a god of unflinching bravery and honor, a prince of temples].

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## Bjarkan



Sound: “b”, “p”, “v”, “mb”, “mp”

Stands for: Birch tree and birch twigs, birth, but also the *bier* or funeral platform, signifying re-birth after death.

Derived from *Berkana*.

Casting meaning: The birch tree represents protective birth, rebirth and purification through its fast-regenerating, shedding paper-like skin, as does the rune *Bjarkan*. It is also a woman's rune symbolizing gestation and birth.

Old Norse Rune Poem: **Birch has the greenest leaves of any shrub; Loki was fortunate in his deceit.** [This use of Loki's name may be a reference to the *Logr* rune due to the use of the L-sound. In an earlier form of the rune poem, and hence the Futhark itself, this rune may have come just after Bjarkan. The Armanen equivalent, *Laf*, is placed just after *Bar/Bjarkan* likely for this very reason. Conversely, Loki's deceit - the means by which he caused the death of Baldur, the god most associated with *Bjarkan* - may serve obliquely to reference Baldur as a mnemonic device for this rune.]

Icelandic Rune Poem: **Leafy twig - and little tree - and fresh young shrub.** [A reference to both birch trees and birth.]

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# Madhr



Sound: “m”

Stands for: Man, mankind

Derived from *Mannaz* with the upper angles removed and the remaining mirrored halves superimposed on top of each other.

Casting meaning: This rune stands not only for humankind but also represents the mythical “first man,” Mannus (or Mannaz), the Germanic root of the word “man” in English (just as “Adam” means man in semitic languages). Since it represents humankind it symbolizes the continuity of the family and clan.

Old Norse Rune Poem: **Man is an augmentation of the dust; great is the claw of the hawk.** [Visually the secondary reference to hawk claws is clear to see - this may be a form of visual mnemonics rather than any sort of esoteric meaning.]

Icelandic Rune Poem: **Delight of man - and augmentation of the earth - and adorer of ships.**

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# Logr/Laukr



Sound: “l”

Stands for: Power of water (or a leek - the authenticity of this alternate meaning is disputed however).

Derived from *Laguz*.

Casting meaning: Unlike other “water runes” this rune concentrates on the power of water – waterfalls, ocean wave, flowing rivers. It is a purification or washing away of unwanted or unneeded thing, a way to cleanse oneself by knowing the powers or tendencies of helpful things from those of harmful ones.

Old Norse Rune Poem: **A waterfall is a River which hangs from (adorns) a mountain-side; but [human] ornaments are of gold.**

Icelandic Rune Poem: **Eddying stream - and broad geysir - and land of the fish.** [Listing various forms of water.]

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# Yr



Sound: “z”, “r”

Stands for: Yew tree, bow made from Yew wood.

Derived from *Eihwaz* and *Algiz*.

Casting meaning: This rune may be related to the [Anglo-Saxon](#) rune [Yr](#), itself a derivative of *Ur*. It is also the entrance to the underworld and chaos, and in this form is sometimes seen as a death rune, though historically the basis for this reading is very weak before the medieval period, and von List rejects it in favor of more positive interpretations for *Yr* in his Armanen system.

Old Norse Rune Poem: **Yew is the greenest of trees in winter; it is wont to crackle when it burns.** [Seems to symbolize survival rather than death.]

Icelandic Rune Poem: **Bent bow - and brittle iron - and giant of the arrow.** [Sounds more like death.]

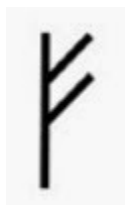
## **The Anglo-Saxon Futhorc**

The Anglo-Saxon Futhorc is the largest and most complex rune row of the four major systems. Unfortunately it is also poorly understood in an esoteric sense, due to the lack of runestone inscriptions and other magickal uses of the system. However the [Anglo-Saxon rune poem](#) survives, albeit in an altered Christianized form, like some parts of the Norwegian and Icelandic rune poems.

There are in the Anglo-Saxon system, in addition to the 24 runes present in the [Elder Futhark](#), several extra runes to account for new sounds or concepts encountered by the Angles and Saxons as they had colonized the Low Countries, and eventually also Britain. In the latter conquest they came into contact with Britons and Celts, and absorbed some of their linguistic and cultural influences. These last few uniquely Anglo-Saxon runes have also sometimes been associated with the Vanir, rather than with Odin, and the Vanir have often been regarded as a paleolithic proto-European pantheon of gods that had been the dominant religion in Europe before the Indo-European migrations of the Neolithic and early Bronze Age from the east - though there is some contrary evidence of similar gods (Fravhar, Friya) in Indo-Iranian pantheons, indicating that both the Aesir and Vanir (Asuras and Vanaras) were in fact original Indo-European gods. The fact that the Indo-European Celts share a number of similar deities with the Vanir system and others with earlier paleolithic fertility deities, and were said to be of similar stock to the Goths and Sarmatians, indicates that some cultural elements of the paleolithic proto-European hunters cultures (Iberians, Britons, and perhaps even a few Finno-Ugrics) had already been absorbed by them, to be still further "Aryanized" by later Indo-European migrations like the Germanics.

These Runes are often believed to have been representative of a mix of Aesic and Vanic lore concepts. The Anglo-Saxon runes vibrate with the sense of nature perhaps to a greater extent than the stone-carved Elder and Younger runes of colder, harsher climates in Scandinavia (although these were also found as far south as Germany). The organic nature and Celtic influence in Anglo-Saxon art (and the poem) also indicates a celebration of life and nature common to the Vanic system, without some of the grimness of the Aesir-centered Lore of the North. However it is also a more warrior-centric Rune row than the Elder Futhark, with the additional Runes at the end referring to things such as rampart-stones, spears, chalices and rites of knighthood (which long pre-dated Christianity). So it must not be forgotten that the Vanir also have a warrior aspect, and are not purely "peaceful" deities; they embody the raw forces of nature's cycles, as described in the Eddas with the Aesir-Vanir war and the following truce and exchange of hostages. The Anglo-Saxons seem to have claimed descent from the Vanir much as the Teutons did from the Aesir; Ingwi-Freyr of the Vanir gave his name to the Ingles (Angles) and thus to Ing-Land (England).

While the [Younger Futhark](#) reduced the number of Runes from the Elder, in spite of the Old Norse language increasing in complexity as the Vikings expanded to new lands (thus necessitating the dual-use phonetic values of some Younger Runes), the Anglo-Saxon system expanded them as would be expected from an increase in complexity through conquest. The Anglo-Saxon Futhorc was used as a script for writing for several centuries, long after use as a magickal system apparently declined, and even after the Christianization of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in England. Unfortunately there is very little attested magickal use of these Runes, with most surviving Anglo-Saxon Rune inscriptions being purely orthographic - thus most of their meanings have to be derived from the Anglo-Saxon Rune poem. Being ultimately of German origin, some of their pronunciations closely match those of their equivalents in the [Armanen Futharkh](#). Below are some the Anglo-Saxon Runes with possible explanations of their meanings, drawing on the usages of the other three runic systems (which share several of the same runes), along with text and **translation** of the Anglo-Saxon Rune poem.



Feoh

Feoh byþ frofur fira gehwylcum;  
sceal ðeah manna gehwylc miclun hyt dælan  
gif he wile for drihtne domes hleotan.

Wealth is a comfort to all men;  
yet must every man bestow it freely,  
if he wish to gain honor in the sight of the Lord.

