

**The Symbolic  
Meanings of  
the Runes**

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This is the traditional interpretation of the runes, to which are added some suggestions presented by Sigurd Agrell, a Swedish runologist who produced his major works on runes in the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s. I have here put the runes in the successive order which has been suggested by him. The sole difference between his rune order and the generally established version of the succession of the runes is that the rune order should begin with the rune ᚱ, Uruz, instead of the rune ƿ, Fehu. According to his theory, this must be done to enable the secret code of the runes to be properly interpreted, and the F-rune should be placed last in the runic alphabet, although every find of the full series of runes known to this day has presented the runes in the order where the F-rune is placed first. He supported his theory upon the fact that he discovered stunning parallels between the traditional symbolism of the runes and the belief in the magical significances of different numbers prevailing in the later history of the ancient cultures in the Mediterranean region and the Middle East, and he argued that the magical significations of the runes were inspired by the Mithras Religion, which was quite popular in the ranks of the soldiers of the Roman Empire, among whom also Germanic mercenaries could be found in the latter part of the Roman era. It may be mentioned that, according to what I have recently heard, this theory is presently considered to be quite interesting among scholars and runologists in Sweden as well as in Norway.

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**1. The Rune of the Origins. Uruz.**

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The rune of the Origins represents the Aurochs, but it also represents the primordial cow Audhumbla, she who in the obscure beginning of Creation came from nowhere and licked upon a piece of rocks and ice, and thereby liberated Bure, the ancestor of the Æsir that killed the giant Ymer and created the world from his body parts. The rune represents the beginning, the origin of creation, but also the savage and untamed power of the bull, and of the cow. Compare this rune with Feoh, which is the last rune if you accept the idea presented by Sigurd Agrell.

The F-rune represents cattle, the domesticated livestock, in Latin *pecus*, a word which later generated the Latin word *pecunia*, 'livestock', amount of cattle', i.e. wealth, a word which is the origin of the Swedish word for money: *pengar*. Uruz, the first rune, represents the primordial life force, the creative power, the origin of Life, and Feoh, the last rune, represents this power in its domesticated aspect, available to the civilized human being. No wonder the cow is still sacred in India. The Norse Way is an offspring of the same root as Hinduism, since it is the Nordic version of the same ancient Indo-European religion.

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## 2. The Thurs Rune. *Thurisaz*.



The Jótunn Rune, or Thurisaz, symbolizes Ymer and the entire Jótunn (*Giant*) kin. *Jótunn* is an old Norse word for a giant, or rather, an ogre. Another name still for the same kind of being is *Thurs*.

In many Indo-European traditions the number *two* represents the demoniacal qualities. The Thurs power is a destructive, chaotic power. It is not an evil power, but it is the destructive, subversive energy, which is at work side by side with the creative one. Sometimes the Thurs power is necessary for breaking down things which are harmful, in order to prepare for rebirth through destruction and death. The Thurs power is the wild and savage natural force which was necessary in order for Cosmos to be created, but which would be disastrous if it were allowed to crash into and unrestrainedly rampage around within our ordered world.

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## 3. The Rune of the Æsir. *Ass*.



Ass represents the Æsir gods and the sacredness of the number *three*. The Æsir are the gods of Heaven and of the Law. It has been stated that the concept of Ass represents the Spark of Life, and this could possibly be interpreted as follows: The Æsir gods came, according to the myths, as the second generation of beings after the giants, and in slaying giants, they acquire the raw and savage power of Jotunheim, the world of giants, but in doing so, they refine the same power, and transform it into a more sublime form, bringing it into a more refined level of existence in order to allow the fine life-web of Midgard to develop by it without any dramatic or chaotic disturbance. This thought could be supported by the mythological information available to us, which states that several of the Æsir have giants as parents. So has Tyr, and so has Oden. The Æsir define the conditions of our world; they represent Law and Order. They are Midgard's protection against the chaotic world of the giants, also called Utgard.

This rune can be regarded as the first rune of Tyr in the rune order.

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## 4. The Chariot Rune. *Raido*.



