

# Adulruna



The Runic Alchemy of  
Johannes Bureus





# Ædulruna

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Johannes Bureus



TRADITION



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*Johannes Bureus  
and the Adulruna*

Edred Thorsson



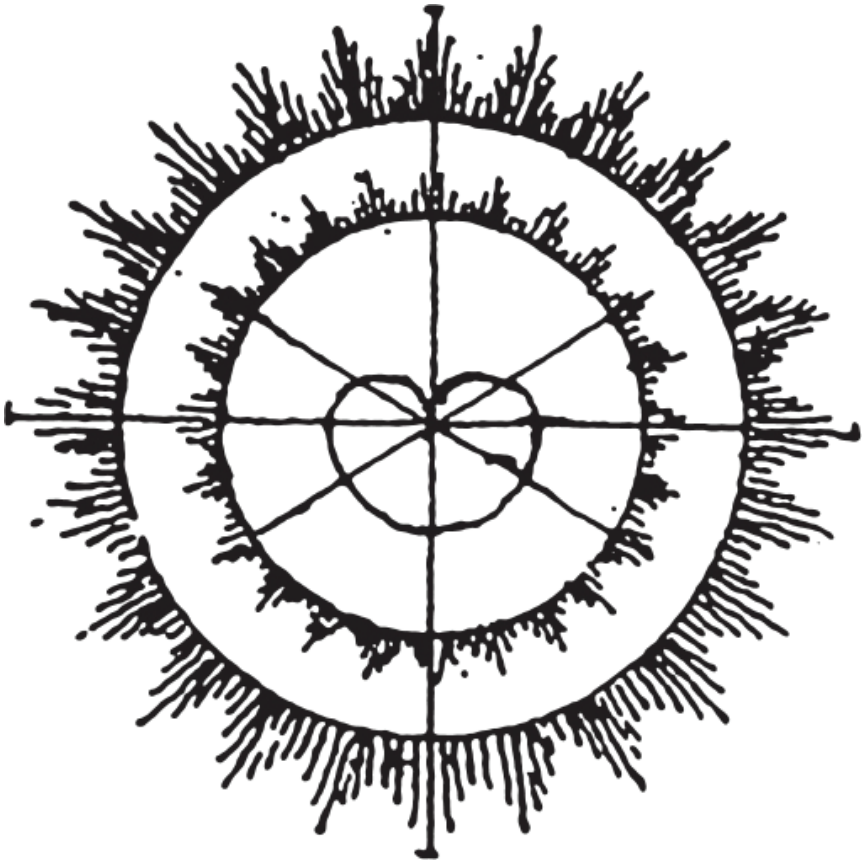


Fig. 3.2. The symbol of Bure's *Adulruna*

It is as an early practitioner of what can be called radical runology that we wish to approach the figure of Johannes Thomæ Agrivillensis Bureus (= I.T.A.B.), as his full name appears in the Latinized version that was fashionable in his day. As we briefly move through his life and work, remember that here we have a man living and thriving within the circles of power close to the royal Swedish government a scant four centuries after the destruction of the “heathen” temple at Uppsala. Interest in a nationalistic Swedish (Gothic) Renaissance had already been ignited by his predecessor, Johannes Magnus, but it was Bure who would synthesize the intellectual precision of scholarship with the inspired passions of magical enthusiasm. From our “postmodern” perspective we must forgive Bure his spiritual intransigence in the paradigms (myths) and terminology of Christianity. As one comes to understand who and what Bure was, one comes to see that his

words encode deeper meanings than perhaps even he was fully able to grasp or articulate at the time.

## THE LIFE OF JOHAN BURE

Johan Bure was born on March 25, 1568, at Åkerby, about one mile northwest of Uppsala, Sweden. The child was christened Johannes Thomæ Agrivillensis Bureus. His father was the Lutheran parish priest of Åkerby, and his maternal grandfather had also been a priest.

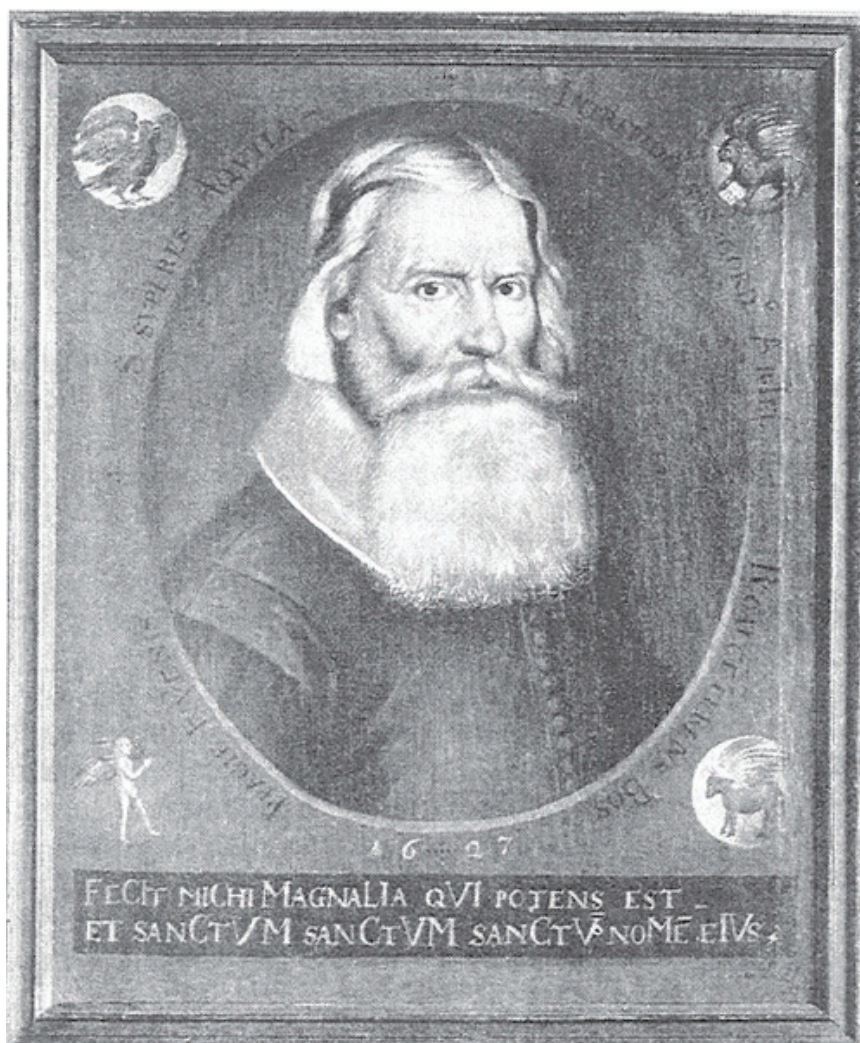




Fig. 3.3. A portrait of Johan Bure from 1627

In 1570, Johan's father died and his mother remarried another parish priest that same year. But she, too, would die just ten years later. Johan's stepfather was kind to the boy and supported him in his early schooling.

By the time young Johan was nine years old, he was in school under Magister Olaus Andreae in Uppsala. At the age of fifteen he went to Stockholm to study at King Johan's Collegium under Ericus Schepperus. In 1590 he received a position in the chancellery of the collegium.

Throughout the years he continued to learn various languages: besides the Latin that was basic to all education at the time, he learned Hebrew (beginning as early as 1584) and Greek. He even began teaching himself Arabic at the age of sixty.

At the time when he received his position in the chancellery, his interest was piqued in all sorts of antiquities. By the next year, 1591, these interests had developed a mystical tendency. In the summer of that year he read the Latin grimoire known as the *Arbatel* or *De Magia Veterum* (On the Magic of the Ancients), and he developed an enthusiasm for the Kabbalah. Perhaps it was contact with the family of his first wife, Margareta, whom he married in January of 1591, which set Bure's mind in this direction. Margareta's father, Mårten Bång, was involved with certain occult pursuits. These ended badly for him as he was beheaded for heresy in 1601. Bång had instructed a certain woman on occult teachings, who then began to report publicly on her "heavenly journeys." The contents of these reports were judged to be heretical so she was burned and Bång, who was charged with being her instructor, was beheaded. This story demonstrates the mortal danger from established authorities that such interests could incur at this time.

In 1593, Bure received a new position as *corrector* (editor) of religious publications. This necessitated a move from Stockholm to Uppsala. But just before he left Stockholm, he visited the Franciscan cloister on Riddarholm (a small island that lies within Gamla stan, the city's old town area) to assess material in the library there. While on this visit, he caught sight of an ancient runestone that had been set in the threshold of a door. The practice of removing stones from their original places to be used as building materials (especially for churches) had been fairly common in medieval Sweden. Of course, Bure had been familiar with the sight of runestones in the countryside from his childhood, as the region around Uppsala is scattered with hundreds of such stones. But when he saw *this* stone it is said that "his curiosity was awakened" (Hildebrand 1910, 75).

From that time forward Bure focused much attention on learning the language reflected in the stones and on the mystical significance of the runic characters themselves. It is said that he went into the “backward”—or culturally conservative—province of Dalarna to the northwest of Uppsala and there learned to read runic characters from the farmers in the region. This is quite credible because farmers in that region were still known to be using runes into the nineteenth century, three hundred years after Bure’s time.

Throughout the period of his government service, which was not a well-paid position, Bure earned extra income with handicrafts—he made copper-plate engravings, inscriptions in stone, and repaired clocks.

By 1595, at the age of twenty-seven, Bure formally entered the university at Uppsala, where he began to study theology. He was promised the parish of Börstil in northern Uppland, but he never took the final step of becoming a priest. During the time of his studies, he traveled to the south, visiting both Germany and Italy. Bure also began an extensive expedition to record runestones in the Swedish countryside. He set out on August 8, 1599, and concluded the trip on April 5, 1600. In 1602 he was named professor in the *artes liberales* by Duke Karl. His teaching fields were to be *runska* (Runic Studies) and Hebrew.

The following year Duke Karl ascended to the throne of Sweden and became King Karl IX. The king then named Bure as his “antiquarian,” although no formal government post had previously existed for this function. Karl was intensely interested in Swedish prehistory, both for its own spiritual sake and for the political advantages that could be derived from the results of such studies.

An example of this latter use of prehistory can be seen in connection with the Mora stones from a parish southeast of Uppsala (fig. 3.4). Karl sent Bure to investigate this group of carved stones that bore not only runes but also a representation of the triple crown insignia of the Swedish monarch. The legitimacy of such a find would demonstrate the great antiquity of the Swedish royal house (since it was believed that the runes were, or could be, antediluvian) as well as the ancient hegemony of Sweden over the other two Scandinavian countries (Denmark and Norway). Such a stone monument indeed exists, but the crowns were obviously carved at a much later date than the runic inscription.



Fig. 3.4. The Mora stones

In 1604, Bure began taking part in the instruction of the young crown prince, Gustav Adolf, and thus a friendship was inaugurated that would last for three decades.

Throughout the first few years of the 1600s, Bure's work on the exoteric interpretation and esoteric significance of the runes was intense. By 1599 he had completed a copper engraving titled *Runakänslones lärospån* (Runology Chart), which was meant to instruct on how to read runic inscriptions (fig. 3.5). This was followed with several other manuscripts, culminating in 1603 with the *Runaräfst* (Rune Investigation), a scientific study of runelore. By 1605 the first version of his masterpiece of runic esotericism, *Adulruna Rediviva* (Noble-rune Resurrected), was complete. However, it must be noted that this, like so many of Bure's other works, was never published in the conventional sense. Over the decades that followed he would revise this text many times until 1642, when he himself deemed it ready to go to a printer.

To appreciate fully the pioneering character of Bure's work, one must realize that relatively little was known about the runes or Norse mythology at the beginning of the 1600s. Bure and his contemporary rival, the Dane

Ole Worm (Olaus Wormius), had virtually initiated the academic study of runes, and, as far as mythology was concerned, the *Codex Riegus*, a manuscript containing the corpus of poems that would come to be called the *Poetic* or *Elder Edda*, would only be discovered in 1643. For these reasons, as well as the general cultural and religious climate in which Bure found himself, we can perhaps forgive him what now might seem to be wild eccentricities. It was simply a matter of not having quality primary sources readily at hand.

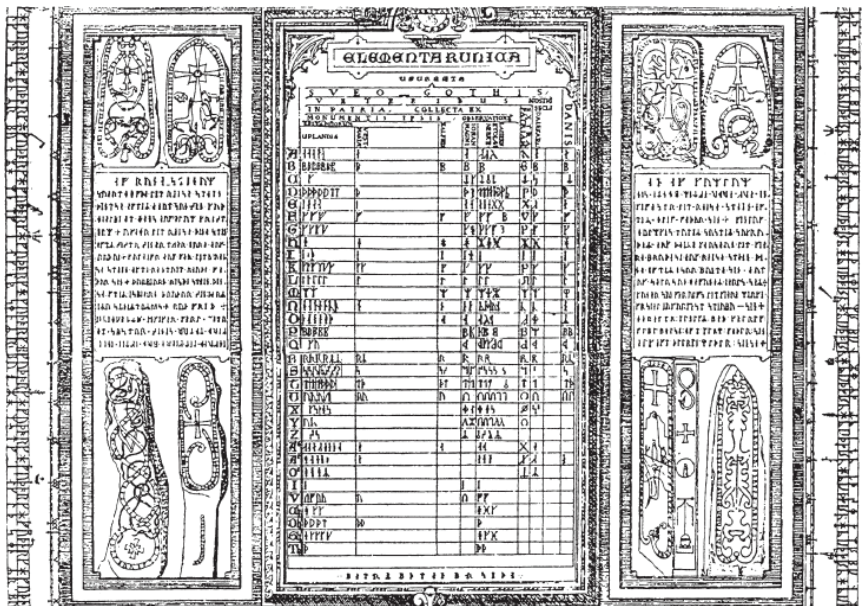


Fig. 3.5. Detail of Bure's runology chart, *Runakänslones lärospån* (1599), with illustrations of runestones and runestaves together with interpretations of rune rows

One conclusion reached by Bure in his studies during the first decade of the 1600s was that the runes had been suppressed by the Christians and that a return of the use of the runes was tantamount to a return of the Swedes to a place of honor. In this idea there is an implicit neo-heathenry. Bure went on to write and have published *Runa ABC-boken* (The Rune ABC Book; 1611), which served as a handbook to teach contemporary Swedes how to write their language in runes.

It is at the time of the publication of *Runa ABC-boken* that Bure becomes a regular companion of Gustav Adolf (Gustavus Adolfus). He con-

tinued to instruct his royal patron on matters of both Swedish prehistory and esoteric matters until the latter's departure for battle in Germany in the midst of the Thirty Years' War in 1630. This book may have aided Swedish forces in using runes as a military code in Europe during this war (Enoksen 1998, 184).

The second decade of the 1600s saw a deepening of Bure's work in the esoteric. He mysteriously refers to the year 1613 as the time when he says that he "received knowledge concerning the hidden truth, and when I found it, I knew it to be my duty to become its apostle" (quoted in Hildebrand 1910, 75). Evidence seems to point to the *Rosicrucian* nature of his enlightenment.

Historians of the Rosicrucian movement will not be disturbed by the dates here, for although the first Rosicrucian manifesto, the *Fama Fraternitatis* (The Story of the Brotherhood), was not published as a printed document until 1614, it had circulated in manuscript form at least as early as 1612 (see Yates 1978, 41). It is not necessary to assume that the contents of the *Fama* alone exercised this influence on Bure. It is more likely that since Bure was intimately connected to the international Protestant esoteric intelligentsia through his personal relationships with Kings Karl IX and Gustavus Adolfus, he was exposed not only to potent manuscripts but also to oral teachings of what might best be described as proto-Rosicrucianism.

Let me hasten to add that we are not left to speculate as to Bure's Rosicrucian connections. In 1616 there appeared a Latin poem under the title *Ara foederis theraphici F.X.R. assertioni Fraternitatis R.C. quam Roseae Crucis vocant, consecrata* (Altar of the Theraphic [= Physicians'] Brotherhood F[raternitatis] C[rucis] R[oseae], dedicated to the Assertion of the Fraternity R. C., which they call the Rosy Cross). On the last page of the eighteen-page document there appeared a text actually *signed* by Johannes Bureus.

It would, I think, also be a mistake to assume that Bure and his royal companion were passive participants in the Rosicrucian adventure. However, Bure's version of these teachings seemed, at their deepest levels, to be related to the symbolism of the runes.

According to Bure there was something exalted and hidden about the runes—there were ordinary runes (as used to carve on stones), but there were also *adulrunor* (or *adelrunor*), "noble-runes," which behaved in ways he compares to Egyptian hieroglyphics or Hebrew letters. A good idea of how this system worked can be gained from the synopsis of the contents of *Adulruna Rediviva* in the next section of the present work. The essential



idea of the *adulrunor* was in place by 1605, but the esoteric realizations of 1613 in a certain way completed the picture for him. Many of Bure's ideas appear related to those of the English philosopher John Dee (1527–1593) on a multiplicity of levels.

In 1616 he delved deeper into the mysteries with the production of a short text titled *Buccina veteris iubilei* (The Old Jubilee Trumpet). This is an esoteric text that Bure used as a focus for his teachings. He began to gather group after group of students to whom he transmitted the mysteries of the text. Students even came from Germany, which brought him in direct contact with Prince August of Anhalt in Saxony, who is known to have had interest in the secret sciences.

The 1620s were a period of intense scholarly activity for Bure. In 1624 he published the first edition of *Monumenta Sveogothica hactenus exculpta* (The Hitherto Carved Suedo-Gothic Monuments), which was the first attempt to create a scientific collection and edition of the vast corpus of runic monuments in Sweden.

This period was, of course, also rich with esoteric discoveries and explorations. Bure came under increasing attacks for his heretical ideas, but he was solidly supported by the royal house against any and all critics, the majority of whom were members of the Lutheran clergy.

A fair amount of Bure's new esoteric work at this time centered on dreams and their interpretation. One interesting anecdote reported in Bure's diaries, which are fairly extensive and detailed for this period of his life, relates how Gustav Adolf told Bure of a dream he had in which one of his boyhood tutors by the name of Henrik Horn appeared and the king took him to be Satan himself. In the dream the king asked "Horn" if he believed in Jesus Christ, and the figure answered "No" and said he had received a new revelation. What is most interesting is that Bure interprets the dream figure of "Horn" as a stand-in for himself. This darkly reveals Bure's own self-conception.

In 1626, Bure's first wife, Margareta, died. Together they had conceived eight children—almost all of whom died in childhood. The sad circumstances of his children's mortality grieved him greatly. Bure was a man of emotion and sentiment. His diaries reveal his grief over his dog, Sultan, who was killed by wolves.

On May 20, 1630, King Gustav Adolf officially created the *Riksantikvariet*, the National Office of Antiquities, and named his friend and mentor, Johan Bure, as its first head, the *riksantikvarie* (National Antiquary).<sup>\*3</sup> Just

a few weeks later the king departed for the battlefields of Germany, where he and his Swedish troops would turn the tide of fighting in the Thirty Years' War. The antiquarian-mystic was with his friend and student up until just a few hours before the warrior-king departed. Sadly, Bure would never see his friend again, as the king was killed at the Battle of Lützen in 1632.

In 1636, when Bure was sixty-eight years old, he remarried. He and his new wife had one child, whom he named Margareta. But she, too, was to die in childhood.

Bure remained active as *riksantikvarie* until 1648, when he had to leave his post due to failing health. He spent the last years of his life as an invalid, though he continued to dictate works to the last. He died at his longtime home at Vårdsätra on October 22, 1652.

## BURE'S CONCEPT OF *ADULRUNA*

Bure begins his *Adulruna Rediviva* by laying out the function of the runic system as a *mediator* between the divine and human levels of existence. He says that the *creative word* of God is a mediator between God and his creations and that in the human realm this is mirrored in *languages*, which act as mediators between speakers and listeners. This notion is extended then to *writing*, which is also God-given, as a mediator between writers and readers. Bure notes that Jesus uses a metaphor by which he refers to himself as a writing system: "I am the Alpha (A) and the Omega (Ω)" (Revelation 1:8). Bure also refers to a *stone* as the most noble and lasting of all things. Clearly, then, a *runestone* is more than just an archaeological artifact for Bure—it is a *mediator* between the divine and human minds.

According to Bure, everything that exists is either creative or created, but between them there is another level, which is creation. This is the creative process itself. For this reason, Bure states that the originators of the runic system made the rune row in three groups of five staves. The first group of five is designated as the progenitor (Sw. *födare*), the second as that of generation (Sw. *födelse*), and the third as that of the generated (Sw. *foster*). Here we find the reason why Bure did not want to recognize *ᚱ* as an independent rune. Only with its identification with *ᚱ* can the number of runes be reduced to fifteen.

Although Bure was somewhat familiar with the newly reemerging data on the runes—such as their traditional shapes, names, and the poetic stanzas attached to each—he dismissed this information as exoteric and relied on

his subjective vision to unlock the secrets of the *adulrunor*. This accounts for the non-traditional elements in the system of *Adulruna Rediviva*. It must be kept in mind that what little was known and had been published about the runes from ancient manuscripts appeared after Bure had already codified the essentials of his esoteric system. This codification took place between 1605 and 1613.

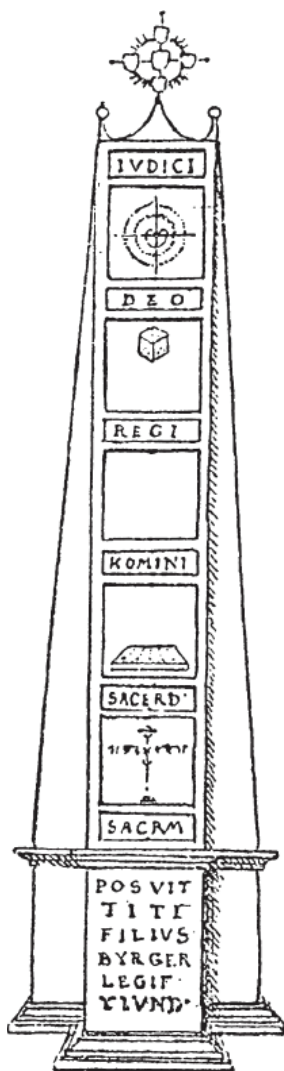


Fig. 3.6. Bure's illustrative runic monument



## BURE'S RUNOLOGY

Bure's runology is represented in table 3.1, the left side of which was printed in his 1611 text *Runa ABC-boken* (p. 11). It shows both the *adul-runor* and the common runes used in writing, which Bure is interested in formulating for use in writing modern Swedish. (The section at right presents another more readable version of Bure's table.)

TABLE 3.1. BURE'S RUNOLOGY


*Runa ABC according to the Swedish ordering*


Alphabetum Scanzianum ordine proprio. <sup>1</sup>			
F	Frey.	F. F/v consona.	1
l	Vr.	h/v. n/v. n/y. h/d.	3
q	Tors.	T / th. p / dh.	5
h	Odhes.	f / o. i / d. k / t / d.	7
c	Rydhur.	R / r. h / r / er fin.	9
Y	Kyn.	Y / t / c. Y / Y / g / q.	10
h	Haghal.	H / Gh / Ch.	30
h	Nadh.	N. I / n fin. f / dn.	50
I	Idher.	I voc. I / j. i / i / e.	70
h	Æru.	Æ. i / a. i / an.	90
r	Sun.	S pr. i / s. i / f / ss.	100
1	Tidhr.	T. t / u. t / d.	300
q	Byrghal.	g / b. f / B / p.	500
f	Lagher.	L. f / ll.	700
ψ	Man.	M. ψ / mm.	900

Fräy	F. v consonant.
Ur	h u. v cons. h y. h ä
Thors	Th. p dh. p dhdh
Odhes	f o. i ä. k t ö
Rydhur	R r. h r final
Kön	k c. g q.
Haghall	H Gh Ch
Nädh	N n final h n. t ä n
Idher	I vowel j cons. f e.
Äru	Ä. a.
Sun	S pr. f s s med. ss
Tydhur	T. t tt in fi. t d.
Byrghal	B. p p in pr. alias p f
Lagher	L. f ll
Man	M. ψ mm

## BURE'S INTERPRETATION OF THE RUNESTAVES

 is Freyja's (*Fröja*) stave. *Fröja* meant *fru* (lady) in the older language. This comes from *frö* (seed), having to do with fertility, and from this the word *fröken* (young lady) is derived. In the runerhymes it is called *fä* (beast; cattle; fool), having to do with abundance. This can be compared to Hebrew *aleph* meaning "ox."

 (*ur*) signifies the force of origin and expansion. It corresponds to: (1) Latin *ab* or *ex*; (2) the *ur-* in *urväder* (bad weather; hard wind with

snow or rain); and (3) the *ur-* in *urverk* (clockwork), which signifies motion.



is linked with the name of Thursday and is the most important sign of *freedom*, because *tōras* (to dare) means to venture out, which is also connected to *tōrna* (to turn back to shore). Bure links this rune with many geographical features in and around Sweden showing where borders between peoples change or meet.



is connected with the name of Oden's day (Sw. *onsdag*) and is called the Odin-stave (*Mercurii litera*) or the Öden-stave (stave of fate = *fati litera*). Otherwise it is also connected to *öde* (fate), and *öud*, which indicates "possession." Bure claims that those who say "Wednesday" or "woensdag," and so forth, have forfeited their rights to use the rune script.



stands for *råda* (to advise, rede), ride, rudder (by which a ship is controlled). It is a sign of dominion and justice (*rätt* = right). Bure identifies the ʀ as the *original* form of R used in final position. The ʀ shows a straight line descending right down between the two arches. *Råda* was exiled to the end of the row, outside the fifteen-rune system, and designated with the ordinary name *stupmadher* (inverted man).



is the sign of sex (*kōn*) or kin. It is the *generosæ naturæ litera* (stave of noble nature). A shack ʀ is inverted to ʀ, which shows the stave's original kingly character, linked also to the concept of ability (*kunna*).



is called *hagel* (hail), that which encloses (Sw. *hagar*) everything and/or makes everything that is most favorable (Sw. *haglek* = art and craft) and protected (Sw. *hagelig*).



bears either the name *nöd* (need) or *nåd* (grace). Bure sees the shape of the stave as an illustration of the relationship between the two alternate names and concepts of *nöd* (need/distress) and *nåd* (grace; gift), in that grace is shown by the raised stroke on the right side (note the subjective perspective here) and distress by the downward stroke as one moves to the right.

is defined as *poenitentiae litera* (stave of repentance) due to its simplicity, or as the *studii litera* (stave of pursuits). Bure notes offhandedly that the poems refer to it as "ice."

Bure notes, has a variety of sound values and hence must have a variety of names. Among these he counts *sära* (honor/glory), *år* (year), *andari* (eagle). He provides a list of Latin glosses: *gloria* (glory), *perpetua requies* (eternal rest), *litus* (shore), *aquila* (eagle), *annus* (year), *amona* (yearly produce, harvest), and *sufficientia* (plenty). The shape of the stave illustrates its meaning as glory ending in tranquillity, because the stroke is raised forward moving to the right, the reversal of *nöd* (need).

is the sun-stave, and the son-stave. The sun is named after the light created on Sunday—the sun is linked with the Son of Light. To this stave belong the words *sona* (to make amends), *sunar* (to be forgiven by the Son), *andransuna* (to redeem that which has been stolen). The poems speak of the sun as the highest in heaven. T is called “hanging sun” because the rune hangs from the back of the serpent S. This latter form, says Bure, was adapted from the Greek Σ and is called “kneeling sun.”


is the tide-stave (cf. Tuesday). It signifies time and holidays or ceremonial divine services. In ancient times priests were called *tidmän* (“time men”) and *tijar* (“godly ones”). The name *tak* (roof) is used because of the shape of the stave. This is also connected to the tar torch and whip (swingle).

*byrkal* = *byr-karl* is the one who is lord over the farmsteads; or *byrgall* (*byrg-all*), which contains everything and is contained in everything. It corresponds to the beginning (*börja*). As a compound of *byr* + *ger*, the name indicates the patron of the home, fatherland, or city. Some translate the name as “son of war,” as we know the *ger-man* is a “man of war.”

= lays, law. The name of Saturday, which Bure calls the seventh day of the week, is *lördag* (wash day) in Swedish. This comes from *lög* (bath). Also, law (*lex*) comes from *laga* (to arrange), so law is connected to laying. Also note the connection with *sam-lag* (sexual intercourse) and *hjone-lag* (connubial union).

is the last rune of the row in Bure’s system. Because it is the runesound [m], made with the lips closed, that “closes the mouth.” It is linked with *Mön*



day, and so to the Moon, and to man. The form of the stave indicates a man with two uplifted arms or, as on some stones, a man scratching his head .





These interpretations of the meanings of individual runestaves are a mixture of philological evidence, folk etymology, and Bure's own spiritual insights. It is unknown how many of Bure's ideas are derived from the lore of the farmers and learned men of Dalarna, from whom he is known to have learned something of the runes. It is also curious to note that some of the more speculative innovations found in the Armanen system of Guido von List seem to have some parallels in the ideas of Bure. These parallels are not likely to have resulted from List and others having read Bure's works, because the latter were never widely published or translated.

## THE ESOTERIC RUNOLOGY OF BUREUS'S *ADUL-RUNOR*

Exoteric runology is concerned with the inner meanings of the runestaves used for writing ordinary language, but it is seen that this is a reflection of the esoteric runology of the *adulrunor*. So, the *adulrunor*, as delineated by Bure, are not identical in form to the *uppenbara runor* (evident or ordinary runes).

The fifteen *adulrunor* are said to be inscribed on a cubical stone that fell from heaven as a sign of the powerful divinity of the mediator between God and Man (fig. 3.7 shows Bure's own illustration of this stone). On three of the sides of the cube there are groups of five staves organized in the form of a cross.

Again we see the typical Burean system of  $3 \times 5$ . The forms of the staves of the *adulrunor* are often quite different from ordinary versions of the staves. The difference is often a matter of rotating the stave ninety degrees, or the use of the rare Helsinga rune-forms for  $\Omega$  and  $\mathbb{R}$ , which are  and , respectively. In the first quintet the five signs appear:

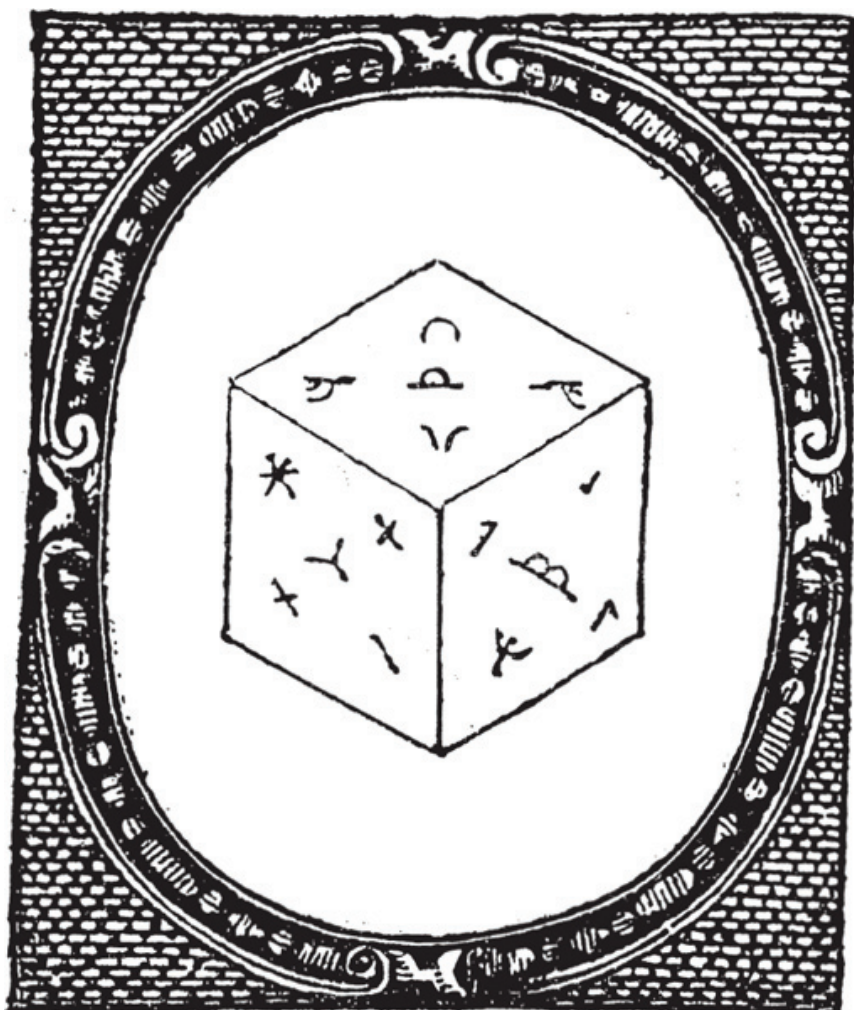
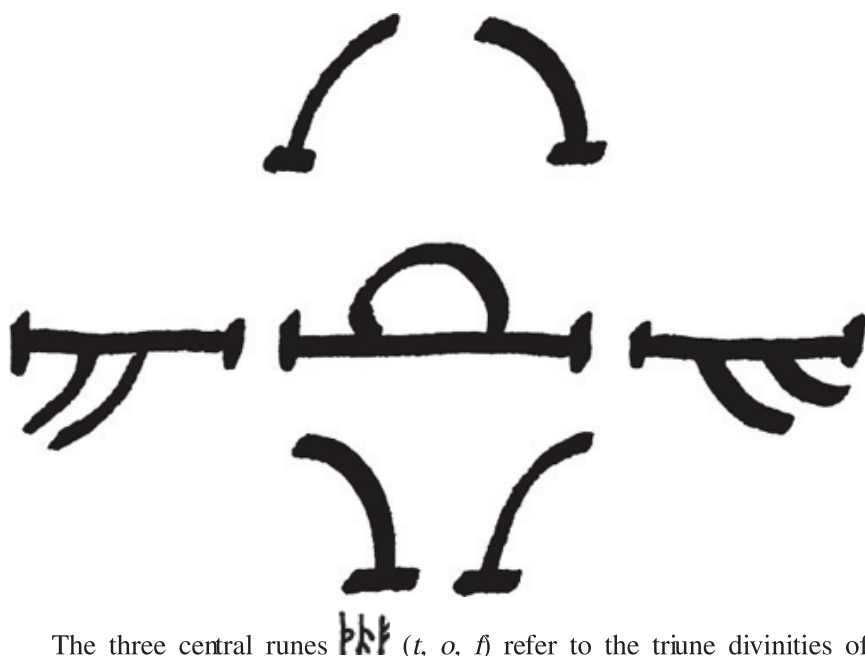


Fig. 3.7. The cubical runic stone







The three central runes **ttt** (*t, o, f*) refer to the triune divinities of Thor–Odin–Frey. According to sixteenth-century “tradition,” these gods were inherited in Sweden from Noah and his son Japheth. Bure insists that only later did Asiatic masters of magic (Sw. *sejd*) and wizards (Sw. *tollare*) arrive, pretending to be incarnations of the true Gods. But the true religion of the ancients held sway for a much longer time in the North than in southern Europe. Bure, like many other mythologists of his time and earlier, used the Old Testament as a text for basic data, which in Bure’s case was then coupled with a primitive understanding of Saxo Grammaticus and perhaps of Snorri’s *Edda*, copies of which had surfaced in the mid-1500s.


One of the innovations of the religion instituted by the wizards was that instead of a triune godhead, the people should worship Thor in life, Frigg at birth, and Odin in death. Here Bure wishes to maintain the primal monotheism of the ancestors and ascribe pantheism to a later, decadent, phase of history. This decadence represents the beginning of the dimming of the knowledge inherent in the *adulruna*.


Bure then proceeds to interpret the individual *adulruna*-staves of the first quintet, which as a whole signify *birth*, or the beginning of things.


**t** is the freest and functions everywhere and in everything. This is the highest and most powerful force, and it is equated with the Norse god Thor. This force is actually androgynous. Bure points to an image of Thor

found in Uppsala that is masculine in the upper body, feminine below. (Later commentators have identified this image as a badly damaged early depiction of Christ.) Thor is linked with Jove, and hence to Jehovah. The icon  shows the door of a lodge at the horizon. It is flanked by  and , Odin and Frigg, who with outstretched arms show the way to the door.

 is the *adulruna* of Odin, the son of Thor, according to Bure. This interpretation of Odin as Thor's son was common in the early studies of Norse myths, which were heavily influenced by comparisons with classical mythology. To Odin belongs all property and estate and all offices of state. The name Odin is equated with Latin *fatum*, "divine foresight," due to the similarity between the god's name and the Swedish word *öde*, "fate."<sup>\*4</sup> This *fatum* is seen as the origin of all created things. The originators of the runes concealed Odem, or the "blood-red one," Ådam, behind the image of Odin—or Mars, the destroyer. Of this Ådam it is said that in his wrath all the power of the enemy shall be destroyed by his blood.

 is on the left side of Thor, and hence on the day after his day. This signifies Frigg (or Fröja), the daughter of Thor and wife of Odin. Bure identifies Freyja (Fröja) with Frigg and says that the Swedish ancestors worshipped the true breath of holiness under the name of Fröja. This is further identified with the spirit that "moved upon the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2). This is the one who distributes all good gifts.

Below the horizon and outside the door are the twins (*u*, *r*), which appear as ram's horns . They indicate the password to the whole divine work, which emanates from above and is in perpetual motion and expansion. Bure indicates that everything emerges from the *one*, and returns to the *one*, and cites a comparison of three biblical passages—Daniel 7:10 and Matthew 13:41 and 22:30—as a key.

But above the horizon the twins (*r*, *u*) are paired *inside* the door thusly: . This is a password to eternal rest and union with the highest God. Bure cites the "Egyptian Trismegistus":

*Those chosen by God are of two kinds,  
the one are those who migrate,  
the other those who are still,  
and these are the highest holiness of souls.*



The second quintet of *adulrunor* appears:

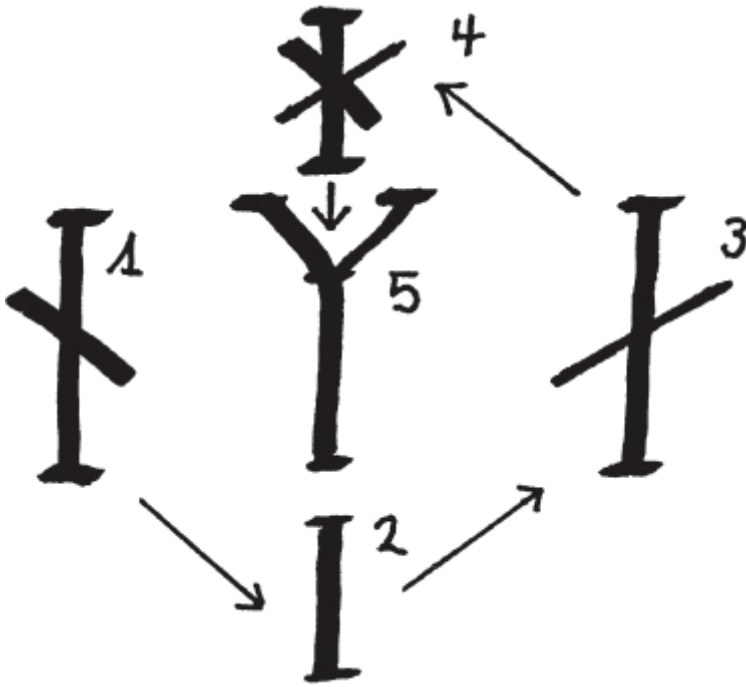


This is the quintet of birth or generation, as the first had been that of the progenitor (the progenitor = father, birth—the process that the father initiates, but not identical with the father). The central triad of this group of five is NotAriKon—those who bear the governments of the three realms signified by the three crowns in the Swedish national symbol. The † on the right side signifies grace/mercy, while the † on the left side means glory in the

Promised Land. **Y** is the ruling governance of the *kyn* (kin) of the realm, which is invisible. *Kyn* is split in two at the top like two branches of a tree. This indicates that the tree of life stands on both banks of the river that emanates from God's throne.