It's fitting that a piece on Vanic runes starts with fertility, wealth, sharing, and the pleasures of life. *Feoh* is all of those things. The word itself means "cattle," but unlike the primal animalic sense that *Ur* brings, it is cattle as a means of acquiring and measuring wealth, sustenance and prestige. The poem talks about the comfort *Feoh* or wealth brings; the Vanir are very much about enjoying the pleasures of life and the world. However, just as it is a sorrow to lack, it is a sorrow not to share what one has freely. Freyr does not hoard his light; Freyja does not partition her love-making to only the rich or famous. Gifting is a vital part of any Vanic ethos, as *gyfu* will show. While "the Lord" sounds like a Christian interpolation, it may just as easily refer to Freyr, the chief god of the Vanir. The name 'Freyr' is actually a title meaning "Lord", just as 'Freyja' means "lady". Freyr's real name, so far as the lore indicates, was probably Ing, which is the origin of the *Ing* or *Ingwaz* rune in both this system and the Elder Futhark (Freyja's true name, though not recorded, was most likely Inga or Ingytja).



## Ur

Ur byþ anmod ond oferhyrned,  
felafrecne deor, feohtep mid hornum  
mære morstapa; þæt is modig wuht.

The aurochs is proud and has great horns;  
it is a very savage beast and fights with its horns;  
a great ranger of the moors, it is a creature of mettle.

The aurochs (*uruz*, "original ox", the Elder Futhark equivalent of "Ur") was an awesome animal, the Old World counterpart of the North American great bison, and would have been a familiar animal to the Vanic cultus as well as the Aesic one. While the major Vanic animal in much of Iron-age northern Europe was the boar, the aurochs was just as important, and may have been replaced by the boar as the former gradually died out after the start of the Iron age. Certainly, the poem's description fits the nature of the Vanir-at-war – proud, ruthless, mettlesome, and at home in the wild. Note, too, the ability of Freyr to fight just as well with an antler/horn as he did with a sword. The aurochs is a symbol of strength, of power, of self-confidence; certainly all the Vanir we know of exude those traits in their own individual ways.



## Thorn

ᚢorn byþ ᚔearle scearp; ᚔegna gehwylcum  
anfeng ys yfyl, ungemetum reþe  
manna gehwelcum, ᚔe him mid resteᚔ.

The thorn is exceedingly sharp,  
an evil thing for any knight to touch,  
uncommonly severe on all who sit among them.

“The thorn is severely sharp – for any thane to seize it is hurtful.” Obviously, the poem is fairly straightforward: thorns and briars hurt! We also know that it was with a thorn that Oðin put a spell of sleep on the Valkyrie Brynhild, a spell which would only be broken by the warrior brave and strong enough to ride through the encircling flames and prove himself worthy to be her husband. But what does a thorn mean in a Vanic context? First, it is thought that the blackberry, a fruit normally found wild in bramble and briar patches, is sacred to certain Vanir women, notably Holda and Nerthus, who are certainly said to be “uncommonly severe” to those who follow them. It is a warning that all is not as it seems when you deal with the Vanir. They are just as much concerned with death as with the continuation of life, especially the older generations. In an Aesir-centric sense, *Thorn* clearly refers to the might and clearing capability of Thor's hammer, and his foes the giants (Jotuns), also known as *thurses*. But you knew that already from the Elder and Younger Futhark meanings, right?



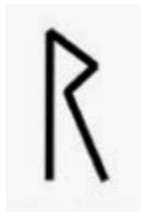


## Ós

Os byþ ordfruma ælere spræce,  
wisdomes wrapu ond witena frofur  
and eorla gehwam eadnys ond tohiht.

The mouth is the source of all language,  
a pillar of wisdom and a comfort to wise men,  
a blessing and a joy to every knight.

The actual translation here is “The God(s) is the source of all language ...,” Ós being the word for a god or the divine in Old English. Traditionally, the god in question is Oðin; especially in his mysterious incarnation as Ódr, husband of Freyja. That is not to say that the other gods, including Vanir, are not wise – after all, in the poem *Hrafnagaldur*, Oðin specifically states that “the Vanir know.” They certainly know battle-magic, which would be a “blessing and joy” to warriors; they know *seiðr*, which Oðin learned from Freyja, and can be used to prophesy and divine, bringing wisdom and comfort to the wise; and they know the flows of *Wýrd*, the source of everything, including language.



## Rad

Rad byþ on recyde rinca gehwylcum  
sefte ond swiphwæt, ðamðe sitteþ on ufan  
meare mægenheardum ofer milpaþas.

Riding seems easy to every warrior while he is indoors  
and very courageous to him who traverses the high-roads  
on the back of a stout horse.

This rune, though the poem is about riding, is less about the mode of transportation and more about the journey itself. Certainly, the horse is sacred to the Vanir, specifically Freyr, but *Rad* is not the Horse rune (that would be *Eh*, or *Ehwaz*, which also symbolizes marriage and partnership). *Rad*, the rune of journeying, is also the rune of sound judgment and thus "Writ" and "Rating" linguistically and spiritually - thus its meaning even as a ride or journey, is forked and twofold, as the poem states - there is an inward, "easy" route, and the harder outward one. As any spiritworker who does regular journeying or faring-forth will tell you, stepping out of your inner soul-body is extremely dangerous. The possibilities of the journey itself is also twofold. There is the meaning of spiritual journeys, *seiðr*, and *hamfarir* (faring-forth), and then something that is hinted at in the poem itself - the dichotomy of slander, empty bragging and gossip, and the "high road" of frith-building, true honor and respect, which certainly requires much courage.



## Cen

Cen byþ cwicera gehwam cup on fyre  
blac ond beorhtlic, byrneþ oftust  
ðær hi æpelingas inne restap.

The torch is known to every living man  
by its pale, bright flame;  
it always burns where princes sit within.

This rune is clearly derived from the Elder Futhark rune *Kenaz* (“torch”). Oddly it's an upside-down form of its Younger Futhark equivalent *Kaun*, perhaps indicating a lowered torch to light a fire in a great hall, illuminating the walls and marking clear shadows from the "princes" there. Light is an interesting thing. The presence of light immediately creates a dichotomy between what is illuminated and what is shadowed – darkness only exists as a discernible entity in the presence of light. So is it with the Vanir – They are at once Light and Dark, some more of one than the other, but all in balance. Freyr, the Shining One, brings Light to the Worlds, but goes into Darkness every year at Yule-tide, whence he is reborn anew; Njordr is calm and even-mannered, but he killed Midir in anger; Nerthus brings peace during Her procession, but demands a yearly sacrifice. Gerdr is a dark-humored, reserved Jotun, but Freyr fell in love with the Light inside her, and they balance both the Light and Dark within each other. Freyja is the sacred sex-bomb who brings joy to people through lovemaking, but also the warrior queen that savagely defends her own; Gullveig is the battle-witch, and the joy of gold and wealth.

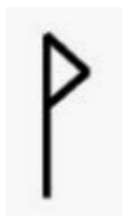


## Gyfu

Gyfu gumena byþ gleng and herenys,  
wraþu and wyrþscype and wræcna gehwam  
ar and ætwist, ðe byþ oþra leas.

Generosity brings credit and honor, which support one's dignity;  
it furnishes help and subsistence  
to all broken men who are devoid of aught else.