The Chariot Rune is Thor's rune and represents the journey, communication, and it also stands for the illuminating lightning that means death to the giants. It represents order and the four corners of the world and the four elements. *Raido* is the same word as the Old English *rad*, which later, in a similarity to, or maybe even in association with the Scots accent, turned into *raid*, a word also used in the Swedish language with the same meaning and spelling nowadays.

So *Raido* is a journey, direction, movement. According to information in the Old Icelandic literature it was a religious deed to bring into movement a chariot or wagon with the idol of Thor as passenger. Thor was also called Aki-Þórr, 'Riding-Thor', 'Thor Who Rides/Drives a Chariot'; but sometimes four wheels are indicated, and this shows us that *Raido*, being the fourth rune, not only represents Thor, the Protector of the four corners of the world, but at the same time it has an association with Thor's vehicle, at times considered to have at least four wheels, consequently a wagon. In the Flatey Book version of the saga of Olaf Tryggveson there is a narrative of a temple consecrated to Thor, inside which he is riding a wagon or chariot, the idol

equipped with wheels under both the wagon/chariot and the he-goats pulling it. This vouches for the fact that the idol must have had at least more than two wheels, probably four or more. It might also be possible to associate certain Bronze Age rock carvings displaying a sort of vehicle dragged by two animals, to the concept of Thor, or some similar mythical hero, riding a wagon. Around the vehicle four wheels are often presented, and by it a figure is standing, raising an axe or something similar. Furthermore, one of the traditional shapes of bread which occur at Christmas in Sweden is called the four-wheeler, and there are even associations with the sun wagon here.

However, it is clear that Thor and the four corners of the world seem to be closely related to each other.

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## 5. The Fire Rune. *Ken*.



The Fire Rune represents the spritual creative energy, the life-giving warmth. It symbolizes a person holding a torch in each hand: one pointing upwards, one pointing downwards. Thus it represents the guardianship of the Fire God: the house-fire as representing the shield against the Utgard powers, and at the same time the spark of life coming from the Æsir. In the ancient Persian religion the name of the Fire God was Zervan, by someone at some point called 'The Five-God'. The number 5 has symbolized the Sky God since ancient times, and we have here the second rune symbolizing the ancient God of Heaven: Tyr, who was called Zeus among the ancient Greeks (although one can see that Zeus also has features ascribed to Thor, such as his hurling lightning against his foes). Ken is a powerful rune of protection. Tyr and Thor have something very profound in common, something which is well hidden and barely visible far back in the distant past. There is much that indicates that Thor originally was an aspect of Tyr.

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## 6. The Gift Rune. *Gebo*.



Gebo, or *Gifu*, as it also might be called, (compare with the word *gift*), is a rune for harmony and balance. It indicates the six directions: the four corners of the world and upwards and downwards, and it represents the gifts of the Gods given to you. But at the same time it stands for your gifts to the Gods. Gebo is a gift rune, but it is also a rune of sacrifices. As you are sacrificing, you are standing in the midst of Midgard, at the centre of the cross depicted by the rune, at the centre of the world, and it is in Midgard the meeting point of all the worlds is created. May Balance rule there, because then everything is *lagom*, a Swedish word which may be hard to translate, but it roughly means balance: not too much; not too little: everything gets its fair share. Then there is balance between the worlds, and then the mutual giving of good gifts can flow freely.

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## 7. The Rune of Joy. *Wunjo*.



The name Wunjo is the same word as the Anglo-Saxon word *Wyn*, which means 'joy'. Wunjo is the divine joy and sense of well-being, the sacred power and love that comes from cosmic balance and which, in doing so, permeates the Universe. The numerological value of the rune represents the number three, which signifies the

Æsir, combined with the number representing the four corners of the world: the rune symbolizes the good power of both worlds together. Here the force of the Vanir, the fertility gods, begins to emerge. Wunjo is a rune of friendship and luck.

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## 8. The Hail Rune. *Hagal*.

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The rune of Hail is mainly associated with the Ass god Heimdall, the sky god who stands sentry by the bridge called Bifrost, in order to keep all the chaos entities of Utgard from coming across to the ordered world. The day when this happens will be the day of Ragnarok. On that day, as they are coming across the bridge, Heimdall will blow the Gjallar Horn.