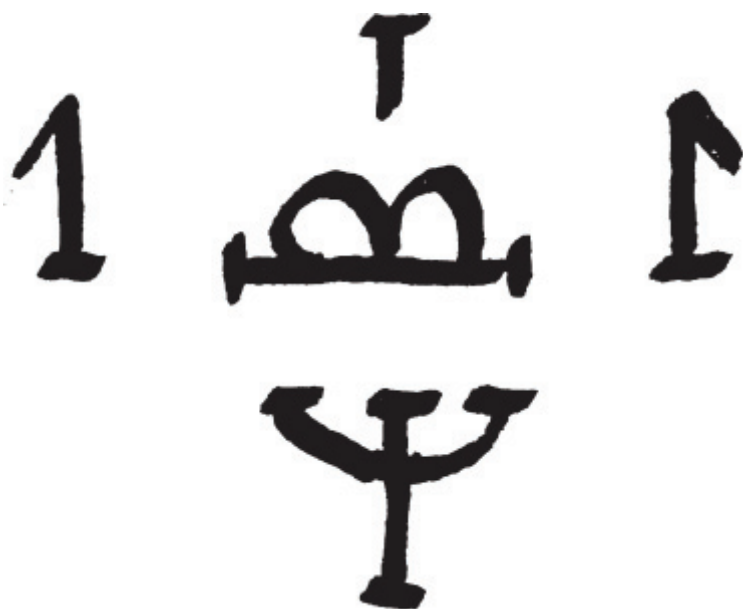
The *adulrunor* of this quintet create a progressive sequence that demonstrates the interrelationship of the three kingdoms:





One emerges from the valley of grace/mercy (†) over the narrow passage of repentance (*ider*) into the plain of honor (*ärevidden*). From there one must pass through a torrent of hail (*hagelfors*) to ascend to the summit of character (*kynnahöjder*). Bure compares this progress to the migration of Israel from Egypt over the Red Sea and through the wilderness into the “redemptive land of peace.” Further, he equates this process to the movement of the High Priest at the Israelite Temple from the outer court (1), before the brazen altar (2), into the holy temple (3), before the holy golden altar (4), and from there into the Holy of Holies (5). Only the one who understands these progressions can understand this quintet of *adulrunor*. He will understand the office of the mediator priest (†), the lying stone (I), the royal government (†), the falling stone (\*), and the office of judges (Y).

The third quintet is that of the offspring:



This quintet can be observed from two distinct angles: either (1) horizontally (1<sub>M</sub>1) or (2) vertically (T<sub>M</sub>Y).

In the first arrangement, a password is formed by the three-forked office of mediation here in this world—of mediating between sun (T) and man (Y) through the central lord (*drotten*) and king (M), flanked by the priests (*tidemän*) on the right and judges (*lägmän*) on the left. All three—king, priest, and magistrate—act as mediators between the sun (*sol*) of righteousness and his servants.

In the second vertical view a column is created between *sol*—the most excellent of all visible things, which here has the high seat (seat of honor)—and the moon (Y, *månen*), which illuminates the night. The former is likened by Moses to Eden (Genesis 2:8) and by Solomon to the “heaven of heavens” (II Chronicles 2:6), while John likens it to the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:2), which requires no sun because it has itself become a sun, and no moonlight because it is its own reflected light. This new world is called Paradise by the Lord and an enclosure in Eden by Moses. However, in the midst of this is the present dungeon (*fjätterhyddan*: the “fetter-hut”).

For this reason, we must await salvation. The twins 1 and J remind us that everything has its *time* and *place* (*tid och lag*).

These two interpretations of this quintet point to the strongly ambiguous and even apparently paradoxical meaning of the *adulruna*: in the one instance it is the mediator (king and lord); in the other, the mortal clay of the body. The reconciliation of these two meanings reveals a profound understanding of the role of the material universe in the cosmology of the ancient Goths as well as in the modern world newly emerging in Bure's time.

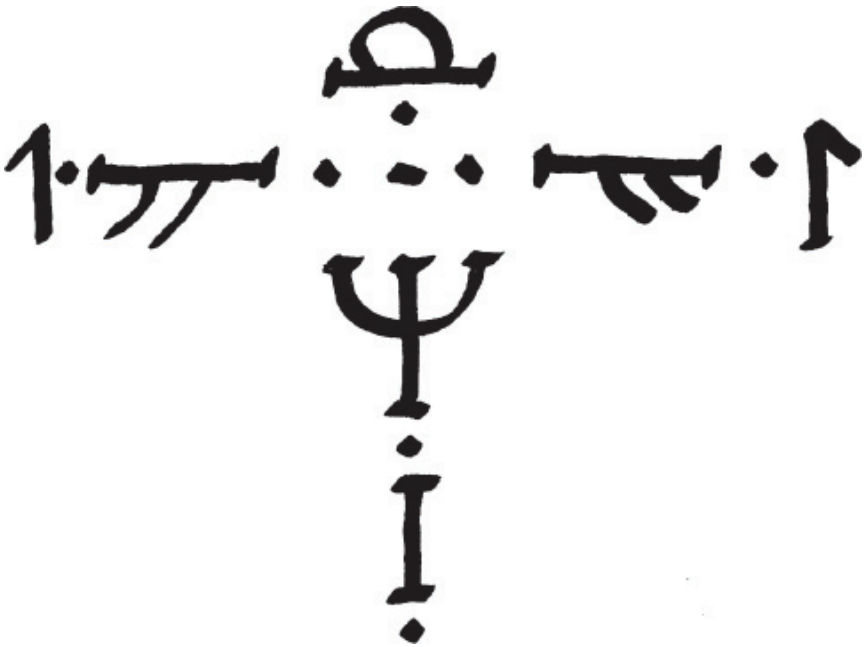
## ***ADULRUNA*: THE PRIESTLY OFFICE**

The third section of *Adulruna Rediviva* deals with the office of the pastor or priest. This section is an extensive commentary on a cruciform arrangement of *adulrunor* widely used by Bure, yet seldom fully explained. The symbol appears as depicted in figure 3.8. Note the three crowns arrayed at the top of the cross and above each side of its horizontal beam.



Fig. 3.8. The cruciform symbol of the priestly office

The mythical priest-figure Byrger, who is said by Bure to have been an originator of the runic system, is used as an archetype of the ancient priesthood. Byrger illustrates the seven eternal *adulrunor* in a cruciform arrangement according to the seven days of the week.



Each of these is shown to correspond to the image of the crucifix—the image of Jesus Christ (= Byrger) hanging on the cross—as shown in table 3.2.


TABLE 3.2. THE ADULRUNOR OF THE CROSS

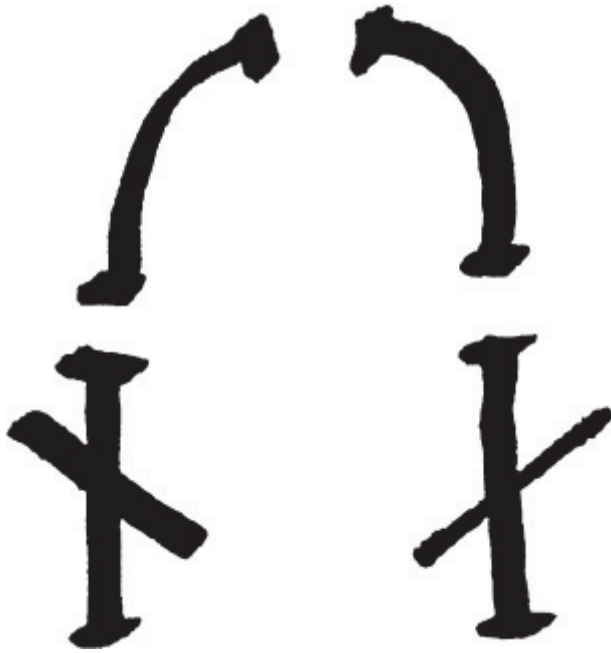
on	stands	marked here
1 head	þ	þ
2 left arm	h	h
3 left hand	l	l
4 feet	—	—
5 chest	—	—
6 right hand	l	l
7 right arm	h	h




This esoteric runic information is combined with the words of Jesus: “Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matthew 16:24). The practice of “taking up the cross” is equated with the daily meditations known as the Stations of the Cross. This, like other Christian forms of practice and belief, was seen as something that actually belonged to the original faith predating the time of the historical Jesus.

Although Bure's melding of mystical Christian and runic iconography may seem at first to be indicative of his subjectivist approach, one should not be so quick to judge his ideas harshly. Studies have more recently shown the degree to which early medieval Christianity was in fact "Germanized" centuries before the first Christians ever came to Swæden (see Russell 1994).




Bure maintains that Thursday is considered by Swedes to be the holiest of days. He takes this as an indication that the secret spiritual heritage of the Swedes (embodied in the *adulrunor*) antedates that of the Jews (whose holy day is Saturday) or the Christians (whose holy day is Sunday). Bure traces the Swedish tradition back to King Ninus of Babel, who established the holiness of Thursday in memory of his father, Bel, who is identified with Jupiter (Jove = Jehovah). From this primeval time until the coming of Roman Christianity, the Swedes had kept their holiest day as Thursday.

There are two groups of four runes each, which form the actual cross under the body of Byrger/Christ—one group of four runes horizontally across the arms, the other vertically along the length of the body. The runes positioned across are  (*RUNA*) = *literatura, experientia* (because *runa* is, according to Bure, derived from *rön*, "experience").<sup>\*5</sup> These *adulrunor* can also be combined as follows:



to form an image of grace and honor opening a gate to eternal peace and rest. These same four runes are also significantly combined as  (*AURN*) = *örn*, *aquila*—the eagle. These are equated with the eagle standards of Caesar Tiberius, which represented Gothic soldiers from the Portus under Pilatus. The runes that form the vertical beam are  — which Bure says can be read as *PIGKind* = *virginis filius* (“son of the virgin”). He comments that the sequence shows the “son of the virgin,” the righteous guide, leading his followers out of bondage (the “feter-hut”) by means of *ider* (repentance) through the embrace of the all-containing \* (a combination of † grace and † honor) and throughout into the highest level of freedom in .

So the vertical column describes the initiation of an individual from a state of bondage to one of liberation, while the crossbeam is the experience (*rön*) of the mystery (*runa*) of the world.

Four *adulrunor* are identified as the shepherd runes as depicted here and that guard an inner seven, which is identified as the flock. The shepherd runes consist of the divine trinity Thor-Odin-Frigg () along with , which is the valor of the shepherd. The image of the  is likened

to the breasts of the maiden, which feed the shepherd, as well as to the double doors of a sheep pen for the entrance and exit of a flock. The runes signifying the “flock” are shown in figures 3.9 and 3.10.

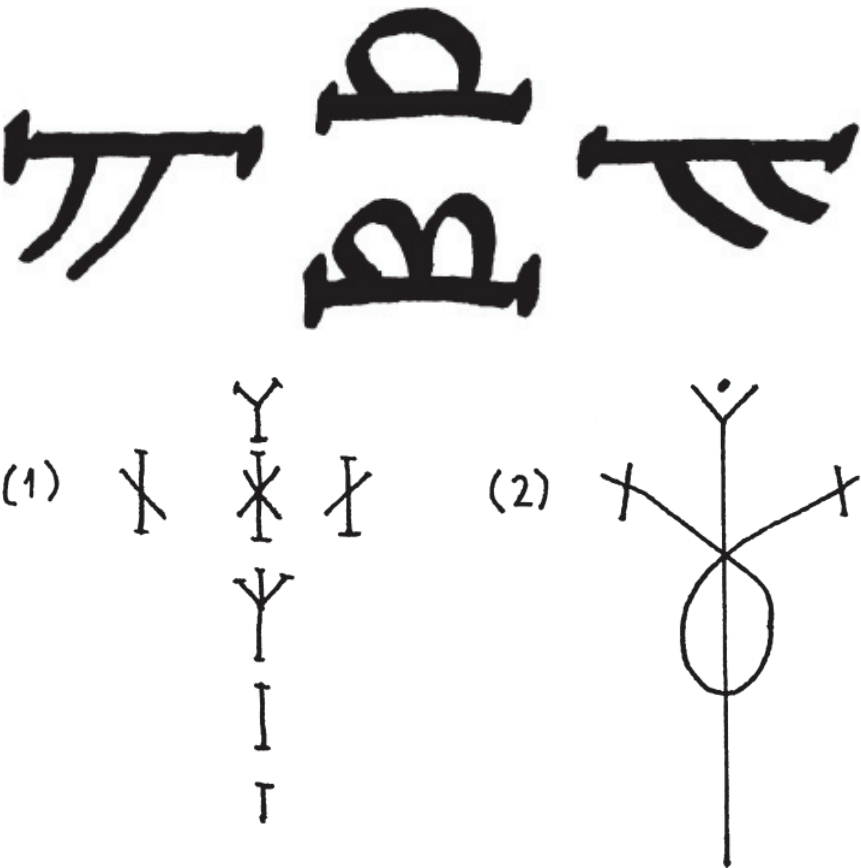


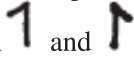





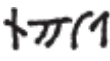
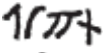


Fig. 3.9 and Fig. 3.10. The seven cruciform runes and the sevenfold Holy Spirit



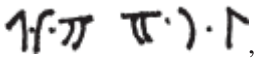


From these seven cruciform runes (fig. 3.9) is formed a glyph (fig. 3.10) that signifies the sevenfold Holy Spirit united with the Word of God. These runes can be arranged from above to below to form the phrase *Y\* \* \* Y* = *gæghn mis* = *ocurre mihi* (run to meet me). This is the voice of the one who calls from above, and those who answer from below call out *Y \* \* \* Y* *sim āghn k(ynd)* = *simus possessionis filij, quasi unus* (we





are of the property of the Son, as if one). Note that  is here read by Bure as an ideographic rune and that the formula is created by reading the seven runes from the bottom upward, reversing the order of the original “call.”




The remaining four runes at the outermost arms of the cross are  = *trol(l)* (trolls), the “evil spirits,” daemons—indicating the spiritual wolves that seek to scatter and gobble up the flock. At first these wolves seem to entice the flock with both  (time and space, *tid och lag*)—and then they drive members of the flock down into the infernal regions with a three-pronged fork  (trident). The reversal of this formula is  (*lort*) [Sw. *lort*, “dirt, filth, muck”] *defraudatorum symbolum* (sign of the deceived)—those who have been lured by the trap and snares.

Bure has the mystical Byrger lay out the *adulrunor* in two groups: a horizontal one of nine staves and a vertical one consisting of seven staves. The horizontal row defines the two outstretched arms of him who calls (*kallare*), and on the “caller’s” heart stands the , which radiates sacrality. On the right arm stand the signs  (= NORD). At first glance this reads *nord* (north), but Bure interprets the initial rune as an ideograph: *N(ådens)ORD/N(ödens)ORD* = Word of Grace/Word of Need. Read in reverse, this yields  *tron*, meaning *fides* (faith). On the left arm we find the runes , which can be read *äful*, “permanent fullness.” But this, too, can be interpreted with an initial ideograph  (*äro*, “glory”), thus *Ä(ro)FUL* = “glorious.” Bure reasons that since the “caller’s” right arm is God’s Word, then it follows that the left arm must be the Holy Spirit: because without these two, he says, no one could be called or *fdbw*.

The runes  (*lof*) can also be read as meaning “praise,” but, according to Bure’s esoteric reading, these signs should be understood as  (*lyf*) = “love.” From *lyf* Bure alternatively reads *l(i)uf-ful* , which refers to faithfulness—with all its legal hooks and bitter barbs , and also to the gospels and the grace-full horn of oil .

The group of seven staves depicts the “collector’s” vertical body, the head of which is , while the feet are . Between these extremes, however, are the five-runged ladder (see next page).



On the downward climb the “caller” began in Thor’s stave and completed the journey in *byrgall*—and there the ones who have been called are to turn around and begin their ascent up the ladder. In Thor () the return journey is complete. The descent begins by passing through doors from which all good gifts come. The first rung is  —the highest realm of the Father. The second is \* (*hagal*)—the one that completes the Father’s will. The third is Y (*man, manna*), which is the heavenly bread. The fourth is I (*ider*), which is repentance as the result of sin (guilt). The fifth is , which

shows the rays of the sun—take note of temptation (Rev. 16:8), the sun does the same (Luke 22:31). The one who is in **W** is sitting in fetters or bonds, being threatened with death. The savior wishes that all those who doubt will come to know that life is the great reward.

The shepherd himself made the ascent into heaven along the ladder of staves described here.

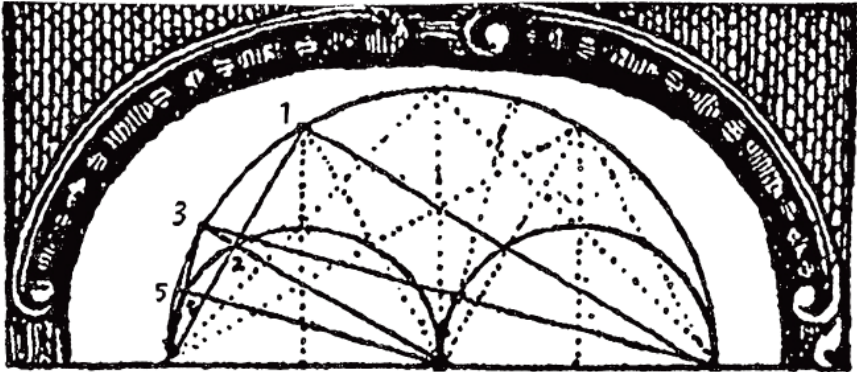


Fig. 3.11. The ascent to heaven

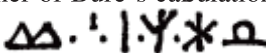
Figure 3.11 shows the immeasurable power received by those who have been united with God.

## ADULRUNOR AND THE SECRET CALCULATION OF TIME

Bure uses the cruciform figure of the *adulrunor* to measure time in mysterious ways. The right arm of the cross renders 1 (300), ↑ (5), **π** (1), and † (60) = 366—the number of days in a complete circuit of the Sun. The fifth stave \* = 30: the number of days in a lunar cycle from new moon to new moon. This is the heart of the bride being embraced by the bridegroom, which is the Sun. This cosmic embrace of the primeval masculine and femi-

nine first took place in Paradise. The staves to the right: **††††** = 90 + 1 + 3 + 700 = 794. According to Bure's calculations, this is the number of years between the conjunctions of Jupiter and Saturn—the two highest planets of (medieval) astronomy. These numbers were used by Bure to arrive at cosmological dates—such as 1648, which was to be the date of the next “embrace” of the Sun and Moon ( $794 \times 2 + 2 \times 30 = 1648$  AD<sup>\*6</sup>). Thus, the

Incarnation of Christ occurred at one of the conjunctions of Saturn and Jupiter. The importance of such a conjunction to Bure is linked with the esoteric interpretation of the planet/god Saturn with the “Gothic” god *Oden* (fate) = Odin.<sup>\*7</sup>

Another of Bure’s calculations concerns the sum of the vertical runes of the cross  (500 + 100 + 70 + 900 + 30 + 5 = 1605). The year 1605 is the one in which Bure received the idea of the *adulrunor*—the idea descended upon him, and with and from this concept, or Word, he spent the rest of his life ascending the ladder of the runes.

The numerological and eschatological speculations embedded in Bure’s work are often extremely obscure to the outsider. Some of Bure’s contemporary detractors accused him of trying to speculate endlessly, and irrationally, about the date of the “end of the world,” and they tried to make it seem that he had become mentally incompetent. The facts do not bear out this interpretation, which now seems to be politically motivated rhetoric at the court of the king. However, his speculations in this direction are obscure and leave themselves open to such attacks. For anyone who can penetrate his code of thought, illumination might accompany their insights.



## THE THREE CROWNS

Bure traces the origin of the national symbol of Sweden, the three crowns, back to the mythical figure of Byrger Tideson, who advised that the administration of the land be divided into three functions: that of the king, the high priest, and the judge. Accordingly, the power to govern was divided into three and so was the land they governed. Each of the three parts of the land received a crown as its symbol—and thus the coat of arms of all three crowns is a symbol of the whole of Swæden.

## THE SCIENCE OF *ADULRUNA*

Since the time when I first wrote the text of this section about Johan Bure in 1998, great strides have been made in the studies surrounding this Swedish runologist and mage. We can especially point to the work of Thomas Karlsson, who was actually inspired by the magical words I originally wrote at the end of this section, “*Någon har mycket att göra.*” This call was heard and now I can say, *Någon har mycket gört!*

At one point Bure created a table with which he wished to show the place of the *adulrunor* in the great scheme of philosophy and the sciences of his day. In his own Renaissance spirit, he was already laying the foundations for an integral runology of the future.

TABLE 3.3. BURE’S TABLE OF THE RUNIC SCIENCES

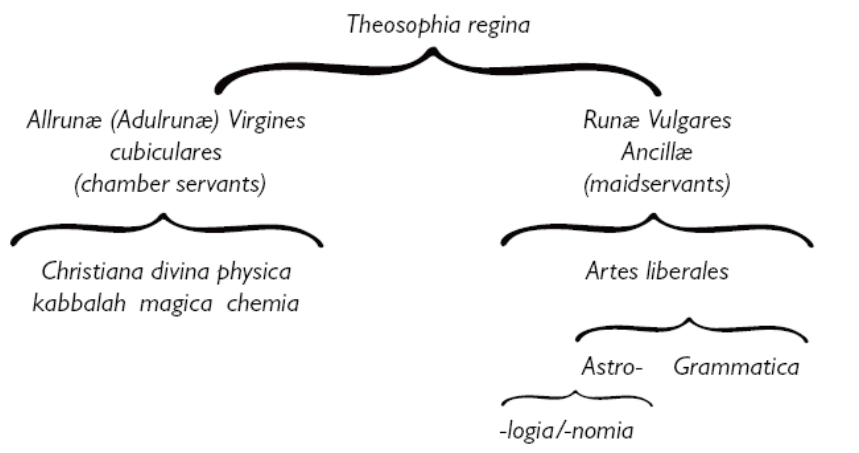


Table 3.3 not only gives us a map of Bure’s esoteric universe of ideas, but it also articulates these ideas into a meaningful series of relationships. Royal theosophy is divided into an inner and outer aspect. The inner aspect is identified with the pristine *adulrunor*, which are articulated into the three sciences of “kabbalah,” “magic,” and “alchemy.” The “common runes” are the “maidservants” known as the liberal arts. These support and promote the esoteric pursuits, and from them the liberal arts branch out further into astronomy/astrology and grammar. From Bure’s life and work it is clear that he realized the magical significance of *grammar*—the meaningful arrangement of sounds/ letters. He saw this as being intimately bound up with the concept of a *rune*. Bure recognized (correctly) the etymological link between the Swedish words *runa* (mystery; letter) and *rön* (experience, obser-

vation, understanding). The definition Bure gives of “*adulruna*” at this point is *nobilis experientia quæ potissimum constat in naturæ cognitione*, the “experience of nobility, which it is agreed (is) in the knowledge of nature.” *Adulrunor* are those things by which we may investigate the noble or exalted aspects of objects—natural or supernatural.

The study of the ideas of Johan Bure is fraught with difficulties. His esoteric works largely remain unpublished today. They are stored away in archives in Stockholm, Uppsala, and Lund. This circumstance makes a difficult study twice as hard as it would be otherwise. Bure’s ideas are, I suspect, extraordinarily sophisticated and complex. Yet their meaning is shrouded behind an obscure language of symbols that would be difficult to understand completely even if all his works were readily available in convenient editions and/or translations. It is almost certainly the case that Bure only revealed the *key* to his thought and language to those students who took the time and effort to come and learn with him in person. So, when we are left to speculate on his meanings or evaluate his thought based on the fragments of printed material and commentaries on the latter, we are confronted with the magnitude of the task of unlocking the mysteries of Bure’s system.

# *The Adulruna and the Gothic Cabbala*

Thomas Karlsson





# INTRODUCTION

Gothicism is associated by many people mainly with the Swedish fantasies of great power expressed in Olof Rudbeck's *Atlantica*, where it is maintained that Atlantis was situated in Sweden, or with the Götiska Förbund (Gothic League) and the bombastic nationalistic and Romantic poetry of the 1800s. Gothicism is a cultural movement that projects its origin back to the Goths, whose legendary great deeds the movement's followers wanted to ascribe to their own history. In Sweden the Goths were connected with the Geats, or in exceptional cases to the inhabitants of the island of Gotland, while in Denmark it was thought that the Goths and Jutes were related. Gothicism was characterized by grand fantasies and speculations and came to be meaningful in both cultural life and propaganda. Gothicism in general, and Swedish Gothicism in particular, lived in a close relationship with the esoteric currents that thrived throughout Europe. Ideas of Paracelsus and later the Rosicrucian awakening would influence Gothicism as much as anything. From this quarter came along apocalyptic predictions and prophecies that were useful in Gothic propaganda, but with this intellectual material also came Hermetic speculations of a significantly more individualistic character that emphasized humanity's gradual ascent toward a higher state of being. The foremost representative for the meeting between Gothicism and esotericism was the antiquarian Johannes Bureus, who was the teacher of King Gustavus Adolphus. Bureus was a pioneer in runology and Swedish linguistics and is acknowledged as the father of Swedish grammar, but Bureus himself thought that it was within the sphere of mysticism that he made his most important contribution.<sup>1</sup>

Bureus represents what we would call an esoteric Gothicism. In him the motif of Gothicism coalesces with the esotericism of his age, with such things as alchemy, Cabbala, Hermeticism, astrology, and magic. Bureus himself called his esoteric system for Nordic Cabbala a *notaricon suethia* or a *Cabala Upsalica*.<sup>2</sup> Bureus also applied the methods of the Cabbala to his runological research.<sup>3</sup> In speaking of an esoteric Gothicism we can differentiate this tendency in Gothicism from the nationalistic chauvinism that we normally associate with it. With Bureus the Gothic themes with runes and ancient Nordic themes appear in an equally imaginative way as with Rud-

beck, but what is particular to Bureus is that he utilizes these themes to describe a highly individualistic initiatory path that leads to an alchemical and cabbalistic coalescence with God. Usually Gothicism, both the older and younger, is restricted to using the theme of the mystical Goths to support the kingdom or nation in a mythologized version of history. Esoteric Gothicism utilizes Gothic themes for individual initiatory purposes. In speaking of an exoteric Gothicism we can also include persons and groups that, in a way partially independent of Bureus's "Gothic Cabbala," incorporate elements in their Gothicism (or Gothic elements in their esotericism). That this is not merely to be thought of as esotericism in the most general sense is due to the importance placed on the myth of the Goths in the esoteric speculations. The Goths were thought to be the mystical exponents of the forgotten truth that mankind stood on the verge of reviving again.

This part is concerned with the esoteric elements in Gothicism as they are expressed in the writings of Johannes Bureus. The focus is on a description of Bureus's most important esoteric work: *Adulruna rediviva*.

As I approached the ideas of Bureus, I tried in the main to proceed from the source material that I read in Stockholm, Uppsala, and Linköping.<sup>\*2</sup> The most important source materials were the six manuscripts of Bureus's esoteric work titled *Adulruna rediviva*. Four of these are found in the National Library of Sweden in Stockholm, and two are found in the Carolina Rediviva in Uppsala. Bureus drew up seven versions of *Adulruna rediviva*, one of which disappeared from the National Library of Sweden in 1812. There is also a manuscript in the National Library of Sweden titled *Antiquitates Scanziana* that in part has contents similar to that of *Adulruna rediviva*. *Antiquitates Scanziana* is more comprehensive, and one finds in it a significant amount of valuable information about Bureus's esoteric thought. Bureus's runic account mostly describes the linguistic implications of the runes but reflects certain esoteric trains of thought as well. Printed texts such as *Runa ABC-boken*, *Runa redux*, and apocalyptic writings such as *Nordlandalejonsens rytande* (Roar of the Nordic lion) give an insight into Bureus's intellectual values. In Linköping's diocesan library I studied Bureus's highly interesting, but muddled, notebook titled *Cabbalistica*, which reveals much of his own references and those esoteric thoughts that characterize his works. In Linköping is also found the linguistic *Om språkens uppkomst* (On the origin of language), which describes his mystical view of language. Two aids that were indispensable as I studied Bureus were a sketchbook and a pocket calculator. Only by drawing Bureus's Hermetic symbols and calcu-

lating his cabbalistic numerical values did his ideas become fairly intelligible.

To complete the picture of the Gothic ideas I also looked at writings by Stiernhielm, for example, a manuscript by him that also had the word *Adulruna* in the title but that has different contents than Bureus's work. Additionally, later Rosicrucians such as Erik Julius Björner and Johan Göransson were of interest—as, for example, Göransson's *Is atlinga* (1747)—as well as writings from later Gothicism such as the periodical *Iduna* of the Götiska Förbund (Gothic League) and Jonas Love Almqvist's description of the degrees of the Manhem League.

Besides these source materials, I found Hans Hildebrand's biography of Bureus of 1910, Sten Lindroth's classic treatise of 1943 titled *Paracelsismen i Sverige till 1600-talets mitt*, as well as Susanna Åkerman's treatise *Rose Cross over the Baltic* (1998) extremely useful. Susanna Åkerman has written several scientific articles on Bureus. Hildebrand, Lindroth, and Åkerman have written the most detailed descriptions of Bureus and his esoteric work. Bureus is noticed many times mainly for his contributions as a linguist, as in Hjalmar Lindroth's *J. Th. Bureus: Den svenska grammatikens fader* (1911). In his role as a typographer Bureus is described in *De yverbörnes typografi* by Nils Nordqvist (1964). Bureus is mentioned in a more popular scientific context in Sten Lindroth's collection of essays *Fru Lusta och Fru Dygd* (1957) and in Mats G. Larsson's *Sveahövdigens budskap* (2000). An article about Bureus's apocalyptic speculations by Henrik Sandblad is found in *Lychnos* (1959). In Björn Anderson's dissertation, "Runor, magi, ideologi: En idéhistorisk studie" (1997), which focuses on Sigurd Agrell, there is a chapter on Bureus that mainly seems to be based on Lindroth's treatise. The Texan Stephen Flowers wrote a short booklet on Bureus partially based on Hildebrand.<sup>4</sup> Bureus's name surfaces in a few different books, but any more detailed studies are rare. Bureus appears in a literary context in Erik Lundberg's *Vid språkets rötter* (1994).

A good deal has been written about Gothicism in general, such as A. Blanck's *Den nordiska renässansen i sjuttonhundratalets litteratur* (1911); Kurt Johannesson's *The Renaissance of the Goths in Sixteenth-Century Sweden: Johannes and Olaus Magnus as Politicians and Historians* (1991); J. Mjöberg, *Drömmen om sagatiden 1–2* (1967–1968); and B. Grandien *Rönndrövans glöd: Nygötiskt i tanke, konst och miljö under 1800-talet* (1987). Johan Nordström's *De yverbörnes ö* of 1934 is a classic study. Johan Nordström also published Stiernhielm's philosophical fragment with a

detailed introduction to Stiernhielm's esoteric world of ideas. Mats Malm's treatise, *Minervas äpple: Om diktsyn, tolkning och bildspråk inom nordisk göticism*, which came out in 1996, is a further contribution to research concerning Gothicism. Ingmar Stenroth published *Myten om goterna* in the year 2002 and took up Gothicism both in Sweden and abroad from antiquity up to Romanticism. Gunnar Eriksson published the extensive and prizewinning biography *Rudbeck 1630–1702: Liv, lärdom, dröm i barockens Sverige*. At present the author of this work is writing a doctoral dissertation about Johannes Bureus and the Gothic Cabbala.

# Den Svenska A B C Boken

På thet enfalligeste så ståle / at de  
vanlige bokstavarne låmpa sig ef-  
ter Runerne / och bådhe semias  
medh wår vanlighe Pro-  
nunciation.



Wisdoms början san / är wist Guds  
alwara fruchtan :

Wt migh wisan man / dån i yngstone  
racadhe. tuchtan.

Trykt i Upsala / af Estil Magnusson /  
år / 1624.

# GOTHICISM AND WESTERN ESOTERICISM

Within the history of religion, Western esotericism has developed into a new field of research and become one of the most conspicuous areas of study seen internationally.<sup>1</sup> The research into Western esotericism spans areas such as Cabbala, alchemy, ritual magic, Rosicrucian movements, Freemasonry, seventeenth-century occultism, and contemporary phenomena such as Wicca and the New Age. For a long time esotericism was observed with skepticism from academic quarters. Theologians conceptualized esoteric teachings as being heretical, and natural scientists viewed them as superstitious and reactionary.<sup>2</sup> The researcher Frances Yates (1899–1981) maintained, contrary to contemporary understanding, that esotericism, or what she called “the Hermetic tradition,” was entirely derived from the development of the modern sciences.

The concept of Western esotericism is a methodological construction that researchers developed to cover several different movements, thinkers, and traditions that, despite great differences, have meaningful common denominators. Western esotericism can be viewed as a third stream of thought alongside Greek rational thought and Judeo-Christian faith, the two great intellectual traditions upon which Western culture rests. Within Western esotericism there is a resistance to both rational thought and dogmatic faith. Humanity and the universe are seen in a holistic way as reflections of each other, which implies that humans can obtain knowledge about God and nature by studying their own interior worlds, and also, on the other hand, that investigations of nature and theological studies help humans to discover truths about that interior world. Furthermore, esotericism is characterized by this development in understanding occurring gradually through different stages of initiation. The basic traits of Western occultism are to be found throughout Gnosticism and Hermeticism, even though the concept of Western esotericism most designates the thought that developed during the Re-



naissance, when Cabbala, Neoplatonism, medieval magic, and Hermeticism were combined.<sup>3</sup>

Western esotericism got its special stamp from Renaissance thinkers such as Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola. Ficino, who was commissioned by Cosimo de' Medici to found a Platonic academy in Florence in the 1450s, was asked ten years later by Medici to put his work aside and instead devote himself to the *Corpus Hermeticum*. This text had been rediscovered in Macedonia, and in 1471 the first Latin translation was finished. It was circulated in no less than twenty-five editions up to 1641, not counting all the other translations that were also done. The mythical author of the text, Hermes Trismegistus, was thought to belong to a remote time, and his writings were thought to present the *philosophia perennis*, the perennial philosophy. This *philosophia perennis* had been formulated from all the ancient doctrines of wisdom, and through the idea of an original doctrine of wisdom different traditions could be combined and correspondences established.<sup>4</sup> These ideas were collected under the designation Hermeticism, which is often used synonymously with esotericism. Regarding the concept of Hermeticism, Antoine Faivre writes that it can designate (a) esotericism in the most general sense, (b) alchemy, and (c) the Greek writings from the beginning of our era that are ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus. Faivre suggests that a new verbal construction—namely, “Hermetism”—ought to be used to designate the broader interpretation of Hermeticism, which includes esotericism in its different forms.<sup>5</sup>

The esoteric tradition maintains that it is primeval or even timeless. Among scholars of religion one finds various conceptions of the history of the esoteric tradition. Olav Hammer indicates in his treatise *Claiming Knowledge: Strategies of Epistemology from Theosophy to the New Age* that there are two main conceptions among historians of religion.

One group may delineate the historical development different than the adherents would, yet still agree in drawing parallels with older traditions. Not infrequently, the Esoteric Tradition is seen as a modern manifestation of a tradition dating back to renaissance hermeticism, or reaching back still further to the Gnostics, or even to pythagoreanism and orphicism. There is a good case to be made for a different view of history, espoused by a second group of scholars, in which such links to premodern epochs are seen as more tenuous due to a radical modernization of these earlier traditions.<sup>6</sup>

The adjective *esoteric* goes back to antiquity and was introduced around the year 166 by Lucianos of Samosata. The word *esotericism* as a noun is of a later date and was popularized by the Frenchman Alphonse Louis Constant, also known under the pseudonym Éliphas Lévi, and the word was introduced into English by the Theosophist A. D. Sinnet in 1883. Lévi even introduced the concept of *occultism*, a word that was probably invented by him, with inspiration from Agrippa's *De Occulta Philosophia* of 1533.<sup>7</sup> The concepts of occultism and esotericism have often been thought to indicate the same phenomena, but many scholars have thought it useful to keep these concepts separate. Wouter J. Hanegraaf argues that the concept of occultism ought to be used to designate a specific development within esotericism.<sup>8</sup>

A classic definition of esotericism comes from the sociologist Edward E. Tiryakian. He defines it as the belief system or the theoretical knowledge upon which the practices that constitute occultism are based. Occultism is the practice, and esotericism is the theory. Tiryakian writes:

By esoteric I refer to those religiophilosophic belief systems which underlie occult techniques and practices; that is, it refers to the more comprehensive cognitive mappings of nature and cosmos, the epistemological and ontological reflections of ultimate reality, which mappings constitute a stock of knowledge that provides the ground for occult procedures.<sup>9</sup>

Antoine Faivre has accepted Tiryakian's application of the concepts but has indicated that they contain certain weaknesses, as there are practical sides of esotericism and theoretical ones in occultism.<sup>10</sup>

In his *Access to Western Esotericism*, Antoine Faivre writes that esotericism is not a field such as art, philosophy, or chemistry but rather a way of thinking. Faivre explains that

the etymology of "esotericism" clarifies the idea of secret by suggesting that we can access understanding of a symbol, myth, or reality only by a personal effort of progressive elucidation through several successive levels, i.e., by a form of hermeneutics. There is no ultimate secret once we determine that everything, in the end, conceals a secret.<sup>11</sup>

Faivre actually thinks that six criteria have to be met before one can speak in a useful way about anything specifically esoteric (among other things to



differentiate it from non-esoteric initiations), of which four are the most important. The criteria he enumerates are (1) universal correspondences, (2) living nature, (3) imagination and mediation, (4) experience of transmutation, together with (5) traditional concordance, and (6) transmission.<sup>12</sup>

- (1) Correspondences involve the idea of hidden connections between the visible and invisible parts of the universe, in accordance with the Hermetic motto “As above, so below.” Connections exist between minerals, the human body, plants, and so on.
- (2) The idea of a living nature proceeds from the view that the cosmos is a complex, manifold, and hierarchical unity where nature occupies an important place along with God and man. Nature is permeated by a light, or a fire, and is rich in potential revelations and could therefore be read like a book. But Faivre also thinks, which is important, that since the beginning of the 1900s there also arose a monistic spiritualism, inspired by Oriental mysticism in which nature is disregarded or even denied.
- (3) Imagination and mediations. Esotericism is differentiated from mysticism by the emphasis on intermediary levels between the terrestrial and the divine. The doctrine of angels and other intermediary beings is important in this context, as is the idea of gurus and initiators. Where mysticism sees the imagination as an obstacle, esotericism sees it as a means to an end. Faivre expressively describes this:

Understood thus, imagination (*imaginatio* is related to *magnet*, *magia*, *imago*) is the tool for knowledge of self, world, Myth. The eye of fire pierces the bark of appearances to call forth significations, “rapports” to render the invisible world visible, the “*mundus imaginalis*” to which the eye of the flesh alone cannot provide access, and to retrieve there a treasure contributing to an enlargement of our prosaic vision.<sup>13</sup>

- (4) Experience of transmutation. Without the experience of transmutation as an important component esotericism could be mixed up with some form of speculative spirituality. The word *transmutation* comes from alchemy and indicates a transition or transformation from one plane to another, the subject’s metamorphosis to higher levels.

To these four basic components within esotericism can be added two related components as follows:

- (5) Concordance is found between different religions and doctrines, and it is possible to discover common denominators that unify them.
- (6) Transmission. Knowledge can or must be transmitted from teacher to pupil according to a given model, often through initiations. Conditions for this “second birth” are that (a) the teachers are respected and not called into question, as one becomes part of this tradition, and (b) that initiation occurs through some teacher or master.

Hanegraaf indicates that it is important, as historians of religion, to differentiate Faivre’s application of the concept of esotericism from the popular use of the term that can be found in New Age contexts, where the concept of esotericism has taken on new implications. Hanegraaf cites Christoph Bochinger, who describes how the concept of esotericism came to be applied within the New Age, where it is

first and foremost a concept referring to *Individualkultur* according to the motto “You have it all inside yourself, check it out!” . . . Thus Esotericism changes . . . from a special tradition of knowledge into a special type of “religion,” the “journey within.” . . . Similar to the word “spirituality,” “esotericism” thus became a surrogate word for “religion,” which accentuates its subjective element focused on inner experience.<sup>14</sup>

Faivre’s method of investigating Western esotericism has come to be the one most commonly used in the field. Faivre succeeded François Secret, who, until 1979, had the first professorship in the subject called “the history of esoteric Christianity,” which was founded in 1965 at the *École Pratique des Hautes Études*, Sorbonne. When Faivre took over, the title of the professorship was changed to “esoteric and mystical currents in modern and contemporary European history.” In 1999 another professorship was founded in the subject at the University of Amsterdam with the title “the history of Hermetic philosophy and closely related currents” and is held by Wouter J. Hanegraaf. Two fulltime scholars are connected to the institute: Olav Hammer and Jean-Pierre Brach. The latter left the institute to take a professorship at the Sorbonne. The institute in Amsterdam offers courses from the undergraduate level to doctoral studies.<sup>15</sup>

Henrik Bogdan, a scholar of religion at Göteborg University, opened a Swedish department of Faivre's research organization, ARIES (Association for Research and Information on Esotericism), and now conducts a course on esotericism at the University of Göteborg. In an article on Western esotericism Bogdan writes:

The study of Western esotericism does not merely deal with the observation of earlier forgotten or suppressed aspects of Western culture, or the understanding of the historical context for modern phenomena such as the New Age, but rather it deals above all with the widening and deepening of our knowledge about, and understanding of, Western culture in its totality. The topic of Western esotericism does not simply comprise an isolated group of traditions exclusively of interest to historians of religion, but rather this is also of importance for an interdisciplinary understanding of our history and contemporary world. Literary historians, art historians, and musicologists increasingly make their presence felt in the forum where Western esotericism is discussed, which testifies to the cultural anchoring that the esoteric currents had—and to a great extent still have. The study of Western esotericism promotes a reinterpretation and a suggestion of the conceptions we have about what composes our culture.<sup>16</sup>

If we want to have a deeper understanding of the driving forces and the fantasies that nourished Gothicism, it is also useful to investigate its points of contact with Western esotericism.

