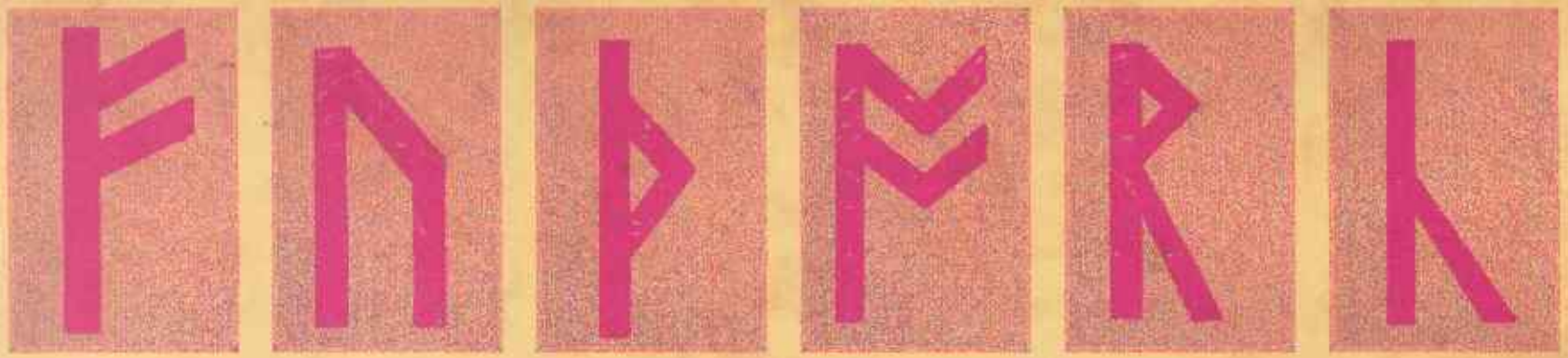


Fehu

Cattle, Wealth

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

First rune of first aett

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.

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 welath 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:	Colour:	Elements:
Frey/Freya	feminine	fiery red	fire/earth

URUZ

Aurochs

Sound value: U
Old English: Ur
Old German: Uruz
Old Scandinavian: Ur

Second rune of first aett

Aurochs is fierce and high-horned
The courageous beast fights with its horns
A well-known moor-treader.
It is a brave creature.

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:	Polarity:	Colour:	Elements:
Thor	masculine	red	earth

Thorn

The God Thor, Thorn

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

Third rune of first aett

Thorn is painfully sharp to any warrior
Seizing it is bad, excessively severe
For any person who lays among them.

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:	Polarity:	Colour:	Elements:
Thor	masculine	red	fire

Os

Mouth

Sound value: A
Old English: Os
Old German: Ansuz
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.

Ansuz 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 unfeterring rune.

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

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

RAD

Riding

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

Fifth rune of first aett

Riding is for every man in the hall
Easy, and strenuous for him who sits upon
A powerful horse along the long paths.

The act of riding and the 'road', wherever one choses 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:	Polarity:	Colour:	Elements:
Thor	masculine	red	air

cen

Torch, Light

Sound value: K
Old English: Cen
Old German: Kenaz
Old Scandinavian: Kaun

Sixth rune of first aett

Torch is known to each living being by fire
Radiant and bright. it usually burns
Where nobles rest indoors.

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*, 'king' 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 touch to the next generation, or else to share its light by teaching.

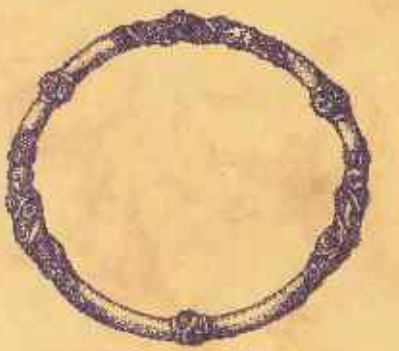
God:	Polarity:	Colour:	Elements:
Freya/ Heimdal	feminine	red/orange	fire

GYFU

Gift

Sound value: Y or G
Old English: Gyfu
Old German: Gebo
Old Scandinavian: none

Seventh rune of first aett



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

Getho is the 'act of giving' as well as the thing 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.

God:	Polarity:	Colour:	Elements:
Odin	dual	blue/gold	air

Wynn

Joy, Perfection

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

Eighth rune of first aett

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

Joyful are those who regonise 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.

God:	Polarity:	Colour:	Elements:
Odin	masculine	golden	earth

haegl

Hail

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

First rune of second aett

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

Signifies the realms of Hel or the underworld and one's personal unconscious.