Yet there is another significance. Originally, the word 'hail' has probably meant 'crystal stone'. In the old days it was believed (*referring to the Roman author Plinius the Older and old Indian and Persian sources*) that quartz crystals were petrified ice that had fallen from the sky. In the Mithras teachings from the late Ancient Period the fixed stars were the eighth sphere of the universe. The Hail Rune is the eighth rune, if you are willing to accept the UTHARK runic order. In traditional mythology this rune represents the firmament, consisting of crystal.

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## 9. The Rune of Need. *Nauðiz*.

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Nauðiz, or Nauð, Need or Necessity, is the rune of the nine worlds. It comes as the ninth rune in the UTHARK runic order. It is one of the most powerful runes, and it is often used as a rune for bestowing special powers upon magical charms. It represents need, necessity, and this is not strange if one assumes that it imposes its magical influence on all the nine worlds which our ancestors believed in. Nauðiz is Necessity, difficulties which are necessary, and it represents the web of Destiny which are intervening in our lives. Thus, the rune is also related to the Norns, the goddesses of Destiny, and their web, which goes through all the nine worlds. Already the Sumerian culture considered the number 9 as 'the number of perfection', or completion, and it is possible to find innumerable examples throughout the history of magic in the Middle East and Europe showing that the number 9 has been used when somebody has wanted to find a specially powerful magical way to make a wish come true.

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## 10. The Ice Rune. *Iss*.

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The Ice Rune represents stagnation, freeze, winter and ice. Since it stands for frozen water, it represents stagnation of energies. For this reason the rune is a binding rune, which has been used, among other things, to seal a magical charm, or to bind evil runes or magicians, in order to prevent them from exerting their harmful powers.

In the old rune magic, the rune has probably been related to Hel, the empress of the Realm of Death bearing the same name as herself, the realm where the dead are kept, bound in the frozen shackles of death.

In this life, the rune may represent coldness between people, emotional stiffness and armouring of human feelings. The Ice Rune can represent lack of flexibility and indicate that you are having a disability for letting go of things, letting them escape,

and that you are incapable of opening up for new impressions, issues or features. The rune may indicate a stagnation in the development of somebody or something, but it can also indicate that this person or issue might need to withdraw into a period of rest, seclusion from the world, to be able to face and see himself, herself or itself. Soon enough the time of thaw will come, springtime will return, and the ice will melt, and then the energies will be able to flow freely again.

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## 11. The Rune of the Year and the Annual Harvest. *Jara*.



The original significance of this rune is associated with 'The Good Year', the year's crops, the annual harvest. Because of this, Jara is a predominant rune of the fertility gods, the Vanir, both the male Vanir and the female ones, and therefore also an important rune for both male and female sexuality. The rune represents the cycle of the seasons, the marriage between Freyr and Freya. Jara is mainly associated with the harvest and the fruits of the year. It may imply that you will be able to harvest the fruits of your work, that you will reach the goal of your labour. Jara shows us that we are filled with the fertility powers of Freyr and Freya. But the rune also represents the year in the sense of a cycle which must be completed before the harvest can be reaped, and it may therefore indicate that we might need patience, and that we should not try to hasten a process which may need a certain amount of time to be properly completed.

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## 12 or 13. The Yew Tree Rune. *Eihwaz*.



