

A study of modified noun phrases  
in the Bryggen in Bergen runic material  
and other Old Norwegian sources

*“Sezt niðr ok ráð rúnar!”*

Ágnes Viktória Jávorszky



Master's thesis in linguistics in Viking  
and Medieval Norse Studies

Department of Linguistics and Scandinavian Studies (ILN)

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

Faculty of Icelandic and Comparative Cultural Studies

UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND

Spring 2018



# A study of modified noun phrases in the Bryggen in Bergen runic material and other Old Norwegian sources

*“Sezt niðr ok ráð rúnar!”*

Ágnes Viktória Jávorszky



Master's thesis in linguistics in Viking  
and Medieval Norse Studies

Department of Linguistics and Scandinavian Studies (ILN)

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

Faculty of Icelandic and Comparative Cultural Studies

UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND

Spring 2018

© Ágnes Viktória Jávorszky

2018

A study of modified noun phrases in the Bryggen in Bergen runic material and other Old Norwegian sources

Ágnes Viktória Jávorszky

<http://www.duo.uio.no/>

Printing: Reprosentralen, Universitetet i Oslo

The quote on the front page is from the Bryggen in Bergen inscription N B584 M.

# Summary

This thesis examines the runic inscriptions of Bryggen in Bergen as well as the Old Norwegian corpus currently consisting of four texts in the Menotec corpus of Old Norwegian, with regard to modified noun phrases. The relevant noun phrases in the Bryggen in Bergen corpus are glossed and, along with the relevant output from the Old Norwegian corpus, they are gathered into tables and statistics are drawn and contrasted to other, existing research on Old Icelandic. The thesis is a part of the project *Constraints on syntactic variation: Noun phrases in early Germanic languages* project (NFR 261847) and carries out research for the initial stages of the project, to examine the empirical distribution of noun phrases.

The aim of this thesis is to draw up potential patterns in Old Norwegian with regard to the word order in modified noun phrases, with a focus on noun phrases containing a noun and an adjective or a noun and a possessive (possessive pronoun and reflexive possessive). While in the Bryggen in Bergen inscriptions, the statistics concern all noun phrases with a common noun and a complement that is not an epithet or apposition, in the Old Norwegian corpus, only the noun phrases with a common noun and an adjective or a common noun and a possessive (possessive pronoun or reflexive possessive) are considered.

Keywords: Old Norwegian, Bryggen in Bergen runic inscriptions, noun phrases, noun phrase modification.



# Foreword

First, I would like to thank Terje Spurkland for starting me out on the road of runes. Without him, this thesis would not have come to be in its present form. I would also like to thank Karl G. Johansson who helped me with difficulties I faced while translating Old Norse and answered any and all questions I had regarding the technical parts of the thesis; Alexander Pfaff who has also provided some much-appreciated insight into alternative translations of runic inscriptions as well as helped me understand his system of annotation that I have used in this thesis; Paul Meuer at INESS, who helped me to refine my queries so that I could search in the database; Marco Bianchi at the Samnordisk runtextdatabas who helped me with software issues; Antonio Mitag who was indispensable when searching for sources or trying to sort out stubborn queries in INESS which refused to work after several tries; Kjell Jonas Nordby, who kindly gave me access to the Runic Archives at the Museum of Cultural History in Oslo; and all the rest of you whom I did not name but who have helped with comments and questions regarding the topic.

Last and most importantly, I would like to thank my supervisor, Kristin Bech, without whom this thesis could not have come into existence. Throughout the writing process, she was most supportive and pointed out things that were lacking, needed clarification, or, in fact, needed to be worked over completely. Thank you.

May 2018

Ágnes Viktória Jávorszky





# Table of contents

1	Introduction .....	1
1.1	Background, aim, and scope .....	1
1.2	Research questions .....	2
1.3	The structure of the thesis .....	2
1.4	Data used in the thesis .....	3
2	What are runes? .....	5
3	Transliteration and translation of runic inscriptions .....	11
4	Issues with interpreting runic inscriptions .....	15
5	A background to Bryggen in Bergen and its inscriptions .....	25
6	Previous research on Old Norse noun phrases .....	35
6.1	Falk and Torp: <i>Dansk-norskens syntax i historisk fremstilling</i> (1900) .....	35
6.2	Nygaard: <i>Norrøn syntax</i> (1905) .....	36
6.3	Ringdal: <i>Om det attribute adjektivs position i oldnorsk prosa</i> (1918) .....	37
6.4	Valfells and Cathey: <i>Old Icelandic: An Introductory Course</i> (1981) .....	38
6.5	Haugen: <i>Grunnbok i norrønt språk</i> (1995) .....	38
6.6	Faarlund: <i>The Syntax of Old Norse</i> (2004) .....	39
6.7	Barnes: <i>A New Introduction to Old Norse</i> (2008) .....	41
6.8	Summary .....	41
7	Glossing, categorization, and statistics from the relevant runic material from Bryggen in Bergen .....	43
7.1	Glossing and categorization of the runic material .....	43
7.2	Statistics from the glossing of the runic material .....	60
7.2.1	Noun phrases with one dependent .....	61
7.2.2	Noun phrases with multiple dependents .....	64
7.3	Summary .....	66

8	An analysis of noun phrases in the Menotec corpus of Old Norwegian .....	67
8.1	Noun and possessive.....	68
8.2	Noun and adjective .....	70
8.2.1	Adjectives by strong and weak declension .....	71
8.2.2	Adjectives by gradation.....	73
8.2.3	Adjectives appearing in Bryggen in Bergen examined in Menotec.....	77
8.2.4	Adjectives by (semantic) categories.....	81
8.3	Summary.....	93
9	Conclusion.....	95
9.1	Answers to the research questions.....	96
9.2	Concluding remarks.....	97
	Appendix 1: The Bryggen in Bergen inscriptions used in the thesis .....	103
	Appendix 2: Special characters .....	121
	Appendix 3: List of transliterations in the database.....	125

# Table of figures

Table 2.1 The elder fuþark (Spurkland 2010, 5) .....	6
Table 2.2 The Anglo-Saxon and Old Frisian fuþorc (Page 2006, 39) .....	7
Table 2.3 The younger fuþark (long-branch runes) (Spurkland 2010, 75) .....	8
Table 2.4 The younger fuþark (short-twig runes) (Spurkland 2010, 75) .....	8
Table 2.5 Medieval Norwegian runes (Spurkland 2010, 153) .....	9
Table 7.2.1 Statistics of the distribution of constituents in noun phrases with one dependent from the Bryggen in Bergen runic material .....	61
Table 7.2.2 Statistics of the distribution of constituents in noun phrases with multiple dependents from the Bryggen in Bergen runic material .....	64
Table 8.1.1 The distribution of noun and possessive in the Old Norwegian corpus.....	68
Table 8.1.2 The distribution of noun and possessive pronoun in the Old Norwegian corpus .	68
Table 8.1.3 The distribution of noun and reflexive possessive in the Old Norwegian corpus	69
Table 8.2.1 The distribution of noun and adjective in the Old Norwegian corpus .....	70
Table 8.2.1.1 The distribution of noun and strong (indefinite) adjective in the Old Norwegian corpus .....	71
Table 8.2.1.2 The distribution of noun and weak (definite) adjective in the Old Norwegian corpus .....	72
Table 8.2.2.1 The distribution of noun and adjective in the positive in the Old Norwegian corpus .....	73
Table 8.2.2.2 The distribution of noun and adjective in the comparative in the Old Norwegian corpus .....	75
Table 8.2.2.3 The distribution of noun and adjective in the superlative in the Old Norwegian corpus .....	76
Table 8.2.3.1 The distribution of noun and the lemma ‘góðr’ in the Old Norwegian corpus..	78
Table 8.2.3.2 The distribution of noun and the lemma ‘heilagr’ in the Old Norwegian corpus .....	78
Table 8.2.3.3 The distribution of noun and the lemma ‘mikill’ in the Old Norwegian corpus	79

Table 8.2.3.4 The distribution of noun and the lemma ‘sannr’ in the Old Norwegian corpus	79
Table 8.2.4.1 The distribution of strong (indefinite) adjectives by (semantic) categories in the Old Norwegian corpus .....	83
Table 8.2.4.2 The distribution of weak (definite) adjectives by (semantic) categories in the Old Norwegian corpus .....	88
Table 8.2.4.3 The distribution of strong (indefinite) and weak (definite) adjectives by (semantic) categories in the Old Norwegian corpus .....	91

# Table of figures

Figure 6.6.1 The basic pattern of the NP (Faarlund 2004, 55).....	39
Figure 6.6.2 The D-structure relationship between the definite article and the NP (Faarlund 2004, 56).....	39
Figure 6.6.3 The S-structure relationship between the definite article and the NP (Faarlund 2004, 57).....	40



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background, aim, and scope

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the empirical distribution of constituents in modified noun phrases in Old Norse (Old Norwegian) as part of the project titled *Constraints on syntactic variation: Noun phrases in early Germanic languages*. Not much research has been done on the topic and the papers that exist contradict one another on various details, first and foremost concerning what the default positions of constituents of noun phrases are in relation to the head. For this reason, I decided to look at the runic inscriptions from Bryggen in Bergen as well as the Menotec corpus of Old Norwegian (from now on referred to as Menotec) and analyze the different modified noun phrases appearing in these corpora while drawing statistics from them.

For the Bryggen in Bergen inscriptions, I look at the inscriptions available in the Samnordisk runtextdatabas (from now on referred to as Rundata), in particular those that fit the criteria of this research: namely, inscriptions in Old Norwegian which are legible and contain modified noun phrases. After this, I gloss the different noun phrases and organize the statistics into tables, and I then compare these to the research of Börjars and Booth regarding Old Icelandic (Bech et al. 2016).

The Old Norwegian texts have already been annotated within the constructs of dependency grammar and are available to search in INESS.<sup>1</sup> To search in the database, I construct queries which provide data output relevant to this thesis. I collect these statistics into tables again and compare them with the statistics from the Bryggen in Bergen chapter as well as the research done by Börjars and Booth (Bech et al. 2016).

The focus of my research is modified noun phrases where the head noun is a common noun and thus proper names with epithets and prepositional phrases have been excluded.

---

<sup>1</sup> INESS is the Norwegian Infrastructure for the Exploration of Syntax and Semantics which provides syntactically and semantically annotated databases in several modern as well as dead languages.  
<http://clarino.uib.no/iness/>

## 1.2 Research questions

The thesis aims to carry out an empirical and philological, exploratory study catering to the needs of the project *Constraints on syntactic variation: Noun phrases in early Germanic languages*, and this is reflected in the following research questions:

1. What is the distribution of constituents in modified noun phrases in the Bryggen in Bergen runic corpus?
2. What is the distribution of constituents in modified noun phrases in the Menotec corpus of Old Norwegian?
3. What is the distribution of adjectives based on (semantic) categories in the Menotec corpus of Old Norwegian?

## 1.3 The structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into nine chapters. The first half of the thesis are introductory chapters into the background of the materials and topics this thesis handles. Chapter 2 is an introduction to the history of runic writing and the runic writing systems themselves. Chapter 3 explains how runic inscriptions are transliterated and subsequently translated into a modern language, while Chapter 4 highlights the potential pitfalls one might face when trying to decipher runic inscriptions. Chapter 5 provides a background to where the inscriptions have been found, namely Bryggen in Bergen, and some information on the inscriptions themselves. Finally, Chapter 6 looks at previous research on the topic of noun phrases in Old Norse (usually Old Norwegian).

The second half of the thesis concerns itself with the research I have conducted on Old Norwegian noun phrases. In Chapter 7, all the relevant noun phrases from the Bryggen in Bergen inscriptions (which can be found in Appendix 1) are listed, glossed, and organized into categories based on what constituents they consist of. This is then organized into tables and is contrasted with the research of Börjars and Booth (Bech et al. 2016). Chapter 8 looks at noun phrases from Menotec, limited to noun phrases consisting of a noun and an adjective or a noun and a possessive (either possessive pronoun or reflexive possessive). In this chapter, I further analyze the noun phrases with an adjectival constituent based on the declension (strong or weak) and gradation of the adjectives, and I look at the adjectival lemmas in the Menotec corpus which



appear in the relevant noun phrases in Bryggen in Bergen and can be found in (7.1.9), (7.1.12), (7.1.13), (7.1.15), and (7.1.17). Finally, I look at adjectives based on semantic categories assigned to them according to the annotation guidelines by Pfaff (Pfaff in progress).

## 1.4 Data used in the thesis

As previously stated, the data for the noun phrases has been taken from two primary sources: the Rundata and Menotec. Both are accessible online and Menotec is fully annotated and accessible in INESS, which greatly simplified the research in it. The texts Menotec consists of are: Old Norwegian homily book (AM 619 4to), Landslög Magnúss Hákonarsónar (Holm perg 34 4to), Óláfs saga ins helga (legendary version, DG 8 II), and Strengleikar (DG 4–7) (Menota catalogue 2018). Rundata includes transliteration and normalized spelling as well as English (sometimes Norwegian) translations.

For translation of the glosses and the noun phrases from Menotec, I have used the following dictionaries: Walter Baetke: *Wörterbuch zur altnordischen Prosaliteratur* (2006), *J. Fritzners ordbok*, and Geir T. Zoëga: *A Concise Dictionary of Old Icelandic* (2004).

For research on noun phrases in Old Norse, I have used the following secondary literature: Hjalmar Falk and Alf Torp: *Dansk-norskens syntax i historisk fremstilling* (1900), Henry Sweet: *A New English Grammar* (1900), Marius Nygaard: *Norrøn syntax* (1905), Karl Ringdal: *Om det attribute adjektivs position i oldnorsk prosa* (1918), Sigríð Valfell and James E. Cathey: *Old Icelandic: An Introductory Course* (1981), Odd Einar Haugen: *Grunnbok i norrønt språk* (1995), Jan Terje Faarlund: *The Syntax of Old Norse* (2004), and Michael P. Barnes: *A New Introduction to Old Norse* (2008).



## 2 What are runes?

Runes are the writing systems used by the Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon people until the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Spurkland 2010, 199). The origin of the runes is quite debatable as their point of origin and time of emergence cannot be established without a doubt.

Williams says that “since the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there have been many theories of where, how and why the runes were invented” (Williams 1996, 212). He puts the invention of the runes to “around the birth of Christ, give or take a century or so” (Williams 1996, 213) and mentions three theories: the Latin, Greek, and Etruscan theories, however, states that trying to fit the entirety of the runic system onto the mold of one alphabet is forced, since there are inconsistencies as in some cases either the sound value or the shape does not correspond to any alphabet. He concludes that the shapes of the runes fit the Latin alphabet most seamlessly (Williams 1996).

Moltke states that the emergence of runes has been dated to a wide range of eras from the biblical Flood to the Bronze Age (thus making the runes in fact the ancestors of the oldest Mediterranean writing systems), all the way to around and following 800 CE (Moltke 1985, 23). He examines four theories: the Phoenician, Greek, Etruscan, and Latin theories. He argues that the origin of the runes should be searched for in the Latin alphabet after having disregarded all three other alphabets. According to him, the emergence of the runic script should be dated to no later than the second century CE, but he notes that the Meldorf fibula (which he deems to be runic) would move this date back by another 150 years. Moltke further states that keeping in mind alphabet histories, this date can be moved back to 1 CE, give or take 100 (or 50) years – not unlike what Williams concluded (Moltke 1985).

Spurkland agrees that the runic system had adopted most from the Latin script but does not disregard other influences as well, for example the runes  $\text{ᚩ}$  /o/ and  $\text{ᚱ}$  /s/ which seem rather similar to the Greek omega ( $\Omega$ ) and sigma ( $\Sigma$ ) letters, respectively, while the slightly younger  $\text{ᚳ}$  /s/ rune resembles the Latin S (Spurkland 2010, 6).

As we can see, the theories on the origin of the runes as well as when they were created vary vastly: the currently accepted oldest finds are the Øvre Stabu spearhead (N KJ31 U)<sup>2</sup> with the inscription **raunijar** (*trier, examiner*) dated to c. 200 CE (Spurkland 2017:1, 2) and the nine

---

<sup>2</sup> Runic inscriptions which have been entered into the Samnordisk runtextdatabas have a designation which consists of numbers and letters assigned to them based on the location and the order in which they have been found.

inscriptions at Illerup,<sup>3</sup> which are dated to 210/220-250/260. The Meldorf fibula, which is dated to c. 50 CE, has not yet been proven or disproven to be runic, although Moltke firmly believes it to be a runic inscription (Moltke 1985, 64).

The Scandinavian runic system is called *futhork* after the first six letters in its sequence, while the Anglo-Saxon runic system, which developed from the elder *futhork*, is named *futhorc*, for the same reason. This is not unlike the English word “*alphabet*” or the Hungarian word “*ábécé*” where the name comes from Greek alpha-beta and Hungarian a, b, and c, respectively. The Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon runic systems resemble each other in quite a few shapes although sound values may vary.

The runes have one or sometimes two staves (long vertical lines) and one or two branches (shorter slanted lines) though there are some instances where staves are not present at all. These runes disappear when the younger *futhork* emerges, while the Anglo-Saxon *futhorc* retains them.

The *futhork* first appeared as the elder *futhork* with twenty four runes and a one-to-one correspondence between grapheme and phoneme which made reading it quite simple compared to the younger *futhork*. The very first appearance of the complete *futhork* was on the Kylver stone (G 88 U; ƿ ƚ ƿ ƿ ƿ < ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ ƿ with the **a**, **s**, and **b** runes being retrograde runes as opposed to how they appear here, that is, they are mirrored vertically), dated to around 400 CE.

Table 2.1 The elder *futhork* (Spurkland 2010, 5)

ƿ	ƚ	ƿ	ƿ	ƿ	<	ƿ	ƿ
f	u	þ	a	r	k	g	w
Ɔ	ƿ		ƿ	ƿ	ƿ	ƿ	ƿ ƿ
h	n	i	j	p	ë	R	s
ƿ	ƿ	ƿ	ƿ	ƿ	◊ ◻	ƿ	ƿ
t	b	e	m	l	ŋ	d	o

<sup>3</sup> DR MS1995;334C U: **swarta**, DR MS1995;335A U and DR MS1995;335B: **wagnijo**, U, DR MS1995;336A U: **af(i)l)a---**, DR MS1995;336B U: **nijijo tawide** (*Nijijo made*), DR MS1995;336C U: **lagupewa**, DR MS1995;337 U: **fir(h)a/fir(u)a**, DR MS1995;338 U and DR MS1995;338 U: **gaupz** (Rundata).

The first twenty-four runes of the Anglo-Saxon futhorc are mostly the same as the runes in the elder futhorc although there are some differences in the shape of the runes as well as sound value. The rest of the runes are an extension of the elder futhorc so that the system better suits the Anglo-Saxon phonetic inventory, including umlaut sounds that the futhorc only includes by the Middle Ages.

*Table 2.2 The Anglo-Saxon and Old Frisian futhorc (Page 2006, 39)*

ƿ	ᚱ	ᚲ	ᚴ	ᚷ	ᚹ	ᚻ	ᚾ
f	u	þ	o	r	c	g	w
ᚿ	ᚰ	ᚱ	ᚳ	ᚴ	ᚷ	ᚹ	ᚻ ᚾ
h	n	i	j	ī	p	x	s
ᚰ	ᚱ	ᚲ	ᚳ	ᚴ	ᚷ	ᚹ	ᚻ
t	b	e	m	l	ŋ	æ	d
ᚴ	ᚵ	ᚶ	ᚷ	ᚸ	ᚹ	ᚺ	
a	æ	y	ea	ġ	k	ċ	

After the elder futhorc, during a transitional period with syncope and vowel changes, new runic forms reflecting changed sound values started to emerge and slowly took over as the new younger futhorc, though the new futhorc retained several runes from the old system. The usage of the younger futhorc mostly corresponds with the Viking Age. The two versions of the younger futhorc are long-branch (mainly used in Denmark) and short-twig (mainly used in Sweden and Norway) runes.

The issue with the younger futhorc is its reduction in the number of runes available. Instead of 24 runes, the younger futhorc consists of only sixteen runes for a phonetic system which has been infused with several new (umlaut) vowel sounds. Aside from the new futhorc not having runes for the new vowels, some runes marking consonant sounds (/p/, /d/, and /g/) as well as vowels (/e/ and /o/) have fallen out from the runic inventory. As a result, some runes represented not only two, but sometimes three sound values, making the transliteration and reading harder.

Table 2.3 The younger fuþark (long-branch runes) (Spurkland 2010, 75)

ƿ	ᚱ	ᚲ	ᚴ	ᚷ	ᚹ	ᚻ	ᚼ
f	u	þ	ǫ	r	k	h	n
ᚨ	ᚩ	ᚪ	ᚫ	ᚸ	ᚾ	ᚿ	ᚾ
i	a	s	t	b	m	l	R

The short-twig runes are a simplified version of the long-branch runes and although both writing systems are complete on their own, the two systems could appear in the same inscription, sometimes even both versions being used within the same inscription to denote the same sound.

Table 2.4 The younger fuþark (short-twig runes) (Spurkland 2010, 75)

ƿ	ᚱ	ᚲ	ᚴ	ᚷ	ᚹ	ᚻ	ᚼ
f	u	þ	ǫ	r	k	h	n
ᚨ	ᚩ	ᚪ	ᚫ	ᚸ	ᚾ	ᚿ	ᚾ
i	a	s	t	b	m	l	R

By the Middle Ages, the fuþark had gone through another change: the sixteen-rune younger fuþark has been infused with new runes representing the new umlaut sounds and consonant sounds whose runes were lost during the transitional period. Some of these were new runes while others appeared as the dotted counterparts of some already existing runes, though these were not at all used universally. Table 2.5 is a representation of the runes that were the most wide-spread in usage though there appear occasionally some other dotted rune variants to denote voiced variants of consonant sounds or umlaut vowels, for example ƿ̇ to mark /v/, ᚱ̇ for /v/, /y/, or /ø/, and þ̇ for /ð/.

Table 2.5 Medieval Norwegian runes (Spurkland 2010, 153)

ƿ	ᚢ	ᚦ	ᚩ	ᚱ	ᚷ	ᚹ	ᚻ
f	u	þ	o	r	k	h	n
l	ᚦ	ʀ	ᚠ	ᚷ	ᚷ	ᚠ	ᚷ
i	a	s	t	b	m	l	y
ᚦ	ᚦ	ᚦ	ᚦ ᚦ	ᚷ	ᚠ	ᚷ ᚷ	ᚦ
e	æ	ø	ç	g	d	p	c z

As already mentioned, the runic script was used up until the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Spurkland 2010, 199), and it enjoyed a resurrection during Romanticism as well as in the 20<sup>th</sup> century – although in the latter case, it seems to have more to do with magic than with actual writing, at least in the mainstream culture, which makes it difficult to share with the world the heritage of the runes.





### 3 Transliteration and translation of runic inscriptions

According to Barnes, “serious study of runes and runic writing requires examination of the inscriptions themselves” (Barnes 2012, 4). While it is true, this would understandably limit the study of runic inscriptions to only those scholars who have taken the time to learn all the possible runic systems with variant runes, and yet reading an inscription could still prove difficult. “The primary purpose of transliteration is to make runic inscriptions more accessible to those unfamiliar with the script, while preserving as many features as possible of the original text” (Barnes 2012, 4).

Transliterating runic inscriptions is useful for several reasons: those who are unfamiliar with reading runes can read the transliterations, which expands exposure to runic inscriptions significantly and makes it possible for scholars not read in the field of runology to work with the material and compare it to other sources.

The second reason is that numerous runic inscriptions cannot be moved simply due to the size and weight of the stones they have been carved onto, and thus if a person would like to read the runic inscription, they would have to travel to the location of the stone, which might not be possible.

The third reason concerns photographs of runestones. While they are useful to show what the inscription looks like to those unable to look at the inscriptions in person, photos are by no means perfect. Runestones can have carvings on several sides, the stone (or rune stick) can be bent, and sometimes the photo is simply not good enough in quality for the inscription to be legible.

The fourth reason is the fact that it is easier to represent the inscription in roman letters than using runic fonts.<sup>4</sup> It is time-consuming to try and represent all runic characters properly in such fonts and it leaves room for personal choices in the shapes which are ambiguous (e.g. whether to represent the voiceless dental fricative with an angular þ or a curved þ bow). While this does not distort the meaning of the inscriptions, it does give false information about the runic shapes themselves.