“A gift for a gift” says Hár (Oðin) in the Hávamál, and reciprocity is an important Norse value. But there are strictures on the type of gift, if you wish to gift in a truly Nordic style – it must be given willingly, joyfully; no stinginess or reluctance. Freyr does not go grumbling each year, resentful of the gift of his life to sustain the Nine Worlds – He goes willingly, happily, aroused as if to his honeymoon, running with passion into the cold embrace of Death. Nerthus’ servants did not complain; they gave of themselves willingly and gladly, throwing themselves into the black void of her embrace for one chance to see her as she is. Sif and Sigyn do not care for their husbands and families because of any meekness or coercion – it is their gift to the men they love. A gift is not truly a gift if it is not given with all your being behind it; it is simply a payment or a tribute.



## Wynn

Wenne bruceþ, ðe can weana lyt  
sares and sorge and him sylfa hæfþ  
blæd and blysse and eac byrga geniht.

Bliss he enjoys who knows not suffering,  
sorrow nor anxiety, and has for himself  
happiness and prosperity and a good enough house.

*Wynn* (equivalent to the Elder Futhark *Wunjo*) is probably one of the most Vanic of runes – it speaks of joy, prosperity, a good home, and self-contentment. It is the rune of frith, of peace-making, because there is no happiness in war, and the Vanir understand that intimately. While certainly not pacifists or poor fighters (They were winning, after all, before they offered truce to the Aesir), the Vanir realize that happiness and prosperity, good homes and bliss cannot be found on the battlefield or in the destructions of war; they can only be cultivated in peace and tolerance.



## Hægl

Hægl byþ hwitust corna; hwyrft hit of heofones lyfte,  
wealcaþ hit windes scura; weorþeþ hit to wætere syððan.

Hail is the whitest of grain; it is whirled from the vault of heaven  
and is tossed about by gusts of wind; and then it melts into water.

The Anglo-Saxon shape of Hægl is that of a steep-roofed house with high posts or chimneys. I feel this is Holda's rune, as she is intimately connected with snow and winter in folklore; it can also be associated with Skadi and Ullr, who are the gods of the woods and wilderness, especially the snowy mountains of Norway and Sweden (and Colorado). Giantess Skadi is also associated with snow and skiing, and is even rumored to have invented the sport. The poem doesn't seem to make much sense other than as a simple description of how frozen water acts, until one looks closer, and realizes that it is an allegory for life - we are as seeds tossed unto the earth from the "heavens," yet even during our lives we are subject to the gusts of "wind" that are caused by our wyrd and orløg as well as the decisions we make. And when our time has come, we "melt" into the earth to nourish the next generation of seeds.



## Nyd

Nyd byþ nearu on breostan; weorþeþ hi þeah oft niþa bearnum  
to helpe and to hæle gehwæpre, gif hi his hlystaþ æror.

[Need] is oppressive to the heart; yet often it proves a source  
of help and salvation to the children of men, to everyone who heeds it betimes.

Need, or necessity, has long been touted as the “mother of invention.” And it is true – nothing new would be created were there not some need for it, even if that need is one that does not seem “oppressive” – for instance, many people have a need to experience beauty, but the lack of it does not immediately endanger their lives (whether or not it can cause long-term damage is a debate for another time). The Vanir understand need – Freyr’s death fulfills the need of recharging the Nine Worlds to keep them alive; Njordr has an irrevocable need to be near the ocean, as Skadi does the mountains. Nerthus and Sigyn understand duty, as do the three hostages to the Aesir; in fact, there are possibly no beings in the Nine Worlds that are more conscious of duty than the Vanir, with the exception of Hela.



## Is

Is byþ ofereald, ungemetum slidor,  
glisnaþ glæshluttur gimmum gelicust,  
flor forste geworuht, fæger ansyne.

Ice is very cold and immeasurably slippery;  
it glistens as clear as glass and most like to gems;  
it is a floor wrought by the frost, fair to look upon.

Ice is the rune of winter, of stasis, of slowing down and looking within. The poem describes the many qualities of ice, but notably only the ice that is usually called black ice or clear ice, as opposed to rime, the solid white ice that is named for the frost thurses. Black ice is indeed immeasurably slippery, and is a great danger to those who are not paying attention and moving without caution. While there is no specifically Vanic trait about this rune, all the Vanir know well the value of mindfulness and taking time to reflect so that one does not slip up. And when we stop and look around us, we find that the ice that was once a danger unheeded is now a thing of great beauty.



# Ger

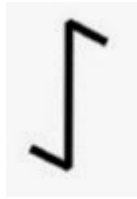
Ger byþ gumena hiht, ðonne God læteþ,  
halig heofones cyning, hrusan syllan  
beorhte bleða beornum ond ðearfum.

Summer is a joy to men, when God, the holy King of Heaven,  
suffers the earth to bring forth shining fruits  
for rich and poor alike.

This rune is derived from *Jera*, the Elder rune of the year-end and harvest. It is the Anglo-Saxon word for "year" in modern English (= *Jahr* in German), "year-end", "reaping" and "harvest". Though there is some noticeable Christian influence in this verse, there is clearly an older Heathen substrate hidden beneath, where "God" was "The Gods"; the mention of "cyning" or Koenig/King likely invokes Freyr, who is associated in several Indo-European cultures with the 'Farr' (godly radiance) of Kingship; for while he is a god of fertility and agriculture, even Kings were considered farmers in the Tripartite classes of the early Germanic folk when not personally at war.

Harvest and cycles are the epitome of the Vanic way; while the Anglo-Saxon Futhorc in general is often associated with the Germanic Warrior Class, the people of Tiwaz-Tyr, this particular Rune, like its Elder Futhark version, holds several attributes of the Vanir. That which was sown is reaped, the trees give forth their yearly abundance, and all are blessed with the bounty of nature.

Harvest was a three month-long process, starting first with the grains and nuts and then the autumn fruits and vegetables; oftentimes, those three months were the most joyous in the community, because all the year's hard work had finally come to fruition and they were (hopefully) prepared for another harsh winter. There were feasts and blóts all through the period of Lammas to Winterfylleth: as each harvest came in, the people would give of it to the gods in thanks for their blessings. Freyr is the one most associated with this time, though all the Vanir work to bring forth fertility and bounty in the Nine Worlds.



## Eoh

Eoh byþ utan unsmeþe treow,  
heard hrusan fæst, hyrde fyres,  
wyrtrumun underwreþyd, wyn on eple.

The yew is a tree with rough bark,  
hard and fast in the earth, supported by its roots,  
a guardian of flame and a joy upon an estate.

While most Asatruars and even most academics view the World Tree, Yggdrasil, as being an ash tree, there may be some merit in its being a yew. As such, *Eoh* speaks to one of the Nine Worlds and the Tree themselves, as Rad speaks of journeying. The line about flame is especially interesting, as there is no tale we know of that tells of the origin of the Tree itself, but the saga of Northern mythology starts and ends in fire, and the yew is a highly flammable tree because of its oils. Also, the root of the World Tree is Helheim – all life is supported by death, something the Vanir know well.



## Peorð

Peorð byþ symble plega and hlechter  
wlancum [on middum], ðar wigan sittap  
on beorsele bliþe ætsomne.

Peorth [luck, gambling] is a source of recreation and amusement  
to the great, where warriors sit  
blithely together in the banqueting-hall.



Luck is very important in the Northern Tradition. Called *hamingja* in Norse, it is seen as a driving force in a person's individuality in and of itself, rather than some random chance. Some conceptualizations of it portray it as a figure similar to the fetch/fylgja or the *dísir* – female guardian figures responsible for the person's well-being or happiness. However, unlike modern ideas of luck, there are specific things about the *hamingja* that need to be noted. One is born with a certain amount of it, and can either lose it or make it grow, but once lost or wasted, it cannot be regained. However, *Peorð* is also the rune of Wyrð, and the glyph can be seen as the Well of Urð (though on its side).