In the late pagan period, the Yew Tree Rune is the rune of the Ass god Ullr. Basically it probably represents the World Tree, provided that you are ready to accept the parallel images of the World Tree as a yew tree and as an ash tree respectively. The tree is usually known as 'Yggdrasil', an Odinit name meaning 'the beast of burden for the Terrible One'. 'The Terrible One' refers to Odin, and he abused the tree for his own purposes, by hanging himself in it, in order to gain personal power and life force from all the nine worlds. A more respectful name of the World Tree is also presented in the Edda poems, and that is 'Læraðr', a name meaning 'The Provider of Shelter', implying the fact that the World Tree provides shelter and nourishment to all beings in all the nine worlds. The practise of *seiðr* (a form of what is commonly known as shamanism) was associated with the worship of Odin, and the poem *Völuspá*, the same document which introduces the name Yggdrasil for the World Tree, states that the 'Völva', the *seiðr* woman whose voice we hear in the poem, remembers nine worlds, *nú íviði*. *Ívið* means yew tree. Now, we know by the myth, that Ullr lives in *Ídalar*, The Yew Valleys, where he goes by ski and shoots with a bow and arrow. A really good bow in the Viking Age was made of yew. The assumption that Ullr could be associated with Læraðr can also be supported by comparing the Norse mythology with the related Ancient Greek mythology, where the name of the superior god is Zeus, actually the same name as the Norse *Tyr*. One of Zeus's brothers bears the name Apollon. Apollon is a Sun God, who among other things is a skilful archer. If, then, we look upon the god Ullr, we find that his name, 'Ullr', has been interpreted as 'The Shining One'.

If you study place names in Sweden, Norway and Denmark, you will find a predominance of Ullr-names in Sweden and Norway, whereas there is a predominance of Tyr-names in Denmark. Some scholars have assumed that *Ullr* is

an ancient Swedish and Norwegian name for the god who was frequently called *Tyr* in Denmark. In addition to that, an important attribute for Ullr is the bow.

Quite naturally, the World Tree and the superior God of the Sky have something very profound in common. And, as we see from what has just been stated here, it should be quite possible to regard Ullr as an aspect of the same superior god.

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### **13 or 12. The Rock Rune. *Pertra*.**



The Rock Rune is the rune of earth and minerals. Originally, it probably represented one of the principal deities of the Mithras cult, which had been inspired by Persian myths, and which found many worshippers among Roman soldiers. Mithras was born coming out of the rock, (*petra*) or the stone, and it is remarkable when reading the myth to notice how many features are parallel with, or in some cases even identical to, the features in the Christian legends which are relating the story of the birth of Jesus: the same star in the sky betokens their birth, and three *magoi*, i.e. priests in the the late Zoroastrian Era, heed its call. The Mithras cult was powerful in the late Roman Era, but eventually Christianity gained an advantage over the Mithras cult, maybe a great deal due to the fact that also women were embraced by Christianity. The Mithras cult was a pronounced warrior cult which only concerned men, and which predominantly found its worshippers in the ranks of the Roman legions, where, in the late period, many soldiers of Germanic origin could be found.

It can be noticed that both Eihwaz and Pertra are runes which are placed in the centre of the runic alphabetical order, and also this fact indicates that the two runes are to be regarded with a certain amount of respect. And if both of them represent a principal god, or aspects of this god, then we may become able to understand why it seems to be possible to let the two runes change places with each other in the runic order. Both variants of the FUTHARK runic order have been archaeologically proved: examples are The Kylver stone from Gotland and the Vadstena bracteate.

If we also observe that the Mithras worshippers in the Roman army camps paid tribute to an idol that bore the Latin name *Petra Genetrix*, 'The Conceiving Stone', we will find it possible to regard the divinity represented by the rune as female, namely she who gave birth to Mithras, and then we will discover, right here in the middle of the rune alphabet, an aspect of the Supreme Divine Couple: the sky god Tyr/Ull and the Earth Goddess of the Southern Germanic Tribes: Berchta, also called Perta.

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### **14. The Twin Rune. *Algiz*.**



The fourteenth rune represents a linguistic sound which we no longer use. It is an r-sound which is being pronounced by putting the tip of the tongue against the alveolar ridge or the palate, and the sound was once used in the end of some words. The rune bears the name *Eolh-secg* in the Anglo-Saxon Rune Poem, and the first part of the name is considered to mean 'elk'. Sigurd Agrell claims that the rune is concerned with the twin gods, by the ancient Greeks called Castor and Polydeukes, by the Romans called Castor and Pollux, who - side by side - are constantly committed to competition against each other. It has also been stated that the Germanic peoples called a certain constellation in the sky "The Elk", and that it was associated with the Germanic analogue to those gods. Who these Germanic gods are is unclear, but in several ancient Indo-European cultures they have been worshipped

and given the name 'The Wooers of the Sun's Daughter'. One can observe that after this rune, the Rune of the Sun follows.