There are some conventions which have been used more or less consistently by runologists in the art of transliteration, but they are by no means universal: while Thompson (in Page)

---

<sup>4</sup> In the paper, the Gullhornet and Gullskoen fonts are used.

chose boldface for transliteration due to the fact that it was already well-established in runologist circles, Moltke (in Page) refrained from using it, saying that it looks “intrusive and unattractive” on paper (Page 1984, 24–25). It is for this reason that Thompson was pleading for a unified system of transliteration at the First International Symposium on Runes and Runic Inscriptions in 1980 (Page 1984, 23).

In transliterating runes, it is not the runic shape that is most important, as there exist several variant runes. If these were all to be represented separately, it would be hard to differentiate between all the separate forms just by using the Latin alphabet. Transliteration looks at the sound value each rune holds, and the runes are transliterated into the corresponding roman letter closest to the sound value of the rune in question (Barnes 2012, 4).

As pointed out by Page (1984, 23–24), this transliteration system does not always work as intended. There are two runes which either change their sound values or expand them over time. The two runes in question are the *\*ansur* ᚱ and *\*ūrur* ᚷ runes. The *\*ansur* rune has the following sound values changing from the elder fuþark to the younger to the medieval fuþork: **a > ǫ > o** which the transliteration system differentiates between. The *\*ūrur* rune, though in the elder fuþark only denoted /u/, in the younger fuþark it represented /u/, /o/, or /v/, and by the medieval fuþork it marked /u/, /v/, and /y/ which all have been represented as **u** in transliteration. The reader thus has to make out which sound value it is supposed to denote. Page called this the apposition between the phonetic approximation and the consistency of representation (Page 1984, 23–24).

The transliteration system generally used for Scandinavian inscriptions uses the following formatting and symbols: the transliterated text itself is in boldface while the linguistic normalization is in italics and the translation to a modern language is put between quotation marks. Reconstructions and conjectural restorations are put between square brackets, and countable missing letters are marked with subscript dots equivalent in number to the number of missing runes. The end of a line in inscriptions is marked with a single vertical stroke while bind runes are marked by a superscript curve above the two letters (Page 1984, 24).

A good example of this process and the formatting can be shown is the Strøm whetstone (3.1):

(3.1) **N KJ50 \$U**

- a) ᚱᚺᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲ
- b) ᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲ



(Page 1984, 24). This means that transliterated texts are, unfortunately, by no means trustworthy, as the transliterator could have assumed and transliterated a rune which is actually illegible on the inscription. This distorts the inscription and all following interpretations thereof. This poses a problem as “the reader may regard the transliterated text as a facsimile of the original” (Barnes 2012, 4). It is for this reason that it is best to visit the runic inscription one wishes to examine until such a database is made in which the transliterations are objective and corruptions and other details are clearly marked and explained.

## 4 Issues with interpreting runic inscriptions

The process of interpreting a runic inscription uncovers several issues. Although it becomes easier to draw up guidelines to interpret inscriptions and the rules according to which they could have been written due to more and more finds having been uncovered, there are still several issues which remain unresolved.

The first issue, which is unrelated to the spelling conventions of the time period, is wear. Depending on what material the carver used to immortalize the words, inscriptions can range from mostly intact to severely damaged, even practically illegible. In the case of stone monuments, the weather (severe temperatures, acid rain, for instance) could have worn off the inscription (depending on the type of stone it was carved into) and parts of the stone could even have broken off, making it impossible to reconstruct a part of the inscription. In the case of metal, the readability is better depending on the age of the artifact the inscription was carved on and the carving technique used.

The Bryggen in Bergen inscriptions, which this thesis concerns itself with, are carved on wood. These rune sticks were not meant to last: they were a means of quick communication in a society where, although Latin script was common, it was not easy to come by parchment and ink, let alone write with them on the go. For this reason, people carved their messages on these rune sticks which, after they fulfilled their purpose, were cast aside. Thus, in this case, it is more due to sheer luck than careful planning that these inscriptions have survived and can be retrieved and analyzed. Still, many inscriptions discovered so far seem to be damaged past the point of legibility.

The issue with damaged runes can apply to the entirety of an inscription, some parts of it, or, in the best case, to single runes only. Damage decreases legibility in these inscriptions and can prove an obstacle with regard to transliteration and normalization into Old Norse. For this reason, such runes and transliterated Latin letters, even if they are transliterated, should be marked as already discussed in Chapter 3. While it may seem straightforward as to what the missing rune could be (either by the shape of the remaining strokes or due to what can be expected based on the runes surrounding it), the decision made by the transliterator is subjective and not everyone may agree with in the future. These illegible runes are marked in transliteration to indicate that the reading of the inscription is not complete.

Ambiguous readings, too, are marked so that the reader may know that the reading of the inscription is not at all certain. Sometimes it may help to use technology to scan, x-ray, or

otherwise map the surface of these inscriptions; however, in such cases of illegibility it is always prudent, if possible, to take a look at the original inscription rather than blindly trusting the transliterated text presented in a book, as discussed in the previous chapter.

An example of a reading of a runic inscription made harder by illegibility is the Gørlev stone (4.1):

(4.1) **DR 239**

a) **þiauiþui:risþi:stinþansi:aftuþinkaur:fuþarkhniastbmlr:niutualkums:**

b) **þmkiiisssttiiiill[:]iaksataru[na]ri[t]kuniarmutrkrub[...]**<sup>5</sup>

*Þjóðvi reisti stein þenna ept Ópinkár; fuþorkhniastbmlr, njót vel kumls! þistill/mistill/kistill, ek seta rúnar rétt. Gunni, Armundr, krub...*

‘Thjodvi raised this stone in memory of Odinkar. fuþorkhniastbmlr. Make good use of the monument. þistill/mistill/kistill. I placed the runes right. (By another carver:) Gunni, Armund...’

(Spurkland 2017:2, 1)

It is clear that there should be more runes following after **krub**, but it is not possible to make them out.

A more severe example is the Tune stone (4.2):

(4.2) **N KJ72 U**

a1) **ekwiwarafter·woduri**

a2) **dewitadahalaiban:worahto·[.]**

b1) **(...)h:woduride:staina:**

b2) **prijordohtrirdalidun**

b3) **arbijasijosterarbijano**

*ek WiwaR after Wōdurīdē witandahalaiban worahō [rūnōR]*

*[fal]h Wōdurīdē staina þrijōR dohtriR dālidun arbija āsijōstēR arbijanō*

---

<sup>5</sup> When representing an inscription in written form, letters are used to show if parts of the inscription occur on different sides of the surface the inscription is carved into and numbers indicate the different rows, for ease of reading and reference.

‘I, Wi, in memory of Wodurid, the bread warden, worked the runes. I committed (dedicated) the stone to Wodurid. Three daughters prepared the funeral feast, the most devoted/most god sent among the heirs.’

(Spurkland 2017:1, 5–6)

On this runestone, it seems that the end of line a2 has been broken off entirely and the stone has also suffered some breakage at the beginning of line b1.

Aside from the issue of legibility, some other concerns are present due to deviation from the reconstructed writing conventions. Carvers can use different runes, or rune combinations, for the same sound. It is probably due to dialectal differences, which result in the same word having been pronounced in different ways. While it may give us potential insight on dialects of the time, such examples are by no means numerous enough for us to be able to use them as sources for diagnosing dialects. Alternately, the use of different runes could also have happened because the carvers were not so familiar with spelling conventions and thus spelled in the way they thought was correct. The latter would apply first and foremost to the medieval inscriptions due to the fact that Latin script writing was not as established in earlier times.

Three examples of alternating spelling are the Lom stave church inscription (4.3), and two inscriptions from Bryggen in Bergen, (4.4) and (4.5):

(4.3) N A74 M

- a) --]auarþær:sender:gu[-----]:g[.]þærs:kueþiuoksinauigan
- b) oknuerminfuleruili:at:þiþiþin:efþuuilt:æihimeþ
- c) [---]bæini:uer[.]:[---]a:þitrap:oklatsehiamer
- d) þinuilia

*Hávarðr sendir Guðnýju Guðs kveðju ok sína vingan. Ok nú er min fullr vili at biðja þín, ef þú vilt eigi með Kolbeini vera. Huga þitt ráð, ok lát segja mér þinn vilja.*

‘Hávard is sending Gudny God’s regards and his friendship. Now it is my intention to make you an offer of marriage, provided that you do not prefer Kolbein. Think the matter over and let me know your will.’

(Spurkland, 2017:3, 2)

(4.4) N 648 M

- a) hau:grimi:felag:sinum:sen:dir:þorer:fagr:kæip:iu:gups:ok:si:nan:san:  
nan:flaskar:okuinatomartskorter
- b) mikfelageki:er:mun:gatetæin:ki:fis:kar:nir:uil:ek:at:þu:uitir:en:ægi:kræf
- c) þubip:bondannkomasuprtilluaroksiahutoslipreggahantilenkræfpueiskislutamerokægilaþu
- d) þostæinlankuitasenmerhazkanokoraeu:sigriþþærunokospabioffennehiitþumerekkiuetahypualaþi

*Hafgrimi, féлага sínum, sendir Þórir fagr kveðju Guðs ok sína, sanna félagskap ok vináttu. Mart skortir mik, félagi! Ekki er mungátit, eingi fiskarnir. Vil ek at þú vitir, en eigi kref þú. Bið bóndann koma suðr til vár ok sjá hvat oss líðr. Eggja han til; en kref þú einskis hluta mér; ok eigi lát þú Þorsteinn lang vita. Send mér hanzka nòkkura. Ef Sigríðr þarf nòkkurs, þá bjóð henni. Heit þú mér ekki vetta hýð válaði.*

‘To Havgrim, his partner, Tore Fair is sending God’s and his own greetings, true partnership and friendship. Things are bad with me, partner. I did not get the beer, nor the fish. I want you to know this, and ask you not to press me. Ask the Goodman to come south to us, so that he may see how things are here. Urge him to come, and do not press me, nor let word of this get to Torstein Long. Send me some gloves. If Sigrid is in want, offer her (or: invite her). Do not thrash me for my helplessness!’

(Spurkland, 2017:3, 2–3)

(4.5) N 650 M

- a) einnripi:þeta:atumeratgiallda:tuamælaok:þriusald:enahngarstihi:sihtanmæla
- b) enþuskallt:æinndripi:taka:þatkonn:sem:berþor:ameratlukaeihiminna:ensehstanmæla
- c) skalltutaka:epa:ellihar:takþueihi:en:fapurminn:bipek:a[t]hannkillti:mer:þriusald

*Eindriði! Þetta átt þú mér at gjalda: tvá mæla ok þrjú sáld, en annarstveggi sextán mæla. En þú skalt, Eindriði, taka þat korn sem Bergþórr á mér at lúka. Eigi minni en sextán mæla skalt þú taka eða elligar tak þú eigi. En fòður minn bið ek at hann gildi mér þrjú sáld.*



‘Eindride! This you have to deliver me as payment, two “mæler” and three “sæld”, and moreover sixteen “mæler”. And you shall, Eindride, collect that corn that Bergtor is due to pay me. Not less than sixteen “mæler” shall you collect, beyond that you shall not collect anything. And I ask my father that he delivers me three “sæld” as payment.’

(Spurkland, 2017:3, 3)

The words that imply differing pronunciations are **æihi** and **sehia** in (4.3), **felag** and **ægi** two times each with the same spelling in (4.4), and **ahngarstihi**, **eihi** (two times with the same spelling), and **ellihar** in (4.5). It is obvious that **æihi**, **ægi**, and **eihi** are representing the same word, only the pronunciation, and thus the spelling, is different. In (4.3) and (4.5) the carvers mark this sound with a /h/, while in (4.4) it is marked with a /g/ both of which could either be exactly as people who carved the inscriptions pronounced the words or they could be approximations to the actual sound value which the \* **h** and ʀ **g** runes represent: [ɣ], a voiced velar fricative.

The presence of duplicate runes can be confusing as well due to the fact that in the elder and younger futhorks rune duplication was a rare occurrence. The carver carved only one rune and trusted the reader to double it in their heads while reading the inscription. This applied not only to double runes in words but to the same rune appearing at the end of a word and at the beginning of the next. There still is no uniform consensus about, for instance, the Möjbro stone (4.6) where two differing interpretations exist by von Friesen and Krause:

(4.6) **U 877 U**

**frawaradar**

**anahahaislaginar**

von Friesen:

*Frawarādar. Āna hāhā is slaginar.*

‘Fraráðr (rests here). Ane the one-eyed is slain.’

Krause:

*Frawarādar. āna hāhāi slaginar.*

‘Fraráðr slain on (his) steed.’

(Spurkland, 2017:1, 7)

In the normalized version by von Friesen he duplicates the originally only once appearing *s* while Krause interpreted the *s* in the inscription as a single consonant.

This omission of double runes changes by the emergence of the runic writing system of Middle Ages, when such runes often appear as bind runes (that is, the two runes share the same stave).

Bind runes, though rarely, can pose an issue as well, because it is not always clear in what order these runes are meant to follow one another. The reading of bind runes, however, compared to the previous issues, is usually more of a curiosity than an actual problem, as it is usually not difficult to interpret these bind runes from the context. An example of this is the Vinje church I (4.7) inscription:

(4.7) **N 170 M**

The bind rune which appears in the inscription is: 

Although the reading of this bind rune is not at all impossible and bind runes were mostly used in a manner which made it quite clear what the reading order of the runes is, there can be some cases which may cause some initial confusion upon first reading.

In the case of /n/, the spelling convention in the elder and younger futhorks dictates that it does not have to be represented in writing provided that the following consonant is homorganic. In the younger futhork, however, this omission was already marked if the preceding sound happened to be an /a/. In that case, they often used the rune for the nasal /ã/. By the emergence of the futhork of the Middle Ages, this convention disappeared as the carvers represented both consonant sounds.

Two good examples of this are the Gripsholm stone (4.8) and the Galteland stone (4.9):

(4.8) **SÖ 179**

**×tula:lit:raisa:stain:pinsat:sun:sin:haralt:brupur:inquars:þair-**

**furu:trikila:fiari:at:kuli:auk:a:ustarlar:ni:kafu:tuu:sunar:la:asirk:lan:ti**

*Tola let reisa stein þenna at sun sinn, Harald, broður Ingvars.*

‘Tola had this stone set up in memory of her son Harald, Ingvar’s brother.’

*Þeir fóru drengila  
fjarri at gulli  
ok austarla  
erni gáfu.  
Dou sunnarla  
á Serklandi.*

‘They fared like men  
far after gold  
and in the east  
gave the eagle food.  
They died southward  
in Serkland.’

(Spurkland, 2017:2, 2)

(4.9) N 184

**a) arn×[stin]×risti×stin×þi[na]×iftir×bior×[s]un×sin×[sa×uar]tubr×ilipix  
þ[ǫs×knutrsoti×iklæt]**

**b) ×inis×ko[þ]**

*Arnsteinn reisti stein þenna eptir Bjór, son sinn. Sá varð dauðr í líði þá er Knútr  
sótti England.  
Einn er Guð.*

‘Arnstein erected this stone in memory of Bjor, his son. He died in the army when  
Knut attacked England. God is one.’

(Spurkland 2017:2, 3)

In (4.8), /ŋ/ **n** is omitted before the homorganic /g/, but this omission is unmarked as the vowel sound preceding is **i**. In (4.9) on the other hand, **n** is omitted before **t**; however, it is marked in the **a** which is thus written with the **o** (**ǫ**) rune.

A typo in an inscription such as the Kjøløvik stone (4.10) or the Ramsund rock (4.11), can cause some initial confusion as well:

(4.10) N KJ75 U

**hadulaikar**

**ekhagustadar**

**hlaiwidomaguminino**

*hadulaikaR*

*ek hagustadaR*

*hlaiwidō magu mīninō*

‘Hadulaik (is resting here). I Hagustald buried my son.’

(Spurkland 2017:1, 4)

(4.11) **SÖ 101**

**siripr:kiarpi:bur:posi:mupir:alriks:tutir:urms:fur:salu:hulmkirs:fapur:sukrupar-  
buata·sis**

*Sigríðr gerði brú þessa, móðir Alriks, dóttir Orms, fyrir sálu Holmgeris, fǫður  
Sigrøðar, bónda sins.*

‘Sigrid made this bridge, Alrik’s mother, daughter of Orm, for the soul of Holmgeir,  
Sigrød’s father, her husband.’

(Spurkland 2017:2, 3)

In the case of (4.10), the carver seems to have accidentally carved **haaiwido** at first and then inserted the **l** as a bind rune attached to **h** to correct the mistake and trusting the reader to read it correctly as **hlaiwido**. This, although not problematic in itself, can pose an issue with other, more ambiguous cases of miscarvings. In (4.11), the carver seems to have missed the **r** and added it after the **u**, so instead of **bru** ‘bridge’ it reads **bur**.

Finally, there is the issue which might not be so obvious to those who are unfamiliar with original runic inscriptions or their transliterations. Word spacing is rarely present in the runic material written in the elder fuþark, and even then, these separators usually divide clauses, sentence parts, or phrases. Later, with the emergence of the younger fuþark, spacing is used more frequently most probably due to the emergence of the Latin script culture. However, word spacing in the modern sense has not yet been adopted in either inscriptions in the younger fuþark or in medieval inscriptions. It is very often the case that while some words are correctly separated by modern standards, some other words are written together, and some words get separated within the word. Both “errors” seem to be a result of phonetic writing whereby the carver attached some unstressed function words to stressed content words or separated a word at morpheme boundaries. A good example of this are the Alstad I (4.12) and II (4.13) inscriptions:

(4.12) **N 61**

- a) **iurunꝛrais[t]i[ꝛ]s[t]ainꝛ pinaaf[t]ir[ꝛ] ]au·aunꝛ is[h]anaꝛ ·[t]i[ꝛ] ]aukꝛ furpiꝛ afꝛ  
hrikarikiꝛu[t]anꝛurulbꝛaui·**
- b) **×aukꝛ[m]untaꝛstainꝛ···irꝛpusi×**

*Jórunn reisti stein þenna eptir ... er hana átti, ok færði útan or Ulfeyju. Ok myndastein (mæt)ir þessi.*

‘Jorunn raised this stone in memory of ....., who was married with her, and (she) brought (it) out from Ringerike, from Ulvøy. And the picture stone honors them.’

(Spurkland 2017:2, 3–4)

(4.13) N 62 §

1) ×ikli×reiStisteinþanaeftir×þoral[t]

2) sunsinisuarþtaupr×iuitahol(mi)

3) mipliustaulmsaukkarpax

*Engli reisti stein þenna eptir Þórald, son sinn, er varð dauðr í Vitaholmi, miðli Ustaholms ok Garða.*

‘Engle erected this stone in memory of Torald, his son, who died in Vitaholm, between Ustaholm and Gardar.’

(Spurkland 2017:2, 4)

While in (4.12) we find meticulous word divisions, in (4.13), the carver either has not found it so important to mark word-boundaries (even though this inscription was carved into the stone later) or thought this to be a logical way of dividing the text.

In this last case of questionable word division, it can be difficult to determine where the word boundaries should be in case of continuous writing, while if morphemes are separated it can prove a challenge to determine whether a certain set of sounds should be a morphological ending to the word preceding it or an entirely new function word, for instance. Therefore, it is important to mark the transliteration as close to the original as it is possible. Rundata, as can be seen in examples taken from it, chooses to insert spaces between words based on their interpretation of the text.

As already mentioned in some cases, some of these issues are period-specific. The ones that affect the analysis of the Bryggen in Bergen runic material that the thesis is concerned with are damage to the inscription, duplicate runes, bind runes, and word spacing. This might not seem like too many factors which influence legibility and thus transliteration, normalization, and translation; however, there are instances of the same runic inscription having been interpreted in sometimes vastly different ways by scholars.



## 5 A background to Bryggen in Bergen and its inscriptions

Bergen, said to have been founded by King Olav Kyrre around 1070 according to the Norse sagas, used to be the capital of Norway. This resulted in widespread international contacts as well as an international scene within the town itself. Due to its long history, Bryggen is an invaluable source of information regarding quite possibly every aspect of life from the foundation of Bergen up until modern times. Unfortunately, about half of Bryggen burnt down in the fire of July 1955, which, on the other hand, allowed archaeologists to excavate artifacts which provided valuable insight into the everyday lives of people (Herteig 1959, 177).

Among the finds were pottery, miniature objects (children's toys), large quantities of leatherwork (sword and knife sheaths and shoes), carvings in wood or bone (combs), and runic inscriptions (Herteig 1959, 181–185). The many fires which raged in Bryggen (1170, 1198, 1248, 1332, 1413, 1476, 1702, and the last one already mentioned in July 1955) and have been documented either in sagas or other written sources allow for relative dating of the artifacts found during excavation (Herteig 1959, 177; Liestøl 1966, 50). The inscriptions have been dated ranging from the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Currently, there are 643 runic inscriptions from Bryggen in Bergen documented in Run-data, which means that this is so far the largest runic material found in one location, which provides the field of runology with invaluable information and a deeper insight into how and why people used runic writing (Liestøl 1966, 49). The inscriptions have been carved mostly into wood and some into bone. Most of the inscriptions are in Old Norwegian, but there are numerous inscriptions in Latin and some in Greek, and there are examples of alliterative poetry (Liestøl 1966).

The nature of the inscriptions varies widely: perhaps most common are the labels denoting ownership, which were attached to (or pierced through) the object they were supposed to mark as the property of someone. Related to this, there are inscriptions which seem to be price tags. There have been found some letters either to a business partner or to a family member, which are quite intimate in nature, and there are inscriptions which have been carved on a night out in the pub. There are numerous religious texts with Christian content as well as some which can be attributed as magical invocations for a loved one or against someone perceived as harmful (Liestøl 1966, 53–55).

Some examples of the type of inscriptions so far found in Bryggen in Bergen are listed below. The inscriptions have been retrieved from Rundata. For explanations on special characters in the transliterations, consult Appendix 2.

Most of the inscriptions have been written in Old Norwegian and among them there are quite a few texts with religious themes, such as (5.1) but there are numerous religious texts in Latin as well, as (5.2) shows.

(5.1) N 289 M

§A (t)rotin<sup>^</sup>n : um a<sup>^</sup>lla : fram ÷ o<sup>^</sup>k þu styrk : mik : til a<sup>^</sup>l<sup>^</sup>lra go<sup>^</sup>þra : lut...

§B ...otin<sup>^</sup>n : iis÷us krist<sup>^</sup>ur ÷ sa (i)r bæþe : er guþ o<sup>^</sup>k : mapa<sup>^</sup>r : høyr : a<sup>^</sup>kal<sup>^</sup>l  
mit : -...

§C ... þik : o<sup>^</sup>k biþia mer : miskuna<sup>^</sup>r : uiþa<sup>^</sup>r : þi(k) o<sup>^</sup>k ma<sup>^</sup>riu (: ) mo<sup>^</sup>þ(o)(r)

§A *Dróttinn um alla fram! Ok þú styrk mik til allra góðra hlut[a].*

§B *[Dr]óttinn Jésús Kristr, sá er bæði er guð ok maðr, heyr ákall mitt ...*

§C ... *þik ok biðja mér miskunnar viðr þik ok Maríu, móður.*

§A Lord above all! and You strengthen me for every good lot.

§B Lord Jesus Christ, who is both God and man, hear my invocation ...

§C ... You and pray for mercy for me from You and Mary, (Your) mother.

(5.2) N 615 M

**pater ÷ noster ÷ kui | |is in selo ÷ santaf(i)setur ÷ nomen tum ÷ apf(e)n(i)ap reno-**

*Pater noster, qui es in cælis. Sanctaficetur nomen tuum, adveniat regnu[m]*

Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. [Thy] kingdom come.

Aside from Christian themes, there are some inscriptions with pagan topics, for example (5.3), which summons Odin to catch a thief and closes with “amen”, while (5.4) invokes a formula similar to that which all know well from their childhood, “hocus pocus”, which probably derived from “Hoc est corpus filii” which is well known from Christian religious rituals. *Rubus rabus et arantabus*, while it may sound like Latin, does not seem to mean anything (Ellefsen 2009, 53). Seemingly, people in Bryggen did not have an issue with mixing Christianity with their old beliefs.

