Fehu
Cattle, Wealth

Sound value: F
Old English: Feoh
Old German: Fehu
Old Scandinavian: Fe

First rune of first aett

Wealth, luck, responsibility, creative energy.

Same root word as 'fee'. Cattle were cult animals and used for barter. The primal cow was called Audhumla.

Overtones of 'princely treasure' with all the associations of ancient glory and personal honour.

Ownership of cattle, indeed any manifestation of wealth, demands that the owner should show responsibility.

Be open-handed and use wealth to benefit the living. Treasure in a barrow makes a fine lair for a dragon but it is giving, not hoarding, that gains respect on Earth and glory in Heaven.

Wealth brings wolves from the woods.

God: Njord; Polarity: feminine; Colour: fiery red; Elements: fire/earth

Wealth is a comfort to any man
Yet each person
Must share it out well
If he wants to win
A good name before his lord.
Positive strength. determination. perseverance. courage. physical health. assertiveness.

Meanings by association: manhood. vigour.

In German and Dutch. ur means 'primal' or 'ancient'.

Horns used for much-prized drinking vessels.

Strength is a great asset, but it must be tempered with wisdom and cunning.

Uruz is the will to live. the primal impulse to be and to become.

Uruz is associated with growth and, through conflict and challenge, the overcoming of obstacles, the force to assert oneself and to assert one's right to one's own space.

Healing rune.

God: Thor Polarity: masculine Colour: red Elements: earth
THORN
The God Thor, Thorn

Sound value: þ
Old English: thorn
Old German: thurisaz
Old Scandinavian: thurs

Third rune of first aett

Originally the rune name was purisaz, a very ancient name for Thor (appearing alongside Wodenaz and Teiwaz). Thurisaz also means a kind of large malevolent being often translated as 'giant' although perhaps 'demon' or 'wizard' are closer to the original idea. The rune name was changed to 'thorn'.

Evil does harm to those who practice it.

Used for harmful magic - but is double-sided so can backfire easily.

A ring of Thurisaz runes drawn around a circle - a ring of thorns - will keep out anything or anybody undesirable.

Thurisaz/thorn represents the forces of chaos.

God: Thor
Polarity: masculine
Colour: red
Elements: fire
OS

Mouth

Sound value: A
Old English: Os
Old German: Ansz
Old Scandinavian: Ass

Fourth rune of first aett

Originally the rune name was ansuz, one of the Aesir, perhaps a nickname for Woden. The homonym os may be a punning reference to Woden.

Ansz represents order, consciousness, intelligence, communication and reason.

The chanting of runes and magical use of sound to expand one’s consciousness.

Os/ansauz is an unfettering rune.

Mouth is the origin of all language
Wisdom’s foundation and wise man’s comfort
and to every hero blessing and hope.

God: Woden
Polarity: masculine
Colour: indigo
Elements: air
RAD

Riding

Sound value: R
Old English: Rad
Old German: Raido
Old Scandinavian: Reid

Fifth rune of first aett

The act of riding and the 'road', wherever one chooses to ride.

**Rad** is cognate with words for 'counsel' and 'advice'. Raido is linked to leadership and nobility.

Before you take to the road give thought to the hardships, as well as the rewards, that await you. Anticipation should be the first step on a long journey.

Raido lends the ability to control and take initiatives.

Raido rune may be used as journey charm, or to speed to death on the road to Hel. Esoterically, Raido can be used for shamanic travel to the underworld.

The working force of Raido means to be in charge of your own path in life: to keep your own counsel; to ride, not be ridden: as far as possible to be master of your own circumstances.

God: Thor
Polarity: masculine
Colour: red
Elements: air
The word *cen* is cognate with English dialect *ken*, 'to know' and with Dutch *kunst*, 'craft' - to which English 'cunning' corresponds. *Cen* also links to 'kin' and *cyning*, 'kin' or 'royal folk' (and all kings were descendents of Woden).

Torch is the beacon around which those of common purpose can gather together. Wisdom and hope are the flames of the torch of leadership.