In any case, this rune is a rune of protection, which has frequently been in use in protective magic, it is a shield against black magic, a protective instrument which works in a way similar to the antlers of the elk, which serve as the keepers of an open space around its head.

Considering the runes that follow this rune, one can easily put into mind the fact that the following stanza can be read in the albeit rather Christian 'Song of the Sun' (Sólarljóð). Predominantly influenced by Christianity as it may be, it still contains a great number of Pagan elements:

Sólar Hjört	The hart of the Sun
leit ek sunnan fara,	I found travelling from the south,
hann teymdu tveir saman;	him two together were bridling
fœtr hans	his feet
stóðu foldu á,	were standing on the earth,
en tóku horn til himins.	and his antlers were reaching into the sky.

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### 15. The Rune of the Sun. *Sol*.

The *Sol* rune is of course the rune of the summer and the sun, it represents the life-giving, good powers of the sun. In all it represents beneficent energies, but the sun also has a translucent power, which exposes that which is dark and obscure.

This is the fifteenth rune. In the ancient Persian religion the fifteenth day of the month was consecrated to the benevolent god of Light, Ahura Mazda. In Babylon the fifteenth day of the month was consecrated to the king, and he was regarded by the ancient Persians as 'the brother of the sun and the moon'.

Also, in the ancient Norse magical tradition the number 15 has been connected to the sun. One only needs to consider Havamal, stanza 160:

Það kann eg ið fimmtánda,	This I know as the fifteenth thing,
er gól Þjóðrerir	which the dwarf Tjodröre
dvergur fyr Dellings durum:	sang before the door of Delling;
afl gól hann ásum,	power he sang to the Æsir,
en álfum frama,	success to the elves,
hyggju Hroftatý.	a clear mind to Hroftatyr.

It can be added that "The door of Delling" has frequently been interpreted as referring to the sunrise at dawn.

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### 16. The rune of Tyr. *Tyr*.

This is the rune of the sky god himself, Tyr, and it is therefore the rune of the spiritual warrior, the warrior who fearlessly encounters dangers, who joyfully plunges into challenging situations, and who dares to encounter and vanquish his own points of darkness. The Tyr rune also represents the male energy of the sky, which is the counterpoint of Mother Earth. It represents the Supreme Law and Divine Order. Tyr was invoked as being the protector of the 'Thing', the assembly where juridical matters were settled.



The rune depicts a spearhead, and this fact shows us that the spear originally was the symbol of Tyr, not of Odin. The worshippers of the one-eyed god must have copied and perverted this mythological context by introducing the Odinic spear Gungnir as the foremost weapon of Odin, making it one of his predominant attributes.

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### **17. The Rune of the Birch Tree. *Bjarka*.**



The Birch Rune, just like the birch tree itself, is consecrated to the goddess Frigg, the spouse of the Sky God and the protector of the deliverance or childbirth among the Germanic tribes. It represents earthly, female power.

The rune has also been conceived as being consecrated to Freya, and in that sense it represents the female Vanr power, female sexuality. These two statements seem to confuse things, but if you add the fact that the word Freya means housewife whereas the name Frigg represents something which rather means 'darling', you will begin to make out something which will serve to dispel the veils of mist. Both Freya and Frigg have an elaborate necklace as emblems, and both goddesses have connections to the emotional and biological aspects of Life. What we really are talking about here is the Mother Goddess, simply manifested in her Vanr aspect on one hand, and in her Ass aspect on the other.

There remains in any case the fact that the rune represents the female power, in terms of fertility power and as a generative power, as well as the female aspect and energy in the universe; the spouse of the Sky God. Snorre writes that Frigg is Odin's wife, but if we once again consider ancient Greek parallels, we will see that Hera, the Greek goddess who is the nearest equivalent to Frigg, is neither the wife of Ares nor Hermes, both possessing features closely answering to the character of Odin, but she is the wife of Zeus, the Greek version of the god Tyr.