(5.3) N B241 M

§A ek sörø þik o<sup>^</sup>þen mæþ hiþuto mæstr fiata

§B (i)¶¶ata þuæi cæh mæþ namn þæs mas æir ctal



§C fir kirictini ih mer nu þæ(i)n otaþ  
 §D æit niþik aþa^lrr n(i)þik iehh mæR oþen  
 §E nu er cørp o^k karafa^r maþ ølu hiþum  
 §F t^u þu nu øþilc(k) mæR namn þec æR ctal a

§A *Ek sori þik, Óðinn, með ..., mestr fjánda;*  
 §B *jǫfíáta því; seg mér nafn þess manns er stal;*  
 §C *fyr kristni; seg mér nú þína ódáp.*  
 §D *Eitt níðik, annat(?) níðik; seg mér, Óðinn.*  
 §E *Nú er sorð ok ... með øllu ...*  
 §F *... þú nú øþlisk mér nafn þess er stal. A[men.]*

[Norwegian] Jeg maner deg, Odin, med (hedendom), den største blant djevlene. Gå med på det. Si meg navnet til den mann som stjal. For kristendom. Si meg nå (din) udåd. Ett håner jeg, (det andre) håner jeg. Si meg, Odin! Nå er (mengder av djevler?) manet fram med all (hedendom). Du skal nå skaffe/odle meg navnet til den som stjal. (Amen.)

(5.4) N B257 M

§A rist e^k : bot:runa^r : rist : e^k biabh:runa^r : eæin:fa^l uip : a^luom : tuiua^lt  
 uip : t^rolom : þreua^lt : uip : þ(u)--  
 §B uip e^nne : skøþo : skah : ua^lkyrriu : sua:at : eæi mehi : þo:at æ uili : læuis :  
 kona : liui : þinu g- -  
 §C e^k sende^r : þer : ek se a þe^r : ylhia^r : e^rhi o^k øþola : a þe^r : rini : upole  
 : a^uk : i(a)luns : mop : sittu : ald^ri : sop þu : ald^r(i) -  
 §D a^nt : mer : sem : sialpre : þer : beirist : rubus : rabus : eþ : arantabus : laus :  
 abus : rosa : ga^ua --

§A *Ríst ek bótrúnar, ríst ek bjargrúnar, einfalt við alfum, tvífalt við trollum, þrífalt við þurs[um],*  
 §B *við inni skoðu skag(?) valkyrju, svát ei megi, þótt æ vili, lævis kona, lífi þínu g[randa], ...*  
 §C *ek sendi þér, ek sé á þér, ylgjar ergi ok úþola. Á þér hríni úþoli ok ioluns(?) móð. Sittu aldri, sof þú aldri ...*  
 §D *ant mér sem sjalfri þér. Beirist(?) rubus rabus et arantabus laus abus rosa gaua*  
 ...

I cut runes of help; I cut runes of protection; once against the elves, twice against the trolls, thrice against the ogres ... .. against the harmful 'skag'-valkyrie, so that she never shall, though she ever would-evil woman!-(injure) your life ... I send to you, I look at you (= cast on you with the evil eye): wolfish evil and hatefulness. May unbearable distress and 'ioluns' misery take effect on you. Never shall you sit, never shall you sleep, ... .. (that you) love me as yourself. [Latinized magical words] and [magical words] ...

Inscriptions (5.5) and (5.7) are fuþark-inscriptions with the first being divided into so-called *ættir* which are used in secret writing while the second one is carved continuously.

The meaning behind the word *ætt* is not agreed upon as it can mean 'kin', 'family', or simply 'eight' and while some fuþark-inscriptions are continuous, others divide the fuþark into rows of eight runes, for example, on the bracteate from Vadstena (Ög 178 †\$U): **fuþarkgw : hñijëþrs : tbemlñod** (Spurkland 2010, 80; Rundata).

After the reduction in number of runic characters, these *ættir* remained as they were with only 6, 5, and 5 runes in the *ættir*, respectively. This was used for cryptic writing on the Rök stone (Ög 136 \$) and in the mound at Maeshowe.

This division of eights has been used as a basis for some scholars to attach magical meanings to the runes and fuþark-inscriptions in particular, but a clear correlation between fuþark-inscriptions and magic, or in fact runic inscriptions and magic, cannot be proven.

#### (5.5) N B301 M

**fuþorkhniastbmtý**

<fuþorkhniastbmtý>

<fuþorkhniastbmtý>

Inscriptions (5.6) and (5.7) are about love although one has a rather poetic style and is in Latin while the other is rather simple, written in Old Norwegian. On another side of (5.7) there is a fuþark-inscription which some assume would have functioned as a magical spell to ensure the success of the request (Liestøl 1966, 54), although it could just as well have been a reminder to the carver to carve the runes properly.

#### (5.6) N 603 M

§A ... -g(r)(e):gie : igni:bus : ka^(e)sko : æius : koti:die : in amo^re : græs:ko ...

§B ...--(s) : agam : teneri : uirgo : sik · agamus : ambos : (s)umus ...

§C ...-n--a : luisis : agone : Yilum·ena : kuæruli : tæria (r)-... ...

§A [*Virginis e*]gregie ignibus calesco [et] eius cotidie in amore cresco; ...

§B ... *agam teneri virgo sic agamus ambos sumus ...*

§C ... *lucis agone. Philomena querule Terea r[etractat], ...*

§A I am becoming inflamed with the fires (of love) for the exquisite maiden, and grow daily (more) in love with her ...

§B ...

§C ... with life's(?) despondency. Philomena lamenting struggles with Tereus ...

(5.7) N B17 M

§A **f-ufpork : hneas · tbmly**

§B **ost : min : kis : mik**

§C **(-) ki**

§A <fufpork> <hneas> <tbmly>

§B *Ást mín, kyss mik.*

§C ... ..

§A <fufpork> <hneas> <tbmly>

§B My beloved, kiss me.

§C ... ..

Two examples of letters are (5.8) and (5.9). Inscription (5.8) is a business letter, although written to someone the carver was on friendly terms with while (5.9) is a letter written to a family member regarding some issue which the carver had to solve.

(5.8) N 648 M

§A ÷ **hau÷grimi : felag ÷ sinum ÷ sen÷dir ÷ þorer ÷ fagr ÷ (k)æip÷iu ÷ guþs ÷ ok ÷**

**si÷nn^a ÷ san:na^ñ : flaskap ÷ ok uinato mart skorter**

§B **mik felag eki : er · mun:gatet æin÷ki : fis:ka^r:nir ÷ uil ÷ ek : at ÷ þu · uitir ÷ en**

**÷ ægi : kræf**

§C **þu biþ : bondan^ñ koma suþr til^l uar ok sia hut os liþr egga ha^ñ til en kræf**

**þu eiskis luta mer ok ægi la þu**

§D **þostæin lan^k uita sen mer hacka nokora eu ÷ sigriþ þæru nokos þa biop**

**henne hiit þu mer ekki ueta hyp ua^lapi**

§A *Hafgrimi, félag sínum, sendir Þórir Fagr kveðju Guðs ok sína, sannan félagskap ok vináttu. Mart skortir*

§B *mik, félagi! Ekki er mungátit, eingi fiskarnir. Vil ek at þú vitir, en eigi kref þú þú. Bið bóndann koma suður til vár ok sjá hvat oss líðr. Eggja hann til, en kref þú einskis hluta mér, ok eigi lát þú*

§D *Þorstein Lang vita. Send mér hanzka nokkura. Ef Sigríðr þarf nokkurs, þá bjóð henni. Heit þú mér ekki vetta hýð válaði.*

§A Þórir the Fair sends to Hafgrímr his partner his own and God's greeting, and true partnership and friendship. I am lacking much,

§B partner; there is no beer, nor fish. I want you to know this, and not make demands.

§C Order the husbandman to come south to us and see how we are suffering. Urge him to it, and don't make demands for more lots from me; and do not let

§D Þorsteinn Long know. Send me some gloves. If Sigríðr is in need of anything, then offer her. Promise that you will not beat me (at all) for my poverty!

(5.9) N B368 M

§A **þes : uil · ek · biþia ÷ þik : at | | t^u ÷ fa^r · ¶ o^r : þema : po^l:o^ke ÷ sntd : rit ÷ til ÷ s¶lyst^ur ÷ o^la^us ÷ hætt^usuæins ÷ h¶lo^n : e^r ÷ i ÷ bia^ruin : at^ ^n:unu:set^ri**

§B **o^k læita : ras ÷ uip : ha^na ÷ o^k ¶ uip : prønbr ÷ þina er þu : uil¶dir : sætas : æki : at | | t^u : s(y)sni : ¶ iarls ÷ at^u : kena : nu · r(æ)t^u ·**

§A *Þess vil ek biðja þik, at þú far ór þeima flokki. Snid rít til systur Ólafs Hettusveins. Hon er í Björgvini at nunnusetri,*

§B *ok leita ráðs við hana ok við frændr þína, er þú vildir sættask. Eigi átt þú synsemi jarls ... ..*

§A I would ask you this, that you leave your party. Cut a letter in runes to Ólafr Hettusveinn's sister. She is in the convent in Bergen.

§B Ask her and your kin for advice when you want to come to terms. You, surely, are less stubborn than the Earl.

Example (5.10) is a note to keep track of taxes, or other debts.

(5.10) N 655 M

§A **· (k) · barþr · t^ra^uan : ha^luan : a^nan : øyri : hein:rekr : tuær : ærtogar : brek · i ¶ uihi**

§B **ingimundr : sauþr : ha<sup>l</sup>fa : þriþiu : ærtog ƿ uih**

§C **h- ƿ (h)**

§D **uihi**

§A *G[oldit](?): Bárðr: trauðan halfan annan eyri. Heinrekr: tvær ertogar brek í. Vígi.*

§B *Ingimundr Sauðr: halfa þriðju ertog. Vígi.*

§C ... ..

§D *Vígi.*

§A *Paid(?): Bárðr: scarcely one and a half öre. Heinrekr: two ertogar, fraudently. Vígi / Acknowledged.*

§B *Ingimundr the Sheep: two and a half ertogar. Vígi / Acknowledged.*

§C ... ..

§D *Vígi / Acknowledged.*

Labels, although not consisting of long texts, could be quite varied with sometimes only the name of the owner being carved as in (5.11), sometimes ‘XY owns’ (5.12) or ‘XY owns me’ (5.13), while sometimes the text denotes what the object owned by a certain someone is (5.14). The last example, (5.15), has been used as a price label of sorts.

(5.11) **N 663 M**

**a<sup>l</sup>rni**

*Árni*

Árni

(5.14) **N 687 M**

**øiulfr a sek þena**

*Eyjulfr á sekk þenna.*

Eyjulfr owns this sack.

(5.12) **N 661 M**

**arne a**

*Árni á.*

Árni owns.

(5.15) **N 735 M**

§A **couæk a þræþr þisa**

§B **ho<sup>l</sup>f : fimta mo<sup>l</sup>rk**

§A *Sólveig á þræðr þessa.*

§B *Hølf fimta mork.*

(5.13) **N 688 M**

**eo<sup>l</sup>fr a ik**

*Eyjulfr/Þólfur á mik.*

Eyjulfr/Þólfur owns me.

§A *Sólveig owns these threads.*

§B *Four and a half marks.*

There are some examples of alliterative poetry as (5.4) and (5.16). Because of inscription (5.16), dated to c. 1332 (Rundata), the time limit for alliterative poetry in Norway has to be moved more than a hundred years closer to modern times (Liestøl 1966, 56).

(5.16) N B249 M

§A **sæint er þat er suæin fan dynta silfrberh : i : mol d^uærga þat sæg^hir hæ  
meþ harra hæiþmil^lc : i : giof ræiþa ÷ ÷ ha^u sa er la^uh at lqþe lohryranda  
dyrum þes uitis biþ ek þriote þægnlæiþum guc ræiþi**

§B **sigurþr : amunda:son : a mik**

§A *Seint er, þat er Sveinn fann dynta, silfrberg, í mql dverga, þat segir herr með harra, heiðmilds í gjof reiða. Hafí sá er laug at logis logrýranda dýrum, þess vítis bið ek þrjóti þegnleiðum, Guðs reiði.*

§B *Sigurðr Amundasonr á mik.*

[Norwegian] §A Seint er, det (= sølvberget) som Svein dynta fant, sølvberg, i dvergens grus/krystaller - det sier hæren sammen med kongen - redet ut som gaven til den gavmilde. Måtte den ha som løy til den dyre havets lues/flammes (dvs. gull) forminsker (dvs. kongen) - den straffen ber jeg om for stivnakken som mennene er lei - guds vrede.

Another interesting group is the pub carvings group, which perhaps contains the most interesting inscriptions – not unlike sending letters in classrooms. In the example provided, (5.17), the carver could have intended the text as gossip, to let their friends know about this fact, or perhaps as a warning, to inform someone of the affair.

(5.17) N B39 M

§A **smiþur ÷ saa^rþ ÷ uiktisi**

§B **af ÷ snæltu÷benum**

§A *Smiðr sarð Vígdísi*

§B *af snældubeinum.*

§A *Smiðr fucked Vígdís*

§B *of the Snelde-legs (ie, the Snelde-legs folk)*

Finally, inscription (5.18) is written in Latin and Old Norwegian, although where exactly the carver was the day before is hard to say; it is dubious that it would have been Rome.

(5.18) N 607 M

§A ru·ma · kapud · mundi

§B ut ÷ uar ÷ ek i kær

§A *Roma, caput mundi.*

§B *Út var ek í gær.*

§A Rome, capital of the world.

§B I was out (there) yesterday.

Unfortunately, many of these inscriptions are in rather poor condition either due to them having lain outside, subject to the elements after deposition or because the carver or recipient have carved over them, or have broken them. Due to this, several inscriptions are fragmented and only partially legible (Liestøl 1966, 52).





## 6 Previous research on Old Norse noun phrases

There has not been much research into the workings of the noun phrases of Old Norse from the perspective this thesis examines them. In this chapter, some previous research will be examined to see what has been looked at in this regard in order to be able to contrast the research in the following chapters with previous observations.

Falk and Torp look at noun phrases from a diachronic perspective, contrasting Modern Danish and Norwegian with Old Norwegian (Falk and Torp 1900). Nygaard has given an extensive description on the morphology and word order of noun phrases and their semantic and stylistic differences (Nygaard 1905). Ringdal claims that the word order is closely tied with sentence rhythm and offers an explanation to prenominal and postnominal adjectives (Ringdal 1918).

Valfells and Cathey look at adjectives and give stylistic significance to the position of adjectives in relation to the nouns (Valfells and Cathey 1981). Haugen offers a quite clear explanation of the different constituents and their position within a noun phrase, and describes the most frequent cases (Haugen 1995). There has been research done in the field of generative syntax as well, explaining the word order with movements (Faarlund 2004). Finally, Barnes inspects noun phrases based on which words constitute them and draws a generic outline of the word order of noun phrases in Old Norse (Barnes 2008).

Falk and Torp, Nygaard, Ringdal, and Haugen wrote in Scandinavian, but I have provided my own translation throughout the chapter.

### 6.1 Falk and Torp: *Dansk-norskens syntax i historisk fremstilling* (1900)

Falk and Torp (1900) look at the syntax of Danish and Norwegian in relation to Old Norwegian. They claim that the original, Indo-European position of the adjective was in front of the noun and that this originally Indo-European word order remained in the West Germanic languages while it changed in East Germanic (Gothic) where the adjective precedes the noun if it has an emphatic stress. According to Falk and Thorp, the rule in Old Norwegian is quite clear according to them, where they claim that the weight of the words plays a role in the word order inside the phrase itself. For example, if the head is a compound noun, it would move ahead of the

adjective: *hann var mikill maðr – hann var hermaðr mikill; hann var ríkr höfðingi ok málafylgumaðr mikill* (Falk and Torp 1900, 308 §188).

In case of a weak (definite) adjective, it would stand after the noun: *í hinum beztum íþróttum – með kærleik hinum mesta; Uðr hin djúpuðga; Halfdanr svartí*; while in the case of strong (indefinite) adjectives, the order is not as bound: *einn ríkr maðr – kerling ein gømul*. Participles follow the noun more often than preceding it: *riddarar vápnaðir*. In the case of two coordinated adjectives, one generally precedes while the other follows the noun: *mikit vápn og gott; svá segja gamlir menn ok sannaðir; mildr guð ok miskunnsamr* (Falk and Torp 1900, 309 §188).

Possessive pronouns mostly follow the noun: *minn herra – í elli sinni* and in case of the combination of a noun, possessive pronoun, and another pronoun, the possessive still generally follows the noun: *aðrir synir mínir; heverr maðr hans*. (Falk and Torp 1900, 310 §188). Nouns in the genitive are placed either directly before or after the nouns they modify: *kalla jörð Ýmis hold ok móður Þórs* while in case of two nouns in genitive modifying the noun, the case is similar to that of two coordinated adjectives following the noun: *um skipna búnað ok vápna* (Falk and Torp 1900, 44 §37).

## 6.2 Nygaard: *Norrøn syntax* (1905)

According to Nygaard, a strong (indefinite) adjective is placed by default after the noun while it is placed in front of it when it is stressed (Nygaard 1905, 363 §348). An adjective in positive, weak (definite) form is in general placed behind a proper noun but in front of a common noun while an adjective in comparative or superlative stands in front of a noun (Nygaard 1905, 365 §349–350).

If a weak (definite) adjective is added to a noun which has a demonstrative pronoun as well, the adjective is placed mostly before, but also often after the noun (Nygaard 1905, 366 §351).

The placement of a genitive that determines a noun as attribute:

- a) Possessive, conjunctive, subjective, and objective genitive is placed after the noun
- b) Partitive genitive, genitive of material, and genitive of the whole is placed after the noun
- c) Genitive of description is placed in front of the noun

(Nygaard 1905, 368–369 §355)

### 6.3 Ringdal: *Om det attribute adjektivs position i oldnorsk prosa (1918)*

Ringdal starts his examination of Old Norwegian by stating that the influence of the sentence rhythm on the word order itself has not been sufficiently examined thus far (Ringdal 1918, 5 §1). He furthermore states that the word order in Old Norwegian, as opposed to Modern Norwegian, was much more free (Ringdal 1918, 7 §2). He also states that the position of the adjective in most languages which have a freer word order is a hard topic, and he refers to Sweet: “we should expect post adjunct order to prevail – we should expect assumptive adjectives to follow their nouns” but further quotes Sweet that “the most frequent deviation from purely logical principles is the pre-adjunct order adjective + noun. This order was originally probably emphatic” (Sweet 1900, 2–3 §1762–1763). To oppose the viewpoint of Sweet, he quotes Falk and Torp (Falk and Torp 1900, 308–309 §188; Ringdal 1918, 13 §6).

Ringdal differentiates between two groups of adjectives depending on their function in the phrase that he attributes the difference in word order to:

- a) characterizing function (prenominal): *lendr maðr; rautt gull; rennanda vatn; sýkn dagr; heilagr dagr; (at) norronu máli; (á) danska tungu; (hann helt) teknum hætti; (at) fornu fari; (hann átti) heimilan sigr; heimult fé; heilagr staðr; hvítr matr; sǫnn sǫk; rǫng sǫk; vegin sǫk; send orð; kent heiti; kristinn dómr; heilagr dómr; frjáls dómr*, etc. (Ringdal 1918, 15 §6).
- b) describing function (postnominal): *fjallgarðr mikill; skíðgarðr hár; skjaldþili flatt; vígamaðr mikill*, etc.; describing epithets: *vǫllr slétt; hamrar brattir; veizlur miklar; bú stór*, etc.; *maðr metnaðargjarn; kona ríklunduð* (Ringdal 1918, 16 §6).

He further states that the meaning of the noun and (especially) the adjective plays an important role in their order and says that the postnominal position is the default position for the adjective in Old Norwegian, quoting Nygaard who says the same (Nygaard 1905, 363 §348). If the adjective is to be stressed, it takes the position in front of the noun (Ringdal 1918, 18–9 §6–8). In subsequent chapters, he further examines the word order and semantic functions behind it.

## 6.4 Valfells and Cathey: *Old Icelandic: An Introductory Course* (1981)

Valfells and Cathey attribute the word order of noun phrases to semantic and stylistic differences. According to them, “the adjective modifying the noun may either precede or follow. When it precedes the noun, it is somewhat more emphatic, or a more basic attribute of the noun it modifies. Often the position of adjectives modifying a noun is varied for stylistic purposes, in order to avoid a repetitive or monotonous narrative sequence: ‘*Ingólfr er norskr vikingr ok maðr ríkr ok djarfr*’” (Valfells and Cathey 1981, 16, 28).

According to Valfells and Cathey, if the noun is modified by an adjective, the definite article may be postponed to adjoin to the noun, if the adjective follows the noun instead of preceding it, for example: *inn ungi sveinn* becomes *sveinninn ungi* if the adjective is moved to the postnominal position.<sup>6</sup> According to them, when the adjective follows the noun, it is less prominent in the noun phrase than if it precedes it (Valfells and Cathey 1981, 69).

## 6.5 Haugen: *Grunnbok i norrønt språk* (1995)

Haugen states that the noun phrases are the most complex of all the Old Norse phrases. Modifiers in noun phrases have a relatively free relationship with the head noun and constituents which are now bound to appear only in front of the head, could appear in front of as well as after it in Old Norse (Haugen 1995, 252).

In adjective in the positive usually follows the noun: *hestr hvítr; hraun stórt; kerling ein gømul; ungr drengr*. The same applies to many determiners (Haugen counts possessive pronouns into this category): *akarn nokkut; kotttr minn; lið várt* (Haugen 1995, 252).

Adjective in the comparative and superlative mostly stands in front of the noun: *ríkari maðr; inn mesti vinr; beztr læknir* (Haugen 1995, 252–253).

A demonstrative pronoun and an adjective may stand either in front of or after the noun: *reflarninr þeir hinir góðu; konan sú hin verri; hafit þat it djúpa; sá hinn ungi maðr; sá hinn yngri sveinninn* (Haugen 1995, 253).

A genitive of description mostly follows the noun: *øgrynni liðs; fjórir hleifar brauðs; frændr ok kunnmenn sveinsins* (Haugen 1995, 253).

---

<sup>6</sup> More can be read on definiteness marking in Börjars 2008 and Börjars 2016.

## 6.6 Faarlund: *The Syntax of Old Norse* (2004)

According to Faarlund, “the Old Norse noun phrase exhibits a great variety of forms and structures, to the extent that the word order within the NP seems almost totally unconstrained by syntactic rules. On closer inspection, however, certain basic patterns emerge, and the variants turn out to be the result of general movement rules” (Faarlund 2004, 55).

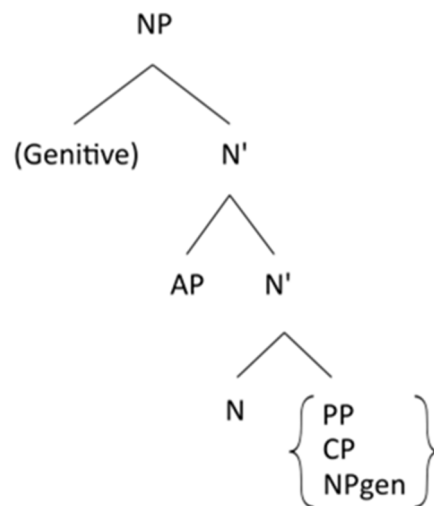


Figure 6.6.1 *The basic pattern of the NP* (Faarlund 2004, 55)

Structurally, the independent definite article is used when a noun phrase has an adjectival complement and the article precedes the noun. In this case, “the definite article is the head of a phrase above the NP in the D-structure” (Faarlund 2004, 56).

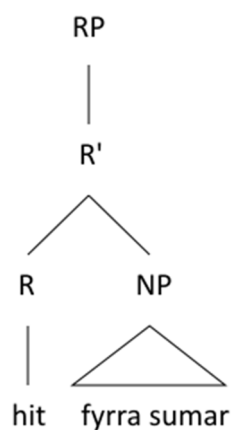


Figure 6.6.2 *The D-structure relationship between the definite article and the NP* (Faarlund 2004, 56)<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Faarlund (2004) establishes RP as reference phrase.