Courage makes *kenaz* burn more brightly.

*Kenaz* represents the light within: confidence in the knowledge that one is descended from the gods; and the responsibility to hand over the torch to the next generation, or else to share its light by teaching.

God: Freya
Heimdall

Polarity: feminine

Colour: red/orange

Elements: fire
Gyfu

Gift

Sound value: Y or G

Old English: Gyfu
Old German: Gebo
Old Scandinavian: none

Seventh rune of first aett

Getho is the 'act of giving' as well as the thine given.

Gift-giving was central to Germanic culture, creating bonds of mutual loyalty and obligation through society.

A man should be loyal through life to friends, and return gift for gift. Laugh when they laugh but with lies repay a false foe who lies.

No person is so rich that he will not welcome thanks for a gift given.

Gift is an honour and grace of men
A support and adornment, and for any exile
Mercy and sustenance when he has no other.

God: Odin
Polarity: dual
Colour: blue/gold
Elements: air
Wynn
Joy, Perfection

Sound value: W (V)
Old English: Wynn
Old German: Wunjo
Old Scandinavian: none

Eighth rune of first aett

Joyful are those who recognise good fortune when it is with them.

This rune is associated with words meaning 'joy', 'hope', 'wishing', 'expectation', 'peaceful', 'winning', 'pasture', 'friendship' and mutual support (as in fighting).

Wynn is the rune of fellowship, shared aims and general well-being.

One of Odin's bynames is Oski, the fulfiller of wishes.

Happiness he cannot enjoy who knows
Little woe, pain and sorrow, and has for himself
Wealth and joy, and sufficient protection too.

God: Odin
Polarity: masculine
Colour: golden
Elements: earth
Signifies the realms of Hel or the underworld and one’s personal unconscious.

Hail is the rune of sudden change. But all things pass in time, just as hail turns to water.

Hail is whitest of corn. From heaven’s height it whirs. Wind blows it, it becomes water after.

Sound value: H
Old English: Haegl
Old German: Hagalaz
Old Scandinavian: Hagall

First rune of second aett

God: Hella/Holda
Polarity: feminine
Colour: grey
Elements: water (Hail)
NyD

Need, Distress

Sound value: N
Old English: Nyd
Old German: Nauthiz
Old Scandinavian: Naugthr

Second rune of second aett

NyD is the antithesis of wynn.

NyD can also be a euphemism for 'death'. It is associated with the kind of adversity which may act as a test of moral fortitude.

NyD is associated with Norn. Skuld, who rules the future.

NyD is linked to fire and the 'need fire' and fire rituals.

Crossing the fingers of the right hand 'for luck' forms the nyD rune.

God: Skuld
Polarity: feminine
Colour: black
Elements: fire
is

Ice

Sound value: I
Old English: Is
Old German: Isa
Old Scandinavian: Is

Third rune of second aett

Much of what we desire is difficult or dangerous to gain, painful to hold, and easily slips from our grasp. What looks resplendent from afar is often painful to the touch.

In Germanic tradition ice was the primaeval solid matter from which everything else was created or released through the actions of its opponent, fire.

Is crystallizes spirit into matter. It is the rune of self-preservation and self-containment, the positive aspect of which is our individualism and the ability to survive against all odds; the negative aspect is self-centeredness and the 'each for his own' mentality.

Is is static. It 'is', and connected with the Norn Verdandi who rules the present. It keeps things as they are.

God: Skadi
Polarity: feminine
Colour: white
Elements: water (ice)

Ice is too cold and extremely slippery
Glass-clear it glitters most like gems
A floor made of frost, fair in appearance.
GER

Year, Harvest

Sound value: J
Old English: Ger
Old German: Jera
Old Scandinavian: Ar

Fourth rune of second aett

Ger represents time itself, the cycles of the year and the seasons.

Ger has strong associations with the land’s fertility and with fruitful harvests.

Ger is a very beneficial rune, used to create positive change in a situation. It works well in all matters involving time.

Harvest is men’s hope when God allows
- Holy king of heaven
- The earth to give up
- Fair fruits to warriors and to wretches.