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### **18. The Horse Rune. *Ehwaz*.**



The Horse Rune represents the magical horse which carries someone on the journey to the other worlds, just like Hermod rode Oden's horse Sleipner to Hel's realm, in the purpose of persuading Hel to let Balder return to the realms of the living. In this context this rune is the predominant rune of Oden. Oden was called Wotan among the southern Germanic tribes, and the word roughly means 'the raging one' (compare with German 'wütend' = furious).

In the Sami (Lapp) culture of northern Scandinavia there is a death god, Rota, who comes riding on his horse to fetch a dying person to the realm of the dead.

In his book on mystery religions in the late cultures of the classical antiquity and their relation to rune magic (*Senantik mysteriereligion och nordisk runmagi*), Sigurd Agrell tells us that during the excavations of the ancient town Pergamon, situated on the Turkish coast, there was found, amongst a multitude of other artifacts, an apparatus intended for divination, probably from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D. It consists of a tripod table made of bronze. From the centre of the table top a pillar stands upright, probably intended to serve as a stand for a shallow bronze basin, which was found next to the table, and which must have been part of the device. On the surface of its convex side, which must have been its upper side, 24 (!) squares have been engraved, each one containing a magical symbol. It is believed that this divination device has been used together with a pendulum in the shape of a magical ring hanging from a

string of some kind, and the users of the apparatus have interpreted the oracle by the squares that the pendulum indicated. These squares and their symbols have, according to Sigurd Agrell, a practically complete accordance to the symbolic meanings of the runes – in the runic sequence, actually the Uthark sequence!

Consequently, one finds in the eighteenth field a well confirmed sign for Hades, and Hades is the Greek counterpart to the Norse deity Hel. It becomes clear that Oden, a journey on the back of a horse to the realm of the dead, and Hel, are closely related.

The number 18 also appears on several locations in the old Germanic text material with reference to Oden. In the eighteenth stanza in the last part of Havamal, traditionally called the *Ljóðatal*, Oden, or the poet, assuming the character of Oden, refers to his own private secret:

163. Það kann eg hið átjándá,  
er eg æva kennig  
mey né manns konu,  
— allt er betra,  
er einn um kann;  
það fylgir ljóða lokum, —  
nema þeirri einni,  
er mig armi ver  
eða mín systir sé.

163. This I know as the eighteenth thing,  
which I will never reveal  
to any maiden or any man's woman,  
— everything is better,  
that only one knows;  
this follows the end of the song —  
except to the only one  
who opens her arms to me,  
or to my sister.

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## 19. The Rune of Man. *Madr* or *Mannaz*.



This is the rune of mankind and of men. Its name means 'man', and the rune represents a well-balanced and integrated human being.

During the latter part of the classical era, the number 19 represented man, who was considered to be a miniature representation of the cosmos. According to ancient Babylonian conceptions the body of man corresponded to the 12 signs of the Zodiac, whereas his soul was ruled by the 7 planets. 12 + 7 makes 19. The rune represents self-knowledge and balance.

In the Norse mythology we find an indication of the connection between the Mannaz rune and the number 19 in a narrative about Gångerolf, in which he is lost in the woods while hunting. Out there, he meets a female troll, who asks him to come with her to help her daughter. By then, the daughter has been in labour pains for *nineteen* days, and can only be delivered if helped by a *human being*.

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## 20. The Water Rune. *Laguz*.



Here is yet another rune connected with the Vanir deities. The Vanir gods and goddesses are deeply connected to water, since water brings life to everything. Njordr, for example, is the god of fishery and shipping, and the folklore entity called the water sprite, usually called "Näckén" in Swedish, although he is most likely not a Vanr deity, he is certainly acting with severe sexual undertones, which associates him directly with that field of responsibility for the Vanir deities. Should the water sprite have a reference to any Old Norse category of entities, he would then be associated with the elves in some respect, and the difference between elves and the

Vanir deities are sometimes in the old texts hard to distinguish. In other words, in part, they have domains in common.