## INITIATION

The third (imagination and mediations), fourth (experience of transmutation), and sixth (transmission) criteria for esotericism, according to Faivre, all point to the idea that there are different levels of reality that the adept is to investigate and penetrate. This investigation occurs through initiation. Initiation is a key concept within esotericism. The goal of initiation is to reveal the hidden kernel that is concealed behind the outer appearance of phenomena. Through initiation the adept comes into contact with the interior part of religion and myth and receives knowledge about their concealed truths. The classic initiatory theme is based on a symbolic death, descent into the underworld, and rebirth and return. The initiate leaves his old life

and his old ego behind and is reborn, often with a new name that represents the new person.<sup>17</sup>

Mircea Eliade explains initiation in his *Rites and Symbols of Initiation* in the following way:

The central moment of every initiation is represented by the ceremony symbolizing the death of the novice and his return to the fellowship of the living. But he returns to life as a new man, assuming another mode of being. Initiatory death signifies the end at once of childhood, or ignorance, and of the profane condition.<sup>18</sup>

Concepts such as ascent and descent and that opposites merge into one another recur constantly in the description of esoteric initiation. One's old life is represented as a cage or a prison of ignorance, from which initiation and esoteric enlightenment provide liberation. Johannes Bureus equates the lowest rung on his runological ladder toward enlightenment with a cage.<sup>19</sup> The same ideas are found in the initiatory system of the Manhem League in which the first degree represents humankind in its state of darkness. In the lowest degree the adept in Manhem is supposed to realize that impurity and ignorance characterized the world and his earlier life.<sup>20</sup> Even if much distinguishes Bureus's Hermetic runic initiation, with its apocalyptic character, from the educational and socially aware initiatory system of the Manhem League, both are nevertheless influenced by the initiatory mysticism of the esoteric tradition. Bureus emulated the Hermetic and Rosicrucian models that were widespread during his lifetime. The Manhem League was given shape by the surrounding secret orders during the 1800s and emulated the Freemasonic order structure, almost in a Gotho-Nordic form.

## THE PROPHETS OF GOTHICISM

The year was 1434, and there was an ecclesiastical conference in progress in Basel. Representatives of the Christian nations had been assembled to discuss the business of the church. It was not long before a clamor arose among the delegates who could not agree about how they were to arrange their seating. Everyone wanted to sit on the right side, as it was the most distinguished, and everyone wanted to be seated in the most advantageous position as possible. The lesser nations realized that they would find themselves seated in the less prestigious places, but large nations such as England and Spain could not agree about who it was who deserved the best seat. In the midst of the dispute Sweden's envoy, Nicolaus Ragvaldi, suddenly rose and openly declared that it was Sweden that deserved the most distinguished place. In a speech that caused amazement among the other delegates Ragvaldi explained that Sweden had at one time been the most powerful and most meaningful nation of all. The Goths originated in Sweden, of course. This people had subdued the world, and all the European nations were well acquainted with their history.<sup>1</sup> The Castilian delegates used their Gothic heritage as an argument to receive a favorable placement at the church meeting.<sup>2</sup> Ragvaldi wanted to remind those gathered that the Goths came from Götaland, which was in Sweden, and that they were a powerful people who vanquished Persian kings, such as Cyrus and Darius; took part in the Trojan War; made themselves known for their warrior women, the Amazons; and last but not least, subdued the powerful Roman Empire. He also reminded them that the Spanish kings and the Spanish aristocracy stemmed from the land of the Goths in the north. The Spaniards grumbled and asserted that it was much more distinguished to be descended from the brave emigrants than from the cowards who stayed behind. Despite his speech Ragvaldi had to be satisfied with a more ordinary place within the church meeting, but his speech was of great importance and was used as a diplomatic means of exerting pressure whenever the Swedes wanted to assert their historical rights. Over time the speech almost became a document

of the rights of the state and is the most important source for early Swedish Gothicism.<sup>3</sup>

Ragvaldi actually provided nothing new. The history of the Goths was well known and accepted. One of the oldest portrayals of Swedish history is Ericus Olais's *Chronica regni gothorum* (History of the Gothic Kingdom) from the 1400s. As the title of the book shows, it was considered quite obvious to speak about the Goths in connection with Swedish history. In the *Fornsvenska legendariet* from the latter half of the 1200s we meet Gothic history being seen as the same thing as Swedish history.<sup>4</sup> Already in 1081, Pope Gregory VII uses the word *wisi-gothi* for Sweden's *west-götar*.<sup>5</sup> Sweden's linkage with the Goths has its most important source in the *Getica*, a text by the Romano-Gothic historian Jordanes. Jordanes wrote his chronicle about the Goths in 551. Jordanes was of Gothic extraction and wanted to give prominence to the Goths as a people who loved learning, contrary to Roman opinion.<sup>6</sup> They were not only the people who conquered Rome, but he also wanted to indicate all of the good traits that characterized the Goths. At one time they had emigrated together with their king, Berik, from the island of Scandza; that is, Scandinavia. They fared forth on three ships from Scandinavia, and the crews of these gave rise to the three tribes: Ostrogoths, Visigoths, and Gepids. In a few lines often cited by Gothicists, Jordanes describes the exodus: "It is related that the Goths once emigrated with their king, Berig, from that island, like unto from a workshop where peoples are created, or as if out of a womb of nations."<sup>7</sup>

Jordanes gives an account of the attack of Italy and the plundering of Rome that happened under the leadership of the Visigothic king Alaric. He also reports about the great Ostrogothic heretic Theodoric the Great as well as the different battles in which the Goths were involved. Jordanes's chronicle is the most important document for Gothic history. In the year 98 CE the Roman historian Tacitus had already written about the Goths, the *gotones*, in his *Germania*.<sup>8</sup> The Goths and the other Germanic peoples north of Rome were seen by Tacitus as noble savages with upstanding morality and ability in war. They are contrasted with a culturally weary and decadent empire, such as Rome. Both Greeks and Romans idealized the barren frontiers in the north where peoples lived a simple but vital and free life. They were of the opinion that the climate shaped hardy people with superhuman powers.<sup>9</sup> The Greeks thought that both their gods and they themselves had their original roots in the faraway lands in the north. The Greek historian Herodotus thought that the goddess Leto came from the land of Hyperborea in the outermost north and came to Greece, where she gave birth to Artemis and

Apollo.<sup>10</sup> This so-called Hyperborean motif, with its roots in ancient Greece, would be the other very important pillar within Gothicism: the myth of the Hyperboreans and the history of the Goths.<sup>11</sup> It is where the Hyperborean motif is melded to the history of the Goths that Gothicism becomes especially interesting for the historian of religion. Gods and other entities became an important component of Gothic speculations.

## THE BROTHERS MAGNUS

The early Swedish Gothicists had certainly not come to utilize the possibility of uniting these motifs. Johannes Magnus and his brother, Olaus Magnus, are among the most important personages within early Swedish Gothicism. A good century after Ragvaldi's remarkable speech came the next important event in the history of Swedish Gothicism. In 1554, Johannes Magnus published a history of the kings of the Goths and Swedes, *Historia de Omnibus Gothorum Sueonumque Regibus*. It followed in the footsteps of Ragvaldi and represented Swedish history as something unique and magnificent. Johannes Magnus was a Catholic archbishop who found himself in exile in Rome and there encountered many questions concerning his homeland. He wanted to report concerning his homeland's fantastic history and to give Sweden a place beside the great European nations. Despite the fact that he took the opportunity to criticize Gustav Vasa (King Gustav I), Vasa saw great advantages in the book, and it was circulated widely, as through it Gothic ideas became even more useful. The book was translated into Swedish in 1620.<sup>12</sup>

Johannes's brother, Olaus Magnus, published a complementary history of the Nordic people, *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus*, in 1555.<sup>13</sup> Olaus Magnus and his brother saw the runestones as a proof for the antiquity of Swedish culture. When the Romans were still a barbaric and illiterate people, literature and culture flourished in the North.<sup>14</sup> They were convinced that the great runestones must have been dragged into place by giants in the primordial ages, apparently at some point before the Deluge.<sup>15</sup> The brothers, who lived in exile, wanted to describe the North because in discussions with learned men on the Continent they discovered that old geographical and ethnological descriptions of the North were inadequate and unsatisfactory.<sup>16</sup> In 1539, Olaus Magnus had the *Carta Marina* printed. This was the first fairly accurate map of Scandinavia. High up on the map stands the mythical warrior Starkader with a rune tablet under each arm. These



runes are of the same type that the brothers published fifteen years later in their “Gothic alphabet,” a runic alphabet in ABC order with explanatory Latin letters over every rune. Olaus Magnus wrote that the Nordic people had had their own language since time immemorial and that they wrote to each other on pieces of wood, something he maintained was still done during war since wood is more durable than paper and was more available. The two brothers honored the country from which they were exiled, and in one of the many illustrations in Olaus Magnus’s book there appears the phrase “preserve the ancient monuments” in Latin.<sup>17</sup>

In spite of the fact that it was close at hand, the brothers Magnus did not connect the history of the Goths with the myths of the Hyperboreans. This is remarkable since Johannes Magnus was very familiar with Jacob Ziegler’s text *Schondia* (1532) in which this connection is made.<sup>18</sup> The high point of Swedish Gothicism was achieved in the 1600s, and it was then that the connection between the Hyperboreans and the Goths was seen as being obvious. Hyperboreans became Goths, and Greek myths became Swedish ones. Most consider Olof Rudbeck as the great representative of Gothicism, but one of the most important personages of Swedish Gothicism in the 1600s was Johannes Bureus. Even if he is relatively unknown to the general public in comparison with Rudbeck, Bureus has been called the father of Swedish grammar, the first pioneer of runology, and the high priest of Gothicism.

## JOHANNES BUREUS

Johan Bure (1568–1652), or Johannes Bureus, the name by which he is best known, is one of Gothicism’s most singular figures. In his works the Gothic myths would be reinterpreted so that they did not exclusively emphasize the history of the Swedish kingdom but could also be used as a path of individual enlightenment. With Bureus, older Gothicism and his runic and linguistic research were blended with his interest in the occultism of his time.

In an annotation under a picture of a runestone Bureus mentions the point in time when his runic investigations began, as he noted, “*Denna lärde migh först läsa runor 1594 widh lagh*” (“This first taught me to read runes around 1594”).<sup>19</sup> The works of Johannes Bureus were decisive for the birth of a Swedish grammar.<sup>20</sup> He was also a great pioneer of runology and the one who reshaped the Gothic ideology in a very personal way. In 1599 he completed the first-ever printed work on runes. It was a large copper en-



[illegible]

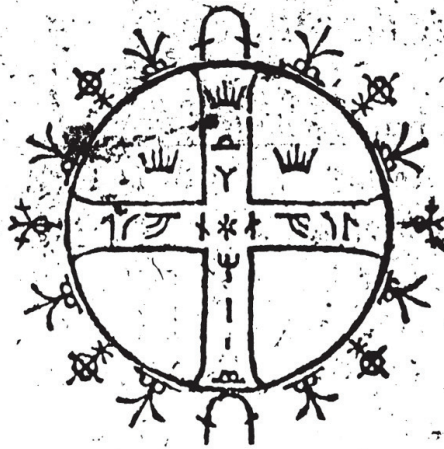
53

All Wijsheet är af Herrans Gudi/och

Svenska  
ABC

W D R G N

medh  
Kvior.



S V E A A R T N

P S A L A K V N A

¶ Gudhs fruchtan är  
början til Wijsheet.

Stockholm/ 1 6 1 2.  
medh tije åra frijheet.

Andå förtumtat benne. Zan hafwer vthgitt henne öfwer all sin werl.

är å när bond/sams wijsheet är för all ding. Guds Ord är wijsheetens

The word *känsla* (“sense”) characterizes the time and the science of the time. In this work Bureus illustrated many runestones and showed different types of rune rows with the phonetic values of the runes.<sup>22</sup> The runic investigations of Bureus were seen as so meaningful that the Swedish king forbade him to travel outside the country since the history of ancient times might be lost if anything happened to Bureus.<sup>23</sup> Bureus thought that Christianity and Latin had displaced the runes, and he wanted to make an attempt at reintroducing knowledge of them, so he published *Runa ABC-bok*. One of Bureus’s greatest accomplishments in the burgeoning science of runology was his comprehensive survey of runestones. He managed to document 663 runestones. That is approximately a fourth of all those known in Sweden up until today.<sup>24</sup>

A runology was developed by Johannes Bureus that both maintained itself within a linguistic framework and drifted into deep esoteric speculations. Bureus, who was active in Uppsala, was inspired by the Cabbala and alchemy and read Agrippa, Paracelsus, Reuchlin, and other great names in occultism.<sup>25</sup> In a comparison to the Cabbala he was convinced that the runes also had different dimensions, partly as written signs but also as esoteric and magical symbols.<sup>26</sup> He developed a Gothic Cabbala, which he called the *Cabala Upsalica*. He called the secret dimension of the runes *adulrunor* or *adelrunor*. Moreover, he constructed a symbol he called Adulruna, which also contains the fifteen adulrunor. As noted above, the symbol has similarities to the Monas Hieroglyphica of the Welsh English occultist John Dee, a symbol that contains all the planetary symbols.<sup>27</sup> Bureus’s Adulruna is a map of the universe and of man’s development through different levels of existence. The Adulruna functions both as a symbol of mankind and of the universe, of the microcosmos as well as the macrocosmos. Bureus’s most important esoteric text was titled *Adulruna rediviva*, “The adulruna revived.”

With the birth of Gothic runology during the time when Sweden was a great power, one could say that a certain type of runic rebirth took place. The runes were used among many Swedish officers during the Thirty Years War (1618–1648) to encode communications.<sup>28</sup> What is special about Bureus’s Gothic runic research is that the runes are not merely seen as age-old written signs that demonstrate the ancient Norseman’s literary qualities but that they were primarily symbols for an individual path of initiation and enlightenment in which the adept attains contact with God. Bureus’s esoteric runology was also known about outside Sweden, and he received visits from long-distance guests who wanted to be instructed in the secrets of the adul-



runor.<sup>29</sup> On his deathbed Bureus declared that it was his investigations into mysticism that he was most proud of, despite his meaningful contributions in linguistics.<sup>30</sup> His successors as royal antiquarians, such as Stiernhielm and Verelius, were to take up some of Bureus's ideas. At the same time they distanced themselves from his most occult and cabbalistic speculations.<sup>31</sup> The ideas he was probably most proud of, and which he worked out in several editions of *Adulruna rediviva*, appear not to have won any larger following. The thoughts were perhaps so personal, difficult to grasp, and occult that they had difficulty in receiving a more widespread distribution. This is at the same time quite remarkable since many mystics after Bureus appear to have developed similar trains of thought in ways independent of him, regardless of whether we speak of the Manhem League's Gothic initiatory grades or the runic mysticism of the Aryosophist Guido von List. Despite many similarities, it appears that these others developed their systems without direct influence from Bureus.

## OLOF RUDBECK


With Olof Rudbeck's *Atlantica*, Swedish Gothicism of the 1600s reaches its zenith. It is also called *Atland eller Manhem* and consists of four thick volumes, the last of which is unfinished. Rudbeck is inspired by Snorri's *Edda*, which had a great distribution at this time and which is one of Gothicism's most important sources of inspiration. Rudbeck elevates Snorri's principles of substitution to a hermeneutic principle with which he can prove that a number of accounts in Greek mythology really deal with Sweden. When Rudbeck tries to explain why Plato talks about elephants in his portrayal of Atlantis it is because this is a circumlocution referring to wolves, which proves that nothing is to be found that contradicts his basic thesis that Atlantis was actually Sweden.<sup>32</sup> Despite the fact that *Atlantica* was already controversial in its own time, it enjoyed a significant influence. Several points of contact are to be found between Bureus and Rudbeck, even though they represent two different conceptual models of Gothicism. Rudbeck is a representative of an extreme form of nationalistically self-assertive Gothicism, while Bureus represents a Gothically colored esotericism that penetrates into the individual's experiences of the supernal plane.

Olof Rudbeck has become somewhat of an introductory figure when it comes to describing Gothicism. He gave rise to his own current, which is called Rudbeckianism and which had many adherents. But there is a reason to keep Rudbeckianism and Gothicism apart. As Mats Malm indicates in his

doctoral dissertation “Minervas äpple,” many disassociated themselves from Rudbeckianism during the 1700s without necessarily abandoning the basic principles of Gothicism. Dalin’s *Swea rikes historia* is usually thought of as a revolution in the writing of Swedish history, but as Mats Malm indicates, this work calls Rudbeckianism into question, but not Gothicism. Dalin still has the basic attitude of Gothicism and is of the opinion that the Gothic language is the mother of all Germanic languages. What he distances himself from is the fantastic assertion of Rudbeckianism that the Gothic language was spoken before the confusion of languages at the Tower of Babel. Rudbeckianism can be seen as the outermost pole of Gothicism, where it serves national and historical demands.<sup>33</sup>

Over time Rudbeckian authority would diminish and adherents would become even fewer. Two gentlemen who stubbornly defended Rudbeck’s ideas were Erik Julius Björner (1696–1750) and Johan Göransson (1712–1769). Björner was in a bitter feud with lesser scholars of a Rudbeckian bent, such as Olof Celsius. Björner could, among other things, not stand the fact that they wanted to de-emphasize the antiquity of the runes. Many times he found himself having his Rudbeckian theories shot down, but occasionally he came away from the fray victorious, as when he was able to prove that the Hälsinge runes were younger than the normal runes and not the other way around, as Celsius maintained.<sup>34</sup> Björner published a series of Old Icelandic sagas in *Nordiska kända dater*, which would become his most important literary work and one that would come to inspire the circle around the Gothic League.

Johan Göransson, who was somewhat younger, wrote patriotic books about runes and history. In 1746 he came out with a translation and interpretation of Snorri’s *Edda* and published it under the title *De yverborna atlingars eller sviogötars ok nordmännens Edda* (The super-patriots: Edda of the Atlings or Sveagoths and Norsemen).<sup>35</sup> It contained only Snorri’s prolog and the *Gylfaginning*.

Johan Göransson was an esotericist and was intellectually close to Bureus.<sup>36</sup> Göransson developed ideas in the spirit of Bureus about the spiritual content of the runes. He thought, “Wherever there is a rune there is a sermon.”<sup>37</sup> The basic stave (  ) signifies the initial letter of Jehovah and indi-

cates ice and *J*; that is, As, or God. The rune row’s first sign, the Feh rune, indicates the trinity, and the rune Madhur shows the crucified Christ.<sup>38</sup> According to Göransson the runes were created by Jephthah’s son, Gomer. Since

his time the true teaching of the North was embraced, a teaching found concealed in the *Edda*. The Gothic kings, such as Bore, Odin, and Thor, were adherents of the true doctrine. These kings were elevated to the level of gods by other people. Thor was identical with the Egyptian Thoth and the Persian Zoroaster (Tor-As).<sup>39</sup>

Göransson received the commission from the king and the royal estate for collecting and publishing the great body of runic material that, since the time when Sweden had been a great power, had been stored in the archive of antiquities. The members of the college of antiquities strongly objected to the upstart Göransson receiving this commission. They effectively restricted his freedom and proposed that Göransson's prospective commentaries should be approved by Olof Celsius. Göransson was not at all aware of the esteemed runologist's antipathy toward the "disorderly" speculations of the kind Göransson was prone to making.<sup>40</sup> Göransson nevertheless finally published his last and most important work, *Bautil*, in which 1,173 runestones were cataloged and ordered according to geographical area. Despite the resistance, Göransson was successful in including a good part of his Rudbeckian theories, such as that the runestones were raised immediately after the Deluge and that the *Edda* is concerned with a Hyperborean theology in which Balder was the equivalent of Christ.<sup>41</sup>

## THE GOTHIC LEAGUE AND LATER GOTHICISM

Later Gothicism began during the early 1800s. It had been preceded by a period of decline for Gothicism and a time of disinterest in things Nordic. The earlier form of Gothicism and Rudbeckianism had disappeared, or been scoffed at in learned circles, and only a few people such as Björner and Göransson had dared to be representatives of Gothicism during the 1700s. As a reaction to this disinterest the Gothic League was founded in 1811, and Geijer, Ling, and Tegnér were among the prominent figures. The aims of the league were literary as well as cultural, and patriotic in general. Inspired by Danish nativistic Romantics such as Grundtvig and Oelenschläger, they wanted to revive the "spirit of freedom" and "manly courage" of the Goths. They read Björner's *Nordiska kända dater* and wrote poems inspired by Norse mythology. They extolled the old Nordic myths and Icelandic sagas. They hoped that these would inspire a Gothic awakening. Atterbom published the mythological poem "Skaldar-Mal" in 1811 with commentaries in

which he explained that the Nordic gods represented abstract principles. For example, Thor was “the symbol of the masculine principle of Divinity, the Light or Intelligence that stimulates the natural basis or the original imagination.”<sup>42</sup> In the journal of the Gothic League, *Iduna*, each of the runes is presented furnished with a little poem that harkens back to the procedure we found practiced by Johan Göransson.<sup>43</sup>

Johan G. Liljegren (1789–1837) was a member of the Gothic League who played an important role in giving runology a place in science again. He was awarded the medal of the Academy of Antiquities for his work *Anmärkningar öfver Runorna och Runminnesmärken i Norden*. In contrast to most earlier runologists, Liljegren did not get into the problem of speculating about the origin of the runes but instead restricted himself to demonstrating why he did not consider himself able to determine their origin.<sup>44</sup> In 1832 Liljegren published his important *Run-Lära* which would be decisive for all of runology during the 1800s.<sup>45</sup> He refers to the ideas of Verelius about the magical powers of the runes, which are based on the same concept as that of Bureus; namely, that the runes have many concealed levels.<sup>46</sup>

Although the Gothic League admired the *Eddas* as fine examples of “folk poetry,” it was not just anyone who was accepted as a member. The league wanted to gather a small number of prominent poets and academic experts in old Nordic culture.<sup>47</sup> A somewhat different direction was taken by the Gothic Manhem League, which in part shared the same membership, but it was oriented more toward youth and focused on gymnastics and rites of initiation.

Gothicism can be divided into some main phases. These coincide to a great extent with phases within literary history. In the article “Den fornordiska musan: Rapport från ett internationellt forskningsprojekt” in *Myter om det nordiska—mellan romantik och politik* by Margaret Clunies Ross and Lars Lönnroth, the history of the reception of old Nordic literature is divided into the following five phases.

1. From Snorri’s *Edda* to Laufá’s *Edda* (ca. 1230–1600)
2. Scandinavian Gothicism and the Baroque (ca. 1600–1750)
3. The Nordic Renaissance and Pre-Romanticism (ca. 1750–1800)
4. National Romanticism (ca. 1800–1870)
5. The Decline of National Romanticism (after ca. 1870)<sup>48</sup>

The first phase is where we find the early manuscripts that connect Sweden and the Swedes with the Goths and also with the Hyperboreans in certain contexts. To this period belong Ragvaldi, Ericus Olai, and the brothers Magnus.

The second phase is the period with which we most strongly associate with Swedish or Scandinavian Gothicism. To this period belong Johannes Bureus, Georg Stiernhielm, Olof Verelius, and Olof Rudbeck. During this period an extreme form of Gothicism arose that was developed by Rudbeck and is therefore called Rudbeckianism. We can count Erik Björner and Johan Göransson as later successors to this period.

The third period is most often called the Nordic Renaissance, which is a concept coined by the literary historian Anton Blanck in his book *Den nordiska renässansen i sjuttonhundratalets litteratur* (1911). Blanck described this as a Pre-Romantic literary current inspired by Eddic poetry and Norse mythology that was introduced by the Swiss historian Paul-Henri Mallet and that was developed by such predecessors of Romanticism as the Englishmen Thomas Percy and Thomas Gray and the German Johann Gottfried Herder.<sup>49</sup> During this phase ideas were developed about the sublime, something that is not the same as the classical ideals of beauty but rather something essentially different from beauty. The sublime is that which simultaneously awakens fascination and horror. Myths and archaic or ancient poetry are extolled as examples of the sublime.<sup>50</sup> The concept of the sublime becomes an important ingredient in the assessment of the Goths and things Gothic.

The fourth phase, identified as National Romanticism, coalesces with later Gothicism, which has its most important representatives in the circle around the Gothic League and the Manhem League—men such as Almqvist, Geijer, Ling, Atterbom, and Tegnér.

The fifth phase signals a decline in National Romanticism as well as Gothicism in the forms that were found during the early 1800s. That which we call Gothicism and Gothic literature and art occasionally do coalesce, for example in the assessment of the archaic and sublime. In many respects this actually constitutes two separate genres, as when the Gothic contains elements of Romantic horror. This latter genre lives on within art, literature, and music.

It was not only in Sweden that Gothicism occurred. In most European nations one could claim some sort of origin from the Goths. Besides Sweden, Gothicism was strong in Spain. In both Denmark and England ideas



about a Gothic origin flourished. While Sweden equated the Gotar, the people of Gotland, with the Goths, the Danes pointed to a connection between the Jutes and the Goths. Several peoples have been associated with the Goths. The English poems *Beowulf* (ca. 700–1000 CE) and *Widsith* (ca. 700 CE) have been interpreted as Gothic histories. In England, as well as in other large parts of Europe, the Goths would become synonymous with the struggle for freedom. Celts and Goths were often juxtaposed. The Goths were seen as a free and powerful people who were able to smash Roman tyranny. Ingmar Stenroth writes in his book *Myten om goterna: Från antiken till romantiken*:

Moral qualities also play a role in the new way of evaluating the Goths. Sweden was one of the few countries in Europe where serfdom did not take root. The English, who already in the 1600s were keen supporters of democracy as a mode of existence, think that it is here in the north where the Goths, the champions of freedom, originally lived. It is when the Goths leave Scandia that they were gradually able to liberate the European peoples from the Roman grip of imperialism, it was thought.<sup>51</sup>

When the Goths migrated out over Europe they took Russia and Poland and finally surrounded the Black Sea. The Goths were divided into the eastern and western Goths. The western Goths sacked the city of Rome and then went into Spain, where they would come to form the Spanish monarchy and aristocracy. The eastern Goths founded their own dynasties in Italy. The historian Rodrigo Toletanus wrote a book about the history of Spain in 1243, which he called *Goternas historia*. Spaniards became increasingly interested in their original homeland in Scandinavia. In the Spanish-speaking countries the myth of the Goths was widespread. Spaniards interpreted the struggle against the Muslims in conjunction with the Gothic heritage. Stenroth writes: “From the first moment the Spaniards see the struggle against the Arabs as a *reconquesta*, a reconquest of the old Gothic realm, culturally, geographically, and politically.”<sup>52</sup>

The Goths are by no means always interpreted in positive terms. For the most part the Goths have been considered a dark, dangerous, and destructive people in European history. The Goths were barbarians, and the word *gothic* was synonymous with something primitive and barbaric. The Swedish forefathers were also sometimes divided with regard to the Goths.

The history of the Goths would indicate the glorious and powerful past of the nation, but at the same time the Goths were also heathens.

The Bible contains prophecies that indicate that it is in the north that wickedness has its origin, but also it is the quarter out of which God's punishment will come. When the Goths attack Christian Rome, it is interpreted in terms of biblical prophecy. The Goths are conceived both as a manifestation of chaos and the powers of darkness as well as God's instrument with which he punishes the world, and this allows doomsday to come. During the Protestant Reformation the Goths were referred to as the people who punished Rome and the sinful Catholic Church. The Goths and other northern peoples are interpreted by the early church fathers as God's tool of punishment. Stenroth writes:

Antiquity sees the Roman Empire as the center of God-given world order, and the attack of the Goths upon the empire could be conceived of as meaning that the final Judgment was close at hand. In his *History of the Jews* (80 CE) the Jewish historian Josephus already tries to identify the menace from the barbaric peoples of the north as a corroboration of Ezekiel's prophecy in the Old Testament.<sup>53</sup>

The church father Ambrose asserted in the fourth century that "*Gog iste Gothus est*"; that is, the biblical "Gog is the same as the Gothus."<sup>54</sup>

During the Renaissance the Goths come to represent the decline of culture during the Middle Ages. The Gothic is seen as the counterpole of ancient civilization and classical ideals of beauty. The conflict between the Gothic and classical ideals continues throughout the cultural history of the Western world. Classical ideals are based on clarity, reason, light, and regularity. Gothic ideals are metaphysical and are based on archaic visions, dreams, the obscure and dark, inspiration, and possession. In poetry, classicism is marked by a pragmatic poetic vision that emphasizes rules and craftsmanship, while the Gothic merges with a metaphysical poetic vision in which the content is more important than the form.<sup>55</sup> In architecture *Gothic* became a pejorative term for a medieval church style that characterizes the cathedrals of Cologne, Strasbourg, and Notre Dame, among others, with its grand and pointed style. Despite the fact that the style is thought to have had its origin in France in the 1100s, it is called German or Gothic in what is a condescending nomenclature. Gothic architectural fashion, with its pointed style, has been associated with wild nature. The structures seemed similar to

icicles, immense ancient trees, as well as grottoes with their stalactites and stalagmites. According to classical taste, the Gothic represented something tasteless and overgrown, menacing and terrifying. But with Germans such as Herder and Goethe, the Gothic would be reevaluated, and Gothic architecture would be appreciated once more.

In spite of this, the Gothic would become synonymous with wild nature and that which is ghostly. In art during the 1800s there developed a romanticism connected with ruins in which graveyards and ruins of Gothic churches are shown entangled by an untamed nature under the glow of a full moon. Caspar David Friedrich was one of the foremost representatives of the romanticism of ruins. Ruins became such a fashion that some people were obliged to construct ruins, because the supply of genuine ones was insufficient. The Gothic ideal would be connected with the Romantic idea of the sublime. The sublime was something magnificent that inspired dread but was fascinating at the same time.

The word *sublime* comes from Latin *sublimis*, which means “high,” “exalted,” “of a high order or magnitude.” The sublime is an important category in classical aesthetics. A work about the sublime, which for a long time was erroneously ascribed to the third-century Greek philosopher Longinus, was translated into French in the 1600s. It inspired analyses and discussions about the sublime in art and the experience of art. Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant were the philosophers who pondered and wrote most about the sublime, and their ideas proved significant for the concept. The sublime touches upon experiences that move beyond a rational explanation of the world. The sublime resembles the experience that the artist Kandinsky calls “*das Unheimliche*,” “the uncanny.” For Burke beauty and the sublime had become distinct as definite formal qualities: beauty was round, soft, graceful, and often in pastel colors; the sublime was sharp, hard, grand, and in dark, strongly contrasting colors. Classical ideals were connected to the ideas of beauty, while the Gothic was linked to the sublime. Stenroth describes the differences between classicism and the Gothic in the following way:

Classicism is supposed to be an imitation of simple nature with the geometrically constructed garden as its pattern. For this conception of reality the irrational ideal of Gothicism appears to be in bad taste. When the view of nature changes, when humanity perceives all the wild windings of vegetation and begins to investigate the uninhabited cliffs and precipices of the mountains, respect is once more found for the aesthetic qualities of the Gothic. . . . Now the archi-

fects of palaces abandon classical geometrical order in favor of a liberation from the constraints of rules. Formally pruned trees become overgrown, the lawn a meadow, the basin a lake, and the garden pathway a twisting trail for the lone philosopher, where he wanders submerged in melancholy thoughts.<sup>56</sup>

Among the English Gothic Romantics an “enthusiastic terror” was spoken of, and they tried to get away from the pure, bright, ordered ideal of classicism. Instead gods, demons, hell, spirits, human souls, enchantments, magical arts, thunder, torrents, monsters, fire, war, plague, and starvation were sought.<sup>57</sup> Sublime horror would be able to give mankind knowledge of a greater reality that did not allow itself to be captured within the limits of reason. Writings that formed this style included titles such as Edward Young’s “Night Thoughts” from 1742 and Robert Blair’s poem “The Grave” from 1743.

The connection between the romanticizing of terror and Gothic literature on the one hand, and the Gothic and dark, mist-shrouded lands of the north on the other, was a constant feature in the genre. H. P. Lovecraft, an influential author of Gothic literature, wrote:

At heart I despise the aesthete and prefer the warrior—I am essentially a Teuton and barbarian; a Xanthochoric Nordic from the damp forests of Germany or Scandinavia, and kin to the giant chalkwhite conquerors of the cursed effeminate Celts. A son of Odin and a brother to Hengist and Horsa . . . Grr . . . Give a drink of hot blood with Celtic foe’s skull as a beaker!<sup>58</sup>

After the destruction of Second World War, and with the misuse of old Nordic symbols and myths by the Nazis, the use of runes and old Nordic mythology for ideological aims came under heavy suspicion. In the forward to the book *Myter om det nordiska—mellan romantik och politik*, which was published in the context of the project *Vägar till Midgård* (Ways to Midgård), Catharina Raudvere wrote:

The general interpretation that everything that makes use of old Nordic imagery implicitly carries with it undemocratic ideas confirms certain prejudices about religion in the pre-Christian North. Nordic mythology appears to be able to be washed clean of political contamination only with the greatest of difficulty.<sup>59</sup>

During the time of the hippies and the growing New Age movement, the old Nordic myths began to be taken up again, but most often with completely different political implications than during the Nazi period. Ásatrú and pagan groups inspired by old Nordic myths would be able to use these for anti-racist aims. Contemporary groups, however, can manifest several different tendencies—everything from extreme racism to a pronounced anti-racism. Mattias Gardell has divided the Ásatrú groups he has studied in the United States into three main categories: (1) anti-racist Ásatrú, (2) racist Ásatrú, and (3) ethnic Ásatrú. The first group believes that Ásatrú has nothing to do with ethnicity. The racist or radical racials believe that the gods are found in human biology in the form of Jungian archetypes, and they think that Ásatrú is an exclusively Aryan religion. Between these positions we find the ethnic Ásatrú, who are critical of what they on the one hand consider to be “New Age-ism” and on the other hand consider to be “reverse racism.”<sup>60</sup>

In England the Goths and Gothicism were used by liberals in the argument for parliamentarianism, and during the 1600s there occurred a century-long debate over parliamentarianism. The liberal Whigs extolled the Goths as a model, while the severity of classical culture was idealized by the conservative Tories. The liberals believed that it was in the north where freedom was originally found and that the land was originally inhabited by free tribes who were the descendants of the Goths. The power of the king was limited back then, and so must it be again.<sup>61</sup>

Swedish Gothicism could probably best be described as conservative, while the Danish form had many radical elements. The conservatives in Denmark were concentrated in Copenhagen, and during conflicts with Germany at the end of the 1800s, the conservatives wanted to focus their resources on Copenhagen, which the liberal farmers, who belonged to the Left, opposed. The Left started rifle clubs that had the ambition of being able to defend all of Denmark against the Germans. The activities of the Left were also found at the popular colleges (*folkshögskolor*) that were inspired by Grundtvig’s ideas and Ling’s gymnastics program. Nordic mythology, as interpreted by Grundtvig, was identified with the Left, while the classical images, which Grundtvig’s followers scornfully called too “Romanized,” were identified with the Right. In the Gothic polarization between the Nordic-Gothic and the classical-Roman, the Romanizers were associated with formality and conservatism, centralism, and rulership by an elite. Conversely, the same polarization was used to criticize Gothic ideals as being overgrown and barbaric. In Denmark mythic interpretations in the

spirit of Grundtvig continue to be used, especially among Leftists and in the environmental movement, where the heritage of the idealistic popular colleges is sometimes preserved today, even in polemics against the political establishment in Copenhagen no less.<sup>62</sup>

Before we go further this may be the time to reflect on the meaning of the word *got*, which gave the Goths and Gothicism their names. The word can have many original meanings and is derived from the Indo-European root *\*gheu-*, which gave rise to the Germanic word for “god” and also the Icelandic word *geysir* (geyser).<sup>63</sup> The word has been connected with the meanings “spring,” “to gush forth,” “to pour out,” which can give rise to interesting speculations with links to ancient Nordic religion and customs. The words for the Geats, Gotlanders, and Goths all go back to a Proto-Germanic word, whose root is *\*geut-/ \*gaut-/ \*gut-*. The meaning of this root is “the one who pours out” and could indicate a man with an allusion to ejaculation. Another interpretation is that it indicates “those who live where the waters pour forth”; that is, people who live next to springs or water courses.<sup>64</sup> Gotland could, for example, mean “the land rich with springs.”<sup>65</sup>

When Swedish Gothicism reached its culmination during the period when Sweden was a great world power, it existed under different conditions than it did during Gothicism’s first phase. The older representatives of Gothicism, such as the brothers Magnus, were Catholics and belonged to a circle of men that was in its demise as Sweden was becoming increasingly Protestant. Johannes Bureus belonged to the new epoch and enjoyed the patronage of the powerful Protestant king.<sup>66</sup> The successes of Gustavus Adolphus caused Sweden to become a world power, and this created the circumstances whereby Swedish Gothicism found itself in fair winds, and its grandiose claims seemed more reasonable than they had earlier in history. It is above all during this period that we find strong points of contact between Gothicism and esotericism in its various forms.

Throughout the history of Christianity there have always existed groups that asserted that heavenly existence will be preceded by a thousand-year paradise on earth. The Antichrist would rampage at the end of times, but the church and the Christians would emerge victorious from the battle and establish a kingdom of glory that would endure until the eternal kingdom begins. This chiliasm, or belief that Christendom would be victorious at the end of human existence and prepare a heavenly kingdom, was widespread during the first centuries of Christianity but was condemned as heretical during the Middle Ages. During the religious upheavals of the 1500s these chiliastic ideas once more won a great many followers.<sup>67</sup> In these circles the



book of Revelation and other prophecies were studied, and people looked for signs and made astrological predictions. During the decades around 1600 a great many ideas were disseminated right alongside the official teachings of Lutheranism. These were different forms of esoterically colored religiosity that at times merged with Lutheran teachings, but that many times found themselves in completely different ideological spheres. Often this concerned Neoplatonically inspired religiosity with points of contact with alchemy, Hermeticism, and Rosicrucianism. These free, spiritualistic, and unorthodox forms of religion gained great numbers of followers from all social classes in the Protestant world. Influential thinkers were persons such as Valentin Weigel, Johann Arndt, Jacob Böhme, and Johan Valentin Andreae. Their most important common source of inspiration was the sixteenth-century Swiss physician Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, better known as Paracelsus.<sup>68</sup>

Paracelsism would become an important undercurrent in the Protestant world, but it often found itself in a marginalized position. Nevertheless Paracelsian ideas were very influential in many areas. One of the central parts of Paracelsus's mission was to call into question Aristotle and the scholasticism that was then dominant in European seats of learning. Paracelsus was a revolutionary thinker who wanted to overthrow established teachings and replace scholastic rationalism with his natural doctrine, which is stamped by occultism and empiricism. Paracelsus and his followers felt that Aristotle and his logic were un-Christian, and they mounted an attack on the exaltation of the Christian world by this heathen. Instead they emphasized Plato, Pythagoras, Zoroaster, and Hermes Trismegistus (that these were supposed to be in any way less heathen certainly seems curious).<sup>69</sup> In his central esoteric document, *Adulruna rediviva*, Johannes Bureus writes that these ancient sages possessed knowledge of the secrets of the adlrunes.

During the time of Gustavus Adolphus, Paracelsism would gain great influence in Sweden. The king was under the influence of the Ramist Johan Skytte and the occultist Johannes Bureus, both of whom were opponents of Aristotelianism. In 1640, Johan Skytte delivered an oration to the students in the academy in which he praised and idealized the example of Gustavus Adolphus of opening wide the doors of the university to the true philosophy of Trismegistus and Theophrastus (Paracelsus).<sup>70</sup> Paracelsism, with its empirical method of experimentation that would become meaningful for all the alchemists of the time who were trying to produce gold from ignoble metals, had the intention of manufacturing miracle-working mixtures and dis-

covering remedies for all diseases. Out of this heritage modern natural science also developed some of its most important points of departure.<sup>71</sup> The influence of Paracelsism on Uppsala University would above all put its stamp on the physics (natural philosophy) and medicine done there.<sup>72</sup>

During the early 1600s the occult traits within Paracelsism were enhanced, and cabbalistic concepts would become an important ingredient in the new Paracelsism. Paracelsus had not immersed himself in the Cabbala in the same way as Pico della Mirandola, Reuchlin, or Agrippa, but successors, such as the Leipzig physician Heinrich Khunrath, would be instrumental in explaining that Paracelsism was intimately connected with this form of Jewish mysticism. Through Reuchlin and Mirandola the Cabbala received a Christian stamp that made it easier to be received into the Christian world. The Paracelsian Crollius was of the opinion that the purpose of the Cabbala was to show how God dwells in our innermost soul and that this means our salvation.<sup>73</sup> Johannes Bureus is a meaningful representative of Paracelsian Cabbalism, and we again find the idea of an immanent divine aspect in his work where it is furthermore united with Nordic mythology.

## THE PROPHECY OF THE LION

Perhaps the strongest influence of Paracelsus on the status of Sweden as a great power, and the Gothicism of that period, came from one of the prophecies of Paracelsus. In one prophecy Paracelsus proclaimed that there are three hidden treasures that would come to revolutionize the world when they were discovered. The first would lie buried in Weida in Friaul, the other between Swabia and Bavaria in a place he does not want to name so as to avoid a great evil. The third treasure would be found between Spain and France. These treasures were supposed to consist of incredible riches of gold and jewels, but above all they will relate to the writings of Paracelsus on the secrets of the transmutation of metals and the universal medicine. Someday three men will find these treasures. The first one is supposed to be thirty-two years old at the time, the second fifty, and the third twenty-eight.