In the case of a clitic definite article, the noun is moved up to R position to join to the definite article.



Figure 6.6.3 The S-structure relationship between the definite article and the NP (Faarlund 2004, 57)

In case of a genitive phrase (“NP phrase or pronoun in the genitive, or a possessive determiner”), the phrase can precede or follow the head noun, though most often they follow it. In this case, “the genitive is generated as a complement of N” (Faarlund 2004, 59). The genitive may also precede the noun, in which case it moves to the specifier of the NP (Faarlund 2004, 60).

Regarding the adjectives, Faarlund states that their basic position is to the left of the noun and as participles behave syntactically and morphologically like adjectives, they would take the same position; however, Faarlund also states that on the surface, adjectives usually follow the noun which he attributes to the movement of the noun to the R-position while if an adjective precedes the noun, it is emphasized or focused (Faarlund 2004, 67–69).

In the case of definite NPs with adjectival constituents, “the noun normally remains behind the adjective, while the article appears in its full form.” He postulates that the noun moving to the R-position to combine with the definite article is less common (Faarlund 2004, 70).

Finally, Faarlund states that quantifiers are generated in the same position as adjectives and thus the noun may either follow it, or after the movement to the R-position, precede it (Faarlund 2004, 73).

## 6.7 Barnes: *A New Introduction to Old Norse* (2008)

Barnes states in his book that the word order in Old Norse noun phrases is freer than in (present day) English and states that “words modifying a noun may, with certain restrictions, appear either before or after it” and that noun phrases with several constituents can appear with numerous orders: *sá (h)inn **blindi** maðr*, *maðr sá (h)inn **blindi***, or *sá maðr (h)inn **blindi*** (Barnes 2008, 228).

He further states that possessive adjectives (in this thesis these are regarded as their own groups, namely possessive pronouns and reflexive possessives), genitive modifiers, and epithets and appositional modifiers follow the noun. In the case of possessive adjectives this order may be reversed due to emphasis: *lið **várt***, *móðir **mín***, *tungu **hennar***, *þat er ekki **mitt** skap*; *þræll **konungs***, *haugr **Hálfðanar***, *margra **manna** vitorð*; and *Eiríkr **rauði*** and *Þorfinnr **jarl*** (Barnes 2008, 228).

Comparative and superlative adjectives, along with adverbs modifying adjectives, precede the noun by default ((*h*)in **stærri** skipin and (*h*)inir **spökustu** men), however, certain adverbs (*mjök*, *vel*, *betr*, and *best*) tend to follow their head word: *ákafliga **reiðr***, *gott **mjök***, and *hærðr **vel*** (Barnes 2008, 229).

## 6.8 Summary

From these papers it is clear that there are four groups who view the word order inside noun phrases quite differently, of which two are of greater significance for this thesis. Falk and Torp state that word weight plays an important role in the word order of phrases and so heavier elements tend to come first. They also state that a weak (definite) adjective follows the noun. Nygaard’s view is that a strong (indefinite) adjective follows the noun unless it is emphasized, while a weak (definite) adjective precedes a common noun. This latter view is shared by Haugen.

Ringdal heads his own group with his proposal that the intended function of adjectives in the phrase plays an important role in determining whether they stand before or after the head noun. Valfell and Cathey seem to agree with Ringdal in that a strong (indefinite) adjective may precede or follow the noun, but, the similarities end here as they refer only to sentence rhythm when justifying their viewpoint. Barnes claims that adjectives, with certain restrictions, may precede or follow the noun, but he does not specify exactly when either case happens. It is interesting to point out that Valfell and Cathey, while looking at the noun phrase from a linear

view, claim backwards movement of the definite article in case of a definite noun phrase while Faarlund states that it is in fact the noun that moves up to join to the definite article.

In the following chapter, the Bryggen in Bergen runic material and the Old Norwegian corpus in Menotec will be examined to see if they show any patterns in favor of any of this research.



# 7 Glossing, categorization, and statistics from the relevant runic material from Bryggen in Bergen

## 7.1 Glossing and categorization of the runic material

Of the 643 inscriptions documented from Bryggen in Bergen, 47 were found relevant for the thesis. Most of the inscriptions had to be excluded on the basis of language, due to the fact that they were completely or mostly illegible, or because they did not contain the type of noun phrases the thesis investigates.

These 47 inscriptions are included at the end of the thesis in Appendix 1. The noun phrases have been glossed and afterwards categorized into their present order. If a phrase appears multiple times, it is only glossed once but the inscriptions in which it appears are listed.

### (7.1.1) Noun and quantifier

*einskis*            *hluta*  
no.M.GEN.SG    thing.M.OBL.SG  
'(for) more things'  
(N 648 M)

*hanzka*            *nøkkura*  
glove.M.ACC.PL    some.M.ACC.SG  
'some gloves'  
(N 648 M)

*alla*                *hluti*  
all.M.ACC.PL    parts.M.ACC.PL  
'all parts'  
(N B30 M)

*øllum*             *huga*  
all.M.DAT.SG    mind.M.OBL.SG  
'all (my) mind'  
(N B493 M)

*margar*                      *jartegnir*  
many.F.ACC.PL.STR    sign.F.ACC.PL  
'many signs'

(N B524 M)

**(7.1.2) Noun and numeral**

*einn*                      *hlutr*  
one.M.NOM.SG    thing.M.NOM.SG  
'one thing'

(N B91 M)

**(7.1.3) Noun and definite article**

*salt-it*  
salt.N.ACC.SG-the.N.ACC.SG  
'the salt'

(N B625 M)

*sal-it*  
payment.N.NOM.SG-the.N.NOM.SG  
'the payment'

(N B625 M)

**(7.1.4) Noun and determiner**

*slíka*                      *konu*  
such.F.ACC.SG    woman.F.ACC.SG  
'such a woman'

(N B552 M)

**(7.1.5) Noun and demonstrative pronoun**

*þat*                      *korn*  
the.N.ACC.SG    corn.N.ACC.SG  
'the/this corn'

(N 650 M)

*sekk*                      *þenna*  
sack.M.ACC.SG      this.M.ACC.SG  
'the/this sack'

(N 678 M, N 687 M)

*þetta*                      *tré*  
this.N.ACC.SG      tree.N.ACC.SG  
'the/this tree'

(N 694 M)

*garn*                      *þetta*  
yarn.N.ACC.SG      this.N.ACC.SG  
'the/this yarn'

(N 722 M)

*þræðr*                      *þessa*  
threads.ACC.SG      these.F.ACC.SG  
'the/these threads'

(N 735 M)

*þeirri*                      *hirð*  
the.F.DAT.SG      retinue.F.DAT.SG  
'the/that retinue'

(N B32 M)

*þess*                      *manns*  
the.M.GEN.SG      man.M.GEN.SG  
'of the/that man'

(N B241 M)

*þess*                      *vítis*  
the.N.GEN.SG      punishment.N.GEN.SG  
'the/that punishment'

(N B249 M)

<i>þeima</i>	<i>flokki</i>	
the.M.DAT.SG	company.M.DAT.SG.	
‘the/this company’		(N B368 M)
<i>þetta</i>	<i>mál</i>	
the.N.ACC.SG	matter.N.ACC.SG	
‘the/this matter’		(N B448 M)
<i>rúnar</i>	<i>þessar</i>	
runes.F.ACC.PL	the.F.ACC.PL	
‘the/these runes’		(N B462 M)
<i>þosa</i>	<i>þenna</i>	
little.bag.M.ACC.SG	the.M.ACC.SG	
‘the/this little bag’		(N B525 M)
<i>afskurðum</i>	<i>þeim</i>	
cutting.off.M.DAT.SG	the.M.DAT.SG	
‘the deceiver’		(N B525 M)
<i>sá</i>	<i>maður</i>	
the.M.NOM.SG	man.M.NOM.SG	
‘the/that man’		(N B552 M)
<i>þessari</i>	<i>lykt</i>	
the.F.DAT.SG	conclusion.F.DAT.SG	
‘the/this conclusion’		(N B625 M)

(7.1.6) **Noun and possessive pronoun**

*ákall*

*mitt*

invocation.N.ACC.SG

mine.N.ACC.SG

‘my invocation’

(N 289 M)

*föður*

*minn*

father.M.OBL.SG

mine.M.ACC.SG

‘my father’

(N 650 M)

*lífs*

*míns*

*ok*

*sálu*

life.N.GEN.SG

mine.N.GEN.SG

and

soul.F.OBL.SG

‘my life (body) and soul’

(N B13 M)

*ást*

*mín*

love.F.NOM.SG

mine.F.NOM.SG

‘my love’

(N B17 M)

*bjarzku*

*þína*

beauty.F.OBL.SG

yours.F.ACC.SG

‘your beauty’

(N B184 M)

*þína*

*óðáþ*

your.F.ACC.SG

misdeed.F.ACC.SG

‘your misdeed’

(N B241 M)

*lífi*

*þínu*

life.N.DAT.SG

yours.N.DAT.SG

‘your life’

(N B257 M)

*frændr*                      *þína*  
kinsmen.M.ACC.PL      yours.M.ACC.PL  
'your kinsmen'  
  
(N B368 M)

*orleik*                      *þínum*  
liberality.M.DAT.SG      yours.M.DAT.SG  
'your generosity'  
  
(N B416 M)

*smíð*                      *þína*  
forging.F.ACC.SG      yours.F.ACC.SG  
'your forgings'  
  
(N B448 M)

*bæn*                      *mín*  
request.F.NOM.SG      mine.F.NOM.SG  
'my request'  
  
(N B448 M)

*minn*                      *vilja*  
my.M.ACC.SG      will.M.ACC.SG  
'my will'  
  
(N B448 M)

Rundata has normalized the spelling of **min** as *mín* instead of *minn* which would be expected preceding *vilja*, a weak masculine noun in the oblique case.

*byrli*                      *minn*  
cup-bearer.M.NOM.SG      mine.M.NOM.SG  
'my beloved/drink server'  
  
(N B493 M)

*minni*            *vitend*  
my.F.DAT.SG    knowledge.F.DAT.SG  
'my knowledge'

(N B625 M)

(7.1.7) **Noun and reflexive possessive**

*Hafgrími,*            *félag*            *sínum,*  
Hafgrímur.M.DAT.SG    partner.M.DAT.SG    his.own.M.DAT.SG  
'to Hafgrímur, his partner'

(N 648 M)

Rundata has normalized the spelling of **felag** as *félag* which could be interpreted as *félagi* (meaning 'partnership, fellowship'). However, the word in question here is *félagi* ('partner') which in oblique case would be *félagi*.

*Lunaneyju,*            *húsfreyju*            *sinni,*  
Lunaney.F.DAT.SG    wife.F.DAT.SG    his.own.F.DAT.SG  
'to Lunaney, his wife,'

(N 649 M)

*ver*            *sínum*  
man.M.DAT.SG    her.own.M.DAT.SG  
'her man/lover'

(N B111 M)

*lifi*            *sínu*  
life.N.DAT.SG    his/her.own.N.DAT.SG  
'his/her life'

(N B384 M)

*knífi*            *sínum*  
knife.M.DAT.SG    his.M.DAT.SG  
'his/her knife'

(N B480 M)

(7.1.8) **Noun and genitive**

*mǫl*                      *dverga*  
gravel.F.DAT.SG      dwarf.M.GEN.PL  
‘the gravel of the dwarves’

(N B249 M)

*Guðs*                      *reiði*  
God.M.GEN.SG      anger.F.NOM.SG  
‘God’s anger’

(N B249 M)

*ylgjar*                      *ergi*                                              *ok*      *úpóla*  
wolf.F.GEN.SG      wickedness.F.NOM/OBL.SG      and      impatience.M.ACC.PL  
‘wolfish evil and hatefulness’

(N B257 M)

*Ioluns*                      *móð*  
Iolunn.M.GEN.SG      wrath.M.ACC.SG  
‘Iolun’s misery’

(N B257 M)

*sýstur*                      *Ólafs*                                              *Hettusveins*  
sister.F.DAT.SG      Ólafr.M.GEN.SG      Hettusveinn.M.GEN.SG  
‘Ólafr Hettusvein’s sister’

(N B368 M)

*synsemi*                                              *jarls*  
disobligingness.F.NOM/OBL.SG      earl.GEN.SG  
‘the earl’s stubbornness’

(N B368 M)

*Ránar*                      *ljóma*  
Rán.F.GEN.SG      radiance.M.OBL.SG  
‘Rán’s radiance’

(N B416 M)



*konungs*            *dómi*  
king.M.GEN.SG    judgement.M.DAT.SG  
‘the king’s judgement’

(N B416 M)

*gumna*            *ferðir*  
men.M.GEN.PL    journey.F.ACC.PL  
‘men’s journeys’

(N B416 M)

*konu*                *manns*  
woman.F.ACC.SG    man.M.GEN.SG  
‘man’s woman/wife’

(N B496 M, N B644 M)

*orð*                 *Guðs*  
word.N.ACC.SG    God.M.GEN.SG  
‘the word of God’

(N B524 M)

*nafni*                *dróttins*  
name.N.DAT.SG    Lord.M.GEN.SG  
‘the name of the Lord’

(N B524 M)

#### (7.1.9) Noun and adjective

*sannan*            *félagskap*            *ok*    *vináttu*  
true.M.ACC.SG.STR    partnership.M.ACC.SG    and    friendship.F.ACC.SG  
‘true partnership and friendship’

(N 648 M)

*skæra*            *mikil*  
uproar.F.NOM.SG    great.F.NOM.SG.STR  
‘great uproar’

(N B190 M)

*mestr*                                      *ffánda*  
 big.M.NOM.SG.STR.SUP      devil.M.GEN.PL  
 ‘the greatest among devils’  
 (N B241 M)

*lævís*                                      *kona*  
 crafty.F.NOM.SG.STR      woman.F.NOM.SG  
 ‘evil woman’  
 (N B257 M)

*hugum*                                      *góðum*  
 thought.M.DAT.SG      good.M.DAT.SG.STR  
 ‘good thoughts’  
 (N B380 M)

*froknan*                                      *dreng*  
 valiant.M.ACC.SG.STR      bold.man.ACC.SG  
 ‘the brave man’  
 (N B416 M)

*blindr*                                      *maðr*  
 blindr.M.NOM.SG.STR      man.M.NOM.SG  
 ‘(a) blind man’  
 (N B417 M)

It is interesting to note that while the adjective is strong (indefinite) in *blindr maðr*, the implied meaning of the phrase seems to be definite.

*konu*                                      *væna*  
 woman.F.ACC.SG      beautiful.F.ACC.SG.STR  
 ‘beautiful woman’  
 (N B524 M)

(7.1.10) **Numeral and unit of measure**

*tvá*                      *mæla*  
two.M.ACC.PL    measure.M.ACC.PL  
'two measures and three casks'

(N 650 M)

*þrjú*                      *sáld*  
three.N.ACC.PL    cask.N.ACC.PL  
'three casks'

(N 650 M)

*sextán*                *mæla*  
sixteen    measure.M.ACC/GEN?.PL  
'sixteen measures'

(N 650 M)

*þrjú*                      *sáld*  
three.N.ACC.PL    cask.N.ACC.PL  
'three casks'

(N 650 M)

*halfan*                *ask*  
half.M.ACC.SG    ask.M.ACC.SG  
'half an ask'

(N 652 M)

*tvær*                      *merkr*  
two.F.ACC.PL    mark.F.ACC.PL  
'two marks'

(N 654 M)

*þrettán*                *pund*  
thirteen    pound.N.ACC.PL  
'thirteen pounds'

(N 654 M)

<i>halfan</i>	<i>annan</i>	<i>eyri</i>	
half.M.ACC.SG	second.M.ACC.SG	öre.M.ACC.SG	
‘one and a half öre’			(N 655 M)
<i>tvær</i>	<i>ertogar</i>		
two.F.ACC.PL	ertog.F.ACC.PL		
‘two ertogar’			(N 655 M)
<i>halfa</i>	<i>þriðju</i>	<i>ertog</i>	
half.F.ACC.SG	third.F.ACC.SG	ertog.F.ACC.SG	
‘two and a half ertogar’			(N 655 M)
<i>þrim</i>	<i>pund</i>		
three.N.DAT.PL	pound.N.NOM/ACC.PL		
‘three pounds’			(N 656 M)
<i>halfan</i>	<i>níunda</i>	<i>eyri</i>	
half.M.ACC.SG	ninth.M.ACC.SG	öre.M.ACC.SG	
‘eight and a half öre’			(N 656 M)
<i>tveir</i>	<i>aurar</i>		
two.M.NOM.PL	öre.M.NOM.PL		
‘two öre’			(N 657 M)
<i>hólf</i>	<i>fimta</i>	<i>mörk</i>	
four.F.NOM.SG	fifth.F.NOM.SG	mark.F.NOM.SG	
‘four and a half marks’			(N 735 M)

*halfan*                      *bolla*  
 half.M.ACC.SG              bowl.M.ACC.SG  
 ‘half a bowl’  
 (N B255 M)

*halfan*                      *annan*                      *bolla*  
 half.M.ACC.SG              second.M.ACC.SG              bowl.M.ACC.SG  
 ‘one and a half bowls’  
 (N B255 M)

*tvau*                      *pund*  
 two.N.ACC.PL              pound.N.ACC.PL  
 ‘two pounds’  
 (N B625 M)

*þrjú*                      *skinn*  
 three.N.ACC.PL              skin.N.ACC.PL  
 ‘three skins’  
 (N B625 M)

(7.1.11) **Noun, quantifier, and definite article**

*ekki*                      ...              *mungát-it*  
 no.N.NOM.SG              ...              ale.N.NOM.SG-the.N.NOM.SG  
 ‘no (the) ale’  
 (N 648 M)

*eingi*                      *fiskar-nir*  
 no.M.NOM.PL              fish.M.NOM.PL-the.M.NOM.PL  
 ‘no (the) fish’  
 (N 648 M)

*engi*                      ...              *saltpundar-in*  
 no.M.NOM.SG              ...              salt-scale.M.NOM.SG-the.F?.NOM?.SG  
 ‘no salt-scale’  
 (N B625 M)

The noun *pundari*, according to all three dictionaries used in this thesis, is masculine while the ending **-en** Rundata normalized as *-in* in the inscription, which is the feminine cliticized definite article for the nominative. The quantifier *engi* can stand for both the masculine and feminine nominative.

It is not entirely clear in the case of these three examples whether *ekki*, *eingi*, and *engi* are quantifiers or adverbs in this case. Since they are in fact declined they seem to be quantifiers rather than the indeclinable *ekki* adverb, however, their role in the sentence is not quite clear.

*Ekki er mungátit, eingi fiskarnir.*

*Engi var saltpundarin heima.*

*Ekki er mungátit, eingi fiskarnir.*

Not.adv is ale, not fish

None.quant is ale, none fish

*Engi var saltpundarin heima.*

Not.adv was salt-scale home

None.quant was salt-scale home

Both readings seem sound and as Modern English uses two different constructions to convey these two meanings in the case of the second sentence, namely that ‘the salt-scale was not at home’ or that ‘no salt-scale was at home’ (we had no salt-scale at home), it is hard to draw parallels.

#### (7.1.12) Noun, quantifier, genitive, and adjective

<i>allir</i>	<i>Guðs</i>	<i>helgir</i>	<i>menn</i>
all.M.NOM.PL	God.M.GEN.SG	holy.M.NOM.PL.STR	men.M.NOM.PL
‘all of God’s holy men’			

(N B13 M)

#### (7.1.13) Noun, quantifier, and adjective

<i>allra</i>	<i>góðra</i>	<i>hluta</i>
every.M.GEN.PL	good.M.GEN.PL.STR	thing.M.GEN.PL
‘all good things’		

(N 289 M)

*nøkkura*            *mórenda*            *váð*  
some.F.ACC.SG    russet.F.ACC.STR.SG.STR    cloth.F.ACC.SG  
‘some russet cloth’

(N 649 M)

*allir*            *helgir*            *menn*  
all.M.NOM.PL    holy.M.NOM.PL.STR    men.M.NOM.PL  
‘all holy men’

(N B13 M)

(7.1.14) **Numeral, genitive, and unit of measure**

*átján*        *alnum*        *jarns*  
eighteen    ell.F.DAT.PL    iron.N.GEN.SG  
‘eighteen ells of iron’

(N B448 M)

*sex*        *laupa*            *salts*  
six        basket.M.ACC/GEN.PL    salt.N.GEN.SG  
‘six baskets of salt’

(N B625 M)

(7.1.15) **Noun, definite article, and adjective**

*hit*            *bezta*            *barn*  
the.N.NOM.SG    good.N.NOM.SG.WK.SUP    child.N.NOM.SG  
‘a very good child’

(N B660 M)

Rundata translates this as ‘the best child’; however, the phrase itself is an absolute superlative and as such, it should be disambiguated in the translation as ‘a very good child’ as Barnes describes the construction (Barnes 2008, 93). In case of this phrase having a relative superlative meaning, it should have the form *hit bezta barnið*.

(7.1.16) **Noun, determiner, and genitive**

*nafn*                      *þess*                      *manns*  
name.N.ACC.SG      the.M.GEN.SG      man.M.GEN.SG  
'the name of the/that man'

(N B241 M)

*nafn*                      *þess*  
name.N.ACC.SG      the.M.GEN.SG  
'the name of (the/that) ...'

(N B241 M)

This phrase is considered identical to the above *nafn þess manns* on grounds of ellipsis although, as it does not explicitly contain a noun, it is not counted into the statistics but remains here as a curiosity for potential future research.

*vinr*                      *vífs*                      *þessa*  
friend.M.NOM.SG      wife.F.GEN.SG      the.M.GEN.SG  
'the friend of the/this wife'

(N B644 M)

The reading of this phrase is not obvious as *þessa* would indicate masculine genitive. However, syntactically this does not make sense.

*Ann ek svá konu manns, at mér þykkir kaldr eldr. En ek em vinr vífs þessa.*

'I love another man's wife so that fire feels cold to me. And I am the friend of the wife (of this man)/this wife.'

If the reference was meant to be the husband of this woman be referred to here, he would either have to have been the subject of the preceding sentence: *Ann ek svá konu manns, at mér þykkir kaldr eldr*, or the phrase should be *vinr vífs þessa manns*. However, if *þessa* should refer to the woman, it is in the wrong form as then it should be *þessarar*. The transliteration shows that the carver has originally carved *þessu* and then inserted a bind-rune **a** to **u**: **uinr ÷ ui`f's þæsu^a**.



(7.1.17) **Noun, possessive pronoun, and adjective**

*sanna*                      *vingan*                      *vára*  
true.F.ACC.SG.STR    friendship.F.ACC.SG    ours.F.ACC.SG  
‘our true friendship’

(N B448 M)

(7.1.18) **Noun, reflexive possessive, and genitive**

*kveðju*                      *Guðs*                      *ok*                      *sína*  
greetings.F.ACC.SG    God.M.GEN.SG    and                      his.own.F.ACC.SG  
‘his own and God’s greeting’

(N 648 M, N B333 M)

...    *Guðs*                      *ok*                      *sína*  
...    God.M.GEN.SG    and                      his/her.own.F.ACC.SG  
‘his/her own and God’s ...’

(N 649 M)

This instance is counted as an example of noun, reflexive possessive and genitive based on the similar examples from other inscriptions and the formulaic nature of the phrase even though it is missing its head noun.

*kveðju*                      ...    *Guðs*                      *ok*                      *sína*  
greetings.F.ACC.SG    ...    God.M.GEN.SG                      and                      his.own.F.ACC.SG  
‘his own and God’s greeting’

(N B448 M)

*kveðju*  
greeting.F.ACC.SG  
‘greetings’

(N 658 M, N 659 M)

This phrase, although not included in the statistics, is interesting to mention as it is possibly the short version of *kveðju Guðs ok sína*.

(7.1.19) **Unit of measure only**

*pund*

pound.N.NOM/ACC.PL

‘pound’

(N 653 M)

*bolla*

bowl.M.ACC.SG

‘bowl’

(N B255 M)

## 7.2 Statistics from the glossing of the runic material

In this chapter, statistics from the 101 previously analyzed and glossed noun phrases from the preceding chapter are collected and organized. After the tables examples follow with the glossing for the selected examples repeated for ease of reading.