God: Baldr
Frey/Freya

Polarity: both

Colour: green

Elements: earth
eoh

Yew

Sound value: IH; E
Old English: Eoh
Old German: Eihwaz
Old Scandinavian: none

Fifth rune of second aett

This rune represents Yggdrasil and can be used in shamanic travelling.

Eoh is traditionally associated with hunting, as bows used to be made of yew. Hunting is a daring business and eoh is used for situations which demand an outgoing, dynamic, go-out-and-get-it response.

Yew is an unsmooth tree outside
Hard; earthfast, fire’s keeper
Underpinned with roots.
A joy in the homeland.

God: Skaldi
Villers: Odin
Polarity: masculine
Colour: green
Elements: all
PEORTH

?secret; ?games; ?birth

Sound value: P
Old English: Peorth
Old German: Perth
Old Scandinavian: none

Sixth rune of second aett

An enigmatic rune whose meaning is not known - suggestions include dice box, chess piece, secret, womb and even sexual relations.

Subtle associations to the Well of Mimir and the Norns. Rather than intellectual knowledge, peorth relates to the recollection of hidden knowledge.

One interpretation is to regard 'peorth' as the birth rune, and to 'reinstate' the rune poem as follows:

Poerth is always play and laughter to the proud ones
Where wives sit in the birthhall blithely together.

Gaming is always play and laughter
To proud men ... where warriors sit
In the beer hall happily together.

God: Nerthus  Polarity: Mimir: Frigg  feminine
Colour: silver  Elements: water
The original meaning of 'protection' or 'guard' (but linked to OE *eahl* 'temple, sacred place') transferred to 'sede' in OE and 'bow' in ON because the sound value had no equivalent in these languages.

Be wary even in times of need. Grabbing quickly for support at that which comes to hand can bring pain and sorrow.

This rune is used to invoke divine protection and acts as a shielding device.

Elk grass most often dwells in a fen
Grows in water, harshly wounds
Marks with blood any warrior
Who tries to take it.

God: Heimdall Polarity: either
Valkyries Colour: rainbow
Air Elements:

Sound value: Z
Old English: Eolhsecg
Old German: Algiz
Old Scandinavian: Yr
Seventh rune of second aett
Sigel represents the higher will or intent as well as the sense of self and self-worth. It contributes strength to any healing spell.

Sound value: S
Old English: Sigel
Old German: Sowulo
Old Scandinavian: Sol

Eighth rune of second aett

Sun to seamen is always a hope
When they travel over the fish's bath
Until the sea-steed brings them to land.

God: Baldur
Polarity: masculine
Colour: gold
Elements: air
Tiw/Tyr is a warrior motivated by a sense of justice, not for the sake of conquest and blood-lust.

Tiw is the warrior’s friend: god of courage, aggression and glory. Tiw is unflinching in battle and all he does. Warriors and travellers look to his brightly burning light.

Teiwaz, Wodenaz and Thurisaz are the oldest names known for the god Tyr.

Tiw is one of the signs, holds faith well. With noblemen, on a journey is always. Above night’s gloom, never fails.
BEORC

Birch

Sound value: B
Old English: Beorc
Old German: Berkana
Old Scandinavian: Bjarkan

Second rune of third aett

Birch is the wood of rune wands and the tree of the wiccan, the wise ones who can heal bodies and minds.

The branches of birch seem bare of flower and seed, yet is very fertile and sprouts many shoots. In northern forests the birch is often the first to spout catkins and leaves. The OE rune poem appears to describe a tree more like an aspen or poplar than what we call a birch.

The birch rune is associated with fertility and spring rites. The shape resembles the breasts of the goddess Berta/Berchta, who may be different form of Freyja.

Birch woods are the home of Amanita muscaria, and the birch tree is the favoured tree for Siberian shamans to use to access the underworld.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>God</th>
<th>Polarity</th>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Elements</th>
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<tr>
<td>Berta</td>
<td>Holda</td>
<td>feminine</td>
<td>green</td>
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It is a pleasure to own something that gives pride in its possession and joy in its use. A horse provides the opportunity to seek adventure, meet people and visit far off places.