This prophecy was supposed to be fulfilled when the Austrian Empire fell. The most influential part of the prophecy relates that at the same time there would come a golden lion from the North, from the land of midnight, and that this lion, “*Der Löwe aus der Mitternacht*,” would shatter the eagle; that is, the Austrian emperor. The prophecy warns that the time before the arrival of the lion will be marked by many plagues and afflictions. The



dream of a lion from the North who is supposed to overcome the eagle flourished in chiliastic and reformist circles. Among the Rosicrucians, Paracelsus's prophecy was referred to and people were expecting the lion who would come from the North and save the righteous. The lion would establish the terrestrial kingdom of glory that was to precede the heavenly kingdom.<sup>74</sup>

At the time, tensions were increasing between Catholics and Protestants. In 1608 the Evangelical Union was formed, and as a counter to this the Catholic League was established the following year. Bohemia experienced a short time of freedom but was crushed in 1620 by Austria. Denmark entered the conflict, but the Danish troops are beaten down in 1626. Nothing seems to be able to vanquish the emperor and the Catholic League, which has all of northern Germany in its grip. The Roman eagle rules over the Protestant regions, and the Protestant population is desperately seeking a savior. Through Rosicrucian literature, people read the prophecy of Paracelsus concerning the lion from the North and turned their attention northward. At first it was believed that this lion was perhaps the Danish king Kristian IV, but after his defeat people's attention was drawn farther north. Could it perhaps not be that the successful king of Sweden, Gustavus Adolphus, was the midnight lion people were expecting? Johan Nordström describes the spirit of the time in *De yverbornes ö* of 1934.

Never before in the Protestant world had people abandoned themselves—despite the warnings of the professional theologians—to more fervent and romantic expectations of an incipient age of bliss than during these years of such terrible reality. Nothing betrays the strain of enthusiasm within this generation more than its preoccupation with the Rosicrucian mysteries. The message of the Rosicrucians concerning the prospective general reformation, since after the vanquishing of pontifical tyranny mankind should be united with the true religion of Christ and be in possession of the revealed secrets of nature to live in paradisiacal bliss, this message, itself a child of the spirit of the times, everywhere found faithful and dedicated hearts, penetrated into the palaces of the princes and the homes of the common man, won the support of the learned at the universities and the townsmen in the commercial centers, condemned by many, defended by still more, including by Lutheran pastors, discussed by all.<sup>75</sup>

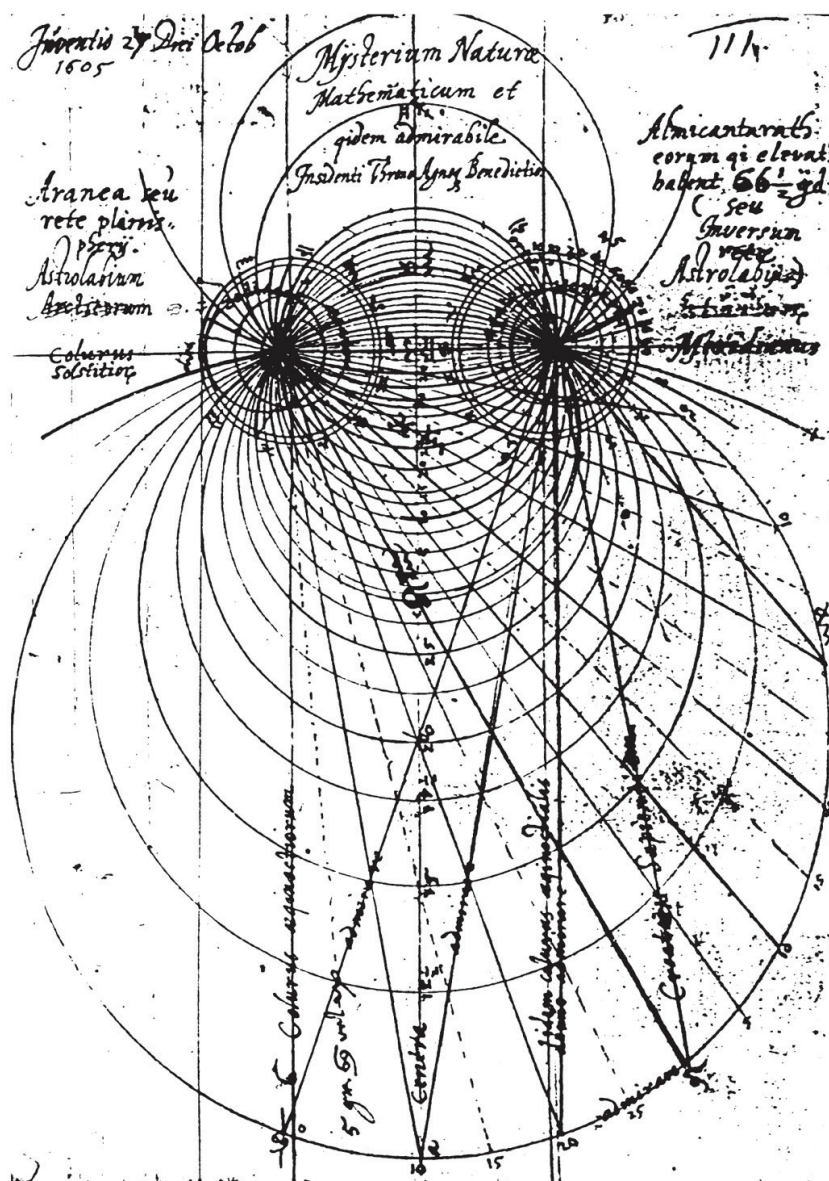
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*Aracelsus, Ariel.*



Bureus's "Astrologiska uträkningar" (Astrological calculations)

One of those who would devote much attention to the prophecy of the lion was Johannes Bureus himself. Despite his closeness to Gustavus Adolphus, he would express his uncertainty as to whether it was really the Swedish king who was the predicted midnight lion, who many believed he

was. Through his detailed reading of the book of Revelation, Bureus realized that the lion of the tribe of Judah, who opened the sealed book the Lord holds in his hand, must be the same lion that Paracelsus spoke about. That the lion in the book of Revelation referred to Christ was not a satisfactory explanation for Bureus. If it was the same lion that Paracelsus prophesied about and that was discussed so much in the time of Bureus, then the lion would come from the North. Besides, was it not so that it was Bureus himself who received the key for opening the apocalyptic age upon his enlightenment in 1613? No, that the lion in the book of Revelation and the prophecy of Paracelsus were intended to indicate Christ or the Swedish king appeared to be untrue. For Bureus the image became clear, and he came to realize that it was he himself who was the lion.<sup>76</sup>

## THE ADULRUNES

Bureus composed seven manuscripts of *Adulruna rediviva*. One of these, in the Codex Holmiensis (F.a. 16), which disappeared in 1812, was written in Swedish. That it disappeared during the zenith of neo-Gothicism is worth noting. The manuscript F.a. 16 that disappeared could have been identical to F.a. 21. On a page of a catalog in the National Library of Sweden dated 1864 it is noted that whether these two manuscripts of *Adulruna* were identical is uncertain but that the cronogram “aDILrVnaMaL” indicates that F.a. 21 was written in 1640.<sup>\*3</sup> Of the four manuscripts in the National Library of Sweden, two are written in Swedish and two in Latin. Codex Holmiensis F.a. 21 and F.a. 23 are written in Latin, while Rål. 9 8° and Rål. 6 12° are in Swedish. Of the two manuscripts, Codices Upsalienis *Adulruna rediviva* R 551a and R 551b, that are found in the Carolina Rediviva in Uppsala, the former is in Latin and the latter is in Swedish.

The different manuscripts vary somewhat in content and dedications, but the basic structure and principal contents are generally the same. *Adulruna rediviva* consists of the following parts.

The first section:	The recumbent stone
The second section:	The falling stone
The third section:	The rune cross
The fourth section:	The shepherd's royal office
The fifth section:	The treasury of the Adulruna
The sixth section:	The three crowns



# Alphabetum Scanzianum ordine proprio.

Ƴ	Frey.	F. Ƴ/v consona.	3
1	Vr.	h/u. n/v. n/y. n/d.	3
4	Tors.	I / th. p / dh.	5
h	Odhes.	f / o. f / d. f / t / t / o.	7
c	Rydbur.	R / r. h / r / er fin.	9

Y	Kyn.	Ƴ / f / c. Ƴ / Y / g. 4 / q.	10
†	Hagball.	H / Gh / Ch.	30
†	Nadh.	N. I / n fin. f / dn.	50
I	Idher.	I voc. I / j. I / I / e.	70
†	Æru.	Æ. I / a. † / an.	90

1	Sun.	S pr. f / s. h / f / ss.	100
1	Tidhr.	T. f / tt. f / d.	300
4	Byrgbal.	g / b. f / B / p.	500
f	Lagher.	L. f / ll.	700
Ψ	Man.	M. Ψ / mm.	900

## Ordine Latino.

I. H. Ƴ. 1. I. Ƴ. Ƴ Y. †. I. Y Ƴ. f. Ψ. †  
a b b c d e f g g h i k k l m n n

4 f. † B. 4. (R. h. 1. 1. 1. h. n. f + J.  
o o p p q r r r s s t u u y z i

Ƴ Ƴ + 1. h. f. k f f + f. b. †. d. †.  
v v a a a o o o ch dh gh th.

The first section, the recumbent stone, describes the exoteric significance of the runes. The second section, the falling stone, places the runes in three crosses of five runes each and describes their spiritual esoteric dimension. The third to the fifth sections continue with this. The rune cross is an arrangement of all the runes in the form of a cross heavily laden with meaning. The shepherd's royal office is a short piece with an illustration accompanied by an explanation that shows a king dressed in vestments decorated with runes. The treasury of the Adulruna is perhaps the most essential part that attempts to indicate the origin of the runes out of simple, original geometrical forms. The sixth section describes the mystical origin of the three crowns and does not deal with runes.

## THE FIFTEEN ADULRUNES


Bureus divides the rune row into three groups of 5 runes each. This arrangement does not correspond to the traditional division of the rune row into the families of Frey, Hagal, and Tyr. Bureus removed the last rune in the rune row of 16.<sup>\*4</sup> Out of this he derived a symmetrical rune row with  $3 \times 5$  runes. In the usual case, the rune row of 16 has three families, where the initial Frey family consists of the runes *f, u, th, a, r, k*, which caused the rune row to be called "futhark." The two subsequent families consist of 5 runes each. In the usual rune rows *m* comes before *l*, but Bureus reverses these and has the rune row conclude with the letter *m*. He undoubtedly derived this from the 19-figure rune calendars in which the runes also have this order. That he calculated using the runic calendar is apparent since he makes note of it when certain of the runes are "golden numbers"; that is, they mark a year within a nineteenyear cycle of time. Bureus's so-called *femter*, or "quintets," begin with the runes for *f, k, and s*; that is, Frey, Kyn, and Sun (Bureus's spellings in his *Adulruna rediviva*). He calls the first quintet the *födarefemt* (progenitor quintet), after this comes the *föelsefemt* (generational quintet), and last comes the *fosterfemt* (generated quintet). Bureus developed speculations about this triplicity in connection with the adulrunes. His first group of runes is not a futhark. The rune *a* indicates an *o* instead, which it started to do toward the end of the Viking Age. Thus Bureus's first group of five is *f, u, th, o, r*; that is, *futhor*, which in his adulruna stands for "father," "progenitor," "creator." Bureus also had the runes represent numbers. In the first quintet the runes stand for the odd numbers between 1 and


9, in the next group of five they have the same values multiplied by ten to make 10–90, and in the last *femt* they are multiplied by a hundred; that is, 100–900. This forms the point of departure in his adulrunic gematria and his apocalyptic calculations. The symmetry of the rune row and the correspondence in number between the runes and various principles are of the greatest importance when Bureus develops his runology. In this he prefers to represent the runes *u* and *r* in their shorthand forms as they appear among the so-called Hälsing runes. In this way these two runes become mirror images of each other. Bureus renders the runes so that they appear to the greatest extent possible as mirror images of one other. The symmetry of the rune row is important for his esoteric speculations.<sup>\*5</sup>

The descriptions that follow of the interpretations of the runes by Johannes Bureus are taken from *Runa ABC-boken*, *Runaräfstén*, and the esoteric *Adulruna rediviva*. The etymological discussions are those of Bureus himself. The numerical values are from *Runa ABC-boken* and the etymologies from *Runaräfstén* and *Adulruna rediviva*. The rune images that follow were drawn by T. Ketola.

## THE PROGENITOR QUINTET

(*Födarefemten*)

 **Frey:** In the *Adulruna rediviva*, Bureus calls this rune the stave of Freyja. In ancient times the word *Freyja* (Sw. *fröja*) meant “lady” (Sw. *fru*). The word comes from “seed” (Sw. *frö*) and thus refers to fertility. In this instance, the word *fröken* (unmarried woman) is derived from this word. The rune is called *fä* (cattle) for the sake of abundance in the same way that the Hebrew letter *alef* means “ox.” In *Runaräfstén*, Bureus calls the rune *fre*, *frö*, *fröj*, *frägh*, *frigg*. The farmers call it *fä* or *fähysing*. It is called *frö* (seed) or abundance because of the branches that come out from its main stave. Friday has its name from the same word as this rune. The rune signifies both the letters *f* and *v*. Bureus gives the rune the numerical value of 1.

 **Ur:** This rune indicates original motion and expression. It corresponds to (1) the Latin *a*, *ab*, *e*, *ex*; (2) the *ur* in *urväder* (drizzly weather); and (3) the *ur* in *urverk* (clockworks), “on account of movement.” *Yrka* (demand) is derived from it. Ur corresponds to the letter *u* along with *y* in the pointed




form (with a point inside *u*) or *å* in a double-pointed form. Ur has the numerical value of 3.

**Þ Tors:** Bureus writes in *Runaräfssten* that the Thor rune has the same name as Thursday, Thor's month, and *torsk* (codfish).

It remained in books of the Middle Ages longer than the other runes, perhaps due to some mystery it concealed, Bureus thought. According to him Tors can be compared to the Hebrew *tora*, which means "law," "correction," "instruction," "God's word." The name of the god Thor could have been derived from this. This rune is the sign of the highest freedom, because it means "to dare" or "venture" as well as "strike," "to turn back." Bureus uses as an example the river Torne, "where the Gulf of Bothnia turns back," Tören—Södertören—"where the countries of the three peoples meet," and Törnby, "where the inlet of Mälär, Skafven, turns back." As an adulrune this rune indicates Thor, God, unity, the Ain Sof of the Cabbala, and the highest spiritual level. Tors is the rune of God, and Bureus's interpretation of the name Thor (Sw. *Tor*) corresponds more to the Old Norse name of the sky god Tyr, whose name means "god." In the manuscript *Cabbalistica*, Bureus renames this rune *unitas Deus*.<sup>1</sup> Because Tors is the third rune in the row, Bureus thought that he could connect it to the trinity. The Tors rune signifies *th* and *d* and has the numerical value 5.



**h Odhen:** This rune is called Odin's stave (*mercurii litera*) or the *ödenstav* (*fata litera*)—"the stave of fate." This goes together with *od*, *öde*, *aud*, and *öud*, which, according to Bureus, mean possession. He compares it with the words *Svidiod* (Sweden), *månad* (month), *härod* (jurisdictional district), *klenod* (jewel). *Odhen* can indicate *o*, *å*, and *ö* in Swedish. The Swedish word for Wednesday, *Onsdag*, belongs together with the name of this rune. Bureus attacks those who call *Onsdag* such things as *woensdag*, *wendisdagr*, and so on, and is of the opinion that they have forfeited their right to use the runic script. According to him the Icelanders preserved the ancient and correct name of the day and call it *odensdagur*. In *Runaräfssten*, Bureus writes that Odin was the greatest of the heathen idols. Frigga was the wet nurse and foster mother of mankind, who fostered man and helped him during the time of his growing up. Thor rules over man's grown-up life. On the other hand, Odin rules over man's "end," or *fatum*, and corresponds to

Mars, Pluto, and Mercury. Odin is connected to man's destiny (Sw. *öden*). The rune has the numerical value of 7.


 **Rydhur** or **Redh**: This is connected to *rede* (advice), *ride*, and *rudder* (with which one rules over a ship). Rydhur is a sign of dominion and justice (the “right”). It corresponds to the Latin *dominium*. Bureus complains that the rune *r* in one of its forms was displaced and put at the end of the sixteen-rune row. There it lost its venerable chivalric name and was instead called quite simply *Stupmadher* (inverted man). Rydhur has the numerical value 9.

## THE GENERATIVE QUINTET

(*Födelsfemten*)

 **Kön** or **Kysn**: Bureus gives the rune many alternate names such as *kaghn*, *gaghn*, *kaghvänd*, *gaghnnum*, *göir*, *geir*, *käir*, *git*, and *kan* (*naturæ kön*, *notitiæ*, *nosce*), as well as *generosæ naturæ litera*, “the generous or noble stave of nature.” The name of the rune means “the reproductive power of nature,” but it is also related to the word “can”; that is, “to be able” (Sw. *kunna*).<sup>2</sup> The rune can also indicate “sex” (Sw. *kön*), with the meaning “boil”; that is, sore. Whenever this rune is on the golden number, animals and men will be struck by boils, Bureus warns. The rune name Kyn also stands for being knowledgeable and authoritative. When the rune splits in two directions () the better side corresponds to the meaning “king,”

German *König*, which comes from *kön*, *kyni*, and *kunna*. The rune corresponds to the Pythagorean Y, which symbolizes man's choice between the evil leftward path or the good rightward path. The three lines in this Y in this form of Kön also indicate *intellectualis*, *animalis*, and *corporalis*. The rune corresponds to *c*, *k*, and *g* as well as to *ch*, *gh*, and *q*, even though Bureus takes note that *q* is not found in proper Swedish and that one should stick to Swedish inasmuch as it is as good as any other language. Bureus is of the opinion that languages should stand on their own and be “undiminished and unbloated.” The rune corresponds to the number 10.

 **Haghal**: This rune describes “that which encloses (Sw. *hagar*) or accomplishes everything and which is favorable.” The name of the rune can

be compared to a word such as *haglek*, which means “art” and “craft.” Bureus thinks that this rune is formed from a combination of the runes *n* and *a*, which stand for grace and honor, respectively. Haghal embraces these two principles and corresponds to the Latin *grando*. The rune corresponds to the letter *h*, and the numerical value of Haghal is 30.



**Nåd or Nodher:** This rune is also called Nodh and Nödh. The name of the rune means both “grace” (Sw. *nåd*) and “distress” (Sw. *nöd*). It is grace because one side of the sloping line is raised, but distress because it slopes down on the right side, Bureus explains. The rune indicates the letter *n* and has the numerical value 50.



**Is or Idher:** This stave is “completely naked” and therefore received the name *poenitentiae litera*, “stave of repentance.” It is also called Idstav (*studii literi*). According to *Runaräfssten* the name *idher* comes from Edher, who first devised the runes. From this comes the concept *idíngar*, “learned in writing,” and *idh*, which means “study.” It stands for *i* and, when pointed, the letter *e*. This rune has the numerical value 70.





**Ar:** This rune sometimes indicates *a* and *ä* and sometimes *å*. Therefore it has different names such as *ära* (honor/glory), *ärv*, *är*, *ar*, *ari* (*eagle*), *are*, *år* (year), *årstav*, *Gloria* (honor), *perpetua requises* (perpetual rest), *littus*, *aquila* (eagle), *annus* (year), *annora*, and *sufficientia*. The rune symbolizes honor (Sw. *ära*) and the eagle (Sw. *örn*). The appearance of the rune best fits the names *gloria* and *perpetuo requises*, according to Bureus, because the slanting line is raised at the end. This is also what honor and perpetual rest does after experiencing distress. The rune concludes the second group of five and has the numerical value 90.


## THE GENERATED QUINTET


(*Fosterfemten*)




**Sun or Sol:** This rune is called “the highest sun in heaven” and also has the designation sun stave, of the sun, and *sön*, which gives its name to Sunday (Sw. *söndag*). Sol could have been one of the highest Gothic gods, and


some people call the rune Sel instead, which means “soul” (*beatus, animus*). The sun is named after light, which was created on Sunday, and the sun is likened to the son of light. The words *son* and *sun* correspond to each other in this way. Connected to this rune are the words *sona*, *suna* (“to forgive through the son”), and *ransuna* (“to recover what has been stolen”). This rune indicates the letter *s* and has two forms:  and . The first is, according to Bureus, the more correct and is called “hanging sun” because it hangs from the top line of the serpent in runic inscriptions. The second form is, however, most common and is called “kneeling sun.” The rune’s number is 100.



 **Tidher:** This rune has the same name as Tuesday. Some call it Tyr, and in Dalarna it is called Tijr. It is called the stave of time and it marks out time as well as times of celebration and solemn services. In ancient times the priests were called *tidmān* (time men) and *tijar*, Bureus reports. The foremost of these, according to Bureus, may have been Byrger Tidesson, the mystical originator of the adulrunes. Time is likened to a *skäkt*, a *arm-bågs**pil*, due to its hastiness. The appearance of the rune reminds us of an arrow. The rune is also called Tak (roof) because of its appearance. It is called Tyri, which means *tjärfakla* (tar torch), because when this rune is a golden number many conflagrations occur. Tidher represents the ascension (*ascensus*) and the elements of air and fire. The Tidher rune signifies *t* and sometimes *d*. The rune has the numerical value 300.

 **Byrghal:** It is also called Birka, Birke, Birkal, and Björk. In *Runaräfstén*, Bureus writes that some think that this rune got its name from Berik. Berik is the legendary Gothic king about whom the Roman historian Jordanes writes in his work *Getica*. The Goths left their motherland, Scandza, in three ships and traveled out into the world under the leadership of Berik. The rune is also called Byrkal after *byrkarl*, “he who is lord over the homestead,” as well as *byrgal*, “containing everything contained in everything.” The name of the rune is also connected with *börja* (to begin), “the one who begins.” The name of the rune is a compound word made up of *byr* and *ger* or *kär*, since this is the patron of the house, fatherland, and towns, and *bur* means “townsman,” Bureus reasons. Some use the word *burgeir*, meaning “the son of war,” in the same way that *ger-man* means “war man.”<sup>3</sup> Because one of the names of the rune is Byrger, the rune gives its name to the mysti-

cal creator of the adalrunes. This rune represents mankind, the spirit submerged in matter and the microcosm. Byrghal is the opposite of the Thors rune. While the Thors rune, or the rune of god, represents the highest plane of unity and enlightenment, Byrghal symbolizes darkness, opposites, twofoldness, matter, and the material world.<sup>4</sup> In *Cabbalistica*, Bureus names Byrghal as the *binarius daemon* in contrast to the Thors rune, which represents the *unitas Deus*.<sup>5</sup> In the same work Bureus shows how this rune in its twofoldness consists of the sun and the moon, day and night.<sup>6</sup> It is important to indicate that Bureus did not view this rune as evil or negative. The goal is to raise this rune to the level of the Thors rune; that is, that mankind and matter are to be made divine. Byrghal indicates *b* and *p* and has the numerical value 500 (while Thors has 5).

 **Lagher:** This rune is also called Lag and Lauger and is formed from the same name as *lördag* (Saturday). The name of the rune comes from *läkkia*, which means “to drip” or “pour,” and *laug*, which means “bath” (Sw. *lög*), also a name for Lakes Mälaren and Luugen. The rune is also connected with water. The rune name Lag (*lex*) comes from the verb *laga* (to arrange). The name is also connected with “layer” (Sw. *lag*) as well as the word “lay,” as in the sexual connotation; see also Swedish *samlag* (sexual intercourse) and *hjonelag* (concubinal union). Besides being connected to water this rune represents the law and often turns up paired with Tidher. This represents time and law; that everything has its time and place.<sup>7</sup> Lagher represents descent (*descensus*) and the elements water and earth. Lagher corresponds to the letter *l* and has the numerical value 700.

 **Man:** This rune has the same name as Monday and corresponds to the moon. Some call it Madher (man), and it is seen illustrating a man with outstretched arms. It indicates the sound *m* and therefore as the last rune indicates “the one that shuts the mouth.” The rune Man can be connected with Stiernhielm’s letter—and adalrune—mysticism in which the letter *m* corresponds to the lowest and last part of the Neoplatonic series of emanations that begins with the vowels and ends with the consonants. *M* is the lowest and indicates the earth, mire, darkness, and silence (cf. “the one that shuts the mouth”).<sup>8</sup> For Bureus *m* corresponds to the moon as the light of the night. Bureus also calls Man the *manestav* for *mani* (moon). In a variant of

the rune  a man scratching his head is shown. Bureus explains that this is actually the last rune but that the last rune is also often considered to be *stupmadher* (inverted man) , which signifies *r*. According to him it is thus degraded from its original place together with the fifth rune, Rydhur. Bureus equates the rune Man with “the human being as the measure of all things” and with the center of the world.<sup>2</sup> Man has the numerical value 900.

## THE HIDDEN LEVELS OF THE RUNES

For Bureus language and words are mediators between man and the divine. Bureus explains that among the foremost gifts with which God honors mankind so as to differentiate him from the animals, belong “reason and rationality” along with the two sensory mediators, language and writing. Of all the natural powers, language is the most wondrous of all the arts and writing, “*dedh wirkeligeste och vnderligeste*” (the most true and wondrous).<sup>10</sup> In the introductory sections of *Adulruna rediviva*, Bureus gives an account of the meaning of the runes, words, and writing. The spoken word is a mediator between writer and reader; similarly, writing is the mediator between writer and reader. The son of God is the mediator between the creator and the created world, and therefore he calls himself Alpha and Omega, the first and the last letters in the Greek alphabet. The son of God is holy scripture, holy writing. This scripture is found in three forms: the divine, the macrocosmic, and the microcosmic.

Divine scripture can be revealed, as when Moses received the Ten Commandments from God, or it can be deciphered as divine signs in natural objects, as, for example, mystical inscriptions upon fish in the sea. Written signs are found engraved in nature and constitute fundamental patterns for humans to observe.

A similar idea is found in a remarkable account in runology in which the linguist and Icelandic historian of ancient times Finn Magnusen (1781–1847) enthusiastically described bold bind runes and runes with common main staves on a rock wall in Runamo in Blekinge. He manages to read a Nordic heroic epic into this feature and described his revelation in a written work of seven hundred pages.<sup>11</sup> But it actually turned out that these runes were merely natural fissures in the rock, and Magnusen met with devastating criticism. His book, *Runamo og Runerne*, is nevertheless a learned book with much factual runological information.<sup>12</sup> Finn Magnusen’s revelations

about the rock have fascinated many rune mystics, especially since he described how he understood the runes and translated them in a state of ecstasy and trance.<sup>13</sup> The esoteric runologist Nigel Pennick took up for Magnusen by comparing his experience with Artur Artaud's universal esotericism in which people interpret local natural symbols that express eternal hidden realities.<sup>14</sup> Pennick writes in his *Secrets of the Runes*:

From the Runamo experience, as with earlier traditions, it is clear that natural runic patterns have a great deal to tell us. They have their own geomorphic content, from which we can learn.

This approach is the same as Bureus advocates when he writes about the divine script. This script is called macrocosmic and constitutes nature and the great world outside humanity. It is the book written by God *vtan synliga stavar*—"without sensory staves." The microcosm and man are God's third book.<sup>15</sup>

The runes are the first original signs that mediated between the creator and creation, between the writer and the reader. The runes are found in two main forms. There is the outer, exoteric form that Bureus calls "the evident" or "the known and sensible" runes that were of great interest but not the most important. These outer runes can teach us to read. But of significantly greater importance are the inner, esoteric dimension of the runes, called *adulrunes*, which relate to the usual script the way the Cabbala does among the Hebrews or the hieroglyphs among the Egyptians.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, there is an innermost, third runic dimension called the *alrunes*. Therefore the runes have three dimensions as follows:<sup>17</sup>

1. Evident runes
2. *Adulrunes*
3. *Alrunes*

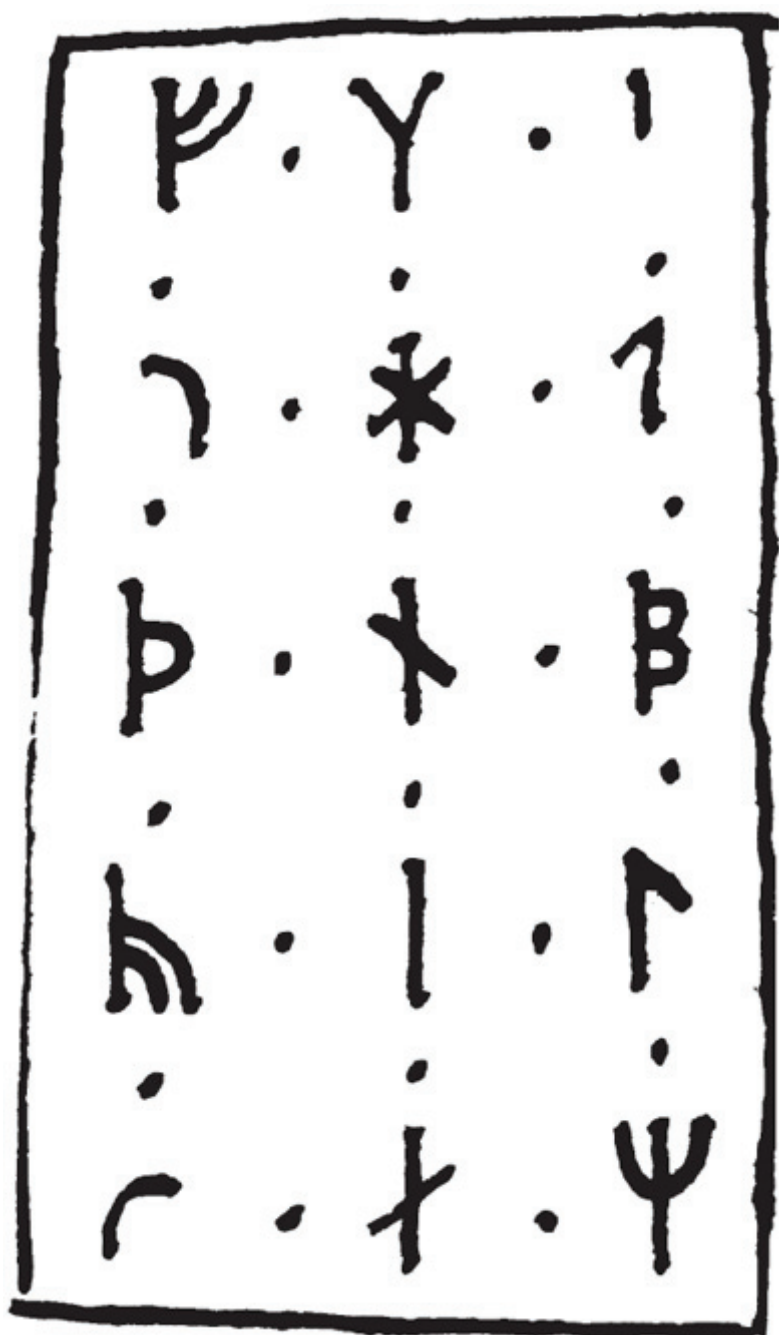
## THE RECUMBENT STONE AND THE FALLING STONE

Scripture and God's son are one, and Christ reveals himself as a stone that communicates the message of salvation and enlightenment to mankind. Hildebrand explains Bureus's view of the mediator: "In the same way he

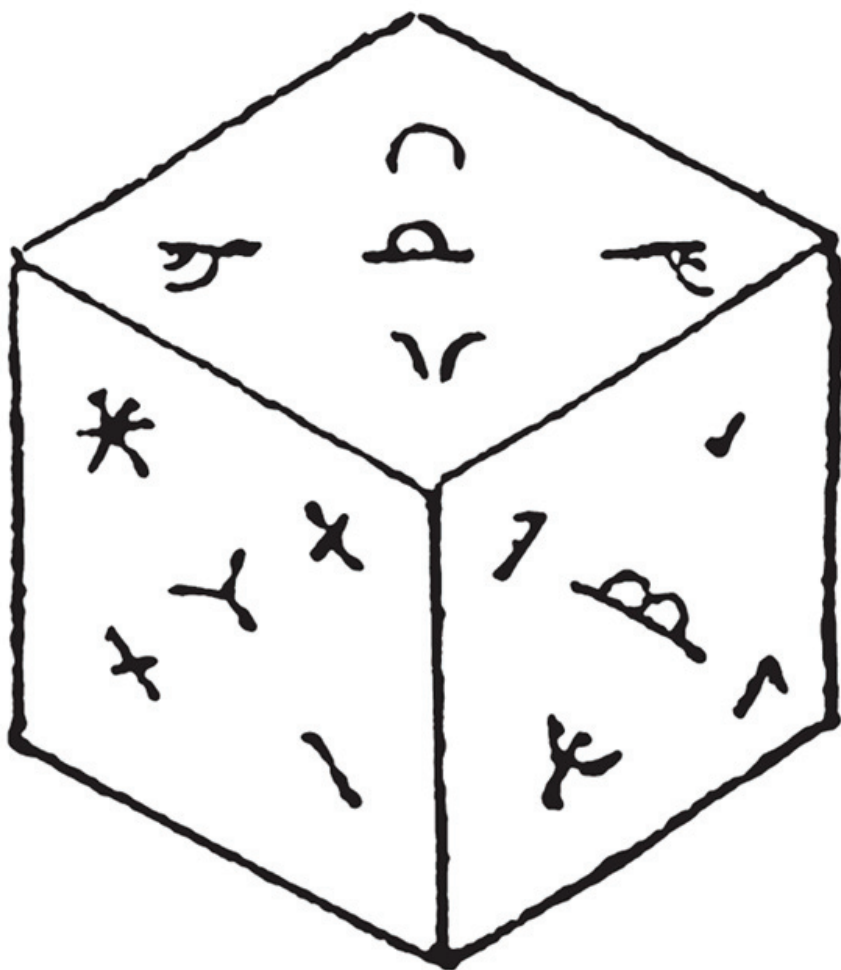
does not equate this mediator exclusively with a shepherd or father, as the best servant of all by office, but also with a stone as the oldest thing of all and the most permanent.”<sup>18</sup>

The stone that corresponds to Christ, and that transmits the communicative language, is one of Bureus’s most important symbols. The stone is portrayed in *Adulruna rediviva* either as a recumbent or falling one. The recumbent stone represents the runes in their exoteric “evident” form. It is flat and square or rectangular and shows the runes standing in three vertical columns one beside the other. The recumbent stone represents “the scorned human form of the mediator.” The falling stone signifies “the powerful divinity of the mediator” and the esoteric dimension of the runes. This stone falls from heaven into the world of men, where it takes the form of the recumbent stone. The falling stone is a cube, the three visible sides of which each bear one of the three quintets of runes. The runes in these quintets are arranged in the form of a cross with a rune in the middle and two to the sides and one above and one under the central one. That the runes are placed in the form of an equal-armed cross shows that this involves spiritual, esoteric runes and not ordinary written signs.





The recumbent stone



The falling stone

In the first quintet, which is on the top face of the falling stone (see the image above), the runes Odhen, Thors, and Frej stand in a row. These runes signify Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, but as a group Bureus calls these runes TOF, and they are said to represent the original Nordic trinity. Bureus thinks that the original true religion maintained itself undefiled for a longer time in the North than it did in the southern lands. But over time an Asiatic master of witchcraft found his way up into the North and called himself Odin. His wife was called Fröja, and they declared that people should worship Thor during their lives—Fröja in connection with birth and the beginning of life, and Odin during old age and death. Heathenry and the worship of idols made of wood began with the advent of the false Odin. With this,

the people turned away from the true trinity TOF, and the wisdom of the adalrunes was stifled.

The rune Thors represents the thing that is most free, effective everywhere and in everything. Bureus explains that the Northmen worshipped Thor from primeval times. The word *thora* indicates that the wisest people had the highest power and authority in the beginning, before the languages were confused.<sup>19</sup> Thor is immortal and both masculine and feminine. This is demonstrated, according to Bureus, by an image of Thor in the church at Gamla Uppsala that is bearded above and feminine below. This image is now thought to be a badly damaged picture of Christ. Thor corresponds to other sky gods such as Jupiter and Jehovah. The Thors rune illustrates an open door that rises up over the horizon and leads to a “shelter.” Thor is the great invoker, and Odin and Fröja (represented by runes) are his messengers. They stand on each side of the door with their hands humbly stretched below the horizon, which Bureus shows in one of his illustrations, rendered here by T. Ketola:



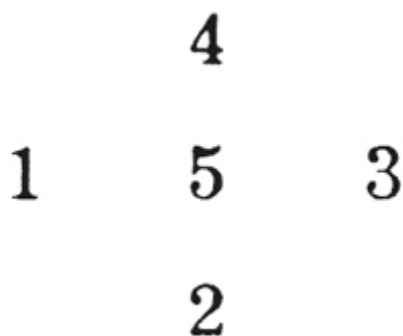
At Thor's right side is found Odin, and the day before Thursday is Wednesday (Sw. *onsdag*). Odin is Thor's son. Odin is destiny, *fatum*, divine providence, which is the origin of everything as well as the one that destroys. As the destroyer, he is Odem, “the second blood-red Adam, who in the rage in his blood destroys all his enemies.”

At Thor's left side is found Fröja, and the day after Thursday is Friday. Fröja was Thor's daughter and Odin's sister. She is the holy woman and corresponds to the Holy Spirit that in the beginning hovered over the water in the first book of Moses. She was worshipped in the North as the true spirit of sacrality and that which provides all good gifts. This is interesting because the rune is also called Feh, which is used to indicate riches, livestock, and property in other interpretations of the runes.

The two runic signs below the Thors rune (on the top face of the falling stone) are called the twins by Bureus, and he equates them with two ram's horns and an *oro* (*uru*) in a clock's works. The signs consist of the runes *o* and *r*, and together they form a word that characterizes the world outside and below the god Thor; that is, *or* or *oro* (agitation). These two runes signify perpetual motion and expanse. The twins are paired above the Thors rune and its horizon. They have, so to speak, passed through the "door" (the Thors rune). Now they form the Swedish word *ro* (peace) and represent eternal rest and inscrutable union with the highest god. Bureus cites Hermes Trismegistus: "Those chosen by god are of two kinds, the one are those who migrate, the other those who are still, and these are the highest holiness of souls."<sup>20</sup> Below and outside the door are also the two runes *u* and *r* in the form of Hälsing runes that Bureus most often uses for these two. They form the word *ur* or *or*, which is supposed to signify life, twofold/manifold, motion, *oro* (agitation), and divine activity. Above and inside the door they form the word *ru* or *ro*, which signifies eternity, the beyond, and God's world, unity, peace, and eternity.

In the second cruciform quintet, located on the left face of the falling stone, "the quintet of generation," are the runes grace (Nåd), sex (Kön), and glory (Ar) in a row. For Bureus these form the word NotArKon, which signifies the administration of the three realms of the sustainer, or God. This also corresponds to the three crowns in the Swedish royal coat of arms.<sup>21</sup> The word *notarikon* is derived from the Cabbala, where it indicates one of the cabbalistic letter codes. Sometimes this concept is synonymous with the Cabbala itself, and Bureus also called his runic Cabbala *notaricon suethia*.<sup>22</sup> The *n* rune on the left side is that of "glory in the Promised Land." While the *k* rune is the governance of the kin (*kyn*) of the realm, "which no eye has seen."<sup>23</sup> The *k* rune is split in two on top, but on bottom has only one stroke: "the single Tree of Life stands on both sides of the river that flows from God's throne." In this figure the rune looks like a Y and can be connected to the Pythagorean "Y" that symbolizes the life of a person where the foot is the innocence of the child and the two outstretched arms are the choice between good and evil, the right and left, virtue and vice. Bureus explains the runes above and below in the following way:

The twins are, according to their name, placed with the Hagal (hail) above and Ider (repentance) below. They can also form boundaries between the aforementioned three realms, thusly:



1.2. 3. 4. 5 so that one emerges from the valley of distress (1) into the plane of honor (3) over the passage of repentance (2), and the one who proceeds from there has to go through a torrent of hail (4) and on to the summit of character (5). This corresponds to the people of Israel's migration over the Red Sea into the wilderness, where they were nourished with manna and then through the rocky Jordan into the "redemptive land of peace," where they dwelled permanently, as well as to the movement of the high priest of God, first from the outer court then by the brazen altar (2), into the holy temple (3), and from there to a place before the golden altar (4), and into the holy of holies (5). He who understands this, only he understands this quintet and the journey together with the fact that the mediator's priestly office is here equated with N, the recumbent stone with I, the royal government with A, the falling stone with H, and the office of the judges with K.<sup>[24](#)</sup>

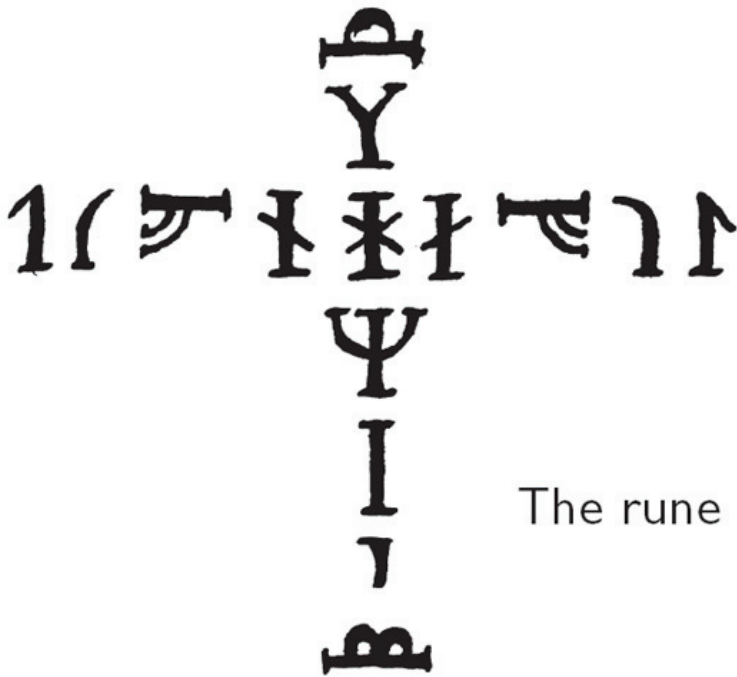
The third quintet, the quintet of the offspring, which is located on the right face of the falling stone, can be read in two directions. Either (1) horizontally with the runes Tidher, Byrghal, and Lagher, or (2) vertically with the runes Man, Byrghal, and Sun. The three horizontal runes represent the three offices of the crowns (the priest, the king, and the judge) that mediate between Sun, the powers of the sun and heaven, and Man, mankind. Byrghal in the middle is the most important of these triplets. It represents the prince or king. On the king's right side stands Tidher with his priests, and on the left side stands Lagher with his judges. This arrangement is reminiscent of the two sephirot Chesed and Geburah in the Cabbala, which are situated to the right and left of Tipharet, respectively. Chesed to the right signifies reconciliation and mercy, and Geburah to the left has the power of judgment.