## Eolh

Eolh-secg eard hæfþ oftust on fenne  
wexeð on wature, wundap grimme,  
blode breneð beorna gehwylcne  
ðe him ænigne onfeng gedep.

The Elk-sedge is mostly to be found in a marsh;  
it grows in the water and makes a ghastly wound,  
covering with blood every warrior  
who dares himself touch it.

*Eolh* is the rune of holiness, of taboo, of the sanctuary; the Old English concept of *wīh* or sacred-space is what this rune embodies. *Eolh* itself, though apparently signifying the antlers of the Elk, is also similar to the Old English word for temple, *ealh*, and the poem reminds of the dangers of violating the sacred spaces carelessly or with malice. It is worth noting that the description the poem gives of where the elk-sedge is located, is similar to Tacitus' account of Nerthus' holy grove, the Vane who is most concerned with *wīh*.



## Sigel

Sigel semannum symble biþ on hihte,  
ðonne hi hine feriaþ ofer fisces beþ,  
op hi brimhengest bringeþ to lande.

The sun is ever a joy in the hopes of seafarers  
when they journey away over the fishes' bath,  
until the courser of the deep bears them to land.

Sunna is well-loved in all the Nine Worlds (except perhaps Niflheim), but especially in Vanaheim, because she is the one that causes all the crops to grow. However, the poem speaks of sailing, which is the place of Njordr. And indeed, the sun is a vital resource in sailing, both as a compass-guide and by the light it offers, light which is often rare in northern climes, and as such, is preciousy revered by farmers and sailors alike, both of which the Vanir are.



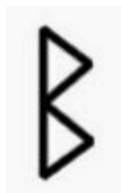
## Tiw

Tir biþ tacna sum, healdeð trywa wel  
wiþ æþelingas; a biþ on færylde  
ofer nihta genipu, næfre swiceþ.

Tiw is a guiding star; well does it keep faith  
with princes; it is ever on its course  
over the mists of night and never fails.

*Tiw/Tir* is named for the Aesir god Tyr, and the Norse and Icelandic poems talk about his attributes as god of victory and justice. The Anglo-Saxon poem takes a different angle, referring to the North Star (this rune pointing straight up is a metaphor for “true north”), another important guide for sailors, as well as hunters (both Vanic occupations - Njordr is a master sailor, and many Vanir are associated with hunting and woodlands). There are also hints of the importance the Vanir (as well as the Aesir) place on trustworthiness, what in Norse is called *mægen* or honor. The North Star (currently Polaris) does not move in the Great Procession; all the other stars move around it, at least from the perspective of us on earth. As such, it can always be counted upon to show true north; similarly, to the Aesir and Vanir, keeping truth and word is vital to not only reputation, but the ability to build and maintain *frith*.

Interestingly, other Germanic and Indo-European cultures sometimes pointed to Sirius as Tyr's star, rather than Polaris, as it was originally associated with a great Wolf rather than a domestic dog, and as such represented Tyr's loss of a hand to Fenrir in the latter part of the Eddic cycle, corresponding to the rising of Sirius in the dawning of the winter months. Being in the south of the sky relative to Polaris when observed in the Northern Hemisphere, it seems fitting for the Wolf-star to be thus in opposition to Tyr; though relative to the greater *galactic* plane, Sirius is actually a star of the East, not the South - hence, further cementing its status as Tyr's star, since one esoteric homophone of the *Ostivanen* (the Warrior Class, men of *Os-Tivar* or *Asa-Tyr*), is also *Ost-ziehanen*, "those who pass east", for traditionally the early Germanic warriors of the Goths and Rugii often conquered lands in eastern Europe and were prepared to die there, and Tivash-Tir was also honored far further east as an *Asura* in the Indo-Iranian sphere.



Beorc

Beorc byþ bleða leas, bereþ efne swa ðeah  
tanás butan tudder, biþ on telgum wlitig,  
heah on helme hrysted fægere,  
geloden leafum, lyfte getenge.

The Birch bears no fruit; yet without seed it brings forth suckers,  
for it is generated from its leaves.  
Splendid are its branches and gloriously adorned  
its lofty crown which reaches to the skies.

The birch tree is a major Northern Tradition plant, commonly seen in Celtic, Germanic, Slavic and Saami/indigenous Finnic cultural herbology, as a purifier. It sheds its outer layers constantly, like sheets of paper, and was sometimes used in place of the same. Its branches and twigs are held to be sacred for fertility and birth, as it reproduces itself through parthogenesis and is thus "self-fertile". The Finnish saunas use birch twigs, in a somewhat sensual means, as a means of stimulating blood flow and cleansing of both the space and the people within; in Celtic and Germanic cultures, birch twigs were often cut in early spring and brought inside to bloom, thus blessing and warding the house. The birch is also one of the trees, along with the ash and oak, that usually comprise sacred groves, which are commonly associated with the Vanic cultus as well as the Finno-Ugric tribes which it may have influenced (and on occasion, have been influenced by).



## Eh

Eh byþ for eorlum æþelinga wyn,  
hors hofum wlanc, ðær him hæleþ ymb[e]  
welege on wicgum wrixlaþ spræce  
and biþ unstyllum æfre profur.

The horse is a joy to princes in the presence of warriors.  
A steed in the pride of its hoofs,  
when rich men on horseback bandy words about it;  
and it is ever a source of comfort to the restless.

There is a common saying that the dog is man's best friend. However, in the millennia before the medieval and modern eras, no animal was more important to humankind than the horse (*Ehwaz*). The horse provided food, skins for clothing and shelter, transportation, increased ranges in territory and hunting/foraging and great power in battle. Beyond the practical, however, there is an almost spiritual symbiosis between humans and horses – ask any horse owner, and they will tell you of that connection. It is for this reason that the horse also represented partnership for the Germanic tribes, even marriage (*Ehe*). The most famous horse in the Northern tradition is actually a Jotun – *Sleipnir*, child of a shapeshifted Loki – but the tribe of Gods with the greatest connection to horses is the Vanir. Freyr, though he rides a boar, has a horse, *Blóðughófi* (Bloody-hoof) and is strongly linked with horses in the Sagas (such as the horse *Freyfaxi*, which was dedicated to him by Hrafnkell Freysgoði, and the horses of Thronðheim). Holda is said to ride a horse when she leads the Wild Hunt. Historically, the domestication of the horse and the time of its greatest importance were the Mesolithic and Neolithic Eras, the time when the Vanic cultus was most likely the strongest and most wide-spread. However, the path of the Aesir, too, could never have spread as far as it did without mastery of the horse, for which the Scythians and Goths in particular were renowned.



## Mann

Man byþ on myrgþe his magan leof:  
sceal þeah anra gehwylc oðrum swican,  
forðum drihten wyle dome sine  
þæt earme flæsc eorþan betæcan.

The joyous man is dear to his kinsmen;  
yet every man is doomed to fail his fellow,  
since the Lord by his decree  
will commit the vile carrion to the earth.

In many ways, this rune reflects and focuses the other “human” runes of *Gyfu*, *Eðel* and *Wynn*, as the poem depicts. One who has much *Wynn* will certainly be more amenable to the process of *Gyfu*, because the miserable are not prone to giving or building frith, and a generous and joyful man raises the reputation of his *Eðel* and family, thus making him “dear to his kinsmen.” Even though the second half of the poem is Christian in basis, you can still see in it a reminder, as with all things Vanic, that there are two sides to the coin – Light and Dark, Joy and Sadness, Life and Death – and we are all doomed to die, that others might live in our places, one part of the cycle that we are still in thrall to, regardless of our deeds.