The combinations listed in the table are present to point out the constituents the noun phrases consist of but disregard the order in which they appear in the noun phrase to not overcomplicate the tables. The columns in the tables are: the constituents in the noun phrase regardless of their position in relation to one another; the next two (or three in Table 7.2.2) columns denote the position of the constituents in relation to one another while the last column is the total number of phrases of the kind, regardless of the position of the constituents.

For the simpler phrases, two positions are possible: prenominal and postnominal while for the more complex noun phrases prenominal, postnominal, and flanked are the possibilities. Flanked is used for noun phrases where the noun is flanked by at least one constituent on either side. Upon presenting examples, these constructs are consistently marked as: a) prenominal, b) postnominal, and c) flanked throughout the chapter.

Phrases which appear in multiple inscriptions are counted as many times as they appear while some phrases, although they appear in the glossing chapter, are disqualified from the statistics on ground of lack of information regarding their structure due to words missing, as mentioned in subchapter 7.1.

Contractions used in the chapter:

N	noun	PossPron	possessive pronoun
Q	quantifier	ReflPoss	reflexive pronoun
Num	numeral	Gen	genitive
DefArt	definite article	Adj	adjective
Det	determiner	UoM	unit of measure
DemPron	demonstrative pronoun		

### 7.2.1 Noun phrases with one dependent

*Table 7.2.1 Statistics of the distribution of constituents in noun phrases with one dependent from the Bryggen in Bergen runic material*

	Prenom.	Postnom.	Total
N+Q	4	1	5
N+Num	1	0	1
N+DefArt	0	2	2
N+Det	1	0	1
N+DemPron	9	7	16
N+PossPron	3	11	14
N+ReflPoss	0	5	5
N+Gen	6	7	13
N+Adj	5	3	8
Num+UoM	18	0	0

#### (7.2.1.1) N+Q

a) <i>einskis</i>	<i>hluta</i>	b) <i>hanzka</i>	<i>nøkkura</i>
no.M.GEN.SG	thing.M.OBL.SG	glove.M.ACC.PL	some.M.ACC.SG
‘more things’		‘some gloves’	

(N 648 M)

(N 648 M)

(7.2.1.2) **N+Num**

- a) *einn*                      *hlutr*  
one.M.NOM.SG            thing.M.NOM.SG  
'one thing'

(N B91 M)

(7.2.1.3) **N+DefArt**

- b) *salt-it*  
salt.N.ACC.SG-the.N.ACC.SG  
'the salt'

(N B625 M)

(7.2.1.4) **N+Det**

- a) *slíka*                      *konu*  
such.F.ACC.SG            woman.F.ACC.SG  
'such a woman'

(N B552 M)

(7.2.1.5) **N+DemPron**

- a) *þat*                      *korn*  
the.N.ACC.SG            corn.N.ACC.SG  
'the/this corn'

(N 650 M)

- b) *sekk*                      *þenna*  
sack.M.ACC.SG            this.M.ACC.SG  
'the/this sack'

(N 678 M, N 687 M)

(7.2.1.6) **N+PossPron**

- a) *þína*                      *óðáþ*  
your.F.ACC.SG            misdeed.F.ACC.SG  
'your misdeed'

(N B241 M)

- b) *ákall*                      *mitt*  
invocation.N.ACC.SG            mine.N.ACC.SG  
'my invocation'

(N 289 M)

(7.2.1.7) **N+RefIPoss**

- b) *ver*                      *sínum*  
man.M.DAT.SG            her.own.M.DAT.SG  
'her man/lover'

(N B111 M)

(7.2.1.8) **N+Gen**

a) <i>Guðs</i>	<i>reiði</i>	b) <i>mǫl</i>	<i>dverga</i>
God.M.GEN.SG	anger.F.NOM.SG	gravel.F.DAT.SG	dwarf.M.GEN.PL
‘God’s anger’		‘the gravel of the dwarves’	
	(N B249 M)		(N B249 M)

(7.2.1.9) **N+Adj**

a) <i>mestr</i>	<i>fjánda</i>	b) <i>skæra</i>	<i>mikil</i>
big.M.NOM.SG.STR.SUP	devil.M.GEN.PL	uproar.F.NOM.SG	great.F.NOM.SG.STR
‘the greatest among devils’		‘great uproar’	
	(N B241 M)		(N B190 M)

(7.2.1.10) **Num+UoM**

<i>tvá</i>	<i>mæla</i>
two.M.ACC.PL	measure.M.ACC.PL
‘two measures and three casks’	
	(N 650 M)

Unfortunately, as the number of examples for each category is not numerous enough, no certain conclusions can be drawn regarding the behavior of noun phrases. Probably the only exception to this would be the noun and possessive pronoun and perhaps the reflexive possessive constructions.

It is interesting to point out that the noun with a possessive pronoun construction seems to correspond to the finds in Old Icelandic: in the Bryggen in Bergen material this is 3 prenominal and 11 postnominal possessive pronouns corresponding to 21.4% and 78.6%, respectively, while in the Old Icelandic corpus examined by Börjars and Booth, this same construction is 1,339 prenominal, and 3,057 postnominal possessive pronouns corresponding to 30% and 70%, respectively (Bech et al. 2016, 8).

In the case of quantifiers and nouns, while there are only five examples from Bryggen in Bergen, they show the same ratio as in the research of Börjars and Booth. With four prenominal and one postnominal quantifier, this category corresponds to 80% and 20%, respectively, and in Börjars and Booth’s statistics, this is 1,742 (85%) for prenominals and 312 (15%) for

postnominals. This, though cannot be trusted blindly, seems to confirm that quantifiers are predominantly in prenominal position.

The last group which can be examined to some extent is the noun and adjective construction, of which there are eight examples in the Bryggen in Bergen material with five (or 62.5%) being prenominal and three (37.5%) postnominal, which corresponds to Börjars and Booth's 3,529 (79.6%) for prenominals and 904 (20.4%) for postnominals, although with a difference in percentages. Both statistics show adjectives taking mainly prenominal positions, however, the number of noun and adjective constructions in the Bryggen in Bergen material is not high enough to take the difference in percentages as indication of the difference in the prenominal-postnominal ratio between the two corpora.

## 7.2.2 Noun phrases with multiple dependents

Table 7.2.2 Statistics of the distribution of constituents in noun phrases with multiple dependents from the Bryggen in Bergen runic material

	Prenom.	Postnom.	Flanked	Total
N+Q+DefArt	0	0	3	3
N+Q+Gen+Adj	1	0	0	1
N+Q+Adj	3	0	0	3
Num+Gen+UoM	2	0	0	2
N+DefArt+Adj	1	0	0	1
N+Det+Gen	0	2	0	2
N+PossPron+Adj	0	0	1	1
N+ReflPoss "and" Gen	0	4 <sup>8</sup>	0	4

### (7.2.2.1) N+Q+DefArt

- c) *eingi fiskar-nir*  
no.M.NOM.PL      fish.M.NOM.PL-the.M.NOM.PL  
‘no (the) fish’

(N 648 M)

<sup>8</sup> Although the noun is missing in N 649 M in (7.1.18), due to the formulaic nature of the phrase, it is reasonable to assume that the missing part would be *kveðju* and thus the phrase is counted in this category.

(7.2.2.2) **N+Q+Gen+Adj**

- a) *allir*                      *Guðs*                      *helgir*                      *menn*  
all.M.NOM.PL      God.M.GEN.SG      holy.M.NOM.PL.STR      men.M.NOM.PL  
'all of God's holy men'

(N B13 M)

(7.2.2.3) **N+Q+Adj**

- a) *allra*                      *góðra*                      *hluta*  
every.M.GEN.PL      good.M.GEN.PL.STR      thing.M.GEN.PL  
'all good things'

(N 289 M)

(7.2.2.4) **Num+Gen+UoM**

- a) *átján*                      *alnum*                      *jarns*  
eighteen      ell.F.DAT.PL      iron.N.GEN.SG  
'eighteen ells of iron'

(N B448 M)

(7.2.2.5) **N+DefArt+Adj**

- a) *hit*                      *bezta*                      *barn*  
the.N.NOM.SG      good.N.NOM.SG.WK.SUP      child.N.NOM.SG  
'a very good child'

(N B660 M)

(7.2.2.6) **N+Det+Gen**

- b) *nafn*                      *þess*                      *manns*  
name.N.ACC.SG      the.M.GEN.SG      man.M.GEN.SG  
'the name of the/that man'

(N B241 M)

(7.2.2.7) **N+PossPron+Adj**

- c) *sanna*                      *vingan*                      *vára*  
true.F.ACC.SG.STR      friendship.F.ACC.SG      ours.F.ACC.SG  
'our true friendship'

(N B448 M)

(7.2.2.8) N+ReflPoss “and” Gen

b) <i>kveðju</i>	<i>Guðs</i>	<i>ok</i>	<i>sína</i>
greetings.F.ACC.SG	God.M.GEN.SG	and	his.own.F.ACC.SG
‘his own and God’s greeting’			

(N B448 M)

### 7.3 Summary

Examining the noun phrases in the Bryggen in Bergen material is an interesting task and it has yielded certain results, especially with the possessives (possessive pronouns and reflexive possessives) which, according to the data, are mainly postnominal. Adjectives appearing in the inscriptions take usually prenominal positions but in their case, the difference between the number of prenominal and postnominal examples is not large enough to draw any conclusions. However, one can by no means take the results as indisputable proof for the pre- or postnominal position of a constituent. Therefore, we move onto examining the longer corpus of Menotec.



## 8 An analysis of noun phrases in the Menotec corpus of Old Norwegian

Menotec currently consists of four manuscripts with full linguistic annotation, which are the texts investigated in this chapter. The four texts consist of 190,047 words and are the Old Norwegian homily book (AM 619 4to; referred to as non-homiliebok-dep or homiliebok), Landsløg Magnúss Hákonarsónar (Holm perg 34 4to; non-mll-dep or mll), Óláfs saga ins helga (legendary version, DG 8 II; non-olavssaga-dep or olavssaga), and Strengleikar (DG 4–7; non-strleik-dep or strleik) (Menota catalogue 2018).

Out of the different structures of noun phrases listed in the previous chapter, only two will be considered here: noun phrases modified by an adjective and noun phrases modified by a possessive, either a pronoun or the reflexive possessive of Scandinavian languages.

Due to the constraint of time, the corpus in Menotec has not been analyzed as thoroughly as the Bryggen in Bergen material, and thus in this chapter there is no differentiation between noun phrases with one or several constituents appearing with the noun as it would have required significantly more time to refine the queries.

With each category, the search queries used are listed. The examples appearing in the chapter have been normalized for ease of reading and so *v*, *i*, *f*, and *p* are spelled with *u*, *j*, *s*, and *u*, *v*, or *w* respectively, where applicable. Just as in the previous chapter, a) marks prenominal, and b) marks postnominal constituents.

For ease of reading, page breaks are introduced before subchapters 8.1 and 8.2.

## 8.1 Noun and possessive

Table 8.1.1 The distribution of noun and possessive in the Old Norwegian corpus

	Prenominal		Postnominal		Total
	#	%	#	%	#
non-homiliebok-dep	222	18.7	967	81.3	1,189
non-mll-dep	125	23.7	403	76.3	528
non-olavssaga-dep	165	33.0	335	67.0	500
non-strleik-dep	81	10.0	728	90.0	809
<b>Total</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>19.6</b>	<b>2,433</b>	<b>80.4</b>	<b>3,026</b>

### (8.1.1) Noun and possessive

- a) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #det:[pos="det-poss"] & #det . #n  
 b) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #det:[pos="det-poss"] & #n . #det

Table 8.1.2 The distribution of noun and possessive pronoun in the Old Norwegian corpus

	Prenominal		Postnominal		Total
	#	%	#	%	#
non-homiliebok-dep	127	18.6	557	81.4	684
non-mll-dep	22	29.7	52	70.3	74
non-olavssaga-dep	96	48.5	102	51.5	198
non-strleik-dep	43	15.1	241	84.9	284
<b>Total</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>23.2</b>	<b>952</b>	<b>76.8</b>	<b>1,240</b>

### (8.1.2) Noun and possessive pronoun

- a) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #det:[pos="det-poss"] & #det . #n & #det:[lemma!="sinn"]

*pitt*

*æigin*

your.N.NOM.SG

property.N.NOM.SG

‘your property’

(olavssaga: 235; 2180767)<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> The numbers are used to search directly in Menotec. The first number denotes the sentence number within the text while the second, so-called UID number (unique identifier) is to denote the sentence within the entire database, thus allowing to view it if searched for with this number. The UID can be used to search in the “Sentences” section.

- b) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #det:[pos="det-poss"] & #n . #det & #det:[lemma!="sinn"]  
*konunge*                      *varom*  
 king.M.DAT.SG.              ours.M.DAT.SG  
 ‘our king’

(mll: 1228; 2172202)

Table 8.1.3 The distribution of noun and reflexive possessive in the Old Norwegian corpus

	Prenominal		Postnominal		Total
	#	%	#	%	#
non-homiliebok-dep	95	18.8	410	81.2	505
non-mll-dep	103	22.7	351	77.3	454
non-olavssaga-dep	69	23.7	222	76.3	291
non-strleik-dep	38	7.2	487	92.8	525
<b>Total</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>17.1</b>	<b>1,481</b>	<b>82.9</b>	<b>1,786</b>

(8.1.3) Noun and reflexive possessive

- a) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #det:[pos="det-poss"] & #det . #n & #det:[lemma="sinn"]  
*sinum*                              *husum*  
 one’s.own.N.DAT.PL              house.N.DAT.PL  
 ‘their own houses’

(mll: 1372; 2172346)

- b) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #det:[pos="det-poss"] & #n . #det & #det:[lemma="sinn"]  
*fe*                                      *sit*  
 money.N.ACC.SG              one’s.own.N.ACC.SG  
 ‘his/her own money’

(mll: 544; 2171518)

In the case of possessives, the statistics from Menotec lie in between the Bryggen in Bergen statistics and the research of Börjars and Booth on Old Icelandic. While both the possessive pronouns and reflexive possessives are predominantly postnominal, the reflexive possessives are more so, and in both cases, the postnominal possessives are more frequent than in the Old Icelandic corpus examined by Börjars and Booth (Bech et al. 2016, 8).

## 8.2 Noun and adjective

In this subchapter, the noun phrases with an adjective may have the following constructions:

- a) a noun immediately preceded by an adjective or a noun immediately preceded by an adjective which is immediately preceded by a determiner
- b) a noun immediately followed by an adjective or a noun immediately followed by a determiner (demonstrative, quantifier, or possessive) which is in turn immediately followed by an adjective

In this subchapter, three queries are used for each category. In phrases with a prenominal adjective, determiners would normally precede the adjective and thus both constructions with and constructions without a determiner are included. In phrases with a postnominal adjective, however, the first query only searches for a noun immediately followed by an adjective and excludes noun phrases in which a determiner follows the noun and precedes the adjective. To solve this imbalance and to avoid distortion of the data, both queries are used in the case of noun phrases with weak (definite) adjectives.

*Table 8.2.1 The distribution of noun and adjective in the Old Norwegian corpus*

	Prenominal		Postnominal		Total
	#	%	#	%	#
non-homiliebok-dep	1,852	92.8	144	7.2	1,996
non-mll-dep	791	84.6	144	15.4	935
non-olavssaga-dep	713	87.3	104	12.7	817
non-strleik-dep	897	97.1	27	2.9	924
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,253</b>	<b>91.0</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>4,672</b>

### (8.2.1) Noun and adjective

- a) `#n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj"] & #a . #n`
- b) `#n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj"] & #n . #a`  
`#n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj"] >aux #d:[pos="det-dem|det-quant|det-poss"]`  
`& #n . #d . #a`

The noun-adjective construction provides the most extreme ratio between prenominal and postnominal adjectives in Menotec with 4,253 (91.8%) prenominal and 379 (8.2%) postnominal

adjectives while the difference is the smallest in the Bryggen in Bergen material discussed in Chapter 7.

## 8.2.1 Adjectives by strong and weak declension

Table 8.2.1.1 The distribution of noun and strong (indefinite) adjective in the Old Norwegian corpus

	Prenominal		Postnominal		Total
	#	%	#	%	#
non-homiliebok-dep	1,522	92.7	120	7.3	1,642
non-mll-dep	626	84.5	115	15.5	741
non-olavssaga-dep	529	85.6	89	14.4	618
non-strleik-dep	656	97.0	20	3.0	676
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,333</b>	<b>90.6</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>3,677</b>

### (8.2.1.1) Noun and strong (indefinite) adjective

- a) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & morph=("indef")] & #a . #n

*retta*

*tru*

just.F.ACC.SG.INDEF

faith.F.ACC.SG

‘true faith’

(homiliebok: 25; 2498287)

- b) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & morph=("indef")] & #n . #a

*sjo*

*storan*

sea.M.ACC.SG

big.M.ACC.SG.INDEF.POS

‘great sea’

(olavssaga: 604; 2181136)

Table 8.2.1.2 The distribution of noun and weak (definite) adjective in the Old Norwegian corpus

	Prenominal		Postnominal		Total
	#	%	#	%	#
non-homiliebok-dep	324	94.5	19	5.5	343
non-mll-dep	120	85.7	20	14.3	140
non-olavssaga-dep	183	92.9	14	7.1	197
non-strleik-dep	224	97.0	7	3.0	231
<b>Total</b>	<b>851</b>	<b>93.4</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>911</b>

(8.2.1.2) Noun and weak (definite) adjective

- a) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & morph=("def")] & #a . #n

*sanna*                      *þolen mǫðe*  
 true.F.ACC.SG.DEF.POS    patience.F.ACC.SG  
 ‘true patiečne’

(homiliebok: 161; 2498423)

*hit*                      *hælg*                      *husl*  
 the.N.ACC.SG    holy.N.ACC.SG.DEF.POS    house1.N.ACC.SG  
 ‘the/that holy eucharist’

(homiliebok: 867; 2499129)

- b) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & morph=("def")] & #n . #a

*ana*                      *hælg*  
 river.F.ACC.SG-the.F.ACC.SG    holy.F.ACC.SG.DEF.POS  
 ‘the/that holy river’

(olavssaga: 2151; 2182683)

#n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & morph=("def")] >aux #d:[pos="det-dem|det-quant|det-poss"] & #n . #d . #a

*konungr*                      *hinn*                      *kurteisazti*  
 king.M.NOM.SG    the.M.NOM.SG    courteous.M.NOM.SG.DEF.SUP  
 ‘the/that most courteous king’

(strleik: 2160; 2176360)

Both strong (indefinite) and weak (definite) adjectives are, according to Menotec, predominantly prenominal, although the weak adjectives are so by a slightly larger margin.

The slight inconsistency in numbers between Table 8.2.1 and tables Table 8.2.1.1 and Table 8.2.1.2 comes from adjectives which are annotated as non-inflectable (sixty-eight prenominal and five postnominal) and one prenominal *hælgum* which is annotated as ‘unsp-def’. The non-inflectable adjectives in prenominal position are numerals above four, *allskonar*, *allskyns*, *einga*, *hverskonar*, *lartil létes*, *margskonar*, and *þesskonar*, while in postnominal position *samfeðra*, *sammæddr*, and *tólf* (written with numbers) appear.

The queries used to search for the inconsistencies were:

- a) `#n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & morph!="indef" & morph!="def" & lemma] & #a . #n`
- b) `#n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & morph!="indef" & morph!="def" & lemma] & #n . #a`  
`#n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & morph!="indef" & morph!="def" & lemma] >aux #d:[pos="det-dem|det-quant|det-poss"] & #n . #d . #a`

## 8.2.2 Adjectives by gradation

Table 8.2.2.1 The distribution of noun and adjective in the positive in the Old Norwegian corpus

	Prenominal		Postnominal		Total
	#	%	#	%	#
non-homiliebok-dep	1,711	92.7	135	7.3	1,846
non-mll-dep	647	83.5	128	16.5	775
non-olavssaga-dep	626	87.8	95	13.2	721
non-strleik-dep	770	97.2	22	2.8	792
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,754</b>	<b>90.8</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>4,134</b>

### (8.2.2.1) Noun and adjective in the positive

- a) `#n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & morph=("pos")] & #a . #n`

*æinn*

*mikinn*

*hjort*

one.M.ACC.SG

large.M.ACC.SG.INDEF

stag.M.ACC.SG. POS

‘a large stag’

(strleik: 46; 2174246)

*hin*                      *fagra*                      *fru*  
the.F.NOM.SG      beautiful.F.NOM.SG.DEF      woman.F.NOM.SG.POS  
‘the/that beautiful woman’

(strleik: 202; 2174402)

b) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & morph=("pos")] & #n . #a

*mannfall*                      *mikit*  
slaughter.N.NOM.SG      great.N.NOM.SG.INDEF.POS  
‘great slaughter’

(olavssaga: 37; 2180569)

*hin*                      *fru*                      *kurtæisa*  
the.F.NOM.SG      woman.F.NOM.SG      courteous.F.NOM.SG.DEF.POS  
‘the/that courteous woman’

(strleik: 124; 2174324)

#n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & morph=("pos")] >aux #d:[pos="det-  
dem|det-quant|det-poss"] & #n . #d . #a

*lifs*                      *ens*                      *æilifa*  
life.N.GEN.SG      the.N.GEN.SG      eternal.N.GEN.SG.DEF.POS  
‘the/that eternal life’

(homiliebok: 3519; 2501781)

*sannan*                      *fagnað*                      *allra*                      *hæilagra*  
true.M.ACC.SG.INDEF.POS      joy.M.ACC.SG      all.UNSP-GEN.PL      holy.UNSP-GEN.PL.INDEF.POS  
‘true joy of all (that is) holy’

(homiliebok: 2235; 2500497)



Table 8.2.2.2 The distribution of noun and adjective in the comparative in the Old Norwegian corpus

	Prenominal		Postnominal		Total
	#	%	#	%	#
non-homiliebok-dep	55	91.7	5	8.3	60
non-mll-dep	42	89.4	5	10.6	47
non-olavssaga-dep	39	88.6	5	11.4	44
non-strleik-dep	20	90.9	2	9.1	22
<b>Total</b>	156	90.7	16	9.3	172

(8.2.2.2) Noun and adjective in the comparative

a) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & morph="comp"] & #a . #n

*mæira*                                                  *ljós*  
more.N.ACC.SG.INDEF.COMP                  light.N.ACC.SG  
‘more light’

(olavssaga: 135; 2180667)

b) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & morph="comp"] & #n . #a

*fé*                                                                  *mæira*  
money.M.ACC.SG                  more.M.ACC.SG.INDEF.POS  
‘more money’

(strleik: 543; 2174743)

#n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & morph="comp"] >aux #d:[pos="det-dem|det-quant|det-poss"] & #n . #d . #a

*bøner*                                          *hinar*                                          *siðaru*  
prayer.F.NOM.PL                  the.F.NOM.PL                  later.F.NOM.PL.INDEF.COMP  
‘the/those later prayers’

(homiliebok: 3539; 2501801)

Table 8.2.2.3 The distribution of noun and adjective in the superlative in the Old Norwegian corpus

	Prenominal		Postnominal		Total
	#	%	#	%	#
non-homiliebok-dep	81	95.3	4	4.7	85
non-mll-dep	57	89.1	7	10.9	64
non-olavssaga-dep	47	92.2	4	7.8	51
non-strleik-dep	90	96.8	3	3.2	93
<b>Total</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>93.9</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>293</b>

(8.2.2.3) Noun and adjective in the superlative

- a) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & morph=("supl")] & #a . #n

*hcestum*                      *veg*                      *þinum*  
highest.M.DAT.SG.INDEF.SUP      road.M.DAT.SG      yours.M.DAT.SG  
‘your highest road’

(homiliebok: 202; 2498464)

*hinn*                      *villdaste*                      *viðr*  
the.M.NOM.SG      agreeable.M.NOM.SG.DEF.SUP      tree.M.NOM.SG  
‘the/that most agreeable tree’

(strleik: 9; 2174209)

- b) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & morph=("supl")] & #n . #a

*annar*                      *maðr*                      *mestr*  
man.M.NOM.SG      man.M.NOM.SG      great.M.NOM.SG.INDEF.SUP  
‘the second greatest man’

(olavssaga: 976; 2181508)

*nótena*                      *næsto*  
night.F.DAT.SG-the.F.DAT.SG      next.F.DAT.SG.DEF.SUP  
‘next night’

(homiliebok: 2709; 2500971)

#n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & morph=("supl")] >aux #d:[pos="det-dem|det-quant|det-poss"] & #n . #d . #a

*fordagr*

*hinn*

*fyrsti*

removing.day.M.NOM.SG

the.M.NOM.SG

first.M.NOM.SG.DEF.SUP

‘the first removing day’<sup>10</sup>

(mll: 1364; 2172338)

As the Bryggen in Bergen runic material does not provide enough examples of adjectives for each gradation (see (7.1.9)) and this has not been examined by Börjars and Booth, the only statistics are from Menotec. This shows that, as expected from the previous categories, adjectives are predominantly prenominal. The superlative group shows the largest gap between prenominal and postnominal with its 97.9% and 2.1%.