The vertical interpretation of this quintet shows Sun, Byrghal, and Man. Sun is the sun that illuminates the day and therefore is called “the most splendid of all sensible things.” The man rune, which is also called Måna, is the light of the night; that is, the moon. Both represent the celestial world. In the middle is found Byrghal, which represents mankind and the cage in which mankind is trapped. Humanity sits in the cage of physicality and waits for redemption. The twins Tidher and Lagher on each side remind humanity that everything has its time and law. In *Cabbalistica* this cruciform quintet illustrates the sensory world: Byrghal represents humanity and the microcosm, Sun represents the archetype, Man stands for the macrocosm, and Tidher and Lagher for the elements. Tidher represents the ascending elements air and fire, while Lagher stands for the descending elements earth and water. Byrghal has the ambiguous role of representing the king, the foremost mediator between above and below, in the horizontal reading of this quintet, but in the vertical reading Byrghal stands for the cage (Sw. *bur*) that separates humanity from the heavenly world. This illustrates the dualism in Bureus’s view of humanity.

The first section of *Adulruna rediviva* deals with the recumbent stone, or the scorned humanity of the mediator. The second section deals with the falling stone and the powerful divinity of the mediator. The third section takes up “the priestly office of the shepherd” and proceeds from Bureus’s rune cross.

## THE RUNE CROSS

Bureus’s rune cross is constructed from the fifteen adulrunes. Seven vertically placed runes represent the ascending and descending path between heaven and earth. The two arms of the cross consist of four runes each, which are mirror images of one another. Out of the rune cross Bureus interprets seven “discernments” or contemplations, which he also calls clusters. These consist of groups of runes or so-called rune courses (here “course” refers to a row of stones set in a wall).



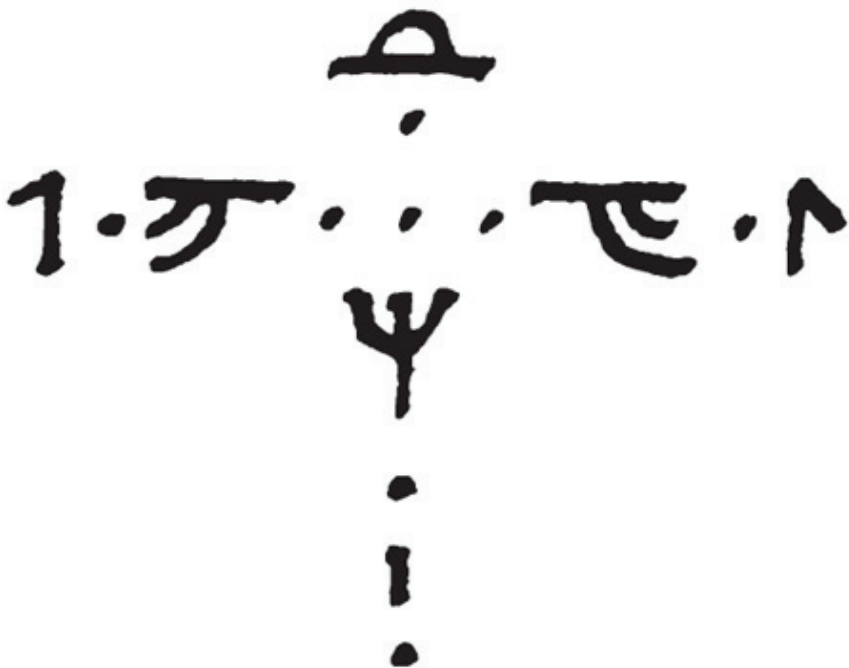
The rune cross

1. The first triplets of the cluster: A course of seven and two courses of four.
2. The second triplets of the cluster are (a) the shepherd and defender of four staves, (b) the herd of seven staves, and (c) the ravager of four staves.
3. The third cluster: Nine staves of outspread arms and its seven-stave summit.
4. The fourth flock: A cluster concerning the reckoning of time.
5. The fifth flock: Two realms and their governor.
6. The sixth flock: The staves in the quintet of the offspring that became the five wounds of the crucifixion.
7. The seventh flock: The imminence of the guide of law. The runic bow and arrow.

The first cluster is led into with a “course of seven,” thus a group with seven runes from the rune cross. The Haghal in the very middle is removed, and this course of seven consists of every other rune in the rune cross. These



seven runes correspond to the seven weekdays and the seven planets of alchemy.



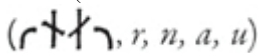
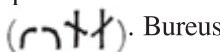
Course of seven  
(Image by T. Ketola)

	På	står		märkiandes här
1	hufvudet	ᚦ	Staf	ᚦ
2	v. armen	ᚦ		ᚦ
3	v. handen	ᚦ		ᚦ
4	fötterna	ᚦ		ᚦ
5	bröstat	ᚦ		ᚦ
6	h. handen	ᚦ		ᚦ
7	h. armen	ᚦ		ᚦ
				dag diem
				ᚦ Jovis
				♀ Veneris
				♄ Saturni
				☉ Solis
				☾ Lunæ
				♂ Martis
				☿ Mercurii

The correspondences of the course of seven  
(The second column, rows 1–7: head, left arm, left hand, feet, breast, right hand, right arm.)

The course of seven illustrates Christ on the cross, as well as Odin or Byrger as the crucified. To explain why the third section concerning the shepherd's priestly office begins with this symbol, Bureus cites the Gospel of Matthew (16:24): "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me."<sup>25</sup> The course of seven illustrates the crucifixion of the body. The bearing of the cross should occur every day.

Bureus explains that Thursday is the Northmen's holiest day. This comes before the Sunday of the Christians or the Saturday of the Jews. Thursday as the holy day originated, according to Bureus, when King Ninus of Babel lost his father, Bel, who is called Jupiter (Jove, Jehovah = Thor) in the chronicles. Thursday became a holy day in memory of his father.

The two "courses of four" in the first cluster are formed by the eight runes that do not make up the body of Byrger or Christ (= the course of seven) and the seven days of the week. Four of these (, *r, n, a, u*) are found on the horizontal line of the cross and make up the first of these two courses of four. These runes from the word *RUNA* () Bureus explains that the word *runa* means "experience" (Sw. *rön*) and signifies a "test" or "experiment." We can add to Bureus that the meaning of the word *runa*, "secret," "hidden wisdom," and such, fits well with the meaning he gives the word. The runes *RUNA* and *AURN* that form the word *runa* can be depicted as a gateway (see images below). This is the gateway of grace (Nādh) and honor (Ar) to eternal peace (the runes *r* and *u* or *o* = *ro* ["peace, rest"])). The word *runa* itself makes up the gateway to the higher worlds. The four runes can also be composed in another way so they form the word *AURN* (Sw. *örn*), eagle, *aquila*, the double-headed symbol of the Gothic warriors of the Roman emperor Tiberius. This is the "mocked, scourged, stripped, and crucified mediator."<sup>26</sup> Bureus writes that the Haghal rune stands in the midst of the crucified staves that a thrall sold for thirty pieces of silver. The number for Haghal is 30, and for Bureus it symbolizes Christ and the Holy Spirit.<sup>27</sup>

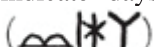


RUNA



AURN


(Images by T. Ketola)


The second course of four consists of the four vertical runes that do not indicate days of the week, or the crucified body. These four runes () can be read as *PIGKynd*, *virginis filius*, “the virgin’s son.”

The Swedish word *pig* relates to *piga*, a young woman or maiden. *Kynd* relates, for example, to the German word for children, *Kinder*. This son of the virgin can lead mankind out of bondage (Byrghal) through the rune Idher (repentance) and the embrace of grace and honor (the embrace is an expression of the equation of Haghal with the union of the Nādh and Ar runes) through the gateway of RUNA to the divine Thors, which is reached through Kyn, the son of the virgin.

The second group of triplets of the cluster or flock are the “fourstave shepherd and defender,” “the seven-stave herd,” and the “four-stave ravager.” The four-stave shepherd, or defender, is equated to a spiritual sheep pen where the sheep are enclosed in a protective wall or fire. It consists of the trinity TOF and Byrghal, which corresponds to the humanity of the shepherd. The Odhen rune corresponds to his divinity. TOF is the trinity and Byrghal is humanity. Due to its appearance, Byrghal is equated with the Holy Virgin’s breasts with which she nurses the shepherd when he becomes a human being in the quintet of the offspring. Byrghal can also be equated to a double-door that functions as the entrance and exit for the sheep. Byrghal is also the basis or foundation upon which congregation rests. The name can therefore also be interpreted as *bärg-all* (save-all).<sup>28</sup>

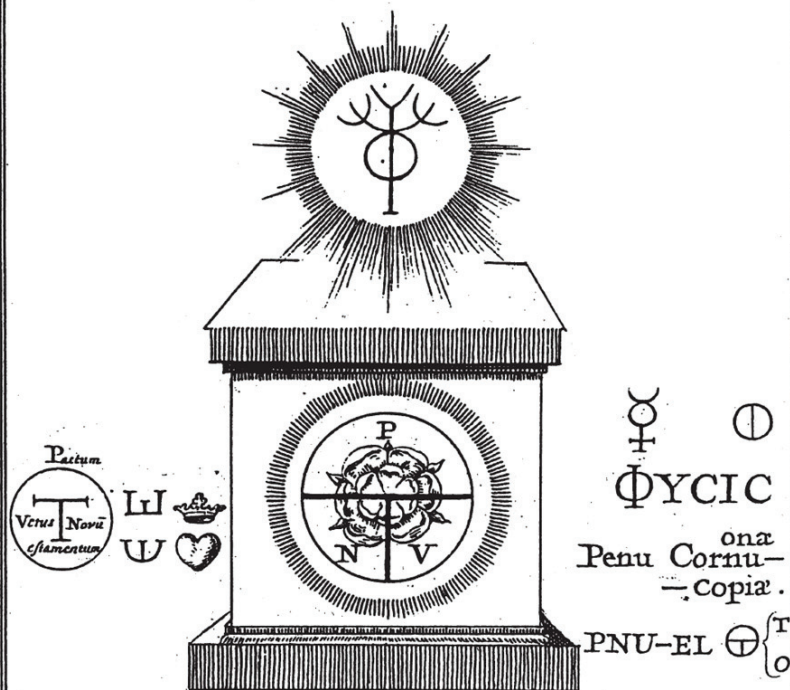
The seven-stave herd is made up of the five runes in the vertical line between Byrghal and Thors (between Christ as man and God), together with

the two innermost ones on the horizontal line, Nādh and Ar. These runes represent the multitude of the congregation with the sevenfold unity of the spirit of holiness.<sup>29</sup> Bureus ties these runes together in a special symbol or bind rune that occurs often in his works. The symbol is called *signum foederis*, “sign of the covenant.” As one example, he places this symbol upon the Rosicrucian altar he illustrates on the cover of his early Rosicrucian pamphlet, *Ara Feoderis Theraphici F. X. R.* The runes in this stave can be arranged so that they form  GÆGHN MIS—*occure mihi*,

which means “go to me” or “run to meet me” and is the call or mission of Christ, who is the “caller” of mankind. In *Antiquitates Scanziana* he mentions John 21:19 as the source for this mission.<sup>30</sup> This is the call from above downward. Man, or “the called,” answers with the same runes read in a different way, from below upward: , SIM ÄGHN K(ynd), *simus*

*possessionis filij, quasi unus*, “We are the possessions of the Son, as one.” As is frequent in the works of Bureus, one rune, in this case Kyn, has to signify a whole word: *Kynd*.





ARA  
FOEDERIS THERAPHICI  
F.X.R.

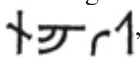





ASSERTIONI FRATERNITATIS R.C.  
*quam Roseæ Crucis vocant  
Consecrata.*

Frankenberg's version of Ara Feoderis Therphici F. X. R.

The four-stave group of the ravager is made up of the four staves that are left on the rune-cross after the seven staves of the herd and the four

staves of the shepherd have taken shape. The excluded runes are , TRUL; that is, *troll*, the evil spirits, demons, the spiritual wolves that try to scatter and gobble up the flock. These correspond to the forces of chaos and the thurses in ancient Norse mythology. In the beginning these entice, using law and time (); later they press the dupes down into the abyss with the three-pronged pitchfork (). If the four staves of the ravager are read in another way one gets LURT, , *defraudatorum symbolum*, “the sign of the duped ones,” which can be interpreted as filth or muck (LORT).<sup>31</sup>

The third cluster describes the horizontal line of the rune cross that is called “nine staves wide” and its vertical line that is called “seven staves high.” In the middle of the rune cross on the crossroads, between the horizontal and vertical lines, stands the Haghal rune. On the right arm of the nine-staves wide stand the runes , which form NORD. This does not, in the first instance, signify the point of the compass north but rather its secret meaning: “*N(ådens) Ord och N(ödens) Ord*,” “the word [Sw. *ord*] of grace and distress.” If the runes of the right arm are read in the opposite direction one gets the word TRON, which is *fides*, “truth, faithfulness.” The Tidher rune signifies, as we saw in the section on the fifteen runes, both *t* and *d*. On the left arm stand , which give the word ÄFUL, which is to be interpreted by reading the first rune by its complete name. We thus get the word *A(r) FUL*, which means “perpetual fullness,” or in its adulrunic reading it stands for *ärofull*, “glorious,” “honorable.” The two arms can be read as *ära*, “honor,” and *trohet*, “faithfulness.” The right arm stands for God’s word and the left for the spirit of holiness, and “without these two nothing can be called or come.”<sup>32</sup> To be called and to come allude to “the Caller,” Christ, who cries out from above down to mankind, who is to respond and come to God. From the runes  on the left arm one can interpret LOF, “praise,” but Bureus thinks that the proper adulrunic interpretation should be , LYF, which according to him is the old Swedish word for “love,” along the lines of the English word, or the German *Liebe*. If we take the runes from both arms, except for the innermost ones (Nådh and Ar)—that is, the whole nine-stave horizontal line without the middle-most runes (*n*, *h*, *a*)—the rune cross gives us the word TROFUL, “faithful.” The nine-stave horizontal line describes various qualities and characteristics

that are required for initiatory transcendence as the vertical “seven-stave summit” illustrates.



TRUL



LURT

(Images by T. Ketola)

The seven-stave summit, the vertical rune row of the rune cross, is one of the most important parts of Bureus’s adurunic system. Its runes illustrate a seven-grade initiatory process that can go upward (*ascensus*) or downward (*descensus*). Bureus explains that God’s son (Christ/Odin) both descended and was born as a man in this way and reascended to heaven along the same path. The work of man, or of the adurunic adept, is to advance upward from the lowest rune, Byrghal, to the highest God rune, Thors. The mediator for this process is Christ or Odin, who is represented by the Haghal rune.<sup>33</sup> In *Cabbalistica* this seven-grade path of initiation recurs in several versions. It is, for example, connected to the alchemical process and its seven steps to the elixir.<sup>34</sup> In *Antiquitates Scanziana* the seven runes describe Christ’s various stages as savior, from conception to resurrection and his reascension to God.<sup>35</sup> While the nine-stave breadth illustrates “the Collector’s,” Christ’s (Byrger’s, Odin’s), outstretched arms, the seven-stave summit shows the upright length of his body. Thors is the head and Byrghal the feet. The body in between demonstrates the five runes that also symbolize a ladder, “the five-runged ladder,” between the divine and humanity. The runes are the rungs of the ladder.





Ascensus

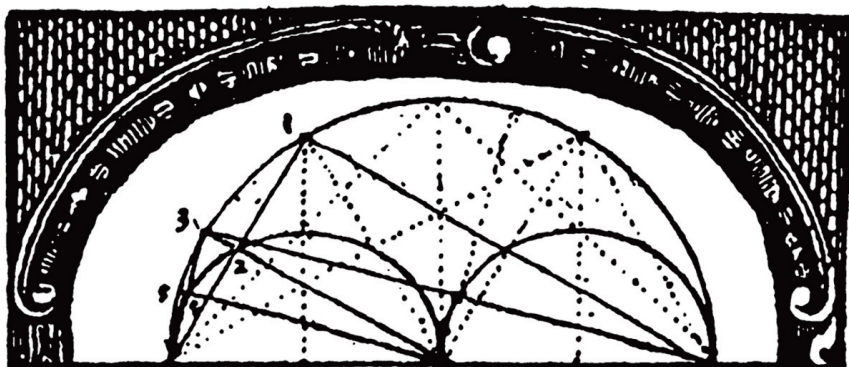


The arrow of Abaris

(Images by T. Ketola)

These five rungs of the ladder help Byrghal to climb to the Thors rune. Bureus illustrates this climbing in *Adulruna rediviva* with symbols where Byrghal is combined with the five runes on the path to Thors. This path is the ascending one, or *ascensus*, which is the goal of the runic adept.

Bureus weaves the five rungs of the runic ladder together so that they form a recurring symbol in his work. This symbol is “the arrow,” and Bureus connects this symbol to the Hyperborean Abaris, who appears in Greek mythology. This arrow is also a stave or a magical twig carved with runes and bears mystical secrets and magical powers.<sup>36</sup> Through his illustration of the ascension Bureus demonstrates that the goal is a unification of Byrghal and Thors, man and God. This is not a question of a complete absorption by God, without man retaining his distinctive features, as Byrghal illustrates, but rather it is an ascent to a higher level. The symbol of the unification of Thors and Byrghal occurs in various forms in the works of Bureus, but in *Adulruna rediviva* he shows a special version that “indicates the immeasurable power that those who become unified with God receive.”<sup>37</sup>





The unification of Thors and Byrghal

The descent, *descensus*, begins in the Thors stave and is completed in Byrghal only to begin as an ascension in order to be united once more with Thors. Byrghal is interpreted as comprising two gateways; these can illustrate how God descends into matter by exiting one gateway into the world and then returns through the other on the way back to the divine plane. For man Byrghal's two gateways can symbolize birth and death, the womb that conducts us into the world and the grave that conducts us out of the world. The descent begins through the Thors rune, "the door from which all good gifts come."<sup>38</sup> The runes describe, according to Bureus, various levels of the descent: The Kön rune stands for the father's highest kingdom, Haghal accomplished the father's will. Man, or Manna, is the heavenly bread, and Idher stands for repentance that is the result of guilt. The rune Sun represents temptation, and Byrghal is the dungeon in which man sits shackled in irons and in fear of impending death. Bureus explains that the one who sits in this dungeon wishes for a savior, and this is only doubted by someone who does not understand that life is the foremost reward.<sup>39</sup> The seven rune steps correspond with the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9–13.








<b>Thors</b>	Our Father, hallowed be thy name
<b>Kön</b>	Thy kingdom come
<b>Haghal</b>	Thy will be done in heaven as well as on earth
<b>Man(na)</b>	Give us our daily bread
<b>Idher</b>	Forgive us our debts as we forgive those who owe us debts
<b>Sun</b>	And lead us not into temptation

**Byrghal** But deliver us from evil.

In *Cabbalistica* the meaning is then developed into the initiatory seven-staved ascent. This corresponds to the alchemical process for producing the tincture or elixir of life.

Calcinatio	—		Byrghal <sup>40</sup>
Sublimatio	—		Sol
Solutio	—		Idher
Putrefactio	—		Man
Destillio	—		Haghal
Coagulatio	—		Kön
Tinctura	—		Thors

On the same page in *Cabbalistica* the alchemical process is enumerated: (1) *sublimatio*, (2) *descensio*, (3) *destillatio*, (4) *calcinatio*, (5) *solutio*, (6) *coagulatio*, (8) *cæratio*, (7) *fixio*. Why 8 comes before 7 is not quite clear. Because we are dealing with a handwritten manuscript it could simply be a mistake. But adulrunic and Hermetic meanings for this inversion cannot be ruled out.

The seven-stave vertical line is also a Hermetic path of enlightenment. The adept is raised from the darkness of ignorance *tenebræ* () through *splendor* () , *lumen* () , *lux* () , *luminare* () , and *modus entis* () to *principum absolutæ primum* () . The seven runes are situated upon a double-graded scale where the three lowest ones (Byrghal, Sun, and Idher) belong to evil (*mala*) and the four highest ones (Man, Haghal, Kön, and Thors) to the good (*bona*).<sup>41</sup> The seven-stave vertical line also describes man and his constitution.

6-1: *Unum*

5-2: *Mens*

4-3 *Ratio*


3-4 *Opinio*

2-5: *Natura*

1-6: *Corpus*

*Byrghal* <sup>42</sup>

The fourth flock (cluster) concerns the calculation of time derived from the numerical mysticism of the rune cross. The numbers Bureus assigns to the runes are presented in his *Runa ABC-bok*. The right arm of the rune cross consists of the runes *t, r, o, n*, which have the numerical values 300, 9, 7, and 50, which add up to 366. Hildebrand's runes were supposed to add up to 362, even though following Bureus he says that the sum is 366. The number 366 is, according to Bureus, supposed to correspond to a solar year, while the rune Haghal in the middle of the rune cross has the numerical value of 30 and corresponds to a cycle of the moon.

The left arm of the rune cross consists of the runes *a, f, u, l*, which have the numerical values 90, 1, 3, and 700, which add up to 794. That, according to Bureus, corresponds to the number of years between conjunctions of Saturn and Jupiter ("Jovis"). Bureus explains that "with  Adulruna ef-

fects the bride's presence, embrace, and double delight pointing to the year 1648 away from the previous embrace."<sup>43</sup>

The previous embrace was therefore the birth of Jesus, so here we are dealing with a calculation of an apocalyptic event. By the expression "the bride's presence" Bureus means that the Haghal rune should be included in the calculation and that "the embrace and double delight" means that the sum should be multiplied by 2. The conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter, or the "embrace," 794, is added to the number of the Haghal rune, 30, and that is multiplied by 2. This gives 1648, a year that stands out prominently in the adulrunic texts. To understand the meaning of this date we have to see what occurred on the previous arm: A solar year is there extended by one year (366), so we can derive the actual solar year by subtracting one year (366 - 1 = 365). We have to deal with the left arm in the same way. By subtracting one year we can arrive at the actual meaning, which is 1647. This year has great meaning in the work of Bureus in contrast to the year 1648, which

does not have any especially pronounced meaning, despite the fact that the Treaty of Westphalia, ending the Thirty Years War, was concluded in that year. Bureus identifies himself with the lion spoken about in the book of Revelation 5:5, as well as the cherub who appears as a lion at God's throne in the book of Ezekiel. In this same way Bureus identifies himself with the lion from the North, *Der Mitternacht Löwe*, which is talked about in the prophecy of Paracelsus. Bureus saw himself as the prophet of the new age who would reawaken the adalrunes and the ancient wisdom.

Then the last herald, the lion, began to act, the eschatological process is dramatized more and more. The signs and events begin to accumulate. The third empire, Solomon's kingdom, has its inception in 1641, but a greater thing happened in 1647, the year of the second coming of the Holy Spirit and the veritable judgment (Mishpat), when nevertheless only the righteous shall be judged. In this year the sixth seal of the book of Revelation shall be broken and the sixth bowl poured into the Euphrates.<sup>44</sup>

The year for the return of Christ is 1666, when the first judgment comes preceding the thousand-year reign. We understand from Bureus's speculations surrounding the number 666, the number of the wild beast, that the year 1666 has a special meaning.<sup>45</sup> Everything that is supposed to come to pass in 1666 will have already come about in 1647 due to the fact that the year 1666 is to be reduced by nineteen years. Bureus gives many mystical and intricate explanations for this.<sup>46</sup> Bureus explains that in 1647 there would appear a sign on the moon, and the number 19 has been connected to the moon. In the Nordic rune calendars that Bureus studied a row was found with so-called golden numbers with the help of which the exact date of Easter can be calculated. These calendars were constructed according to the principle found in Christian calendars that it took nineteen years for the lunar cycles to be repeated on the exact same day. On the runic calendar Latin numerals were replaced by runes.<sup>47</sup> Bureus writes concerning the number 19 and these rune staves:

PRIMA  
JUVENUTIS  
CHRISTIANÆ  
INSTITUTIO  
LITERARIA.

Lingua & Characteribus,  
Latinis & Gothicis.



STOCKHOLMIÆ,

*anno precedente*

---

INDICIVM,

Chr. Reusæro impressore.

Because the golden number of the Moon is Nineteen years, there is first Twelve common years in the calculation, then Seven additional years, which most every farmer in Uppland knows how to make out as the Rimstaves have them.<sup>48</sup>

The number 19 recurs in the work of Georg Stiernhielm, a disciple of Bureus. He compares Greek myths about Apollo's return every nineteenth year with the golden numbers that are found on the rune calendars.<sup>49</sup>

After 1647/1666 a time of supreme happiness comes about that consists of six years in which every day is like a thousand years. In the seventh year, 1673, the final judgment occurs.<sup>50</sup> Thereafter the eternal kingdom of God begins.

The vertical line of the rune cross contains the runes *b, s, i, m, h, k, th*, which have the numerical values: 500, 100, 70, 900, 30, 10, and 5, the sum of which is 1915.

In connection with the computations of the seven-stave summit, a picture of a monument is shown with a cryptic legend: "therewith he set up an adlruna monument for his wife." On the monument was written *adlrunakuml*, ADVLrVnakkVML (= adlruna monument). The capital letters signify Latin Roman numerals, which give the year 1615, DVLVVML = 500 + 5 + 50 + 5 + 5 + 100 + 50. In the same way we substituted the number 1 from each side of the nine-staves across, we will, according to Bureus, subtract 1 from the beginning and 1 from the end of the seven staves of the vertical. This gives us the year 1613, "commonly written as IVDICIUM" (= 1 + 5 + 500 + 1 + 100 + 1 + 1,000), the day of judgment 1613.<sup>51</sup> It was in this year that Bureus received his enlightenment concerning the secrets of the adlrunes. In the late autumn of that year he was on a journey with King Gustavus Adolphus for the purpose of organizing the new printing of the Bible. When they were in Tuna in Dalarna on the fifth of December at twenty-two minutes after six o'clock Bureus was overcome by a *momentum excitationis*, a moment of rapture. He heard a voice that said in song: "RIVos IaM CLaVDe pVer sat prata bIberVnt," "Boy stop up the rivulets, for the meadows have drunk enough."<sup>52</sup> In these words are concealed the Roman numerals for 1673, when the world, according to Bureus, was supposed to end.

The events of 1613 would affect Bureus forever, and he would change earlier conceptions after this and instead take on the role of one initiated into the mysteries, a prophet in the midst of the confused world around him.



The manuscript *Cabbalistica* in the diocesan library in Linköping is introduced with the words:

*This book is mostly (fantasies)*

*Collected before I*

*Received knowledge in 1613*

*of the hidden*

*Truth*

*No author can reveal it.*<sup>53</sup>

According to his way of thinking Bureus (Byrghal) was united with the divine (Thors) in 1613 by means of a mystical runic path of initiation that the seven-staved vertical line of the rune cross illustrates.

The fifth flock shows the three kingdoms and their rulers. It is constructed out of the runes *t*, *o*, *f* (i.e., the divine triad TOF) and *k*, *n*, *e* together with *h*.

The sixth flock shows the staves in the quintet of the offspring (i.e., the last of the three groups in the row of adulrunes), which here are called the crucified's quintet of wounds. The rune Sun is nailed through both feet, Tidher through the right hand, Lagher through the left, Byrghal has both feet fettered, and the rune Man is found at the heart like a spear thrust into it with a stream of blood coming from the heart.



The three kingdoms and their rulers

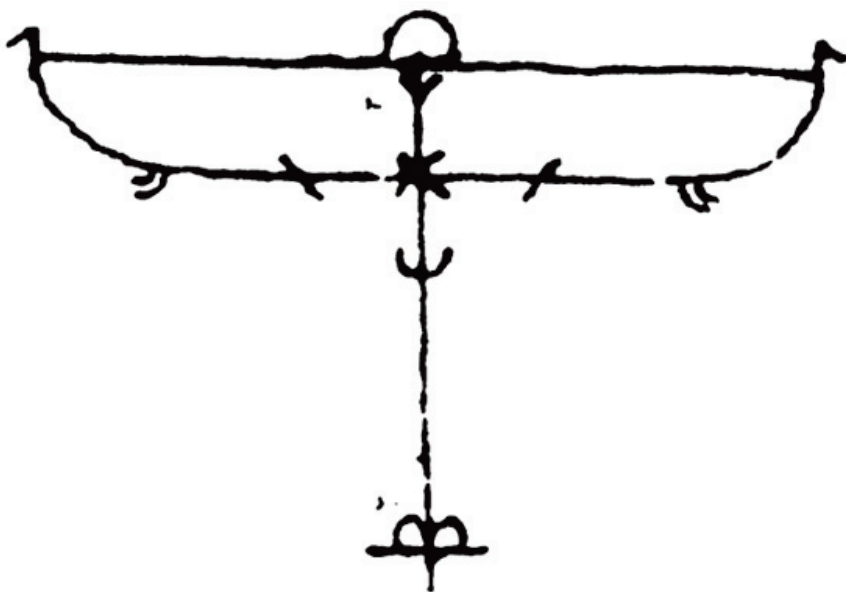


The quintet of the wounds

(Images by T. Ketola)

The seventh and last flock in the third section of *Adulruna rediviva* shows “the threat of the guide of the law.” Here the rune cross has become a bow and arrow with an arrow pointed toward its target, which is humanity/Byrghal, called the single-stave target. The highest rune, Thors, is called

the single-stave string; the nine-stave crossbeam is called the nine-stave bow; and the five-runged ladder has become the arrow of Abaris—that is, the five-stave arrow that occurs in many ways in the works of Bureus. It is worth noting that the point of the arrow is formed by the rune Sun, which corresponds to the sun and especially to its rays. Abaris catches one of Apollos' arrows; that is, one of the rays of the sun. Therefore the arrow of Abaris is a ray of sunlight or an arrow of Apollo. Apollo himself is the sun and can be connected with the Thors rune, which Bureus usually equates with the sun on the horizon.



The bow and arrow

## THE KING CLAD IN RUNES

The fourth section or chapter in the *Adulruna* work shows a king who has the runes on his clothing and crown. He is the shepherd in his royal office. The king is clad in a shining white tunic with a belt around his waist and crowned with a golden crown. In the pictures he is most often shown carrying a scepter and orb. On the crown is the first quintet of the progenitor, on the belt the quintet of generation, and on the hem of the tunic the quintet of the offspring.<sup>54</sup> In *Antiquitates Scanziana* we see the shepherd or king without his scepter or orb, and instead he is standing with outstretched arms. He

is clothed in the three runic quintets, but here the crown is a piece of head-gear that looks like the Thors rune.<sup>55</sup>

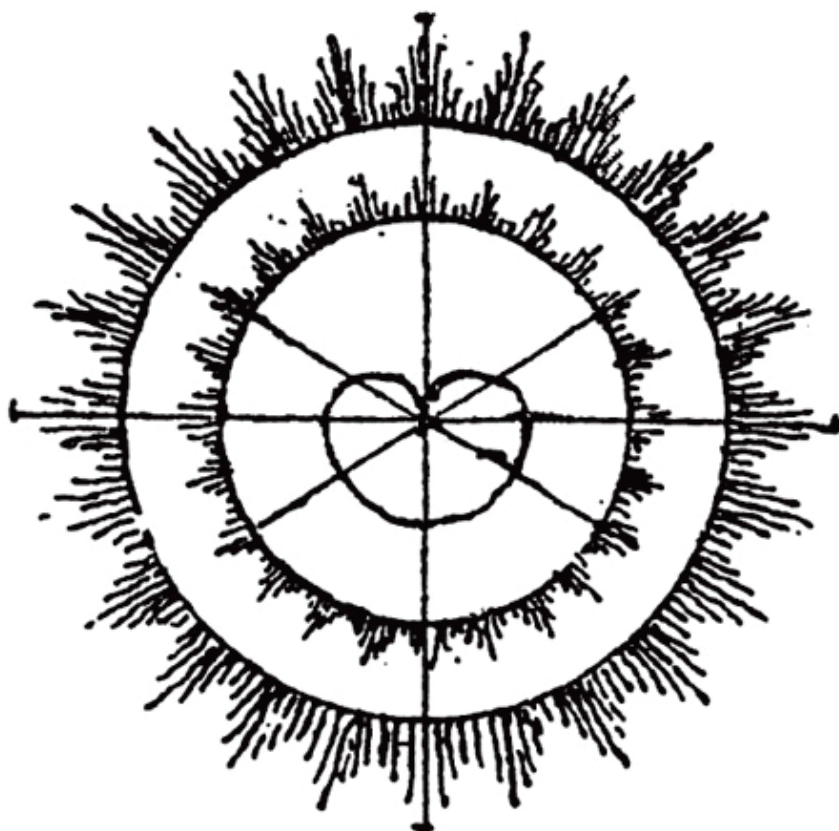


## THE INNERMOST VAULT AND TREASURY OF THE ADULRUNA

Bureus devotes the fifth section to what he calls “the innermost vault and treasury of the Adulruna.” At the center of Bureus’s mysticism is found this symbol from which the fifteen runes of the rune row have their origin. He calls this symbol the treasury of Adulruna, where “the creator’s holiest name is revealed.” It has the form of a solar cross with three rings within one another. The two outer rings are geometrically perfect circles, while the

innermost ring has the shape of a heart. The heart consists of a semicircle on the lower part and on the upper part that of a divided circle, the two halves of which lie over the lower semicircle, which give the form of a B lying on its side. From the inside of the second circle there is an equal-armed cross that produces the rune Haghal, which is a central rune. The Adulruna symbol is therefore constructed on the basis of an equal-armed cross, a cross and three rings that correspond to the three levels of existence. The solar cross is an ancient symbol that has been found in the North since heathen times. Bureus was also inspired by John Dee's *Monas Hieroglyphica*, which, similarly, is a universal symbol that contains other symbols within itself. The signs of all the planets can be seen in Dee's *Monas Hieroglyphica*.<sup>56</sup>

All fifteen runes can be traced in the Adulruna symbol, and Bureus has an elaborate system for how that is to be done. The first group of five runes, the quintet of the progenitor, is extracted for the most part from the outermost parts and outermost rings of the Adulruna. The quintet of the progenitor corresponds to God the Father, the creator. These runes are, after they are extracted from the Adulruna, the five largest in size as compared with the next ten runes. The next group, the quintet of generation, corresponds to the mediator. These runes are derived from within the outer circle and from the middlemost circle and are smaller than the former group. The last group, the quintet of the offspring, is derived from within the middlemost circle and from the heart form. These last five runes are the smallest of all. Among these runes are found the rune of matter and duality, Byrghal, and these last five correspond to the plane of matter and the physical body.



Adulruna

## ***HOMO TRIPLEX AND THE THREE QUINTETS***

Before we investigate the structure of the Adulruna we should take a closer look at Bureus's ideas about triplicity. The world, as well as the human being, is made up of three main levels. These ideas commonly occur within Hermeticism and Neoplatonism. There is a divine level and a material level. Between these is found a mediating level that has been called the astral level or the world soul. This triplicity is a recurring theme in the work of Bureus. Besides the creator and that which is created, there is also the process of creation itself. To this level belongs "the mediator," which corresponds not only to the son, Jesus, but also to Odin and Byrger Tidesson. The universum consists of three books written by God. The first book is God's word, which can be interpreted as the Bible, and also as the mystical word John describes (1:1): "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word

was with God, and the Word was God.” The second book is the macrocosmos, nature and the world around man. The third book is the microcosmos, man and his inner world.<sup>57</sup> The world was created in three main sections: sky, earth, and sea. More precisely, Bureus is strict about not confusing heaven and earth with the ordinary sky or material earth. The first and lowest of the parts of the world was the ocean. In the beginning it is found as a primeval abyss. From the ocean, which corresponds to the principle of physicality, the sensible external world originates. The second, middlemost world was the earth, but a nonphysical earth of a higher type that corresponds to paradise and the garden of delight. The third level is heaven, which is the divine world and which should not be mixed up with the ordinary sky.<sup>58</sup> Bureus thought that in the same way man was a *Homo triplex*, with a threefold nature. He derived support for this from Hebrews 4:12, that man also consisted of two higher parts besides the physical body. He indicated that the initials of man’s threefoldness formed the Paracelsian word SAL.

**S**—*Siel* (soul), a replica of God’s body. *Homo spiritualis*.

**A**—*Anda* (spirit), the sum of all human powers, a medium of which reason is a part. *Homo rationalis*.

**L**—*Lekamen* (body), matter, human flesh, and blood. *Homo carnalis*.<sup>59</sup>

The letter *T* in the alchemical principle SALT can also be found in the work of Bureus. The body and corpse of Christ is crucified on a T as Bureus notes in one of his Adulruna commentaries. This would correspond to the occult idea that the cross upon which Christ was hung corresponds to the *Tau*, the final letter in the Hebrew alphabet. It marks the end and the point in time when man can return to his divine origin. Because Bureus equates Christ and Odin, this symbolism is interesting from the ancient Nordic perspective since Odin hangs himself on the world tree, Yggdrasil, which has been associated with the *t* rune.

Among occultists there is disagreement as to whether the spirit or the soul was the highest substance of man. In his revelation of 1613, Bureus has the idea that the soul was ranked above the spirit, but after his experiences in Tuna he thought the better of it and reverted to his earlier view that he revised: “At that time I knew not that Spiritus is the highest *in homine*.”<sup>60</sup>

Bureus explains that the body is earthly, heavy, and downward striving while the spirit is divine and “mightily high-soaring.” Body and soul are

unified by the medial substance that is the soul. The soul is the soul of the body and is also the body of the spirit.<sup>61</sup> The soul is feminine, while the spirit and matter are by contrast masculine, and they are like suitors courting the soul. Bureus writes:

The spirit, who first sought her hand in marriage, very much wants to elevate her, make her his bride and thus make her his lawful wife and queen; but the body, like a seducer, flatters her and wants to lure her away from her bridegroom, down into a dark cave in the earth, to make her into a whore.<sup>62</sup>

In the Nymäre verses Bureus writes:

*Our soul has the temperament of a bride,  
and the spirit is of the nature of the husband.*<sup>63</sup>

The soul is a bride whose favor the body and spirit fight over. The bride allows herself to be lured down into matter by the body, which is called a common or unredeemed man.

*Now it was not long,  
Before a Commoner,  
Came into the company,  
He enticed her away with flattery,  
Into a Cave with him,  
Way down under the Earth.  
The dark and ugly,  
And there he did dishonor her.*<sup>64</sup>

It is only by sacrificing the body on the cross or on the world tree like Christ or Odin that the human soul is united with the spirit.

Triplicities occur in the Adulruna symbol of Bureus with its three circles from which the three runic quintets can be derived. The three circles correspond to spirit, soul, and the body. The outermost level corresponds to God and the spirit, while the middle one is thought to stand for the mediator and the soul. The innermost heart-shaped ring corresponds to the body that is crucified.