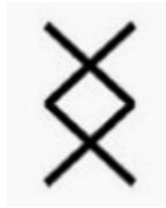


## Lagu

Lagu byþ leodum langsum geþuht,  
gif hi sculun neþan on nacan tealtum  
and hi sæyþa swyþe bregaþ  
and se brimhengest bridles ne gym[eð].

The ocean seems interminable to men,  
if they venture on the rolling bark  
and the waves of the sea terrify them  
and the courser of the deep heed not its bridle.

While the Old English word *lagu* is cognate with Latin *lacu*, “lake,” the poem describes the largest lake of all – the ocean. However, this depiction of the ocean is much different from the one for *Sigel*, though it uses many of the same words. This ocean, is that of the terrifying storm, the devouring hurricane, the Sea that threatens to tear the boat apart and swallow all within. Njordr, being a sailor himself, knows well the power of the sea, and is on good terms with the Nine Undines and Ran herself, for which they allow him to calm their storms on occasion.

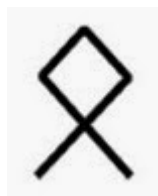


# Ing

Ing wæs ærest mid East-Denum  
gesewen secgun, oþ he siððan est  
ofer wæg gewat; wæn æfter ran;  
ðus Hearingas ðone hæle nemdun.

Ing was first among the East-Danes,  
seen by men; till departing east,  
over the waves he went, followed by his chariot.  
So the Hearingas named the hero.

The Anglo-Saxon poem for the *Ing* rune tells us the story of Yng, the eponymous ancestor of the Ynglings, a royal family of medieval Sweden (and later, Denmark), and who was probably either an avatar of Freyr, or Freyr himself - and thus a symbol of male potency, the prosperous farmstead, and the Seed. The obviously Vanic symbol of the wain (wæn) or wagon/chariot is the main focus here, though it is interesting that the tale has him coming and going from the east, when Vanaheim is traditionally to the west (as Celtic lands are to the west of Teutonic ones); however, if one looks at it from the perspective of the Anglo-Saxons, the East is Geatland (as opposed to the West-Danes of Denmark and the Danelaw), and Sweden, two of the major Vanic regions in Scandinavia. Linguistically, the root of *Ing* (and its Elder Futhark equivalent, *Ingwaz* or *Inguz*) is a bit obscure - it has been interpreted by turns to mean both "spark" (in an ancient Indo-European sense of Ingwi = Agni) and "seed", and the word itself has been a literal seed for many lineages and names, from the Ynglings in Sweden to the Ingaevons (Ingvonen), the numerous farmer tribes of northern Germany, from whom the Angles and even the name *Anglaeland* or England (literally Ing-land) which they conquered, were ultimately derived - all of these claimed descent by some royal line or other from Ingwi-Freyr, the blesser of agricultural Kingship.



# Éðel

Epel byþ oferleof æghwylcum men,  
gif he mot ðær rihtes and gerysena on  
brucan on bolde bleadum oftast.

An estate is very dear to every man,  
if he can enjoy there in his house  
whatever is right and proper in constant prosperity.

Family and estate (*Othala*, *Odal*, or *Edhel*) was very important in ancient times, because not only were you the product of your ancestors, the whole family's *mægen*, *hamingja* and *orløg* rested in your hands. Yet family meant more than the blood relationships. Before the Industrial Revolution and subsequent urbanization of much of western civilization in the modern era, family meant land – the land where your fathers and mothers were born, lived, and died, with few exceptions. Land also meant all the various spirits that must be propitiated – the crops, the wild and domesticated herbs, the earth itself, the house spirits, the trees and rocks, and everything else that was necessary to “enjoy ... whatever is right and proper in constant prosperity,” a topic we have already discussed as being greatly important to the Vanir. Unlike *Ing*, this rune refers not so much to fertility but rather to bloodright, estate, and responsible ownership. It is also related to the German word *Adel* or *Edel*, meaning “noble” or “rightful”.



# Dæg

Dæg byþ drihtnes sond, deore mannum,  
mære metodes leoht, myrgþ and tohiht  
eadgum and earmum, eallum brice.

Day, the glorious light of the Creator, is sent by the Lord;  
it is beloved of men, a source of hope and happiness to rich and poor,  
and of service to all.



Like *Sigel*, *Dæg* is about the light of Sunna. But where *Sigel* is the Light being useful (and with connotations of victory given its similarity to the Germanic runic root-word *Sig*), *Dæg* is the new day, the bright beginning, since *dæg* can also mean dawn. This is the rune of the Second Chance, the ability to start anew, to make this day worth living regardless of what happened before. Many ancient cultures did not view time with the obsession of past-future that we do; instead, each day was taken as is (hence the need for daily auguries, to determine what the best use of the day was to be). One of the lessons the Vanir teach is to take each thing that comes as it comes, stopping our mad rush into the future to stop and enjoy the sensations of the now, whether those be chocolate, good food, better sex, or even just watching a spider spin a web.

The next five runes are unique to the Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Frisian systems, and are attested in the Anglo-Saxon rune poem.



## Ác

Ac byþ on eorþan elda bearnum  
flæsces fodor, fereþ gelome  
ofer ganotes bæþ; garsecg fandap  
hwæþer ac hæbbe æþele treowe.

The oak fattens for the children of men the flesh of pigs, often it traverses the gannet's bath; and the ocean proves whether the oak keeps faith in honorable fashion.

The oak is another sacred tree among many of Europe's ancient peoples – the Greeks attributed it to Zeus; the Celts named it as the special tree of the Dagda. There is a specific oak forest in Northern lore that is well-known – the Iron Wood of Angrboda and the Jotnar. Among the Germanic peoples, it was always the sacred tree of Thunearr (Thor) for its strength and resilience, and there was a Holy Oak of Thunearr for the Saxons in Germany, which the Frankish Christians destroyed in their persecution campaigns to stamp out the Old Ways. Yet the oak is also sacred to the Vanir, both as the tree itself (useful for shipbuilding and making homes from) and as the major source of food for the Vanir's most attributed animal, the boar.



## Æsc

Æsc biþ oferheah, eldum dyre  
stip on stapule, stede rihte hylt,  
ðeah him feohtan on firas monige.

The ash is exceedingly high and precious to men.  
With its sturdy trunk it offers a stubborn resistance,  
though attacked by many a man.

The fourth tree associated with a rune in the Futhorc, the ash tree is the traditional representative of the World Tree (switching with the yew); however, it was also a favored wood in the production of spears and polearms, the major weapons of the masses before the invention of smelting. The poem also refers to another usage - many shields were made of ash, being cheaper and easier to work than the harder oak. While such blatant militarism might seem anathema to the common understanding of the Vanir, one need only remember that they were winning in the war against the Aesir, and that many of the Vanir probably would not have had swords, to understand how this tree might be well-loved in Vanaheim, beyond its usefulness in non-military contexts. Although this rune closely resembles the Ós rune and its Elder Futhark ancestor, *Ansuz*, it may have evolved independently. However the fact that Yggdrasil, the world tree (upon which Odin, the god most associated with Ós rune, sacrificed himself) was reputedly an Ash tree, makes the connection of this rune with the Ós/*Ansuz* rune a strong possibility - not to mention the linguistic similarity.