Again, the discrepancy between Table 8.2.1 and tables Table 8.2.2.1, Table 8.2.2.2, and Table 8.2.2.3 is due to the sixty-eight prenominal and five postnominal adjectives having been annotated as non-inflectable in Menotec.

The queries used to search for the inconsistencies were:

- a) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & morph!="pos"] & morph!="comp"] & morph!="supl"] & lemma] & #a . #n
- b) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & morph!="pos"] & morph!="comp"] & morph!="supl"] & lemma] & #n . #a

### 8.2.3 Adjectives appearing in Bryggen in Bergen examined in Menotec

Although the relevant noun phrases in the Bryggen in Bergen inscriptions are not numerous enough to draw conclusions from, it is interesting to look at the distribution of the adjectival lemmas appearing in Bryggen in Bergen in the Menotec corpus. Although more adjectival lemmas can be found in the Bryggen in Bergen material, here only those are listed which are present in noun phrases this thesis examines, and so epithets and appositions are excluded.

<sup>10</sup> *Fardagar*: “four successive days in summer, at the end of May, old style.” (‘far-dagar’ in Zoëga 2004, 127)

Table 8.2.3.1 The distribution of noun and the lemma 'góðr' in the Old Norwegian corpus

	Prenominal		Postnominal		Total
	#	%	#	%	#
non-homiliebok-dep	210	96.8	7	3.2	217
non-mll-dep	18	100.0	0	0.0	18
non-olavssaga-dep	41	95.3	2	4.7	43
non-strleik-dep	61	98.4	1	1.6	62
<b>Total</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>97.1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>340</b>

(8.2.3.1) Noun and the lemma 'góðr'

- a) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="góðr"] & #a . #n  
b) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="góðr"] & #n . #a  
#n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="góðr"] >aux #d:[pos="det-dem|det-quant|det-poss"] & #n . #d . #a

Table 8.2.3.2 The distribution of noun and the lemma 'heilagr' in the Old Norwegian corpus

	Prenominal		Postnominal		Total
	#	%	#	%	#
non-homiliebok-dep	251	91.3	24	8.7	275
non-mll-dep	26	86.6	4	13.3	30
non-olavssaga-dep	38	95.0	2	5.0	40
non-strleik-dep	13	92.9	1	7.1	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>91.4</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>359</b>

(8.2.3.2) Noun and the lemma 'heilagr'

- a) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="heilagr"] & #a . #n  
b) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="heilagr"] & #n . #a  
#n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="heilagr"] >aux #d:[pos="det-dem|det-quant|det-poss"] & #n . #d . #a

Table 8.2.3.3 The distribution of noun and the lemma 'mikill' in the Old Norwegian corpus

	Prenominal		Postnominal		Total
	#	%	#	%	#
non-homiliebok-dep	104	85.2	18	14.8	122
non-mll-dep	16	91.1	1	5.9	17
non-olavssaga-dep	149	75.3	49	24.7	198
non-strleik-dep	148	97.4	4	2.6	152
<b>Total</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>85.3</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>489</b>

(8.2.3.3) Noun and the lemma 'mikill'

- a) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="mikill|mykill"] & #a . #n  
b) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="mikill|mykill"] & #n . #a  
#n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="mikill|mykill"] >aux #d:[pos="det-dem|det-quant|det-poss"] & #n . #d . #a

Table 8.2.3.4 The distribution of noun and the lemma 'sannr' in the Old Norwegian corpus

	Prenominal		Postnominal		Total
	#	%	#	%	#
non-homiliebok-dep	33	97.1	1	2.9	34
non-mll-dep	7	70.0	3	30.0	10
non-olavssaga-dep	2	66.6	1	33.3	3
non-strleik-dep	2	100.0	0	0.0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>89.8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>49</b>

(8.2.3.4) Noun and the lemma 'sannr'

- a) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="sannr"] & #a . #n  
b) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="sannr"] & #n . #a  
#n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="sannr"] >aux #d:[pos="det-dem|det-quant|det-poss"] & #n . #d . #a

(8.2.3.5) Noun and the lemma 'blindr'

- a) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="blindr"] & #a . #n  
b) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="blindr"] & #n . #a  
#n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="blindr"] >aux #d:[pos="det-dem|det-quant|det-poss"] & #n . #d . #a

The adjective *blindr* appears only in olavssaga and only three times, exclusively in prenominal position.

(8.2.3.6) **Noun and the lemma ‘vænn’**

- a) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="vænn"] & #a . #n
- b) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="vænn"] & #n . #a  
#n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="vænn"] >aux #d:[pos="det-dem|det-quant|det-poss"] & #n . #d . #a

The adjective *vænn* appears only in olavssaga and only once, in prenominal position.

(8.2.3.7) **Noun and the lemmas ‘beztr’, ‘frœkn/frókn/frókinn’, ‘lævíss’, ‘mestr’, and ‘mórendr’**

There are no examples of these adjectives in Menotec, but the queries used are listed below as this could be due to a difference in normalized spelling.

**‘beztr’**

- a) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="góðr" & morph=("supl")] & #a . #n
- b) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="góðr" & morph=("supl")] & #n . #a  
#n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="góðr" & morph=("supl")] >aux #d:[pos="det-dem|det-quant|det-poss"] & #n . #d . #a

**‘frœkn/frókn/frókinn’**

- a) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="frœkn|frókn|frókinn"] & #a . #n
- b) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="frœkn|frókn|frókinn"] & #n . #a  
#n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="frœkn|frókn|frókinn"] >aux #d:[pos="det-dem|det-quant|det-poss"] & #n . #d . #a

**‘lævíss’**

- a) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="lævíss"] & #a . #n
- b) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="lævíss"] & #n . #a  
#n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="lævíss"] >aux #d:[pos="det-dem|det-quant|det-poss"] & #n . #d . #a

### ‘mestr’

- a) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="mikill" & morph=("supl")] & #a . #n  
b) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="mikill" & morph=("supl")] & #n . #a  
#n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="mikill" & morph=("supl")] >aux  
#d:[pos="det-dem|det-quant|det-poss"] & #n . #d . #a

### ‘mórendr’

- a) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="mórendr"] & #a . #n  
b) #n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="mórendr"] & #n . #a  
#n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & lemma="mórendr"] >aux #d:[pos="det-  
dem|det-quant|det-poss"] & #n . #d . #a

## 8.2.4 Adjectives by (semantic) categories

In this section, noun phrases in the Menotec corpus are examined as part of the *Constraints on syntactic variation: Noun phrases in early Germanic languages* project, and the annotation guidelines proposed by Pfaff are used to categorize the adjectives (Pfaff in progress, 59–60 and 62–69). The examples of the categories are taken from Menotec.

The following categories were used based on the annotation guidelines proposed by Pfaff:

### Lexical adjectives:

As some of these classes may overlap to a certain extent with one another, he proposes the application of a top-down procedure of elimination.

1. Denoting ethnicity, origin, affiliation etc. (Ethnic): “adjectives denoting ethnicity/“nationality”/“affiliation”, or origin”; examples: *brezkr, finnskr, hebreiskr, himneskr, iarðligr*.
2. Denoting color (Color): “adjectives denoting color and degrees of coloring and brightness”; examples: *blakkr, dökkkr, grænn, rióðr, snæhvítr*.
3. Denoting physical property or dimension (PhysDim): adjectives denoting “physical properties such as shape, material, consistency, smell, taste, touch, temperature, physical/material states”; examples: *aldaðr, blindr, framanverðr, kollótr, líkþrár, líóss, ondverðr, þurr, úreinn, æðri*.
4. Evaluative adjective (Eval): adjectives denoting “an evaluation, an (aesthetic, moral, personal, professional ...) assessment, a (more or less) subjective description, but

also adjectives expressing a disposition / attitude, a physiological condition, or a mental state”; examples: *ábrúðigr, allsvaldandi, bóklærðr, drukkinn, eldligr, fríðr, heiðinn, lekr, logsamligr, nýtr, rétt næmr, skilfenginn, sundrlaus, ævinligr, øruggr*.

5. Relational/denominal adjective (RelDen): adjectives that “have classificatory/ taxonomic function (i.e. describe a kind of N) or denote an argument or instrument in the nominal argument structure (hence sometimes referred to as thematic adjectives)”; example: *dróttinligr*.
6. Denotes Degree or event quantification (Deg/Q): adjectives “that express degree or quantification”; examples: *áttandi, fár, iafnfiolmennr, morgunligr, tvennr*.
7. Other classes of lexical adjectives (LexRest): lexical adjectives not fitting into the above categories; examples: *allskonar, falr, løyndr, næstr, samfæddr, sýkn, tíðligr, úkommin, úrøyndr, vinstri, ýmiss*.

(Pfaff in progress, 63–68)

#### **Functional adjectives:**

1. Defective adjectives (Defect): “adjectives belonging to this class only have comparative and/or superlative, but no positive forms, or they simply are – formally – comparatives”; examples: *aptri, betr, innri, nærr, æfri*.
2. Determiner-like adjectives (Deter): adjectives that “have no descriptive content at all” but act more like a determiner; examples: *slikr, þvilíkr*.
3. Past participle (PastP): “every adnominal modifier that has participle morphology”; examples: *sialfsettr, úskiptr, úvígðr, vígðr*.
4. Present participle (PresP): “every adnominal modifier that has participle morphology”; examples: *handgenginn, nýfunnin, opinn, úorðinn, viðrkomandi*.

(Pfaff in progress, 59–60)

These annotation rules proposed by Pfaff, although useful for the lexical categories, the functional categories have proven a challenge to apply to the adjectives. It was especially the present and past participles group, which can overlap with the lexical groups, making it harder to decide which group an adjective should belong to. This provides an opportunity for different people to categorize certain adjectives differently and thus distort their research in relation to one another.

Due to the limited time, each adjective is only assigned one category based on its primary meaning, while the context in the different phrases they appear in is ignored.



Table 8.2.4.1 The distribution of strong (indefinite) adjectives by (semantic) categories in the Old Norwegian corpus

	non-homiliebok-dep					non-mll-dep				
	Prenominal		Postnominal		Total	Prenominal		Postnominal		Total
	#	%	#	%	#	#	%	#	%	#
Lexical adjectives										
1. Ethnic	49	96.1	2	3.9	51	0	0.0	0	0.0	0
2. Color	8	88.9	1	11.1	9	0	0.0	1	100.0	1
3. PhysDim	301	90.9	30	9.1	331	98	79.7	25	20.3	123
4. Eval	1,004	93.9	65	6.1	1,069	324	82.9	67	17.1	391
5. RelDen	3	100.0	0	0.0	3	0	-	0	-	0
6. Deg/Q	74	94.9	4	5.1	78	123	96.1	5	3.9	128
7. LexRest	34	69.4	15	30.6	49	34	75.6	11	24.4	45
Functional adjectives										
1. Defect	10	100.0	0	0.0	10	4	100.0	0	0.0	4
2. Deter	23	92.0	2	8.0	25	35	85.4	6	14.6	41
3. PastP	1	100.0	0	0.0	1	4	100.0	0	0.0	4
4. PresP	15	93.8	1	6.2	16	4	100.0	0	0.0	4
	non-olavssaga-dep					non-strleik-dep				
	Prenominal		Postnominal		Total	Prenominal		Postnominal		Total
	#	%	#	%	#	#	%	#	%	#
Lexical adjectives										
1. Ethnic	7	87.5	1	12.5	8	8	100.0	0	0.0	8
2. Color	7	77.8	2	22.2	9	10	90.9	1	9.1	11
3. PhysDim	233	79.3	61	20.7	294	220	96.5	8	3.5	228
4. Eval	206	92.8	16	7.2	222	354	97.5	9	2.5	363
5. RelDen	0	-	0	-	0	0	-	0	-	0
6. Deg/Q	54	93.1	4	6.9	58	37	100.0	0	0.0	37
7. LexRest	2	33.3	4	66.7	6	8	80.0	2	20.0	10
Functional adjectives										
1. Defect	0	-	0	-	0	0	-	0	-	0
2. Deter	18	94.7	1	5.3	19	17	100.0	0	0.0	17
3. PastP	1	100.0	0	0.0	1	0	-	0	-	0
4. PresP	1	100.0	0	0.0	1	2	100.0	0	0.0	2

(8.2.4.1) **Strong (indefinite) adjectives by categories in the Old Norwegian corpus**

a) Prenominal adjectives

#n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & morph=("indef") & lemma] & #a . #n

**Lexical adjectives:**

1. Ethnic

*himnescrar* *dyrðar*

heavenly glory

‘heavenly glory’

(homiliebok: 1171; 2499433)

*bræzko* *male*

Welsh language

‘Welsh language’

(strleik: 960; 2175160)

2. Color

*huitum* *heste*

white horse

‘a white horse’

(olavssaga: 2618; 2183150)

*snehvitum* *clæðum*

snow-white clothes

‘snow-white clothes’

(homiliebok: 1851; 2500113)

3. PhysDim

*gullego* *loke*

golden lock

‘a golden lock’

(strleik: 995; 2175195)

*auðar* *tuptir*

empty homesteads

‘empty homesteads’

(mll: 1320; 2172294)

4. Eval

*tómre* *hugrenning*

empty thought

‘empty thought’

(homiliebok: 1449; 2499711)

*arboren* *maðr*

by.birth.entitled.to.inherit man

‘a man who is entitled to inherit  
by birth’

(mll: 520; 2171494)

5. RelDen

*drottinlegre* *queðio*

godly greetings

‘godly greetings’

(homiliebok: 3662; 2501924)

## 6. Deg/Q

*marger men*

many men

‘many men’

(mll: 3105; 2174079)

*fiorfalldan harm*

fourfold sorrow

‘fourfold sorrow’

(strleik: 1426; 2175626)

## 7. LexRest

*miok nalæg frendkona*

very close friend.woman

‘a very close female friend’

(strleik: 455; 2174655)

*sialfr skaparenn*

(him/her)self Creator

‘(the) Creator himself’

(olavssaga: 2924; 2183456)

## Functional adjectives:

### 1. Defect

*ennar iðre fözlo*

the inner food

‘the inner food’

(homiliebok: 941; 2499433)

*hinum bæzta manne*

the best man

‘the best man’

(mll: 1911; 2172885)

### 2. Deter

*slica syslu*

such business

‘such business’

(strleik: 1695; 2175895)

*þvi lica miscun*

such mercy

‘such mercy’

(homiliebok: 2238; 2500500)

### 3. PastP

*up sliten bræðe*

divided anger

‘divided anger’

(homiliebok: 567; 2498829)

*nyfunnin strengleic*

newly.found lay

‘a newly composed lay’

(strleik: 1974; 2176174)

#### 4. PresP

*oskipti iorðu*

undivided earth

‘undivided earth’

(mll: 1491; 2172465)

*ovigðan ælld*

unconsecrated flame

‘unconsecrated flame’

(olavssaga: 3133; 2183665)

#### b) Postnominal adjectives

#n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & morph=("indef") & lemma] & #n . #a

##### Lexical adjectives:

##### 1. Ethnic

*hærr svænskan*

man Swedish

‘a Swedish man’

(olavssaga: 2048; 2182580)

*ambót norróna*

bondwoman Norse

‘a Norse bondwoman’

(homiliebok: 2560; 2500822)

##### 2. Color

*kyrtli rauðum*

tunic red

‘a red tunic’

(mll: 1205; 2175405)

##### 3. PhysDim

*manne unngum*

man young

‘a young man’

(homiliebok: 1171; 2499433)

*silkiskyrta gudlsaumað*

silk.skirt embroidered.with.gold

‘a gold-embroidered silk shirt’

(olavssaga: 1306; 2181838)

##### 4. Eval

*visa sniallan*

leader well-spoken

‘a well-spoken leader’

(olavssaga: 2785; 2183317)

*eitt sveinbarn fagr*

a male.child beautiful

‘a beautiful boy’

(strleik: 1812; 2176012)

## 6. Deg/Q

*þing*     *fiolment*  
þing     with.many.people  
‘a þing with many people’  
(olavssaga: 3156; 2183688)

*iarteinir*     *margar*  
proofs     many  
‘many proofs’  
(homiliebok: 2311; 2500573)

## 7. LexRest

*broðr*     *samfæddr*  
brother     of.the.same.parents  
‘brother or the same parents’  
(mll: 833; 2171807)

*guði*     *siölfum*  
God     (him/her)self  
‘God himself’  
(homiliebok: 893; 2499155)

## Functional adjectives:

### 2. Deter

*skaða bót*     *slika*  
compensation     such  
‘such compensation’  
(mll: 1726; 2172700)

*almosu*     *slika*  
alm     such  
‘such alm’  
(homiliebok: 1991; 2500253)

### 3. PastP

*himna*     *opna*  
skies     open  
‘open skies’  
(homiliebok: 1055; 2499317)

Table 8.2.4.2 The distribution of weak (definite) adjectives by (semantic) categories in the Old Norwegian corpus

	non-homiliebok-dep					non-mll-dep				
	Prenominal		Postnominal		Total	Prenominal		Postnominal		Total
	#	%	#	%		#	%	#	%	
Lexical adjectives										
1. Ethnic	0	-	0	-	0	0	-	0	-	0
2. Color	0	-	0	-	0	0	-	0	-	0
3. PhysDim	55	96.5	2	3.5	57	24	80.0	6	20.0	30
4. Eval	187	93.0	14	7.0	201	21	70.0	9	30.0	30
5. RelDen	0	-	0	-	0	0	-	0	-	0
6. Deg/Q	27	100.0	0	0.0	27	27	100.0	0	0.0	27
7. LexRest	38	92.7	3	7.3	41	43	89.6	5	10.4	48
Functional adjectives										
1. Defect	17	100.0	0	0.0	17	5	100.0	0	0.0	5
2. Deter	0	-	0	-	0	0	-	0	-	0
3. PastP	0	-	0	-	0	0	-	0	-	0
4. PresP	0	-	0	-	0	0	-	0	-	0
	non-olavssaga-dep					non-strleik-dep				
	Prenominal		Postnominal		Total	Prenominal		Postnominal		Total
	#	%	#	%		#	%	#	%	
Lexical adjectives										
1. Ethnic	0	-	0	-	0	0	-	0	-	0
2. Color	0	0.0	1	100.0	1	4	100.0	0	0.0	4
3. PhysDim	60	89.6	7	10.4	67	38	92.7	3	7.3	41
4. Eval	79	97.5	2	2.5	81	151	97.4	4	2.6	155
5. RelDen	0	-	0	-	0	0	-	0	-	0
6. Deg/Q	19	90.5	2	9.5	21	8	100.0	0	0.0	8
7. LexRest	23	92.0	2	8.0	25	21	100.0	0	0.0	21
Functional adjectives										
1. Defect	2	100.0	0	0.0	2	2	100.0	0	0.0	2
2. Deter	0	-	0	-	0	0	-	0	-	0
3. PastP	0	-	0	-	0	0	-	0	-	0
4. PresP	0	-	0	-	0	0	-	0	-	0

(8.2.4.2) **Weak (definite) adjectives by categories in the Old Norwegian corpus**

a) Prenominal adjectives

#n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & morph=("def") & lemma] & #a . #n

**Lexical adjectives:**

2. Color

*hinni gulo kapello*

the yellow chapel

‘the/that yellow chapel’

(stleik: 1057; 2175257)

3. PhysDim

*hin forne fiande*

the ancient enemy

‘the/that ancient enemy’

(homiliebook: 1692; 2499954)

*þui bloðoga vatne*

the bloody water

‘the/that bloody water’

(olavssaga: 3110; 2183642)

4. Eval

*þessom hæimska harm*

the foolish sorrow

‘the/that foolish sorrow’

(strleik: 684; 2174884)

*hina skynsamostu menn*

the reasonable men

‘the/those most reasonable men’

(mll: 314; 2171288)

6. Deg/Q

*æystra riki*

more.eastern kingdom

‘the Eastern kingdom’

(olavssaga: 2531; 2183063)

*fiorða dags*

fourth day

‘the fourth day’

(strleik: 1473; 2171193)

7. LexRest

*sama skilorðe*

same condition

‘the same condition’

(mll: 976; 2171950)

*nesto likamsklæði*

near clothes

‘the nearest clothes’

(strleik: 1039; 2175239)

## Functional adjectives:

### 1. Defect

*hínir bezstu menn*

the best men

‘the best men’

(mll: 256; 2171230)

*en æfsta dóm*

the vehement judgement

‘the vehement judgement’

(homiliebok: 3188; 2501450)

### b) Postnominal adjectives

#n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & morph=("def") & lemma] & #n . #a

#n:[pos="noun-com"] >atr #a:[pos="adj" & morph=("def") & lemma] >aux

#d:[pos="det-dem|det-quant|det-poss"] & #n . #d . #a

## Lexical adjectives:

### 2. Color

*malmrenn dækvce*

malm.the dark

‘the dark malm’

(olavssaga: 3055; 2183587)

### 3. PhysDim

*mannz spæl mæira*

destruction.of.life more

‘more killing’

(strleik: 2984; 2501246)

*þriðia mann fulltiða*

third man full-grown

‘the third full-grown man’

(mll: 285; 2171259)

### 4. Eval

*hæilsa dyrlegre*

health glorious

‘the glorious health’

(homiliebok: 2805; 2501067)

*lifs ens æilifa*

life the eternal

‘the eternal life’

(homiliebok: 3519; 2501781)

*andans hælga*

spirit holy

‘the holy spirit’

(olavssaga: 3221; 2183753)



## 6. Deg/Q

*orrustu hina fogrtando*

battle the fourteenth

‘the fourteenth battle’

(olavssaga: 524; 2181056)

## 7. LexRest

*Olafsmesso fyrri*

Saint.Olaf’s.day former

‘the previous St. Olaf’s day’

(mll: 3477; 2184009)

*daga hina fyrstu*

days the first

‘the first days’

(mll: 2594; 2173568)

*nótena nésto*

night next

‘next night’

(homiliebok: 2709; 2500971)

While the scope of this thesis does not allow for a deeper analysis of the data, it is clear that the different genres vary in the distribution of adjectives assigned to the various semantic categories. Some instances worth pointing out are listed below.

In noun phrases with a strong (indefinite) adjective, the following texts are showing a lower prenominal distribution compared to the other texts:

### **Lexical adjectives:**

1. Ethnic olavssaga
2. Color homiliebok and especially olavssaga
3. PhysDim mll and olavssaga with almost the same percentage
4. Eval mll

### **Functional adjectives:**

2. Deter mll

In the Lexical category 7. LexRest, all texts have a prenominal percentage lower than 80%.