## THE ADULRUNA

In the different versions of *Adulruna rediviva* and in *Antiquitates Scanziana*, Bureus describes the development of the runes from the archetypal principles out of which his adulrunic solar cross is constructed. He also describes the construction and principles of the Adulruna symbol. In *Antiquitates Scanziana* he shows how the solar cross is built upon a circle that represents the *theologia negativa*, the knowledge of the divine that cannot be described in word or concept. This is the undifferentiated primeval principle of unity. On the other hand, the cross represents the positive and affirmative knowledge of the divine, the *theologica affirmativa*. Bureus connects this affirmative knowledge of the divine with Paracelsus and his teachings. Bureus identified himself with Paracelsus, and Bureus's initials, ITAB, which stood for Iohannes Tomae Agrivillensis Bureus were also indicated as meaning Iohannes Theophrastus Aracelsus Bureus in signatures. The initials ITAB could have other symbolic meanings as well.<sup>65</sup> The equal-armed cross corresponded to the sun and its influence as well as to the presence of the divine. Bureus also explained the structure of the cross. The horizontal line stands for the horizon of eternity. In agreement with Platonic tradition it can represent how the creator divided the world into two parts and separated heaven and earth, spirit and matter. Above and below are, however, reunited by the vertical line. The descent by God's son (Jesus, Odin, the mediator) unifies the two worlds. This thereby makes possible the ascent of man.

From the symbol with a circle divided by a horizontal line Bureus derives the first name of the creator, which is GUD (God), which consists of the runes Kōn, Ur, and Thors. The runes Kōn and Ur gave rise to the runes Frey and Odhen, and Bureus finds in the word GUD the original Gothic trinity TOF: Thor, Odin, and Frigga. When the solar cross is completed, and the vertical line is added, the name of the Gothic tetragrammaton can be found. The vertical line corresponds to the descent of the son and his appearance as an *I* could be associated with "Jesus." The four-staved Gothic tetragrammaton is thus GUID. In *Antiquitates Scanziana* he compares the name of the tetragrammaton in different languages. In Latin it is DEUS, in Arabic ALLA, in Hebrew IHVH, and so on.<sup>66</sup> In any illustration of the tetragrammaton, however, the Hebrew IHVH has the foremost place among tetragrammatons in different languages. The Thors rune represents God the Father, the Ur rune corresponds to the son, Odin, and Christ, and the vertical line (which is similar to the rune I) stands for the descent of the son into

human form. The Kōn rune represents the Holy Spirit. Seeing that Bureus first produced GUD and then GUID, the Gothic tetragrammaton could be interpreted as God + the son.

○ *Theologia negativa*

✚ *Theologia affirmativa*

— *The horizon*

| *The ascending/descending*

⊖ *GUD*

⊕ *GUID*

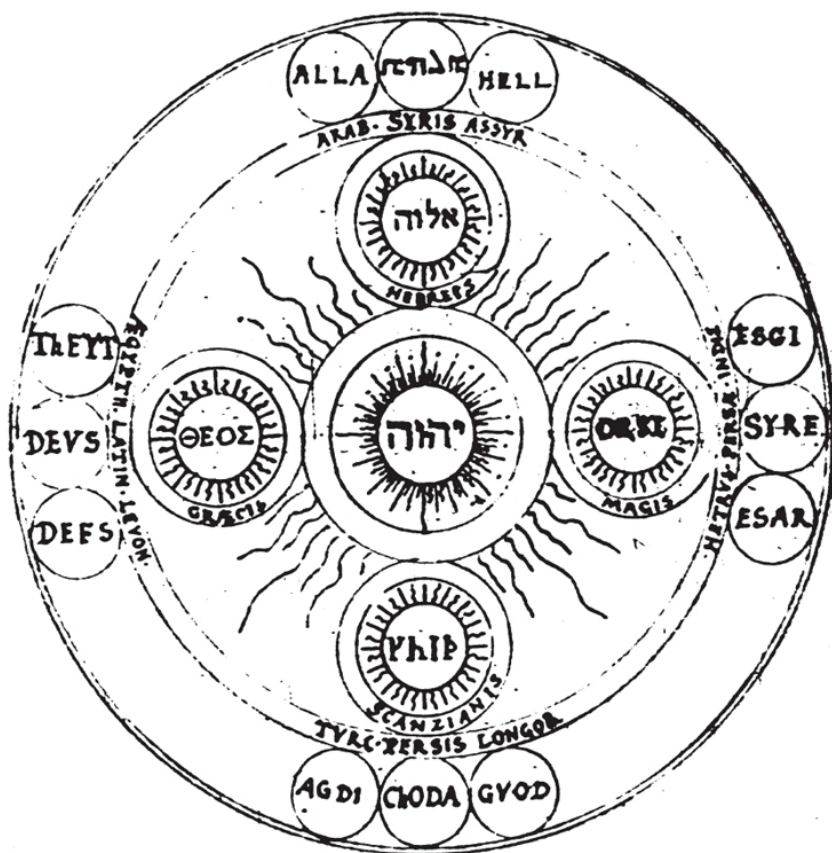
⊗ *FUTHOR*

✱ *HNKAI*

⊗ *STBLM*

In the next level of the Adulruna symbol there is found a circle within the first one. From this symbol the creator's other name can be discovered. From the equal-armed cross with two circles Bureus's entire first group of runes, the quintet of the progenitor—*f, u, th, o, r*—can be derived. These runes form the word *FUDOR*, which Bureus interprets as father. This is the creator's, or progenitor's, other name, as well as the first quintet of the three. The runes that give rise to GUID FADER are of the same size.

In the next group the runes become a degree smaller. Now a cross has been formed on the inside of the other rings. This cross, together with its vertical line, forms a Haghal rune. Bureus associates this rune with Christ and the Holy Spirit, which are the mediators that will unite man (Byrghal) and God (Thors).<sup>67</sup> This is also the quintet of the mediator, the quintet of generation, which is symbolized by the three scepters that express the official power of the three crowns. The runes in this quintet are *h, n, k, a, i*. Bureus has the runes *n, a, and k* represent NotAriKyn (*notarikon*), the cabbalistic teaching where initial letters form a word, as in ITAB.



The last group, the quintet of the offspring, consists of the runes *s, t, b, l, m*, and these form the symbol of the crucified heart that has three nails in it. This represents Christ on the cross. By placing Byrghal on its side on top of a man rune a heart-shaped symbol is made. It appears as a heart crucified on a T, which can correspond to the Tau cross. The rune Tidher corresponds to the nail in the right hand; the Lagher corresponds to the nail in the left. The Sol rune in its simple so-called hanging form penetrates from above, between the two halves of Byrghal. The Sol rune corresponds to the nail through the feet. This runic quintet represents matter, flesh, and blood and consists of smaller runes than the ones in the foregoing groups.

The three basic symbols in the Adulruna are the solar cross with two rings, the three nails, and the crucified heart with three nails. These three basic symbols each represent a runic quintet. Additionally these are pre-

ceded by the simple solar cross with a ring that stands for the Gothic tetragrammaton, GUID.

GUID      The solar cross, tetragrammaton.

FUTHOR   The solar cross with two rings (sun and moon). “Id Sol et Luna Adulrunæ,”<sup>68</sup> quintet of the progenitor, “Father.” The divine world. Thor.

HNKAI<sup>\*6</sup>   The three nails, quintet of generation, the mediator, the son. The astral world. Odin.

STBLM    The crucified heart pierced through by three nails, the quintet of the offspring. Matter. Frigga/Frey.

## THE THREE CROWNS

The sixth section in *Adulruna rediviva* concerns the three crowns, “the eldest coat of arms of the Swedish realm.” The number 3 is a holy and magical number in the work of Bureus and recurs in many contexts in his philosophy. In the chapter about the three crowns Bureus explains that the Swedes were originally ruled by the ancient one who was called the Ancestor. Over time the mass of people grew and the ancestral father’s task became too difficult, so he installed a high priest and a judge who took over some of his duties. He himself was called the king and was the most prominent of the three. The Swedish realm was also divided into three countries, and on the advice of Byrger Tidesson the king, or *drihten*, gave each country a crown, and the three crowns were to become the heraldic device of Sweden as a whole.

The so-called folklands is a collective way of designating Tiundaland, Attundaland, and Fjärundraland in Uppland. These were juridical districts. They were united in and by the enactment of the Law of Uppland (1296) into one common jurisdiction. The origin and development of the folklands before 1296 is veiled in darkness, but their existence is known from the eleventh century onward. The names of the three folklands indicate that they originally comprised ten (Tiundaland), eight (Attundaland), and four (Fjärundraland) so-called *hundaren* (hundreds); that is, jurisdictional districts or district courts. Around 1300 the interior parts of Gästrikland were still counted as part of Tiundaland. The word “folk” in the term *folkland* appears to have originally meant “warrior band.” Before the inception of the

Upplandic Law the folklands were independent domains of “law men” who had a religious function. Byrger Tidesson was, according to Bureus, a law man in Tiundaland.








The younger Västgötland Law asserted that the Swedes possessed the right to elect the king of the realm. According to the Upplandic Law this right was incumbent upon the three folklands. The Södermanna Law established that the election should take place at the legal assembly of Mora. Magnus Eriksson’s national law established that the law men from all the jurisdictions of the realm should elect the king at the legal assembly of Mora. On the meadow of Mora in the parish of Lagga, about six miles from Uppsala, on the border between Attundaland and Tiundaland, the election of the king was conducted during the legal assembly of Mora, when the people chose their king. During the Middle Ages an oath stone was situated on the meadow of Mora. It was called the Mora stone. The exact original location of this oath stone is now unknown. It was probably displaced back in the Middle Ages. But it was supposedly to be found in the vicinity of a house that was built in 1770, where it is preserved today in eight pieces of stone. Some of them are whole and others fragmentary. The three crowns were depicted on the Mora stone. A classic drawing by Scheffrus shows the Mora stones, where one of the stone fragments bears the symbol of the three crowns.<sup>69</sup>

The three crowns also symbolize the three functions: the king, the judge, and the high priest.<sup>70</sup> For Bureus the three crowns are in no way merely associated with mundane concerns. They are in the highest degree symbols for metaphysical and esoteric reality. In several illustrations the three crowns surmount the rune cross. From the chapter titled “The Three Realms and Their Rulers” in *Adulruna rediviva* we can draw the conclusion that the three realms that the three crowns symbolize are derived from the Gothic trinity TOF, so that the three crowns are those that crown Thor, Odin, and Frigga. Sweden’s national emblem is therefore also derived from the Gothic trinity.

## THE ADULRUNA AND ITS SCIENCES

In *Cabbalistica*, Bureus lists seven sciences according to the hierarchical ordering of the seven vertical staves of the rune cross.



	<i>hesophia</i>
	<i>abala</i>
	<i>yperphysico</i>
	<i>physico-agria</i>
	<i>physico-chemia</i>
	<i>physico-medicia</i>
	<i>physica</i>

## THE SUCCESSORS OF BUREUS

The esoteric researches of Bureus were known to those outside Sweden, and he received several visits from guests from faraway countries who desired to be instructed in “the truth about the adulrunes.”<sup>71</sup> The Dano-German author Conrad von Hövelen for a time owned one of the seven manuscripts of *Adulruna* by Bureus. Conrad von Hövelen was inspired by the contents, and when he traveled to Sweden in 1659 to write ballets and plays, he also wrote “Die Auf-läbende Adulrune oder Schwedens Alten und Neuen Herligkeit,” presented in 1664 but now lost.<sup>72</sup> The famous Rosicrucian Joachim Morsius visited Bureus. Jacob Böhme’s prominent pupil, Abraham von Franckenberg, expressed his admiration for Bureus in several letters that have been preserved.<sup>73</sup> Even if he also met with opposition to his domestic plan, Bureus had a small band of followers.

Bureus's most advanced apprentice was the poet and civil servant Georg Stiernhielm (1598–1672). Stiernhielm became the royal antiquary after Bureus and was strongly influenced by his teacher. On certain topics he would tone down Bureus's mystical speculations, in other contexts he went even further than Bureus. Stiernhielm was fascinated by Neoplatonism early on and opposed the scholastics and the tedious “quarreling” of Aristotle, which he abhorred. “Eagles don’t catch flies,” was his commentary on the Aristotelians. Instead he read the *Enneads* of Plotinus and mystics such as Ficino, Robert Fludd, and Giordano Bruno. He was the first in Sweden to accept in all respects the ideas of Bruno concerning an infinite animated universe with countless stellar worlds. Like Bureus, Stiernhielm thought that the true philosophy was found among the ancient wise men such as Plato, Moses, Zoroaster, and Hermes Trismegistus. In his uncompleted philosophical life's work, *Monile Minervae* (Minerva's Necklace), Stiernhielm describes how elements in nature are woven together. The main theme is the doctrine of nature's three principles: the dark, the soul, and the light. According to Stiernhielm the biblical account of creation describes how these three principles work together to produce our world. Out of the night, the empty nothingness, emerged the first principle, *prima materia*, primeval matter, which was a misty mass of water, the abode of the dark and cold. Primeval matter was formed and received its structure from the principle of the soul (*mens*). The soul is an emanation of God's essence that deposited the ideas, or seeds, of things in matter. These are first made ready or actualized by the light (*lux*) that functions as the instrument of the soul and drives away the night so that nature rises out of the depths like Venus from the waves.<sup>74</sup>

Stiernhielm was also a linguist, and his linguistic writings are marked by the influence of Neoplatonism and of his teacher, Bureus. In the chapter about the treasury of Adulruna, Bureus shows how the runes and words correspond to spiritual reality. Therefore the original Gothic language is not only supposed to represent reality but also directly reflect it. During the Renaissance it began to be called into question as to whether Hebrew was the original divine language. Bureus toyed with the idea that the original Gothic language was the oldest, but he nevertheless ascribed a special position to Hebrew as the original divine language above any other. Stiernhielm would go all the way and declare Gothic to be the original language that corresponded exactly to the things it describes.<sup>75</sup> The idea comes from Plato's dialog *Cratylus*, in which words are seen as not merely arbitrary signs but rather as something that reflected their own content and corresponded to ac-

tual things. Even the individual letters and their sounds corresponded to certain principles: *R* signifies movement, *L* ease, and so on.<sup>76</sup> Stiernhielm shows how the letters represent gradations of spirit or matter. The vowels correspond to the spiritual plane; the highest of them is the letter *A*, which corresponds to God himself, the source of all things. After *A* come the other vowels in the hierarchical order: *Ä*, *E*, *Ö*, *I*, *Y*, *Å*, *O*, *U*. The letter *A* corresponds to the light and clarity, while *U* corresponds to the dark and night. The consonants represent matter, but the vowels *I* and *U* are close to being materialized, and by losing light the sounds are transformed into *J* [*Y*] and *V*. If *V* condenses and materializes further it becomes an *F* and ultimately a *P*. Of the consonants the *H* is closest to the spiritual. It is almost immaterial. To the lowest consonants belong the *N* and finally the *M* that corresponds to the earth and more, darkness and silence. Here we see a similarity to the description by Bureus of the fifteen runes where *M* is the last rune, “the one that shuts the mouth.” Perhaps it was this Platonically influenced linguistic teaching caused Bureus to place the rune *M* last. In the usual sixteen-rune row it is the fourteenth rune. That Stiernhielm was to a high degree influenced by Bureus is clearly indicated by the title of his first more exhaustive linguistic work, *Adelruna sive Sibylla Sveo-Gothica*.<sup>77</sup> In the manuscript *Specimen philologicum in primam literam A*, Stiernhielm devotes himself to the concept of *adelruna antiqua*.<sup>78</sup> In *Mysterium Etymologicum* he starts out from the fifteen *adelruna* row of Bureus.<sup>79</sup>

After Stiernhielm, Olof Verelius (1618–1682) would become the royal antiquary. Unlike Bureus, Verelius did not consider the runes to be keys to some positive esoteric knowledge, but rather he thought that they had been used as means for the practice of black magic. He did consider, in agreement with Bureus, that the runes had several layers, or levels, that were only accessible to the initiated runemaster. Following the directions of the Ice-lander Olof Rugman (1636–1679) he made an inventory of the magical uses of the runes. There were *málrúnar*—that is, written signs—but there were also magical runes. These latter runes were the magical forms of runes, and they could be divided into twenty grades, or alphabets, with progressively more mysterious powers. In the first grade each rune had a name according to what it was supposed to represent. The rune *Man* signifies “man” or “human being.” In other grades certain characteristics or properties were added such as in this example, *madher er moldar auki*, which means “man is the increase of dust.” Grade for grade the signification of the runes was expanded, and already with the seventh grade one required the wisdom of a poet to understand the meanings, for here the really dark runes began, such

as the harmful runes, flax runes, weaving temple runes, and so forth. Those who were initiated into the highest degrees knew how to use them to “call up the dead and conjure spirits.”<sup>80</sup>

Olof Rudbeck was influenced by Bureus, and in chapter 28 of the first volume of *Atlantica* he refers to the research of Bureus.<sup>81</sup> In the same chapter is found a picture of a caduceus staff in the image of which Rudbeck shows how all the runes can be seen. This staff with its two serpents, which belonged to Mercurius, or the *merkesmann*, as Rudbeck calls him, illustrates the three governmental authorities ascribed to the three crowns. Rudbeck shows how the three runes that symbolize the authority of the three crowns are found in the caduceus. These runes also represent Har, Jafnhar, and Thridi, the mystical chieftains whom King Gylfi meets in Snorri’s *Edda*. Jafnhar is represented by the *i* rune, Har by the *h* rune, and Thridi by the *t* rune.<sup>82</sup> Rudbeck’s way of finding all the runes in the Hermetic symbol and gathering correspondences with Gothic and national motifs is reminiscent of procedures used by Bureus.

A farmer by the name of Jon Olofsson quoted Bureus as he traveled around in the Upplandic countryside spreading a daring form of religious propaganda. He was gripped by apocalyptic speculations and considered himself to be a “prodigy” and world savior who spoke daily with an angel.<sup>83</sup>

Although Bureus had a small group of admirers, it does not seem that his adalrunic esotericism received any wider distribution. His most prominent pupil, Stiernhielm, distanced himself from Bureus’s cabbalistic mysticism and is more tinged with Neoplatonic ideas. Neither does it appear that Bureus’s theories were committed to any sort of practice, even if they invited such application. Perhaps his *Adalruna* was too subjective and obscure to win over any successors.



***Adulruna Rediviva***  
***Johannes Bureus' Rosy Cross***

Susanna Åkerman





“ADULRUNA REDIVIVA” – JOHANNES BUREUS’  
ROSY CROSS

FecIt miChi magnalia qvi potens est  
et sanctvm, sanctvm, sanctv nome eivs

Records show that along the wind-torn shores of the Baltic—from Lübeck and Danzig in the south to Pernau and Reval in the east, and from Dorpat and Riga in the north-east to Stockholm in the north-west—a particular understanding had flourished. Sightings of celestial portents in 1583 had sped up the dissemination of medical, alchemical, magical, and political tracts in the trade networks among Baltic merchants. The Gregorian calendar reform of this year created a wave of Protestant resistance, as activists claimed that the new dating was a strategy by Rome to confound believers; never more, they cried out, will we know when Easter comes.

What had begun in the first half of the sixteenth century with the presentation of a mysterious Paracelsian theme had reached a bifurcating fork: the chemical and medical sciences were impelled along a familiar line of opposition to scholastic learning; a more obscure and prophetic science began to spread on the basis of a geographic and mythical claim.

The geographic claim evolved into the view that the Scandinavians were a genuinely autochthonous people, who, isolated and self-evolving on their wanderings, had carried with them the gist of an archaic knowledge that was now revealed to have arisen out of the primeval Hyperborean culture in the north to which land Apollo had ridden on his Swans to spend the winters. Addressing himself to the Rosicrucians, Johannes Bureus proclaimed in his *FaMa e sCanzJa reDUX* (s.l., 1616) that the north was distinct in culture and knowledge, that much of this Hyperborean tradition was preserved in the Gothic-Scandinavian Runes, and that a northern wisdom existed that could ensure salvation to those who sought it.

Some of this lore about a special wisdom had been energized by ideas given in satirical form in the visionary tract *Fama Fraternitatis*

*R.C.*, believed to have been written in Tübingen by Johan Valentin Andreae while he was in contact with members of the group around Tobias Hess and Christoph Besold some years before it turned up in print in 1614 at Kassel. Nine editions appeared between 1614 and 1617; four at Kassel, two at Frankfurt, and then those of Danzig and Marburg, as well as translations from the original German into Latin and Dutch at Frankfurt. A new statement, *Confessio Fraternitatis Roseae Crucis. Ad eruditos Europae* appeared in Latin at Kassel in 1615. The authors of the two tracts called for others to come forward in support of the brotherhood. Replies were now being written by various hands and the stream of publications pledged to the Rosicrucian brothers in 1614 to 1620 amount to more than two hundred texts.

Johannes Bureus, the northern antiquarian, worked at this time as a royal archivalist in Sweden and had access to books otherwise difficult to obtain. Bureus found inspiration in the French antiquarian Guillaume Postel's cosmographic ideas on a revival of Celtic Europe with an accompanying revolution of arts and sciences, to which he added ideas on the northern spread of the Hyperborean peoples. Postel's expansionist Gallic imperial scheme was veiled in rhetoric on the redemptive role for mankind that would be played by the sons of Japheth, particularly Gomer and his youngest brother Askenaz. Bureus took interest in Postel's claims concerning the double sources of prophecy: that the Old Testament prophets are completed by the Sibylline oracles, and the prophetic role of Alruna, the northern Sybil, who like the Celtic druids had been revered for her great visionary powers. Alruna was born in 432 B.C. and Bureus believed she knew the great Thracian Sibyls, Latona, Amalthea, and Acheia.<sup>1</sup>

By harkening back to the Sibyls, Bureus sought to give new significance to the alleged medieval proofs that the inhabitants around the Baltic were descendents of migrating tribes from before the fall of the Tower of Babel, tribes that undivided and uncorrupted had remained in direct cultural debt to the son and grandson of Noah: Japheth and Askenaz, from which was derived the name *Skanzeä*.

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<sup>1</sup> Bureus' MS. F.a.3. f. 156v, 145, 41, Kungliga Biblioteket, Stockholm. Bureus to Johannes Terserus, 3 December, 1614, MS. K2, Uppsala UB. In Theodore Zwinger, *Theatrum Humanæ Vitæ*, Basel 1587, Alruna is specified as a Cimbric Sibyl. A note by Bengt Skytte (ca. 1675) explains Bureus' terminology as part of Celtic Druidism: "Magia pers. Incantatione sic Alruna erant Sapientes foeminae apud Gothos unde Alruna dicta verba Mandragora, qui admagia et incantatione valere credentor drotte vel druid (drus)". MS. N 65, f. 41. Kungliga Biblioteket, Stockholm.

Rock carvings and cultic remains of an ancient solar temple at Uppsala showed that the Swedes were the Hyperborean peoples living north of the Gauls spoken of in classical times.<sup>2</sup>

The basic idea of an autochthonous arrival on a straight path from oldest antiquity was a prelude for the detailed historiographic claims put forth during the late fifteenth century Gothic Renaissance, and were now made further plausible through adding a mixture of Hermeticism and neo-Pythagoreanism. In his function as the tutor to the Swedish princes, Gustav Adolf and Carl Philip, Bureus in 1612 began to focus on Zamolxes, the Gothic legislator, who as a northern philosopher in 530 B.C. had brought a magical potion, the “pharmakon”, to Italy. In his ethnographic studies, Bureus then sought to clarify precisely the knowledge with which Abaris, the northern Thracian sage, had influenced Pythagoras. In 1616, Bureus’ studies led him to hint at these Gothic claims in writings addressed to the Rosicrucian movement.

But all along, the majority of scholars argued against the existence of the Rosicrucian fraternity or this special Hyperborean wisdom. Scholars outside the movement showed no sympathy when Rosicrucian agitation reached the Universities of Rostock and Giessen, and the scepticism continued in a letter from Johan Kirchman to Paul Tarnow, dated Lübeck, 5 May 1617. Kirchman had confronted some colleagues whom he suspected to take an interest in the latest Rosicrucian writings and wrote:

The nonsense of the Brothers of the Rosy Cross sent here from Stockholm I have shown to D. Lubinus & D. Asselman. Each one of these Fanatics pretended not to know what these dreams, that they wrap themselves up with, mean; one of whom, the only one to whom I suggested where the document comes from, even strongly urged me to commit it to the flames, professing that that was the best kind of refutation. Not one of them is a follower of the model; it is not what you would expect from him. I sent one copy to D. Helvicus of Giessen for his opinion of this marvel and for that of his colleagues: I could learn nothing further about the mysteries of these Brothers.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Askenaz/Skanzea is suggested by Bureus and by Stiernhielm in his notes for the *Runa Svethica*, Kungliga Biblioteket, Stockholm. The idea can be traced to Bureus’ use of Postel’s *De Originibus linguarum*, Paris, 1538. Cf. Arno Borst, *Die Turmbau von Babel—Geschichte der Meinungen über Ursprung und Vielfalt der Sprachen und Völkern*, vol. III:i. Stuttgart, 1960.

<sup>3</sup> J. H. von Seelen, *Athenae Lubecensis*, Lübeck, 1719, vol. iv, p. 270. “Fratrum Rosae Crucis nugamenta Stockholmia huc missa exhibui D. Lubino & D. Asselmanno. Uterque istorum Fanaticorum somnia quid sibi velint, ignorari proficetur, quin alter,

As his inquiries produced so little information, Kirchman passed on the Rosicrucian pamphlet to Christoph Helvicus, a leading orientalist known for his commentaries on *Seder Olam Rabba*, the Hebrew messianic text on the passage of the ages. Even so, the three scholars so intrigued by the mystery from Stockholm—Tarnow, Lubinus, and Asselman—soon joined in a “Rosenacademie” at Rostock organized in 1619 by Heinrich Hein, who was the later rector of Dorpat University in Swedish Livonia.<sup>4</sup> The long distance allegiance among the towns along the Baltic littoral produced ideal conditions for a special sort of Baltic Paracelsism.

Paracelsism was an occult system that was merged with the military perspective of the Evangelical states. Indeed, the Paracelsist influence in Sweden concurred with Sweden’s emergence in the European wars, a period of northern influence that lasted from about 1590 to 1718. The objectives of Sweden became manifest in the articulation of an enduring military intention: expansion eastward and southward to the coastal regions across the Baltic waters. Swedish expansion and especially efforts to control Baltic trade met with determined resistance from a hostile Catholic league led by King Sigismund Vasa of Poland and his formidable Habsburg ally. The Swedish undertaking to hold onto lands taken in Livonia during the wars of Carl IX in 1598–1605 was rapidly enhanced by the military reform of 1621, after Ingria and Narwa were subdued to the crown. Through diplomacy, Sweden sought to keep the Danes at bay by contesting the control of Baltic trade through the Sound, that is, the three Baltic straits to the Atlantic (Öresund and the broad and the narrow Baelt).<sup>5</sup>

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cui soli, unde venerint, indicavi, multum me hortatus est, ut ea Vulcano traderem, id genus refutationis fortissimum esse aiebat. Nisi unum ex iis exemplaribus: non quod tu ab eodem exigebas. D. Helvico Giessam scissitandi super his mirabilibus ipsis & collegarum iudicii gratia: nihil autem de arcanis horum Fratrum cognoscere potui.”

<sup>4</sup> On Hein, see Hans Schick, *Das ältere Rosenkreuzertum—ein Beitrag zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Freimaurerei*, Nordland; Berlin, 1942, pp. 141–142. In 1623, Heinrich Nollius was expelled from the University of Giessen because of his Hermetic tract, *Parergi Philosophici Speculum*.

<sup>5</sup> Gothic historians saw the three crowns in the Swedish coat-of-arms as an emblem for the three straits (baelts) of the Sound, and by extension Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. In 1660, Johannes Scheffer demonstrated that the three crowns were introduced as a Swedish royal emblem by the Hansa-supported Prince Albrecht of Mecklenburg in 1354, taking them to signify a tale from Cologne about the three Magi.



To seal his Baltic design, Gustav Adolf had closed an important alliance in 1620 by marrying Marie Eleonore of Brandenburg-Hohenzollern, the princely Lutheran family controlling the Teutonic Order in Livonia and in ducal Prussia. By 1629, the reforms of Gustav Adolf and mounting external pressures had set the stage for the entrance of the Swedes in the Thirty Years' War.<sup>6</sup>

To support Sweden's naval and economic influence in the Baltic region, the Swedes developed a particular historical fiction, held together by beliefs designed to justify the expressed political aim of establishing a final "dominium maris Baltici."<sup>7</sup> Essential to maintaining this new symbolic order was the imaginary history in which Scandinavia is seen as the land of the Hyperboreans, a claim put forth as part of the Gothic Renaissance.<sup>8</sup> Bureus added to it a new master narrative taken from Guy Le Fèvre de la Boderie's Postellian text *La Galliade ou de la revolution des arts et sciences* (Paris, 1578). In this important text, a tale of cyclical cultural effluence along the west-east axis was worked out in five "cercles" or chapters. Boderie claimed that the druidic bards had influenced the early Hebrews, and that the wisdom of the Psalms passed to the hymns of Orpheus and more concretely to Pythagoras in the form of sacred geometry. What had once passed out of Gaul had then returned to it in the form of sacred geometry, the sacred geometry of the high medieval renaissance used by the builders of cathedrals and transmitted by singers of the Gregorian chants, those who place the sevenfold rosetta in their hearts as a celestial lyre. Bureus now argued that there had been a cultural effluence along the north-south axis as well. The Runes of the Scandinavian shamans had through Abaris reached the Pythagoreans in Italy. These sacred patterns of the original alphabet had contributed to Etrurian literary culture that now was returning to the north in the form of ideas on the origin of the Gauls and Hyperboreans, thus completing the cultural cycle.

The mystical origin of the three crowns in the Swedish coat-of-arms was first to be aligned to this new view of ancient history.

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<sup>6</sup> Michael Roberts, "Gustav Adolph and the Art of War" *Essays in Swedish History*, London, 1967.

<sup>7</sup> Ursula Voges, *Der Kampf um das Dominium Maris Baltici 1629–1645*, Greifswald, 1939. The formula governed Swedish foreign policy until the 1648 Westphalian Peace Treaty, when Johan Adler Salvius gave it up in secret alliance with the Queen against Oxenstierna.

<sup>8</sup> Kurt Johannesson, *Gotisk renässans*, Michaelis-gillet; Stockholm, 1982, transl. *The Origin of the Gothic Renaissance in Scandinavia*, London, 1991.

Bureus pointed to the three crowns chiseled onto Mora Stenar, the stone on which the ancient Swedish Kings had been chosen. Then he offered an Hermetic interpretation of the Nordic Pantheon by claiming that the three crowns correspond to a universal Trinity, a trinity also found in classical myth: Thor was God the Father, or Lumen, the Themis lex divina and the Thora lex judeorum, and even Jupiter Mandragora. Othin was the Son, or the verbum Dei, the sapientia of the Pythagoreans, Mars, and Hercules. Freya was identical with the Holy Spirit, or the foecunditas universi, the bonitas divina, the Diana of the Ephesians. Bureus illustrated his insights with female figures, among them the northern Sibylla, for a projected monument, the Tropheum Upsalicum.<sup>9</sup>

In this mytho-poetic reconstruction, the three golden crowns on the royal coat-of-arms represent the three oldest communities of Scandinavia, the Fylkelands around Uppsala: Tyunda, Ottunda, Ferugra. Each was consecrated to a deity: Thor, Othin, and Frey.<sup>10</sup> Each became a totemic emblem of the confederated regions of Sweden: Uplandia, Vestmannia, and Sudromannia. Appealing to Hermetic chronology, Bureus then boldly argued that Uppsala had been founded before the time of Abraham.<sup>11</sup>

The tripartite scheme was prepared for one of Bureus' manuscripts with the preliminary title *Adulruna et Alruna Baltica Scanziana*, in which we find a dedication to the memory of "Gustavus Hero Baltica." In this small book, the wanderings of the Goths (Getes) are traced, by way of land, to Scandinavia.<sup>12</sup> From notes to this work, one can see that in 1612, Bureus entertained the idea that "Gether Bactrianus doctor et sacerdos est Zoroasther et Prometheus," a statement that he held to until 1643, when instead he asked himself: "Gether Bactrianus ex ipso est 1. Prometheus, 3. [sic] Zoroaster, 2. Hercules?" In either case, the noble Goths were hidden in the myths of both Persians and Greeks, and were therefore older. Bureus also argued that the first to invent the gnomic device for constructing the Runes,

<sup>9</sup> *Antiquitates Scanziana*, MS. F.a.3. f. 41. KB, Stockholm.

<sup>10</sup> *Adulruna Redi-viva sive Sapientis Sueorum veterum—De Mysteriis Alphabeti trium Coronarum. Regni trium Fulkandiarum sive Svethiae antiquissime*, MS. Råhlamb, no. 27, 8. f. 87, 89. KB, Stockholm.

<sup>11</sup> Arameisms and Arabisms occur frequently in the Book of Job. That some of Noah's descendants through to Abraham spoke Arabic was a not uncommon seventeenth century view. Hence, Bureus saw Chaldean resonances in Arabic.

<sup>12</sup> *Adul-Runa Redi-Viva ad trinitatis Divine Gloriam ex patria monumentis . . . Theosophia Vestita Radiis in Scenam prodies Anno Crucis 1605*, MS. R 551a, Uppsala UB.

the *Adulruna*, was “Birger, Tyunda Lagman,” the legendary Magistrate at the Tyunda Ting. The establishing of the uniformity of the Runic script from the primitive base of the 16 character “Futhark” led to the idea of proposing a new origin for the alphabetic languages in Europe. Bureus claimed that from this apex of cultural development, the (fictional) Swedish King Erik VIII stood out as the undisputed authority for the Gothic nations, “like the sun in the middle of the planets and the midst of the Gothic monarchy.”<sup>13</sup>

At the time that Bureus wrote these lines, Sweden was in the process of assuming a new political role among the evangelical states. King Carl IX had defeated his Catholic nephew Sigismund Vasa of Poland in 1598 and had proceeded to nurture important contacts with the French-inspired Calvinist court of Moriz the Learned at Hesse-Kassel. At the death of Carl in 1611, Bureus presented a most remarkable manual to Prince Gustav Adolf and his younger brother, Duke Carl Philip. He intended it as a secret manual of Kingship and it was called *Adul-Runici Clypei quinarius penetralis seu Adulruna Rediviva de quinque Alphabeti seeri dispositionibus*. Bureus expounded on the title with the epigram “Clypeum nostrum Adulruna Mandragorae,” our breast-plate, the bronzen Mandragora etched with the adulrune.<sup>14</sup> He thought that the title page could carry an entrance, or threshold, made out of trumpets from which resonate a divine message:



This arrangement emerged early in Bureus' thinking. In another place he says that it is a special icon built up from three elements (∩, regies, †, gratia, ‡, gloriae). It would convey, on the Day of Resurrection, the sight of the great and shining throne “thronum (candidum) magnum” on which the book of life would be laid open, as said in Daniel 7:9–10 and Revelations 20:11. These magnificent aspects of the cult of majesty had some influence on Gustav Adolf

<sup>13</sup> “quasi Sol in medio Planetarum centralis esset et media totius Gothice monar-cha”, MS. Råhlamb, no. 27, 8. f. 13.

<sup>14</sup> A note by Bengt Skytte (ca. 1675) explains Bureus' terminology as part of Celtic Druidism: “Magia pers. Incantatione sic Alruna erant Sapientes foeminae apud Gothos unde Alruna dicta verba Mandragora, qui admagia et incantatione valere credentor drotte vel druid (drus)”. MS. N 65, f. 41. Kungliga Biblioteket, Stockholm.



on his assumption of the Swedish throne on 30 October 1611. But this sacred and secret scheme seems to have had less power and value for the five Lords of the interim government that followed upon the death of the King in 1632, a high council that included Carl Carlsson Gyllenhielm, Gustav Adolf's illegitimate brother. What Axel Oxenstierna's thoughts were are unknown, when, on 28 February 1640, Bureus offered him a gilt-edged Swedish version of the *Adulruna*, small enough to fit in the hand.<sup>15</sup>

### *Hanseatic Trade and the Lumen Sopho of a Christian Union*

On 12 January 1632, fifteen years after the Rosicrucian blast had reached Rostock, the same Paracelsist Doctor Kirchman wrote with considerably more confidence to the Rosicrucian Joachim Morsius of Lübeck on some specifics in the alchemical tradition: "Brother Basilius Valentinus' Ms. testament shows that the secrets of the sons of Hermes are equally found in the *Opus Vegetabili* of <the alchemist> Isaac the Hollander."<sup>16</sup> The reference to "the secrets of the sons of Hermes" remains enigmatic, even though alchemical practise was widespread and the mystery it harbored not specific to the Protestant north.

Medical researchers such as Kirchman and Morsius learned more about alchemy and medicine through travel to the various ports of the Baltic. For this reason and for generations in Germany, Lübeck had been considered "the northern college of the Hanseatic league," the obvious opening to the ports of Copenhagen, Stockholm, Åbo, and Riga, to Visby on Gotland and to Reval and Pernau, and not least to Danzig, the center for the Hansa trade with the Dutch and for Polish grain. Even if the thousand-ship fleet of the Hansa had long since begun to decline, and even if the learned master Paracelsus had not as he claimed spent many days "in Stockholm in Denmark" in 1521, he had more followers than ever in the 1630s in the German congregation in Stockholm.<sup>17</sup> For some time, perhaps even since the

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<sup>15</sup> MS. R 551b, Uppsala UB. The offer may indicate that Oxenstierna was influenced by Bureus to a greater degree than hitherto expected. In 1622, he was very critical of the Rosicrucians.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 272. "Fratris Basili Valentini testamentum MS. quod arcanis apud Hermetis filios habetur Isaac Hollandi opus vegetabili."

<sup>17</sup> Paracelsus may have been a soldier in the army of the Danish King Christian

beginning of the fall of the Hansa, the German congregation had exerted influence in the Swedish ports of trade and around its royal seat. They kept up the trades, pressed the influence of the German language, seldom intermarried with the locals, and closed their guilds to non-German speaking middlemen. For a relatively low cost, or indeed for nothing, merchants such as these could take letters on board for shipment along with their cargo and thus ensure a quick delivery across the waters.

The concrete difficulty for the Swedes in the Baltic from the 1610s to the 1640s was how to build a homogenous civil society out of local provinces and small towns whose interest in a confederacy lay only in their trading contacts across the waters of the Baltic Sea. True, the Hanseatic league had consisted of ports held together by mutual interests: the demand for tar and pitch, the salt sought in exchange for herring, fur, and timber. But the Hanseatic terms of legislation had been markedly Germanic and its society distinctly monocultural. The Hanseatic control over the trade was in fact a defensive monopoly and it operated on a shrinking market, more and more under pressure from rivals first in Antwerp, then in Amsterdam.

Because there were many nostalgic memories of this community of trade and thought, the political bases of the Hanseatic confederacy were closely reviewed, as in the four volume chronicle *De Rebuspublicis Hanseaticis* (Leiden, 1631) by Johan Angelus Werdenhagen at Hamburg, a follower of Jacob Böhme, but also suspected to be a Jesuit spy.<sup>18</sup> At this precarious stage of the Swedish advance in northern Germany, Werdenhagen defends Habsburg dominance by confronting the liberty of trade in cities such as Lübeck, Danzig, Braunschweig, and Cologne with an Imperial political doctrine of Christian charity and servitude. Above all, he seeks to clarify what Imperial jurists mean by the statement: "servitude is the legal state of a people, who against nature subject themselves to an alien Lord." In chapters such as "What is a universal society?" and "What is real liberty?", an argument is set forth instead to show how natural

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II. On the Hansa generally, cf. David Kirby, *Northern Europe in the Early Modern Period—The Baltic World 1492–1772*, Longman; London, 1990.

<sup>18</sup> Balint Keszrű points out that Johannes Permeier suspected that Werdenhagen was affiliated with the Jesuits. Werdenhagen wrote sonets for the birthday of Duke August of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel in 1628. He was devoted to Jacob Boehme, and wrote the condemned, but influential *Psychologia vera* J.B.T., Amsterdam, 1632.

harmony can be cultivated by a nation in order for political subjects to gain mutual privilege.<sup>19</sup>

Using the political models of Jean Bodin and Christoph Besold at Tübingen, Werdenhagen favours a society of equity and justice bound together by Christian love.<sup>20</sup> The confederacy sought is compared to Plato's ideas on the origin of civil society, and emphasis is laid on the social virtues represented in the *Alcibiades* and the *Symposium*. By contrast, the "vulgar opinions of the Stagirite," found in Aristotle's *Politeia* and recently much discussed by German Lutherans, was scorned. What was needed even among Hanseatic merchants was "caritas," the attitude conducive to the formation of a society of spontaneous subjection in natural servitude to a higher goal. In fact, Werdenhagen worried that the Hansa would seek alliance with the Swedish King. Hence, he recommended that the waning Hansa submit their markets to the German Emperor in order to create a true "Hanseatica Teutonica," because "for a merchant", he argued, "coffee can never be made too strong." From the very beginning of his study, Werdenhagen pointed out that the Holy Roman Empire was an association imbued with divine light, infused by the "spiritus Jehova" and the "lumen sopho" spoken of in the Kabbalah. Indeed, this spirit was a fire and a light confluent from salt, mercury, and sulphur, and hence was a celestial "tinctura" most aptly described by conjugal love, or by the patrofilic and the patrofamilic relations favoured by the Imperial monarchy.<sup>21</sup>

But the Holy Roman Empire was not the sole community to foster charitable confraternal ideals. A version of this social conditioning was put forth also in the Protestant camp, at Erfurt in 1633–34, as Lutherans began to forge gold-plated copper coins to commemorate the death of Gustav Adolf. The King's body was depicted as lying on lit-de-parade with the insignia of Sulphur and Mercury bound together in a stem. The alchemical insignia was the minters-mark of Antonius Weismantel and was also meant to signify the need for concord, peace, and fruitful flowering in evangelical Germany

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<sup>19</sup> Johann Angelus Werdenhagen, *De Rebuspublicis Hanseaticis et earum celebritatibus Confederationis Societate*, Leiden, 1631, Vol. I, pp. 359, 200.