## Yr

Yr byþ æþelinga and eorla gehwæs  
wyn and wyrþmynd, byþ on wicge fæger,  
fæstlic on færelde, fyrdgeatewa sum.

Yr is for every prince and knight a source  
of joy and honor; it looks well on a horse,  
and is a reliable equipment for a journey.

If any of the Vanir resonate with this rune, it is Ullr, since *Yr*'s glyph is the hunter's bow. The poem speaks of the many uses that bows have – sport (the source of joy and honor among nobility), war (mounted bowmen are a very powerful force), and survival in the wilderness (for both food and protection). The concept that *Yr* speaks to, and Ullr also teaches, is the power in focus, but not the focus of a camera, or the loose sort of focus most of us give to something we're doing. This is the focus of the Hunter, of the Artist, of the Craftsman, or the Duelist – the pouring of oneself into the moment, when everything falls away but the task at hand. *Yr* calls us to remember that focus, and apply it to the everyday, whether that be in the home, at work, or in our relationships with human and divine. Its beautiful and strong connotations in this verse, also have traditionally been taken to imply a Yew-bow, for that is the wood most venerated among the Anglo-Saxons as the ideal bow-wood - thus symbolically connecting this Rune in a mysterious way with both the *Eoh* (*Eihwaz*) rune, and the differently shaped *Yr*-rune in the Younger and Armanen systems.



## Ior

Iar byþ eafix and ðeah a bruceþ  
fodres on foldan, hafap fægerne eard  
wætre beworpen, ðær he wynnum leofap.

Iar is a river fish and yet it always  
feeds on land; it has a fair abode  
encompassed by water, where it lives in happiness.

The normal translation of *Ior* is an eel, though the description may actually be that of a crocodilian, giant salamander, or other reptile or amphibian species (which may also be the basis of the European dragon legends). Some have postulated that the river-fish "Ior" in question is actually Jormungandr, the Midgard Serpent, though the poem certainly paints a much different picture of it than is normally the case if that is true. This rune probably represents being content and at home in one's surroundings, and being well-adapted to the current circumstances. Notice that if you cut off the "tail" of this rune, it resembles the rune *Hagall* in the Younger Futhark and Armanen Futharkh - in which it is considered a positive rune of motherly nurturing and protection against calamity. This is likely not coincidental, for the prophesied death of the Midgard Serpent in Ragnarok is also the beginning of a new age of rebirth for Midgard itself.



## Ear

Ear byþ egle eorla gehwylcun,  
ðonn[e] fæstlice flæsc onginneþ,  
hraw colian, hrusan ceosan  
blac to gebeddan; bleða gedreosaþ,  
wynna gewitaþ, wera geswicaþ.

The grave is horrible to every knight,  
when the corpse quickly begins to cool  
and is laid in the bosom of the dark earth.  
Prosperity declines, happiness passes away  
and covenants are broken.

*Ear* ("yar") is the grave or the grave-marker, and deals with the duality of nature; as there is life and growth, so is there decay and decline. Many people view the Vanir, especially the most well-known ones, as merely being gods of life and fertility, peace and happiness. While that is certainly part of what they are, it is not all of it, especially for the older Vanir who are more primal and Jotun-like. Tacitus tells of the bloody nature of Nerthus' rites; Holda is said in folklore to steal children and eat them. Njordr can calm the storms, but also can deny harbor to ships, dooming them to the rocks. Not only are their natures involved with death, their very life cycle is dependent on it. Life cannot live without death; the seed must die to grow. Freyr goes to Hela every year to ensure that life continues, not knowing if she will allow him to return this time. Nerthus kills her own son every year in the name of death. Gullveig was willing to die and be reborn three times. The Vanir understand and embrace the importance of death, of the slow rotting and falling away, because without it, they could not exist as they do.

The following four runes, from the expanded Anglo-Saxon Futhorc of Northumbria, are not present in more southerly saxon realms in England or the Anglo-Frisian/continental variants of the rune row, and are not included in the Anglo-Saxon rune poem; their status as distinctly separate runes is contested (for example, Cweorð may possibly be an alternate form or derivation from Peorð). I have included them anyway, because I feel there are certain lessons that they have to share, regardless of their origins. You will notice that they can loosely correspond with the four elements of Wicca and Neo-paganism, as well as the four suits of the Tarot.



**Cweorð** - Fire-twirl (or Sword)

*Cweorð* is the Rune of Fire, but not the illuminating fire of *Cen* or the saving warmth of *Nyd* - this is the Pyre, the Wildfire that destroys homes and forests (of which we have seen much of in recent years). Though many of the other runes speak of destruction and death, none quite top this one. *Cweorð* teaches the lesson of Fire as Purifier - destruction of the old, the worn-out, the no-longer-useful to make way for the new, the way woodlands and prairies need occasional destruction to remain healthy. The very reason that this has been such a problem in recent years in the outer world is that we have decided we know better than nature, and have allowed deadbrush to build up through "overprotection" - by stopping smaller fires or otherwise inhibiting the natural processes. The Vanir, however, understand the necessity of that destruction, and urge those who would follow them to be open to the Pyre, to not repress and ignore those things we do not like, to not let them fester and build up, but instead give them up to the purifying flame. In some interpretations this Rune can also mean "sword" which makes sense linguistically - a twirling sword of flame and fire, calling to mind both the initiations of new knights/warriors (cutting or burning away all of the hesitation and weakness of their former selves) and the Icelandic symbolism of Surtur as wielding a giant fire-sword.



Calc - Cup/Chalice

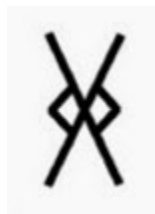


Another rune linked with water, *Calc* (and its alternate form, the starburst-like *Kalc*) speaks of reflection, of looking inward, of containing the free flow of Lagu into something useful. It can be the scrying bowl, the mirror pool in which answers are sought. But it can also be the peace-cup that is shared among friends and former enemies; the cauldron of Ægir comes to mind, as well as the story of Kvasir and the mead of Poetry. There is a danger, though, in relying too much on reflection, in that the person most easily deceived is oneself; divination is not set in stone, nor can peace be maintained without work. The converse of this is a symbol well-known in later European mythology - the Holy Cup, the Grail. This aspect of *Calc* is the idealism that fuels passion, that starts pilgrimages, that calls people to a higher cause and path. But just as the illumination of *Cen* can be twisted in *Calc*'s depths, so too can that idealism be hollow and without foundation. *Calc* is very powerful, but care must be taken that one does not fall into the trap of thinking its shallows are deeper than they seem.