In noun phrases with a weak (definite) adjective, these texts have a lower prenominal to postnominal ratio compared to the other texts:

**Lexical adjectives:**

- 3. PhysDim especially mll but also olavssaga
- 4. Eval mll

*Table 8.2.4.3 The distribution of strong (indefinite) and weak (definite) adjectives by (semantic) categories in the Old Norwegian corpus*

	Indefinite (strong)					Definite (weak)				
	Prenominal		Postnominal		Total	Prenominal		Postnominal		Total
	#	%	#	%	#	#	%	#	%	#
Lexical adjectives										
1. Ethnic	64	95.5	3	4.5	67	0	-	0	-	0
2. Color	25	83.3	5	16.7	30	4	80.0	1	20.0	5
3. PhysDim	852	87.3	124	12.7	976	177	90.8	18	9.2	195
4. Eval	1,888	92.3	157	7.7	2,045	438	93.8	29	6.2	467
5. RelDen	3	100.0	0	0.0	3	0	-	0	-	0
6. Deg/Q	287	95.7	13	4.3	300	81	97.6	2	2.4	83
7. LexRest	6	15.8	32	84.2	38	125	92.6	10	7.4	135
Functional adjectives										
1. Defect	10	100.0	0	0.0	10	26	100.0	0	0.0	26
2. Deter	93	91.2	9	8.8	102	0	-	0	-	0
3. PastP	3	100.0	0	0.0	3	0	-	0	-	0
4. PresP	19	95.0	1	5.0	20	0	-	0	-	0

**(8.2.4.3) The distribution of strong (indefinite) and weak (definite) adjectives by (semantic) categories in the Old Norwegian corpus**

Although there is currently no further research into the distribution of adjectives categorized in such a manner, it is interesting to note that, again, most of these groups show that adjectives are predominantly prenominal. The one exception to this seems to be the group LexRest, where indefinite (strong) adjectives tend to be postnominal according to the occurrences in Menotec. As this group is a semantically mixed one, it could be interesting to give further attention to it, once the annotation guidelines have been properly established.

As it can be seen in the tables, the different texts have different distributions for the constructions examined in the thesis, and collapsing categories may distort the outcome significantly, thus it would be prudent to establish a framework within which these corpora may be examined and compared.

### **8.3 Summary**

As already tentatively mentioned in Chapter 7, adjectives are mostly in prenominal position. The difference in the distribution of prenominal and postnominal adjectives, however, is much greater in the Menotec corpus, probably because it has a much higher number of these constructions.

In the case of possessives, both possessive pronouns and reflexive possessives tend to be mainly postnominal. In the case of reflexive possessives, the percentage of postnominals is higher than for the possessive pronouns, which would indicate that Barnes' claim about prenominal possessive pronouns express emphatic stress does hold some truth (Barnes 2008).



## 9 Conclusion

The thesis has set out to find out more about the distribution of constituents within noun phrases and compare it with previous research. The corpora used were the Bryggen in Bergen runic material and the Menotec corpus of Old Norwegian. Examples from these two corpora were examined, glossed, and statistics were drawn from them for the project *Constraints on syntactic variation: Noun phrases in early Germanic languages*.

The first half of the thesis is philological in nature. In Chapter 2, I introduced the history of runic writing and writing systems. In Chapter 3, I explained the basic rules of the transliteration and translation of runic inscriptions while in Chapter 4 I explored potential issues that may arise upon attempting to transliterate and translate such inscriptions. In Chapter 5, I provided a brief background to Bryggen in Bergen, where the runic inscriptions were found.

In Chapter 6, previous research regarding noun phrases in Old Norse (Old Norwegian) was outlined. It became clear that there is no consensus regarding the word order of noun phrases and that in the papers examined, there are four views regarding the structure of noun phrases.

According to Falk and Torp (1900), a strong (indefinite) adjective may precede or follow the noun while a definite adjective follows it. Nygaard (1905) claims that a strong (indefinite) adjective follows the noun unless it is emphasized, while a weak (definite) adjective precedes a common noun. Ringdal (1918) states that the intended function of adjectives in the phrase plays an important role in determining whether they stand before or after the head noun, with which Valfells and Cathey (1981) agree, although they fail to give any specific rules and examples of word order. Haugen (1995) writes that adjectives in the positive by default follow the head noun, while adjectives in the comparative and superlative precede the noun. Barnes (2008) is rather vague on the subject and says that though with certain restrictions, word order in noun phrases seems to be free. Faarlund (2004) explains the noun phrase structure with movement within the phrase.

It is clear from just these few papers that there is no consensus on the word order of the Old Norse noun phrases and that the question is still unanswered.

In Chapter 7, the noun phrases relevant to the research from the Bryggen in Bergen runic material were glossed and categorized and statistics were drawn from the data. This made it clear that the research questions stated in subchapter 1.2 could not yet be answered, as the data showed deviation from the previous research as well as the statistics from a preliminary

study carried out by the project *Constraints on syntactic variation: Noun phrases in early Germanic languages*. Consequently, due to the fact that the Bryggen in Bergen inscriptions do not contain examples in a great enough number, I was only able to draw some tentative conclusions based on the data.

In Chapter 8, noun phrases in the Old Norwegian Menotec corpus was examined, and a much greater number of examples gave a clearer result than the Bryggen in Bergen material. According to the data, none the claims of previous research papers on the subject are completely correct.

## 9.1 Answers to the research questions

There were three research questions in subchapter 1.2 to which I have set out to find an answer.

1. What is the distribution of constituents in modified noun phrases in the Bryggen in Bergen runic corpus?

In noun phrases modified by only an adjective, the adjective takes predominantly prenominal position. This prenominal tendency, in fact, is similar with other constituents as well. The exceptions to this are the reflexive possessive and the genitive noun phrase constituents. Because the Bryggen in Bergen runic material does not have a significant number of examples, and in some cases the number of examples and the difference in the ratio between prenominal and postnominal constituents is too small, no certain conclusions can be drawn from these statistics.

2. What is the distribution of constituents in modified noun phrases in the Menotec corpus of Old Norwegian?

In the Menotec corpus, dependents generally precede the head noun. This is the case with adjectives, whether they are strong (indefinite) or weak (definite), or positive, comparative, or superlative; all adjectives are, by a large margin, prenominal. Possessives, on the other hand, are predominantly postnominal.

3. What is the distribution of adjectives based on (semantic) categories in the Menotec corpus of Old Norwegian?

In the case of adjectives categorized by their (semantic) categories assigned to them based on the annotation guidelines proposed by Pfaff (Pfaff in progress), the distribution of adjectives in relation to their head noun still shows predominantly prenominal tendencies in the

different semantic classes and genres. Only in one case, the LexRest category does the distribution deviate from the adjective taking a prenominal position, and only in the case of strong (indefinite) adjectives.

## **9.2 Concluding remarks**

According to the empirical research conducted in Chapters 7 and 8, it becomes clear that the views which are held in academic circles regarding the distribution of constituents in modified noun phrases are incorrect or partially correct at best and that this question requires further attention. The intentions of this thesis were to draw attention to the shortcomings of research in this field and to contribute to the initial empirical work of the project *Constraints on syntactic variation: Noun phrases in early Germanic languages*.





# List of sources and bibliography

- Baetke, Walter. 2006. *Wörterbuch zur altnordischen Prosaliteratur*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag Berlin. [http://emedien.ub.uni-greifswald.de/ebooks/alt nord-wb/baetke\\_digital.pdf](http://emedien.ub.uni-greifswald.de/ebooks/alt nord-wb/baetke_digital.pdf).
- Barnes, Michael P. 2013. "Introduction." In *Runes: A Handbook*, 1–8. Woodbridge: Boydell Press.
- Barnes, Michael P. 2008. *A New Introduction to Old Norse. Part I. Grammar*. London: Viking Soc. for Northern Research.
- Bech, Kristin, Hannah Booth, Kersti Börjars, Tine Breban, Svetlana Petrova, Sheila Watts, and George Walkden. November 2016. Modifiers in early Germanic: a comparative corpus study. Presentation, Grammar and Corpora, Mannheim.
- Börjars, Kersti, and Pauline Harries. 2008. "The Clitic-Affix Distinction, Historical Change, and Scandinavian Bound Definiteness Marking." *Journal of Germanic Linguistics* 20, no. 04: 289–350.
- Börjars, Kersti, and John Payne. 2016. *Adjectival definiteness marking and noun-phrase internal functions*. University of Manchester, HEADLEX. [http://nlp.ipipan.waw.pl/Head-Lex16/handouts/borjars\\_payne.pdf](http://nlp.ipipan.waw.pl/Head-Lex16/handouts/borjars_payne.pdf)
- Faarlund, Jan Terje. 2004. "The Noun Phrase." In *The Syntax of Old Norse: with a Survey of the Inflectional Morphology and a Complete Bibliography*: 55–80. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Falk, Hjalmar, and Alf Torp. 1900. "Kapitel XIV: Ordenes og sætningenes følge." In *Dansk-norskens syntax i historisk fremstilling*: 283–321. Kristiania: Aschehoug.
- Haugen, Odd Einar. 2008. "Leddstilling og kongruens." In *Grunnbok i norrønt språk*: 247–257. Oslo: Gyldendal Akademisk.
- Herteig, Asbjørn E. 1959. "The Excavation of 'Bryggen', the old Hanseatic Wharf in Bergen." *Medieval Archaeology* 3, no. 1: 177–86.
- J. Fritzner Dictionary. Accessed May 2, 2018.  
<http://www.edd.uio.no/perl/search/search.cgi?appid=86&tabid=1275>

- Liestol, Aslak. 1966. "The Runes of Bergen; Voices from the Middle Ages." *Minnesota History* 40, no. 2: 49–58.
- Moltke, Erik. 1985. "Part 1: Runic Writing." In *Runes and Their Origin: Denmark and Elsewhere*, 21–73. Copenhagen: Nationalmuseets forl.
- Nygaard, M. 1905. "Ordenes og sætningernes stilling." In *Norrøn Syntax*, 343–391. Oslo: Aschehoug.
- Page, Raymond Ian. 1984. "On the Transliteration of English Runes." *Medieval Archaeology* 28, no. 1: 22–45.
- Page, Raymond Ian. 2006. "The Anglo-Saxon Runic Letters." In *An Introduction to English Runes*, 38–48. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell.
- Pfaff, Alexander. *Annotation guidelines for noun phrases*. In progress.
- Ringdal, Karl. 1918. *Om Det Attribute Adjektivs Position I Oldnorsk Prosa*. Kristiania: Aschehoug.
- Rosén, Victoria, Koenraad De Smedt, Paul Meurer, and Helge Dyvik. 2012. "An Open Infrastructure for Advanced Treebanking". In *META-RESEARCH Workshop on Advanced Treebanking at LREC2012*. Ed. by Jan Hajič, Koenraad De Smedt, Marko Tadić, and António Branco. Istanbul, Turkey, pp. 22–29. <http://clarino.uib.no/iness>
- Samnordisk runtextdatabas*. 2018. (Computer software). Uppsala universitet, Institutionen för nordiska språk. Uppsala Universitet. <http://www.nordiska.uu.se/forskn/samnord.htm>. 19 January 2018. Referred to as *Rundata*.
- Spurkland, Terje, and Betsy van der Hoek. 2010. *Norwegian Runes and Runic Inscriptions*. Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer.
- Spurkland, Terje. 2017. "Proto-Norse runic inscriptions." (Handout received in Runology – General introduction NFI4100, Oslo, 22 August 2017).
- Spurkland, Terje. 2017. "Runic inscriptions from the Middle Ages." (Handout received in Runology – General introduction NFI4100, Oslo, 31 October 2017).

- Spurkland, Terje. 2017. “Viking Age runic inscriptions.” (Handout received in Runology – General introduction NFI4100, Oslo, 10 October 2017).
- Spurkland, Terje and Kjell Jonas Nordby. 2018. “Inscriptions in the older fuþark.” (Handout received in Runology – Runic Inscriptions from the Migration Period to the Viking Age NFI4123, Oslo, 16 January 2018).
- Sweet, Henry. 1900. “Word-order.” In *A New English Grammar: Logical and Historical. Part 2. Syntax*: 1–28. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- The Menotec corpus of Old Norwegian catalogue*. 2018. (Online). <http://clarino.uib.no/menota/catalogue?session-id=244665986511267>. Retrieved 26 April 2018. Referred to as Menota catalogue.
- The Menotec corpus of Old Norwegian*. (Online). <http://www.menota.org/menotec.xml>. Referred to as Menotec.
- Valfells, Sigrid, and James E. Cathey. 1981. *Old Icelandic: An Introductory Course*. Oxford: Oxford U.P. in Ass. with the American-Scandinavian Foundation.
- Williams, Henrik. 1994. “The origins of the runes.” Essay. In *Frisian runes and neighbouring traditions: proceedings of the first International Symposium on Frisian runes at the Fries Museum, Leeuwarden*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996: 211–18
- Zoëga Geir T. 2004. *A Concise Dictionary of Old Icelandic*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications.



# Appendix 1: The Bryggen in Bergen inscriptions used in the thesis<sup>11</sup>

## *N 289 M*

§A (t)rotin<sup>^</sup>n : um a<sup>^</sup>lla : fram ÷ o<sup>^</sup>k þu styrk : mik : til a<sup>^</sup>l<sup>^</sup>lra go<sup>^</sup>pra : lut...

§B ...otin<sup>^</sup>n : iis÷us krist<sup>^</sup>ur ÷ sa (i)r bæþe : er guþ o<sup>^</sup>k : maþa<sup>^</sup>r : høyr : a<sup>^</sup>kal<sup>^</sup>l mit : -...

§C ... þik : o<sup>^</sup>k biþia mer : miskuna<sup>^</sup>r : uiþa<sup>^</sup>r : þi(k) o<sup>^</sup>k ma<sup>^</sup>riu (: ) mo<sup>^</sup>þ(o)(r)

§A *Dróttinn um alla fram! Ok þú styrk mik til allra góðra hlut[a].*

§B *[Dr]óttinn Jésús Kristr, sá er bæði er guð ok maðr, heyr ákall mitt ...*

§C *... þik ok biðja mér miskunnar viðr þik ok Maríu, móður.*

§A Lord above all! and You strengthen me for every good lot.

§B Lord Jesus Christ, who is both God and man, hear my invocation ...

§C ... You and pray for mercy for me from You and Mary, (Your) mother.

## *N 648 M*

§A ÷ hau÷grimi : felag ÷ sinum ÷ sen÷dir ÷ þorer ÷ fagr ÷ (k)æiþ÷iu ÷ guþs ÷ ok ÷ si÷nn<sup>^</sup>a ÷ san:na<sup>^</sup>n : flaskap ÷ ok uinato mart skorter

§B mik felag eki : er · mun:gatet æin÷ki : fis:ka<sup>^</sup>r:nir ÷ uil ÷ ek : at ÷ þu · uitir ÷ en ÷ ægi : kræf

§C þu biþ : bondan<sup>^</sup>n koma suþr til<sup>^</sup>l uar ok sia hut os liþr egga ha<sup>^</sup>n til en kræf þu eiskis luta mer ok ægi la þu

§D þostæin lan<sup>^</sup>k uita sen mer hacka nokora eu ÷ sigriþ þæru nokos þa biop henne hiit þu mer ekki ueta hyp ua<sup>^</sup>laþi

§A *Hafgrími, félag sínum, sendir Þórir Fagr kveðju Guðs ok sína, sannan félagskap ok vináttu. Mart skortir*

§B *mik, félagi! Ekki er mungátit, eingi fiskarnir. Vil ek at þú vitir, en eigi kref*

§C *þú. Bið bóndann koma suðr til vár ok sjá hvat oss liðr. Eggja hann til, en kref þú einskis*

---

<sup>11</sup> Retrieved from Rundata.

*hluta mér, ok eigi lát þú*

§D Þorstein Lang vita. Send mér hanzka nôkkura. Ef Sigríðr þarf nôkurs, þá bjóð henni. Heit þú mér ekki vetta hýð válaði.

§A Þórir the Fair sends to Hafgrímr his partner his own and God's greeting, and true partnership and friendship. I am lacking much,

§B partner; there is no beer, nor fish. I want you to know this, and not make demands.

§C Order the husbandman to come south to us and see how we are suffering. Urge him to it, and don't make demands for more lots from me; and do not let

§D Þorsteinn Long know. Send me some gloves. If Sigríðr is in need of anything, then offer her. Promise that you will not beat me (at all) for my poverty!

### ***N 649 M***

§A ÷ lun(a)næyu hu(i)spræyiu sinni sint-... ..

§B guþs ok sinna ek uil at otu kapp-... ..

§C skreiþar er þu fær nokkora mor...---... ----

§D eigi er oftyr

§A Lunaneyju, húsfreyju sinni, send[ir] ...

§B Guðs ok sína. Ek vil at Óttu Kapp[a]/Kap[alein] ...

§C skreiðar, er þú fær nôkkura mór[enda(?) váð(?)]

§D eigi er ofdýr.

§A ... sends to Lunaney, his wife, ...

§B his and God's. I want Ótto the champion / chaplain ...

§C stock-fish, (for) which you will get some russet(?) cloth(?)

§D ... is not overpriced.

### ***N 650 M***

§A ÷ æin^nripi ÷ þeta ÷ at | |tu mer at gia^l^lda ÷ tua mæla ok ÷ þriu sa^lld ÷ en ahngarstihi ÷ sihta^n mæla

§B en þu ska^l^lt ÷ æin^ndripi ÷ taka ÷ þat ko^nn ÷ sem ÷ berþor ÷ a mer at luka ÷ eihi min^na ÷ en sehsta^n mæla

§C ska^l^lt | |tu ta^ka ÷ eþa ÷ el^lihar : tak þu ehi ÷ en ÷ fa^þur min^n ÷ biþ ek ÷ a(t) ha^nan

**kil<sup>l</sup>ti ÷ mer ÷ þriu sa<sup>l</sup>ld ÷ i**

§A Eindriði. Þetta átt þú mér at gjalda: tvá mæla ok þrjú sáld, en annarstveggi(?) sextán mæla.

§B En þú skalt, Eindriði, taka þat korn sem Bergþórr á mér at lúka. Eigi minna en sextán mæla

§C skalt þú taka eða elligar tak þú eigi. En fôður minn bið ek at hann gildi mér þrjú sáld. ...

§A Eindriði! This you owe in payment: two measures and three casks, or else(?) sixteen measures.

§B And you should, Eindriði, take the corn which Bergþórr has to discharge. (You should take) no less than sixteen measures

§C or otherwise take nothing. And I order my father that he pay me three casks ...

### **N 652 M**

**: sikurþr ha<sup>l</sup>fan ask : æirikr**

*Sigurðr: halfan ask. Eirikr.*

Sigurðr: half an 'ask' (unit of liquid measure). Eirikr.

### **N 653 M**

§A **helga · aon...-(æ)(k)(e)-...**

§B **(f)(o)(l)(t)(æ)<sup>l</sup>(l)... ÷ gu<sup>n</sup>na<sup>r</sup> : pa<sup>r</sup>fæ- : pu<sup>n</sup>d : ogmundr · -- · oæ--...**

§A *Helga/helga ...*

§B ... *Gunnarr Parve[l](?): pund. Ôgmundr ... ..*

§A *Helga/Helgi/holy ...*

§B ... *Gunnarr the Small(?): pound. Ôgmundr ... ..*

### **N 654 M**

§A **bet<sup>r</sup> <sup>l</sup>et | t<sup>u</sup>ær mækr · o<sup>l</sup>a<sup>r</sup> : þreta<sup>n</sup> bu<sup>(n)</sup>**

§B **suærþo<sup>l</sup>fr --- enku lo...**

§A *Pétr lét tvær merkr, Ólafr þrettán pund.*

§B *Sverðolfr ... engu lo[kit].*

§A Pétr let (gave) two marks, Ólafr thirteen pounds.

§B Sverðolfr ... nothing discharged.

### ***N 655 M***

§A · (k) · barþr · t<sup>^</sup>ra<sup>^</sup>uan : ha<sup>^</sup>luan : a<sup>^</sup>nan : øyri : hein:rekr : tuær : ærtogar : brek · i ¶ uihi

§B *ingimundr : sauþr : ha<sup>^</sup>lfa : þriþiu : ærtog ¶ uihi*

§C **h- ¶ (h)**

§D **uihi**

§A *G[oldit](?): Bárðr: trauðan halfan annan eyri. Heinrekr: tvær ertogar brek í. Vígi.*

§B *Ingimundr Sauðr: halfa þriðju ertog. Vígi.*

§C ... ..

§D *Vígi.*

§A *Paid(?): Bárðr: scarcely one and a half öre. Heinrekr: two ertogar, fraudulently. Vígi / Acknowledged.*

§B *Ingimundr the Sheep: two and a half ertogar. Vígi / Acknowledged.*

§C ... ..

§D *Vígi / Acknowledged.*

### ***N 656 M***

§A -- **halluarþe sloþa þrim (p)-... ..**

§B **loþne faus haluan niunnda æyri ok h-...**

§A ... *Hallvarði Slóða: þrim p[und](?) ...*

§B *Lodni Faus: halfan níunda eyri, ok ...*

§A ... *To Hallvarðr the Slothful: three pounds(?) ...*

§B *To Lodinn the Reckless(?): eight and a half öre and ...*

### ***N 657 M***

§A ... **mankerþ : t<sup>^</sup>ueir : øurar**

§B ... **...n:kerþ : tueir : øura<sup>^</sup>r**

§A ... *manngerð tveir aurar.*

§B ... *[ma]nngerð tveir aurar.*



§A ... conscription-levy: two öre.

§B ... conscription-levy: two öre.

### ***N 658 M***

**gus... ..amur seætr kuæþiu**

*Gus[ir](?) [S]ámr(?) sendir kveðju.*

Gussir(?) the Dark(?) sends greetings.

### ***N 659 M***

§A ... ..(r) : þe<sup>^</sup>r : g(e)<sup>^</sup>uæþiu<sup>^</sup>(a)

§B ... (k) : hene : klofa

§A ... *[sendi]r þér kveðju.*

§B ... *henni glófa.*

§A ... sends you greetings.

§B ... her gloves.

### ***N 678 M***

**ænrí a sek þ(e)na**

*Eindri[ði] á sekk þenna.*

Eindriði owns this sack.

### ***N 687 M***

**øiulfr a sek þena**

*Eyjulfr á sekk þenna.*

Eyjulfr owns this sack.

### ***N 694 M***

**fitr : a : tæta tre**

*Finnr á þetta tré.*

Finnr owns this wood.

### ***N 722 M***

**rannr a : ka^rn : þætta**

*Ragnarr á garn þetta.*

Ragnarr owns this yarn.

### ***N 735 M***

§A **couæk a þræpr þisa**

§B **ho^f : fimta mo^rk**

§A *Sólveig á þræðr þessa.*

§B *Hólf fimta mörk.*

§A Sólveig owns these threads.

§B Four and a half marks.

### ***N B13 M***

§A **(m)-kæl · petr · ioanes · andres · lafranc · tomas · olafr · klemet · nikulas · aller hælger**

§B **men giæte min · not ouk dah lfs mins ouk salo kuþ se mik ok s(i)hni**

§C **<kuþ> <kifi> <o>s <byr> <ok> <kafo> <mar>i<a>**

§D **h(i)-lbe mer <klim>et hialbe m(e)^r alle gc hlk(e)r h(i)(a)**

§A *Mikjáll, Pétr, Jóhannes, Andrés, Lafranz, Thomás, Ólafr, Klemet, Nikulás. Allir helgir*

§B *menn, gæti mín nótt ok dag, lífs míns ok sálu. Guð sé mik ok signi.*

§C *Guð gefi oss byr ok gæfi María.*

§D *hj[a]lpi mér Klemet, hjalpi mér allir Guðs helgir [menn].*

§A Mikjáll, Pétr, Jóhannes, Andrés, Lafranz, Thomás, Ólafr, Klemet, Nikulás. May all holy

§B men protect me by night and day, my life (ie body) and soul. May God see me and bless me.

§C May God give us good wind, and Mary good luck.

§D Help me, Klemet, help me, all of Gods holy (men).

### ***N B17 M***

§A **f·uþork : hnias · tbmly**

§B **ost : min : kis : mik**

§C **(-) ki**

§A <fuþork> <hnias> <tbmly>

§B *Ást mín, kysst mik.*

§C ... ..

§A <fuþork> <hnias> <tbmly>

§B My beloved, kiss me.

§C ... ..

### ***N B30 M***

**--l--t : --hrar : a a^(a) · luti**

... ..*grar á alla hluti.*

... in all parts.

### ***N B32 M***

**(r)-- · (æ)ihi · -a--s · (a^f) · þæri · hirþ ilom · þoa · ek · som –**

... *eigi ... af þeirri hirð ... þoa ek sem ...*

... not ... from the retinue ... even if I who ...

### ***N B91 M***

**goþr uar æin lutr**

*Góðr var einn hlutr.*

One piece was good.