<sup>20</sup> Besold was Andreae's teacher at Tübingen, and in his *Politicorum libri duo* (Strassburg, 1618), he uses ideas of both Campanella's *Civitas Solis* (in MS. 1603) and Boccacino's *Ragguagli di Pamasso* (Venice, 1612), works he translated together with Tobias Hess. Besold converted to Catholicism in 1622.

<sup>21</sup> J. A. Werdenhagen (1631), pp. 465ff., 475.



after the untimely martyrdom of the Swedish King. The display of these coins carried a long-lived legend: that the inscriptions showed them to be forged from a special metal produced during a successful act of alchemical transmutation, catalysed by the presence of a monarch destined to rule over all Lutheranism.<sup>22</sup> Responding to this praise of the Swedish King at Erfurt and Wolgast, in 1633, the Lutheran Pastor J. V. Andreae published a speech in which he took on precisely that attitude of subjection to an alien Lord against which Werdenhagen had warned. Addressing himself to the “society for the raising up and for the defence of brothers in dispersion, those who on their evangelical breastplates carry the great name of their strong and pious King,” Andreae printed the speech together with a project for the restitution in Germany of a Christian Republic.<sup>23</sup>

In saluting the memory of Gustav Adolf, Andreae now transferred praise to the new Swedish governors, Axel Oxenstierna and Gustav Horn. He called on fellow Lutheran theologians such as Johannes Gerhard, Polycarp Leiser, Johannes Saubert, and Conrad Theodoric, preachers who were strategically placed to form a *Pietatis Germaniae* in Leipzig, Jena, Nürnberg, and Ulm. In the same year Andreae also addressed to them a dialogue in heaven on the battle of Gustav Adolf against “Apap”—which contained a thinly disguised doctrine of Caesaro Papism. “Apap” was also the mythical snake of the underworld, defeated by Ra, the sun and creative demiurg, in the cosmic war postulated by the ancient priests at Hermopolis. This creature passes from Egypt and from the Greek myth about the battle of the Titans to the myth of St. George and the Dragon.<sup>24</sup> In such Lutheran revivalist circles as these, politics in northern Germany continued to center on a saviour leader, picked out through alchemical, mythographic, and evangelical symbolism.

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<sup>22</sup> The minter is identified as Johan Scheider Weismantel using the mark of Asmun Wagner (A. W.) of Erfurt. Gustav Adolf's body was on display at Erfurt, Naumburg, and Wittenberg from June 1632 to the beginning of March 1633, and was then carried to Wolgast and Sweden. Cf. Arne Wettermark, “Ett Hermetiskt Guldmynt från Kristina-utställningen” *Saga och Sed*, 1966, pp. 83–107.

<sup>23</sup> J. V. Andreae, *Pietatis Germanae ad Gustavum Adolphum Suecorum regem magnum, principis christiani exemplum alloquium, calamo vicario Johannes Valentini Andreae*, Nürnberg, 1633 dedicated to “Societati pro sublevandis et tuendis Fratribus ‘en diasporai LIP-SIAE nuper ab Evangelicis conditae augustum nomen REGIS PII FORTIS in clypeo suo gerenti.”

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13. The theme of “Apap” may derive from the Egyptian-Hermetic prophecies, perhaps mediated by the translator of Campanella, Tobias Adami.

*Johannes Bureus' Rosicrucian Altar and the Temple at Damar*

From 1616 to 1618, Johannes Bureus produced no less than three Rosicrucian pamphlets building up to his claim about the secret of the Runes and their Gothic past. The first of these, the *Ara Foederis Therapici F.X.R. Assertioni Fraternitatis RC quam Roseae Crucis vocant, consecrata. Hoc lege, perlecto Carmine certis eris* (n.p. 1616), was a brief addition to a reprinted text in verse produced at Hagenau in 1614. Alluding to an interior castle, and intended to persuade all those in doubt, the added lines herald:

Sacrum hoc castrum esto fraternitatis

ROSA		ALRUNA	Iam ANSES
EST	&	nupta	(DIXIt)
V.ET.N		Proteo	proCreo
CRUX			

The frontispiece shows an altar inscribed with a rose and a tau set within a circle, thus creating the sign of vitriol, the green salt from which the process of alchemy can begin, a salt that Paracelsus calls the Signat-stern.

In a second tract, the *FaMa*, Bureus draws on the prophetic treasure *Clangor Buccina Jubilei* (1584) emanating from the magical court of Emperor Rudolph II in Prague. It was probably this second text, *FaMa e sCanzIa reDUX*, that Kirchman of Lübeck had read. Signed with Bureus' concealed initials "BisvATI Ierubbabel", it trumpeted the title, *Buccina Iubilei Ultimi*—*hyperbolic prediction of Eos, smiting with resplendent noise the summits of the mountains of Europe, sounding amidst the hills and valleys of Arabia* (n.p. 1616). Through an outburst of enigmatic pronouncements, Bureus interprets the seven trumpets of the Apocalypse, in chapters 11 and 14, as a new key for the Second Coming.<sup>25</sup> In a torrent of revelations his call resonates:

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<sup>25</sup> The translation is by A. E. Waite. Note that "Tubae penultima stridor" was Postel's special signum, as in the *Panthenousia*. The "buccinae" also resonate with the apocalypse of the Koran as translated into Latin by Theodore Bibliander in 1543. A Czeck version of the *Clangor* from Prague is now in Christina's collection at Leiden. Cf. P. C. van Boeren, *Codex Vossiani Chymici*, Leiden, 1975. The Latin version is found in the *Museum Hermeticum* (5 vols. Amsterdam, 1623–50).

Evropa	Evigilia Europa felix, ad stridorem venientis: Eur ꝛ sagitta Abarides
Eur-hopa	InITInωrw 1290 dies Et exultabit ARABA solitudo & florebit velut rosa

Bureus had probably seen Abraham Ortelius' map of the world, *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (Antwerp, 1570), in which Damcar, the secret city of the Queen of Sheba, is described as situated in *Arabia Felix* with the same typographical error as in the second edition of the *Confessio* (Frankfurt, 1615). Damcar is actually Damar in Yemen. The chronicler Leo Africanus had described that city as situated on the eastern shore of the Red Sea and told how the Sabéans there could pursue their planetary worship in peace. The *Confessio* lauds it, "for there do govern only wise and understanding men, who pursue by the king's permission to make particular laws; according unto which example also the government shall be instituted in Europe." The 1290 days from Daniel 12:11 signified, so Bureus hoped, a new "congregation" and a new dawn for the right-thinking peoples in Europe.<sup>26</sup>

Note, in this context, that the 1639 Scottish translation of the *Confessio* gives Damascus instead of Damcar. This is even more incorrect. No copy of the Frankfurt edition of 1615 has been preserved on the British isles, so the list of printing errors with the clue to Damear was never seen in the English-speaking world. One wonders whether the perpetuation of the printing error was deliberate disinformation, either on part of the original authors or on part of the English translators; was the original Damcar-Damear substitution a deliberate blind to protect the location of Damar? In any case, the blind is brilliant, since Damcar means "the blood of the Lamb" in Hebrew, thus satisfying the curiosity of profane.

Members of the Sabéan sect were active in Damar at the alleged time of Christian Rosencreutz. It is uncertain whether or not they are related to the more well known Ssabians of the Eastern Khurasan.

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<sup>26</sup> R. Kienast, "Die vier ältesten Rosencreutzerschriften" *Palaestra* 152, Leipzig, 1926, p. 113. A copy of this rare 1615 edition of the *Fama* is preserved in Uppsala UB. Thomas Vaughan conflates Damcar with Damascus in his 1652 translation, see Frances Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (Routledge and Kegan Paul; London, 1972), ARK Paperbacks; London, 1986, pp. 239ff. esp. p. 254. Cf. Paul Arnold, *Histoire des Rosecroix et les origines de la Franc-Maçonnerie* (preface by Umberto Eco), Mercure de France; Paris, 1990, p. 354, n. 47.

In Aramaic “sabi” means “to dip” or “to baptize” and it was believed in the seventeenth century that the Ssabians were identical with the Mandaean Hebrew Christians of St. John, both sects having branches in the Baghdad area. Orientalist antiquarians investigated their origin and religious practises. The Rosicrucian reader John Selden did so in his *De Diis Syris* (1617), not least because the Sura 2:32 of the Quran says that the Sabians will be saved along with “the peoples of the Book.” The Mandaeans held a great worship for the North, the source of light, and they buried their dead facing towards the polar star. To those concerned with what sources on the Mandaeans were available by 1610, it is noteworthy that Ignatius of Antioch describes the Christians of St. John in a special tract *Narratio originis . . . christianorum Sancti Johannis*.<sup>27</sup> The identification of the Ssabians with the Mandaeans is rejected by modern research, however. Instead, the Quranic term refers to the Ssabians of Harran in the Baghdad area, the sect practising pre-Islamic worship of the planets. They attributed these revelations to Hermes and Agathodemon, today held to be a deliberate blind, put forward to gain tolerance after the Muslim conquest.<sup>28</sup>

The Sabéans of Damar in Arabia Felix appear at first glance to be followers of the Queen of Sheba of Ethiopia, whose story is told in Coptic books (Yemen was part of Ethiopia at that time). According to other more well known Ethiopian legends, they had an Ark of the Covenant. The Ssabians of Harran in the Baghdad area, on the other hand, adhered to an ancient pagan worship of the seven planets behind a veil of Hermetic revelation attributed to the prophet Idris, identified as the first Hermes or Enoch. In Arabic sources, the Ssabians of Harran are called “the adepts of the Temples.” They built separate temples for each one of the seven ancient planets in specific geometric shapes, and in different locations. The shapes were as follows: one was round (for the Soul of the World), one triangular (Jupiter), one quadrangular (Sun), one pentagonal (Moon), one hexagonal (Saturn), one hexagonal within a square (Mercury), one built as a triangle within an elongated square (Venus), and one as an

<sup>27</sup> See Daniel Chwolson, *Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus*, St. Petersburg, 1856, pp. 27, 48. Henry Corbin, “Rituel Sabéen et exégèse ismaélienne du rituel” *Eranos Jahrbuch*, 1950, pp. 181–246. Also the excellent work of Tamara M. Green, *The City of the Moon God—Religious Traditions of Harran*. E. J. Brill; Leiden, 1992, p. 206.

<sup>28</sup> Jan Hjärpe, *Analyse critique des traditions arabes sur les Sabéens Harraniens*, Diss. Uppsala, 1972, pp. 62ff., 90–92.



elongated quadrangle (Mars). While the relation of the Ssabians to the Sabéans of Yemen are unclear, it is known that the Sabeans worshipped the Sun, Moon, and Venus; a temple specified for this kind of worship may have been built in Damar. A Ssabian temple dedicated to Mercury was even located in Spain, built during the Moorish occupation. This is very suggestive since Christian Rosencreutz visited Spain as well. It is not unlikely, given this information, that the *Confessio* intends to convey that Christian Rosencreutz was initiated by Ssabian adepts, and that the stories of his journeys record his visits to their various planetary temples. It is unclear how much of these connections were known to the writers of the *Confessio*, but as I show later in further detail, ancient theories on the special status of the seven planets were active ingredients in Paracelsian astrology.

Because of its density and obscurity, most readers were unable to discern fully the meaning of the seven sections of Bureus' *FaMa*, a text that offers no explicit opinion on the Damcar/Damar issue. Bureus had sent it sealed and stamped with green wax to the universities of Rostock, Greifswald, Frankfurt, Wittenberg, Jena, and Altdorf, where, Kirchman tells us, some believed that the seal was that of the RC brothers themselves. It consisted of a circular arrangement with the Hebrew text from Psalms 91:16, "Bisvati", in my salvation, and with the signature ITABURE. It is significant that Johannes Bureus' quaint kabbalism of 1616 ("ad stridorem venientis") was taken up immediately by the physician of Duke August of Wolfenbüttel, Melchior Breler from Fulda in Buchau, in his *Echo Buccinae Iubilei Ultimi nuper e Scanzia in Germaniam F.R.C. missae*. Other early Rosicrucian pamphlets are cited in Joachim Morsius's pseudonymic list of Hermetic books, *Nuncium Olympicum von ethlichen geheimen Büchern und Schrifften* (Lübeck, 1626), at a time when Rosicrucianism was said to have completely died out among the seriously concerned.<sup>29</sup> Yet, many themes presented in these documents continued to be promoted and to be favourably received.

Closer study of Bureus' papers shows that *FaMa e sCanzIa reDUX* was a response to the text of the *Confessio*:

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<sup>29</sup> Heinrich Schneider, *Johannes Morsius und Sein Kreis*, Lübeck, 1943. A copy of Melchior Breler's answer is in Karl Widemann's papers at Augsburg. In his *Mysterium iniquitatis pseudo-evangelica*, 1621, Breler refers to Besold and Hess and to Andreae's spiritual knight in *Theca gladii spiritus* (1619), but stresses the redemptive doctrine of Tauler and Johan Arndt.

And thenceforth our Trumpet shall publically sound with a loud sound and great noise, when namely the same (which at this present is shown by few, and is secretly, as a thing to come, declared in figures and pictures) shall be free and publicly proclaimed and the whole world shall be filled withal.<sup>30</sup>

What was at stake was the new Rosicrucian language, explained in the *Confessio* as consisting of “letters and characters” found here and there in the Bible and imprinted in nature by God,

From the which characters and letters we have borrowed our magic writing, and have found out, and made a new language for ourselves, [in which withall is] expressed and declared the nature of things. So, there is no wonder we are not eloquent in other languages, the which we know that they are altogether disagreeing to the language of our forefathers, Adam and Enoch, and were through the Babylonical confusion wholly hidden.<sup>31</sup>

As Bureus saw, the language of Japheth could just be this ancient and perfect language. The sought for Enochian script was not a form of Coptic or Chaldean, but the language of the Runes.<sup>32</sup>

### *Adulruna and Momentum Excitationis*

In personal notes dated as early as 1609–1611, we can see how Bureus works out a mystical sevenfold iconography based on the ancient runes, inspired by millenarian and kabbalistic texts, and in particular by the hieroglyphic monad of John Dee, which by 1610 emerges as the main pattern for Bureus’ theosophic tool, the *Adulruna*. The notes also show that by 1610, Bureus was reading John Dee’s *Monas Hieroglyphica*; he noted in particular that the monas is referred to neutrally in English and Swedish, “it/ett/en.”<sup>33</sup> In an ingenious interpretation, the *Monas* was decomposed and rearranged as when

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<sup>30</sup> Frances Yates (1986), pp. 254–255.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 257.

<sup>32</sup> Bureus follows Postel in believing that the Hebrew characters developed through Noah, Seth, and Enoch. A copy of the Ethiopian book of Enoch annotated by Roger Bacon was used by John Dee in sessions of angelic magic with Edward Kelley at Prague in 1586. See Nicholas Clulee (1988), p. 209.

<sup>33</sup> Bureus mentions Dee’s *Monas* on 16 January 1610, Ms. N 24, f. 60v. Linköpings Stiftsbibliotek. There are photocopies of this manuscript at Kungliga Biblioteket and there is a folder of the items on exhibition at the library in 1967, mimeographed at MS. IB 80.

Bureus assimilated his special Rune  $\text{m}$ , “bjärkan,” to the sign for Aries 3, ♈, and then (quasi fluxu) by superimposing them, wedded it to the moon, sun, and cross  $\oplus$ . “Id est sol et luna, Adul-Runa.” The discovery that the root pattern for the *Adulruna* is John Dee’s hieroglyphic monad, supports Frances Yates and undermines Brian Vickers’s contention that Dee’s ideas are a most unlikely source of Rosicrucianism. According to Vickers, Dee’s *Monas* was not a famous book, but rather an obscure text on the absolute margin of Renaissance culture, quoted by no more than ten contemporary writers.<sup>34</sup> Yet, in Bureus we find a Swedish Rosicrucian who not only reads the *Monas*, but who also, while supressing his source, builds his most favoured spiritual glyph on it.

In a later phase, from 1625, Bureus’ ideas also appear in a projected Rosicrucian document that develops on the restitution of mind, body, and soul in an angelic prophecy attributed to ARIEL, the Lion of God. By that time, Bureus’ other Rosicrucian texts, the *Ara Foederis Therapici F.X.R* (1616) and the *FaMa e sCanzIa reDUX* (1616), had been given second printings. Bureus persisted in proclaiming the elements for a theosophy of Runes that he first elaborated in his secret manual for Kingship, the *Adulruna Rediviva*, given to Gustav Adolf on his day of accession in 1611. This manuscript underwent several redactions beginning in 1605, and he kept on revising it until 1643, when the *Adulruna* finally was presented to Queen Christina of Sweden, on her seventeenth birthday.

Bureus’ manuscripts offer much material on how an early theosophist conceived of the process of regeneration, both in his own person and then in the sense of a collective outpouring of grace in the seventh age heralded by the Rosicrucians. While Bureus’ ideas instruct us about the character of early theosophy, it is of interest that Bureus’ Rosicrucian interpretation of 1616 had further influence. In 1646, the mystic at Danzig, Abraham van Franckenberg, sent a manuscript copy of the *FaMa e sCanzIa reDUX* to the millenarian reformer Samuel Hartlib in England. He sent another copy, on 16 April 1651, to the brilliant Hermeticist in Rome, Athanasius Kircher. In this document, Bureus’ views emerge as part of a much larger world

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<sup>34</sup> Brian Vickers (1979), p. 308n. Apart from its being mentioned in the *Fama* (I.O.’s Book H.), there are dozens of German translations in manuscript, among them one belonging to Queen Christina, at MS. Reg. Lat. 1266. Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana.

vision that grew out of his obsession with signifying spiritual ideas pictorially.

In 1614, Bureus announced that he had undergone a significant experience that he now tried to convey in a letter to his friend Johannes Terserus by drawing a particular sign that on the face of it looks like a crucified heart pierced with three nails, but shaping, as he said, a sevenfold key and a Runic Cross. Authors commenting on Bureus' theosophy have been much bewildered by this sign, given his claims that it describes the sublime mystical experience, his momentum *excitationis*, that he underwent at Stora Tuna in Dalecarlia a little before half past six on the morning of December 5th, 1613. On that morning, Bureus claims to have finally perceived the hidden truth "that no author could disclose." He had heard a voice, as if singing: "RIVos IaM CLaVDe PVEr sat prata blberVnt—Close up the streams, young boy, for the meadows have drunk themselves full." The Latin phrase turns out to be the chronogram for 1673, and Bureus went on to use it in explicating the Apocalypse. He also indicated that he had gone into that state of mind called the mystery of regeneration, the state in which things are seen and heard that according to Hermes must not be communicated to the profane. Readers who have noticed Bureus' cross and nails have believed them to be the product of some intense christocentric meditations, particularly since he later, in 1644, made a new drawing called ECCe CRVCeM Cor et ClaVos IesV—the chronogram for 1666—that in detail reproduce his findings from 1613.<sup>35</sup>

Had Bureus perhaps gone through some form of inexplicable manic (or even drunken) experience? Was it a depressive state that he now went on to belabor with material from his readings, visions, and dreams? No, Bureus clearly had something else in mind in calling his insight "that which no author could disclose." After much searching, I have identified the source for Bureus' insight. What he actually heard was the last line of Virgil's third *Eclogue*, the part that ends the contest of songs among shepherds by closing the streams of milk that have flowed through Virgil's scene, just after he posed his alluring enigma:

Tell me in what land not wider than three ells  
does the space of heaven extend,

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<sup>35</sup> Håkan Sandblad, "Eken vid Güstrow och de sju inseglen—till tolkningen av Johannes Bureus religiösa mystik", *Lychnos* (1959), pp. 70–87.



Tell me in what land grows flowers  
with the names of Kings inscribed. . . .<sup>36</sup>

It was not, as one might think, that no author would ever be able to retell the exstatic experience of finding the clue, but rather that Bureus was concerned that there were authors who had tried but who could not tell. He was thinking of the scroll sealed with seven seals in Revelations 5:5, of which it is sadly said,

And I saw a mighty Angel proclaiming in a loud voice: who is worthy to break the seven seals and open the scroll or even look inside it? I wept and wept because no-one was found who was worthy to open the scroll and look inside. . . .

The crucified heart was the outcome of some intense readings of the book of Revelations to which Bureus now thought he had found the key. By offering his set of tokens, Bureus thought he had summed up the whole doctrine of the Apocalypse. His geographic and biblical studies had pointed him to land of redemption, the land of his own. This tremendous insight did not dawn upon him quickly, however, because its precise growth can be seen in his notes of the preceding years.

The notes of 1609–1611 stem from Bureus' work on the construction of the *Adulruna*, initially taken as the ancient mystical norm by which the Nordic Runes must have been constructed. The enigma surrounding "that which no author could disclose" is dispelled if one concentrates on these notes and on their context of theosophic apocalypticism at a time just before the publication of the first Rosicrucian documents.

### *Runic Combinations and Adulrunic Theosophy*

Bureus read widely in Latin Kabbalah and these kabbalistic influences are already present in the manual of Runic mysticism that he started to work out in a first version, entitled *Adul-Runa Redi-Viva . . . Theosophia Vestita Radiis in Scenam prodies Anno Crucis 1605*. In his diary of the

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<sup>36</sup> Vergil, *Eclogues* III, 111. The first enigma is usually taken to refer to the span of heaven captured in the surface of the water in a well, and the second to refer to Hyacinth beginning with "ai", Greek for king. At line 63–64, Virgil sings "Galatea hits me with an apple and flees into the willows and hopes to be seen first." In all of this Bureus sees the Hyperbeorean far north.

subsequent years, Bureus emerges as a fully formed Hermeticist. In May, 1607, he made numerological annotations to the ten pyramidal points of the Pythagorean Tetractys ( $1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10$ ). Bureus reasoned that because the Hebrews avoid all direct naming of the Holy One, they insist on seven as the divine number only to avoid naming the sum of the triad 1, 2, & 3, which equals six. He offered the six-pronged Hagal Rune ✻ as a Japhetic emblem for this ancient secret. In July 1608, he saw himself in a dream devising a key with the inscription ANIMUS and shortly thereafter dreamed of a carnal experience.

In 1609–1610, on a more massive scale, Bureus started to coordinate the views of the Hermetic philosophers to the Runes. He made excerpts from Pico's *Heptaplus*, from Ficino's expositions of the triads in the late Platonic commentaries by Porphyry and Proclus, and from the Hermetic *Pimander*. In a similarly eclectic fashion, he drew on the Christian Kabbalists Johannes Reuchlin, Petrus Galatinus, and Paul Scalichius to represent some central Runes as "stations" in a sevenfold descent from the superior to the inferior world. He read Helisaeus Roeslin's Copernican and Paracelsian compendium *De Nova Mundi Hypotheses* (1598) and copied down its elaborate "Signaculum mundi Pythagoricum." Pursuing this kabbalism further, he drew up the Sephirothic tree from a work by Cesare Evoli published in Vienna in 1573. He emphasized the coordination of the seven planets to the seven lower Sephira, and contemplated putting it on a coat-of-arms.

Throughout this period, Bureus kept astronomical records, made optical measurements, and experimented in alchemy. After visiting Wäsby in 1610, he even left behind an allusion to the great work—"Hic LABor hic reQVIes"—in an old alchemical album of Peder Månsson, the early sixteenth century book keeper and alchemist of renown at the monastery of Wadstena. Bureus' most frequent notes reveal that he had started to take excerpts from the *Amphitheatrum* of Heinrich Khunrath in order to adapt its doctrines to the Runes. Just as man is the measure of all things, the Runes can be developed in three distinct patterns, each representing an anthropocentric idea; and, as Bureus says, they are of use to the *theantropos*, the angelic Pastor of the scattered flock. In the notes of 1610–1612, three signs emerge:

1. a sevenfold arrow-with-a-goal, similar to Abaris' arrow. ✚
2. a concentric solar cross, the *Adulruna* proper. ☉
3. a male and female arrangement based on the "signum foederis tres coronae", allusive of the mystical union (sponsus et sponsa). ♂ ♀

The first of these, the sevenfold Runic arrow, is meant to incorporate a septenary, a sextenary, and a binary structure. To explain the arrow, Bureus coordinates it to a few kabbalistic concepts in a ladder of descent from the One:

	O	principium absoluti purimum	
Lux	Y	modus mentis	Cabala
lum.	X	L	tenebras
spl.	I	Lux	lumen
calor	l		lucem
gratio	i	splendor	
gratum	m	trombua	

At this stage, however, the arrow is not entirely fixed in its details; the Runic "sun" at its top and the Runic "footstool" at its bottom are yet not named. Later, the arrow-with-its-goal emerges alone, without the explanatory concepts, or differently, as nodes in a sevenfold chronology, adding up to 1666. The point of the sevenfold construction appears to have a deep meaning, for in the notes under the title "senario septentrionis" is a sixfold septenary, also understood as the *northern* sixfold. Here, Bureus develops the fact that snowflakes drop down in a variety of sixfold shapes. He goes on to join a sign for a snowflake to his special Rune, Bjärkan  $\mathfrak{B}$ , to form a Runic line of descent from the sun, O, wedded to Aries,  $\mathfrak{m}$ . ♀

Bureus presents the *Adulruna* proper as a Runic solar cross; he later adds to it a crucified heart and three nails, and it becomes the gnomonic device for constructing the Runes. In notes for the *Antiquitates Scanziana*, Bureus states that this crucified sun is to represent 1. solar influence (divine goodness). It is generated by 2. an infinite circle (negative theology) and 3. a cross that represents "Paracelsus as the hand of God (affirmative theology)." The sign of the cross itself is generated from 4. an eternal horizon —, and a vertical line, seen as the Son of God descending into the netherworld. The theosophy of infinity by Nicholas Cusanus was applied, in terms of his observation that an infinite circle joins with an infinite plane.



The human shaped sign “tres coronae” occurs later in 1623 in two arrangements, a male version and a female version, each inserted below a Runic sun and above a Runic footstool. They are called “Bureloft, Brudeloft” (the loft of Bureus and of the Bride) apparently to develop an early astro-spiritual idea expressed in the Hermetic formula, “☉ & ☿ nuncius caeli et terra maritatio,” that signifies the mystical union between heaven and earth expounded by Pico della Mirandola and even more so by John Dee.

In the early notes of 1609–1611, one can follow closely how Bureus investigates the Pythagorean “Y”; for example, he relates it to the sign for mercury, ☿, and alludes to the Hermetic view that the “Y” was used in antiquity by Orpheus. By 1611, Bureus playfully puts the “signum tres coronae” on a shield with the text “EUR” underneath, and faithful to his neo-Gothic anthropology, he baptizes it “Cithara” or “Lyra Apollinis”, the seven-stringed lyre of Apollo.

The emergence of these ideas may have a specific cause. When the Swedes robbed the library of the Polish Jesuit College at Posen in 1609, they succeeded in carrying home a first edition of John Dee’s celebrated work on celestial signification, the *Monas Hieroglyphica*, the theoretical work essential for the development of Bureus’ theosophic tool.<sup>37</sup> A note from 1610, “Adulruna refocillata,” indicates that it was the copy stolen from Posen that finally made Bureus assimilate his special Rune B, “bjärkan,” to the sign for Aries ♈, and then (quasi fluxu) by superimposing them, wedded it to the moon, sun, and cross. When the Monas is reshaped into the Adulruna, in this way, a solar centered crucified heart emerges, as if placed on the northern pole at the origo of the north-south axis. One wonders if Bureus had received any oral introduction to Dee’s obscure text from someone who could have revealed to him that the Monas functions as a microcosmic signifier of the internal sensory sun by compressing many themes of western imperial power into an exalted spiritual object, as the sun of illumination passes from east to west.

Bureus kept on revising his Runic system throughout 1606–1609, first by pondering the role of the central character B, “bjärkan” and then, in April, 1610, by adding “kvistrunor,” a Runic scheme for

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<sup>37</sup> The first edition of Dee’s *Monas* (1564), taken at Posen in 1609, is now in Uppsala. Likewise, Kepler’s copy of Brahe *De Nova Stella, anno 1572* (Uraniburg, 1593) and his own text *De Nova Stella* (Prague, 1606) in Stockholm were taken at Olmütz in 1615. A copy of *De Revolutionibus* with Copernicus’ notes (taken in 1626 at the convent Frombork outside Danzig) is now at Uppsala.

wooden sticks (further expanded in 1628), which he saw as a universal “alphabetum vegetale,” an alphabet so natural that it may have preceded the carvings in stone. In 1626 (at the age of sixty), Bureus started a serious study of Arabic. He had come to believe that he could thereby unravel more biblical secrets for his *Adulruna*. It is clear from Bureus’ notes that he made frequent use of Postel’s work on the origin of languages, especially on the interrelations among the alphabets, and on the influence of Hebrew on the formation of Samaritan, Syriac, and Arabic, and the influence of Greek on Latin, Etruscan, and Gothic. In Postel’s translation of the kabbalistic text *Sefer Jezira* (1552), a book that Bureus read in 1610, there is a significant conclusion: the reduction of the 22 characters in the Hebrew alphabet to combinations of the single letter Iod. Postel also purported to promulgate a paradoxical prophecy of Mohammed: that after a thousand years when the Christians will have come to know the Koran and to have learned Arabic, the rule of Islam will efface itself before the rule of Christ. Bureus apparently was stirred up by this idea. Believing in the myth of the sons of Japheth, and perhaps because manna is an Arabic word, he made a great fuss about the Book of Job as a Hebrew translation from the Arabic. He even reshaped the Runes into a flowing script similar to that of Arabic.<sup>38</sup>

Indeed, one cause of this interest in Islamic themes was the added impulse given to the Reformation by the spread throughout Europe of descriptions of the Koranic Apocalypse. Nicolas Cusanus’ *Cribatio Alcoran* (1488) transmitted a review of the Koranic doctrines that displays how Adriel, the angel of death, will blow the next to the last Trumpet and then perish, whereupon the dead will rise to eternal life. As Sura 39:68 of the Koran says:

Then the Trumpet will sound again and they shall rise and gaze around them. The world will shine with the Lights of her Lord, and the Book will be laid open.

With his Adulrunic theory already prepared, Bureus borrowed a copy of the first Rosicrucian tracts shortly after their first publication. He

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<sup>38</sup> Bureus’ Diary, *Samlaren* (4) 1883, pp. 41, 112. On Postel’s Iod, see MS. N 24, f. 56. Linköpings Stiftsbibliotek. Bureus gave Postel’s *De Originibus linguarum* (Paris, 1538) to Stiernhielm for his work on the *Runa Sæthica*. The prophecy on Mohammed in the 1553 edition is described by Carlos Gilly, in Guy Trédaniel, ed. *Guillaume Postel 1581–1981*, Ed. La Maisnie; Paris, 1985, p. 52.

had to return them to their anonymous owner in 1615, but he asked for new copies by writing to “sis-ne-Meus,” the playwright and Livonian historiographer at Riga, Johannes Messenius. Bureus wanted Messenius to have one mysterious “T.E.” send him the Rosicrucian statements, “the German tractates de extremis iudiciis.” Apparently, T.E. had excellent contacts, for the major part of Bureus’ *Ara Foederis Therapici* (n.p. 1616) consists of an *Assertio Fraternitatis RC* (Kassel, 1614), later revealed to have been written by the mysterious character Raphael Eglinus, first obtained in September 1616, then translated in the second printing of the *Ara Foederis* (Newenstadt, 1618) states.<sup>39</sup>

*Paths to Adultrine Theosophy: Arbatel, Agrippa, and Zoroaster*

While Bureus began to learn Hebrew with a local priest in 1584, his serious studies occurred when he was in contact with Johannes Chesnecopherus, a Ramist scholar in Stockholm who was interested in numerology and mathematics. As one can see in his diary, Bureus continued to ponder the depths of the Hebrew language for some ten years, often in company with friends among the clergy. Moving to the court at Stockholm, Bureus sought to become an emblem-maker, a scribe, and a drawer of designs. As luck would have it, and as he records in his diary, he was one of the party who in 1602 uncovered some books hidden behind a wall in the former royal college at Gråmunkeholmen near the Castle.<sup>40</sup> The royal college had preserved many Catholic traditions, but in 1593 it had undergone a total Protestant purge. The old teachers had been thrown out in an attempt to abolish the Catholic influences that had flourished in Sweden during the reign of Johan III and his son Sigismund. Bureus made the right choice in seeking favour with the brother of King Johan, Duke Carl, who soon, in 1598, defeated Sigismund and drove him out of the land.

<sup>39</sup> For the *Assertio FRC* and Raphael Eglinus, see W.-E. Peuckert (1928), p. 171. There is a German copy of the *ARA* (Newenstadt, 1618) in the Waller Collection, Uppsala UB. Schick suggests that I.S.B.N. was Iulius Sperber. Who was T.E.?

<sup>40</sup> On Bureus’ studies in King John’s Catholic College at Gråmunkeholmen closing down in 1593, Hans Hildebrand, *Minne av Johannes Bureus*, Stockholm, 1910, p. 10n. See also, G. E. Klemming, “Anteckningar af Johannes Tomae Agrivillensis Bureus”, cited below as Bureus’ diary, *Samlaren* (4), 1883, pp. 12–43, 71–126.

By 1600, Bureus could offer a simple method of deciphering the runes. He was now sent around the countryside to make inventories of the runestones. At the same time, he took an interest in local sorcerers. In 1601, when Bureus' political role was still rather weak, he had not been able to prevent the authorities from accusing his brother-in-law, Johannes Martin Bång, of sorcery and imprisoning him. Two women, who had "travelled to Heaven and Hell," had named Martin as their instructor. In the trial that put to an end the witchery of Blasius Britta from Wassunda, Martin was also put on the rack. Confessing under interrogation, he was finally executed on 15 January 1603. On the same day, another of Bureus' relatives, Erik Root, was found dead in his prison. "It is said," Bureus exclaims in horror, "that a rainfall of blood showered the castle yard."<sup>41</sup> Yet, one outcome of these associations with local sorcerers was that he could learn more from local traditions. He was shown an old Norwegian book of spells and was told of a magical contrivance to use when playing cards: One is bound to win, if only one manages to scratch five Runes onto the table without being seen.

Recognized in 1602 for his more mundane work on translating runestones, Johannes Bureus had a unique opportunity to influence the Swedish princes, Carl Philip and Gustav Adolf. The political value of a deeply grounded national history was fully realized by the Crown. Bureus was asked to demonstrate his alphabetic rendering of the Runes to foreign emissaries, beginning with a reception in the summer of 1602 for the envoys of the Dukat court of Hesse-Kassel, to whom Bureus offered a sketch of the Royal castle. Bureus was asked to join the Kassel-trained mathematician Nils Chesnecopherus' embassy to Germany; but after a visit by Danish diplomats, it was decided that loss of Bureus' skills could not be risked. To accomplish the task of translating ancient Scandinavian documents of law and kingship, he was given a post as a royal antiquarian, and it was now possible for him to take meals in the Chancery.<sup>42</sup>

Bureus' theosophic interests appear to have begun in 1591 with his reading of Arbatel's *De Magia Veteri* (Basel, 1575), because he says that it was through this book that his "desire for the Kabbalah" was

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>42</sup> On the visit of emissars from Hesse-Kassel in 1602, see Bureus' diary, *Samlaren* (4) 1883, p. 24. Note that Hananias and Azarias, Bureus' two first children with Margareta Bång, born in 1592 and 1593, both died within some few years.



kindled. Yet apart from naming the seven Olympian names for the planetary angels: Aratron, Bethor, Phaleg, Hagith, Och, Ophiel, and Phul, Arbatal's book of magic is not kabbalistic in any precise sense. Instead, it is closely related to the angelic magic set out by Agrippa of Nettesheim, and contains a list of nine kinds of magic, including Olympian, Hesiodic, Pythagorean, and Hermetic. More recently, Arbatal's treatise has been noted for its division of knowledge into theosophia and anthroposophia; it is in fact the first modern text in which the latter term is used.<sup>43</sup> In following Arbatal's magical instructions, Bureus was inspired to see himself as a prophet or a sage. He even began to assimilate himself to the angelic role of Ariel the Lion of God, one of the 72 spirits mentioned by Agrippa, and the name for one part of the bronzen altar of burnt offerings spoken of in 2 Chronicles 4.

Having read Gerard Dorn's edition of Paracelsus' ideas on the signatures of nature *Archidoxis magica* (Basel, 1570), Bureus started to object to Orthodox Aristotelian philosophy. To withstand the heathen explanation of man as a rational animal, he says, one must turn to Scripture and its sense of the soul as a harmonious and besouled entirety. Bureus thus argued for two ideas fairly common among Paracelsians, that were nevertheless controversial. These are the idea of the two natures of Christ, his status as the first and the second Adam, and the idea of the Homo Triplex, the idea of three natures in man. To show that the human persona is three-fold, Bureus offered examples from the biblical text. Thus, of Revelations 22:16, where it is said, "The Soul and the Bride say, come . . . whoever is thirsty let him come," he bluntly asks, who are they? The answer, he thinks, is given in Hebrews 4:12 where God's word is likened to a sharp sword that "separates the spirit from the soul, dividing joints and marrow." On these scriptural grounds, Bureus was confirmed in his belief in the three principles of human beings and he noted that their names in the very ancient Swedish-Gothic tongue make up the Paracelsian principle Sal(t): SAL—Siel, Anda, Lekamen; or thus,

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<sup>43</sup> Arbatal's work was printed at Basel by the publishing house of Perna as one of a series of publications arguing for magical reform as a way of spiritualizing the Calvinist standpoints. The editor was Theodor Zwinger, the Paracelsian systematist. Carlos Gilly, "Theodor Zwinger—Zwischen Erfahrung und Spekulation—Theodor Zwinger und die religiöse und kulturelle Krise seiner Zeit" *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* (77) 1977, esp. pp. 87–89.

- S Siel <Spirit>, an image of Divine likeness. Homo spiritualis.
- A Anda <Soul>, the sum of all human faculties (partes), a medium of which reason is a part. Homo rationalis.
- L Lekamen <Body>, human flesh, of matter and blood. Homo carnalis.

These three are animated by a fourth principle, the inner sun, Lux, or the lifegiving light, that separates the pure from the impure, and that illuminates the whole. This light resolves, by bringing forth a solvent, sound (as in “sundheet, sanitatis,” or sanity; thus punning on the role of the Paracelsian healer).<sup>44</sup> In Bureus’ scheme the three human elements are gender-specific. The spirit is female, he says, and it relates to the soul and to the body as a maid with two suitors. If she chooses the soul then she shall dwell in the light as a spiritual being, but if she chooses the body or flesh she shall be brought into darkness. Bonded in a proper way with the soul, the spirit binds the ethereal soul and the bodily flesh together, making a spiritual body, and a harmonious whole. Also, in a series of poetic songs, *Nymärewijssor*, Bureus spelled out that the spirit when joined to the soul in this way is like a queen who lacks nothing, or like a bride ready to marry the son of a king.<sup>45</sup>

Bureus’ idea of a tripartite soul is not unusual in the Hermetic tradition. The bridal mysticism was part of the alchemical worldview presented in numerous texts and by J. V. Andreae in his widely read text, *The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosencreutz*. Bureus read this pamphlet no later than 1617, thus about four years after his experience with the crucified heart. I consider the context of Andreae’s text more closely in the next chapter, but note here that Bureus from earlier on had developed a Manichean view of the soul through reading Johan Jessenius’ commentary on *Zoroasther* (Wittenberg, 1593). Excerpting 48 pages of material from this book in 1595, Bureus moved on to investigate the various forms of angelic magic found in Arbatel’s *De Magia Veteri*. It was hardly these sources alone, however, that in 1604 made Bureus dream of Lady Sophia. She held

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<sup>44</sup> Bureus’ MS. F.a.9. f. 4. KB, Stockholm. See also Hans Hildebrand (1910), pp. 277–279.