Stan - Stone

The very word 'stone' brings to mind many qualities - rigid, steadfast, hard, grounded, immovable, secure, guarding, strong - what fortresses, walls and castles are built from. Stones can make secure walls, homes, weapons; they can also be dangerous - sailors fear the embrace of the rocks, where the breakers are, because just a brush can wreck a hull beyond repair. Even far from the sea, rocks can be troublesome, if they are in the field one is trying to plow. Mountains are obstacles to be climbed or passed around; caves and tunnels are deep depths that can collapse on the unwary. All of the Northumbrian runes have their dangers, and *Stan* (= German 'Stein') is no exception. But the major lesson that *Stan* has for us is the strength and power of steadfastness - loyalty in word and deed, perseverance in hardship, protection of the weak, resolve in the pursuit of frith - all the qualities that the Vanir hold dear. *Stan* also has an unusual double-dovetail shape, which can interlock with other *Stan* runes when stacked in staggered rows like bricks, and thus symbolically form an immovable and indestructible wall, also calling to mind the shield-walls of Germanic warriors in various nations. There is also a primal Indo-European context to this interlocking stone imagery, as the formations of the Roman *Testudo*, Macedonian *Phalanx*, Persian *Spahband*, and other historical "shield walls" were widespread, and even today the Persian Zur-khaneh martial arts system refers to a traditional shield-derived free-weight as a "sang" (stone) - a word still rather close to *Stan*. Locking together like stone walls, was the basis of wearing out an enemy and pushing to victory. This, above else, is the focus of Vanic virtues - unity of purpose is the "swarm" of nature's forces, the simplest force-multiplier; just as an arch cannot stand without the keystone, so do all the other runes mean less without the steadfastness and grounding of *Stan*, and the entire band of warriors is weaker without the discipline to lay aside their personal differences and work together like interlocking stones.



**Gar** - **Spear** (Odin's spear Gungnir)



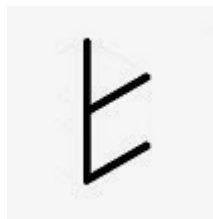
If *Peorð* is the rune of personal wyrd, *Gar* is the rune of Universal Wyrd, of the Well itself, the Great Tangle of Life. While the rune is named for Oðin's spear, which represents mastery of Wyrd and precise hitting of targets, which could decide the fate of battles, the glyph itself looks like a spider's web, signifying the interconnectedness of all life and individual wyrds that make up the Whole (in some forms of *Gar*, there is a complete square or rhombus in the center of the rune). That weaving in and out, the way that all strands of the web affect the others, is vitally important in this day and age, and the Vanir are well aware of that. We have long been disconnected from the cycles of Life and Death, and rampant individualism is the mantra of the modern world; the Vanir teach us that such concepts are anathema to both our health and the health of the world, that cutting ourselves off from the source of Life only leads to sickness and disease, the effects of which are well-advanced in modern culture.

### **The Armanen Futharkh**

The Armanen Futharkh is both the newest and the oldest of the four Runic systems. It was officially published in 1908 by Guido von List, the most prominent Rune-master of his generation, and the central figure in the revival of the Germanic pre-Christian esoteric traditions. However the true origins of these runes [go back far further](#), at least as far as the [Elder](#) and [Younger](#) Futharks, and likely far further to the very beginnings of Nordic civilization before the Migration Age. The Armanen Rune-row is the only one which contains precisely 18 runes, the same number mentioned and described by Odin in the *Hávamál*. And despite what many ignorant "purist" camps today claim, it is indeed a valid and historically based rune row. The first sixteen runes are simplified versions of the Younger Futhark, many of them identical to their Elder Futhark forms; and the last two are very primitive ancestral "branch" forms of the Elder Futhark runes *Ehwaz* and *Gebo* (rendered as *Eh* and *Gibor* in the Armanen system). Based on his decades of Runic research and meditation, confirmed by the *Runenmeisteren* of Clan Lauterer who initiated him formally into Armanenschaft, Meister List considered these runes to be the same [18 Sacred Runes of Odin mentioned in the \*Hávamál\*](#), and that all other Rune-rows ultimately derived from these. From the Armanen point of view, the Elder Futhark were the Runes of the Germanic farmer class (*Ingvonen*), pertaining to seasons and harvests; the [Anglo-Saxon Futhorc](#) (and related local Rune-rows in Frisia and Thuringia) were Runes of the warrior class (*Ostivanen* or *Istaevonen*), with their later staves being related to ramparts, spears, ceremonial chalices and oaths of fealty. The Armanen Futharkh, in this understanding, are thus the Runes of the priest or mystic class (*Armanen* or *Irminen*), the highest and most elite Rune-row of them all, being also the 18 Runes of the *Hávamál* mentioned by Wotan or Odin (whose most commonly used title in Germania was *Irmin* or *Arman* - the 'strong one', the 'arising one', the 'ideal' - which the priests emulated). The Younger Futhark were thus an incomplete (though still

powerful) Viking-age attempt by Norse mystics (*Vitkar*) and skalds to revive these same 18 Odinic Runes of the *Hávamál*.

The following are the Armanen Runes along with their corresponding *Hávamál* verse below ([Gorgani translation](#)), and the Rune meanings to the side, largely based on Larry Camp's 2009 book *A Handbook of Armanen Runes*, which includes the most common accepted Armanen Rune meanings compiled from the primary Armanen authors (Guido von List, Rudolf Gorsleben, Siegfried Kummer, Karl Spiesberger, etc.) Keep in mind that the superficial meanings of some Runes, while sometimes omitted by Armanen Masters, are NOT necessarily invalid for the Armanen system. *Ur* can still refer to the Aurochs, as *Thorn* and *Tyr* refer to famous Aesir gods, as they did in the Elder and Younger Futharks - but in a metaphorical sense (as they always did; Asatruars and other followers of the Norse tradition are always quick to point out that they do not take the lore and mythology 100% literally - the Continental Armanen tradition also applies the same fact to the outer, *apparent* meanings of Runes). The 18 Runes can be [interpreted](#) as positive ("bright stave") or negative ("murk-stave") [depending on their position/orientation](#) when cast onto a cloth or drawn from a bag. The positive positions (see chart at the bottom of this post) can be interpreted as either exoteric or esoteric. More advanced rune casting methods which discriminate between these two positive meaning sets are a subject for another time. **NOTE: all of the Armanen rune images on this page are my original work. ASK before using them.**



## FA

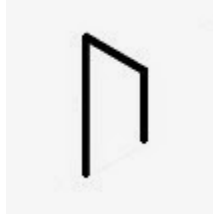
Exoteric: Changes, new beginnings, growth, change of residence, travel, animals, movable possessions/wealth, fire.

Esoteric: Original fire, creative father principle, guidance, help, Father-God principle.

Negative: Set-backs, failures, destruction, blockage.

*Those songs I know,  
that no King's Queen knows,  
nor any man's son:*

*Help, the first is called,  
which will [bring] thee help,  
with all woes and sorrows  
and certainly all strife. (Hávamál, verse 146)*



## UR

Exoteric: That which is permanent, that which lasts, good fortune, money, physician, medical help, healing powers.

Esoteric: Original cause, origin, root of all cosmic and material phenomena, contact with the transcendent, contact with the dead, life after physical death, Mother-God/creative mother principle.

Negative: Instability, bad influence, disease, ignorance.

*I know the second,  
which is needful for men's sons,  
in those who would live as healers;  
[-----  
-----  
-----] (Hávamál, verse 147)*



## THORN

Exoteric: Will to act, setting of goal, power to become.

Esoteric: Return, new emergence from the apparently old and dried-up, formative power of the seed.

Negative: Demonic influence, damage, deception, perishing, enemies.

*I know the third:  
if my need becomes great,  
for a chain to halt my foes;  
The edges I blunt  
of mine enemies' [swords];  
leave no bite to their weapons nor staves! (Hávamál, verse 148)*



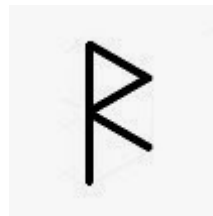
## OS

Exoteric: Speech, discussion, charm, success as a speaker, Aesir, God-speech, breath which evolves, suggestion, freedom, uterus.

Esoteric: Idea of that which is given, of that which is evolving.

Negative: Ill fortune, failure of the word/work, negative suggestions, misuse of knowledge and wisdom.