### ***N B111 M***

§A **snot gat : la<sup>u</sup>ssa<sup>n</sup> lata lingunir fyrir ur**

§B **---(o)m : æ- --r h(o)- mæR fyrir mo<sup>n</sup>nom**

§C **-æ(k)(u)mbæi(p)iba<sup>r</sup>(p)(o)**

§A *Snót gat lausan láta, Lín-Gunnr, fyrir ver*

§B *[sín]um, e[nn] [e]r hó[n] mæR fyrir mónnum,*

§C ...

[Norska]

Den kloke kvinnen må gi slipp på ... for husbonden[elskeren] sin - ennå er hun ei møy for menn [dvs. ennå regner folk henne for møy] - ...

### ***N B184 M***

**fanabælti iok biacku þina**

*Fanabelti jók þjarzku þina*

May the belt from Fana increase your beauty(?).

### ***N B190 M***

**n<sup>u</sup> er skøra mykyl kaLdhørþa<sup>r</sup>þiri**

*Nú er skæra mikil. ...*

Now is a great uproar. ...

### ***N B241 M***

§A **ek sörø þik o<sup>l</sup>þen mæþ hiþuto mæstr fiata**

§B **(i)¶¶lata þuæi cæh mæR namn þæs mas æir ctal**

§C **fir kirictini ih mer nu þæ(i)n otap**

§D **æit niþik aþa<sup>l</sup>rr n(i)þik iehh mæR open**

§E **nu er cörþ o<sup>k</sup> karafa<sup>r</sup> maþ ôlu hiþum**

§F **t<sup>u</sup> þu nu ôþilc(k) mæR namn þec æR ctal a**

§A *Ek sori þik, Óðinn, með ..., mestr fjánda;*

§B *jǫfna því; seg mér nafn þess manns er stal;*

§C *fyr kristni; seg mér nú þína ódáp.*

§D *Eitt níðik, annat(?) níðik; seg mér, Óðinn.*

§E *Nú er sorð ok ... með öllu ...*

§F *... þú nú óþlisk mér nafn þess er stal. A[men.]*

[Norska]

Jeg maner deg, Odin, med (hedendom), den største blant djevlene. Gå med på det. Si meg navnet til den mann som stjal. For kristendom. Si meg nå (din) udåd. Ett håner jeg, (det andre) håner jeg. Si meg, Odin! Nå er (mengder av djevler?) manet fram med all (hedendom). Du skal nå skaffe/odle meg navnet til den som stjal. (Amen.)

### ***N B249 M***

§A **sæint er þat er suæin fan dynta silfrberh : i : mol d<sup>u</sup>ærga þat sæg<sup>h</sup>ir hær meþ harra hæiþmil<sup>l</sup>c : i : gíof ræiþa ÷ ÷ ha<sup>u</sup> sa er la<sup>uh</sup> at lóþe lohryranda dýrum þes uitis biþ ek þriote þægnlæiþum guc ræiþi**

§B **sigurþr : amunda:son : a mik**

§A *Seint er, þat er Sveinn fann dynta, silfrberg, í mól dverga, þat segir herr með harra, heiðmilds í gjóf reiða. Hafi sá er laug at logis logrýranda dýrum, þess vítés bið ek þrjóti þegnleiðum, Guðs reiði.*

§B *Sigurðr Amundasonr á mik.*

[Norska]

§A Seint er, det (= sølvberget) som Svein dynta fant, sølvberg, i dvergens grus/krystaller - det sier hæren sammen med kongen - redet ut som gaven til den gavmilde. Måtte den ha som løy til den dyre havets lues/flammes (dvs. gull) forminsker (dvs. kongen) - den straffen ber jeg om for stivnakken som mennene er lei - guds vrede.

§B Sigurd Amundson eier meg.

### ***N B255 M***

§A **÷ myttar bol<sup>l</sup>a katr haluan<sup>n</sup> bol<sup>l</sup>a auþr hal<sup>l</sup>uin an<sup>n</sup>an bo tast**

§B **hal<sup>l</sup>í<sup>l</sup>í<sup>l</sup>a<sup>u</sup>an b holmr hal<sup>l</sup>uan b**

§C **uar ken<sup>n</sup>ir uira uitr ugllapan sitita**

§D air nemr opt ok storum alun^ns grun^ntar mik blun^nti

§A Myttar bolla, Kôtrtr/Kattr/Kátr halfan bolla, Auðr halfan annan bo[lla], Tast

§B hal^lfan b[olla], Holmr halfan b[olla].

§C Vár kennir [mér] víra vitr úglaðan sitja.

§D Eir nemr opt ok stórum óluns grundar mik blundi.

[Norska]

§A-B Myttar(?) en bolle, Katt/Kát en halv bolle, Aud halvannen bolle, Tast(?) en halv bolle, Holm en halv bolle.

§C-D Den kloke kvinnen (= gulltrádenes Vár) fær meg til á sitte uglad. Kvinnen (= Eir av ormejord/gull) tar ofte og i høy grad søvn fra meg.

### **N B257 M**

§A rist e^k : bot:runa^r : rist : e^k biabh:runa^r : eæin:fa^l uip : a^luom : tuiua^lt uip : t^rolom : þreua^lt : uip : þ(u)--

§B uip e^nne : skøþo : skah : ua^lkyrriu : sua:at : eæi mehi : þo:at æ uili : læuis : kona : liui : þinu g- -

§C e^k sende^r : þer : ek se a þe^r : ylhia^r : e^rhi o^k opola : a þe^r : rini : upole : a^uk : i(a)luns : mop : sittu : ald^ri : sop þu : ald^r(i) -

§D a^nt : mer : sem : sialpre : þer : beirist : rubus : rabus : ep : arantabus : laus : abus : rosa : ga^ua -

§A Ríst ek bótrúnar, ríst ek bjargrúnar, einfalt við alfum, tvífalt við trollum, þrífalt við þurs[um],

§B við inni skoðu skag(?) valkyrju, svát ei megi, þótt æ vili, lævis kona, lífi þínu g[randa], ...

§C ek sendi þér, ek sé á þér, ylgjar ergi ok úpola. Á þér hríni úpoli ok ioluns(?) móð. Sittu aldri, sof þú aldri ...

§D ant mér sem sjalfri þér. Beirist(?) rubus rabus et arantabus laus abus rosa gaua ...

I cut runes of help; I cut runes of protection; once against the elves, twice against the trolls, thrice against the ogres ... .. against the harmful 'skag'-valkyrie, so that she never shall, though she ever would-evil woman!-(injure) your life ... I send to you, I look at you (= cast on you with the evil eye): wolfish evil and hatefulness. May unbearable distress and 'ioluns' misery

take effect on you. Never shall you sit, never shall you sleep, ... .. (that you) love me as yourself. [Latinized magical words] and [magical words] ...

### ***N B333 M***

§A **sira : ion ¶ s(e)n^ndir : gun^nari : huit : ku(i)þiu guþrs o^k**

§B **sina hakon^n ...**

§A *Síra Jón sendir Gunnari Hvít kveðju Guðs ok*

§B *sína. Hákon ...*

§A Sire Jón sends Gunnar White Gods and his greeting.

§B Hákon ...

### ***N B368 M***

§A **þes : uil · ek · biþia ÷ þik : at| |t^u ÷ fa^r · ¶ o^r : þema : po^l:o^ke ÷ sntd : rit ÷ til ÷ s¶lyst^ur ÷ o^la^us ÷ hæta^usuæins ÷ h¶o^n : e^r ÷ i ÷ bia^ruin : at^ ^n:unu:set^ri**

§B **o^k læita : ras ÷ uip : ha^na ÷ o^k ¶ uip : prønbr ÷ þina er þu : uil¶dir : sætas : æki : at| |t^u : s(y)sni : ¶ iarls ÷ at^u : kena : nu · r(æ)t^u ·**

§A *Þess vil ek biðja þik, at þú far ór þeima flokki. Snid rit til systur Ólafs Hettusveins. Hon er í Björgvini at nunnusetri,*

§B *ok leita ráðs við hana ok við frændr þína, er þú vildir sættask. Eigi átt þú synsemi jarls ...*

... ..

§A I would ask you this, that you leave your party. Cut a letter in runes to Ólafr Hettusveinn's sister. She is in the convent in Bergen.

§B Ask her and your kin for advice when you want to come to terms. You, surely, are less stubborn than the Earl.

### ***N B380 M***

§A **hæil ÷ se þu : ok : i huhum : goþom**

§B **þor : þik : þig÷gi : open : þik ÷ æihi :**

§A *Heil(l) sé þú ok í hugum góðum.*

§B *Þórr þik þiggi, Óðinn þik eigi.*

§A Hail to you and good thoughts.

§B May Þórr receive you, may Óðinn own you.

### ***N B384 M***

...<o> : <sim> <libi> : <sinu>

... *sem lífi sínu.*

... as his/her life.

### ***N B416 M***

§A ... -ø(g)na<sup>n</sup> t<sup>^</sup>reng · a · bloþ(e) · (s)(p)(r)(e)ngir

§B --ota · r<sup>^</sup>æyni · ga<sup>^</sup>utu- · ra<sup>^</sup>nar · lioma · (g)o<sup>^</sup>no<sup>^</sup>n-s · -o--

§C -þ · urab(e)t<sup>^</sup>r(e) · hlufu

§D - · hia · o<sup>^</sup>rlæik · þin<sup>^</sup>num · æinskis · u<sup>^</sup>ærþr · um · kumna · færþir

§A ... [*fr*]oknan dreng, á blóði sprengir,

§B <--ota> reyni gautu[m] Ránar ljóma konun[g]s [d]ó[mi].

§C ... <urabitri> <hlufu>

§D ... *hjá örleik þínum einskis verðr um gumna ferðir.*

[Norska]

§A ... den modige mannen, med blodet sprenger,

§B ... (mot) prøve-gauter (= menn) Ráns (= havgudinnens) glans (dvs. gull) med kongens (dom).

§D ... [min sparsommelighet?] er ingenting verd blant grupper av mennesker i forhold til din gavmildhet.

### ***N B417 M***

**þetta ræist blinder ma<sup>^</sup>þer til þin h(y)-**

*Þetta reist blindr maðr til þín ...*

A blind man carved this to you ...



### ***N B448 M***

§AP ÷ sigurþr : la<sup>^</sup>ua<sup>^</sup>r(þ)r · sændir : kuæþi(o) -- · guþs o<sup>^</sup>k sina : s(m)ip : (þ)ina : uildi : k :  
ha<sup>^</sup>ua : um

§AQ ÷ sigurþr : la<sup>^</sup>ua<sup>^</sup>r(þ)r · sændir : kuæþi(o) -- · guþs o<sup>^</sup>k sina : s(m)ip : (þ)ina : uildi : k :  
ha<sup>^</sup>ua : um

§B ua<sup>^</sup>pnabunað : dt : --- : spio(t) : (a) : a--an a<sup>^</sup>lnum : iarns : ær : ek : sændi : þir : mæþ :  
ioani :

§C Øra : nu : er : þa(t) : bøn : min : ai biþia : þik : at : þu : sir : mer : a<sup>^</sup>uþbøn : nu : um : þæta  
: mal : i

§D in : æf : þu : girir : nu : min : uilia : þa : ska<sup>^</sup>lt : þu : sa<sup>^</sup>nna : uinga<sup>^</sup>n : ua<sup>^</sup>ra : ha<sup>^</sup>ua : i  
gægn : nu : o<sup>^</sup>k : iamnan

§AP *Sigurðr Lávarðr sendir kveðju ... Guðs ok sína. Smíð þína vilda ek hafa um*

§AQ *Sigurðr Lávarðr sendir kveðju ... Guðs ok sína. Smíð þína vildi konungr hafa um*

§B *vápnabunað at ... spjót af á[tj]án alnum jarns, er ek sendi þér með Jóhani*

§C *Øra. Nú er þat bæn mín at biðja þik at þú sér mér auðbænn nú um þetta mál ...*

§D *En ef þú gerir nú mín vilja, þá skalt þú sanna vingan vára hafa í gegn nú ok jafnan.*

Sigurðr Lávarðr sends God's and his greetings to ... The King (or I) would like to have your forgings for arms ... spears from the iron worth eighteen ells of russet, that I send with John Øri. I now pray you that you will do as I ask in this matter, and if you do as I say, you shall receive our true friendship now and forever.

### ***N B462 M***

§A suæin : riste : runar : þæsar : ôk pa<sup>^</sup>þ

§B (e)<sup>^</sup>luucio rata

§A *Sveinn risti rúnar þessar ok bað*

§B *Lúciu ráða.*

§A Sveinn carved these runes and asked

§B Lúcia ...

**N B480 M**

--(l)(i)(n) · meþ knifi · s--(u)m · (þ)-n-(æ)--(n)-(u)---

... með knífi s[ín]um ...

... with his knife ...

**N B493 M**

**bylli min un mer an ek þer af astom a^u^k af <allum> <huha>**

*Byrli minn! Unn mér! Ann ek þér af ástum ok af öllum huga.*

[Norska]

Min elskede/skjenkesvenn: Elsk meg! Jeg elsker deg med hele mitt hjerte og med all min hug.

**N B495 M**

§A -----hæt snh--k-

§B ÷ (e)--(n)(g)(e)-(h)(a)-- e^n ek ma^n h-

§C ÷ be^r i briost m(e)^r s(u)a^(r)-

§A ... ..

§B ... en ek man ...

§C berr í brjóst mér ...

---

**N B496 M**

§A ÷ an ek : sua : ko^no : ma^nc : (k)(i)þa : taka : fioll ÷ uip : lægiumk : sua : hugi a ÷ ringæiþr  
: at : io^rþ : sprin(g)r ÷

§B : ram en skal aþr en ek hoskge hamna huit er su miol er liggr

§A *Ann ek svá konu manns víða taka fjóll við leggjumk svá hugi á, hring-reið, at jórð springr.*

§B *Hrafn ... skal áðr en ek horskri hamna hvítr er sú mjóll er liggr.*

[Norska]

§A Slik elsker jeg en (annen) manns kvinne/kone, de vide fjell begynner å svinge [før jeg glemmer henne?]. [Høye/fornemme] kvinne (= ring-vogn), vi elsker hverandre slik at jorden

sprenges.

§B Ravnenn skal, før jeg vraker den kloke (kvinnen), (bli) hvit [som] den snø som ligger [på fjellene].

### ***N B524 M***

§A ð hæilagr : andreas : bostole : foru-

§B and : at : boda : ord guds : auk : gærði : han : m(a)--

§C : iartæknir : i : nafne : drotens : ukytreuk--

§D se se sæsse se kono uena : se þu : huar : sitter :

§A *Heilagr Andreas postoli fór*

§B *and at boða orð Guðs, ok gerði han mar[gar]*

§C *jartegnir í nafni dróttins ...*

§D *Sé, sé, Sessi. Sé konu væna. Sé þú hvar sittir.*

[Norska]

§A Heilag Andreas apostel fór

§B ... at forkynne Guds ord, ok gjerde han mange

§C jartegn i Herrens namn ... §D Se, se, Sessi. Se kona ven. Se du kvarhelst sitter.

### ***N B525 M***

§A ð pendihta : a bosa : þena : han : gerþe : gob : m(a)-

§B af : af:skurpum : þæim : ær ægo uðro nyti—

§A *Benedikta á posa þenna. Hann gerði góð <ma->*

§B *af afskurðum þeim er e(n)gu váru nýti[r].*

[Norska]

§A Benedikta eier denna pose. Han gjerde god ...

§B av de avskurder som ikkje var dugande.

### ***N B552 M***

**ila hefer sa maþr er -(e)-(e)r sliga go(n)o (s)ein(i)uer**

*Illa hefir sá maðr er [h]e[f]ir slíka konu ...*

Evil has the man who has such a woman ...

### **N B625 M**

§A ÷ guþ · signi · þr · sira · pro<sup>^</sup>fast<sup>^</sup>r · oddr · kom · til · min · o<sup>^</sup>k · mærkti · ek · yþr · seks · la<sup>^</sup>upa

§B salls · sua · at · firi · uinnr · um · t<sup>^</sup>uau · (p)u(n)d · (o)<sup>^</sup>(k) · (a) · þorer · sa<sup>^</sup>ltet · o<sup>^</sup>f ha<sup>^</sup>rþr · engi · ua<sup>^</sup>r · sa<sup>^</sup>lt·punda<sup>^</sup>ren · hæima

§C · o<sup>^</sup>k · lita · matt · þu · þessa<sup>^</sup>ri · lykt · at · m(i)nn(i) · (u)(i)(t)end · en þa<sup>^</sup>r · liggr · at þæi(r)(r)(a) · (s)(a)l(e)(t) · (o)(k) · (·) (s)(k)(a)<sup>^</sup>(l) · (e)(k) · (þ)-- ----

§D sem fyrst · fæ · ek · pundara · o<sup>^</sup>k · þat · til · ia<sup>^</sup>rþtegna · at · ek · ga<sup>^</sup>f · þriu · skinn · a<sup>^</sup>f · bo<sup>^</sup>kfælli · o<sup>^</sup>k riþ · til · min · huæso þer ...

§A *Guð signi yðr, sira prófastr. Oddr kom til mín, ok merkti ek yðr sex laupa*

§B *salts, svá at fyrir vinnr um tvau pund. Ok á þorir saltit of harðr. Engi var saltpundarin heima.*

§C *Ok hlíta mátt þú þessari lykt at minni vitend. En þar liggr at þeira salit, ok skal ek þ[at senda]*

§D *sem fyrst fæ ek pundara. Ok þat til jartegna at ek gaf [yðr] þrjú skinn af bókfelli. Ok rit til mín hversu þér ...*

[Norska]

Gud signe Dem, sira prost. Odd kom til meg, og jeg merket for Dem seks laup salt, slik at det rekker ut over to pund; og Tore Ovhard eier saltet. Det var ingen saltvekt hjemme (hos meg). Og du kan stole på denne betalingen ved mitt vitende. Men betalingen ligger der hos dem, og jeg skal (sende det?) så snart jeg får en vekt. og det (skal være) til tegn (dvs. pant, garanti?) at jeg gav Dem tre skinn av pergament. Og skriv til meg hvordan De ...

§D ...

### **N B644 M**

§A a<sup>^</sup>n ek sua ÷ kono mans at mer ÷ þyki kaltr æltr ÷ en ek em uinr ÷ ui<sup>^</sup>f's þæsu<sup>^</sup>a

§B asa

§C {PPS}

§D ir

§A *Ann ek svá konu manns, at mér þykkir kaldr eldr. En ek em vinr vífs þessa.*

§B *Ása.*

§C {PPS}

§D ...

[Norska]

§A Jeg elsker så en (annen) manns kvinne/kone, at ilden tykkes meg kald. Og jeg er en venn av denne kvinnen. ... §B Åse. (P- P-son).

### ***N B660 M***

**aspiørg ÷ hit pæsta parn ÷ ¶ -urat^a(r)...ranæ**

*Ásbjörg hit bezta barn. ...*

*Ásbjörg the best child. ...*



## Appendix 2: Special characters<sup>12</sup>

Certain special characters are included in the database.

The following special characters are used in the file of transliterated texts (rundata.run):

### Punctuation:

· = 

:

× = 

α = 

' = 

+ = 

÷ = all other punctuation

### Special letters:

ñ = η, i.e. the rune with variants in the 24-character futhark.

ô = o, i.e. the rune  $\text{ƿ}$  in the Maeshowe inscriptions from Orkney. In medieval inscriptions,  $\text{ƿ}$  is transliterated as ø but in the Maeshowe inscriptions, the special variant  $\text{ƿ}$  is transliterated as ø.

R = R, i.e. the rune  $\text{ᚱ}$ .

### Other signs and symbols:

() = damaged rune which can be read with some certainty.

[ ] = series of lost runes which can be supplied from another source.

{ } = Latin majuscule. For the sake of clarity, these are also written in capitals in the transliterated text.

< > = runic cipher which has been solved.

- = a sign, most often a rune, which cannot be defined but is part of the inscription.

---

<sup>12</sup> Retrieved from Rundata.

? = indefinable sign, either a non-rune or an insoluble bind-rune.

... = damaged area in an inscription where runes are presumed to have been.

^ = bind-rune. For example, the bind-rune  $\mathfrak{A}$  is transliterated a<sup>^</sup>f. A bind-rune can connect the end of one word with the beginning of another; for example, **risastin** (*ræisa stæin*) is transliterated risa<sup>^</sup>stin.

| = double-duty rune. Because the database works on the basis of word-for-word comparisons, a series of runes such as **aukuþs** (*ok Guðs*) must be split into two words: auk|kuþs.

‘ = added afterwards. These characters around a rune specify that the rune is added afterwards. This is only partly implemented in the database.

/ = variant readings. If the reading of runes in a word is doubtful, the possible variants are given divided by a slash.

§P (etc.) = variant readings involving more than a single word; §P, §Q (etc.) is then included in the normalised text as well.

§A (etc.) = different sides of the object bearing the inscription; §A, §B (etc.) is then included in the normalised text as well.

¶ = new line in the inscription.

¶¶ = One word spans two sides of object. For technical reasons, it is not possible to put a side notation such as §B in the middle of a word. Instead, the side notation is located before or after the word which spans two sides of a stone and the place the word is broken is marked by two ‘line break’ symbols.

° = inscription is purely ornamental.

¬ = inscription is recent. The reading is specified under Other in the file rundata.xls. Genuine post-medieval inscriptions dated to about year 1600 have readings and interpretations in the textfiles.

The following special characters are used in the file containing Old West Norse (Old Icelandic) normalised text (rundata.fvn) and that of the Old Scandinavian (rundata.nfs):



**Special letter:**

ô = ǫ.

**Other signs and symbols:**

" = the next word is a Personal name. ' = enclitic form. This mark is used in forms such as 's, a contracted form of *es* 'is', 'which/who' and in 'k, a contracted form of *ek* 'I'.

(?) = the normalised form should be regarded as doubtful.

? = all normalised forms in the inscription should be regarded as doubtful.

... = part of the inscription is missing or untranslated.

[ ] = reconstructed text. Part of a word or a whole word can be reconstructed with some certainty.

{ } = this part of the inscription was written in Roman majuscule.

<> = series of runes cannot be interpreted in an otherwise fully translated inscription; the runes are transliterated in pointed parentheses as they stand.

/ = alternative forms. If a series of runes can be interpreted in several ways, the alternatives are separated by a slash. In Gotlandic inscriptions, the slash is also used to indicate the modern form of a place-name.

° = inscription does not contain any but ornamental runes.

¬ = inscription is recent.



## Appendix 3: List of transliterations in the database<sup>13</sup>

Below are listed all transliterations which occur for runes represented and in which period they occur (u. = pre-Viking, v. = Viking Age, m. = Medieval). Transliterations are strictly consistent within each time period, with a few regional exceptions in the Medieval group.

a = u. ƿ, v. ʀ, m. ɹ.

A = u. ʁ, u., v. ʁ (<ϳ), with the sound value /a/ developed later

A = ɹ in Medieval inscription.

b = ƕ.

c = m. ʀ (but in Norwegian m. ʁ).

d = u. ƿ, v., m. ʀ.

D = ƿ in Viking-Age inscription.

ð = v., m. ʀ.

e = u. ƿ, v., m. ʀ.

E = ƿ in Viking-Age inscription.

f = ƿ.

g = u. ʁ, v., m. ʀ.

G = ʁ in Viking-Age inscription.

G = ʀ in Medieval inscription.

h = u. ʁ, v., m. ʀ.

H = ʁ in Viking-Age inscription.

i = l.

---

<sup>13</sup> Retrieved from Rundata.

ī = u. J.

j = u. S.

k = u. <, v., m. P.

l = f.

L = f.

m = u. M, v., m. Y.

M = M in Viking-Age inscription.

ñ = u. D.

n = t.

N = t, t.

o = u. O, v. t, m. d.

O = in Viking-Age inscription.

ô = m. f in Maeshowe inscriptions, Orkney.

p = u. P, m. B, K.

r = R.

R = v., m. h (for Norwegian m see y; see also z).

s = u. S, v., m. h (but in Norwegian m. l).

t = f.

þ = þ.

u = U.

v = m. P.

w = u. P.

y = v., m. U (but in Norwegian m. h).

Y = Norwegian m. ð.

z = u. ʏ.

æ = m. ǣ.

ø = m. ƿ (but ƿ in Maeshowe inscriptions).