This rune represents the life-giving water, and by this it also represents intuition, and simultaneously the energies of the moon, which is so tightly connected to the water of the earth by its influence upon the tide.

After fire, water was the element which was considered the most sacred one in the ancient Persian religion.

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## **21. The Ing Rune. *Inguz.***

The Ing Rune, representing the -ng- sound, has to do with the power of the Vanr god Freyr. Ing is another name of Freyr. He is the most well-known Norse god of fertility alongside with his sister Freya. Freyr represents male fertility, but also the power of grains of seed in their aspect of the crops, growing in the fields.

The male energy is characterized by creative power, by the directing of life energy, and the active, initiating principle of the universe.

The Ynglinga dynasty claims its origin from Freyr, and here we can see the link between the names Ing/Yngve and Freyr.

In Ingelstad, south of Växjö in the Swedish landscape Småland there is a grave mound with an ornamented slightly flattened spherical grave stone on its top, next to a standing stone. This monument of antiquity is called The Inglinge Grave Mound and Ball. In the centre of the ornamentation, on the top of the ball, there is a symbol identical with the Ing Rune.

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## **22 or 23. The Rune of Home and Hearth. *Opila.***

The Othal/Othila rune symbolizes culture and cultivation, it represents your family, your home, your country, your relatives and your ancestors. This is one of the runes that went out of use when the Viking Age began, and the knowledge of it must have gradually disappeared among ordinary people. But if the rune had remained in use through the Viking era, it would probably have been called *Oðal*, a word which means 'heritage' and 'ancestral ground'. The Anglo-Saxons called the rune *Odal* or *Epel*.

In the version of the FUPARK order represented on the Vadstena bracteate this rune comes before the D rune, whereas these two runes appear on the Kylver Stone in the following order:  $\mathfrak{M}$   $\mathfrak{X}$ . The correct order of these runes is debated.

The rune may be regarded as a favourable rune, since it represents real estate, and thus it represents wealth and safe capital assets.


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## **23 or 22. The Rune of the Day. *Dagaz.***

Dagaz symbolizes the day, daylight, understanding and insight. The daylight exposes and transforms, it awakens and illuminates. The positive powers of this rune have sometimes been characterized as representing such a radically different change in direction from the path which had previously been followed, that it has been likened to a 180-degree turn from a bad road to a good one.

In the Avestan (ancient Persian) calendar, the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of the month was one of the four days that were consecrated to the great god of light, Ahura Mazda. The other three days were the 1<sup>st</sup>, the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup>. Most likely, the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of the month must have been revered in the same way by the Mithras devotees of Persian influence during late antiquity, the day consecrated to Caelus, a deity who is a merging of Persian Ahura Mazda and Jupiter, the Roman version of Zeus and Tyr. The word *caelum* means ‘heaven’ in Latin.

In Asia Minor there is a symbol of the double axe, a common emblem of the thunder god, which looks very much like the Dagaz rune: .

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## 24. The Rune of Livestock. *Feoh*.

As mentioned above, it is interesting to compare this rune with the first rune in the UPARK order, the *Uruz* rune.

The F-rune represents cattle, domesticated livestock, in Swedish ‘boskap’, ‘fä’, in Latin *pecunia*, ‘supply of cattle’, in other words ‘wealth’. And *wealth* is the crucial word here, wealth in the sense of personal property as opposed to the rune *Opila*, which, as mentioned above, represents real estate. *Feoh*, the last rune, represents the power of the savage aruochs, domesticated, available to mankind.

Simultaneously, this rune represents completion in the sense that, by its numerological value, 24, it represents all 24 runes, the full succession of the UPARK. It is the sum of the cosmology illustrated by the runes, wealth and assets guaranteed to be bestowed upon those human beings who live in the balance with everything around them and inside themselves which is the ideal state according to the Norse Way, and whose contemporary expression becomes clear through the Swedish word *lagom*, which translates as ‘the adequate amount, not too little, not too much’. The word is sometimes associated with drab mediocrity, but the Old Norse concept of equilibrium and balance in the cosmos carries an entirely different implication: *Ars og Friðr*; Wealth (actually good harvest) and Peace.

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