*I know the fourth:  
if men burden me  
[with] shackles on the joints of my limbs;  
Such do I sing,  
that I may go free,  
[it] springs the fetters from my feet,  
and the halter from my hands. (Hávamál, verse 149)*



## RIT

Exoteric: Right, order, the judge, advice, salvation, money, truth.

Esoteric: Original law, that which flows away, religious feeling, ritual action.

Negative: Injustice, lawlessness, violent act, black magick practice.

*I know the fifth:  
if I see, by foes shot,  
a shaft speeding through the folk;  
Fly it never so strongly,  
yet I can still stop it,  
if I see but a glimpse of its flight. (Hávamál, verse 150)*



## KA

Exoteric: Art, capability, artist, genius, being favored, that which is established.

Esoteric: Female principle of the universe, as executive power of balancing justice.

Negative: Refused procreation, injustice, decay, incapability.

*I know the sixth:  
if a Thane would harm me  
with the root of a moist tree,  
and that man  
upon me curses speaks;  
Then their harms eat him rather than me. (Hávamál, verse 151)*



## HAGAL

Exoteric: That which cares for, maintains, preserves, protects; that which is motherly; wisdom, harmony, salvation, blessing, protects from hail and fire.

Esoteric: Eternal change, caring and maintaining principle in the universe, Higher Self, God in us.

Negative: Exposed to ill fortune, not protected, bad weather, destruction by storm, hail, and fire.

*I know the seventh:  
if I see on high, blazing,  
a hall over the bench-companions;  
Burn it never so brightly,  
yet I can still save it -  
I know how to sing that song. (Hávamál, verse 152)*



## NOT

Exoteric: The Inevitable, separation, stress, karmic debt, karmic need, but with outlook for change of karma, banishing ill fortune/strife by accepting karma & cooperating with karmic law.

Esoteric: Decision of the Norns, karma paid for, cause-effect flow.

Negative: No hope for change, exposed to fate due to revolt against karmic nature, inevitable fall and decline, ultimate negation.

*I know the eighth,  
which all can  
likewise find useful to take:  
Where hatred waxes  
'midst the warrior's sons,  
with that [song] I settle it soon. (Hávamál, verse 153)*



## IS

Exoteric: Self-aware ego, positive attitude, activity, will, self-domination, influence, magick, personal power, to banish evil.

Esoteric: Unity in the universe, duration, magickal powers, action in the cosmos.

Negative: Passivity, lack of will, being dominated, medium and mediumistic

activity (being possessed by another).

*I know the ninth:  
if my need does arise  
to save my ship afloat;  
The wind I calm  
upon the waves,  
and soothe all the sea [to rest]. (Hávamál, verse 154)*



## AR

Exoteric: All that which is beautiful and Sun-like, change to good, virtues, honor, glory, rewarding work. Banishes darkness.

Esoteric: Completion, light, Divine spirit, Sun.

Negative: Ugly, sterility, corruption to evil, shame.

*I know the tenth:  
if I see witches  
ride and sport in the air;  
I so make it  
that they madly flee,  
home from their own hides,  
[and] home from their own minds! (Hávamál, verse 155)*



## SIG

Exoteric: Victory, success, gain, triumph, achieved goal, school.

Esoteric: Salvation by light, inspiration, soul, power of the sun.

Negative: Destructive light, lightning, hopeless fight, defeat, failure, exploitation,

blocked soul powers.

*I know the eleventh:  
if I shall to war  
lead my long-time friends;  
Under the shields I sing it,  
and they, with power, fare forth -  
safe to the battle,  
safe from the battle,  
they come [back] safe from wherever. (Hávamál, verse 156)*



## TYR

Exoteric: Beginning, creation, excitation, power, success, wisdom, duties fulfilled, art/act of concealment and hiding.

Esoteric: Re-birth into the light - life of the soul, the power to make situations turn completely around. The phoenix reborn.

Negative: Perverted beginnings, tarnished beginnings, falsified knowledge, failures, dying.

*I know the twelfth:  
if I see up in a tree  
a corpse in a noose, hanging;  
Such [a song] I carve  
and paint in Runes,  
that the man descends  
and speaks with me. (Hávamál, verse 157)*





# BAR

Exoteric: Becoming, birth, being protected, help in birth, son, bread, song, fountain, mountains, Birch tree (layers of safety).

Esoteric: Meaning of life on this planet, in this world.

Negative: Not-becoming, perverted birth, miscarriage, lost son, bitter bread, vulnerability, outcast, vain wishes, death-bed.

*I know the thirteenth:*

*if I shall, a warrior's young son*

*sprinkle with water;*

*He will not fall,*

*though to him, battle comes -*

*never will the man sink before sword! (Hávamál, verse 158)*



# LAF

Exoteric: Life, experience, initiation, test, temptations by life circumstances, water, sea, good management, natures of things.

Esoteric: Test of life, school of the lives, laws of nature, relations.

Negative: Succumb to temptation, deception by mate, failure to learn from mistakes, downfall, emptiness, corpse.

*I know the fourteenth:*

*if I shall to men's folk*

*tell of the gods, 'fore them;*

*Aesir and elves,*

*I know all their nature*

*such as none know, if untaught. (Hávamál, verse 159)*



# MAN

Exoteric: Man, increase, masculinity, health, plenty, magick.

Esoteric: Spirit, truth, God-Man, male principle in cosmos.

Negative: Demonic spirituality, left path, growth through improper practices, black magick.

*I know the fifteenth,  
which Folk-stirrer (Volkrast) sang,  
the dwarf, 'fore the doors of Dawn:  
Strength he sang to the Aesir,  
and courage to the elves,  
and wisdom to the Roaring-God. (Hávamál, verse 160)*



# YR

Exoteric: Woman, femininity, desire, sensual love, passion, perfection.

Esoteric: Woman, mother, chaos from which creation emerges, female principle in cosmos, God-Woman.

Negative: Perversion, unbounded passion, error, maya, failures as a result of wrong action.

*I know the sixteenth:  
if I wish from a witty maid  
to have all love and delight;  
The heart I turn  
of the white-armed woman,  
and I change her entire mind. (Hávamál, verse 161)*



## EH

Exoteric: Marriage, wedding, partnership, permanent bond, binding decision, hope, duration, horse.

Esoteric: Permanence and marriage as a law, unity of ego and YOU, sister-souls, soul love, God-Man-Woman.

Negative: Mismatch, unlucky love, ego and you can not find each other due to karma, prevented from finding your partner.

*I know the seventeenth,*

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*that my [love], none will coldly shun,  
even the shy maiden. (Hávamál, verse 162)*



## GIBOR

Exoteric: Fulfillment, giver, gift, sacred marriage, being ONE with the sister soul, protection against evil forces.

Esoteric: God-all, death-life cycle, seeing of the Divine, Being the Divine, union of Creator and created, deepest cosmic mysteries.

Negative: Vain desires for fulfillment, hopeless search for soul mates, god-lessness.

*I know the eighteenth  
which I'll never teach  
to maid, nor man's wife;  
- all is better  
if one doth know it;*

thus follows the songs' end -  
*Except to her alone  
who holds me in her arms,  
or else my sister be. (Hávamál, verse 164)*

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*Now are the High-One's words  
spoken in the High-One's hall,  
all-needful to the sons of men,  
woeful to the sons of giants;  
Hail to him who spoke!  
Hail to him who knows it!  
Use, thou that took it in!  
Exalted be they that listened! (Hávamál, verse 165)*