<sup>45</sup> Johannes Bureus, *Nymärewijssor*, Stockholm, 1638. Cf. Lindroth (1943), pp. 427, 223.



a runic stick in her hand, and while Bureus offered her an open book, two ignorant court jesters at the same time sat asleep on her other side.<sup>46</sup>

Bureus took many notes from his readings of the Christian kabbalists. Much of his Gothic theosophy may even stem from readings found behind that wall on Gråmunkeholmen in 1602, for by 1605, Bureus had read two outstanding authors on Joachite interpretation, Jacob Brocardo, who sets out an interpretation of the seven seals of Revelations by pointing to a great European council of reformers (patterned on the republic of Venice), and Postel, whose ideas also develop in this direction.<sup>47</sup>

Although inspired by the rapidity of conquests in the Baltic, and conducted through the comparison of linguistic differences among the Baltic peoples, Bureus' antiquarian studies depend on a pre-modern revolutionary "episteme", a time-bound and essentially revelatory way to organize the field of knowledge.<sup>48</sup> Postel's Semito-Gallic Renaissance linguistics and John Dee's naval science for British domination of the Atlantic were both couched in the lore of a Celtic revival. In this imaginary world, the Gallic monarchs and the Welsh Tudors were predestined by cyclical effluence to gain power on an imperial axis running from east to west, mythically underpinned by an even more primary bardic cultural flow from the Ile-de-France to Jerusalem.<sup>49</sup>

With his Runic speculation, Bureus similarly strove to find a language for a renewed articulation of power and order in the Baltic, placing ancient Uppsala in the center as an original cultural sun. In so doing, his antiquarian concerns set a framework for new experi-

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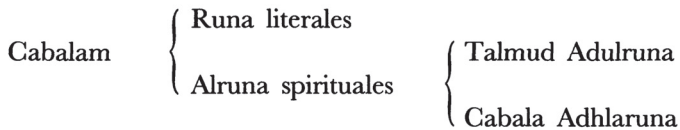
<sup>46</sup> The dream image of Lady Wisdom is in Bureus' MS. F.a.9. inscribed 13 March 1604, cf. his diary, *Samlaren* (4) 1883, p. 35.

<sup>47</sup> The copy of Brocardo's *Mystica et prophetica libri Levitici interpretatio* (Paris, 1580) at KB in Stockholm is heavily annotated in Latin. Later, this copy was in the custody of the Swedish noble family Rosenhane. Note that Bureus' party to the monastery included Johan Jöransson Rosenhane.

<sup>48</sup> The assertion, "Mount Helicon is in Scandinavia", may be regarded as a neo-Gothic "objet trouvé". Though false, there were rules governing its location in the Gothic scheme. The occasions for its use would show its inter-discursive nature, i.e., its dependence on wide epistemological patterns (biblical, mythographic, linguistic, classificatory). Cf. Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge*, New York, 1972, Ch. III, ii: a-b and IV, vi: e-f.

<sup>49</sup> On British rights to lands in the Atlantic see John Dee, *General and Rare Memorials Pertayning to the Perfecte Art of Navigation* (London, 1577). I thank Robert Cunningham for insights into the east-west movement as an extension, I would like to add, to the movement found in *La Galliade* (1578).

ences. Parallel to developing theosophic aspects of his Runic scheme, Bureus polished up his Runic ABC. He had begun to see the Runic texts as having a threefold significance. He correlated the apparent surface meaning of the Runic script to two other interpretative realms, thus creating three levels: 1. the Runic, 2. the Adulrunic, and 3. the Alrunic. The first literal level is chiseled into the stones. Taken literally, Runic texts make typical reference to sacred microcosmic events, such as the claiming of land or the remembrance of the dead. The second level, however, is entirely interpretative. According to Bureus, it conveys the glory of macrocosmic structures, such as the majesty and kingship described in his Gothic manual *Adulruna Rediviva*. The third, Alrunic, level of a Runic text is thought to represent the divine aspects of nature in a more general way. Bureus describes it as “catholic,” to be used to interpret the available stock of myths and prophecies universally, i.e., for all time and all peoples, but from the perspective of the Hyperboreans.<sup>50</sup> With a slightly different emphasis, he drew a scholastic chart of how these levels interrelate as Hebrew Law relates to the rabbinical commentaries (adding a fourth level, the adhlarunic):



The latter two levels are to be used to develop themes allegorically (by way of myth) and anagogically (by spiritual symbols). On all interpretative levels, and especially on the second and third, Bureus produced Gothic thinking relevant to the enterprise of a “dominium maris Baltici.” For example, he distributed many copies of his Runic book of ABC, in which he transliterates the Lord’s prayer, published in several editions between 1611 and 1624. However, Bureus harkened back to linguistic hypotheses by arguing that certain discoveries in the systems of language, nature, and ancient history held out new revelations in the cosmic plan. As a keen reader of this type, Bureus

<sup>50</sup> This triple division is called “Thronus Triunus in Theatro” and is associated with the book of life “ALIUS LIBER apertus est q. est LIBER VITAE” of Revelations 20:11. Trinities like these are found in variety of Bureus’ manuscripts, here f. 173v. MS. N 24, at Linköpings Stiftsbibliotek.

was quick to develop his own version of the scenario, with information taken from the ancient Runes and confirmed by that song he had heard at Stora Tuna about closing up the streams.

Bureus' role as antiquarian of the Swedish court has been somewhat obscured, or over-shadowed, by more recent historiographic concentration on the Stoic elements in the northern military renaissance. As Gerhard Oestreich and others have shown, the perception in Sweden was that to the south in the European mainland, builders of the Catholic Habsburg Empire successfully governed with Holy Roman Law. By tradition, the Swedish legal order used Roman Law as a parallel source of justice and now Axel Oxenstierna sought scholars capable of moving these double principles toward a more effective administrative use. The intervention of the Swedes in the Baltic region had then to rest on a legal reform and its cultural animation. But as the neo-Stoic scholars brought to Sweden were to realize, the old model of praise for Latin ancestry and Germanic practises would not move the Baltic peoples.<sup>51</sup> To separate the Baltic Germans, Scandinavians, Finns, and Livonians from the Holy Roman realm of influence, it was not enough simply to teach Tacitus' *Germania*, nor even to teach the detailed historiography of the Gothic peoples set out by Olaus Magnus in 1552. To have the "dominium maris Baltici" prevail with any permanence, the new territories needed to be integrated into a shared identity and common purpose, and a new collective identity had to be inculcated in the new lands across the Baltic to reinforce the changes of institutional practises. An act of profound self-transformation was necessary, one requiring a new vocabulary for legitimating the regime.<sup>52</sup>

During 11–13 March 1617, therefore, Bureus gave a three day course at Uppsala on the apocalyptic meaning of the *Buccina*. Eleven students attended the lectures, seven on the first day, ten on the second, and seven on the last. They included Johannes Matthiae and Jacob Hunterus, Lars Ambjörn Scarin, Anders Zebrygen, and Carl Horn.<sup>53</sup> If not many were eager to listen, it was with orations such

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<sup>51</sup> For example, in 1643 Scheffer's companion from Strassbourg, the classical historian Johann Heinrich Boecler, was beaten up and thrown out of the window by his students at Uppsala, because they found his lectures too tedious. Boecler had called them "stupid asses." Gerhard Oestreich, *Neo-Stoicism and the Modern State*, Cambridge University Press; Cambridge, 1982, pp. 109ff.

<sup>52</sup> This awareness is also expressed in *A History of Livonia*, (s.l., 1650) reprinted in Scheffer (1718), p. 380.

<sup>53</sup> Bureus' diary, *Samlaren* (4) 1883, p. 43.

as these that Bureus attracted his most congenial student, the poet Jöran Cuprimentanus Lilja (later ennobled Georg Stiernhielm). Stiernhielm married Bureus' niece in 1629 and was to receive Bureus' most lavishly illustrated manuscript *Antiquitates Scanziæ*, a manuscript that was a main inspiration for Stiernhielm's majestic unpublished linguistic work *Runa Suethica*. Only an outline of Stiernhielm's work was ever published, but he sent copies of it to the Royal Society in England and it was later reprinted in a compendium of Germanic linguistics collected by Daniel Morhof.<sup>54</sup>

Through a friend in the early summer of 1618, Bureus had one of his texts consecrated on the high altar in the Uppsala Dome. Seeking a larger audience, on 30 July, he took a further step and someone set up a placard on the door to the Dome, a placard of prophecy that remained there for four days. It offered this harsh admonishment:

S. Birgitta Extravagantium c. 77 comminato gravis  
Regni Sveciæ. Filius Dei loquitur: Arabo terram istam  
IUDICIO et TRIBULATIONE, Donec Habitantes addiscant  
petere Miseri Cordiam Dei. 7473 quid? sera. adde. clavum  
1822, habebis 5618 thesaurum.

In this untranslatable piece of millenarian calculation one reaches a set of numbers showing the year for the final Judgement. While it is not entirely clear from Bureus' notes that he was the author of the placard at Uppsala, this is more plausible than that there were other concealed Rosicrucians there. Bureus has copied the text in his diary and immediately inserts a note in Swedish, stating "1658, 40 years hereafter," a reference to Paracelsus. One thing is certain. The posting the placard on the Dome constituted a public call for a renewed awareness of historical events. In her own extravagant way, St. Bridget had prophesied a future war between Germany and France that would be resolved by a coming European saviour, but the exact timing of this disastrous event had been much in debate; Rosicrucians were also aware that Paracelsus had made similar predictions for "58". Five days after posting the placard, Bureus was called in. Authorities in the Church condemned his ideas on the coming end as fantasies, "nugas et errores."<sup>55</sup> After the

<sup>54</sup> D. G. Morhof, *Unterricht von der Teutschen Sprache*, Frankfurt, 1678.

<sup>55</sup> Bureus' diary, *Samlaren* (4) 1883, p. 70. St. Bridget's German/French scenario from 1360 to resolve the Hundred Years' War was continuously reshaped, as in Lichtenberg's popular fifteenth-century book of sayings.





rior body has been destroyed and only the inward person remains. The newborn assumes a new angelic name, a practise signalled by the Rosicrucian documents in which Bureus uses anagrams, for example Ierubbabel, the one who turns his back on Babel.<sup>59</sup>

### *The Growth of the Adulruna Rediwiwa*

The work on the *Adulruna* was long and laborious. On 15 April 1615—he remembered it quite exactly—Bureus had become convinced that he had found the key for solving a mystery that long had plagued him, that of: “Runa oriente crus promissus, Scanzianorum pastor et petra.”<sup>60</sup> On this date, he had understood that his discovery of the exact method for the construction of the Runes ought to be announced in a document addressed to the Rosicrucians. The method also had led him to two fundamental insignia:

“Sagitta Abarides qui totum orbem peragrabat” †

and

“Signum foederis tres coronae” ✚

Abaris’ arrow was one of a piece with the wisdom of Zamolxes the magician, or as Bureus wrote, of the congregator, “Samlhoxes.” In his *FaMa e sCanzIa reDUX*, Bureus played on the arrow of Genesis 49:24 and Isaiah 16:18. The arrow is made up of Runic letters and would lead the way for those who wanted to participate in a Lutheran regeneration and Hyperborean revival in the north, since these peoples should know and revere the origin of their abecedarian scripts.<sup>61</sup> The “signum foederis,” on the other hand, had been placed in a halo of light on the altar that adorned the frontispiece of his first Rosicrucian pamphlet, the *Ara Foederis Therapici F.X.R.* Apart from being a compound of Runic characters, the sign was also a mark for his perception of the “sponsae ecclesiae”, or the spiritual bride in mystical union, as shown in Bureus’ description of his sublime mystical experience at Stora Tuna. The experience of 1613 forms

<sup>59</sup> Bureus’ *FaMa* (1616), p. 4.

<sup>60</sup> Bureus’ diary, 1612 & 1643, *Samlaren* (4) MS. F.a.3. f. 67.

<sup>61</sup> Bureus’ *FaMa* (1616), p. 16.



the basis for his announcements in the *FaMa*, and he seems to have then conceived the full majestic role played by the *Adulruna* in a Rosicrucian scheme. Later he thought that the “signum tres coronae” was best to be placed in the hands of the Nordic Sibyl adorning the Tropheum Upsalicum.<sup>62</sup> Her name is Alruna, and Postel had understood her as a northern druidess.

*FaMa e sCanzIA reDUX: EU-ropa and EUR-hopa*

The immediate response to Bureus' pamphlets in 1616 was a recognition that there were Scandinavian thinkers who supported the European Rosicrucian cause. In later chapters, I investigate his role as royal antiquarian during the series of conflicts ravishing Germany in 1619–1648. In about 1643, Bureus realized that his system must be revised to fit the diplomatic attempts to bring about peace. He now worked out a dedication copy of his new system directly for Queen Christina, entitled *Adulruna Redi-Viva*. In this edition, he stressed ideas of Hermetic Pansophism that he had reached in an earlier variant entitled: “Adulruna id est Catholica nominatur sapientiae incarnatae virgo a cubiculis famula.”<sup>63</sup>

In this new system, Bureus quotes various sources to show that the ancients must have known the cross (Mercurius, Zoroaster, Tertullian, Minucius Felix); and that the Hyperboreans had wandered with their wisdom to the north (Plato, Orpheus, Apollodorus), where they had constructed the Runes with a special gnomonic device revealed only to them. These events were mythically remembered by the Sibylline Oracles.<sup>64</sup>

Bureus then offered the special gnomon by which the Runes must have been constructed, the *Adulruna*, and now claimed that it was revealed to him as “the inner ring of edges around the wound, stung through by the three fatherly spires of the judge.” To commemorate his discovery, Bureus wanted to build a new monument depict-

<sup>62</sup> MS. F.a.3. f. 156v, 145, 41. Bureus to Johannes Terserus, 3 December, 1614, MS. K2, Uppsala UB.

<sup>63</sup> MS. F.a.3. f. 60, 62. “Catholic” means general, “pansophic”. Is there a connection between Bureus' *Adulruna* (1643) and the Queen's feverish insights in 1648? To Adler Salvius and the “Order of Immanuel” in 1650? Cf. Åkerman (1991), pp. 144, 147, 149.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 71, 187. See also Sten Lindroth (1943), pp. 241–243.

ing the descending Runic bloc and its revelatory reconfiguration on a flat plate of the Futhark, the protean alphabet. Although these cultural ideas about Runic emblems were largely ignored by the new authorities, Bureus reworked them idefatigably.

Three years later, through contacts with the mystic Abraham van Franckenberg in Amsterdam, Johannes Bureus' personal fame rose to such a point that he was to be numbered among the Christian kabbalist sages of the nations, sages such as Joachim di Fiore, Pico, Reuchlin, Agrippa, Francesco Giorgi, Giordano Bruno, Petrus Bongus, Julius Sperber, and Philip Ziegler. The list was appended to a new edition of Guillaume Postel's *Absconditorum a Constitutione Mundi Clavis* (Amsterdam, 1646, 1st ed. Paris, 1553), a mystical text on the seven ages presented by Franckenberg to the court of Wladislaus IV in Poland.<sup>65</sup> The list includes Petrus Bongus, the author of *De numeris mysteriis senario & septenario* on Pythagorean number theory, and Julius Sperber of Anhalt-Dessau, author of *Echo der von Gott hocherleuteren Fraternitet* (Danzig, 1615). Philip Ziegler, on the other hand, was known as a subversive radical in Basel, Worms, Speier, and Strassburg, from which last he was exiled in 1617 because he had pretended to be "König Rosae Crucis." The alchemist at Hesse, Benedict Figulus, met him in the winter of the same year. After travels to Frankfurt in 1620, Ziegler went to Holstein, Denmark, Sweden, Bern, France, and Prague, perhaps causing the Parisian rumour of 1623 that thirty-six Rosicrucians circulated in Europe; six had supposedly lodged at the Marest du Temple in the Faubourgs Saint-Germain, but had left without paying, while four had gone to Sweden.<sup>66</sup>

After drawing Bureus into this radical kabbalist company, Franckenberg ends his edition with an Oriental-Pythagorean post-script that displays the key of David that contains the secrets of Divine kingship, with the announcement:

Salve, Philomysta. We offer you the key to the innermost sanctuary, but purify yourself before you move towards the Divine: this is the

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<sup>65</sup> Bureus owned a copy of Postel's Latin translation, *Abrahami Patriarcha Sepher Jetzira sive formationis mundi*, Paris, 1552. Cf. Postel's *Clavis*, Amsterdam, 1646, pp. 121ff., also in a recent Italian edition *La Chiave delle Cose Nascoste*, Dioscuri; Genoa, 1987, pp. 119ff. Marion Kuntz has pointed out to me that van Franckenberg's MS. copy of Postel's *Clavis* in the Sloane collection of the British Museum is marked "from the Rosicrucian school."

<sup>66</sup> Paul Tannery, ed. *Correspondence de Mersenne*, Presse Universitaire; Paris, 1945, vol. 1, p. 154n.

law. Learn of Universal sapience, of the tetrachord and of Apollo's chariot, the wheel of sapience, and you will more easily understand the science of the Mercabah, the chariot of Isra-El, a reliquary cherubimic, or biblical.<sup>67</sup>

The Pythagorean tetrachord and the chariot of Apollo is in this statement set beside the Mercabah mysticism of the kabbalists, perhaps to suggest that knowledge of musical consonance and poetry can enhance the angelic visions of the Bible. The editors urge, that more grain of the same meal, more symbolic expositions of the Hebrew kabbalist text *Sefer Jezira*, could be culled from Bureus' work. They are probably referring to his recent book *The Roar of the Northern Lion, that by measuring the bronzen altar reveals the time-reckoning of Scripture* (s.l., 1646), in which Bureus sees an immediate end of the present era, and sets out a final key to the visions of Ezekiel and the Book of Revelations.<sup>68</sup> The Key he offers is the following:

- |                                  |      |                   |
|----------------------------------|------|-------------------|
| 1. the Man with the fire         | 1396 | Johan Huss        |
| 2. the Oxen with the voices      | 1530 | Martin Luther     |
| 3. the Lion with the thunder     | 1614 | J. T. A. B(ureus) |
| 4. the Eagle with the earthquake | 1647 | Habsburg defeat   |
| 5. the double edged Sword        | 1673 | Judicium          |

The Paracelsian background to this roar of prophecy has been brilliantly dealt with in Johan Nordström's studies published in Uppsala in 1934.<sup>69</sup> Later, in 1943, Sten Lindroth pointed out that the initials do not simply mean Johannes Tomae Agrivillensis Bureus, but also Johannes Theophrastus Aracelsus Bureus, showing that Bureus, as one of the few genuine Rosicrucians, was identifying himself with Paracelsus. Inspired by Revelations 2:17, he also used a new seal: Iesu Tua Bonitate Absorbeas. The Lutheran mysticism of the Lamb

<sup>67</sup> Salve Philomysta. Clavis tibi damus ad interiora domus ad Divos enim Caste advento. Lex est: Pana, Tetrachordon, aut Quadrigam Apollinis sapientia Rotis, sapientiam Mercabah sive currum Isra-ELis, cum reliquis Kerubinicae, sive Biblicae . . . *Clavis* (1646) Appendix (written by Franckenberg) section 1.

<sup>68</sup> *Nordlandalejonsens rytande som av kopparaltarens mätning uppenbarar skrifternes tidsräkning*, s.l., 1644, p. 86. In 1670, Johannes Scheffer translated the title into Latin "Rugitum Leonis septentrionalis, revelatum ex mensuratione altaris Aenei".

<sup>69</sup> Johan Nordström, "Lejonet från Norden", *De Yverbornes Ö*, Rudbeckstudier; Uppsala, 1934.

is further conveyed in his early use of exlibris: *Insidenti Throno Agnoque Benedectio*.

There is, however, another document, now at Leiden, of which no previous Swedish scholars have been aware. In 1646, van Franckenberg sent yet another transcription of Bureus' *FaMa* to an unknown receiver in the Netherlands, who made an exquisite hand drawn and deciphered copy. The manuscript contains several marginal notes that Bureus himself had offered to Franckenberg, thus producing new symbolism that now seems essential to understanding his unfolding of the seven apocalyptic trumpets and their heralding of a new European seat of power. For example, these secret annotations explain the cryptic chapter heading that through the years has distracted many readers, "Ex asInI ManDIbuLA IUDICIUM—a judgment from the jawbone of the Ass," which turns out to be a reference to Balaam's prophecy. According to the Book of Judges, Balaam was riding his ass when the animal stopped and wanted to go no further; before anyone else could interpret the signs, the ass had seen the coming of the Messiah. Bureus' line is in fact a combined chronogram (by adding the Latin numerals) pointing to 1568, the year of coronation of the Swedish King Johan III, and, significantly, to 1613.<sup>70</sup>

It seems clear, then, that Bureus was acquainted with the Celto-Gallic ideas of Guillaume Postel and actively used them for his Rosicrucian pamphlets. To what degree, then, did these imperial structures influence the Tübingen Rosicrucians? As we shall see in later chapters, an analysis of this question sheds light even as we address the more traditional sources for the Rosicrucian documents.

In Franckenberg's copy of Bureus' *FaMa* traditional elements also occur. Luther's crest with a black cross on a red heart upon a white rose is set beside an expansion on the letters, F.R.C., *Futuræ Reformatio Catholicae*, signifying a hope for a future Universal Reformation, similar to that heralded by the Tübingen texts.<sup>71</sup> Luther saw his crest as based on a more abstract fourfold idea: *Circulus, rosa,*

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<sup>70</sup> Cod. N 157 B. Leiden UB. A copy of the *ARA Foederis F.X.R.* is also included, Paracelsus signat stern (vitriol) imposed on the rose can clearly be seen. The package includes Neander's documents on the Gnostic sayings of Christ, an essay by Castellio, and Postel's *Candelabri Typici*.

<sup>71</sup> Catholic means general, universal. The Lutheran pansophism involved in the Rosicrucian reform may have been inspired by Augustinian or Jesuit mystical techniques, but emerged as a third force unaligned to all forms of orthodoxy.



Cor, Crux—explaining that they stood for “consummatum gaudium cordis in cruce,” the joyful consummation of the heart in the cross.<sup>72</sup> To discern the impact of the Reformation, Bureus goes into apocalyptic calculations based on events and terms stated in Hebrew and Greek: the year 135 A.D. marks the end of the Jewish wars as described by Josephus; added to the number 1260 (thanatos) from Revelations 11:3, they yield 1395, or the year of inquisition at Erfurt against Johan Huss, the first European reformer. Matching this with 1396 as the sum for each of the the Greek words “Europia”, “euroioia” (arrogance), and “europes” (darkness), one reaches an obvious condemnation of the old order.

Bureus is inspired by the concept of KOGHIR, the aduronic quiver used for the arrows brought by Abaris, the Gothic magician. Through this art of seven letters, and by means of a plainly sexual metaphor, the spirit of life is brought back into “the sterile uterus of Europe.” He concludes that reformers cannot just go on shouting Eu-ro-pa, instead, one must gather the council together, as in Eur-hopa, as if with a handful of arrows put in a KOGHIR.<sup>73</sup>

The 1290 days from Daniel 12:11 are shown to amount to the Greek word *lychnis* (light, illumination), while the 1335 days of Daniel 12:12 amount to the mystical number found in the Greek *kriseos* (judgment). At an important point, the reader is referred to the mystical interpretations of Paul Lautensack, the painter and organist from Nüremberg who in 1533 circulated an illustrated apocalyptic manuscript, *De Opere Mirabili*, portraying Christ and his starry angels. This highly mystical text was denied publication during the Reformation, but was published with writings of Valentin Weigel in 1618 at Frankfurt by Lucas Jennis, the Rosicrucian printer.

Bureus finally moves to the year of IVDICIUM, that he says was personally fulfilled for him in 1613 (at age 49) when he heard that voice singing: RIVos IaM CLaVDe PVEr sat prata blberVnt—Close up the streams, young boy, for the meadows have drunk themselves full. If to the year 1613 is added half of the prescribed 120 years of penitence, 60, one attains 1673 as the final year of the Lord. Rejoice, Bureus exclaims, for these are the times of “panthenios

<sup>72</sup> J. W. Montgomery (1973), p. 173, quoting the “Mysterium sigilli D.M.L.” of Luther’s *Tabletalks* III, 3436.

<sup>73</sup> Bureus employs a word that he believes to stem from the ancient Japhetogothic language. He believes Abaris’ mission to be one of spreading the Runes, and he sees Scandinavia as the “vagina gentium”, the Ur-heim of European culture.

gnathos,” of everlasting grace, when Eliahuh will pour his balm according to the rule of the seven-branched candlestick, scattering a cream that flows as the scent from Christ’s resurrection, as declared (Bureus cryptically points out) in 1582. Behold, for this is the roar of ARIEL, the Lion of God. Still, Bureus warns of the apostolic division between Iacob Andreae and Theodore Beza, made plain in 1586 when the Lutheran-Calvinist positions were discussed at the Mömpelgard Colloquium at Strassburg. Yet, Bureus is sure, the great reforming council of Europe will finally congregate. Replace the the Lily in the Psalms with the rose and the deserts will be brought to flowering, as in Isaiah 35:1. He signs his document as it began, “Bisvati,” in thy salvation, as in Psalms 91:16, or spelled out: *Beati immaculati sub umbra alarum tuarum Jehovah*—Blessed without stain under the shadows of thy wings, O Lord.<sup>74</sup> –

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<sup>74</sup> The years 1582 and 1586 are not explained. However, Jacob Andreae and Theodore Beza met at “the Mömpelgard Colloquium” at Strassburg in 1586 to discuss the Augsburg Confession. Bureus also refers to Robert Fludd’s *Tractatus apologeticus* (1617), to his report of the great conjunction between Saturn and Jupiter below the comet in *Serpentario* 1603/04.





*The Altar of the  
Theraphic Brotherhood*

Johannes Bureus



## Ara Foederis Theraphici

Below is a translation into English of an early Rosicrucian piece the Ara Foederis Theraphici F.X.R. Der Assertion Fraternitatis R.C. consecirt An den Leser. Quisquis de Roseae dubitas Crucis ordine Fratrum... 1618. This has been ascribed to Johannes Bureus. According to Susanna Akerman the Ara Foederis was written by Raphael Eglinus and translated into German by I.S.B.N. (Iulius Sperber). Bureus added some lines at the end and published it in 1616 and then a second time it appeared at Newenstadt in German.

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### Altar of the Theraphic Brotherhood Fraternitatis Crucis Roseae dedicated to the Assertion of the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross

To the Reader,

Whoever has doubts about the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross, let him read this and having read the poem, he will be certain.

ANNO CHRISTI 1617

Written by a Brother of this Fraternity first in Latin, then translated into German and printed by I.S.N.P. & Poet Laureate

Printed at Neuenstadt by Johan Knuber 1618.

To the very Noble, Powerful and Honourable Balthasar von Schkoelen, Senior Master of the Horse of the Elector Prince of Saxony.

To the Honourable, Worshipful and Wise Ambrosius Becker, County Justice and Worshipful Mayor of Schkeunitz.

To the Honourable, Respected and Art loving Michael Stemplin, a Noble Erudite and noted Spagyric Expert.

To my high protectors and Young Lords, my Brother-in-law, and my trusty friends respectively, Luck, Blessing and Success.

Noble and powerful young Lord, kind and beloved Brother-in-law, well known

and trusty friend, to you I send greetings first and my service, after that I dedicate and write these presents, which from outward appearance looks a short, little work, yet according to its secret meaning and hidden contents it is a very weighty and far looking work, and of the goodness and truth of my heart.

I trust they will receive and recognise it with a thankful mind and heart, read it with full attention, that they will think further over these matters, and wait with patience until something plainer, rounder, opener and more recognisable—as shall happen shortly, but then in Secret and in confidence—occurs.

Recommending myself to them jointly or severally as theirs for any service

Datum the 16th September Anno 1616.

at your service

Noble, Honourable, Powerful

also Honourable, Worshipful and Wise

Gentlemen.

I.S. N.P.P.C.

## ALTAR OF THE THERAPHIC TIE

F. X. R.

Fratris Christiani Rosencreutz

People live in doubt everywhere  
If the highly honoured Fraternity  
of the Rosy Cross exist in truth  
which men declare to be so virtuous  
And the Fama is made ridiculous  
here and there as if it were a fairy tale.

The Fama I say declares one condition to the whole world.  
But whosoever likes to doubt matters clear as the Sun  
Is starblind at Midday  
No oculist can help him.

Note this, attentive and pious reader,  
What I tell you in one word  
I am a branch selected  
from the Highborn fraternity  
I tell you without guile  
In Germany our order exists in truth  
Right in the heart of the German Lands.  
And note it well, well known in foreign parts.

And although there are but few of us  
Until now, yet in these days  
And quite lately with pleasure  
The order has been extended  
By ten persons well known for their  
Understanding, honour, Art and virtue.

The Order has also at this present time  
Been newly and well reconstrued  
With many bye laws and statutes  
Which give it order, measure and object.

Could you see these, by your oath  
You would confess without hesitation  
That all and everything has been carefully  
Put into new form.

There are many who without pause or rest  
Endeavour and tireless try to come to our order,  
but by the nature of the thing,  
one does not easily reach one's heart's desires.

But many in their own mind  
cheat their own selves miserably.  
For our custom is of this kind  
that we elect those who are known  
to us for a long time before,  
And who are proved full many a year



who are their own masters and free  
Of body not bound to anyone.

Many strict conditions are to be found  
Which bind the Fratres of our Order  
Which are to be kept without exception  
Throughout your whole life.  
As a fellow a true friend,  
(Such are a thin crop in these days),  
may possibly be taken on  
So soon as he shows within him  
that he is worthy of such friendship,  
And is free from guile and tricks.

Listen, I will at this time  
Make round and clear yet another thing.  
A castle it is, a Castle fine  
Wherein the fraternal crown  
great in honour, rich in wonders  
has its lodging wonderfully.  
Which our father did erect  
And entrust to our fraternity  
and left it to them, as is known,  
Sancti Spiriti it has been called.  
But the length of time through many year  
Have however altered this name.  
In our documents, however, it remains  
The same as can be read therein.

In this cloister we live, I tell thee  
Dressed all alike,  
Yet are we not bound down  
to the yoke of the Pope of Rome  
As in former times we were  
Enveloped with that ill treatment.

Together with our well cared for acres

We are surrounded by a green forest,  
A noble river quite clean  
Runs gently through our domain.  
Not far from us there exists A fine and farefamed City, Where we procure what  
we require At any time that we desire.

In this place we live, believe me,  
in the enjoyment of freedom.  
The neighbours generally, round about  
Don't know who ever we can be,  
Many poor people daily and for ever  
Knock at our door desiring relief  
which we then send amply relieved away again.  
Whoever is troubled with disease  
and those whom evil fevers plague,  
All seek their refuge with us  
Those are helped quickly and at once

Wherefore the whole neighbourhood  
Is affected with loving kindness to us  
Loves and honours us, wishes us all good things  
And if a service can be rendered us  
it is done with joyous heart and willingly.

What more then can we now desire  
There is no man who intends or dares  
to hurt us in our bodies or goods;  
What more should we therefore desire  
That we would like better.

I nearly had told the place  
Where our order is concealed,  
But to tell that name now  
I have serious objections to.

In order that we have knowledge  
And news of all things in the order

So that everything shall be free  
And unconcealed from any of us,  
We travel through all lands  
Unknown, now here, now there.

This is now my third voyage  
Which I have completed with zeal,  
Therefore have I rested a day finally in Hagenau.  
Because the rain without ceasing  
Has delayed me and the weather is wet  
Which has prevented me as aforesaid  
So that I could not get away.

Scarcely shall I complete within the space of a year  
my voyage which is prescribed to me,  
And how many countries and people do remain  
Which I have to visit yet  
In a little time and without vexation.

In the meantime it is not forgotten  
And is often done by me  
That I salute the order secretly  
By means of letters  
And communicate to them truthfully  
Many secret things frequently  
What I discover on my travels,  
That they know very soon.

And although we travel out and home  
Through foreign lands generally  
There is no host ever lived on earth  
Who received vexation and trouble  
One single time through us.  
We treat them well  
Pay for meat and meal and lodgings  
and what in such a case is fair and customary,  
Give them addition rich gifts;

Wherefore as good friends  
We never are a burden to anybody.

The elder brethren of this order  
Have come to this agreement  
That the younger brethren henceforward  
Shall allow themselves to be used for this purpose  
But that their knapsacks are filled  
With rich and ample provender,  
Until they have in proper manner  
Deserved for troubles suffered and true diligence  
Their rest in the future.  
And have deservedly earned  
That for the rest of their lives  
They may live in peace without troubles.

We are anxiously desirous  
To study much more  
And daily to know much more  
Is our desire, wish and object  
If we find anything that is good anywhere  
Then we do it from that time  
Note it, and make note of it.

Therefore nothing can happen  
In Germany at any time  
But we see it at once with our eyes.  
If any new books come out  
The Bookguide brings it to us at once,  
who is properly met for reward appointed to this office  
We treat honourably  
Manyfold Arts diligently  
With science, knowledge, art and handycraft  
We spend the rest of our time.

So that we may never be idle  
And stand in anybody's light

We exercise ourselves at all times  
In the foreign languages of many lands.  
In Polish, Welsh, Spanish  
We all know how to talk  
In Italian and free Gallic  
And also in others whatsoever they may be (we can converse)  
There is no language throughout all lands  
Unknown to our Order.

Nature is assiduously examined  
Experience is highly valued  
What anyone in the fraternity  
Has newly, through his brain power,  
Discovered and studied  
He submits quickly to the Fratres  
Who examine these matters at once  
And amply weigh and value them.

We have in these times many things  
Which were invented by the Ancients  
Which we admit and experiment with  
And readily allow them to pass  
Which if rightly looked at  
Are hardly to be comprehended by human mind.  
At times also the inclination takes hold of me,  
When I can hardly help being idle,  
Idleness being a bad councillor  
So that I write Poetry,  
And in this enjoyment kill my time.,

Amongst us we maintain certainly  
The due regulations without murmuring  
Our spirits inward and outwardly learn  
In peace and flame of love,  
One mind, one soul, one sense, one heart,  
One will, one opinion, one pain  
Are dwelling in us,

Unity is our delight and most beautiful ornament.

Nobody knows anything but that forthwith  
The others know equally well  
Just as nobody owns anything particularly himself  
It is one heart, one sense, one council.

Our worthy overseer  
Then calls us together  
At certain hours and orders freely  
One after the other regularly  
To refer in *Mediem* (to practically try)  
What he has learnt in studying.  
As soon as that happens  
We do not all omit  
To consider the matter  
Now to argue *pro et contra*  
And what then is found correct  
Is entered at once into the Protocol (*Minute Book*)  
What is found false, as false is rejected.

Thus do we always proceed  
There everybody begins to tell  
What he in all his days  
Has heard, read, meditated  
All is truly referred.  
Then for love of our posterity  
All this is immediately also  
Entered with care into a Book.

What then pleases the Order  
The president (*praesul*) when it suits  
Knows how to use place, measure and time  
And sets a task now one or another  
That he do something and experiment (*laborier*)  
According as his known information (according to his ability)  
And qualification for the art



Whom the Brethren altogether  
Counsel in many ways  
By (word of) mouth, with (helping) hand and good counsel  
With assistance, science, and actual help (physical assistance)  
A library there stands  
With many thousand beautiful books.

No single trouble sorrowfull  
Is to be thought of in this world  
Which in the least could  
Trouble us anymore, nothing can be found  
That we should go short of here on earth  
God has given us plentifully  
With abundance what we lack  
No shortcomings are to be felt.  
On little do we live  
Well satisfied with some thing.  
Our bodies we cure  
According to nature properly.  
Therefore our health is good indeed  
And we live many a long year,  
Which creeps softly along like a tender rivulet  
Runs equally away on its course.

If it is required and necessity demands  
That we require money or goods  
For honours sake or necessity requires  
Then it is splendidly everywhere  
No dearth of Riches is here  
Of Power, pomp or reasonable adornment  
God give that every fellow  
Who hankers after temporary riches  
Knew thus to arrange matters  
in this world without guile or trick  
to do likewise when much honour  
would ensue to the fear of God  
And vice and shame would not

be so plentiful in our fatherland.

God be praised,  
innocently we have to be blamed by evil tongues about many things  
by false hearts who charge us  
With things which never came into our minds.

What we began for the sake of the truth,  
That is explained in evil  
Therefore what we are charged with in evil  
We do not repay in evil  
But suffer patiently  
In our heart and peacefully

He who accuses us of magic lately and without fear,  
and quite openly incriminated us  
and branded us with disgrace,  
That very pious man  
Does not himself know with whom he has to do.  
Truly he is in error absolutely  
And knows nothing at all about us.

But this I don't at all deny  
But grant it readily with all my heart  
That we naturally in many things  
Bring many a miracle into effect  
About which many an ignorant man  
May easily give many a thought  
As in chemistry many indeed proceed  
Without measure or object  
No day ever elapses  
Which does not see something in his fire (in his crucible)  
If he thinks that all this is done  
And not without the Devil's help,  
O God he is deceived  
And is in eternal error.  
For it is our care always that we together in common

promulgate the honour of God  
Throughout the world in every place  
Serve God purely with hand and mouth  
Out of pureness of soul from the bottom of our hearts  
Full of the fear of God is our life  
Whom we to honour it is our duty  
To our neighbour our services are  
Openly ready now and evermore  
What more do you want dear Christian (brother)

Know that our College is an academy  
full of learning of God's word,  
what more do you want  
The time will yet arrive  
That it shall be hidden from no one  
In all this world what the power of God  
Has conceived by means of an order  
Amongst all people in every land.

The value of our order is recognised  
Be it about high and weighty matters  
Which will call many to wonder greatly  
Whereof the stiffnecked world  
Shall be horror struck—as often declared,  
Out of our work it can be seen  
What benefit we have intended.

We are not lazy bellies  
Who are only trained to eat and drink  
We are no useless world plague  
Who lay themselves out for idleness  
But all our leisure is full of labour here and there  
Which labour serves to benefit  
The common weal for all his good  
And serves to your praise  
Lord Jesus Christ my saviour.

True it is and I cannot deny  
That many a false book is in print  
As if our society had published the same  
Which never came from us  
Nor would we dare to issue it.

A pious honest good man  
Can soon distinguish about these  
Who rightly considers our Reputation (Famam)  
And carefully bears in mind its sense

To say nothing about many an impudent clown  
Calls himself our Brother  
Whereas the unfortunate fool  
Widely differs from our Society

Such a deceiver a short while ago  
Has been found out at Nuremberg  
Who, amongst the common people  
Disseminated very many lies  
Until by reason of the truth  
he was in a very few hours convicted  
That he was a scoundrel and annant thief  
Who did nothing but brought misery on land and people  
Therefore on the gallows as he deserved  
His body became the food for the rooks.

In Augsburg also in the same way  
A landlouper was found out in flagrenti delictu  
And his back well paid for this  
And the broom on his back he carried  
Out of the town as a reward  
And both his ears were cut off the head  
Of the wicked clown as a reward.

It serves them right all these fellows  
Who want to brag about the joint of meat

Who have not tasted the Broth  
Such pay is proper for such tricks.

Here it is well also to bear in mind,  
Unfairly we are often thought of,  
That we do not make ourselves known  
And call ourselves after our first father,  
But his name clearly do not discover publicly,  
Indeed those altogether do us an injustice in this case  
Who say freely and without concealment  
That our name be only a dream.

You godless bumblebees do not err  
Your hive troubles us little  
Leave our Beehive undisturbed  
If you cannot please yourselves otherwise  
For your iniquity will be brought to light  
By us in a very short time

Therefore do not lightly believe  
What lyingly is painted to you  
Without you like to be made a fool of  
And deceived by false appearances  
And tell me this without wicked guile  
That in our days the world throughout  
Is dressed in the feathers of Lady Fraud  
Deceit, falsehood and wicked tricks reign now  
and every instant we find many Landwindlers.

Everybody pretends to know about us  
And lies and swindles without measure or number  
And all is ever invention alone

People hunt us very assiduously  
And many a question arises about it.  
The Jesuitical wicked crowd  
Invent many a hundred secret things

That they may soon and above all  
Require to know of a surety  
Where we might dwell  
Day and night they enquire about us.

In order to avoid their jaws  
And look well after our affairs  
And that our order does not become the prey  
Of these unmannerly wolves  
We have always to be careful  
And not make ourselves too public.

O holy and powerful God  
Save us from this wicked lot  
Cast down their godless impudence  
Keep our order in your protection  
If so be that you are pleased at this time with all our works,  
Turn away, turn away all our enemies  
Who have become wickedly wrath  
That they in no wise on us may  
Satisfy their great hatred

Protect the pious, Lord Jesus Christ  
Who art the refuge of us all  
For it is our wish all together  
To be known publicly  
To the world and the globe of the earth  
As God the best of witnesses knows

Oh that this in a short while may happen,  
How great would be our delight  
But if without end or finish  
Yet many obstacles be found  
We think the best counsel to be  
To keep as we are for a little while longer  
But in such a way that meanwhile  
We certainly make many more friends



Therefore we appeal to many a learned man in our writings  
With letters and by our own hands  
Although our names are not known,  
That is known to many a philosopher  
Many a chemist, many a Doctor  
Many a Reverend, many a worthy man  
Knows the sound of our trumpet.

Were I to let you know all  
And mention their names  
O Eternal God, what a book  
would this indeed become  
Go now and doubt more  
Whether in untruth and dishonour  
Our free Brotherhood  
Really be in the nature of things

You must not make silly remarks  
The work itself will convince you  
What this noble brotherhood has  
Of might, of vitality, of power

But - where have I finally got to?  
I have almost gone too far  
Therefore that I do not not go beyond  
My object or say too much  
Or more than is permitted to me  
I will finish for this time  
And lay away my pen

Go be with you, and fare thee well

And now I beg kind permission  
What I have communicated to you this time  
If you do that and we get knowledge of you  
You will soon receive more.

B.M.I. of the Fratres R.C. the least

He wrote this during his third journey at Hagenau

in which place he lay several days quietly, stopped by the rain.

Done the 22 September Anno 1616.