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

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

nyd

Need, Distress

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

Second rune of second aett

Need is hard on the heart
Yet for man's sons it often becomes
A help and healing
If they heed it soon.

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:	Polarity:	Colour:	Elements:
Skuld	feminine	black	fire

ís

Ice

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

Third rune of second aett

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

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:	Polarity:	Colour:	Elements:
frost giants	feminine	white	water (ice)

GER

Year, Harvest

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

Fourth rune of second aett

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

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.

God: Baldur	Polarity:	Colour:	Elements:
Frey/Freya	both	green	earth

eoh

Yew

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

Fifth rune of second aett

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

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.

God: Skaldi	Polarity:	Colour:	Elements:
Ullr; Odin	masculine	green	all

PEORTH

?secret; ?games; ?birth

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

Sixth rune of second aett

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

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.

God:	Polarity:	Colour:	Elements:
Nerthus Mimir: Frigg	feminine	silver	water

eolhx

Protection

Sound value: Z
Old English: Eolhsecg
Old German: Algiz
Old Scandinavian: Yr

Seventh rune of second aett

The original meaning of 'protection' or 'guard' (but linked to OE *eahl* 'temple, sacred place') transfered to 'sedge' 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: Heimdal: Valkyries	Polarity: either	Colour: rainbow	Elements: air

sigel

Sun

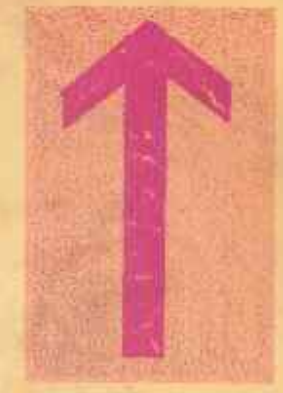
Sound value: S
Old English: Sigel
Old German: Sowulo
Old Scandinavian: Sol

Eighth 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.

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

God:	Polarity:	Colour:	Elements:
Baldur	masculine	gold	air



ᛏ TIR

The God Tyr

Sound value: T
Old English: Tir
Old German: Teiwaz
Old Scandinavian: Tyr

First rune of third aett

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

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.

God:	Polarity:	Colour:	Elements:
Tyr	masculine	red	air

BEORC

Birch

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

Second rune of third aett

Birch is fruitless, yet bears
Shoots without seeds.
Is pretty in its branches.
High in its spread, fair adorned
Laden with leaves, touching the sky.

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 adifferent form of Frigga.

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.

God:	Polarity:	Colour:	Elements:
Berta; Holda	feminine	green	earth

eh

Horse

Sound value: E
Old English: Eoh
Old German: Ehwaz
Old Scandinavian: none

Third rune of third aett

Steed is noblemen's joy before heroes
A hoof-proud horse
Where about it warriors
Rich in stallions exchange words
And is always a comfort to the restless.

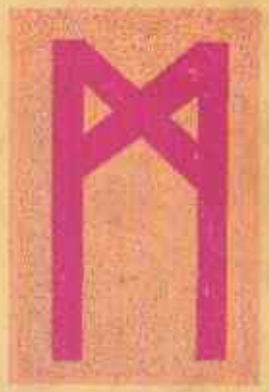
It is a pleasure to own something that gives pride in its possession and joy in its use. A horse provides the opportunity to seek adventure, meet people and visit far off places.

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:	Polarity:	Colour:	Elements:
Frey/Freya	Both	green	earth



MAN

Mankind

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

Fourth rune of third aett

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.

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.

God:	Polarity:	Colour:	Elements:
Heimdal	masculine	blue	air

Lagu

Water

Sound value: L
Old English: Lagu
Old German: Laguz
Old Scandinavian: Logr

Fifth rune of third aett

Water is seemingly endless to men
If they must fare on a fitting ship
And sea-waves frighten them mightily
And the sea-steed does not heed the bridle.

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:	Polarity:	Colour:	Elements:
Nerthus	feminine	sea	water

ING

The God Ing

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

Sixth rune of third aett

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

Ing/Inguz is the god of fertility, peace and plenty.

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

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

God:	Polarity:	Colour:	Elements:
Frey/Freya	both	green	water/earth

ᛖᛈᛖᛚ

Inherited wealth

Sound value: O
Old English: Epel
Old German: Othila
Old Scandinavian: none

Seventh or eighth rune of third aett

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

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 inhritance to be treasured.

God:	Polarity:	Colour:	Elements:
Odin	masculine	red	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

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

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

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

God:	Polarity:	Colour:	Elements:
Heimdal; Loki	masculine	red	fire/air