The horse was a sacred animal among the Germanic tribes and was used for divination and sacrifice. Horseflesh was only eaten during ritual sacrifices and never part of the normal diet.

Ehwaz emphatically relates to Sleipnir, Odin's eight-legged horse, who was born of Loki while in the form of a mare. Both Frey and Freya were said to wear horse masks and supposedly had the ability to assume mare shapes, in which they could roam about as 'night mares'.

Ehwaz symbolises partnership, as between a horse and its rider. It also associates with all forms of transport, whether horse-drawn or not.

**God:** Frey/Freya  
**Polarity:** Both  
**Colour:** green  
**Elements:** earth
MAN

Mankind

Sound value: M
Old English: Mann
Old German: Mannaz
Old Scandinavian: Mathr

Fourth rune of third aett

Young and alone on a long road
Once I lost my way.
Rich I felt when I found another.
Man rejoices in man.

A kind word need not cost much.
The price of praise can be cheap.
With half a loaf and an empty cup
I found myself a friend.

Mannaz deals specifically with the powers of mind and intellect.

Man is dear to his kinsmen in mirth
Yet each one must fail the others
Since by his judgement the lord wishes
To commit the poor flesh to the earth.

God: Heimdall
Polarity: masculine
Colour: blue
Elements: air
Lagu

Water

Sound value: L
Old English: Lagu
Old German: Laguz
Old Scandinavian: Logr
Fifth rune of third aett

Lagu means either the substance water or a body of water or lake - perhaps specifically the ritual waterscapes of Jutland where sacrifices were made to the gods. Nerthus, probably the oldest goddess known from Germanic sources, was worshipped on an island in a lake.

Among the early Germanic peoples the passage of time was conceived of as a stream which would periodically overflow.

On earth there is no person who is so confident, so generous with gifts, so bold in youth, so brave in deeds, or with so loyal a lord, that he can ever venture over the whale’s domain without fear of what Wyrd will bring him.

Laguz is strongly connected with the occult. The name is linked to Logr or Laukar, which are words for sorcery.

God: Nerthus
Polarity: feminine
Colour: sea
Elements: water
ING

The God Ing

Sound value: Ng
Old English: Ing
Old German: Inguz
Old Scandinavian: none

Sixth rune of third aett

Ine/Inez is the god of fertility, peace and plenty.

Inguz represents the divine hero, consort of the mother goddess and himself probably a vegetation spirit. The wagon in the rune poem may recall the cult processions of Nerthus.

The Angles may have been originally Ingwine ('friends of Ine'). England perhaps is the land of Ine.

Ine was first among the East Danes
Seen by men until he later eastwards went
Across the waves, the wagon sped behind.
Thus the hard men named the hero.

God: Frey/Freyr
Polarity: both
Colour: green
Elements: water/earth
Epel means Inherited wealth, homeland, farm, family estate. The earliest meaning was 'noble'.

A homeland, in which a people can live by their own laws, and practice their own customs in peace and freedom, is an inheritance to be treasured.

Homeland is very dear to every man
If there rightfully and with propriety
He may enjoy wealth in his dwelling generally.

God: Odin
Polarity: masculine
Colour: red
Elements: earth
DAEG

Day; Daylight

Sound value: Th or D
Old English: daeg
Old German: thagaz
Old Scandinavian: none

Seventh or eighth rune of third aett

Daegaz is a rune of cataclysmic change. Daegaz synthesises, transmutes and dissolves all opposing polarities. Daegaz operates between light and darkness but partaking of neither.

Daegaz is the rune of the rainbow bridge, the pathway to Asgard, which links the worlds of Mideard and Asgard. Heimdal is the guardian of this bridge.

Day is the Lord’s sending, dear to man
God’s splendid light, joy and hope
To the blessed and the wretched, a benefit to all.

God:
Heimdal: Loki

Polarity:
Masculine

Colour:
Red

Elements:
Fire/air